

PREFACE

About this Book

This book is one of the first publications offered by TMCEC. It is an important resource for preparing to take the clerk certification test. However, it is also a reference for court clerks, judges, and prosecutors.

The Fifteenth Edition (2026-2027)

This edition reflects changes enacted by the 89th Legislature (2025), including an increased warrant reimbursement fee, the creation of a Consolidated Municipal Court Building Security and Technology Fund for certain cities, and revised requirements for driving safety course dismissals. Chapter 7, *Legal Research*, was modernized to address digital research tools and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the courts. Chapter 6, *Financial Management*, was streamlined to improve readability and focus on information most relevant to court clerks.

Because many clerks not only use this book to study for the certification test, but also as a quick reference, practice notes continue to be added throughout the texts. These can be found in shaded boxes titled “Practice Note” within the chapters. Some are provided to give clerks some additional background in the subject matter, and some provide suggested practices.

This book includes an appendix. The glossary of defined terms has been expanded in Appendix A and quick legal reference cards have been added to Appendix B. These are by no means meant to be a comprehensive dictionary; rather, they are meant to be another resource to assist in understanding certain concepts. These resources are also intended to give new court clerks foundational knowledge.

Court Clerk Certification Program

The Municipal Court Clerk Certification Program marked its 25th anniversary in 2021, a milestone that reflects both the strength of the program and the growing professionalism of municipal court operations across Texas. Over the years, participation in the program has expanded significantly, driven by a greater recognition of the critical role clerk education plays in the effective administration of justice. Cities increasingly understand that certified court clerks contribute to courts that operate more efficiently, professionally, and accurately.

The responsibilities of today’s court clerks require a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce. Court clerks routinely manage confidential juvenile records, process both criminal and civil matters, and report case dispositions to state and national criminal databases that may affect an individual’s legal rights, including the ability to possess firearms. The days of assigning court responsibilities to any available city employee have long since passed.

Participation in the certification program continues to grow each year. Over the past decade, overall participation has increased by nearly 45 percent, while the number of clerks achieving the highest designation, Level III certification, has nearly tripled. New court clerks and those who have not yet pursued certification are strongly encouraged to participate in the program and take advantage of the professional development opportunities it provides.

How to Use the Study Guide

One primary goal of this book is to help municipal court clerks prepare for the court clerk certification exam. The most effective way to prepare is to use this guide to study the material and complete the practice questions. Although the practice questions are not identical to those on the exam, they cover similar concepts and reflect the style of questions clerks will encounter on the test.

The guide is organized by topic, with practice questions following each section and answer keys provided at the end of each chapter. Each chapter also includes a table of contents to help clerks quickly locate specific topics.

To prepare for the Level II exam, clerks should read and review each section, complete all practice questions, and compare their responses to the answer key. For unfamiliar terms or additional clarification, clerks may refer to the appendix at the end of the book.

Not Legal Advice

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of this work. However, this book is a summary of applicable law and is not an authority. Throughout the text, the law is frequently paraphrased to facilitate understanding. This study guide is for educational purposes only and may not be used as a substitute for legal advice or counsel. Should any material in this publication conflict with constitutional, statutory, or case law, the law provided by the constitution, statute, or case prevails.

This book is intended to be a guide; and as such, it is not a substitute for thorough legal research and the advice of legal counsel or your police advisor. It is not intended to provide legal advice. If you are using this book as a secondary reference, this book should be the starting point to your research. Individual statutes may have additional requirements, including culpable mental states, specific elements, or defenses that this book does not explore in depth or as comprehensively as to be substituted for legal advice provided by an attorney. As always, consult your legal counsel for specific questions of law or application.

Acknowledgements

TMCEC is thankful for the efforts of many individuals throughout the years who have made suggestions, offered edits, or provided opinions on the use of this book. This includes the original efforts of Margaret Robbins and the court clerks who worked together to create this book.

Special thanks to the TMCEC staff that contributed to this edition: Mark Goodner, Leandra Quick, Regan Metteauer, Ned Minevitz, Madison Mondragon, Elaine Riot, and Ryan Kellus Turner.



Municipal Court Guide: Level II

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