



CITY OF KINSTON

City Manager



The Community

The City of Kinston is a vibrant and historic community incorporated in 1762. Located 75 miles east of Raleigh and 60 miles west of the Atlantic Ocean, Kinston serves as the county seat and the largest municipality in Lenoir County. Its central location places residents within an hour of growing communities such as New Bern, Jacksonville, Goldsboro, and Greenville, all less than an hour away.

Kinston boasts a rich cultural and recreational landscape, featuring a lively downtown district, the Kinston Community Center, and Lions Water Adventure. The community enjoys expansive public spaces, including Emma Webb Park and Bill Fay Park, alongside the historic Grainger Stadium. With an active focus on downtown revitalization, public arts, and neighborhood preservation, Kinston offers a welcoming environment for residents, businesses, and visitors.

The Organization

The City of Kinston operates under the Council-Manager form of government. The governing body consists of a Mayor and five Councilmembers elected at large to serve four-year staggered terms. The Mayor and Council appoint the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk. The City Manager oversees day-to-day operations, implements the policies of the elected body, and appoints department heads to manage functional areas.

The City operates with an adopted Fiscal Year 2026 budget of approximately \$133 million and employs more than 340 full-time professionals. Kinston is a full-service municipality. City services provide police and fire protection, street maintenance, planning and zoning, and comprehensive parks and recreation programs, including a community center. In addition to general governmental activities, the City owns and operates electric, water, wastewater, stormwater utilities, and sanitation services.

The Position

The City Manager serves as the chief administrative officer for the City of Kinston and is responsible for directing and supervising all municipal departments. This executive role involves appointing and managing city employees, ensuring that all local and state laws are faithfully executed, and preparing the annual budget and capital improvement program. The City Manager attends all City Council meetings, provides regular financial and administrative reports, and recommends measures to advance the strategic goals of the community. Serving as the primary liaison between the City Council and municipal staff, the City Manager translates policy directives into effective operational services while maintaining a high standard of public accountability.





Leadership Opportunities

Strategic Infrastructure and Utility Investment. The incoming City Manager will lead the continued enhancement of Kinston's robust enterprise utilities. This includes managing multi-million-dollar capital improvement plans for water, sewer, electric, and stormwater systems. The leader will oversee major projects such as electric substation upgrades, Heritage Street stormwater improvements, and ongoing road resurfacing efforts to ensure long-term reliability for all stakeholders.

Community Safety and Neighborhood Vitality. Supporting a safe and healthy environment is a primary objective for the organization. The City Manager will work closely with the police and fire departments to ensure they have the training and resources needed to protect the community, including the deployment of advanced public safety technology. Additionally, the leader will champion code enforcement, housing initiatives, and the remediation of neglected properties to foster cleaner, more vibrant neighborhoods.

Economic Development and Downtown Revitalization. Kinston is committed to expanding economic opportunities and maintaining the momentum of its downtown revitalization. The City Manager will collaborate with local and regional partners to attract new businesses, support existing enterprises, and implement the Downtown Masterplan. By promoting mixed-use development and enhancing public spaces, the leader will help solidify Kinston as a destination for commerce and recreation.

Workforce Development and Educational Partnerships. Developing a skilled local workforce is essential for both municipal operations and broader regional growth. The City Manager will actively partner with the public school system and the local community college to create training opportunities and career pathways. By fostering these educational relationships, the leader will help build a strong talent pipeline that meets the staffing needs of the City while supporting the expansion of local industries.

Organizational Health and Performance Culture. Cultivating a supportive and high-performing workplace is essential for delivering excellent public service. The City Manager will prioritize team development, competitive compensation structures, and comprehensive training programs to recruit and retain top talent. By fostering an environment of transparent communication and mutual respect, the City Manager will empower staff to innovate and excel in their respective roles.

The Successful Candidate

The City seeks a visionary and collaborative professional with proven, high-level municipal experience who is deeply committed to public service and community building. This leader must possess a strong strategic vision to anticipate future needs, prioritize the work through strategic planning, and align the budget to drive progress in key focus areas, including economic development, job growth, infrastructure, public safety, and neighborhood revitalization. Fiscal and operational accountability are essential, requiring a strong background in municipal finance and enterprise fund management paired with a commitment to the responsible stewardship of public resources.

The successful candidate will demonstrate a dedication to team development by mentoring personnel, promoting professional growth, and sustaining an inclusive, high-performance culture. Furthermore, this leader must provide clear direction to staff, delegating the necessary authority for them to do their jobs effectively without micromanaging.

Exceptional collaborative communication skills and open-mindedness are required to articulate complex information clearly to diverse audiences and help tell the story of Kinston. The next City Manager will consistently update all Councilmembers about the work of the City and maintain a proven history of building consensus. This leader must advocate effectively for the City to secure win-win agreements, demonstrating the ability to influence others.

This professional will foster strong relationships among the City Council, municipal staff, residents, and the broader community, as well as with the county, other regional stakeholders, and at the state level. Finally, the City Manager must possess the adaptability and resilience to navigate shifting priorities, manage emergency situations, and lead the organization steadily through periods of change and uncertainty.

Qualifications

This position requires a bachelor's degree in public administration or a closely related field, paired with extensive management and leadership experience in finance, government, and public administration. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered. The successful candidate must demonstrate a proven record of strategic leadership, a passion for community building, and a collaborative management style. Experience overseeing a full-service municipality and its administrative operations is required. Significant importance will be placed on the candidate's professional fit with the leadership and culture of the City.





Compensation and Benefits

The starting salary for this position will be \$165,000 - \$180,000. The City offers a full range of employee benefits including health (with Teladoc), vision, and dental insurance, retirement (401k and 457 deferred compensation), a health savings account, a wellness and employee health program, paid holidays, vacation and sick leave and longevity rewards. Read more about Kinton's benefits [here](#).

The City of Kinston is an affirmative action and equal opportunity employer.



How to Apply

Applications will be accepted electronically by Raftelis at raftelis.com/opportunities. Applicants complete a brief online form and are prompted to provide a cover letter and resume. The position will be open until filled with a first review of applications beginning **May 4, 2026**.



Questions

Please direct questions to Anne Lewis at alewis@raftelis.com or 540-757-0316 or Niayla Hairston at nhairston@raftelis.com.