



VILLAGE OF PARK FOREST, ILLINOIS VILLAGE MANAGER

MGT

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VILLAGE MANAGER

AT A GLANCE

Park Forest, IL (pop. 21,975) As a progressive and thoughtfully planned historic south suburban community, Park Forest has a reputation for well managed municipal services and a focus on supportive resident service. Park Forest is a diverse, family-oriented home rule municipality located in both Cook and Will Counties, Illinois, approximately 30 miles south of Chicago. Park Forest is a full-service municipality including public works, police, fire, community development, planning, economic development, finance, recreation and parks, health and a housing authority. It boasts a vibrant arts community as the home to the Nathan Manilow Theater at Freedom Hall, Studio 47, Fieldcrest School of the performing Arts, the Tall Grass Arts Association and the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra. The Village's budgeted expenditures in the General Fund after transfers are \$35.8M, with General Fund revenues projected at \$32M. Budgeted expenditures for all funds other than the Library Fund are \$68.4M; budgeted revenues for all funds, other than the Library Fund, are \$65.6M. There are 167 full-time equivalent employees. Since 2004 the village has received over \$81 million in federal, state and county grants. Park Forest has a history of political and administrative stability.

The Village Manager leads the executive management team facilitating key decisions regarding financial management, strategic planning, economic development, capital planning and development, and intergovernmental relations. The Village Manager is appointed by the Board of Trustees (including the Mayor); the elected officials are elected at large on a non-partisan basis and, in 2025, will enjoy an uncontested election. The current Village Manager is retiring after 27 years of service to Park Forest. The Village Manager and executive team are extremely collaborative and value teamwork which has resulted in a high functioning, long tenured senior staff. Park Forest offers unique services supporting resident quality of life through its parks and recreation programs and the health and housing authority.



ABOUT THE POSITION

The Village employs a full-time Village Manager along with well-qualified Department Heads to professionally manage the Village's affairs and public services. The Village Manager oversees the day-to-day operations of Village government and is the Mayor and Trustees' key point of contact. The new Village Manager is encouraged to look at the municipal organization and over time, evaluate service delivery processes, procedures, and innovative methods.

The Village Manager is appointed by the Mayor with the concurrence of the Board of Trustees. The elected officials are elected at large to serve four-year terms on a non-partisan basis. On April 1, 2025, three Village Trustee positions will enjoy an uncontested election. This position is available following the anticipated retirement in June 2025 of the valued Village Manager who has served the community with dedication for nearly 30 years.

Staff has a lot of daily interaction with one another and report strong interdepartmental relations. Major areas of operation include the full-service Administration Department, Building & Community Development Department, Economic Development and Planning Department, Finance Department, Fire Department, Police Department, Public Works Department, and Recreation, Parks & Community Health Department.

The Village is assisted in its policy development by numerous [Boards and Commissions](#) consisting of residents who volunteer to serve on specific committees. The Village Manager is a staff-liaison to a number of these volunteer groups.





VILLAGE GOALS

Adopted in 2022 ([click here](#)), the Village Board identified these goals:

1. To strengthen and enhance economic conditions to attract and retain businesses and employers to support a thriving local economy.
2. To provide municipal services in a responsive and fiscally sustainable manner through continued collaboration, innovation, and regional leadership.
3. To employ best practices to deliver high-quality services and maintain and develop infrastructure in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable manner.
4. To mitigate the effects of climate change through the management of Village resources, partnerships, and the natural environment.
5. To continue to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of Village residents and property through the provision of excellent and innovative public safety services delivered with integrity and impartiality.
6. To increase opportunities for engagement and maximize resources for all residents.
7. To continue to develop public relations and innovative marketing and communications to promote Park Forest.
8. To build upon the history of Park Forest and cultivate a culture that meets the future.



PARK FOREST - A COMMUNITY WITH HISTORY AND PROMISE

From its inception in 1946 as America's first post-war planned suburb, Park Forest has been a welcoming community and home to a diversity of residents who appreciate and support the efforts to be a sustainable, affordable community. As an urban design model, the community started as a place to welcome the many returning GI's returning from World War II. There is a variety of housing options, an extensive park system and professionally operated local government. Residents take pride in their efforts to ensure fair housing for all supported by an array of amenities typically not found in a community of its size. There is a long history of support for the professional Council-Manager form of government.

Located approximately 30 miles south of downtown Chicago, Park Forest is part of both Cook and Will Counties. It is bordered by Chicago Heights, Matteson, Olympia Fields, Richton Park and University Park. Interstate Highway 57 is less than three miles to the west, Interstate Highway 80 is seven miles to the north, and the Bishop Ford Expressway eight miles to the east, providing access to the major highways in the Chicago area. Both Midway and O'Hare are less than one hour away. Metra trains make daily trips to downtown Chicago making this community convenient for commuters.

AT A GLANCE

Households	7,976
Median Age	37.4
College attainment	37.0%
Median Income	\$58,907
Median Home Value	\$106,203

(from CMAP snapshot and US Census)



AREAS OF FOCUS

The Village of Park Forest is a diverse and engaged community with a rich history and a commitment to sustainability, innovation, and collaboration. The next Village Manager will join an organization that values strategic thinking, community engagement and advocacy, and operational excellence in a strong organizational culture. The role presents several challenges and opportunities, including:



1. Encouraging Economic Development and Revitalization

Park Forest is committed to fostering sustainable economic growth while preserving its distinctive identity. Since 2008, the

Village has continually refined its downtown and comprehensive planning efforts, adapting to emerging trends and community needs. Opportunities abound to revitalize key commercial corridors, strengthen the viability of the Village's commercial center, attract new businesses, and promote mixed-use developments. In the 1990's, Park Forest acquired a significant portion of the commercially zoned property and acts as a landlord within the community. The next Village Manager will collaborate with regional partners to position the Village competitively in the greater South Cook County area.

2. Addressing Housing and Community Development Needs

With a mix of historic neighborhoods and newer developments, Park Forest offers housing options that appeal to a diverse population. Within the Cook County portion of the community, the unpredictability in assessed housing value, along with decreased commercial/industrial values and high exemptions, has shifted the tax burden to residents. The next Village Manager will work to address challenges such as property tax assessment, housing affordability, aging infrastructure, and the preservation of neighborhoods, while also supporting new residential development to compassionately meet the needs of current and future residents.

3. Enhancing Public Safety and Community Relations

The next Village Manager will work with public safety leaders to support innovative policing strategies, enhance emergency preparedness, and build strong community relations to ensure residents feel safe and connected.

4. Fostering Community Engagement and Communication

The Village benefits from an active and engaged citizenry. Maintaining open communication, ensuring transparency, and fostering partnerships with residents, businesses, and community organizations will be essential for the next Village Manager. A visible, approachable, and collaborative leadership style will help build trust and strengthen community bonds.

5. Maintaining Financial Stability and Exploring Revenue Opportunities

The Village has worked diligently to maintain its financial health. However, like many municipalities, it faces the challenge of balancing increasing service demands with constrained revenue streams. The next Village Manager will work closely with the Board of Trustees and staff to explore new revenue opportunities, identify cost-saving efficiencies, and ensure long-term fiscal sustainability.





AREAS OF FOCUS (continued)

6. Navigating Regional Collaboration and Statewide Policies

As a part of the larger Chicago metropolitan area, Park Forest faces both opportunities and challenges from regional collaboration and state policy impacts. The next Village Manager will represent the Village's interests in regional initiatives, advocate for local priorities, and ensure compliance with evolving state and federal regulations. This includes effectively engaging in broader conversations pertaining to South Suburban regional planning to ensure Park Forest's voice is heard and interests are well-represented.

7. Sustaining Environmental and Sustainability Initiatives

The Village is a recognized leader in sustainability and green initiatives. Continuing to advance environmental efforts, such as renewable energy projects, green infrastructure improvements, and waste reduction programs, will remain a key priority. The next Village Manager will have the opportunity to build on these achievements and engage the community in innovative sustainability efforts. This role offers the opportunity to position Park Forest as a model for climate-forward governance in the Chicagoland area.

8. Promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Park Forest has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. The next Village Manager will champion equity initiatives, support diverse hiring practices, and work to ensure that all voices in the community are heard and valued.

9. Succession Planning

Park Forest recognizes the importance of maintaining a skilled, knowledgeable, and committed workforce to support its mission of delivering exceptional services to residents. With many seasoned employees nearing retirement, the Village is focused on developing a robust succession planning strategy to ensure continuity of operations and institutional knowledge. The next Village Manager will lead efforts to identify and cultivate emerging talent within the organization, provide opportunities for professional development, and foster an environment that supports innovation and career growth.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Requires a bachelor's degree in public policy, planning or related field.
- Master's degree in public administration, business administration or related field is highly desired.
- Minimum of seven to ten years of increasingly responsible management experience in municipal government.
- Successful administration of municipal operations in a suburban city/village with the desire to innovate processes and approaches when appropriate.
- Will have extremely well developed oral and written communication skills.
- Will exhibit a collaborative, welcoming approach with elected officials, residents, the business community, and employees.
- Residency, while not required is desired.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Starting salary range: \$195,000 +/- DOQ with excellent benefits; the current compensation for the Village Manager is budgeted at \$204,000. Employees will have access to Park Forest's competitive benefits package including health, dental, vision, life insurance, pension, deferred compensation plans, and so much more!

HOW TO APPLY:

Apply online at www.GovHRjobs.com with a resume, cover letter and contact information for five professional references by March 7, 2025. Confidential inquiries may be directed to Ashley Eccles, MGT Senior Consultant, or Kathleen (Katy) Rush, independent authorized executive recruiter at 847-380-3240.

The Village of Park Forest is an Equal Opportunity Employer