



# CITY OF URBANDALE, IOWA **CITY MANAGER**



# CITY OF URBANDALE, IOWA

## CITY MANAGER



Urbandale, IA (47,205) – The City of Urbandale is seeking a creative, passionate, and forward-looking leader to become its next City Manager. The current City Manager is retiring after 15 years in the position. The City has had only two City Managers in the past 40 years.

Incorporated in 1917, Urbandale today is the fourth largest community in the Des Moines metro area behind Des Moines, Ankeny, and West Des Moines. There are over 50 cities in the region. The City lies within two counties (Polk and Dallas) and is bordered by five other municipalities, including Clive, Johnston, Grimes, Waukee, and Des Moines. The community is less than 15 minutes from the Des Moines International Airport, downtown Des Moines, the state capital, and an array of cultural, entertainment, shopping, and dining opportunities.

## THE COMMUNITY

Urbandale is located in the northwest part of the Des Moines Metro Area at the intersections of Interstate 35, Interstate 80, and Iowa Highway 141. This unique geographic location allows Urbandale's 47,000+ residents convenient access to a variety of amenities and attractions in the metro area.

In addition to its convenient location, Urbandale also has a number of other advantages, including strong public-school systems, a variety of housing options, a budding downtown area, and a number of parks and recreation areas. From safe neighborhoods to acres of green space, Urbandale is uniquely positioned as an attractive place to raise a family, grow your business, and enjoy life.

The City of Urbandale maintains one of the lowest municipal tax rates in the state, providing excellent services at an exceptional value. Over the past three decades, Urbandale has experienced steady growth in population. Each year hundreds of new residents make Urbandale their home—joining those who already enjoy the community's extensive park and trail network, short commutes, great career opportunities, and excellent schools.

## ABOUT URBANDALE



**9 in 10**  
residents rate Urbandale as an excellent or good place to live.



**9 in 10**  
residents rate Urbandale's overall quality of life as excellent or good.



**9 in 10**  
residents rate Urbandale as an excellent or good place to raise children.



**9 in 10**  
residents rate the quality of Urbandale's utility infrastructure as excellent or good.



**97%**  
of residents report feeling safe in their neighborhood during the day.



**94%**  
of residents rate Fire Services as excellent or good.



**88%**  
of residents rate the Police Department's job at maintaining public order as excellent or good.



**\$111,888**  
Urbandale's median household income.



**\$340,796**  
Urbandale's median home price.



**57 parks**  
and 41 playgrounds are located in Urbandale. Most residents live less than 1/2 mile from a park.



**57 miles**  
of paved trails are in Urbandale, connecting residents to a regional trail network.



**1 in 10**  
residents speak a language other than English at home.



## EDUCATION:

Urbandale is home to six public school districts and two private schools. Generally, educational institutions accessible to residents of Urbandale perform above the State of Iowa’s average score in a number of performance standards. Iowa’s focus on a top-notch educational system contributes to a high quality of life for Urbandale residents and a solid pipeline of talent for the business community’s future workforce. Urbandale’s central location also provides easy access to nationally recognized educational institutions like Drake University and Grandview University in Des Moines. Iowa State University is about a 45-minute drive north to Ames; while the University of Iowa is about a two-hour drive east to Iowa City. The Des Moines Area Community College is a very short drive from Urbandale in nearby Ankeny.

## LOCAL ECONOMY:

Urbandale’s retail and service businesses continue to enhance Urbandale’s quality of living. Locally owned shops and national chain retailers and restaurants provide everything families need to check off their personal and professional to-do lists. In 2020 and 2021, Urbandale was ranked one of the Top 100 Places to Live by Money magazine. The Greater Des Moines area has an unemployment rate among the lowest in the nation.

The following large regional employers are located in Urbandale or just minutes away in one of the adjacent communities. The employee totals reflect the number of employees in the region.

Hy-Vee Food Stores, Inc.	11,782
Wells Fargo	11,000
Principal	6,100
MercyOne	5,641
UnityPoint Health	5,147
Amazon	4,100
John Deere	3,800
Nationwide	3,300



Forbes Magazine named Central Iowa as a “Top 10 Place for Business & Careers” in 2019.



## ENTERTAINMENT:

Urbandale is a city that knows how to have fun! The City's Fourth of July celebration is the largest in central Iowa, and it's packed with activities for the whole family. From its time-honored parade to the outdoor carnival and street dances, there's something for everyone.

The City of Urbandale also offers a variety of entertainment options throughout the year. The biggest event is Party in the Park, which is held twice every summer. Thousands of people from across the metro region come for the live music, food trucks, and variety of activities for families. It's a great way to spend a summer evening and enjoy the outdoors.

Living History Farms is a popular site in Urbandale and is conveniently located right off Interstates 35/80. It is an interactive outdoor museum which educates, entertains, and connects people of all ages to Midwestern rural life experiences. 300 years of agricultural history are represented including a 1700 Ioway Indian Farm, 1850 Pioneer Farm, 1900 Horse-Powered Farm and an 1875 town. Tours are self-guided and historic interpreters at each farm site are dressed in clothing from each era to explain what it would have been like to live in that time.

Beyond Urbandale, the metro area offers a wealth of entertainment options. Des Moines is home to the Des Moines Art Center, which features an extensive collection of modern and contemporary art, as well as Pappajohn Sculpture Park, an iconic outdoor space showcasing dozens of sculptures in a beautifully landscaped urban park setting.

The Civic Center of Greater Des Moines hosts a variety of Broadway shows, concerts, and other performances throughout the year, making it a cultural hub in the region. For sports enthusiasts, the Iowa Cubs, a Triple-A affiliate of the Chicago Cubs, offer exciting baseball games at Principal Park. Spend the day at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden or enjoy a scenic bike ride along the extensive trail system that connects Urbandale to downtown Des Moines and beyond.



## THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT & THE CITY MANAGER POSITION

For the past 40 years, the City of Urbandale has benefited from the steady leadership of just two City Managers. Additionally, the current Mayor has provided unwavering direction for nearly 20 years. This continuity has allowed Urbandale to thrive, grow, and consistently deliver high-quality services to its residents. Due to the impending retirement of the current City Manager, who has held the position for 15 years, the City is now seeking a visionary leader to position Urbandale for its next chapter of success.

### GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE:

Urbandale operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The City is governed by the Mayor and five council members, all elected at large and serve four-year terms. The Council appoints the City Manager. As the Chief Administrative Officer, the City Manager plays an essential role in implementing the policies set forth by the Council and ensuring the efficient operation of all city services. The City's annual operating and capital improvements budget totals \$77.8 million.

### THE ROLE OF THE CITY MANAGER:

The City Manager is the driving force behind Urbandale's day-to-day operations. This position is responsible for advancing the vision of the Mayor and City Council—a safe, regionally connected community where diversity is valued, opportunities are abundant, and all can thrive. The City Manager oversees 13 direct reports and leads a workforce of 259 full-time and 63 part-time employees, ensuring effective management across a diverse range of departments, including Administration, Community Development, Economic Development, Engineering, Fire/EMS, Library Services, Parks & Recreation, Police, and Public Works. Urbandale has an history of excellence as demonstrated by the Fire, Police and Library accreditations.

Essential to the City Manager's role is upholding Urbandale's core values, listed below, which are critical for the City's next chapter of success:

- **Sustainability:** The City Manager champions practices that preserve environmental resources and foster a resilient community, ensuring long-term sustainability for future generations.
- **Quality-of-Life:** By prioritizing the well-being of community members, the City Manager ensures access to high-quality amenities, human services, cultural enrichment, recreation, and excellent urban infrastructure.
- **Safety:** The City Manager works closely with departments to provide robust services, including law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency preparedness, to maintain a safe environment for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- **Inclusive Community:** The City Manager fosters an atmosphere where all individuals feel valued and respected. This includes promoting cohesiveness across our entire community and civic participation.
- **Collaboration:** Urbandale values collaboration and partnership to address challenges, the City Manager leverages resources and creates shared solutions for the benefit of the community.
- **Accountability:** The City Manager emphasizes transparency, integrity, and responsible stewardship of resources to uphold the highest ethical standards in governance and service delivery.





## REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

The City of Urbandale is seeking candidates who hold a minimum Bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, or a related field. A Master's degree is preferred but not required. Candidates should also have ten years of progressively responsible leadership / managerial experience in a municipality or a similar organization. Candidates should also possess a good overall understanding of all aspects of municipal operations.

## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE:

In addition to a commitment to the preceding core values of the community, the Mayor and City Council have identified the following values, leadership traits, and personal attributes that the ideal candidate for the position will possess:

- Collaborative
- Strategic thinker
- Committed to regionalism
- Flexible
- Receptive to new ideas
- Long-term perspective
- Relationship builder
- Promotes a positive workplace culture and healthy work-life balance
- Excellent communication skills
- Challenges the City Council when appropriate
- Results oriented
- Committed to transparency
- Values inclusiveness and diversity
- Politically astute and aware
- Creative problem-solver
- Allow staff to perform duties without unnecessary interference or oversight
- An excellent listener
- Inspiring and motivational

The Mayor and City Council have also identified the following skills, competencies, and experience as highly desirable for the new City Manager:

- Strategic planning
- Environmental sustainability
- Climate change planning
- Economic development
- Regional initiatives
- Community engagement
- Grant procurement
- Affordable housing
- Budgeting and financial management
- Public safety management



## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The new City Manager will be expected to address the following major challenges and opportunities during his or her first 24 months of employment with the City of Urbandale:

- Implement various new planning initiatives that the Council created in recent years: Strategic Plan, Human Services Plan, Environmental Sustainability Plan, to list just a few. [View the Council's Strategic Priorities here.](#)
- Develop plans and strategies for the community to address climate change impacts
- Aggressively pursue environmentally sustainable practices and policies throughout the municipal operation.
- Develop plans and strategies for the revitalization of Downtown Urbandale.
- Develop and implement programs to address various critical community housing needs, including affordability and availability.
- Develop succession plans for several senior staff retirements over the next two to four years.
- Work to strengthen relationships with regional partners and seek ways to collaborate and cooperate with these partners to address regional problems and exploit regional opportunities.
- Develop plans and strategies to address revenue restrictions the State of Iowa has placed on local governments.

## COMPENSATION AND HOW TO APPLY

The annual starting salary range for the position is \$200,000 to \$230,000 +/- DOQ/E. The City of Urbandale provides the City Manager with a highly competitive array of fringe benefits, including a monthly vehicle allowance. Relocation assistance may be negotiated with the successful candidate. Apply online at [www.GovHRjobs.com](http://www.GovHRjobs.com) with a resume, cover letter, and contact information for five professional references by October 21, 2024. Confidential inquiries may be directed to Mark Peterson, MGT Approved Independent Executive Recruiter, at Tel: 309-825-5091 or Charlene Stevens, Vice President, at Tel: 320-262-0303.

The City of Urbandale is an Equal Opportunity Employer

