



# Cleveland County

NORTH CAROLINA

Invites Your Interest in the Position of

## DSS DIRECTOR





If you are a compassionate social work professional, eager to utilize your keen strategic planning, collaboration, and visionary skills in your next career, Cleveland County is seeking its next **DSS Director**.

The ideal candidate:

- has vast experience in social work, including social services fieldwork, and understands the facets of state regulations governing services for vulnerable children, families, and disabled adults;
- functions well in a high-impact, ever-changing environment and has successful methods to manage stress;
- is highly regarded by their direct reports for their leadership style that motivates and inspires while maintaining professional boundaries and a culture of feedback and empowerment;
- is an impeccable communicator who can speak confidently to a Board of Commissioners and other county leaders when advocating for the needs of the department and county;
- thinks critically with foresight and understands how to read, interpret and apply relevant data to solve problems;
- brings practical and innovative solutions to common social service issues such as high caseloads and high turnover, foster home shortages, and minimal community resources;
- has created and implemented successful safety plans to reduce and manage risks, ensure the safety of clients and staff, and comply with state regulations and laws.

The ideal candidate can work effectively within the demands of an organization which follows State of NC Health and Human Services regulations. This position is governed by the Board of Commissioners and reports directly to the Cleveland County Manager. The successful leader has a track record of partnering and collaborating with staff, community, regional partners, the DSS Advisory Board, County Manager, and County Commissioners to carry out the mission of the department: *provide children a safe, permanent family, protect, and serve vulnerable disabled adults, aid families to become self-sufficient, and help eligible families obtain medical and food assistance*. The primary theme that unites each of these statements is Citizen Advocacy.

A woman with a ponytail, wearing a blue and green tie-dye t-shirt and jeans, is walking a black and white dog on a leash along a paved sidewalk. The sidewalk is lined with lush green trees and bushes on the left, and storefronts with signs like 'RY', 'Hot Coffee, Cool People', and 'OPEN' on the right. Other people are visible in the background, creating a lively town square atmosphere.

Cleveland County is located in the foothills of the beautiful North Carolina Blue Ridge mountains.



## About the Community:

Cleveland County, located in the western Piedmont region of North Carolina, is home to nearly 101,000 people. Across the county's 15 municipalities, you'll find small-town charm, southern hospitality, and family-oriented culture. Cleveland County covers 469 square miles and is a short drive to urban life in Charlotte, Greenville or Asheville, and a day trip to the Blue Ridge Mountains, or one of North Carolina or South Carolina's beautiful beaches.

Residents boast about the county's high quality of life, low cost of living (nearly 10% lower than the national average), affordable housing prices (49% lower than the national average), premier educational institutions, and vast outdoor recreation opportunities. Recreational activities include connections to the Carolina Thread Trail, Kings Mountain Gateway Trail, the First Broad River Trail, Moss Lake Park and Campground, and the Broad River Greenway. The county seat, Shelby, is home to legendary bluegrass and country musicians Earl Scruggs and Don Gibson. The county's world-class entertainment venues and lively festivals show its rich musical heritage. Historical landmarks showcase the county's history and former culture as the top NC county cotton producer and highlight key places such as the Earl Scruggs Center.

# LIVE, WORK AND PLAY IN CLEVELAND COUNTY

A family-oriented lifestyle, small-town charm, and southern hospitality make Cleveland County a great place to live, work and play and that's why nearly 100,000 people call this place home.





Cleveland County equally attracts many industries, including Hanesbrands, Inc. (distribution), Ingles Markets, Inc., Atrium Health Care, Wal-Mart Associates, LLC (distribution), and Nippon Electric Gas (manufacturing) for its accessibility, affordability, and innovation. These industries also benefit from the county's skilled workforce, many of which were a product of the county's honorable educational institutions. Over 86.1% of the county's population holds a high school degree or higher.

Ranked as one of the top 35 universities in the South, Gardner-Webb University is a private liberal arts school in Boiling Springs (southwest Cleveland County) that offers 80-plus undergraduate and graduate fields of study. Cleveland Community College, located in Shelby, is a public two-year college that enrolls nearly 2,300 students and offers more than 120 programs, from fifteen-hour certificate programs to two-year associate degrees in arts, applied science, advanced manufacturing, and fine arts. Cleveland County's public school system enrolls over 3,000 students annually throughout its 29 facilities and online learning school. The system is the largest employer in the county and was recognized as the 'Best Place to Work in Cleveland County' for four consecutive years.



Location is one of Cleveland County's biggest advantages. The county is the gateway between Asheville and Charlotte and is centered between two of the largest metropolitan areas of the Carolinas -- Charlotte and Greenville/Spartanburg with easy access to major airports and interstate highways to get to your desired destination. Learn more about Cleveland County [here](#).



One of several family-friendly festivals held annually in Cleveland County, the Earl Scruggs Music Festival is a multi-day celebration that brings the best of bluegrass, Americana, and roots music together with fans who have a true appreciation for the music.



## About the Organization, Department, and Position:

Cleveland County operates under the Council-Manager form of government. Its Board of Commissioners upholds the county's values of High Performance, Courage, Teamwork, Integrity, and Innovation. The county's strategic focus areas of citizen engagement, economic development, public safety, fiscal sustainability, and community wellness guide and govern the work of its departments. A team of 780 full time with an additional 150 part time employees are supported by the county's FY 23 – 24 budget of \$146.7 million.

The [Cleveland County Department of Social Services](#), governed by the Board of Commissioners, provides services and programs for children, families, and adults including but not limited to: Adoption Services, Adult Services, Child Day Care, Child Protective Services, Child Support, Energy Assistance, Foster Care, Food and Nutrition Services, Medicaid, Program Integrity, Work First, and services for the blind. The Director reports to the County Manager. With guidance from the DSS Advisory Board, the **DSS Director** manages the department's \$22 million budget and oversees 182 full-time and 12 part-time employees. The **DSS Director** has seven direct reports: Deputy Director, Assistant to the DSS Director, 2 DSS Attorneys, Business Officer II, Economic Services Administrator, and Management Analyst.

The **DSS Director** supports staff in delivering agency services and provides leadership and direction for program development. This position establishes program standards and monitors and evaluates the quality-of-service delivery systems. The next **DSS Director** will positively represent the department with government officials, community members, other human services providers, and various advocacy groups. Through their collaborative efforts, the **DSS Director** will ensure adequate resources for program maintenance and expansion while providing quality delivery of services.

This position is for the culturally competent professional with a community relations mindset who loves engaging with others, connecting resources, and enhancing services. Through research, strategic efforts, and collaboration with key partners, including the county's health department, the next DSS Director will expand the county's resources to further enhance the department's funding, programs, and services for children, families, and adults.

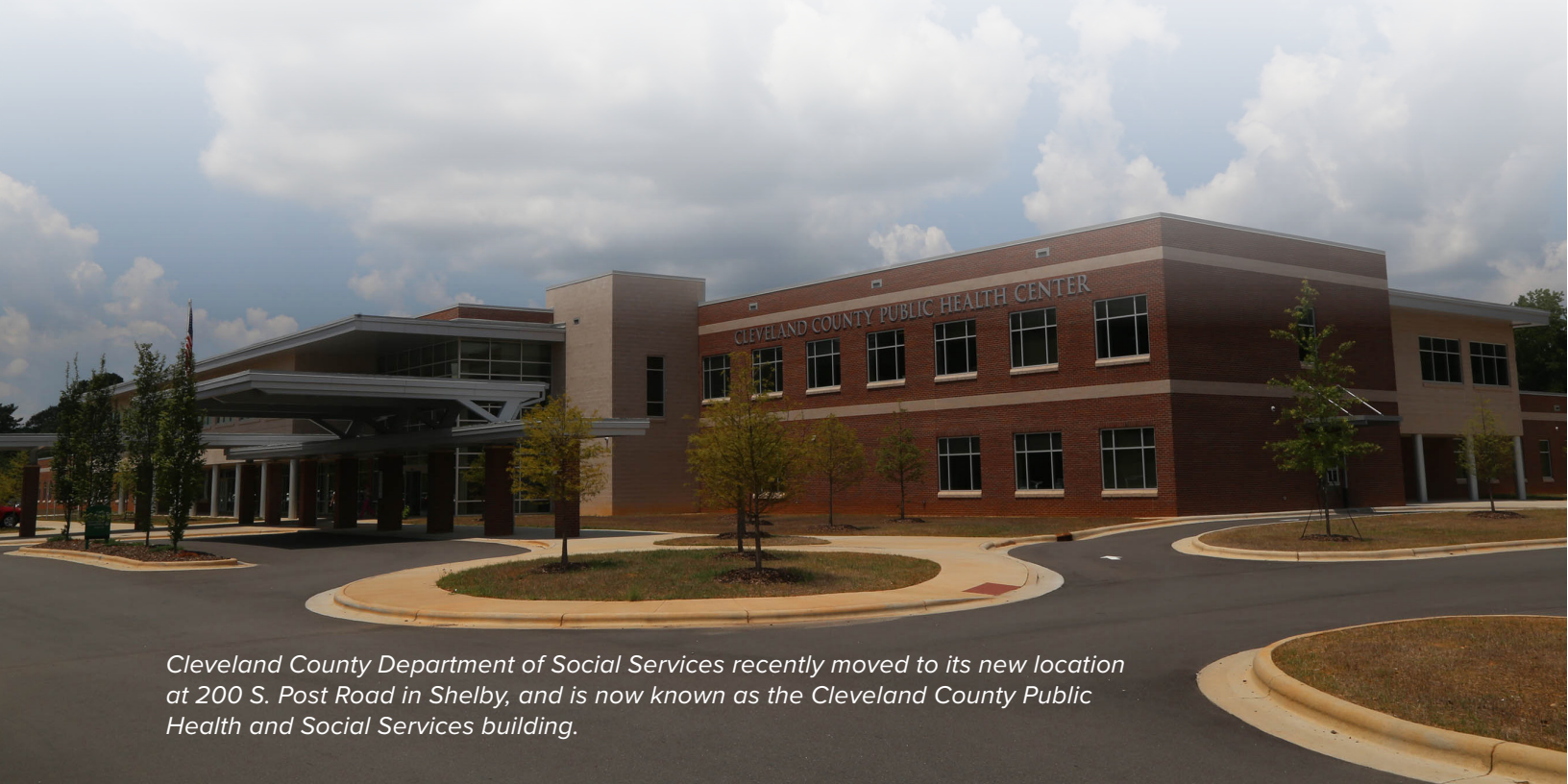


## Key Position Priorities:

- Evaluate the organization's structure to support a collaborative, cross-trained working environment; Implement innovative strategies to recruit and retain skilled employees; and build a training and succession program that promotes skill and knowledge development and positions staff for promotional opportunities.
- Assess factors affecting morale, such as staffing levels, compensation, and training, and implement changes to facilitate a cohesive culture of high morale that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion, challenges staff to excel, and celebrates accomplishments.
- Strategically prepare for Medicaid expansion through targeted education efforts that recruit eligible individuals while ensuring the department has adequate staffing to support the increased workload.
- Reshape the community's perspective of the department through community immersion, intentional and consistent education, marketing campaigns, and collaborative efforts with community partners.
- Improve efficiency and efficacy of department operations by researching and securing a database system that aligns with the department's needs and oversee the system's transition, education, and training.

## Qualifications:

A master's degree in social work and two years of supervisory experience in the delivery of client services; or a bachelor's degree in social work and three years of supervisory experience in the delivery of client services, one of which must have been in Social Services; or graduation from a four-year college or university and three years of supervisory experience in the delivery of client services, two of which must have been in Social Services **is required**; or an equivalent combination of training and experience. Applicants **must** understand the organizational structure of a social services department and applicable county policy, as well as state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. Residence within Cleveland County *is preferred*.



*Cleveland County Department of Social Services recently moved to its new location at 200 S. Post Road in Shelby, and is now known as the Cleveland County Public Health and Social Services building.*



## The Successful Candidate is:

- knowledgeable of state/federal requirements and regulations governing social service programs and the practical application of those requirements;
- experienced in building an inclusive team from the bottom up and top down with demonstrable experience in maintaining a community of learning and mobility as well as a positive work culture and environment;
- assertive in advocating for the needs of Cleveland County clients, community members, and employees with key stakeholders and decision-makers who influence policy, laws, and funding;
- accountable by creating and applying performance metrics that objectively measure department performance against mission-critical goals;
- flexible and adaptable to change processes that prove ineffective when attempted and utilizes data and metrics when determining the effectiveness of strategies, programs, and services;
- articulate when marketing and communicating the services of the agency to regulatory bodies, general and eligible community members and programmatic partners;
- experienced in breaking down silos and barriers while building bridges and paths to solutions in partnership with others;
- experienced in developing, managing, and coordinating a budget that consists of funds from multiple sources; as well as a good understanding of the County's budget and available financial resources;
- able to enhance and ensure equitable service delivery to the department's constituents;
- knowledgeable about the legal and philosophical basis for public assistance programs, along with a theoretical knowledge base of the field of social work;
- a natural collaborator who networks with peers in neighboring communities and throughout the state;
- committed to establishing and cultivating relationships at the federal level to support advocacy work and ensure compliance with federal laws;
- a creative thinker in assessing ways to meet program needs within staffing and budgetary constraints;
- an excellent communicator both verbally and in writing and possesses well-developed interpersonal skills and abilities; and,
- an accountable manager who holds high expectations of self and others while being an influential and respected leader.

## Salary:

The hiring range for this position is \$111,702 (min) - \$178,724 (max). The hiring salary is dependent upon qualifications and experience.

To apply, please visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/developmentalassociates> and click on the

**DSS Director – Cleveland County, NC** title.

- All applications must be submitted online via the Developmental Associates application portal (link above) – NOT the Cleveland County employment application portal, nor any other external website.
- Resumes and cover letters must be uploaded with the application.
- Applicants should apply by **September 25th, 2023**.
- The hiring team will invite successful semi-finalists to participate in virtual interviews and skill evaluations on **October 26th – 27th, 2023**. Candidates are encouraged to reserve these dates for virtual meetings should they be invited to participate.
- Direct *inquiries* to: [hiring@developmentalassociates.com](mailto:hiring@developmentalassociates.com).

## Benefits:

- Health/dental plans with zero premiums for employee coverage.
- Generous vacation, sick pay, holidays (12), petty time and flex time.
- Comp hours earned.
- Retirement plan and 401K with 6% county contribution.
- Optional Supplemental Plans (Accident, Cancer, Critical Illness, and others) available.
- Wellness programs that include Wellness Center, Pharmacy, deep YMCA membership discounts, HSA dollars, performance bonus program, access to primary care, case management for chronic medical conditions and many other award-winning wellness initiatives.

View more information about Cleveland County's comprehensive benefits [here](#).



Cleveland County 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."