

Thornton, Colorado

Utilities Director



THORNTON
COLORADO



City Profile

Thornton is the 6th largest city in Colorado and benefits from its proximity to downtown Denver, Denver International Airport, and the foothills of the beautiful Rocky Mountains. Thornton has a current population of just over 153,000 people and is expected to grow by another 90,000 people in the next 30-years. The city offers both established neighborhoods, and newer, affordable homes, creating a safe, sought-after, and active environment with a wide variety of municipal services. Thornton has a very diverse population with a wide range of socio-economic conditions for residents throughout the city.

While early development in Thornton was primarily residential, it has become a destination for primary employers and regional retail. There are three Regional Transportation District commuter rail stations with two additional planned stations further north. Thornton has nearly 1,000 acres of land developed or designated for public parks and trails. Thornton recently began construction of additional treatment capabilities for PFAS removal at one of our water treatment plants. In addition, a \$500+ million water project continues at various stages of design and construction to deliver high quality water to Thornton residents and businesses.

Today, Thornton continues moving forward in a responsible manner that strengthens the city's increasing footprint. This includes the City's responsiveness to growth with an ever-growing menu of city services, programs, and capital investments. Our mission is to build a resilient and thriving Thornton by providing vital services that support safety and well-being for our community.

Form of Government

Thornton is a home-rule city operating under the council - manager form of government. The City Council consists of the Mayor who is elected at large, and eight Council Members, two elected from each of the city's four wards. The Mayor and Council each serve four-year terms, and all have an equal vote. The Council enacts ordinances, approves the city budget, and appoints the City Manager, City Attorney, and Municipal Judge. The City Manager administers the daily operations and programs of the city through the department directors, other staff members, and employees. The Utilities Director reports to the Assistant City Manager.



Department Profile

The City of Thornton began an organizational review in 2025 to identify opportunities to modernize the City's organization structure to enhance decision-making, collaboration, and service delivery while increasing the capacity to address emerging policy and service challenges associated with a growing community. The process included numerous employee interviews, focus groups, staff survey, peer city review, and consultant recommendation that in turn has been refined internally through multiple phases. As a result of the process, the Utilities Director was created to specifically focus on the city's water, sewer, and solid waste utilities. The City also has a stormwater utility, however those functions reside in the Transportation Department due to the integrated nature of maintenance the ROW and transportation system with stormwater systems. A separate Engineering and Asset Department manages all major capital projects and asset tracking. Together, these three departments report to the Assistant City Manager.

Departmental Functions

The Utilities Director will oversee the following functional areas:

- Water Utility (Raw water rights and accounting, treatment, water quality lab, distribution, water conservation)
- Sewer Utility (Collection and conveyance to Metro Water Reuse)
- Environmental Services Utility (solid waste, recycling, diversion, environmental sustainability)

The department structure is still being finalized; however, the director will have several direct reports to manage the functional areas and oversee approximately 120 full-time employees. In the 2026 budget, the water operating fund is \$48M, the sewer operating fund is \$19M, and the environmental services operating fund is \$7.5M.

Key Initiatives of the department include providing excellent customer service and communication to the utility customers, coordination with related elements in the strategic plan, and ensuring long-term resiliency of the city's infrastructure with sustainable rates.



The Ideal Candidate

Thornton is searching for a leader who will provide visionary leadership to link sustainability, resiliency, and affordable rates of the utilities with the strategic goals of the city and local, state, and federal regulations. They will implement the approved strategic workplan and address the city priorities through thoughtful leadership and policies

Essential Functions

Leads, directs and manages all activities of the Utilities Department, including all functions of the water utility (water rights, raw water supply, treatment, quality, distribution, and meter shop), the sewer utility (sewer collection system), and the solid waste utility (curbside waste and recycling, composting and diversion programs).

Develops the strategic vision of the utilities and drives long range planning and capital programs to support sustainability, resiliency, and affordable rates.

Serves as the spokesperson for the utilities and manages complex relationships and negotiations with other agencies, municipalities, boards, and ditch companies. Coordinates advocacy at a state and federal level for balancing the needs of water treatment/quality with stormwater regulations.

Manages or coordinates with the appropriate department on all financial, planning, legal, design/engineering, construction, communications, human resources, diversity, operations, public affairs, and information technology functions to support the utilities.

Leads discussions with the Finance Department and consultants to maintain a sustainable utility with equitable rate and fee structures.

Maintains a thorough knowledge of federal and state laws, local statutes, ordinances, standards, procedures, and trends related to department operations, and ensures their implementation. Advises the City Manager and City Council on issues related to the regulatory landscape on drinking water standards.

Assesses local needs and updates the strategic plan for the future of the department, the city, and the community. Analyzes problems, identifies alternative solutions, projects consequences of proposed actions, and implements recommendations in support of goals. Increases the understanding of the role of water in the community and economic development efforts across the city.

Represents the city in meetings with professional organizations, other public agencies, and the public to ensure Thornton is a leader in the industry.

Meets and advises City Council, city management, commissions and boards to assist in policy determinations.

Directs the emergency responses to natural disasters or weather events as necessary.

Education/Experience

Bachelor's degree in civil or environmental engineering, natural sciences, or related field from an accredited college or university; five years' experience in management-level utility roles with at least eight years' experience serving in a utility. Equivalent combinations of education and experience may be considered.

Licensing/Certification Requirements

May need the ability to travel to various locations in a timely manner as the job requires.



Compensation and Benefits

Salary range of \$182,914 to \$241,446 plus excellent benefits.

Application and Selection Process

[Apply Here](#)



This position will accept applications until Xxxx.

The City of Thornton is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists for this position will be subject to a comprehensive background check. The selected candidate must pass a preemployment drug screening and/or post-offer physical examination, and secure a valid Driver's License within a reasonable period following appointment.