

Hamilton County

Voter Handbook



Hamilton County Election Commission

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OUR MISSION

It is the Mission of the Hamilton County Election Commission to ensure the integrity of the electoral process, enhance the public trust, and encourage voter participation. As stewards of the public's trust, we will consistently administer fair and impartial elections in compliance with the law. Voting is one of the most basic constitutional rights, and the Hamilton County Election Commission has a great responsibility in this process which is at the heart of our democracy.

The Hamilton County Election Commission is committed to its mission of ensuring the integrity of the electoral process, enhancing the public trust, and encouraging voter participation. This “Voter Information Handbook” was developed as a tool to help voters have the best possible experience on Election Day.

This handbook includes information about registering to vote, using the voting equipment, what you will need to bring to vote, finding your polling place, as well as contact information for answers to any questions about voting you may have. This handbook includes general qualifications, duties and some information about the Hamilton County constitutional offices as well as links to sites with more in depth information.

As we prepare for the 2016 elections, we want you to be prepared. Since this a presidential election year we have included a section regarding political party primaries and the electoral college. In keeping with our mission statement, this guide is included on our website along with many other useful and informative publications and resources.

I encourage you to contact the Hamilton County Election Commission if you have any questions or need more information related to voter registration and elections. We are always eager to inform and help the voters of Hamilton County.

Kerry B. Steelman, Certified Administrator of Elections

M. Scott Allen, Assistant Administrator

Registering to Vote

Registering to vote in Tennessee is done by county. If you have moved to Hamilton County from any other Tennessee county or from another state you are required to complete a new registration to be eligible to vote in Hamilton County.

Voter registration forms may be obtained at the Hamilton County Election Commission office, Department of Safety and Homeland Security, Public Assistance agencies, the County Clerk's Office, all branches of the Hamilton County Library, your local Post Office, or various other government offices. Registration forms can also be printed from our website:

<http://elect.hamiltontn.gov>. You cannot submit a registration form online, but may print one from our website and mail or hand deliver it to our office.

If you complete a registration form at the Department of Safety, County Health Department or Department of Human Services it will be sent to us for processing. The Department of Safety may send a Voter Registration form to you in the mail with your license. You can complete the form and mail it to us if you did not complete a registration form while at the agency.

Forms provided by other sources should be fully completed and mailed to:

Hamilton County Election Commission
700 River Terminal Road
Chattanooga, TN 37406

Or, you may bring your application to the Election Commission Office at the above address. When you register in person please have a photo ID with the correct address or a photo ID and a piece of mail you have received with your name and address on it (electric bill, bank statement, insurance card, etc.).

When your application is received by the Election Commission it will be processed and your new voter registration card will be mailed. You will be registered to vote when you receive your voter registration card in the mail. TCA§ 2-2-124

Important Information To Know Before Completing Your Voter Registration Form

To register to vote, you must meet **ALL** of the following qualifications:

- **Citizen of the United States;**
- **Eighteen (18) years old on or before the date of the next election;**
- **Resident of the State of Tennessee; and**
- **Not have been convicted of a Felony or have had your Voting Rights restored as required by law if you have been convicted.**

- 1) If you download the form, print it only on **WHITE** paper.
- 2) Use **black** or **blue** ink only to complete the form.
- 3) Complete **every question** on the form including **ALL FOUR YES/NO questions**.
- 4) Tennessee requires your Social Security Number & Date of Birth in order to register to vote.
- 5) You must include the City & State of your birth.
- 6) You do not register by party in Tennessee.
- 7) This form can be used for either change of address or name change if you are already registered in Hamilton County.
- 8) The deadline to register to vote is always 30 days before an election. Registrations must be hand-delivered to our office or postmarked by that date in order to be processed for the upcoming election. If the 30th day falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be the next business day. Registrations received after the deadline will be processed after the election and you will be eligible to vote in the next election after your registration has been processed.

When Is The Last Day I Can Register To Vote And Vote In The Next Scheduled Election?

The deadline to register is the close of business on the 30th day before each election. Registrations received after the deadline will be processed after the election.

Keeping Your Voter Registration Updated:

Once you are registered to vote in Hamilton County and have received your voter registration card there is no requirement to “renew” your registration. However, you do need to update your registration as necessary to keep your status as an Active Voter in Hamilton County.

Always update the Election Commission in writing, with your signature, if:

- You change your name due to marriage or divorce
- You move within Hamilton County
- You receive any correspondence from the Election Commission where we need a response from you.

If you have moved to another county or another state you will be required to register to vote in that county or state.

Please contact the Hamilton County Election Commission with any questions or for more information about registering to vote. You can change your registration address or name up until the fifth day before each election.



What You Will Need to Vote

When you receive your voter registration card it is important that you check your card for accuracy. The card will have your name and residential address on it, unless you have a PO Box as a mailing address. In that case, the card will have the PO Box listed, but all precinct information will be based on your residential address. The card will also have the County Commission District, County School Board Zone, State House of Representatives District, State Senate District and U.S. Congressional District. If you live in Chattanooga the City Council district number will also be on your card.

Please contact the election commission office immediately if you have any concerns about the accuracy of the voting information on your card.

You are not required to have your voter registration card with you to vote during Early Voting or on Election Day. You will need a valid Photo ID issued by the State of Tennessee or the U.S. Government.

Photo ID Information

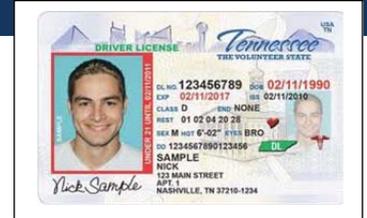
BRING YOUR PHOTO ID WHEN YOU COME TO VOTE

The state's Voter ID law requires poll workers to ask you for your PHOTO ID when you vote. Voter ID strengthens the public's faith in the integrity of our elections by enabling poll workers to match a voter's name to their face.

What Photo IDs Are Acceptable?

Any of the following IDs may be used, even if expired:

- Tennessee driver license with your photo
- United States Passport
- Photo ID issued by the TN Department of Safety and Homeland Security
- Photo ID issued by the federal government or Tennessee state government
- United States Military photo ID
- Tennessee handgun carry permit with your photo



What Photo IDs Are Not Acceptable?

College student IDs and photo IDs not issued by the Federal or Tennessee State government are NOT acceptable. This includes county or city issued photo IDs, such as library cards, and photo IDs issued by other states.

What If I Registered By Mail And Am Voting In My First Election?

Federal law requires first-time voters who register by mail to present one of the following:

- A current photo identification with voter's name and photo, **OR**
- If the photo identification is expired, the voter must also present one of the following: a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or government document that shows the voter's name and address.

What If I Don't Have An Acceptable Photo ID?

Contact the Hamilton County Election Commission for questions concerning acceptable forms of photo ID. We will assist you with any questions about the photo ID requirements or any other voting-related questions.

Protecting Your Vote

No eligible voter will be turned away at the polls. Voters who do not bring a Photo ID to the polls can vote using a provisional ballot, which will be counted if the voter returns to the Hamilton County Election Commission within two (2) business days after Election Day with a valid Photo ID. **Examples and a list of acceptable IDs can be found at**

<http://elect.hamiltontn.gov/photoid>

Voter Registration If You Have Moved

The voter registration application also serves as a name and/or address change request. When updating your address within the county, the form may be submitted in person to our office, mailed, faxed, or emailed with an attached document which includes a scanned signature. When updating one's name, the form must be mailed or delivered in person to our office. The form must be signed and received no later than five (5) days before the election in order to process the change.

Pursuant to TCA § 2-2-107, a person shall be registered as a voter of the precinct in which the person is a resident, in other words you will be registered to vote in the precinct in which you live. This is important because this ensures you are voting on candidates who represent the area where you live.

You may change your address when you vote on Election Day. However, taking care of the change before coming to vote will save you time, paperwork, and possibly having to drive to another polling place to vote.

When you apply to vote you affirm, under penalty of perjury, that the information you have provided on your application is correct. Providing false information on your voter application is a felony. (TCA § 2-19-107)

Registration Cards, Precincts and Polling Place Changes

When will I receive a new registration card?

Any time there is a change to your voter information you will receive a new card. If you contact us with an address change or name change, you will receive a new card with updated information. You may also request a new voter registration card if your old one is lost or damaged. Any time there is a change to a precinct – whether it is due to redistricting, a change

in a polling place, or both, we will send out new cards to notify all voters affected by the change.

Do I Need My New Voter Card To Vote At Early Voting Or On Election Day?

You do not need your voter card to vote during early voting or on Election Day. **You must have a Tennessee state or federally issued photo ID to vote.** The voter registration card does not exempt you from having a Photo ID to vote. **You can vote without a voter registration card, but not without a photo ID.**

My Neighbors Recently Received New Cards, But I Didn't. Why?

You may not have received a new voter card if any of these conditions apply to you:

- Your address is different from the one on your registration,
- Your name has changed and you have not updated it with us,
- You have been designated as an “inactive voter” for one of several reasons, or
- You are not registered to vote.

PLEASE CONTACT THE ELECTION COMMISSION OFFICE IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED A VOTER REGISTRATION CARD AND BELIEVE YOU SHOULD HAVE.

Why Has My Polling Place Changed?

Part of upholding accurate and fair elections is maintaining consistent polling places. We change polling places only when necessary; however, there are several reasons we may change polling places. For example, after redistricting some polling places changed because they were no longer needed to accommodate a district with a more compact geographical configuration. Or, the owners of a polling location may decide they no longer want to host elections at that site. In previous years many polling places were located in public schools. We have recently moved these polling places at the request of the school board.

What If I Don't Want To Vote At My Assigned Polling Location?

You must vote at your designated polling place on Election Day. During the Early Voting period you may vote at any of the four Early Voting locations in Hamilton County. Early Voting is convenient, fast and you don't have to worry about missing the opportunity to vote on Election Day due to an unforeseen event. The Early Voting Locations will always be listed on our website prior to each election.

How Do I Know Where To Vote Or Which Offices I Can Vote For?

Your district information is on your voter registration card. The card will have your name and residential address on it. The card will also have the County Commission District, County School Board District, State House of Representatives District, and State Senate District. If you live in Chattanooga, your City Council District will also be listed on your card. **PLEASE CONTACT THE ELECTION COMMISSION OFFICE IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT THE ACCURACY OF THE VOTING INFORMATION ON YOUR CARD.**

You can also find your district information on our website <http://elect.hamiltontn.gov>

What is Redistricting?

Redistricting is the redrawing of County Commission, State Senate, State House, US Congress, School Board and City District lines to ensure that every citizen is equally represented. Each district has an approximately equal number of residents according to the 2010 census. Geographically, some districts are larger or smaller than the others. Each district, no matter its geographical size, is approximately equal in population. Redistricting takes place after each new federal census to ensure the districts remain reasonably equal in population.

Who Determines Where The New District Lines Will Be?

The decision makers are the elected officials who have the statutory authority to locate the district lines on census block boundaries.

- **The Tennessee General Assembly:**
 - Congressional Lines
 - State Senate Lines
 - State House Lines
- **Hamilton County Commission:**
 - County Commission Districts
 - School Board Districts
- **City Councils:**
 - City Council Districts
- **Hamilton County Election Commission:**
 - Precinct Boundaries
 - Polling Places

2016 Hamilton County Election Calendar

Presidential Preference Primary and Hamilton County Primary Election

March 1, 2016

1st Day to Pick-Up Petitions – September 11, 2015
Qualifying Deadline – December 10, 2015 NOON
Withdrawal Deadline – December 17, 2015 NOON
Last Day to Register to Vote – February 1, 2016
1st Day to Request Absentee Ballot – December 2, 2015
Last Day to Request Absentee Ballot – February 23, 2016
Early Voting—February 10th thru February 23rd

Offices Eligible for County Primary

Assessor of Property
Criminal Court Judge Division II

August County General/State Primary Election

August 4, 2016

1st Day to Pick-Up Petitions – January 8, 2016
Qualifying Deadline – April 7, 2016 NOON
Withdrawal Deadline – April 14, 2016 NOON
Last Day to Register to Vote – July 5, 2016
1st Day to Request Absentee Ballot – May 6, 2016
Last Day to Request Absentee Ballot – July 28, 2016
Early Voting—July 15th thru July 30th

Offices Eligible for State Primary

U.S. Congress – District 3
State Senate – District 10,
State Representative – Districts 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

Offices Eligible for County General

Hamilton County School Board Districts 1, 2, 4, 7
Town of Lookout Mountain Commission and School Board
Winners from primary plus independent candidates:
Assessor of Property, Criminal Court Judge Division II

November State & Federal General and City Elections

November 8, 2016

1st Day to Pick-Up Petitions – May 20, 2016
Qualifying Deadline – August 18, 2016 NOON
Withdrawal Deadline – August 25, 2016 NOON
Last Day to Register to Vote – October 11, 2016
1st Day to Request Absentee Ballot – August 10, 2016
Last Day to Request Absentee Ballot – November 1, 2016
Early Voting – October 19th thru November 3rd

Offices Eligible for City Elections

City of Collegedale – three commissioners
City of East Ridge – two council members
City of Lakesite – three commissioners
City of Red Bank – two commissioners
Town of Signal Mountain – three council members
City of Soddy Daisy – three commissioners
Town of Walden – mayor, two aldermen

Offices Eligible for State & Federal General Election

Winners from primaries plus independent candidates:

President
U.S. Congress – District 3
State Senate – District 10,
State Representative – Districts 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

Be Prepared for the 2016 Elections

The 2016 elections will be busy. By having the proper photo ID and being educated on the candidates before coming to vote you will be prepared and be able to vote quicker, allowing for shorter wait times at the polls.

Using The Voting Machines

When you arrive at the precinct you will complete a ballot application and sign the poll book before you are issued a ballot. After receiving your ballot, find a seat at any one of the privacy booths to begin voting. Mark your selections by completely filling in the oval to the left of the candidate's name. The ballot may be two-sided, so make sure you look at the front and back. You are not required to vote in every race in order for your ballot to be counted. Most races in Hamilton County are "vote for one", meaning you will vote for only one candidate per race. In some races you will be allowed to vote for more than one candidate, but these races will always be specifically noted. As such, do not vote for more than one candidate unless you are specifically instructed to do so.

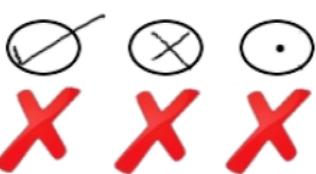
Making selections:



Correct



Incorrect



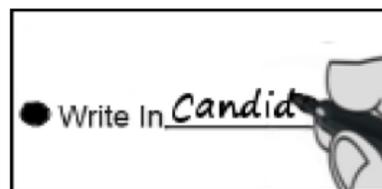
Fill in the oval to the left of your choice.

You must fill in the oval for your vote to count.

Do not cross out your vote or make any marks outside the voting oval or your vote might not count.

If you make a mistake, ask a poll worker for another ballot.

Optional Write In:



To vote for a candidate that is not on the ballot, fill in the oval to the left of "Write In" and print the name clearly on the line to the right.

If you accidentally mark too many candidates in a single race or mark the wrong oval, then take your ballot back to the ballot clerk and you will be issued another ballot. Tennessee law allows you three opportunities to correct a mistake on your ballot. **If you make a mistake, or have any questions about your ballot, now is the time to ask a poll worker. Once your ballot is in the voting machine, you cannot make changes.** Poll workers can answer procedural questions about the ballot and voting machine, but they are statutorily prohibited from giving opinions on any candidate or issue on the ballot.

Once you are satisfied with your ballot, make your way to the voting machine. Hamilton County uses Dominion Voting's Imagecast Precinct Optical Scan Tabulator to process voted ballots. The machine judge will instruct you to remove your ballot stub and place your ballot in the machine. The machine will scan your ballot and count your votes. If there is anything wrong with your ballot—for example, if you have voted for too many candidates in a race or if an oval is filled in ambiguously, the machine will return your ballot and provide a message noting what is wrong. You will then have an opportunity to correct the problem before casting your ballot. You have voted and can now place your ballot stub in the stub box.

Help America Vote Act (HAVA)

Are special accommodations made for elderly, disabled and visually impaired voters?

In accordance with the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and state law, Hamilton County has an accessible voting unit for every polling place in the county. The Imagecast Evolution is available at the four early voting locations for voters who choose to use it. For the elderly, disabled, and visually impaired voters who choose to vote in their precincts on Election Day, the Imagecast Precinct machine can be configured to allow for a voter to vote using a keypad and headphones rather than marking a ballot.

All registered voters are automatically entitled to use the accessible voting equipment located at each polling place – no special applications are required. When the registered voter arrives at the polling place, the voter simply needs to let a poll worker know that he or she needs to use the accessible equipment.

Each polling place also will be equipped with a sheet magnifier to assist voters who are visually impaired.

Elderly, disabled, and visually impaired voters may also elect to have someone assist them in filling out a paper ballot. This assistant must mark the ballot per the voter's choices and cannot provide opinions on how to vote. If the voter requests assistance, but does not have someone with them to help, a pair of Democrat and Republican poll workers may assist the voter. If a voter requests help, the assistant(s) must sign a voter assistance form.



What Can I Do If My Polling Place Is **Not** Accessible To Voters With Disabilities?



All Early Voting and Election Day polling places in Hamilton County have been surveyed and are ADA compliant. If you are a voter with a disability and the polling location where you are assigned to vote is inaccessible to you for any reason, you must notify the Hamilton County Election Commission not less than 10 days before Election Day.

Provisional Voting Information

If you are not on the signature list or do not have an acceptable form of identification, you will be allowed to cast a provisional ballot. The Provisional Counting Board will meet and based on all of the information provided will determine eligibility. Your ballot may or may not be counted. You will be notified, in writing, whether or not your ballot was counted.

Party Primary and General Elections

The Presidential Preference Primary will be held on March 1, 2016. This election will be a primary election for both the Tennessee Republican and Democratic parties to choose Presidential Candidates and state delegates to their respective conventions. The Republican and Democrat parties will also have a County Primary to determine the candidates for Assessor of Property and Criminal Court Judge Division II. The judge's race is a special election for a six-year term to fill the remainder of an eight-year term.

On August 4, 2016, there will be Federal and State Republican and Democratic Primaries for the State House seats in Districts 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30, State Senate District 10, the 3rd Congressional District seat, a County General election for Assessor of Property and School Board Districts 1, 2, 4, and 7, and a municipal election for Lookout Mountain.

The November 8, 2016 election will be a Federal & State General Election and municipal elections for Collegedale, East Ridge, Lakesite, Red Bank, Signal Mountain, Soddy Daisy, and Walden .



A **Primary Election** is a nominating election.

Voters that vote in a Primary Election consider themselves Republicans or Democrats – Tennessee does not have Primary Elections for Independents. In order to vote in the primary, for either party, you will be required to choose which party primary you wish to vote in on your voter application.

Tennessee primaries are “Open Primaries”. You are not registered as a member of any party and may vote as your current party allegiance allows. This is why during primary elections the poll worker will ask you which party’s ballot you prefer.

“A registered voter is entitled to vote in a primary election for offices for which the voter is qualified to vote at the polling place where the voter is registered if:

- 1. The voter is a bona fide member of and affiliated with the political party in whose primary the voter seeks to vote; or*
- 2. At the time the voter seeks to vote, the voter declares allegiance to the political party in whose primary the voter seeks to vote and states that the voter intends to affiliate with that party.” TCA §2-7-115 (b)*

Winning the party’s nomination in a Primary Election is the first step in the election process. It narrows the field in a political party to one individual for a specific office. The winner of the party primary in August will be on the general election ballot in November representing their party.

In August, you do not have to vote in the federal & state primary. You may choose to vote only in the Hamilton County general election.

A **General Election** is the election in which all voters make the **final choice** from among the party nominees and the independent candidates for a specific office.

The winners of Hamilton County offices on the **general** ballot in August will take office on September 1, 2016. The winners of the **primaries** on the August ballot will appear on the general ballot in November and the winners will take office January 1, 2017.

By state law, municipal offices and school board members are never partisan races.

The Electoral College is a process where the founding fathers established in the Constitution as a compromise between election of the President by a vote in Congress and election of the President by a popular vote of qualified citizens.

The Electoral College consists of 538 electors. A majority of 270 electoral votes is required to elect the President.

Each state's entitled allotment of electors equals the number of members in the Congressional delegation plus two for the Senators.

9 U.S. House of Representatives + 2 Senators

=

11 Electoral Votes for Tennessee

The Road To President

A Certificate of Ascertainment declares the winning presidential candidate in the state and shows which electors will represent the state at the meeting of the electors in December of the election year.

The meeting of the electors takes place on the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December after the presidential election. The electors meet in their respective states, where they cast their votes for President and Vice President on separate ballots. The state's electors' votes are recorded on a "Certificate of Vote," which is prepared at the meeting by the electors. The state's Certificates of Ascertainment and Certificates of Votes are sent to the Congress and the National Archives as part of the official records of the presidential election.

The state's electoral votes are counted in a joint session of Congress on the 6th of January in the year following the meeting of the electors. Members of the House and Senate meet in the House chamber to conduct the official tally of electoral votes.

The Vice President, as President of the Senate, presides over the count and announces the results of the vote. The President of the Senate then declares which persons, if any, have been elected President and Vice President of the United States.

The President-Elect takes the oath of office and is sworn in as President of the United States on January 20th in the year following the Presidential election.

Qualifications For Office

Tennessee State Law sets out some general qualifications that ALL candidates must meet to be on the ballot. Individual offices may have additional requirements.

Tennessee State Law

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELECTED OFFICE:

All persons 18 years old and over, who are citizens of the United States and of Tennessee, and who meet certain residency requirements (these differ by office) are qualified to hold office unless the person:

- Has been convicted of offering or giving a bribe, of larceny, or, of any other offense declared infamous by law, unless the person has been restored to citizenship as prescribed by law
- Has not paid a judgment from money received in an official capacity, which is due to the United States, Tennessee or any county
- Has defaulted to the treasury at the time of election
- Is a soldier, seaman, marine or airman in the regular United States Army, Navy or Air Force
- Is a member of Congress or holds any office of profit or trust under any foreign power, other state of the Union or the United States

(There are additional qualifications for offices such as Sheriff, School Board, etc.)

Constitutional Offices

The following are general descriptions of the origin, qualifications, duties and other general information about the Constitutional Offices in Hamilton County. These descriptions are intended to give you a general understanding of each office. The elected offices included have many more detailed duties and other official requirements than are included here. For detailed information please visit [CTAS](#) TCA Title 8.

COUNTY MAYOR

The County Mayor is the administrative head of the county. This office was created as a constitutional office in 1978 by an amendment to Article 7, Section 1 of the Tennessee Constitution.

The County mayor is elected by the people of the county for a term of four years.

Qualifications for County Mayor:

- All general qualifications for holding office in Tennessee;
- Must be at least 25 years old;
- Must be a qualified voter of the county;
- A resident of the county for at least one year prior to filing a petition for the office.

The position is full-time and compensation is set by state law.

The County mayor serves as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the legislative body (the County Commission). They also serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of most committees of the commission.

The County mayor may be elected as the chairperson of the Commission. As Chairperson, the Mayor may cast a vote only in the event of a tie. If the mayor chooses not to be the chairperson of the commission, he has veto power over most legislative resolutions.

The County Mayor is the Chief Financial Officer of the county.

The County Mayor has the care and custody of all county property.

The County Mayor may enter into “letters of agreement” with county fee officials.

The County mayor performs other duties and shares administrative tasks with other constitutional officers and statutory county officials.

To learn more visit www.acmtn.com

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Hamilton County commission is made up of nine individuals elected from the each of the nine county commission districts for a four year term.

Qualifications for County Commissioner:

- Attained the age of 18;
- Citizen of the United States;
- Citizen of Tennessee;
- Resident of their district when qualified;
- Cannot be an elected county official
- Comply with all general requirements for holding office in Tennessee.

The compensation of County Commissioners is fixed by resolution of the County Commission but not for less than the minimum compensation set by the General Assembly.

They are required to meet at least four times per calendar year. The Hamilton County Commission meets twice a month.

The County Commission is required to adopt a balanced budget and appropriate funds for the ensuing fiscal year for all county departments and agencies.

The County Commission can levy a county property tax without limitation to rate to fund the county budget. The county property tax is the only significant source of revenue for the county.

The County Commission also has the duties of:

- Accepting and maintaining county roads
- Passing general laws regarding financial management, budgeting and purchasing
- Issuing county debt instruments, i.e. bonds and notes

- Providing facilities for courts, jails and for certain county officials
- Planning and zoning for areas outside of municipalities
- Passing a countywide personnel policy
- Animal control
- Securely maintaining county records
- Other duties given them by the legislature

To learn more about TN County Commissioners, go to www.tncountycommissioners.org.

SHERIFF

The Sheriff, as a constitutional office, has been included in Tennessee's three Constitutions (1796, 1835 and 1870). The Sheriff is elected by the people of the county for a four year term.

Qualifications for Sheriff:

- All general qualifications for holding office in Tennessee;
- Must be at least 25 years old;
- Must be a qualified voter of the county;
- Must have obtained a high school diploma, or its equivalent;
- Must not have been convicted, pled guilty or pled nolo contendere to any felony charge or any violation of any federal or state laws or city ordinances related to force, violence, theft, dishonesty, gambling, liquor or controlled substances, so long as the violation involves an offense that consists of moral turpitude, or misdemeanor crime of domestic violence;
- Must be finger printed under the direction of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and have the TBI make a search of local, state and federal finger print files for any criminal record;
- Must not have been released from the armed forces of the United States with a dishonorable or bad conduct discharge, or as a consequence of conviction at court martial for either state or federal offenses;
- Must have been certified by a qualified professional in the psychiatric or psychological fields to be free of all apparent mental disorders as described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition, of the American Psychiatric Association or its successor;
- Must possess a current and valid peace officer certification as issued by the Tennessee Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST) within 12 months of qualification for election as Sheriff;
- Must not be a member of the General Assembly, nor shall any practicing attorney be obligated to act as Sheriff.

The Sheriff's compensation is set by CTAS.

The duties of the Sheriff include but are not limited to:

- Conservator of the peace and law enforcement
- Maintaining and providing a correctional facility

Visit <http://tnsheriffs.com/> to learn more about Tennessee Sheriffs.

COUNTY CLERK

For years, the County Clerk was known as the County Court Clerk. In 1978, this office was made a constitutional office. The County Clerk is elected by the people of the county for a four year term.

This office has no additional qualifications beyond the general qualifications for holding elected office in Tennessee.

The County Clerk is compensated with a minimum salary set forth in state law. The compensation of the County Clerk does not vary with the amount of fees collected.

The duties of the County clerk are generally:

- Keeping the official records of the County Commission
- Collecting local and state taxes such as – county wheel taxes, local hotel and motel taxes, beer taxes, business taxes, and vehicle registration fees
- Issuing motor vehicle titles and registrations
- Issuing marriage licenses
- Issuing business licenses
- Processing applications for beer permits
- Process applications for notaries public
- Issuing pawn broker licenses
- Issuing hunting and fishing licenses
- Offering renewal of Tennessee Drivers licenses

Visit www.tncountyclerk.com to learn more about County Clerks in Tennessee.

ASSESSOR OF PROPERTY

The assessor of property was a statutory office for many decades before it became a constitutional office following the 1978 amendments to the Tennessee Constitution. The assessor of property is elected to a four-year term in the August general election in even numbered years in which there is not an election for governor. T.C.A. § 67-1-502. This places the election of the assessor in years different from the other county constitutional officers who are popularly elected.

This office has no additional qualifications beyond the general qualifications for holding elected office in Tennessee.

The assessor's duties include two basic functions:

- appraisal of taxable real and personal property in the county that is not appraised by the state.
- assessment of taxable real and personal property in the county that is not appraised by the state.

To learn more go to <http://www.tnaao.org/index.htm>

REGISTER OF DEEDS

The Register of Deeds was originally an office appointed by the county legislative body, but became an elected office with the 1830 Tennessee Constitution. The Register of Deeds is elected by the people of the county for a four year term.

Register of Deeds has no additional qualifications from the general qualifications to hold elective office in Tennessee.

The compensation for the Register of Deeds is set by the legislature and has no bearing on the amount of fees collected by the office.

The duties of the Register of Deeds is to make and preserve a record of instruments required or allowed by law to be filed or recorded including, but not limited to:

- Deeds
- Powers of Attorney
- Deeds of Trust
- Mortgages
- Liens
- Contracts
- Plats
- The Register of deeds is also responsible for collecting “transfer” and “mortgage” taxes
- Leases
- Judgments
- Wills
- Court Orders
- Military Discharges
- UCCs
- Other filings and documents

To learn more go to <http://tnregisters.homestead.com>

COUNTY TRUSTEE

The County Trustee was originally an office appointed by the county legislative body. The office became an elected office with the 1835 Tennessee Constitution. The County Trustee is elected by the people of the county for a four year term.

There are no additional qualifications for County Trustee other that the general qualifications for holding elective office in Tennessee.

Compensation for the County Trustee is set by the legislature, and the compensation does not vary with the amount of fees or commissions collected by the office.

The County Trustee has three primary functions:

- Collecting all county property taxes
- Keeping a fair and regular account of all money received
- Investing temporarily idle county funds



The County Trustee may also:

- Disburse sales tax revenues
- Collect municipal property taxes and other state and local taxes

Find more information at: www.tennesseetrustee.com

CIRCUIT COURT CLERK

The Tennessee Constitution provides for counties or districts to elect a Circuit Court Clerk. The Circuit Court Clerk is elected by the people of the county for a four year term.

There are no additional qualifications for Circuit Court Clerk beyond the general qualifications to hold elective office in Tennessee.

The minimum compensation for Circuit Court Clerk is set by the legislature. The compensation does not vary with the amount of fees or commissions collected by this office.

The duties of the Circuit Court Clerk include:

- Attending each court session with all the papers for the cases on the docket
- Administering oaths to parties and witnesses who testify
- Keeping minutes of the court
- Maintain the rule docket and execution docket in which all court judgments or decrees are entered in order of rendition and all receipts and disbursements in a case are entered
- Maintaining indexes for all books dockets that are kept by the office
- Investing funds pursuant to law
- Collecting:
 - State and county litigation taxes
 - Criminal injuries compensation taxes
 - County expense fees
 - Sheriffs fees
 - Miscellaneous other court fees

For more information visit: <http://www.tncourts.gov/>

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

School Board members are elected by the people of the county from nine districts. The borders of the school board districts match the borders of the Hamilton County Commission districts. Your school board district number and your county commission district number are the same.

School Board members are elected to four year terms. Four (Districts 1, 2, 4, and 7) are elected in Presidential election years. The remainder (Districts 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9) are elected during gubernatorial election years.

Qualifications for School Board Members:

- Residents of the district they represent;
- Qualified voters of Hamilton County;
- Cannot be members of the Legislature or a County Official;
- Cannot be elected as a teacher or any other paid position in Hamilton County school system;
- Must possess a high school diploma or equivalent;
- Must attend annual training; and
- All other general qualifications for holding elective office in Tennessee.

There are many duties for School Board Members these include:

- Employing a Director of Schools
- To elect teachers upon the recommendation of the Director who have attained or who are eligible for tenure, to fix their salaries, and to make contracts with them
- To manage and control all public schools under its jurisdiction
- To purchase all supplies, furniture, fixtures materials of very kind through the executive committee
- To dismiss teachers, principals, supervisors and other employees upon sufficient proof of improper conduct, inefficient service or neglect of duty
- To suspend or dismiss pupils when the progress or efficiency of the school makes it necessary
- To require the Director of schools and the chair of the school board to prepare a budget and when approved by the board submit it to the County Commission
- Many other duties that are required by law and discretionary

For more information visit www.tsba.net

JUDGES

Judges are elected for eight year terms. All judges must meet the general qualifications to run for office in Tennessee as well as be practicing attorneys in Tennessee.

Hamilton County Judges:

- General Sessions Judges for Divisions I, II, III, IV, and V

11th Judicial District Judges:

Hamilton County is the sole county in Tennessee's 11th Judicial District.

- Criminal Court Judges (3)
- Circuit Court Judges (4)
- Chancellors (2)

Two additional offices that are elected by the voters of the 11th Judicial District for eight year terms are:

- District Attorney General
- District Public Defender

For more information on the duties and details of these offices please visit:

www.tba.org

www.tsc.state.tn.us/courts

www.tndagc.com

www.tsc.state.tn.us/judges

Where Do I Vote?

Early Voting

For the March 1, 2016 Election:

Early Voting.....February 10th thru February 23rd

For the August 4, 2016 Election:

Early Voting.....July 15th thru July 30th

For the November 8, 2016 Election:

Early Voting.....October 19th thru November 3rd

During the Early Voting period you will be able to vote at any of the four convenient Early Voting sites in Hamilton County. Dates/times for Early Voting can be found on our website <http://elect.hamiltontn.gov> prior to each election. We make every effort to keep our Early Voting locations consistent from election to election, however locations are not official until approved by the Hamilton County Election Commission prior to each election. Our office at 700 River Terminal Road will always be one early voting location. The other three Early Voting locations will be publicized before each election, both on our website and in the local media.

Election Day

On Tuesday, March 1st, Thursday, August 4th, and Tuesday, November 8th you are required to vote at your assigned polling location. Your polling site is printed on your voter registration card. If you are unsure about where you vote on Election Day please contact the Election Commission office for your assigned polling site.

Absentee Voting

What is Absentee Voting?

Absentee voting is a voting method that involves voting on a day earlier than the actual Election Day.

Tennessee has two forms of absentee voting:

1. Absentee in person, which is better known as Early Voting, and
2. Absentee by mail, which is commonly called by mail voting.

Who may apply to vote By-Mail Absentee?

To vote by mail, a registered voter must fall under one of the following categories:

1. The voter will be outside the county of registration during the early voting period and all day on Election Day;
2. The voter or the voter's spouse is enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited college or university outside the county of registration;
3. The voter's licensed physician has filed a statement with the county election commission stating that, in the physician's judgment, the voter is medically unable to vote in person. The statement must be filed not less than seven (7) days before the election and signed under the penalty of perjury;
4. The voter resides in a licensed facility providing relatively permanent domiciliary care, other than a penal institution, outside the voter's county of residence;
5. The voter will be unable to vote in person due to service as a juror for a federal or state court;
6. The voter is sixty (60) years of age or older;
7. The voter has a physical disability and an inaccessible polling place;
8. The voter is hospitalized, ill, or physically disabled and because of such condition, cannot vote in person;
9. The voter is a caretaker of a person who is hospitalized, ill, or disabled;
10. The voter is a candidate for office in the election;
11. The voter serves as an election day official or as a member or employee of the election commission;
12. The voter's observance of a religious holiday prevents him or her from voting in person during the early voting period and on Election Day;
13. The voter or the voter's spouse possesses a valid commercial drivers license (CDL) or the voter possesses a valid Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) card and certifies that he or she will be working outside the state or county of registration during the open hours of early voting and Election Day, and has no specific out-of-county or out-of-state address to which mail may be sent or received during such time; or
14. The voter is a member of the military, a dependent of a member of the military, or is an overseas citizen. (See additional information on page 30.)

What is the process for requesting the by-mail ballot?

Voters can download an Absentee Request Form from <http://elect.hamiltontn.gov>, call our office to request an application be mailed to them, or create their own request with the following information and send it to our office by mail, fax, or email (if a voter chooses to email the following information, it should be sent as attached document with a signature):

1. Name of the registered voter
2. Address of the voter's residence in Hamilton County
3. Voter's social security number
4. Voter's date of birth
5. Address to mail the ballot outside the county (only if the voter's reason for voting by mail involves that the voter will be outside of the county during Early Voting and on Election Day)
6. The election in which the voter wishes to participate. If the election involves a primary, the political party in which the voter wishes to participate.
7. Reason the voter wishes to vote absentee. (If applicable, a copy of the CDL containing the CDL number

or the TWIC card must be included in the voter's request. See below.)

8. Voter's signature

A request that contains this information will be processed and a ballot will be mailed to the voter.

Is any additional information required for people who have registered to vote by mail?

Unless an individual who has registered to vote by mail is on the permanent absentee voting register, that person must appear in person to vote in the first election after the registration becomes effective. If a by-mail registrant has already voted in person since the registration, then no additional information will be required to vote by mail.

How can a person who possesses a valid Commercial Driver License (or the spouse of a person possessing a valid commercial driver license) or a Transportation Worker Identification Credential and who will be working outside the county of registration during the Early Voting period and all day on Election Day vote?

If the voter (or spouse) possesses a valid CDL or the voter possesses a valid TWIC and does not have a specific out-of-county or out-of-state location to which mail may be sent or received during the Early Voting or Election Day hours, the voter may:

- a. Complete an application to vote absentee by mail at the Hamilton County Election Commission office; **or**
- b. Send a written request that contains the information discussed in the question above; **and**
- c. Provide a copy of the current commercial driver license which contains the commercial driver's license number or a copy of the current transportation worker credential card;
- d. Provide the voter's current residential address and any mailing address to which the ballot shall be mailed.

When may a registered voter apply to vote by mail?

A registered voter may request an application for by-mail ballot no earlier than ninety (90) days before the election and no later than seven (7) days before the election. To be processed for the next election, the application must be received by the election commission no later than seven (7) days before the election.

For the March 1, 2016 Election:

1 st Day to Request Absentee Ballot.....	December 2, 2015
Last Day to Request Absentee Ballot.....	February 23, 2016

For the August 4, 2016 Election:

1 st Day to Request Absentee Ballot.....	May 6, 2016
Last Day to Request Absentee Ballot.....	July 28, 2016

For the November 8, 2016 Election:

1st Day to Request Absentee Ballot.....August 10, 2016
Last Day to Request Absentee Ballot.....November 1, 2016

To be counted, when must the ballot be received by the election commission?

The county election commission must receive the ballot by mail no later than the close of polls on Election Day. Once the election commission issues an absentee by-mail ballot to a voter, the voter can only vote by mail.

What if I do not receive my ballot or ruin my ballot and can no longer use it?

If a voter notifies the election commission that he or she has “spoiled” a ballot or has not received the ballot, the election commission shall note on the records that subsequent supplies have been sent and supply the voter with a second set of voting supplies. As with voting in person, a voter has three opportunities to vote a ballot and up to three sets of voting supplies can be mailed to a voter (one at a time) if the voter makes a mistake while marking their ballot.

What if I do not provide all of the information required on the by-mail ballot application?

The county election commission will reject the application and return the application to the voter immediately by mail to be completed and returned again. If time permits, any rejected application must be corrected and returned to the County Election Commission by the seventh (7th) day before the Election.

Can the ballot be hand delivered?

No. The application can be hand delivered, but the by-mail ballot must be received by the county election commission office through the postal mail.



Military/Overseas Voting

Military personnel, their family members, and overseas civilians fall under the Uniformed and Overseas Civilians Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). UOCAVA voters should apply for an absentee ballot using a Federal Postcard Application (also known as a FPCA or Form 76). These forms can be found at <http://elect.hamiltontn.gov> or the Federal Voting Assistance Program website: www.fvap.gov. UOCAVA voters may receive their absentee ballot via postal mail or e-mail upon request. UOCAVA voters may also track when the ballot was received by their local county election commission office. The voted ballot must be received by the local county election commission office by the close of polls on Election Day to be counted.

If you are **not** in the military, a dependent of a member of the military, or an overseas citizen, these instructions do not apply to you and you may not use the Form 76. (Please refer to Absentee Voting on page 27.)

Who may apply to vote absentee under T.C.A. § 2-6-502?

To vote pursuant to the above statute, an individual must fall into one of the following categories.

MILITARY PERSONNEL: Persons who are United States citizens, residents of Tennessee and members of the Uniformed Services (i.e., armed forces personnel), and their family members.

"Armed forces personnel" is defined in T.C.A. § 2-1-104(1) as members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Environmental Science Service Administration, Public Health Service of the United States or members of the Merchant Marine of the United States, and their spouses and dependents.

CIVILIANS OUTSIDE U.S.: Persons who are United States citizens, residents of Tennessee, and who are currently residing overseas.

OVERSEAS CITIZEN: A United States citizen who resides outside the U.S. and, but for living outside the U.S., would be qualified to vote in Tennessee.

PERSONS BORN OVERSEAS: A person who has never lived in the U.S. but has a parent who is eligible to vote in Tennessee may vote in Tennessee in the same voting residence claimed by the parent.

Must I already be a registered voter to vote in Tennessee pursuant to this provision?

No. If you meet the qualifications to register to vote in Tennessee but have not registered prior to requesting an absentee ballot and you fall into one of the above categories, your application for absentee ballot will be treated as an application for temporary registration.

Normally, an individual who registers to vote by mail must appear in person in the first election the person votes in after such registration becomes effective. This provision is waived in the case of military personnel, their family members, or overseas citizens. However, since this is only a temporary registration, once you are no longer eligible to vote under this provision of the law, you must complete a voter registration form and submit the form to your local county election commission prior to voting in any subsequent election. Temporary registrations are good for one election year, unless a voter ceases to be eligible to vote under this provision during that year.

If you are a registered voter prior to requesting an absentee ballot under this provision, the above information does not apply to you. You will remain a permanently registered voter until we are notified that Tennessee is no longer your state of legal residence.

When may a registered voter or individual who meets the above requirements apply to vote by absentee ballot?

Applications may be received no earlier than January 1 of the year in which the election is to be held unless the election is to be held less than ninety (90) days after January 1 of the calendar year. In that case, the application may be received no earlier than ninety (90) days before the election and no later than seven (7) days before the election. For the 2016 election cycle, our office can accept applications beginning December 2, 2015 which is 90 days prior to the March 1, 2016 election.

UOCAVA requests are good for the entire year unless the voter indicates they would only like ballots for a specific timeframe. In other words, if a UOCAVA voter submits a request in January 2016, the voter will automatically receive ballots for the March, August and November elections. Voters are responsible for updating their mailing information if it changes between elections.

What is the process for requesting an absentee ballot?

An individual who meets the above requirements may request an absentee ballot by completing a Federal Post Card application, also known as a “Form 76 or FPCA” (herein Form 76). UOCAVA voters can download the Form 76 from our website at <http://elect.hamiltontn.gov> or the Federal Voting Assistance Program at www.fvap.gov. Or they can request a hard copy be mailed to them from our office. The FVAP website also provides state-by-state information for completing the form.

How do I submit the request or application to my local county election commission?

The form may be mailed, faxed or emailed as an attached document that includes a scanned signature to the Hamilton County Election Commission office.

To be counted, when must the voted ballot be received by the county election commission?

The voted ballot must be received by mail by the close of the polls on Election Day. If the ballot is rejected, the registered voter will be notified that the ballot was rejected and why the ballot was rejected.

Must I submit an application for each election in the upcoming year?

No. UOCAVA voters will receive absentee ballots for all regularly scheduled elections for the calendar year in which their request is submitted.

Note that it is the voter’s responsibility to keep the local county election office informed of any changes of address. The ballots will be mailed or e-mailed (UOCAVA only), depending on the choice of the voter, to the address that is originally submitted to the local county election office until further notice from the voter.

What if I do not receive my ballot or ruin my ballot and can no longer use it?

If a voter notifies the election commission that he or she has “spoiled” a ballot or has not received the ballot, the election commission shall note on the records that subsequent supplies have been sent and supply the voter with a second set of voting supplies. As with voting in person, a voter has three opportunities to vote a ballot and up to three sets of voting supplies can be mailed to a voter (one at a time) if the voter makes a mistake while marking their ballot.

I'm overseas and I do not believe my ballot will have time to make it back and forth in time to be counted. What do I do?

After timely requesting an official absentee ballot, Armed Forces personnel and overseas voters who feel that there may not be a sufficient amount of time to receive and then return the voted ballot may also use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB).

Instructions for completing an FWAB may be found at <https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/fwab-qrg.pdf>

To obtain a FWAB see your voting officer or you may print the ballot at <http://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Forms/fwab2013.pdf>

For Security Envelope - <http://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/EO/fwabsecenv.pdf>

For Return Envelope - http://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Forms/fwab_envelope.pdf

Note: If both ballots are received prior to the close of the polls on Election Day, the county election commission will count the official ballot it provided to the voter.

What if I do not provide all of the information required on the by-mail ballot application?

The county election commission will reject the application and return the application to the voter immediately by mail to be completed and returned again.

How may I receive my absentee ballot?

Tennessee allows you to receive an absentee ballot by mail or e-mail. Please indicate how you would like to receive your absentee ballot on your request. If you indicate e-mail, provide your e-mail address (on the Form 76 your e-mail address should be provided in Block 2) with the request. Even if you wish to receive your ballot by e-mail, you must still provide the out-of-county address where you are residing. If you do not indicate how you want your absentee ballot sent, the absentee ballot will be mailed. Tennessee does not allow you to receive your absentee ballot by fax.

May I track my absentee ballot?

Yes. Go to [Tennessee's voter lookup page](#) on the Division of Elections homepage. Enter your information and you will be able to track when the ballot was received by the Hamilton County Election Commission office. If you need assistance, contact your local county election commission office.

www.fvap.gov

Restoration of Voting Rights

Article 4, §2 of the Tennessee Constitution provides that the Tennessee legislature may deny the right to vote to persons convicted of "infamous" crimes. Pursuant to this provision in the Tennessee Constitution, the Tennessee legislature has excluded individuals convicted of various felonies from the right of suffrage.

However, the legislature has also established conditions and procedures through which individuals who have lost their voting rights may regain them. The manner in which a person may restore a lost voting right depends upon the crime committed and the year in which the conviction occurred.

A Restoration of Voting Rights Form can be obtained from the Hamilton County Election Commission.

The restoration of voting rights form may be used to restore an individual's voting rights for a felony conviction on or after May 18, 1981. **Note:** For each felony conviction imposed on or after May 18, 1981, whether it is a federal conviction, a state conviction within Tennessee, or a state conviction from another state, a separate restoration of voting rights form must be completed for each felony conviction with a different docket/case number.

The form must be completed by an agent, such as a probation/parole officer or criminal court clerk, who has the authority to provide the required information regarding the individual's conviction, final release date and information regarding restitution or court cost. The person convicted of the felony offense may **not** complete the restoration of voting rights form. Once the form(s) are completed, the form(s) must be submitted to the local county election commission office in the county in which the individual resides.

The restoration of voting rights form only restores an individual's voting rights. An individual's citizenship rights must be restored through a court order.





Where Can I Find A Sample Ballot Before The Election?

Before Early Voting and Election Day, a sample ballot will be published in the local newspaper. The sample ballot will also be available on our website: <http://elect.hamiltontn.gov>. Sample ballots will be posted at each of the four Early Voting sites and all Election Day Polling Places.

Can I Work at the Polls?

Poll Workers are patriotic Hamilton County voters that believe in the greatness of our republic and are willing to set aside time in their busy lives for a small stipend to ensure that the integrity of every vote cast is protected.

Poll Workers are appointed by the Hamilton County Election Commission prior to each election. For every county-wide election, the Hamilton County Election Commission relies on approximately 800 poll workers to staff the 81 polling places throughout Hamilton County and to staff the four Early Voting sites.

The greatest benefit to being a poll worker is the gratification derived from your active participation in the election process.

If you would like to join our team and become a Hamilton County Poll worker, please go to our website <http://elect.hamiltontn.gov/WorkerApp.htm> and complete the Poll Worker Application.

Where Can I Find Information About A Candidate?

The Election Commission qualifies the candidates, prepares the ballot, and administers the election. Information about individual candidates, their biographies, views on issues, etc. may be obtained from the local media, the local parties, and from the candidates themselves.

We hope this Voter Handbook has been a useful resource for you. Please contact the Hamilton County Election Commission with questions or for more information about elections and voting.

**Hamilton County Election Commission
700 River Terminal Road
Chattanooga, TN 37406**

423-493-5100

423-493-5101 (fax)

vote@hamiltontn.gov

<http://elect.hamiltontn.gov>

