



Thurston County

SOLID WASTE MANAGER

Recruitment Announcement

About Thurston County Public Works

The Thurston County Public Works Department is dedicated to providing excellent public services that protect public health, support economic vitality, preserve natural resources, and enhance the quality of life for residents throughout Thurston County. Serving one of Washington's fastest-growing regions, the department is responsible for maintaining and improving vital infrastructure while planning for the community's future needs.

Public Works delivers a wide range of essential services, including transportation, solid waste management, water and sewer utilities, stormwater management, and environmental stewardship, as well as maintains park and trail facilities for the well-being of the community. The department is committed to operational excellence, accountability, innovation, transparency, safety, and responsive customer service while fostering a collaborative workplace where employees are empowered to grow professionally and make a meaningful impact.

As an American Public Works Association (APWA) Accredited Agency, Thurston County Public Works has demonstrated its commitment to excellence by meeting nationally recognized standards for public works management, operations, and continuous improvement. This distinction reflects the department's dedication to best practices, accountability, and delivering exceptional service to the community.



Our Values

Accountability – We take ownership of our work and honor our commitments to the public and one another.

Customer Service – We strive to provide exceptional service that is responsive, respectful, and solution-oriented.

Innovation – We continuously seek better ways to improve our services, processes, and outcomes.

Safety – We are committed to creating a safe workplace and protecting the health and well-being of our employees and community.

Teamwork – We value collaboration, mutual respect, and shared success in achieving our mission.

Our Mission

To provide excellent public services in all areas of our business.

Our Vision

To be the premier public works organization, accountable and transparent in all services we provide to our community.

To learn more about Thurston County Public Works and the services it provides to the community, please visit:

<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/departments/public-works>



About the Solid Waste Division

The Thurston County Solid Waste Division provides environmentally responsible, cost-effective, and sustainable solid waste services for residents and businesses throughout the county. The Division plays a vital role in protecting public health and the environment through waste reduction, recycling, household hazardous waste management, transfer station operations, education, and long-range planning.

Operating as an enterprise fund with an annual budget of approximately \$34 million, the Division serves more than 300,000 residents through the Waste & Recovery Center in Lacey, two rural drop-box facilities, recycling and waste reduction programs, household hazardous waste collection, and community education initiatives. The Division is responsible for managing an integrated solid waste system that supports the County's commitment to environmental stewardship, regulatory compliance, and long-term sustainability.

As Thurston County continues to experience significant population growth, the Solid Waste Division is focused on meeting increasing service demands while investing in modern infrastructure, improving operational efficiency, expanding waste diversion opportunities, and protecting the County's environmental resources for future generations. This includes a \$28 million expansion and modernization of the Waste & Recovery Center to ensure the County's solid waste system remains safe, efficient, and sustainable for decades to come.

This is an exciting opportunity to join a highly collaborative leadership team committed to innovation, environmental stewardship, and delivering exceptional public services to one of Washington's most dynamic and growing communities.

To learn more about the Solid Waste Division, please visit:

<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/departments/public-works/garbage-recycling>

About the Position

Reporting directly to the Public Works Director, Thurston County's Solid Waste Manager is responsible for leadership of the Division, has broad responsibility for the operations of solid waste in the County, as well as charting the course for the Division's future.

In addition, the Manager is responsible to:

- Plan, organize, direct, and oversee all operations and programs of the Solid Waste Division, including transfer station operations, waste reduction and recycling, household hazardous waste, environmental compliance, long-range planning, capital projects, and public education.
- Lead the development and implementation of the Division's strategic and operational plans, including the Solid Waste Management Plan, Disaster Debris Management Plan, Continuity of Operations Plan, and Capital Facilities Program. Coordinate planning efforts with the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, Board of County Commissioners, regulatory agencies, and community stakeholders.
- Prepare and administer the Division's annual operating and capital budgets. Monitor revenues and expenditures, establish financial strategies, and ensure enterprise fund resources are managed responsibly to support operational priorities, capital investments, and long-term financial sustainability.
- Coordinate Division activities with other County departments, local jurisdictions, state and federal agencies, private contractors, and community organizations. Serve as the Division's representative on policy, operational, and regulatory matters, providing recommendations and presentations to elected officials, advisory committees, and the public.
- Recruit, develop, mentor, and lead a high-performing workforce by fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. Establish performance expectations, support professional development, and promote a safe, inclusive, and engaged workplace.
- Direct the County's waste reduction, recycling, and resource recovery initiatives through public education, school partnerships, business assistance programs, and community outreach that encourage sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.
- Oversee the procurement, negotiation, and administration of contracts for professional services, operations, and capital projects. Monitor contractor performance and ensure services are delivered effectively, efficiently, and in compliance with County standards and regulatory requirements.
- Promote operational excellence by identifying opportunities to improve processes, enhance customer service, leverage innovation, and increase organizational efficiency while maintaining a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and regulatory compliance.
- Advance Thurston County's mission by delivering reliable, sustainable, and cost-effective solid waste services that protect public health, preserve natural resources, and support the quality of life for residents throughout the county.

The Ideal Candidate

For this important role Thurston County seeks an experienced, unifying leader who is deeply committed to the success of the County and is a strategic big-picture thinker. The new Solid Waste Manager must have the desire and capability to lead a team in implementing innovative programs that care for the spaces, places and active lifestyles that define the County's identity and quality of life.

The successful candidate will possess the following key leadership characteristics:

- **Results Oriented Leadership:** Ability to inspire, build trust, persuade, engage, speak clearly about complex solid waste issues, make tough decisions, and take difficult actions. Display balanced thinking that combines analysis, wisdom, experience, and perspective. Produce data-driven decisions that withstand the “test of time.”
- **Strategic Vision:** Ability to influence, articulate, and translate the vision and goals for building a vibrant community into tactics that are realistic and effective.
- **Creativity and Innovation:** Ability to generate innovative and visionary approaches to problem solving that are effective and responsive.
- **Build a Talented, Effective Staff Team:** Hire, mentor, develop, train, retain, and manage a diverse staff. Assemble and reinforce a cohesive, dedicated, and highly effective interdisciplinary team. Ability to lead team through change processes.
- **Business and Management Acumen:** Ability to manage human, financial, and information resources strategically. Bring innovative approaches and solutions. Streamline and remove processes that do not bring value. Measure success based on results. Set high standards of performance, using accountability measures and benchmarks to track progress.
- **Flexibility:** Manage effectively in a rapidly changing environment while staying focused on priorities.
- **Partnering:** Inspire action without relying solely on authority. Listen skillfully. Perceive the complexity of situations quickly.
- **Drive External Communications and Relationships:** Develop and nurture mission-critical relationships with labor, business, political leaders, regulatory agencies, and the public.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Effectively manage and integrate multiple disciplines, including technical, operational, planning, and policy development.
- **Cultural Competency:** Focus on equity and collaboration in ways that enable positive working relationships in diverse communities and cross-cultural situations.



Minimum Qualifications

A bachelor's degree in an environmental field, public administration, or related field, plus four years of progressive experience in solid waste, contract management, community relations and resource protection, including at least three years of supervisory experience; or, any equivalent combination of education, training and/or experience that provides the required knowledge and abilities. Ability to use a personal computer and applicable software packages to perform essential job functions. Current Washington State Driver's License or have requested and obtained an appropriate accommodation.



Compensation

The annual salary range for this position is \$103,560 - \$136,224. Compensation will be dependent on qualifications.

Thurston County offers an excellent benefits package.

- **Work-Life Balance:** We are committed to ensure that our staff experience the reward of public service, while also sustaining a routine that suits each individual's lifestyle.
- **Plan For Your Future:** As a member of our team, you will enjoy great employee benefits, including a retirement plan, pre-tax savings accounts, as well as comprehensive health care and dental/vision care for you and your family. Please visit [Thurston County Employee Benefit Plans](#) for more information.
- **Paid Leave:** Full-time regular employees earn paid vacation in addition to [paid holidays](#).
- **Robust Training Program:** Employees are encouraged to attend County paid training to help them further their career, learn new skill sets, and stay on top of emerging trends in our industry. We also encourage our staff to participate in professional organizations and attend conferences.
- **Flexible Work Schedules:** Some of the options that employees may take advantage of include alternative or compressed schedules and/or remote working.
- **Deferred Compensation:** The County offers 3 voluntary deferred compensation plans for employees who would like to set aside additional deferred tax dollars into a retirement savings plan.
- **Flexible Spending Account (FSA):** Employees can take advantage of Section 125 flexible spending accounts for out-of-pocket health care and daycare expenses with pre-tax dollars.
- **Public Service Loan Forgiveness:** This is a federal program that allows full-time public service employees who have made qualifying payments for certain loans, to get their student loans repaid. [Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program](#).

APPLICATION PROCESS

Persons interested in this position should submit the following information:

- Cover letter
- Current resume

If you have questions regarding this announcement, please call Marissa Karras at 360.956.1336.

This position will remain open until filled. In order to be considered for the first round of interviews, please submit your application materials no later than September 8th, by visiting www.karrasconsulting.net and clicking on “view open positions.”

About the County

Thurston County values the diversity of the people it hires and serves. Inclusion to us means fostering a workplace in which individual differences are recognized, appreciated, and responded to in ways that fully develop and utilize each person’s talents and strengths. We are dedicated to recruiting and developing a talented workforce from various cultures, lifestyles, backgrounds, and perspectives who are committed to our vision and core values. [Thurston County Racial Equity and Inclusion Webpage.](#)

Thurston County is committed to provide equal opportunity to all persons seeking or having access to its employment, services and activities, which is free from restriction based on race, sex, marital status, color, creed or religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, including gender expression or identity, pregnancy, status as an honorably discharged veteran or military status, genetic information, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, unless based upon bona fide occupational qualifications.

Thurston County is located between Seattle and Portland in Western Washington’s South Puget Sound Region. Perched in between the mountains and the ocean, the area boasts the perfect blend of year-round outdoor activities including boating, hiking, skiing, and more. The region is also home to the state capitol city of Olympia, known for its many restaurants, microbreweries, coffee shops, farmers markets, kids’ activities, history, and art events. Discover more about life in Thurston County at Experienceolympia.com.

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