



EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

County Administrator

Ottawa County, Michigan

SALARY: \$220,000 to \$260,000 DOQ

Great leadership is in our nature.

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OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

Ottawa County, Michigan, is a dynamic and rapidly growing community located along the eastern shores of Lake Michigan. Known for its scenic landscapes, strong agricultural roots, and thriving local economies in cities like Holland, Grand Haven, and Hudsonville, Ottawa County blends natural beauty with innovation and an exceptional quality of life. The county offers residents and visitors access to Lake Michigan beaches, miles of biking and hiking trails, and a diverse mix of urban and rural living.

In addition to its population centers, Ottawa County is home to a rich network of rural communities that contribute significantly to its character and economic vitality. Communities such as Allendale, Wright Township, Polkton Township, and Blendon Township exemplify the county's agricultural heritage, close-knit neighborhoods, and commitment to preserving open space and rural lifestyles. These areas face unique challenges and opportunities including farmland preservation, infrastructure development, and access to services that require thoughtful, inclusive leadership from county administration.

With a commitment to good governance, economic resilience, and service excellence, Ottawa County stands at a pivotal point in its leadership journey. The community is seeking a County Administrator who will help foster collaboration, stability, and accountability across departments, while continuing to build trust with residents and external partners. The next administrator will be expected to lead with integrity and independence, bringing clarity, strategic direction, and a collaborative spirit to the organization.

This is more than a leadership position—it is an opportunity to shape the long-term trajectory of one of Michigan's most respected and fastest, growing counties. The successful candidate will manage a dedicated team of professionals, work closely with an engaged Board of Commissioners, and represent the County in high-level conversations at the local, regional, state, and federal levels. Key priorities include organizational alignment, internal communications, long-term strategic planning, and transparent decision-making that supports the County's diverse residents and stakeholders, from lakeshore cities to rural townships.

If you are a dynamic, relationship-centered leader ready to guide a community into its next chapter, we invite you to explore this meaningful opportunity.

OTTAWA COUNTY FAST FACTS



POPULATION
308,000



HOUSEHOLDS
110,019



MEDIAN HOME VALUE
\$291,200



MEDIAN INCOME
\$86,000



FARMLAND
144,491 Acres



**PUBLIC
PARK ACREAGE**
7,528 Acres



PUBLIC TRAILWAYS
130+ miles





REGIONAL ATTRACTIONS

Ottawa County, Michigan, offers a diverse array of attractions that cater to residents and visitors alike, showcasing the region's natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and vibrant community life. From picturesque parks and scenic beaches to engaging festivals and historical landmarks, Ottawa County provides numerous opportunities for recreation, exploration, and relaxation.

What attracts thousands of people to Ottawa County, and what factors lead 308,000 residents to call this region home?

Regional Festivals: The region hosts some of the most celebrated festivals in the Midwest. Holland's Tulip Time Festival draws visitors from around the world to enjoy spring blooms and Dutch heritage celebrations, while Grand Haven's Coast Guard Festival honors military service and attracts over 300,000 attendees each summer.

Windmill Island Gardens (Holland): Home to "De Zwaan," an authentic 250-year-old Dutch windmill, surrounded by tulip gardens and historic structures.

Tunnel Park (Holland): A unique park featuring a tunnel through a dune, leading to stunning Lake Michigan views.

The Holland Museum: Showcases the history of the Dutch settlement and cultural heritage of the area.

The Outdoor Discovery Center (Holland): A nature preserve with walking trails, wildlife exhibits, and hands-on learning experiences.

Pigeon Creek Park (West Olive): A great year-round outdoor destination offering hiking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding.

Rosy Mound Natural Area (Grand Haven): Features beautiful wooded dunes, hiking trails, and scenic views of Lake Michigan.

The Grand Haven Musical Fountain: A synchronized water and light show set to music, located along the Grand River waterfront.

Hemlock Crossing Park (West Olive): A peaceful nature preserve with hiking trails, boardwalks, and an interpretive center.

Dutch Village (Holland): A family-friendly attraction featuring traditional Dutch architecture, clog-making demonstrations, and fun rides.

Outdoor Recreation: Ottawa County is a four-season outdoor destination with over 5,000 acres of public parks and preserved lands. Holland State Park home of the iconic "Big Red" lighthouse, Grand Haven State Park, and nearby Saugatuck Dunes State Park offer scenic beaches, wooded dunes, and extensive trail systems for hiking, biking, and nature exploration. With 307 miles of rivers and streams, the area is also popular for fishing, paddling, and wildlife observation, making it a haven for outdoor enthusiasts.

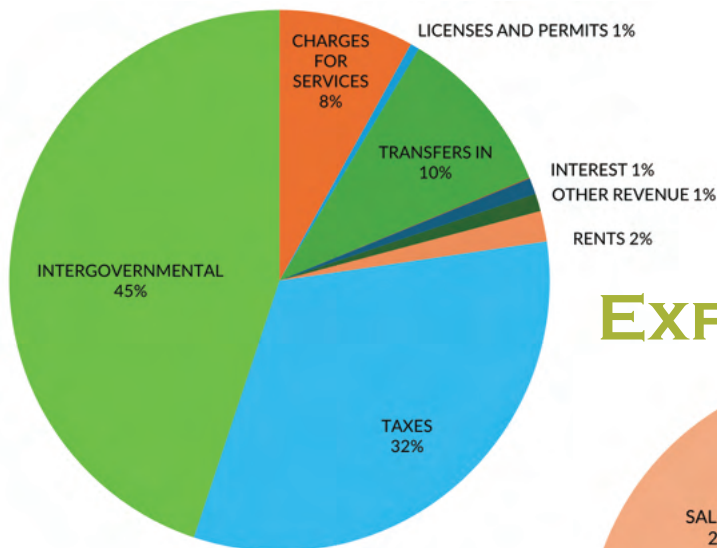
OTTAWA COUNTY HISTORY

Ottawa County traces its roots to 1837, the same year Michigan officially became a state. Long before its formal establishment, the area was home to the Odawa (Ottawa) people, whose deep connection to the land is reflected in the county's name. French fur traders and missionaries arrived in the 17th century, laying the groundwork for cross-cultural exchange and early commerce. The mid-1800s brought a wave of European-American settlers, including a significant group of Dutch immigrants led by Albertus Van Raalte, who established the City of Holland in 1847. This community quickly grew into an economic and cultural anchor for the county, shaping its identity for generations to come.

Ottawa County's early economy was rooted in lumber, shipping, and agriculture particularly fruit farming, thanks to the rich soil and proximity to Lake Michigan. Over time, the region diversified, welcoming manufacturing and tourism as key contributors to its economic resilience. Today, Ottawa County is recognized as one of Michigan's fastest-growing regions, offering a balance of rural farmland, thriving cities, and beloved shoreline communities like Grand Haven and Holland. The county remains a place where tradition and progress go hand in hand, and where natural beauty, economic vitality, and community pride continue to define the way of life.

OTTAWA COUNTY BUDGET

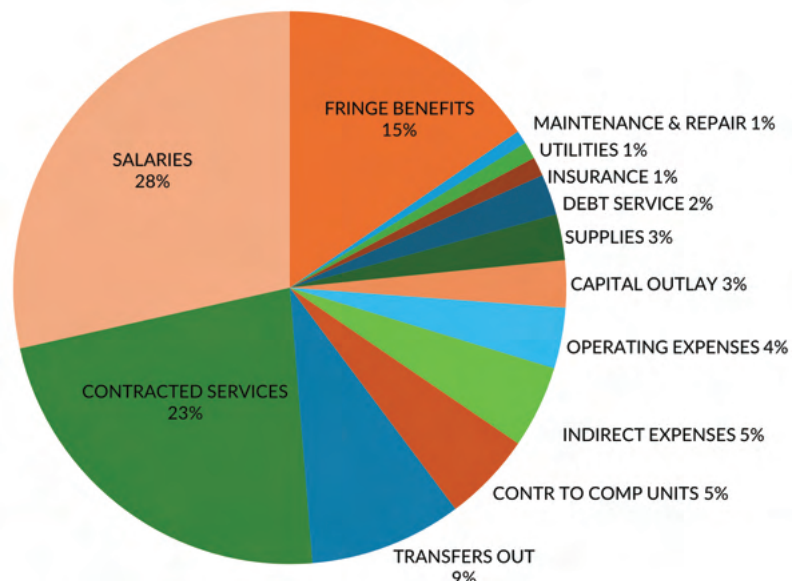
REVENUE



FY25 Budget Summary

Fund	Sources		Appropriated Expenses
	Revenues	Reserves	
General Fund	\$ 119,426,937	\$ 2,246,987	\$ 121,673,924
Special Revenue Funds	\$ 149,127,083	\$ 978,519	\$ 150,105,602
Debt Service Funds	\$ 6,307,495	\$ -	\$ 6,307,495
Capital Projects Funds	\$ 5,018,212	\$ 758,421	\$ 5,776,633
Total	\$ 279,879,727	\$ 3,983,927	\$ 283,863,654

EXPENDITURE



Ottawa County holds a Aaa bond rating, demonstrating its strong fiscal health.

For additional budget details, please contact DHS recruiter Mitch Foster.

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR...

The ideal County Administrator is a strategic and relationally skilled leader with strong fiscal expertise and a steady hand in navigating complex political and operational landscapes. They bring confidence, collaboration, and clarity to the role, with a focus on transparency, sustainability, and community-driven decision-making. Grounded in the values of West Michigan, they will balance long-term vision with immediate action to build trust, foster organizational stability, and address key issues like housing, workforce, and infrastructure.

IDEAL SKILLS

STRATEGIC VISION

- Future-focused and growth-minded.
- Encourages innovation and creativity.
- Guides with intention, not reaction.

STABILITY & LONGEVITY

- Committed to Ottawa County for the long haul.
- Offers consistent leadership and follow-through.
- Focused on continuity and shared progress.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- Approachable and supportive.
- Leads with empathy and emotional awareness.
- Rebuilds trust with patience and intention.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Brings calm, confidence, and integrity to the role.
- Addresses issues head-on with consistency and poise.
- Promotes unity and long-term stability.

OPERATIONAL EXPERTISE

- Proficient in resolving disputes.
- Understands county governance and administration.
- Respects policymaker-administrator boundaries.
- Leads with structure, clarity, and efficiency.

TEAM & CULTURE

- Actively engages with residents,
- Fosters teamwork and cross-department alignment.
- Values subject matter experts and empowers staff.
- Builds unity through shared purpose and respect.
- Sets clear boundaries to protect staff capacity, promote focus, and maintain organizational integrity.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Communicates clearly and directly.
- Builds trust through transparency and consistency.
- Listens actively and avoids surprises.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

- Invested in Ottawa County's people and future.
- Leads with relationships, not transactions.
- Engages meaningfully with staff and residents.

Ottawa County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

ABOUT THE POSITION

Specific Duties & Responsibilities:

- The County Administrator shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the county ensuring statutory obligations are met, policies of the board are implemented and followed, and leading or coordinating all aspects of county governance in a unified manner.
- The County Administrator shall supervise the operation and performance of all County departments and department heads, except elected officials and their officers.
- The County Administrator, shall be responsible for the future direction of the County by developing a continuing strategic plan for the County and presenting it to the Board for approval.
- Submit to the Board an annual budget with a complete report on finances and activities. Maintains fiscal oversight of the county including administering and analyzing budgets. Leads and coordinates the planning of county infrastructure including facilities, capital outlay, budget, and critical long-range needs.
- Ensures that the Board of Commissioners is kept informed of County programs, financial status and legal, social and economic issues that may effect County operations and programs.
- Builds and maintains relationships with other governments, non-profits, and other entities to implement the county's strategic plan and address community needs.
- Promotes transparency with the public through various communication methods. Serves as a key point of contact for residents, ensuring transparency and responsiveness in government.
- Oversees and coordinates matters involving corporate counsel, seeks legal advice and opinions, and advises the Board on recommended actions. Develops policy as directed by the Board or as needed in conjunction with legal counsel. Directs labor negotiations and maintains positive labor relations.
- Represents the County and coordinates efforts with departments, elected officials, judges, local units of government, community leaders, state and federal officials on federal, state, county and community issues.





CURRENT & FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- **Community Reconnection:** Ottawa County is ready for a unifying leader who can help rebuild trust, reestablish collaborative relationships, and guide the organization through a healing and forward-looking process.
- **Strengthening Board Governance:** The next County Administrator will have the opportunity to work with the Board of Commissioners to improve collaboration, enhance training opportunities, and build strong governance practices.
- **Strategic Budgeting:** With a strong financial foundation, there is an opportunity to further refine budgeting practices, identify operational efficiencies, and ensure long-term fiscal health.
- **Expanding Support for Arts and Culture:** As community identity and placemaking become increasingly important, the County can enhance its role in supporting local arts and cultural initiatives.
- **Sustainable Growth Management:** With Ottawa County experiencing continued population growth, there is a strong opportunity to shape smart, sustainable development that aligns with community values.
- **Organizational Strategic Planning:** A refreshed county-wide strategic plan will serve as a roadmap for aligning vision, policy, and day-to-day operations across all departments.
- **Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion:** Improving digital access and infrastructure across rural and underserved areas will support economic development and quality of life.
- **Veteran Services Momentum:** Ottawa County has made meaningful strides in supporting veterans. There is strong momentum and public support to continue advancing these efforts.

CHALLENGES

- **Housing Affordability and Availability:** Like many growing regions, Ottawa County faces mounting pressure to address housing affordability, availability, and long-term market stability. Ensuring access to diverse housing options will remain a priority.
- **Workforce Retention and Development:** Retaining experienced talent and attracting new professionals across the organization will be critical, especially in a competitive job market. Workforce development efforts must support both internal teams and the broader economic ecosystem.
- **Navigating a Polarized Political Climate:** National and local political tensions have had a direct impact on governance. The next County Administrator will be expected to lead with integrity and diplomacy, supporting respectful discourse and collaboration.
- **Sustainable Fiscal Planning:** Fluctuations in interest rates, property values, and tax structures require strategic budgeting to ensure financial health. Balancing rising service expectations with long-term revenue sustainability is a central challenge.
- **Cost of Government vs. Revenue Generation:** As service needs grow, identifying sustainable funding sources while maintaining efficiency is a top concern.
- **Leadership Stability:** Ottawa County has experienced turnover in key positions. Ensuring continuity, institutional knowledge, and team cohesion will be essential to long-term success.
- **Government Complexity and Transparency:** The increasing complexity of local governance calls for efficient systems, accessible communication, and a commitment to transparency and accountability.
- **Groundwater Availability and Stewardship:** Despite its proximity to the Great Lakes, Ottawa County is experiencing challenges with groundwater storage and long-term supply. Continued growth will require careful planning, investment, and stewardship to ensure this vital resource remains sustainable for future generations.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

Ottawa County is home to a diverse and collaborative network of institutions, organizations, and agencies that work together to enhance quality of life for residents. The next County Administrator will be supported by a robust ecosystem of community partners that share in the mission of advancing opportunity, access, and prosperity throughout the region.

- **Major Employers and Industry Partners:** Ottawa County’s economy is driven by advanced manufacturing and design leaders like Gentex, MillerKnoll, Haworth, Shape Corporation, and Magna. Major retailers like Meijer and institutions like Grand Valley State University (GVSU) support workforce development and economic vitality.
- **Local Government and Municipal Partners:** The County collaborates with cities, villages, and, townships such as Holland, Grand Haven, Hudsonville, Georgetown, and Allendale to align on infrastructure, public safety, and planning.
- **Educational Institutions:** Beyond GVSU, the County supports education through partnerships with K-12 districts, ISDs, and early childhood programs like Early On Michigan.
- **Health and Human Services Organizations:** Partners such as Ottawa County Public Health, 2-1-1, MSU Extension, and Community Mental Health help ensure access to essential health and wellness services.
- **Economic Development and Workforce Agencies:** Lakeshore Advantage and West Michigan Works! lead efforts in business growth, entrepreneurship, and job training across the county.
- **Nonprofit and Cultural Institutions:** From the Ottawa County Community Foundation to local museums and arts organizations, nonprofits foster civic engagement and cultural vibrancy throughout the region.



TOP FIVE REASONS WHY YOU WANT TO BE OUR NEXT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

1. **Opportunity to Lead Strategic Growth:** Ottawa County is poised for significant economic development, infrastructure expansion, and innovation in areas such as broadband access and farmland preservation. The next Administrator will have the chance to shape the county’s future through strategic planning and creative problem-solving.
2. **Thriving Community and Quality of Life:** Known for its beautiful parks, strong work ethic, and vibrant farming community, Ottawa County offers an exceptional lifestyle. The Administrator will have the chance to work in a region with a high quality of life and a community invested in its growth and sustainability.
3. **A Chance to Foster Unity and Rebuild Trust:** With recent political and operational challenges, the Administrator has the unique opportunity to mend relationships, rebuild morale among staff, and create a collaborative environment for stakeholders and residents alike.
4. **Supportive and Collaborative Environment:** The county offers a dedicated team of employees, engaged elected officials, and supportive community partners who value professionalism and innovation. This collaborative atmosphere is ideal for driving impactful and sustainable changes.
5. **Diverse and Impactful Challenges:** From addressing housing affordability and water resource management to enhancing countywide infrastructure and services, the role provides the chance to tackle meaningful challenges while leaving a lasting legacy of progress and stability in one of Michigan’s fastest-growing counties.

OTTAWA COUNTY ECONOMY

Ottawa County is one of Michigan's most economically vibrant regions, built on a foundation of industrial innovation, agricultural strength, educational excellence, and retail diversity. Its economic health is sustained by a wide array of industries and employers that collectively create a dynamic and resilient job market.

From globally recognized manufacturers like Gentex, Haworth, MillerKnoll, and Shape Corporation to major retail providers like Meijer, Ottawa County's economy thrives on both high-tech production and everyday services. The county plays a prominent role in the automotive, office furniture, and advanced manufacturing sectors, with companies like Magna, GHSP, and Automatic Spring Products Corp. bringing global innovation to the local landscape.

The region is also a key player in Michigan's agricultural economy. Its farms, orchards, and greenhouses produce a diverse range of products and are supported by initiatives such as Ottawa County's Farmland Preservation Strategy. These efforts not only strengthen food production, but also preserve open space and support long-term sustainability for rural communities.

Ottawa County's growing tourism and recreation economy benefits from its picturesque shoreline, walkable downtowns, and cultural attractions. Scenic destinations like Holland and Grand Haven contribute to a steady flow of visitors year-round, while public investments in trails, parks, and events continue to support both economic and community vitality.

Education is another major driver of the local economy. Grand Valley State University (GVSU), based in Allendale, serves as an anchor institution for the county, supporting innovation, research, and workforce development. The university's partnerships with public agencies and private employers help prepare a pipeline of talent to meet the needs of Ottawa County's diverse industries.

With a low unemployment rate and a strong entrepreneurial culture supported by Lakeshore Advantage and West Michigan Works!, Ottawa County continues to attract new investment while supporting homegrown businesses.

Its broad economic base, from precision manufacturing and logistics to agriculture, healthcare, and education, makes Ottawa County a regional leader in economic sustainability, innovation, and collaboration.



THE PEOPLE & PLACES OF OTTAWA COUNTY



Northwest | Grand Haven & Spring Lake

Historic lakeshore cities known for tourism, waterfront recreation, and walkable downtowns. Home to the U.S. Coast Guard Festival and major manufacturing employers. This area blends natural beauty with a vibrant small-town atmosphere.

North Central | Polkton, Wright, Chester
Rural heartland featuring family farms, small communities, and wide-open spaces. Agriculture remains a foundational industry, complemented by growing interest in agri-tourism and conservation.

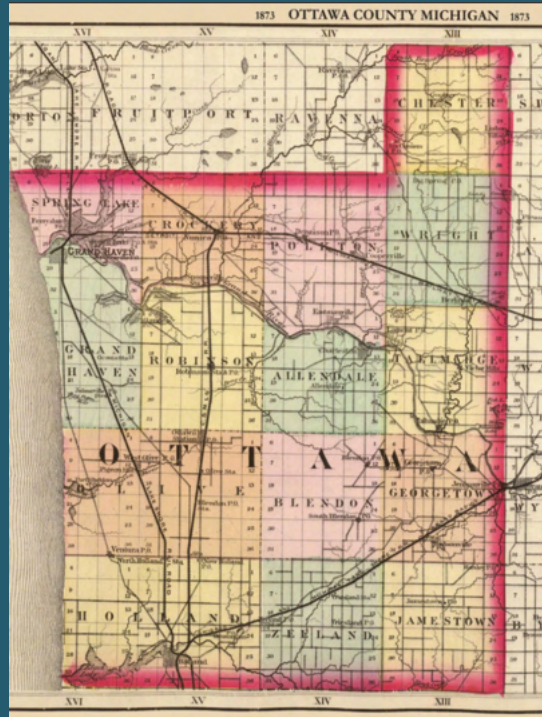


Northeast | Tallmadge, Kent County
Transitional communities bridging rural life and suburban growth. Residents enjoy proximity to Grand Rapids while retaining a sense of countryside living.



Central | Allendale & Robinson

Home to Grand Valley State University, this region offers a youthful energy and ongoing development. It is one of the fastest-growing areas, driven by educational opportunities, housing demand, and emerging commercial growth.



Southeast | Georgetown & Jamestown
A fast-growing suburban area with excellent schools, family-friendly neighborhoods, and robust infrastructure. Businesses and families alike are drawn to the region's balance of development and community spirit.



Southwest | Holland & Park Township

A cultural and economic powerhouse known for its Dutch heritage, thriving downtown, and manufacturing legacy. Holland is a regional hub for innovation and design, with a strong tourism and arts presence.



South Central | Zeeland & Blendon Township

Zeeland blends historic charm with cutting-edge manufacturing and logistics. Local employers like Herman Miller and Gentex anchor a strong economic base. This area is also known for its close-knit, values-driven community.

QUALIFICATIONS

Competitive candidates will have ten or more years of executive leadership experience. Masters degree is preferred.

SALARY & BENEFITS

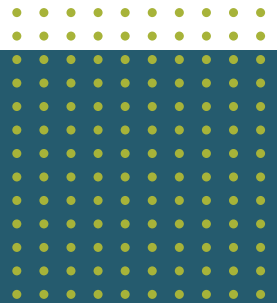
- Compensation: \$220,000 to \$260,000 DOQ
- Car allowance of \$833.33 per month.

Benefits: Ottawa County offers a comprehensive benefits package that includes:

- Paid vacation and sick leave
- Eight paid holidays and six floating holidays
- Medical, dental, and vision insurance
- Health savings and flexible spending accounts
- Life and supplemental life insurance
- Short-term and long-term disability coverage

Ottawa County contributes 8% of salary into a MERS Defined Contribution Plan, with a mandatory 6% employee contribution. In addition, 25% of employee contributions to the county-sponsored 457 plan is matched (up to the IRS maximum).

Relocation assistance is available and will be negotiated as part of the overall offer package.



LIVING IN OTTAWA COUNTY



Living in Ottawa County, Michigan, offers residents a harmonious blend of educational excellence, comprehensive healthcare, vibrant community events, abundant recreational activities, and a family-friendly environment.

Education

Ottawa County is served by several distinguished school districts, including West Ottawa Public Schools, recognized as the Best Public School District in the county. The Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD) supports over 45,000 students across 11 local public school districts, seven public school academies, and 18 faith-based non-public schools. For higher education, Hope College in Holland and Grand Valley State University in Allendale offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs, fostering a culture of academic achievement and lifelong learning.

Healthcare

Residents have access to quality healthcare services through facilities like Trinity Health Grand Haven Hospital, Holland Hospital, and Corewell Health Zeeland. The Ottawa County Department of Public Health provides a variety of services, including immunizations, sexual health clinics, and communicable disease management, ensuring comprehensive care for the community.

Lifestyle & Community Events

- **Shopping and Dining:** Ottawa County boasts a diverse array of shopping and dining experiences, from charming local boutiques to fine dining establishments, particularly in downtown areas of Holland and Grand Haven.
- **Community Services:** Numerous libraries, community centers, and recreational programs foster a connected and engaged community.
- **Arts and Culture:** The county hosts various cultural events and festivals, such as Holland's Tulip Time Festival, celebrating Dutch heritage with vibrant tulip displays, traditional music, and dance performances.
- **Historic Charm:** Residents and visitors can explore the area's rich history through local museums and historical sites that preserve and showcase Ottawa County's heritage.
- **Festivals and Events:** Annual events like the Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival and the Spring Lake Heritage Festival foster a strong sense of community and celebrate local traditions.
- **Farmers Markets:** Access to fresh produce and artisanal goods is available at local farmers markets, enhancing the vibrant lifestyle and supporting local agriculture.

Recreational Activities

- **Outdoor Recreation:** Ottawa County offers miles of sandy beaches, scenic parks, and trails for boating, fishing, hiking, and cycling. The county's park system includes over 7,000 acres of parkland and more than 150 miles of trails.
- **Water Activities:** The shores of Lake Michigan provide ample opportunities for sailing, kayaking, and paddleboarding, with parks like Pigeon Creek Park offering additional recreational options.
- **Golfing:** Golf enthusiasts can enjoy challenging courses with scenic views at various golf clubs throughout the county.

Family-Friendly Environment

Ottawa County's safe neighborhoods, excellent schools, and numerous family activities make it an ideal place for families. Youth programs and sports leagues offer children and teenagers various opportunities to engage in sports, arts, and educational activities, fostering a nurturing environment for growth and development.





DOUBLE HAUL SOLUTIONS

Great leadership is in our nature.

HOW TO APPLY

Accepting applications through May 5, 2025.

Please complete the application form using the link below.
DO NOT APPLY via LinkedIn.

**NOTE: To request confidentiality during this executive search process,
please indicate your preference in your cover letter.**

Any questions or inquiries regarding the position can be made to the attention of:
Mitch Foster,
Economic Vitality & Small Community Specialist; Double Haul Solutions
mitch@doublehailsolutions.com | 231-690-7609

Applicant Management Provided by Vettraino Consulting.

CLICK HERE TO APPLY TODAY.

www.doublehailsolutions.com