



Director, Office of Economic & Workforce Development Durham, NC

The City of Durham, NC is seeking a strategic leader to help realize the Shared Economic Prosperity goal of the City's Office of Economic and Workforce Development.

ABOUT DURHAM

With a highly diverse population of approximately 300,000 and a labor force of approximately 182,000, Durham is located in North Carolina's "Triangle" region – midway between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the state's pristine Crystal Coast. Durham's world-renowned Research Triangle Park (RTP) boasts more than 170 high tech companies, and a bullish entrepreneurial community. Top employment sectors include life sciences and health care; professional, scientific and technical services; retail; and manufacturing. Durham is also home to several institutions of higher education, including North Carolina Central University, Duke University, and Durham Technical Community College, each maintaining synergistic relationships with City of Durham Government.

The City of Durham has operated under the Council-Manager form of government since 1921.

Durham City Council is comprised of seven members: three members from specific wards, three at-large members and the Mayor. The terms for the City Council seats are staggered, and nonpartisan elections are held every two years. The Mayor is elected for a two-year term. City Council is the legislative and policy-making body for Durham and is the final authority on most matters relating to the City. The Council is responsible for establishing general policies for the City: appointing the City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk and members of various boards and commissions; enacting ordinances, resolutions and orders; adopting the annual budget; and authorizing contracts on the City's behalf.

Durham, NC by the Numbers

~300,000
Population

~\$355,000
Median Home Value

69%
Share of residents 16+ in
civilian labor force

55.7%
Share of residents 25+ with a
Bachelor's degree or higher

\$306 million
2024-25 City General Fund

Sources: U.S. Census, City of Durham

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The primary goal of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) is Shared Economic Prosperity. To this end, OEWD seeks to enable an environment wherein public-private strategic alliances create transformative projects that contribute to Durham's thriving economy by expanding business and employment opportunities for all of Durham's residents. OEWD also houses the Durham Workforce Development Board, responsible for developing and executing the City of Durham's workforce development strategy together with the economic development strategy. The workforce development strategy is focused on leveraging federal, state, and local funds to ensure the alignment of Durham's talent pipeline with the needs of the region's industry sector. The economic development strategy and programs are centered on growing and driving economic prosperity in Durham.

With a FY24-25 budget of \$8.8M, the Office's priorities are predicated on generating opportunities that increase the commercial tax base, create jobs, build the capacity of the talent pool, and maximize private-sector investment, which in turn contribute to a strong, diverse, and inclusive economy in support of Durham's [FY24-26 Strategic Plan](#).

Under the City's strategic goal of Shared Economic Prosperity, the Office's strategic objectives include:

- Implementing OEWD's Small Business Work Plan
- Building a Talented, Competitive Workforce
- Growing a Civic Infrastructure
- Building Strong and Collaborative Relationships with Durham's Growing and Emerging Corporate Community

The adoption of the Shared Economic Prosperity Goal has enabled the Department to implement a programmatic framework focused on servicing local small, minority, and women-owned businesses and residents with barriers to employment. Over the past four years, OEWD has focused on the critically important aim of creating an ecosystem with strategic and civic partners in support of the community, all viewed through the lens of equity and inclusion.

OEWD continues to respond to the needs of local small businesses and their employees impacted by business closures and disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has had a significant impact on employment and job training services. While Durham County's unemployment rate has rebounded to 3.5% as of June 2022, the employment picture remains challenging. Employers in sectors like hospitality continue to struggle to find candidates for their posted job openings. Structural changes continue to force the reevaluation of how business is conducted while recovering from the impact of the pandemic. Potential employees are seeking higher wages, safer work environments and childcare services. These phenomena require a more comprehensive approach to support sustainable employment. The Office continues to be proactive in adapting to strategies that will yield organizational and citywide success.

ABOUT THE OEWD DIRECTOR

The Director, Office of Economic & Workforce Development Director will partner with business, cultural, civic, and elected officials and institutions to chart Durham's economic path forward and build a diverse, sustainable, future-ready economic ecosystem for Durham.

The Director ensures that the City plans for and delivers enduring economic outcomes by serving as a staunch champion of effective collaboration and ensuring the Office of Economic and Workforce Development is a reliable and trusted first point of contact for:

- Large, medium, and small businesses considering location or expansion in Durham,
- Entrepreneurs seeking to establish a business,
- Educational institutions and others working to develop the local workforce,
- Potential investors who want to learn more about the community, and
- Residents concerned with trade-offs driven by business growth or development.

The Director is responsible for:

- Helping to streamline development processes and permitting where possible to attract talent,
- Providing services for new employees and employers (job fairs, interim space solutions, etc.),
- Facilitating local government procurement opportunities for businesses operating in Durham, and
- Assisting regulators and businesses to navigate complexities associated with state and federal economic policy tools (tariffs, specialty zones, tax incentives, etc.).

The Director, Office of Economic and Workforce Development Director will be equipped with the background, skills, and resolve to:

Build a great internal team from the ground up

The Director will ensure the department operates with a strategic, service-focused structure, cultivating and retaining a highly effective and collaborative workforce aligned with the City's goals. By fostering innovation, transparency, and adaptability, they will empower staff to deliver outstanding results while addressing challenges with creativity and purpose.

Drive outcomes in partnership with local, regional, state, and federal leaders

The Director will actively engage with key community organizations, local and regional boards, and national think tanks to promote alignment and resource efficiency. They will build partnerships across government, academic, and institutional sectors, fostering collaboration and ensuring alignment with the City's strategic plan.

Deliberately expand and optimize use of resources

The Director will leverage technology and data to enhance efficiency and service delivery while championing investments in key assets that bolster economic resilience. They will advocate for expanded funding opportunities, prioritize evidence-based practices aligned with strategic goals, and foster collaboration across departments and stakeholders to maximize productivity and transparency.

The midpoint salary for this position is \$174,554. The final offer will be commensurate with experience.

QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate will possess a bachelor's degree in business administration, urban planning, economics, public administration, or a related field. An appropriate advanced degree is desirable. The ideal candidate should possess a minimum of nine (9) years of progressively responsible experience in the field of economic development, including participating in and/or negotiating public/private projects and demonstrated experience in leading redevelopment projects of a significant size.

Additionally, the ideal candidate will have at least seven (7) years supervisory experience, preferably within a municipal government. A Certified Economic Development Director (CEcD) certificate from the International Economic Development Council or successful completion of IEDC core courses is preferred.

TO APPLY

The City of Durham is partnering with PoliHire to identify their next Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. If you are interested in this opportunity, please [click here](#) to submit a cover letter detailing your interest and your resume.

Once your application is successfully transmitted, you will receive an auto-generated acknowledgment email. Please be aware that this conformation email may be in your junk/spam folder.