



CITY OF  
**LA MESA**

*JEWEL of the HILLS*



# **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**Application deadline: February 7, 2025**





## OUR COMMUNITY

Founded in 1912 and centrally located in the rolling hills of San Diego County with a population of approximately 60,000, La Mesa is known as the Jewel of the Hills. A near perfect climate, tree-lined streets, walkable neighborhoods, easy access to retail and commercial areas, and a quaint Downtown Village make La Mesa a highly desirable community in which to live and work. There is more to the Jewel of the Hills than just geography. It's about the myriad of people who have called La Mesa home for the last 100 years whom we honor for their extraordinary accomplishments as well as their devotion to the community. Spanning nine square miles, the City's increasing popularity is not going unnoticed. Niche's 2023 Best Places ranks La Mesa as one of the best suburbs for young professionals in California and one of best and most diverse places to live in the San Diego area.

La Mesa is also a much sought-after business location due to its regional centrality and superior transportation network that includes three major freeways and two trolley lines, plus quick and easy access to a major international airport. The City is home to more than 5,000 businesses representing a wide array of industries with Sharp-Grossmont Hospital, the La Mesa-Spring Valley School District, Walmart (two locations), Kaiser Permanente, and Costco being the largest employers. A main attraction for many La Mesans is the ability to live, work, shop and play in the community in which they live. The Downtown Village serves as the historic center of the community and is filled with one-of-a-kind retail shops, vintage stores, and dining options, while also being a gathering place for many civic events and celebrations including a weekly farmers market, summertime classic car shows and annual Oktoberfest which is one of the largest in the west. Also, within city limits, Grossmont Center serves as a regional dining, shopping and entertainment hub with over a million square feet of space.

The community's amenities support a healthy living lifestyle. Fifteen beautiful municipal parks are located within La Mesa's borders as are award winning urban trails, jogging paths, and other recreational facilities including a municipal pool and sports complex.

La Mesa is served by two school districts. The La Mesa-Spring Valley School District operates most of the elementary and middle schools while Helix Charter High School is part of the Grossmont Union High School District. There are also numerous private schools in the area. Local higher education options do not get any better with the University of California San Diego, San Diego State University and the University of San Diego all in close proximity. In addition, several community colleges serve the region.

## CITY GOVERNANCE

La Mesa is a general law city which uses a council-manager system of government with a directly elected mayor. The city council consists of a mayor and four councilmembers, all of whom are elected from the city at large and serve four-year terms. In this arrangement, the council is responsible for determining policy, and the City Manager ensures that such policy is implemented. The City Council appoints the City Manager and City Attorney, as well as a full complement of Boards and Commissions.

In addition to Community Services Department and offices of the City Manager and City Clerk, other city departments include Community Development, Human Resources, Finance, Fire, Police, and Public Works.

The Director of Community Services is a "department head" level classification and receives administrative direction from the City Manager. As a member of the City's Senior Management Team, the Director of Community Services carries out general policy direction from the City Manager and elected officials, fulfilling assigned responsibilities within broad guidelines. The City has 278 full-time budgeted employees. The 2024-2025 budget is \$148,886,882.

### MISSION

Our mission is to reliably deliver high-quality public services that enhance the quality of life for all.

### ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

Welcoming, Accessibility, Accountability, Excellent Customer Service, Integrity

### FIVE-YEAR GOALS

- Maintain a community where residents and visitors feel safe.
- Ensure a strong financial outlook through careful planning, sustainable service levels, and fiscal sustainability.
- Promote a high quality of life that current and future generations can afford to call home.
- Invest in infrastructure to serve the needs of the community.
- Nurture an organizational culture where employees are recognized for the delivery of high-quality services to the community.

## THE COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Community Services Department focuses on meeting diverse community needs through essential health, safety, and well-being programs. It enhances residents' quality of life via facilities like the Adult Enrichment Center, Community Center, Municipal Pool & Spa, Nan Courts Cottage, Recreation Center, and 15 City parks. These facilities host various programs for all ages, including camps, classes, events, and spaces for community gatherings.



## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **AQUATICS:** provide a wide range of programs and activities for all ages and abilities; maintain Municipal Pool and Spa.
- **ADULT ENRICHMENT CENTER:** manage volunteers; provide meeting spaces for community events, partner with outside agencies to provide recreation and enrichment classes, social activities, and manage the La Mesa Walks Program; and manage the daily lunch program in partnership with County of San Diego.
- **FACILITY & PARK RENTALS:** manages multiple indoor and outdoor rental facilities providing venues for weddings, special occasions, birthday parties and community events throughout the year.
- **SPORTS:** provides oversight for the use of athletic fields for youth and adult sports located within City parks and school district facilities.
- **RECREATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL CLASSES:** offer more than 400 instructional programs for all ages including babysitting, dance, tiny tots, fitness, gymnastics, and sports classes. The most popular recreation program in the division, run completely by part-time staff, is the 9-week La Mesa Summer Day Camp Program. Specialty camps are also offered during school breaks with various topics such as art, skateboarding, cooking, dance, traditional day camp, engineering, gymnastics, jump rope, science, and tennis.

## THE POSITION

This is an at-will position, reporting to the Assistant City Manager. The Community Services Director has the responsibility to plan, direct, supervise and coordinate the activities and programs of the Community Services Department. The position will be supported by seven (7) full-time positions and seasonal part-time staff.

## KEY FUNCTIONS AND PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

- Assuming full management responsibility for all Community Services Department services and activities providing leisure, educational, and cultural activities for the City of La Mesa including aquatics programs, community recreation activities, and Human Services programs; plan and direct the operations of and providing custodial services for public buildings; recommend and administer policies and procedures.
- Providing leadership and expertise in the implementation of Park Master Plans, including the development of new parks and facilities.
- Managing the development and implementation of departmental goals, objectives, policies and priorities for each assigned service area.
- Establishing, within City policy, appropriate service and staffing levels; monitoring and evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery methods and procedures; allocating resources accordingly.
- Selecting, training, motivating and evaluating assigned personnel; coordinating staff training; working with employees to correct deficiencies; implementing discipline and termination procedures.

- Managing the development and administration of the department budget including budget development for aquatics, recreation programs and Human Services programs; approving the forecast of funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials and supplies; approving expenditures and implement budgetary adjustments as appropriate and necessary.
- Planning, directing and coordinating, through subordinate level staff, the Community Services Department's work plan; assigning projects and programmatic areas of responsibility; reviewing and evaluating work methods and procedures; meeting with key staff to identify and resolve problems.
- Overseeing the operations of non-profit Park and Recreation Foundation as required in accordance with the City's mission; raising funds for project; serving as the liaison between the foundation, community and City; participating in the development of a volunteer leadership team to guide the Foundation create community awareness of Foundation; developing long term funding for Foundation.
- Representing the Community Services Department to other departments, elected officials, outside agencies, and the general public; coordinating assigned activities with those of other departments and outside agencies and organizations.
- Providing staff assistance to the City Manager; participating on a variety of boards, commissions and committees; preparing and presenting staff reports and other necessary correspondence.
- Attending and participating in professional group meetings; staying abreast of new trends and innovations in the fields of leisure, educational and cultural services.
- Responding to and resolve difficult and sensitive citizen inquiries and complaints.

## PRIORITIES & OPPORTUNITIES

- **Program Development & Oversight:** Enhancing and managing leisure, educational, and cultural programs to meet the diverse needs of the community.
- **Staff Leadership & Development:** Recruiting, training and managing department staff to ensure efficient service delivery and fostering a collaborative and productive work environment.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Assessing and improving service delivery methods, maintaining facility operations, and ensuring safety and compliance with laws and regulations.

## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will be an innovative, flexible, and collaborative leader who values teamwork and is committed to developing and mentoring staff. They will be a forward-thinking individual with strong communication skills who can align departmental objectives with the City's long-term vision. The successful candidate will have the ability to identify community needs, evaluate programs, and implement innovative solutions to create inclusive and accessible community services and facilities for all residents. The ideal candidate will combine their technical expertise, leadership, community focus, and strategic thinking to enhance the City's community services and improve the quality of life for La Mesa residents.



## KEY ATTRIBUTES & CHARACTERISTICS

The City of La Mesa seeks a candidate who will be a hands-on working leader with a commitment to timely execution, accountability, and transparency; is progressive, proactive and flexible; thrives in a position that requires attention to detail; and has excellent organizational, communication and problem-solving skills. The following traits are desired:

- **Influential Leadership:** Effectively engaging others in undertaking and completing challenging projects, aligning activities and priorities with those of the City and creating a world-class Community Services Department.
- **Exceptional Customer Service:** Positive, engaging interactions and communications with City Council, committee and commission members that fosters unity and the solutions to challenges.
- **Change Management:** Successfully creating and leading changes that enhance the City of La Mesa customer-focused approach.
- **Interpersonal Leadership:** Applying a collaborative and consultative approach that builds rapport and supports the attainment of departmental goals.
- **Inclusive Leadership:** Dedicated to creating an equitable work environment where diverse perspectives are valued, and all team members feel empowered to contribute.

## QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination of education and experience that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

- A Bachelor's degree, or equivalent, from an accredited college or university with major course work in recreation administration, business administration, public administration, or a related field.
- A Master's degree is highly desirable.
- At least seven (7) years of increasingly responsible experience in community services programs, including three (3) years of experience in managing and supervising a comprehensive community services, recreation, and/or human services program.



## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The annual salary range for the Director of Community Services is **\$163,654 - \$198,931**, commensurate with the candidate's experience and qualifications.

In addition to a competitive salary, the City offers an attractive compensation and benefit package that includes:

- **Retirement** – Participation in the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). Classic Tier Members hired on or after January 1, 2013, will be enrolled in the 2.5% @ 55 plan with an employee contribution of 8% and employee cost sharing of 1%. PEPRAs members will be enrolled in the 2% @ 62 plan with an employee contribution of 7.75%.
- **Social Security** – The City participates in Social Security.
- **Medical, Dental & Vision** – Effective January 2025, the City contributes up to \$2,120.96 per month towards the medical, dental, and vision plans of fulltime employees and their qualified dependents. The City participates in CalPERS Health plans.
- **Vacation** – two to four weeks, based on length of service.
- **Vacation Buy Back** – Management employees may sell back anywhere from 40 to 80 hours of vacation in December of each year, based on their number of years of service.
- **Sick Leave** – 12 days per year.
- **Sick Leave Conversion** – Management employees may convert a portion of accumulated sick leave to an equal amount of vacation or pay, based on formula and eligibility.
- **Holidays** – 14 holidays.
- **Administrative Leave** – 80 hours per calendar year (use or lose).
- **Mobility Allowance** – \$375 per month (\$0 if issued a City vehicle).
- **Technology Allowance** – \$80 per month.
- **Deferred Compensation** – The City matches employee's contributions up to \$1,500 per calendar year.

To view additional benefits for Management, please visit <https://www.cityoflamesa.us/436/Salaries-Benefits>.

## APPLICATION PROCESS AND RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE

**The final filing date is 11:59 P.M., Friday, February 7, 2025.**

To be considered, interested candidates must submit a job application, cover letter and resume online under the City's Job Opportunities page at [cityoflamesa.us](http://cityoflamesa.us).

**DEADLINE TO APPLY:  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2025.**

Candidates whose qualifications most closely meet the needs of the City will be invited to participate in the examination process for this position. Extensive reference and background checks will be completed on the selected candidate.

For additional information, please contact Gretchen Spaniol, Director of Human Resources at [gspaniol@cityoflamesa.us](mailto:gspaniol@cityoflamesa.us).

