



Position Closes April 22, 2026

Guided by its motto, “Progress with Vision,” the Town of Waynesville, NC, is seeking an experienced, empathetic, and ethical **Town Manager** to provide organizational leadership during a pivotal period of recovery, growth, and opportunity. Working closely with the Mayor and Town Council, the **Town Manager** will help lead the Town in developing a Town-wide strategic plan with an emphasis on funding the rehabilitation and replacement of several Town facilities. The ideal candidate will further strengthen the Town’s finances following the impacts of Hurricane Helene, guide infrastructure and capital priorities, and work with elected officials and staff to establish a clear direction for the community’s future. Success in this role will require strong communication, sound judgment, and the ability to build trust while navigating complex issues.

Waynesville is defined by a strong sense of community, engaged residents, and a deep pride of place. The Town Manager is expected to be visible, accessible, and actively engaged in the community, building the relationships that are essential to effective leadership in a small-town.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene in September 2024, Waynesville continues to address significant damage to municipal facilities and infrastructure while working toward long-term financial recovery and stability. The next **Town Manager** will play a key role in helping the Town continue to move forward by strengthening operations, addressing financial and infrastructure priorities, and positioning the organization for long-term stability.

Waynesville is also experiencing increasing development pressure and demand for municipal services, trends common to many mountain communities in North Carolina. These pressures are often felt acutely at the local level, particularly as the Town works to balance growth with preserving its character and ensuring its infrastructure can support that growth. New residential development and potential annexations are further increasing these demands while shaping the community’s future growth.

The **Town Manager** will work with elected officials, staff, and community partners to manage responsible growth and implement the goals of the Town’s [2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, “Planning with Purpose,”](#) which addresses land use, housing, economic development, transportation, and the preservation of the community’s natural and cultural resources. Internally, with a stable, experienced, and well-educated Leadership Team, the organization is primed for future growth as it looks ahead to the next phase of municipal operations. The next **Town Manager** will provide leadership to a dedicated staff, strengthen communication between the Council and the organization, and help the Town move from crisis response toward a more stable and strategic future. This position offers a unique opportunity for a skilled public administrator who can bring the experience and perspective of a larger organization while embracing the values and relationships that define this close-knit mountain community—essentially, a “big city manager” who can thrive in a small-town environment.

About the Organization and Position:

The Town of Waynesville operates under a council–manager form of government and consists of a Mayor and four Town Council members, all elected at-large. The Mayor and Council are responsible for establishing policies, adopting local ordinances, and setting the overall direction for the community. Reporting to the Town Council, the **Town Manager**

serves as the chief administrative officer and is responsible for implementing Council policies, overseeing day-to-day municipal operations, and managing the Town's departments and services. The **Town Manager** also oversees the Town's annual budget, which totals [\\$38,947,882 for FY2026](#), and leads a workforce of 215 full-time equivalent employees and approximately 75–80 seasonally dependent employees with four direct reports: the Assistant Town Manager, Human Resources Director, Human Resources Coordinator, and Town Clerk.

The Town currently does not have a Strategic Plan, though staff have expressed interest in developing one to help guide the organization's future direction. At the same time, the Town continues to function primarily in crisis recovery mode following the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene in September 2024. Approximately \$4.5 million in damage to municipal facilities was identified, and the Town is awaiting FEMA approval for \$3.8 million in disaster recovery funds, while FEMA has proposed reimbursement of less than \$500,000 to date. As a result, the Town's fund balance has been depleted to cover immediate expenditures, and additional funding will be needed.

Key Position Priorities:

- Continue the recovery efforts following Hurricane Helene by working with FEMA and the Finance Department to secure reimbursement for storm-related damages, conducting a financial assessment, pursuing grants and other funding sources, and addressing the current budget gap while maintaining essential municipal services.
- Strengthen communication and trust among the Town Council, administration, and staff by promoting transparency, setting clear expectations, and maintaining appropriate roles between policy leadership and day-to-day operations.
- Support the organization through employee engagement, leadership development, and team building while gaining the trust of staff, particularly within the Finance Department following significant turnover, and continuing organizational improvements, including evaluating staffing needs and the structure of key departments such as Public Works.
- Advance infrastructure and capital priorities by developing a comprehensive capital improvement plan and overseeing major projects, including the construction of Fire Station #2, the rehabilitation of the wastewater treatment plant, and other infrastructure needs, while applying strong project management, RFP/RFQ, construction contract management, and civil engineering knowledge. Additionally, the next Town Manager should have working knowledge of electric distribution systems.
- Guide responsible growth and long-term planning by helping the Council navigate development pressures, infrastructure demands, and community concerns while implementing key planning initiatives, evaluating past commitments, and establishing clear long-term priorities for the Town's future.

About the Community:

The Town of Waynesville, a small mountain town located in Haywood County about 30 miles southwest of Asheville, is commonly known as the "Gateway to the Smokies" because of its proximity to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway. With a population of approximately 10,500 residents, Waynesville maintains a small-town feel while still serving as the county seat and the largest town west of Asheville.

Despite its modest size, Waynesville is a regional hub for shopping, dining, arts, and tourism in Haywood County. It is especially known for its charming [downtown district](#) centered along Main Street, which features historic brick sidewalks, scenic mountain views, and a collection of locally owned businesses that give the town much of its character. Downtown serves as the cultural and commercial heart of the community, with art galleries, boutiques, restaurants, breweries, and coffee shops all within an easy walking distance. Throughout the year, community events, street festivals, and seasonal decorations bring energy to the area, making it both a gathering place for residents and a popular stop for visitors exploring the Smoky Mountains. Just below downtown along Richland Creek is [Frog Level](#), a historic district that once served as the town's railroad and industrial hub in the late 1800s. In recent years, the area has experienced a revitalization, transforming into a lively neighborhood filled with breweries, restaurants, galleries, and locally owned shops. While it has grown into a vibrant extension of downtown, Frog Level still reflects its historic roots and remains a favorite spot for both locals and visitors to gather.

One of the biggest draws of Waynesville is its strong arts and festival culture. The town hosts several annual events that bring residents and visitors together. The [Appalachian True Heritage Festival](#) is a two-day celebration of the rich history, traditional crafts, and vibrant mountain culture of Western North Carolina. The [Folk moot International Dance Festival](#), recognized as North Carolina's official international folklife festival, features dance groups from around the world performing in and around downtown each summer. Other popular events include the [Apple Harvest Festival](#) in the fall, the Church Street Art & Craft Show, and regular summer street dances featuring live mountain music and traditional clogging. Downtown galleries also participate in monthly events like "Art After Dark," where shops stay open late for art demonstrations, music, and social gatherings.

For those who enjoy the outdoors, Waynesville offers easy access to some of the most scenic landscapes in the Southeast. The town sits near [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#), [Pisgah National Forest](#), and the [Blue Ridge Parkway](#), making it a convenient base for hiking, waterfall hunting, scenic drives, and camping. Nearby destinations such as Lake Junaluska provide walking trails and water recreation, while winter activities like skiing are available at Cataloochee Ski Area.

Like many communities in western North Carolina, Waynesville was affected by Hurricane Helene, which brought intense rainfall and flooding across the mountains, causing landslides, washed-out roads, and widespread infrastructure damage throughout the region. Waynesville did not experience the level of devastation seen in some nearby mountain communities, but it still faced significant flooding and infrastructure impacts. Floodwaters damaged several businesses, particularly in the Frog Level district, and some bridges and roads were temporarily closed while repairs were made. The storm disrupted tourism for a time and required repairs to local infrastructure, though the town avoided the catastrophic destruction experienced in several nearby valleys and river communities.

Since the storm, the area has been steadily rebuilding and recovering. Efforts across western North Carolina have focused on repairing roads, restoring sections of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and reopening parks and businesses that were damaged by flooding. Local businesses in Waynesville have gradually reopened, and tourism has returned as visitors continue to travel to the mountains for hiking, festivals, and fall foliage. While recovery has been a long process, it has also highlighted the strong volunteer spirit and community support for which the region is well known.

Demographically, Waynesville is a relatively small and stable community that has experienced modest growth over the past decade. The town has a higher-than-average percentage of older residents—about 26% of the population is age 65 or older—reflecting its appeal as a retirement destination in the mountains. At the same time, Waynesville remains a beautiful small mountain community with a predominantly blue-collar, close-knit population that is navigating both the recovery from a century storm and the natural growing pains that come with new housing and growth.

What truly distinguishes Waynesville is its people. Residents are deeply invested in the community and take an active interest in local decision-making. This creates both an opportunity and an expectation for the Town Manager to be visible, communicate clearly, and stay engaged with the community.

Qualifications:

The successful candidate ***must*** have a bachelor's degree in public administration, public affairs, business management, or a related field and 10 years of progressively responsible leadership and management experience in local government or business.

Preferred qualifications include:

- familiarity with NC municipal management;
- a master's degree in business or public administration;
- membership and/or professional certification from ICMA, NCCMA, and completion of the Municipal/County Administration Course from the School of Government, UNC Chapel Hill, or other leading professional bodies is desired; and

- progressively responsible experience as a department head, Assistant City/Town Manager, or City/Town Manager within small to mid-sized municipal government organizations.

The Successful Candidate:

- Demonstrates integrity, honesty, and high ethical standards while building trust with elected officials, staff, and the community;
- Communicates clearly and transparently with Council, staff, residents, and the media, explaining the reasoning behind decisions and promoting trust across the Town’s departments and employees;
- Advises the Mayor and Town Council with professionalism and confidence, offering sound recommendations and respectfully providing candid professional guidance when needed;
- Learns the organization and its culture, aligns core values, and works to ensure staff and leadership are moving in the same direction;
- Builds strong relationships across the organization and community by listening carefully, getting to know staff, engaging with residents, and maintaining a visible presence throughout the Town and its departments;
- Empowers department heads and staff by building a collaborative team environment, mentoring emerging leaders, and creating a supportive workplace culture that values teamwork and professional growth;
- Strengthens employee morale and retention by recognizing staff contributions, supporting professional development, and working to retain experienced employees;
- Leads with patience, resilience, and emotional intelligence while navigating financial pressures, operational challenges, and difficult community issues;
- Applies strong financial management skills, including budgeting, grant development, debt management, and long-term capital planning, and is comfortable navigating financial software such as Tyler Munis;
- Provides technical knowledge in construction management and civil engineering, enabling effective oversight of infrastructure projects, facility improvements, and capital investments;
- Brings significant experience managing diverse municipal services, including utilities such as water, wastewater, and electric systems;
- Builds consensus among elected officials, staff, and community stakeholders while aligning organizational goals and priorities;
- Demonstrates political acumen and professionalism when working with elected officials and navigating sensitive public issues; and
- Inspires a shared vision for Waynesville’s future while guiding the organization with steady leadership, practicality, and a genuine commitment to public service.

Salary and Benefits: The hiring range for this position is \$123,000-181,000. The starting salary is based on experience and qualifications. The Town of Waynesville offers a competitive benefits package, including group health, dental, and life insurance, a 401(k) plan, and retirement benefits. A summary can be viewed [here](#).

To apply, please visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/developmentalassociates> and click on the "**Town Manager –Waynesville, NC**" title.

Please note the following:

- All applications must be submitted online via the Developmental Associates application portal (link above) – NOT the Town’s employment application portal or any other external website.
- Resumes and cover letters must be uploaded with the application.
- Applicants should apply by **April 22, 2026**.
- The hiring team will invite successful semi-finalists to participate in virtual interviews and skill evaluations on **May 21-22, 2026**. Candidates are encouraged to reserve these dates for virtual meetings should they be invited to participate.
- Direct *inquiries* to hireing@developmentalassociates.com.

The Town of Waynesville, NC, is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Developmental Associates, LLC, manages the recruitment and selection process for this position. To learn more about our selection process, visit <https://developmentalassociates.com/client-openings/>, select "Client Openings," and scroll down to "Important Information for Applicants."