

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

ALLEGHANY COUNTY, VIRGINIA



ALLEGHANY COUNTY

Virginia's Western Gateway

Alleghany County is seeking an experienced professional to serve as County Administrator, the chief administrative officer responsible for directing programs and operations of the County government.

This recruitment profile provides background information on the community, its government operations, and its aspirations. It also outlines the qualifications, experience and characteristics determined to be necessary and desirable for successful performance as County Administrator.

Qualified candidates are encouraged to submit a cover letter and resume, with salary expectations and professional references, to The Berkley Group via email at kimball.payne@bgllc.net. While the position is open until filled, the formal review of applicants will begin **December 3, 2021**. Inquiries relating to the County Administrator position may be directed to:

Kimball Payne

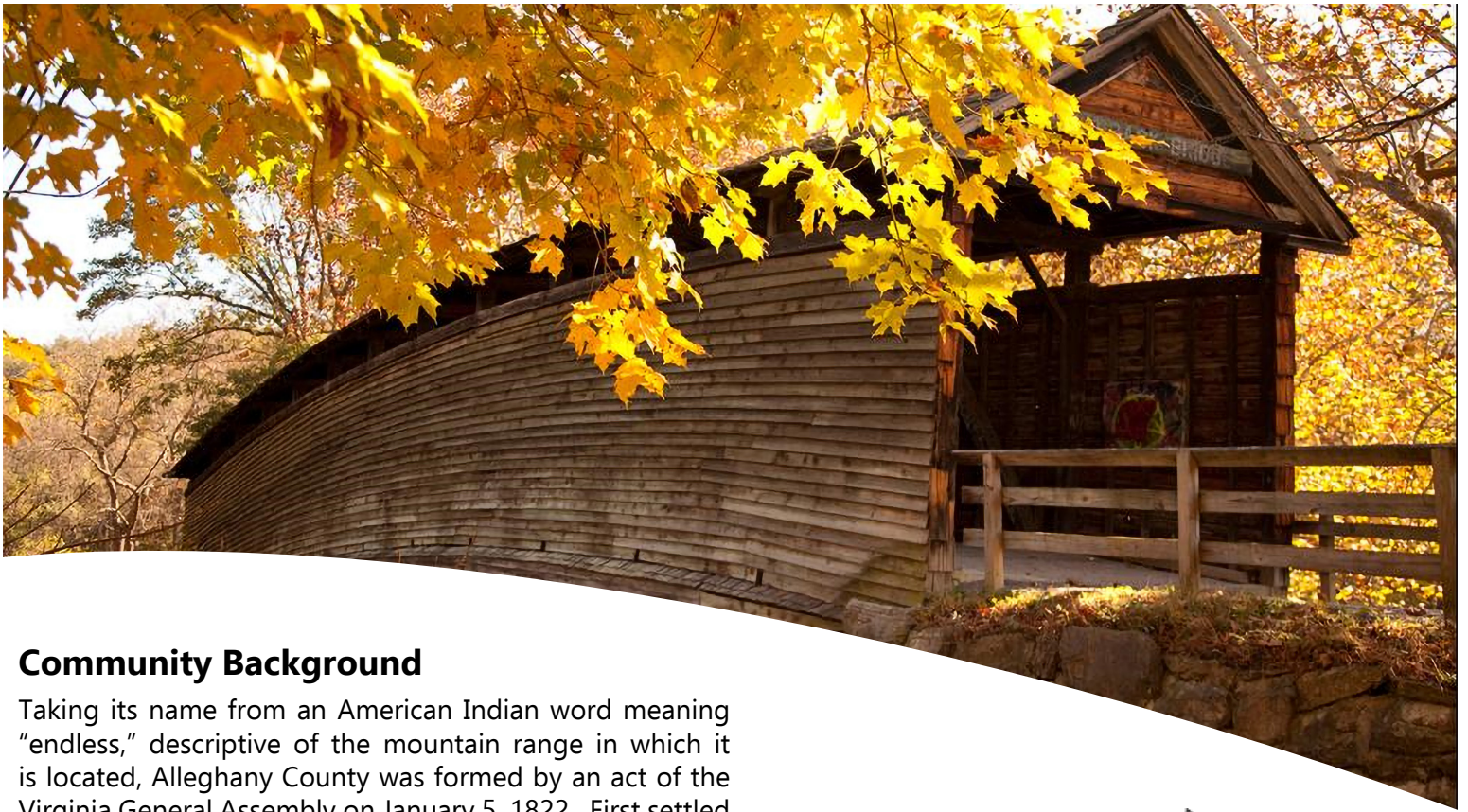
The Berkley Group

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Community Background

Taking its name from an American Indian word meaning "endless," descriptive of the mountain range in which it is located, Alleghany County was formed by an act of the Virginia General Assembly on January 5, 1822. First settled in 1746, the County comprises approximately 452 square miles of which nearly 50% is in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest. Alleghany County encompasses one city, Covington, and contains the towns of Clifton Forge and Iron Gate. Collectively, these localities are referred to as the Alleghany Highlands and they share a common vision and many services.

Designated as "Virginia's Western Gateway," Alleghany County borders West Virginia, about three hours via Interstate I-64 west of the State Capital in Richmond. The City of Roanoke is about an hour south on U.S. Route 220 and Lexington is 35 miles east. Two commercial airports, Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport and Greenbrier Valley Airport in Lewisburg, West Virginia, are within an hour's drive. Several other smaller commercial and private airports are nearby. Buckingham Branch Railroad and CSX provide freight services to local and regional industrial users and Amtrak passenger rail service goes through Clifton Forge.

Covington, a city of the second class and the County seat, was named in honor of General Leonard Covington, a hero of the war of 1812 and friend of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson. Covington was designated as a town in 1819 and was incorporated as a city in 1833. Before the formation of Alleghany County, property records and court services for the area were provided from Fincastle, the county seat of Botetourt County. As this involved a two-day trip for the recordation of deeds or any court business, the formation of the Town of Covington a few years earlier made it desirable and perhaps necessary to provide a nearby location for these services.



The Town of Clifton Forge was originally called Williamson after the family which owned the land on which the town was located. However, in 1882 the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Co. named its new depot there "Clifton Forge" and with the coming of the railroad it became not only a railroad junction, but a division point. After this, growth was very rapid and in 1906 Clifton Forge received a charter as an independent city. In July 2001, due to financial challenges, Clifton Forge reverted from a city to a town.

The Town of Iron Gate grew from the development of the iron industry and was later home to a tannery. Its predicted growth never materialized and today it remains an attractive small community near where the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers merge to form the James River.

The economy of the Alleghany Highlands is stable with business and industry based in traditional manufacturing including automotive components, wood and paper products, packaging, and plastics and coating materials. WestRock, formerly Mead-Westvaco, is the largest private employer in the region with approximately 1,200 workers manufacturing paperboard in one of the largest such facilities in the United States. Its presence has attracted other commercial and industrial interests to the region.

Other prominent employment sectors in the region are government, health care and social assistance, tourism, and agriculture.

The local governments of the Alleghany Highlands work closely together to promote economic development in the region. Alleghany County and the City of Covington have a joint Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and an economic growth-sharing agreement. The Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation (<https://www.ahedc.com/>) and the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism (<https://ahchamber.com/>) are active in business attraction, retention, and advocacy for the region.

The availability of high-speed fiber optic internet to over 90% of the County, has prompted the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism to launch a new marketing campaign called, "Work Remotely, Live Uniquely," with a goal of reaching professionals and others who can work wherever they choose and are seeking a quieter, more affordable lifestyle.

The Alleghany Highlands offers an extraordinary quality of life for its residents and an exceptional range of opportunities for visitors. Two great downtowns, in Covington and Clifton Forge, are less than thirty minutes apart, yet each has its own distinct charm, personality, and history with opportunities for shopping and dining and plenty of festivals and special events.

The Chamber of Commerce and Tourism is active in promoting the region's amenities and assets (<https://www.visitalleghanyhighlands.com/>). Among the area's historic and scenic attractions are two that particularly stand out. The Humpback Bridge, located in a five-acre wayside park just outside of Covington, is the only bridge of its design in the United States. Built in 1857 and on the National Register of Historic Places, the center of the floor and the roof of the bridge are four feet higher than the ends. Just north of Covington is Falling Spring Falls, a stunning 80 foot high waterfall that is one of the most visited places in the Alleghany Highlands. The overlook is located on Rt. 220 and features a breathtaking view of the falls and a picnic area.

The Alleghany Highlands is proud of its rich railroad heritage, which is on display in numerous places across the region. The C&O Depot in Covington was once a passenger rail station that has been meticulously restored to become a favorite gathering place for local citizens. The C&O Railway Heritage Center in Clifton Forge tells the fascinating story of the C&O Railroad and its vital role in the life of the community. The C&O Historical Society and national archives are based in Clifton Forge and bring many visitors to the Alleghany Highlands.

It should be no surprise that amid the stunning beauty of the Alleghany Highlands is a thriving arts community. The Clifton Forge School of the Arts is dedicated to teaching the fine and applied arts to area residents and dozens of local artisans display their work at the Alleghany Highlands Arts & Crafts Center or in other local galleries.



The region also hosts theatrical and musical performances at numerous venues around the region including the Historic Masonic Theatre in Clifton Forge. Known as The Mason Hall and Opera House when it opened its doors in 1906, the theatre was host to political speakers like William Jennings Bryan and big-name entertainers like Tex Ritter, Burl Ives, and Gene Autry. Silent Movies and later talkies, newsreels and classic movies were shown on its screen. Restored to its original grandeur in 2016 the theatre is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a venue for artistic, musical, and theatrical performances, as well as for meetings and social activities.

The Alleghany Highlands YMCA opened its 37,000 square-foot facility in 2008, with a full-size gymnasium and a competition-size indoor pool, and offers fitness, aquatic, and recreational facilities seven days a week. It offers an excellent child-care program which provides instruction, development support, and day care to area youth.

The Alleghany Highlands is well-known for its exceptional outdoor recreation, including the best mountain biking in Virginia and world-class fly fishing. Fourteen golf courses are located within a one-hour drive of the Alleghany Highlands including the famous courses of the Greenbrier and Homestead resorts.

Douthat State Park, which straddles Alleghany and Bath Counties, was one of the original six Virginia State Parks that opened in 1936 and is now on the National Register of Historic Places. At 4,493 acres, the park offers plenty of

space for adventure on the trails and peace and quiet in the campgrounds and cabins. The park's 50-acre lake offers trout fishing, boating, and swimming at a sandy beach, but Douthat State Park is perhaps best known for its excellent hiking and mountain biking on 40 miles of trails ranging from easy to challenging.

The Longdale Recreation area, formally known as Green Pastures, was originally built in 1938 as a miniature Douthat Park for the African American Community during the period of segregation. Despite its unfortunate history, the park has remained a valuable recreation asset for the region and, under the terms of a long-term lease between the Forest Service and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, will be refurbished by the State and become a satellite of Douthat State Park.

With roughly 50% of the Alleghany Highlands in the national forest, there is a lot of beautiful wilderness to be explored. Over 100 miles of trails can lead visitors to waterfalls, wildflowers, or amazing mountain views. There are trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding. The Jackson River Scenic Trail, with a trailhead just minutes from downtown Covington has a surface of finely crushed gravel and is well suited for family rides and hikes. The 14.4-mile trail is built on an old railroad bed that runs mostly parallel to the Jackson River. Restrooms are available at several trailheads. There are plans to extend the trail into Bath County in 2022.



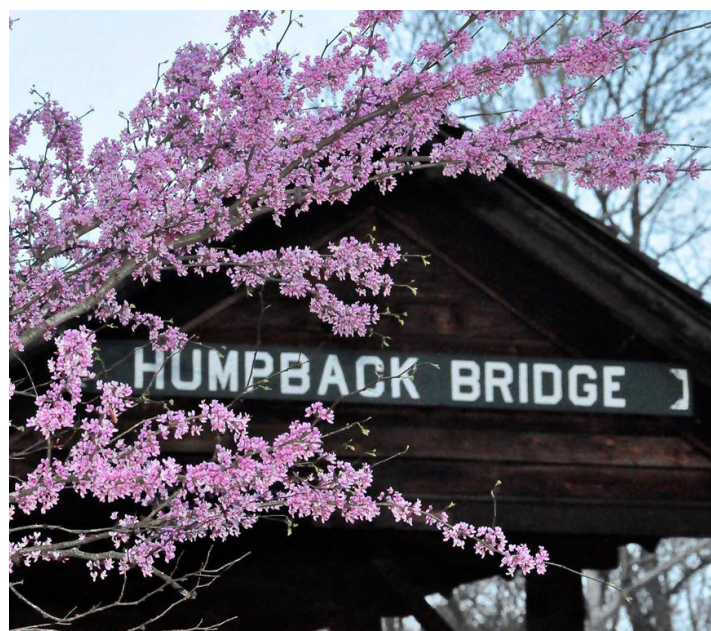
The Allegheny Highlands Blueway encompasses two scenic rivers, the Cowpasture and the Jackson, and two mountain lakes, Lake Moomaw and Douthat Lake. Visitors can enjoy excellent fishing, float through Class I and Class II rapids, or just explore beautiful lake shores. Allegheny Outdoors, the contracted concessionaire outfitter of the Allegheny Parks and Recreation Department, rents kayaks, tubes, bikes, and rafts for trips in or along the blueway.

Allegheny County Public Schools, governed by an appointed School Board, serve approximately 2,000 students in three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The elementary schools are fully accredited and the middle and high school are accredited with conditions by the State Department of Education. The Jackson River Technical Center, governed by a joint board of control with members from Allegheny County and the City of Covington, provides vocational programs in automotive technology, carpentry, computer systems technology, culinary arts, early childhood education, electricity, marketing, welding, and nurse aide/health assistant. High school students with an interest and ability in math and science can attend the Jackson River Governor's School for Science, Mathematics and Technology with the opportunity to earn up to 40 college credits and an associate degree from the local community college. In addition to the community college, ten other colleges and universities, both public and private, including Virginia Military Institute, Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, and James Madison University, are within a two-hour drive.

In January 2021, the Virginia Board of Education approved the consolidation of the Allegheny and Covington public school divisions. Effective July 1, 2022, the consolidated system will serve approximately 3,000 students and have four elementary schools, a middle school housed in the current Covington High School and a single high school in the current Allegheny High School building. An earlier consolidation, in 1981, merged the school systems of Allegheny County and the then City of Clifton Forge.

LewisGale Hospital Allegheny, a part of the LewisGale Regional Health System under Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), is located in Low Moor. A 205-bed facility, the hospital specializes in cardiac rehab, orthopedics, physical therapy, surgical services and mental health and behavioral health services. It has an accredited Chest Pain Center and a highly rated Women's Center. The Allegheny County/Covington Health Department provides public health services to the community.

Allegheny County's population of 14,860 (2019 estimate) has experienced a slow decline over the last two decades. It is approximately 92.8% white, 4.7% African American, and 1.6% Hispanic or Latino. The 2019 Median Household Income was \$47,673, with a median value of owner-occupied housing of \$119,700, and a poverty rate of 11.5%. The City of Covington, an independent city that shares many services with the County, has a population of 5,538 (2019 est.).





City Services & Government

Allegheny County operates under the traditional, or County Administrator/Board of Supervisors, form of government (as defined under Virginia Law). It provides a range of services to the citizens and businesses of the county including public safety, animal control, public utilities, waste management, building and environmental inspections, emergency management and mitigation, parks and recreation programs, social services, and community planning. Frequently these services are offered in partnership with the City of Covington and the towns of Clifton Forge and Iron Gate. County roads are maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The County is governed by a seven-member Board of Supervisors, elected by district to four-year terms. Elections are staggered at two-year intervals. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Board are elected annually by its members. The Board is the legislative policy making body for the County government. It enacts ordinances, adopts the annual budget, and appropriates funds, sets tax rates, establishes policies, and adopts plans for County growth and development. The County Administrator, the chief administrative officer of the County, is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. He or she directs and supervises the daily operations of all County departments and agencies under the direct control of the Board of Supervisors, provides administrative support to the Board of Supervisors and coordinates and implements its policy directives with regard to Board agendas, meetings, resolutions, ordinances, legislative policies, and constituent services. The County Administrator is responsible for developing and, upon adoption by the Board, implementing annual operating and capital budgets. He or she recommends policies and priorities for the Board's consideration and leads the County workforce in delivering services and responding to citizen issues or concerns. The County Administrator has primary responsibility for personnel administration with direct supervision of County staff. He or she serves as a liaison between the Board of Supervisors, the Constitutional Officers, the Judiciary, regional, state, and local agencies and authorities, and community associations. The County Administrator also serves as the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors, the Coordinator of Emergency Management, the Purchasing Agent, and is a member of local and regional boards and commissions.

The Allegheny County Sheriff, one of five elected constitutional officers, is responsible for law enforcement and administers the Allegheny Regional Jail. The other constitutional officers are the Commonwealth's Attorney, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Commissioner of the Revenue, and Treasurer. The latter two provide property assessment and tax collection and financial management, respectively. The Sheriff, Commonwealth's Attorney, and Clerk of the

Circuit Court also serve the City of Covington and its residents participate in their election.

County fire and emergency medical services are provided by volunteer departments dispersed throughout the County and dispatched by the County's E-911 Communications Center. The County has first responder coverage and mutual aid agreements with the City of Covington and the Town of Clifton Forge.

Public water and wastewater treatment services are provided in limited areas of the county by the County, the City of Covington, and the Town of Clifton Forge. In all there are six (6) public water systems and ten (10) public wastewater systems serving approximately 3000 residents. The main source of water in the Alleghany Highlands is the Jackson River for central and western service areas of the County and Smith Creek for the eastern service area. The Lower Jackson River Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant is operated by the County.

Library services are provided at the Alleghany Highlands Regional Library located in Covington and at the Clifton Forge Public Library. Both offer summer reading programs and pre-school story hours. Other programs and services offered by one or both libraries include Books-By-Mail, interlibrary loans, a monthly book discussion club, a Friends of the Library organization, books, magazines, videocassettes, DVD's, audiotapes, microfilm, microfiche, newspapers, Internet, wireless access, a non-circulating collection of general reference material, as well as local genealogy and history books. Community space is also available for public use.

Family and protective services, benefits programs, and other assistance are delivered through the Alleghany

County-Covington Department of Social Services which is governed by an appointed board.

The Alleghany Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of activities for people of all ages. Year-round programs are offered for Senior Citizens throughout the County with transportation provided. Youth athletic programs are also offered seasonally, as well as special events. The department maintains several ball fields and eight parks, four of which have access to the Cowpasture or Jackson River.

Solid waste management is handled by the Public Works Department. The County provides weekly curbside pickup to residents of Alleghany County, as well as the Town of Clifton Forge. Refuse collection for businesses within the County and Town of Clifton Forge is also provided, including emptying dumpsters. Waste is collected at the Island Ford Transfer Station for shipping to a private landfill outside of the County.

Alleghany County has approximately 300 employees, including those of the constitutional officers and the jail, and a FY21 budget of approximately \$81.3 million, including \$37.6 million for General Government, \$5.4 million for Water and Sewer Utilities, \$30.5 million for School Operations, and \$1.3 million for Capital Projects. The County is financially sound, with a healthy fund balance and low debt.

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Challenges, Issues & Opportunities

In April 2019, the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors adopted a new Comprehensive Plan to set forth a blueprint for the future of the region. Although adopted separately, the plan was developed in coordination with the City of Covington and includes the following vision statement:

Alleghany County and the City of Covington are a model for cooperative planning and sustainable regional growth – working together to protect our environmental and cultural resources while promoting economic growth that supports the stability of the Alleghany Highlands. Together we seek to achieve greater prosperity through collaborative relationships that connect the Alleghany Highlands economically, socially, and physically.

The plan includes five broad goals and numerous objectives to move the region toward the fulfillment of its vision.

1. The Alleghany Highlands will become known as the recreation and cultural hub of Western Virginia.
2. Our communities will develop the regional economy by supporting existing industry, embracing economic diversification, and fostering emerging business and industry sectors.
3. Alleghany County and the City of Covington will improve and expand collaboration to provide effective and efficient services to citizens.
4. Our communities will ensure the stability and vitality of our neighborhoods and commercial centers.
5. Our region will reverse the population decline of the past several decades.

Within the context of the adopted vision and goals the Board of Supervisors has identified the following challenges, issues, or opportunities that the new County Administrator can anticipate addressing within the next three to five years.

- Implementing the consolidation of the City and County school systems; including refinement of the process for funding annual operations and capital projects, determining the disposition of facilities no longer needed by the joint system, and deciding on the appropriate form of governance, either an elected or appointed School Board.
- Continuing, along with the City of Covington and other regional partners, to promote and incentivize business and industrial development and new employment opportunities in the region. Completion of the Alleghany Regional Commerce Center, planned to be the first in the state to run on solar energy, is a priority.
- Providing adequate, affordable, and available housing options to improve the current stock and support community growth.
- Providing the necessary infrastructure to support residential growth and economic development. Extending water and sewer service to the eastern part of the County and exploring the development of an authority with Covington and Clifton Forge are important initiatives.
- Ensuring the availability of twenty-first century technology, including the build-out of the fiber-optic broadband system, throughout the County.
- Strengthening relationships among area localities, educational institutions, healthcare providers, regional organizations, and the private sector to enhance the provision of effective and efficient services to the citizens of the Alleghany Highlands.





Position Profile

County Administrator, Alleghany County

Qualifications, Education & Experience

The following education and experience factors are the expected qualifications for successful performance:

- A bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Business Management, Planning, or a related field; a master's degree would be a plus.
- At least three (3) years of successful leadership in the administration of local government in a comparable organization; possessing a broad skill set appropriate to the breadth of County government operations. An understanding and appreciation for rural communities and their culture would be beneficial. Local government experience in Virginia as a manager, deputy, assistant, or department head is preferred.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the principles and practice of public administration, local government finance, public works, emergency services, parks and recreation, and the statutory authority and requirements of county government.
- A demonstrated commitment to ongoing professional development through participation in organizations such as the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA).
- Any combination of education and experience that qualifies an applicant may be considered in lieu of the more specific criteria listed above.

Personal Traits & Desired Characteristics

- Absolute integrity, ensuring ethical, equitable, honest, fair, and open interactions with members of the Board of Supervisors, community members, and all County employees.
- Professionally competent, with confidence tempered by humility.
- A sound decision maker, open to input from stakeholders, exhibiting sound judgment, and decisive when appropriate.
- A change agent, open to different ways of thinking and new approaches while respecting the culture of the community.
- Excellent communications and interpersonal skills, including the ability to collaborate, listen effectively, and understand differing views.
- Strong democratic leadership skills in the government organization, the community, and the region; visionary, proactive, and decisive; able to integrate new ideas and facilitate the blending of differing points of view into a reasonable approach for community betterment.
- Able to diffuse tense situations and seek common ground when different community perspectives create friction.
- Approachable and empathetic with a customer service mindset.
- A role model, coach, and mentor for County employees; dedicated to the professional development of staff; able to empower employees with a focus on performance, collaboration, and accountability; able to build a competent staff team and to delegate responsibility.

Performance Expectations

- Short-term, immediate actions will be to engage with staff and the Board of Supervisors, review the County budget, structure, policies, and procedures, and get up to speed on active projects. The County is going through transition periods after upgrading its financial system and installing a new radio system.
- Responsive to citizen concerns and issues; listening, understanding, and providing timely follow-up.
- A commitment to open and transparent government; promoting a positive and interactive relationship with citizens and stakeholders; encouraging citizen engagement.
- Effective communications with all stakeholders; presenting information in a form understandable to various audiences; strong, consistent, and equal communications with the Board of Supervisors.
- A focus on promoting communication, cooperation, and collaboration with the City of Covington, Constitutional Officers, the Department of Social Services, Alleghany County Public Schools, non-profit agencies, the private sector, and the region.
- An effective liaison with the State and Federal governments, especially with the United States Forest Service.
- Diligent in the pursuit and management of grant funding for capital projects such as infrastructure improvement and expansion.
- Fair and equitable investment in and support of County employees and departments, with a priority of improving competency and accountability. Not a micromanager; able to empower and entrust employees in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- An active resident of the community, building relationships with citizens, business owners, and other stakeholders.

Compensation & Benefits

The Board of Supervisors anticipates that compensation for the County Administrator will be in the range of \$125-150,000, depending on qualifications and experience. The successful candidate will be offered a generous benefits package including participation in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), health insurance coverage, paid time off, deferred compensation, professional development support and other benefits as identified in a negotiated employment agreement.

Application Process

A formal review of applications will begin on **December 3, 2021**, and those candidates considered to most closely match the qualifications contained in this profile will be contacted for initial interviews. Applications received after that date may be considered until the position is filled, however, timely submittal will ensure the most advantageous review. To be considered, please submit a cover letter and resume, with salary expectations and professional references, to The Berkley Group, via email at kimball.payne@bgllc.net. Questions may be directed to:

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For Additional Information

Visit: <https://www.co.alleghany.va.us/>

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