



**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**
City of Palm Desert, California

Recruitment Services Provided By





THE OPPORTUNITY

Palm Desert, a growing and innovative city, seeks a talented economic development professional to serve as its Economic Development Manager. The selected candidate will have the opportunity to contribute to headline projects including luxury hotels, mall redevelopment, and more in this upscale community.

ABOUT PALM DESERT

Palm Desert is a vibrant and beautiful city located in the heart of the Coachella Valley of Southern California. With a population of over 53,000 residents, Palm Desert is a popular destination for tourists and a thriving community for residents. The city is known for its excellent quality of life, with a diverse and inclusive community, exceptional educational opportunities, and access to world-class healthcare. The City of Palm Desert is an excellent place to work, with a strong commitment to attracting and retaining top talent who are aligned with a focus on community service and improvement.

In addition to its other attractive characteristics, Palm Desert is a hub for cultural and recreational activities, with an abundance of art galleries, theaters, public art, and outdoor spaces to explore. The city is home to the world-renowned McCallum Theatre, which hosts a range of performances and events throughout the year. Additionally, the Palm Desert Civic Center Park offers a variety of recreational opportunities, including sports fields, playgrounds, and picnic areas. Another of the many attractions in Palm Desert is the beautiful Desert Willow Golf Resort, which was developed by and owned by the City. Desert Willow boasts a stunning clubhouse with a full-service restaurant, vista bar, and a well-equipped pro shop. One of Desert Willow's two Championship courses was featured on the front page of the Smithsonian magazine for its use of desert landscaping and sustainable water management practices while offering unmatched panoramic vistas and a lush, oasis-like experience. It continues to garner awards as one of the nation's premier, pace-setting public golf resorts. When completed, the resort will contain more than 1,000 hotel/timeshare rooms, as well as commercial development and an entertainment venue.

As a growing city, Palm Desert is committed to sustainable development, with a focus on preserving the natural beauty of the surrounding desert environment. The city is also dedicated to promoting economic growth and development, with a strong emphasis on supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs. It is expected that the City will be home to another 10,000 residents in the next decade, thus staff is busy developing new amenities and services for the incoming residents.

CITY GOVERNMENT

Incorporated in 1973, the City of Palm Desert operates under the Council-Manager form of government. The political leadership of five Council Members elected to four-year overlapping terms is combined with the daily leadership of the City Manager. Palm Desert contracts for many services, including public safety, through Riverside County. Park operations and recreational activities are contracted through the Desert Recreation District. The City's 130 employees are proud to work for the community and take pride in providing exceptional customer service to residents and visitors alike.

The fiscal year 2025/2026 budget allocates funds to the City's highest priority – the well-being and safety of residents, visitors, and businesses. The City has established strong financial reserves over many years and continues to enjoy a strong financial foundation. The City's FY 2025/2026 General Fund budget is \$109.7 million and all-funds budget is \$226 million.

THE POSITION

The Economic Development Manager plays a central role in shaping Palm Desert's future prosperity by leading strategies that attract, retain, and expand businesses while enhancing the City's economic base. Reporting to the Director of Economic Development, the Manager provides strategic leadership and program oversight to support business vitality, real estate development, and workforce innovation. This position offers an exciting opportunity to influence policies and initiatives that drive investment, strengthen community partnerships, and ensure long-term competitiveness and sustainability. Key areas of responsibility include:

- **Business Attraction, Retention & Expansion:** Develop and implement strategies to support new and existing businesses, streamline development processes, and enhance Palm Desert's reputation as a premier destination for commerce, innovation, and investment.
- **Strategic Planning & Project Delivery:** Lead major economic development initiatives, including public-private partnerships, real estate transactions, and targeted industry strategies. Oversee long-range planning, fiscal and market analyses, and policy development to advance City priorities.

- **Commercial & Housing Development:** Facilitate commercial, industrial, and housing projects by coordinating City processes, supporting site selection, and providing guidance to developers, property owners, and businesses. Promote investment opportunities that align with community needs and regional growth.
- **Community & Regional Engagement:** Serve as the primary liaison to the business community, developers, brokers, and regional partners. Cultivate relationships to expand job opportunities, strengthen local industries, and build collaborative economic initiatives.
- **Policy & Program Innovation:** Design and implement forward-thinking policies, incentive programs, and marketing strategies that foster sustainable growth, attract investment, and support workforce development. Monitor legislative and market trends to ensure Palm Desert remains competitive.
- **Organizational Leadership:** Provide direction, mentorship, and performance management for assigned staff and consultants. Promote professional development, teamwork, and operational excellence within the department.
- **Fiscal & Resource Management:** Assist with preparation and administration of the department budget. Oversee agreements, contracts, and property transactions to ensure compliance with applicable laws, including the Surplus Land Act and prevailing wage requirements.
- **Public Representation:** Represent the City at Council meetings, business forums, community organizations, and interagency groups. Communicate effectively with diverse stakeholders and present data-driven recommendations that inform City decision-making.





QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

Education: A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in Economics, Business Administration, Public Administration, Urban Planning, or a related field. A Master's degree is highly desirable.

Experience: Six years of increasingly responsible experience in economic development, community development, or business services, including three years in a supervisory or management role.

Certification: Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) or Accredited California Economic Developer (ACE) is desirable.

SALARY & BENEFITS

The hiring range for the Economic Development Manager is **\$125,590 - \$172,328** dependent on qualifications. In addition, an excellent executive benefit package is outlined below. Key benefits include:

Retirement: Retirement is provided through CalPERS. Classic CalPERS members are eligible for the 2% @ 55 formula, while PEPRA members are eligible for 2% @ 62.

Deferred Compensation: A voluntary deferred compensation program - 457 and 401a with 2% City match to the 401a program.

Retiree Health Savings Account: 1% contribution that the city matches.

Medical, Dental and Vision Insurance: IRC 125 cafeteria plan that includes CalPERS medical insurance (fully paid PPO and HMO options for employees and dependents).

Holidays: 12 annual holidays and 2 floating holidays per calendar year.

Sick Leave: 12 annual sick days.

Vacation: A competitive number of vacation days will be negotiated as part of the overall benefit package.

Life Insurance: Amount equal to annual salary.

Long Term Disability Insurance: City paid long-term disability insurance.

Tuition Reimbursement: An educational incentive program is provided by the City.

Employee Assistance Program: City paid.

Ride-share program: An alternative transportation incentive program is available from the City.

Relocation Assistance: Up to \$5,000 of reimbursement is available from the City.

APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS

Apply immediately - Will close once a strong pool of candidates is established. Interested candidates are encouraged to submit a cover letter and résumé online at:

APPLY HERE

This recruitment will be handled with strict confidentiality. References will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established. Confidential inquiries are welcomed to Martin Alvarez with the City of Palm Desert at (760) 346-0611 ext. 467 or malvarez@palmdesert.gov.

The City of Palm Desert is an Equal Opportunity Employer.