



# Welcome to the County of El Paso

Chief Administrator Position Open - Apply by March 1, 2016



Population 828,000

A jewel of the southwest desert, El Paso County is the westernmost and sixth most populous county in Texas. Its county seat, the City of El Paso, is the 19th most populous city in the United States. On the other side of the Rio Grande River lies the Mexican State of Chihuahua and the City of Juarez. El Paso and Juarez together comprise the largest international metroplex in the world.

The weather is some of the best in the world with over 300 sunny days a year. For this reason, El Paso is often referred to as the "Sun City", and it is truly a place in the sun. During the day, the mountains take on shades of purple, orange and green. As evening approaches, the sunsets are magnificent. At night, the views from the foothills or from the Wyler Aerial Tramway make the city lights look like a scattering of glittering diamonds across the expanse of darkness.

El Paso is a dynamic border community that combines the advantages of a major metropolitan area with the character and friendly charm of a modern western town. Its quality of life is excellent. For example, in 2013, Movoto rated El Paso as the 3rd best city in the country in which

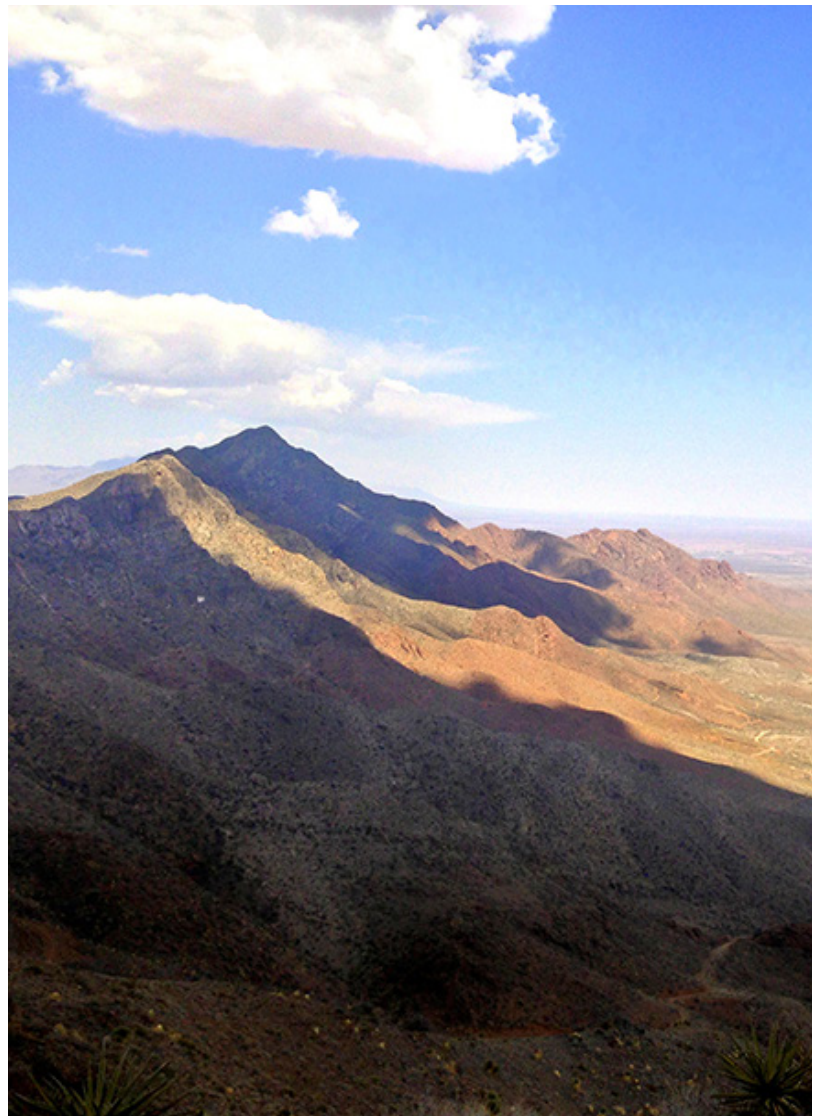
to raise a family. It is also an extremely safe county, a place where people feel comfortable walking alone any time of day or night. In fact, El Paso has been ranked as the safest city of its size in America for the past four years and in the top three since 1997. It is also a progressive community on the move. Overall, the cost of living is favorable and housing prices are reasonable.

The County boasts state-of-the-art medical facilities. The schools are very good and offer an excellent AP curriculum. El Paso's three school districts offer 22 high schools, 33 middle schools, 101 elementary schools, 8 specialty schools and 3 adult learning centers. The County also has over 25 parochial schools and 50 private schools such as the renowned Loretto Academy for Girls and St. Clement's Parish School. As for higher education, the most prominent institutions include the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), which has been ranked in the top 10 schools in the country for the past two years by *Washington Monthly*. El Paso Community College and nearby New Mexico State University also offer excellent programs.

Cultural and entertainment opportunities are readily available, and with the new Triple A baseball stadium and a revitalizing downtown, it will only get better. Examples include Broadway in El Paso at the Plaza Theater, the El Paso Ballet and the El Paso Symphony Orchestra. Alternatively, arts lovers can enjoy a show under El Paso's famously tranquil night skies at the McKelligon Canyon Amphitheater.

While organized amateur sports focus on UTEP, the City does offer the Western States Hockey League's Rhinos. Professional sporting events are offered through the Triple A Chihuahuas, a minor league affiliate of MLB's San Diego Padres.

The Franklin Mountains, which divide east and west El Paso, provide ample opportunities for outdoor recreation and are another bright spot. Walking, running and bicycling are common activities year-round. The more adventurous can tackle bouldering and rock climbing. Visitors can enjoy a picnic in Franklin Mountains State Park, the largest urban park in the United States. Outstanding hunting (deer, quail and dove) and fishing areas are found nearby. Between Thanksgiving and mid-March, skiing is available in Ruidoso, New Mexico, a three-hour drive from El Paso.



El Paso County is a perfect place to enjoy the seamless blending of cultures and customs that make up its heritage. Captivating relics of the historic Old West and the treasured traditions of Native Americans highlight the community. Residents still attend church in old Spanish missions on the historic Mission Trail that were built by Native Americans in the late seventeenth century. The area was also the home to famous outlaws including Poncho Villa, John Wesley Harding and Billy the Kid.

For those who like to shop, ample opportunities exist. El Paso is particularly famous for its footwear and boasts the title of “Boot Capital of the World”. From clothing and jewelry to antiques and home furnishings, customers can find endless options suiting every taste and budget.

What makes El Paso County truly special, however, is its residents. They are welcoming and involved. During the recent influx of Central American refugees, the community responded with four 100-bed shelters with 1,000 volunteers per shelter. They care. The community is family-oriented and boasts strong neighborhoods. Residents are friendly and help their neighbors. People love getting together in neighborhoods, parks, and at the many free community events taking place throughout the year. We agree with Movoto – El Paso is a great place to raise your family. In fact, we would go a step further and tell you that it is a great place to call home, to live, to work and to spend your spare time.

We invite you to apply to be El Paso County’s Chief Administrator and help take the County to a new level of excellence.

Table 1: El Paso County Pop. Growth

Year	Population
1860	4,051
1900	24,886
1950	194,968
1960	314,070
1970	359,291
1980	479,899
1990	591,610
2000	679,622
2010	800,647

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## History

The history of El Paso is a tapestry woven from the vibrant cultures and customs that envelop the thriving and unique metropolitan area that exists today. The region’s written history spans more than 400 years and fuses Native American, Spanish, Mexican and Cowboy traditions into one cohesive whole.

In 1581, Spanish explorers reached the Rio Grande River and viewed a pass between two mountain ranges rising out of the desert. They named it El Paso del Norte (the Pass of the North). On April 30, 1598, the area was colonized by a Spanish expedition under Don Juan de Oñate.

The El Paso area became part of the United States at the end of the U.S.-Mexican War in 1848. One year later, the military post that eventually became Fort Bliss was established. El Paso County was established in 1850. The Southern Pacific Railroad arrived in 1881, and assured the area’s future.

El Paso was the Wild West. The City flourished during the rambunctious era of gunfighters, cattle rustlers, saloons, famous marshals and the Texas Rangers. In 1911, the Mexican Revolution thundered into town and ushered in a new era. Refugees streamed out of Mexico by the thousands into El Paso. The people who remained when the war was over were instrumental in building the unique culture and heritage that is the Sun City today.

The transformation of the City since the days of the Wild West has been tremendous. Today, El Paso is a thriving community reveling in the blend of cultures with its sister city of Ciudad Juárez. It is a major distribution and manufacturing center and is the focal point of an annual \$20 billion in trade between the United States and Mexico. (See Table 1 for population growth of El Paso County.)

## Demographics

According to the 2010 Census, the age distribution is as follows: 41% are under 25 years of age, 27% are between 25 and 45 years old, 22% are between 45 and 65, and the remaining 10% are over 65. The median age is 31. The population is 82% Caucasian, 3% Black, 1% American Indian, 1% Asian and the remainder is composed of “other”. Hispanics of all races make up 82% of the population. Seventy-three percent of the population over 25 years of age have a high school degree, and 13% have Bachelor’s degrees. Seventy-two percent of the County’s population were born in the United States and 56% were born in Texas. The median annual household income is \$39,699. Twenty-one percent of all families live below the poverty line. Over 70% of the residents are bilingual.

Table 2: Temperatures and Precipitation in El Paso County

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average High °F	58	63	70	79	88	96	95	93	88	79	66	58	78
Average Low °F	32	36	42	50	59	67	70	69	62	51	39	32	51
Precipitation in Inches	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.7	1.6	1.6	1.4	.07	.04	.06	8.7

Source: Weatherbase

## Geography and Climate

El Paso County’s climate is classified as Tropical and Subtropical Desert. Its atmospheric environment inhibits precipitation. In spite of monsoonal winds in high-and low-sun periods, moisture-laden air penetrates the area only infrequently. There are an average of 49 days of rain per year and an average of 5.7 inches of snow.

## Commerce

Situated on the border of two nations and three states, El Paso’s location presents a unique array of opportunities. As noted, El Paso and its sister city, Ciudad Juarez, comprise the largest metropolitan area on the border between the United States and Mexico. In fact, the downtown areas of these two cities are within walking distance of each other.

With El Paso’s proximity to Mexico comes excellent opportunity for businesses to capitalize on NAFTA. For example, El Paso’s Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) #68 encompasses over 2,500 acres in 17 non-contiguous sites and is the lowest cost and second-highest volume general purpose FTZ in the United States. Recently Forbes Magazine ranked El Paso as the fourth “Best Mid-Size City for Jobs” in the country. It was ranked first in 2011 and twenty-seventh in 2012.

Table 3 on page 5 reflects the top employers in El Paso County.

The most recently reported unemployment rate for the County was 4.9% (August 2015 per the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas).

## The Government and the Chief Administrator

Under Texas law, what would be referred to as the Board of County Commissioners in most states is called the

Commissioners Court (hereafter “the Court”) and is composed of five members. The Chair is known as the County Judge although she has no judicial responsibilities. The Judge is elected at large to a four-year term and presides over Commissioners meetings. The other four members of the Commissioners Court are known as Commissioners. Each is elected from a precinct to a four-year term. The terms are staggered, and two Commissioners were elected in November of 2014. All of Texas’s 254 counties operate under the same governing legislation, which is largely unchanged since 1850.

The Court as a whole has authority over a multitude of areas in the operation of County government. On the other hand, the County has a staggering number of other elected officials, including Judges, the District and County Attorneys, the Sheriff, Constables and Justices of the Peace, the Tax Assessor, the District Clerk and the County Clerk.

The County Judge and Commissioners are united in their resolve to achieve progress and innovation. While sometimes divided on the best path, all are dedicated to making the County the best it can be and improving the residents’ quality of life. Overall, they are fiscally conservative, compassionate, and dedicated to improving their community. While four are Democrats and one is a Republican, the partisanship seen at the national level does not exist within the County government. Instead they all get along well, are respectful of one another and value the staff. Once a vote is taken, the Court unites behind the will of the majority to make policies successful.

The Chief Administrator is a new position for El Paso County. The individual will be appointed by the entire Commissioners Court and will be well supported by elected officials and

**“The El Paso Commissioners’ Court has gone “all in” in their support of technology and the employees who use it. Their vision and cooperation is a shining example to agencies throughout the Country in leveraging IT resources for the benefit of its constituents and staff.”**

**–Christopher Stathis,  
Chief Technology Officer**

Table III: Principal Employers, El Paso County

Employer	Function	# of Employees
Fort Bliss	Military	40,000
El Paso Independent School District	Education	9,000
Ysleta Independant School District	Education	7,155
City of El Paso	Goverment	6,570
Socorro Independent School District	Education	6,000
T&T Staff Management	Employment	4,000
University of Texas at El Paso	Education	3,700
Tenet Healthcare	Healthcare	2,991
El Paso County	Government	2,771
El Paso Community College	Education	2,449

Source: El Paso County 2014 CAFR

staff alike. All are genuinely looking forward to partnering with the Commissioners Court to enable a more centralized and structured approach to managing operations. The Chief Administrator will be responsible for all the day-to-day operations falling under the Court.

Of the 2,873 persons employed in El Paso County, the new Chief Administrator will directly oversee the Assistant County Administrator and 11 department heads and other managers who, in turn, manage 583 employees. The Sheriff oversees 1,069 employees, with all detention and licensed officers in a bargaining unit. The remaining 1,203 employees are distributed to the other elected offices.

The general fund budget for the El Paso County Government for FY 2015 was \$252,957,809 and the total budget was \$311,757,136. Sixty percent of the County’s revenue is derived from the property tax. The County maintains an AA- bond rating. It provides basic health and human services; court and public defender services; public works and sheriff and probation services for residents.

## Challenges and Opportunities

The first challenge is that this position is less than 14 months old. Hence the new Chief Administrator will need to demonstrate the value of the position both inside and outside the government. While the Court is fully supportive, some other County officials are skeptical. Both staff and other elected officials are accustomed to working directly with the Judge and

Commissioners. Very few currently in the government have worked under a structure similar to what has been enacted, and the creation of this position is a huge change. Introducing the new structure, as well as a new chain of command and policies and procedures, will be necessary. A period of adjustment for all concerned is expected.

The change presents an unprecedented opportunity to implement a structure and programs that will form the County’s foundation for the future. The Court’s intention is for the Chief Administrator to be the hub of the organization and the source from which efforts would emanate to modernize an antiquated organization.

Part of the challenge will be building solid relationships with the other elected constitutional officers and their staffs. Seventy percent of the Court-approved

budget falls under the direct control of these other elected officials. While visible tension is infrequent, more cohesion and teamwork would be helpful moving forward.

One of the driving cultural and economic forces in El Paso County is Fort Bliss. It is among the largest military institutions in the country and is an integral part of the community. Developing relations with key personnel at Ft. Bliss will be important, as will be planning for the vagaries associated with any federal presence.

Building a strong relationship with the City of El Paso will be important, as it comprises over 670,000 of the County’s total population of 828,000.

Internally, the Court would like to see a performance measurement and management system introduced. It also would like the various operations under its control to demonstrate their value to the community. It would also like its decisions for the budgets of the other entities within the County to be based on hard data (to the degree possible) rather than conjecture.

Finally, El Paso is a community with a low tax base and a large minority population. Many of the residents are bi-national and have relatively low income. It will be important to find ways to improve the level of service the County provides them and their quality of life.

Meeting these challenges will be time-consuming and will

require a dedicated, focused approach. Fortunately, all the key elements for success are present – everyone (staff, elected officials, and the public) wants the new Chief Administrator to succeed and to lead the County for a long period of time.

## The Ideal Candidate

El Paso County is seeking a strong leader to partner with the Court to guide the County to a better future. The individual will be an advisor to the elected officials yet also recognize that he/she works for the Court. The Chief Administrator will be a highly capable and professional manager who is competent, driven to succeed, intelligent, upbeat, resourceful, relentlessly positive, progressive, approachable, open, honest, trustworthy, transparent and extremely ethical. He/she will be someone who is politically astute but not politically involved or ambitious – someone who knows how to navigate the boulders that lie just below the surface and to get the job done. The individual will have to tread a very careful path. This position is relatively new, and its role, while easily understood on paper and widely supported by the Court and staff, will take time to implement fully. Patience will be critical. The Court members are accustomed to being very involved and will need to be kept fully informed. They are also very busy. Over time, as they develop confidence in the Administrator, their involvement will likely lessen. The Chief Administrator will need to be somewhat visionary. The individual will be open to new ideas and suggest options to the Court while always deferring to its decisions. At the same time, he/she will be independent and unafraid to speak truth to power at the right time and in the right setting.

The ideal candidate will be inspirational and a motivator. He/she will think strategically, be a consensus builder, and have excellent people skills. As noted above, the primary challenge initially will be to establish the value and credibility of the Chief Administrator position. That effort will involve working with all the elected officials (not just the Court) and with the Department Heads. The individual will need to establish open lines of communication and high levels of trust and comfort. The key will be to demonstrate a contribution that makes their jobs easier. Building effective working relationships with individuals and bureaucracies will be vital to effectuating the desired changes. To



this end, tact and excellent negotiating skills will be needed.

The individual will be someone who values community, is involved and encourages the involvement of others. El Paso is a very diverse community. As such, the Administrator will need to be sensitive to cultural differences, be inclusive, embrace diversity, and be respectful of all. He/she will need to be visible and in the community. Further, his/her conduct will be above reproach as the individual serves as a face of the County government.

The Chief Administrator will have a strong presence and excellent communication skills. The individual will be equally comfortable speaking to elected officials and to the “person on the street.” The County does not have a public relations staff, so being comfortable with the media is extremely important. He/she will be customer service oriented and set the tone for the County. The individual will ensure that the staff realizes that the customer is not always right but deserves to be respectfully, listened to and helped to the extent possible.

The County’s staff is very capable and strong. Its directors are experts in their fields. Hence, the Chief Administrator will not need to micromanage but rather to provide latitude and direction based on the Court’s vision and decisions. The ideal candidate will be informed and hold the staff accountable for results and for meeting targets and goals. If a director steps out of line or fails to follow through, the Administrator will not hesitate to remind the individual of his/her responsibilities and the importance of carrying them out in a timely manner and in the prescribed way. The individual will understand the importance of, and be dedicated to, developing and mentoring the Assistant Administrator and staff. Creating a learning environment where innovation flourishes will be part of the individual’s

management philosophy. A good sense of humor and of balance between one’s personal and professional lives will be critical. This job will not be low stress.

The Chief Administrator will be honest but tactful, compassionate but not weak, and confident but not arrogant. Being progressive, achievement-oriented, analytical and solution-driven will be key to the individual’s success. He/she will constantly, yet diplomatically, challenge established practices to determine if there is a better way. At present, nothing in the County seems to be broken. On the other hand, a fresh set of eyes may be able to identify organizational weaknesses. A knowledge of the application of information systems will be a strong plus.

The ideal candidate will be able to see over the horizon, anticipating upcoming issues as well as the consequences of possible alternatives. He/she will be decisive, yet patient with the ability to wait until the time is ripe for action. Since change will probably not be immediate, endurance will be important.

The position requires a Bachelor’s degree with an emphasis in Public Administration, Business Administration or a related field. A Master’s degree in these areas is preferred. Candidates should have at least ten years of executive-level management experience in a public or private sector entity and five years in a large organization of similar

complexity. Experience in County Government (ideally in Texas) and certification as an ICMA Credentialed Manager are preferred. Fluency in Spanish is a plus but not required. If the individual is not already familiar with Texas statutes, he/she will need to master them quickly.

This job will be challenging, time-consuming and, at times, frustrating. The ideal candidate will bring enthusiasm and passion to the position. Those seeking a soft place to land

**“My extensive career in public service has primarily been on the municipal side, and felt that my experiences would provide me with the solid knowledge base and background needed for employment at El Paso County. To my surprise, this last year in the County Public Works Department has had a profound impact on my understanding of the value of our work in the most under-served areas of the community. It has rekindled a new sense of public service motivation, and set a new course for developing positive relations and communicating our departmental values to the Commissioners Court. This past year, the department has seen a direct impact on our funding and ability to provide greater services to these areas. The Commissioners Court has been supportive and helpful in communicating our new core values for the department, and as an organization.”**

**– Pat Aduato, Public Works Director**

should look elsewhere. The County has a strong desire to find someone who will commit for the long term. For the right person, this job will be very satisfying and very rewarding. The County has tremendous potential and needs the right appointed leadership to help take it forward.

## Compensation

The starting salary is projected to be around \$186,000 DOQ. The County offers excellent fringe benefits at the top tier in the state.

## Residency

Residency in El Paso County is required.

## Confidentiality

Applications will be treated confidentially to the degree possible, and no names will be released without the permission of the candidate. By the same token, once finalists have been determined, candidates should expect their names to become public.

## How to Apply

Please email your resume to: [Recruit43@cb-asso.com](mailto:Recruit43@cb-asso.com) by March 1, 2016. Submissions by regular mail or facsimile will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537 and Kathryn Knutson at (715) 282-3595.

## The Process

Applications will be screened between March 2nd and April 13th. Finalists will be selected on April 14th, and interviews will be held on April 28th, with a selection shortly thereafter.

## Other Important Information

El Paso County is an equal opportunity employer and encourages women and minorities to apply.

