

City of Cortez, CO
LIBRARY DIRECTOR





CORTEZ AND THE FOUR CORNERS

Just to the west of the majestic San Juan Mountains, high on southwest Colorado’s desert plateau sits the City of Cortez. “Platted in 1886, incorporated in 1902, and becoming a city in 1952, the founding date of Cortez is (open) to interpretation,” says the city’s budget. Rich in ancient history and natural beauty, Cortez (pop. 9,118, elev. 6,191, 6.21 sq. mi.) is the largest city in, and county seat of, Montezuma County. Residents enjoy access to the massive San Juan National Forest, every manner of outdoor recreation, and the serenity of the high desert and the American West.

The Ancestral Pueblo people made this region their home for some 700 years between the years 600 and 1300 CE. Cortez is ten miles west of Mesa Verde National Park and about three hours from New Mexico’s Chaco Culture National Historical Park (Chaco Canyon). Both sites were major centers of culture for the Ancestral Puebloans,

whose cliff dwellings, including the showpiece Cliff Palace, are remarkably well-preserved at Mesa Verde, inspirational evidence of their rich culture and sophisticated community. The Ute Mountain Ute Indian Reservation is immediately to the south.

Named for Spanish Conquistador Hernán Cortés, the city is also about 45 minutes northwest of the famous Four Corners Monument, which is located within the Navajo Nation and the only place where four states meet – one can stand in Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico at the same time. Cortez’s economy benefits from the tourist traffic along U.S. 160 between these two classic destinations, and the city hosts a Colorado Welcome Center.

Cortez residents enjoy a strong sense of community, and they love the serene setting, good weather, high quality of life, and raising families in this quintessential western small town. The city is friendly. Neighbors here look out for one another. Water, mountain, and desert recreation are easily available. Durango is located 45 minutes to the east, and Telluride’s world class skiing is 90 minutes northeast, while Moab’s red rocks, mountain bike trails, and Arches National Park are two hours away in Utah. The 20th Annual Cortez Balloon Rendezvous was held in August, and various

other community events occur throughout the year.

The Montezuma-Cortez RE-1 School District serves the city and includes four elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school, along with charter schools and a Montessori School. Southwest Memorial Hospital is located in town, with CommonSpirit - Mercy Hospital 50 miles to the east. The Cortez Municipal Airport and the Durango-La Plata County Airport both offer commercial flights.

To learn more about the City of Cortez, please visit <https://www.cortezco.gov>

THE ORGANIZATION

Cortez adopted its home-rule charter in June 1957 and operates under the council-manager form of government. Residents elect a seven-member city council, who sets policy, enacts ordinances, adopts the budget, and hires the city manager, who oversees day-to-day operations.

Cortez is one of Colorado’s best kept secrets, a beautiful, mature, full-service municipality where one might not expect to find one. The city provides services well beyond those provided by others its size, including a regional emergency communications and dispatch center, a fiber optic system (third-party franchisee), residential and commercial refuse / recycle service,

QUICK FACTS

Population:9,118
Size:6.21 sq mi
Elevation:6,191 feet
FY 2024 Budget: ..\$35.4M; GF \$15.77M
FY 2024 FTE:150

the Cortez Animal Shelter, and a showpiece parks and recreation system that is the envy of the region.

Since joining Cortez in May, 2021, City Manager Drew Sanders has recruited national-caliber talent to an already strong leadership team. Together with Cortez's finance director and department, and an expert team of outside auditors, Mr. Sanders has overseen a dramatic turnaround in the city's finances. The team has helped restore public trust by painstakingly reconstructing six years of audited financial statements, retired millions in debt early, which has left the city "debt-free," and implemented the ClearGov budget management system, which institutionalizes transparency in budgeting. The city's FY 2024 approved budget of \$35.4 million (GF \$15.77 million) supports 150 FTE.

CORTEZ PUBLIC LIBRARY AND THE DIRECTOR

From its origins as the Ute Mountain Study Club in the early 1930s, today's Cortez Public Library was established by the City of Cortez, which maintains the library as a city department funded through the general fund. (Source: History of the Cortez Library Service, April 13, 1973, University of Denver, Special Collections.) The library is an essential part of the community's public education framework, and its free resources and programs enhance the quality of life throughout the Four Corners Region.

LIBRARY FACTS

Size:18,000 sq ft
 2024 Library Budget\$904,967
 Library FTE5 (plus 5 PTE)
 Customers 51,660/year
 Circulation
 (books and materials, nearly half of which are electronic) 83,068/year
 Programming (2023): 33 adult programs, 510 participants; 70 young adult programs, 365 participants; and 72 children's programs and outreach events, 710 participants.



Located in beautiful Centennial Park, the main library (no branches or bookmobiles) is open six days a week. In 2023, the library had 33 adult programs with 510 participants, 70 young adult programs with 365 participants, and 72 children's programs and outreach events with 710 participants. The library deals with many of the social issues facing most libraries today.

The library director reports directly to the city manager. City council appoints a seven-member board of trustees to advise the library, city manager, and city council on matters pertaining to the library. The 2024 departmental budget of \$904,967 supports 5 FTE, plus 5 PTE. The library is a member of the Colorado Library Consortium.

QUALIFICATIONS

A four-year degree in a relevant field of study; at least three years of public library experience plus at least two years of supervisory experience or progressively responsible experience in library management; knowledge of library best practices, trends, issues, and industry software and databases; or any equivalent combination of education and experience are all required. A master's degree in library science, library information science, or a related field is preferred.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The city manager is looking for a passionate leader to examine every aspect of the library, its operations, programs, and strategic

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:September 8, 2024 Recommendation of Candidates: September 25, 2024
 Preliminary Interviews: September 16-17, 2024 Finalist Interview Process: October 4, 2024

planning, with a realistic eye toward modernization and sophistication. Mr. Sanders is looking for a committed professional to capture the potential of all existing staff and to organize latent, but obvious, support for this critical community asset, building a reliable volunteer base.

The ideal candidate has expert-level outward- and inward-facing, communication and presentation skills and the ability to communicate to broad audiences, including the board of trustees, presentations to the city council, briefings to the city manager, and regular engagement with volunteer groups and residents. She or he is thick-skinned and politically astute but apolitical, capable of navigating the social landscape of the modern library.

The preferred candidate is creative, innovative, and visionary, someone who understands all of the possibilities, purposes, and functions of the modern library. She or he is fiscally disciplined, with significant experience



developing budgets, obtaining grants, and managing both. To build the library and take it several levels higher, the preferred candidate has courage, discipline, and grit, and is a reliable, adaptable leader with strong situational awareness.

The next library director is an effective departmental manager, a unifier, and a team-builder, someone committed to staff development, who is able to delegate effectively and to maximize the potential of all persons under her or his authority. She or he sees the staff as the first face of the city

and is their advocate, but also holds them accountable without micromanaging. The ideal candidate will also do their part to be a highly effective member of the leadership team, supporting the city manager, avoiding silos, and fostering strong relationships with every team member.

The preferred candidate is committed to superior customer service in every respect for Cortez's residents, the many tourists, Native American sovereign nations, and special interest groups who use the library. She or he is friendly, open, honest, and approachable, with a sense of humor. To be successful, the library director must be level-headed, empathetic, patient, and free of ego, fully embracing the public service nature of this role. She or he is quietly confident and listens actively. The ideal candidate intends to come to Cortez to have an impact and leave a legacy.

TOTAL COMPENSATION

The annual salary range for this position is \$105,000 to \$140,000, and appointment will be made depending upon the qualifications of the selected candidate. In addition, the following benefits are provided: health (city pays approx. 90%, employee, 10%) and dental (city pays 100%) insurances; life insurance; mandatory 5% supplemental retirement, matched 100% by the city, plus optional voluntary deferred compensation plan; vacation, sick, and discretionary leave, plus 10 paid holidays; and employee assistance program. Relocation assistance and possible additional incentives 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>.