

CITY OF LA MESA, CALIFORNIA

Director of Finance



CITY OF
LA MESA
JEWEL of the HILLS



THE COMMUNITY

Founded in 1912 and centrally located in the rolling hills of San Diego County with a population of approximately 60,000, La Mesa is known as the Jewel of the Hills. A near perfect climate, tree-lined streets, walkable neighborhoods, easy access to retail and commercial areas, and a quaint Downtown Village make La Mesa a highly desirable community in which to live and work. There is more to the Jewel of the Hills than just geography. It's about the myriads of people who have called La Mesa home for the last 100 years whom we honor for their extraordinary accomplishments as well as their devotion to the community. Spanning nine square miles, the City's increasing popularity is not going unnoticed. Niche's 2023 Best Places ranks La Mesa as one of the best suburbs for young professionals in California and one of best and most diverse places to live in the San Diego area.

La Mesa is also a much sought after business location due to its regional centrality and superior transportation network that includes three major freeways and two trolley lines, plus quick and easy access to a major international airport. The City is home to more than 5,000 businesses representing a wide array of industries with Sharp-Grossmont Hospital, the La Mesa-Spring Valley School District, Walmart (two locations), Kaiser Permanente, and Costco being the largest employers. A main attraction for many La Mesans is the ability to live, work, shop and play in the community in which they live. The Downtown Village serves as the historic center of the community and is filled with one-of-a-kind retail shops, vintage stores, and dining options, while also being a gathering place for many civic events and celebrations including a weekly farmers market, summertime classic car shows and annual Oktoberfest which is one of the largest in the west. Also, within city limits, Grossmont Center serves as a regional dining, shopping and entertainment hub with over a million square feet of space.

The community's amenities support a healthy lifestyle. Fourteen beautiful municipal parks are located within La Mesa's borders as are award winning urban trails, jogging paths, and other recreational facilities including a municipal pool and sports complex.

La Mesa is served by two school districts. The La Mesa-Spring Valley School District operates most of the elementary and middle schools while Helix Charter High School is part of the Grossmont Union High School District. There are also numerous private schools in the area. Local higher education options do not get any better with the University of California San Diego, San Diego State University and the University of San Diego all in close proximity. In addition, several community colleges serve the region.



CITY GOVERNANCE

La Mesa is a general law city which uses a council-manager system of government with a directly elected mayor. The City Council consists of a mayor and four councilmembers, all of whom are elected from the city at large and serve four-year terms. La Mesa employs a Council-Manager form of government. In this arrangement, the council is responsible for determining policy, and the City Manager ensures that such policy is implemented. The City Council appoints the City Manager and City Attorney, as well as a full complement of Boards and Commissions.

In addition to the Police Department and offices of the City Manager and City Clerk, other city departments include Community Development, Finance, Fire, Parks and Recreation and Public Works. The City has 288 full-time budgeted employees. The General Fund budget is approximately \$81 million.

Mission: Our mission is to reliably deliver high-quality public services that enhance the quality of life for all.

Organizational Values: Welcoming, Accessibility, Accountability, Excellent Customer Service, Integrity

City of La Mesa Five-Year Goals

- Maintain a community where residents and visitors feel safe.
- Ensure a strong financial outlook through careful planning, sustainable service levels, and fiscal sustainability.
- Promote a high quality of life that current and future generations can afford to call home.
- Invest in infrastructure to serve the needs of the community.
- Nurture an organizational culture where employees are recognized for the delivery of high-quality services to the community.

To learn more about the City of La Mesa, go to: www.cityoflamesa.gov

THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT

The Finance Department provides a variety of quality services to internal city departments, city employees and the public. Staff in the Finance Department are dedicated to providing excellent customer service. The Finance Department currently has 10 full-time team members whose responsibilities include:

- Data Processing
- Customer Service
- Accounts Receivable
- Accounts Payable
- Budget Preparation and Monitoring
- Business Licensing
- Financial Planning and Forecasting
- General Ledger Accounting
- Payroll and Tax Reporting and Compliance
- Preparing the City Budget
- Purchasing



THE POSITION

As the Finance Director for the City of La Mesa, you'll play a vital "hands on" leadership role in guiding the City's financial future. This dynamic position oversees all functions of the Finance Department – including Accounting, Sewer Billing, Receivables, and Purchasing – ensuring the integrity, transparency, and accuracy of the City's financial systems.

The staff in the Finance Department are eager to expand their accounting skills. If you are a CPA who is passionate about GAAP accounting and keeping good books, your job will include teaching the Finance staff, who would love to learn accounting principles and best practices during their course of doing their jobs.

You'll be responsible for delivering timely financial statements and budget reports, managing department operations, and working collaboratively with City departments, external agencies, and the La Mesa community. As a key member of the City's executive leadership team, you will provide strategic and complex administrative support to the City Manager, contributing to a fiscally strong and well-managed municipal government.

If you are a forward-thinking finance professional with a passion for public service and excellence, we invite you to bring your expertise to La Mesa and make a lasting impact.

Building on a Strong Foundation

Over the past several months, the Finance Department has been led by a dedicated Interim Finance Director who has made significant strides in strengthening internal processes. This transitional period has laid a solid foundation for long-term success of our accounting systems, with renewed focus on collaboration and efficiency for the organization.

The ideal candidate for this role will be ready to build on that momentum – bringing vision, leadership, and continuity to the department. We're seeking someone who is eager to continue advancing a culture of integrity, accountability, and excellence in public service.

This is a unique opportunity to lead a team of accounting staff who love their jobs, and who are ready to grow, evolve and make a lasting impact on the City of La Mesa.

Key Functions and Priorities

- **Comprehensive Department Oversight:** Lead the Finance Department through "hands on" management of accounting, budgeting, payroll, purchasing, revenue collection, sewer billing, vendor payments, licensing, cash management, and property inventory.
- **Strategic Financial Planning:** Direct the development and administration of the City's annual operating and capital improvement budgets; forecast revenues and expenditures to ensure long-term financial health.
- **Operational Excellence:** Evaluate and refine departmental systems, processes, and internal controls to improve service delivery, enhance efficiency, and safeguard City assets.
- **Team Leadership & Development:** Select, train, supervise, and evaluate a skilled team of finance professionals; foster a collaborative, accountable, and service-oriented departmental culture.
- **Financial Reporting & Compliance:** Ensure that accounting procedures are performed in accordance with GAAP and best practices, and the preparation of accurate financial reports in compliance with legal requirements; present findings and recommendations to the City Manager, City Council, and relevant committees.
- **Policy Development:** Establish and implement financial goals, policies, and priorities in alignment with City-wide objectives; recommend changes based on best practices and regulatory updates.
- **Technology & Systems Management:** Oversee the design and implementation of the FinancePlus automation of financial systems that support transparency, accuracy, and timely reporting.

- **Interdepartmental & Community Collaboration:** Act as liaison between the Finance Department and other City departments, outside agencies, and community stakeholders to support citywide financial initiatives.
- **Cash & Investment Management:** Monitor the City's cash flow and investment portfolio, ensuring proper fund transfers and adherence to investment policies; keep the elected City Treasurer abreast of investable cash balances.
- **Public Engagement & Communication:** Represent the City in meetings with residents, boards, commissions, and professional groups; address complex financial inquiries with clarity and professionalism.



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will be a “hands on” Finance Director with a detail fund accounting skill set, and a results-driven, organized, and proactive professional who possesses outstanding leadership, high integrity and ethical standards and independent judgment. The successful candidate will have strong communication and interpersonal skills to enable him/her to build and maintain effective working relationships with staff, city leadership, elected officials and other stakeholders. The City is seeking a Finance Director who places high value on customer service with a high degree of government finance and accounting technical competency, including knowledge of the principles, techniques and practices of local government finance, accounting, investment, budgets, financial reports, audits, bank reconciliation and cash management; principles of supervision; program analysis and revenue forecasting; bond servicing; pertinent local, state, and federal laws, rules and regulations.

If you are a high energy leader that understands how to implement accounting systems that provide the checklists and written procedures that will expand staff productivity and resources, this is an opportunity to be a part of a cohesive and solid leadership team, working with a supportive city council, and a cooperative management team across departments.

Key Attributes and Characteristics

- A solid leader and staff manager with a positive presence who demonstrates initiative, exercises good judgement, treats others with respect and is open and approachable
- Champions staff mentorship with an emphasis on cross-training and employee development
- Articulates complex concepts and ideas clearly and directly
- Is politically astute and knows when to escalate items
- Shows emotional intelligence and easily works and communicates with various work styles and personalities
- A leader who is collaborative and supportive in working with executive leadership and others to ensure the organization works towards innovative solutions and a common set of goals
- A person with the highest ethical standards who commands trust and respect of peers through conduct of high integrity and professionalism

QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination of experience and education that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

- Bachelor's degree, or equivalent, from an accredited college or university with major course work in accounting, finance, business administration or a related field.
- A Master's degree is desirable.
- Seven (7) years + of increasingly responsible finance and accounting experience.
- Three (3) years + of management and administrative responsibility.
- A Certified Public Accountant license or Certified Public Finance Officer are highly desirable.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The salary range for the Director of Finance is \$178,672 - \$217,193, commensurate with the candidate's experience and qualifications.

In addition to a competitive salary, the City offers an attractive benefit package that includes:

- **Retirement** – California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) Classic members 2.5% @55 benefit formula with single highest year (8% employee contribution plus 1% cost sharing). New Members to CalPERS fall under a 2% @ 62 (7.75% employee contribution) benefit formula with 3-year final average compensation.
- **Social Security and Medicare** – The City participate in Social Security. The City matches the employee contribution, which is 6.2% of salary. The City matches the employee's Medicare contribution, which is 1.45% of salary.
- **Health Insurance** – Health (medical/dental/vision) is provided. Medical plans are offered through the CalPERS Health Program, giving employees a range of HMO and PPO options. The City provides a cafeteria plan of 90% of the average of the Sharp and Kaiser health plans to be used to pay for health coverage. In 2025, the City pays up to \$2,210 per month for "Employee + 2 or More" coverage.
- **Vacation, Holidays and Leave** – The City provides 11 paid holidays and three floating holidays per year. Management employees accrue 80 hours vacation, with increased accrual based on tenure. Directors accrue 80 hours of administrative leave per calendar year.
- **Sick Leave** – Employees accrue 96 hours per year.
- **Auto Allowance** – \$375 per month.
- **Technology Allowance** – \$80 per month.
- **Sick Leave Conversion and Vacation Buy-Back programs** are available to eligible Management employees.
- **Group Life Insurance** – City provides the cost of life insurance of the employee's annual compensation up to \$225,000 plus an additional \$25,000 in coverage.
- **Short and Long Term Disability** – The City provides the cost of short and long term disability insurance for management employees. Management employees do not participate in State Disability Insurance (SDI).
- **Deferred Compensation** – City employees have the opportunity to boost their retirement savings and reduce taxable income by participating in the City's Section 457 deferred compensation program or the post-tax 457 Roth deferred compensation program through MissionSquare – includes up to \$1,500 in annual employer matching per calendar year.
- **Work Schedule** – Flexible 9/80 work schedule available.



APPLICATION PROCESS AND RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE

This position will be open until it is filled.

To be considered, please submit a resume, cover letter, and five work-related references to:

<https://koffassociates.com/la-mesa-dir-of-finance/>. References will be only be contacted following candidate approval.

Resumes should reflect years and months of positions held.

For additional information, please contact:



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Resumes will be screened based on the criteria outlined in this brochure. Candidates with the most relevant qualifications will be given preliminary interviews by the consultant. Koff & Associates will report the results to the City. The City will then select candidates to participate in City interviews. Extensive reference and background checks will be completed on the selected candidate.