



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Salary: \$120,000 to \$150,000



WADENA COUNTY WELCOMES YOU!

Wadena County, Minnesota, is a county situated in central Minnesota and is located 90 minutes from St. Cloud, Minnesota, and Fargo, North Dakota. The northerly section of the County is beautiful with its trees and lakes whereas the eastern border is anchored by the Crow Wing River. A tornado in 2010 has given the area an opportunity to re-build and refresh its infrastructure. Approximately 14,240 residents call Wadena County home.

The Wadena County area offers excellent transportation services as U.S. Highways 10 and 71 cross each other to provide easy access to anywhere you need to go. In 2025, MnDOT is partnering with the County to improve Highway 71 and expand Highway 10 to four lanes, two in each direction. The Friendly Rider Bus Service provides inexpensive transportation to its residents so they can get to medical appointments and run errands. The service, which provides 60,000 rides/year across four counties, has developed a legacy of area donors to ensure the transit program continues long into the future. The area is also serviced by the Wadena Municipal Airport and the Staples Municipal Airport.

Wadena County is comprised of seven cities – Aldrich, Menahga, Nimrod, Sebeka, Staples (part), Verndale, and Wadena, and 15 townships – Aldrich, Blueberry, Bullard, Huntersville, Leaf River, Lyons, Meadow, North Germany, Orton, Red Eye, Rockwood, Shell River, Thomastown, Wadena, and Wing River. The communities range in size from 35 residents to 4,311 residents.

County parks and State forests dot the geography throughout this growing County, in addition to many city parks and the Crow Wing River which offer many recreational, camping, tubing, and hiking activities. The City of Wadena, also the county seat, is growing and has a vibrant downtown. Young families are bringing energy into the area.

THE COMMUNITIES

The small City of Aldrich, with just 35 residents, sits along the Partridge River. As the “Oldest City in Wadena County,” this closeknit community has a multi-generational history that continues into present day. Farming continues to be an important part of this community with local farmers and Amish neighbors providing local foods using both standard and organic practices for potato, buckwheat, and other crops. While some of the original businesses have gone away, the community still thrives with new businesses like popular Ted and Gen’s BBQ, which has the largest open pit barbeque in Minnesota. Community spirit shows at the well-attended potluck dinners held annually at the historic Community Center. Halloween is celebrated as a community wide event, and with the help of the local Lion’s Club, the community is growing. The snowmobile trail runs right along Highway 10 and provides easy access to the business district and inter-county trail system.

Known as the Gateway to the Pines, the City of Menahga is home to 1,375 residents. There are plenty of outdoor activities to enjoy like fishing on one of the many nearby lakes or hiking through the beautiful woods. In the heart of Menahga sits the beautiful Spirit Lake, complete with a pier and sugar sand beach. In town, there are several restaurants, cafes, and shops that provide a unique shopping and dining experience. Residents also enjoy the local events hosted throughout the year that bring people together for celebrations and festivals. Despite its size, Menahga is a great place to call home with its friendly people and relaxed rural lifestyle.

Nimrod is a city with a population of 76 residents. Nimrod’s city park is named Stigman’s Mound for Dick Stigman, a relief pitcher on the 1965 American League Championship-winning Minnesota Twins team who was born in Nimrod. The park is located astride the Crow Wing River, a tributary of the Mississippi River and is a key rest stop for the many canoe enthusiasts who voyage the scenic river. The City holds a town celebration known as Jubilee Days that swells the town’s population sometimes by the thousands over Labor Day weekend.

Located along the Red Eye River is the City of Sebeka with a population of 742. The City’s Red Eye River Celebration is the town’s summer celebration and occurs in June every year.



THE COMMUNITIES - CONT'D



If you are looking for quality small-town life, the City of Staples offers just that. With just about 3,030 residents, the City is home to an active arts community and many large companies including Lakewood Health System, Central Lakes College, 3M's Fabrication Services Plant, Sourcewell, and Stern Rubber Company. Outdoor enthusiasts will find river tubing, water sports, fishing, ATVing, and lakeside camping available. There is also opportunity to relax at music performances or gather with family in one of Staples' many parks and gardens, play a round of golf at The Vintage, explore the train depot, visit Living Legacy Gardens, see a Lumberbats baseball game, or stroll down Minnesota's longest fishing pier.



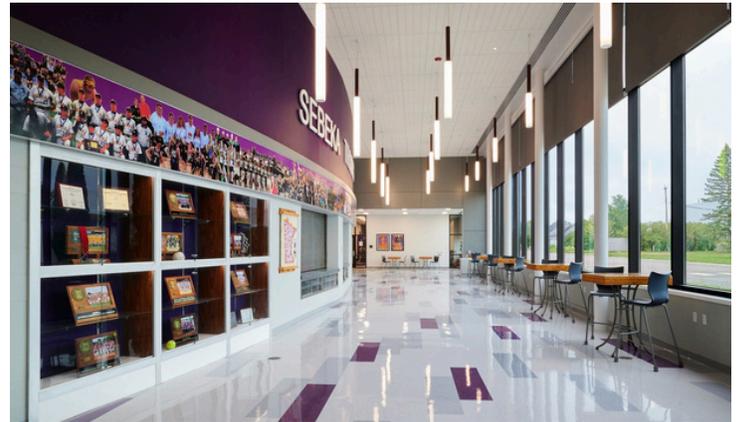
Called, the "most beautiful town between Brainerd and Fargo," the City of Verndale was established quickly to serve the needs of settlers swarming to the area. Today Verndale's strong farming tradition continues with England Prairie Living Museum south of town serving as a model for harnessing new varieties of crops and as a market for local produce. Verndale residents understand the importance of getting involved to help where it is needed; this is one of the greatest strengths it holds. Fundraisers are common in Verndale and these have helped to shape the community through challenges. Residents feel Verndale is a neat place to raise children as it is stated on their welcome sign. The town supports small businesses that serve to meet basic needs including a grocery/thrift store, hardware, clinic, hair salon, and newspaper, as well as horse sales, manufacturing, and banking services. One of the most unique events in Verndale is the Bulls and Barrels...and Broncs, a two-day, indoor rodeo held annually in February. It is Verndale Days that draws residents together. Once known as Sunbonnet/Straw Hat Days, the festival sparks several events to celebrate: a parade, fireworks, and the one-act plays put on by actors from the community college.



The city of Wadena is the economic hub for the County and is home to a very caring community of 4,332 residents. The City is bursting with vibrant culture, celebrated arts, progressive technology, and a bustling downtown featuring unique shops, a brewery, distillery, and other fun places to visit. In 2013, the Wadena movie theater The Cozy, was chosen as the top theater in Minnesota. Whether you are looking for diverse neighborhoods, affordable housing, or an abundance of recreational and leisure activities, you will find it in Wadena. The City is home to over 200 businesses including Homecrest Industries, Mason Brothers, Wensman Seed, and Russ Davis Wholesale.



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



There are a number of public school districts serving the students of Wadena County - Menahga Public Schools, Sebeka Public School, Staples-Motley School District, Verndale Public School, and Wadena-Deer Creek Public Schools (WDC).

The Menahga Public School District consists of traditional schools under one roof along with an alternative learning center and early learning programming. The building is a Pre-K through grade 12 facility with classrooms, maker spaces, commons, gymnasiums, and two libraries. The facility houses just under 1,000 students school-wide within the elementary and high school.

Sebeka Public School serves grades PreK through grade 12. The students of the Sebeka School live in a four county area, and it enrolls over 500 students. The high school, preschool, and elementary school are all contained within the same building.

Staples-Motley School District, a PreK through grade 12 district, serves around 900 students in their elementary and middle/high schools.

WDC Schools serves the communities of Wadena, Deer Creek, and Bluffton and is comprised of an elementary school and a middle/high school. The District serves over 1,000 students in PreK through grade 12.

Verndale Public School provides education to approximately 500 students from PreK through grade 12.

An alternative educational option is also available. Freshwater Education District Area Learning Center provides early childhood education classes (ECFE) for families and children ages birth to 5 years. Their Area Learning Center (ALC) serves as an alternative to traditional schools with targeted learning for students from Kindergarten to adult.

A couple of private educational options are also available in the County. Sacred Heart Area School is a Catholic school in Staples providing education to approximately 110 students in grades PreK through grade 6. Verndale Area Christian Academy is an elementary school offering classes for students in Kindergarten through grade 6 in a Christian environment.

Higher education opportunities are also available in the County. Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State) is a member of the Minnesota State system is comprised of four campuses – Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, Moorhead, and Wadena. M State serves approximately 6,400 students in transfer, career, and technical programs that provide hands-on preparation for successful careers. The college is a great ally for the County in meeting the training needs of area industries. In addition, Central Lakes College has a main campus and a West Campus located in the City of Staples.

HEALTHCARE

Astera Health, formerly known as Tri-County Health Care, is a private, not-for-profit healthcare corporation with seven locations including those in Sebeka, Verndale, and Wadena. Astera Health in Wadena is located on a beautiful new property just west of Wadena on Highway 10. The new \$72 million, 125,900 square-foot facility provides a wide range of specialties for the entire family including laboratory testing, foot care, geriatric care, emergency care, routine physicals, maternity care, x-rays and lab services, and medical care for any illness or injury. The hospital provides 24-hour emergency services and a number of top-notch care units including surgery suites, labor and delivery suites, a pediatric unit, x-ray and lab services, and respiratory, physical, and occupational therapy services. The Wadena location also offers a ReadyCare clinic for walk-in and same-day appointments as well as a Rehabilitation Clinic offering rehab services for a complete range of therapies.

Astera Health – Sebeka Clinic and Astera Health – Verndale Clinic are both conveniently located in their respective downtowns and provide a wide range of specialties for your entire family.

Astera Health and CentraCare have recently approved a partnership that will expand cancer services to the region including the addition of a cancer center at the new Astera Health main campus in Wadena. The 20,000-square-foot addition will be added to the west end of the new building. The project, which will include infusion, radiation oncology, and supportive care, is estimated to cost \$23.7 million and will be completed by spring of 2025.

Lakewood Health System, headquartered in Staples, features a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital, five primary clinics, pharmacy and home medical equipment stores, a wide variety of senior housing and service options, and more.



THE ORGANIZATION



The Wadena County Board of Commissioners is the body charged with the ultimate management and control of all of the affairs of Wadena County including the County's finances and resources. Various elected and appointed officials are responsible for managing their respective departments with the limits established by law and the County Board. The Board is comprised of five Commissioners who represent the five districts of the County. The County Administrator is appointed by the Board and works with them to set short- and long-term goals of the organization.

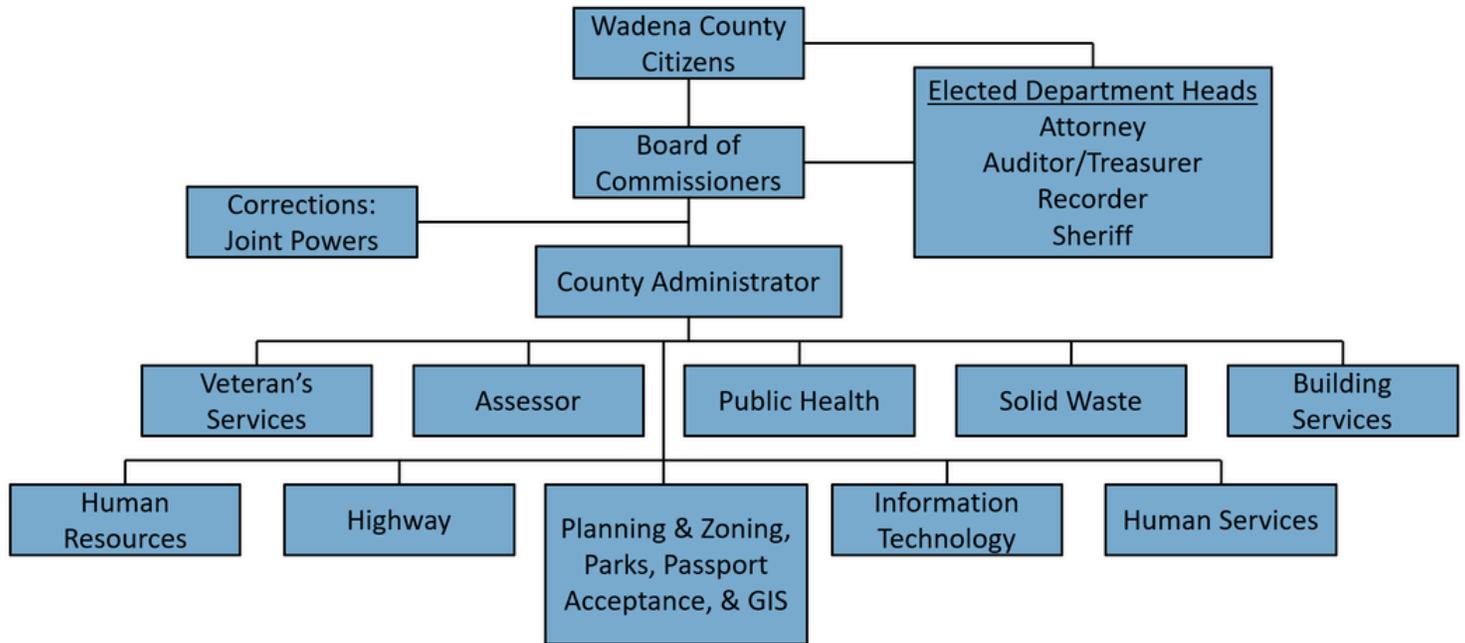
The Wadena County Government Center is located in the heart of beautiful, downtown Wadena. Walking into the Government Center, one feels the warm and welcoming environment. Staff is friendly and enjoys serving the residents. Staff work well with each other and across department lines. The incoming County Administrator can look forward to working with a knowledgeable and well-established team. The department heads have served in their capacity for many years and are subject matter experts in their field.

Twice a year, the County Board takes their work session to other communities within Wadena County to engage residents in discussions and planning work sessions.

The County has enjoyed consistently low levy rates and high voter participation. The County put Covid dollars out into the community to lessen the impact of the annual levy on its residents. The Wadena County Government Center is the only location within the County that will provide the passport photo and application process. County residents appreciate the services the Highway Department provides.

Wadena County has a total of 193 employees, 153 full-time and 40 part-time.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



BUDGET SUMMARY

	2023 Budget	2024 Preliminary Budget
General Revenue Fund	5,754,825	6,020,868
Building Fund	0	0
Public Health	1,316,995	1,365,031
Sheriff	3,157,021	3,605,466
Road and Bridge	10,023,322	10,002,217
Social Services	7,599,943	8,083,272
Friendly Rider's Transit	1,203,731	
Solid Waste	1,731,376	1,707,462
Total Expenditures	\$30,787,213	\$30,784,316

CORE DUTIES

Serves as Administrator and Advisor to the County Board

- Carries out the orders and policies of the Board in the operation of County Government in accordance with Federal, State, and local laws and the accepted standards and practices of public administration.
- Serves as a liaison between the County Board and department heads, County employees, and local/regional/state/federal agencies. Communicates activities of the Board to the news media and public through press releases and other oral and written correspondence.
- Develops structure and staffing models; hires, trains, mentors, and assigns accountabilities including, but not limited to, discipline and termination of department staff, negotiating separation agreements in consultation with legal representatives, and directing workflow to accomplish department and organizational goals.
- Manages, delegates, and implements a variety of diverse programs and functions related to the overall administrative operations of the County.
- Develops interagency contacts necessary to stay abreast of developments that affect the County.
- Communicates resolutions, ordinances, policies, and regulations of the County Board by maintaining open channels of communications with civic organizations, state officials, and citizens.
- When so directed, represents the County Board of Commissioners at local, regional, state, and national meetings. Attends professional meetings and keeps informed of developments in County government operation and management. Advises the County Board on changes in statutes and regulations.
- Assists the County Board of Commissioners in establishing short- and long-range objectives to include appropriate action plans and programs to achieve them, and coordinates and implements the strategic planning process.
- Annually coordinates the County budget process, develops annual budget instructions, analyzes all annual budget requests, makes recommendations, and is responsible for preparing the budget within levy guidelines set by the State. Annually develops departmental budgets for the County Board, Administrator, Building CIP Funds and assist other departments as needed in development of CIPs. During the year, authorizes expenditures from these budgets and monitors their status. Monitors all departmental budgets.
- Serves as the responsible authority for County compliance with the Data Practices Act for all departments.
- Ensures the effective execution of County Board directives, resolutions, and regulations.
- Provides recommendations concerning County operations, financial matters, labor negotiations, staffing, and related issues.
- Serves as Clerk to the Board - prepares agendas and advises of department head agenda items.
- Communicates with the public, contractors, and State of Minnesota departments.
- Represents Wadena County to other agencies.

CORE DUTIES - CONT'D

Serves as Department Head for Administration

- Review annual budgets for all departments.
- Coordinates personnel administration that includes the development of countywide personnel policies, the development of a County Compensation and Classification Plan, consistent with state and federal laws, contractual agreements with bargaining units, EEO, and Affirmative Action requirements.
- Oversees compliance with the County's personnel policies through advice and communication with department heads and the payroll clerk.
- Assists department heads in determining a field of qualified applicants for position vacancies. Assists the County Board in screening, evaluating, interviewing and selecting replacements for any appointed department head positions.
- Serves as a resource to all County employees on personnel, payroll and insurance matters.
- Supervises the County's compliance with the state's comparable worth legislation.
- Develops interdepartmental relationships to allow the Coordinator to assist in the representation of departmental interests.
- Oversees and ensures complete set of job descriptions for all County positions. Assists department heads as needed in preparing upgraded descriptions. Annually, directs the process of job evaluation, reclassification requests and implementation of any changes.
- Oversees the employee performance evaluation process by department heads and prepares proper documentation of all personnel and payroll actions.
- Assists department heads in the use of progressive discipline and procedures for documentation of misconduct, disciplinary action, suspension or termination consistent with the County's personnel policies.
- Maintains individual employee service records on all County employees. Supervises maintenance of personnel records by department heads.
- Coordinates the activities of the County's labor negotiating team and participates actively in labor negotiations with County employee unions.
- Reviews, researches and recommends changes in County personnel policies to the County Board. Communicates clarifications or changes in the County's personnel policies to all County employees.
- Administers the County's Compensation and Classification Plan.
- Directs the preparation of salary projections for each employee to be used by appropriate authority in development of annual budget.
- Hire, manage, discipline, and terminate employees and provide direction to department heads.
- Manage all building construction projects.
- Supervise payroll and benefits.

CORE DUTIES - CONT'D

Supervisory Duties and Responsibilities

- Manages and supervises all department appraisal and support staff including recruitment and selection, scheduling, work assignment, performance evaluation, training and counseling, performance improvement plans, discipline, and other personnel related actions.
- Delegates and monitors work assignments to ensure compliance with guidelines, statutes and department policies and procedures.
- Interprets, reviews and advises staff regarding laws and policies.



DESIRED ATTRIBUTES

- Has a strong background in human resources, negotiations, and grievances.
- Has experience working in local government and finding ways to collaborate across department lines and with area stakeholders.
- Enjoys working with many different personalities and has the patience and ability to balance competing interests.
- Enjoys educating and coaching stakeholders about the Board and budget, data practices, open meeting laws, and county government processes.
- Is a highly organized leader with an even demeanor and patience.
- Is open to new ideas and concepts and likely to say, "Let's find a way to make it work." Empowers people to find solutions.
- Is personable, positive, and outgoing.
- Is comfortable reaching out to area partners and state legislators to advocate for the County.
- Is a natural leader who is not afraid to take a firm stance but also knows when to take a step back.
- Enjoys being the face of the organization and is instrumental in building positive morale.
- Is dependable and reliable and expects the same from others.
- Appreciates coming to work with a sense of humor and making the workplace an enjoyable place to be.
- Is highly communicative and listens and shares information across the organization; effectively delivers clear expectations.

GOALS & PROJECTS



- Wadena is on the edge of taking off! Be a part of its trajectory.
- Engage the Board in annual strategic and goal setting sessions to identify areas for future progress and growth. Find a way to regularly report out positive results of meeting identified goals.
- Working with area partners, continue to explore ways to lower the County's tax rate.
- Work with the EDA to help guide and support efforts to move the County forward with a focus on developing a variety of housing options, updating the zoning code, growing existing businesses, and expanding industrial opportunities.
- Serve as a conduit for the Board and departments. Share information up and down the organization and ensure accountability. Ensure the full Board receives the same information.
- Set up preliminary meetings to establish goals with each bargaining unit, set deadlines, and engage the Labor Attorney to represent the County in labor negotiations.
- Enlisting the aid from appropriate stakeholders, review and update leases, personnel policies, recruitment and retention processes, housing and commercial policies, and other organizational processes.
- Roll out and provide training to department heads and managers on a standardized employee review system and associated software module.
- Present recommendations on how to distribute and use remaining AARPA dollars.
- Educate self on County's recently adopted housing abatement as a tool for economic development.
- Explore opportunities to collect fees from non-resident users of Wadena County services, amenities, and parks to lessen the impact on taxpayers.
- Work as a partner with MnDOT on the 2025 highway improvement/expansion project, and work with Board on a zoning update for the affected highway corridor.
- Take time to learn each of the departments and long-time serving department heads. Trust in staff to manage their departments.
- Get a good handle on the budget and involve the appropriate staff and Board members in the budget process. Develop a long-term capital improvement plan to include equipment, construction projects (including Highway Department shops, jail and courtroom updates, landfill and park improvements), and funding mechanisms.
- Delegate Commissioners and staff to represent the County at area meetings and develop a reporting mechanism to ensure all are informed.
- Stay current on I.T. needs within the organization.



POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

COUNTY: Wadena County, Minnesota

POSITION: County Administrator

SALARY: \$120,000 to \$150,000, plus comprehensive benefits including health, dental, and vision, short- and long-term disability, life, pre-tax accounts, PERA retirement, and more

APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 19, 2025

JOB SUMMARY: The County Administrator is responsible to provide services to the county citizens as mandated by the State of Minnesota and as directed by the County Board. This position is responsible to use federal, state, and local funds efficiently to provide public services. This position works with the County Board to set short- and long-term goals of the organization.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelor's degree in Business or Public Administration, or a related field, and five (5) or more years of experience along with the skills, knowledge, and abilities required including progressively responsible management assignments including managing a significant amount of employees. A master's degree in Public Administration, Human Resources, Business Administration, or a related field is preferred.

APPLY: Visit <https://daviddrown.hiringplatform.com/297900-wadena-county-administrator/1136938-application-form/en> and complete the application process by March 19, 2025. Finalists will be selected on April 8, 2025, and final interviews will be held on April 24, 2025.

Please direct questions to Liza Donabauer at liza@daviddrown.com or 612-920-3320 x111.

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DDA

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