



# CITY MANAGER

## Oak Ridge, Tennessee



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# CITY MANAGER OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE

## THE CITY

Oak Ridge, Tennessee (population 31,402) rich in [history](#) and natural beauty, combines a family friendly small-town environment that has an abundance of recreational, cultural and educational amenities with the opportunities and challenges of a unique, growing [city](#). Oak Ridge, located 25 miles west of downtown Knoxville in both Roane and Anderson counties, and part of the Knoxville metropolitan area, is strategically located in a valley between the Cumberland and Great Smoky Mountains. From its quiet woodlands and [peaceful waterfronts](#) to the [Manhattan Project National Park](#), Oak Ridge has something for everyone. Oak Ridge is seeking experienced local government executives as candidates for its City Manager position. Candidates must be entrepreneurial, innovative, and lead with integrity, collaboration and a high level of communication.



Oak Ridge is experiencing momentum unlike anything in its recent history. Created by the federal government to construct the first atomic weapon in 1942, Oak Ridge is currently experiencing a surge in growth and economic development expecting to add at least another 10,000 residents in the next ten to fifteen years. The federal government owns a sizeable fraction of the land area, and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has a large presence, with major facilities operated by multiple contractors for different components of DOE. Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) is a multiprogram research laboratory of the DOE Office of Science. The Y-12 National Security Complex is a production facility of the National Nuclear Security Administration, responsible for the maintenance and production of uranium components of nuclear weapons in the United States arsenal. As the nuclear stockpile is reduced, Y-12 dismantles these devices to allow the special materials to be used for electric power generation by the commercial power industry. The complexity of leading a City like Oak Ridge with this federal installation backdrop cannot be underestimated.







Oak Ridge leaders and its citizens have been proactive in preparing Oak Ridge to meet this momentum. Well over 100 volunteers serve the city as appointed members of city commissions such as the Beer Permit Board, Municipal Planning Commission and advisory boards on topics like disabilities, environmental quality, and the interests of local youth. From 2017 - 2019, the city and hundreds of volunteers developed a [Blueprint for Oak Ridge](#) that is a citizen supported, visionary plan for future growth and development. The following values were identified:



**Natural Assets:** There is widespread appreciation for the greenbelts, trails, river, creeks, and scenic vistas that are part of the everyday experience of living in Oak Ridge. Their protection, enhancement, and expansion are important to our community.



**Science, Technology and Innovation:** Oak Ridge grew from a fascinating history of worldwide influence that is still the underpinning of our economy and community identity. We were "Born to Innovate." At its inception, Oak Ridge was a place where incredibly smart, creative young people came from around the globe to do amazing work that changed the world. Interestingly, that remains the case yet today.



**Education:** Oak Ridge schools have presented consistent success in the community; from the time they were established in 1943 to serve the families of the Manhattan Project. In 2017, the district earned the distinction of being the first to achieve district-wide AdvanceED STEM Certification, meaning each school and all grades K-12 are focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs.



**Being Uniquely Oak Ridge:** Oak Ridge was an extraordinary place when it was the core element of the Manhattan Project – it is an extraordinary place today. The community clearly expressed the desire to make Oak Ridge a more distinct and identifiable place, and to build upon its unique history, landscape, the arts, and contribution to the world of science.

Most notably, the Blueprint says the following about Oak Ridge:

It is also apparent that the people that call Oak Ridge home are remarkable for the exceptional community spirit, broad-mindedness, and sense of responsibility. The diversity of people that was produced by the Manhattan Project has shaped a culture of tolerance and altruism. One does not have to be born here to be an Oak Ridger, a concept that redefines "community."







## THE CITY MANAGER POSITION/ CITY ORGANIZATION

The City Manager reports to a seven member Mayor and City Council, elected at large. The Mayor is elected by the members of the City Council and serves a two year term as Mayor. The current Mayor and Council are collaborative, valuing healthy, civil debate, and work to build consensus. The City Manager is responsible for providing executive leadership in a full-service city with a FY2023 total budget of \$220 million and 418 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions across all funds. The city's budget includes the budget for the highly rated Oak Ridge public schools. The

city and the Oak Ridge School system have a collaborative working relationship which is critical as the community grows and further develops. In addition to the traditional services provided by a full-service city (Police, Fire, Public Works, Planning and Development, Finance, Information Technology, Library, Recreation and Parks, City Courts and Administration, Oak Ridge also operates an electric utility, and water and wastewater utility and is considering the construction of a general aviation airport.

The city's department heads are experienced, dedicated leaders who value teamwork, collaboration and communication. They are seeking a leader who leads with integrity, empathy and honesty, who respects the subject matter expertise of the executive team and can build consensus in a complex working environment. The workforce is described as "smart and passionate" with the desire to make Oak Ridge the "best it can be."







## EXPECTATIONS AND PROJECTS

- The next City Manager will be expected to fully embrace the challenge of executive leadership in a city with a significant federal government presence. Approximately 35% of the City Manager's time is spent on addressing issues related to the federal presence and maintaining and further enhancing the relationships inherent in this unique environment.
- The next City Manager will have the opportunity to work with the elected officials and all community stakeholders on the [Comprehensive Plan Update](#) as the city moves to implement the City Blueprint.
- The city's original inception did not include a traditional downtown. Current city leaders are working on developing a mixed-use "downtown" district in the city's center that will function like an [historic downtown](#) and can be a gathering place for residents and visitors.
- The city is in a unique position with respect to economic development. The economic impact of the Department of Energy presence is estimated to be \$7 billion. Oak Ridge can continue to capitalize on this asset while also diversifying its economic development and redevelopment options.
- The city has earned a Aaa bond rating from Moody's. It is important to maintain this rating as the next City Manager continues to address the City's aging infrastructure. The city is completing an \$80 million Water Plant construction and is considering construction of a new general aviation airport. Highway expansion is also critical to alleviate congestion in the region. The ability to leverage federal and state funding for these important, long-term improvements is vital.
- Oak Ridge Schools account for a large fraction of the City's \$220 million budget. The bulk of the schools operating budget comes from State-controlled allocations, but the City supplements this by contributing nearly \$15.5 million per year (equivalent to about three-quarters of receipts from local taxes on real property) from city tax revenues, and debt service on school capital projects adds several million more to the city expenditure for schools. Furthermore, the schools are requesting additional capital funding for improvements and possible expansions to their facilities.
- Oak Ridge, like many local governments, is grappling with recruitment and retention of employees. The next City Manager must be a 21st century leader with the ability to assess the needs of today's workforce and provide innovative solutions to recruitment and retention challenges including but not limited to compensation, flexibility in scheduling and hybrid work options.

## CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

- Candidates must have a master's degree in public administration, business administration, urban planning, or related field and seven to ten years of progressively responsible municipal government experience, including senior management leadership, ideally in a region with a large federal presence. ICMA-CM certification is highly valued.
- The next Oak Ridge City Manager must have a leadership record of entrepreneurial, innovative problem-solving skills who can capitalize on the City's current growth trend and along with the elected officials and stakeholders chart a vision for Oak Ridge's future.
- Candidates must be highly collaborative with demonstrated success in building partnerships, particularly with large institutional stakeholders, regional partners and state agencies.
- Candidates must be comfortable with and have experience in dealing with complex, multi-stakeholder issues that include the federal government – well developed negotiation skills are a must.
- Candidates must have a reputation for a high level of communication in their interactions with the elected officials, city organization, citizens and all community stakeholders.
- Candidates will be expected to reside in Oak Ridge and become a part of the fabric of the community.

## CANDIDATE SKILLS AND TRAITS

- Be a motivating, empathetic and transformational leader who can facilitate cross-organizational relationships.
- Possess municipal finance expertise and knowledge sufficient to leverage city dollars with state and federal funds to achieve the city's infrastructure goals and objectives.
- Be a naturally curious, politically astute and situationally aware leader who displays strong listening skills.
- Be a skilled manager who can foresee organizational challenges, assess and elevate their team's talents and support succession planning and professional development for city employees.
- Display excellent oral and written communication skills with the ability to explain complex issues to policy makers, citizens and other stakeholders in non-technical language.
- Possess a strong public service orientation that inspires and motivates the organization and community.







## COMPENSATION AND RESIDENCY

The anticipated hiring range for this position is \$200,000 to 215,000 +/- DOQ. The city offers a competitive benefits package. The City Manager will be required to reside in the City of Oak Ridge within a reasonable amount of time. Under Tennessee law applications may be subject to open records request.

## HOW TO APPLY

The recruitment for this position is being handled by GovHR USA. Candidates should apply by June 2, 2023, with resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related references to [www.GovHRjobs.com](http://www.GovHRjobs.com) to the attention of:

Heidi Voorhees, President and Lane Bailey, Senior Vice President GovHRUSA, Tel: 847-380-3243

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