

CCMA PROGRAM

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As a near record number of applicants have been coming forward to take the annual CCMA examinations, this is a good time to review the origins of the CCMA designation(s) and the recertification program.

The CCMA (*Certified Connecticut Municipal Assessor*) Committee was formed as a direct result of the 1972 *Meskill Commission Report on Tax Reform*. Due to the recommendations in this report, Public Act 74-255 was enacted. This Public Act became CGS 12-40a, and provides that the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management shall appoint a Committee consisting of seven members charged with developing rules and regulations for the training and certification of assessment personnel. Two members are appointed every two years and all serve six year terms. Six members of the Committee must come from communities of various populations and the seventh member is a representative from the Office of Policy and Management.

The statute also mandates that the Committee shall elect its own chairman and adopt regulations, in accordance with chapter 54, for the training and examination of assessment personnel including standards for the certification and recertification of assessors, and the setting of various fees.

The founding members of the first CCMA Committee were Walter Birck, Richard Prendergast, Robert Kemp, Joseph Cullen, John Killeen and Edward Clifford. Thirty five assessors were first appointed as CCMA's on October 23, 1974. These thirty five people had held the CAAO's *Certified Connecticut Assessor* designation. (The CCA designation was a voluntary certification program for assessors which was established by CAAO in 1962.) By the end of 1974, sixty one more assessing officers had received the new CCMA designation.

As mandated by CGS 12-40a, the CCMA Committee set up rules and regulations, effective January 1, 1977, for an applicant to qualify for taking the CCMA examination. These rules specified a training program consisting of three courses and three years of minimum experience in assessment administration. They also provided for an alternative method that required an applicant to apply to the State Tax Commissioner for a waiver of the prescribed training program. The rules and regulations remained basically the same, with minor adjustments through the years. These changes included the addition of a fee to take the examination, provisions for conducting courses in addition to the schedule offered at the annual Assessors' School in June, and the three courses were expanded to five courses (soon to be six, with the addition of the revaluation Course). Also included in the regulations are provisions that specify that the instructors of each of the CCMA courses must be certified by the In-Service Training Committee of CAAO (now known as the Instructor Certification Committee) and approved by the Education Committee of CAAO. The list of approved instructors is sent to the CCMA Committee and instructors are then assigned to CCMA Courses courses by the CCMA Committee.

The next major change to the regulations came in 1995, but was first introduced to the State Legislature in August, 1989. After **six years** of hard work by the Committee and the Office of Policy and Management, P.A. 95-283 amended CGS 12-40a to allow for rules and regulations guiding not only the certification of assessors, but also instituted a program for the recertification of assessors and provided for a five year mandatory recertification program.

On the horizon is another major change to the regulations. The sixth course has been developed by the Curriculum Development Committee of CAAO and the CCMA Committee and has been in place as an optional class for the last several years. This new course is a revaluation course, in response to the growing number of revaluations taking place on a shorter schedule than the original ten year period. Before this course becomes an official part of the certification process, the statutes governing the certification of assessors will need to be changed, and that process is currently going on. As mentioned earlier, the last change in the regulations took six years to implement. It is a long and involved process.

The regulations governing the certification and recertification of Assessors can be found in CGS Section 12-40a-5 thru 12-40a-12. These are available in the CAAO Handbook for Connecticut Assessors in Chapter 3.

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