



WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR



EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

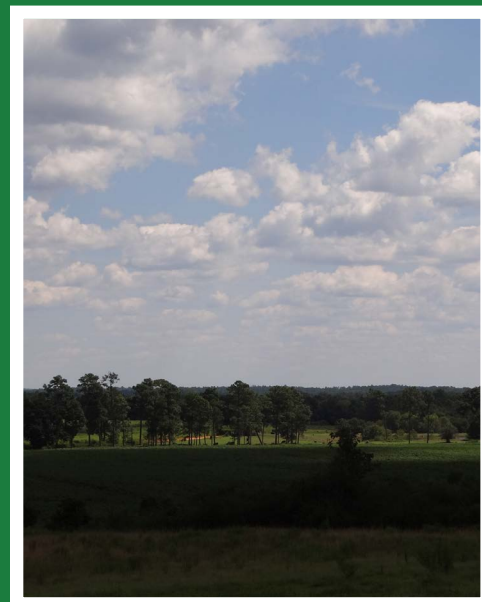
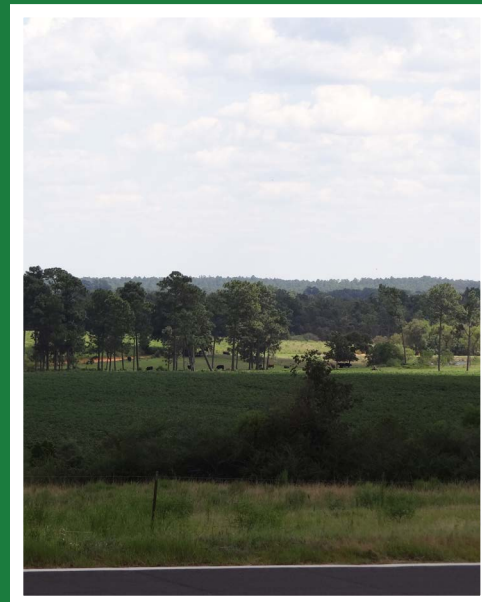


Walton County, FL (pop. 75,305) – The Board of County Commissioners seeks a County Administrator to join their Leadership Team, employees, community partners and residents in further growing and developing a resilient and sustainable community. Walton County is located on the Emerald Coast in the panhandle of Florida, with its southern border on the Gulf of Mexico. Its county seat is DeFuniak Springs, and the county has a total area of 1,240 square miles, of which 1,038 square miles is land and 202 square miles (16.3%) is water. The county is one of the largest in area in the state, stretching from the Alabama state line to the Emerald Coast.

Walton County was organized by European Americans in 1824. It was named for Colonel George Walton Jr., Secretary of the Florida Territory. The early territory that has since become Walton County was part of the colony of British West Florida. During this time British settlers permanently settled in the southern area, becoming the first English-speaking people to permanently reside in what is now Walton County. There were also Scottish settlers that migrated from the backcountry of the Carolinas and settled in the Defuniak Springs and northern area while English settlers, most of whom were either farmers or anglers, settled in the southern portion of the county by the sea.

Since the early days, farming has been an important occupation of the majority of the citizens in Walton County. The soils of the county vary in character from the heavy river bottom lands to the lighter sandy loam of the hills, under-laid by clay subsoil. The latter type is especially adapted to the growing of wild satsuma, grapes, pears, figs, and peaches. The staple crops most produced are corn, soybeans, peanuts, wheat, sugar cane, sweet potatoes, and forage crops.

Walton County saw an almost 40% population growth between the 2010 and 2020 census. The 26 miles of sugary beaches are an attraction to many residents as well as visitors to the area.



INCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

THE CITY OF DEFUNIAK SPRINGS

The City of DeFuniak Springs is Walton County's seat of government, including the county courthouse, administrative offices and various departments. This community of approximately 6,000 residents has over 200 structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. With a historic district encircling Lake DeFuniak (one of only a few perfectly round lakes in the world), the city boasts the perfectly restored Chautauqua Hall of Brotherhood, an icon of a fabled cultural arts movement that flourished in the late 19th century. Many of the homes built in early years, by visitors to the Florida Chautauqua who moved here from the north, along with businesspeople of the time, still stand.

Many of the same things that made DeFuniak Springs so popular in its early years are still found here today. A quiet friendly community, today it continues to host cultural events like the Florida Chautauqua Assembly, Florida Chautauqua Theater productions, and Grit and Grace, as well as various Arts and Crafts groups. The historic downtown district has been undergoing some exciting revitalization in the past few years, thanks in part to the city's Community Redevelopment Agency and partnership with Mainstreet DeFuniak Springs. Highlights of the city's most popular events are the farmer's market, live music and performances, Lake Fest, Marvel of Flight air show, and the city's grand finale- Christmas Reflections. The city has a host of boutique, antique and curio shops.

THE CITY OF FREEPORT

The City of Freeport is the crossroads between North and South Walton County. Situated along the north shore of Choctawhatchee Bay only 15 minutes from the Beaches of South Walton, Freeport has maritime roots that continue to support a thriving barge port today. It is advantageously situated and within driving proximity to Tallahassee, Pensacola, Montgomery, Ft. Walton Beach, and Panama City. Freeport is a proud cooperative neighbor of Eglin Air Force Base which borders the city limits.

In addition, the city has become home to a notable master-planned community and golf course living. Retail opportunities abound in Freeport, and the Walton County Industrial Park at Freeport has enjoyed strong success. With the recent four-lane expansion of Highway 331 and the newly reconstructed Choctawhatchee bridge, Freeport has recently welcomed several commercial developments. It is a progressive small city on the verge of huge economic development.

THE TOWN OF PAXTON

The Town of Paxton is nestled just south of the Alabama state line in the northernmost part of Walton County, and it straddles busy US Highway 331, the primary route from the midwest and midsouth to the Emerald Coast beaches. This community is home to the highest point in the state of Florida and is a logical stopping point for much of the leisure-oriented traffic passing through. The city owns the 23-acre Paxton Industrial Park, which features a 10,000 square foot building ideal for logistics and distribution. Proximity to Interstate 65 and its access to the Mobile/Birmingham/Nashville markets is a key feature of the town.

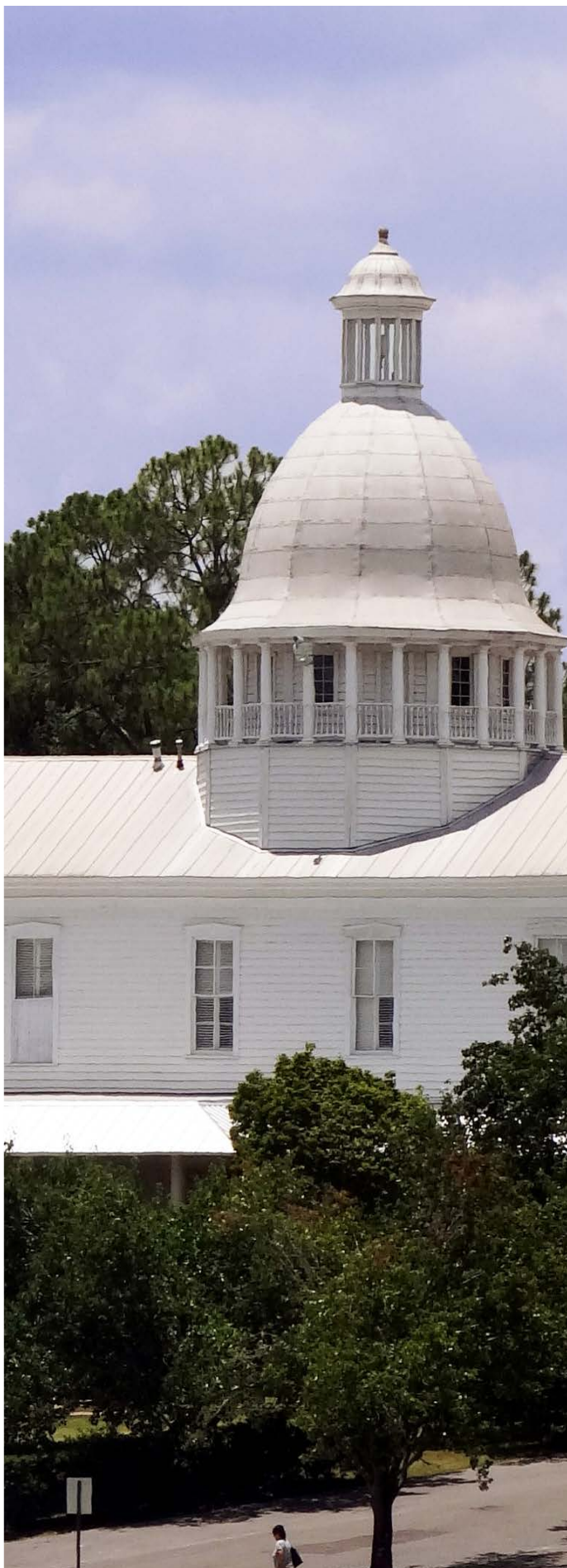
TOURISM & INDOOR/ OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Walton County's tourism economy is heavily rooted in the scenic beaches that wind along the 26 miles of the Emerald Coast. Scenic Highway 30-A winds along the Gulf of Mexico for 25 miles and highlights a vast variety of beach towns, each of which has a distinct personality. From the world-renowned architectural splendor of Seaside to the "old Florida" look of Dune Allen Beach, from the master-planned town center of Rosemary Beach to the flair of Grayton Beach, there is a discovery around every bend. To the west of Highway 30-A, the mega-resort Sandestin (Walton County's largest private employer) offers golf and distinctive accommodations spanning from the gulf to the bay.

The economic engine of tourism is a lot more than just visitors. It is the thousands of Walton County residents who live in these same communities and make their living in fields ranging from hospitality to the military to construction. The coastline is also home to St. Joe Companies, the storied forestry-company-turned-land-developer that is a huge corporate presence in the county and has its home base there.

Beyond the beach, an incredible arts scene unfolds on stages and in local art galleries. Interactive art experiences can be found around every corner and musicians perform live at local hotspots and restaurants. Talented actors entertain through timeless classics and modern improv. Passionate chefs create memorable meals using seafood fresh from the Gulf of Mexico. The area is home to an incredible mix of events highlighting local arts, culture, live music, food, and wine. From the annual 30A Songwriters Festival to Digital Graffiti and the Sandestin Wine Festival, there is never a dull moment.

It is easy to reconnect with nature in Walton County as well. With more than 200 miles of hiking and biking trails, four state parks and the Point Washington State Forest, a peaceful run or hike will immerse you in the area's natural beauty. The county is one of the few places in the world where coastal dune lakes exist and their calm waters are ideal for kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding.



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Walton County School District (WCSD) is committed to excellence in education. All WCSD public schools are accredited by AdvancED, which is a national accrediting organization formed through a partnership of regional accrediting agencies. WCSD holds high expectations for all students and staff. As a result, the WCSD has maintained the State Board of Education's Academically High Performing School District designation for seven consecutive years.

In 1996, WCSD sponsored one of Florida's first charter schools. Currently, choice options include virtual instruction and home school education opportunities. Schools in Walton County have an abundance of technology resources to enhance instruction. Approximately 340 district classrooms are equipped with 21st Century technologies. Grants have provided opportunities for one-to-one computing at some grade levels. The district has a 3:1 ratio of students to computers empowering students with hands – on learning.

WCSD has an articulation agreement with Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) to provide dual-enrollment courses for eligible high school students. Students completing these courses earn high school and college credits simultaneously. WCSD has partnered with the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center at the Nokuse Plantation, a 48,000-acre private conservation preserve in Freeport, to bring learning to life through hands on learning opportunities and field studies conducted alongside professional scientists. WCSD has partnered with Nokuse to redesign curriculum and integrate field studies into life and earth science for students in grades four, seven and designated high school courses.

Cultural programming is an important part of instruction. WCSD transports students to a wide variety of venues scheduled in the Florida panhandle area and in Alabama. Many students attend the Alabama Shakespearean Theater, theatrical programming at NWFSC, as well as other performances in the panhandle region. Schools also participate in the Florida Chautauqua Assembly's cultural arts program each year through extensive project-based learning activities focused on the selected annual theme.

WCSD has six elementary, three middle, three high schools, one K – 12 school, two alternative education schools, three charter schools, and a career development center school.

DeFuniak Springs is home to the Emerald Coast Technical College, which provides both secondary and post-secondary programs leading to professional certifications in computer science, auto mechanics, nursing and construction management. Students from throughout Walton County attend the Center, benefiting from both classroom training and hands-on experience.

Northwest Florida State College has two satellite campuses in Walton County, offering a variety of programs. NWFSC is noted for its degree program in hospitality management, meeting the needs of the burgeoning visitor-based economy in Walton County. The University of West Florida has a branch campus in nearby Fort Walton Beach; Florida State University operates a satellite in Panama City.



THE COUNTY & THE ORGANIZATION

The five-member Board of County Commissioners (Board) is the governing body of Walton County and serves as the legislative branch of county government. Commissioners from Districts One, Three and Five are elected in presidential election years; Districts Two and Four are elected in the intervening years. Shortly after the beginning of a new fiscal year, the members of the Board elect a chairperson and vice chairperson.

The authorities and responsibilities of the Board include:

- Adopting ordinances and resolutions to establish public policy;
- Levying authorized taxes and fees;
- Adopting a budget each fiscal year;
- Appointing a chair and vice chair at the annual organizational meeting in November;
- Providing county services and infrastructure, including determining the amount and sources of funding for each;
- Appointing, supervising, and removing the County Administrator, County Attorney and Tourist Development Council Executive Director;
- Approving expenditures of county funds;
- Entering into contracts and agreements;
- Appointing individuals to serve on various boards and commissions established by state law, or by the Board.

The County Administrator is appointed by the Board and serves as the county's chief administrative officer to ensure the effective management of operations and facilities. The County Administrator provides managerial direction to departments under the authority of the Board; provides oversight of budgets and capital expenditures; and conducts activities to promote effective public and media relations.

The county currently employs 460 full-time employees and 50 part-time/seasonal employees. The total 2022 County Budget was \$239 million.



QUALIFICATIONS

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES WILL IDEALLY POSSESS THE FOLLOWING QUALIFICATIONS

- A Bachelor's Degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a major in public administration, public policy, business, or related field, with a Master's Degree from a regionally accredited college or university specializing in Public/Business Administration or related discipline preferred.
- Seven to ten years of progressively responsible experience as a County/City Manager or an Assistant County/City Manager, including extensive experience at a senior level interacting with elected officials and other stakeholder groups.
- Demonstrated ability in budget development and implementation, financial management, and long-range financial planning for local governments; experience in innovative strategies to find new sources of revenue, including government grants-in-aid programs and public/private partnerships.
- Experience in economic and community development/redevelopment, comprehensive land use planning, and zoning administration to assist the Board in addressing issues and opportunities confronting the county and community.
- Successful experience working in and interacting within a community of multi-cultural and socioeconomic diversity; has experience in and supports equal opportunity and diversity in the workplace.
- Superior oral and written communication skills; experienced and comfortable in making oral presentations to county officials, employees, and community organizations.
- A background of successful employee relations experience; knowledgeable regarding modern human resource programs, including talent acquisition and development within a competitive and challenging labor market.
- Knowledge of Federal, State, and City laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances related to the management and administration of a county government.
- Experience in negotiating, developing, administering, and executing public and private partnerships, development contracts, grants, and professional services.
- Experience in intergovernmental relations and the ability to personally interact with other jurisdictions and agencies in a constructive, cooperative, and mutually supportive manner, while representing the county's interest tactfully and firmly.
- Experience in technology applications and computer systems, especially as they relate to a modern, effective county government operation.
- Personal experience in building teams, particularly among departments and organizations over which the County Administrator does not have direct management authority; seek feedback from not only top management staff but non-supervisory personnel as well.
- Outstanding leadership, interpersonal and communication skills while being open and approachable with strong analytical, written, and verbal presentation skills.
- History of providing and implementing creative solutions and directions by clearly and effectively setting courses of action.
- Possess and display an attitude of respect for council, staff, and the public with consistent dedication to encouraging an environment where creativity flourishes, results are provided, and accountability is at the forefront.

ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Be a person capable of engendering and earning the trust and respect of elected officials, staff, and citizens.
- Have a background of complete integrity and a high sense of professional and personal ethics; lead and motivate by example.
- Be able to build constructive working relationships and to work in partnership with elected officials who have responsibility for significant county programs and personnel.
- Be an excellent communicator; share information clearly, concisely, and in a timely manner with the Board, other elected officials, and staff.
- Be a good listener.
- Believe in, model, and promote a strong customer service orientation among county employees in dealing with citizens and as internal organizational service providers.
- Be committed to providing the Board of Commissioners with the best professional advice and recommendations that the Administrator and staff can research and develop.
- Be politically aware/politically savvy but not be involved in politics.
- Be a balanced leader and manager; be able to delegate work and hold people accountable without micromanaging; champion and exhibit participatory team management and consensus building; .
- Be innovative and creative; can anticipate rather than react to problems, concerns, and opportunities.
- Have a commitment to regular training and career development for self and employees including ongoing coaching, and development of staff toward attaining job satisfaction, high morale, and productivity.
- Be willing and able to be involved in the community beyond the duties and responsibilities of the job.
- Be willing to commit to a reasonable tenure in service to Walton County.



The minimum salary for the position is \$150,000. Additional salary is negotiable based upon qualifications and experience. Walton County also offers an outstanding fringe benefit package. Interested candidates should apply online by February 3, 2023, with a cover letter, resume, and contact information for at least five (5) professional references to www.GovHRjobs.com and to the attention of:

Sarah McKee, Senior Vice President,
GovHR USA,
630 Dundee Road, Suite 130, Northbrook, IL 60062.
Tel: 847-380-3240, EXT 120.

Walton County is committed to compliance with the American Disabilities Act and is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Diversity and inclusion are critical to their success. They seek to recruit the most talented people from a diverse candidate pool and strongly encourage women, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities and veterans to apply.

*The State of Florida has strong public record laws.
All application materials are public record.
Walton County follows all applicable Florida Sunshine Laws.*