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February | 2022  
HIRING

## Engineering Technician-City of St. Francis, WI

Posted December 28, 2021 | Closes January 31, 2022 11:59 PM

Engineering Technician City of St. Francis, WI The City of St. Francis is seeking an Engineering Technician to assist the...

## Planner-City of Prescott, WI

Posted January 3, 2022 | Closes January 21, 2022 4:30 PM

Planner City of Prescott, WI Salary: \$54,995 (\$26.44/Hour) plus benefits The City of Prescott located 20 minutes from St. Paul, MN and the eastern Twin Cities...

## Clerk/Treasurer-Village of North Prairie, WI

Posted December 10, 2021 | Closes January 21, 2022 5:00 PM

Job Posting – Village of North Prairie Clerk/Treasurer Waukesha County, WI Application Deadline January 21, 2022, by 5:00 p.m. central time...

## Clerk-Treasurer-Village of Johnson Creek, WI

Posted December 29, 2021 | Closes January 17, 2022

Clerk-Treasurer Village of Johnson Creek, WI The Village of Johnson Creek, the fastest growing community in Jefferson County which embraces small town charm with big...

## Clerk/Treasurer-Village of Belmont, WI

Posted January 6, 2022 | Closes January 28, 2022 4:00 PM

Village of Belmont, Lafayette County, Wisconsin Clerk/Treasurer An Equal Opportunity Employer The Village of Belmont, WI is seeking a professional to fulfill...

## Senior Center Janitor-City of West Allis, WI

Posted December 14, 2021 | Closes January 15, 2022 11:59 PM

Senior Center Janitor City of West Allis, WI Salary: \$17.56 - \$20.07 Hourly Job Type: Permanent part time Department: ...

## City Clerk-City of Ripon, WI

Posted December 22, 2021 | Closes January 24, 2022 11:59 PM

City Clerk City of Ripon, Wisconsin City Clerk, Ripon, WI (pop. 7,833). Ripon is a delightful city in Fond du Lac County, best known as the home of renowned...

## Electrician/Electrical Inspector-City of Two Rivers, WI

Posted December 29, 2021 | Closes January 28, 2022 4:00 PM

ELECTRICIAN/ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR City of Two Rivers - Two Rivers Water & Light The Electrician/Electrical Inspector performs skilled work in the installation,...

## Fire Chief-Village and Township of Egg Harbor, WI

Posted November 8, 2021 | Closes January 30, 2022 11:59 PM

Fire Chief Village and Township of Egg Harbor, WI The combined Township & Village of Egg Harbor are currently seeking to fill the position of Fire Chief...

## Parks Maintenance/Zookeeper-City of Chippewa Falls, WI

Posted December 28, 2021 | Closes January 21, 2022 11:59 PM

City of Chippewa Falls - Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Job Opportunity Parks Maintenance/Zookeeper The City of Chippewa Falls is accepting...

## Financial Analyst-City of New Richmond, WI

Posted December 21, 2021 | Closes January 19, 2022 11:00 AM

Financial Analyst City of New Richmond, WI The City of New Richmond is accepting applications for a Financial Analyst to join our team.

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Workers?

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Strategy in an Employee-  
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# The Strategic Case for Remote Work

Jenny Kosek, Economic Development Specialist, City of West Allis

Earlier this year, the Atlas For Cities, Engaging Local Government Leaders, CivicPlus, Route Fifty, and CivicPulse released a report on “The New Normal Local Government Survey.”<sup>1</sup> The survey took the pulse of local government organizations more than 12 months after the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. One question asked respondents to rank their priorities for the coming year. “Work from home” ranked near the bottom of the list, with only 15% of respondents noting it would be a focus in the next 12 months.

By contrast, on a recent webinar I attended about remote work in government,<sup>2</sup> CPH Consulting shared that 57% of government employees who could do so would prefer to work remotely, at least part time. 28% would prefer to work remotely full time. Only 9% hoped to work full time on-site.

Despite the data showing workers’ preference for remote opportunities, municipalities continue to cling to in-office models. On November 10, 2021, I visited the League’s website to view current job postings. Of the 104 positions listed, only two offered “limited remote work.” Both were in Minnesota.

Of course, some positions cannot be remote. We don’t expect a paramedic to respond to a cardiac arrest via Zoom, but positions that have historically been “desk jobs” – administrative or professional roles – absolutely can work remotely. The refusal to accommodate remote work is hurting municipal retention and recruitment outcomes. Traditional workplace norms must be changed to support our long-term success and ability to continue providing services.

“I want to see my people in their seats,” say some managers. “We have to be in-office for team building,” others say. The pandemic has clearly demonstrated that connection is possible via technology, and 40 hours a week in an office together is by no means required to develop strong teams. “We need people available to assist residents,” say elected officials. With more municipal communications occurring via email, websites, or over the phone, service can happen anytime, anywhere, offering a better customer service experience than standard business hours ever could. “We pay for you to be in an office,” some residents might object. Residents pay for municipal services and if they’re continuing to receive services, where and how staff are located when providing them is irrelevant.

There are also long-term, strategic reasons for allowing remote or hybrid work that go beyond a kneejerk response to the current cultural landscape. They include:

## 1. Increasing candidate pools and supporting diverse hiring

If you’re requiring employees to work on-site or even live locally, you’re drastically limiting who can apply for your open positions. Work-from-home options broaden your candidate pools exponentially by opening your opportunities to anyone, anywhere. As residency requirements have weakened over time, so too must requirements to work on-site if we truly are committed to filling our positions with the best talent available. The best talent may not live in your community, so let them come to you from wherever they are. Casting a broad hiring net by offering remote work also encourages more diverse candidates to apply, which is crucial considering 80% of workers want to work for inclusive companies.<sup>3</sup> Remote work is an essential tool in supporting inclusive hiring practices.

## 2. Cost efficiencies and reduced facilities management expectations

With fewer people in offices, municipalities have opportunities to downsize aging infrastructure and lessen the burden on taxpayers and public works professionals to maintain sprawling city halls. Leasing coworking spaces or commercial office spaces, or consolidating services with other municipal facilities are all possibilities when fewer staff are required to be in buildings. In addition, employers save money on consumables, such as paper goods and office supplies, when employees are working from home. It’s estimated that having an employee work just half their hours remotely could save businesses as much as \$11,000 per employee per year on facilities and fleet management costs.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Sustainability and climate impact

According to *The Guardian*, “Carbon dioxide emissions from transportation dropped 15% last year as people hunkered at home.”<sup>5</sup> Transportation is the largest contributor to U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Encouraging employees to work at home and skip their commutes can have long-term positive impacts on the environment.

The average U.S. round-trip commute time is about an hour, equating to nearly 3.2 tons of carbon per year, per person. Particularly in urban areas, which are disproportionately affected by climate change and nine out of 10 individuals are negatively impacted by air pollution,<sup>6</sup> empowering municipal employees not to drive into the office can have meaningful ecological impact on the local environment – especially if you’re one of the largest employers in the community. If enough employers embraced it, there is real opportunity to improve air quality, reduce greenhouse emissions, and lessen the demand for fossil fuels. Not only that, but you’re also giving employees their commute time back, allowing them more personal time to support their work-life needs.

**4. Reduced healthcare costs for employers, increased financial returns for employees**

40% of job turnover is due to stress, and healthcare expenditures are nearly 50% higher for workers experiencing stress.<sup>7</sup> Workers say that remote work could help them reduce stress.<sup>8</sup> As employers, we can provide the remote opportunities they seek to be happier and healthier.

Additionally, 73% of Americans cite finances as their number one cause of stress, and remote work can lessen this stressor, too.<sup>9</sup> According to *The Washington Post*, the average cost of commuting is \$2,000 - \$5,000 annually. Grabbing coffee or lunch on the run can rack up an additional \$2,500 in expenses. Depending on where you live, you could be giving employees back more than \$7,000 per year by letting them work remotely. We can seldom increase salaries, but we can put money back into employees’ pockets by letting them work from home. It all adds up to support employees who are more content, more likely to stay, and less likely to become a burden on already overwhelmed healthcare budgets.

**5. Employees want it – and we want employees**

Data shows repeatedly that people want flexibility in where and how they work. If we don’t provide that, we will continue to face unprecedented staffing challenges. The days of eager candidates lining up to apply for “cushy” government jobs are long gone. It cannot be stressed enough that the future of employee retention and acquisition is a battlefield. Municipalities are competing with private-sector organizations to attract and retain talent on a global scale, and we need to structure our workplaces accordingly.

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With so many employees wanting remote or flexible work environments and so many demonstrable benefits from the practice, resistance to change will only hurt our employment outlooks further. Embracing the benefits of remote work will attract candidates to our opportunities and position us as employers of choice in the continually changing times ahead.

## About the Author:

Jenny Kosek holds a certificate in Human Resources Essentials from MRA-The Management Association and served in HR, marketing, and executive leadership roles prior to joining the public sector in 2017. Her areas of passion include culture-building, recruitment, and retention strategies. She currently serves as Economic Development Specialist for the City of West Allis, WI.

1. <https://the-atlas.com/city-covid-legacy/covid-19-wont-fundamentally-change-the-work-of-local-government/>
2. <https://elgl.org/webinar-rewind-retaining-talent-in-the-new-world-of-work/>
3. <https://builtin.com/diversity-inclusion/diversity-in-the-workplace-statistics>
4. <https://abc11.com/work-from-home-telecommuting-pandemic-coronavirus-nc/10354141/>
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/aug/02/is-remote-working-better-for-the-environment-not-necessarily>
6. <https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/telecommuting-sustainability-how-telecommuting-is-a-green-job/>
7. <https://www.uml.edu/research/cph-new/worker/stress-at-work/financial-costs.aspx>
8. [https://mhanational.org/blog/mental-health-benefits-remote-and-flexible-work#:~:text=Respondents%20also%20said%20that%20remote,more%20comfortable%20\(52%25\)%20and](https://mhanational.org/blog/mental-health-benefits-remote-and-flexible-work#:~:text=Respondents%20also%20said%20that%20remote,more%20comfortable%20(52%25)%20and)
9. <https://www.cnn.com/select/73-percent-of-americans-rank-finances-as-the-number-one-stress-in-life/>



WINDSOR

### Bryanna Windsor, Firefighter/Paramedic - Wisconsin Rapids

**Previous work experience:** I've been in EMS for three years, starting as a first responder for the Town of Hull. After moving to Wisconsin Rapids, I joined the Grand Rapids Volunteer Fire Department.

**Why did you decide to join the local government workforce?** I have always found enjoyment in helping my local community the best way I can. Getting into public safety gave me the opportunity to make a career out of doing something I enjoy. My family values hard work and serving in their local community. I had to find a career where I would be doing something I love while helping those around me, and it just so happened to be firefighting and EMS.




EDMONDSON

### Carrie Edmondson, AICP, Associate Planner/Community Development Specialist - Wisconsin Rapids

**Previous work experience:** I started as a city planner in Southern California. I then paused professionally to raise four great children and returned to work in 2018 as a regional planner.

**Why did you decide to join the local government workforce?** I was fully intending to go to law school. As an undergraduate senior, I had a professor/mentor who told the class that the field of law was oversaturated and recommended that we consider a Master of Public Administration degree instead. This intrigued me and I looked through the dictionary (no Google) to try to figure out what exactly this was. I began as a graduate student and was encouraged to do an internship immediately. I started as an unpaid planning intern with the City of Pomona. I fell in love with local government and planning and haven't looked back since.

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