



Federation of Tax Administrators

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Phillip Ashley Named Harley T Duncan Award Winner

Texas Comptroller for Public Accounts Associate Deputy Comptroller for Tax to be honored at FTA Annual Meeting held June 8-11 in Chicago

The Federation of Tax Administrators named Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts Associate Deputy Comptroller for Tax Phillip Ashley a winner of the 2025 Harley T Duncan Award for Leadership and Service.

"I am honored to announce Associate Deputy Comptroller Ashley as a winner of the Harley T. Duncan Award," said Federation of Tax Administrators Executive Director Sharonne Bonardi. "His commitment to everyone he serves in the great state of Texas and all those he serves with at the Texas Comptroller are shining examples of selfless leadership. Our Board of Trustees and our profession thrive because of Phillip and his contributions to tax administration."

Ashley has served nearly 24 years with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. He rose from an entry-level position with the Comptroller's Fiscal Management Division to top agency leadership positions, first as Associate Deputy Comptroller for Fiscal Matters and currently as Associate Deputy Comptroller for Tax, said Comptroller Glenn Hegar in his nomination letter.

"This is a tribute to Phillip's ability to guide, direct and inspire agency employees and colleagues in addressing important policy issues that directly affect taxpayers and the state's bottom line," Hegar said. "He has shared the benefit of his knowledge and experience with industry peers in state and national tax policy associations."

Ashley's more notable accomplishments include:

- Helping establish and oversee the Tax Customer Experience Improvement Task Force, which conducted an extensive review of processes over 18 months to simplify life for taxpayers, collaborating with other agencies, revising taxpayer forms and notices, reorganizing the agency's website, and improving call routing and automated messaging. Task force efforts resulted in significant improvements, including a 29% reduction in telephone hold times, a 20% decrease in call volume, and a 45% reduction in abandoned calls.
- Transformation and retooling of the Comptroller's Criminal Investigation Division (CID), and significantly enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness in enforcing the state's tax laws. Under Ashley's leadership, the team successfully addressed pay inequities, and achieved remarkable productivity improvements, including filing over 600 felony cases in fiscal year 2024 and the first eight months of fiscal year 2025, and during that period securing over \$1.4 million in court-ordered restitution, fines and penalties.

Ashley's focus on teamwork and graciously giving credit to others for accomplishments goes to the heart of who he is as a leader. As he said when he learned of being nominated for this honor, "All of the things we do around here are a team effort, and the team deserves all the credit -I'm proud to be part of a team that is making a difference."

His credentials play a big part in his successful leadership: He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Master of Business Administration from Baylor University, and he is a licensed CPA and Certified

Government Financial Manager, a 2006 graduate of the Texas Fiscal Officers' Academy and former president of the Texas State Agency Business Administrators' Association.

The FTA Harley T. Duncan Award for Leadership and Service is a distinguished honor presented to leaders in tax administration who possess exceptional vision and innovation, commitment to open communication, devotion to continuous learning, and willingness to adapt and embrace change.

The Federation of Tax Administrators is a Washington DC based non-profit serving its government tax administration members from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, New York City, and Philadelphia. It provides its members with the knowledge, tools, and relationships in support of tax administration, which furthers voluntary compliance while preserving, protecting, and enhancing tax revenue.

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