



CITY MANAGER

LA JUNTA, COLORADO

EXECUTIVE
RECRUITMENT
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Welcome to the Junction!



THE COMMUNITY

Located in southeastern Colorado about 60 miles east of Pueblo, the City of La Junta has developed as a junction for commercial, agricultural, and ranching ventures for more than a hundred years. Before that, La Junta was the junction where the famous Santa Fe Trail branched south to New Mexico, while a lesser route continued west to Pueblo and beyond.

La Junta is the county seat of Otero County and sits on the south bank of the Arkansas River. The mountains for which Colorado is so famous can be seen to the west, although La Junta itself is a rolling prairie land. Farming dominates the landscape in a narrow corridor along the river, while a short excursion north or south of US Highway 50 brings travelers to miles upon miles of grasslands. The City has a population of 7,152 in 3.19 square miles.

The City is home to a regional medical center and specialty clinics, as well as a number of retirement communities. An excellent K-12 school system is located here, with enthusiastic, community-wide support for high school sports rising. Otero College offers technical certificate programs, a well-regarded nursing program, and a law enforcement academy. The City hosts a number of light industries and an airport in an industrial park north of the City, as well as a railyard and a downtown business district typical of small western cities.

Major employers include: BNSF Railroad, Lewis Bolt and Nut, Debourgh Manufacturing, Coffee Holding, Otero College, and Arkansas Valley Regional Medical Center.

Parks serve as the center for community activity. The fountain in City Park is a beautiful backdrop to kids fishing and playing and ball fields are filled with tournaments of all kinds all summer long. La Junta has roadside farm markets that tie to the City's railroading past and history that goes back before the fur trade.

Annual festivals include the 4th of July Wet Parade, Early Settlers Day, and Tarantula Festival. Other tourist attractions include Koshare Kiva, Bents Old Fort, and Picketwire Canyons.

La Junta has a median household income of \$50,799 and an average home value of \$145,500.

GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

La Junta operates under a council-manager form of government with six Council Members and a Mayor. The City Manager and City Attorney are appointed and/or confirmed by the governing body.

The City of La Junta offers the following services: Parks and Recreation, Streets Department, Electric Department, Fire Department, Police Department, City Utilities, Public Library, Building Department, Finance Department, City Clerk, Water/Wastewater Department, and Purchasing Department.

The previous City Manager Rick Klein retired after over 30 years of service. He started as an Otero County Engineer before working for the City of La Junta as an Engineer, then serving as Assistant to the City Manager before being appointed La Junta City Manager in 1999 and serving until February 2024.

Major projects underway or recently completed include the Brick & Tile Park, and the Multimodal Center planning and design.

The City has a 2023-2024 fiscal year budget of \$37,894,500 and 127 full-time employees, 20 part-time employees, and 40-45 seasonal employees. La Junta has a sales tax rate of 8.9%.

ABOUT THE POSITION

Under general direction of the City Council, the City Manager carries out the City Council's decisions and oversees all City employees. Duties include executing policies, creating and managing the budget, supervising personnel, and handling contract negotiations. The City Manager will oversee the day-to-day operations of the City in an efficient, and transparent manner.

Ensuring policies and decisions are applied consistently and ethically, the manager will hire and supervise Department heads, oversee special projects and studies, and address the concerns of City residents. This position will be able to work unsupervised and alone, carrying out duties in a



manner befitting a professional position. The City Manager ensures City services are reliable and robust. They will interpret policies and apply judgement for logical conclusions and will possess the delegation skills to assign tasks to City Department heads and/or contractors.

The City Manager represents the City to the media and the public and is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with federal, state, and local agencies, City Council, the employees, and the public.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The new City Manager will focus on the following opportunities and challenges:

- Assisting City Council and Department heads in developing a long-term vision for the community that provides a framework for policy development and goal setting.
- Maintaining a strong commitment to excellence within the organization that sets the tone for all employees. The City Manager should expect staff at all levels, from Department directors to line employees, to meet high standards in service delivery, accountability, and ethics.
- Addressing aging infrastructure.
- Handling water supply issues.
- Leadership for economic development efforts.

IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of La Junta seeks an open-minded, progressive thinker with exceptional leadership skills to serve as its next City Manager. The ideal candidate is a highly creative problem solver, with a positive attitude and a strong work ethic. They will be diplomatic when handling divisive issues. A strong financial background with municipal budget management experience is important. The ideal candidate should be able to manage organizational change, understand economic development, and communicate with business and community leaders. They will be an engaged member of the community and able to work as part of a team.





The ideal candidate will have exceptional written and verbal communication skills and be able to convey ideas to staff and interact positively with City residents, City Council, and federal, state, and local agencies. They will be knowledgeable of local laws and codes, aware of pressing issues in the City, and socially perceptive. Critical thinking skills to approach complex City issues creatively are vital for this position. The chosen City Manager will have strong organizational skills and strong listening skills to respond appropriately and maintain positive relationships with citizens.

Other attributes of the ideal candidate include someone who provides leadership, vision, and a focus on results to serve the community; brings a community-wide perspective that considers past and future challenges to policy discussions; develops and sustains organizational excellence; and promotes innovation.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

This position requires a bachelor's degree in public administration, business, or a related field, plus five (5) to seven (7) years of local government, or other relevant experience, with progressively increasing responsibilities. A master's degree in a related field is preferred. Experience in economic development, and experience in water rights and water purchases is preferred. A familiarity with the challenges associated with aging infrastructure and economic development, is crucial for this position. The City strongly encourages applicants from the private sector or with military backgrounds to apply, as diverse experiences and perspectives are highly valued. A relevant combination of education, training, and experience will also be considered.

Per City Charter, the City Manager must live within La Junta city limits during tenure.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The City of La Junta offers a competitive salary range of \$120,000-\$150,000, depending on qualifications and experience. The City offers a generous benefits package, including medical, vision, and dental insurance; life insurance; paid sick leave and vacation time; and a cafeteria plan. A City car is provided.

APPLICATION PROCESS

[Please apply online](#)

For more information on this position, contact:

Larry Gilley, Senior Vice President

LarryGilley@GovernmentResource.com

325-660-4208



The City of La Junta is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists will be subject to a comprehensive background check.

RESOURCES

City of La Junta

www.lajuntacolorado.org

La Junta Chamber of Commerce

www.lajuntachamber.com/

