



CAPE FEAR PUBLIC UTILITY AUTHORITY

Assistant Operations Director



The Position

Cape Fear Public Utility Authority (CFPUA) seeks an Assistant Operations Director (AOD) to lead and direct the utility's water and sewer field operations. Reporting to the Deputy Executive Director, the AOD implements plans and programs for the department including budgeting, job assignments, employee evaluations, and the preparation of contractual obligations. The AOD oversees the work of division leaders who plan, direct, and control the day-to-day operational activities for 90 staff members across the authority's Construction and Distribution, Water Quality, Utility Locates, and Collections Systems and Pump Station groups.

The AOD ensures the effective operation and maintenance of critical infrastructure, including over 1,300 miles of water distribution lines, 1,100 miles of sewer collection lines, and 167 sewer pump stations. The role requires oversight of field services and the development of operational programs that maintain a safe and reliable system for over 200,000 people in our community. The AOD ensures that all field activities are conducted in an environmentally sound manner, evaluates performance measures, and implements continuous improvement strategies to modernize aging assets and support the growth of new neighborhood infrastructure.

In coordination with the Deputy Executive Director and the Chief Engineer of Capital Projects, the AOD participates in the execution of the Capital Improvement Plan and ensures the completion of ongoing infrastructure projects. This position identifies the operational and maintenance needs of assigned departments and manages annual division goals consistent with the CFPUA strategic plan. Furthermore, the AOD analyzes budget requests and helps supervisors develop annual departmental budgets that prioritize infrastructure resilience and the emergency, corrective, and planned repair and maintenance of transmission mains and pump stations.

The AOD facilitates strong relationships between field staff and executive leadership, serving as an advocate for the division and maintaining cohesion across different departments. This position leads or participates in various teams focused on increasing education and certifications across the authority. As a member of the management team, the AOD demonstrates the CFPUA values and holds staff accountable for creating a culture of belonging and inclusion. The AOD works in partnership with the Human Resources department to ensure compliance with federal and state employment law and verifies that staff completes all relevant training and safety protocols.

Priorities

- Develop and maintain positive, trust-based relationships internally throughout the organization, serving as a critical bridge between field staff and executive leadership.
- Identify and implement opportunities for increased operational efficiency by establishing performance metrics and benchmarks, specifically for the maintenance of pump station assets and field activities.
- Navigate and utilize the authority's complex workorder system to modernize aging infrastructure and evaluate equipment life cycles, balancing rehabilitation and replacement maintenance with the demands of rapid community growth.
- Coordinate with the engineering department to ensure the successful completion of ongoing capital projects, including the repair and rehabilitation of transmission mains and critical sewer pump stations.
- Collaborate with supervisors to analyze budget requests and develop annual departmental plans that prioritize long-term infrastructure health and reflect the actual cost of regional operations.
- Maintain a steadfast commitment to operational safety protocols and emergency preparedness, ensuring a secure work environment for the authority's 90-person field operations team.
- Champion the advancement of the division by supporting the new apprenticeship program, advocating for necessary crew expansions, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and certification.
- Ensure all collection and distribution activities meet or exceed regulatory standards, protect public health and the environmental integrity of the regional water and sewer system.
- Serve as part of the incident and command structure during emergency events.



The Successful Candidate

The next Assistant Operations Director (AOD) is a highly competent, hands-on leader who brings deep technical credibility to water and sewer field operations. The ideal candidate will understand the complexities of maintaining a growing utility system, including the oversight of 167 sewer pump stations, the rehabilitation of transmission mains, the management of water quality and distribution, and the safety risks and controls to protect staff. This individual is a strategic thinker who can evaluate equipment life cycles and prioritize capital needs to ensure the long-term reliability of the system. This leader is fully committed to operational excellence, effectively managing multiple complex projects while helping staff prioritize both immediate repairs and long-term infrastructure goals.

The successful candidate has exceptional leadership and coaching skills, with the ability to motivate a diverse team of 90 positions and foster a collaborative work environment. The ideal AOD will have a high degree of emotional intelligence and serve as a bridge between the field and executive leadership. As a champion for the division, they will delegate work appropriately, mentor supervisors through complex performance issues, and involve employees in decision making processes. They serve as a model of integrity, remaining calm under pressure and providing decisive leadership during emergency responses and crisis events.

The AOD will have a strong foundation in core utility services, including utility construction, contract management, and budget development. The ideal candidate is technologically savvy, capable of navigating complex asset management workorder systems and using performance metrics to identify opportunities for increased efficiency. Because CFPUA is a national leader in operational excellence, the successful candidate will have the technical acumen to understand its impact on operations, regulatory compliance, and the customers we serve. Above all, the next Director will proactively address workplace challenges and foster a culture of safety, innovation, and belonging, ensuring the organization continues to improve its service to the community.

Qualifications

Minimum requirements include a bachelor's degree and five years of professional work experience at a management level in water or wastewater utility management, engineering management with an emphasis on water and sewer field operations, or utility maintenance management. CFPUA will also consider candidates with fifteen years of experience in managing water and sewer activities related to field operations and maintenance (including repair and rehabilitation of transmission mains and pump stations) in lieu of a degree.

Preferred qualifications include project management certifications, or advanced North Carolina water or wastewater certifications. The ideal candidate will have a proven track record of overseeing complex infrastructure, managing departmental budgets, and leading division leaders in a fast-paced operational environment.



Inside The Cape Fear Public Utility Authority

CFPUA opened in 2008 to provide quality, reliable, and affordable water and sewer services to the people of New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington. CFPUA is a ratepayer-funded, not-for-profit, public entity operated from a business-savvy perspective. CFPUA is a standalone authority and is the ninth largest utility in the State. More than 75,000 homes, businesses, and industries have accounts with CFPUA, serving more than 200,000 people in our community. CFPUA's annual report can be viewed [here](#).

In addition to providing water and sewer services, CFPUA's operations are driven by a team of over 350 professionals across several specialized departments:

- **Linear Assets:** Operates and maintains over 1,300 miles of water distribution and 1,100 miles of sewer collection systems.
- **Environmental Management & Sustainability:** Operates our certified Laboratory and monitors water quality throughout the region.
- **Finance & Customer Service:** Manages meter reading, billing, enterprise resource planning (ERP), and long-term financial budgeting.
- **Support Services:** Our Information Technology and Human Resources departments are dedicated to maintaining critical infrastructure and empowering our most valuable resource, our staff.

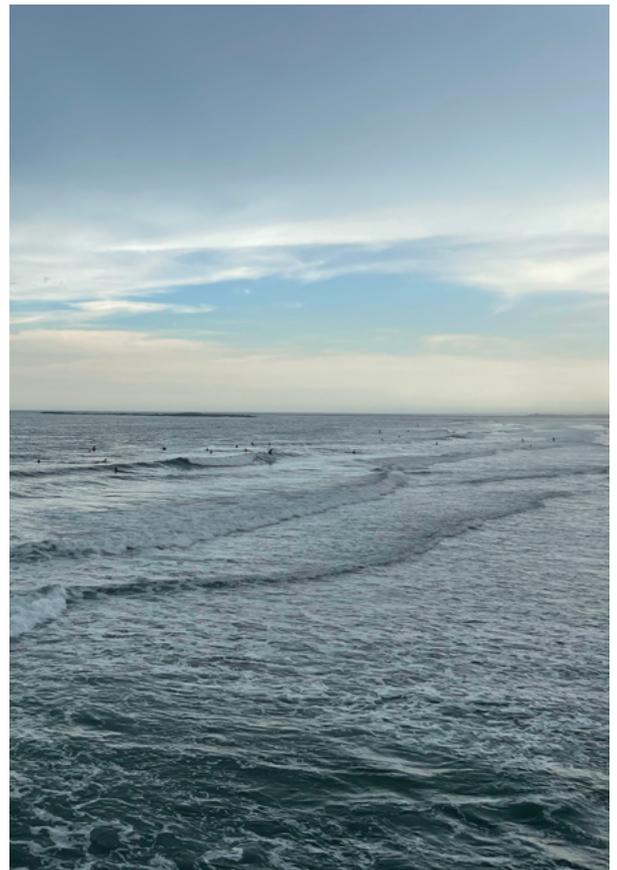
Strategic Vision & FY 2026 Planning

As CFPUA looks toward Fiscal Year 2026, our organization is focused on long-term sustainability and infrastructure resilience. [The FY 2026 Adopted Budget](#) prioritizes significant capital investments to enhance treatment capacity and modernize aging assets, ensuring we meet the needs of a growing community.

CFPUA staff of 350-plus work each day to provide customers and community the highest quality service at the lowest price practicable with the goal of being recognized as a premier employer. CFPUA is committed to recruiting, retaining, and empowering a competitive workforce that is competent, innovative, and safety focused. We are also committed to developing our workforce for personal and organizational growth. CFPUA strives to create a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We work hard to achieve this by creating programs that will attract, develop, and retain our diverse workforce.

Awards

- **Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA):** Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (15th consecutive year) and Distinguished Budget Presentation Award (13th consecutive year).
- **North Carolina Division of Water Resources:** Area Wide Optimization Award (17th consecutive year - Sweeney facility).
- **National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA):** Peak Performance Gold Awards for both the Northside and Southside Wastewater Treatment Plants, and Gold Recognition in the Excellence in Management Program.
- **Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA):** Platinum Award for Exceptional Utility Performance.
- **North Carolina Department of Labor 2025 Safety Awards:** Achievement in Outstanding Health and Safety. Gold Recognition: Customer Service, Administrative Services, Utility Services (Collection System Operations and Maintenance, Water Quality and Locate Services), Wastewater Treatment (Northside), Water Treatment (Richardson), Engineering, and Environmental Management (Community Compliance & Lab). Silver Recognition: Wastewater Treatment (Southside) and Water Treatment (Sweeney).
- **NC Department of Labor Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program:** Water Treatment Plants (Richardson & Sweeney), Wastewater Treatment Plants (Northside and Southside), Administration Facility, and Environmental Services Facility.



The City of Wilmington and County of New Hanover

Wilmington, North Carolina, is a captivating destination where history intertwines with coastal splendor. The County seat of New Hanover County is nestled along the Cape Fear River. The City offers a harmonious blend of Southern charm, cultural richness, and natural beauty. Home to over 117,000 residents, Wilmington is the eighth-largest city in North Carolina with a diverse population that contributes to the vibrant tapestry of the inviting community that is filled with enriching culture and tradition.

Historic Downtown Wilmington features cobblestone streets that lead to quaint shops, charming cafes, and vibrant galleries. One becomes immersed in the rich heritage while visiting the local iconic landmarks such as the Bellamy Mansion and the Battleship North Carolina. With access to pristine beaches, including Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach and Kure Beach, spanning over 31 miles of coastline. These picturesque shores attract millions of visitors annually. With over 200 days of sunshine each year and an average temperature of 74°F, Wilmington offers ideal conditions for outdoor adventures year-round. Whether you're hiking scenic trails in nearby state parks or indulging in water sports along our coast, there's always something exciting to explore.

New Hanover County is a dynamic community nestled along the stunning coast of the Tar Heel State. With a population exceeding 235,000 residents, New Hanover County offers a lively blend of urban amenities and coastal charm. With a thriving economy, top-rated schools, and a strong sense of community, New Hanover County offers an exceptional quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Join us in exploring the beauty and charm of New Hanover County, where coastal living meets Southern hospitality.



Compensation and Benefits

The expected hiring range is \$140,000–155,000, depending on qualifications, with an excellent benefits package. Learn more about our options and employee-based benefits [here](#).



How to Apply

Applications will be accepted electronically by Raftelis at raftelis.com. Applicants complete a brief online form and are prompted to provide a cover letter and resume. The position will be open until filled with a first review of applications beginning **March 18, 2026**.



Questions

Please direct questions to Pamela Wideman at pwideman@raftelis.com and Niayla Hairston at nhairston@raftelis.com.