



# DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

## City of Unalaska, Alaska

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First Review of Applications: February 12, 2024



PUBLIC SECTOR EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

# THE COMMUNITY

Unalaska, Alaska (est. full-time pop. 4,195 plus seasonal influxes) is strategically located in the heart of the North Pacific and Bering Sea fisheries and is home of the number one commercial fishing port in the United States, the International Port of Dutch Harbor. The community is 50 miles from the North Pacific Great Circle Shipping Route and 800 miles southwest of Anchorage. This coastal community in the Eastern Aleutian Islands seamlessly blends industry and history, connected by a 40-mile network of roads that link the bustling port, harbors, private docks, local businesses, and residential areas on Unalaska and Amaknak Islands.

Unalaska's economy thrives on commercial fishing, seafood processing, fleet services, and marine transportation, with the Port of Dutch Harbor serving as a vital year-round, ice-free deep draft port designated as a Potential Port of Refuge. In 2021, it reclaimed its title as the leading commercial fishing port in the U.S., handling 745 million pounds of seafood valued at \$249 million. The Eastern Bering Sea Pollock fishery, the nation's largest, sets the stage for various fishing activities.

Unalaska also hosts the westernmost container terminal in the U.S., facilitating the efficient transshipment of cargo both domestically and internationally. The community offers a wide range of support services, from seafood processing to accounting, logistics, and marine support, making it a unique resource for the fishing industry in the region.

Unalaska boasts a climate characterized by a pleasantly moderate and consistent climate with summer temperatures ranging from 41-56° and winter temperatures between 31-40°. Precipitation averages 60" annually, with up to 90" of snowfall that tends to melt quickly. During the summer, Unalaska's scenery undergoes a remarkable change, with the hills bursting into vibrant shades of green and adorning themselves with an abundance of beautiful wildflowers and delicious berries, creating a picturesque and welcoming atmosphere.



## THE COMMUNITY (continued)

Unalaska's Department of Parks, Culture, and Recreation (PCR) is dedicated to enriching the community by providing cultural, leisure and recreational facilities and programs. PCR provides diverse services, including aquatics, arts and culture, fitness, programs for children and teenagers, leisure activities, library services, and special events. They manage facilities like the Aquatics Center, Community Center, Library, and eight parks. The recently renovated Public Library offers a wealth of resources, while the Museum of the Aleutians showcases 9,000 years of local history. The outdoors beckon in Unalaska, where nature enthusiasts can explore the vast 134-acre Aleutian World War II National Historic Area for outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, and wildlife observation.

The Unalaska City School District, serving around 345 students, offers comprehensive education from preschool to 12th grade, consistently ranking among the top schools in the state. Accolades such as the 2011 National Blue-Ribbon School Award highlight their commitment to academic excellence. Unalaska City School's educational facilities are complemented by the University of Alaska Fairbanks Bristol Bay Campus Unalaska Learning Center, which offers a range of college courses and educational opportunities.

Residents of Unalaska take pride in their work and the quality of their schools, healthcare, leisure, and cultural offerings, fostering a well-rounded and vibrant community. Now they also enjoy the benefits of high-speed internet.



## THE ORGANIZATION

Unalaska is a First Class City established in 1942 and has a Council/City Manager form of government. The elected Mayor and City Council are responsible for the legislative functions of the City, developing the overall vision, establishing policy, passing local ordinances, and voting on budget appropriations.

The City Council appoints a professional City Manager who has broad authority to oversee the administrative operations of the municipality, implement policies, and advise the Mayor and City Council. The City is not part of an organized borough.

The City operates with an FY24 operating budget of \$35.1 million and employs 172 full time equivalent positions.

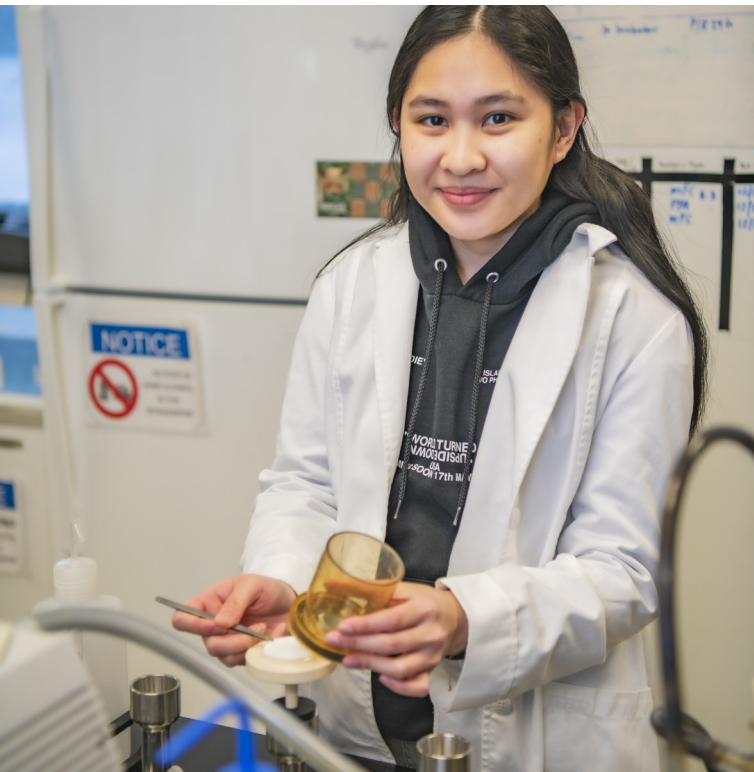
Click [here](#) to view Unalaska's organization chart.



# THE DEPARTMENT

The City of Unalaska is the service provider for water, wastewater, electric generation and distribution, and solid waste services. The Department of Public Utilities Administration (DPUA) operates under the authority of the State of Alaska and the Alaska Public Utilities Commission. The responsibilities of the Department of Public Utilities are further defined in [Title 10 of the City of Unalaska Ordinances](#).

The DPUA operates with an FY24 \$34.3 million operating proprietary funds budget. The DPUA is also responsible for managing multiple capital projects in various stages of completion; the management of 36 full-time permanent and three full-time temporary employees; maintaining current operating permits for all utilities; and submitting applications and questionnaires for project grants and funding. The Department ensures that eligible funds from grants and funds for operations and capital projects are properly used for the designated operations and capital projects.



## MISSION

*The Mission of the Department of Public Utilities is to provide electric, solid waste, wastewater, and water services that, within regulatory guidelines, meet or exceed the needs of our customers and our expectations for safety, quality, and quantity; to provide these services at a competitive price; and in a fair, equitable and environmentally responsible manner.*

## THE POSITION

The Director of Public Utilities is an executive-level position that functions as the general manager of public utilities for the City of Unalaska under the general direction of the City Manager. This position manages and administers electric, water, wastewater, and solid waste utilities and supervises all matters related to the management, planning, operation, engineering, and maintenance of the City's public utility facilities and systems. It provides planning and budgetary information to the City Council through the City Manager for its capital and maintenance projects.

The next Director of Public Utilities will exhibit exemplary leadership, ensuring each utility under their purview operates in strict compliance with local ordinance, state and federal regulations, and operating permit requirements. Furthermore, they will certify that regulatory sampling and reporting obligations have been properly filed, reflecting a commitment to transparency and adherence to industry standards. The implementation of comprehensive maintenance/upgrade capital project schedules and preventative maintenance plans for each utility underscores their proactive approach to infrastructure management. Furthermore, the Director will have a strong financial planning skillset. Success in the position will be demonstrated by each utility having knowledgeable, professional supervisors; and all Utility Divisions staffed by empowered and knowledgeable employees, attesting to a robust commitment to employee welfare and operational excellence.

# LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The ideal candidate for the position of Director of Public Utilities should demonstrate unwavering honesty in all professional dealings, fostering a culture of trust and integrity within the organization. Transparency is paramount, ensuring open communication and alignment of strategic objectives. Proficient presentations to the Mayor and Council and in other public meetings will reflect confidence and effective communication skills. Additionally, the candidate should exhibit a robust skill set encompassing budgeting expertise, adept problem-solving abilities, strong people skills, and effective written communication. Furthermore, a proven record in performance management, coupled with organizational leadership expertise, will be instrumental in driving the Public Utilities department toward sustained success.



Other leadership opportunities include but are not limited to the following:

**Makushin Geothermal Project.** The City has been working on this project for more than 4 years in cooperation with Chena Power and the Ounalashka Corporation. The project would advance the power plant to harness heat from the Makushin Volcano, generating electricity for the island. If successful, Unalaska would become the first community in the nation to be entirely powered by geothermal energy. If funding is approved, the expected start date is no earlier than November 2028 with significant infrastructure needed as a base for development.

**Organizational management.** Fill key mission-critical positions, and build a cohesive staff team with a formal training program for each utility, continuous feedback and accountability, competitive pay, and a succession plan. The Director of Public Utilities will promote transparency, build trusting relationships, and understand the needs and goals of each utility by actively seeking input from staff and valuing their contributions, thereby adding to a positive work culture.

**Capital improvement projects.** The solid waste management project is required because the landfill cells are reaching capacity with an anticipated five years left until filled. An \$8.3 million gasifier project is being considered and would result in the gasification of anaerobic digestion as a waste reduction strategy. Another option would be to expand a cell on another property. Other high-priority capital projects include electrical distribution upgrades and potable water storage.

## DESIRED CAPABILITIES

The ideal candidate will showcase a proven history in various key areas, including extensive knowledge of public utility management, administration, and infrastructure maintenance. They should possess expertise in capital project management, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of engineering and scientific principles applicable to public utility systems. A sound grasp of utility operations, safety protocols, and relevant state and federal regulations is essential. Furthermore, candidates should exhibit proficiency in public administration and management principles, encompassing budgeting, fiscal control, program planning, and strategic planning. Strong leadership capabilities in employee supervision, development, and performance evaluation are crucial, alongside the ability to identify and address training needs. Additionally, the candidate should be well-versed in emergency management, incident command systems, and public utilities. Exceptional written and oral communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills are prerequisites, coupled with proficiency in planning, organizing, and directing departmental activities. The ability to maintain confidentiality, work under pressure, manage multiple projects, meet deadlines, and collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders completes the desired skill set.

The ideal candidate for this role must embody a pioneering and adventurous spirit, as the position is located 800 miles from Anchorage amidst breathtaking natural beauty. If you seek external stimuli in your non-work life, this may not be the ideal fit, as large-scale entertainment and shopping opportunities are limited. Flexibility in both professional and personal life is essential, considering the challenges associated with the weather and the remote location. A willingness to embrace life as it is, amidst a community where individuals can choose their level of busyness, engaging in various activities such as volunteering for fire/EMS, contributing to non-profits, participating in artistic outlets, volunteering at the museum or library, and actively participating in a vibrant community center. Whether it is offering a class or starting a club, this community encourages individuals to share their skills and interests with others. With amenities like the aquatic center, birding, hiking, and fishing opportunities, avenues for amateur photographers, and even the chance to develop a radio show, this environment fosters a unique and dynamic lifestyle.



# EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

This position requires a bachelor's degree in engineering or a related field, and progressively responsible professional leadership (ideally eight years), including experience in construction and/or utility management or a related field. Other combinations of education and experience providing the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform the job duties may be evaluated. Preference will be given to the candidate holding a master's degree, and specialized education/certification in water, wastewater, solid waste, or electrical/powerhouse operations. Geothermal knowledge and union negotiation experience are a plus. The successful candidate must have, or be able to obtain, an Alaska driver's license within 90 days of hire, possess the ability to pass all required pre-employment testing (i.e., criminal background, employment history, credit check and drug testing), and must be eligible to work in the U.S.



# COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The City is conducting a compensation study and it is expected that salary ranges will be adjusted to reflect the current market and variables such as cost of living and remote location. Results of the compensation study will be presented to the City Council in March. The current maximum salary is \$148,913, which we anticipate will be upwardly adjusted commensurate with the ongoing compensation study. The City of Unalaska offers an outstanding benefits package which includes:

- 100% employer-paid medical premiums (employee & dependents)
- 100% employer-paid basic life/AD&D insurance (employee & dependents)
- 100% employer-paid Lifelight insurance (employee & dependents)
- Up to a \$10,000 hiring bonus
- Up to \$10,000 in relocation assistance
- Annual travel allowance of \$2,000 after the first year of employment
- Personal Leave Accrual starting at 16 hours a month, progressing to 32 hours a month at year 9
- 9 paid Holidays and 4 floating holidays per year
- 7 days bereavement leave
- Longevity bonus starting on the third year of employment
- Eligible for Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) retirement
- Eligible for 457 Plans with MissionSquare and Mutual of America
- City-owned vehicle to drive for work and personal use
- City-owned employee housing may be available for rent



## APPLICATION PROCESS

Qualified candidates please submit your cover letter and resume online at:

[www.governmentjobs.com/careers/bakertilly](http://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/bakertilly)

This position is open until filled; however, interested applicants are strongly encouraged to apply no later than February 12, 2024. For more information, please contact Anne Lewis at [Anne.Lewis@bakertilly.com](mailto:Anne.Lewis@bakertilly.com) or 703-923-8214.

For more information about Unalaska, visit: <https://www.ci.unalaska.ak.us>, <https://www.ci.unalaska.ak.us/publicutilities>, and <https://www.facebook.com/Unalaska.DutchHarbor>

THE CITY OF UNALASKA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The City of Unalaska is an Employer of National Service and encourages AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, and other national service alumni to apply.



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