



CITY MANAGER

Salary Range: \$150,000-\$180,000
Depending on Qualifications

The City of Oberlin, OH invites qualified candidates to apply for this position.



OBERLIN, OH

Quick facts:

- City Population: Approximately 8,000
- Location: Lorain County
- City Government: Council-Manager
- Largest Employer: Oberlin College and Conservatory
- Notable Landmarks: Allen Memorial Art Museum, Tappan Square, Weltzheimer-Johnson House (Frank Lloyd Wright), Memorial Arch, Waterworks Tower
- Education: Oberlin City Schools; nearby private and charter school options available
- Median Household Income: \$52,000
- Median Single-Family Home Value: \$160,000
- Annual Budget: ~\$51 million
- Staff Size: 110 full-time; 65-70 seasonal

Oberlin, OH





About the City of Oberlin

Nestled just 35 miles southwest of Cleveland, the City of Oberlin blends the charm of a small town with the energy of a progressive, culturally rich community. Surrounded by a mix of urban and rural landscapes, Oberlin is known for its diversity, vibrant arts scene and unwavering commitment to social justice and environmental sustainability. It's more than a place to live—it's a place to belong.

Here, individuals, families, businesses and organizations thrive together, supported by a spirit of collaboration and a high quality of life. Enjoy scenic biking trails, lush parks and the peaceful beauty of the Oberlin Arboretum—all just steps from your door.

Oberlin College and Conservatory anchors the city, deeply enriching its cultural, intellectual and social life. The college brings a diverse population, world-class performances, innovative programming and a forward-thinking spirit that helps shape Oberlin's unique identity. Other important contributors to the community include Lorain County Community College and local nonprofits like Oberlin Kids and Oberlin Community Services.

Explore the city's walkable downtown, where a vibrant mix of outstanding restaurants and shops complement a calendar of year-round community events and festivals that draw visitors from across the region. History and creativity are everywhere—from the Allen Memorial Art Museum and scenic Tappan Square to a rich collection of National Historic Landmarks, including the iconic Memorial Arch, the 1886 Waterworks Tower and the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Weltzheimer-Johnson House.

Oberlin also honors its powerful legacy as a stop on the Underground Railroad. The Oberlin Underground Railroad Center, housed in the historic 1889 Gasholder Building, and The First Church in Oberlin (1842), a longtime hub of community life, offer meaningful connections to the city's past and its ongoing commitment to justice.



Governance and Organization

Oberlin is a Charter City, with four key appointees hired by and reporting directly to City Council.

The City takes pride in delivering high-quality public services to both residents and visitors. Its operations are supported by a stable, experienced workforce that takes great pride in their work, with many having deep community roots. Effective governance is strengthened by a unified and collaborative City Council.

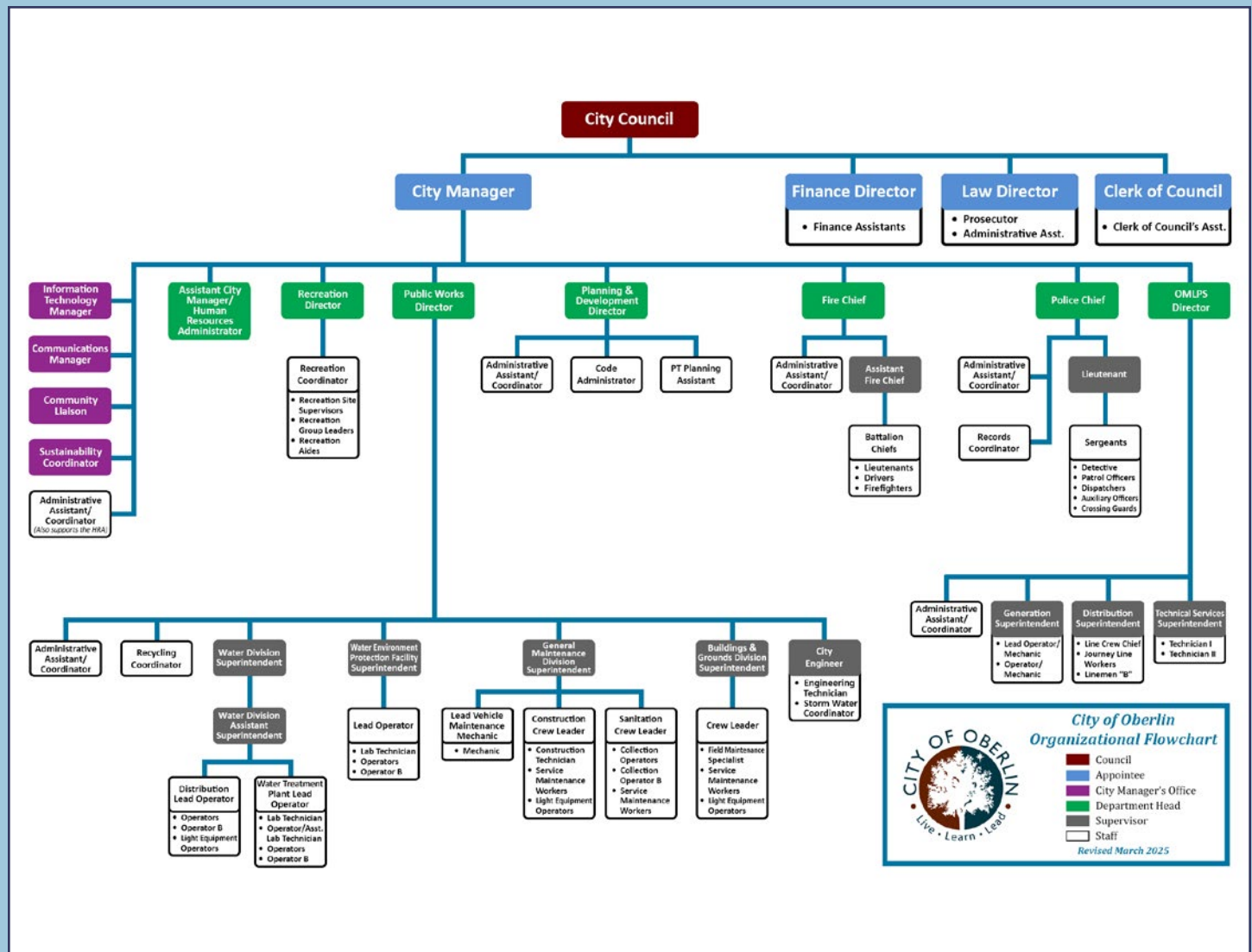
Oberlin's recently adopted Comprehensive Plan, along with upcoming Social Equity and Climate Action Plans, reflect a clear and forward-looking vision for inclusive, sustainable development.

Departments overseen by City Manager

- Assistant City Manager/HR Director
- Public Works Department
 - Water Division
 - Water Environmental Protection Facility
 - General Maintenance Division
 - Building & Grounds Division
 - City Engineer
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Oberlin Municipal Light and Power System/OMLPS
- Planning & Development Department
- Administrative Department
- Information Technology
- Communications Manager
- Community Liaison
- Sustainability Coordinator



CITY OF OBERLIN ORGANIZATIONAL FLOWCHART





About the Role

As the City's chief administrative officer, the City Manager is appointed by and reports to the City Council, overseeing all municipal operations in accordance with Council-established policies. This individual is expected to lead with integrity and initiative, demonstrating ethical governance, responsive service and a strong commitment to community stewardship.

The next City Manager will guide a civil service workforce of approximately 160 employees, fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability and inclusivity. They will actively support the goals outlined in the City's Comprehensive Plan and other Council-identified priorities, including deepening community engagement, advancing economic development and promoting equitable access to public services—particularly in areas such as public works and infrastructure.

The City Council is open to negotiating an employment agreement and will consider a multi-year term for the right candidate.

Key Responsibilities

- Prepare and manage the annual municipal budget in collaboration with the Finance Director.
- Anticipate and advise City Council on emerging needs and strategic priorities.
- Prepare agendas for Council meetings and provide relevant background and guidance.
- Oversee human resources functions and support the professional development of City staff.
- Lead, direct and evaluate the operations of City departments and programs.
- Manage the City's infrastructure and physical assets.
- Communicate transparently and effectively with the City Council, department heads, staff, residents and stakeholders.
- Represent Oberlin at regional, state and national meetings and conferences.
- Participate in professional groups, committees, commissions and City boards.



WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

The successful candidate will bring technical expertise, sound decision-making and a proactive, people-centered leadership style. They will be a confident communicator and relationship-builder—someone who maintains strong connections with elected officials, community leaders, City staff, residents and key institutional partners such as Oberlin College and Conservatory and Oberlin City Schools.

Preferred Qualifications and Experience

- Demonstrated experience in local government management or administration.
- Strong understanding of municipal finance, procurement and fiscal policy.
- Familiarity with state and national policy trends and their potential impact on local government.
- Experience aligning operations with strategic plans and organizational goals.
- Commitment to sustainability, innovation, transparency and inclusive practices.

The next City Manager of Oberlin will be more than an administrator—they will be a trusted civic partner who listens deeply, acts decisively and leads with vision to support a thriving, equitable future for the city and all who call it home.



The Ideal Candidate

The next City Manager of Oberlin, Ohio, will be a seasoned, values-driven leader with a strong foundation in effective and efficient local government management. Council envisions someone who is not only a skilled administrator, but also a visible, trusted presence in the community—engaged with residents, involved with local organizations and attentive to historically underrepresented voices.

Working with the City Council, the City Manager will lead implementation of the City's Comprehensive Plan, which aims to expand economic opportunity, enhance housing options and enrich public services through collaboration with institutions like Oberlin College and Conservatory.

Operationally, the City Manager will oversee daily municipal functions with a strong focus on efficiency, service quality and affordability. Key responsibilities include ensuring the effective operation of City utilities—especially the Oberlin Municipal Light and Power System—and maintaining the City's long-standing fiscal stability through strategic budgeting and cost-saving measures that do not compromise essential services.

This role also calls for continuous improvement in operations and workplace culture, active support for the professional growth of staff and ongoing review and refinement of policies and ordinances. The City Manager will work closely with department leaders, leveraging staff strengths and addressing challenges collaboratively to foster a high-performing, inclusive organization.

Above all, the City Manager must be capable of translating community aspirations into actionable plans that are both strategic and financially sustainable. Balancing competing interests with empathy, fairness and sound judgment will be critical to long-term success.

In Oberlin, inclusivity is more than a value—it's a practice. The right candidate will lead with integrity, openness and a deep commitment to public service as the City moves forward.

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KEY TRAITS AND COMPETENCIES

The next City Manager of Oberlin will be a forward-thinking, community-focused leader who brings vision, initiative and integrity to the role. They will lead by example, embodying the values that define Oberlin's identity and aspirations.

Key Leadership Traits:

- Visionary and inclusive leadership.
- Innovative and creative problem-solving.
- A strong commitment to social equity, fairness, diversity and inclusion.

Core Competencies:

- Exceptional communication skills.
- Confident, effective public speaking and presentation expertise.
- Strategic planning, project management and organizational effectiveness.
- Economic development experience.
- Environmental stewardship.
- Strong problem-solving ability.
- High emotional intelligence and interpersonal awareness.



OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES AHEAD

Oberlin is a city on the move, and the next City Manager will play a pivotal role in driving progress while staying grounded in community values. Some of the key opportunities and priorities awaiting the new leader include:

- Securing intergovernmental funding for capital and strategic initiatives.
- Strengthening engagement with local and prospective business owners.
- Deepening partnerships with surrounding municipalities.
- Advancing equitable, balanced economic development.
- Enhancing the city's annual budget process and financial planning.
- Expanding public communications and transparency.
- Increasing access to affordable and appropriate housing for residents of all income levels.
- Implementing cost-saving strategies without compromising essential services.
- Creating succession plans to support smooth leadership transitions in city departments.
- Increasing collaboration and cooperation among city departments and staff.

WHAT WE VALUE

As part of this executive search, Pracademic Partners engaged with Oberlin City Council and senior staff to identify the key values and leadership traits they believe are essential for the next City Manager. Their responses reflect a shared vision rooted in collaboration, accountability and equity.

Top Characteristics & Priorities:

- Create an environment where all residents can thrive.
- Consensus-building and collaboration.
- Transparency and open communication.
- Fiscal responsibility.
- Strategic planning.
- Long-term thinking.
- Consistency and reliability.
- Inclusivity.
- Community engagement.
- A clear understanding of housing needs and solutions.
- A strong focus on economic development.

How to Apply

This recruitment process is being conducted with strict confidentiality. All inquiries, nominations, and application materials will be handled with discretion throughout the search.

Candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by **May 7, 2025**. The position will remain open until a final selection is made.

To express interest, please submit the following materials via email:

- A cover letter
- A current résumé
- A list of three (3) professional references

Application materials should be sent in confidence to:

Dr. Ian M. Coyle

ian@pracademicpartners.com

Subject line: *City Manager - City of Oberlin*

Pracademic Partners is assisting the City of Oberlin with this executive search. Dr. Coyle is available to address questions or receive nominations throughout the process.

Transparency and Public Information Notice to Applicants: Please be advised that any written communications, including but not limited to inquiries, applications, and accompanying materials, are public records under the laws of the State of Ohio and must be provided or made available for inspection upon request by any person.

Finalist candidates will be required to complete a comprehensive background check.