

TENNESSEE

Tennessee ranks 31st among the states in number of local governments, with 928 as of October 2007.

COUNTY GOVERNMENTS (92)

The entire area of the state is encompassed by county government except for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, the Metropolitan Government of Lynchburg and Moore County, and the Hartsville-Trousdale County Government.

Although the three metropolitan governments are classified under Tennessee law both as counties and as municipalities, each is counted only once, as municipal governments, in census statistics on governments.¹ General service districts and urban service districts (Davidson, Moore, and Trousdale counties) and special service districts (Trousdale County) are not counted as separate governments. In Tennessee counties not having adopted a metropolitan form of government, the form of the governing body is the county legislative body.

SUBCOUNTY GENERAL PURPOSE GOVERNMENTS (347)

Municipal Governments (347)

The municipal governments in Tennessee consist of cities and towns; these governments usually operate under special charter. There are no differences in legal powers or status that would affect their classification for census purposes. The minimum population requirement for incorporation is 1,500. The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, the Metropolitan Government of Lynchburg and Moore County, and the Hartsville-Trousdale County Government are each counted only once for census purposes – as municipal governments.

Township Governments (0)

Tennessee has no township governments.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS (136)

School District Governments (14)

Only the "special" school districts in Tennessee are counted as governments. These districts were established by the general assembly prior to April 30, 1982, by separate acts but with substantially uniform provisions for each district. The method of selection of the school board and the maximum rate of taxation for each district are set by the authorizing legislation.

Dependent Public School Systems (122)

Tennessee statutes authorize the following types of dependent public school systems:

Systems dependent on county governments (91):

County school systems

Systems dependent on municipal governments (31):

Municipal school systems

School systems composed of multiple counties are authorized, but none exist.

Each of the 91 county school systems is administered by an elected county board of education. The fiscal requirements of the county school systems are provided for by the county legislative body.

Provisions governing the 31 city school systems are specified in the city charters. City school systems are governed by elected boards of education. The fiscal requirements of the city school systems are provided for by the city governing body.

SPECIAL DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS (475)

Tennessee statutes authorize the creation of a variety of special districts or authorities that are counted as governments. These are discussed in detail below.

Airport Authorities--Metropolitan, Municipal, and Regional

Three types of airport authorities are authorized under state statutes. Airport authorities may issue revenue bonds and impose fees, rentals, and charges for use of facilities.

Metropolitan airport authorities.

These authorities may be created by any city or metropolitan government having a population of 100,000 or more or by any county containing such a city, following public hearing and upon resolution of the governing body and approval by its executive. Additional municipalities may participate. Each authority is governed by a board of commissioners that is appointed by the executive officer of the creating municipality and approved by its governing body. Some metropolitan airport authorities may be authorized by the creating municipality to exercise the powers of an industrial development corporation.

Municipal airport authorities. These authorities may be created by any city or town by ordinance of the governing body or by any county upon resolution of the governing body. The governing body consists of a minimum of five commissioners appointed by the governing body of the creating government. Governments eligible to form metropolitan airport authorities may not form municipal airport authorities.

Regional airport authorities. These authorities may be created, after public hearing, by two or more municipalities by resolution of the governing body of each or by one or more municipalities and one or more counties by resolution of the governing body of each. Authorities formed by two or more municipalities have a governing body consisting of one commissioner appointed by each creating governing

body plus one commissioner appointed by the Governor if necessary to have an odd number of commissioners.

Authorities formed by a combination of municipalities and counties have a governing body consisting of two commissioners appointed by each creating government plus one additional commissioner appointed either by the existing commissioners or by the Governor.

Airports owned and operated by a single county or municipal government are classified as dependent activities of those governments.

East Tennessee Regional Agribusiness Marketing Authority

This authority was created by special act in 1998 for the purpose of establishing and operating a market to serve farmers and citizens of the region and furthering the economy and growth of agriculture in the region. The authority's board of directors is composed of the mayors of the participating counties plus the state commissioner of agriculture and the dean of the University of Tennessee agricultural extension service. The authority may issue revenue bonds.

Energy Acquisition Corporations

These corporations may acquire, manage, and finance natural gas, electrical power, and other energy forms for municipal distributors. The authorities may be created upon application of at least three voters to the governing body of a county or municipality and the passage of a resolution by the governing body. Each corporation is governed by a board of directors appointed by the creating local government. The corporations may set fees and charges and may issue revenue bonds. The creating local government may issue revenue bonds on behalf of a corporation.

Energy Authorities (special acts)

The Jackson Energy Authority and the Bolivar Energy Authority were created by special acts. Each authority is governed by a board of

directors appointed by the mayor of its respective city. The authorities may establish and charge fees and may issue revenue bonds.

Four Lake Regional Industrial Development Authority

This authority was created by special act to serve the counties of Macon, Smith, Sumner, Trousdale, and Wilson. The authority is governed by a board of directors consisting of the chief executive of the participating counties and municipalities, members of the industrial development boards, a gubernatorial representative, one representative of a member of Congress, a member of the state senate, a member of the state house of representatives, a member appointed by the Tennessee Valley Authority, and one member appointed by each electric cooperative meeting certain specifications. The authority may issue revenue bonds. The authority also may issue general obligation bonds in conjunction with the state of Tennessee.

Housing Authorities

Tennessee laws provide for four types of housing authorities--county, municipal, consolidated, or regional. An individual county or municipality may establish a housing authority upon petition of residents to the county court or city council, after public hearing. Similarly, two or more municipalities may establish a consolidated housing authority, and two or more contiguous counties may establish a regional housing authority. The mayors of municipalities or the county legislative bodies appoint the housing authority commissioners. The authorities may issue bonds and establish and collect rentals for use of authority facilities. Housing authorities in Tennessee may also carry out redevelopment projects. The Knoxville Community Development Corporation and the Metro Development and Housing Agency in Nashville operate under the same law as the housing authorities.

Port Authorities

One or more counties, cities, or towns or any combination of these may form a port authority under general law upon resolution and after public hearing. A board of commissioners is appointed by the executive officer of each member government with the approval of the governing body. Port authorities may establish and charge fees, rentals, and other charges for the use of facilities or services and may issue revenue bonds.

Railroad or Rail Service Authorities

Under general law, rail authorities may be created by resolution of a municipal or county governing body or any combination of municipalities and/or counties. A board of directors composed of representatives of participating governments governs each authority. Authorities may fix rents, rates, tolls, fees, and charges, and may issue revenue bonds.

The South Central Tennessee Railroad Authority, North East Tennessee Railroad Authority, and the Tri-County Railroad Authority were created by special acts with similar provisions.

Regional Transportation Authority

This authority was created by a 1998 special act to plan and provide mass transit services to specified counties and the municipalities within those counties, at each local government's option. The authority is governed by a board composed of the chief executive of each participating county, the mayor of each participating town or city, the state commissioner of transportation, and six members appointed by the Governor. The authority may set local assessments to be paid by the participating local governments.

River Basin Development Authorities

Beech River Watershed Development Authority--governed by an eight-member board of directors, including five gubernatorial appointments, the

county mayors of Decatur and Henderson counties, and the state commissioner of environment and conservation.

Carroll County Watershed Authority--governed by a six-member board of directors appointed by the Governor.

Sequatchie Valley Planning and Development Agency – serves a region including Bledsoe, Marion, Rhea, Grundy and Sequatchie counties. The agency is governed by a board of directors composed of the county mayor (or county executive) of each member county, one gubernatorial appointment from each county, one member selected by the mayors of cities and towns within the region, and one member appointed by the Governor from the Governor’s staff or cabinet.

Tellico Reservoir Development Agency--governed by a nine-member board of directors, including the three county mayors of Monroe, Loudon, and Blount counties, and two appointees from each county appointed by the county mayor with advice and consent of the county commission.

Tennessee Duck River Development Agency--governed by a 17-member board of directors consisting of representatives from each of the five counties (Coffee, Bedford, Hickman, Marshall, and Maury counties), two county mayors, a member of the Governor’s staff or cabinet, two mayors, and two at large members, all designated by the Governor.

West Fork Drakes Creek Dam and Reservoir Interstate Authority – This authority is counted under the state of Kentucky.

These authorities may receive contributions from the participating governments and may issue revenue bonds.

Soil Conservation Districts

Soil conservation districts are created by the state soil conservation committee upon petition of landowners and after hearing and referendum. The governing body of each district consists of three elected supervisors and two appointed by the state committee. The districts may require contributions from benefitted landowners and may accept federal and state contributions.

Solid Waste Authorities

Solid waste authorities may be created by two or more counties or municipalities. The board of directors may be the same board as that of the municipal solid waste region or may be appointed by the member counties and municipalities. Authorities may fix and collect fees for services and may issue revenue bonds.

Solid waste authorities created by a single county or municipality are not counted as separate governments. See “Subordinate Agencies and Areas,” below.

Utility Districts

Utility districts may be created to serve the territory of one or of multiple counties by the county mayor or county mayors of such counties following petition of landowners and public hearing. Utility districts may provide water service, sewer, garbage collection and disposal, street lighting, parks and recreational facilities, gas supply, fire and police protection, transit, transmission of industrial chemicals or natural gas by pipeline, and community antenna television facilities or combinations thereof. Each district is governed by a board of commissioners that is appointed or elected as specified in statutes or in special acts. Utility districts may fix rates, fees, and charges, and may issue revenue bonds.

Watershed Districts

Watershed districts are established by the state soil conservation committee upon petition of landowners and after local referendum. An

elected or appointed board of directors governs each district. Watershed districts may set special assessments and may issue revenue bonds. Ad valorem tax levies may be made only by special act of the state's general assembly.

Water and Wastewater Treatment Authorities

These authorities are established by resolution of the governing body of any city, metropolitan government, or county government, after public hearing. A five-member board of commissioners is appointed by the executive of the creating government with the approval of the governing body of the creating government. The executive officer of each participating government appoints one additional member. The board may fix service charges and issue revenue bonds. Some of these authorities have been created by special act.

Water and wastewater treatment authorities serving a single government are classified as dependent agencies of the governments they serve. See "Subordinate Agencies and Areas," below.

SUBORDINATE AGENCIES AND AREAS

Shown below are various governmental designations in Tennessee that have certain characteristics of governmental units but that are classified in census statistics as subordinate agencies of the state or local governments and are not counted as separate governments. Legal provisions for some of the larger of these agencies are discussed below (see "Public School Systems," above, regarding educational agencies of this nature).

Human resource agencies (municipal or joint county-city). These agencies deliver local services to metropolitan or multi-county areas within the economic development districts. The chief elected officials of the counties and/or cities within each district may create an agency. Each agency is governed by a board composed of local officials plus one state senator and one state representative.

The participating local governments provide funding, which is matched by the state.

Industrial development corporations (county or municipal). General law authorizes the creation of public corporations to facilitate and finance industrial, commercial, recreational, and pollution control facilities. The corporations may be created upon application of three or more persons to the county or municipal governing body. A board of directors, appointed by the county or municipal governing body, governs each corporation. Industrial development corporations may charge rents and may issue revenue bonds. In addition, the parent county or municipal government may, upon voter approval, issue general obligation bonds on behalf of the corporation.

Tennessee Housing Development Agency (state). This agency was formed to provide mortgage credit for low- and moderate-income housing. The governing body is a board of 19 members consisting of 12 members appointed by the Governor and one member appointed by each of the speaker of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives, plus the state treasurer, the comptroller of the treasury, the commissioner of finance and administration, the secretary of state, and a staff assistant to the Governor. The agency may fix charges in connection with its loans and issue revenue bonds.

Tennessee Technology Development Corporation (state). Created under 1997 legislation, this corporation assists in developing a technology-based economy in the state. The corporation is governed by a 24-member board of directors with 21 members representing both the private and public sectors who are appointed by the Governor and leaders of the general assembly, plus the commissioner of economic and community development and two members of the Tennessee science and technology advisory council. The corporation may receive money from any source and may borrow money.

Tennessee State School Bond Authority

(state). This authority was established to finance public school construction in the state. The governing body consists of designated state officials, with the Governor serving as chair. The authority may fix and collect charges and rentals and issue revenue bonds.

Other examples include:

State

Certified Cotton Growers' Organization
Chickasaw Basin Authority
Community service agencies
Development districts
Local neighborhood development corporations
Regional library boards
Tennessee Child Care Facilities Loan Guarantee Corporation
Tennessee Industrial Development Authority
Tennessee Industrial Finance Corporation
Tennessee Local Development Authority
Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation
Tennessee Tomorrow Inc.
West Tennessee River Basin Authority

County

County airports
County electric distribution agencies
County industrial development corporations and boards
County libraries
Drainage and levee districts
Economic development commissions
Emergency communications districts
Fire departments and districts
Gibson County Water Projects Authority
Health, educational, and housing facility corporations
Metropolitan hospital authorities
Metropolitan libraries
Parking authorities
Public building authorities
Regional megasite authorities
Solid waste authorities (single county)
Sports authorities
Tourism development zones
Transit authorities
Water and wastewater authorities (single county)

Municipal

Central business improvement districts
Emergency communications districts
Fire districts (metropolitan governments)
Inner city redevelopment districts
Health, educational and housing facility corporations
Metropolitan celebration authorities
Metropolitan government port authorities (Nashville-Davidson)
Metropolitan hospital authorities
Municipal airports
Municipal electric distribution agencies
Municipal industrial development corporations and boards
Municipal libraries
Nashville Thermal Transfer Corporation
Parking authorities
Public building authorities
Regional megasite authorities
Solid waste authorities (single municipality)
Sports authorities
Tourism development zones
Transit authorities
Water and wastewater authorities (single municipality)

Joint city-county

City-county airports
Memphis-Shelby County Harbor and Port Commission
Memphis-Shelby County Convention Center Commission
Regional megasite authorities
Public building authorities
Transit authorities

Tennessee laws also provide for various types of local areas for election purposes and administration of justice.

1. Six cities located within the area of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County continue to exist as separate governments: Belle Meade, Berry Hill, Forest Hills, Goodlettsville, Lakewood, and Oak Hill. Each of these six cities is counted as a municipal government in census statistics on governments.

2. Hospital districts and authorities previously created by private acts were placed under the provisions of the metropolitan hospital authorities in 1996.