



Grand Rapids Public Utilities
500 SE 4th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218-326-7189
HR@grpuc.org

Job Description **Operations Manager**

Position Title: Operations Manager

Department: Administration

FLSA Status: Exempt

Pay Grade: 7

State Job Match: Utilities Superintendent, Electric Distribution Supervisor, Administrator

Date: August 2026

Commission Approval Date: August 26, 2026

Primary Objective of Position

Under limited supervision of the General Manager, the Operations Manager performs technical, supervisory, and administrative work related to the construction, operation, maintenance, and repair of the Utility's electric distribution, water treatment and distribution, and wastewater collection and treatment systems.

The position plans and supervises Utility personnel responsible for the operations and maintenance of these utility systems and oversees the day-to-day operations and capital projects of assigned qualified and skilled personnel. Oversight is provided through inspection, consultation, review of reports, and assistance with complex technical and operational problems. The position prepares and manages operational and capital budgets, provides reports and presentations, and maintains the records necessary to support the safe, reliable, efficient operation of Utility's infrastructure.

The Operations Manager also serves as Assistant General Manager and assists the General Manager with Utility administration and leadership, including organizational planning, personnel management, and coordination across Utility functions. The position exercises personnel and administrative authority as delegated by the General Manager and may act on the General Manager's behalf when assigned or during the General Manager's absence.

Essential Functions of the Position

Essential duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific duties does not exclude them if the work is similar, related, or logical to the position.

- Lead operations and capital project planning and delivery for the Utility's electric, water, and wastewater systems from concept through closeout, working with the General Manager, Finance Manager, Compliance & Programs Manager, Directors, Foremen, staff, and consultants to incorporate operational expertise and organizational priorities.
- Manage and coordinate projects, including scopes, schedules, budgets, cost estimates, bidding, contractor selection, engineering, construction oversight, inspections, documentation, and closeout, and monitor expenditures and performance to ensure projects remain on budget and achieve established objectives.
- Develop and maintain short- and long-range infrastructure and capital improvement plans and evaluate infrastructure condition, capacity, reliability, risk, and future needs to prioritize improvements, rehabilitation, replacement, and expansion.
- Coordinate projects and electric, water, and wastewater operational activities to maximize efficiency and minimize conflicts, outages, and service disruptions, including reviewing development projects for potential impacts to Utility infrastructure.
- Evaluate and coordinate solutions to complex or recurring operational and maintenance issues and recommend technologies, equipment, and practices that improve safety, reliability, efficiency, and customer service.
- Coordinate with the Compliance & Programs Manager to incorporate regulatory, safety, permitting, and program requirements into projects and operations and provide support for permits, grants, regulatory submissions, and other compliance activities.
- Develop, review, and maintain standards, operating procedures, and project-management practices that promote a strong safety culture in project planning and execution.
- Provide leadership and technical coordination on significant Utility operational matters, including emergency response and restoration activities, and effectively communicate and collaborate with internal and external stakeholders.
- Provide leadership, coaching, direction, and project management for assigned employees; participate in organizational strategic planning, budgeting, policy development, succession planning, and continuous improvement; and perform other duties as assigned by the General Manager.

Subject Matter Expertise

This position serves as a Utility-wide Subject Matter Expert (SME) in project management, operational coordination, infrastructure planning, and safety. The incumbent is required to maintain authoritative knowledge and provide guidance in the following areas:

- **Project Management:** Expert knowledge of project management principles and practices, including planning, budgeting, bidding, scheduling, construction oversight, coordination, risk management, and project completion.
- **Utility Operations Coordination:** Broad working knowledge of electric, water, wastewater, and maintenance operations sufficient to understand system needs, identify interdependencies, coordinate projects and operational activities, and make informed

recommendations, while utilizing the technical expertise of Directors, Foremen, engineers, consultants, and other subject-matter experts.

- **Technical Coordination:** Advanced knowledge of infrastructure planning and ability to interpret engineering plans, specifications, technical reports, construction documents, and other technical information; identify issues and risks; and coordinate effective solutions with Utility staff, engineers, consultants, contractors, and other stakeholders.
- **Safety:** Provides leadership and oversight to the Compliance and Program Manager for the Utility's safety program, including safety policies, training, compliance, incident review, hazard identification, and continuous improvement of safe work practices.

Examples of Performance Criteria

- **Capital Project Management:** Capital projects are appropriately planned, budgeted, scheduled, coordinated, and completed with consideration for cost, quality, safety, reliability, and operational impact.
- **Communication and Coordination:** Projects and operational issues are effectively coordinated across departments and with consultants, contractors, regulatory agencies, customers, and other stakeholders. Management is promptly informed of significant project risks, cost or schedule changes, infrastructure concerns, and operational issues.
- **Leadership and Collaboration:** Demonstrates effective leadership, accountability, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving; develops productive working relationships across departments and promotes coordination between electric, water, and wastewater functions.
- **Technical Judgment and Documentation:** Technical recommendations demonstrate sound judgment and consideration of safety, reliability, regulatory requirements, financial impacts, and long-term Utility needs. Project records, plans, specifications, contracts, reports, and other documentation are accurate, complete, and appropriately maintained.
- **Infrastructure Planning:** Long-range infrastructure planning appropriately identifies and prioritizes the Utility's electric, water, and wastewater system needs and supports responsible stewardship of Utility assets and financial resources.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Identifies and implements opportunities to improve Utility processes, infrastructure, technology, operational efficiency, and overall service delivery.

Minimum Qualifications

- **Experience:** Ten (10) years of progressively responsible experience in project management, engineering and construction, utility operations, infrastructure management, or a related field, including at least five (5) years of experience supervising and leading employees with increasing responsibility for personnel management and organizational leadership.
- **Project and Operational Management:** Demonstrated ability to manage multiple complex infrastructure projects and competing priorities simultaneously, with working knowledge

of utility construction, infrastructure planning, maintenance practices, procurement, budgeting, and contract administration.

- **Technical Knowledge and Judgment:** Ability to read and interpret engineering drawings, plans, specifications, technical reports, contracts, regulations, and other complex documents; apply sound analytical and decision-making skills; and independently evaluate and resolve complex problems.
- **Communication:** Professional-level oral and written communication skills, with the ability to clearly communicate complex technical and operational information to both technical and non-technical audiences.
- **Interpersonal and Leadership Skills:** Strong interpersonal, leadership, organizational, and collaboration skills, including tact, diplomacy, flexibility, and the ability to work effectively with employees, contractors, consultants, governmental entities, customers, and Utility officials.
- **Integrity and Accountability:** High level of integrity and ability to exercise independent judgment, discretion, and accountability in carrying out the responsibilities of the position.

Desirable Qualifications

- **Education and Professional Credentials:** Bachelor's degree in engineering, construction management, or related technical discipline. Project Management Professional (PMP) certification or similar project-management credentials are preferred. Professional Engineer (PE) licensure is desirable.
- **Utility and Infrastructure Experience:** Experience with municipal electric, water, and/or wastewater utilities, including knowledge of electric distribution, water treatment and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment, and associated infrastructure. Experience managing projects involving multiple utility disciplines is preferred.
- **Asset Management and Operational Technology:** Experience developing capital improvement plans and long-term infrastructure replacement strategies, as well as experience with utility GIS, asset-management systems, work-management systems, AMI, OMS, SCADA, and other operational technologies.
- **Procurement and Project Delivery:** Experience with public bidding, procurement, construction contracts, grants, and state or federally funded infrastructure projects.
- **Regulatory Knowledge:** Familiarity with applicable OSHA, NESC, NEC, MPCA, MDH, EPA, and other standards and regulatory requirements affecting public utilities.

Supervision

- **Manager:** General Manager
- **Supervision of Others:** Supervises assigned personnel as established by the Utility's organizational structure.

Working Conditions

- Work is performed in both office and field environments, including the Utility's electric distribution facilities, water and wastewater facilities, and other infrastructure locations.
- Work may involve exposure to outdoor weather conditions, noise, moving equipment, electrical hazards, wet or humid environments, construction activities, chemicals, and other conditions commonly associated with Utility operations.
- Frequently required to walk, sit, stand, talk, hear, and use hands to operate computers, equipment, and other tools. Occasionally required to climb, balance, stoop, kneel, crouch, or access Utility facilities and construction sites, and move up to 25 pounds.
- Must be able to safely access and inspect Utility facilities, infrastructure, and active construction sites.
- May be required to work evenings, weekends, holidays, or outside normal business hours when necessary for construction activities, Commission meetings, outages, emergencies, or other Utility needs.

Conditions of Employment

- Successfully pass a criminal background check.
- Maintain a valid Class D driver's license.
- Maintain applicable licenses, certifications, and training required for assigned responsibilities.
- Comply with all organizational and departmental policies and procedures.

This position description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and the employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the utility and requirements of the job change.

Grand Rapids Public Utilities is an Equal Opportunity Employer in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. It will provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with disabilities and encourages both prospective and current employees to discuss potential accommodation with the employer.