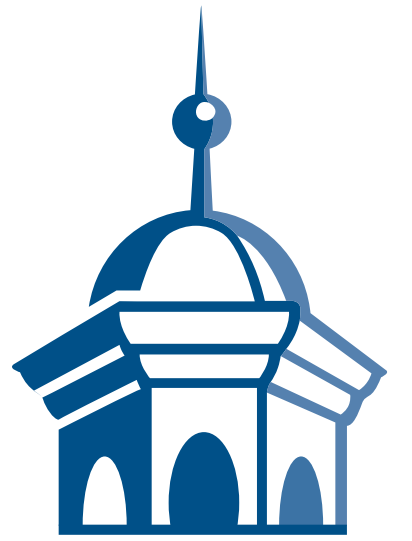


May 19, 2025



**Muni Mornings**

# Hiring Your Town's First Town Administrator or Administrative Assistant

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Vermont League of Cities and Towns

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

### Step 1: Conduct a Needs Assessment

- Gather input from Selectboard members, town employees, and community members.
- Identify specific administrative challenges the town faces

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

- Based on the needs assessment, outline the responsibilities of the Town Administrator or Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard

# Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

## VLCT Resources

- Why Hiring a Town Administrator is Beneficial for a Selectboard
- Benefits of Hiring an Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

### Step 2: Create a Job Description

- Include essential elements such as:
  - Job title
  - Summary of the position
  - Key responsibilities and duties
  - Required qualifications — education, experience, skills)
  - Desired attributes — leadership, communication, problem-solving)

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

- The specific duties of each position can vary significantly depending on the size and complexity of the town and the structure of the Selectboard.
- A Town Administrator's role often involves significant independent decision-making and responsibility for the town's overall operations, whereas the Administrative Assistant provides crucial support to the Selectboard but generally operates under their direct supervision.

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

- The Town Administrator oversees the overall administration of the town, while the Administrative Assistant provides vital support to the Selectboard through administrative tasks; both roles are crucial but serve different functions.

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

	Town Administrator	Administrative Assistant
<b>Roles &amp; Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oversee daily operations of the town</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide administrative support to the Selectboard</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement policies set by the Selectboard</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manage scheduling and communications</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare and manage budgets</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain records and documentation</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Serve as a liaison between the Selectboard and the public</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare meeting agendas and minutes</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supervise town staff and departments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assist in community outreach and engagement</li></ul>



## Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

	Town Administrator		Administrative Assistant
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and implement town policies</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schedule and coordinate meetings</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manage financial reports and budgets</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Document meeting minutes and prepare agendas</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitate communication with stakeholders</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handle correspondence and inquiries</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oversee project management and strategic initiatives</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain filing systems and records</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyze community needs and develop solutions</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assist in organizing community events and town meetings</li></ul>

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

	Town Administrator		Administrative Assistant
Summary of Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bachelor's degree in Public Administration or related field</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High school diploma or equivalent; Associate's degree preferred</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experience in management or municipal government</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proficiency in office software and communication skills</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong leadership and problem-solving skills</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organizational and multitasking abilities</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge of budgeting and financial management</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to work collaboratively with diverse groups</li></ul>

# Town Administrator ≠ Town Manager

**A Town Administrator only has those powers and responsibilities that the selectboard delegates to them.**

In towns where the selectboard has hired a town administrator, the administrator may perform similar duties to a Town manager. The key difference between these two positions is that while their duties may be similar, the administrator is not a statutory position — it's one created by the selectboard to assist it in carrying out its duties. The administrator's authority doesn't emanate from state law as a manager's authority does and, as such, an administrator only has those powers and responsibilities that the selectboard delegates to them.

# Town Administrator ≠ Town Manager

## Town Managers are given their authority directly by state law

The town manager (“manager”) is responsible for the general supervision of the affairs of the town and is the administrative head of all departments. Managers are given their authority directly by state law and are responsible for all duties not otherwise conferred upon another town officer. 24 V.S.A. §§ 1235, 1236(1). In addition, the manager performs all duties committed to the selectboard by law, except for those duties reserved to the selectboard via 24 V.S.A. § 1236(2). The manager, however, does remain subject to the direction and supervision of the selectboard.

# Town Administrator ≠ Town Manager

If your town is weighing the pros and cons of a Town Administrator vs. a Town Manager position, VLCT has excellent resources for you:

- Town Manager or Administrator: Organizational Structures Guide
- On-site presentations provided by VLCT's Municipal Assistance Center (MAC).

# Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

## Step 3: Determine Compensation and Benefits

### 1. Research Comparable Salaries:

- Investigate salary ranges for similar positions in other Vermont towns.
- Consider the town's budget and financial capacity.

### 2. Develop a Benefits Package:

- Outline benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off.
- Ensure benefits are competitive to attract qualified candidates.

# Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

	Town Administrator		Administrative Assistant
Annual Compensation (Average)	\$75,741		\$50,291*

\*Average hourly wage of \$26.30 annualized based on a 40-hour week.

Source: VLCT 2024 Compensation & Benefits Survey Data

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

For those considering adding a Town Administrator position:

- You will be competing with recruitment efforts for Town Manager positions. The average annual salary for Town Managers is \$115,877 (2024 VLCT Salary Survey).
- Recent Town Administrator ads include:
  - Berlin, population 2,849: \$85,000 - \$90,000
  - Bristol, population 3,782: depending on qualifications, starting at \$72,500
  - East Montpelier, population 2,598: \$80,000 - \$90,000
  - Highgate, population 3,472: \$75,000 - \$85,000



# Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

## Very rough estimates of benefits costs for full-time positions

	Town Administrator		Administrative Assistant	Notes
Health Insurance	\$10,000 - \$30,000		\$10,000 - \$30,000	BC/BS High-Deductible Health Plan @ 90% \$10K 1 insured; \$20K 2 insured; \$30K 3+ insured
Social Security & Medicare Taxes	\$5,794		\$3,847	Social Security Tax = 6.2% Medicare Tax = 1.45%
Retirement (VMERS B)	\$5,301		\$3,520	Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System, Plan B, 7%
Total	\$21,095 - \$41,095		\$17,367 - \$37,367	Does not include Vt Childcare Tax (.44%), other optional benefits such as dental insurance, or workers compensation insurance

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

If you would like to add a Town Administrator or Administrative Assistant, but do not think your town afford to do so, options to explore include:

- Combining the position with another part-time position, such as the Town Clerk or Zoning Administrator.
- Sharing the position with a nearby town.

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

### Step 4: Create a Funding Plan & Secure Funding

- Develop a budget for the position, including wages, benefits and office expenses
- Include in your budget proposal for consideration at Town Meeting

# Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

## Step 5: Create a Recruitment Plan

- See VLCT PACIF Steps to Hiring Well:
  - **Plan Ahead to Ensure Consistency.** Treat applicants in a consistent and non-discriminatory manner by following the same steps for all.
  - **Prepare a Timeline for the Recruitment Process.** Establish deadlines for posting the job, reviewing applications, conducting interviews, and making a hiring decision.

# Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

## Step 5: Create a Recruitment Plan - Continued

- **Attract a Pool of Well Qualified Candidates.**
  - **Select Recruitment Channels:** Post the job ad on:
    - Town website
    - Vermont League of Cities & Towns website
    - Local newspapers and community boards
    - Professional organizations and job boards (e.g., ICMA)
  - **Let current employees know about the opening.** Current employees could be interested in the position and/or help spread the word about the opportunity

# Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

## Step 6: Review Applications and Conduct Interviews

### 1. Review Applications:

- Create a scoring rubric to evaluate candidates based on qualifications, experience, and fit for the community.

### 2. Conduct Interviews:

- Schedule interviews with shortlisted candidates.
- Prepare standardized questions to assess their skills, experiences, and vision for the town.
- If a quorum of a legislative body or a duly appointed subcommittee will conduct the interviews, be sure to comply with Vermont's Open Meeting Law. Individuals generally expect that their job application will be kept confidential, especially if they are currently employed. Plan a confidential process so you don't breach that trust.

# Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

## Step 7: Make an Offer

### 1. Select the Final Candidate:

- Based on interview performance and committee discussions, choose the most suitable candidate.
- Check references before extending an offer of employment. Once you decide whom to hire, always check at least three professional references before extending an offer.
- For certain positions, it makes sense to hire a firm to conduct a more in-depth background check before making an offer. When doing so, it is important to follow legal notification and sign-off requirements.

### 2. Extend a Job Offer:

- Present a formal job offer that includes salary, benefits, and starting date.
- Make the offer of employment contingent upon the candidate providing relevant certifications or other necessary credentials.

# Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

## Step 8: Onboarding Your New Employee

### 1. Develop an Onboarding Plan:

- Create a structured onboarding program that includes:
- Introduction to town staff and key stakeholders.
- Overview of town policies, procedures, and organizational culture.
- Training on specific software or tools used in town administration.

### 2. Set Initial Goals:

- Work with the new hire to establish short-term and long-term goals within their first 90 days.



# Muni Mornings - Town Administrators & Administrative Assistants

## Step 9: Ensure Ongoing Support and Retention

### 1. Provide Regular Feedback:

- Schedule regular check-ins to discuss performance, challenges, and support needed.
- Offer constructive feedback and recognize achievements.

### 2. Facilitate Professional Development:

- Encourage attendance at workshops, conferences, and training programs relevant to town administration.

### 3. Foster a Positive Work Environment:

- Promote open communication and collaboration among staff and the Town Administrator or Administrative Assistant
- Create a supportive culture that values input and innovation.

# **Muni Mornings - Town Administrator & Administrative Assistant to the SB**

## **New Resources**

- **Sample Job Descriptions**
- **Recruitment Strategies & Sample Job Ads**
- **Onboarding & Training Resources**
- **A Guide for Establishing a Town Administrator Position**
- **Guidelines for Establishing a Shared Town Administrator Position**

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrator & Administrative Assistant to the SB

### VLCT Staff Resources

- VLCT's Human Resources Team, PACIF's Acting General Counsel Julie McKenzie and Senior Human Resources Consultant Jill Muir, are available to review offer letters and provide support and guidance for employment issues.
- Municipal Operations Specialist Kathleen Ramsay is available to compare salary and benefits with towns of similar size and develop and/or review your step-by-step hiring process and timeline.

# Hiring Toolkit

## DOCUMENTS

 steps-to-hiring-well\_1.pdf

 what-to-include-in-an-employment-ad.docx

 lawful-interviews.docx

 human-resources-faqs-i-9s.pdf

 sample-job-application-for-non-cdl-positions\_0.pdf

 sample-new-hire-checklist.docx

- VLCT's Hiring Toolkit includes legal and best practice guidance along with sample documents to aid legislative bodies, supervisors, managers, and HR directors in making hiring decisions.
- While every effort is made to provide members with the most accurate information possible, these documents do not constitute legal advice.



## Muni Mornings - Town Administrator & Administrative Assistant to SB

### Idea Exchange - Input received during the webinar:

#### ➤ Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Considerations:

- Town Administrators are considered exempt, salaried employees.
- Administrative Assistants are considered non-exempt employees, eligible for overtime pay for hours worked over 40 hours per week.

## Muni Mornings - Town Administrator & Administrative Assistant to SB

### Idea Exchange - Input received during the webinar (continued):

- If a background check is required as part of the hiring process, VLCT recommends including note of that contingency, as well as any other contingencies, in the advertisement for the position.
- Job boards, such as Indeed, offer free and pay-per-click sponsored job postings. Select an approach that fits your recruitment strategy and budget. Note payment terms and requirements.

# Have questions?

LET US KNOW!



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VLCT.ORG

# Municipal Operations Support Team



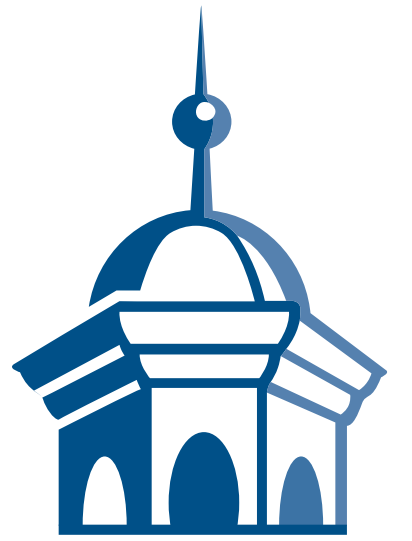
*Running a Vermont Municipality is Complicated.  
We Can Help.*

Find us: <https://www.vlct.org/municipal-operations-support>

Contact us: [info@vlct.org](mailto:info@vlct.org) or [Ask A Question](#)

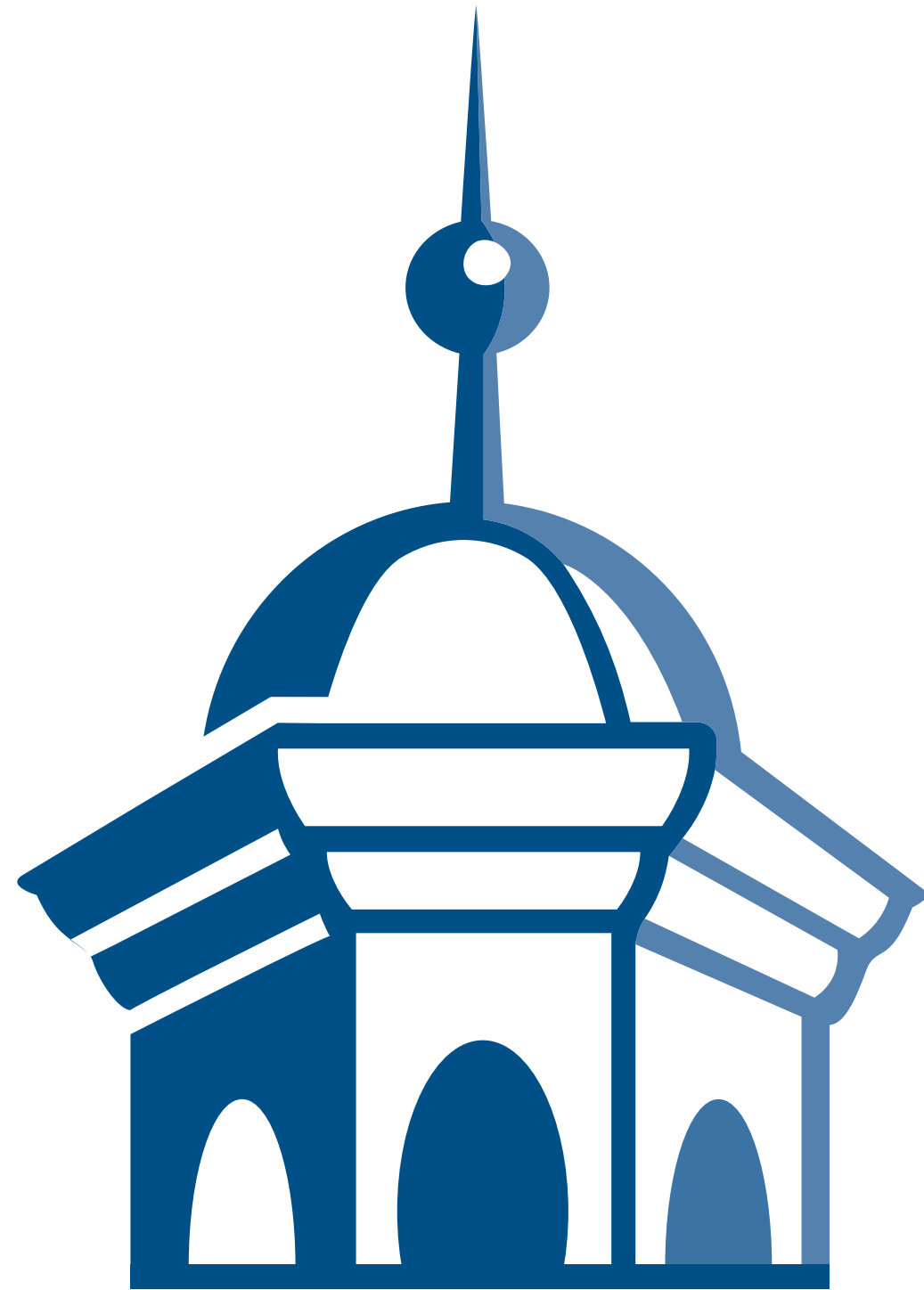


Coming Soon!



# Muni Mornings

Thursday, June 26, 2025 - Highway Hiring, with a focus on innovative recruiting practices (we'll bring some ideas, and we hope you'll bring yours, too!) and testing & paperwork requirements for hiring drivers with CDLs.



# VLCT Announcements!

- ❖ Dental Benefit - [vlct.org/dental](https://vlct.org/dental) - Open Enrollment is in full swing for groups in a fiscal year schedule.
- ❖ PACIF Board Vacancy - [vlct.org/PACIFBdNom](https://vlct.org/PACIFBdNom) - Nominations are due May 23 (extended from May 9).
- ❖ Golf Outing on June 13 - [vlct.org/events](https://vlct.org/events) - Golfers and sponsors support the Municipal Service Scholarship.

# Thank you to our Business Alliance Program Sponsors!



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