



FINANCE DIRECTOR

Independence, Missouri

EXECUTIVE
RECRUITMENT
PROVIDED BY



THE COMMUNITY

Located on the south bank of the Missouri River, Independence is the largest suburb on the Missouri side of the Kansas City metropolitan area and the fifth largest city in the state. It is a city known not just for its rich history but also as a thriving community that offers a quality lifestyle for its residents. With a resilient and growing economy, diverse culture, and strong sense of community, Independence is truly a great place to live and work.

Nicknamed the “Queen City of the Trails,” Independence has a long history dating back to the 1800s when it served as a hub for pioneers on their westward journey along the Oregon, California, and Santa Fe Trails. Independence is also the hometown of Harry S. Truman, the 33rd President of the United States. Today, the city still pays tribute to its roots through various historical sites such as the Truman Presidential Library and Museum, the National Frontier Trails Museum, and the Vaile Mansion.

Independence is more than just a tourist destination; it is a bustling city that provides a variety of job opportunities for its residents. With major employers like Centerpoint Medical Center, Olin Winchester, and the Independence School District, the city has seen consistent economic growth, providing its residents stability and a promising future.

One of the most attractive aspects of living in Independence is the affordable cost of living. The city offers a range of housing options, from historic homes to modern apartments, from a rural lifestyle to living in a first-ring suburb of a metropolitan city, making it accessible for individuals and families of all sizes and budgets. Residents take full advantage of the city’s beautiful parks, trails, and recreational activities. From hiking and biking trails to water parks and sports complexes, including being minutes from the homes of the Kansas City Chiefs and the Royals, there is no shortage of activities while living in Independence.

Whether you are a history buff, a young professional looking for job opportunities, or a family searching for a great place to raise children, Independence offers the best of both worlds – a rich history and a promising future.

To learn more about the area and community, please visit [The Independence Story](#).

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Burd and Fletcher

Centerpoint Medical Center

City of Independence

Crossroads Hospice and Palliative
Care Center

Independence School District

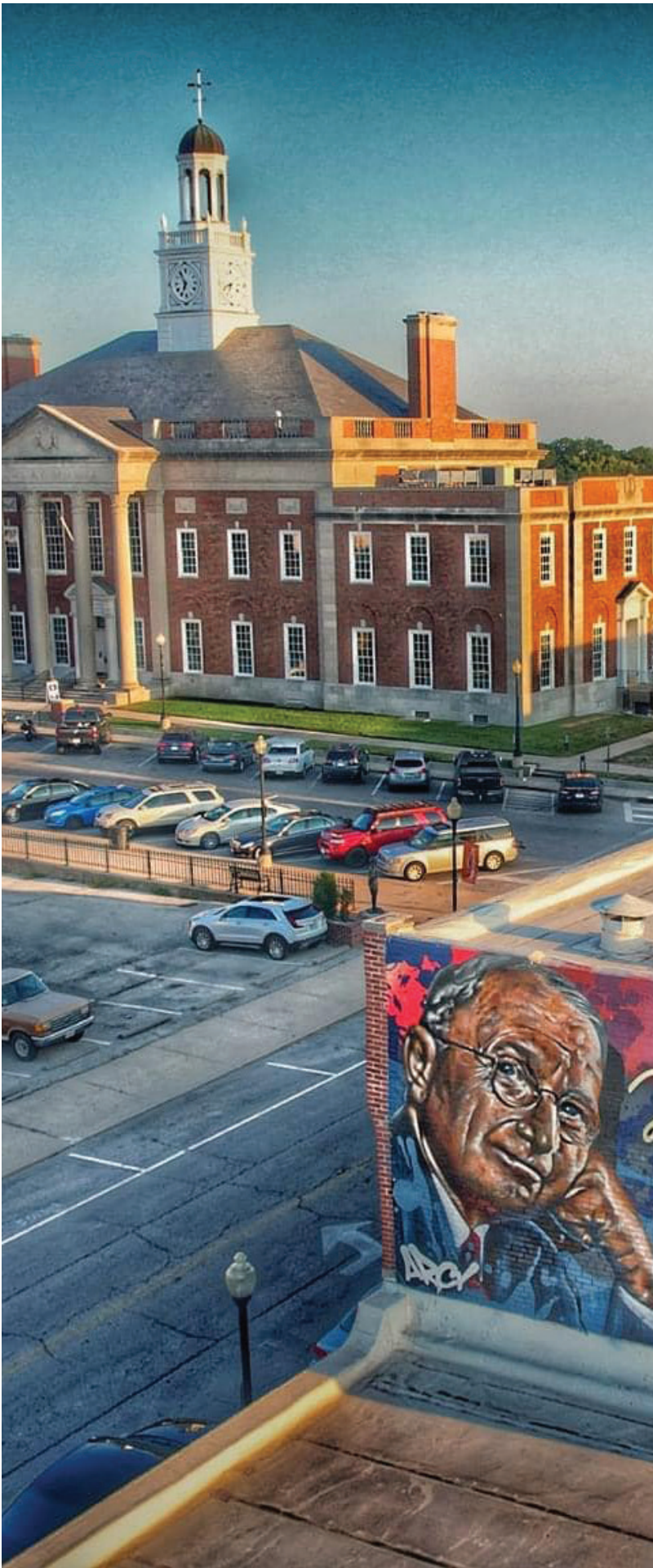
Olin Winchester

Phoenix Home Health

The Groves Retirement Center

Unilever





Community Snapshot



Population
123,000



County
Jackson



Size
78.4 Square Miles



Parks
700+ Acres



Athletic Fields
43



Recreation
Lakes, Trails, &
Golf Courses



Independence ISD
30+ Schools/
14K+ Enrollment



Libraries
Mid-Continent Public
Library System with
30+ Branches



Median Income
\$57,415



Median Home Price
\$150,800

GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

Independence is a full-service charter city operating under a council-manager form of government. The mayor and two council positions are elected at large; the four remaining positions serve single-member districts. All are elected to four-year terms with no term limits.

City departments include Police, Fire, Emergency Management, Parks, Recreation & Tourism, Municipal Services, Finance, Technology Services, Human Resources, Law, Community Development, Health and Animal Services, Municipal Court, and Independence Power & Light.

Appointed to the position of City Manager in 2016, Zachary Walker oversees all day-to-day operations, including 1,182 employees and an annual budget of approximately \$413 million. The City is an organization that maintains a strong sense of family, supports home-work balance, and takes pride in the collaborative and supportive spirit between the Independence City Council and staff.



STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Independence is a safe, inclusive community fostering civic engagement and creativity, with a thriving diversified economy, a strong and proud history, and a high quality of life as our community grows and adapts. After several months of gathering stakeholder feedback, the City Council adopted a new Strategic Action Plan in February 2023. Outlined below are the updated Purpose Statements.

- **An Engaged Community.** The City of Independence will foster a culture of engagement and civic leadership based on innovative and best practices involving community members of all backgrounds and perspectives.
- **An Innovative Economy.** The City of Independence will grow a diversified and innovative economy, leveraging our community amenities, skilled and creative people, and educational resources to generate economic opportunities.
- **A Safe, Welcoming Community.** The City of Independence will embrace a safe, healthy, welcoming, and inclusive community.
- **A Well-Planned City.** The City of Independence will consistently improve our community's appearance and quality of life as it grows and changes, honoring our unique history and sense of place as we plan for a livable, affordable, more connected city.
- **A Financially Sustainable Organization.** The City of Independence will create long-term financial stability by using equitable and sustainable sources of funding for City services, and we deliver them in a lean and efficient manner.
- **A High-Performance Organization.** The City of Independence will operate as an ethical, high-performance organization, anticipating future needs, utilizing best practices, and striving for continuous improvement.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The City's award-winning Finance Department is a team of 14.82 employees operating with an annual budget of approximately \$2.54 million. Responsibilities include:

- **Finance Administration:** Providing leadership and direction for the City's Financial duties and responsibilities so that all the City's financial assets are protected.
- **Accounting:** Maintaining the accounting records for all the City's operations and components units so that the records meet all governmental accounting standards and the annual independent audit is completed.
- **Treasury and Debt Management:** Ensuring excellence in managing the City's banking, investing, and financing services and unclaimed property administration.
- **Finance Operations:** Working collaboratively across the organization to ensure operations and core functions are performed according to best practices and the highest standards of customer service, accountability, and efficiency.
- **Procurement:** Seeking to secure equipment, materials, and services for the City departments in an efficient, professional, and timely manner at the lowest costs.

The work of these talented public servants has consistently earned the City of Independence awards of excellence in both budgeting and financial reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the U.S. and Canada. The City's utilities have also received A/Stable, AA-/Stable and A+/Stable ratings for its bonds from Standard & Poor's.



DEPARTMENT MISSION

Process, record, and report all transactions in a timely and accurate manner using sound business practices and methods. In performing our mission, we will maintain a well-trained staff and utilize the tools provided by the City to their greatest advantage.

DEPARTMENT VISION

To provide the financial services necessary to meet our customers' requirements and keep them informed, and at the same time, maximize the growth of their assets and minimize risk of the loss of the assets they have entrusted to us.



ABOUT THE POSITION

Under the guidance of an Assistant City Manager, the Director of Finance plans, organizes, and administers a comprehensive program to provide leadership and direction to the Finance, Administration, MIS and Personnel staff, aligning department activities with the vision, goals, and policies of the City Council. Essential duties include:

- Planning short- and long-range goals, objectives, organizational structure, and overall department direction.
- Serving as advisor to the City Council and City Manager regarding financial legislation, best practices, and recommendations, and providing administrative support to City leaders.
- Developing, communicating, and monitoring their departments' policies, procedures, and standards and recommending improvement when necessary.
- Interviewing, hiring and training, planning, assigning and directing work, appraising performance, rewarding and disciplining employees, addressing complaints and resolving problems.
- Performing special assignments as requested, including researching and preparing reports and projects, developing and implementing programs, administering state and federal grants, and presenting technical data to management, elected officials, and others.
- Maintaining and upgrading professional knowledge, skills, and development by attending seminars and training programs and reading trade and professional journals and publications.
- Representing the City at various functions and to a mix of stakeholders, including civic and business associations, developers, officials, citizens, and members of the media, to establish goodwill and resolve/respond to issues.



OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The City of Independence has several exciting plans in the works that will keep the new Director of Finance busy in the years ahead. The City is in the midst of redeveloping its Independence Square, which has been the City's commercial center since the community's founding in 1827. The goals for this project include the redevelopment and relocation of the National Frontier Trails Museum and the redevelopment of civic facilities, including City Hall, Justice Center, and the Community Center and amphitheater.

To help facilitate this project, Independence acquired one of Eastern Jackson County's largest Class A office properties in early 2024 in a \$20 million lease-purchase arrangement. The City will relocate the Municipal Services Department and Independence Power & Light from the Independence Utilities Center into a portion of the newly acquired offices within the next year, and all functions currently housed in City Hall. This will set the stage for a comprehensive Justice Center campus on the Independence Utilities Center's 9-acre premises, addressing the burgeoning needs of the Independence Police Department.

To make these projects possible, the City intends to seek a \$250 million General Obligation Bond — the first GO debt in the City's history — in April 2025. The proposed bond would also cover costs associated with street reconstruction, bridges, sidewalks, historic sites, park improvements, an animal shelter, and other public building maintenance. In addition, the City's Capital Investment Plan includes the construction of three fire stations, one new and two replacements, in the coming years.

Beyond the significant fiscal opportunities on the horizon, the new director will be tasked with building and maintaining a strong foundation of confidence and stability in the City's Finance Department team by both internal and external customers. This will include tackling special projects while remaining committed to short- and long-term goals and analyses needed to manage the City's daily operations effectively.

Independence is one of the oldest suburbs in the Kansas City metro area, so important public infrastructure maintenance is an ongoing challenge. Finance staff also work diligently to ensure the financial success of the City's three utilities: Power & Light, Water, and Sanitary Sewer. Together, these three comprise over half of the City's 2024 annual budget.

In their first year, City leaders would like the new hire to:

- Build strong relationships with the Finance Department team and fellow department directors.
- Attain a solid understanding of the City's financial structures, funds, debt, and financial processes and policies.
- Analyze the utility of the City's current ERP system and make appropriate adjustments to improve regular financial reporting and management.
- Work with team members to develop and begin executing a staffing plan to best support the City's financial administrative service needs and succession requirements based on current department strengths and weaknesses.
- Actively serve as the City's financial representative and support its efforts through economic development projects and appointed community tax and utility boards.

With a strong foundation within the organization and community established, goals for the new Director of Finance during their first few years on the job include:

- Developing a long-range financial plan for the City based upon the organization’s strategic plan, its capital plan and its current, ongoing, and future long-range obligations, including its pension obligations. The plan should continue to address the City’s structural imbalance in its General Fund, which currently has a projected positive ending fund balance (\$20M) by FY 28-29.
- Building off the City’s recently improved procurement process, updating and building a well-conceived, understandable, and clearly communicated complete set of city financial policies and procedures.
- Supporting collective bargaining negotiations as needed with the City’s seven public employee bargaining units in coordination with the City Manager’s Office and other City departments.
- Assisting in strategically and effectively managing the City’s self-funded health insurance plan, covering 944 active employees and 1,230 retirees and beneficiaries, in cooperation with the Human Resources Department and other partners.
- Developing and implementing strategies to effectively manage and/or mitigate the City’s risk management portfolio in cooperation with the Law Department and other partners.
- Assisting City departments in improving public service accomplishment and performance measurement dashboards.



IDEAL CANDIDATE

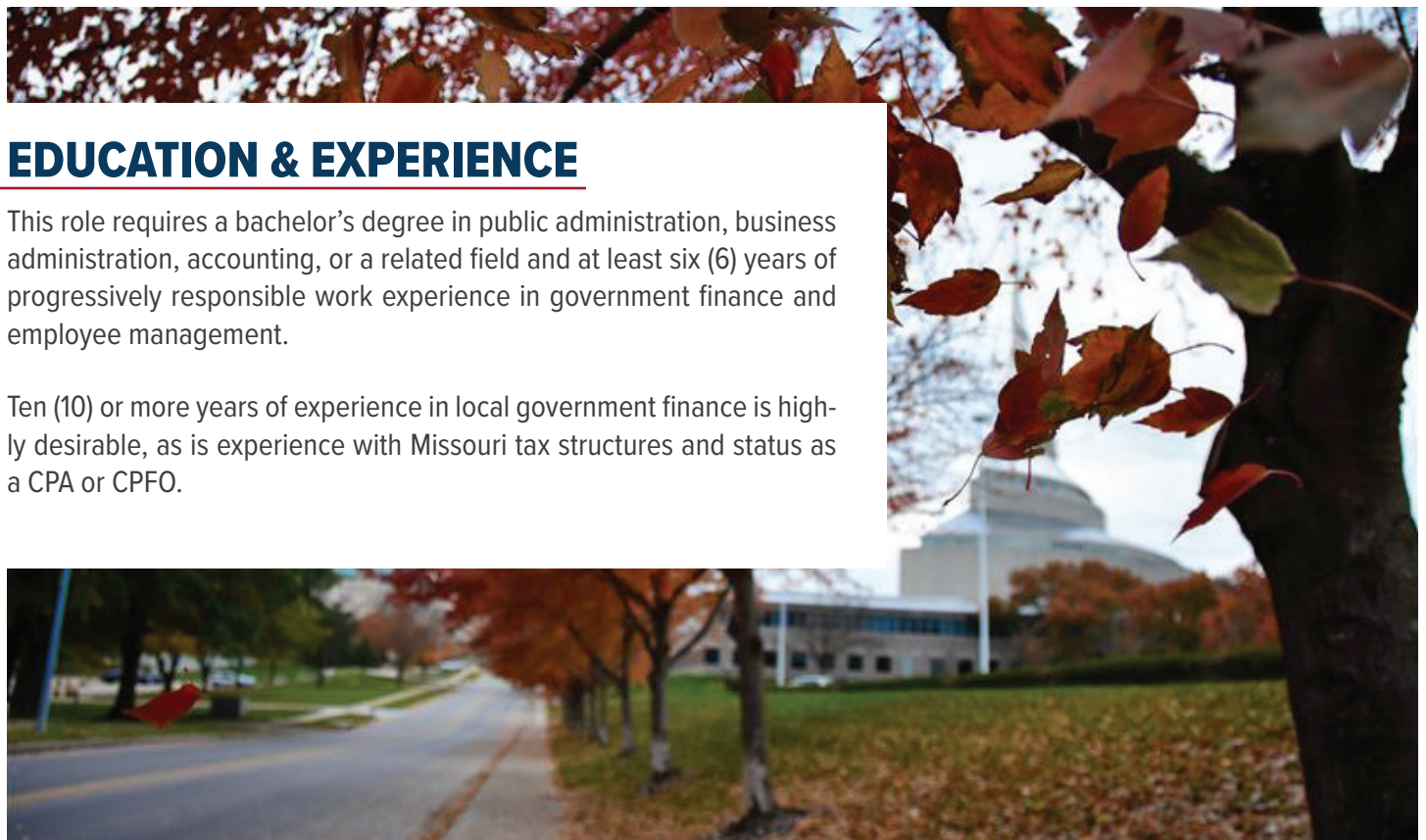
The City of Independence is seeking a visionary and innovative municipal finance leader to steer its fiscal operations and uphold the highest standards of integrity as the new Director of Finance. After a period of flux due to retirements and other circumstances, the organization's Finance Department is prime for stable leadership over a strong team of public servants committed to excellence on behalf of the organization and community.

This role requires a self-motivated leader who combines exceptional decision-making skills with a personable approach, effectively communicating across various audiences to foster transparency and trust. Candidates should have robust experience in financial management within a government setting, bringing extensive knowledge of accounting and financial administration. They should be equipped with a deep understanding of budgetary principles, administrative practices, and compliance with relevant laws and regulations — and supervisory experience is key.

The right fit for this position is strategic and analytical, skilled in developing goals, assessing capital and operational needs, and preparing detailed reports and analyses. The new hire must also have exceptional interpersonal skills to lead and mentor staff, build cooperative relationships with senior management, elected officials, and external partners, and navigate complex, politically sensitive situations.

This role demands proficiency in government accounting standards (GAAP and GASB), ERP systems, and financial operations such as public funds investment, procurement, and debt administration. Experience in financial reporting, including audits of government financial reports, federal funds, and grant management, is crucial. Additionally, expertise in economic development finance (including TIF districts), public sector bond financing, and utility finance will be valuable.

The ideal candidate is highly organized and capable of setting priorities, meeting deadlines, and managing a diverse workload with minimal oversight. They're a team player who excels in strategic planning and a confident decision maker known for their creativity and adaptability.



EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

This role requires a bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, accounting, or a related field and at least six (6) years of progressively responsible work experience in government finance and employee management.

Ten (10) or more years of experience in local government finance is highly desirable, as is experience with Missouri tax structures and status as a CPA or CPFO.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Independence is offering a salary range of \$125,257 to \$187,885 for this position, commensurate with qualifications and experience. The organization also provides a comprehensive benefits package, including four health insurance plans, three dental plans, two vision plans, and both life and long-term disability insurance; generous paid leave policies; and car and phone allowances. Employees also receive free membership at the Roger T. Sermon Community Center and have the option of working a hybrid schedule.

Independence participates in the Missouri Local Government Employees Retirement System, featuring a 4% employee contribution and 22.3% employer match, and offers employees access to supplemental 457b plans.



APPLICATION PROCESS

[Please apply online](#)

For more information on this position, contact:

Merrill King, Senior Vice President
MerrillKing@GovernmentResource.com
651-308-6582



The City of Independence, Missouri, 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 Independence
independencemo.gov

Independence Finance Department
independencemo.gov/government/city-departments/internal-services/finance-department

Independence Tourism
visitindependence.com

Independence Chamber of Commerce
ichamber.biz

Independence School District
idschools.org

