



# COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

## SUSSEX COUNTY, VA





*"Sussex County... Rooted in the Past, Growing for the Future!"*

Sussex County is seeking an experienced professional to serve as County Administrator, the chief administrative officer responsible for implementing the Board of Supervisors' vision and directing programs and operations of the County government. The new Administrator will succeed the previous County Administrator who served nearly six years.

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, resume, and professional references, to Berkley Group via email at [libby.gooden@bgllc.net](mailto:libby.gooden@bgllc.net). While the position is open until filled, the formal review of applicants will begin November 13, 2026. Inquiries relating to the County Administrator position may be directed to:

Libby Gooden

Executive Manager

Berkley Group, LLC

Email: [libby.gooden@bgllc.net](mailto:libby.gooden@bgllc.net)

Mobile: (757)-256-9198

## COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

Sussex County, “Rooted in the Past and Growing for the Future,” offers a rural lifestyle of farmland, historic sites, open space, and recreational activities with access to urban amenities in Richmond and Hampton Roads. The county encompasses 496 square miles and lies in the Coastal Plain region on level to slightly rolling terrain. It is a part of “Virginia’s Gateway Region,” which includes the cities of Colonial Heights, Hopewell, and Petersburg, and the counties of Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Prince George, and Surry. Four towns provide services and amenities to the community. Wakefield, the “Peanut Capital of the World,” is home to the historic Virginia Diner which draws travelers from all over for its Southern cuisine and peanut products. The town also hosts the official National Weather Service forecast office that serves over 7 million people across eastern Virginia, northeast North Carolina, and the Chesapeake Bay.

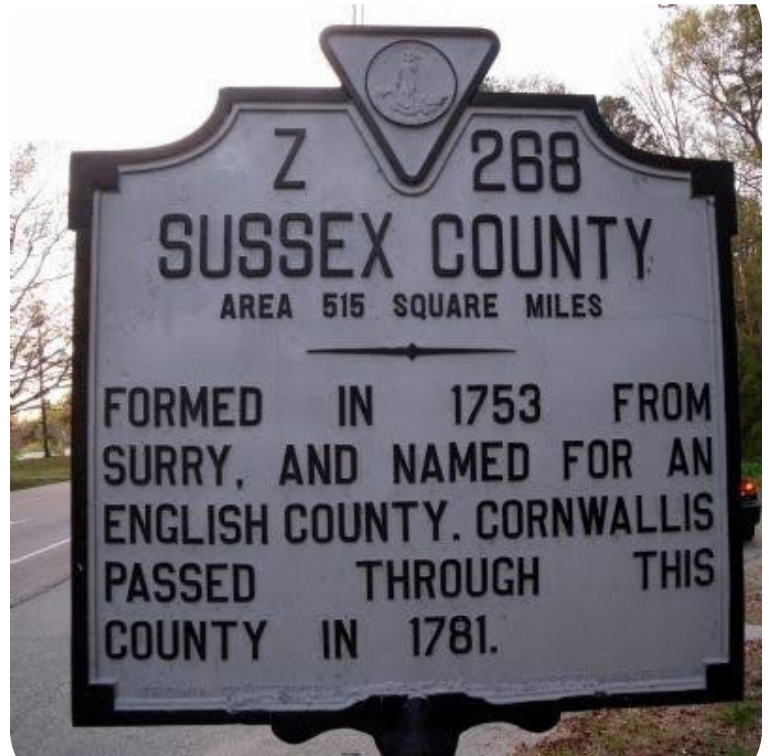


## LOCATION & TRANSPORTATION

Located in the heart of rural south-central Virginia, Sussex County is strategically centered between Richmond, Hampton Roads, and Southern Virginia. Included in the Richmond Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), 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. It is 150 miles south of Washington, D.C. and 50 miles west of Hampton Roads. In addition to the interstate and primary road system, the County has freight rail service and easy access to the four terminals of the Port of Virginia in Hampton Roads. General aviation service is available at the Wakefield Municipal Airport, and commercial air service is at Richmond International Airport (RIC).

## HISTORY

Settlement of the area began prior to 1700 as colonists moved south of the Blackwater River onto land occupied by the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) tribe of Native Americans. 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.



## ECONOMY

The economy of Sussex County has strong ties to agriculture, agribusiness, manufacturing, forestry, and government. According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, there were 106 farms in Sussex County in 2022, with an average farm size of 656 acres. Twenty-two 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 important components of the local economy include manufacturing, pork production, commercial forestry, peanut shelling, tourism, and non-local government. The Virginia Department of Corrections operates Sussex I State Prison near Waverly. Sussex II State Prison closed in June of 2024 and is currently being maintained by the Commonwealth for potential future use. Waste Management, Inc. operates the Atlantic Waste Disposal facility, a commercial landfill operation, in the County.

Sussex County promotes additional economic development through partnerships with state and federal organizations, including the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), Virginia's Gateway Region, and other regional initiatives such as Go Virginia, and the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (TRRC). The County markets several sites for new and expanding businesses and industries, including the Sussex Green Enterprise Park, Henry Technology Commerce Center, Cabin Point Road Site, and the Henry Road site. The Sussex Green Enterprise Park includes approximately 1,130 acres owned by the County and is positioned for large-scale industrial development. 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 community welfare, to promote trade, commerce and agriculture, and to foster, develop and protect the industrial growth of Sussex County.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

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.



## HEALTHCARE

Sussex County residents have access to primary care, preventive health services, behavioral health services, and specialized medical care through local providers and regional healthcare facilities. Southside Medical Center in Petersburg provides emergency care, inpatient services, diagnostic imaging, and other medical specialties. Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Medical Center in Richmond offers comprehensive specialty care, advanced medical treatment, and teaching hospital services.

Within Sussex County, Horizon Health Services operates the Waverly Medical Center, providing primary medical care, behavioral health services, preventive care, medication management, and other community-based health services. Horizon also operates a pharmacy in Waverly, further supporting access to healthcare for County residents. Stony Creek Community Health Center provides comprehensive primary and preventive care, including routine medical visits, chronic disease management, immunizations, and specialty referrals. The Sussex County Health Department offers additional public health services, including preventive health programs and community health resources.

These local healthcare resources, complemented by regional hospitals and specialty providers, offer Sussex County residents access to a broad range of medical services.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Sussex County has an estimated residential population of approximately 9,800 (2025). The County's population is approximately 45% white, 51% African American, while 4% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino regardless of race. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2020-2024 American Community Survey, Sussex County's median household income is \$63,530, and the median value of owner-occupied housing units is \$183,800.

## COUNTY GOVERNMENT & SERVICES

Sussex County operates under the traditional County Administrator and Board of Supervisors form of government as established by 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 County is governed by a seven-member Board of Supervisors, elected by district to four-year terms. 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 adopts local ordinances, approves the annual budget and appropriates funds, sets tax rates, makes land use decisions, establishes policies, and generally oversees the operation of the County government.

## EDUCATION

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 1,045. 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 Bright Point Community College. Higher education opportunities are available at public and private universities in the Richmond and Hampton Roads metropolitan areas.



The Sussex County Sheriff, one of five elected constitutional officers, is responsible for law enforcement and crime prevention services across the county, including patrols, investigations, court security, and civil processes. 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.

Sussex County has approximately 140 employees, including those of the constitutional officers and social services department, and a FY2027 budget nearly \$31 million, including \$8.5 million in the school fund, and \$1.8 million for debt service.



## THE POSITION

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 the 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:

- Working with County staff to develop and coordinate agendas for meetings of the Board of Supervisors.
- Advising the Board and facilitating policy discussions and policy development.
- Working collaboratively with the Board to establish County priorities, strategies, and long-term goals.
- Leading long-range organizational, service delivery, capital, and financial planning.
- Developing and advancing strategies that support economic development, business investment, and the County's long-term economic vitality.
- Keeping the Board informed of significant operational, financial, policy, and community matters.
- Engaging with citizens, businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders to understand community needs, concerns, and expectations.

- Building productive working relationships with Constitutional Officers, the Courts, School Board, Registrar, municipalities, regional organizations, and other governmental partners.

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.

## PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATOR

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.

Sussex County's strategic priorities have historically centered on expanding economic opportunity, practicing good governance, strengthening community partnerships, and ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability. Recent Board discussions have continued to emphasize economic development, financial stability, infrastructure needs, and organizational effectiveness.

Within the context of the County's vision, mission and strategic initiatives, the Board of Supervisors has identified the following priorities that the new County Administrator can anticipate addressing in the first few years.

- Coordinate with the Economic Development Authority (EDA) and the Board of Supervisors on major economic development projects.
- Evaluate and propose amendments to the organizational structure to improve the responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency of service delivery.
- Develop a plan for the relocation of administrative functions into long-term, permanent space.
- Fill important staff positions such as Deputy County Administrator, Finance Director, and Parks & Recreation Director.
- Promote citizen engagement and encourage greater citizen involvement through outreach, education, and feedback.
- Strengthen financial management; recommend appropriate policies to the Board of Supervisors; implement best practices and improve capital program funding and management.
- If the referendum for an additional one cent local sales tax for school facilities passes, in partnership with schools' administration, develop a plan for the use of the additional funds for capital projects.
- Work with other stakeholders, including the Sussex Service Authority, to address County utility infrastructure needs, particularly water supply. Help to evaluate options for the ownership and management of utility assets.



## 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, political science, 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.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the principles and practice of public administration, local government financial management, economic development, and the broad array of local government operations and service delivery.
- An understanding of the statutory authority and requirements of county government and dedication to the principles of the board of supervisors/administrator form of governance. Local government experience in Virginia 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 a plus.
- 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

- Unquestioned integrity, ensuring ethical, equal, honest, fair, and open interactions with members of the Board of Supervisors, community members, and all County employees.
- A hands-on, resourceful leader who can balance strategic leadership with the practical demands of a smaller local government organization.
- Professional competence and confidence balanced by humility, self-awareness, and a willingness to seek input and expertise from others.
- Sound fiscal stewardship, with a disciplined approach to managing public resources and a focus on operational efficiency, accountability, and long-term financial sustainability.
- Sound and consistent judgment, with the ability to gather appropriate input, assess risk, make timely decisions, and act decisively when circumstances require.

- An innovative and forward-thinking leadership style, with openness to new ideas, different perspectives, and practical approaches to improving County operations and services.
- Flexible and adaptable while remaining consistent to high ethical standards and principles of good governance.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to listen effectively, communicate clearly, understand differing perspectives, and build productive working relationships.
- Strong executive presence and positive leadership within County government, the community, and the region; proactive and able to bring differing perspectives together to identify practical solutions that advance the County's interests.
- Composed and resilient in challenging situations, with the ability to manage conflict constructively, defuse tension, establish common ground, and remain focused on effective problem-solving.
- Possessing an approachable and empathetic leadership style, with a strong commitment to responsive, professional, and customer-focused public service.
- Committed to developing the County workforce by serving as a role model, coach, and mentor; empowering employees; developing organizational capacity; and establishing clear expectations for performance, collaboration, and accountability.

## PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

- Engage with County staff and the Board of Supervisors to develop a comprehensive understanding of the County's budget, organizational structure, policies and procedures, current priorities, and ongoing projects and initiatives. Demonstrate a commitment to carrying out the policies, priorities, and directives established by the Board of Supervisors, ensuring that the Board's decisions are effectively implemented.
- Be responsive to citizen concerns and issues; listen, understand, and provide timely follow-up.
- Demonstrate a commitment to open and transparent government by fostering positive relationships with residents and stakeholders, encouraging meaningful public engagement, and promoting accessible and responsive County government.
- Communicate effectively with all stakeholders by presenting information clearly and in a manner appropriate to diverse audiences; maintain consistent, timely, and equitable communication with all members of the Board of Supervisors.
- Focus on promoting communication, cooperation, and collaboration with community stakeholders, the Constitutional Officers, the Department of Social Services, Sussex County Public Schools, the private sector, other local governments, and regional organizations; be a good representative and ambassador for the county.
- Maintain regular communication and engagement with the towns to address shared priorities, strengthen intergovernmental relationships, and foster cooperation and collaboration on matters of mutual interest.
- Ensure fair and equal support and investment across County employees and departments, with an emphasis on strengthening organizational capacity, professional competency, performance, and accountability.
- Reside in the county and become an active member of the community, building relationships with citizens, business leaders, and other county and regional stakeholders.

## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Compensation for the County Administrator will be competitive depending on qualifications and experience. The Board of Supervisors has identified a hiring range of \$140,000 to \$175,000. 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 provided for all county employees or identified in a negotiated employment agreement.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

A formal review of applications will begin on **November 13, 2026**, and candidates whose qualifications and experience most closely match those outlined in this profile will be contacted for initial virtual interviews. Applications received after that date may be considered until the position is filled; however, timely submittal will ensure the most advantageous review. To be considered, please submit a cover letter, resume, and professional references to Berkley Group, via email at [libby.gooden@bgllc.net](mailto:libby.gooden@bgllc.net).

Questions may be directed to:

Libby Gooden, Executive Manager

Berkley Group, LLC

P.O. Box 181

Bridgewater, Virginia 22812

Email: [libby.gooden@bgllc.net](mailto:libby.gooden@bgllc.net)

Mobile: (757)-256-9198



For Additional Information, visit: <https://sussexcountyva.gov/>

Sussex County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.