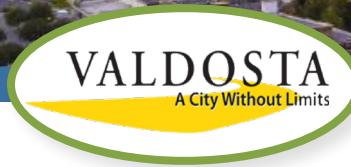


*Inviting Applications for*

# CITY MANAGER

*of Valdosta, Georgia*

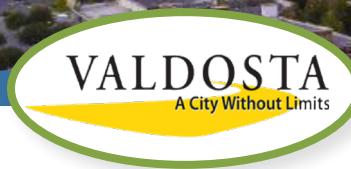


## About the City

The City of Valdosta is a unique community, blending its historic past with a dynamic and high growth environment, coupled with a diversity to give it economic viability and strength. In 1860, Valdosta was incorporated as the new county government seat. With a population of 166 people, Valdosta thrived as the county government seat of Lowndes County and the inland capital for Sea Island cotton.

During the city's first 10 years, it grew 622 percent to a population of 1,999. Valdosta has seen explosive growth in the most recent decade and is now approaching a population of 60,000. The determination of the little town that moved to the railroad is still evident in today's city as it works toward a prosperous future. Valdosta provides a healthy, vibrant, safe environment where residents live, work, and play in a diverse community that values families and neighbors. Valdosta-Lowndes County is a thriving community with an economy balanced for growth, where wages are increasing at a healthy pace yet cost of living and business costs remain competitively low. Valdosta residents enjoy the scenic rural area of South Georgia along with a variety of urban shopping choices, dining, arts, and entertainment. Valdosta serves as the cultural, medical, and commercial hub for eleven South Georgia and north Florida counties.

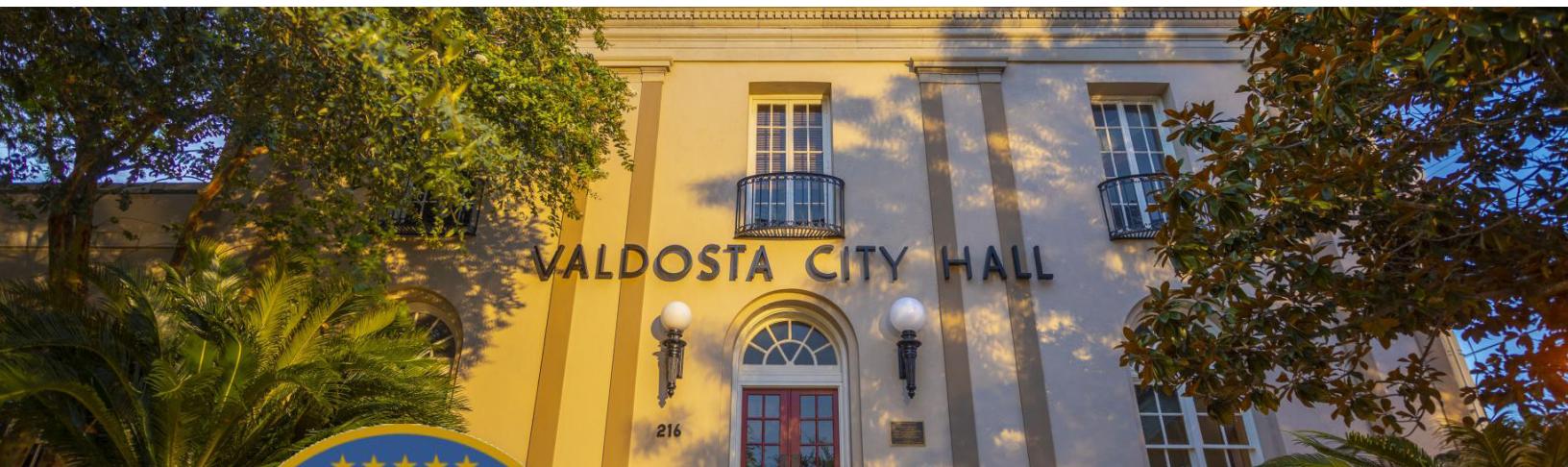




## About the Government

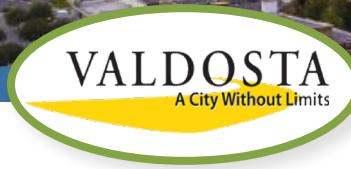
The City of Valdosta operates under a Council/Manager form of Government. The Valdosta City Council is composed of a mayor and seven council members who serve four year staggered terms. The city is divided into six single-member districts and one at-large district. The Mayor/Council is charged with setting policy, approving budgets, and other legislative duties such as adoption of ordinances.

The Mayor/Council appoints the City Manager who works at the pleasure of the Council and is responsible for the daily operations of the city with 600 employees. Department heads are selected by and report to the City Manager. The City Manager is responsible for implementing the annual operating budget (currently \$124 million) as approved by the Mayor/Council.



## City Awards

- 2022 GMA Visionary Award Winner for Unity Park Amphitheater
- 2022 APWA Award for “Valdosta On-Demand Transit”
- Named one of Georgia’s first “Cities of Excellence” for being one of the state’s “best managed and most livable cities” for quality-of-life



## About the Position

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The City Manager is the Chief Administrative/Executive Officer and is responsible to the Mayor and Council for the administration of all city affairs as required by the charter.

- Manages activities of city departments by assigning priorities and objectives to department heads and professional staff; reviews/approves management reports regarding department and administrative activities.
- Oversees the preparation and administration of the annual city budget; prepares and presents an annual balanced budget to the Mayor and Council.
- Oversees the preparation of the agenda and related documentation for meetings of the Mayor and City Council. Prepares an annual report of the city's accomplishments and awards.
- Provides leadership and direction in the development of short- and long-range plans; gathers, interprets, and prepares data for studies, reports, and recommendations for decision-making purposes.
- Oversees the implementation of policies as adopted by the Mayor and City Council.
- Provides professional advice to the Mayor and City Council; provides direction to department heads.
- Attends and represents the city at local, regional and state meetings regarding policies and issues that impact the city; serves as the city's representative on a variety of boards and authorities; represents the city to a variety of state government entities.
- Communicates official plans, policies and procedures to staff and the general public; represents the city before the news media.

## The Ideal Candidate

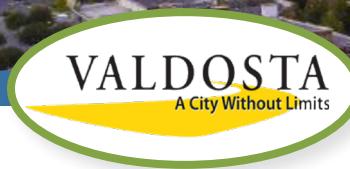
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The ideal candidate will be an ethical, approachable, and open-minded leader who adopts progressive strategies and embraces positive change, while applying local government best practices proven effective in communities comparable to Valdosta. This individual will possess the capability to collaborate effectively with the Mayor and Council to define and implement a community-supported vision that upholds the city's values and fosters responsible growth.

The ideal candidate should be confident, energetic, and able to build trust with citizens. Valdosta seeks a professional City Manager who can help the Mayor and Council address community challenges effectively and compassionately.

The ideal candidate will be an attentive listener with excellent communication abilities who can interact positively with the business community, citizens from diverse backgrounds, and Valdosta's leadership team to foster trust and transparency within the city.

The ideal candidate will maintain a consistent visible presence within the community to foster strong working relationships with key stakeholders, including Lowndes County government, Moody Air Force Base, the Valdosta City School Board, Valdosta State University and South Georgia Medical Center.

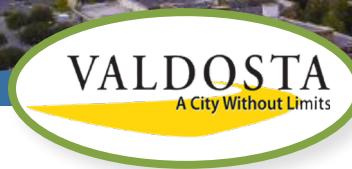


## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- The new Manager will be expected to develop a collaborative working relationship with the Mayor and Council that is defined by transparency, continuous sharing of information concerning government operations, regular interactions with Council members to gain understanding of specific district needs, and a willingness to develop and champion challenging recommendations for positive change. Roles and responsibilities of the Manager and of the Mayor & Council as defined by the charter must be valued, respected, and modeled by the Manager while encouraging elected officials and staff to do the same. The Manager is expected to uphold and defend the charter-defined roles of both the Manager and the Mayor & Council, while also encouraging elected officials and appointed staff to respect these same roles and responsibilities.
- The new Manager will need to focus on community transportation, pedestrian travel ways, and chronic stormwater needs with special attention given to downtown Valdosta and older residential areas of the city that have not been prioritized in the past. He/She will be expected to work with transportation partners to expedite actions for rerouting commercial traffic from the downtown area and construction of identified railroad overpasses to improve traffic flow.
- There are several major capital improvements projects that will need to be high priorities for the new Manager's work plan. Among those are: design and construction of collector roadways and interstate connection improvements being funded by the T-SPLOST program; completion of a new south side water treatment plant currently under construction along with a planned new wastewater treatment plant funded by revenue bonds; a multi-generational recreational facility; installation of a new water metering/billing system, and possible expansion of the Rainwater Conference Center.
- The City is in the final stages of completing an employee compensation study to address pay inequities and to ensure that the city can recruit and retain a quality workforce. The new Manager will be responsible for helping to manage employee expectations regarding the outcomes of the pay study and develop an implementation strategy that aligns with the city's available funding.
- The new Manager will be expected to foster an inclusive, high-performing organizational culture by building trust with employees, recognizing the expertise of existing staff, and clearly defining expectations for accountability, performance, and professional conduct. Emphasis will be placed on leadership development, succession planning, and maintaining a workforce that reflects the community it serves while delivering consistent, high-quality customer service.
- The Manager will be expected to provide leadership to address workforce housing needs by promoting strong partnerships with proven housing providers such as Habit for Humanity and the local landbank; expediting CDBG funded projects; utilizing federal tax credit programs and grants; and other housing best practices proven to be effective in other communities of similar size to Valdosta. Dilapidated/blighted houses and buildings should be addressed through consistent and objective enforcement of existing codes as well as possible housing code changes focused on utilizing more aggressive blight removal tools.

## MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree required in public administration, business administration, planning, economic development or related degree from an accredited college or university. A master's degree is preferred.
- A minimum of five (5) years of managerial experience in a local government as a city or county manager, deputy manager; or as an upper-level executive manager in an organization with comparable complexities to the City of Valdosta. Any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience that provides the required knowledge and skills for the position will be considered.
- Evidence of continued professional development such as ICMA Credentialed Manager designation, is a positive indicator of dedication to the profession and will be noted during the vetting process.



## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The expected starting salary range for this position is **\$175,000 - \$200,000** (depending on qualifications of the selected candidate).

A very comprehensive benefits package is offered for this position, including:

Health, dental and vision insurance; no cost Medical Clinic – Premise Health; Basic Life and AD&D – provided by the city at no cost; Long-term disability paid by the city; Employee Assistance Program – EAP; Pension benefit – employee contributes 3%, vested in 10 years; Deferred Compensation 457 offered through Empower and Paid time off (PTO) and paid holidays.

The city offers a generous annual and sick leave program, as well as vehicle and cell phone allowances. Relocation expenses are negotiable.



## HOW TO APPLY

Interested candidates must submit by email a cover letter, resume, a list of at least five job related references (with email and phone numbers), as well as salary history **no later than March 13, 2026 to lisaward912@gmail.com.**

**Please direct any questions to Lisa Ward, Senior Associate, Mercer Group Associates, at 706-983-9326; or Alan Reddish at 706-614-4961.**



**MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES**