



City of Buena Vista, VA

CITY MANAGER

RECRUITMENT PROFILE





The City of Buena Vista is seeking an experienced professional to serve as City Manager, the chief administrative officer, responsible for implementing the Council's vision and directing programs and operations of the City government. This recruitment profile provides background information on the community, its government operations, and its aspirations. It also outlines the qualifications determined to be necessary and desirable for successful performance as City Manager.

Qualified candidates are encouraged to submit a cover letter and resume, with professional references, and salary requirements, to Sarah Burch, Clerk of City Council, via email at sarah.burch@bvcity.org. While the position is open until filled, the formal review of applicants will begin May 15, 2026. Inquiries relating to the City Manager position may be directed to:

Wayne Handley
Interim City Manager
2039 Sycamore Avenue
Buena Vista, VA 24416



COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

OVERVIEW

Buena Vista is an independent city of approximately 6,600 residents nestled in the heart of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, defined by its scenic setting, strong sense of community, and legacy of resilience. Located along the Maury River on the western slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the City is surrounded by natural beauty and offers immediate access to some of the region's most iconic outdoor destinations, including the Appalachian Trail and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Local amenities such as Glen Maury Park, a 315-acre multi-use municipal park, further enhance the community's quality of life.

Established in 1892 as a center of industry and manufacturing, Buena Vista retains a strong work ethic and identity rooted in its history. Today, the City is focused on reinvestment, infrastructure improvements, and downtown revitalization, balancing its historic character with a forward-looking approach to growth and opportunity.

LOCATION & ACCESSIBILITY

Buena Vista offers strategic connectivity while maintaining its small-town character. Located just four miles from the intersection of Interstates 64 and 81, the City provides direct access to major markets across the Midwest and East Coast. Additional access is provided by U.S. Routes 60 and 501, with proximity to U.S. Route 11, supporting both regional mobility and economic activity. Rail service through the Norfolk Southern Railway further strengthens the City's infrastructure, particularly for industrial and manufacturing uses.

Buena Vista is located just six miles from Lexington and is part of the broader Rockbridge County region, offering access to regional assets while maintaining its own distinct identity.

EDUCATION & HEALTHCARE

Education is a cornerstone of the Buena Vista community. The City is served by a fully accredited public school system that includes a high school, middle school, and two elementary schools, with a student population that allows for personalized instruction and strong student engagement. Recent progress includes approval of a high school expansion to consolidate with the middle school, a project that will advance over the next few years and enhance educational facilities for the community.

The City is also home to Southern Virginia University and Mountain Gateway Community College, and within an eight-mile radius of Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee University, contributing to the City's educational, cultural, and workforce pipeline.

Residents are served by a range of healthcare providers, including local offices for Carilion Clinic and Rockbridge Area Health Center, as well as the nearby Carilion Rockbridge Community Hospital. Additional services, including a local health department and private dental practices, ensure accessible, community-based care.



ECONOMY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Buena Vista has long served as the traditional manufacturing nucleus of the Rockbridge region, supported by established rail access, transportation infrastructure, and available industrial sites. Today, the City is building on this legacy through a proactive economic development strategy focused on business retention and expansion, attracting new investment, and preparing key redevelopment sites for future use. With an unemployment rate that has remained consistently competitive with regional and state averages, Buena Vista offers a reliable and accessible workforce. Recent announcements, including the expansion of Modine Manufacturing, underscore renewed industrial momentum and confidence in the City's economic future.

The City's approach to economic development is closely tied to its high quality of life, which serves as both a retention and recruitment advantage. Buena Vista offers an affordable cost of living, walkable neighborhoods, and immediate access to outdoor recreation, along with a strong sense of community and civic pride. Economic development efforts are focused on revitalizing downtown, advancing development of key properties, investment in public infrastructure, placemaking, and leveraging partnerships with local institutions and regional stakeholders. The City benefits from proximity to higher education institutions, a stable workforce, competitive cost of living, and access to major transportation corridors, positioning Buena Vista as an attractive location for small businesses, light industry, and entrepreneurial growth.





QUICK FACTS



Population*: 6,593

Median age of Population*: approx. 36 years old.

Poverty Rate*: 18.8%



Households*: 2,554

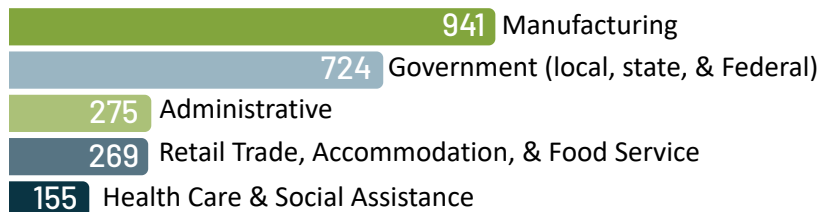
Median Household Income*: \$57,833

Median Home Value*: \$156,200



Economy of BV Employs:** 2,455

Top Employment by Industry:**



**Source: U.S. Census Bureau, July 2024*

***Virginia works, January 2025*

CITY GOVERNMENT

The City of Buena Vista is governed by a six-member City Council and a mayor, all elected at-large by city residents. These officials provide direction and oversight, guiding the City Manager, who acts as the chief executive officer, in managing the day-to-day operations. The City Manager directs a workforce of 114 and manages a FY 2025/2026 general fund budget of \$14,706,528.

Public safety and emergency services are provided through the Buena Vista Police Department, the Buena Vista Sheriff's Office, the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department, and the Buena Vista Volunteer Rescue Squad. The City manages its own water and sewer systems through the Buena Vista Public Service Authority, ensuring reliable utility services for residents and businesses.

Buena Vista has six constitutionally mandated officers, funded by state and local resources and elected by City residents. These officers operate independently of City Council but collaborate closely with the City Manager and Council to serve the community. They include the Sheriff, Commonwealth's Attorney, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Commissioner of the Revenue, Treasurer, and Clerk of General District and Juvenile & Domestic Relations Courts.

The City collaborates extensively with neighboring Lexington and Rockbridge County on shared services and regional initiatives, including social services, jail operations, youth recreation programs, tourism promotion, E911 call-taking and dispatch, and a regional library. Residents are further supported by active boards, commissions, and committees, which provide guidance, oversight, and opportunities for civic engagement in areas such as planning, development, and recreation.

Through this structure, Buena Vista delivers efficient, responsive services while fostering a strong sense of community and regional cooperation, emphasizing transparency, collaboration, and strategic investment to enhance quality of life for residents.





CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate will possess the strategic vision, energy and leadership necessary to accelerate and advance Buena Vista’s economic revitalization.

The City is looking for an experienced, goal-oriented, and data-driven individual with strong interpersonal and leadership skills. The City Manager must be an integral part of the community by living in the city, participating in local events, and actively engaging with Council, local business leaders, and the citizens.

Candidates must possess a Bachelor’s Degree and 3-5 years of progressively responsible leadership experience. A Master of Public Administration, or equivalent graduate degree, is strongly preferred.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Starting salary depends upon qualifications and experience. The City has a competitive benefits program.

HOW TO APPLY

Initial review of applications will begin May 15, 2026, and the process will remain open until filled with the best candidate. To be considered please submit a cover letter, resume, professional references, and salary requirements to Sarah Burch, Clerk of the Council, via email at sarah.burch@bvcity.org.