



FINANCE DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT

RICHLAND COUNTY, WISCONSIN

POSITION PROFILE



Public Administration Associates

This recruitment is facilitated by Public Administration Associates, LLC

THE COMMUNITY

Quality of Life

Located in Southwest Wisconsin, Richland County (Population 17,179) offers the best of both worlds; a small-town quality of life within a ninety-minute drive of both Madison and La Crosse. Richland County's many peaceful communities, offer a variety of housing options, quality schools, growing businesses and job opportunities. Richland County boasts year-round recreational activities including canoeing, kayaking and fishing. Thousands of acres of parks and public land are available for hiking, biking, cross country skiing and hunting with trails for snowmobiling and ATV's. The County's total land area of 589 square miles is organized into 16 towns, five villages and one city. The County seat is the City of Richland Center (population 4,961). Learn more about Richland County by visiting its [website](#).

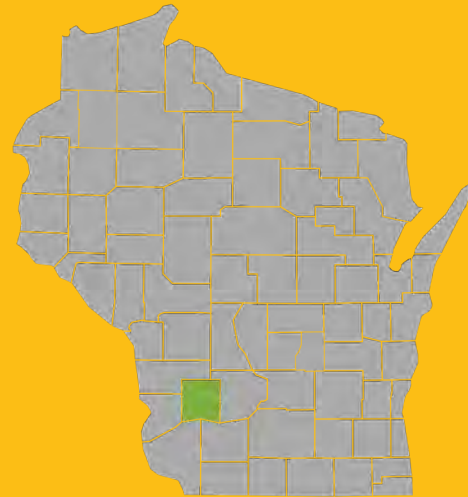
The top five most populous jurisdictions are:

- Richland Center 4,961
- Town of Buena Vista . . . 1,818
- Town of Richland 1,166
- Village of Lone Rock . . . 836
- Town of Dayton 774

There are activities to suit all interests in Richland County. Local retail orchards and the Richland Area Farmers Market offer locally grown produce. Many small museums, such as the Akey School Museum near Twin Bluffs offer a glimpse into the County's past.



Richland County residents enjoy the charm of small town living within a 90-minute drive of the metropolitan areas of Madison and La Crosse. The Starlight 14, in Richland Center, is one of just 11 remaining outdoor theaters in Wisconsin.



Created from the Wisconsin Territory in 1842, Richland County was organized in 1850. It was named for the high quality of its soil. The County has a total area of 589 square miles.



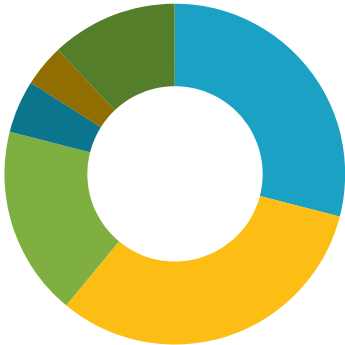
Hundreds of miles of rivers and streams, including the Wisconsin and Pine Rivers make Richland County a paradise for canoeists and kayakers.

Outdoor activities are not limited to the summer months. An extensive trail system offers opportunities for snowmobilers and skiers to enjoy the winter beauty of Richland County. (Both photos courtesy of Richland Tourism).



THE ECONOMY

Richland County enjoys a diverse economy featuring a strong manufacturing base. Major employment sectors are shown on the following chart.



Richland County Employment

- Education and Health Services 28.6%
- Manufacturing 32.2%
- Trade, Transportation and Utilities . 18.5%
- Construction 4.5%
- Public Administration 4.0%
- All Other Sectors. 12.2%

Agricultural products comprise an important part of the County’s economy. According to a study by UW-Extension, agriculture accounts for over 3,200 jobs and \$1B in economic activity.



The county’s strong manufacturing base is on full display in Richland Center. Pictured above is Rockwell Automation’s production facility on Highway 14. Seats Incorporated operates a manufacturing facility in Richland Center (pictured below.) The company is one of the most diverse seating manufacturers in the country, producing products used in a wide variety of vehicles including semi-tractors, earth moving equipment and military vehicles.



EDUCATION

Richland County is served by four different quality public school districts including Richland, Weston, Ithaca and Kickapoo. The County is also served by the Southwest Wisconsin Technical College System. In 2022 Southwest Tech was named as one of ten finalists for the Aspen Prize for community college excellence, the nation’s signature recognition of community colleges that are achieving high, improving and equitable outcomes for students.



Richland Center High School serves nearly 400 students in grades 9-12. Offering advanced placement classes in eleven different subjects as well as a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, the School placed in the top 30 percent for overall test scores in the State in 2022. The 600 seat Performing Arts Center is pictured above. Kickapoo High School located in Viola, Wisconsin (located below) serves students in the northwestern portion of the County. Viola is one of two villages that is located in Richland County as well as a neighboring county (Vernon). The other is Cazenovia (Sauk County).



For many years the University of Wisconsin offered classes at a campus in Richland Center (UW-Platteville Richland) as a partnership between county and state government. The University provided faculty and administrative support while the County owned the campus and shared maintenance costs. Two-year campuses have been under pressure, across the state, due to decreasing enrollment. In 2023 the University ceased in-person instructional activities at the Richland campus. Reuse of the campus facilities will be an important challenge for the new County.



RICHLAND COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Richland 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 \$42.5M annual (2025 expense) budget supports 248 full-time employees, 15 part-time employees and an additional 176 authorized casual positions. Richland 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. The Finance Director reports to the County Administrator, but provides assistance to County committees and departments. In addition to County Board Supervisors, other officials elected directly by voters include the County Clerk, Treasurer, Sheriff, Clerk of Circuit Court, Register of Deeds, Coroner, Circuit Court Judge and District Attorney. The County Board is organized into numerous standing committees to provide policy oversight of the departments. Much of the work for the County Board is conducted by these committees.



It took the County four previous attempts to build a courthouse, but the fifth one was a charm. (Pictured at the top of the page). Constructed from 1889 to 1890 the Richland County Courthouse is an architectural gem. It was refurbished in 1937 and again in 1953, when its cupola, clock tower and steep gables were replaced by an electronic clock. A Government Center was added to the west side of the courthouse in 1982. Today, the building houses a single branch of the circuit court, the County Board, as well as numerous departments of County government including the Sheriff's Office and jail.

Although hard to upstage the Courthouse in terms of architectural significance, Frank Lloyd Wright, who was born in Richland Center, did just that in 1917 with his design of the A.D. German Warehouse, pictured above. The warehouse, which still stands today just a few blocks away from the Courthouse, draws visitors from around the world. Designed in Mayan Revival Style, the warehouse has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1974.



FINANCES

Like all Wisconsin Counties, Richland County relies heavily on property taxes to fund operations. Charges for services are also a key revenue source that support the annual budget. Since 1989 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.

RICHLAND COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL FUND

EXPENSES/EXPENDITURES CATEGORIES

BUDGET YEAR 2025



Expenses/Expenditures Cat.	Percent
General Government	7.7%
Public Safety	12.8%
Health and Human Services	49.8%
Debt Service	7.8%
All Other	21.9%

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 took place 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 .75 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.



The Sheriff is considered the chief law enforcement officer of the County and is directly elected by the voters. The statutory responsibilities of the Sheriff are broad and include; appointing deputies, directing law enforcement services, deputy discipline, taking charge of the jail, attending to the Circuit Court, serving and executing writs and legal process, enforcing the law, executing warrants and transporting prisoners. In Richland County, the Sheriff also oversees the County Emergency Communications Center, which dispatches police, fire and emergency responders throughout the entire county and for agencies in surrounding counties that have service areas extending into Richland County.

MAJOR SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Richland County provides a wide range of services from assisting veterans to overseeing elections. The following are some major services provided by the County, but 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

The County provides law enforcement and emergency services through the Sheriff's Office as well as the Offices of the District Attorney, Coroner and Emergency Management Department.

Health and Human Services

The County provides health and human services in a wide variety of areas including public health, aging, mental health, developmental disabilities, alcohol and other drug abuse, economic support, child abuse and neglect, child support enforcement and long-term care.

Highways

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

Pine Valley Community Village

Located just south of Richland Center, Pine Valley Community Village provides a variety of services including a skilled nursing center and assisted living facility.

Zoning, Sanitation and Conservation

The County Land Conservation Department oversees land and water conservation programs. The mission of the Zoning Department is to regulate land uses within the County through the enforcement of comprehensive zoning, shoreland, subdivision and flood plain ordinances.



The Richland County Highway Department operates out of its facility located near Richland Center (shown above). Wisconsin has a unique system whereby counties maintain, not only county roads, but State Highways, as well, under a reimbursement program.

THE POSITION

POSITION SUMMARY

The Finance Director plays a key role in managing and overseeing the financial operations of Richland County government. This leadership position requires a strategic thinker who can guide financial decisions, ensure compliance with budgetary regulations, and provide expert financial advice to the County Board, the County Administrator, and departments. The Finance Director is responsible for maintaining fiscal integrity, promoting transparency, and maximizing the efficient use of public funds. The Finance Director reports to the County Administrator and supervises the Finance Department staff.

COMPENSATION

The salary range for the position is \$101,920 to \$126,609 plus excellent benefits.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

SOME ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE POSITION INCLUDE:

- Establishes, maintains, and directs County-wide accounting functions ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal requirements.
- Advises and assists the County Administrator and County Board in preparing budget documents and makes related recommendations based on review and analysis of county financial data.
- Prepares and recommends Capitol Improvement Plans.
- Monitors all County department expenditures collaboratively with the County Administrator.
- Develops, recommends, and implements accounting policies and procedures.
- Prepares and presents financial reports to County Board, staff, and governing committees.
- Provides professional financial consultation to County officials and staff.
- Develops and maintains long-term planning and debt management.
- Assists and collaborates with outside auditors and consultants.
- Prepares a variety of reports, data, analysis, and recommendations.
- Manages staff: recommend hiring, discipline and discharge decisions. Assigns and schedules work activities, trains, monitors, and evaluates work.
- Attending conferences, training, and meetings.
- Performs other duties as assigned or apparent.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

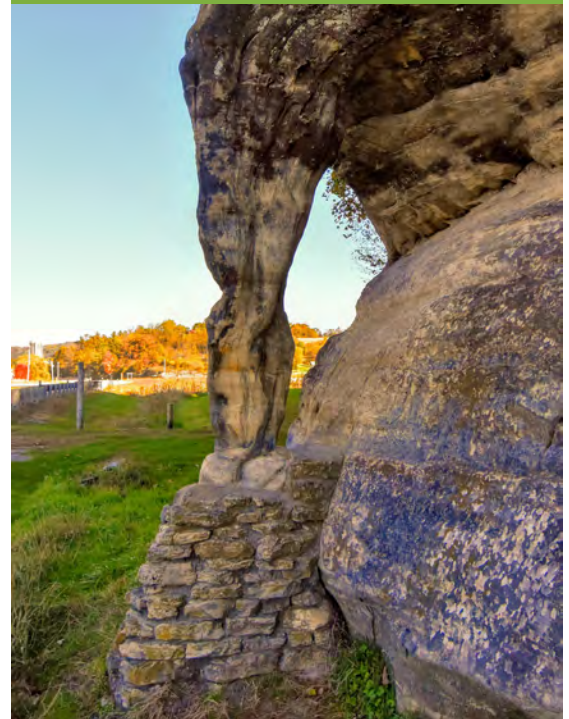
The ideal candidate for the Richland County Finance Director position is a financial professional with a track record of success in creating and maintaining transparent and financially resilient organizations. The County seeks an approachable leader who is a collaborative problem-solver and possesses exceptional listening skills.

SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

A strong finance background including a comprehensive knowledge of government accounting principles, sound knowledge of budget development and capital improvement planning is essential. The ideal candidate will have experience with the following : Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and Outlook software as well as IBM I-Series and AS400 systems. The County is currently transitioning to a new financial software system. The ability to prepare a variety of documents and spreadsheets, develop and implement goals and objectives and supervise personnel in a manner conducive to efficient performance and high morale is essential. Finance professionals who excel at performing widely varied work requiring analytical ability and inductive thinking are encouraged to apply.

QUALIFICATIONS

Requires a Bachelor's degree in accounting or related field and five years' governmental accounting/finance experience; or any combination of education and experience that provides equivalent knowledge, skills, and abilities for this position. CPA licensure preferred.



Richland County is part of Wisconsin's "driftless region." Bypassed by glaciers during the last ice age, the County's geography is characterized by steep hills, forested ridges and breathtaking rock formations such as the one pictured above.

(The photo above as well as the cover photo are courtesy of the Southwestern Regional Planning Commission).

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 smcdade@gmail.com. Include Richland County Finance Search in the subject line. Questions regarding the position should be directed to Mr. Hochkammer at (608) 225-3024. The deadline for applications is May 16, 2025.

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