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**LAKE FOREST,  
ILLINOIS**

**DIRECTOR OF  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION**

# DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION CITY OF LAKE FOREST, ILLINOIS

The City of Lake Forest seeks an experienced and innovative leader to head its Parks and Recreation Department. With a world-class beach, new state-of-the-art athletic field facility, thriving youth organization, and a variety of adult offerings, Lake Forest provides an excellent opportunity for Parks and Recreation programming. At the same time, Lake Forest has experienced a significant population shift in recent years, with a record number of new families moving into the City. This brings an exciting opportunity to build upon the City's solid Parks and Recreation foundation. The City of Lake Forest seeks a creative leader who can collaborate with employees across the organization, elected and appointed officials, and the public to shape the future of recreational experiences in this exceptional community.



The City of Lake Forest, Illinois is seeking to hire a Director of Parks and Recreation with experience in parks and recreation operations, in addition to the principles and practices of maintenance, open space management and trails planning, including funding and acquisition, park construction and use of public buildings and park facilities in a comprehensive park and recreation program.

This position is responsible for overseeing all City parks, trails, facilities, recreation programs, and partnerships. The ideal candidate will have a proven track record of effective leadership, strong written and oral communication skills, creative problem-solving, and the ability to collaborate with staff, elected officials, and the community to help enhance the city's parks and recreational system as we build a better community. This Director role will require exceptional team building and professional development skills to inspire excellence in staff and foster a collaborative work environment that allows for diversity of thought, viewpoints, and experiences.

This recruitment is being conducted on a local, regional, and nationwide basis, encouraging applications from all individuals who meet the qualifications. All inquiries relating to the recruitment and selection process for the Director of Parks and Recreation position are to be directed to the consultants listed below who are collaborating with the City of Lake Forest and its designated Search Committee.

Steve Scholten or Joe DeLuce, Vice Presidents,  
GovHR USA,  
630 Dundee Road, #225, Northbrook, IL 60062  
Tel: 847-380-3240

Formal applications should be submitted to: [www.govhrjobs.com](http://www.govhrjobs.com)





# ABOUT THE CITY OF LAKE FOREST

## HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

A picturesque community located high on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan, Lake Forest is one of the eight suburban communities north of Chicago that are collectively referred to as "the North Shore." Less than 30 miles from downtown Chicago, Lake Forest's 19,149 residents are spread over 16.8 square miles with approximately 95% of the area being zoned single-family residential.

Lake Forest is nationally renowned for the quality and character of its architecture, whether erected for residential, religious, educational, or public purposes. Market Square, located in downtown Lake Forest, was constructed in 1916 and is reported to be the first shopping center in the United States. Today, Market Square encompasses many nationally recognized retail businesses as well as unique specialty stores.

The City is home to Lake Forest College, a highly regarded private liberal arts college, Lake Forest Graduate School of Management, and Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital, a world-class medical institution. It is also home to a thriving theater life, a beautiful lakefront beach, thousands of acres of preserved open space, and 30 miles of trails. The western boundary of the City is the Illinois Toll Road (I-94) with three interchanges serving the City. With two Metra commuter railroads, the divided four-lane U.S. Route 41 (which connects to the Edens Expressway on the south and Wisconsin 1-94 on the north), scenic Green Bay Road, Sheridan Road (Illinois 42), the four-lane Waukegan Road (Illinois 43), and the above-mentioned Illinois Toll Road, the transportation arteries serving Lake Forest are exceptional.





## LAKE FOREST CITY GOVERNMENT BACKGROUND

The charter under which the City of Lake Forest was incorporated provides advantages not available to cities incorporated under the general statutes enacted by the legislature after the adoption of the 1870 Illinois Constitution. The main advantage is that the charter permits Lake Forest to be administered efficiently and economically with a minimum number of separate government bodies. The City Council is the legislative and policy-making body. It includes the Mayor and eight Aldermen, two from each of the City's four wards. The Mayor is elected biannually for a two-year term and Aldermen are elected to staggered two-year terms, with one Alderman elected from each Ward annually.

The City has a \$122 million total budget, which includes a \$42 million general fund budget. Lake Forest is a full-service city, including police, fire, public works, water production plant, community development, finance, human resources, parks and recreation, senior center, youth center, cemetery, and golf course. The City has 215 full-time employees, and a strong commitment to fiscal stewardship. The City Council embraces long-term planning, including aggressive infrastructure and pension funding strategies. Rather than making short-term fixes, the City makes decisions with the best long-term interests of the entire community in mind.





## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Parks and Recreation Department is a City-run department and the facilities are under the direction of the City Government. The City's special charter gives it ownership of all public parks and recreation facilities within the City and an obligation to regulate and improve those assets. The City of Lake Forest operates under the Council-Manager form of government. The Director of Parks and Recreation reports to the City Manager and also works directly with the Parks and Recreation Board, which serves as an advisory body regarding the development and operation of recreation programs, playgrounds, the Recreation Center, Deerpath Golf Course, the beach, and all other City-owned Parks and Recreational facilities. The Board also acts as a liaison between the residents and the City Council on all Parks and Recreation matters.

The Department has a \$9.3 million operating budget with 23 full-time and 360 part-time and seasonal employees. The current staff is comprised of professional, long-term personnel who take pride in their jobs and in providing the highest level of service to the residents of Lake Forest. The department is responsible for 580 acres of parks and offers over 1,000 recreation programs for all ages each year.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Parks and Recreation Department is committed to providing residents of all ages positive experiences through a variety of high-quality programs, facilities, and services under the direction of professional and dedicated staff who are responsive to the changing needs of the community and to preserving our natural environment.

### VISION STATEMENT

To promote wholesome, enriching, and enjoyable recreation, park and golf experiences that continues to improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and community.





# CHOOSE LAKE FOREST

With a world-class beach, 17 beautiful parks, new state-of-the-art athletic field facility, a thriving youth organization, and a variety of adult offerings, Lake Forest provides an excellent opportunity for Parks and Recreation programming. At the same time, Lake Forest has experienced a significant population shift in recent years, with a record number of new families moving into the City. This brings an exciting opportunity to build upon the City's solid Parks and Recreation foundation.

Lake Forest is a unique community with exceptional recreation facilities, where residents are actively involved and supportive of initiatives that enhance our quality of life. Get to know our community and envision yourself leading in an organization where staff are encouraged to be creative and are provided the resources to try new things.

- **World Class Beach:** The beachfront is a gem of the community and home to one of the premier community sailing programs in the country. It has benefited from recent investments to revitalize the bluffs and boardwalk, and hosts nearly 100k visitors each summer!
- **Deerpath Community Park Athletic Fields:** New state-of-the-art athletic fields, with 9.5 acres of synthetic turf, eight dedicated pickleball courts, a half-mile walking trail, two open air pavilions, a playground, and more!
- **CROYA:** the Committee Representing Our Young Adults, the City's youth organization, is flourishing. From music jams to helping kids with disabilities to a multitude of activities, including retreats and educational programs, the organization creates a safe space for teens. It is recognized as one of the country's longest running and most successful youth organizations.

## AWARDS

The City of Lake Forest is known for providing superior services to its citizens and in 2003 the Lake Forest Parks and Recreation Department received the **National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in the Management of Parks and Recreation.**

This award, considered the highest award in the profession of Parks and Recreation, is presented by the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration and National Recreation and Park Association. Lake Forest was chosen as the only City in the United States, among cities with population of 25,000 or less, to receive this award.

# QUICK FACTS

Population:	19,368
Median Household Income	\$194,267
Median Home Value	\$996,140
Parks	17
City Park Acreage	580
Facilities	7
Bike Paths	11 miles
Nature and Walking Trails	20 miles
Beaches	1
Baseball Fields	4
Softball/Baseball Fields	9
Grid Fields	30
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	3.5
Pavilion/Picnic Shelter	8
Tennis Courts	16
Pickleball Courts (Outdoor)	12
Racquetball Courts	3
Playgrounds	10
Golf Courses	1
Golf Driving Range	1
Recreation Center	1
Ice Rink	1
Volleyball Courts (Outdoor)	2
Boat Launch	1
Gyms	1





## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Director of Parks and Recreation can expect to work closely with staff on the following opportunities and challenges:

- Program and schedule the new, 9.5-acre synthetic turf athletic field complex to maximize use and revenues.
- Develop, create, and promote new innovative programs and activities for all residents.
- Develop new partnerships with schools, local colleges, and various companies and agencies throughout the community.
- Implement the use of data analytics to create programming and services that foster excitement in the community.
- Implement marketing strategies to make the Parks and Recreation Department one of the best in the state and nation.
- Develop a plan and work through the NRPA CAPRA Accreditation process.
- Work effectively with the Parks Advisory Board to utilize their skills and interests.
- Encourage all staff to be leaders and show the passion for providing quality programs and services to the residents.
- Promote the beach operations and services to encourage more use of one of the community's best assets.





## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- Must be an experienced parks and recreation leader with a commitment to excellence in customer service, employee relations and development, and integrity in local government.
- Must possess a management and leadership style that reflects collaboration, team building, accessibility, and a calm, professional demeanor.
- An approachable and supportive leader who has experience with high performing organization concepts and embraces this philosophy in their leadership style.
- A visionary leader who can develop the department's mission, goals, and strategies in alignment with the community's strategic priorities.
- A leader who is transparent, knowledgeable, and able to build trust in the organization.
- Innovative and experienced in identifying emerging parks and recreation trends and opportunities and able to effectively implement best practice solutions.
- Decisive and firm when necessary while acting consistently with clarity and grace.
- Able to balance the needs for strategic thinking and direction with the day-to-day management of the department and cultivate positive morale.



## CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS

- A bachelor's degree in parks and recreation, or a related field. A master's degree is a plus.
- At least ten years' experience in parks and recreation, with five (5) of those years served in a management capacity. Municipal or public sector experience is a plus.
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of all functions and facets of parks and recreation.
- The capacity and interest to be an effective mentor and leader for staff and have a demonstrated record of developing a team.
- An excellent communicator and an active listener.
- The demonstrated ability to build collaborative, effective relationships across all levels of the organization.
- Enthusiasm and energy for working at a fast pace with the ability to prioritize and delegate effectively.
- Residency in the City of Lake Forest is not required.



EDUCATION

This position requires a bachelor's degree in parks and recreation administration, public administration, business administration, or a closely related field and ten years of relevant experience. A master's degree is a plus.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$155,000 to \$185,000. Appointments within the range will be made depending on the qualifications of the selected candidate. A generous benefit and retirement package is also offered by the City, details which are available at the City of Lake Forest's website, [cityoflakeforest.com](http://cityoflakeforest.com).

HOW TO APPLY

Candidates are to apply by Monday, March 4, 2024, with resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related references to [www.GovHRjobs.com](http://www.GovHRjobs.com) to the attention of Steve Scholten, Vice President, or Joe DeLuce, Senior Vice President, GovHR USA, 630 Dundee Road, #225, Northbrook, IL 60062. Tel: 847-380-3240

The City of Lake Forest is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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