



## *City Manager* *Yakima, WA*

(Population 91,630 - Approximately the 340<sup>th</sup> largest City in the U.S.)

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Yakima has been the cultural, business, educational, health services, and governmental focal point of the Central Washington region since it was founded more than 125 years ago. Originally built along the then new Northern Pacific Railway company line, Yakima has grown from its agricultural roots into a vibrant, diverse metropolitan city. With a rich history and a bright future, Yakima is the Heart of Central Washington.

Yakima's economy has traditionally revolved around agriculture and a wide variety of crops are grown in the Yakima Valley. These include more than 30 varieties of fruit (apples, cherries, peaches, pears, nectarines, apricots and berries) and vegetables (such as asparagus and eggplant). Not many people know that the region produces about 75% of all of the hops (a key ingredient in beer) grown in the United States.

While Yakima still relies on agriculture to drive its economy, over 250 manufacturing firms call the area home and produce a variety of products including aircraft parts, wood products, plastic products, recreational vehicles, and communications technology. Healthcare plays a large role in the Valley as represented by five hospitals and over 400 first class physicians covering 36 specialties. Clinics provide a full range of treatment with open heart surgery, neurosurgery, and cancer care among them.

Tourism is the fastest growing segment of the Yakima economy. More than 70 wineries are located in the Valley and regularly draw visitors to sample and buy internationally renowned varietals. Outdoor recreation, including water and snow skiing, fishing, boating, hiking, horseback riding, and white water rafting, also makes Yakima a favorite destination for people from throughout the Northwest and around the world. Finally, Yakima is home to a minor league baseball team (the Yakima Bears, an Arizona Diamondbacks affiliate) and hosts numerous regional sports tournaments (baseball, basketball, softball and soccer, for example).

## **COST OF LIVING, HOUSING AND EDUCATION**

The cost of living in Yakima is below the national average at 88.6%. The average sales price of a home is \$172,000 and the average commuting time to work is about 15 minutes. Beyond K - 12, the area boasts a private technical college, a community college, a university, an osteopathic medical school, and a number of vocational education programs.

## **GEOGRAPHY, DEMOGRAPHICS AND CLIMATE**

Yakima is located in South Central Washington State and covers 28.27 square miles. Sunshine is the norm with 270 to 300 blue sky days per year. The area enjoys four separate and distinct seasons with the summers being hot and dry while the winters are cool with light snowfall.

Yakima is the largest city in Yakima County and the 9<sup>th</sup> largest city in Washington State. Most of the people who founded Yakima were of European decent, although significant numbers of African-Americans and Asian-Americans homesteaded in the area as well. Relatively recently, the Yakima Valley has experienced a large influx of Latino immigrants, which now account for approximately 45% of the population in Yakima County. Today, the Yakima community enjoys a rich mixture of people from many cultural and ethnic backgrounds. 74% of the population has at least a high school degree and 18% has a bachelors degree or higher. The median annual household income in Yakima was estimated to be \$36,351 in 2009.

## **THE GOVERNMENT**

Yakima is a full service city. Its 2012 General Government budget is \$58.7 million and its total 2012 budget (including utilities and other enterprise funds) is \$192.3 million. Based on the 2009 CAFR, approximately 30% of the employees are in General Government, 25% in Police, 12% in Fire, 8% in Wastewater, 7% in Transit, 5% in Streets, 4% in Water and 6% in other activities ranging from Refuse and Stormwater to a cemetery and the bus transit system.

Yakima is governed by a seven member council operating within the traditional Council – Manager form of government. Council members serve staggered four year terms. Four members represent geographic districts and three are elected at large. The mayor is selected by the council from among its members. The City Attorney reports to the City Manager.

The vast majority of City employees are represented by 15 bargaining groups (within 4 separate unions). About 90 employees, which are all management or exempt staff, are unrepresented.. It should be noted that the labor laws in Washington state are challenging and much more favorably inclined towards labor than in the vast majority of states. Those interested in this position should be familiar with Washington State public sector labor law before applying.

One final note is that a referendum was on the ballot in February of this year proposing the City change to a Mayor - Council form of government. It was defeated 52% to 48%.

### **THE PRIMARY CHALLENGES THE NEXT MANAGER WILL FACE**

- Scarce Resources. While Yakima has been well and conservatively managed, resources are tight. In the last year, funded positions have been reduced from 750 to 730. Additionally, parts of the City's infrastructure (such as 30% of its streets) need renovation.
- Redevelopment. In the past ten years Downtown Yakima has undergone a renaissance. The Downtown Futures Initiative provided for a street to storefront renovation throughout the downtown core, and included new pedestrian-friendly lighting, water fountains, planters, banner poles, new trees, and hanging baskets to complement the new paver-inlaid sidewalks. The result is the downtown has been recast as a center for events, services, entertainment, and smaller, more personal shopping experiences. The City wants the redevelopment momentum to continue. Examples of other opportunities are the redevelopment of the 211 acre former Boise Cascade Mill site and designating the area around the local commercial airport as a port district.
- A third challenge is crime and the City does have an issue with gangs. It is working diligently to resolve this issue and has developed a strategy to deal with it. The Gang Free Initiative and the funding of 12 police officers through a recently passed 6% tax on utilities, goes a long way towards addressing this issue. The crime is centered in specific areas and, as a result, much of the rest of the community is quite safe.
- Finally, several managerial positions are currently filled by staff in an acting capacity. Further, one or two other long serving department heads and key personnel may also be considering retirement. Succession planning has not been emphasized so two things must happen. The vacant positions must be filled and the staff developed. Mentoring and succession planning both need to be enhanced.

### **THE IDEAL CANDIDATE**

The City Council is seeking someone to work with it as a partner. The ideal candidate will understand the Council makes policy and it is the manager's responsibility to carry out Council direction. The individual will be a leader and someone who is intelligent, outgoing, fair, organized, and progressive – someone with common sense and a can do attitude, someone who is visionary, yet practical, and someone who is a realistic risk taker. She/he will be expected and engage the community, to be a cheerleader for the City and work diligently as an ambassador to the world. Yakima has a wonderful story to tell and the Council wants its next manager to be passionately positive about telling that story. The ideal candidate will have strong analytical

skills, take a hard look at City operations and challenge entrenched processes. He/She will be politically savvy but not politically involved. The manager will have outstanding interpersonal and communication skills while being open and approachable. She/he will be someone who works with the Council, the community, local businesses, and residents to find solutions to problems. Customer service will not be just a catch phrase but rather, along with integrity, be a core principle. The best candidate will be respectful of the City's managers and staff, delegate and encourage an environment where creativity will flourish, and will expect results and accountability. The manager will believe in transparency and open government. Other important characteristics are experience managing in lean times, experience working with the media, and the ability to anticipate and resolve issues before they become problems.

The selected individual will have a demonstrated track record of achievement in management, finance, labor relations, economic development, redevelopment, and public / private partnerships. Experience dealing with crime (gangs in particular), intergovernmental relations and diversity will also be important. With the Yakama Nation reservation being located just a few miles south of the city, experience working with Native American tribes will also be helpful.

The selected candidate will be expected to make a commitment to Yakima. This position should not be viewed as a stepping stone but as a gem in its own right.

The position requires a Bachelor's degree in business administration, public administration, public policy or related field, and seven to ten years of increasingly responsible experience as a senior level government executive. A Master's degree is preferred.

### **COMPENSATION**

The starting salary will be between \$135,000 and \$180,000.

### **RESIDENCY**

Residency within the City is not required but is preferred.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Candidate names will not be released without the candidates' permission. However, it is expected that, when the City selects finalists, some form of public participation will be incorporated in the final stages of the city manager selection process.

### **HOW TO APPLY**

E-mail your resume to [Recruit25@cb-asso.com](mailto:Recruit25@cb-asso.com) by March 2, 2012. Faxed and mailed resumes

will not be considered. Questions should be directed to John Darrington at (509) 619-0880 or Colin Baenziger of Colin Baenziger & Associates at (561) 707-3537.

### **THE PROCESS**

Applicants will be screened between March 3<sup>rd</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup> when finalists will be selected. Interviews will be held April 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> with the final selection being made shortly thereafter.

### **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Yakima is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity at all levels of its workforce. It encourages minorities and women to apply.