

# Santa Margarita Water District

*invites your interest in the position of*

## Director of Human Resources



**Santa Margarita  
Water District**

### **Our Mission**

*The Santa Margarita Water District provides our customers with quality water and wastewater service – maximizing human, environmental, and financial resources – to help guide South Orange County’s water and wastewater needs into the next century.*



Recruitment Services Provided by  
Ralph Andersen & Associates



# Outstanding Opportunity

The Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD) is seeking an innovative, solution-oriented, and influential professional to serve as the District's Director of Human Resources. The individual will contribute across the organization as a valued member of the senior leadership team. The ideal candidate will have strong interpersonal skills and be driven to support employee development and engagement in alignment with the District's core values and culture. The position reports directly to the Office of the General Manager and will contribute a variety of key, agency-wide initiatives to support the mission of the District.

## Organizational Overview

Located within southern California's beautiful Orange County, the Santa Margarita Water District provides safe, reliable drinking water, recycled water, and wastewater services to over 200,000 residents in nine unique communities: Mission Viejo, Rancho Santa Margarita, San Juan Capistrano, and the communities of Coto de Caza, Las Flores, Ladera Ranch, Village of Sendero, Esencia, and Talega in San Clemente. The District is the second largest retail water agency in Orange County.

The vast majority of the District's drinking water supply is imported from hundreds of miles away through the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Municipal Water District of Orange County. To ensure the stability of the region's water supply, the Santa Margarita Water District continues to make generational investments in developing local, reliable, and sustainable water supply programs, reducing its dependence on imported water.

SMWD employs approximately 220 full-time employees and has an annual operating budget of \$114M. The District's total annual budget is \$129M. SMWD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors. Each director is elected by the public to represent a specific division within the District.





## The Position

The Director of Human Resources is an at-will position that will provide leadership and direction to the department ensuring a high-performance, service-oriented environment that aligns with the District's mission, vision, goals, values, and organizational culture. The individual will have a demonstrated career history of leading people and leading change. This will also include directing and mentoring staff to achieve a highly effective and efficient team.

Specific responsibilities include directing the operations of the District's human resources program including employee and labor relations, safety and risk management, recruitment and selection, classification and compensation, benefits, workers compensation, training and development, organizational planning, performance evaluation and related programs and services; provides professional assistance and guidance to the District's Board, managers and supervisors on complex human resources and employee relations policy and procedural issues.



# SMWD Human Resources Office





# The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will be a top caliber individual possessing high integrity with a focus on fairness, inclusion, and equitable and consistent delivery of all rules and regulations dealing with SMWD's most important asset – the men and women that make up its dynamic workforce.

The Director of Human Resources will embrace a philosophy that pro-actively reaches out to management and employees in a consultative fashion and truly believes in the benefit of working for and promoting a healthy public organization to the fullest. A sense of humor, positive “can do” attitude, and dose of humility will ultimately lead to long-term success at SMWD.

The ideal candidate will be an aspiring leader with a strong commitment to public service and best practices. The top candidate will have a proven record of accomplishments in change management, building capacity, and strategic alignment of human resource services to the organization's needs. Candidates for serious consideration will need to be confident and collaborative, and able to combine thoughtful leadership with an understanding of the impact human resources related decisions have on overall operational effectiveness and the culture of the organization.

The selected candidate will also be a strategic thinker with the ability to understand technical issues and offer objective insight to the General Manager, executive leadership, and management on a variety of issues, including organizational re-alignment for optimal operational effectiveness, training, and professional development of staff, and work closely with employees to ensure they understand their role in advancing the mission and vision of the Agency.





# The Ideal Candidate *continued*

Top candidates will be well-balanced in skills and will have a comprehensive knowledge of the professional practices and principles of human resources administration, including many of the following areas: collective bargaining, grievances, investigations, arbitration and labor contract negotiations practices, employee relations, organizational training and development, recruitment and selection, succession planning, benefits, anti-discrimination, and employment laws and regulations.

**Additionally, the ideal candidate will have a career history that supports the ability to:**

- Excel in developing interpersonal relationships including being an excellent communicator, facilitator, and collaborator; achieve consensus and guide policy decisions.
- Be seen as innovative and creative with an entrepreneurial approach to personnel management and service delivery.
- Offer a high level of integrity, honesty, and transparency; be known as a professional recognized for his/her efforts and sought out by others throughout the organization.
- Display an engaging personal style and be a good listener with a results-oriented approach to problem-solving; and Coach, inspire, and mentor staff and Agency-wide employees to reach and achieve goals, setting an example of the highest level of professionalism.



# Qualifying Education and Experience

**Education:** Graduation from an accredited college with a major in human resources, business, administration, or closely related fields.

**Experience:** At least ten (10) years of progressively responsible experience in human resource management including labor management relations, at least five of which were in a supervisory or program management capacity; or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience. Importantly, experience in a public agency is highly regarded.

**Certifications:** Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Professional in Human Resources (PHR) certification, International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-SCP) Senior Certified Professional, or similar professional certification is strongly desired.

## Compensation

The annual salary range for this position is from \$175,000 to \$240,000 and is highly competitive and commensurate with qualifications and responsibilities to other agencies of similar size and scope in the region. Salary will be negotiated based on the candidate's experience and qualifications.

The salary will be supported by a benefits package including:

- **CALPERS retirement** – Classic members formula is 2.7% at 55 with a contribution of 8%, while PEPRA members have formula of 2% at 62 and a contribution of 7.5%.
- **Medical** – District provides medical plan options and pays for employee coverage equal to highest HMO plan, and shares costs for dependents.
- **Dental** – HMO and PPO plans are available. The District pays for employee coverage and any added dependents are paid for by the employee.
- **Vision** – VSP plan is paid for employees and their dependents.
- **Life insurance** – A term life insurance benefit is provided.
- **Paid Time Off** – The District has a generous general leave program.
- **Holiday** – The District provides 11 ½ holidays per year.
- **Social Security** – The District does not pay into Social Security and provides a private disability program at no cost to the employees.
- **Other benefits** – Other employee benefit programs are available such as deferred compensation with partial matching, a flexible spending program for medical expenses, and other benefit programs

# To Be Considered

This is a confidential recruitment and will be handled accordingly throughout the various stages of the process. References will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established. Candidates are encouraged to apply early in the process with the first review of resumes occurring in mid-December 2024. This recruitment may close at any time once a significant pool of qualified candidates has been established. It is anticipated that the most highly qualified candidates will be invited for an on-site interview. Selection and appointment are anticipated in early 2025. The District wishes for a smooth transition and every effort will be made to ensure this happens.

Electronic submittals are strongly preferred to Ralph Andersen & Associates at [apply@ralphandersen.com](mailto:apply@ralphandersen.com) and should include a compelling cover letter and comprehensive resume.

Confidential inquiries are welcomed to Mr. John Rossi at (916) 630-4900.



*The Santa Margarita Water District is an Equal Opportunity Employer*

[www.smwd.com](http://www.smwd.com)