

# COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

## GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY, WA



### Why Apply?

This is a rare and exciting opportunity to become the County's first administrator and to manage and lead a strong team of appointed and elected department directors and staff that strive and desire for the County to be successful and provide quality service to its constituents. The community is tight knit, and the people here are proud to be Harborites. The Board of Commissioners are bright, energetic, supportive, and eager for change. While they may occasionally have differing points of view, they are respectful of each other and staff and always place the best interests of the organization and community first. There are opportunities to develop deep and meaningful relationships.



# Welcome to GRAYS HARBOR

Grays Harbor is a coastal county of 77,000 residents located along the Pacific Ocean in the southwest corner of Washington's Olympic Peninsula. The region is known for its mild climate, enchanting forests, sandy beaches, and vibrant seaside communities. The county is home to the Port of Grays Harbor, two national wildlife refuges, the Quinault and Chehalis Indian Reservations, and a portion of the Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park.

Due to its access to the sea and dense forests, Grays Harbor County has a rich history in both the maritime and timber industries. Today tourism is a significant contributor to the economy as the county's 50 miles of ocean beaches attract visitors for clam digging, storm watching, beachcombing, surfing, and spectacular sunsets. Ocean Shores and Westport are regarded as among Washington's best beach towns.

Aberdeen (pop. 17,000) is the county's largest city, followed by Hoquiam (pop. 8,800). Along with Cosmopolis, these contiguous port cities are the economic hub and home to almost half of the county's population. Residents and visitors alike appreciate the amenities of these bustling seaport communities, including local craft breweries, coffeshops, wineries and distilleries, and coastal cuisine.

The county seat is the city of Montesano (pop. 4,100), about 10 miles inland from the bay. Montesano offers small-town charm, turn of the century architecture, and easy access to the quintessential Pacific Northwest lifestyle.

A prominent feature of the county is the majestic Quinault Rain Forest, one of the few temperate rain forests in the Northern Hemisphere and a favorite destination for exploring waterfalls amid the old growth trees and lush greenery. This popular area is also home to the glacier-fed Lake Quinault and the grand Lake Quinault Lodge, built in 1926 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The county's beachside communities are known as North Beach and South Beach, separated by the bay. The "North Beach" area of Grays Harbor is comprised of the coastal towns of Copalis Beach, Moclips, Ocean City, Ocean Shores, Pacific Beach, and the resort community of Seabrook. South Beach includes the world-class fishing community of Westport, also home to commercial cranberry bogs and opportunities for year-round surfing. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) serves the region with commercial flights.



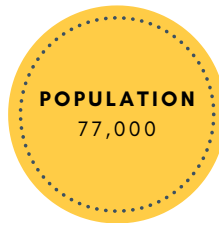


# GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

Established in 1854, Grays Harbor County is named for the large estuarine bay which lies at the mouth of the Chehalis River, the second largest watershed in Washington. The government seat is Montesano (pop. 4,100) and home to the 1911 Grays Harbor County Courthouse.

The Board of Commissioners is Grays Harbor County's legislative authority and is made up of three Commissioners elected to four-year terms. The County is divided into three districts, based on population. The Commissioners are partisan and nominated in a primary election within their district only. All county voters are given an opportunity in the general election to select the Commissioner who will ultimately serve.

The County serves a population of 77,000 across 1,900 square miles with a 2024 budget of \$46 million and a team of 500 FTEs. In 2024, the Board voted unanimously to create the position of County Administrator.



## THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

The County Administrator is a new position reporting directly to the Board of Commissioners, representing a significant change to both the Board and the organization. The County Administrator plans, organizes and coordinates the management of executive and administrative functions in coordination with and as assigned by the Board. This position provides organizational leadership and direction to department heads and is accountable for the efficient and effective performance of those departments, including establishing expected outcomes and results and evaluating those results.

The County's leaders will be looking to the administrator as part of the team to continue making the County a great place to live and to work. The Commissioners will also give clearly defined goals and objectives for the administrator to achieve. At the same time, they will look to County Administrator to give examples, options, and suggestions on the best path forward on streamlining and creating efficiencies.





## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- Proven ability to quickly build trust and develop positive and productive relationships. Will assist the Board of Commissioners, department heads, elected officials and the public in feeling comfortable with this new role.
- A strong, compassionate leader with great people skills and a confident demeanor. Enjoys taking on a challenge and has the energy and passion to hit the ground running.
- Broad and deep experience and knowledge of general county functions and demonstrated understanding of the subject matter areas that fall under the Administrator's oversight. Has a track record of past successes in this role.
- Strong organizational skills and a stellar ability to see and implement efficiencies in mostly siloed departments. Able to pull all departments together and represent each equally and fairly. Has a working knowledge and understanding of each department's role and function.
- Comfortable working with the Board of Commissioners delegated authority. Experience in making recommendations on financial and budgetary matters across the organization. Able to give solid recommendations to the Board regarding hiring, staffing levels, and all strategic planning including financial, operational, and facilities.
- Collaborative and purposeful in seeking all contributions from commissioners and both appointed or elected officials. Has a proven inclusive style that provides opportunities for direct and open discussion. Can enhance communication and consensus and be a driving force and champion for change.
- A leader with exceptional personal character and high ethical standards. Demonstrates individual respect and personal commitment in all interactions with staff, other departments, and individuals within and served by County government. Has an even temperament, especially in decision-making, and is trustworthy and trusting of others.
- Ability to cultivate high-functioning teams and create organizational effectiveness by developing and communicating values, building productive relationships, and creating organizational effectiveness. Has culture-building experience in developing and shaping a positive work environment.
- A strategic mind-set with verifiable experience developing and successfully executing two, five, and 10-year work plans.
- A strong and effective leader that will provide consistency and stability. Will enable continuity between commissioners and directors that might occur from election turnover.



# OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

## **Onboarding the New Position**

While there are many organizational and operational challenges that the new County Administrator will need to address in the first six to 12 months of their tenure, the most significant issue will be the establishment of the County Administrator position.

The Board is eager for professional management; however, this position represents a substantial change for the Board and the organization. The new County Administrator will need the skills to facilitate the navigation by commissioners and department heads through this change and be able to build a cohesive executive management team. This position will have the opportunity to create the roles and responsibilities of the position with the instituting Board.

## **Creating Better Communication Systems**

Creating an open line of communication with all departments and managers will be crucial so they feel appreciated and heard while building teamwork and collaboration among and between the Board of Commissioners and all departments and staff. This will necessitate capable and accurate strategic financial forecasting and assessing the County's ability to streamline and find efficiencies to better serve the community.

## **HR Onboarding Program**

The County is in need of an onboarding system or program for all employees in all departments coming into the organization to ensure consistent messaging and training.

## **County and Departmental Facilities Plans**

Physical workspace is in short supply across all departments. The County recently completed a capital facilities plan that is ready to be implemented to address the current and long-term space demands.

## **Succession Planning**

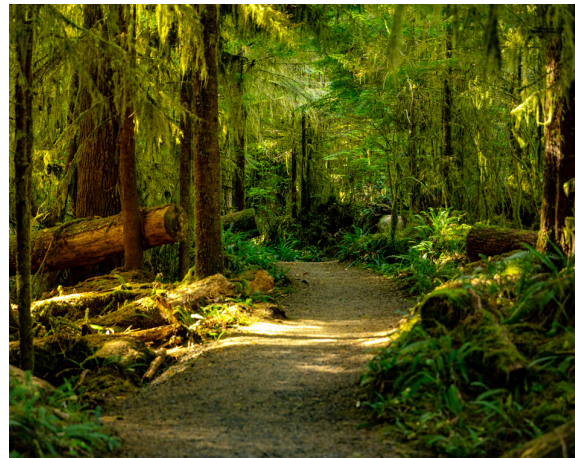
In the next several years, the County will experience numerous retirements across all departments. Institutional knowledge is deep, but it will need to be replaced. A systematic leadership and management training program along with an accompanying succession plan for all departments will be crucial for the County to address this issue.





# EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

- Bachelor’s degree in public administration from an accredited four-year college or university. Master’s degree or higher in public administration or equivalent preferred.
- At least ten (10) years of demonstrated progressively responsible managerial and supervisory experience and executive level decision making in local government or relevant private sector management experience.
- Demonstrated experience in public sector budgeting, financial management, human resources management, information technology, facility and capital planning, and organizational systems, procedures and program analysis, or relevant private sector experience.
- Or an equivalent experience in industry with emphasis in finance and budgeting, and demonstrated supervisory/management skills; or any equivalent combination which provides the required skills, knowledge, and ability to perform duties and responsibilities of the position.



## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Grays Harbor is offering a salary range of \$150,000 to \$176,988 for this position, dependent upon experience and qualifications, along with a comprehensive [benefits](#) package.

## RESOURCES

[2024 Budget](#)

[Greater Grays Harbor](#)

[County Org Chart](#)

[Visit Grays Harbor](#)

[Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Grays Harbor Talk](#)



# TO APPLY

Apply Online: [gmphr.com](http://gmphr.com)

First Review: **April 14, 2024**

More Info: **Bob Larson, GMP Consultants**  
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