



NORTH CENTRAL KANSAS

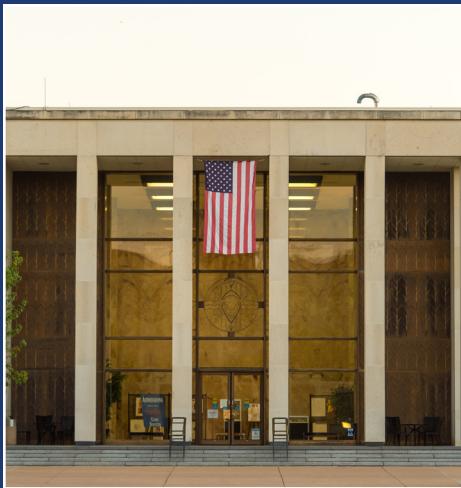
ABILENE

IS SEEKING A CITY MANAGER

The City of Abilene, Kansas, invites applications from accomplished local government professionals interested in serving as City Manager. Abilene is a historic and forward-looking community that values professional administration, sound governance, fiscal stewardship, and collaborative leadership. Operating under a commission-manager form of government, the City offers an outstanding quality of life, a strong sense of place, and the opportunity to lead a stable organization with meaningful strategic initiatives underway.

Located in central Kansas along the Interstate 70 corridor, Abilene is the county seat of Dickinson County and serves as a regional center for employment, healthcare, tourism, and public services. With a population of approximately 6,500, Abilene combines the accessibility and relationships of a small community with regional influence and national recognition.





Community

Abilene is nationally recognized as the hometown of President Dwight D. Eisenhower and as a historic Chisholm Trail cattle town. This heritage is both carefully preserved and actively integrated into community life. The Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum & Boyhood Home is a cornerstone institution of national significance, drawing visitors, scholars, and dignitaries from across the country and anchoring the City's strong sense of civic pride and identity.

Beyond its presidential legacy, Abilene is widely regarded as one of the Midwest's most successful historic small towns. The community is frequently recognized in national and regional media for its downtown vitality, preservation ethic, and quality of life. Abilene's historic character is dynamic, supported by active storefronts, cultural venues, festivals, public art, and community traditions that generate year-round engagement for residents and visitors alike.

Abilene has recently adopted a Comprehensive Plan and Park System Master Plan, providing a community-driven roadmap for growth, infrastructure investment, and quality-of-life enhancements through 2045. The community places a high value on stewardship, civic pride, collaboration, and thoughtful reinvestment to ensure long-term sustainability.

Economic Base and Regional Role

Abilene's economy is diverse, resilient, and regionally significant. Manufacturing, healthcare, public administration, retail, and tourism all play meaningful roles in the local employment base. Longstanding employers such as Great Plains Manufacturing/Land Pride, Rawhide Portable Corral, and Russell Stover Chocolates provide stable, family-supporting jobs and anchor the community's industrial presence. Healthcare is a major contributor, led by Memorial Health System of Abilene, an affiliate of Salina Regional Health Center, which serves both the city and surrounding region.

The City also benefits from a strong base of locally owned businesses, agricultural services, equipment dealers, and entrepreneurs that contribute to a balanced and adaptable local economy. Tourism, supported by Abilene's historic assets and national profile, complements this mix by driving year-round activity in retail, lodging, dining, and service sectors.

Economic growth is a priority of the City Commission. The City is actively preparing its industrial park with infrastructure improvements designed to create shovel-ready, KDOC-certified sites, positioning Abilene to compete more effectively for industrial, logistics, and value-added manufacturing opportunities. Housing development, workforce availability, and quality-of-life investments are viewed as essential supports to continued economic development.

DEMOGRAPHICS



Pop. 6,501

44

Average Age: 44.5



Average Family Size 2.3



92% High School Diplomas
20.7% Bachelor Degree +



The Organization and Governance

Abilene operates under the commission–manager form of government and has a long tradition of professional local government. The City Commission is engaged, policy-focused, and committed to transparency, ethical governance, and collaborative decision-making.

Following a prolonged period of executive turnover, the organization has placed renewed emphasis on strengthening internal systems, policies, and procedures. Throughout this transition, the City has benefited from a capable and dedicated staff led by experienced department directors who have maintained service levels while addressing longstanding operational and organizational needs. Recent efforts have included updating policies and ordinances, improving internal coordination, strengthening internal controls, and modernizing organizational practices.

The City adopted a balanced budget in 2026, reflecting improved financial discipline and collaboration between the governing body and staff. Rebuilding reserves remain a priority, supported by the adoption of ten-year Capital Improvement and Equipment Reserve Plans for General Fund departments, utilities, and fire apparatus. Voters have demonstrated support for infrastructure investment through approval of dedicated sales taxes for recreation and street maintenance, providing stable funding sources for community priorities.

Recent utility rate and cost-of-service studies have identified the need for phased rate adjustments to support long-term system sustainability. Addressing these challenges will require steady leadership, clear communication, and a focus on balancing affordability with infrastructure and service reliability.

The next City Manager will have the opportunity to provide stability, strengthen organizational culture, guide implementation of adopted plans, and lead Abilene through its next phase of investment and growth. This is a hands-on leadership role in a community where decisions matter, progress is visible, and professional management is highly valued.

The Position

Reporting directly to the City Commission, the City Manager provides executive leadership and administrative direction for all City departments. The City Manager is expected to be a visible, accessible leader who builds trust with elected officials, staff, and the community while advancing the City's strategic priorities.

Key Responsibilities

- Provide overall leadership and direction for City operations and services
- Supervise and support department heads; foster a culture of professionalism, accountability, and teamwork
- Prepare, administer, and monitor the annual budget; ensure sound financial management and long-term fiscal sustainability
- Support economic development, downtown revitalization, infrastructure investment, and community improvement initiatives
- Assist the City Commission with policy development and ensure effective policy implementation
- Serve as a liaison between the City Commission, City staff, partner agencies, community organizations, and residents
- Promote organizational effectiveness, continuous improvement, and service excellence

COMMUNITY SPECIFICS



Median Household Income: \$54k

Median House Value: \$147k



Critical Care Access



3.7% Unemployment Rate

Desired Qualifications and Professional Profile

The City seeks a City Manager who demonstrates sound judgment, strong interpersonal skills, and a commitment to ethical and professional local government management.

Education and Experience

- 5 to 9 years of progressively responsible experience in local government management
- Bachelor's degree in public administration, political science, or a related field (required)
- Master's degree in public administration or a related field (preferred)
- A combination of relevant education and experience that demonstrates the ability to successfully perform the duties of the position may be considered

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Demonstrated expertise in budget preparation, financial management, and fiscal stewardship
- Experience supporting economic development and community revitalization efforts
- Ability to work effectively with elected officials in a commission–manager environment
- Strong communication, facilitation, and consensus-building skills
- Experience with strategic planning and implementation
- Ability to build, lead, and sustain a high-performing organization
- Experience with downtown revitalization, redevelopment, or community improvement initiatives
- Commitment to professionalism, integrity, and ethical leadership consistent with ICMA principles

Compensation and Benefits

The City of Abilene offers a competitive salary range of \$125,000 to \$150,000, depending on qualifications and experience, along with a comprehensive benefits package.

POSITION SPECIFICS



Commission-Manager
5-person City Commission



City Budget: \$16M



Compensation:
\$125k - \$150k



FTEs: 64

How to Apply

To apply submit a cover letter, resume, and three professional references to LEAPS-Abilene@lkm.org. Application review process begins February 8, 2026. EOE.

LEAPS-ABILENE@LKM.ORG

