



# DeKalb County, Illinois

Invites your interest to be our next  
**County Administrator**

First Review of Applications:  
December 19, 2025



SLAVIN MANAGEMENT  
CONSULTANTS





# Lead DeKalb County Into Its Future

Are you a visionary leader, a savvy strategist, and a collaborative spirit ready to bridge the gap between tradition and innovation? The DeKalb County Board is seeking a County Administrator and County Champion who can harness the energy of this diverse region to drive progress and shape a legacy. The County Board desires its County Administrator to build on a foundation of success and not only find ways to keep the momentum but create strategies to take the County to the next level.

DeKalb County, Illinois, was founded more than 185 years ago. There are fourteen (14) incorporated communities and nineteen (19) townships in the County, with Sycamore (pop. 18,900) as the county seat. DeKalb County is ranked in the top 20 largest populated counties in the state with an approximate population of 105,000 and 634 square miles. It is more than a county, it is a dynamic blend of rich agricultural heritage, cutting-edge industry, and vibrant university life. Located just 63 miles west of Chicago (within the metropolitan region), the County offers the professional opportunity of a growing region without the frustrations of inner-city gridlock. The private sector has taken notice of the County's strategic location where over \$4 billion in industrial investment has occurred since 2020. DeKalb County is home to Northern Illinois University, a premier public research institution, and Kishwaukee College. The K-12 education system is highly ranked with 45 public schools and 6 private schools, providing options for virtually any need. The County has grown by 4.7% over the last 15 years as a result of an effective economic development strategy resulting in affordable housing, advanced healthcare and the quality of its education system.

Notable corporations such as Meta, Ideal Industries, Bayer, 3M, Syngenta, and Ferrara Candy have a significant presence in DeKalb County and continue to make additional investment based on the longterm trajectory of the County.

## Sociodemographic Information

- Population 105,000
- Median Household Income \$69,022
- Median House Value \$315,000
- Median Age 32.6





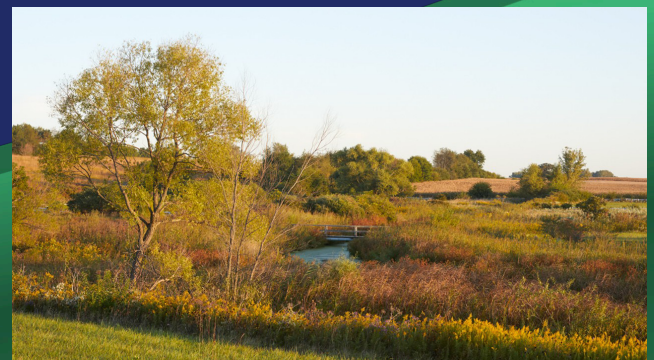
# Recreation and Events

Recreation and open space opportunities are plentiful, with DeKalb County noted with an abundance of parks (local and state), preserves and trails. One notable trail, the 17 mile in length Great Western multiuse trail, connects with other trail systems close to Chicago. Many of the parks offer winter sporting and recreation activities including ice skating. Cross-country skiing is a popular activity as well where, according to the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau, in Russell Woods in Kingston it is a local tradition. Incorporated Cities within the County also have a rich tradition of active parks, trails and passive area open spaces connecting neighborhoods, shopping and other employment centers. Additionally, annual events in the County are popular not only to residents but to the entire Chicago region. Events such as the DeKalb Barn Tour, Rumble on the River, DeKalb Corn Fest, Sandwich Fair and the Sycamore Pumpkin Festival are time honored favorites.



## A TOP RANKED COUNTY

- Top 20 for Best Places to Raise a Family – niche.com
- Top Open Space and Preserves County – over 1,457 acres of forest
- Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee - A Top Ranked Hospital in Illinois
- K-12 Public Education with Over 30 exemplary and commendable schools to choose from

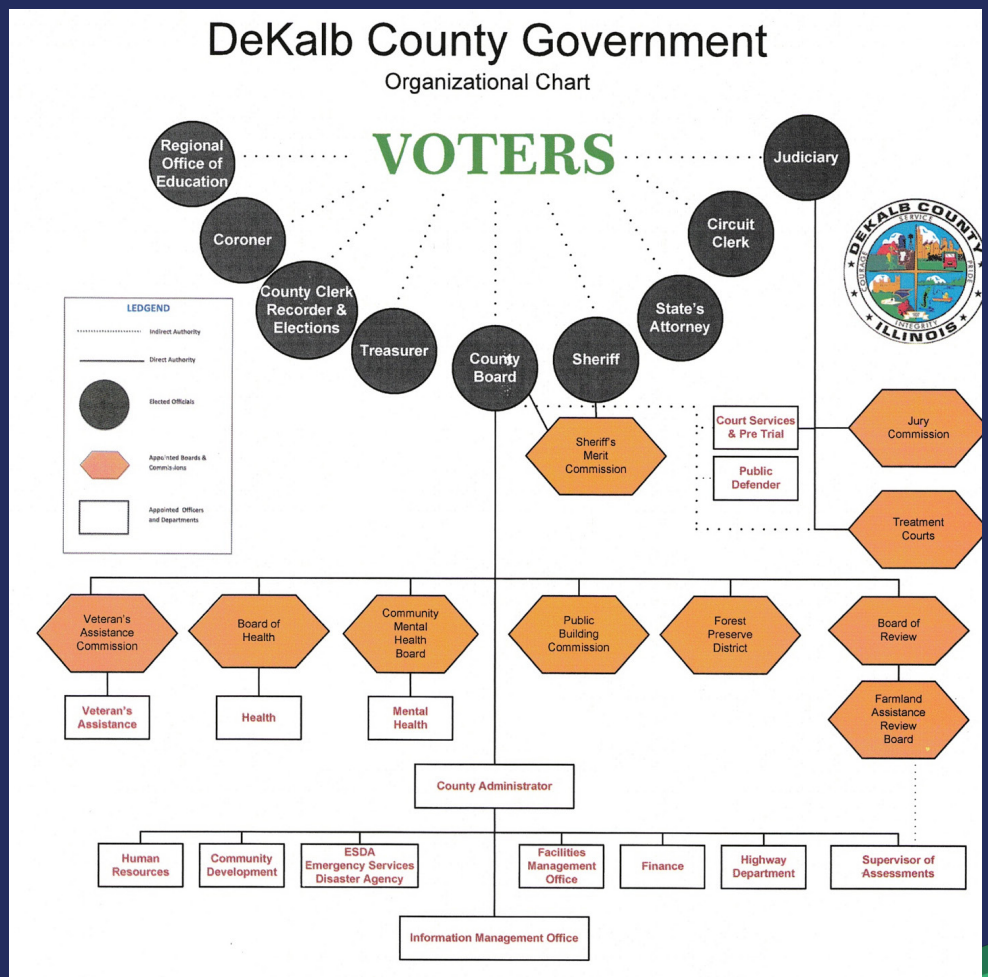




# The Organization

DeKalb County operates under the Illinois township form of county government where the governing body is the County Board. There are twenty-four (24) members of the Board, elected on a partisan basis, by 12 population based, geographic districts or two representatives per district. It is important to note that from a strict policy implementation basis, despite partisan nature of elections, historically, there continues to be broad-based operational objectivity and consensus on budget, revenues, and operations. Moreover, as prescribed in the County Code, it is prohibited to create or amend district boundaries to favor party affiliation. Board Members are elected for four-year, staggered terms. Every two years, one member is elected in each District. The election cycle is reset at the November General Election in the second year following a decennial census, where all twenty-four (24) members are elected. To assist with organizational efficiencies and practicalities, the Board has formed a nine (9) member Executive Committee that works directly with the County Administrator on policy initiatives for consideration by the full Board. The Chair of the Board is also Chair of the Executive Committee.

The full 24-member County Board is responsible for adopting all ordinances for the governance of the County. From a functional perspective, the county administrator and the organizational structure is comparable to a traditional county administrator but with a larger governing board. For example, a primary responsibility of the County Administrator is presenting a balanced fiscal year budget, working in collaboration with all appointed and elected department heads.



As is typical for counties in general, and specifically in Illinois, the organization includes several elected department heads. Elected department heads include Chief Judge, Circuit Clerk, County Clerk and Recorder, Coroner, Regional Superintendent of Schools, Sheriff, State's Attorney, and Treasurer. There are eight (8) departments that report directly to the County Administrator: Human Resources, Community Development, Emergency Services Disaster Agency, Finance Department, Highway Department, Information Management Office, Facilities Management Office, and Supervisor of Assessments Office. The County also is one of only seventeen (17) counties in the state that operate a Nursing and Residential Health Care Center. The Administrator of the Rehabilitation and Nursing Center also reports directly to the County Administrator. In total, the County's workforce is comprised of approximately 600 dedicated employees with roughly most of the employees in public safety, health and human services. Some County employees have union representation. The County has six (6) recognized labor unions. DeKalb County employees pride themselves on their exceptional service levels, a culture of collaboration, which is reinforced with long-tenured employees across all departments. The County Board strives to ensure alignment of values between the County Board and the employees in all aspects of the organization. The County encourages cross-department teams, interdisciplinary collaboration and outcomes driven solutions to complex challenges facing the County.



The County Board established four financial tenets that shape their budgetary vision and overall philosophy: Working Within Our Means, Meeting Our Obligations, Investing in Infrastructure and Reducing Debt. DeKalb County's Fiscal Year is January 1 to December 31. The current fiscal year's budget is \$112,033,711, with a \$37.7 million General Fund. Strengthening the fund balance has been a strategic focus of the County. Now at \$24 million, it represents about 65% of the General Fund (61% of budgeted expenses). Moody's Investor Service has recognized the financial stewardship of the County with a bond rating of Aa1, only one notch below the coveted AAA rating. Additionally, the County received its 38th consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.



**ONE**  
**COUNTY**  
— DEKALB —





# Essential Duties of the County Administrator as prescribed in the County Code

The DeKalb County Code provides for the following prescribed “minimum authority, duties, and responsibilities of the County Administrator:

1. The County Administrator reports directly to the County Board through the Chairman and the executive Committee.
2. The County Administrator is responsible for gathering and disseminating to the Board objective information which will aid in their decision-making process including, where appropriate, staff recommendations.
3. The County Administrator facilitates and promotes communication between the Board, the public, department heads, County employees, external boards, commissions, and their governments.
4. The County Administrator provides key staff support to the Board in its policy formulation efforts and makes recommendations as appropriate. The County Administrator assures that the actions of the Board, as expressed through their various ordinances and resolutions, are carried out. The County Administrator also serves as the Editor of the County Code and is responsible to see that all actions of the County Board, as appropriate, are timely codified and made available to the public in an organized format.
5. The County Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and operation of all County services that are under the control of the County Board.
6. The County Administrator is authorized, pursuant to a departmental request, to amend departmental budgets between line-items and categories within a department's total appropriation for all their cost centers within a fund, but only the County Board can increase or decrease the total fund appropriation for a department.
7. In the event of an emergency, the County Administrator, in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair, the Finance Chair, and the Chair of the relevant jurisdiction Committee, may authorize additional spending to address the emergency, but such expenditures must be reported to the Finance Committee at their next regular meeting.
8. The County Administrator is responsible for the allocation, use, renovation, safety, and stewardship of the County's buildings and grounds.
9. The County Board retains the authority to approve the number of authorized positions for each department, but the County Administrator may approve staff re-organizations within a department where the resulting annualized expenses do not exceed the monies already budgeted.
10. Labor contracts are to be negotiated and recommended by the County Administrator to the County Board for the Board's final approval. Before negotiations begin, the County Administrator shall gather input from the executive Committee and then the County Administrator, Board Chair, and Board Vice-Chair shall establish negotiation parameters and strategy. Labor disputes and policy interpretations arising above the departmental level will be handled by the County Administrator.
11. When a vacancy exists at the Department Head level (other than that of County Administrator), the County Administrator, the Chair of the relevant jurisdiction Committee, and either the Board Chair or Vice-Chair (to even out political party representation if possible), are responsible for bringing forward to the appropriate County Board Committee up to five candidates for consideration by the Committee. If none of the candidates are found to be acceptable by the Committee, or the County Board, the process starts over.
12. Performance evaluations for County Board appointed Department Heads will be conducted by the County Board in a manner determined from time to time by the executive Committee of the County Board. The County Administrator may submit input to the Board as part of that evaluation process. The County Administrator may also choose to perform interim evaluations as deemed appropriate.
13. In situations where the County Administrator deems it necessary, the County Administrator shall have the power to order the immediate suspension of a County Board appointed Department Head, with or without pay as deemed appropriate, until acted upon by the County Board. In such cases, the County Board shall act on the suspension at their next regular monthly meeting to reinstate, or take other appropriate action, or to permanently remove the Department Head.
14. The County Administrator, or his/her designee, will represent the County on any applicable Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) District's Joint Review Boards or related TIF Advisory Boards.”

# Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

Identified below are selected notable items that the County Board has identified as top tier considerations that should be part of the next County Administrator's ongoing work program(s) for the organization.

- **Budget and Finance Considerations.** Although the County is performing extremely well financially, with relatively stable revenues, it will be important for the next County Administrator to have a skill set in the sustainability and performance characteristics of County revenues and expenses, with an emphasis on recurring revenues to support ongoing costs. Ensuring revenue stability to meet current service demands is an important issue for the County's sustainability. The Board has adopted a philosophy of lowering the property tax rate to minimize the impacts on residential value increases. There is an interest to continue this tradition, but with a longer-term financial plan presented by the next administrator. The next County Administrator will be presented with challenges and opportunities in managing service levels based on this budget practice and strategy. Financial and budget modernization of the County's processes and standards; and, identifying opportunities for leadership, creativity and initiative is an important consideration in current budget processes and standards.
- **Internal Collaboration.** With both elected and appointed department heads, it is important to the Board that there is clarity on the big picture and all work together to find mutually acceptable goals, objectives, including alternatives and options. Collaborative philosophy is desired to advance economic development and other preservation strategies desired by the Board.
- **Accountability, Transparency and Governance.** DeKalb County's citizens are engaged with their local governments and appreciate accountability and transparency in governance.
- **Partnerships.** Building and Maintaining positive working relationships with key County stakeholders, including its many cities, townships, agriculture groups, education, and business partners. Creating new pathways for improving key stakeholder relationships including reinvigorating communications with these stakeholders.
- County-wide culture of **a balanced region, with economic prosperity**, jobs growth while concurrently navigating the line of maintaining the heritage of the County. The County is experiencing strong interest in renewable energy proposals and their careful integration into the fabric of the region is an important issue.
- Developing a **service delivery and economic strategy** that acknowledges the opportunities and diversity of issues between parts of the County.
- Addressing **staffing capacity** issues in some areas of the organization, for example in Health and Human Services. In general, developing a strategy where the County Administrator can be a resource for the entire organization, positioning each department in the best possible way to have success.
- An **assessment of the organizational performance** and identify opportunities to innovate, create new efficiencies, and best practice standards.





# Preferred Characteristics and Demonstrated Experience of the Ideal Candidate

- ▶ **Visionary Leader.** The strength to harness the collective desire and goals of the whole Board and be able to think “outside the box” at times – asking the question where the County wants to be and how to get there. An individual who sees the “big picture” for the County Board, and who can help shape this vision. An individual who can represent the County Board’s collective vision, policy action(s) or direction to all County stakeholders, particularly the media or sensitive interests within the County including an overall persona as a “people person” with all stakeholders within the County. Someone who is passionate about public service and is responsive to issues with an overall mentality of “leaving the organization and the County in a better place than when they first arrived.”
- ▶ **Ethics, Honesty and Transparency.** An ethical, honest and strong leader who can hold their ground, be clear, direct, and in a transparent manner; is confident but not defensive with their positions and/or recommendations. Politically astute but apolitical.
- ▶ **Communication Leader.** An active listener with an openness and a willingness to engage with people. A translator, who can distill complex subject matters to all audiences. An individual who can gain trust, build consensus, oftentimes by speaking with candor, diplomacy and non-bureaucratically. A clear understanding of the interconnectedness of all service lines and the overall mission.
- ▶ **Creative and Innovative.** Someone who is creative and can suggest new ways of doing some aspects of County operations and/or systems. An individual who is comfortable with ambiguity and can innovate, establishing stretch goals for departments.
- ▶ **Budget and Finance.** Budget and finance experience, grounded in sustainable practices, that address long-term financial strategies and who is successful in implementing improvements to financial systems that support the goals of the Board. A skilled diplomat with the ability to speak clearly to the intended audience about recommended financial matters and articulating resource allocation opportunities and challenges.
- ▶ **Systems Thinker.** Being able to multitask with multiple service lines and ensuring that all staff work for the County cohesively. Can develop processes where important information is provided in a timely manner equally to all elected officials, keeping them abreast of emerging situations and circumstances within the County.
- ▶ **Strategic Planner.** A guide and counselor for the Board, respecting Board authority while respecting constructive oversight, while concurrently being able to articulate the Administrator’s thoughts.
- ▶ **Relationship and Collaboration Builder.** An individual who can prioritize developing positive, effective and productive relationships with the Board and the County’s stakeholders. Demonstrates independence and professional approach to elected officials by treating all fairly, in a non-partisan manner and recognizes the paramount governance role of the County Board. Additionally, an individual who recognizes and values the ideas and views of all Board Members. Understands the importance of labor relations and will prioritize open communication across all levels of the organization, and will avoid a top-down, disengaged approach to leadership.
- ▶ **Organizational Culture.** An individual who can strengthen and preserve the positive culture of the organization. Has experience with and supports succession planning. In general, an individual who makes people feel valued and respected. An individual who can identify the value of employees at all levels within the organization and appreciates that all employees are integral to accomplishing the outcomes and priorities desired by the County Board.



# POSITION REQUIREMENTS

## Education and Experience :

Requires a combination of education and experience equivalent to attainment of an MPA or MBA combined with at least 5 years of senior level and/or executive management experience. The 5 years of experience should include increasingly responsible local government management experience gained in a County or other public agency similarly situated in population and complexity to DeKalb County. However, public sector executives in a mid-sized County may be considered if they possess the characteristics referenced in the profile. A credentialed Administrator within the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is desired. Experience in budget, finance, capital improvement programs, economic development, and/or development services is desired. This opportunity would be ideal for an individual who is an existing County Administrator with similar experience in the issues and opportunities identified herein. However, an experienced Assistant County Administrator in another jurisdiction with a comparable sized County and/or organization may be considered and with experience as stated.

# COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

DeKalb County will offer a highly competitive compensation package commensurate with the successful candidate's experience and qualifications. The adopted compensation range for this position is \$180,000 to \$200,000, depending on the qualifications of the selected candidate. It is expected that the employment agreement will include standard additional items related to vehicle, personal leave allowances, and relocation costs reimbursement, for example. The County also offers an excellent benefits package that includes:

- Fifteen holidays annually
- Vacation leave
- Medical leave
- Major medical insurance plans including PPO and HMO Options from Blue Cross Blue Shield and Blue Advantage
- Dental insurance plan from Delta Dental
- Vision insurance from VSP
- Flexible reimbursement accounts
- Long- and short-term disability insurance
- Employer-paid life insurance of \$50,000
- Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF)
- Voluntary 457 Deferred Compensation plan(s)

DEKALB COUNTY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



## TO APPLY

The recruitment will remain open until the position is filled. The first review of applications is scheduled for December 19, 2025. References will be contacted only following candidate approval. Finalist interviews will be held in DeKalb County. Candidates will be advised of the status of the recruitment following selection of the County Administrator. To apply, please send a letter of application, detailed résumé, and salary expectations to:

**Robert E. Slavin, President or John Kross, Southwest Regional Manager**

**SLAVIN MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS**

**3040 Holcomb Bridge Road, Suite A-1**

**Norcross, Georgia 30071**

**Phone: (770) 449-4656**

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**e-mail: [slavin@bellsouth.net](mailto:slavin@bellsouth.net)**

**[www.slavinweb.net](http://www.slavinweb.net)**

**John Kross Contact Information: (480) 797-4487 or [johnkross@psmconsulting.us](mailto:johnkross@psmconsulting.us)**

Electronic submissions are required.

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