



CITY OF SANTA MONICA

City Clerk



Lead with Integrity. Modernize with Vision. Serve with Purpose.

The City of Santa Monica is seeking a bold, collaborative, and forward-thinking City Clerk to lead one of the most visible and mission-critical functions in local government. Santa Monica is in a transformative period, advancing major technology modernization initiatives, navigating complex election cycles, and serving a highly engaged, high-touch community that expects transparency, accessibility, and excellence.

They will be a collaborative partner and key member of the City's executive leadership team, partnering closely with the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Council, helping ensure that Santa Monica's democratic processes are transparent, modern, and responsive.

This is an opportunity to shape the future of civic engagement in one of California's most dynamic and community-driven cities.

The Position

The City Clerk serves as Santa Monica's chief steward of democratic processes and official records, operating at the center of governance, transparency, and public trust. Reporting directly to the City Council and working closely with the City Manager and City Attorney, this civil service position plays a critical leadership role in ensuring that legislative actions, elections, public records, and civic engagement efforts are administered with integrity, accuracy, and professionalism.

This is a highly visible executive position requiring both technical mastery and political acumen. The Clerk advises elected officials on complex procedural and compliance matters, prepares and manages legislative agendas, oversees municipal elections, including multiple concurrent elections, and ensures adherence to state and local laws governing open meetings, campaign reporting, and public transparency.

Beyond compliance, the Clerk is a strategic leader and organizational partner. The role calls for someone who can confidently navigate governance issues, remain composed under pressure, and build strong working relationships across departments. The Clerk must balance advocacy for their team with accountability and performance, champion modernization efforts, and help foster a cohesive "One Santa Monica" culture.

At its core, this position is about leadership in service of democracy, strengthening systems, supporting Council effectiveness, and ensuring the community has meaningful access to its government.





Priorities

The next City Clerk will lead the City during a pivotal period. Together, these priorities reflect an opportunity to modernize systems, strengthen governance, and elevate public trust, positioning the Santa Monica City Clerk's Office as a model of innovation, collaboration, and civic excellence. Key responsibilities include:

- Leading and administering all aspects of multiple concurrent municipal elections with precision and transparency, and ensuring full compliance with the Elections Code, Government Code, Brown Act, Political Reform Act, and Levine Act.
- Leading the modernization of legislative and transparency systems, including implementing a new agenda management platform, advancing public records system upgrades, ensuring compliance with SB 707, leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) in an ethical way, and introducing innovative, community-facing tools that enhance civic engagement and accessibility.
- Supporting City Council with the Levine Act and local transparency and accountability ordinances compliance.
- Expanding community outreach and civic engagement efforts, including participation in public events and schools, supporting non-partisan candidate education initiatives, promoting transparency and voter education, and enhancing accessibility and inclusion across all public processes.
- Strengthening cross-department collaboration and coordination while cultivating strong, productive relationships with internal teams, external partners, and the Santa Monica community.



The Successful Candidate

This role calls for a confident, principled, and resilient leader, someone who champions participatory democracy and approaches the work with professionalism, purpose, and focused execution.

The successful candidate will bring deep knowledge of elections administration and records management, along with meaningful experience working directly with a City Council, ideally within a charter city environment in the State of California. They will possess strong technical expertise in agenda management systems, legislative processes, and public records compliance, paired with the political acumen to navigate complex governance issues. They will demonstrate composure under scrutiny, the ability to stand firm when necessary, and the judgment to build bridges that move the organization forward.

This leader will remain steady in high-stakes situations and foster trust across teams. They will elevate board and commission processes, strengthen accountability, and ensure Council members have the structure and support needed to perform effectively. At the same time, they will champion their team by balancing advocacy with clear performance expectations, formalizing evaluations, encouraging professional development, leveraging advances in technology, including the ethical use of AI, and preparing the next generation of civic leaders.

The ideal candidate will be self-assured yet collaborative, adaptable within a changing organization, and skilled at navigating complex personalities and competing priorities while maintaining focus and follow-through. Technically fluent across legislative and records systems, they will be passionate about transparency, innovation, civic participation, and meaningful public engagement. Comfortable speaking at Council, boards and commissions, and community meetings, they will serve as both a trusted advisor and visible ambassador for the City.

Most importantly, the next City Clerk will see the Office not as a silo, but as a central pillar of Santa Monica's democratic infrastructure, integral to effective governance, collaboration, and sustained public trust.

Personal Traits and Characteristics

- Demonstrates high emotional intelligence and leads with humility, empathy, and a team-first mindset.
- Exhibits appropriate political acumen, remains calm, and is comfortable interacting in a highly engaged community environment.
- Confident, self-assured, and collaborative, with a “can-do” approach grounded in strong ethics and unwavering integrity.
- Relationship-oriented and skilled at building bridges across teams.
- Focused on enabling Council effectiveness and advancing organizational excellence.

Qualifications

Minimum requirements include graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree. Candidates must also possess a minimum of seven years of increasingly responsible experience in performing complex administrative duties in a City Clerk's department, or equivalent experience in a similar government agency, including five years of management or supervisory experience. Experience in California is highly desirable.

Requires possession of the Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) or the Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) certification issued by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.

Inside the Organization

The City of Santa Monica operates under a council-manager form of government. The City Council, which consists of seven part-time members elected at-large, appoints the City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk, and designates its own Mayor. The City Manager leads a strong executive team comprised of fourteen department directors.

Santa Monica provides an extensive array of services, surpassing those offered by other cities of comparable and even larger sizes. These services include police and fire protection, water and wastewater management, street maintenance, public landscaping, a regional transit system that serves 13.2 million riders annually, and parking services. The City also provides parks and recreation facilities, including 245 acres of beaches, five public libraries, planning, building, and safety services, the Santa Monica Pier, and a cemetery. Additionally, Santa Monica offers a high level of support for social services, art and cultural programs, and public education.

As a city with an AAA credit rating, Santa Monica has a long history of relying on conservative fiscal assumptions for future planning. The City's total adopted Biennial Budget is \$789.9 million in FY 2025-26 and \$825.5 million in FY 2026-27, supporting nearly 1,900 full-time employees. The budget reflects the City's continued efforts to remain financially resilient in the face of serious fiscal constraints with a focus on five key priorities: Achieving Safe Neighborhoods and Clean Streets, Activating Economic Opportunity and Growth, Developing Affordable, Livable, and Secure Housing for All, Creating Organizational Capacity, and Building Organizational Health.

The City of Santa Monica is a progressive, inclusive, and culturally rich community. As leaders in public service, the City strives to be an employer of choice by attracting and retaining a highly talented workforce in which individuals of diverse races, religions, cultures, orientations, gender identities, and lifestyles can thrive. The goal is to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where staff are empowered to perform at their highest level, and where their differences contribute positively.



Inside the City Clerk's Office

The City Clerk's Office, formally known as the Records and Election Services Department, serves as a cornerstone of Santa Monica's democratic process and commitment to transparency. The mission of the office is to uphold open, inclusive, and well-managed civic operations by administering key democratic and compliance functions across the City. The office conducts City, School District, and Community College District elections, maintains official election records, and ensures compliance with legal requirements governing transparency and public access to information.

In addition to elections, the Clerk's Office provides essential support to the City Council by preparing legislative agendas, recording Council proceedings, and maintaining the official legislative history. It also manages the City's records system, responding to public records requests and facilitating access to documents critical to civic engagement and accountability. The department oversees the administrative process for boards and commissions, including notifications, application processing, and appointments, helping ensure broad community involvement in city advisory bodies.

Beyond elections and records, the Clerk's Office has offered additional public-facing services, such as accepting federal passport applications, and currently provides support for mail and printing for internal city departments, underlining its operational breadth and significance within city government. In every function, from ensuring open government compliance to facilitating civic participation, the City Clerk's Office plays an indispensable role in strengthening public trust, supporting elected officials, and enhancing transparent, accessible local governance.

The department is staffed with 13 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees and has approved biennial budgets of \$2.67 million for FY 2025-26 and \$3.58 million for FY 2026-27.

The City Clerk's Office comprises three key divisions:

- **Administration:** The Administration Division carries out the official duties of the City Clerk as required by local law and the Brown Act (Open Meetings Law), Public Records Act, and Political Reform Act. The Division prepares and disseminates the City Council meeting agenda and packets; maintains the City's legislative history for the City Council, Redevelopment Successor Agency, Public Finance, and Housing and Parking Authorities. Additionally, Division staff serve as the Board Secretaries of the Audit Subcommittee, Clean Beaches and Ocean Oversight Committee, and Transient Occupancy Tax Advisory Committee. The office also maintains the City's Boards/Commissions Appointments List, Lobbyist Registry, and Council's Oaks Initiative Log; administers the Records Management Program; and attests to contracts executed by the City Manager.
- **Elections:** The City Clerk serves as the City's Elections Official and Filing Officer as required by local and State Election Codes and the State Political Reform Act. The Division conducts special municipal elections and coordinates consolidated regular elections for the City Council, Rent Control Board, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) Board, and Santa Monica City College (SMCC) Board with the Los Angeles County Clerk/Registrar-Recorder, and maintains the official election records. The Division is staffed by personnel from Administration and Support Services.
- **Support Services:** The Support Services Division provides internal support to City staff and provides all City departments with high-quality reprographic services and efficient internal and external mail service. Support Services personnel also provide additional staffing for the Administration and Election events.





The Community

Santa Monica is a vibrant Southern California city, renowned for its coastal beauty, progressive spirit, and thriving environment. It offers a unique blend of urban living and beach culture, making it a highly desirable place to live and work. Located on Santa Monica Bay, just 15 miles from Downtown Los Angeles, Santa Monica enjoys a mild, year-round climate. Residents benefit from an exceptional quality of life with ocean views, 3.5 miles of beach, and extensive outdoor recreation in parks such as Palisades, Tongva, Clover, and Douglas Parks. The City is highly walkable and bike-friendly, with green bike lanes and the Marvin Braude Bike Trail promoting sustainable mobility.

Originally inhabited by the Gabrielino Tongva and Chumash people, Santa Monica was named in 1769. Founded on July 10, 1875, by Senator John P. Jones and Colonel Robert S. Baker, it was envisioned as a “great commercial center of the southwest.” Early development included a 16-mile rail line to Los Angeles and a substantial wharf. Incorporated in November 1886, Santa Monica grew into a premier resort destination by the 1920s, known for the iconic Santa Monica Pier and its “Gold Coast.” This history reflects the City’s enduring appeal and capacity for transformation.

Santa Monica is integral to the Los Angeles economy, with thriving tech, media, and lifestyle sectors, home to companies like Edmunds, Beachbody, Lionsgate, RAND Corporation, and Bird. The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) is highly regarded, with Santa Monica High School graduates attending top universities. Santa Monica College (SMC) is a leading community college for transfers to University of California and other four-year institutions. The City offers a rich arts and culture scene, featuring over 170 public murals, galleries at Bergamot Station, and venues like The Broad Stage. Its diverse culinary scene includes four weekly Farmers Markets.

Santa Monica features excellent public transportation, including the Metro E Line to downtown Los Angeles and a robust bus network. This, combined with walkability and bike-friendliness, offers diverse commuting options. Santa Monica seamlessly blends coastal living with a dynamic economy, educational excellence, and a rich cultural scene. Its progressive urban planning and commitment to sustainability make it an ideal place for public sector professionals seeking a fulfilling career in a vibrant community.



Compensation and Benefits

The salary range for the City Clerk is currently under review and is anticipated to be up to \$263,760 with an additional 5% PERSable incentive for employees who possess a master's degree or higher from an accredited college or university. In addition, a 2% salary adjustment will take effect on July 1, 2026. Santa Monica offers a competitive benefits package, which includes, but is not limited to:

- **CalPERS Retirement:** 2% at 55 formula for Classic CalPERS members (current employee contribution of 7%). The new member formula is 2% at 62 (the employee contribution rate is the rate prescribed by CalPERS in accordance with Government Code 7522.30). The City does not participate in Social Security but does participate in Medicare, which requires a 1.45% contribution from both the employee and the City.
- **Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance:** The City pays 100% of the cost for the medical, dental, and vision insurance premiums for employees and eligible dependents. The City also pays 100% of the cost of the Employee Assistance Program for employees and eligible dependents.
- **Cash-in-lieu Option:** Employees with eligible group medical coverage can waive medical and receive \$69.23 bi-weekly taxable payment (\$1800 annually).
- **Life Insurance:** City paid term life insurance valued at twice the employee's base annual salary, rounded up to the next \$1,000, not to exceed \$500,000.
- **Long-Term Disability Insurance:** Long-term disability insurance coverage at City expense, subject to usual provisions and exclusions. Coverage shall be for 60% of salary, with a benefit not to exceed \$8,333 per month, after a 60-day elimination period.
- **Annual Physical Exam:** Participants in the Executive Pay Plan shall receive an annual physical examination at City expense.
- **Tuition Reimbursement:** Annually, up to \$2,500 maximum reimbursement for tuition and study material for approved career improvement or job enhancement courses.
- **Deferred Compensation:**
 - o 457(b) available for optional participation.
 - o 401(a): Employee contributes \$625 per month into the 401(a) plan. The City contributes \$190 per month to the 401(a) plan, or, if the employee makes the irrevocable decision to opt out, the same amount of \$190 per month shall be contributed to a 457(b) plan on the employee's behalf.
- **Retiree Medical Insurance:** The City pays for retiree medical insurance up to age 70, as provided in the Executive Pay Plan (EPP) Resolution.
- **Retiree Medical Trust:** The City contributes toward a health premium reimbursement plan. Upon eligibility, separated employees receive healthcare premium reimbursement, currently up to \$425 per month.
- **Retirement Sick Leave Cash Out:** Cash out up to 25% of unused accrued sick leave upon retirement when meeting eligibility requirements.
- **9/80 Work Schedule:** Every other Friday off.
- **Paid Holidays:** 13 holidays, plus one additional cashable and one non-cashable holiday, which becomes available on July 1 and January 1 of each year, respectively.
- **Vacation:** Following the completion of the first six months of service, employees will receive six days of vacation and thereafter accrue one day per month. Employees may cash out up to 48 hours of accrued vacation twice per calendar year, per the Executive Pay Plan.
- **Sick Leave:** Upon hire, six days of sick leave are available for immediate use. Thereafter, one sick leave day per month will commence, effective upon completion of the 6th month of employment. Sick leave accrued but not used during a fiscal year can be cashed out at the end of that year, based on the sliding scale outlined in the Executive Pay Plan.
- **Management Leave:** Each July 1, employees receive 40 hours of non-cashable management leave and eight hours of cashable management leave.



How to Apply

Applications will be accepted electronically by Raftelis at raftelis.com/opportunities. Applicants will complete a brief online form and will then be prompted to provide a cover letter and resume. The position will be open until filled, with a first review of applications beginning **April 24, 2026**.



Questions

Please direct questions to Serena Wright-Black at swrightblack@raftelis.com and Kelsey Batt at kbatt@raftelis.com.