

HUERFANO COUNTY MENTORING AND WORK PLAN

BEST AND BRIGHTEST MANAGEMENT FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM 2023

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Huerfano County is named for Huerfano Butte, which lies along I-25 in the Northern part of the County. The ‘Huerfano’ was a landmark for early explorers long before anyone found Pikes Peak. The word huerfano is Spanish for ‘orphan’.

The more dominant feature of Huerfano County is the Spanish Peaks, or “Huajatolla” which is pronounced Wa-ha-toy-a, but today the mountains are referred to as the East Peak and the West Peak. The double mountain is geographically unique in America because it is independent of a larger mountain range. The West Peak is particularly renowned because of the radial dikes that extend from the mountain.

The County is governed by a three-member Board of Commissioners, elected by districts to four year terms. The core values of the Huerfano County Government are: Fairness, Innovation, Candor, Craftsmanship, and Camaraderie. These values, adopted in 2021, guide County operations and shape our expectations of County Staff. Through a dedicated team of staff and officers, the County provides a variety of services to approximated 6,800 residents over 1,593 square miles including, but not limited to: zoning and code enforcement, law enforcement, emergency management and hazard mitigation, parks and recreation, road and bridge construction and maintenance, social services, and general government administration.

Huerfano County is home to two incorporated communities, Walsenburg and La Veta, as well as two unincorporated communities, Gardner and Cuchara. Each Huerfano County community is unique with their own charm and culture.

- Cuchara is a mountain village tucked into the eastern slopes of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains along the Highway of Legends. The unincorporated village is surrounded by the lakes, trails, and scenic beauty of the San Isabel National Forest and is home to Cuchara Mountain Park, an old ski resort that the County and a local non-profit are working to redevelop into a year-round adventure park.
- Gardner is a small community halfway between the Wet Mountains and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains on the Huerfano River. Founded at the base of Gardner Butte, the Community is a hub for the Upper Huerfano Region which includes Lily Lake and the Huerfano State Wildlife Area and is the home of the 60s and 70s Counter Culture Movement in Huerfano County as well as Mission Wolf.
- La Veta is situated along the Scenic Highway of Legends and at the northern opening of the Cucharas River Valley. Originally settled as a trading center along a branch of the Taos Trail, the Town is anchor for the surrounding ranching and agricultural operations

and is also the County's art hub being home to a number of galleries that feature local, national, and international artists.

- Walsenburg is the county seat and sits at the intersection of I-25, US 160, State Highway 10, and State Highway 69. An entry point to the Scenic Highway of Legends, the City was originally founded as La Plaza de Los Leones and later renamed for Fred Walsen, a businessman who started the coal boom that drove development in the County. Walsenburg is home to the Museum of Friends, Fox Theatre Walsenburg, and Lathrop State Park.

WORK PLAN

The Fellow will be joining the County as a number of major projects are in progress and in development, giving the Fellow a chance to work on a number of transformative projects and develop a wide range of skills.

In 2022 the County anticipates starting renovations on the Fox Theatre Walsenburg and beginning a multi-year energy performance contracting project that will reduce the County's utility costs by 29%, our energy usage by 18%, and greenhouse gas emissions by 30%. The County is currently restoring the masonry on the East Face of the Historic County Courthouse and is wrapping up a development master plan for 29 acres of County owned land in Gardner. The County is also working on our Comprehensive Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, and Airport Master Plan. The Fellow will have the opportunity to be involved in each of these projects and to take a leadership role on the implementation of some of these plans and help develop the scope of future capital projects. Depending on timing the Fellow may be able to take a project from concept through implementation.

The following is an example of the special projects and initiatives the Fellow with which the Fellow should expect to be involved:

- Development of the Throne Ranch into Badito on the River, a new County Park
- Execution of a GOCO Grant (if awarded) for the Cuchara Mountain Park
- Expansion of broadband services and management of County towers
- Implementation of recommendations from the Innovative Housing Opportunity Planning Program
- Development of housing projects around Huerfano County
- Replacement of the Gardner Sewer System and improvements to the Gardner Water System
- Rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan and subsequent zoning changes
- Development of a new County Emergency Operations and Dispatch Center
- Creation of On-Boarding Process and Training Programs

The Fellow will also have a number of daily activities that will help prepare them for a career in local government and give them practical knowledge of County Operations by working closely with the administrative team. The following is an example of the regular duties that can be expected:

- Assist the Administrator with researching and drafting policies for review and adoption by the Board of County Commissioners. Research, track, and summarize federal and state legislation and regulations. Make recommendations and assist with the development of long-term goals, policies, and procedures.
- Assist in the County's annual budget process and any procurement processes
- Identify, write, and manage grant opportunities to advance, support, or improve County operations and infrastructure
- Draft and review internal and external communications. Help coordinate responses with departments as needed. Write and proofread a wide variety of reports, letters, memos, charts, and public notices. Draft resolutions and proclamations.
- Provide support to a County Board or Commission: coordinate and participate in the preparation and processing of agendas; attend meetings and take minutes when necessary; works with Clerk and Recorder's office to ensure documents are properly recorded.

Depending on interest, the Fellow may be assigned to serve as the County Tourism Director and support the County's destination marketing efforts under the direction of the Tourism Board.

MENTORING PLAN

Under the direction and mentorship of the County Administrator the Fellow will be exposed to and gain experience in many areas of County Government. Huerfano County is committed to providing a learning environment and mentor the development of a future County Administrator or Manager. We will offer a variety of project activities including departmental rotations allowing the intern the opportunity for direct mentorship by shadowing an assortment of people with differing management styles and departmental goals.

The Fellow will spend their first few weeks shadowing the County Administrator, attending meetings, and gaining familiarity with County operations, key projects, partnerships, and the communities. Meetings with the County Administrator will continue at least twice monthly during the course of the program. These meetings will focus on the Fellow's professional growth and development, including answering any questions the Fellow might have, constructive feedback on performance, career advice, and guidance on assigned tasks and projects. Interactions outside of regular meetings are invited and encouraged as the Administrator generally maintains an open door policy.

After the introductory period the Fellow will begin working on assigned projects and initiatives. Throughout their time with the County, the Fellow will be integrated into the Administration Office, which supports the Board of County Commissioners includes core functions and shared services for the County such as Finance, Human Resources, and Compliance.

During the second year of the program the Fellow's responsibilities and project assignments may be altered to suite the Fellow's interests and ensure further professional development and growth. The County will also provide opportunities, as they are available and of interest, to give the Fellow experience supervising the day to day operations of an operational unit of the County. Consistent with program expectations, the County will work with the Fellow to identify an appropriate Master's project.

The Fellow will be expected to attend meetings and workshops of the Board of County Commissioners to gain an understanding of the decision making process and the importance of citizen engagement. They will also have the opportunity to attend meetings of various County Boards and Commissions. During their regular duties and projects the Fellow have regular interaction with the Commissioners, other County Elected Officials, the County Attorney, and Department Heads.