



CITY MANAGER



THE COMMUNITY

Nestled less than **20 miles from the Continental Divide**, Helena, Montana was born in 1864 when four weary prospectors stumbled onto gold in what they called “**Last Chance Gulch**”—a twist of fate that turned a mining camp into Montana’s capital by 1875. Today, echoes of that bold beginning live on along Millionaires’ Row and in the heartbeat of a downtown that blends frontier grit with modern charm. The city remains a powerhouse of state, county, and local government—serving residents statewide and several tribal nations—while anchoring a diverse economy and creative community.

Helena pairs its rich history with a thriving present: the world-renowned Archie Bray Foundation, Broadwater Hot Springs, a lively arts scene, and museums that tell Montana’s story from the inside out. Strong K–12 schools and colleges fuel an educated workforce, and **recently approved bonds to modernize local schools demonstrate Helena’s continued investment in its future**. Beyond city limits, adventure calls—Great Divide Ski Area, sweeping trails, a hot spot for geocaching and rockhounding. Plus, the nearby lakes and forests offer a daily escape. In Helena, history isn’t something you visit; it’s something you live.



BY THE NUMBERS

- **13 minutes** -
average commute

113.25M
FY 2026 Budget

34,729
population

15,471
households

9.1%
poverty rate

16.82 sq
city miles

85.1%
of households
have broadband
internet

7 nearby lakes
150+ miles of
trails

5,468'
elevation of
Mt Helena
620-acres of
parks and
trails!

380 city
FTE

53 sworn
police officers

42 full-time
firefighters

Sources: [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov); [Census Reporter](https://www.censusreporter.com)



1 Private College **1** Community College **2** High Schools **10** Elementary Schools



POSITION

The City Manager serves as the driving force that turns the City Commission's vision into reality by advancing community priorities through collaboration, innovation, and integrity. Acting as a bridge between the Commission, department leaders, and the public, the City Manager oversees citywide operations and ensures that every initiative moves Helena toward a more connected, sustainable future.

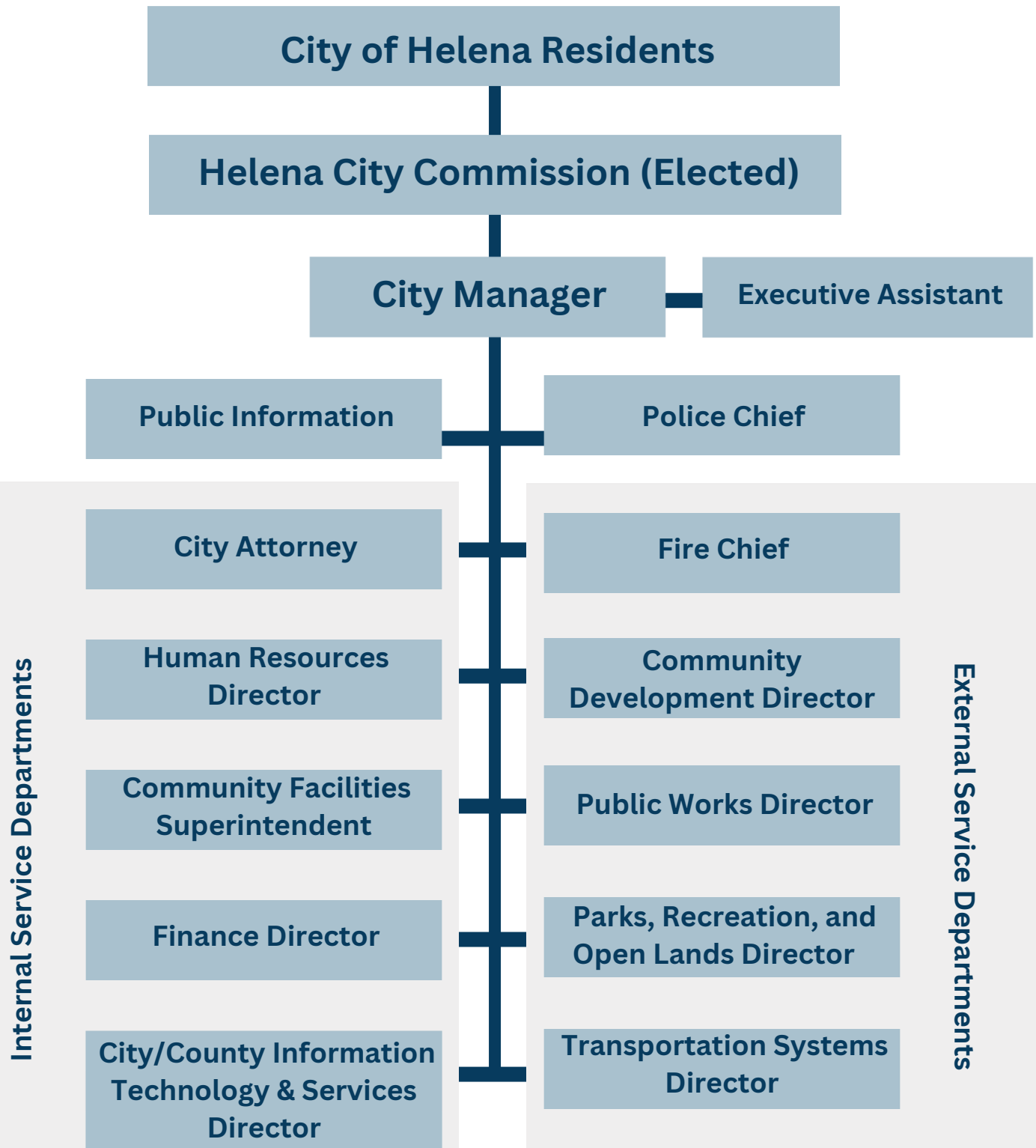
The successful candidate will lead with composure, inclusivity, and clarity—making timely, informed decisions that reflect both data and community values. As the City's chief executive, the City Manager guides the Commission in effective policymaking through rigorous analysis, transparent communication, and strategic foresight. This is a role for a leader who sees a city not just as it is, but as it could be: walkable, vibrant, and built to last.



- Appoint, direct, and evaluate department head attainment of administrative and operational goals and objectives.
- Prepare and deliver the City budget for review and approval by the City Commission.
- Oversee expenditures and report on financial and administrative activities.
- Provide executive management continuity through strategic and succession planning efforts.
- Represent the City in the community, at professional meetings, and with other governmental agencies.
- Oversee all improvement projects; review plans, specifications, and advertisements for bid notices and contracts.
- Lead development of vision, plans, and future goals.



ORGANIZATION



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & PRIORITIES

In just three years, Helena has redefined what progress looks like under the leadership of its City Manager and Commission. Guided by staff and community partners, the City launched its first comprehensive Strategic Plan—aligning every department around shared goals and measurable results. Operations have become leaner, finances stronger, and decision-making more transparent. Helena is now a high-performing organization with momentum—and the next City Manager will carry that energy into the plan’s next phase, steering a city that’s ready to grow **smarter, faster, and sustainably**.

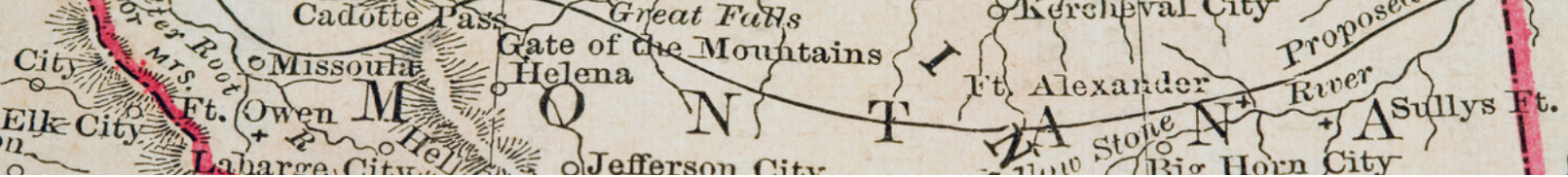
Recent Accomplishments

- **Strategic Planning and Alignment:** Completed Helena’s first citywide Strategic Plan (2024), establishing unified goals, strategies, and accountability metrics across all departments.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Finalized master plans and rate studies for water, wastewater, and transportation systems; launched a multi-year sidewalk and transit expansion program to strengthen mobility and access.
- **Public Safety Capacity:** Earned voter-approved funding for a much needed third fire station based on population growth.
- **Operational Modernization:** Deployed major technology upgrades, including a new ERP system, digital permitting platforms, and expanded public information tools for faster, more transparent service.
- **Employer of Choice Initiative:** Adopted a competitive, market-based pay plan; enhanced leadership development, flexible scheduling, and succession planning to attract and retain top talent.
- **Community Engagement:** Deepened transparency through open records, proactive communication, and collaborative partnerships with neighborhoods, businesses, and regional organizations.

Current Priorities

- **Maintain and Elevate City Services:** Continue modernizing operations, expanding digital access, and upholding accountability in public communication.
- **Holistic Development and Housing:** Streamline permitting, coordinate housing affordability and homelessness initiatives, and protect Helena’s distinctive sense of place.
- **Infrastructure and Sustainability:** Deliver on capital improvement plans, champion proactive maintenance, and embed sustainability into long-term infrastructure investments.
- **Employer of Choice and Culture:** Strengthen workforce engagement, retention, and professional growth while sustaining competitive total rewards.
- **Financial Stewardship:** Advance long-term forecasting, budget refinement, and capital funding strategies to secure Helena’s fiscal health.
- **Partnerships and Governance:** Cultivate strong relationships with Lewis and Clark County, local agencies, and community partners to drive shared success.
- **Community Trust and Transparency:** Reinforce open, responsive, and accountable governance built on clarity, accessibility, and genuine public engagement.





IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Helena is seeking a forward-thinking, collaborative leader to serve as its next City Manager—someone who can unite vision with action and guide the organization through its next chapter of growth. The ideal candidate will bring a balance of innovation and practicality, helping the City Commission shape effective policy rooted in research, transparency, and shared purpose. This is a leadership role for a strategist who can inspire teams, strengthen community trust, and champion a sustainable, people-centered future—advancing initiatives that make Helena more walkable, connected, and resilient while keeping its legacy of service excellence thriving in a rapidly changing world.

Preparation for the role includes education and experience equivalent to a **bachelor's degree** in management, public or business administration, or a related field, plus seven years of progressively responsible leadership experience in government, financial management, urban planning, human resources, or equivalent organizational leadership. The Commission may consider alternative combinations of education and experience. Preferred qualifications include a master's degree, ICMA credentialing, and a track record in economic or community development and municipal government leadership. The City Commission is seeking a City Manager who is strategic, innovative, and community-minded—a leader who can translate civic goals into tangible results and values into action, fostering a city that grows sustainably and serves all who call Helena home. The City Commission seeks a candidate with the following characteristics:

- Ability to gain a clear understanding of the city and its values.
- An inclusive, participatory leadership style and ability to establish trust, stabilize operations, and move organizations forward.
- Ability to explain complex issues in a clear and understandable manner, and effectively represent all city departments.
- Understanding of essential services provided by municipalities, including public lands, development and recreation options.
- Knowledge of human resources including employee and labor relations, compensation, policy, performance management, and motivation.
- Skill in active listening, conducting organizational assessments, and integrating plans from multiple work units into a comprehensive and measurable strategic plan that encourages policymakers to focus on the future.
- Capacity to develop partners and stakeholders, foster diversity and inclusion, lead with empathy and compassion, and motivate teams through change.
- Experience creating succession plans and sharing authority with subordinates to ensure continuity in organizational leadership.
- Ability to provide effective budget development and to adjust for influxes of revenue, to coordinate with the chief financial officer, and to mobilize resources to facilitate leadership and resource prioritization.
- A proactive, thoughtful, and methodical approach for modernization and process improvements.
- Ability to gain a solid understanding of the city Charter and government processes.



COMPENSATION

The annual salary range is **\$175,000 to \$205,000** depending on qualifications. In addition to a competitive salary, the City of Helena offers exceptional benefits coverage including medical, prescription, dental, vision, and hearing aid benefits; life insurance; and retirement plan contributions. An additional Mutual of Omaha life insurance policy premium is paid by the City. Supplemental benefits are available through pre- or post-tax payroll deductions as well as HSA or Flex Spending Account options.

The Montana Public Employees Administration (MPERA) administers the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS). The City and the employee contribute a percentage to the fund as set by State Law. The City also provides an additional 8% deferred compensation contribution and a monthly car allowance.

PROCESS

The City of Helena is an equal-opportunity employer. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. The City prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race, color, religion, creed, national origin, physical or mental disability, marital status, political beliefs, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or genetic information. Candidates will be subject to background and reference checks, and must be bondable.

Candidates interested in this exceptional career opportunity must submit a detailed resume, cover letter and three reference contacts to [Helena City Manager Application Portal](#). The cover letter should describe why the candidate is interested in the position and relevant background information. The resume should include employment details, the size of staff and budgets managed, and career highlights. Candidates are encouraged to submit their application materials early for review by the City Commission. Candidates claiming veteran's preference must provide a copy of their DD214 with their application materials to verify preference.

Applicant reviews will begin on **November 5, 2025**. The position is open until filled. Candidates are requested to include in their cover letter whether they assert their right to individual privacy. Following submission of the applications, a meeting will be scheduled for purposes of initial screening. Meetings of the Helena City Commission are generally open to the public. However, please note that meetings to screen the candidates may be closed if the Mayor determines that the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure. Confidential inquiries are welcome and may be directed to James Kerins of Communication and Management Services, LLC, at (406) 442-4934.

