



CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER



VCERA
VENTURA COUNTY EMPLOYEES'
RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION





The Setting

The County of Ventura is located along the California central coast between the counties of Santa Barbara and Los Angeles. Ventura County includes 43 miles of coastline and the Los Padres National Forest. The county includes the cities of Ventura, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Camarillo, Ojai, Moorpark, Fillmore, Thousand Oaks, Santa Paula, and Simi Valley. The county is also home to the communities of Lake Sherwood, Hidden Valley, Oak Park, Newbury Park, Santa Rosa Valley, and Somis.

More than 800,000 people call Ventura County home. The county has some of the safest communities in the United States with an overall crime rate 33% lower than other California areas. The area is home to everything from family-owned businesses to high-tech enterprises and is one of the fastest growing in Southern California.

The area is a popular recreational paradise offering year-round outdoor activities. Downtown Ventura boasts shopping, events, and local music venues that host regular concerts. Ventura County is also home to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. The Channel Islands area hosts whale watching tours January through April every year. Local communities offer rich cultural diversity, art galleries, shopping, and pristine parks. There is something for everyone here!



The Retirement System

Ventura County Employees' Retirement Association (VCERA) was established by Ventura County in 1947 and is administered by the Board of Retirement, which is a nine-member board with three alternates. The County Treasurer is a trustee by statute; the Board of Supervisors appoints five trustees (one of whom is an alternate); general members elect two trustees; two trustees are elected by the VCERA's safety members (one of whom is an alternate); and two trustees are elected by retired members (one of whom is an alternate).

VCERA is governed by the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL) and the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA). VCERA is a cost-sharing plan with the responsibility to administer retirement, disability, death and survivor benefits to the general and safety members employed by the County of Ventura, as well as employees of the Ventura County Superior Court, the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, the Ventura Regional Sanitation District, and VCERA.

VCERA has nearly 22,000 active, deferred and retired members. VCERA was more than 97% funded on a valuation value of assets basis, as of June 30, 2023, with current assets of \$7.7 billion. The office is conveniently located in the city of Ventura near the County Government Center. The fiscal year 2023-2024 operating budget was approximately \$15 million, and VCERA currently has 35 full-time employees.



Chief Operations Officer (COO)

Ventura County Employees' Retirement Association

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| Job Type | Full-Time |
| Department | Administration |
| Location | Ventura, CA, USA |
| Salary | \$191,189 - \$260,089 DOQ |

Under the direction of the VCERA Retirement Administrator (RA), the Chief Operations Officer (COO) manages the administration, direction, management, and coordination of operational activities related to the Ventura County Employees' Retirement Association (VCERA) in compliance with all applicable laws and statutes; assists the Retirement Administrator in the development of organizational policies and goals relating to general administration, operations, personnel, and communication functions; and is responsible for administration duties in the absence of the Retirement Administrator.

Distinguishing Characteristics

The COO is a single position reporting to the Retirement Administrator and is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of VCERA and for providing support to the RA and Board of Retirement (Board). The COO demonstrates a high degree of initiative, independent judgment, and expertise in public retirement system operations and fiscal strategies, having complete responsibility for planning, directing, and evaluating the scope of operational and financial services and functions required by VCERA.

The COO contributes to executive-level decision-making, including strategic planning, budgeting, and priority setting; directs staff in the correct and compliant calculation and payment of retirement benefits as well as financial compliance; and manages professional-level staff.

Examples of Duties (including but not limited to)

1. In coordination with, and under the supervision of, the Retirement Administrator, provides leadership for VCERA staff in implementing the programs necessary to achieve the organization's mission, goals and objectives; plans, organizes, and directs the work of VCERA professional staff in accordance with the provisions of the County Employees Retirement Law (CERL) and Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA), Internal Revenue Code, and other applicable law.
2. Works closely with the Retirement Administrator and members of the executive team to develop and accomplish goals and strategic plans established by the organization.
3. Leads the development, communication and implementation of effective operational policies, procedures, and processes; maintains effectiveness through ongoing monitoring and amendment as required.
4. Collaborates with the executive and management teams to develop and implement short and long term plans for the operational infrastructure of systems and processes, designed to accommodate the service objectives of VCERA.



5. Motivates and leads high-performance Operations team, mentors direct reports to cultivate skills and awareness of the interrelationship between VCERA divisions.
6. Establishes key performance indicators for staff and management of Operations division, which includes member services for Actives, Retirees, Community Property, Deaths and Disability; directs the supervision, evaluation, discipline and recruitment of department staff.
7. Maintains oversight of VCERA's Disability Retirement program, reviewing procedures and all Disability internal staff recommendations. Consults as needed with outside disability counsel as needed. Works to continuously improve ongoing implementation of VCERA's internal investigation of retirement cases.
8. Remains knowledgeable of industry trends, fellow retirement systems, and all aspects of defined retirement benefits and administration; analyzes and reviews the impact of legislative or regulatory requirement changes; establishes and implements procedures or necessary system modifications in response to changes.
9. In coordination with the Chief Technology Officer, responsible for the operation, maintenance and upgrade of the benefit delivery and benefit administration systems of VCERA. Oversees vendor management in the implementation of new or enhanced technologies or initiatives.
10. Manages Human Resources Administration for VCERA, coordinating activities with designated staff.
11. Supervises Communications staff, reviewing new and updated publications, mailings, and other printed materials for relevance and accuracy. Ensures VCERA's member communication is thorough and accurate, and that all changes in law or policy are implemented and member resources are current. Gathers and analyzes customer trends to assist in developing VCERA communication and service strategies. Prepares and reviews documents and publications; ensures accuracy, consistency, and adherence to professional standards for written materials issued by VCERA.
12. Develops, negotiates, and monitors vendor contracts and invoices. Attends professional meetings as necessary or directed to stay current on pension fund issues; networks with colleagues in other pension systems to share knowledge and ensure best practices.
13. Develops administrative policy recommendations relating to all facets of public pension plan administration to improve or expand member services and to achieve business efficiencies.
14. Prepares and presents letters to the Board pertaining to operational interests, and facilitates Board meetings in the absence of the Retirement Administrator.
15. Works with the fund's actuary, Retirement Benefits Managers and the Chief Financial Officer to ensure that an accurate, thorough and timely actuarial valuation is prepared.
16. Mediates and resolves conflicts of highly sensitive and critical matters.
17. Represents VCERA to other agencies and the public as required, delivering presentations and reports and serving as liaison with outside entities.
18. Coordinates, directs and conducts special projects, studies, surveys and analyses.
19. May perform a wide variety of related work as assigned by the Retirement Administrator and Board of Retirement.

Qualification Guidelines

- Thorough knowledge of defined benefit pension plan administration including knowledge and understanding of disability retirement processes and system development; administration concepts and analysis techniques; principles of management, supervision and training.
- Comprehensive ability to: develop, interpret and communicate retirement policies, legislation, resource and services to the staff and public; coordinate, organize and implement retirement programs and



services; evaluate and analyze the potential impact of proposed policies and programs on retirement services; instruct, train, supervise and evaluate professional and non-professional personnel; develop and implement operational policies and procedures; maintain effective working relationships with staff, VCERA members, vendors, and public; mediate and resolve conflicts; make decisions and independent judgments; understand program objectives in relation to agency/departmental goals and procedures; identify and analyze administrative problems and implement operational changes; collect and analyze data to establish/identify needs; recognize the role of assigned activities in relation to the agency's/department's overall mission goals and objectives; communicate effectively both verbally and in writing; evaluate program effectiveness; and develop operational budgets.

Recruiting Standards

Any combination of education, training, and experience which demonstrates possession of the required knowledge, skills and abilities. One example of a qualifying education and experience is:

Education

A bachelor's degree in business or public administration or a related field; AND,

Experience

Minimum of ten (10) years responsible experience in a large-scale retirement system, employee benefits, or payroll system operation, including five (5) years of supervisory and/or lead experience.

Intermediate proficiency with Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Experience with pension administration software and the development of related workflows.

Significant experience in public speaking and formal presentations, as well as project management and program administration.

Education and Experience

Extensive education and experience which has led to the acquisition of the required knowledge, skills and abilities detailed above. An example of qualifying education and experience includes a bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, business administration or closely related field and the equivalent of five (5) years of full-time progressively responsible benefit administration and/or management experience.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will be an experienced and ethical public pension professional, possessing outstanding interpersonal, technical and management skills. The individual will be a driven self-starter and have the ability to assume a leadership role, with a track record of building and maintaining strong teams. Candidate will possess financial acumen, be highly analytical, while being approachable and diplomatic. An ideal candidate will have experience with high-level decision-making and complex project management, and have the ability to navigate conflicts with tact and diplomacy.

Application and Selection

To be considered for this position, please submit your resume and cover letter by January 31, 2024 (electronic submission preferred).

Please forward these documents to:

Chris Ayala, Program Assistant
Ventura County Employees' Retirement Association

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