



# PENDER COUNTY, NC

Invites Your Interest in the Position of

## COUNTY MANAGER







## Position Closing Date: September 13, 2025

Pender County, located in beautiful southeastern North Carolina, is seeking a capable, forward-thinking, and resilient **County Manager** to lead one of the fastest-growing counties in the state. Facing the challenges of rapid development, major infrastructure demands, and significant internal challenges, the next **County Manager** must be ready to hit the ground running and bring stability, strategic vision, and leadership to the organization.

The ideal candidate will be proactive, assertive, and innovative, with the ability to manage day-to-day operations while also positioning the County for long-term success. The next **County Manager** must be skilled at navigating a Board of Commissioners with differing views with the goal of building consensus on decisions, offering clear, professional guidance while ensuring county departments operate fairly, efficiently, and with a strong sense of purpose. The County seeks a manager who is willing to make a longer-term commitment to the organization to ensure cohesion and leadership stability.



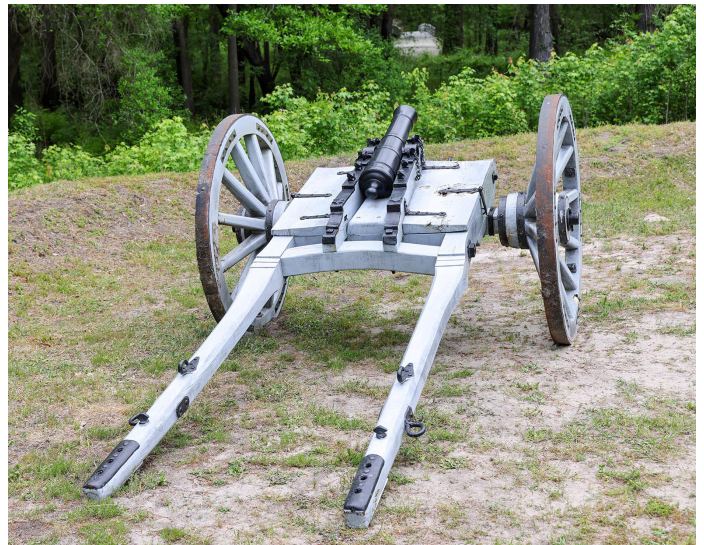
From the 330-acre Pender Commerce Park (left photo) to various ground-breaking ceremonies across the county, including Central Pender Park, a new recreational facility located off U.S. Highway 117 in Burgaw (below, right photo), Pender County continues to grow and attract more residents and visitors year-round.



## About the Community:

Pender County is known for its rich history, scenic coastline, and deep agricultural roots. The county strikes a unique balance between rural charm and modern growth, making it an attractive place to live, work, and visit. From the historic courthouse square in Burgaw to the vibrant beach towns of Surf City and Topsail Beach, and Hampstead's access to the Intracoastal Waterway, Pender County offers a blend of small-town character, natural beauty, and coastal lifestyle. Pender County is also strategically located, providing easy access to the nearby city of Wilmington and other parts of the state via major highways such as Interstate 40, U.S. Highway 17, and NC Highway 132.

For history buffs, Pender County offers a diverse array of attractions that reflect its rich cultural heritage. One of the most historically significant sites in the area is [Moore's Creek National Battlefield](#), which commemorates the first Patriot victory in the South during the American Revolution. Visitors can walk through preserved battlefields and learn about this pivotal moment in early American history. Another historically significant site is Sloop Point Plantation, built in 1726 and considered one of the oldest homes in North Carolina, as well as [Poplar Grove Plantation](#), a beautifully preserved antebellum estate that offers tours and educational programs. In the town of Burgaw, the [Pender County Museum](#) showcases local artifacts and stories within a historic 1917 brick house. Also located in Burgaw, the Pender County Courthouse (bottom photo), constructed in 1936, stands out for its elegant Georgian and Colonial Revival architecture.



*Mother Covington, an artillery cannon at Moore's Creek National Battlefield, which commemorates American Revolutionary War patriot victory over loyalists at Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge in Pender County.*





The Topsail Tower in Topsail Beach, NC—known as Observation Tower No. 2—was built in 1946 as part of the U.S. Navy’s secret Operation Bumblebee to track experimental missile tests. It still stands today as a historic landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Beachgoers and outdoor enthusiasts will find plenty to enjoy in Pender County. Activities like golf, fishing, kayaking, bird watching, and water sports are easily accessible throughout the area, particularly along the Intracoastal Waterway and the oceanfront beaches of Topsail Island. The county hosts a variety of family-friendly community events throughout the year that celebrate local culture, seasonal traditions, and regional agriculture. Highlights include the [North Carolina Blueberry Festival](#) in Burgaw, [Autumn with Topsail](#) in Topsail Beach, the [Atkinson Christmas Parade](#), and the Summer Concert Series, hosted in Hampstead, Topsail, and Burgaw, which features a unique band offering a variety of musical genres to suit every taste.

As of mid-2024, Pender County had an estimated population of about 70,000—a 16% increase since 2020—making it one of the fastest-growing counties in North Carolina. The local economy is a mix of agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and distribution. Farms in the area produce everything from blueberries and strawberries to soybeans and sweet potatoes. There’s also a growing industrial presence, with major employers located in places like the Pender Commerce Park, along with a large Amazon facility, which is currently under construction on the Pender/New Hanover county line. The median household income sits around \$71,487, and the median home sold price is \$422K with 83.4% residents owning their homes.



*The North Carolina Blueberry Festival celebrates the historical, economic, and cultural significance of blueberries in the southeastern region of our state (left photo); Autumn with Topsail features over 100 regional artists selling their work, exciting live musical entertainment, a variety of amazing food with beer and wine, games and rides for children, and much more!*



## About the Organization and the Position:

Pender County is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners, who each serve four-year terms. Terms are staggered so that, every two years, two or three commissioner seats are up for election. The Board appoints and supervises the County Manager, who manages the day-to-day operations of the County. Staffed by 485 full-time, 12 part-time, and 342 temporary employees, across [25 departments](#), Pender County government provides essential services to community members, including:

- Public Safety
- Education
- Health and Human Services
- Environmental Management
- Planning and Community Development
- Recreation and Cultural Opportunities
- Economic Development

The General Fund currently stands at approximately \$111 million but is projected to grow to around \$200 million in 2026, when fire and emergency services are added to the county's responsibilities. The [2025-2026 budget](#) reflects Pender County's ongoing commitment to serving its residents, managing growth responsibly, and addressing the increasing demand for services. The FY 2025-2026 tax rate of 73.75 cents per \$100 of ad valorem value is unchanged.

As part of its ongoing efforts to plan for a thriving future, Pender County has asked community members to help shape its [5-Year Strategic Plan](#), which will guide priorities and decisions through 2030. County staff have developed a draft plan that includes a revised mission statement, updated core values, and strategic goals based on a careful assessment of the county's strengths and challenges. The seven draft strategic goals are:

- Enhancing public safety
- Supporting schools and education
- Focusing on internal development and retention
- Enhancing public communication and transparency
- Improving access to services
- Increasing economic development
- Focusing on strategic growth and infrastructure planning



In carrying out duties, the **County Manager** will exemplify and elevate the County's core values of *Community, Stewardship, Transparency, Professionalism, and Excellence*, ensuring that all actions and decisions reflect the principles that matter most to the people of Pender County.





## Key Position Priorities:

- Lead and manage growth by overseeing strategic planning for infrastructure expansion, including water, sewer, roads, broadband, and a major expansion of emergency services in 2026.
- Encourage and strengthen staff by addressing staff turnover, improving workplace culture, evaluating and addressing workloads, and creating a supportive organizational environment.
- Bring strong expertise in utilities management to actively participate in regional collaborations, ensure the county proactively capitalizes on available resources by pursuing state and federal grant funding efforts for infrastructure in response to anticipated growth.
- Facilitate the successful integration of 300 emergency services personnel into county operations by July 2026.
- Maintain comprehensive readiness and response plans for major weather events—particularly hurricanes—as a significant storm is inevitable despite nearly 30 years without one.

## Qualifications:

A bachelor's degree in Public or Business Administration or closely related field is required; a master's degree in Public or Business Administration and/or ICMA credentialed management is desirable. Candidate must have five or more years of successful and progressive levels of supervisory and management experience, prefer experience in North Carolina local county government.

E-commerce giant Amazon said it will create more than 1000 jobs at its robotics fulfillment center, which is currently under construction at Pender Commerce Park on the Pender/New Hanover county line.

amazon





## The Successful Candidate is:

- a trusted leader who brings stability to a county that has had nine managers in 15 years by remaining calm under pressure, demonstrating political savvy, and effectively shielding staff from controversy while fostering a respectful, high-performing organizational culture;
- a confident decision-maker who builds trust by treating all Board members equally and isn't afraid to say "no" when necessary, always prioritizing the county's best interests;
- skilled in securing vital external funding and grants, unlocking new opportunities to enhance county services and infrastructure;
- is strategic about growth and understands the pressures of fast-paced development, particularly in rapidly expanding areas like Hampstead, taking a thoughtful, forward-looking approach to ensure the County keeps pace with critical infrastructure needs—such as schools, roads, water, and sewer—even when funding is limited or politically sensitive;
- experienced in government affairs and building strong relationships with state legislators to advance Pender County's goals;
- an effective team builder who recognizes the need to strengthen the County Manager's office by expanding leadership capacity—ideally adding at least two Assistant County Managers—to ensure day-to-day operations run smoothly while creating space for strategic planning and long-term development despite ongoing turnover challenges;
- thoughtful and supportive, creating a positive, people-first organizational culture that supports staff, promotes teamwork, and helps employees feel valued—even during times of high vacancies and increasing responsibilities; and
- a forward-thinking leader who rejects the mindset of "good enough" and brings a fresh, high-level perspective—raising expectations, inspiring innovation, and setting a new standard of excellence for Pender County's future.



Earlier this summer, the Pender County Board of Commissioners approved a plan to bring Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and fire protection services under county operation. The move is aimed at streamlining services, enhancing efficiency, and improving long-term sustainability.



## Salary and Benefits:

The Board is offering a competitive salary up to \$180,000, which is negotiable based on experience and qualifications. The County provides a competitive benefits package including health insurance, a retirement pension (once fully vested), generous paid time off including vacation, sick leave, holidays and parental leave; life and disability insurance, and access to wellness programs and confidential Employee Assistance Program services for mental health, financial counseling, and more. View the full benefits package [here](#).

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

- All applications must be submitted online via the Developmental Associates application portal (link above) – NOT the county’s employment application portal or any other external website.
- Resumes and cover letters **must be uploaded** with the application.
- Applicants should apply by **September 13, 2025**, to be considered during the first round of reviews.
- The hiring team will invite successful semi-finalists to participate in virtual interviews and skill evaluations on **October 9-10, 2025**. 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)

Pender County, NC is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



Visitors to the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue & Rehabilitation Center, located in Surf City, can observe turtles in the “sick bay” and “Sea Turtle Bay,” and learn about conservation issues like plastic pollution and habitat loss.



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.”