

The city of Dahlonega invites your interest in the position of

DIRECTOR OF UTILITIES

Dahlonega, GA



The City of Dahlonega is seeking a highly qualified professional to serve as its inaugural Director of Utilities over its water, wastewater, and storm water utilities. This is a rare opportunity to drive operational excellence and infrastructure innovation in a historic city, ensuring the continued well-being and sustainable growth of the Dahlonega community.



WELCOME TO DAHLONEGA

Dahlonega offers a strategic “gateway” location that balances the serenity of the Blue Ridge Mountains with the economic and logistical advantages of the accessible major metropolitan hubs of Atlanta and Chattanooga. Nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Dahlonega is often recognized as one of the most desirable places to live and work in the Southeast. That quality of life is woven into the historic architecture of our vibrant Public Square, the scenic vistas of our award-winning vineyards, and the welcoming spirit of a community that prides itself on safety, security, and a deep sense of belonging.

Our community is a regional hub for the arts, anchored by the Historic Holly Theater and a thriving network of local galleries and music venues. Residents enjoy a year-round calendar of events, from the sounds of traditional mountain music to the Appalachian charm of the Bear on the Square Mountain Festival and the festive glow of our “Hallmark-style” Old Fashioned Christmas.



Dahlonega offers a breathtaking landscape of mountain vistas and rushing water in the heart of the Chattahoochee National Forest. Residents enjoy immediate access to world-class hiking on the Appalachian Trail and at Amicalola Falls State Park, home to the Southeast's tallest cascading waterfall. The Chestatee and Etowah Rivers provide ideal settings for kayaking, tubing, and trout fishing, while the Jake and Bull Mountain trail systems offer premier terrain for mountain biking and horseback riding.



Our families are served by the Lumpkin County School System, boasting a 97.8% graduation rate and SAT/ACT scores that frequently outpace state and national averages. Complementing our K-12 system is the University of North Georgia (UNG), a federally designated Senior Military College. UNG provides not only high-level academic and leadership opportunities but also serves as a cultural and economic stakeholder fueling innovation and community engagement.

Choosing Dahlonega means choosing a life of adventure without the high cost of city living. The City and the Lumpkin County Development Authority are committed to smart growth, ensuring that housing remains accessible and that the cost of living stays reasonable. With a pro-business climate, exceptional infrastructure, and a focus on workforce development, Dahlonega provides the perfect environment to build a career of service to community in the tranquility and beauty of the North Georgia mountains.





CITY GOVERNMENT:

A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

The City of Dahlonega operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The legislative powers of the city are vested in a City Council consisting of a Mayor and six Council members, all elected at large for four-year staggered terms. The Council is responsible for enacting ordinances, resolutions, and regulations. The City Council appoints a professional City Manager who serves as the chief administrative officer. The City of Dahlonega operates under a mission to provide quality services through ethical leadership and fiscal stability. As a designated "City of Excellence," the municipal government functions in full partnership with its residents, business owners, and visitors to ensure that Dahlonega remains the most welcoming, thriving, and inspiring community in North Georgia.

THE DEPARTMENT AND POSITION

With state certified crews that are on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, the 7,500 residents of Dahlonega can rest assured that their water and wastewater needs are met. Composed of over seventy miles of drinking water lines, fifty miles of gravity/force mains, and over twenty lift stations, Dahlonega's Utility System is well prepared to manage today's needs as well as future needs.

The Director of Utilities directs, manages, and provides strategic planning and visioning associated with all activities of the department to provide and maintain water, sanitary sewer,



stormwater, and watersheds of the City of Dahlonega. These activities include operation and maintenance of water and wastewater treatment facilities, water distribution, sanitary and storm water collection systems, customer service and billing, engineering, construction, and inspection services as well as relevant environmental compliance and permitting functions. Reporting to the City Manager, the Director will have three to four direct reports with oversight of a department total of approximately 20 full-time staff. As the City's first Director of Utilities, the selected candidate will have the opportunity to set the vision towards successfully building an organization and a lasting legacy in service to the community. The full job description is available upon request.





WORK SCHEDULE:

This position works 40 hours per week and is subject to recall to duty in cases of emergency. After hours, weekend, and holiday work are sometimes necessary to fulfil the job duties.

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree in civil or environmental engineering or related field is required.
- Master's degree in engineering, public administration, or related field is preferred.
- The ideal candidate will have a minimum of five (5) years of progressively responsible experience in urban planning, civil engineering, construction or project management or related field; three (3) years of supervisory and project management oversight experience; or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities for this job.

LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS:

- State of Georgia Professional Engineering certification is desirable.
- Class 1 water or wastewater treatment operator is desirable.
- Valid Class C Georgia Driver's license (or ability to obtain one by date of hire) and a satisfactory motor vehicle record are required.





EXEMPLARY CANDIDATES

The City seeks candidates who bring not only an excellent technical background but also highly developed communication, leadership, and interpersonal relationship skills needed for success in a tightknit organization that values the care of people and teams, as well as the hard-won trust of the public, City Council, and employees. An exemplary candidate will be comfortable with a variety of roles in the hands-on, front-line management of daily operations, projects, and consultant relationships. This will necessitate the ability to effectively communicate highly technical information at the appropriate level to professionals and lay persons to ensure understanding of issues, problems, and decision points.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Foundational work in water utilities expansion in the management of debt, and the balance of external/internal funding to build capacity during a period of growth.

Enhancement of data-driven decision-making processes to effectively build consensus for timely and appropriate change in compliance with ordinance, law, and regulations to best meet community needs.

Long-range planning for wastewater that considers the balance of potential need for County system capacity as well as rehabilitation/expansion of existing infrastructure.

Collection of baseline stormwater utility data to more effectively track and address stormwater issues, including the advancement of a developing GIS program.

Team building, building of consensus, and the effective management of change to better coordinate utilities functions and operations of what is a traditional water department approach towards updated public utilities and water resources models of service delivery over time.



COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The expected starting salary range for the Director of Utilities is
\$118,000 - \$125,000 depending on experience and qualifications.

The city prioritizes employee well-being through high-quality insurance plans and active wellness initiatives:

*Medical Insurance • FSA Voluntary Dental & Vision Insurance
Employer Paid Short-Term and Long-Term Disability • Defined Benefit Plan (Pension)
457 Deferred Compensation • Life Insurance & AD&D • Paid Time Off (PTO)
Paid Holidays • Wellness Program • Tuition Reimbursement*

TO APPLY

Interested candidates are invited to apply by emailing the following items to
Jeff Hale, Senior Associate, **Mercer Group Associates** at jeffhale@localgovhrs.com
by **11:59 PM EST on Monday, February 23, 2026**:

- Cover letter
- Resume
- List of five job related references with email and phone contact information
- Adobe pdf format is preferred.

The City of Dahlonega is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.



For questions, please contact: Jeff Hale, Senior Associate,
Mercer Group Associates at jeffhale@localgovhrs.com, (706) 371-6126.