CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

UPPER DARBY TOWNSHIP

GMP

Why Apply?

This is a unique opportunity to help lead Upper Darby Township, a richly diverse community with distinctive neighborhoods and a strong sense of place. Its many immigrant communities contribute to a vibrant, welcoming culture and help shape the Township's character, energy, and civic identity—living up to its motto, "The World in One Place."

Meaningful work is underway in Upper Darby, and Mayor Brown is seeking a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) who can help advance his vision for the community. With the current CAO retiring after building a strong, strategic, and responsive team, the next leader will have a solid foundation from which to continue progress. For a leader eager to apply strategic thinking, financial acumen, and collaborative leadership to help move a community from good to great, this is a compelling and challenging opportunity.

Welcome to UPPER DARBY

Upper Darby is a diverse community of more than 85,000 residents located immediately west of Philadelphia, roughly 7 miles from downtown. Spanning less than 8 square miles, Upper Darby is the most populous municipality in Delaware County and the sixth most populous in Pennsylvania. Its neighborhoods vary considerably in character, from the tree-lined streets and stone homes of Drexel Hill to the denser, walkable neighborhoods of Highland Park, Bywood, and Stonehurst.

Upper Darby's motto, "The World in One Place," reflects a community where nearly one-quarter of residents were born outside the United States and more than 100 languages are spoken. That diversity can be seen—and tasted—along its commercial corridors, where locally owned restaurants, markets, and businesses reflect cultures from around the world. Each September, the Upper Darby International Festival brings residents and visitors together for international food, music, dance, cultural performances, and a colorful Parade of Flags.

The 69th Street Transit Center provides direct rapid-transit service to downtown Philadelphia, along with trolley, bus, and rail connections throughout the western suburbs. The surrounding 69th Street area is also one of the Township's primary commercial centers and the focus of ongoing efforts to strengthen it as a community gathering place.

Upper Darby has longstanding ties to the arts, including the landmark Tower Theater, where David Bowie recorded a live album in 1974. Upper Darby Summer Stage, a nationally recognized youth theater program, brings hundreds of young performers together each summer and was named one of Playbill's Top Five Performing Arts Summer Camps in America. Tina Fey is among its alumni and graduated from Upper Darby High School, as did musicians Jim Croce and Todd Rundgren.

Residents enjoy 28 parks and recreation areas, including the Naylor's Run Trail, where a new paved section opened in 2026, adding a lighted walking and biking connection. One of Upper Darby's more unusual local businesses is GreenHorn Gardens, a family-run urban farm that grows produce in a historic greenhouse on the grounds of Arlington Cemetery in Drexel Hill.

UPPER DARBY TOWNSHIP

Upper Darby Township serves a population of approximately 85,000 across 7.9 square miles in Delaware County with a team of 411 FTEs and a 2026 budget of $104.7 million. Departments include Administrative Services, Community and Economic Development, Finance, Fire, Human Resources, Licenses and Inspections, Parking Enforcement, Police, Public Information, Public Works, Recreation, Senior Services, and Tax Office.

Incorporated in 1786, Upper Darby Township operates under a Home Rule Charter adopted in 1974 and a Mayor-Council form of government. The Mayor serves as the Township's chief executive, overseeing the administration, and is elected at large to a 4-year term, with a limit of 3 consecutive terms. Mayor Edward (Ed) Brown has served in this position since January 2024.

The 11-member Township Council enacts legislation, sets policy, and adopts the annual budget. Council includes 7 members elected by district and 4 elected at large, all serving staggered 4-year terms. The Treasurer is also elected at large. A full-time Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) oversees Township operations and works with department heads to carry out the administration's priorities.

"The Mission of Upper Darby Township is to serve and partner with our community to deliver exceptional, efficient, and effective services that enhance the quality of life for all. We are committed to fiscal responsibility, a culture of professionalism, and informed decision-making that reflects the values and needs of Upper Darby Township."

View job description at gmphr.com

THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Appointed by the Mayor with the approval of Township Council, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of Upper Darby Township. The CAO serves as deputy to the Mayor, providing leadership and direction to departments, agencies, and activities as delegated. The CAO has 12 direct reports.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- **Leadership and government experience** - Demonstrates strong, ethical leadership backed by significant local government management experience.
- **Communication and collaboration** - Builds lasting relationships with internal and external partners to sustain Upper Darby's momentum on important initiatives.
- **Goal-focused management** - Maintains focus amid competing demands, empowers department heads to manage effectively, and provides the support they need to succeed.
- **Labor relations** - Brings considerable experience in labor relations and contract negotiations.
- **Accessibility and mentorship** - Remains approachable to all and mentors others to support their highest performance.
- **Financial leadership** - Applies strong financial acumen while partnering with the new Chief Financial Officer to build a sound financial plan from the ground up.
- **Emotional intelligence** - Receives criticism without becoming defensive and consistently keeps the broader perspective in view.
- **Political awareness and governance** - Navigates the political landscape effectively while strengthening the Council's working relationship with the Mayor's Office.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

- Complete the work in progress on lease or acquisition agreements for the Volunteer Fire Houses and present a long-term, stable financial plan for continuity of operations.
- Undertake a facilities study for all Township buildings and present options for investment to the Mayor.
- Research and recommend sustainable service delivery options for sanitation services.
- Work with the Community & Economic Development Department on its downtown revitalization program and find a creative solution to reopen the historic Tower Theater.
- Research organizational structure and recommend opportunities for improvement.
- Begin a utility study on water, stormwater, and sanitary sewer service infrastructure and rates.
- Support advancements in constituent engagement and public information platforms.
- Strengthen the relationship between the Township Council and Mayor's Office.
- Strengthen relationships with regional partners, such as the City of Philadelphia, Delaware County, and other municipalities.
- Continue the ongoing work of building a new community center.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

Bachelor's degree in public administration, political science, business management, or a closely related field and at least 7 years of experience as City/Township Manager, Assistant City/Township Manager, or in a comparable executive leadership role. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered.

PREFERRED:

- Master's degree
- At least 10 years senior-level experience
- ICMA Credentialed Manager
- Familiarity with Township laws and programs

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Upper Darby Township offers an annual salary range of $200,000 – $245,000, based on qualifications and experience, along with a comprehensive benefits package.

RESOURCES

Charter

Budget

Comprehensive Plan

Destination: Downtown Upper Darby

Delaware County Chamber of Commerce

TO APPLY

Apply Online: gmphr.com

First Review: November 29, 2026

More Info: Linda Woulfe, GMP Consultants
lwoulfe@gmphr.com / (612) 965-0237

GMP