

## SB1985 Jackson/HB2039 Carr

### BACKGROUND

In 2007, the General Assembly enacted legislation that required each municipality to employ at least one certified municipal finance officer (CMFO), or individual with equivalent educational qualifications. Later, the Comptroller's office developed a similar program for counties – the Certified County Finance Officer (CCFO) program. While the programs were similar, there were some notable differences. The CCFO program required fewer hours and contained a \$1,000 stipend and reimbursement component for course fees and travel reimbursement.

In 2020, TML requested legislation that would have reduced the continuing education requirements for a Certified Municipal Finance Officer (CMFO) from 24 hours to 16 hours annually; bringing the CMFO requirements in-line with those of Certified County Finance Officers (CCFO). The legislation also proposed creating a \$1,000 stipend for CMFO candidates upon successful completion of all examinations as well as providing reimbursement for travel and meal expenses associated with fulfilling the course requirements. This legislation had the full support of the Comptroller, and TML had successfully worked with his staff and the Lee Administration to identify a funding source. However, the funding source evaporated with the onset of COVID and the legislation stalled in the COVID-shortened session.

Last session (2021), Comptroller Jason Mumpower took the lead and introduced legislation as part of the Comptroller's annual legislative package. The bill quickly made its way through various committees without opposition, but it was amended before final passage to remove the stipend and reimbursement provisions; leaving only the reduction in the annual continuing education requirements.

### CMFO and CCFO Training Requirements

Both certifications require completion of an 11-Course curriculum designed to ensure competence in the handling of municipal or county funds and the protection of public moneys. Courses include Internal Control and Audit, Government Accounting, and Payroll, Benefits, and Pensions. The 11 courses are completed in sequence, with an exam after each course. After completing the curriculum and achieving a passing grade on each exam, candidates are eligible to receive CMFO or CCFO certification.

### PROBLEM

While last session's actions improved the equity issue by reducing the CMFO continuing education hours to 16, the \$1,000 stipend and reimbursement component for course fees and travel reimbursement must be addressed. Establishing a stipend for the CMFO program will bring it in-line with the county's program and allow municipalities to be reimbursed for course fees and travel-related expenses

### REMEDY

Amend TCA, Title 6, Chapter 56, Part 4, to create a \$1,000 stipend for candidates for the CMFO certification upon successful completion of all examinations and reimbursement for course and travel-related expenses incurred by the municipality

