



CITY OF EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN
FINANCE DIRECTOR



EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT



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EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN (pop. 48,500) is looking for a seasoned Finance Director who is committed to customer-based results through empowerment of staff in a high-performing city government. East Lansing is home to Michigan State University located on the Red Cedar River, five miles east of Lansing, the State Capital. As a destination community, East Lansing offers a multitude of university-related culture, plus biking, golf, hiking, and kayaking nearby. The next Finance Director will assist with strategic financial planning and be adept at translating complicated financial matters to staff and elected officials. This is an excellent opportunity for an experienced professional looking to make a difference in an active and growing community.

EAST LANSING'S SCHOOLS, RECREATION & QUALITY OF LIFE

East Lansing is widely recognized as a community with a high quality of life. With top-rated schools and growing businesses, East Lansing is known for its innovation, family values, and environmental stewardship. The community offers a full range of modern amenities including state-of-the-art hospitals and medical centers, contemporary retail centers, and a diverse array of restaurants and cafes. East Lansing is considered one of the best places to live in the state. Major employers in the region include the Michigan State Federal Credit Union, Sparrow Health System, General Motors, and Auto-Owners Insurance Group. The area is well-served by the Capital Region International Airport. East Lansing has above-average public schools and five charter and private schools are available.

East Lansing's downtown area is centered around Grand River Avenue, a wide, tree-lined boulevard, that supports an eclectic mix of dining, retail shops, bookstores and more. Multiple specialty restaurants offer worldwide cuisine and craft beer breweries abound. Working in City Hall, it is convenient and habit forming to grab a mid-morning or afternoon snack just around the corner. You can feel the energy and vibrancy downtown that is created by the MSU students and staff that hail from 100 plus countries worldwide.

EAST LANSING BY THE NUMBERS



Median Housing Value:
\$194,100 (2019)



Population: **45,500**
White: **76.4%**
Hispanic/Latino: **4.4%**
Black: **7.2%**



Percentage of Bachelor
Degree or Higher: **70%**



MSU students and staff
that hail from **100+**
countries worldwide

The Wharton Center on the adjacent MSU campus hosts multiple plays, performers, programs, and speakers while college football, basketball and other athletics are nearby. Greater Lansing hosts a variety of festivals, concerts, and performance art as well as a minor league baseball team.

East Lansing has more than 25 walkable neighborhoods, many of which have neighborhood associations that sponsor social events, attend to neighborhood needs, and often advocate for neighborhood interests in meetings of the City Council. A section of the city has been designated a Historic District. In the northernmost tier of the town are new housing subdivisions, along with a growing amount of office development. Staff can choose to live in these neighborhoods, or build on former farmland nearby, and still be just ten minutes from the office.

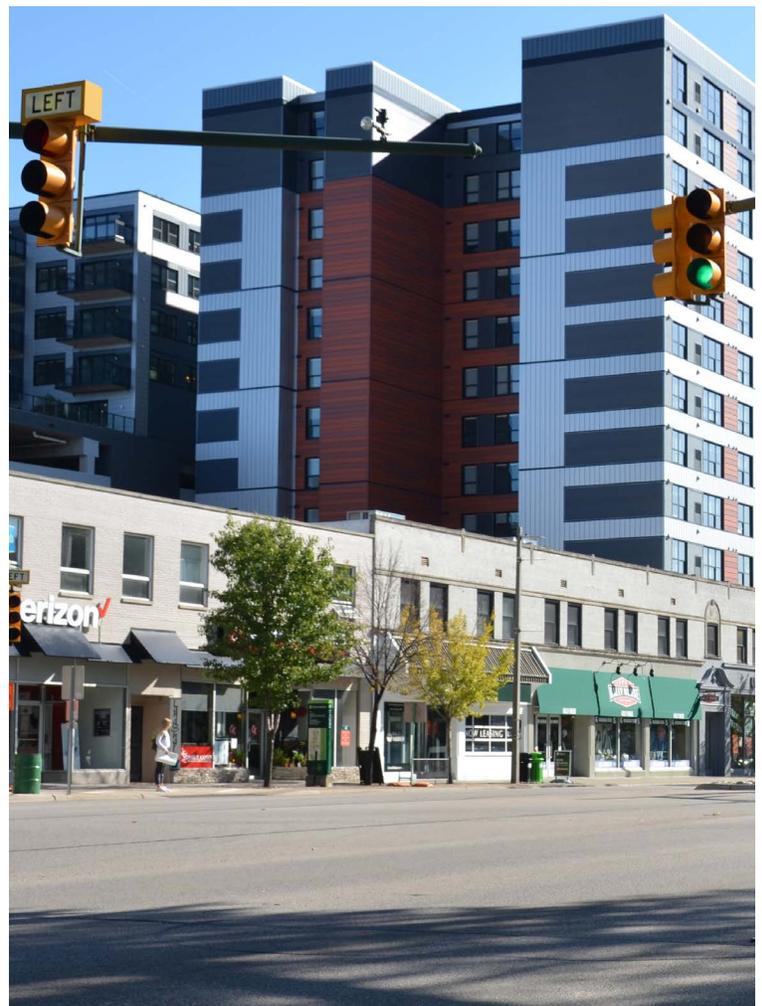
In conclusion, East Lansing has tremendous cultural and recreational assets that provide the high quality of life of a major urban area without sacrificing housing affordability. City staff uniformly report that East Lansing is where they want their kids grow up with the support of quality schools and extensive cultural opportunities.

ECONOMY

East Lansing's unemployment rate is 2.8%. Michigan State University is a driver of economic activity.

The community offers outstanding career choices for each wage earner in your family, ranging from innovative office and financial firms, to specialty retail, to collegiate services, and more.

In the last five years the downtown has exploded with residential, commercial, and restaurant growth with over \$400 million of total new investment, including a seven-story commercial Federal Credit Union structure near City Hall and a major hotel. A 300-person tech company recently relocated to a state-of-the-art headquarters in East Lansing as well as Atesteo, a German drivetrain testing company. This growth is perfectly aligned with East Lansing's strategic priorities. East Lansing is home to large city economic assets yet still feels like a smaller town to live in.



25 Walkable Neighborhoods

Unemployment Rate: 2.8%

\$400 million new investment



ORGANIZATION, BUDGET & STRATEGIC PLAN

East Lansing is a full-service city that operates under the Council-Manager form of government with a full-time staff of 300 and a FY 2023 combined budget of \$155.2 million. The City is in sound financial condition with a 17% general fund balance and a AA+ bond rating. The City currently provides a full range of services including Finance, Planning, Building and Development, Parks, Recreation and The Arts, Police, Fire, Public Works and Environmental Services, Administrative Services, the Senior's Program, and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office.

East Lansing is viewed as a stable and forward-thinking place to work. The Leadership Team tends to be long-term staff members who take pride in tackling hard issues that provide the greatest good and are in the overall best interest of the community. Senior staff report that one never needs to worry about hidden agendas or mixed motivations. "Teamwork" and the word "we" is real in the City of East Lansing.

[East Lansing, MI - Official Website | Official Website \(cityofeastlansing.com\)](https://www.cityofeastlansing.com)

[Strategic-Priorities-2022---Q3-Updates-PDF \(cityofeastlansing.com\)](#)

[2021 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report 1988 \(cityofeastlansing.com\)](#)

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

The Finance Department has a reputation of working seamlessly with the greater Leadership Team to brainstorm multiple points of view in solving problems. Mutual accomplishment, respect, and understanding the big picture is the shared motivation. The City Manager, the Finance Department, and the general staff all have a shared interest moving East Lansing forward as a top tier community.

Although university towns are typically known for having enthusiastic, and sometimes overly thoughtful elected and appointed officials with corresponding longer meetings, this energy creates a synergy that leads to overall better outcomes.

The successful Finance Director candidate will need to work quickly to get to know all the staffing needs. The successful candidate will need to manage their time well given the breadth and depth of finance functions, yet avoid over-delegation, so as to enable high performing existing and expert staff to continue to pursue excellence without excessive supervision. It is likely the next Finance Director will need to work to increase staff support in proportion to organizational and city council information needs.

IDEAL CANDIDATE: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The next Finance Director will need to be a doer, be consultative, and take responsibility for planning and supporting staff while overseeing the operations of the Finance Department as the chief financial officer, budget officer, and risk manager. This position is hired by, and reports directly to, the City Manager and provides highly responsible and complex administrative support to the entire city government. The Finance Department administers a complex chart of accounts and comprehensive financial services with a team of 15 staff, including professional managers for each of four (4) operational divisions that report to the Director: Budget and Accounting, Assessing, Income Tax, and Treasury. The Finance Department also conducts purchasing and biweekly payroll.

The ideal person will excel at translating complex, technical finance information while employing strategic thinking to assist other departments and policymakers. The Director will need to speak effectively, explain, and analyze/evaluate the impacts of policies, projects, programs, and activities. The Finance Director will need to be able to see the bigger picture, make predictions, and effectively communicate long-range financial outcomes. Since existing accounting capabilities are strong within the Department, the new Director can focus on enabling the overall team to continue to excel. The successful candidate will likely come to be viewed as a local government finance leader in the state given the proximity of the state capital.

The ideal candidate will:

- Communicate complicated financial information in real-world terms to policymakers and departments
- Work closely with the City Manager to exercise extensive interdepartmental collaboration and view other department leaders/staff as internal customers
- Provide financial predictions, planning, and policy recommendations and to help bring out the best team outcomes
- Be a quick study open to change, yet make decisions that require tough judgment calls that stand the test of time
- Maintain and share trust
- Model the organization's values
- Seek out additional revenue sources, perhaps related to new City Council or voter authority and/or state legislation
- Adjust and balance workloads when demands are high, retain existing talent, and recruit new staff to backfill for upcoming retirements
- Create improved post retirement financial actions associated with the Michigan Employees Retirement System benefits (MERS).





REQUIREMENTS

- Bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, accounting, economics, or a related field
- Eight (8) or more years of progressively responsible experience in local government financial-management, or any equivalent combination of education, experience, and training
- Four (4) four years of administrative and supervisory experience
- Fund accounting, municipal budget preparation and administration experience
- Strong ethical standards
- Knowledge of systems and inequities as they relate to diversity and inclusion

PREFERENCES

- A master's degree in a related field
- Registration, or eligibility for registration, as a Certified Public Accountant in the State of Michigan
- Long-term financial planning and financial management experience
- State of Michigan experience is desirable but not mandatory

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Salary is \$96,237 - \$134,032.94 per year (including the \$2,000 annual certification bonus for holding a CPA), additional pay negotiable for the right candidate, DOQ/E. The City offers a generous compensation and benefits package which includes relocation assistance and some remote work flexibility. East Lansing has a strong collaborative culture.

[Apply here](#). Applications must be received by January 19th for initial screening. Interviews will be conducted the week of January 30th and February 13th. Applications are confidential until permission is given. Open until filled. Position starts in late April..

The City of East Lansing is committed to becoming a fully inclusive, anti-racist place to live, work, visit and do business. We are seeking and hiring individuals who share our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

EAST LANSING IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/ADA EMPLOYER



GovHR USA
GovTEMPS USA

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