



RECREATION DIRECTOR

CITY OF PALM BAY, FL

EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

Help shape recreation and quality of life in the largest city on Florida's Space Coast.



THE COMMUNITY

The City of Palm Bay, Florida, is a large, growing community located on Florida's Space Coast in southern Brevard County. With a population approaching 160,000 residents, Palm Bay is Brevard County's largest city and offers the scale and complexity of a major municipal organization while maintaining the natural beauty, recreational amenities, and quality of life associated with the Central Florida Coast.



The City is part of one of Florida's most distinctive economic regions. The Space Coast is recognized for aerospace, engineering, advanced manufacturing, defense, healthcare, technology, and professional services. Palm Bay's residential and commercial growth, infrastructure needs, major transportation corridors, and long-range planning priorities make this an important time for strong executive leadership.

A growing Space Coast city with scale, momentum, and long-term opportunity.

For the next Recreation Director, Palm Bay offers an exceptional opportunity to lead programs, facilities, and special events that strengthen community connections, support active lifestyles, and enhance quality of life throughout the largest city on Florida's Space Coast.

Palm Bay provides residents with access to a wide range of outdoor and recreational opportunities, including parks, trails, waterways, conservation areas, boating, fishing, kayaking, biking, and nearby Atlantic beaches. The community's location near the Indian River Lagoon, Melbourne Orlando International Airport, Port Canaveral, Kennedy Space Center, and the broader Orlando region provides strong regional connectivity and access to major employment, travel, and recreation destinations.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Or Scan the QR code to watch a Palm Bay leadership welcome video



THE ORGANIZATION

The City of Palm Bay operates under the council-manager form of government. The City Council provides policy leadership, adopts the budget, establishes community priorities, and sets the overall direction for the organization. The City Manager oversees daily operations, implements policy direction, and leads the delivery of municipal services.

An exceptional opportunity to lead recreation services in one of Florida's largest and most dynamic Space Coast communities.

Palm Bay's adopted FY26 budget is \$521.3 million, including personnel, operating, and capital funding. As the City continues to grow, recreation services play an important role in creating a livable community, supporting residents of all ages, activating public facilities, and providing programs and events that strengthen community identity and connection.

Palm Bay at a Glance

Population: Approximately 160,000

FY26 City Budget: \$521.3 million

FY26 Recreation Department Budget:
Approximately \$3 million

Recreation Department Staffing: 22 FTEs

Form of Government: Council - Manager

The Recreation Director reports to the Deputy City Manager and serves as the City's senior recreation executive. The position leads the planning, organization, development, administration, and supervision of City recreation programs, special events, assigned recreation properties, personnel, departmental policies and procedures, grants, and budgetary resources. The Department includes 22 staff members and an annual budget of approximately \$3 million.

The Recreation Department manages an outstanding network of community destinations:

- ◆ Palm Bay Aquatic Center
- ◆ Ted Whitlock Community Center
- ◆ Tony Rosa Community Center
- ◆ Greater Palm Bay Senior Center
- ◆ Ted Moorhead Lagoon House
- ◆ Turkey Creek Sanctuary

SIGNATURE EVENTS

The Recreation Department produces a year-round calendar of signature events that draw tens of thousands of residents and visitors, strengthen community identity, and showcase the City's parks and facilities. Highlights include:

Holiday Light Parade. One of the City's largest and most anticipated events, featuring more than 96 registered floats and drawing an estimated 28,000 spectators. Local businesses and schools participate in the parade and host their own watch events along the route, and staff from departments across the City organization help produce the event, making it a true citywide tradition.

Fall Fest. A family Halloween celebration at Fred Poppe Regional Park that has grown rapidly, from roughly 2,500 attendees in 2024 to more than 6,500 in 2025, and continues to expand with additional family-friendly activities and live entertainment.

Turkey Creek 5K. A popular community race that supports Department programs, features a custom finisher medal, and has grown to approach its 500-runner capacity, with collaboration opportunities involving sponsors and local organizations such as the Marine Resources Council.

Independence Day Celebration. A signature national celebration that draws more than 6,500 attendees to the Eastern Florida State College site, with tens of thousands more watching throughout the area, and has earned a reputation for one of Brevard County's premier fireworks displays.

Father Daughter Dance and Valentine's Gala. Semi-formal, ticketed events that give area families a memorable way to connect while generating sponsor and community support for Department events and programs.

From a 28,000-spectator Holiday Light Parade to one of Brevard County's premier fireworks celebrations, the Department's event calendar is a centerpiece of community life in Palm Bay.



The Department presents the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony, Golf Classic, community food drives, and a wide range of additional events in support of City departments and community partners, giving the next Recreation Director a strong foundation to build on.

THE POSITION

The City of Palm Bay seeks an experienced, innovative, and community-focused Recreation Director to lead the City's recreation programs, facilities, and special events. This is an executive-level opportunity for a recreation professional who can combine strategic planning, operational leadership, strong customer service, sound financial management, community engagement, and practical problem-solving.

The Recreation Director is responsible for the planning, organization, development, administration, and supervision of a comprehensive citywide recreation program. The position oversees professional, technical, and clerical staff; establishes departmental goals, objectives, policies, and procedures; administers the departmental budget and grant funds; and directs the operation of recreation properties assigned to the Department.

Lead recreation programs, facilities, partnerships, and special events that help make Palm Bay a thriving and livable community

The Recreation Director will evaluate current programs, facilities, and services; identify opportunities for improvement and expansion; develop short- and long-range plans responsive to community growth and changing needs; and leverage partnerships to increase programming, events, and utilization of City recreation facilities.

The position represents the Department before City leadership, elected officials, advisory groups, community organizations, partner agencies, and the public. Evening and weekend availability is required for City-sponsored events and other departmental responsibilities.

Key responsibilities include:

- ◆ Leadership and administration of City recreation programs and assigned facilities
 - ◆ Strategic planning and development of measurable departmental goals and objectives
 - ◆ Evaluation and expansion of recreation programs, special events, and community services.
 - ◆ Leadership, development, supervision, and performance management of departmental staff
 - ◆ Preparation and administration of the departmental budget and monitoring of expenditures
 - ◆ Grant research, proposal development, administration, and required reporting
 - ◆ Partnership development with community organizations, agencies, schools, and other stakeholders
 - ◆ High-quality, responsive customer service to residents and internal customers
 - ◆ Interdepartmental collaboration and coordination with City leadership and elected officials
 - ◆ Monitoring internal controls and stewardship of public resources
 - ◆ Oversight of City-sponsored recreation programs and events, including evening and weekend activities
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THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Palm Bay seeks an accomplished recreation professional with the leadership ability, judgment, creativity, and operational expertise to guide a comprehensive municipal recreation program in a large and growing community.

The ideal candidate will bring:

- » Substantial knowledge of public recreation philosophy, programming, facilities, operations, and community service delivery
- » Demonstrated success developing programs and special events that serve residents of varied ages, interests, and backgrounds
- » Strong strategic planning skills and the ability to translate community needs and City priorities into measurable goals
- » Experience managing budgets, grants, personnel, facilities, partnerships, and operational resources
- » A strong customer service orientation and the ability to respond effectively to residents, participants, community groups, and City departments
- » Confidence presenting to elected officials, City leadership, boards, agencies, professional groups, and the public



The City seeks a strong department leader who values community service, inclusive programming, customer service, employee development, fiscal stewardship, partnerships, innovation, open communication, collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement.



The next director will cultivate a supportive and motivated work environment, foster innovation, and promote a department culture grounded in accuracy, integrity, customer service, and continuous improvement.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Candidates must meet one of the following education and experience pathways:

Pathway 1

- » Bachelor's degree in Recreation Administration or closely related field
- » Minimum of six years of experience in professional parks and recreation work

Pathway 2

- » Associate's degree in Recreation Administration or a closely related field
- » Minimum of eight years of experience in professional parks and recreation work

Highly desirable certification:

Certification as a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) through the National Recreation and Park Association or the Florida Recreation and Park Association.



Additional requirements:

- ◇ Minimum of five years of responsible supervisory experience over personnel, finances, programming, partnerships, and special events
- ◇ Outstanding interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills
- ◇ Valid Florida driver's license upon hire, and an acceptable driving record



COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The City of Palm Bay offers a competitive compensation and benefits package designed to attract a highly qualified Recreation Director.

The salary range for the Recreation Director position is \$111,867 to \$184,581 annually. The starting salary will depend on qualifications and experience. The anticipated starting salary is \$150,000 +/-.

The City provides a comprehensive benefits package for eligible employees, including:

- ◇ Medical insurance through Cigna, including HDHP, OAPIN, and OAP plans
- ◇ Dental insurance, including DHMO and PPO high/low plans
- ◇ Vision insurance
- ◇ Flexible Spending Account
- ◇ Life insurance equal to two times base salary at no cost
- ◇ Optional additional life insurance for the employee, spouse, and/or dependents
- ◇ Short- and long-term disability insurance
- ◇ Legal plan
- ◇ Accident insurance
- ◇ Automobile allowance
- ◇ Critical illness insurance
- ◇ Hospital indemnity insurance
- ◇ Defined contribution and deferred compensation retirement options
- ◇ 13 paid holidays, including one birthday holiday and one floating holiday
- ◇ Sick leave and vacation leave
- ◇ Robust mental health resources

TO APPLY

This position is open until filled, with a first review of applications and resumes on September 3, 2026, after 5:00 pm ET.

Interested candidates should apply through the City of Palm Bay's official application portal at:

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#)

or scan the application QR code.

Direct inquiries to the City's Human Resources Department at (321) 952-3421 or email:

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SELECTION PROCESS

Following the first review date, 65th North Group will conduct a comprehensive review of submitted materials and identify candidates for initial interviews whose experience and qualifications most closely align with the City of Palm Bay's needs.

OPEN UNTIL FILLED, FIRST REVIEW OF RESUMES: SEPTEMBER 3, 2026

The City will select the most highly qualified applicants for in-person finalist interviews.

