

Careers in City Government

City Planner

Larry Weil, West Fargo, ND

Population: 25,830

What are your duties and responsibilities as Planner of your city?

Some of the duties and responsibilities as Planner for the City of West Fargo are as follows:

1. Assist the City in conducting long-range studies including comprehensive plan (community vision, goals and policies, and implementation strategies for the physical development of the city), transportation plan(s), major street corridor studies, capital improvements program, etc. Also, assist in carrying out the comprehensive plan and other study objectives.
2. Assist the City in developing tools to manage development, i.e. zoning and subdivision regulations.
3. Provide staff support to the City Commission (City Council), Planning and Zoning Commission, and City staff.
4. Enforcement of the City's zoning and subdivision ordinance.
5. Represent the City on ordinances, policies, and procedures as assigned.

What type of education and/or training is required for your position?

The type of education and training required for my planning position includes a Master's Degree in Community Planning or related field such as Political Science, Geography, Urban Studies, Community Development or Architecture/Landscape Architecture; or Bachelor's Degree in the above listed fields, plus two or more years of experience in community (city) planning. The education and/or training for a position in another city or county may depend somewhat on the level of involvement in municipal planning and may require fewer years of education and/or experience.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your position?

The most rewarding aspect of the City Planner position is a sense of gratification knowing that one's involvement in community planning is making the community a better place to live and making a difference in people's lives.

What advice would you give someone that is interested in working in city government?

For someone that is interested in pursuing a career in city government, or planning in particular, I would advise them to check to see what the position is all about. To find out more about planning, one can visit the American Planning Association, Western Planner, and North Dakota Planning Association websites. Also, it would be advisable to visit with a planner in one of the cities or counties in North Dakota that has staff working in that capacity. If there are internships available, it may be worthwhile considering working in that capacity to see what types of daily activities the planning staff is engaged in and if that is appealing to them.

The BEST government is LOCAL government!