



Municipal Technical Advisory Service
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

MUNICIPAL E-NEWS

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MTAS Diamond Jubilee Anniversary 2024

Please join us as we celebrate 75 years of service to the cities and towns of Tennessee. Read here for details.



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Public Service Recognition Week

Every year, the first week of May is designated as Public Service Recognition Week. This has been happening since 1985. I love this celebration of service. Too often public servants work hard for too little recognition of the critical jobs that they do. We tend to take for granted that healthy, clean water will flow from the tap when we turn it on; that the roads we drive upon are of a safe width; and that someone from a public safety department will appear within minutes when we call for help; and we take for granted that our municipalities are administratively and financially well managed.

In this year's presidential proclamation for the celebration of this week, you will find the words "Our Nation relies on our public servants every day, and they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect." The proclamation also states that there are over 20 million public servants. This



Margaret Norris
MTAS Executive Director

includes federal, state and local government employees. That is one large group of people working for the people.

However, during this special week, I do not want you to feel like you are just one of 20 million and are unnoticed. I hope that you feel honored, respected, valued and admired for the work that you do every day that makes your community a better place. I certainly see and recognize the impact of what you do for us, and I thank you for your service.



American Rescue Plan Act Awards

Have you obligated state and local fiscal recovery funds of the American Rescue Plan Act awards?

As December 31, 2024, quickly approaches, so does the deadline to obligate State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) awards. What once seemed like years away, has now turned into a few months. With the deadline nearing, some municipalities have not obligated these awards. Failure to obligate by December 31 could result in municipalities having to return the fund to the U.S. Treasury.

So, what is considered an obligation? Would an interagency agreement between departments within the municipality be considered an obligation? Would a MOU (memorandum of understanding) from the mayor or city manager to a department head be considered an obligation?

In late 2023, the Treasury issued their [Obligation Interim Final Rule](#), and in March 2024, the SLFRF [FAQs](#) were revised. While existing deadlines were not altered, some clarity was provided as to what constitutes an obligation. In accordance with FAQ 17.6, both an interagency agreement and an MOU would be considered an obligation under the following conditions:

1. An obligation has occurred if **one** of the following conditions are met:
 - It imposes conditions on the department using funds to carry out the program;
 - It governs the provision of funds from one department or part of government to another to carry out an eligible use of SLFRF funds; or
 - It governs the procurement of goods or services by one department from another;



Travis Bishop
MTAS Finance and
Accounting Consultant

2. And the agreement must satisfy **each** of the following conditions:

- It sets forth specific requirements, such as a scope of deliverables;
- It is signed by the parties of the agreement; and
- It does not disclaim any binding effect or state that it does not create rights or obligations.

If your city has not spent or obligated SLFRF funds, now is the ideal time to do so as municipalities finalize their FY 2025 budgets. Please reach out to your MTAS finance consultant if you have any questions.

Nano Tips

Short on time? Check out the new Nano Tips series, where top LinkedIn Learning creators deliver impactful lessons. The brief, informal content provides actionable tips for immediate application in three minutes or less!

To get started, log in to your K@TE account and a selection of these free online courses are available on the Welcome page or you can search for Nano to find a list of available courses.



Cyndy Edmonds
MTAS Online
Training Specialist

Nano Tips Online Courses		
	Type	Option
20 Nano Tips for Maximizing Excel with Mike Tholfsen	Online Class	Add
Emotional Intelligence Nano Tips with Selena Rezvani	Online Class	Add
Nano Tips for Delegating with Kim Kaupe	Online Class	Add
Nano Tips for Effective Collaboration with Lorraine Lee	Online Class	Add
Nano Tips for Handling Difficult Work Situations with Tiffany Uman	Online Class	Add
Nano Tips for Influencing Those More Senior Than You with Shadé Zahrai	Online Class	Add
Nano Tips for Interpersonal Communication with Shadé Zahrai	Online Class	Add
Nano Tips for More Effective Meetings with Shadé Zahrai	Online Class	Add
Nano Tips for Talking about Race at Work with Benjy Kusi	Online Class	Add
Nano Tips for Using Excel with Kat Norton	Online Class	Add

DID YOU KNOW?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPENDING AND ROI

Research shows the importance of professional development and its impact on employee engagement and retention. But how much should you spend on professional development?

A [2022 article from OneRange](#) suggests that organizations should budget 1-6 % of employee salaries with a minimum spend of at least \$2,500 per employee. Another OneRange article from 2022 highlights the ROI (return on investment) for professional development. Read more about how [professional development](#) can be beneficial for both businesses and employees.



MTAS 75th Anniversary Celebrations Underway

MTAS is currently celebrating a significant milestone—its 75th anniversary. This year marks three-quarters of a century since MTAS began its mission to support and guide Tennessee’s municipalities.

Founded in 1949, MTAS has been a cornerstone for municipal governments, providing expert advice, training, and resources. The anniversary celebrations are a testament to the enduring commitment of MTAS to public service and community development. The 75th-anniversary celebrations not only honor the past achievements but also look forward to continuing this legacy of excellence.

We are celebrating statewide with receptions to commemorate this special occasion:

- June 27, 2024: [UT IPS Training Center](#) at Polk Avenue in Nashville.
- October 3, 2024: [The Sunsphere](#) in Knoxville.

Each event is scheduled from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. local time, featuring a short program and light refreshments.

Our first reception was held at the Southwest Tennessee Development District (SWTDD). It was special day for many reasons, but first and foremost, the reception was held on April 15, the day on which the legislation that created MTAS was signed in 1949.

Our host, Jill Holland, SWTDD made sure everything was just right and city officials and partners showed up. Here are a few fun memories from the event.



Frances Adams-O'Brien
MTAS Librarian



SWTDD Local Government and Special Projects Coordinator Jill Holland and MTAS Executive Director Margaret Norris, take a selfie!



SWTDD City of Paris represented well! (L-R) Commissioner Jackie Jones, Administrative Assistant to the City Manager Jessica Crouch, City Manager Kim Foster, Mayor Kathy Ray and Vice Mayor Vickey Roberts.

MTAS 75th Anniversary Celebrations Underway, continued



Marc Woerner, Atoka Town Administrator gives a testimony about how MTAS has assisted his town.



MTAS Management Consultant Dana Deem and Debbie Yeager of Public Entity Partners.



UT IPS Vice President Dr. Herb Byrd, addresses the group at the reception before the group viewed the MTAS anniversary video.



MTAS Management Consultant and Mayor of Somerville Ronnie Neill provided another testimony on how MTAS has made a difference in his town.

MTAS invites all to join in the festivities and reflect on the many years of dedicated service. For more information or to RSVP, interested individuals can contact Armintha Loveday at (865) 974-9852 or armintha.loveday@tennessee.edu.

As MTAS steps into its next chapter, the organization remains focused on its core values of integrity, service and collaboration, ensuring that Tennessee’s municipalities thrive for years to come.



75 Years of MTAS Training

MTAS was created in 1949 to provide technical assistance to Tennessee municipalities. Though training did not become a defined MTAS program area until many years after we were founded, it has been part of our legacy since the beginning.

In our 75 years, consultants have provided information, educational opportunities and skills development to cities and towns across the state. In this, our diamond jubilee year, we will look at the history of employee training in general.

1940s-1950s

Around the time MTAS was born, vocational training had the spotlight in workplace training and development efforts. This type of training equipped workers with industry-specific skills, a necessity post-World War II as industrial needs shifted.

1950s-1960s

Organizations began to recognize the importance of workplace relationships—perhaps something we can all appreciate! During this time, training focused on leadership and communication, with many workplaces offering programs to improve employee-manager relationships.

1960s-1970s

The concept of organizational development (OD) emerged as people and organizations noticed that training could not solve every problem. Early OD efforts looked at ways to shift attitudes, behaviors and performance outside of the classroom.

1980s-1990s

The introduction of computers at work and home ignited a major revolution that impacts training and learning even today. Computer-based training emerged in the 80s and paved the way for eLearning and other types of online training in the 90s and beyond.



Johanna Owenby
MTAS Training and Development
Program Manager

2000s-2010s

The Internet boom expanded online learning, opening up possibilities and breaking down many barriers to workplace learning. Advancements in mobile technology and social media boosted training access even more.

2020s

So far, this decade has brought attention to virtual training delivery—distinct from eLearning—and artificial intelligence (AI). The scope and strength of AI grows every day, and the question is not whether AI will alter the employee training landscape, but how.

Speaking of AI, this timeline was informed by the University of Tennessee's generative AI platform, UT Verse. The wording is my own.

One theme we may notice throughout this snapshot of history is the drive to find new, better, faster and more engaging ways to train and learn. My prediction for workplace training—and for MTAS—is that the next 75 years will see much of the same.

Are you Participating in the MTAS Salary Survey?

Do you need salary information as you finalize your FY2025 personnel budget for your city or town? The MTAS Salary Survey can help. The Salary Survey Reporting Dashboard is available to any city that participates in the survey.

Is this your first time participating?

You just need to register as a new user, and we will help you take it from there. We have also attached instructions to help you register and start a survey.

Are you a returning participant?

If you participated in the FY2023 Salary Survey, just log in and start a new survey. (Use the same login information you created for the FY2023 survey.) You can import your data from FY2023 into the FY2024 form. If any of the salary information has changed since FY2023, you can update it after you import it.

[SURVEY.MTAS.TENNESSEE.EDU](https://survey.mtas.tennessee.edu)



Frances Adams-O'Brien
MTAS Librarian

Our MTAS HR consultants are available to assist:

- East Tennessee: Betsy Cunningham
betsy.cunningham@tennessee.edu
- Middle Tennessee: John Grubbs
john.grubbs@tennessee.edu
- West Tennessee: Peter Voss
peter.voss@tennessee.edu

You may also email salaryinfo@tennessee.edu with any questions you have.

Also, feel free to contact me with any questions you have: frances.adams-obrien@tennessee.edu or (865) 974-9842.

We look forward to working with you soon to get you set up to take advantage of this unique resource for cities and towns in Tennessee!



HR Consultant Betsy Cunningham meets with an employee from the city of Alcoa.

Have You Met MRLn?

MTAS has launched the latest version of [MRLn, the MTAS Research Library Online](#). This innovative platform enhances the accessibility and management of both print and electronic municipal resources for city officials and staff in Tennessee.

Here's a brief introduction to what MRLn offers:

- **Content:** MRLn provides access to MTAS-authored resources (including reports, legal opinions, surveys, job descriptions, forms, sample resolutions and ordinances) as well as print books, e-books, magazine, and journal articles on a wide variety of local government topics.
- **Save and Repeat Searches:** With a guest user account, you can save searches and results, allowing you to easily repeat searches to find the latest materials in your areas of interest.
- **Access and Use Materials:** Depending on format, you can easily request an item be mailed you, scanned and emailed to you, or you can simply view/download the content yourself.

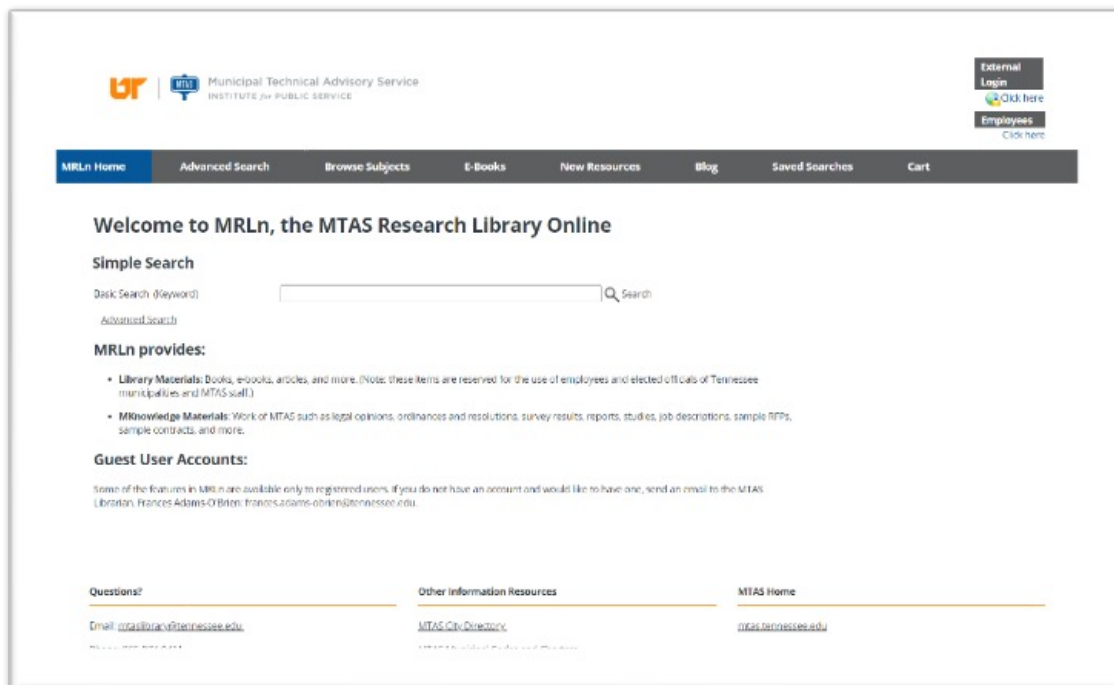
Setting Up a Guest Account

To access special user features such as viewing your account and saving searches, individuals can set up a guest MRLn account. For assistance with this process, reach out to MTAS Librarian [Frances Adams-O'Brien](#).

MTAS is committed to providing comprehensive support to city officials and staff. By offering a streamlined and user-friendly platform, MTAS ensures that valuable information is just a few clicks away for those who serve Tennessee's municipalities.

In the coming months, staff of the MTAS Research and Information Center will host webinars on using MRLn and other resources offered by MTAS to complement our consulting and training programs. Stay tuned!

[ACCESS MRLn](#)



Meet Our New MTASers



Hal Boyd has joined MTAS as a legal consultant working from our Martin office. Hal comes to MTAS after operating his own law practice since 2012. During that time, he also served as county attorney for Lake County and city attorney for Tiptonville. He earned his bachelor's degree in chemistry from East Central Oklahoma State University and his law degree from the University of Memphis. He attended East Central Oklahoma on an ROTC scholarship and received a commission to the U.S. Army where he served from 1985 to 1989. Welcome, Hal!



Patrick Marsh joins MTAS as a management consultant working out of our Nashville office. Most recently Patrick served as city manager in Fernley, Nev. He's also served as city administrator in Fitchburg, Wisc., Monona, Wisc. and Coal Valley, Ill. He received his bachelor's degree from Augustana College in Illinois and his master's degree from Northern Illinois University. Welcome, Patrick!



Jeff Stiles joined MTAS in the Knoxville office as police management consultant. Prior to joining MTAS, he spent more than 28 years with the Knoxville police department and most recently served as a training program manager at the UT Naifeh Center for Executive Leadership. He holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of Tennessee. Welcome, Jeff!



Lyndy Wibking joins MTAS as a new librarian in the Research and Information Center in Knoxville. Most recently Lyndy served as a librarian at Roane State Community College, and prior to that, as an adjunct librarian at Lincoln Memorial University. She received her master's degree in library science and her undergraduate degree in English from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Lyndy actually worked at MTAS for two years immediately following completing her master's program. So, it's welcome back, Lyndy!

TREEDC Annual Conference

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

TREEDC will hold its annual conference and awards reception on November 14 at the Cookeville-



Putnam County Chamber of Commerce building. We are excited to partner with the Tennessee Tech University Center for Rural Innovation and School of Professional Studies along with the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service.

The conference will include presentations from municipal sustainability professionals, energy services providers, rural economic development officials, PACE clean energy initiatives and updates from the Tennessee Department of Environment



Warren Nevad
MTAS Management
Consultant and TREEDC
Executive Director

and Conservation (TDEC) Office of Energy Programs and USDA Rural Development funding opportunities. The awards reception will be held across the street at 37 Cedar Restaurant and will begin at 5 p.m. More information and registration details will be provided in early September.

For sponsorship and presentation opportunities, please call TREEDC President Dwain Land at (423) 718-3435 or email at mayorland@gmail.com.

Join Our Team at MTAS!

MTAS is seeking dedicated professionals to fill various consulting roles across the state.

Current Openings:

- [MTAS Municipal Management Consultant](#), Memphis
- [MTAS Training & Development Consultant](#), Nashville, Chattanooga
- [MTAS Utility Management Consultant](#), Knoxville

Why Work with Us?

- **Impactful Work:** Make a difference in Tennessee's municipalities.
- **Professional Growth:** Opportunities for advancement and professional development.
- **Supportive Community:** Join a team committed to excellence and service.

Apply Now: To view detailed job descriptions and apply, [visit our employment page](#).

Contact Us: For questions regarding the application process or specific vacancies, please reach out to [Wes Fernandez](#), MTAS hiring and business manager.

We encourage all interested candidates to explore the opportunities and become a part of our mission to enhance the governance of Tennessee's municipalities. We look forward to your application!

Upcoming MTAS Training Opportunities

2024 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: JUNE 20 AND 21

MTAS Legal Consultant, John Waddell, will provide an in-depth summary of key bills from the recent legislative session. The session focuses on those that may impact municipalities. Make plans to attend one of our upcoming virtual sessions on Thursday, June 20 or Friday, June 21 from 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. CT/9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. ET.

MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM: SUMMER 2024

Registration is open for municipal leaders who want to transform their leadership capabilities and make an impact in their organizations.

The MTAS Municipal Leadership Program is designed to equip leaders at all levels with knowledge, tools and strategies to excel in their roles. The 14-hour format includes a one-hour virtual orientation, three in-person classroom days (four hours/day) and one hour of prework. Topics include communicating for results, managing performance and influencing people. In addition to the virtual and classroom instruction, participants will get an online DiSC assessment with access to a personalized learning platform with personalized management insights.

Don't miss your training class!

There have been some mix-ups around class start times. There are instances where K@TE may default to Eastern Time. It's easy to overlook, but be sure to double check the class start time for your time zone!

Get our complete listing of classes and more details online.



[VIEW OUR CURRENT
TRAINING CALENDAR](#)

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS FOR MUNICIPAL STAFF AND OFFICIALS

US CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

June 20-June 23, 2024 | Kansas City, MO

TENNESSEE FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

July 13-July 16, 2024 | Murfreesboro

TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL LEAGUE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024

July 20-July 23, 2024 | Knoxville

TENNESSEE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS AND RECORDERS 2024 FALL CONFERENCE

September 24-27, 2024 | Fall Creek Falls State Park

TENNESSEE GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION FALL CONFERENCE

October 2-October 4, 2024 | Murfreesboro

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