

Town of Payson, Arizona
FINANCE DIRECTOR



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BELOW THE RIM

The traditional western Town of Payson (pop. 16,351, elev. 5,003 ft., 19.36 sq. mi.) is one of the most desirable communities in Arizona. For decades, residents of Phoenix and the Valley of the Sun have been making the 90-minute drive up the Beeline Highway (SR 87) through the Mazatzal Mountains to Payson. Visitors escape the Valley’s scorching summer heat, traffic, and congestion, and seek the calm and tranquility of life at altitude. The Tonto National Forest surrounds Payson, so residents are literally five minutes away in every direction from the great outdoors. Temperatures here are about 20° cooler than those in the Valley and rarely break 100°.

Known as “Rim Country,” the area takes its name from the Mogollon Rim, a geographic feature that forms the southern edge of the

Colorado Plateau that runs across northern Arizona. Payson sits about 2,000 feet “Below the Rim” and at the approximate geographic center of the state, hence its nickname, “the Heart of Arizona.” Although Globe is the county seat, Payson is the largest city and the commercial center of Gila County. The town is 35 miles north of Roosevelt Lake and the historic Roosevelt Dam along the Salt River.

Payson is proud of its legitimate small-town feel and honors its agricultural, timber, and ranching heritage. Residents enjoy a high quality of life, four distinct seasons (including winter snow), and every form of outdoor recreation year-round. Activities include hunting, hiking, fishing, cycling, boating, mountain biking, and kayaking. Residents love Green Valley Park, Rumsey Park (basketball, softball, soccer, pickleball, dog park), and especially the impressive Payson Area Trails System. Payson’s three golf courses are open all year, and skiing is two hours away at Arizona Snowbowl (Flagstaff) or Sunrise Park Resort (Greer). The Tonto Apache Tribal Lands are to the south, and the Mazatzal Hotel and Casino offers limited stakes gaming.

The Payson Unified School District (two elementary, one middle, two high schools), a private school, and a branch of Gila Community

College serve the town, as does the Payson Public Library. The Banner Payson Medical Center provides quality healthcare, and Phoenix’s Sky Harbor International Airport is 90 minutes away.

For more information about the Town of Payson, please visit <https://www.paysonaz.gov>.

THE ORGANIZATION

Payson is a general law city, operating under the council-manager form of government, and voters here have approved home rule since 1980. The seven-member town council includes the mayor and six council members, all elected at large on a nonpartisan basis, council members to four-year terms, the mayor to a two-year term. The town council appoints the town manager and the town attorney.

Payson is a full-service municipality and includes these departments: town manager, town attorney, town clerk, finance, human resources, information technology, police, fire, public works, water, community development, parks and recreation, the town library, and a municipal airport. The Town’s FY 2022-2023 budget of \$66.2 million (July 1 – June 30) supports 195 FTE, including PTE and seasonal.

Payson enjoys a world-class water delivery system and arguably the most robust water portfolio in Arizona (dual delivery, 100-year supply), all but eliminating water as an issue for proposed commercial and residential development. Green Valley Water, a sanitary district, provides wastewater treatment services.

One important sign of organizational health is town council’s commitment to a facilitated retreat every January to set council priorities and produce the annual corporate strategic plan. The council wants to redefine the

QUICK FACTS

Population	16,351
Size	19.36 sq mi
Elevation	5,003 ft
2022-23 Budget.....	\$66.2M
FTE	195
2022-23 Department Budget ...	\$587K
FTE (incl. PTE and proposed)...	7.5

town as a destination, instead of as a pass-through community to the rest of Rim Country. To this end, town council is exploring funding a number of infrastructure and capital improvement projects through the use of excise tax-backed bonds, or general obligation bonds. Projects include an indoor aquatics facility, an expanded public safety campus, buildout of the town's IT infrastructure, and others. As do other communities, Payson faces a deferred capital maintenance backlog, a shortage of affordable and workforce housing, and the potential impact of recent legislative attempts to preempt local taxation, which would impair Payson's revenues.

THE FINANCE DIRECTOR AND DEPARTMENT

Reporting directly to the town manager, the finance director oversees the finance department, which includes 7.5 FTE: the finance director, finance manager (proposed in 2023-24 budget), budget analyst, senior accounting specialist, procurement/contract officer, and accounting specialist, and three part-time positions: a grants coordinator and two administrative support specialists. The current departmental budget is approximately \$587,000.

The finance department provides timely, accurate financial information to the Citizens of Payson, the town council, and the town manager. The department is also the strategic business partner of every other town department.



The department performs all traditional functions, including financial reporting, purchasing, accounts payable, and accounts receivable. Most important, the director leads the annual budget preparation process, presents the town manager's proposed budget to the public and the town council, and manages the budget throughout the year.

Issues facing the department include improving standard operating procedures and finance policies; ensuring timely preparation of the annual budget book and all financial reports; enhancing procurement policy and processes; and making full use of the ClearGov platform to maximize transparency in all finance matters.

A bachelor's degree in business or public administration, accounting, finance, or a related field, and six years of progressively responsible

experience in governmental accounting or finance, including budget development and three years of management and supervisory experience, are required. An equivalent combination of experience and education may be considered at the town's sole option. Credentialing through GFOA (CPFO) or AGA (CGFM), and CPA, are all preferred.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The town manager, the town's leadership team, interim finance director, and members of the finance department all contributed to this description of the ideal candidate.

Payson's next finance director is a person of character with the highest ethical standards. The successful candidate is simultaneously humble enough to embrace the role of a working manager and strong and confident enough to be a visionary

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN

Absent unforeseen circumstances, the recruitment will follow the schedule below. Be mindful of the filing deadline and final interview dates, which are unlikely to change.

SCHEDULE

Filing Deadline:	June 12, 2023	Recommendation of Candidates:	June 28, 2023
Preliminary Interviews:	June 20 - 21, 2023	Finalist Interview Process:	July 7, 2023

leader, serving as the town's treasurer and chief fiscal officer.

The ideal candidate has expert-level presentation and communications skills, and is able to communicate complex budget and finance concepts in a manner that is easily understood by anyone, regardless of the listener's experience level or sophistication. The preferred candidate is politically astute but apolitical, and also thick-skinned, with the ability to deflect criticism and maintain a calm, professional demeanor under pressure from every quarter, including from vocal citizens and others.

The next finance director has significant experience in as many of the following areas as possible: accounting, managing bond funds (including bond draws and premiums), budgeting (preparation, presentation, and management), business licensing, capital project financing, enterprise funds, forecasting, grant management, internal controls, payroll, procurement (including laws specific to Arizona), investment of public funds (LGIPs), retirement and benefits costs, sales taxes, impact fees, and utility rates, as well as sources of revenue of every kind and type as applicable in the municipal context. The successful candidate thinks holistically, taking these individual aspects of the finance function and coordinating them as

part of a comprehensive finance strategy, consistently delivering timely, accurate information to the town council, the town manager, department heads, and the public.

The successful candidate is emotionally intelligent, with the ability to empower and maximize the potential of all members of the department through ample cross-training and meaningful professional development, with an eye toward succession planning. The ideal candidate is a teambuilder and collaborator, not a micromanager.

Nimble and adaptive, the next finance director is also an effective, contributing member of the leadership team, offering true strategic partnership to all department heads, including timely responses and meaningful guidance. The ideal candidate always has the goal of removing obstacles and facilitating collaboration. She or he is friendly and approachable, with a sense of humor.

The next finance director appreciates Payson's character and the outdoors, and wants to come here to have an impact and leave a legacy.

TOTAL COMPENSATION

The annual salary range for this position is \$100,000 to \$140,000. Appointment will be made depending upon the qualifications of the selected candidate and fit with the community and organization. In addition, the town provides the following benefits: health, dental, vision, and life insurances – the town may pay up to 76% of premiums depending on the selected coverage, and Section 125 cafeteria plan makes the employee portion a pre-tax deduction – and multiple supplemental insurances, a prescription drug benefit, and a health savings account are available. Retirement benefits are through the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) – the current mandatory deduction is 12.17%, with disability, which is matched 100% by the town, and a voluntary 457(b) deferred compensation plan is available. This position enjoys paid time off, 24 hours of personal time, and 10 paid holidays annually. Relocation assistance and possible additional incentives including a hybrid work schedule and others, are subject to negotiation.

APPLY

To be considered for this excellent professional opportunity, please email only your cover letter and resume to apply@columbialtd.com, naming your files **Last.First.CL** and **Last.First.Resume**. Receipt of your submittal will be acknowledged within two business days. All applicants will be updated on their status following the Recommendation of Candidates.

If you have any questions regarding the recruitment process, or this opportunity, please feel free to call Andrew Gorgey directly at (970) 987-1238. For more information, visit the Columbia Ltd website: <https://columbialtd.com>.