



HARLINGEN
WATERWORKS
SYSTEM

GENERAL MANAGER

EXECUTIVE
RECRUITMENT
PROVIDED BY





THE COMMUNITY

Nestled at the crossroads of the Rio Grande Valley just 20 miles from the border of Mexico, the City of Harlingen is known for its diverse businesses, natural beauty, and incredible quality of life. From shopping to hunting, hitting the town or heading out to the coast, this community of just under 72,000 residents has something for everyone.

Harlingen is home to over 1,200 acres of public parks, offering sports courts, disc golf, playgrounds, picnicking facilities, aquatic centers, trails, and even special features like a meditation garden, remote control car track, and skating facility. Residents who enjoy golf have two 18-hole championship courses nearby along the Laguna Madre Bay at the South Padre Island Golf Club. The Rio Grande Valley is also an international birding destination with over 500 species recorded.

The Arroyo Colorado, one of the few freshwater sources in this stretch of the migratory path, runs through the middle of Harlingen. Along its banks rests the Harlingen Arroyo Colorado World Birding Center — and Hugh Ramsey Nature Park and the Harlingen Thicket both offer a network of paths, overlooks, and terrific birds within the city limits.

The community is also surrounded by beautiful South Texas brushlands and riparian forest, making it a hunter's paradise for white-tailed deer, Nilgai antelope, wild hogs, javelina, white wing doves, bobwhite quail, wild turkeys, and more. You can also head out to the Texas coast which is less than an hour away, where surfing, boating, fishing, and sunbathing are on the itinerary.

The coast is home to all of the popular game fish species sought after throughout the Gulf of Mexico, and the tropical fishing experience is unlike anything else in the U.S., providing the same angling opportunities fishermen travel the world to find. Nearby South Padre Island, on the southernmost tip of Texas, offers the largest stretch of undeveloped ocean beach in North America, and its opportunities include dolphin watching, surfing, horseback riding, and windsurfing. Schlitterbahn Beach Waterpark also makes for a popular destination in the region, with water coasters and more available from April through September each year.

With such excellent access to incredible fish and game and proximity to the regional flavors of Mexico, it's to be expected that the dining scene in Harlingen is one of the best in the state. Local menus serve delicious Tex-Mex, fresh-from-the-Gulf seafood, fall-off-the-bone barbecue, and local specialties like pumpkin empanadas and cabbage tamales.

Restaurants aren't the only area businesses catering to every taste, either. From the contemporary Valley Vista Mall to the historic downtown or one of the many shopping centers located throughout the city, Harlingen has what you're looking for. The city is home to national retailers, luxury boutiques, and bargain antique shops, and the nearby Rio Grande Valley Premium Outlet offers impressive savings on designer brands.

Once the sun goes down, head out on the town; country western bars, Tejano saloons, and contemporary nightclubs await. And on the weekends, browse public art, stop by the Harlingen Arts & Heritage Museum, or enjoy one of the region's popular community events, including weekly farmers markets, Jackson Street Market Days, Harlingen Art Night, the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, the Jalapeno 100 Ride, Shrimp Fest, Blues on the Hill, Taste of Harlingen, Freedom Fest, Halloween on Jackson, the Christmas Parade, and more.

With roughly 18,000 students, the Harlingen Consolidated Independent School System is also the largest employer in Harlingen. And over 60,000 students attend post-secondary education within a 30-mile radius of the city at UT-Pan American, UT-Brownsville, South Texas College, Texas Southmost College, and the local Texas State Technical College.

Harlingen is also home to the University of Texas – San Antonio Health Science Center's Regional Academic Health Center and the UT Health Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine and clinical practice, including a recently opened Institute of Neuroscience.

That focus on the medical field translates into top-notch facilities in the region. Valley Baptist Health System, the Harlingen Medical Center, Su Clínica Familiar, the Rio Grande State Center, and the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health System employ thousands of health care professionals.

The average household income in Harlingen is \$55,804, and the median price for a home is about \$229,000.



ABOUT THE HARLINGEN WATERWORKS SYSTEM

The Harlingen Waterworks System is the public water and wastewater utility of the City of Harlingen, serving approximately 80,000 customers in Harlingen, Primera, Palm Valley, and other water supply corporations.

The utility's rich history dates back to the early 20th century; when Harlingen was incorporated in 1910, the town's original water system and downtown water plant were constructed and owned by Central Power and Light (CP&L). Private ownership continued until 1940 when, as WWII loomed and the start of an airbase to the city was announced, the town's forebears had the insight to see the potential benefits of getting into the water business.

Five individuals at that time financed the purchase from CP&L for the City — and after those bonds were serviced, the City took over the water and sewer systems. The Waterworks was officially established during the 1970s when a referendum was passed to separate the utility system from the City and operate it as a separate department. Harlingen Waterworks is now a wholly owned department of the city, operating under an independent Board of Trustees, with a team of 155 employees and an annual budget of roughly \$27.9 million.

GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

Harlingen's City Charter assigns the managing control and operation of the Harlingen Waterworks System to a five-member Board of Trustees, each of whom is appointed to four-year terms by the Harlingen City Commission. Board members must be residents of the city and customers of the utility, and they are limited to two terms each. The Mayor and City Manager also serve as ex-officio board members.

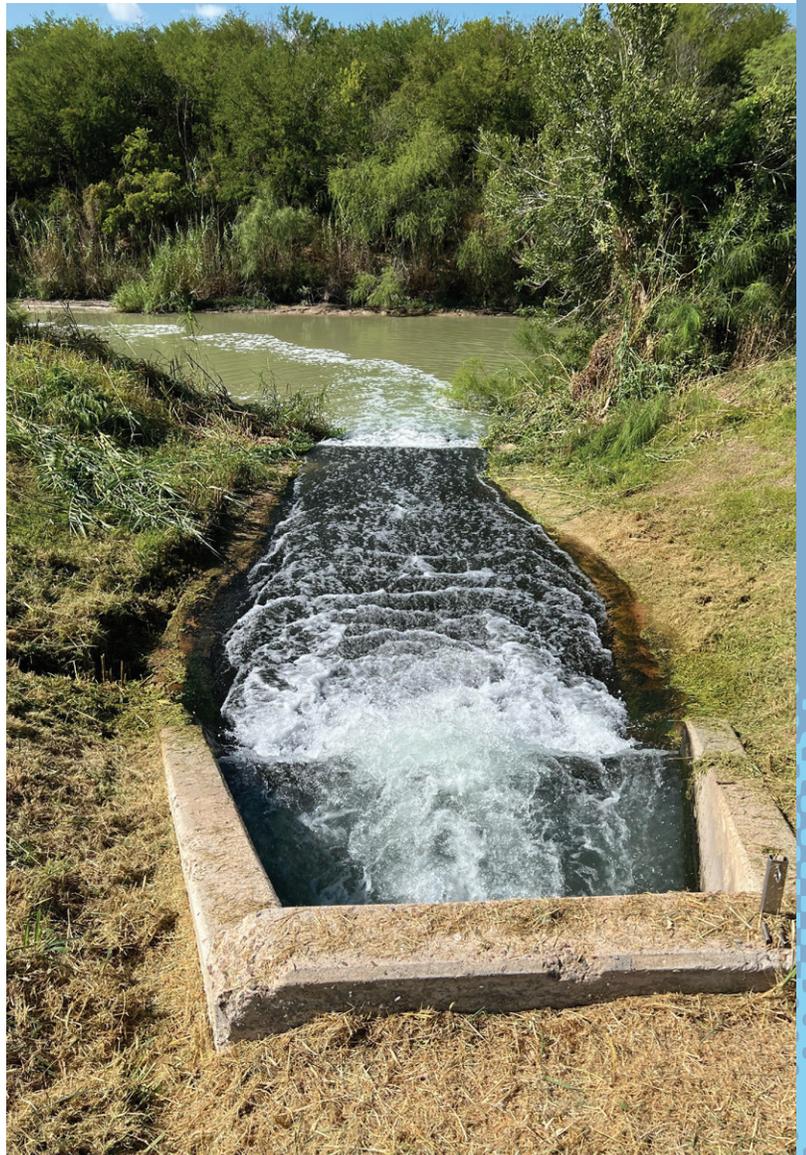
ABOUT THE POSITION

Under the direction of the utility's Board of Trustees, Harlingen Waterworks System's General Manager is responsible for developing and implementing organizational and technological strategies to address and ensure service and manage supply and demand.

This includes overseeing infrastructure generation, expansion, and capacity issues, creating and coordinating policies and protocols to meet the service expectations of various regulatory agencies, and representing the utility to a mix of professional, governmental, and community bodies and organizations, including serving as its spokesperson as needed.

The General Manager is supported by the Director of Wastewater, Director of Water, Director of Finance, Director of Information and Technology, Human Resources Manager, and Engineering Coordinator. Essential duties include:

- Overseeing short- and long-term goals and planning and monitoring the status of projects and the performance of employees and departmental activities as a whole
- Supervising budget preparation and monitoring expenditures, including recommending water and wastewater rates structures and fees
- Resolving customer issues
- Establishing, updating, and reviewing procedures and standards regularly
- Working closely and sharing information with the Board of Trustees, including formulating and recommending policies and programs meant to enhance the utility's goals and objectives
- Executing contracts, grants, and commitments as appropriate



OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The new Harlingen Waterworks System General Manager should be prepared to hit the ground running. The successful candidate will immediately oversee the design and construction of over \$105 million in active capital projects, including an upgrade to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and major interceptor, many of which are partially funded by the Texas Water Development Board. Trustees would also like to see progress toward completing the utility's Master Plan.

Like departments across the country, the utility also continues to struggle in recruitment and retention, particularly for licensed operators. In addition to assessing the utility's finances, programs, and policies, the new hire will bring fresh eyes to keeping the utility competitive to attract and retain the region's best public servants.

IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Harlingen seeks an experienced and innovative utilities professional to help lead the Harlingen Waterworks System into the future.

The next General Manager will have extensive knowledge of water and wastewater systems and treatment plant operations, including their finances, regulatory requirements, and capital project management. The right fit for this role is someone who exercises sound judgment, ensuring accuracy in all tasks, and can establish work procedures and performance standards that align with the vision and policies of the utility's Board of Trustees.

Communication, interpersonal skills, and emotional intelligence are key in this role. The selected candidate will need to build and maintain strong, positive interactions with City staff, internal departments, external agencies, and the public and commit to building trust and ensuring transparency. Confidence and approachability are crucial, as is the ability to effectively lead, mentor, inspire, and evaluate staff.

The new hire should be an excellent public speaker with a history of community involvement. Building relationships with federal and state partners is essential, as is having the knowledge and experience to support the organization and the Board through daily operations and under the stress of various emergencies. This role demands strong decision-making abilities and negotiation skills to help secure favorable outcomes for the organization.

The ideal candidate will be adaptable to the challenges and changes within the water and wastewater industry, open to new ideas and approaches, and committed to customer service excellence. They should excel in team building, time management, and strategic thinking, with a focus on the long-term success of the organization. Also critical to the position is an understanding of cultural diversity and respect for the community's needs that will enhance service delivery and community relations.

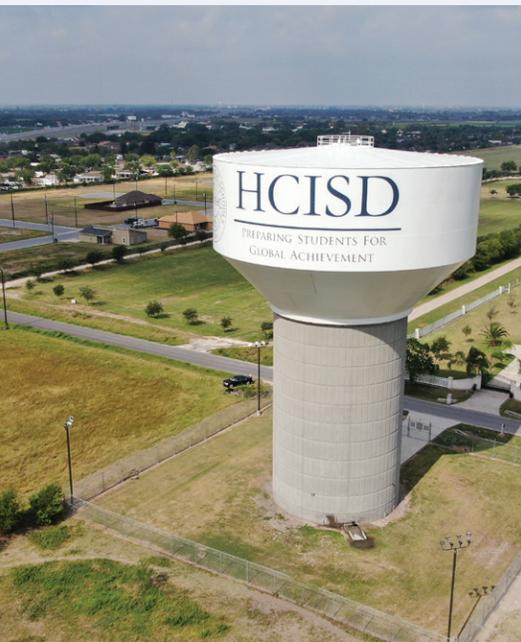


EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

This position requires a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in business administration, accounting/finance, public administration, or a related field, with a master's degree preferred. Degrees in civil or environmental engineering and status as a licensed Professional Engineer are also preferred. If able, the selected candidate will be asked to attain their PE within six months of hire if they do not already possess it and will be required to maintain a Texas driver's license throughout their tenure.

In addition, candidates should have five (5) to seven (7) years of engineering and management experience in public or private environments, including experience with utility administration and direct customer relations, water and wastewater plant design and operations, water distribution and wastewater collection systems design and operations, and construction. Experience working with city, state, and federal regulatory and permitting agencies such as the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and EPA is a plus, and being bilingual is preferred.

Please note that the selected candidate must establish residency within three months of hire.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The Harlingen Waterworks System is offering a competitive salary for this position, starting at \$180,000 minimum, commensurate with experience and qualifications. The organization's benefits package includes health, dental, vision, life, and disability insurance, nine paid holidays, generous vacation and sick leave policies, and an Employee Assistance Program. This position will also be eligible for car and phone allowances.

Harlingen participates in the Texas Municipal Retirement System, which features a 7% employee contribution with a 2:1 employer match, and offers voluntary deferred compensation options.

APPLICATION PROCESS

[Please apply online](#)

For more information on this position, contact:

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The City of Harlingen, Texas, is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists will be subject to a comprehensive background check.

RESOURCES

Harlingen Waterworks System

hwws.com

City of Harlingen

harlingentx.gov

Harlingen Economic Development Corporation

harlingenedc.com

Harlingen Convention and Visitors Bureau

visitharlingentexas.com

