COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Unified Government of Wyandotte County/
Kansas City, Kansas

Annual Salary:
$300,000 – $325,000, DOQ

Kansas City, Kansas

Are you an accomplished public executive ready to lead one of the nation's most distinctive consolidated city/county governments? Are you a team builder who can turn elected leadership's priorities into strategy, budgets, and measurable results? If so, the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/ Kansas City, Kansas invites you to apply to become its next County Administrator.

Nominated by the Mayor/CEO and approved by the Commission, the County Administrator serves as the chief administrative officer of an enterprise with more than 2,300 employees and a $551.3 million FY2027 certified-fund budget, arriving at a pivotal moment of major growth, organizational renewal, fiscal challenge, and regional opportunity.

We're seeking a collaborative, execution-focused leader who is:

- A trusted executive partner to an engaged Mayor/CEO and a ten-member Commission
- A team builder, not a hero leader, who strengthens and aligns the executive team
- Able to strengthen long-term fiscal capacity, steward major capital needs, capitalize on economic growth, and deliver measurable results

If you're ready to help Reset, Renew, and Rebuild a community at an inflection point, read on to learn more about this opportunity!

Executive Recruitment Provided by SGR

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

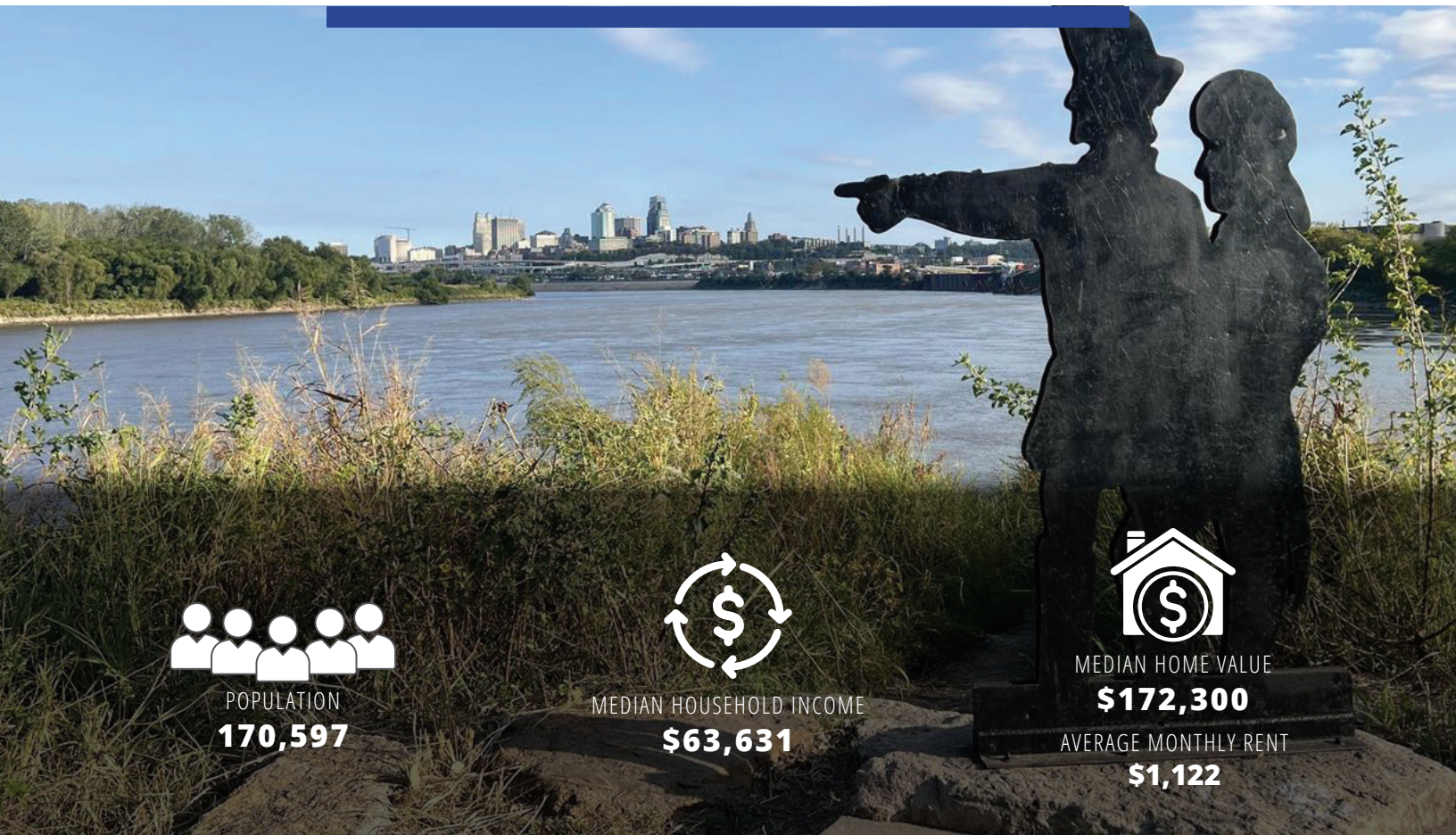
Wyandotte County's momentum continues with major new and planned destinations, including Buc-ee's, the American Royal complex, and the Rock Island Bridge entertainment district. Looking ahead, the county is also slated to become the future home of the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs, further strengthening its position as a regional destination for sports, entertainment, tourism, and investment.

Named for the Wyandot Nation, Wyandotte County sits at the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers, where the Lewis and Clark expedition camped at Kaw Point in 1804. Organized in 1859, the county hosted the Wyandotte Constitutional Convention that produced the constitution under which Kansas entered the Union. Today, Wyandotte County is home to 170,597 residents, and Kansas City, Kansas, its county seat, anchors the Kansas side of a vibrant metropolitan region of more than two million people.

Although one of the smallest counties in Kansas by land area, Wyandotte County is the most diverse county in the state. More than a third of residents are Hispanic or Latino, nearly one in five is Black, and nearly one in three speaks a language other than English at home. That diversity comes alive in the county's neighborhoods, faith communities, festivals, and a celebrated food scene that ranges from neighborhood taquerias to Kansas City barbecue. Residents can choose historic urban neighborhoods, established suburbs, or rural living in the county's western reaches, along with the communities of Bonner Springs, Edwardsville, and Lake Quivira.

Wyandotte County is a regional destination. The Legends area offers Kansas Speedway, Children's Mercy Park (home of Sporting Kansas City), Kansas City Monarchs baseball, Hollywood Casino, and a premier retail and dining district. Outdoor enthusiasts enjoy Wyandotte County Lake and Park and Kaw Point Riverfront Park, while history lovers explore the Strawberry Hill Museum, the Quindaro Ruins, the Wyandotte County Historical Museum, and the National Agricultural Center and Hall of Fame.

The county's central location, interstate access via I-70, I-435, and I-635, and proximity to Kansas City International Airport support a strong employment base that includes the University of Kansas Health System and KU Medical Center, General Motors' Fairfax Assembly plant, and major logistics operations. Families are served by four public school districts – Kansas City Kansas Public Schools, Turner, Piper, and Bonner Springs-Edwardsville – as well as Kansas City Kansas Community College and Donnelly College.



ABOUT THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF WYANDOTTE COUNTY/KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

In 1997, voters consolidated the governments of Wyandotte County and the City of Kansas City, Kansas, creating the Unified Government – a single organization delivering both city and county services.

- Its mission is "to deliver high quality, efficient services, and be a resource to our residents. We are innovative, inspired public servants focused on our community's wants and needs."
- Its vision is "a vibrant intersection of diversity, opportunities, and distinctive neighborhoods. An engaged community: healthy, fulfilled, and inspired."

Mayor/CEO Christal Watson, elected in 2025, has set a clear direction for the organization: "Reset. Renew. Rebuild." Using "People. Process. Policy." as the operating lens, her vision advances four pillars – Infrastructure, Business, Housing, and Community – supported by a four-year execution framework and an emphasis on measurable performance and key performance indicators. The Board of Commissioners' budget priorities align closely: Uphold Fiscal Sustainability, Improve Infrastructure, Service and Communication, and Foster Economic Development.

The Unified Government enters this new executive era with strong professional capacity, experienced employees, and recognized budgeting and financial reporting practices. Public Safety represents about 40% of the FY2027 certified-fund budget and Infrastructure about 23%, and the 2027–2031 Capital Improvement Program serves as a central tool for long-term investment in the community's assets.

Mayor's Vision Wall CLICK!

FY2027 Budget Book CLICK!

GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

The Unified Government's governing body consists of a Mayor/CEO elected countywide and ten Commissioners – eight elected by district and two elected at-large – serving nonpartisan, staggered four-year terms. The Commission establishes policy, adopts the budget, and sets priorities. The Mayor/CEO nominates the County Administrator, subject to Commission approval. The County Administrator serves as the chief administrative officer and leads administration, organizational performance, and implementation. The Code gives the Administrator direct responsibility for daily administration, organizational structure and supervision, Commission-policy execution, budget preparation and administration, capital planning, and appointment and dismissal of key division heads.

The Unified Government provides a full range of services, including:

- Public Safety – Police, Fire, Emergency Management, and Community Corrections
- Public Works, infrastructure, sewer/stormwater, and transit
- Finance, technology, and internal services
- Public health and human services
- Planning, economic development, and housing/community development
- Parks and Recreation

Key working relationships include the Mayor's Office and Chief of Staff; Commissioners; the independently elected Sheriff, District Attorney, and Register of Deeds; the separately governed Kansas City, Kansas Board of Public Utilities; the cities of Bonner Springs, Edwardsville, and Lake Quivira; and state, federal, and regional partners.

Commission District Map CLICK!

ABOUT THE JOB

The County Administrator is the chief administrative officer of the Unified Government and is responsible to the Commission for administration of Unified Government affairs placed in the Administrator's charge. The Administrator directs daily administration, organizes and supervises the administrative structure, implements Commission policy, leads the executive team, and prepares and administers the annual operating budget and capital program.

The Administrator also reports to, confers with, assists, and advises the Mayor and provides professional advice and recommendations to the Commission.

Mayor Watson seeks a close, high-trust partnership built on complementary strengths, candid counsel, mutual respect, and reliable follow-through. She brings ideas and high expectations; the Administrator tests feasibility, organizes and sequences the work, communicates tradeoffs, and converts direction into strategy, work plans, and results – consistent with the Unified Government Charter and applicable law. The Administrator also provides consistent, professional decision support to the entire Commission.

The successful candidate will provide executive leadership for:

- Enterprise operations across all Unified Government departments and services
- Long-term fiscal sustainability, the annual operating budget, reserves, capital financing, and the 2027–2031 Capital Improvement Program
- Executive team development, organizational design, and succession planning
- Performance management, customer service, organizational modernization, cross-department coordination, and clear accountability for results
- Economic development and redevelopment that expand the tax base, strengthen neighborhoods, support jobs and investment, and produce measurable community benefits
- Labor-management relations across a heavily unionized workforce
- Intergovernmental relations with independently elected officials, the Board of Public Utilities, municipalities, and regional, state, and federal partners

Job Description

DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

The County Administrator leads a senior executive team that spans the full breadth of the Unified Government enterprise.

Positions Reporting to the County Administrator

- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Legal Counsel
- Chief Information Officer
- Public Health
- Strategic Communications
- Buildings and Logistics
- Economic Development
- Three Assistant County Administrators

ORGANIZATIONAL QUICKFACTS

- **FY2027 certified-fund budget:** approximately $551.3 million
- **Public Safety:** about 40% of the certified-fund budget; Infrastructure: about 23%
- **Employees:** more than 2,700
- **Governing body:** Mayor/CEO and ten Commissioners
- **Population served**: 170,597
- **Organizational chart**

Click here

KEY INITIATIVES

The next County Administrator will turn the Mayor's vision and the Commission's priorities into a coherent, resourced, and measurable enterprise work program. Key initiatives include:

Fiscal Sustainability and Capital Stewardship
Strengthen long-term fiscal capacity by bringing recurring revenues and expenditures into sustainable alignment, rebuilding reserves toward Commission targets, managing debt and capital obligations, planning for the transition of expiring federal public-safety grants, expanding the tax base, and leveraging grants and outside funding. Establish disciplined capital priorities across roads, bridges, facilities, public-safety assets, technology, sewer/stormwater systems, parks, and other long-lived assets, using the 2027–2031 Capital Improvement Program as a central management tool.

Growth Management and Development Execution
Make economic development an integral part of the Unified Government's long-term fiscal strategy. Capture the benefits of historic investment – including the Kansas City Chiefs stadium and development district, continued growth in the Legends area, downtown and Northeast Kansas City, Kansas redevelopment, and corridor investment – while improving development processes, expanding the tax base, supporting jobs and small-business growth, strengthening workforce development, and ensuring major investments produce measurable benefits across the community.

Organizational Performance and Modernization
Strengthen customer service, responsiveness, accountability, and follow-through through business-process improvement, improved cross-department coordination, 311 and customer systems, enterprise technology, and performance management. Establish clear ownership, timelines, and measures of success, and give the Mayor and Commission practical options, timely recommendations, early decision support, and transparent progress reporting.

Executive Team, Workforce, and Culture
Assess, strengthen, and align the senior leadership team; clarify authority and accountability; break down organizational silos; and build succession capacity. Partner with the Mayor and Human Resources on organizational structure, strengthen employee engagement and retention, continue building trust across the workforce, value every department and function, and maintain credible labor-management relationships.

Community Outcomes and Regional Partnership
Advance housing supply and neighborhood stabilization, homelessness responses, public-health modernization, and youth and young-adult opportunities, with an emphasis on visible and measurable improvements across the community's diverse neighborhoods. Support Police, Fire, Emergency Management, and Community Corrections while working effectively with the Sheriff, District Attorney, Board of Public Utilities, neighboring jurisdictions, regional institutions, and private-sector partners.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The Unified Government seeks an experienced, strategic, collaborative, and execution-oriented city or county executive with sound financial judgment, operational discipline, and the ability to lead a complex organization through significant change. The ideal candidate will understand that successful local government leadership depends on a disciplined partnership between elected leadership and professional administration. They will be comfortable working with a highly engaged Mayor/CEO and Commission, respect the lawful authority of each office, provide candid and independent professional advice, and build trust across the organization and community

This is a team-builder role, not a hero-leader assignment. The next Administrator will be human-centered and respectful, understanding that strong public-service results depend on strong people and healthy management practices. Strategic and organized, they will prioritize and sequence a very large agenda, make timely decisions, establish clear ownership and accountability, close loops, and finish major work. They will be collaborative but decisive, value internal-service and less visible departments as much as high-profile operations, and bring a customer-service and hospitality mindset – internal and external.

Politically astute without becoming political, the ideal candidate will be resilient amid scrutiny, fast-moving priorities, and overlapping authorities. They will bring practical options and clear recommendations rather than simply identify problems; communicate risks and tradeoffs early; and connect fiscal sustainability, economic development, infrastructure investment, organizational performance, and community outcomes. Creative and open to innovation while grounded in disciplined implementation, they will measure success by whether residents, employees, and elected officials experience a more responsive, reliable, accountable, and effective Unified Government. Above all, they will see this as a long-term institution-building opportunity to leave durable results across an entire community.

EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

- Bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, or a related field
- Minimum of seven years of progressively responsible executive leadership experience in city or county government, including at least two years serving as a City Manager or County Administrator preferred
- Successful experience working with a Mayor/Council, Commission, Board, or similarly complex elected governance structure
- A record of building, aligning, and holding accountable an executive leadership team
- Strong financial leadership, including structural budgeting, long-range financial forecasting, reserve management, capital planning and financing, debt management, and development of strategies to strengthen long-term fiscal capacity
- Evidence of carrying major initiatives from concept through implementation and measurable completion
- Residency within Wyandotte County within one year of hire

Preferred:

- Master's degree in public administration, business administration, or a related field
- Demonstrated success in an executive-led or similarly complex governance environment involving an active elected chief executive and professional administrator *(strongly preferred)*
- Demonstrated economic-development leadership at meaningful scale, including public-private development and redevelopment, tax-base growth, development agreements, and measurable community outcomes
- Infrastructure and capital-program leadership; utility, sewer/stormwater, or consent-decree experience
- Experience in a consolidated city/county, countywide, regional, multi-jurisdictional, or similarly complex governmental environment
- Public safety, emergency management, or justice-system experience, including work with independently elected officials
- Labor relations and collective bargaining in a large public organization
- Housing, homelessness, health and human services, or neighborhood revitalization experience
- Technology modernization, including ERP, 311/CRM, and data and performance systems

SALARY & BENEFITS

The Unified Government is recruiting nationally and intends to compete for a high-caliber executive appropriate to the scale and complexity of this assignment. The hiring range is $300,000 – $325,000, DOQ, and final terms will be set in a negotiated employment agreement.

Compensation

- **Salary:** $300,000 – $325,000, DOQ
- **Allowances:** Vehicle, phone, and technology allowance

Health & Wellness

- **Medical:** Choice of two UnitedHealthcare plans – a Traditional PPO plan or a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) with a Surency Health Savings Account, to which the Unified Government also contributes
- **Dental and Vision:** Delta Dental and EyeMed Vision coverage
- **Road to Wellness Health Center & Pharmacy:** An on-site employee health center operated by Marathon Health, offering low-cost office visits, $0 preventive care, prescriptions, and behavioral health services for employees and dependents
- **Wellness Incentive Program:** Employees enrolled in the medical plan can earn up to $600 annually for participating in wellness activities
- **Flexible Spending Accounts:** Surency FSA options for eligible health expenses
- **Employee Assistance Program:** Confidential counseling, legal, financial, and work/life resources through Lucet, available 24/7 at no cost
- **Life Insurance:** Employer-paid basic life and AD&D coverage through The Standard, plus KPERS basic life insurance equal to 150% of annual salary, with voluntary life coverage available for employees, spouses, and children
- **Pet Insurance:** Voluntary pet insurance coverage

Retirement

- **KPERS:** Defined-benefit pension through the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System, with a 6% employee contribution, employer contributions set annually by the State of Kansas, vesting after five years, and KPERS long-term disability coverage
- **457(b) Deferred Compensation:** MissionSquare Retirement plan with automatic enrollment and full, immediate vesting of employee contributions
- **Social Security:** The Unified Government participates in Social Security

Paid Leave

- Paid vacation, sick leave, and holidays

Other Benefits

- Residency within Wyandotte County is required within one year of hire

Additional benefits are outlined in the Unified Government's 2026 Benefits Guide. Click here

This is an extraordinary opportunity to lead a consequential public enterprise, strengthen its long-term financial and organizational capacity, capitalize on historic economic-development opportunities, shape a high-performing executive team, and deliver measurable results for the entire community.

HOW TO APPLY

Apply Here

For more information on this position, contact:
Clay Pearson, Senior Vice President, Executive Recruitment
claypearson@governmentresource.com | (713) 816-8639

The Unified Government is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming workplace and is committed to fostering a workforce that delivers excellence in customer service. At the conclusion of vetting and selection, finalists will be presented and meet community stakeholders and invitees. Selected individual will be required to complete a post offer physical and drug screen.