ONSLOW
NORTH CAROLINA

ONSLOW COUNTY

County Manager



RAFTELIS





The Position

Onslow County, North Carolina, seeks an accomplished, principled, and forward-looking executive leader to serve as its next County Manager. Operating under the commission-manager plan pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes, the County Manager serves as the Chief Administrative Officer of Onslow County Government, carrying out the strategic vision, policies, and ordinances established by the seven-member Board of County Commissioners. This opening follows a period of organizational transition and renewed board focus. Under the steady guidance of an experienced Interim County Manager, who will return to his leadership role as Deputy County Manager upon the arrival of the permanent manager, the Board of Commissioners and County staff have cultivated a respectful, collaborative, and mission-focused working culture. Commissioners are working closely together and are united in their desire for a leader who values people, respects the distinct boundary between policy governance and administrative execution, and leads with genuine humility. The incoming manager will inherit a committed department director team and an organization eager for consistent, communicative, and transparent executive leadership.

Priorities

The incoming County Manager will lead the implementation of the Board of Commissioners' strategic agenda during their first year, focusing on the following core priorities:

Strengthen Public Safety and Fire Protection Partnerships. Overseeing the coordination and implementation of the countywide fire services study to establish financially sustainable service models that support both volunteer and career firefighting personnel, while expanding county emergency medical service (EMS) facilities and Mobile Integrated Health programs to decrease EMS response times.

Guide Strategic Economic Development and Land Use. Partner with the Onslow Coastal Alliance and regional developers to recruit high-wage employers, attract technology investments, market the available parcels within the 730-acre Burton Industrial Park, and align the Horizon 2040 Comprehensive Plan to balance growth with the preservation of working farms and timberlands.

Advance Community Hubs and Decentralized Service Delivery. Implement the Board's vision for regional community service hubs, beginning with site selection and capital planning in the high-growth areas of Richlands and Stump Sound. This initiative ensures county services, including public health, social services, veterans services, libraries, and museum programming, are directly accessible to residents across the entire county meeting people where they are.

Evaluate and Plan Comprehensive Recreational and Cultural Facilities. Drive the analysis, financial modeling, and partnerships required for major quality-of-life investments, specifically evaluating a feasibility model for multiple indoor recreation facilities in targeted areas of the County, park improvements, and collaborative programming with Onslow County Public Schools and municipal partners to optimize existing public gymnasiums and outdoor assets.

Invest in Organizational Culture and Workforce Development. Deepen trust across the organization by modeling the County's REACH core values, supporting departmental directors without micromanagement, promoting career progression through the VIEW program, and fostering proactive, open communication with county staff and the Board of Commissioners.

The Successful Candidate

The ideal County Manager is a servant leader who embodies the highest standards of personal and professional integrity, combining proven operational management with strong emotional intelligence and political acumen. The Board of Commissioners seeks an authentic, transparent communicator who fosters genuine trust across all levels of the organization and community. The successful candidate presents clear facts, balanced options, and objective evaluations without sugarcoating or political maneuvering, maintaining strict impartiality while faithfully executing adopted Board policies.

An empowering executive, the next Manager values staff, listens attentively, and avoids micromanagement. By providing department directors with clear expectations, adequate resources, and professional support, the Manager cultivates an organizational culture of shared accountability, continuous process improvement, and pride in public service. The successful candidate possesses a strong command of local government finance, capital planning, debt issuance strategies, and enterprise fund management, ensuring County resources are deployed prudently and transparently.

The next Manager is a skilled collaborator and consensus builder, adept at forging durable intergovernmental and community relationships. From engaging with agricultural producers and commercial fishermen to collaborating with municipal mayors, town managers, school board officials, and military leadership, the Manager approaches every interaction with diplomacy, respect, and a commitment to shared regional success. Accessible and visible, the successful candidate will immerse themselves in the civic fabric of Onslow County, demonstrating genuine enthusiasm for the community and its people.

Qualifications

A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in public administration, business administration, political science, finance, or a related field is required, supplemented by progressively responsible local government management experience. This experience must include at least five years in an executive or senior management capacity, preferably as a county manager, deputy county manager, assistant county manager, city manager, or comparable local government executive.

An advanced degree in public administration, business administration, or a closely related field is strongly preferred. Credentialed Manager designation through the International City/County Management Association (ICMA-CM) is preferred, with the expectation that the appointed manager will maintain active ICMA membership, adhere strictly to the ICMA Code of Ethics, and pursue or maintain credentialing. Experience navigating coastal emergency operations, partnerships with military installations, and capital planning in growing county governments is advantageous. Onslow County may consider an equivalent combination of knowledge, skills, education, and experience to meet minimum qualifications.

The appointed County Manager must establish legal residency within Onslow County within a reasonable, timeframe following appointment, and maintain residency throughout their tenure.



Inside The Organization

Onslow County operates under the commissioner-manager form of government established by the North Carolina General Statutes. The governing body consists of seven County Commissioners elected at large on a partisan basis to staggered four-year terms. The Board selects its Chairman and Vice Chairman, adopts local ordinances and policies, establishes the annual ad valorem property tax rate, approves the budget, and appoints the County Manager, County Attorney, and Clerk to the Board. The Board is recognized for its collegiality, mutual respect, and focus on practical solutions that advance community well-being.



The County Manager serves as chief administrator, overseeing 27 departments and working in coordination with independently elected officials, including the Sheriff, Register of Deeds, and Clerk of Superior Court. The manager's current executive leadership team includes the Deputy County Manager, Assistant County Manager, Chief Finance Officer, and Clerk to the Board. For fiscal year 2026-2027, the county government workforce includes 1,522 budgeted full-time equivalent positions dedicated to providing high-quality public service. View the Organizational Chart here: Onslow County - County Officials and Organizational Chart.

The County Manager provides executive leadership and operational oversight to a high-performing organization encompassing more than 1,500 dedicated employees, 27 operating departments and divisions, and a total adopted FY 2026-2027 county-wide budget of $373.7 million (supported by a General Fund of $304.5 million). Direct executive reports to the County Manager include the Deputy County Manager, Assistant County Manager, Finance Officer, and Administrative Assistant, while department directors across all public service functions report through executive leadership. The Manager serves as the Board's principal administrative advisor, offering objective counsel, sound fiscal analysis, and professional stewardship.

Onslow County is guided by its organizational mission: "We will ensure that Onslow County is a thriving community for all by delivering exceptional services with good governance and fiscal responsibility," and its vision to be "The community of choice in Coastal North Carolina." The workforce is anchored by the REACH core values:

- **Resilience:** Overcoming challenges through adaptability and steady determination.
- **Excellence:** Delivering high-quality, professional public services every day.
- **Accountability:** Taking personal and collective responsibility for public trust and resources.
- **Customer Service:** Serving residents, businesses, and colleagues with responsiveness and care.
- **Honesty:** Conducting all county business with uncompromised integrity and transparency.

Key organizational initiatives underway include implementing the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, expanding emergency management and public safety infrastructure, modernizing enterprise technology systems, and expanding the VIEW employee progression program to attract and retain exceptional public servants. Onslow County has also recently opened the newly renovated Enrichment Center, housing Senior Services, Cooperative Extension, and Soil & Water which as a $15 million renovation project.

The Community

Situated along the lower Coastal Plain of southeastern North Carolina, Onslow County encompasses 767 square miles of beautiful coastline, winding rivers, vast agricultural tracts, and protected forest lands. The County is home to more than 217,000 residents. Located approximately two and a half hours north of Myrtle Beach and two and a half hours southeast of Raleigh, Onslow County offers convenient access to major metropolitan centers and the Research Triangle while maintaining the charm, neighborliness, and relaxed pace of a coastal community.

Six incorporated municipalities thrive within Onslow County: the City of Jacksonville, which serves as the county seat and regional commercial hub, along with the scenic coastal and rural towns of Swansboro, Holly Ridge, Richlands, North Topsail Beach, and Surf City. The community is culturally diverse and youthful, significantly shaped by the presence of Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River. More than 33,000 military veterans and military retirees have chosen to make Onslow County their permanent home, adding deep civic leadership and a skilled, disciplined workforce to the local economy.

Outdoor recreation is a foundational part of life in Onslow County. Bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, the Intracoastal Waterway, and the New and White Oak Rivers, residents enjoy boating, kayaking, world-class inshore and offshore saltwater fishing, and pristine sandy beaches along North Topsail Beach. The County operates an expansive parks and recreation system, featuring walking trails, athletic fields, playgrounds and water access points. Nearby, the Hofmann Forest provides vast natural conservation areas, while cultural institutions such as the Onslow County Museum, local festivals, and the Museum of the Marine celebrate the region's rich maritime, agricultural, and military heritage.

Public education is provided through Onslow County Public Schools, which serves more than 27,000 students across 41 modern instructional facilities, including an early college high school and the Eastern North Carolina Regional Skills Center. Higher education and workforce training are anchored by Coastal Carolina Community College, which enrolls over 11,000 students annually and maintains nationally recognized technical, nursing, and university transfer curricula. High-quality regional healthcare is readily accessible through Onslow Memorial Hospital and the Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune.

The local economy is anchored by defense, agriculture, tourism, and retail commerce. Camp Lejeune represents the county's largest economic contributor, providing significant economic stability. Agriculture generates approximately $250 million in annual gross revenue, led by poultry, swine, grain production, and timber harvesting across nearly 349,000 acres of forestland. Coastal tourism generates more than $470 million in annual visitor spending, ranking Onslow County 18th in tourism impact among North Carolina's 100 counties. The region's commercial vitality is further demonstrated by $3.5 billion in annual retail sales and active industrial expansions at the 730-acre Burton Industrial Park and the Camp Davis Industrial Park. Onslow County is an extraordinary coastal setting where families, professionals, and businesses truly thrive.





Compensation and Benefits

The expected hiring range for the County Manager is dependent on the qualifications and executive experience of the applicant, with an attractive executive employment agreement subject to negotiation with the Board of Commissioners.

Onslow County offers a competitive and comprehensive benefits package, including:

- Participation in the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System (LGERS)
- County supplemental 401(k) and 457 deferred compensation contribution plans
- Comprehensive medical, dental, and vision insurance options for employees and dependents
- County-paid basic life insurance and accidental death coverage with optional supplemental plans
- Generous annual leave and sick leave accrual, alongside 15 paid county holidays
- Executive vehicle allowance
- Executive technology and communications allowance
- Professional association memberships, including ICMA, North Carolina City and County Management Association (NCCCMA), and the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), with funding for professional development conferences
- Relocation assistance package subject to negotiation

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 **December 7, 2026**.

Questions

Please direct questions to Anne Lewis at alewis@raftelis.com or 540-757-0316 or Niayla Hairston at nhairston@raftelis.com.