



*Deadline Extended – Looking For a Few More Great Candidates*

— POSITION AVAILABLE —

CITY MANAGER

Apply ASAP, but no later than July 19, 2024

Welcome to the heart of Florida's Nature Coast and Crystal River. If you want to escape the big city for a slower pace life southern charm, friendly neighbors, a small town feel, and unsurpassed natural habitats, Crystal River is the place. Located in Citrus County approximately 90 miles northwest of Orlando and 80 miles north of Tampa, the City is known for rich history, many outstanding restaurants, world class fishing and numerous other outdoor recreational activities. Once a hidden gem, USA Today recognized Crystal River as one of its 2023 ten "Best Summer Travel Destinations." Its City Manager job is a golden opportunity you will not want to miss.

With the saltwater Gulf of Mexico and the freshwater Kings Bay springs approximately six miles of each other, the City is unique. Numerous spots along the City's namesake river offer a myriad of opportunities to birdwatch, observe alligators, and swim with manatees. To the south is Three Sister Springs, a 57-acre restored wetland habitat with trails and a boardwalk where you can enjoy bicycling, guided tours, and observing the local flora and fauna. Water enthusiasts will find Kings Bay Park and the Crystal Cove Trailhead to be wonderful places to kayak and fish. Hunter Springs Park is another favorite for swimming, snorkeling, and even spotting dolphins during the winter months.



To the City's west is the Crystal River Preserve State Park, a mosaic of estuaries. Consisting of 20 miles of coastline, the 27,500-acre property is home to pinewoods, salt marshes, and mangrove islands. Many enjoy hiking, kayaking, and paddleboarding through the area to catch glimpses of untouched Florida wilderness. Crystal River Archaeological State Park and its museum provide an opportunity to learn about Native American heritage. Kings Bay is the center of the City and is a natural wonder. It receives over 600 million gallons of fresh water each day from over 70 springs, and due to its 72° degree year round temperature, it is known as the Manatee Capital of the World.

Along the streets of historic downtown Crystal River is Heritage Village, a sightseeing destination where small cracker-style cottages have been converted into unique boutiques. A slow stroll under the oaks, palms and magnolias lining the streets reveals a combination of eateries, an art gallery, and so much more. For active individuals, Jim LeGrone Memorial Park has several amenities such as a playground, various sports courts, barbeque grills, and a baseball field. The park's open field is available for football, events, and other activities. A few minutes west is the Coastal Region Library, a favorite retreat for booklovers.

Throughout the year, the City hosts various festivals and events. A local favorite is First Fridays, a monthly event held at Town Square every first Friday evening. Here, vendors sell handmade, homegrown, and fresh items amidst live music and other entertainment. Many also love the annual Fourth of July Celebration, complete with music, food, activities, and an evening firework show. In November, the Stone Crab Jam attracts a large crowd with its live bands, dancing, drinks, and fun celebrating stone crab season. January's two-day Florida Manatee Festival is especially popular, drawing nearly 25,000 residents and visitors each year.

In 2023, HGTV listed Crystal River in the "50 Most Charming Small Towns in America." The City has a variety of homes, with condominiums, townhomes, and single—and multi-family houses. According to Realtor.com, the City has experienced an increased 13.4% year-over-year trend as of April 2024. As one might expect, homes along the river and Kings Bay can be costly—often more than \$1,000,000—while smaller, older homes (less

than 1,400 square feet) in the same neighborhood may list for \$400,000 or a bit less. Homes well away from the water generally list for between \$300,000 and \$500,000, but tend to be older and not large.

Healthcare in the area is excellent, while serious crime is rare. In fact, Areavibes.com lists Crystal River as having 48% less crime than other areas of Florida. Citrus County School District serves the City and offers approximately a dozen public, charter, and magnet schools for children in preschool to high school. Residents feel children who apply themselves can get a good education here.

For those seeking higher education opportunities, numerous options are nearby. There are multiple community colleges in the surrounding areas as well as the Universities of Tampa and South Florida to the south and University of Florida (Gainesville) and Florida State University (Tallahassee) to the north.

When you are ready for the big city lights, Orlando is 90 miles southeast. In addition to being known as the Theme Park Capital of the World (Disney World, Universal Studios, and SeaWorld among others), it hosts the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, the Orlando Ballet, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Orlando Museum of Art. Sports fans will enjoy watching the Orlando Magic shoot hoops or cheering for Orlando City SC, and the Orlando Pride, men's and women's professional soccer teams. Nature lovers can stare down alligators at Gatorland or venture a bit out of the city for a visit to Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens.

Alternatively, journey 80 miles south to Tampa where animal lovers will enjoy the Florida Aquarium and ZooTampa, while Busch Gardens and Adventure Island water park satisfy thrill seekers. Sports fans can watch the Tampa Bay Rays (MLB), the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (NFL), and the Tampa Bay Lightning (NHL). Those more culturally inclined will want to visit, among others, the David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts, Tampa Theatre, the Florida Orchestra, Opera Tampa, Tampa Bay Opera, and the Tampa Bay Symphony.

Travel to far off destinations is a breeze with Gainesville Regional Airport 70 miles north, Tampa International Airport 75 miles south, St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport 85 miles

south, and Orlando International and Orlando Sanford International airports 100 miles to the east. Cruise travelers also have port options, with Port of Tampa being 80 miles south, Port of Jacksonville 140 miles northeast, and the second busiest cruise port in the world, Port of Canaveral, 140 miles east.

Crystal River is a remarkable place to connect with nature, raise a family, and grow professionally. If you are a seasoned professional City Manager seeking a new opportunity in a wonderful community, look no further. Submit your resume immediately and hopefully become our next Manager!

## HISTORY

The City’s modern history began following the Second Seminole War, when the Armed Occupation Act of 1842 encouraged 22 men to file for patents for land in what is now Crystal River. By the mid-1800s, families began to arrive in the area. They found wild citrus trees growing in abundance, thanks in part to the Spanish explorers who had brought oranges with them and had discarded the seeds in the new world.

Following the Civil War, Crystal River grew as people from states to the north began to arrive, attracted by the area’s mild climate and the potential of becoming wealthy growing citrus crops. Other early industries were turpentine and cedar boards.

In 1888, the railroad reached Crystal River. Its arrival provided a better way to ship and receive goods, and made it easier for tourists to travel. Sport fishing became a draw for many wealthy northerners. The "Big Freeze" of 1894-1895 destroyed most of the local citrus groves.

One of the richest phosphate deposits in the world was discovered in Citrus County in 1889, and the industry grew rapidly. That led to a boom in Crystal River and Citrus County until 1914 when it could no longer be shipped due to the effects of World War I.

As time passed, Crystal River grew slowly with its primary industries become fishing outdoor recreational activities.

Table 1: Crystal River Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	83.5%	0 to 15	9.9%
Black	7.4%	15 to 25	4.7%
Asian	1.3%	25 to 45	12.7%
Native American	0.5%	45 to 65	24.3%
Other	7.3%	65 to 85	31.5%
Total	100.0%	Over 85	16.9%
Hispanic Ethnicity (all races)	4.9%		
<b>2022 Estimated Population: 3,396</b>			

Educational Achievements (25 & Over) and Other Statistics	
High School or Higher	90.2%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	35.4%
Median Age—Crystal River	64.1
Median Age—U.S.	38.9
Median Household Income—Crystal River	\$46,795
Median Household Income—U.S.	\$74,580
Poverty Rate	20.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## DEMOGRAPHICS

See Table I (above) for the City of Crystal River’s demographics.

## CLIMATE

Crystal River experiences a mild subtropical climate, characterized by hot, humid summers and mild winters. During summer months, average high temperatures range between the upper 80s to mid-90s while average low temperatures are between the 60s and low 70s. During winter, average high temperatures remain in the 70s, with average low temperatures ranging between the mid-40s and mid-50s.

The area receives an annual average of 53 inches of rain. Snowfall is exceptionally rare, though on a few winter days the temperature

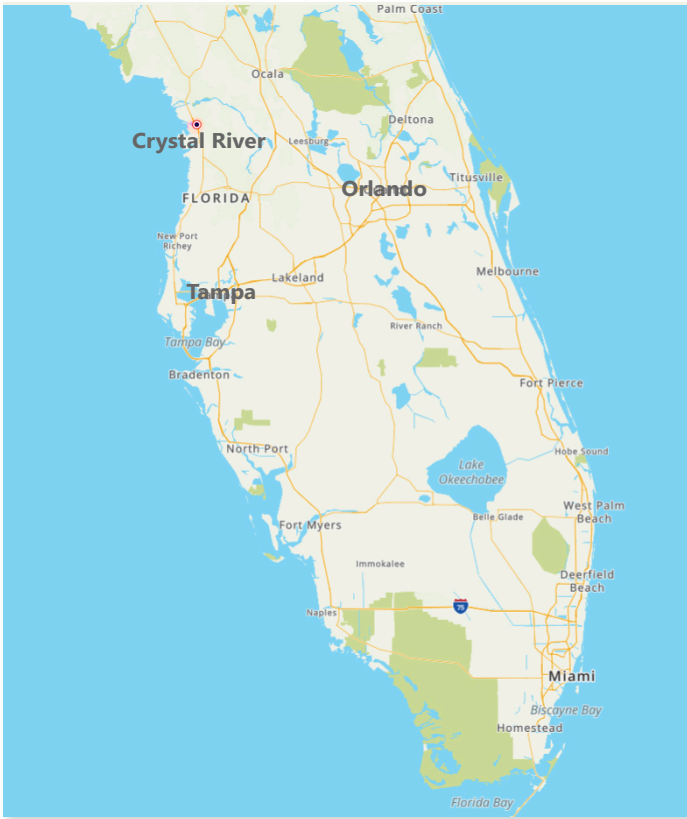


Figure 1: Location of Crystal River, FL

can drop below freezing. Overall, Crystal River enjoys 243 days of sun annually. Like many places in peninsular Florida, Crystal River experiences some level of risk of flooding and wind damage from tropical storms and hurricanes.

## GEOGRAPHY

The City of Crystal River is located on the west coast of Florida north of Tampa and northwest of Orlando (see Figure 1 above). The City covers 6.8 square miles of which 6.2 square miles is land and 0.6 square miles is water. The average elevation is four feet above sea level. Approximately 90% of the City lies on the flood plain. U.S. Highway 19/State Road 98 is Crystal River’s main artery, running north/south and bisecting the City. State Road 44 begins its journey here and continues east until it reaches Florida’s Atlantic coast at New Smyrna Beach, a little south of Daytona Beach.

## COMMERCE

Over the years, tourism (currently averaging 1,000,000 visitors annually) and recreation have become the principal aspects of

Crystal River’s economy. Boat tours during winter manatee migration and swimming with manatee programs are especially popular while fishing remains a major attraction. Most of the City’s businesses are small.

Also important to the local economy is the medical field where many people are employed. Another significant local employer has been Duke Energy. At one time, it had a five unit coal power plant just north of the City. While three units have been decommissioned, they have been replaced with a gas plant and a solar plant.

Several new developments are on the horizon. An old mall covering about 16 acres will be redeveloped as a mixed use property. Citrus County is selling the 300 acre the Betz Farm property. Once it is annexed into the City, it will bring further development. A dilapidated 10 acre strip mall is being combined with another 10 acre property to be developed/redeveloped. Needless to say, much is going on here.

## THE GOVERNMENT

Crystal River operates under a Council–Manager form of government. The elected body is comprised of the Mayor and four Council Members. All are elected at large and serve four year terms. Elections are held during even-numbered years (in line with general elections). Three seats will be up for election this November, while the Mayor and one seat will be up in 2026. Four of the current council members have served at least two terms with one member seated in a special election in March of 2024. The Mayor and Council Members all have the best interests of the City at heart, get along well, respect one another, and hold the staff in high regard. Their questions are thoughtful, and while they may disagree on an issue, they are never disagreeable.

The City Manager is appointed and removed by a majority vote of the City Council. He/she is responsible for the day to day operation of the City and has the authority to hire and terminate employment. The City Council also appoints the City Attorney who oversees the City’s legal matters.

Crystal River provides all the typical services municipalities offer except police (provided by the Citrus County Sheriff's Office).

Further, Fire Services are provided by a volunteer department. Water service is provided via a contract with U.S. Water and Solid Waste Services are provided via a contract with Waste Management.

The City is very healthy financially. Its 2024 fiscal year adopted total budget is \$38,586,949, with an adopted general fund budget of \$8,342,447. For fiscal year 2025, the proposed total budget is \$42,839,414, with an adopted general fund budget of \$8,755,646.

Crystal River has 56 employees (full-time and part-time). Six additional part-time employees are added during manatee season. Presently, the City's non-supervisory employees are represented by the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. See Figure 2 on page 6 for more information.

## THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The City is in a very good place, but the manager will have a few challenges and opportunities. First and foremost is maintaining Crystal Rivers' friendly atmosphere and small town feel in the face of the increased tourism (specifically, the use of the river and associated facilities) and the coming growth. The river is now often crowded with kayakers and boaters, and demand will only increase as Citrus County's population is expected to explode over the coming decades.

The second challenge is sea level rise. With over 90% of the City is on the flood plain, storm surge and flooding from serious rainfall has been a problem. For example, approximately 40% of Crystal River's residents were impacted by last year's Hurricane Idalia where a storm surge of seven to nine feet flooded many roads as well as older homes and businesses. City Hall was one of the victims and has had to relocate to temporary quarters. As a result, new buildings have to be built about 12 feet above sea level.

The third matter the new City Manager will need to address is a significant number of capital projects. These range from a new City Hall to work on the City's Riverwalk, Kings Bay Park, and an

expansion of the wastewater treatment plant. The good news is the funding issues are largely solved.

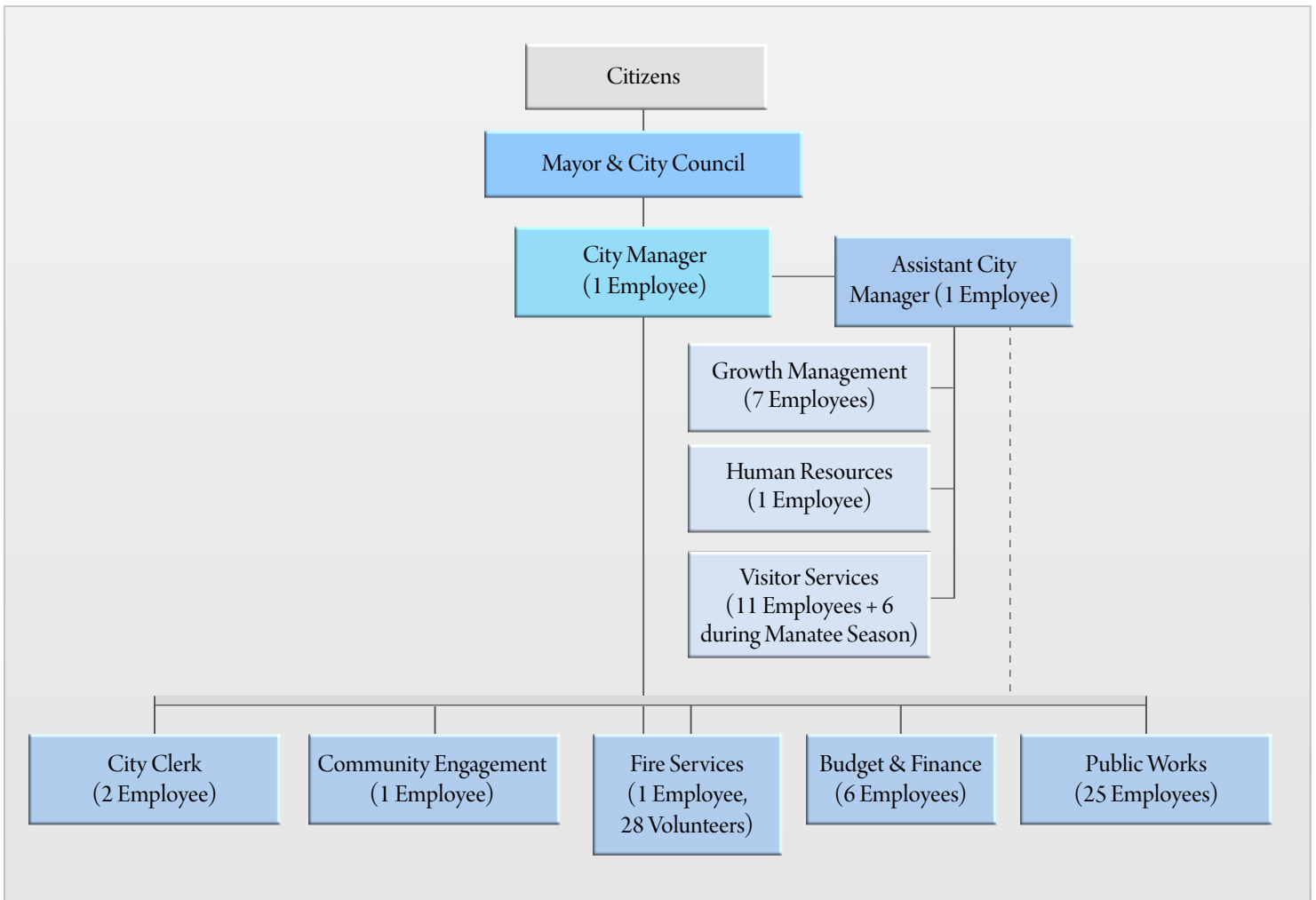
## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Crystal River is seeking an outstanding, achievement-oriented leader and manager to help guide it in both the near and long term. The individual will be a true professional in demeanor, in actions, and in appearance. He/she will serve as a trusted advisor to the City Council and partner with it to develop plans to improve the quality of life for all the City's businesses and residents. The individual will be a visionary who thinks strategically, always looking over the horizon to anticipate issues and take the appropriate action, so they do not develop into significant problems. The ideal candidate will understand politics but not be involved. The City Manager will provide all Council members with the same information at the same time and there will be no surprises.

The successful candidate will be approachable, friendly, and easy to talk to. He/she will have outstanding oral and written communications skills, realizing that listening is often the most important element of communication. The individual will not spend all his/her time behind a desk, but will be visible in the office, the field, the departments, and the community. The manager will communicate effectively with people from all walks of life. Building trust with officials and residents alike will be critical; being humble and willing to admit a mistake will be important to establishing credibility.

The candidate will understand people and how to lead them. He/she will be a team builder who is flexible and open to the ideas of others—someone who is supportive of staff and helps them become stronger. The individual will have high, but realistic, expectations, but also be someone who is comfortable delegating—the staff is very strong. The ideal candidate will be a mentor, helping staff members to grow professionally and improve themselves. That said, he/she will expect to be kept informed and believe strongly in accountability. When it is time to make a decision, the individual will not hesitate. Providing outstanding customer service will be a guiding principle to the manager. He/she will lead by example and make a sincere effort to solve problems rather than simply saying no. Having a sense of fairness as well as a sense of humor will be significant pluses. The

FIGURE 2: CITY OF CRYSTAL RIVER, FLORIDA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



individual will be positive, proactive, responsive, and involved. He/she will also be open, honest, of high integrity, and value transparency. The manager will always be looking for ways to improve efficiency and encourage the staff to do the same. He/she will be straightforward, while diplomatic

The candidate will recognize Crystal River's tremendous potential and work diligently to capitalize on it. The individual will need to balance daily tasks with developing long term plans. He/she will understand that everything cannot be accomplished in one year and will allocate time to thinking about the future. Skill in economic development, coastal issues, capital projects, FEMA, and finance will be important.

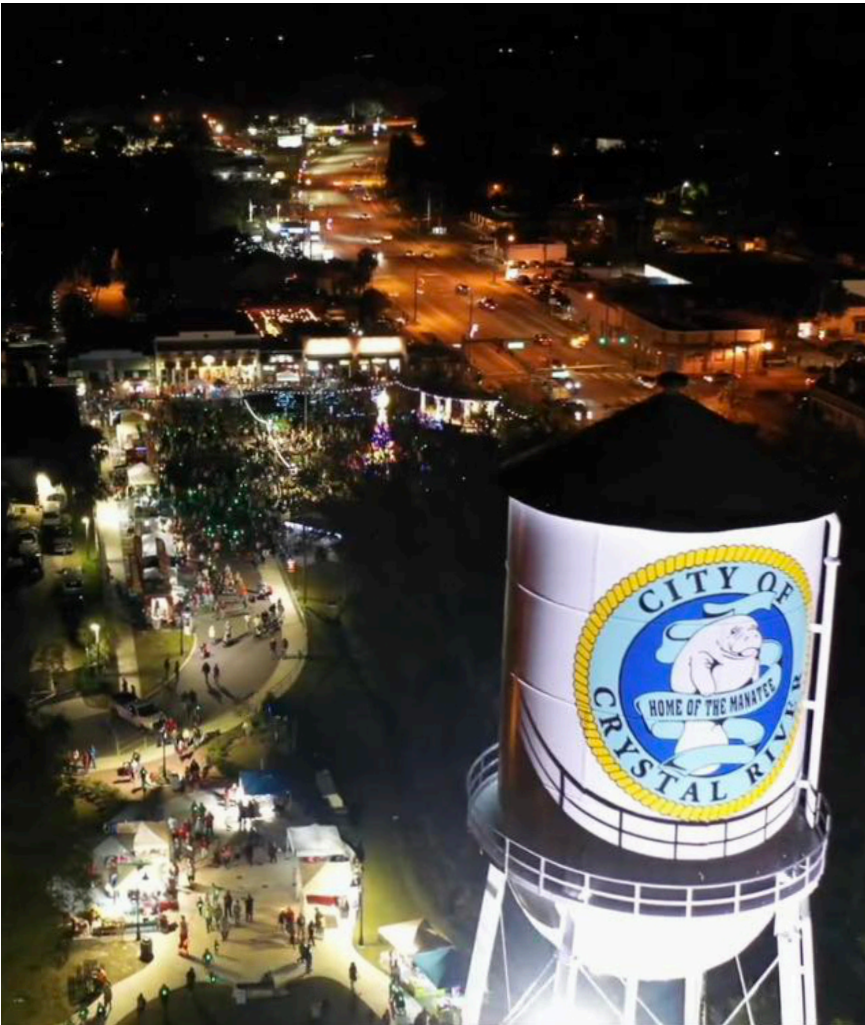
The position requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, or other public related

fields from an accredited college or university. A master's degree in business, public administration, or related field is preferred.

The ideal candidate must have a minimum of 5-10 years of progressive senior management experience as a City Manager, Assistant City Manager, or Department Head. Finally, Crystal River hopes the selected individual will recognize Crystal River as the treasure it is and stay 5 to 10 years.

#### COMPENSATION

The salary range is \$105,000 to \$145,000. The actual salary will depend on qualifications and experience. Benefits are excellent. The City Manager will be part of the Florida Retirement System. All employees are provided with a 457 plan.



## THE MOST RECENT CITY MANAGER

The most recent City Manager left after six months amidst controversy. See the local press for more information.

## RESIDENCY

The City Manager should plan on residing in Crystal River or at least somewhere in Citrus County.

## HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to [Recruit24@cb-asso.com](mailto:Recruit24@cb-asso.com) ASAP, but no later than July 19th. Resumes will be screened as they arrive. Questions should be directed to Rick Conner at (915) 227-7002, Scott Krim at (801) 628- 8364, or Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

## INTERNAL CANDIDATES

One or more internal candidates may apply. That said, the City is committed to a level playing field and the best person will be selected for the position, whether internal or external.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Under Florida's public records act, a submitted application is deemed a public record. As a practical matter, we do not expect media coverage until at least the semifinalists are named, and perhaps not even then.

## THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened as they arrive. Finalists will be selected on August 12th. A

reception and interviews will be held on August 21st and 22nd. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

#### OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The City of Crystal River is an Equal opportunity Employer. It strongly encourages women, minorities, and veterans to apply.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the City, visit:

[crystalriverfl.org](http://crystalriverfl.org)

[discovercrystalriverfl.com](http://discovercrystalriverfl.com)

[citruscountychamber.com](http://citruscountychamber.com)

[visitflorida.com/places-to-go/central-west-crystal-river](http://visitflorida.com/places-to-go/central-west-crystal-river)

