

## Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)


### How does Certification benefit me?

Let's focus on two major benefits. First, serving on a commissioners court today is a complex matter. Particularly during your early terms in office, an organized education plan is essential to your success. CCAC is geared to structure the information you need, when you need it, and in an educational setting where you can benefit from interaction with your peers and experts in the field.

Second, county government and county officials need recognition for the good job they do in serving the public. So often, citizens only think of us when they need us or when the tax notice arrives in the mail, and both occasions can be less than positive. Certification through the CCAC and the public recognition that is entailed gives one more opportunity for the public to view you and your county as progressive and effective.

### How do I get started?

It's not a complex process. Your participation is automatic as you attend CCAC courses. If you are newly elected, your first step will be attending the January Governing Texas Counties conference offered through the University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs. Registration information for the conference will be mailed to you shortly after your election, or you may consult the website of the Texas Association of Counties at [www.county.org](http://www.county.org).

As you attend the various conferences, look for CCAC topics on the agenda. Topics are marked with the  and the course number which will tell you which Phase (II, III or IV) the topic is assigned.

### Can I count education programs outside the Curriculum toward certification?

No. Because CCAC is an organized course of study, only courses from the four Phases count toward certification.

### Are there distance learning options?

Not at this time.

### I had credits in Curriculum 2000. Will they transfer to CCAC?

Yes. Curriculum 2000 credits will automatically transfer to your CCAC certification.

### How do I learn how I stand on my CCAC hours?

On an annual basis, each member of the County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas receives a detailed continuing education transcript. County commissioners get information on both their activities toward their statutory continuing education requirements and their status with CCAC certification. County judges receive information on their status with the CCAC certification if they have attended Curriculum courses. Additional information is available throughout the year from the office of CJCAT General Counsel Jim Allison by calling 512-482-0701 or 800-733-0699.

### What about those who have a Curriculum 2000 Certificate but now want a new CCAC Certificate?

Officials can only receive one certificate. If they already completed Curriculum 2000, they will not receive additional certification.



# Commissioners Court Advanced Curriculum



*Sponsored by  
the County Judges and  
Commissioners Association of Texas*



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Commissioners Court Advanced Curriculum (CCAC), formerly known as Curriculum 2000, is an upper-level education program that provides an in-depth, thorough learning experience for Texas commissioners court members to enable them to excel in their duties. Court members gaining certification through the voluntary program demonstrate their commitment to quality in their service to the public and their ability to master the complex issues of local governance in these challenging times.

CCAC, which follows many aspects of its predecessor, merges foundational information on county government law and operations with updated material on legislative changes and new challenges facing our rapidly growing state. Content is provided to give court members a comprehensive, 360° view of the complex issues involved in serving on the county governing body. Approximately half the courses are required, but court members pursuing certification can also choose from elective courses to meet their individual needs.

The multiyear program requires a minimum of 64 credits of classroom instruction with topics offered in four phases. Courses are available at various educational events sponsored by the County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas (CJCAT) throughout the year. There is no time limit for achieving certification, though it can generally be gained in three to six years depending on the ability of a court member to attend multiple conferences each year. The four phases include:

## • Phase I

**(4-day Curriculum-Required) Phase I** is an orientation program for newly elected commissioners court members held in Austin in January following an election year. The conference, entitled *Governing Texas Counties*, is offered through the University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs and is co-sponsored by both the CJCAT and the Texas Association of Counties. The agenda focuses on the duties and responsibilities of the commissioners court, county government law, county powers and finances, intergovernmental relations, and skills for effective service in county government.

## • Phase II

**(16 Individual Courses-Required) Phase II** further expands on foundational information with focus on the duties and responsibilities of all major county officers and departments. **Phase II** consists of stand-alone courses that are primarily offered through the annual County Judges and Commissioners Continuing Education Conference and Educational Exposition hosted by the V.G. Young Institute of County Government, which is scheduled each year in February and co-sponsored by the CJCAT. Phase II courses may also be found on the program of the regional and state conferences of the CJCAT.

## • Phase III/IV

**(32 Individual Courses-Required) Phase III** entails stand-alone modules providing advanced, in-depth instruction on effective operations in a wide range of topics under the umbrella of commissioners court responsibility. Phase III courses focus on skills and best practices and are offered each year on the programs of the regional and state conferences of the CJCAT and the annual County Judges and Commissioners Continuing Education Conference and Educational Exposition hosted by the V.G. Young Institute of County Government.

**Phase IV** modules address the rapidly changing landscape of county government where new demands from a myriad of sources including the public and other levels of government challenge court members to constantly seek new information on trends and issues. The **Phase IV** stand-alone courses are also offered each year on the programs of the regional and state conferences of the CJCAT and the Continuing Education Conference and Educational Exposition hosted by the V.G. Young Institute of County Government.

The development of Commissioners Court Advanced Curriculum is a combined effort of the CJCAT, V.G. Young Institute of County Government, a part of Texas Cooperative Extension, and the Texas Association of Counties. Through 2005, 263 county judges and commissioners have earned certifications of completion for the Curriculum 2000 program.

For more information and comments, contact

- Bell County Commissioner Richard Cortese, Chair of the CJCAT Education Committee, at [richard.cortese@co.bell.tx.us](mailto:richard.cortese@co.bell.tx.us) or (254) 933-5101.
- Jim Allison, General Counsel, CJCAT, in Austin at (512) 482-0701 or 800-733-0699.
- Texas Association of Counties Education Division at (800) 456-5974
- V.G. Young Institute of County Government Director Richard O. Avery at 979-845-4572.

## Frequently Asked Questions


### Do CCAC courses count toward my statutory continuing education requirements?

Yes and no. State laws establishing continuing education requirements for constitutional county judges and county commissioners differ. For county commissioners, all CCAC credits earned each year can be applied toward your yearly 16-hour statutory continuing education requirement. Continuing education requirements for county judges are very restrictive and call specifically for coursework dealing with the *judicial* responsibilities of the judge. Since CCAC focuses on county government administration, no hours qualify for the yearly mandatory continuing requirements for judges.

### What is the cost of CCAC Certification?

There is no direct cost for participation in the program or certification. Conference registration fees and direct support from co-sponsoring organizations cover the expense of course development, recordkeeping and certification.

### How do I know if a course counts toward CCAC requirements?

It's simple; just look for the Curriculum logo  on the conference agendas. Those are the topics that count toward your certificate. Also, look at the course numbers that are listed on the conference agenda.

### Is the CCAC just for urban or rural court members?

Because the curriculum is an organized course of study, great care is taken to address the needs of all court members. **Phase I and II** content is essential and fundamental information for any court member. **Phase III and IV** courses provide options to address individual needs.