



CITY MANAGER

Annual Salary:
\$175,000–\$195,000 DOE/DOQ

Ottawa, Kansas



Are you a strategic, collaborative, and community-minded public sector leader who can champion organizational excellence, guide long-range planning, and foster a high-trust, team-oriented culture? Are you ready to engage and involve yourself into a positive community of 12,500 that's in an ideal location in the Kansas City/Lawrence/Topeka metro area? If so, apply to be the City of Ottawa's next City Manager!

We're looking for an exceptional relationship-builder and results-driven administrator who is:

- Skilled in municipal operations and finance
- Experienced in cross-departmental leadership
- Committed to transparency, service, and community engagement

"A great place to live, work and play" –read on to learn more about this opportunity!

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Ottawa is a welcoming, full-service community that blends small-town charm with access to major metropolitan amenities. Known for its friendly atmosphere, collaborative spirit, and commitment to continual improvement, Ottawa offers the safety and connection of a close-knit town alongside the opportunities of the broader region. Less than an hour from Kansas City, just 20 minutes from Lawrence, and with strong access to multiple airports and major highways, Ottawa is positioned for both convenience and growth.

The city features historic architecture, vibrant locally owned shops and restaurants, the historic Plaza Cinema, Ottawa Memorial Auditorium, the Old Depot Museum, and abundant cultural programming. It is also a regional hub for outdoor recreation, with the 118-mile Flint Hills Trail and the 52-mile Prairie Spirit Trail uniquely intersecting in Ottawa, drawing cyclists, hikers, and outdoor enthusiasts from across the state.

The City of Ottawa is home to Ottawa University, a distinguished private institution founded in 1865 and steeped in heritage that links the city's educational and civic identity. The University has been working to extend outreach and vitality through the town and particularly the downtown.

Healthcare in Ottawa is embodied by the AdventHealth Ottawa (formerly Ransom Memorial), a modern, community-oriented hospital delivering a full spectrum of acute, surgical, emergency and specialty services.

Rooted in the homeland of the Ottawa Tribe, the community was incorporated in 1866 and grew along a natural river crossing, later becoming a railroad and regional trade hub. Today, Ottawa continues to balance its heritage with modern advancements, supported by quality schools, medical services, and employers across manufacturing, logistics, education, and healthcare.

GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

The City of Ottawa operates under the Commission-Manager form of government. The five-member City Commission is elected at large, with two members serving four-year terms and one serving a two-year term. The Commission annually selects a Mayor from among its members.

Ottawa is a full-service city providing fire and police services, planning and zoning, parks and recreation, cemetery management, public works, utilities, water and wastewater treatment, electric generation and distribution, finance and utility billing, municipal court operations, and a municipal airport.



POPULATION
12,632



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
\$64,655

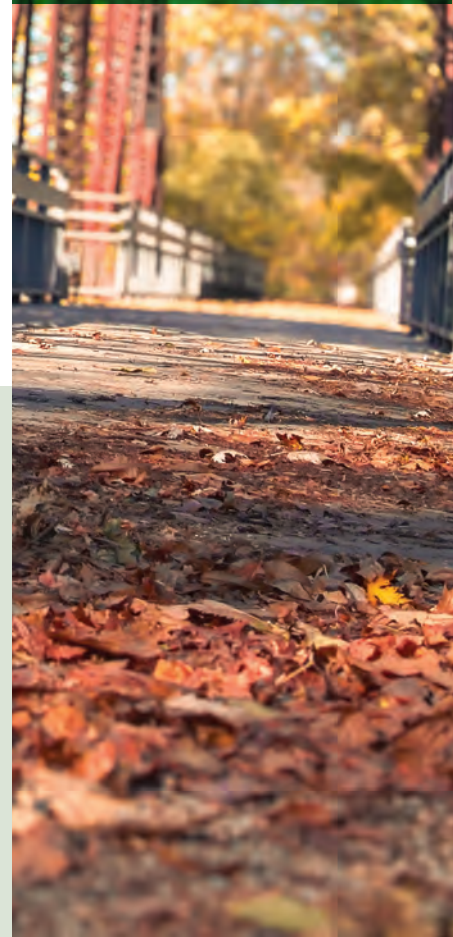


MEDIAN HOME VALUE
\$207,500

History



Tourism





ABOUT THE JOB

The City Manager’s Office provides professional administration of all city affairs, ensuring effective operations, responsible stewardship of resources, and responsive service to the public. The office supports the City Commission, advances organizational initiatives, manages intergovernmental relations, and ensures that departments receive the guidance and support needed to maintain high-quality municipal services.

Reporting to the City Commission, the next City Manager will:

- Elevate communications and listening from the City with the community and all stakeholders; will be present and have City staff present where needed for representation
- Develop sustainable capital improvement plan and visible infrastructure projects, demonstrating evidence of reinvestment from the recently approved sales tax referendum
- Provide professional recommendations and analysis to the City Commission
- Evaluate operations and improve service delivery
- Build strong relationships with employees, residents, partners, and regional entities by being involved and present with community and partner events, representing and advocating for the City

Full Job Description



DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

Divisions within the department:

- City Manager
- Executive Assistant
- Management Intern / Assistant Executive Management Intern
- Communications and Outreach Coordinator

ORGANIZATION QUICKFACTS



EMPLOYEES

185
(TOTAL CITY)



TOTAL FY26 CITY BUDGET
(ALL FUNDS):

\$72,772,361

KEY PROJECTS FOR 2026

- Development of business-friendly policies and recruitment strategies
- Advancing development of Proximity Industrial Park
- Guidance of major capital projects including streets, utilities, and long-range infrastructure planning

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is an experienced, forward-thinking municipal leader who thrives in collaborative environments and exemplifies service, integrity, stewardship, flexibility, and dignity. This individual brings deep experience managing complex organizations, with the ability to build positive relationships, communicate effectively with diverse audiences, and guide both short- and long-term strategic planning.

They will demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, a commitment to transparency, and a proactive, community-oriented leadership style. Technically, they will possess expertise in municipal finance, strategic planning, intergovernmental relations, and project management. The successful candidate will excel at evaluating operations, improving organizational systems, and aligning programs and services with community priorities and long-range goals.



EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

- Master's degree in Public Administration, Political Science, Business Management, or a related field
- A minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible municipal, public agency, or executive administrative experience demonstrated as local government executive or closely related
- Knowledge of municipal finance, human resources, public works, public safety, and community development

Preferred:

- Experience in a full-service municipal organization
- Leadership experience in strategic planning, economic development, and community engagement
- Advanced degrees or additional management certifications
- ICMA-CM certification

SALARY & BENEFITS

- **Compensation:** \$175,000–\$195,000 DOE/DOQ
- **Health Benefits:** The City of Ottawa offers robust health, dental, and vision coverage, including two medical plan options (PPO and HDHP/HSA), Delta Dental coverage, and VSP vision benefits. The City provides employer-paid basic life and AD&D insurance, optional short-term disability, and access to flexible spending accounts (FSAs), health savings accounts (HSAs) with employer contributions, and voluntary supplemental insurance plans.
- **Paid Leave:** Employees earn monthly vacation and sick leave, with additional leave provided according to City policy.
- **Retirement:** The City participates in KPERs, providing retirement security and employer-paid life insurance components.
- **Additional Perks:** Employee assistance programs, voluntary supplemental benefits, professional development opportunities, and organizational perks consistent with senior leadership roles.



HOW TO APPLY

Apply Here



For more information on this position, contact:

Clay J. Pearson, Senior Vice President

claypearson@governmentresource.com | 713-816-8639

The City of Ottawa is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Finalists will undergo a comprehensive background check.