

Municipal Court Clerk Certification Program

Participant Guide

The Municipal Court Clerk Certification Program was established to encourage professional development and educational growth within the court clerk profession. It is sponsored by the Texas Court Clerks Association (TCCA), the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (TMCEC), and Texas State University. Program participants achieve certification upon successful completion of each of the three levels: Level I (CCCI), Level II (CCCII), and Level III Municipal Court Clerk (CMCC). Each level requires specific education hours, exams, and an application. Level III certification has additional requirements, including books, journals, and specific seminars.

For more detailed information about the program, visit <https://www.tmcec.com/clerk-certification/>. Please direct any certification-related questions to certification@tmcec.com.

I. General Overview of Certification Requirements by Level

Note: All education hours must be completed within three years of the application date to count toward the required hours below. Participants who completed the New Clerks Seminar more than three years before the application date do not have to attend that seminar again, but the hours from that past seminar do not count toward certification.

A. [Level I](#)

- Complete 40 hours of [approved education](#), at least 20 hours of which must be Core Education and must include the 32-hour TMCEC New Clerks Seminar (unless attended more than three years before application date)
- Score 70 or above on each part of the Level I exam
- Complete and submit an [application](#) to TMCEC

B. [Level II](#)

- Level I Certification
- Complete 40 hours of [approved education](#), at least 20 hours of which must be Core Education (participants may reuse unexpired hours)
- Score 70 or above on each part of the Level II exam
- Complete and submit an [application](#) to TMCEC

C. [Level III](#)¹

- Level II Certification
- Complete required reading
- Score 70 or above on each part of the Level III exam
- Complete 40 hours of [approved education](#) within the last three years, at least 20 hours of which must be Core Education, including the Court Administrators Seminar.
- Complete a Level III Assessment Clinic. This clinic can be part of the 40 hours within the last three years, but the requirement is still met if it occurred more than three years prior to application.
- Complete court observations
- Complete and submit a journal with a passing grade of 70
- Complete and submit an [application](#) to TMCEC

¹ Please see the [Level III Course of Study & Requirements](#) document for specific details.

II. Initial Education Hours for Certification

- TMCEC, TCCA, and TMCA offer education programs for court personnel, which count for clerk certification credit based on hours of attendance. See the [TMCEC online academic schedule](#) and TCCA [Education](#) and [Testing](#) Events page for available events. TMCEC also maintains a list of [Approved External Education](#) providers for the program. See the [TMCEC General Enrollment Information page](#) for more information about registration, attendance, and credit hours.
- Education Sources and Delivery Methods. For certification purposes, approved education comes from either:
 1. **Core Education:** programs sponsored by TMCEC, TCCA, or TMCA; or
 2. **Approved External Education:** relevant live education from other approved providers.

Core Education may be delivered live (in-person or synchronous virtual) or on-demand (recorded or asynchronous), subject to the limitations below. However, Approved External Education may only be delivered in-person or through live, synchronous virtual programming. For each level of certification, at least one-half (50%) of the required education hours must be obtained through Core Education. The remaining required hours may be completed through Approved External Education.

- For all levels of certification, up to eight (8) of the total hours may be earned through on-demand (recorded or asynchronous) Core Education (e.g., TMCEC archived webinars and archived virtual clinics). Approved External Education must be live and does not qualify for the on-demand allowance.
- Live virtual (synchronous) programs are not considered on-demand and are treated as live instruction.
- Please note that credit hours expire after three years.

III. Eligibility

- Only clerks employed by a municipal court in Texas are eligible to attend a TMCEC event.
- For Levels I and II, participants who are not employed by a municipal court may earn credit hours toward certification through TCCA, TMCA, or an Approved External Education provider, subject to the education requirements in Section II. Both TCCA members and non-members are eligible to attend TCCA events (there is a registration fee for non-members).
- To achieve Level III certification, participants must be employed by a municipal or justice court. However, to maintain Level III certification, such employment is not required.
- Each level of certification is successive. To become certified at Level II, participants must be currently certified at Level I. To become certified at Level III, participants must be currently certified at Level II.

IV. Exams

To register for an exam, go to the [TCCA Testing Events](#) webpage.

A. Exam Requirements

- Certification at each level requires successful completion of a three-part exam.
- Participants may take the Level I, Level II, and Level III exams in parts. Participants may choose to test one or more parts at a time. If the participant is unsuccessful on a part, only the unsuccessful part must be retaken. The time allowed to complete the exam is four hours regardless of the number of parts taken (even if only taking one part).
- A participant may take an exam as many times as needed to pass successfully.
- Participants must achieve the prior level of certification to register and test at the next level.

B. Exam Fees

- The Level I exam is \$25 per part (\$75 for the entire exam).
- The Level II exam is \$25 per part (\$75 for the entire exam).
- The Level III exam is \$25 per part (\$75 for the entire exam).
- All fees must be paid prior to sitting for the exam.
- There are no refunds or transfers of exam fees.
- Registration for a subsequent exam will not be accepted when there are fees outstanding from another exam.

C. Exam Expiration

- For Level I and Level II, exam results are valid for three years from the exam date.
- For Level III, exam results are valid for five years from the exam date.
- Exams are subject to destruction after five years.

D. Alternative Testing Accommodations

For more information and to request alternative testing accommodations, go to the [TCCA Testing Events](#) webpage.

E. Exam Results

TMCEC posts exam results in the participant's [Personal Profile](#) under the Clerk Certification tab. Exam results will be posted within 45 days of the exam date.

V. Applications

For each level, participants must complete and submit an application with required proof of passing the exam and completion of applicable credit hours. For more instructions, go to TMCEC's [Becoming Certified](#) webpage.

VI. Certificates

Upon achievement of certification at Level I or Level II, participants will receive a paper certificate. For Level III certificates, participants will receive a mounted certificate, unless the participant requests a paper copy without a mount. Replacements are available through the [TCCA website](#) at a cost.

VII. Study Materials and Resources

TMCEC and TCCA offer many materials and events to assist participants with certification, including the following:

- [Clerk Certification Webpage](#)
- Clerk Study Guides for [Level I](#) and [Level II](#)
- [Prep Sessions](#)
- [Practice Exams](#)
- [Level III Book Club](#)
- [Level III Study Questions](#)
- [Mentors](#)
- [Flashcards](#) and [Study Questions](#)
- Questions? Email certification@tmcec.com.

VIII. Maintaining Certification

A. Continuing Education Hours

- To maintain certification, Level I and Level II certified clerks must obtain 12 hours of approved continuing education each academic year (September 1 – August 31).
- Level III certified clerks must obtain 20 hours of approved continuing education.
- For all certification levels, at least one-half (50%) of the required continuing education hours must be obtained through Core Education (TMCEC, TCCA, or TMCA programs).
- The remaining hours may be completed through Approved External Education.
- All continuing education hours must be completed by August 31st of each academic year.
- Credit for Attending Prep Sessions
 - Level I prep sessions count for five (5) hours of continuing education.
 - Level II prep sessions count for up to six (6) hours of continuing education. Each session consists of three two-hour increments that cover each certification test part (A, B, and C). Participants will receive two hours of credit for each increment they attend.
 - Participants may not earn credit for attending a prep session for an exam the participant has already passed (unless the exam has expired).
 - Participants may earn credit for attending a prep session a second time if unsuccessful on the examination.
- On-Demand Limitation: No more than eight (8) hours per academic year may be completed through on-demand (recorded or asynchronous) Core Education. Approved External Education must be live and does not qualify for the on-demand allowance.

B. Approved External Education

- Approved External Education is education from approved providers that relates to the jurisdiction of municipal courts or court administration and is delivered through live instruction, either in-person or through live, synchronous online programming.

C. Opt-Out Option (Core Education Requirement)

- Clerks in good standing may request approval to opt out of the Core Education requirement once every two academic years.
- The Opt-Out Option applies to clerks employed by municipal courts. Participants who are not employed by a municipal court are not required to request an Opt-Out and should follow the approval process in Subsection E below.
- In an approved opt-out year, a clerk may complete up to 100% of required continuing education hours through Approved External Education, provided that:
 - The education consists of at least 8 hours of live instruction (in-person or live, synchronous online programming); and
 - The education is from approved providers and relevant to court operations, administration, or the administration of justice.
- Clerks must submit an [Intent to Opt Out](#) request in advance of the academic year or prior to attending the applicable program. Approval is at the discretion of TMCEC.
- The Opt-Out Option provides flexibility for clerks attending extended or specialized programs while maintaining the expectation of regular participation in Core Education.

D. Renewal Applications and Automatic Certification Renewals

- Each academic year (September 1 – August 31), certified clerks must submit proof of their continuing education to TMCEC with a [renewal application](#), unless they qualify for automatic

certification renewal. Clerks are not required to file a renewal application within the same academic year that they become certified.

- Renewal applications are due by August 31st of each academic year.
- Automatic Certification Renewals
 - Level I and II certified clerks in good standing who attend a TMCEC event that is at least 12 hours (e.g., Regional Clerks Seminars, Court Administrators Seminar, Juvenile Case Managers Seminar, etc.) will automatically be renewed if they complete and submit a record of attendance on the final day of the event. Clerks who submit a record of attendance after the event must submit a renewal application.
 - Clerks certified at all levels who attend the TCCA Annual Conference and are on the final list of approved certificates will automatically be renewed.
- Certified clerks can verify their renewal status in the [TMCEC Registration Site](#) under the Clerk Certification tab.
- Clerks relying on Approved External Education must submit documentation of attendance, including certificates and, if requested, course agendas or descriptions. Pre-approval is encouraged; however, it is required when requesting use of the Opt-Out Option.

E. Non-Municipal Court Participants

- Individuals participating in the certification program who are not employed by a municipal court (e.g., court interpreters, paralegals, or other justice system professionals) may submit education hours for approval to the TMCEC Director of Education. These participants are not required to request an Opt-Out under Subsection C above.
- The Director of Education may approve such hours outside of standard program requirements when the education is relevant to court operations, administration, or the participant's professional role or responsibilities within the court or justice system.

F. Non-compliance: Probation and Loss of Certification

1. Probation

- If a certified clerk does not meet continuing education requirements and/or fails to submit a renewal application with required documentation to TMCEC in an academic year, the clerk will be placed on probationary status for the subsequent academic year. TMCEC will notify the clerk of this status in writing via email. Participants should ensure they have not opted out of certification emails from TMCEC.
- While on probation, a clerk must complete both:
 - The standard annual continuing education requirement for their certification level, and
 - Any deficient hours from the previous academic year.
- The current standard continuing education requirements are:
 - Level I and Level II: 12 hours (no more than 8 hours of approved on-demand (recorded) education)
 - Level III: 20 hours (no more than 8 hours of approved on-demand (recorded) education)

Example: A Level II clerk who completed only 6 of the required 12 hours last year must complete 6 make-up hours plus the full 12 hours for the current year, for a total of 18 hours during the probationary academic year.

- All required hours must be completed within the probationary academic year to maintain active certification. Level I and Level II certified clerks who become inactive permanently lose their certification.

2. Inactive Status

- If a certified clerk does not meet continuing education requirements and/or submit a renewal application with required documentation to TMCEC for two consecutive academic years, the clerk becomes “inactive.”
- Level I and Level II certified clerks who become inactive permanently lose their certification.
- Clerks who lose their certification are eligible to re-take the exam (unless the exam results are less than three years old and still valid) and re-apply for certification but must begin at Level I even if they were certified at Level II.
- Level III certified clerks who become inactive may reinstate their certification.

3. Reinstating Level III Certification

- Any clerk who has achieved Level III certification, but has become inactive, may reinstate their certification by completing 40 hours of education and submitting a renewal application with certificates of attendance to TMCEC.
- Six of those hours must come from TMCEC’s most recent Legislative Update.
- All 40 hours of education must be from within the preceding three years from the date of application.
- Up to eight (8) of the 40 hours may be obtained through TMCEC’s archived (on-demand or pre-recorded) webinars.

4. Appeal

Certified clerks who have completed their continuing education requirements for the previous year but fail to timely file their renewal application by the deadline may appeal to the Municipal Courts Education Committee.

G. Maintaining Certification After Leaving Municipal Court Employment

- Certified clerks who are no longer employed by a municipal court but intend to maintain their certification must notify TMCEC at certification@tmcec.com.
- To maintain certification, they must complete the applicable annual continuing education and renewal requirements. Because individuals who are not employed by a municipal court are not eligible to attend TMCEC educational programs, they must complete their education through TCCA or other approved providers.