



TOWN OF BLADENSBURG

Town Administrator Search Proposal

February 2, 2026

Prepared By :

David Deutsch

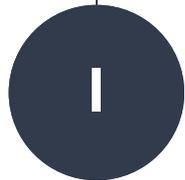
Executive Recruiter

Mercer Group Associates



Pines Management LLC

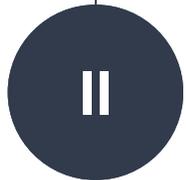
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MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES

15 Cambridge Place, Ocean Pines, MD. 21811
(301)343-6033

davidddeutsch610@gmail.com
mercergroupassociates.com



Pines Management LLC

February 2, 2026

Mayor Takisha James
Town of Bladensburg
Bladensburg, MD 20710

Dear Mayor James:

Thank you for inviting Pines Management LLC dba Mercer Group Associates to submit a proposal to assist the Town of Bladensburg with its search for a Town Administrator. We will partner with you and the Town Council to recruit a candidate that has the necessary experience to be successful as your next Town Administrator.

Mercer Group Associates has extensive experience conducting executive level searches for local governments, authorities, and various governing boards across the country. We are an association of professional consultants with extensive local government backgrounds that provides executive search and management services nationwide. Most of our associates began their consultant careers working with The Mercer Group, Inc. founded by Mr. Jim Mercer in Georgia in 1980. Due to Mercer's death in 2021, the firm restructured itself into the Mercer Group Associates consortium model. Pines Management LLC is a member of the consortium and was incorporated in the State of Maryland to conduct executive searches nationwide. We will be supported by the full Mercer Group consortium of consultants which has assisted communities nationwide with over 2,000 executive level searches. This networking and national experience is an important asset for attracting and encouraging highly qualified candidates to consider the Town of Bladensburg's Town Administrator.

I will be the Project Manager for your search and your primary contact. Another one of our Associates, Jeff Hale, will assist with the project. We will interact with you throughout the search process and we are available to be on-site two times during the search process. If additional visits are necessary, they can be easily arranged.

Mercer Group Associates is committed to developing a diverse candidate pool. Part of our



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Pines Management LLC

approach is the placement of job announcements in various professional associations that focus on minority candidates. We have been successful in placing minority and women candidates in several of our searches.

The proposed Professional Services Agreement and Scope of Services for your search is included as Attachment "A". We look forward to working with the Town of Bladensburg on this important project. If you have any questions concerning our proposal, please call me at 301.343.6033 or email me at davidddeutsch610@gmail.com.

Sincerely yours,

Mercer Group Associates

David Deutsch

Senior Associate

Meet the Recruiter



David J. Deutsch
Senior Associate
Mercer Group Associates
Ocean Pines , Maryland

David Deutsch specializes in Executive Search for the Mercer Group and will serve as the Project Consultant for this search. Mr. Deutsch is a career city manager with over 45 years of experience. He was Chief Administrative Officer of full-service communities in Maryland and Pennsylvania.

David Deutsch will serve as Project Manager for this Project. Mr. Deutsch is a career city manager with over 45 years of experience. He was Chief Administrative Officer of full-service communities in Maryland and Pennsylvania. His major emphasis has been on financial management, public safety, human resources/labor relations, economic development, public works including utility management, environmental/sustainability issues, and organizational improvement. He is a past president of the Association for Pennsylvania Municipal Management Association (APMM).

Mr. Deutsch has been active in the Municipal Leagues in Maryland and Pennsylvania, including testifying before State Legislatures, and serving on the Legislative Committee of the Maryland Municipal League. He served on the Board of Trustees of the International City Management Association Retirement Corporation (ICMA-RC). He chaired the Board of Trustees for more than half of his 11-year tenure with the Local Government Insurance Trust in Maryland, a consortium providing insurance and risk management services to 170 jurisdictions.

Mr. Deutsch holds a Master's in Public Administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, along with a B.A. in Political Science from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He was City Manager in Bowie, Maryland for 23 years, and Township Manager for 13 years in Springettsbury Township, Pennsylvania.

Meet Our Associates



Jeff Hale is an Associate with Mercer Group Associates specializing in recruitment, facilitation, compensation studies and employee handbook development. Jeff has a Master's Degree in American Government and Public Law from the University of Georgia (UGA), and a Bachelor's Degree (cum laude) in Political Science from Knox College in Galesburg, IL. Since 2009, he has continuously maintained

either the PHR certification or as current, the SHRM-CP certification from the Society for Human Resource Management. Jeff is also a Certified Human Resources Manager through UGA's Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Jeff works towards pragmatic HR solutions with high integrity. He continually seeks to appropriately balance legal rights and interests, and is well-versed in balancing the various ethical, financial, and risk factors in crafting effective and defensible solutions. Jeff's passion is in preserving equal opportunity and great work environments in his role as a public servant, and servant leader. Jeff gives of his time by speaking to MPA classes and through community service.

Jeff Hale has over 20 years of combined Government and Human Resources Experience. He has 16 years of local government resources experience with the last seven at the Director level with the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACCGov). ACCGov is a consolidated city-county government with approximately 1,700 employees and 900 retirees. As HR Director with over 25 full-time professional staff, Jeff has been responsible for government-wide compensation and payroll; self-insured benefits and wellness; employment and employee relations; and the risk management functions. He has served as plan administrator for ACCGov's defined benefit and defined compensation plans and as voting member of those boards. Jeff has directed major initiatives in compensation and classification, recruitment and retention, risk management, and defined benefit/defined contribution retirement benefits. Jeff also has over 15 years of experience resolving complex, high liability employee relations matters and leading administrative investigations. Jeff's prior employment includes six years of experience as an educator in public schools, regulatory and human resources consulting in the telemarketing industry, and systems integration work. Jeff brings significant and recent experience, understanding, and insight to the fast changing and growing challenges of local government human resources.

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

DAVID DEUTSCH OF MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES

Full Time City Management

City Manager	Bowie, MD.	May 1993 - June 2016
Township Manager	Springettsbury Township, PA.	Jan 1980 - May 1993
Assistant to Town Manager	Windsor, CT.	Sept 1974 - Jan 1980

Part Time City Management

Town Administrator	University Park, MD.	April 2020 - December 2022
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Interim Management

Westminster, MD.	August 2016 - January 2017
Sykesville, MD.	August 2017 - February 2018
Cheverly, MD.	November 2018 - August 2019
Pocomoke City, MD.	September 2019 - December 2019
Westminster, MD.	May 2021 - September 2021
Cambridge, MD	September 2021 - April 2022
Cambridge, MD.	April 2024 - September 2024

Executive Search

Westminster, MD.	City Administrator	2016
Bowie, MD.	City Manager	2016
Berwyn Heights, MD.	Town Manager	2017
MML	Director of Conferences and Publications	2018
Mount Rainier, MD.	Chief of Police	2018
Cheverly, MD.	Town Administrator	2019
Cheverly, MD.	Chief of Police	2019
Taneytown, MD.	City Manager	2019
Poolesville, MD.	Town Manager	2019
Berwyn Heights, MD.	Town Manager	2020
Dover, MD.	City Manager	2020
Cumberland, MD.	City Administrator	2021
Clinton, NC.	Chief of Police	2021
Cambridge, MD.	City Manager	2021
Garrett Park, MD.	Town Manager	2022
LGIT	Executive Director	2022
Berwyn Heights, MD.	Interim Town Manager	2022
Bladensburg, MD.	Town Manager	2023
University Park, MD.	Interim Town Administrator	2023

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

DAVID DEUTSCH OF MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES

Executive Search

Berwyn Heights, MD.	Town Manager	2023
Alexandria, VA.	Director of Transportation/ Enviro Services	2023
College Park, MD.	City Attorney	2023
Cambridge, MD.	Finance Director	2024
CSDSIP, CO.	Executive Director	2024
Cambridge, MD.	Planning Director	2024
Cambridge, MD.	City Manager	2024
Forest Heights, MD.	Town Administrator	2024
St. Michaels, MD.	Town Administrator	2025
Boca Raton, FL.	City Manager	2025
Roxbury, NJ.	Town Administrator	2025
Upper Darby, PA.	CFO	2026

REFERENCES

DAVID DEUTSCH OF MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES

Mayor Shawn Potillo

Township of Roxbury, NJ
potillos@roxburynj.us
201.230.6672

Former Mayor Stephen Rideout

City of Cambridge, MD
swrideout@aol.com
703.655.6149

Mr. Chris Brittain-Powell

Councilmember
Town of Berwyn Heights, MD
cbrittainpowell@berwynheightsmd.gov
240.786.2578

Mayor Ray Morriss

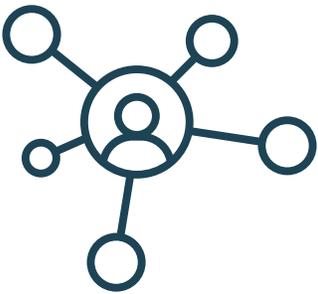
City of Cumberland, MD
Ray.morriss@cumberland.gov
240.580.0919

Scope of Services Work Plan



Position Analysis

Mercer will conduct individual interviews with the Mayor and Elected Officials to determine the goals, future plans, major local issues, desirable qualities of the new Town Administrator, expected leadership style, minimum training and experience required. Based on those interviews/meetings and review of the job description adopted by the Town, Mercer will prepare a draft position profile in the form of a recruitment brochure designed to attract highly qualified applicants. The profile will include information about the Town, services provided, key issues to be addressed, position duties and responsibilities, minimum qualifications, and selection criteria. The final profile will be approved by the Town in order to arrive at a general agreement regarding the specifications for the position. The completed recruitment brochure will be used primarily in an electronic format attached to all national, regional, and state announcements concerning the Town Administrator.



Recruitment Process

The Town Administrator search will be a national search but will demonstrate sensitivity to candidates that have local and regional qualifications. Mercer will work with the Town to determine which advertising options are most likely to produce quality applicants for the position. These ads will be primarily electronic postings on national and state websites related to professional journals, professional newsletters, and job websites typically viewed by local government management professionals. These outreach efforts will include postings specifically focused on creating a diverse candidate pool for the Town's consideration. Mercer will also make direct contact with persons in local government management positions listed in Mercer's database. This 600+ database includes potential candidates who are currently serving as Managers and other local government administrative professionals. Mercer will also rely heavily on our personal contacts with local government management professionals we have developed relationships with during recent searches who may meet the Town's requirements. The formal recruitment process will be not less than 30 days to ensure a large number of qualified candidates are aware of the opportunity and have adequate time to apply.



Resume Review

All resumes/applicants will be received directly by Mercer. Mercer will review and analyze each applicant’s background and experience against the approved position profile criteria. Applicants not meeting the minimum requirements will be placed in “hold” status and will not continue to be actively considered. Mercer will acknowledge all resumes received and keep candidates informed of their status as the process evolves.



Candidate Screening

An initial screening of the most promising candidates will be conducted by Mercer through telephone/video interviews and preliminary reference checks to assess educational background, technical knowledge, experience level, management style, and personality traits. Once the initial screening is completed, Mercer will select a short list of candidates that appear to be the most qualified and most closely match the position profile criteria. A summary of those candidates’ resumes and background information, gathered by Mercer to date, will be shared with the Towns to determine if the candidates meet expectations and therefore should be evaluated further by Mercer. The Town will be asked to select 4-5 semi-finalists for extensive background checks by Mercer and ultimately to be interviewed assuming they successfully complete the Mercer background checks.



Background Check

Mercer will conduct a more intensive background check of candidates identified as qualified (i.e., semi-finalists) by the Town to verify the accuracy of information related to academic credentials, past employment, financial stability, criminal history and driving record. Additional references will be contacted to better assess each candidate’s work experiences and a social media/internet review will be conducted to ensure no candidate background “surprises” surface later. The results of the background checks, reference checks, and social media search along with all resumes and other application materials gathered by Mercer will be shared with the Town in written report format prior to interviews being conducted so that interviewers can prepare for interviewing the recommended Town Administrator.



Interview Process

Mercer, working with the Town, will arrange interview times with the 4-5 semi-finalists in accordance with an interview process approved by the Town. Mercer will also provide recommended questions to be used in the interview process to produce consistency of information received from each candidate and to ensure appropriateness of questions asked. Mercer will act as a facilitators for the interviews and will participate in the interview process at any level, as directed by the Town. Guidelines and suggestions for conducting a successful interview will be discussed with all interviewers before the interview process begins. Mercer will provide observations and insights about each candidate after the interviews.

COMMITMENTS AND GUARANTEES



CONFIDENTIALITY

Mercer will professionally handle all media inquiries. Unless otherwise directed, it is our standard practice to advise all media that we are working on behalf of the Town and that public statements should come directly from the Town. We will maintain confidentiality of candidate information and recommend that the Town do the same to the degree possible under Maryland law. Mercer will suggest actions and timelines for actions by the Town that we believe will ensure that the Town always remains in compliance with Maryland's Open Meeting Laws; however, all final decisions of compliance rest with the Town as advised by the Town's Attorney. Mercer will notify all unsuccessful candidates who were interviewed.



TIMELY UPDATES

Mercer will provide the Town with timely status reports of the progress of the search. These email updates will include status of the recruitment efforts, steps being taken to meet the Town's timeline, and a summary of expenses incurred to date. Mercer will coordinate needed support from the Town for such items as arranging interviews, providing public documents such as benefits information, gathering information needed for the recruitment brochure and processing Mercer invoices for payment of services rendered.



COMMITMENTS

Mercer will not recruit candidates from the Town for two years after completion of the search assignment without full agreement of the Town. We will never recruit a candidate we placed with the Town as long as he/she is employed by the Town without full agreement of the Town. If the candidate we placed leaves for any reason (including termination) during the 12 month period following the date of placement, Mercer will conduct another candidate search and charge the Town for out-of-pocket expenses only required to make the new placement.

TIMELINE COMMITMENT

Mercer will focus its resources and efforts with the goal of having a Town Administrator selected within 90 days after receiving notice to proceed. Upon receipt of Notice to Proceed from the Town, Mercer will develop a final project schedule that will identify specific dates to complete the search within the 90-day schedule. The project calendar will remain flexible throughout the search process to meet the needs of the Town and to reduce the number of days needed to complete the process if possible. Upon approval of this proposal, Mercer is prepared to negotiate a specific start date that meets the needs of the Town and considers other Mercer commitments already in place.

1. Position Analysis/Interview Stakeholders	17 Days
2. Recruitment Process	28 Days
3. Resume Review/Candidate Screening	21 Days
4. Candidate Background Checks	18 Days
5. Interview/Selection Process	2 Days
6. Follow-up/Negotiate Employment Contract	3 Days
Total	89 Days

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT

This AGREEMENT, made as of this _____ day of _____, _____, by and between **PINES MANAGEMENT LLC dba MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES** and the **TOWN OF BLADENSBURG**, a local government corporation in the State of Maryland.

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the Town of Bladensburg (hereinafter referred to as "Town") has made a request for a final proposal from Pines Management LLC dba Mercer Group Associates (hereinafter referred to as "Mercer") to assist the Town in conducting a search for a Town Administrator (hereinafter referred to as "Administrator"); and WHEREAS, the Town selected Mercer's proposal as the proposal that best meets its needs and the Town's desire to hire Mercer to perform the search; and WHEREAS, Mercer desires to provide professional assistance to the Town as it undertakes its responsibility of hiring a Administrator.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the following mutual covenants and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and adequacy of which is hereby acknowledged by all parties hereto, Mercer and Town hereby agree as follows:

1. Mercer agrees to work with Town to conduct an effective search process for filling the position of Administrator in accordance with the Scope of Services attached and made a part of this agreement.
2. The Town agrees to compensate Mercer for its services with a **base fee of \$20,400** (twenty thousand and four hundred dollars). Town also agrees to reimburse Mercer for direct expenses incurred such as advertising, third-party background checks, consultant travel/lodging, report preparation and other reasonable incidentals. Cost for direct expenses will not exceed \$5,500 (five thousand and five hundred dollars) without written approval of the Town. The cost for final candidates to travel for interviews or other reasons required by the Council is not included in this agreement. Those costs may be paid by Town directly to the candidates on a reimbursement basis and are difficult to estimate because they are dependent upon the number of candidates that Town selects to interview, and the distance candidates must travel for the interviews.

Town agrees to pay one-third of the base fee (\$6,800) at the time notice to proceed is given to Mercer; one-third (\$6,800) when applications are closed and Mercer provides a spreadsheet containing applicants' data; and the final one-third (\$6,800) when interview packages of the semi- finalists recommended by Mercer and approved by the Town are delivered to the Town and interview dates are established by Mercer in coordination with Town. All payments for agreed upon services shall be due and payable upon the submittal of an invoice by Mercer describing services completed.

3. Town and Mercer both agree that this Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Maryland.
4. Town and Mercer agree that Mercer Group Associates is an independent contractor to the Town and Mercer acknowledge that it will not be the recipient of any benefits granted to employees by the Town.
5. Mercer confirms that the firm is an equal opportunity employer and assures equal opportunity based on ability and fitness for all employees, contractors, and applicants regardless of race, color, religion, sex or sexual orientation, age, marital or veteran's status, national origin, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability. Our equal employment policy is disseminated to all applicants, employees, and contractors. The intent of this policy applies to internal operations, recruitment, and consulting activities conducted by the firm.
6. Town and Mercer both agree that in the event any dispute arises between the parties, the complaining party shall promptly notify the other of the dispute in writing. Each party shall respond to the other party in writing within ten (10) working days of the receipt of such notice.
7. Town and Mercer both agree that any amendments to this Agreement shall be made in writing and executed by both parties. No proposed amendment which is not in writing and executed by both parties shall affect the terms of this agreement.
8. The parties shall have the right at either party's convenience to terminate this Agreement following ten (10) days written notice to the affected party. Should either party terminate this agreement, the Town shall only be obligated to pay Mercer for those services rendered as of the date of termination.

9. Mercer agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless Town from and against any and all claims, losses, liabilities or expenses which may arise due to Mercer's negligent performance of the services to be provided by this Agreement or Mercer's breach of its responsibilities under this Agreement.

Pines Management LLC dba Mercer Group Associates



**David Deutsch
Senior Associate**

Town of Bladensburg

BY: _____

**Mayor Takisha James
Town of Bladensburg**