



— **Deadline Extended** —

Looking for a Few More Great Candidates

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Apply by April 19, 2024

Welcome to Dougherty County! Nestled in the southwest corner of Georgia along the Flint River, Dougherty County is a slice of history mixed with southern hospitality and nature's beauty. The County is a gem to visitors and residents alike. Indeed, its small-town charm, mixed with many big city amenities, provides a sense of comfort and stability. With its sunny weather, nightlife, and extensive historical preservation, Dougherty County has a little bit of everything for everyone. In fact, residents like to say Dougherty County's county seat, Albany, is just like Atlanta except instead of having twenty of everything, Albany has one. They also say it has everything from A to Z, "A" being the airport and "Z" being the zoo.

Appreciating the outdoors in Dougherty County is almost as easy as walking out the front door. At the Flint RiverQuarium in Albany many enjoy observing snapping turtles, alligators, egrets, waterfowl, and over 120 types of fish. Top RiverQuarium picks include the hatchery and the 175,000 gallon, 22-foot deep Blue Spring Hole. Another popular attraction in the County is Radium Springs, one of the "Seven Natural Wonders of Georgia" and Georgia's largest natural spring. Named for its deep blue waters, which are caused by trace amounts of radium, the spring was discovered in 1925 and maintains a constant 68°F water



year-round. Another popular attraction is the Radium Springs Gardens which are immaculate, complete with gazebos and new walkways.

Outdoor sports enthusiasts have no shortage of options. Golfers can hit the greens at Flint River Municipal Golf Course or Stonebridge Golf & Country Club. Families and individuals have a plethora of parks to choose from for an afternoon outing. A family-favorite is Turtle Grove Play Park, a community-built park with seven distinct play areas. Another popular venue is Chehaw Park, the 700-acre nature preserve and wild-animal park. Located on Albany's northern boundary it also provides numerous amenities that include picnic areas, campgrounds, RV sites, nature trails, and even a BMX bike trail. Other favorite pastimes here include boating, fishing and turkey, quail and duck hunting in the Flint River, cypress swamps, and the reserves. Additionally, to Albany's west, a number of former plantations have been purchased and set aside as private hunting and fishing preserves solely for these purposes. In fact, overall, approximately 40% of the County's land is made up of reserves and parks.

As the County's only incorporated city, Albany is the center of Dougherty County's history and culture. Along Albany's last remaining brick street is Thronateeska Heritage Center, created to preserve and revitalize Albany's historic downtown railroad depot area. The Center is comprised of many facilities, such as the Museum of History, the Wetherbee Planetarium, and the Science Discovery Center. Nearby is the Albany Civil Rights Institute at the newly restored Old Mount Zion Church and its adjacent museum. The Institute memorializes the culture and struggles of Albany during the American Civil Rights Movement during the early 1960s.

The County also boasts several great cultural attractions. For instance, many admire the accredited Albany Museum of Art and its exhibits' commemoration of the South. Connoisseurs of the arts will adore the Theatre Albany which is located in the antebellum jewel of Captain John A. Davis' home and hosts numerous musicals, plays, dramas, and original works throughout the year. Other beloved venues include the Albany Symphony Orchestra, Ballet Theatre South, and The Albany Chorale.

For those who love food, Little Jamaican Restaurant and Jimmie's Hot Dogs are prime examples of local flair that provide plenty of inviting selections. Mixing that love of food with music inspired the South Georgia Seafood and Music Festival, held annually at the Veterans Park Amphitheater in June.

Georgia is home to numerous professional teams. Sports fans can offer their support to the local collegiate Albany State Golden Rams or the professional teams in Atlanta, including the Atlanta Falcons (NFL), Atlanta Braves (MLB), Atlanta Hawks (NBA), Atlanta Dream (WNBA), and Atlanta Gladiators (ECHL).

Dougherty County has excellent healthcare and serves as a regional center. Its key facility is the Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital which is undergoing a \$100 million expansion which includes the construction of a new trauma center, supporting its recent Level II Trauma designation. The crime rate in Albany and Dougherty County varies according to the source. Those who live here consider it to be low to moderate and feel that Part 1 crimes (the more serious crimes) are exceptionally low.

As an additional benefit, the cost of living is very reasonable here compared to many parts of the county, and homes here are extremely reasonably priced. Options range from mobile homes to multi and single-family homes, condominiums, and farms. According to Zillow, the median home listing price is \$190,000, with a median selling price of \$160,000. A nice three bedroom, two bath, 2,400 square foot home can be purchased between \$200,000 and \$300,000. If you are willing to pay more, you can purchase an exceptional home. For example, a very nice 1970s four bedroom, five bath, 4,700 square foot home on 1.3 acres is currently listed at \$490,000.

Dougherty County School System oversees four high schools, five middle schools, fourteen elementary schools, and other education alternatives. Overall, Niche.com rates them as average. That said, the teachers here are well regarded and a student who applies themselves can get a very education in them. Numerous private schools are available as well and many are quite good.

For those seeking higher education, Albany State University and Albany Technical College are local options. Several other colleges and universities can be found within a 200-mile radius,



Figure 1: Location of the Dougherty County, GA

and these include the campuses of Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Georgia, and Georgia State University in Atlanta (200 miles north); Columbus State University (90 miles to the northwest); Auburn University (120 miles northwest); Florida State University in Tallahassee (90 miles south) and the University of Florida in Gainesville (190 miles southeast).

Furthermore, Dougherty County is well located for travelers. By car, various significant roads pass through Albany, such as U.S. Route 19, State Route 82, State Route 234, and State Route 300. East 40 miles to Tifton is Interstate 75. Many wonderful cities are within a few hours' drive including the aforementioned Columbus and Atlanta, as well as Savannah to the east (230 miles) and Jacksonville, FL (190 miles southeast). Florida's fabulous Gulf Coast beaches are 160 miles to the southeast.

For air travel needs, Southwest Georgia Regional Airport is four miles from the governmental center. Other nearby options include Columbus Airport, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Tallahassee International Airport, and Jacksonville International Airport.

What really makes Dougherty County special, however, is its people. They are friendly, welcoming, down to earth, and

resilient. Neighbors help their neighbors and are an embodiment of Southern hospitality.

Dougherty County is a great place to live and grow personally and professionally. The County is the southwest Georgia hub for healthcare, retail, cultural activities, manufacturing, and higher education. Its southern charm, rich history, beautiful scenery, and ideal location make it a wonderful place to call home. So please dust off your resume and apply to be our next County Administrator.

HISTORY

First settled by the Creek tribes, the area later known as Dougherty County was a land with rich resources and waterways. European settlers began inhabiting the region in the 1790s, and the area was set apart as Baker County in 1825. Following the Creek Wars in the early 1800s, people began flowing into the area.

Nelson Tift established the city of Albany in 1836. Its location on the west bank of the Flint River proved successful for merchandising, boat traffic, and eventually railroads. In 1853, the Georgia Legislature formed Dougherty County from a portion of Baker County. It was the namesake of the respectable Judge Charles Dougherty from Athens, Georgia. Albany was designated as the County's seat.

Upon establishment, Dougherty County and the city of Albany's main commerce included cotton trade, cotton seed oil mills, pine products, cross arms, and public ginneries. Industry changed over time to pecan and peanut cultivation, and later to cattle ranching and meatpacking. During World War II, two pilot training fields were established here and in 1952 the Marine Corps Logistics Base (MCLB) opened. The County also introduced other industries, such as breweries and candy manufacturers.

The County also experienced many nationally significant moments. Like much of Georgia, early Dougherty County relied heavily on slave labor. After the American Civil War between 1861 and 1865, struggles still persisted for the newly freed. The fight for civil rights occurred over the next 100 years, but became more emphatic in the early 1960s with the formation of the Albany Movement. In fact, it was the first mass movement in the

modern civil rights era to have as its goal the desegregation of an entire community. It resulted in the jailing of more than 1,000 African Americans including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In many ways, it was a learning experience and the precursor for the later march in Selma.

Interstate 75 was completed in the early 1970s and, instead of passing through the County, its route went 40 miles east through Tifton. Soon after that, Dougherty County’s population began to decline.

The summer of 1994 brought the “Flood of the Century.” Though prone to periodic flooding, Dougherty County experienced its worst incident due to the extensive impact of Tropical Storm Alberto. The Flint River crested well past its banks, covering some areas of downtown Albany with approximately 12 feet of water. Receiving both national and international attention, Georgia rallied under immense support and funding to an award-winning recovery program to improve flood control infrastructure.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Over the past several decades, Dougherty County has experienced a slow decline in population size. Having reached its peak during the 1980 census with a population of 100,718, it has gradually decreased to its current estimate of 82,966. The decline is largely attributable to many in the middle class (both black and white) moving north to neighboring Lee County. For more detailed County demographics, see Table I.

It should be noted that approximately 69,000 residents of the County live in the City of Albany.

CLIMATE

Dougherty County experiences a humid, subtropical climate. Winters are generally mild, with average temperatures generally above freezing. January is the County’s coldest month, with an average low temperature of 36.4° F. Summers can be particularly hot and humid, peaking between June and August as humidity levels sit around 70%. The County’s hottest month is July, with average high temperatures reaching 92.4° F. The most pleasant months are March, April, and October.

Table 2: Dougherty County, GA Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	24.5%	0 to 15	20.1%
Black	69.9%	15 to 25	13.9%
Asian	0.8%	25 to 45	25.2%
Native American	0.2%	45 to 65	23.7%
Other	4.6%	65 to 85	15.8%
Total	100.0%	Over 85	1.3%
Hispanic Ethnicity (all races)	2.8%		
2022 Estimated Population: 82,966			

Educational Achievements (25 & Over) and Other Statistics	
High School or Higher	88.7%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	24.2%
Median Age—Dougherty County	47.1
Median Age—U.S.	38.9
Median Household Income—Dougherty County	\$41,425
Median Household Income—U.S.	\$74,580
Poverty Rate	29.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The area experiences an average of 223 sunny days per year. Average rainfall is 50 inches annually, and snow is exceptionally rare. Historically, flooding has been a concern due to the proximity of the Flint River, with the most recent major flood occurring in 2009. That said, as noted, the County has adopted robust avoidant and protective measures to mitigate future incidents.

GEOGRAPHY

Dougherty County is situated in a section of Georgia’s southwestern corner and is part of the five county Albany metropolitan statistical area. The County’s seat and its only incorporated city is Albany, found in the center of the County’s northeastern quadrant. As noted previously, the County is 180

miles south of Atlanta and 40 miles west of both Tifton and Interstate 75. Just 60 miles to the west is Alabama, and 100 miles south is Florida state’s capital of Tallahassee.

Amounting to 334.5 square miles, the County is comprised of 328.6 square miles of land and 5.9 square miles of water. Its average elevation is 212 feet above sea level. The County is located in the Lower Flint River sub-basin of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin, though the northeastern corner past Albany is located in the Middle Flint River sub-basin of the same ACF River Basin. Other notable bodies of water within County boundaries include Lakes Worth and Chehaw northeast of Albany, as well as various creeks and ponds scattered throughout the region.

COMMERCE

Dougherty County was originally involved in industries taking advantage of its fertile land and forests, such as cotton, cotton seed oil mills, and pine products.

The County’s primary industries are agriculture, defense, distribution and logistics, healthcare, and manufacturing. Several large companies have operations in the County due to its vast natural resources. Notable industries include Procter & Gamble,

Mars Chocolate North America, Miller Brewing Company, and Phoebe Putney Health System.

The County is also home to the Marine Corps Logistics Base (MCLB). Through this interaction, the County and the MCLB signed a renewable energy deal in 2011 to form a 20-year partnership selling the County’s landfill natural gas to MCLB Albany from the County’s Landfill Gas-to-Energy project. Table II below shows City of Albany’s Principal employers.

Importantly, both the Norfolk Southern and the CSX Railroads serve the community.

THE GOVERNMENT

Dougherty County is led by a seven-member Board of Commissioners. Six members are elected to represent geographical districts within the County, with each member representing a separate district. The seventh member is the Chairman, who is elected at-large to lead the Commission and represent the County as a whole. A Vice-Chairman is decided upon within the Board. Both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are voting members without veto power.

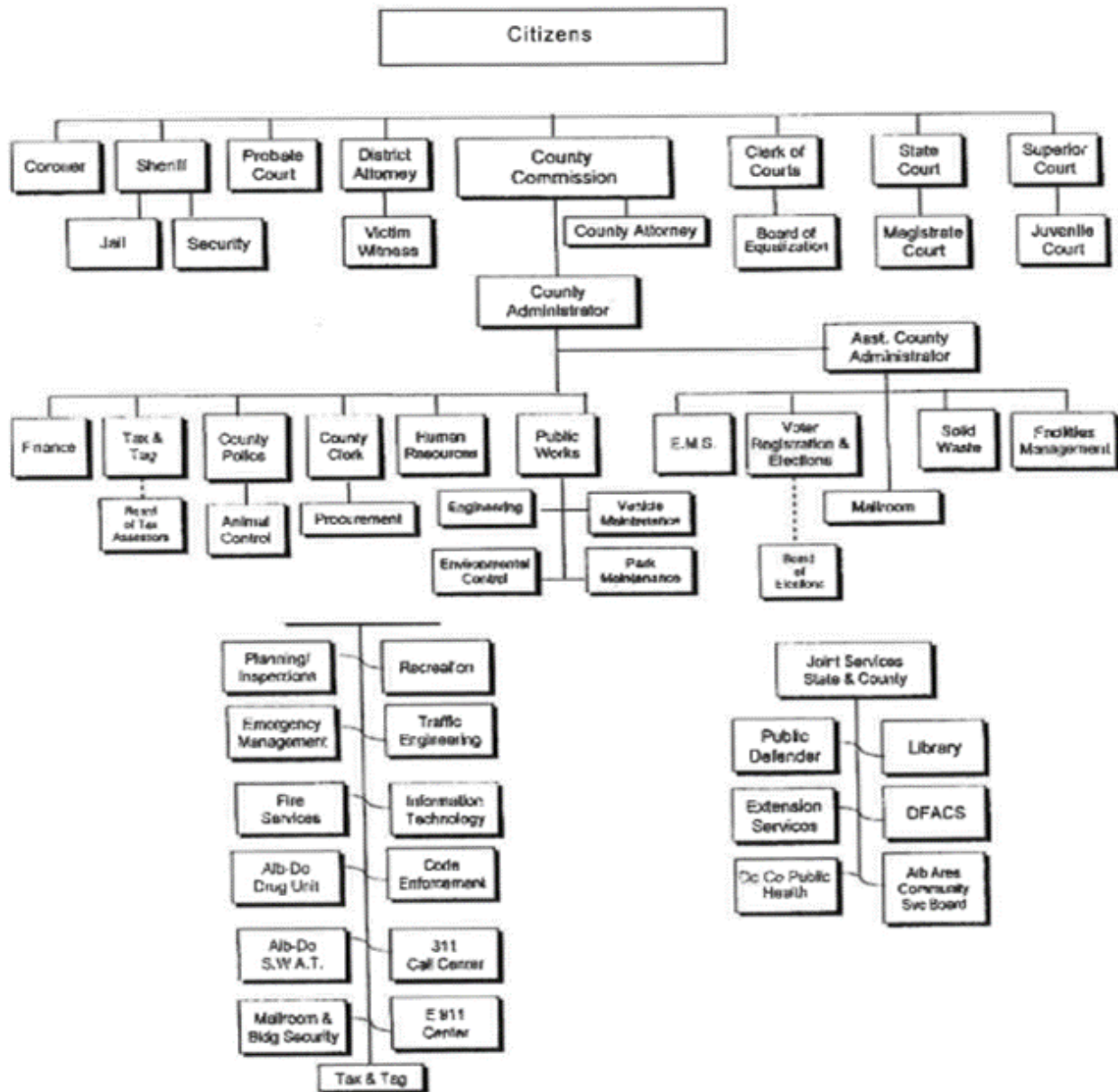
Commissioners serve four-year terms, with elections for district seats staggered during even-numbered years. The next election will be held later this year for County Commission seats representing Districts 1, 3, and 5. Seats for the Chairman and Districts 2, 4, and 6 will be up for election in 2026. Members can serve an unlimited number of terms. Two Commissioners are currently serving their fourth terms, two members are in their third term, one has served eight years, one member is completing his first term, and the Chairman is in the second year of his first term. The Commission Members generally work well together and respect one another as well as the staff.

Table 3: Principal Employers, Dougherty County, GA

Employer	Industry	Employees
Marine Depot Maintenance Command	Military	2900
Dougherty County & County School System	Govt/Education	2800
Phoebe Putney Health System	Healthcare	1800
Procter and Gamble	Manufacturing	1600
City of Albany	Government	1100
Molson Coors	Food & Beverage	500
Albany State University	Education	550
Metro Power	Electrical Power	500
Aspire Behavioral Health	Healthcare	400
Coats and Clark	Manufacturing	300

Source: City of Albany, GA 2020 CAFR

FIGURE 2: DOUGHERTY COUNTY GOVERNMENT—ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



The Board appoints the County Attorney, Chief of Police, and the County Administrator. As the head of the administrative branch, the Administrator oversees the County’s daily operations. He or she is appointed annually for a one-year term upon Board majority vote, generally starting at the beginning of the calendar year. Suspension or removal at any time may occur also by a vote of the Board majority.

The County provides normal services such as EMS, Police (for the unincorporated portions of the County), Court and Jail Services, Solid Waste, Tax Collection, Libraries, etc. Other services like Fire, Sewage, Recreation, IT, Code Enforcement, and Planning and Zoning are provided by the City of Albany under a shared services agreement. The County employs 703 full-time, part-time, seasonal, grant, and appointed officials. The



departments with the largest number of employees include Jail Operations (211), Sheriff's Office (66), Emergency Medical Services (66), Public Works (54), Library (51), County Police (41), District Attorney (29), Facilities Management and Mailroom (28), and Tax Collection (28) See figure 2 on page 6 for more information. The County does not have unionized employees. A notable fact is the County's governmental center houses both City of Albany's and Dougherty County's administrative functions. The problem with just saying city and county is that county's do a lot of things that cities do so if you just say city and county admin functions, the reader could easily miss the point.

Dougherty County's total budget for fiscal year 2022/2023 was \$91,258,919 with a general fund budget of \$67,624,107. The County's drafted proposed total budget for fiscal year 2023/2024 is \$90,467,215, with a drafted proposal general fund budget of \$66,892,096 for maintenance and operations. Additionally, the County has no debt.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

First and foremost, the County Administrator will need to work with the Board of Commissioners to ensure the County has a shared vision, and a strategic plan to implement the vision—a plan to bring together all the elements needed to ensure the long-term health and well-being of the community. A corollary is, while the Commission Members have worked well together historically, the termination of the last County Administrator has caused some division, and the next Administrator will need to help it return to being a fully cohesive entity.

Second, Dougherty County is ripe for and needs more development/redevelopment. It is the key to the County's future and to growing the community. The good news is the Board actively supports the right kind of development, housing in the area is inexpensive, the water supply is excellent, and the transportation system (roads, rail, and water) is very good. The County has two major railroads that serve it, and developers are welcome here. A major challenge is finding raw land—as noted much of the County's land is tied up in preserves and hunting plantations. Redevelopment, on the other hand, will need to occur primarily in the City of Albany so coordination with the City will be needed. On the immediate horizon, as noted, the Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital is undergoing a \$100 million expansion. Further, according to a December 2023 edition of the Albany Herald, a number of prominent downtown buildings are slated for renovation. The first is the historic St. Nicholas Hotel across the street from the County Building. It will become a hotel and conference center. Further, an out-of-state developer has plans to renovate the former Water, Gas & Light and Albany Herald buildings downtown as a hotel and extended-stay hotel, respectively. Another historic building, the former Davis Exchange Bank is slated to be turned into apartments.

Third, the next County Administrator will need to undertake a thorough review of the County's operations. He/she needs to determine if the right people are in the right place doing the right things in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

Finally, in Dougherty County, nearly one in three residents live in poverty. This statistic highlights the economic challenges faced throughout the County; and economic growth will help alleviate this important issue over time. Endeavors to address poverty and improve living conditions are crucial for the well-being of its residents.

The pieces are in place, but much remains to be done. The potential for growth and development is significant. With the right leadership, Dougherty County has a bright future.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Dougherty County is seeking an experienced administrator who has demonstrated he/she is also an outstanding leader, and who

is ready for a new challenge! The Board of Commissioners wants someone to work with it as a partner, a supporter and a trusted advisor. The individual will be a practical visionary, who can look over the horizon, foresee solutions to today's and tomorrow's issues and work with the Board to develop and implement plans to ensure a bright future. The administrator will be a consensus builder yet not afraid to speak up when he/she feels a course correction is needed. The Commissioners are not looking for a "yes" person, but someone they can count on to provide their best professional opinion, diplomatically and in the appropriate setting. He/she will work to ensure every Board Member's views are being heard and considered. Communication will be frank, free-flowing, and without surprises. The individual will be very open, approachable, and believe strongly in transparency.

The ideal candidate will be ready to serve as an effective ambassador and promote the County. He/she will work with the Commission to establish a brand for the County and then market it. Frankly, Dougherty County is a wonderful place with good people and its story needs to be told in a new light. Yes, it has some serious challenges, but it also has great potential. The administrator will realize resolving many of Dougherty County's issues will require the involvement of others—residents, developers, and regional, state and federal actors as well as the media. The individual will have strong interpersonal skills and a track record for building partnerships and for finding win-win solutions. He/she will realize that giving credit to others is often the best way to get things done.

The next administrator will have excellent oral and written communications skills. He/she will realize that listening and showing empathy can be more important than simply giving the right answer. The administrator will embrace outstanding customer service and lead by example. When the County cannot solve the problem, residents deserve a good explanation of why.

The ideal candidate will inspire, manage, delegate and mentor employees. Creativity will be encouraged. Staff members need to feel they have the freedom to try new ideas. The County Administrator will have high expectations for staff members while working together in developing clearly defined programs that will achieve the Commission's vision. The Administrator will realize he/she cannot do it all. Once plans are in place, the

individual will step back, delegate responsibility and authority, and then expect results. The ideal candidate will expect nothing less than employees' best efforts. Accountability is essential, and the administrator will not hesitate to ensure people do their jobs as expected.

The best candidate will be action-oriented with a sense of urgency. Much needs to be done, and the individual will not dawdle. While the Administrator will solicit the opinion and involve others in the decision making, when faced with a difficult situation and the need for a quick decision, he/she will not hesitate. If a course correction is needed later, he/she will admit a better decision could have been made, make the necessary changes, and move on. The ideal candidate will realize credibility sometimes means admitting making a mistake.

The next administrator will have an eye for detail and be a problem solver with outstanding analytical skills. He/she will constantly ask, "Why?" or better yet, "Why not?" An acceptable answer will not be, "We have always done it this way." It may be the best way, but the reason will need to be understood, explained and/or demonstrated. The best candidate will have a strong understanding of technology and its application. Numerous internal practices and processes need to be updated and optimized. Much of that work will involve software solutions.

Personally, the next administrator will be a doer who is positive, bold, intelligent, confident, upbeat, friendly, outgoing, organized, tenacious, high energy, involved in the community, and resolute yet flexible.

The ideal candidate will have a bachelor's degree in a subject area applicable to local government. He/she will have at least five to seven years' experience as a county or city administrator or assistant. Strong experience in development/redevelopment, planning, and finance is important. Experience working with other governmental agencies and economic development is a definite plus.

Finally, the ideal candidate will see Dougherty County as a diamond in the rough and a once in a lifetime opportunity. It

could be the capstone to an already successful career or an opportunity to establish themselves as an outstanding, achievement-oriented administrator. The Board of Commissioners wants to find the right person and, once proven, will work to keep them for a very long time!

COMPENSATION

The starting salary will be between \$157,000 to \$205,000. The actual salary will depend on qualifications and experience. It should be noted, once again, that the cost of living in Albany is less than most places in the country. Benefits are excellent. Due to the County Administrator position being designated as a non-classified employee, retirement plans for this position are negotiable.

TERM OF OFFICE

Under state law, the County Administrator is appointed in January of each year for a period of one year.

RESIDENCY

While the County Administrator is not legally required to reside within the County, it is hard to imagine why he/she would want to live anywhere else.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to **Recruit22@cb-asso.com** by April 19th. Questions should be directed to Scott Krim at (801) 628-8364, or Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537

THE PRIOR ADMINISTRATOR

The most recent County Administrator worked for the County for a total of 26 years, and served as the interim and permanent County Administrator for a little over five years before having his employment terminated.

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

The possibility of one or more internal candidates exists. That said, the County is committed to a level playing field and the best

person will be selected for the position, whether internal or external.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Under Georgia law, once the County narrows the field to three or fewer candidates, their names must be made available to the public. As a practical matter, we will not release any names without the candidates' permission. Further, state law requires that the names of the final three candidates be announced 15 days in advance of the final hiring decision.

THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened between April 6th and May 15th. Finalists will be selected on May 16th. A reception and interviews will be held on May 23rd and 24th. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Dougherty County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. It strongly encourages women, minorities, and veterans to apply.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the County, visit:

www.doughertyga.us

choosealbany.com/site-selection/area-industries

<https://albanyga.com>

www.albanyga.gov/about-us/county-departments/planning-development

<https://visitalbanyga.com/explore/all>

