



City Administrator City of Portage, Wisconsin

Position Profile



Public Administration Associates



The Community

The City of Portage, known as "Where the North Begins" is the largest municipality in Columbia County, with a population of 10,126. It serves as the county seat and is part of the Madison Metropolitan Statistical Area, adjacent to the Stevens Point Micropolitan Statistical Area. Located just 30 minutes from Madison and near the Wisconsin Dells recreation area, Portage offers an affordable, high-quality alternative to big city living. Its strategic location along Interstates 39 and 94 and U.S. Highway 51 enhances its regional appeal, while its commercial and industrial base contributes to a strong local economy.

Incorporated in 1854, Portage is uniquely situated between the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers, historically serving as a key travel route. This geographic advantage has supported the city's long-standing economic success. Portage features excellent neighborhoods, diverse housing options, award-winning schools, a thriving historic downtown, and a growing business district. Many historic sites and buildings are listed on the National, State, and Local Registers of Historic Places, preserving the city's rich heritage.

Portage's location along the rivers provides ample recreational opportunities, including fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and boating. The city's park system further enhances residents' quality of life, offering a variety of amenities. Nearby, the Swan Lake and Pine Island State Wildlife Areas provide additional outdoor activities. The Wisconsin Dells recreation area also offers nationally recognized entertainment and year-round attractions.



City Administrator Role

The City Administrator is the chief administrative officer, overseeing the departments of Administration, Finance, Parks/Recreation/Forestry, Business Development and Planning, Public Works, and Utilities. The position also supervises the Police and Fire/EMS Departments and the Library. Appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the nine-member Common Council, the City Administrator plays a key role in policy implementation and community leadership.

Key Initiatives & Projects

The new Portage Administrator can look forward to a wide range of challenging and interesting work:

- Leverage location, current amenities, and TIF Districts to both retain and attract new business and residential development.
- Continue partnerships with County, School, and Community Groups to collaborate on City needs and strategic plan for the future.
- Continue to develop and initiate an infrastructure improvement plan and City facilities plan, including a facilities wide plant upgrade to the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant (project estimated at \$55 million dollars)
- Assist in continued implementation of new EMS services, following 2024 voter approved referendum.
- Innovative budget and capital planning to meet city needs and employee retention while meeting local and State imposed expenditure and levy limit restraints.



Budget & Workforce

Portage's total 2025 budget is \$31.2 million, including: General Fund: \$9.6 million; Capital Project Funds: \$9.7 million; Debt Service Fund: \$3.6 million; Special Revenue Funds (including EMS): \$5.7 million; Sanitary Sewer Utility: \$2.9 million; Water Utility: \$2.7 million; TIF Districts: \$727,462

The city employs 89 full-time, 15 part-time, and approximately 80 seasonal staff members.

Qualifications & Ideal Candidate Profile

Education: Bachelor's degree in public or business administration (master's preferred).

Experience: Minimum of five years of progressively responsible municipal leadership. Private sector or military experience will be considered if relevant.

Skills:

- Budget development and management
- Capital improvement planning and execution
- Commercial development/redevelopment – overall economic development
- Human resources (pay, performance and general personnel management)
- Strategic planning

The ideal candidate will be a high-integrity leader with open and positive communication skills, a passion for public service, and a collaborative approach to governance. Strong listening skills and the ability to be a team builder and leader in addressing community issues will be critical for success.

Compensation & Application Process

Salary Range: \$125,000 - \$145,000 DOQ + excellent benefits

Application Deadline: April 28, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

How to Apply: Submit a cover letter, resume, 5 work-related references, and salary history as a single PDF to smcdade@public-administration.com.

For questions, contact **Sue McDade** at **(608) 516-9012**, Public Administration Associates, LLC.

Confidentiality requests must be made by the applicant but cannot be guaranteed for finalists.

For more information, visit the City of Portage, WI website at portagewi.gov



Watch the Portage City Administrator Video Announcement
<https://youtu.be/9Sx0bLXq8XU>

