

County Administrator Recruitment Profile

Sussex County

Virginia



COUNTY OF
SUSSEX
VIRGINIA

Sussex County is seeking an experienced professional to serve as **County Administrator**, the chief administrative officer responsible for directing programs and operations of the County government.

This recruitment profile provides background information on the community, its government operations and its aspirations. It also outlines the qualifications, experience and characteristics determined to be necessary and desirable for successful performance as County Administrator.

Qualified candidates are encouraged to submit a cover letter and resume, with salary expectations and professional references, to The Berkley Group via email at kimball.payne@bgllc.net. While the position is open until filled, an initial **review of candidates will begin May 22, 2020**. Inquiries relating to the County Administrator position may be directed to:

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The Berkley Group

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Bridgewater, Virginia 22812

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Sussex County, VA

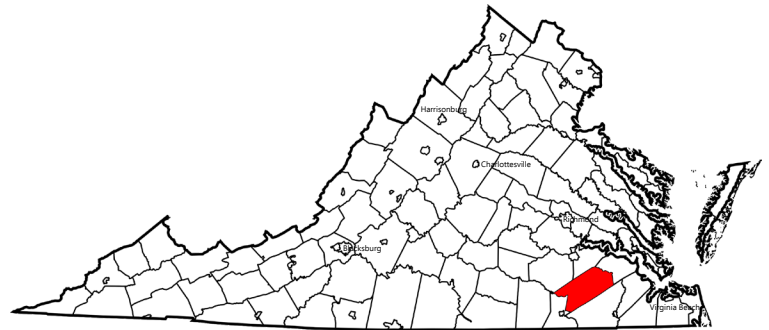
Rooted in the Past, Growing for the Future!

Community Background

Located in the heart of rural southeastern Virginia, Sussex County is strategically centered between Richmond, Hampton Roads, and Southern Virginia. A part of "Virginia's Gateway Region," Sussex sits along the I-95 and US-460 corridors, 45 miles southeast of the capital city of Richmond and 25 miles from the tri-cities area that includes Petersburg, Colonial Heights, and Hopewell. Washington D.C. and Baltimore are within a few hours' drive, while Boston and Atlanta are both within a day's drive. The county encompasses 496 square miles and lies in the Coastal Plain region on level to slightly rolling terrain.

Sussex County was created in 1754 by an act of the Virginia legislature that divided it off from Surry County to the north. It took its name from Sussex County, England. The County has a rich history from colonial times, through the revolution, Civil War, reconstruction, and the Twentieth Century. It is the home of six historic landmarks including the Sussex Courthouse Historic District, the Miles Carpenter House and Museum in Waverly, and four plantation homes. The County has four towns that serve as centers for commerce and culture: Waverly, incorporated in 1879, Wakefield, incorporated in 1902, Stony Creek, incorporated in 1915, and Jarratt, incorporated in 1938.

The economy of Sussex County is based on agriculture and agricultural-related manufacturing. According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, there were 111 farms in Sussex County in 2017, with an average size of 379 acres. Twenty-five percent of the County's land is



devoted to agricultural production. Principal crops are peanuts, cotton, corn, flue-cured tobacco, small grains, and soybeans. Agriculture accounts for over one-half of the county's basic employment and more than a quarter of its total employment. Other basic industries include manufacturing, pork production, commercial forestry, peanut shelling and tourism. The Virginia Department of Corrections operates two facilities, Sussex I and Sussex II State Prisons, near the town of Waverly. Waste Management, Inc. operates the Atlantic Waste Disposal facility, a commercial landfill operation, in the county.

Sussex County promotes additional economic development in partnership with the Virginia Department of Economic Development, Go Virginia, and the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission. It has two sites, a technological commerce center and a mega site totaling approximately 1400 acres, identified for new or

expanding business and industry. The Sussex VA Chamber of Commerce works to develop, encourage, promote and protect the commercial, professional, educational, financial, general business and residential interests of the community, to promote the civic interests and general welfare, to promote trade, commerce and agriculture, and to foster, develop and protect the industrial growth of Sussex County.

The immediate retail and service needs of county residents are met at over 180 businesses located throughout the county. These establishments represent a broad retail mix that includes grocery, hardware, specialty and professional service businesses. The downtown areas of Wakefield and Waverly serve as commercial centers for the county. A wide assortment of antique, clothing, gift and restaurant establishments can be found in these active central business districts. Wakefield is the home of the "Peanut Capital of the World," the Virginia Diner. The county's close proximity to Williamsburg and the Hampton Roads and Richmond metropolitan areas enables residents to benefit from the numerous regional malls and shopping centers that are in those areas.

Cultural attractions in the county include the Miles C. Carpenter Folk Art Museum located in Waverly and the Wakefield Foundation Center for the Arts. The Arts Center offers a wide array of activities and attractions including art displays and courses, dance classes and concerts. The Arts Center also opens its facilities to civic group functions.

Sussex County's central location between Williamsburg, the Richmond-Petersburg metropolitan area and the Hampton Roads metropolitan area enables residents to easily access the numerous recreational, historic, cultural educational and entertainment attractions that these diverse areas have to offer. Regional attractions include the historical sites and museums in Colonial Williamsburg; Busch Gardens and Kings Dominion - theme parks near Williamsburg and Richmond, respectively; the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk; Seashore State Park in Virginia Beach; and numerous championship golf courses located throughout the region.

The many fields, swamps and woodlands of the area offer numerous recreational opportunities for county residents. State, regional and local parks offer fishing, hunting, biking, ball fields, playgrounds and water sports. Rivers and ponds have been stocked with largemouth bass, crappie and bream. Boating and swimming are also enjoyed on the waterways of the county. Deer hunting is a popular activity. Several hunt clubs have been established in the community to support this endeavor. The Southeast 4-H Educational Center on Airfield Lake has an indoor recreational complex and offers swimming, boating and horseback riding facilities. Other public recreational facilities include four tennis courts and 19 athletic fields. Sussex County operates a public park in the town of Stony Creek that includes a walking/running track with exercise stations, fields, and a gazebo for events.

Sussex County residents utilize medical services available at several area hospitals. Southside Regional Medical Center, a 468-bed acute care facility located in Petersburg offers extensive medical services that include 24-hour emergency care, intensive and coronary care, diagnostic services, and a school of nursing. A full critical care, teaching hospital and associated facilities are located at the Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center in Richmond. Comprehensive primary health care is provided at the Stoney Creek Community Health Center. In addition to treating individual patients, the health center emphasizes health promotion and disease prevention for the entire community. Among the core services are physician care, x-ray services, laboratory services, preventive services, immunizations, transportation for health services, case management and specialty referrals. The Sussex County Health Department also offers a range of public health services.

Sussex County Public Schools are all located on a single campus approximately 1/2 mile from the county seat on Route 40. The school district consists of three schools: one elementary school, one middle school and one comprehensive high school with a total student population of approximately 1,200. All county schools are accredited by the State Department of Education. Tidewater Academy, a pre-kindergarten-Grade 12 college preparatory independent school, is located in the town of Wakefield. Sussex County Public Schools has a regional affiliation with the Rowanty Technical Center, in neighboring Prince George County, for career and technical education programs and with the Appomattox Regional Governor's School for Arts and Technology in Petersburg. It also offers dual enrollment through a partnership with John Tyler Community College. Higher education opportunities are available at public and private universities in the Richmond and Hampton Roads metropolitan areas.

Sussex County's population of 11,237 (2018 estimate) has shown a slight decline since the 2010 census count of 12,087 and is approximately 41% white, 57% African American, and 3% Hispanic. The Median Household Income is \$45,801 (2018) and the poverty rate is 22.9%.



County Government & Services

Sussex County operates under the traditional, or County Administrator, form of government (as defined under Virginia Law). It provides a range of services to the citizens and businesses of the county including animal control, building and environmental inspections, public safety, emergency management and mitigation, housing support, park operations, and community planning. County roads are maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation. Solid waste management is provided at convenience sites serviced by Waste Management, which operates a large private landfill within the County.

The Sussex County Sheriff, one of five elected constitutional officers, is responsible for law enforcement. The other constitutional officers are the Commonwealth's Attorney, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Commissioner of the Revenue, and Treasurer. The latter two provide property assessment and tax collection and financial management, respectively.

County fire and emergency medical services are provided by six volunteer fire departments and two volunteer rescue squads, with facilities located in each of the four towns and at the courthouse.

Public water and wastewater treatment services are provided by the Sussex Service Authority, a political subdivision formed by The Town Councils of the Towns of Stony Creek, Wakefield and Waverly and the Board of Supervisors of Sussex County.

Family and protective services, benefits programs, and other assistance are delivered through the Sussex County Social Services Department which is governed by an appointed board. The Blackwater Regional Library serves the communities of Isle of Wight, Southampton, Surry, and Sussex Counties and the City of Franklin. It has branch facilities in the towns of Wakefield and Waverly.

The County is governed by a six-member Board of Supervisors, elected by district to four-year terms. A tiebreaker is elected at large. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Board are elected annually by its members. The Board is the legislative policy making body for the County government. It enacts ordinances, appropriates funds, sets tax rates, establishes policies, and generally oversees the operation of the County government.

The County Administrator, the chief administrative officer of the County, is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. He or she directs the daily operations of County and administers policies and ordinances adopted by the Board. The County Administrator is responsible for developing and, upon adoption by the Board, implementing annual operating and capital budgets. He or she recommends policies and priorities for the Board's consideration and leads the County workforce in delivering services and responding to citizen issues or concerns. The County Administrator serves as

a liaison between the Board of Supervisors, Constitutional Officers, Courts, School Board, and Registrar.

Examples of work and projects that the County Administrator is responsible for include:

1. Develop, with staff, the monthly Board of County Supervisors agenda.
2. Develop and facilitate policy discussion and development.
3. Work with the board to develop county strategies and priorities
4. Develop and direct long-range service and financial planning.
5. Develop and lead county economic development strategies
6. Brief the board on matters of concern and meet with citizens and professional and business groups concerning community needs and expectations.

The County Administrator also oversees human resources activities, serves as the Director of Emergency Management, and is a member of local and regional boards and commissions.

Sussex County has 143 employees, including those of the constitutional officers and social services department, and a FY20 budget of approximately \$27 million, including approximately \$0.5 million in capital expenditures and \$8 million in the school fund.



Challenges, Issues & Opportunities

The Board of Supervisors has identified four broad strategic initiatives: Expand Economic Opportunity, Practice Good Governance, Strengthen Community Partnerships, and Fund the Future. Each year since 2017 it has adopted an action agenda to advance the strategic initiatives.

Within the context of the County's vision, mission and strategic initiatives, the new County Administrator can anticipate a focus, over the next three to five years, in the following areas.

- Continued strategic planning with a concentration on post-pandemic leadership to mitigate and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 virus on residents, businesses, and institutions in the County.
- Economic development in bringing online a state-of-the-art business/industrial park and in supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs through a focused business appreciation and expansion program.
- Ongoing staff development to improve service delivery and responsiveness including continued implementation and refinement of the performance evaluation system.
- Promoting citizen engagement and encouraging greater citizen involvement through outreach, education, and feedback.
- Developing and funding a capital program, including a capital maintenance component, to ensure that County facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the public and allow staff to perform their duties efficiently and effectively.

Sussex County Vision

As a framework for its policy deliberations the Sussex County Board of Supervisors has adopted the following vision and mission statements.

Vision: Sussex County is a community dedicated to making strategic choices and decisions which provide citizens and businesses alike with a diversified economy, quality public services, and a superior quality of life while sustaining the county's natural environment and rural heritage for future generations.

Mission: It is the mission of the Sussex County Board of Supervisors in partnership with the local government staff to establish the range of public policies and to secure and allocate the fiscal and physical resources needed to address the public safety, educational and community development needs of county citizens and county businesses in a fiscally prudent and responsible manner.

The fulfillment of its vision and mission is guided by Sussex County's core values of transparency, mutual respect, teamwork, integrity, and accountability.





Position Profile

County Administrator, Sussex County

Qualifications, Education & Experience

The following education and experience factors are the expected qualifications for successful performance:

- A bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Business Management, or a related field; a master's degree is preferred.
- Three to five years of successful leadership at a senior executive/administrator level in an organization with comparable responsibilities; possessing a broad skill set appropriate to the breadth of County government operations. Local government experience in Virginia as a manager, deputy or assistant is desirable.
- A demonstrated commitment to ongoing professional development through participation in organizations such as the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA); designation or progress toward designation as ICMA Credentialed Manager is desirable.
- Any combination of education and experience that qualifies an applicant may be considered in lieu of the more specific criteria listed above.

Personal Traits & Desired Characteristics

- Absolute integrity, ensuring ethical, equitable, honest, fair, and open interactions with members of the Board of Supervisors, community members, and all County employees.
- Professionally competent, with confidence tempered by humility.
- Excellent communications and interpersonal skills, including the ability to collaborate, listen effectively, and understand differing views.
- Strong democratic leadership skills in the government organization, the community, and the region; visionary, proactive, and decisive; able to facilitate the blending of differing points of view into a reasonable approach for community betterment.
- Approachable and empathetic with a customer service mindset.
- A role model, coach, and mentor for County employees; dedicated to the professional development of staff; able to empower employees with a focus on performance, collaboration and accountability.

Performance Expectations

- Short-term, immediate actions will be to engage with staff and the Board of Supervisors, review the County budget, structure, policies and procedures, assume a leadership role in pandemic mitigation efforts, and get up to speed on active projects and economic development responsibilities.
- Responsive to citizen concerns and issues; listening, understanding and providing timely follow-up.
- A commitment to open and transparent government; promoting a positive and interactive relationship with citizens and stakeholders; encouraging citizen engagement.
- Effective communications with all stakeholders; presenting information in a form understandable to various audiences.
- A focus on promoting communication, cooperation, and collaboration with the Constitutional Officers, the Department of Social Services, Sussex County Public Schools, the private sector and the region.
- Frequent interaction with the towns to discuss issues of mutual interest and to promote cooperation and collaboration.
- Fair and equitable investment in and support of County employees and departments, with a priority of improving competency and accountability.
- An active member of the community, building relationships with citizens, business owners, and other stakeholders.
- County residency is required within one year of employment.

Compensation & Benefits

Compensation for the County Administrator will be competitive depending on qualifications and experience. The previous incumbent received a base salary of \$130,000. The successful candidate will be offered a generous benefits package including participation in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), health insurance coverage, paid time off, deferred compensation, professional development support and other benefits as identified in a negotiated employment agreement.

Application Process

Initial **review of candidates will begin on May 22, 2020**. Applications received after that date may be considered until the position is filled. Timely submittal will ensure the most advantageous review. To be considered, please submit a cover letter and resume, with salary expectations and professional references, to The Berkley Group, via email at kimball.payne@bgllc.net. Questions may be directed to:

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For Additional Information

Visit <https://www.sussexcountyva.gov/>

Sussex County is an Equal Opportunity Employer