

CHECKLIST · NASHVILLE

Moving to Nashville Checklist: The first 30 days (2026)

An ordered list for the first 30 days. It starts with finding your service district, because that decides who collects your garbage. School, library and courts, meanwhile, are county-wide and in one hand.

SHORT ANSWER

We start this list with four warnings. First: **the city and the county are merged**, and school, library, courts, health and the building code sit **county-wide in one hand**; the **city or county** question that wears readers out elsewhere does not arise here. Second: **but there are two divisions**, and the first one shapes your first day: **garbage collection is provided only in the urban services district**, and a household in the general services district **contracts with a private hauler itself**. Third: **merging is not an exemption**; the act creating the verification and reporting regime for public benefits expressly includes **a county having a metropolitan form of government** in its definition of a local government. Fourth: put two dates on your calendar, **November 1, 2026** and **January 1, 2027**.

The calendar: fixed dates, and what could not be found

TASK	PERIOD OR DATE	WHERE
Federal address report	10 days. Changing homes on the same street is also a move	Through your online account or Form AR-11; enter the receipt number of every pending case
Report to the court	5 days , if you have a pending case	On Form EOIR-33/IC. The court is not in this city ; the state's only immigration court is in Memphis
Document rule at vehicle registration	January 1, 2027 , for an initial registration	The county clerk. Renewals require no document; the warning language sits on both
Deadline for sheriffs	January 1, 2027	The statute's own calendar; the body that decides is the sheriff, not the metropolitan council
Grocery tax rate change	November 1, 2026	The clocks go back the same day, so the gap with Türkiye grows by an hour
Verification regime for public benefits	July 1, 2026 , but for local governments at the first reprinting of the form	State agencies, local governments and local health departments
A written state deadline for the license and registration	Not measured this round	Ask the center and the county clerk, and ask for the answer in writing

Two lines of this table mislead readers often. First: **a postal change of address does not satisfy the federal report**, and filing the federal report **does not by itself update the address on a pending case**; do both, uscis.gov/addresschange. Second: **giving your address to a state or local office does not satisfy the federal duty**; no address you give from the driver service center to school enrollment stands in for that report. One more change in 2026: account for the federal rule that took effect on **June 29, 2026** and reworked alien registration and what counts as evidence of registration, in the federalregister.gov record.

The first thirty days

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ Find out which service district your address is in	The government's information line is 615-862-5000 . Ask one question and write down the answer: is this address in the urban services district or the general services district
☐ Check whether your home sits in a separate municipality inside the county	A home with this city's name on the envelope may be in one of six separate cities : Belle Meade, Berry Hill, Forest Hills, Goodlettsville, Oak Hill, Ridgeway
☐ File the federal address report within 10 days	uscis.gov/addresschange ; if you have a court case, Form EOIR-33/IC within 5 days
☐ Open power and gas in your own name	The power utility requires two current identification documents and at least one must be government issued ; photo identification may be required
☐ Ask the right question on the phone	Do not open with I have no number . Ask this: which documents do you accept as government issued identification, are a foreign passport and a residence card on that list, and what counts as the second document
☐ Open the water account	The initiation fee is non-refundable: \$35 for guaranteed same-day service and \$25 for any later day
☐ Ask the garbage question before you sign a lease	In the urban services district the city collects, garbage weekly and recycling every two weeks ; in the general services district a private hauler contract is mandatory and that is a monthly cost
☐ Turn on weather alerts and choose your shelter area	The county has 113 outdoor sirens , but sirens are designed for people outdoors ; keep a weather radio or a phone alert at home
☐ Pick the right center for your license	Testing is done only at the two full-service centers ; there is none at the downtown branch. Complete the application online and send documents for the five business day pre-approval
☐ Register the car with the county clerk	From January 1, 2027 an initial registration requires status documentation ; a renewal does not, and the warning language sits on both
☐ Open school enrollment for the children	The county has a single school district ; residents of the six satellite cities attend it too. A Social Security number does not appear in the enrollment documents
☐ Open your health file early	This state did not expand coverage and the gap is real ; if you are a childless adult both doors may be closed

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
☐ Get a library card in the first week	Free to everyone living in the county; a passport is expressly on the identification list and a lease is accepted as proof of residence. For people living outside the county two official pages of the institution do not agree on whether online access is given; we take no side , ask the library directly
☐ If you are getting married, know you can choose the county	The license can be obtained from any county in the state and is valid for 30 days ; in this county checks are not accepted
☐ For a birth certificate go to the nearest county health department	All 95 county health departments can issue birth and death certificates. That sentence is not written for marriage and divorce records
☐ If you are buying a home, ask two questions the same day	Which service district, and whether it is in a separate municipality inside the county. The residential assessment ratio is 25 percent

TWO DIVISIONS, AND WHICH ONE REACHES YOUR WALLET

- **The first division:** inside the county there are **six cities** that kept their own municipal governments. The charter preserves them, **prohibits the creation of any new city**, and obliges the metropolitan government to serve them. **Three of them levy their own property tax.**
- **The second division, and the real trap:** the **general services district** is the whole county, while the **urban services district** is the old city boundary as of the charter, and it **can expand by annexation.**
- **The charter lists the services provided only in the urban services district:** additional police protection, fire protection, water, sewer, storm sewer, street lighting, street cleaning, **refuse collection**, and wine and whiskey regulation.
- **The tax difference is surprisingly small:** in 2025 the property tax gap between the two districts was **\$0.0320** per \$100 of assessed value. So **the service difference is large and the tax difference is small.**
- **You can find your address on a map, but get the definite answer from the city:** the government's open data portal carries the Services Districts and Satellite Cities layers, but **no tool that answers a typed address was found in this research**, and the services district layer was last updated in **January 2023.**

APPLYING FOR A PUBLIC BENEFIT: MERGING IS NOT AN EXEMPTION

- **A state law that took effect on July 1, 2026** requires state agencies, **local governments** and **local health departments** to verify the lawful presence of applicants aged eighteen and over, and to report those not verified to the state's **centralized immigration enforcement division**.
- **And the critical sentence for this city is in the statute's own definition:** a local government includes **a county having a metropolitan or charter form of government**. **Merging is not an exemption**.
- **The fine point on the calendar:** for local governments the duty begins not on July 1, 2026 but when that unit **first reprints the relevant forms** after that date. **A clause that is not on a form today may be there tomorrow**, and the absence of an attestation on a form is not an exemption, it is a matter of timing.
- **The part in your favor is in the statute's own list:** excluded from the definition of a public benefit are **care for an emergency medical condition, immunization, testing and treatment of symptoms of communicable diseases, short-term in-kind disaster relief, and short-term shelter**. **But the list says verification is not required; it does not say free**.
- **There is a court order and we write it in three layers:** Snader v. Tennessee Dept. of Health, No. 26-0825-I, Davidson County Chancery Court; temporary restraining order **June 24, 2026**, agreed temporary injunction **July 14, 2026**. **Its scope is narrow** (a single children's health program), it is **temporary**, and **the merits were not reached**. We do not write that the provision has been stopped.
- **Talk to your attorney before applying for any benefit**, and if an **attestation of citizenship or lawful presence signed under penalty of perjury** appears in front of you, ask before you fill it in.

RENTING: FOUR THINGS TO CHECK BEFORE YOU SIGN

- **Occupancy follows the bedroom count:** for a group of unrelated people, at most **four** in a dwelling with **three or fewer bedrooms** and at most **five** in one with **four or more**. There is no numerical limit for related people and **a mixed group is expressly allowed**. **The at most three unrelated people figure still circulating online is out of date**. This is a zoning rule; **your lease may carry its own limit**.
- **There is no thirty day deposit rule**. The real mechanism: **a separate account is mandatory** and its location is **disclosed in the lease**; if no response comes to a return notice **within sixty days** the landlord may keep the money. **Make your return request in writing and keep the date**.
- **Look for bold print in the lease**. The state landlord and tenant act provides that a **twelve point bold waiver** placed in the lease **entirely removes** the tenant's right to a **pay within fourteen days** notice.
- **Eviction law hardened in 2024:** a continuance went from **fifteen days to seven**, one of the routes to a higher court was closed, and **an appeal is accepted only with a bond equal to one year's rent**. **Reach a lawyer or a free legal aid organization the day the papers arrive**.
- **On discrimination your handle is state and federal law:** the protected classes are race, color, creed, religion, sex, disability, familial status and **national origin**. **Source of income and immigration status are not on the list**, and **research found no housing discrimination provision at the municipal level here**. Complaints have gone to **the attorney general's civil rights enforcement division since July 1, 2025**; any guide still pointing to the closed commission is stale.
- **Two more questions before signing:** does this building have a designated shelter area and where is it, and **is this address in a floodplain**.

SEVERE WEATHER: TWO REGIMES AT ONCE IN THIS CITY

- **Winter is real and it has been measured:** the state transportation department's statement of **January 25, 2026** describes the icing as **statewide**, says crews were in their **fourth day**, and asks drivers **not to travel**.
- **Salt has a limit:** when roadway temperatures fall below **16 degrees Fahrenheit** salt is not strong enough.
- **On the tornado side there are 113 outdoor sirens county-wide.** Sirens are activated **only when a tornado warning is issued**, the test schedule is **noon on the first Saturday of each month**, and the agency's own warning is that sirens are designed **for people outdoors**.
- **On shelters we build the sentence carefully:** the emergency management office publishes not an **address list** but **guidance** on choosing the safest area inside a building. **We do not say there is no shelter; we say what is published.**
- **The guidance's own criteria:** at home the **lowest floor and the basement**, a space without glass, a short-span roof; **avoid long-span roofs such as gyms and auditoriums**; in a tall building **reinforced concrete stairwells**, failing that restrooms.
- **And the agency's most vital rule:** the time to travel to a community location is the **watch**. **Once the warning is issued you do not set out; you move to the safest area in the building you are in.**
- **A named winter storm hit in February 2026** and **disaster relief centers** were opened; the office also keeps a standing winter page. **If a lawful presence declaration appears on a disaster assistance form, talk to your attorney.**

TAX: THE SENTENCE THERE IS NO TAX IS NEVER WRITTEN

- **There is no state income tax on wage and salary income**, and the state's only personal income tax, on interest and dividends, **was repealed as of January 1, 2021**. **But the sentence there is no tax is never written:** the burden moves to the register.
- **The general sales tax rate is 9.75 percent.** On food and food ingredients the rate is **5.75 percent from November 1, 2026**: a 4 percent state share plus a reduced local rate of 1.75 percent. The reduction applies **across the whole county**, including the six separate municipalities.
- **And here we print a contradiction and take no side:** the revenue department's local rate map page says the transit surcharge in this county raised **the food rate as well**; the same department's September 2026 notice computes food as **the state share plus the reduced local rate** and never mentions the surcharge. **The grocery rate on your receipt may come out at either value**; if it differs, ask the revenue department rather than the store.
- **A local wage tax was searched for and not found.** **We do not write there is none**; ask your employer whether payroll carries any local deduction.
- **There is a state level professional privilege tax and it hits only five professions: 400 dollars a year**, due every **June 1**. Attorney, securities agent, broker-dealer, investment adviser and lobbyist.
- **Work authorization verification:** the private sector threshold is **35 full-time equivalent employees**, while for public employers it has been **mandatory with no threshold since July 1, 2026**. The statute does not treat an employer as in violation for **acting on an incorrect system result**, which makes **name order, a surname change and date of birth mismatches a real risk**. Fix those before a job offer, not after.

MARRIAGE AND VITAL RECORDS: YOU CAN CHOOSE THE COUNTY

- **The license is issued by the county clerk and you can obtain it from any county in the state;** the state source's own sentence says it may be issued **regardless of the parties' residence or the county where the ceremony will take place. The common guidance that it comes from your county of residence is wrong.** The license is **valid for 30 days.**
- **In this county the fee is \$99.50 in cash, \$101.49 by card, and checks are not accepted.** Completing a four hour premarital preparation course brings a **60 dollar discount;** the certificate must have been obtained within the year before the application, and some counties require it **notarized.**
- **For an applicant with no number there is a written answer:** under an attorney general opinion the statute **does not require holding a number** to obtain a license, and **applicants who have not been issued one are not required to provide one.** The field is left blank and no alternative number is requested.
- **We print two contradictions:** state sources **recognize no waiting period,** while a 2010 document published by a neighboring county states a **three day wait;** and one agency says the course discount also applies to **people residing outside the state** while another says it applies **in a single county only. We take no side;** call the clerk you will go to.
- **Research found no witness requirement.** The ceremony provision asks only for the parties' declaration; **we do not say there is none,** as the clerk's own form may ask for something else.
- **Birth and death certificates can be obtained from all 95 county health departments;** in the agency's own words you no longer have to go to the county where the birth occurred. **That sentence is not written for marriage and divorce records.**
- **The identification list runs in your favor: a valid passport is sufficient on its own** and the list does not say U.S. passport; a foreign or residence card and an employment authorization card are also sufficient on their own. **A Social Security card counts only as secondary and only if signed. And the most practical way out:** if the application is **signed and notarized, no additional identification is required.**

HEALTH AND CLINICS: DO NOT CONFUSE TWO SENTENCES

- **This state did not expand Medicaid** and the coverage gap is real: a **childless adult**, whatever their income, generally cannot enter the state program, and marketplace help does not begin below a certain income threshold.
- **From October 1, 2026 refugees and people granted asylum are moving out of the state program;** the state wrote that into its own manual in a policy dated **September 10, 2026. An older document from 2014 still sits on the same server without a warning and still shows refugees as eligible; do not use it as a source.**
- **The pregnancy door is open today:** the agency's own sentence says that if you are pregnant no immigration documents are required. **But in the same household the mother may be covered while the child is not;** before the birth, ask which door the child goes through.
- **A sliding-fee clinic is not a free clinic.** The discount is calculated on household income and household size and **you still pay an amount.** Take **documents showing your household income** to the first appointment.
- **We publish no clinic address.** Find the center through the [official health center finder](#) and **confirm the address and hours on the center's own site.**
- **In an emergency the rule is different:** under federal law a hospital emergency department must examine and stabilize a person **regardless of ability to pay and immigration status. But that does not mean it is free.**



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN NASHVILLE

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