



# CITY MANAGER



COLUMBIA FALLS  
MONTANA

Position Marketed by  
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Clear Career Professionals

# LOCAL LIFESTYLE

Columbia Falls, Montana, offers an exceptional lifestyle that seamlessly blends natural beauty, outdoor adventure, and a welcoming community atmosphere. Nestled in the northeast corner of the picturesque Flathead Valley, this charming town serves as a gateway to some of Montana's most breathtaking landscapes and recreational opportunities.

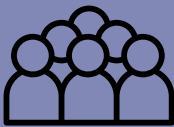
Just minutes away from Glacier National Park, residents have unparalleled access to over a million acres of pristine wilderness, featuring rugged mountains, clear lakes, and diverse wildlife. The park's extensive network of trails and scenic vistas make it a haven for hikers, photographers, and nature enthusiasts. In addition to the national park, Columbia Falls is adjacent to the Flathead National Forest, offering further opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hiking, camping, and wildlife viewing.

For winter sports enthusiasts, the renowned Whitefish Mountain Resort is a short drive away, offering exceptional skiing and snowboarding facilities. During the warmer months, residents can enjoy water activities on Flathead Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake west of the Mississippi, perfect for boating, fishing, and swimming.

Columbia Falls prides itself on a strong sense of community, with events like the annual Heritage Days celebrating the town's rich history and heritage. This festival, held on the last weekend of July, features a parade, carnival, rodeo, and other family-friendly activities that foster a close-knit community spirit.

Columbia Falls offers a small-town feel while providing essential amenities and services. The cost of living is about 3% lower than the Montana average, making it an affordable option for families and individuals. The town boasts a low crime rate, contributing to a safe and family-friendly environment.

The local School District serves approximately 2,185 students, reflecting the community's commitment to education and youth development. The district recently passed bonds to build a new elementary school, addressing capacity challenges, and to refurbish the high school, ensuring modern facilities for students and educators. For those seeking higher education opportunities, Columbia Falls is close to Flathead Valley Community College in nearby Kalispell, which offers a wide range of programs and certifications. Additionally, Montana State University in Bozeman and the University of Montana in Missoula are both within reach, providing access to nationally recognized institutions for advanced studies.



Population  
5,723



Median Income  
\$64,500



Median Home Value  
\$650,000

# WORKPLACE CULTURE

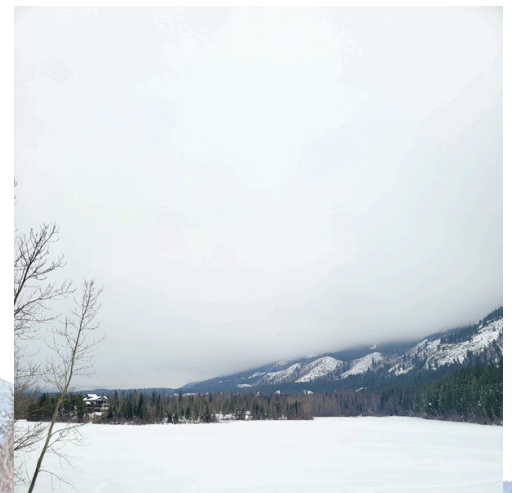
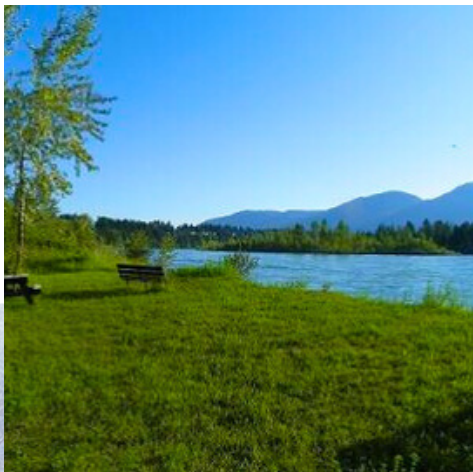
The City of Columbia Falls City Manager operates at the heart of the community, answering to a dedicated Mayor and City Council. This role offers a unique opportunity to lead a highly capable team while driving strategic initiatives that shape the city's future.

The City Council, composed of experienced and long-serving members, brings stability and thoughtful governance to the organization. Mayor Don Barnhart, who has served the city for over a decade, is well-regarded for fostering a collaborative environment where council members are empowered to make impactful decisions. This consistency in leadership provides an ideal foundation for a City Manager to implement long-term strategies with confidence and support.

Council members are deeply engaged in the community, committed to balancing fiscal responsibility with progressive growth. They emphasize empowering department heads, valuing input, and encouraging innovation across all city functions. This culture of trust and collaboration ensures that the City Manager has the tools and support needed to succeed in their role.

With approximately 50 full-time and part-time employees, the city operates as a tight-knit organization where teamwork and open communication are paramount. Department heads are dedicated professionals with a wealth of experience in their respective fields, making it easier for the City Manager to delegate effectively while focusing on strategic priorities.

Columbia Falls values forward-thinking leadership, and the City Manager is expected to take an active role in community engagement, intergovernmental relations, and fostering partnerships with local and regional stakeholders. This position is perfect for someone who thrives in a leadership role and wants to make a meaningful impact in a community that respects its leaders and values its future.



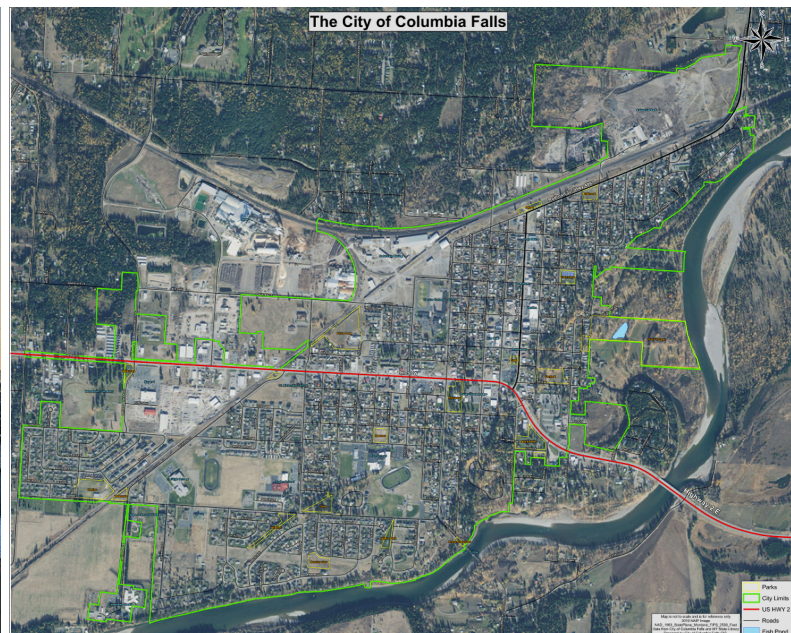
# CHARTING THE FUTURE

## The Position Priorities

- **Strategic Planning:** Develop and execute long-term strategies for growth and sustainability, including updating the city's strategic plan and aligning it with council priorities.
- **Financial Stewardship:** Maintain fiscal responsibility through effective budgeting, grant management, and long-term financial planning.
- **Community Engagement:** Foster strong relationships with residents, businesses, and regional partners through transparent communication and active involvement in local events.
- **Team Empowerment:** Support and develop city staff, ensuring a collaborative and high-performing work culture across departments.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Oversee critical infrastructure projects, including water and sewer system upgrades, road maintenance, and recreational facility enhancements.
- **Housing and Growth Management:** Address challenges related to affordable housing, land use planning, and sustainable growth within the city's limited land space.

## Key Challenges

- **Housing Affordability:** Navigate limited housing availability and affordability while balancing growth and community character.
- **Legislative Compliance:** Adapt to new state regulations, such as SB0382, and ensure compliance with evolving land use and zoning laws.
- **Intergovernmental Relations:** Collaborate effectively with county, state, and regional entities to address shared concerns and secure resources.
- **Economic Development:** Expand economic opportunities while preserving the community's small-town charm and natural environment.
- **Public Expectations:** Balance the diverse needs of residents, including property rights, recreational opportunities, and fiscal constraints.



# HOW YOU FIT HERE

The City Manager of Columbia Falls serves as the Chief Executive Officer of this vibrant and growing community, bringing visionary leadership to a city defined by its natural beauty, collaborative governance, and engaged citizens. This is a rare opportunity to make a profound impact while advancing your career in a supportive and forward-thinking environment.

## The Role

As City Manager, you will oversee the city's daily operations, ensuring efficient and effective administration of all departments. Working directly with the Mayor and City Council, you'll act as a trusted advisor and strategic partner in shaping the city's future. Your responsibilities will include implementing council policies, managing a dedicated team of department heads, and representing Columbia Falls in regional collaborations and intergovernmental partnerships. The position demands a balance of strategic thinking and hands-on leadership. You'll lead initiatives ranging from infrastructure development to housing solutions, navigate state legislative changes like SB0382, and foster relationships with a range of stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and neighboring jurisdictions. With the city poised for growth, your ability to prioritize and deliver impactful projects will be instrumental.

## Your Unique Fit

This role is ideal for a dynamic leader who thrives in a collaborative environment and has a proven track record in public administration. You bring financial acumen, having managed budgets, grants, and long-term financial strategies. Your experience with land use planning, housing challenges, and infrastructure projects will enable you to address the city's priorities effectively.

You'll also be a community builder, someone who values transparent communication and understands the importance of engaging with residents, businesses, and regional partners. If you are a decisive yet approachable leader, Columbia Falls is the perfect platform for your skills and vision.

## Why Columbia Falls?

The city offers an unparalleled quality of life, nestled at the gateway to Glacier National Park and just minutes from Whitefish Mountain Resort. As a leader here, you'll work with an experienced Mayor and City Council that values innovation, empowerment, and collaboration. The supportive governance culture ensures you'll have the tools and autonomy to succeed.

# THE CITY MANAGER WE'RE LOOKING FOR

The next City Manager of Columbia Falls will be a strategic leader, an innovative problem-solver, and a dedicated public servant. They will bring a proven track record of leadership, collaboration, and community engagement, combined with the skills needed to manage a dynamic and growing city. The ideal candidate will reflect the following qualifications and attributes:

## Education and Experience

- A Bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, or a related field is required. A Master's degree in Public Administration (MPA) or a related field is strongly preferred.
- At least 7 years of progressively responsible leadership experience, such as city management, military leadership, or other senior public service roles. Extensive relevant experience may be considered in lieu of a formal degree.
- A history of successfully leading municipal operations, including budgeting, grant management, and infrastructure development.
- Experience addressing housing, growth, and land use challenges, ideally in a small-to-medium-sized community.

## Key Competencies

- **Visionary Leadership:** A strategic thinker capable of setting long-term goals while managing day-to-day operations effectively.
- **Community Engagement:** A natural collaborator who listens to residents and works to build strong relationships with all stakeholders.
- **Team Development:** A leader who empowers department heads and staff to take ownership of their roles, fostering a culture of accountability and innovation.
- **Problem-Solving Expertise:** An adaptable and creative problem-solver who can address complex issues like housing affordability, growth management, and public infrastructure needs.
- **Clear Communication:** Strong skills in public speaking, report writing, and interpersonal communication to connect with diverse audiences, from council members to citizens.
- **Ethics and Integrity:** A commitment to transparency, fairness, and the highest standards of public service.

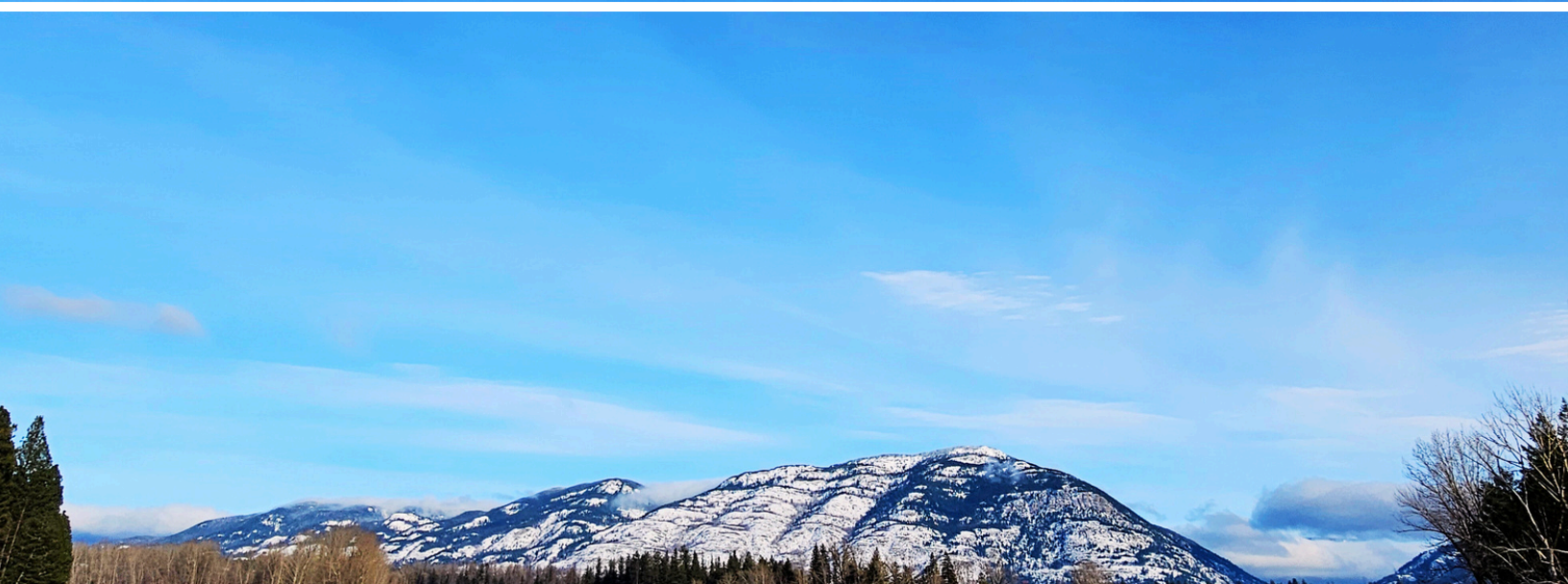
## Preferred Attributes

- While candidates may live outside city limits within a reasonable response time, the City would strongly prefer the manager to reside within Columbia Falls to be fully immersed in the community and its culture.
- Experience in small communities balancing growth while preserving local character.
- A track record of fostering partnerships with regional and state agencies.
- A commitment to collaboration, ensuring diverse voices are heard and valued.

# WHAT WE OFFER

The City of Columbia Falls provides a competitive compensation package for the City Manager role, including:

- **Salary: \$125,000 to \$150,000, depending on qualifications (DOQ).**
- Health Insurance: Comprehensive coverage options for individuals and families.
- Retirement: Mandatory participation in the Montana Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), with the city contributing 9.07% of gross pay and employees contributing 7.9%.
- Paid Time Off: Generous vacation accrual starting at 15 days per year, plus sick leave accrued at one day per month.
- Holidays: 11 paid holidays annually, including the State General Election Day.
- Professional Development: Opportunities for training, conferences, and memberships.
- Relocation Assistance Negotiable



# HOW TO APPLY

The position is open until filled.

First Review Deadline: 5 p.m. Friday, January 31, 2025

Please email your cover letter and resume in .pdf format to [applycolumbiafalls@clearcareerpro.com](mailto:applycolumbiafalls@clearcareerpro.com)

Faxed and mailed submissions will not be considered.

For more information on this position contact:

Michael Boese, President

[Michael@clearcareerpro.com](mailto:Michael@clearcareerpro.com)

[\(972\)837-0916](tel:(972)837-0916)

Candidate materials will be screened in relation to the criteria described in this brochure. Candidates deemed to be the most highly qualified will be invited to participate in the selection process. The selection process will include virtual interviews with the most qualified candidates and final interviews with the City and its representatives. Appointment is subject to completion of a thorough background and reference verification.

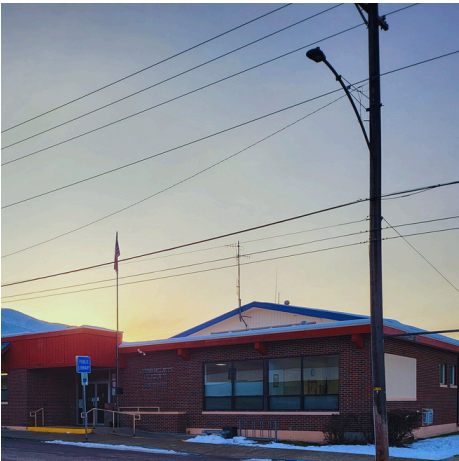
## RESOURCES

Columbia Falls City Website: <https://www.cityofcolumbiafalls.org/>

Flathead County Website: <https://flathead.mt.gov/>

ISD Website: <https://www.cfmtschoools.net/>

[Job Posting Podcast Episode - Listen Here](#)



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