



City of Falls Church

# City Manager





## The Community

The City of Falls Church is an independent city located approximately six miles west of the nation's capital, adjacent to Arlington County and Fairfax County in Northern Virginia. Known affectionately as "The Little City," Falls Church is small in area but rich in history, community spirit, and civic engagement. The City's heritage dates to the late 1600s as an early colonial settlement, and it was incorporated as a town in 1875, and as an independent city in 1948.

The City is home to approximately 16,000 residents who treasure its unique blend of small-town warmth and urban accessibility. Over 90% of residents rate their quality of life in the City of Falls Church as high. The Falls Church City Public School system is one of Virginia's top-rated school systems and a primary reason families choose to live here. The City also features a thriving commercial base, with locally owned restaurants, shops, and mixed-use developments that contribute to a vibrant and walkable city.

The City's location within the Northern Virginia region provides unmatched access to the resources and opportunities of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, including Metro transit access, proximity to major employment centers, and connections to world-class cultural and recreational amenities. At the same time, the City maintains its own distinct identity. Major community traditions include the weekly, year-round Farmers Market, the Memorial Day Parade, and the Falls Church Festival. Residents are deeply engaged in civic life, and boards and commissions attract talented volunteers who contribute meaningfully to City governance.

The City of Falls Church has experienced significant transformation over the past decade, adding nearly 2,000 housing units through mixed-use developments while investing in infrastructure upgrades, school facilities, and public spaces. This growth has created both opportunities and challenges. The next City Manager will guide the community through its continued evolution while honoring the values and character that make the City of Falls Church a special place to live, work, and raise a family.

Learn more about the City from the [City's website](#).

## Inside The Organization

The City of Falls Church operates under the council-manager form of government. Political authority is vested in the seven-member City Council, which enacts ordinances and resolutions, approves City budgets, sets tax rates, and establishes policy. The Council members are elected at-large for four-year staggered terms. The Council elects the Mayor and Vice Mayor from among its members for two-year terms. The City Manager is appointed by the City Council as the full-time chief executive and administrative officer. The City Attorney and City Clerk are also appointed by the City Council.

The City Manager oversees all municipal departments and functions, including finance and administration, police, development services, public works, housing and human services, recreation and parks, the library, economic development and the City's environmental sustainability programs. The City Manager oversees approximately 252 full-time equivalent positions and their organizational structure, with several departments currently reporting directly to the City Manager, including Communications, Community and Legislative Relations, Emergency Management, Finance, and Public Safety, while two Deputy City Managers provide an additional layer of oversight for the remaining departments. Review the [City's Org Chart](#). The position carries broad responsibility for implementing City Council policies, preparing and administering the annual budget, managing capital improvement projects, negotiating interjurisdictional agreements, and ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to residents, businesses, and visitors.

The City's adopted FY2027 General Fund budget, inclusive of schools, general government, and the capital plan, totals approximately \$134.5 million. The general government operating budget is approximately \$59.5 million, while the school transfer represents approximately \$58.1 million. More information is available at [www.fallschurchva.gov/budget](http://www.fallschurchva.gov/budget). Real estate taxes account for approximately 60% of City revenues. The City has maintained sound fiscal practices, triple-A bond ratings, and healthy reserves.

The City's organizational values reflect the principles that guide daily operations and leadership expectations. The City's mission is to enhance the quality of life for all community members through supportive and collaborative public service. Its vision is to be an adaptive, future-focused organization committed to the shared responsibility of building a vibrant and inclusive community for all. The organization's seven core values are accountability, communication, inclusivity, innovation, integrity, service, and trust. The City Manager is expected to model these values in all aspects of organizational leadership and community relations.

The organization's culture is characterized by warmth, professionalism, and community spirit. Employees celebrate an employee of the year and participate in City picnics and events. Staff members are committed to their work and proud to serve the community. The next City Manager will sustain this culture while raising expectations for performance, innovation, and continuous improvement.



2026 City of Falls Church City Council pictured from left to right: Justine Underhill, Marybeth Connolly, David Snyder, Letty Hardi, Laura Downs, Erin Flynn, and Arthur Agin.

## The Position

The City of Falls Church seeks an experienced, community-oriented leader to serve as its next City Manager. Reporting directly to the seven-member City Council, the City Manager serves as the chief executive and administrative officer responsible for the day-to-day operations of the City government. This is a highly visible leadership role that requires strategic vision, fiscal discipline, political acumen, and a genuine commitment to preserving and promoting the City's distinctive small-town character in an urban setting.

The City Manager attends all meetings of the City Council, keeps the Council informed of major activities and operations, and serves as the chief advisor by making recommendations critical to the future of the community.

The position also serves as the primary liaison between the City Council and staff, translating policy direction into operational action. Key responsibilities include presenting the annual budget, attending all regular and special meetings, and representing the City in interactions with Arlington County, Fairfax County, the City of Alexandria, state agencies, and regional partners including the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

The City Manager provides strategic counsel to the Mayor and Council on land use, economic development, infrastructure investment, intergovernmental affairs, and the City's long-range financial health. The position requires regular engagement with residents, business owners, community organizations, boards and commissions, and the Falls Church City Public Schools superintendent. The ideal candidate will bring a generalist municipal management background with the ability to navigate complex community issues, negotiate effectively with regional partners and developers, and lead a dedicated team of professionals through a period of significant growth and transformation.





## Priorities

**Balancing Growth and Community Character.** The next City Manager will balance continued growth with the community's commitment to small-town character, navigate development pressures, negotiate strong outcomes with developers, and implement the Comprehensive Plan in a way that reflects the values and vision of residents.

**Building and Sustaining a High-Performing Team.** The organization has invested significantly in defining its mission, vision, and values, and in assessing and improving its internal culture. The next City Manager will honor that work, build on it, and hold the organization accountable to its own aspirations. The City Manager will invest in talent development, build succession plans, establish a feedback culture, and create an environment of accountability and high expectations. Staff expect a leader who gives them a voice at the table, seeks input before decisions, communicates the "why," and fosters accountability at all levels while preserving the collaborative, supportive environment employees value.

**Navigating Complex Financial Challenges.** The City faces substantial capital obligations, including road paving backlog, WMATA funding commitments, a facilities conditions assessment, infrastructure costs, and deferred maintenance across City assets. The City Manager will develop a clear long-range financial plan, manage capital improvement priorities, sustainable maintenance schedules, and provide the City Council with honest assessments of fiscal trade-offs.

**Investing in Walkability, Biking, and Quality of Life.** Residents have consistently identified walking and biking infrastructure as a top priority. The City Manager will invest in pedestrian safety, traffic calming, and multi-modal transportation options, supporting the vision of a more walkable city while balancing the needs of all residents.

**Advancing Key Development Projects.** Virginia Village, a long-planned affordable housing project with approximately \$10 million already invested, needs to reach its next decision points. The Gordon Road Redevelopment Project, which includes a new Department of Public Works space, represents a significant capital undertaking and private real estate development opportunity. The City Manager will provide Council with clear options, timelines, and recommendations while managing community expectations.

**Modernizing City Operations and the Customer Experience.** The City Manager will champion process improvement, invest in digital services, and foster a culture where innovation and experimentation are encouraged, including empowering staff to pilot new approaches without over-engineering every decision all while ensuring excellent customer/resident experiences.

**Strengthening the Revenue-Sharing Relationship with Schools.** Approximately half of the City's tax revenue goes to Falls Church City Public Schools through a revenue-sharing agreement. The City Manager will work constructively with the superintendent, School Board, and City Council to ensure both sides can meet their respective operational & capital needs as enrollment and services evolve.

**Championing Regional Partnerships and Intergovernmental Relations.** The City of Falls Church depends on intergovernmental partnerships, including contracts with Arlington County for fire services and Fairfax County for human services and sewer infrastructure. The City Manager will serve as head negotiator on interjurisdictional contracts, represent the City in regional forums, and build productive relationships with neighboring jurisdictions and state officials.



## The Successful Candidate

The next City Manager of the City of Falls Church will be an experienced municipal leader with a proven track record of managing a complex local government operation. The ideal candidate brings a strong foundation in public administration, an action-forward mindset, a collaborative management style, and a genuine appreciation for the distinctive character of a small but sophisticated urban community. This individual is equally comfortable presenting budget recommendations to elected officials, negotiating multi-million-dollar interjurisdictional agreements, fostering the conditions for employee success across departments, and engaging with residents at community events or local businesses.

The successful candidate demonstrates the ability to think strategically while remaining deeply engaged in daily operations. The City Manager must set organizational direction while ensuring that core services are delivered effectively every day. This includes a strong track record of responsible budget management, with experience preparing and presenting annual budgets, overseeing capital improvement programs, managing debt portfolios, and identifying creative approaches to address fiscal challenges.

The next City Manager clearly communicates, actively listens, and authentically engages with a wide range of stakeholders. This includes the ability to present complex information in plain language to elected officials and the public, respond to resident concerns with empathy and follow-through, and proactively correct misinformation with facts and a calm, professional demeanor. The successful candidate is confident speaking up in public settings to provide clarity and context. Internally, staff expect the same directness: clear expectations, honest feedback delivered with compassion, and a genuine two-way exchange where department heads are consulted before public statements are made and their expertise is respected.

The ideal candidate understands the council-manager dynamic and works effectively with a City Council that is highly engaged, well-informed, and deeply knowledgeable about City operations. The City Manager will strive for consensus among all seven members, not just a majority, and will provide well-researched options and honest professional counsel while respecting the governing body's authority. The successful candidate sets expectations clearly, pushes back constructively when commitments are unrealistic, and communicates the reasons behind recommendations and decisions.

The successful candidate is a visible, authentic community leader. The City of Falls Church is a place where residents know their City Manager by name, people cheer for City staff during parades, and showing up at the Farmers Market or a neighborhood business matters. The City Manager will bring warmth, humor, and a genuine interest in the people who make up this community.

Innovation and a willingness to take calculated risks are valued. The successful candidate is willing to test new ideas and challenge assumptions and encourages staff to try new approaches even if they do not always succeed. This includes embracing change as the City continues to grow and evolve, and the ability to communicate both the opportunities and the trade-offs that come with a community in transition. This leader will enter an organization with a strong foundation, talented and dedicated staff, and a community that cares deeply about its city. The next City Manager should be prepared to listen first, learn the organization's history and trajectory, and build trust through consistent, authentic engagement at every level.

## Qualifications

The City of Falls Church seeks candidates with a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, preferably in public or business administration. A master's degree in public administration or a related discipline is highly desirable. Candidates should have a minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience in government administration, with prior service as a city manager, assistant or deputy city manager, or senior executive leader. Comparable private sector experience which demonstrates an understanding of the role of a city manager will be considered. Experience in a small to mid-size community managing the full range of local government functions is preferred, and familiarity with Virginia local government operations, including the Dillon Rule, is an asset. Membership with the International City/County Management Association is expected, and ICMA credentialing as a Credentialed Manager is valued.



Candidates must reside or be willing to relocate within 30 minutes of City Hall. Residency within the City of Falls Church is strongly preferred, although the surrounding localities of Arlington, Fairfax County and Alexandria, are acceptable. The City Manager is expected to be an active and visible presence in the community, and proximity supports the accessibility and engagement that the City Council and residents value.



## Compensation & Benefits

The expected hiring range for the City Manager position is \$252,000 - \$282,000. An excellent benefits package accompanies the position.

Benefits offered include the following:

- Health, dental, vision, and life insurance
- Participation in the City of Falls Church retirement program
- Deferred compensation plan
- Paid holidays
- Paid annual and sick leave
- Professional development, including training, conferences, and certifications
- Tuition assistance program



## How to Apply

Applications will be accepted electronically by Raftelis at [raftelis.com](https://raftelis.com). 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 **June 23, 2026**.

The City of Falls Church is an equal opportunity employer committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce.



## Questions

Please direct questions to Anne Lewis at [alewis@raftelis.com](mailto:alewis@raftelis.com) or 540.757.0316 or Kelsey Batt at [kbatt@raftelis.com](mailto:kbatt@raftelis.com).