

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Chester County, Pennsylvania



EXECUTIVE
RECRUITMENT
PROVIDED BY 



THE COMMUNITY

Chester County and its 540,000 residents enjoy a high quality of life with outstanding employment and educational opportunities, coupled with an array of performing arts and cultural venues, museums, historical sites, world-renowned gardens, recreational offerings, and an eclectic mixture of dining, microbreweries, and wine tasting options. Referred to locally as “Chesco,” the County includes the City of Coatesville, 15 Boroughs, 57 Townships, and numerous other unincorporated communities within its 762 square miles and is part of Philadelphia’s 6.2 million metropolitan area population. Chester County is the fastest-growing county in southeastern Pennsylvania, with 146,000 projected new residents by 2050.

Accessible by the nearby Philadelphia International Airport and the Pennsylvania Turnpike (Interstate 76), and US Routes 1, 30, 202, and 322, the County’s convenient location provides easy access to the City of Philadelphia as well as to other metropolitan areas including Wilmington, Delaware to the southeast, Trenton, New Jersey to the northeast, and Baltimore, Maryland to the southwest.

One of the three original counties formed by William Penn in November 1682, Chester County did not become an inland county until 1789. Its name derives from Cheshire (i.e., Chester-shire), England, from which many of its early settlers came. West Chester, the county seat since 1788, was incorporated as a Borough

on March 28, 1799. It was named for Chester, the older county seat (now in Delaware County), which in turn derived its name from the shire town of Cheshire.

The County’s rich history can be experienced by visiting the Brandywine Battlefield Park and by learning about the area’s prominent role and important stops for freedom seekers on their way north with Underground Railroad Stations located at West Chester, Phoenixville, Oxford, and Kennett Square. The Longwood Progressive Meeting became a beacon to reformers throughout the United States for movements such as the abolition of slavery, women’s rights, and temperance. Visitors and speakers to the meeting house included Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, and more. Today, the building houses the Brandywine Valley Tourism Information Center and serves as the starting point for the Kennett Underground Railroad history tours. Architectural history can also be seen by driving through the region to view and photograph its numerous covered bridges that line the County’s Brandywine Valley countryside.

Chester County offers a litany of recreational opportunities including Valley Forge National Historical Park, Marsh Creek, and French Creek State Parks, six County Parks, and the Chester Valley Trail, Struble Trail, and Schuylkill River Trail, two of which connect with adjoining Counties. Other area tourist attractions include the

COUNTY MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Chester County Government is to provide high-quality, fiscally responsible services to the citizens and visitors of Chester County through efficient and cost-effective operations so they can live, work, and raise a family in a thriving community.

THE COMMUNITY *continued*

world-renowned Longwood Gardens and its Festival of Fountains, the Jenkins Arboretum & Garden, American Helicopter Museum & Education Center, People's Light & Theater, The Colonial Theatre, Brandywine Ballet, the Antique Ice Tool Museum, Treehouse World, West Chester Railroad, and the Winterthur Museum Garden & Library.

Residents and visitors alike also enjoy participating in the region's numerous celebrations and festivals and events including the Kennett Square Mushroom Festival (Chester County is the Mushroom Capital of the world, as 65% of the fresh mushrooms consumed in the United States are grown in the area), Strawberry Festival, Turks Head Music Festival, Devon Horse Show, Ludwig's Corner Horse Show and Country Fair, Plantation Field International Horse Trials, Chester County Balloon Festival, "Blobfest" (in celebration of the movie "The Blob"), Brandywine Hills Point-to-Point Races, Willowdale Steeplechase, Radnor Hunt Races, Chester County Hospital Polo Cup, Summerfest Air Show, Benchmark Twilight Cycling Classic, Chester County Restaurant Festival, and the seasonal Longwood Christmas, Yuletide at Winterthur and A Brandywine Christmas.

A high percentage of residents work in professional occupations, resulting in Chester County attaining the highest median household income in Pennsylvania. The County has strong employment centers in agriculture, finance and insurance, information technology, management of companies and enterprises, and professional, scientific, and technical services. Over 50% of jobs are in the top five industries – health care, professional and technical services, retail, finance and insurance, and manufacturing. The County's major employers include the Vanguard Group, QVC Network, Chester County Hospital, County of Chester, Giant Food Stores, Main Line Hospitals, Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, Devereux Foundation, Downingtown School District, Janssen Research & Development, Siemens Medical Solutions USA, Herr Foods, The Pyle Corporation, Communications Test Design, and Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc.

The area's educational needs are met by the County's 12 public school districts and three career and technical high schools. Additionally, the County is served by numerous charter and private schools for K-12 students. Higher educational providers within the County include the West Chester University of Pennsylvania, Lincoln University, Cheney University, Immaculata University, University of Valley Forge, and the Delaware County Community College campuses. Other higher education opportunities include Temple University, University of Pennsylvania, LaSalle University, Drexel University, Saint Joseph's University, University of the Sciences, Philadelphia Academy of the Fine Arts, The Restaurant School at Walnut Hill, and more.

Chester County residents benefit from convenient access to medical facilities, including the Chester County Hospital (Penn Medicine), Paoli Hospital (Main Line Health), and Coatesville VA Medical Center, as well as being in close proximity to other Philadelphia area medical specialty providers.

The County's median income is \$104,161, with a median home sale price of \$420,000.

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COUNTY GOALS

Health & Human Services:

Protect vulnerable people in the community while promoting healthy choices.

Public Safety:

Ensure safe and secure communities.

Economy:

Support the growth and development of a strong and vibrant economy for all residents.

Financial Management:

Continue to exercise sound financial management and maintain the County's financial strength while minimizing the property tax burden.

Governance:

Pursue excellence through exceptional customer service, transparency, accountability, and innovation.

Growth, Preservation & Environment:

Manage growth and land use to preserve and optimize quality of life, effective transportation, and environmental assets for future generations

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

National Honor for Performance Management Leadership (2022)

Healthiest County (2022)

Top 10 Digital County (5th time in the top 10)

Best School Districts in Pennsylvania - 7 in Chester County (2022)

25 Best Places to Live in PA- #1 Chesterbrook + 7 other Chester County Towns (2022)

25 Best Places to Raise a Family in PA - Chesterbrook #1 + 6 other Chester County Towns (2022)

Best Place to Retire (2021)

Wealthiest county in PA (2019)

Top 50 richest counties in the US (2021)

Counties where residents earn the most investment income – Chester County 2nd in PA (2021)

Top 10 Trails in PA - SRT (2021)

Wealthiest zip codes in Philadelphia Region – Chester County has 8 of 50 (2020)

Lowest credit card debt - 2nd in PA (2022)

Six of Pennsylvania's Top 50 Scoring School Districts (2022)

NACo Achievement Award for Chester County Youth Center and Brandywine Valley SPCA SAFE Program Partnership

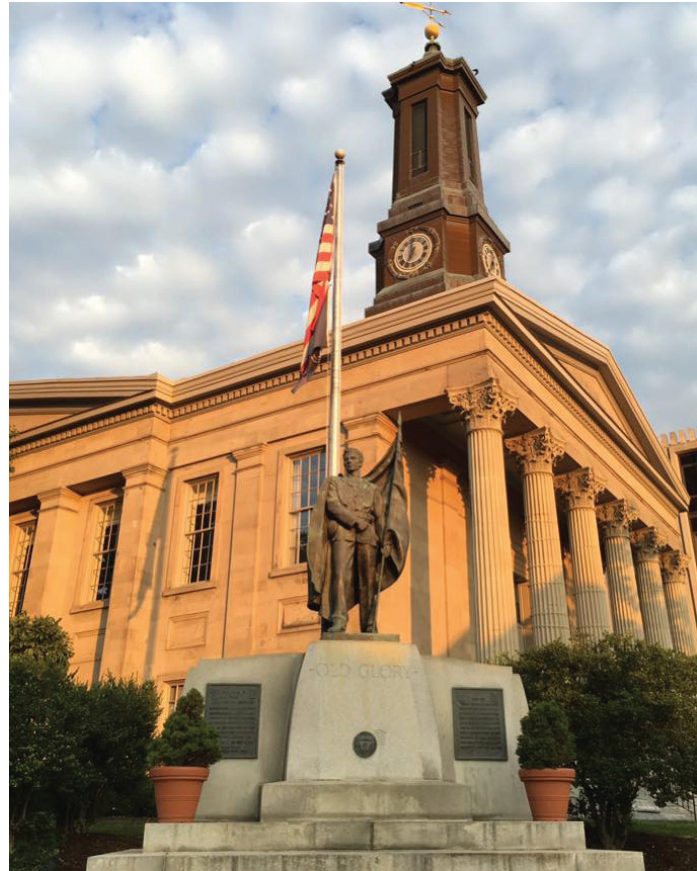
NACo Achievement Award for Fresh Start Juvenile Expungement Program

Distinguished Budget Presentation Award – Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA)

GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

Chester County operates under a Commission form of government with the three-member Board of Commissioners constituting the chief governing body of the organization. The Board, together with its executive staff, manages the large and diverse organization whose mission is to provide quality government services in an efficient, cost-effective manner. Elected every four years on an at-large basis, the Board of Commissioners are responsible for policy making, fiscal management, and the administration of county affairs.

The County provides a wide array of local government services and a FY 2024 Annual Consolidated Budget of about \$683 million (\$201 million General Fund), supported in part with an ad valorem property tax of 4.551 mills. It is the only Pennsylvania county to hold a AAA-credit rating from all three major credit rating agencies and one of only fifty-three counties in the United States with such a distinction. County services are provided by roughly 2,400 full-time and 174 part-time positions.



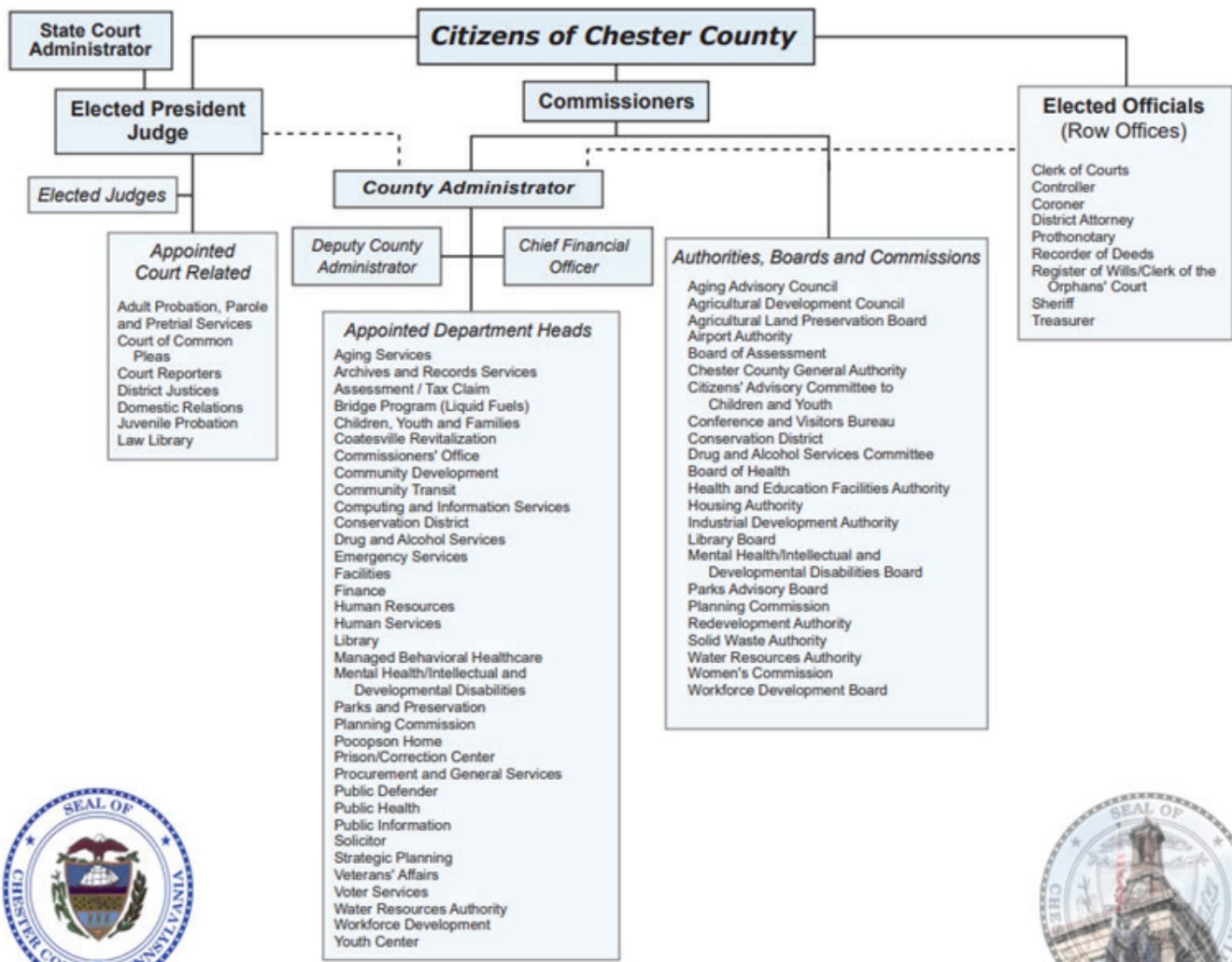
ABOUT THE POSITION

The County Administrator is responsible for supervising and directing the programmatic, financial, and administrative operations of all departments under the auspices of the County Commissioners. The County Administrator also presents options and recommendations to the Commissioners to make informed decisions. The incumbent works with the Commissioners and agencies in strategic planning efforts and maintains and forges intergovernmental and non-governmental relationships. In addition, the incumbent is responsible for providing direction about the internal and external communications of the County. Additionally, the County Administrator also serves on a variety of Committees including the Prison Board of Inspectors, Criminal Justice Advisory Board, and Building Security Committee.

Direct reports to the Administrator include the Deputy County Administrator, Chief Financial Officer, and the Appointed Department Heads as outlined on the adjacent Organization Table

A summary of the County Administrator's responsibilities includes the following:

- Advise Commissioners on policy, operational and budgetary matters.
- Recommend and implement policies and decisions of the County Commissioners.
- Direct, supervise and provide strategic guidance to all Departments.
- Review Department annual fiscal year operating and capital budget requests prior to presentation to the Commissioners.
- Provide guidance to Department Heads/Directors in implementing county policies and programs.
- Work with Department Heads/Directors to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization.
- Review and approve budget and personnel-related proposals made by Department Heads/Directors for consideration by the Commissioners during the course of the fiscal year.
- Coordinate activities of the Chester County Retirement Board and understand County Pension plans and investments.
- Build and maintain relationships essential to the success of the organization.
- Serve as the Commissioners' representative on various task forces and committees affecting County government.
- Serve as liaison to all elected officials and the Court of Common Pleas and its related agencies.
- Serve as liaison to external constituencies and customers, including economic development related agencies (CCEDC, etc.).
- Supervise the Public Information Officer and oversee related activities of the PIO.
- Perform special projects as required by the County Commissioners.
- Perform other duties, tasks, and special projects, as needed.



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Facility Needs & Projects: Chester County has a variety of current facility-related initiatives that will require the attention of the next County Administrator. These include the decision regarding the future of the Government Service Center (GSC) which is not currently fully utilized with the prospect of selling the facility outright and relocating several Departments and operations to other locations; a hybrid mixture of private and public use; or remodeling the facility to better meet the needs of County operations. Other significant facility projects include the construction of a new Coroner's facility, and numerous Prison capital upgrades.

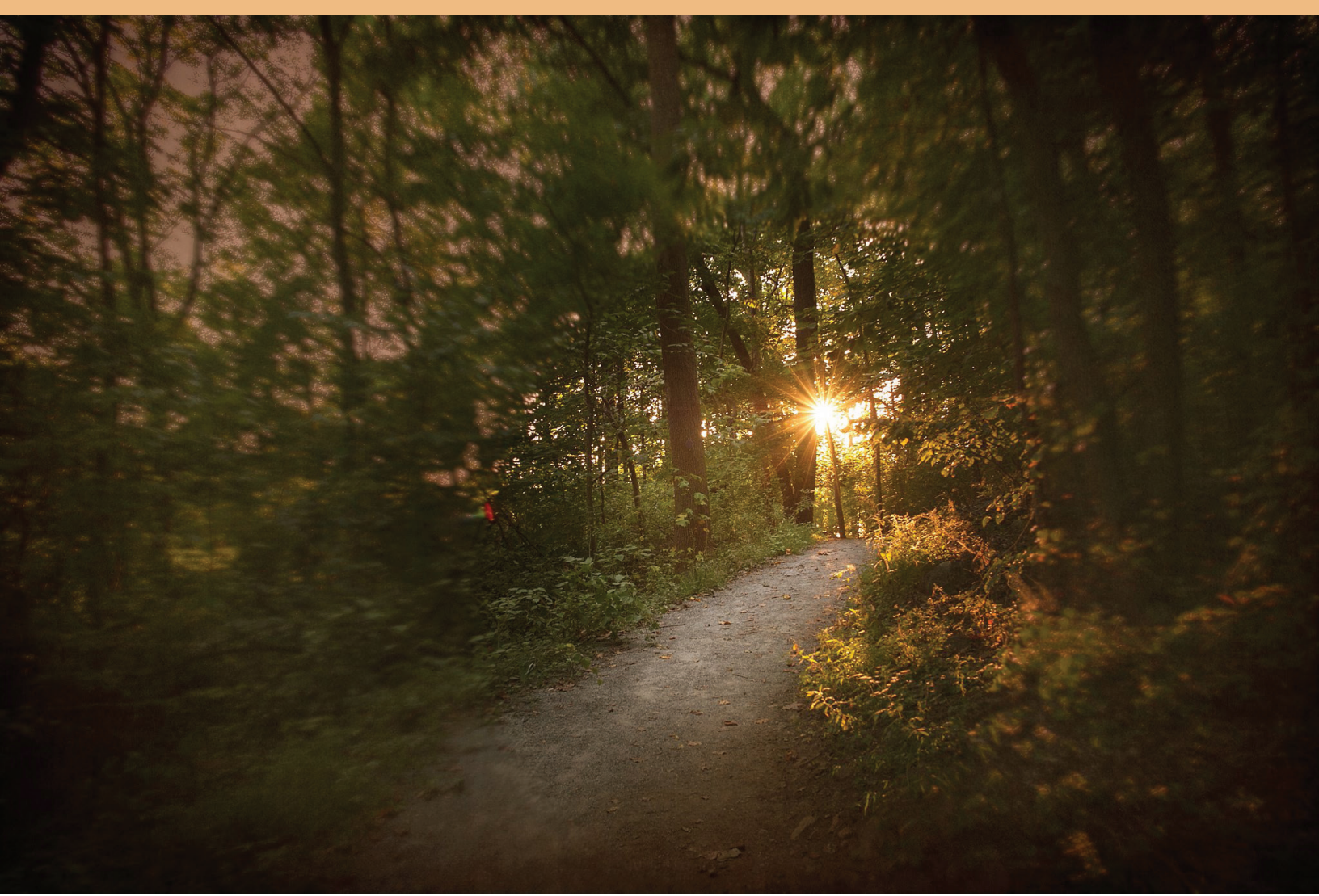
Emergency Management Communications: The County's 911 Call Center (currently located in the GSC) is in the preliminary discussions with consolidating the 988 Crisis & Suicide Hotline in either the GSC or an alternative location. Also planned is the replacement of the current Law Enforcement Radio System, which is approaching the end of its planned life cycle, with the County providing replacement radios to end-user Police Departments within the County.

Bridge Maintenance: Housed within the Public Services/Facility Department is the County's Bridge Maintenance Division, which is responsible for the inspection, maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement of the County's 91 public roadway bridges spanning local waterways at widely dispersed locations across Chester County to provide safe passage by the traveling public by meeting Federal and State standards. The County's bridge inventory is comprised of both modern and historic structures. The Division's capital budget is currently supporting 26 multi-year bridge restoration, rehabilitation, and replacement projects, and the County is evaluating its bridge inspection & management engineering contract and allocation of internal personnel to be more proactive in this critical service.

Health Equity: The Health Department is implementing an equity approach that ensures the Health, Human Services, and Community Development Departments can analyze and act on upstream factors in the social, physical, and built environments that are the root cause for differences in disease and health outcomes, and the role of trauma on health, community resilience in Chester County.

Recruitment, Retention, & Succession Planning: Following the pandemic, Chester County has developed a workplace culture that is committed to a flexible/hybrid work environment that promotes both in-office and remote work opportunities. The next County Administrator will need to champion a work culture that supports both long-term and new team members and promoting succession planning initiatives. It will be critical to support innovative recruitment and retention strategies to ensure continued organizational capacity to deliver superior services and have Chester County continue to be recognized as an "Employer of Choice."





CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES *continued*

Priority Based Budgeting (PBB): The County initially transitioned to PBB in FY 2022 to help focus the allocation of resources on the priorities and needs of the community, as opposed to reporting on just the services the County provides. Chester County's PBB approach also engages County employees through their participation on PBB Peer Review Teams that review and rank the importance of County programs and services for the community, using a specific scoring system. The successor County Administrator is expected to utilize and refine the current PBB system as it undergoes its natural evolutionary stages.

Affordable Housing Pilot Projects: Similar to many communities, Chester County faces an increasingly difficult challenge in the availability of affordable workforce housing options. The County is currently exploring a land bank and is considering other possible pilot projects to encourage the development of affordable housing opportunities in their efforts to promote a live-work-play environment for current and future residents.

Commitment to Open Space: Chester County residents truly value the benefits of open lands, stewardship, and the environmental and economic contributions associated with the preservation of open space in the form of farms, preserves, parks, and trails as their commitment to sustaining natural resources, quality of life, and sense of place in Chester County. In support of this effort, the County is nearing the issuance of \$10 million in bonds for future open space initiatives.



IDEAL CANDIDATE

Chester County seeks an enthusiastic, visionary, and decisive servant leader with a commitment to professionalism to be the next County Administrator. The ideal candidate will be a pragmatic person of high integrity with a history of adopting best management practices and a track record of building consensus both internally and through fostering community, state, and regional partnerships to achieve community goals. The successor County Administrator will be a skilled problem-solver with a history of implementing creative and innovative solutions to challenges and championing effective and efficient public service delivery with the highest level of customer service.

The ideal candidate should possess a no-surprises management style and highly effective board skills as an advisor to the Board of County Commissioners and Executive Leadership Team as they navigate both policy and administrative decision-making processes, being politically savvy but never political. This position plays a critical role in fully informing the County Commissioners in the most appropriate and timely manner and creating a positive, trusting, productive, and lasting relationship with each member of the governing body and Senior Leadership team. The ideal candidate will be a person with a high level of emotional intelligence, advanced interpersonal and listening skills, and a proactive, transparent, collaborative management style that can advise parties of the pros and cons of a given course of action based on their professional training and experience. The chosen individual will have strong management and leadership skills and will be approachable, even-tempered, and maintain a calm demeanor while simultaneously juggling multiple tasks, projects, and initiatives.

The ideal candidate will promote team building and model the highest level of ethics. A skilled delegator who understands the details but manages the big picture, the selected candidate will empower employees and provide general direction and desired outcomes, providing them the freedom to manage their operations and be the translator between Commission direction and staff execution of programs and policies. The selected candidate will be supportive of the professional development of team members and serve as a coach and mentor for the organization as they build high-performance and results-driven teams. The Administrator will be a champion of interdepartmental cooperation and promote both internal and external customer service. The ideal candidate should have a passion for public service while maintaining a work-life balance and encouraging team members to do the same.

The ideal County Administrator will have a demonstrated track record of developing effective relationships with intergovernmental partners, community stakeholders, and non-profits in the advancement of Chester County's priorities and initiatives. They should be an active member of state and national professional associations with an established network of colleagues.

Finally, the ideal candidate should have a strong financial background/acumen, including long-term budgeting and capital planning skills, with an understanding of the complex mixture of the diverse administrative, human services, emergency management, judicial, cultural and recreational offerings, and other local government services provided by the County, and how they need to interact cohesively to provide exceptional local government programs for residents and customers.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

A Master's degree from an accredited college or university in Public Administration, Business Management, or related field is required, coupled with 10 or more years of County or City Management experience with at least five (5) years at senior management level. Candidates with an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience will also be considered. ICMA-CM is preferred. The final selected candidate must also possess or be able to obtain a valid driver's license. Residency is not required for the position; however, it is desired that the County Administrator be within a reasonable commuting distance to the County Administration Building.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Chester County offers a competitive salary based upon qualifications and experience with a desired starting salary range of \$146,000 - \$182,611. The County provides a generous benefits program including health, dental, vision, pre-tax spending accounts, life insurance and long-term disability, paid vacation, personal days, sick leave, and other professional development assistance. Employees participate in the County's Defined Benefit Retirement Plan with a 6% Employee contribution, with an additional optional 457 deferred compensation plan available.

APPLICATION PROCESS

[Please apply online](#)

For more information on this position contact:

Doug Thomas, Executive Vice President
DouglasThomas@GovernmentResource.com
863-860-9314



Chester County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists for this position will be subject to a comprehensive background check.

RESOURCES

County website
chesco.org

FY 2024 Approved Annual Budget Document
chesco.org/DocumentCenter/View/73823/2024-Approved-Budget?bidId=

Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry
ccbi.org

Chester County Conference & Visitors Bureau
brandywinevalley.com

