THE CITY OF
HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA

INVITES YOUR INTEREST IN THE POSITION OF
CITY MANAGER
HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA — AN EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY

This is an exceptional opportunity to provide leadership and management to an internationally prominent city of commerce with ambitious plans for the future.

Strong candidates are effective leaders and sound managers with the ability to work productively under the policy guidance of the City Council and maintain and inspire a dedicated City workforce. They are able to collaborate with elected officials and all citizens and employees to achieve community objectives. They are effective stewards of public funds with budget development and administration experience. They have knowledge of the principles and best practices of public administration with innovation and sound judgment.

THE CITY OF HIGH POINT

High Point, known as the “Home Furnishings Capital of the World,” is North Carolina’s ninth largest city. The estimated population is over 115,000, in a metropolitan area of 750,000 and a larger Piedmont Triad region of 1.6 million people.

The community acquired its name because it was located at the highest point of the NC Railroad between Charlotte and Goldsboro, at its intersection with the Great Western Plank Road that ran from Fayetteville to Salem. The General Assembly incorporated the town in 1859.

The city is situated primarily in the southwest corner of Guilford County, with portions also in Davidson, Forsyth and Randolph counties—the state’s only city in four counties. It is bordered by Greensboro to the north, Jamestown to the northeast and Archdale to the southeast. Winston-Salem is only 20 miles away. High Point is in two river basins—the Yadkin-Pee Dee and the Cape Fear.

High Point is the home of the biannual High Point Market, the world’s largest wholesale furniture and furnishings merchandising market. The city also remains the prime location in the United States to purchase brand-name furniture and furnishings at a substantial discount, in more than 50 retail stores.

The Market features 12 million square feet of showroom space and attracts 100,000 exhibitors, buyers, retailers and design professionals from around the world. The official slogan—“North Carolina’s International City”—is derived primarily from the High Point Market. It is the largest economic event in North Carolina, twice per year. The Mayor and City Manager serve as members of the High Point Market Authority Board of Directors.

Other major industries include bus manufacturing, distribution and logistics, textiles, customer service, banking, photography and pharmaceuticals. Among the largest employers are Wake Forest Baptist Health, Ralph Lauren, Thomas Built Buses, Bank of America, Guilford County Schools, High Point University, the City, Alorica, Aetna and XPO Logistics.

The city is home to High Point University, the “Premier Life Skills University.” HPU is an accredited private liberal arts, coeducational, Methodist-affiliated institution with approximately 4,400 undergraduate and graduate students. It has enjoyed tremendous academic progress, campus development and increased national prominence in recent decades, with inspired leadership. The University offers 50 undergraduate majors, 10 graduate degree programs and one doctoral program. HPU is a member of the NCAA Division I and the Big South Conference.

Since High Point is situated in four counties, the city is served by four public school systems: Guilford County Schools (the third largest public school system in NC), Davidson County Schools, Forsyth County Schools and Randolph County Schools. Guilford Technical Community College maintains a High Point campus.

Major highways passing through or near High Point include Interstates 40, 74 and 85; U.S. Routes 29 and 70; and NC Highways 62, 66, 68 and 610. Piedmont Triad International Airport (GSO) is located less than 15 miles from downtown High Point. Amtrak’s Crescent, Carolinian and Piedmont trains depart from the historic and recently refurbished High Point Amtrak station. Public transportation is available within the city, and to and from other nearby municipalities.

The High Point Enterprise is the daily newspaper, and the Greensboro News & Record also is available. The studios of the FOX television affiliate, WGHP, Channel 8, are located in High Point. The Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point designated market area includes nine television stations.

There are abundant cultural attractions and programs, including the High Point Theatre and the High Point Public Library, both owned and operated by the City.
The new $36 million Truist Point baseball stadium is home to the High Point Rockers, of the independent Atlantic League. The team is owned by a local non-profit entity. The almost 4,000 seat stadium is an anchor of vigorous downtown revitalization efforts, as a major element of the City’s Strategic Plan. Future public-private development plans and goals include new restaurants, a hotel, an office building, a children’s museum, educational cinema and an events center, to bring more people downtown. Forward High Point—a public-private, City-funded entity—is the lead downtown development agency.

North Carolina is the ninth most populous state, between Georgia and Michigan, with over 10.5 million people. The state population grew by 10% in the decade between 2010 and 2019.

High Point University:  
http://www.highpoint.edu/

Business High Point – Chamber of Commerce:  
https://www.bhpchamber.org/

Visit High Point:  
https://visithighpoint.com/

Forward High Point:  
https://downtownhighpoint.org/

High Point Market Authority:  
https://highpointmarketauthority.org/

**THE POSITION**

The City operates under the council-manager form of government. The City Manager is appointed by and works under the direction of the Mayor and City Council.

**City Charter provisions:**  
https://library.municode.com/nc/high_point/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTITHCH_ARTIVAD_CH1CIMA

The Council is composed of the Mayor and eight Council Members, each elected by the nonpartisan primary and election method, to serve concurrent four-year terms (not staggered). The Mayor and two Council Members are elected at-large, by all registered voters. The other six Council members are elected by the registered voters within their wards. Elections are held in odd-numbered years, every four years. The next municipal election will be held in 2023.

The City Manager supervises one Deputy City Manager, two Assistant City Managers, and 20 department directors. There are 1,463 full-time employees.

![City of High Point Organizational Chart FY 2020-2021](image-url)
The General Fund budget is $109.5 million, Water & Sewer Fund $71.2 million and the Electric Fund $133.4 million. The City is one of 74 NC municipalities that owns and operates the electric distribution system, and also operates a landfill.

The City operates on a July 1-June 30 fiscal year, along with most other local governments, under the uniform and sound NC Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act (G.S. Chapter 159). The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) presented a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to the City for its annual budget for the fiscal year that began on July 1, 2019. To receive this award, a governmental unit must publish a budget document that meets GFOA’s criteria as a policy document, an operations guide, a sound financial plan, and an informative communications vehicle.

The finances are sound, although budget development with the uncertainties of the current fiscal year was challenging. The Council reduced expenditures, increased fund balance, and took other measures to close a gap between projected revenues and requested expenditures. The property tax rate is $0.6475. One cent on the tax rate yields approximately $1 million per year, on combined total assessed valuation of approximately $9.997 billion (1.5% increase over previous year estimate). Along with other NC cities, High Point receives significant local option sales tax revenue, along with other state-collected local revenues.

The City has strong general obligation bond ratings: AAA from Standard & Poor’s, Aa1 from Moody’s, and AA+ from Fitch.

The City Council and senior staff are intently focused on the Strategic Plan adopted in early 2016, and since reaffirmed and expanded. The Plan includes three initial general goals, with action steps:

- Increase the population of active, engaged, and entrepreneurial and working young professionals living in High Point by 25%
- Proactive enforcement of codes—a strategy to address blight and stabilize neighborhoods
- Create a downtown catalyst project that produces:
  - 500 private sector jobs
  - 15-20 new restaurants and shops
  - 250 additional housing units, including affordable housing
  - A centralized gathering place, with enhanced cultural attractions and amenities

The City Council added three new short-term goals in early 2020:

- Design a marketing campaign focused on diverse groups, events and quality of life
- Select target neighborhood and coordinate necessary city departments to implement holistic strategy
- Recruit 50 new office jobs and five new investors for catalyst project

Although all available hotel rooms and private rentals in the surrounding region are booked and downtown is bustling during the High Point Market periods, there is less activity during other periods. A major goal of the downtown catalyst element of the Strategic Plan, with the new baseball stadium as the anchor, is to bring more people downtown year-round.

North Carolina is recognized consistently as a state with a strong commitment to the council-manager form of local government. The state has a relatively strong and resilient economy, sound local government finances and strong credit ratings, and enlightened and effective state agency oversight of local government finances and borrowing.

City of High Point:
https://www.highpointnc.gov/

High Point Strategic Plan:
https://www.highpointnc.gov/1603/High-Point-Strategic-Plan-2017

FY 2020-21 Approved Budget:

High Point Strategic Plan:
https://www.highpointnc.gov/1603/High-Point-Strategic-Plan-2017

THE CANDIDATE

The City Council is seeking an innovative, high energy leader with strong interpersonal skills, high emotional intelligence, and personal and professional maturity and self-confidence. The City Manager should be active and visible in the community and accessible and responsive to citizens, assist in balancing sound growth and development with preservation of the character of this community, and work to enhance public facilities and services, with a continued focus on sound financial management. The Manager must be committed to implementing the Strategic Plan, and demonstrated creativity and downtown revitalization experience will be highly valued.

Requires a bachelor’s degree in Public or Business Administration or other relevant field; Master’s degree is preferred. Candidates should have a minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible leadership and management experience in local government or business; knowledge of management and finance principles and practices; confidence with public writing and speaking; experience and comfort in a collaborative environment; experience as a local government manager, assistant manager or department head is preferred. Experience in NC municipal government, public power cities, university towns, cities with significant manufacturing employment, or in otherwise comparable communities is a plus.
The City Personnel Resolution requires that the City Manager reside within the corporate limits.

**Desired characteristics, qualifications and experience:**

- Versatile, adaptable, open minded
- Strong communication skills
- Accessible, visible and active in community affairs, respectful and responsive to citizens and elected officials to carry on our citizen service culture
- Effective delegator
- Creative thinker and problem solver
- Demonstrated good business sense and management skills
- Strong and creative financial and budget management skills
- Strong organization and management skills
- Able and willing to make sound, timely decisions after considering relevant information and alternatives, with follow-through and results
- Willingness to make a long-term commitment to service in High Point, with sensitivity to the character and history of the City
- Demonstrated ability to help elected officials and senior managers understand their respective roles and responsibilities, and keep them informed about significant long-term trends, opportunities and challenges that should be addressed in the public interest, with adequate notice and opportunity for consideration of sound recommendations and alternatives, and skills to help build consensus
- Strong media relations skills, and ability to be an effective spokesperson and ambassador for the City
- Demonstrated strong negotiation skills to address future opportunities, needs and challenges
- Experience in developing and implementing effective economic and tax base diversification policies and strategies, including attracting businesses and services to underserved neighborhoods
- Experience with urban revitalization, including knowledge of new urbanism strategies and principles
- Politically astute but scrupulously non-partisan, with demonstrated sound professional judgment
- Thorough understanding of the appropriate respective roles of elected officials and senior managers, with a demonstrated commitment to working respectfully and professionally with all members of the governing body, in a transparent, responsive and even-handed manner
- Impeccable integrity, committed to the high ethical standards of the local government management profession and transparent government operations, ability to establish high level of credibility with citizens
- Experience with environmental issues, and knowledgeable about alternative energy issues and information technology
- Demonstrated long range vision and ability to follow through
- Commitment to maintaining productive working relationships with state government, other local governments in the region, community groups and the business community

- Demonstrated sound personnel management experience with a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
- Willingness and ability to make timely and fair personnel decisions, and skills to plan and implement effective performance appraisal and management systems
- Professional and collaborative leadership and management style that allows City employees to make productive contributions to serving our citizens as a cohesive and coordinated team, based on clear communication of general expectations without micromanagement
- Track record of respecting the expertise and capabilities of department directors, with accountability and recognition for achievements, and a commitment to enhanced professional development opportunities and sound succession planning
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS
The starting salary will be market competitive, depending on the experience and qualifications of the selected individual. The City provides attractive benefits.

TO APPLY
To apply for this outstanding opportunity, send letter of interest and resume by email to:

highpointcitymanager2021@gmail.com
S. Ellis Hankins, Senior Vice President, The Mercer Group, Inc.
Cell & text: 919-349-8988

The Mercer Group, Inc., a firm that provides executive search and other consulting services to public and private sector clients nationwide, is assisting the High Point City Council with their City Manager search. For additional information, please contact Ellis Hankins.
The Mercer Group:  www.mercergroupinc.com

Apply by March 4, 2021. Receipt of applications will be acknowledged by email. If timely acknowledgement is not received, please follow up with Mr. Hankins.

The City of High Point is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity across the workforce, in order to serve all citizens well.