



CHIPPEWA COUNTY  
Est. 1848



WISCONSIN

# COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR RECRUITMENT CHIPPEWA COUNTY, WISCONSIN

POSITION PROFILE



Public Administration Associates

This recruitment is facilitated by Public Administration Associates, LLC

# THE COMMUNITY

## Quality of Life

Located in scenic west central Wisconsin, Chippewa County offers the best of both worlds: a small-town quality of life within minutes of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and a ninety-minute drive to Minneapolis. Chippewa County's many peaceful communities offer a variety of housing options, quality schools, growing businesses and job opportunities. Chippewa County boasts year-round recreational activities, including canoeing, kayaking and fishing on its many rivers and streams. Thousands of acres of parks and public land are available for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, and hunting, with trails for snowmobiling and ATVs. The County's total land area of 1,041 square miles is organized into five cities, four villages and 23 towns. The County seat is Chippewa Falls (population 14,985). Learn more about Chippewa County by visiting its [website](#).



Created when the Territorial Legislature of Wisconsin divided Crawford County in 1845, Chippewa County was organized in 1853. Its name derives from its earliest inhabitants, the Chippewa people, also known as the Ojibwe. The County has a total area of 1,041 square miles, including 33 square miles of water.

### TOP FIVE MOST POPULOUS JURISDICTIONS

City of Chippewa Falls.....	14,985
Village of Lake Hallie.....	7,429
Town of Lafayette.....	6,553
City of Stanley.....	3,772
City of Bloomer.....	3,724

There are activities to suit all interests in Chippewa County. Local retail orchards and farmers markets offer locally grown produce. Museums, such as the Bloomer Historical Society Museum recount the region's rich history. Local festivals include the renowned Hoofbeat Country Music Fest, the largest three-day music and camping event in the U.S.



Cultural and recreational activities abound in Chippewa County. The Chippewa Area History Center (shown above) features exhibits on a variety of subjects, including lumbering, agriculture, and the area's early inhabitants.



Miles of rivers and streams, including the Chippewa and its tributaries, make Chippewa County a paradise for canoeists and kayakers. The County boasts 449 lakes. Prominent area lakes include Wissota (6,024 acres) and Long Lake (1,089 acres). The Chippewa Flowage, is Wisconsin's largest wilderness lake, home to many fish species, including walleye, northern pike, and smallmouth bass. Outdoor activities are not limited to the summer months. An extensive trail system offers opportunities for snowmobilers, skiers, and dog sled enthusiasts to enjoy the winter beauty of Chippewa County.



# THE ECONOMY

Chippewa County enjoys a diverse economy featuring a strong manufacturing base, as shown in the following chart.



## CHIPPEWA COUNTY EMPLOYMENT

Trade, Transportation and Utilities . . . .	23.9%
Manufacturing . . . . .	21.2%
Education & Health Services . . . . .	19.7%
Leisure & Hospitality . . . . .	8.5%
Public Administration . . . . .	7.2%
All Other Sectors. . . . .	19.5%

Agricultural products comprise an important part of the County’s economy. According to a study by UW-Extension, agriculture accounts for over 4,000 jobs and \$750M in total economic activity.

# EDUCATION

Eight quality school districts serve the county, providing students a variety of educational options. County residents are also served by the Chippewa Valley Technical College System. The system is based in Eau Claire and serves eleven area counties from four campuses, including its Chippewa Falls campus. In 2021, Chippewa Valley Tech was one of only 150 two-year institutions eligible to compete for the Aspen Prize for community college excellence. Four four-year universities including the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, UW-Stout, UW-River Falls and Lakeland University are within an hour’s drive of the County.



Chippewa Falls High School, or “Chi Hi” as it is known to locals, has an enrollment of approximately 1,400 students. It is ranked in the top 5 among Eau Claire area high schools according to [U.S. News & World Report](#).



## Several iconic companies were founded in Chippewa County, including Cray, Inc. and the Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company.

Originally founded as Cray Research, Inc. by Seymour Cray in 1972, the company built some of the world’s fastest supercomputers. Hewlett Packard Enterprises now owns the Chippewa Falls facility and continues to manufacture computer parts there.

Leinenkugel’s was founded in Chippewa Falls in 1867. The company’s “Leinie Lodge” (left), is a popular event venue and tourist destination.



# CHIPPEWA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Chippewa County government provides a diverse range of services in areas including public safety, health and human services, land use, and highway maintenance, among many others. A \$124M total annual (2025 expense) budget supports approximately 425 full-time, equivalent employees. Chippewa County is governed by a twenty-one-member, nonpartisan Board of Supervisors, elected from districts every two years. The County Board Chair is elected by the Board. The County Administrator is appointed by the Board and reports to the Executive Committee. The County Board is organized into seven major standing committees and 17 “statutory” committees that provide policy oversight of County programs. “Ad hoc” committees are formed from time to time to work on specific projects. These committees conduct much of the work of the County Board.

Chippewa County’s officers and employees are organized into 18 different departments. Elected officials manage six of these departments, including the County Clerk, Clerk of Circuit Court, Coroner, Sheriff, Register of Deeds, and Treasurer. The District Attorney is an elected position. The D.A. and his or her assistant attorneys are state employees; however, administrative support is the county’s responsibility. The Register in Probate Office is under the direction of the judges.

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Wisconsin counties have historically been governed by large boards. State law permits a county as populous as Chippewa to have as many as 39 Supervisors. In 2010, following the trend of a number of Wisconsin counties, voters passed a referendum downsizing the Board from 29 to 15 Supervisors, effective in 2012. In 2022 the Board was expanded to its current 21-member size.

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# FINANCES

Like all Wisconsin Counties, Chippewa County relies heavily on property taxes to fund operations. Charges for services are also a key revenue source that support the annual budget. Since 1991, the County has collected a 1/2 cent sales tax on many purchases (*The amount of sales tax that a county may impose is fixed by State law*). Wisconsin counties administer many state programs; as a result, state grants and reimbursements comprise a major source of revenue. State funding is not spread equally among the departments, however. Health and human service programs receive the “lion’s share” of state funding, while other programs, such as the Sheriff’s Office rely much more heavily on the property tax levy. Major categories of expenses are shown below.

## CHIPPEWA COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL FUND EXPENSES/EXPENDITURES CATEGORIES BUDGET YEAR 2025



Expense/Expenditure Cat.	Percent
Health and Human Services	36%
General Government	33%
Transportation	17%
Public Safety	10%
All Other	4%

One challenge facing all Wisconsin counties is a state-imposed tax levy cap. A county’s ability to increase the tax levy is limited to the value of new construction (“*net new construction*”) that occurred during the previous year. Operating expenses often rise at a faster rate than net new construction. For example, in 2024, net new construction accounted for 2.34 percent of the growth of equalized value in the County.

To proactively address this challenge, it will be important for the next Administrator to have strong financial and planning skills as well as the ability to “think outside of the box” in terms of funding operations. Financial skills, including accounting, budgeting, and capital improvement planning, were identified by County stakeholders as being key to the success of the next Administrator.



Lake Wissota State Park is northeast of Chippewa Falls and offers secluded campsites, hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails, picnic and playground areas, and a swimming beach on a 6,300-acre man-made lake.

# MAJOR SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Chippewa County provides a wide range of services, from assisting veterans to overseeing elections. The following are some major services provided by the County, but they are by no means a complete list. For a complete overview of the names and functions of the County's departments, visit its [website](#).

## Public Safety

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The County provides law enforcement and emergency services through the Sheriff's Office, the District Attorney's office, the Coroner's office, and Emergency Management Services.

## Human Services

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With its mission of "strengthening our community through partnerships and services to promote dignity, increase resilience, and provide hope," the Department provides resources for basic human and family needs such as food, fuel, shelter, and medical services. The Department achieves this through a wide variety of programs in areas including aging, mental health, developmental disabilities, alcohol and other drug abuse, economic support, child abuse, and neglect.

## Courts

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Chippewa County's three circuit court judges are elected by County voters to six-year terms and paid by the State. Support of Court operations, however, is the responsibility of County, led by the elected Clerk of Circuit Court and his staff.

## Highway Department

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The Highway Department is responsible for year-round maintenance of an extensive system of State and County highways.



## Administration

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The County Administrator leads the Department of Administration, which consists of the following divisions: Corporation Counsel, Criminal Justice Services, Finance, Information Technology, Facilities & Parks, and Human Resources.

## Planning & Zoning

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The Planning and Zoning Department administers and enforces the County's land use ordinances as well as applicable provisions of Wisconsin law covering general zoning, shoreland zoning, floodplain zoning and land division.

## Public Health

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The mission of the County's Health Department is to protect, promote, and preserve the health of the Chippewa County community. Its many roles include investigating and diagnosing community health problems and hazards, providing education, and providing emergency preparedness.

## Land Conservation and Forest Management

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The County Land Conservation and Forest Management Department provides services that allow County landowners, residents, and cooperating municipalities to conserve and manage natural resources. In addition to managing stormwater and non-metallic mining, the Department is responsible for managing the production, use, and conservation of the Chippewa County Forest.

Wisconsin has implemented a unique partnership with its counties seen in only one other state (Minnesota). Under the arrangement, counties are responsible for maintaining not only county trunk highways but also state roads under a reimbursement system. The Chippewa County Highway Department maintains the fourth largest combined County Trunk and State Trunk system in Wisconsin. In addition to being responsible for maintaining 1,663 lane miles of state and county highways, the Department maintains 1,333 land miles of local roads under contracts with other units of government. Highway Department personnel are pictured (left).

# THE POSITION

## POSITION SUMMARY

The County Administrator is the chief administrative officer of the County under section 59.18 of the Wisconsin statutes, appointed by and accountable to the County Board. The County Administrator is responsible for performing all statutory responsibilities as well as duties assigned by the County Board. Major statutory duties of the position include appointing and supervising the heads of all departments of the county except those elected by the people or where the statutes provide that the appointment shall be made by elected officers. Duties also include “recommending such matters to the board for its consideration as the county administrator deems expedient” and submitting the annual budget to the Board.

## COMPENSATION

The salary for the position is **\$150,000 to \$170,000** plus excellent benefits.

Under Wisconsin law, the administration of county government is to be provided in one of three ways:

- Elected County Executive
- Appointed County Administrator
- Appointed Administrative Coordinator.

The difference between the Administrator and the Administrative Coordinator is that the former position has additional responsibilities and authority established by state law. The statutory charge of the County Administrator is set forth in section 59.18 of the Wisconsin statutes. In Wisconsin counties that operate under a County Administrator system, oversight committees take on a policy-making role while the County Administrator is responsible for day-to-day operations.

The incumbent County Administrator is retiring after serving seven years in the position.

## ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

### THE FOLLOWING DUTIES ARE NORMAL FOR THE POSITION:

- Fulfills the duties of the County Administrator as set forth in Wisconsin state statutes.
- Oversees daily operations of county government under the general supervision of the Board of Supervisors, including the direction, supervision, and administration of the county departments, agencies, and offices.
- Ensures that every County ordinance and state or federal law is observed, enforced and administered within the county if the ordinance or law is subject to enforcement by the County Administrator or any other person supervised by the County Administrator.
- Interprets and executes policies of the Board of Supervisors and promulgate rules and regulations as necessary to implement those policies. Advises department heads concerning said policies, directives and expectations.
- In consultation with the county board chair, prepares the agenda for County Board and executive committee.
- Investigates the use of funds appropriated by the Board of Supervisors and used by any person or group and reports the findings to the Board.
- Attends all meetings of the County Board and committees unless excused.
- Provides professional consultation and staff support to assist the County Board in making informed decisions regarding key policy matters. Presents policy alternatives and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for deliberation/action.
- Reviews all agendas for meetings of the Board of Supervisors and all agendas for committee, board, or commission meetings; evaluates departmental and other requests to determine if such requests should be submitted to the board and makes recommendations to the board on agenda items as warranted.

These are representative duties of the position. The full position description is available to candidates upon request. Candidates are directed to section 59.18 of the Wisconsin Statutes for additional information.

# THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate for the Chippewa County Administrator position will be an approachable leader with a proven track record of building high-quality teams and maintaining an excellent workplace culture. The County seeks a collaborative problem-solver, with exceptional listening and communication skills. The ability to cultivate productive relationships with staff, citizens, county board supervisors, and other units of government will be critical to success.

## SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

A strong finance background, including a sound knowledge of budget development and capital improvement planning, is essential. The successful candidate will possess exceptional strategic planning and project management skills. Immediate priorities include employee recruitment and retention and maintaining excellent services in light of statutory budget caps.

## QUALIFICATIONS

Requires a Bachelor's degree in public or business administration, finance, or a related field. Significant experience in the administration of a complex organization with a minimum of four years in upper-level management is required, as well as a thorough knowledge of local government. A combination of education and experience may be substituted for a specific degree major. Preferred credentials are a Master's degree in a related field. Private sector and military candidates who have led comparably sized, complex organizations are encouraged to apply.



Economic development is a priority for the County. The County Administrator must work collaboratively with the Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation, the County Board's Economic Development Committee, and others to develop a long-term plan for future development and/or future business parks. Groundbreaking ceremonies at the Lake Hallie Business Park (above).



The 33,000-acre Chippewa County Forest (above) is a working forest that serves multiple purposes. In addition to providing a wide range of recreational opportunities, the forest is managed by the County for the sustainable production of forest products.

# HOW TO APPLY

Email cover letter, résumé, three professional references and salary history as a single PDF to Jon Hochkammer, Public Administration Associates, LLC at [jonhochkammer@gmail.com](mailto:jonhochkammer@gmail.com). Include Chippewa County, WI Administrator Search in the subject line. Questions regarding the position should be directed to Mr. Hochkammer at (608) 225-3024. The deadline for applications is January 27, 2025.

*Confidentiality must be requested by applicant and cannot be provided for finalists.*