

# THE CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA



IS SEEKING A DYNAMIC, INNOVATIVE  
AND PROGRESSIVE LEADER TO SERVE AS

## **Director of Communications and Public Engagement**



## The Community

The City of Charlottesville is located in West Central Virginia, approximately 120 miles southwest of Washington, D.C. and 70 miles northwest of Richmond, Virginia. Situated within the upper Piedmont Plateau at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and at the headwaters of the Rivanna River, Charlottesville was established as a town in 1762 by the Virginia General Assembly and was incorporated as an independent city in 1888. As a result of eight annexations, the most recent of which was in 1968, the City is 10.4 square miles.



Charlottesville serves as the economic, cultural, and educational center of a multi-county region. In 1981, the United States Census Bureau recognized the Charlottesville area as a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). The SMSA includes the City of Charlottesville and the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, and Nelson. In 2017, the population of the City was estimated to be approximately 49,000 and the Charlottesville SMSA population of over 200,000.

Charlottesville was the home of two U.S. Presidents, Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe. During their terms as Governor of Virginia, they lived in Charlottesville and traveled to and from Richmond. The University of Virginia, founded by Jefferson and one of the original Public Ivies, straddles the city's southwestern border. Monticello is three miles southeast of the city and is, along with the University of Virginia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, attracting thousands of tourists every year.

The City has ample health care resources. The University of Virginia's Health Sciences Center provides world renowned medical research, health care, and training. Martha Jefferson Sentara Hospital has a well-regarded comprehensive women's health center, oncology center, and a strong community focus.



Whether you are looking for an outdoor adventure such as hiking, biking, paddling, and camping, or you prefer fine dining, shopping or the arts, the unique and picturesque experience of Charlottesville is sure to win you over. Its scenic beauty, brick-lined Downtown Mall, and wine choices



from 30+ local orchards and vineyards in the region are bonuses to a charming yet innovative community. Popular annual events include the Dogwood Festival, First Night Virginia, the Virginia Film Festival, the Virginia Festival of the Book, the Tom Tom Founders Festival, the Festival of Cultures, the African-American Cultural Arts Festival, among many others that occur throughout the year. The City has received many notable awards and recognitions and is consistently at the top of everyone's "best lists" including the "Best Place to Live in America" and "Best Small Cities in the U.S."

## City Government

The City operates under the City Manager/Council form of government. The City of Charlottesville voters elect a five-member Council to serve at-large as the City's legislative and governing body. Members serve staggered four-year terms, and they select one Councilor to serve as Mayor and one as Vice-Mayor for two years. Municipal elections are held in November in odd-numbered years. The Mayor presides over meetings, calls special meetings, and serves as the ceremonial head of government. The City Council appoints the City Manager, Director of Finance, City

Assessor, Clerk of Council and members of major policy-making Boards and Commissions. Council makes policy in the areas of city planning and finances, human services, public safety and justice, public utilities, and transportation and has specific powers to pass ordinances, levy taxes, collect revenues, adopt a budget, make appropriations, issue



bonds, borrow money, and provide for the payment of public debts. Administrative and executive duties are performed by the City Manager. Three Deputy City Managers assist the City Manager in the operational and financial aspects of all City functions, coordinate interdepartmental activities and assist with assignments relating to the racial diversity, equity and inclusion, planning, direction, control, and evaluation of the operations and programs of the City Government, relations with City Council, and the coordination of the City's operating and capital improvement budgets.

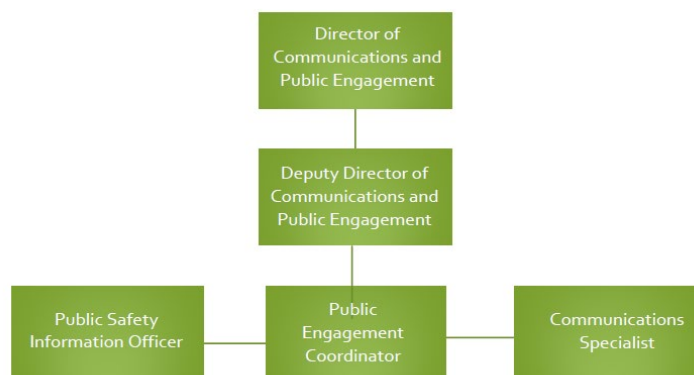
Charlottesville is an engaged community with a variety of citizen advisory groups, commissions, task forces, and ad hoc committees, which assist the City Council by studying specialized areas of interest and making recommendations for Council action. These range from the Planning Commission and the BAR to the Parks and Recreation Commission. As noted, civic engagement is a strong value in the City of Charlottesville. The City government continually creates venues for all citizens, with a special emphasis on those who are traditionally under-represented in civic processes, to become involved. This commitment to inclusive civic engagement ensures that social equity is built into the development of public priorities and policies.

The City is a full-service city with approximately 1000 full-time staff, an FY 2022-23 General Fund operating budget of \$212 million, and an FY 2022-26 Capital Improvement Plan budget of \$121 million. The FY 2022-23 budget reflects the continued delivery of high-quality governmental service that citizens, businesses, and visitors rely upon daily within the constraints of the current economy. As an independent City, Charlottesville does not have the same boundaries as nor is subject to taxation by any county and is not liable for any county debt. The City is financially stable and has a AAA bond rating.

## Office of Communications and Public Engagement

The Office of Communications serves as a liaison between the City and citizens by coordinating media, public and community relations, and by encouraging citizen engagement in their government through a variety of methods, including, but not limited to – media relations, press releases, the City's email newsletter *City Notes*, programming on City Public/Educational/Government Access channels, produced media for broadcast on radio and television, the City's website, social media platforms, print advertisements, public appearances, public events and public service announcements. The Office currently has five full-time positions and an FY2022-2023 operating budget of approximately \$681,471.

### Office Organizational Chart



## Director of Communications and Public Engagement Profile

The City of Charlottesville is seeking a dynamic communicator to be its next Director of Communications and Public Engagement who will serve as the City government's chief spokesperson and Public Information Officer (PIO). The Director is responsible for developing and directing a city-wide communications program that includes both internal and external communications using multiple tools including the City's website and social media; and is responsible for support and coordination to city-wide departments and offices.

The Director is responsible for developing and administering a public relations and media program for the City, to include ensuring City governmental activities are communicated effectively and accurately to employees, residents, businesses, and other customers; and manages community engagement initiatives. Promotes and maintains a positive public image of the City regarding service issues and programs. A high degree of community engagement with residents is expected, with the incumbent having high levels of cultural humility.

This position reports directly to the City Manager and works directly with other senior and executive-level staff. Position has overall management responsibility for the Office of Communications, including supervision of staff. Performs related duties as required.

### Specific Duties and Responsibilities

- Manages and coordinates the public information and community relations functions of the City;
- Sets the editorial and content direction for the Office of Communications;
- Supervises the writing, editing, and distribution of any and all news releases from the City;
- Serves as primary spokesperson for the City through all appropriate media outlets and communication channels including broadcasting, online, and print media and maintains the City's Media Relations Policy. Coordinates with Police and other PIOs to ensure accurate and timely information dissemination;
- Develops and advises the City Manager on coordinated comprehensive communication strategies and outreach programs and oversees their implementation;
- Implements strategic communications initiatives and directives to support the mission, goals, and objectives of the organization while fostering internal communications, public awareness, and community engagement;
- Coordinates accurate, timely, and accessible public information to promote a positive City image and public perception, communicate local government issues, and maintain public awareness of city programs and services. Anticipates problem areas and follows through on activities designed to keep the public informed and aware of major policy issues;
- Creates a process for and implements strategies for the use of content of the City's social media, print material, and cable television channel and other means of communication, outreach, and engagement for both internal and external communications;
- Supervises the editorial content of the City's internal web site and employee newsletter, and the City's external website and bi-monthly community newsletter as well as a variety of additional City publications;
- Plans, coordinates, organizes, and communicates information (which may include marketing and advertising) for community celebrations and signature City events and programs, public service announcements and emergency messaging;
- Prepares materials for use in presentations to the public, including talking pieces, speeches, video scripts, and PowerPoint presentations;
- Coordinates, executes, and leads presentation of public meetings and hearings including City Council whether the meeting is in-person, remote, or hybrid;
- Works effectively as a member of the City Manager's Executive Leadership Team to plan, execute and evaluate organization-wide strategies that achieve City Council's vision and goals in important community needs. Maintains current knowledge of City Council and City Manager policy positions and City-wide programs, projects, services, and issues;
- Provides quality assurance assistance to departmental staff on public notices and materials to ensure consistency and adherence to City public information philosophy and guidelines;
- Act as a facilitator for public input, stakeholder, and resident engagement meetings. Plans, organizes, and leads Town Hall meetings and other special outreach opportunities;

- Provides media relations training and guidance for key personnel and departments as needed;
- Monitors internal and external marketing trends and news coverage and assists with strategic responses;
- Evaluates marketing reactions to marketing/advertising programs and formulates adjustments to meet changing market conditions;
- Researches, analyzes, and mentors trends using focus groups and other feedback tools;
- Uses data collection to evaluate marketing techniques and suggest strategic improvements;
- Develops corporate and community leader relationships to enhance promotion activities;
- Creates customer outreach, communication, and education programs;
- Develops, monitors, and reports on performance measures that document the effectiveness of communication and marketing initiatives, makes recommendations based on return on investment;
- Develops and executes strategic marketing plans and programs and establishes marketing goals. Reviews and approves the creation, development, and implementation of all City marketing, use of City brands, advertising materials and department publications;
- Oversees the governance of branding within the City of Charlottesville;
- May be required to be on-call and to work non-standard hours including weekends. Regular, reliable attendance is necessary;
- Performs related work and other duties as assigned.

## Education, Experience and Skills

### Education:

- Bachelor's Degree with coursework in public relations, communications, journalism, public administration, or related field.

### Experience:

- At least five (5) years of experience in media relations, public relations or journalism, preferably in the public sector with local government. (An equivalent combination of training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities may be deemed acceptable).

**Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:** Requires complete functional knowledge of the workings of media & public relations including crisis communications; familiarity with a variety of the industry's concepts, practices & procedures; demonstrated capabilities as manager of both people & projects, including the ability to establish priorities, allocate assets properly with a keen focus on execution & detail; ability to think strategically, creatively & purposefully while managing multiple issues & projects; familiarity with new media tools including web sites; exceptional writing & editing skills; expertise in measuring & evaluating the effectiveness of media coverage; experience in developing PR plans & budgets; well organized, detail oriented & experience managing multiple complex projects while working under pressure.

Must be proficient in the use of electronic media, especially social media, to deliver important information to our residents, businesses and visitors. The director must possess an understanding of the changing methods of communications and how best to utilize them in a City that embraces new technology while understanding that not all residents have access to the latest tablet or smartphone. Must embrace the values of anti-racism and implement principles that foster diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice into their internal and external work.

## Compensation and Benefits

The preferred hiring salary will be between \$100,000 to \$122,248.34 Annually, plus 6% COLA July 1, 2023., dependent on education and experience level of the candidate. The City offers an outstanding program of employee benefits, including the option of participation in a Defined Benefits or Defined Contribution Retirement Plan. The opportunity to live and work in one of the most dynamic, challenging and culturally rich communities in the United States is an added benefit for the successful person. Reasonable relocation assistance will be available.

- **Medical Benefit:** Medical insurance is available through Aetna. Employees can choose from 3 options. Employee premium costs are based on plan selection. Spouse and dependent coverage is available but the

cost of the premium is not subsidized. Coverage is effective on the first of the month following date of hire. Plan options and costs are determined each fiscal year and are subject to change.

- **Dental Insurance:** Provided through Delta Dental at no cost for employee only coverage. Spouse and dependent coverage is available but not subsidized.
- **MetLife Vision Insurance:** The City's medical insurance through Aetna covers an eye-exam. Additional optional coverage under MetLife is available and participation is voluntary. The cost depends on the selected coverage type, employee only or dependent coverage.
- **Life Insurance:** The City provides basic term life insurance in an amount equal to two times your annual salary. The City pays the premium. You may also purchase additional life insurance.
- **Cancer/Accident/Disability Insurance** is available for purchase.
- **Vacation and sick leave** are accrued on a monthly basis. Vacation accrual is based on length of service. City executives have a beginning accrual rate of 3 weeks per year of service. Accrual is on a per pay period basis. All employees accrue 4.62 hours of sick leave per pay period. In addition, you will have immediate access to 20 hours of discretionary leave that you can use for any purpose. Employees who leave employment with the City are eligible to receive compensation for any unused vacation time up to the maximum accrual limit. There is no cash compensation for unused sick leave. However, employees participating in the City's defined benefit retirement plan can convert a percentage of their unused sick leave for additional service credit.
- **Holidays:** City employees receive 14 paid holidays per calendar year (13 observed, 1 floating).
- **Flexible Spending Accounts** for health, dependent care, and transportation/parking expenses.
- **Educational Assistance:** The City currently will pay up to \$1,500 per fiscal year towards undergraduate, or up to \$3,000 towards graduate level courses, for courses taken at approved institutions that qualify as career development. Funds are approved at the beginning of the fiscal year.
- **Retirement Plan Options:** You may choose one of two retirement plan options offered by the City: Defined Benefit or Defined Contribution. The Defined Benefit Plan pays a monthly benefit for life at retirement based on your years of credited service and your average compensation while you are working at the City. Employees contribute 5% of base salary to this plan. With the Defined Contribution Plan, an account is established on your behalf and your account grows through contributions from the City and earnings from investments you select. The defined benefit requires 5 years of service to vest. Vesting in the Defined Contribution plan is immediate. The City makes contributions to both plans. The contribution rate to the Defined Contribution plan for executives is 19.5% effective July 1, 2021.
- **Long Term Disability:** The City provides long term disability insurance at no cost. If unable to work due to illness or injury, the plan replaces 60% of your basic monthly earnings up to a maximum of \$6,000 per month. There is a 90-day elimination period.
- **A Deferred Compensation Plan (457):** Participation is voluntary. The employee on a pre-tax basis makes all contributions. ICMA is the administrator for the City's plan.
- **Employee Assistance Program.** Program is confidential & available to employees & family members at no cost.

## Application and Selection Process

Applications for the position must be submitted online at [www.charlottesville.gov/jobs](http://www.charlottesville.gov/jobs). Resumes will not be accepted in lieu of a completed online application. **Please also submit with your online application a cover letter, résumé, and five (5) professional references.** This job opportunity is advertised with a closing date of "Continuous." If interested in being considered, an application should be submitted as soon as possible. Applications may no longer be considered once a reasonable number of applications has been received or once a candidate to fill the position is identified. Applications may be evaluated on a continuous basis and interviews may be conducted as soon as possible during the recruitment with candidates who are best qualified.

*The City of Charlottesville is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Values Diversity at all Levels of its Workforce.*

