

APPOMATTOX COUNTY, VIRGINIA

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR RECRUITMENT PROFILE



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Appomattox County at a Glance:

Appomattox County is literally at the crossroads of Virginia, American history, and today's opportunity. The County is located at the geographical center of the Commonwealth, is where our country reunited, and is open for business. Home to a variety of thriving businesses, the National Park Service's Historic Appomattox Court House, and the newly constructed Museum of the Confederacy, Appomattox County is poised for opportunity.

Beautiful and historic, the County is located in the rolling Piedmont area of Central Virginia, nestled between the Blue Ridge Mountains to the west and the Tidewater region to the east. The scenic James River forms the County's northern boundary. With a convenient mid-Atlantic location, Appomattox provides residents, businesses, and tourists a unique environment. The county is within a day's drive of over half the nation's population. Four hours from Washington, D.C., three hours from Virginia Beach, 2.5 hours from Historic Jamestown/Williamsburg/Yorktown, and 1.5 hours to Virginia's capitol of Richmond.

The County embodies a rich and balanced blend of natural beauty, practical living, cultural heritage, community spirit, and forward-looking governance. These elements combine with a strong sense of community and commitment to quality of life for all residents, excellence in education, strong local work ethic, responsible fiscal planning, and solid family values. The result is a unique community where citizens and government cooperate toward the County's vision that includes:

- Conservative fiscal stewardship of taxpayer resources;
- Ensuring economic and educational opportunities for residents and youth;

- Being a place where family and community are valued, as the highest priority, where its citizens and visitors can live, work, and play all within the trusted confines of the towns and surrounding neighborhoods;
- Safety for all; young and old; welcoming and gracious to each visitor; while promoting a healthy, vibrant community focused on high quality of life through parks, trails, and recreational opportunities that seize upon the Civil War Heritage;
- Leadership that is based on Honesty, Integrity, Trustworthiness, Cooperation, and a Dedication to public service.
- Community leaders encourage businesses, new and existing, to offer a workforce that has relevant education, skills, and training;
- A pragmatic vision of success for current and future generations through prudent planning and well managed growth along the primary corridors of Routes 460, 24 and 26, and emphasizing growth near the town center, while preserving the rural character and abundant open spaces, rivers, and other natural resources;
- Employment opportunities supported by improved county services, infrastructure, educational attainment, and community facilities;
- Collaboration on issues within a respectful and open democracy to identify the best long-term outcomes for the entire community; and
- Respecting local heritage and cultural diversity. In 1865, in a small, rural village, two men resolved to shake hands, thus ending a bitter chapter in American history. Appomattox County will continue to build on that spirit of reunification by being an open-minded community that encourages cooperation and embraces change.

In order to achieve their vision the priorities for the County Board of Supervisors include:

- Placing tourism at the forefront of economic development;
- Strengthening infrastructure and providing opportunities for job creation in the 21st Century economy;
- Improved public facilities and infrastructure through better funding;
- Enhanced communication and cooperation with the Towns, Schools, Constitutional Offices, the private sector, and other regional partners;
- Adequate funding for education, particularly school infrastructure needs and attracting and retaining excellent teaching staff;
- Improved collaboration and training of staff among all County funded areas to increase effectiveness;
- Implementing enhanced technology within County operations to make better use of existing resources;
- Pro-active Governance at all levels; and
- Community planning and appearance.

Upcoming Opportunities and Organizational Challenges

Looking ahead several key opportunities and challenges are on the horizon.

Greater Tourism:

To say that Appomattox has an opportunity to enhance tourism is an understatement. The value of Historic Appomattox Court House and the Museum of the Confederacy, coupled with the quaint Southern nature of the Town of Appomattox is a tremendous asset that is being underutilized. A new focus needs to be placed on developing activities and support services that will support tourism in the County in a more robust way.

Finances:

Although fiscally stable Appomattox County has had difficulty along with other localities to maintain the forward-thinking momentum that was emerging prior to the impact of federal and state economic struggles over the past five years. Along with many other localities the organization is emerging from a period where improvement projects were postponed, filling of needed positions was delayed, and organizational advancements to meet the community's potential were severely limited.

The County now faces the challenge of meeting current needs while finding feasible, cost effective means of addressing large-scale issues from the past that have remained unresolved. These include the tourism initiative mentioned above, school and county infrastructure improvements, technology improvements, economic development initiatives, and the need to maintain competitive compensation practices. Solving this long-term issue will remain at the center of complex planning discussions as the County moves forward and will involve innovative thinking, staying focused on core services, and working closely with the Town of Appomattox and regional partners to find the best solutions for current and emerging conditions.

As a locality and a government entity, Appomattox County continually strives to provide needed services for the private sector and be competitive with the more asset-rich areas in the state and nation in terms of talent retention, funding for technological advancements, infrastructure readiness for businesses, and support of innovation. In the years ahead, effective leadership that embraces new and dynamic ideas toward governing will be paramount toward ensuring the County's success.

Organizational Development:

While the County is by no means overstaffed, there is some degree of staff resource utilization that is not maximized due to the inherent segregated nature of county, school, town, and constitutional office operations in Virginia. The Board of Supervisors feels that a

thorough review of organizational operations to better enhance collaborative efforts among all of the various groups funded by the County can result in better cost allocation and therefore redistribution of funds for other more pressing needs.

Along these same lines, the Board feels that current staff should be provided with better training and lifelong learning opportunities to help with long term retention, change management, personal development, and ultimately more effective and efficient service delivery to the citizens and businesses of the County. To do anything less would not be doing our part to support the competitive environment that everyone faces in the highly technical world we live in.

Technology:

While part of the bigger organizational development issue, technology utilization and improvement is a clearly identified need within the county organization and warrants a separate initiative. There is no doubt that technology plays an ever more prominent role in meeting the challenges of the 21st century. County operations are not utilizing technology resources as well as they could be and are in turn affecting all three of the previously noted issues. The successful candidate should be prepared to take a hard look at how technology can be better utilized and to implement those improvements in support of better utilization of taxpayer resources to help meet the other challenges facing the County.

The Big Picture:

In essence, Appomattox County represents small town, rural America at its best, while proudly setting an example of ethical, practical and value-driven government. At the same time the County faces many of the same fiscal and infrastructure challenges as other similar localities. How to do more with less in order to remain competitive for our citizens and businesses? There is a compelling reason to work as collaboratively as possible with other agencies, private business, and government partners to find better, more effective ways to meet the priorities of the County. With a dedication to leadership, collaboration, democracy and future planning, Appomattox County seeks an administrator who will build upon this solid and proven approach to governing.

A Glimpse of Appomattox County's History:

A relatively “new” county by Virginia standards, Appomattox County was formed on May 1st, 1845 from Buckingham, Prince Edward, Campbell, and Charlotte Counties in honor of the river springing from the heart of the territory. In 1848 another section from Campbell County was added. It was named for the Appomattox River, which in turn was named from the “Appamatuck,” a historic Native American tribe in Virginia of the Algonquian-speaking Powhatan Confederacy.

The village of Clover Hill, located in the center of the new county along the Richmond-Lynchburg Stage Road, was renamed Appomattox Court House and became the seat of government. Clover Hill was originally settled around 1815 with the construction of the Clover Hill Tavern, across from which the brick courthouse building for the new county was built.

In April of 1865, Appomattox Court House played a pivotal role in the history of the United States and came to national attention. Four long years of war had torn the nation apart, killed tens of thousands of men, wounded tens of thousands more, scorched the landscape, and forever changed life in the South, and the entire country. Virginia was especially devastated since the Old Dominion had served as the primary battleground of the war in each side’s attempt to capture the capitol city of the other. But, on April 9th a large part of the hostilities ended when General Robert E. Lee, Commanding General of the Army of Northern Virginia, accepted the generous terms of surrender offered by Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant, General-in-Chief of all United States forces, in the parlor of a home owned by Wilbur McLean. Though fighting raged on elsewhere for several more months, General Lee’s surrender at Appomattox effectively ended the Southern States’ attempt to create a separate nation, and made the County a symbol of peace and unity.

In February of 1892, fire destroyed the courthouse building. Two months later, the County held a special election that resulted in the decision to move the County seat closer to the railroad at Appomattox Depot, two miles to the southwest; what is now the Town of Appomattox. Historic Appomattox Court House was left to deteriorate until being taken over by the National Park Service in the 1930s. Appomattox Depot was originally settled with the coming of the railroad in 1852 and changed names when the County seat moved there. The village was incorporated in 1925, and remains the seat of government today.

Around 1854, the Southside Railroad reached what is now the Town of Pamplin. By 1874 the settlement established around Pamplin Depot, named for a local landowner, had become so prosperous that the General Assembly granted the request to incorporate. Pamplin’s most famous landmark, the Pamplin Smoking Pipe Manufacturing Company, at

one time was the world's largest factory of the sort, producing as many as 25,000 clay pipes per day before closing in 1951. Pamplin is one of the two incorporated areas remaining in the County today.

After two centuries of social change, agricultural and industrial growth, national conflicts and economic ebbs and flows, the County reflects an intriguing history spanning America's Revolutionary War era and early formative steps, long-lasting impacts of the Civil War, and progression into the post-modern 20th and 21st centuries.

Appomattox County Today:

Appomattox County has evolved from its establishment in 1845 into a steadfast community with traditional Southern appeal of over 15,000 residents within 334 square miles. The diverse landscape includes peaceful, green farmlands, quaint towns and villages, friendly neighborhoods, industrial parks, lush woodlands and scenic river basins.

Appomattox County is at the heart of Virginia history and national tourism, while conveniently close to Lynchburg's urban features and attractions just 30 minutes west. US Route 460 - East and West, and Virginia Routes 24 and 26 - North and South, provide convenient travel conduits across the County for local citizens, as well as for visitors passing through the area. Natural blueways, regional trails and short travel distance to the Appalachian Trail offer alternate recreational means of traversing the area, especially for outdoor enthusiasts.

Appomattox County's moderate climate combined with the loveliness of its distinct seasons, mountain vistas, hometown appeal, and low crime rate make the County an ideal location to build a business, raise a family or spend retirement days. Family-owned wineries, farms, restaurants and shops, add to its charming appeal.

From an economic perspective, Appomattox County's tourism potential anchors the County's future. While history is important, Appomattox also has an eye on the future as well. With companies like Craneworks, Inc., Metal Fab/Stall Works, Quality Pattern Works, and Tri-Tech Solutions of Virginia, Appomattox has some of the most high-tech, metal-based firms in the Mid-Atlantic. Just recently the manufacturer of industrial environmental-control announced its decision to add 350 new jobs in what used to be the Thomasville furniture manufacturing plant located in the Town of Appomattox. Appomattox has a varied blend of prospering small businesses, Bed and Breakfast, building contractors, manufacturers, agricultural producers, and history to help pave the way.

The County is the eastern most locality in Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership, a private/public economic development association that includes the areas Local Government Council and five other partner organizations – the area Workforce Investment Board, Young Professionals, Technology Council, Business and Economic Development Alliance, and Center for Advanced Engineering and Research. Member localities include Amherst, Appomattox, and Bedford Counties, the City of Lynchburg, and the Towns of Altavista, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, and Brookneal.

Region 2000 comprises 2000 square miles that over 275,000 residents and a mix of industry and business call home. The area is home to five universities and colleges including Liberty University, and Lynchburg, Sweet Briar, and Randolph Colleges.

Five voting districts, each with an elected Board of Supervisors member, comprise the political and governmental framework of the County. Board members are elected by eligible voters for four-year terms, which are staggered to promote continuity and positive change management. The current Board is comprised of members who range in seniority from 20 years to 11 months. The current Board is both congenial and cooperative, and works collaboratively with staff. Two Board members up for reelection in the fall of 2015 have decided not to seek another term in office.

The County Administrator is the senior appointed official and serves as the Board's agent and liaison to daily County operations. The incumbent has occupied the position for seventeen years during two different periods. The position is supported internally by a dedicated group of long-term employees. The position has direct oversight of 45 full time staff. Additionally, the position provides budget oversight and coordination with the Department of Social Services, five constitutional offices (Clerk of the Court, Commonwealth's Attorney, Commissioner of the Revenue, Treasurer, and Sheriff) that have a total of 57 full time staff; and schools.

Appomattox County's operating budget for FY 15, including schools, was adopted at just under \$37 million. The current tax rate on real property is 63.5 cents.