

City of Fresno

Fresno Yosemite International Airport

Director of Aviation

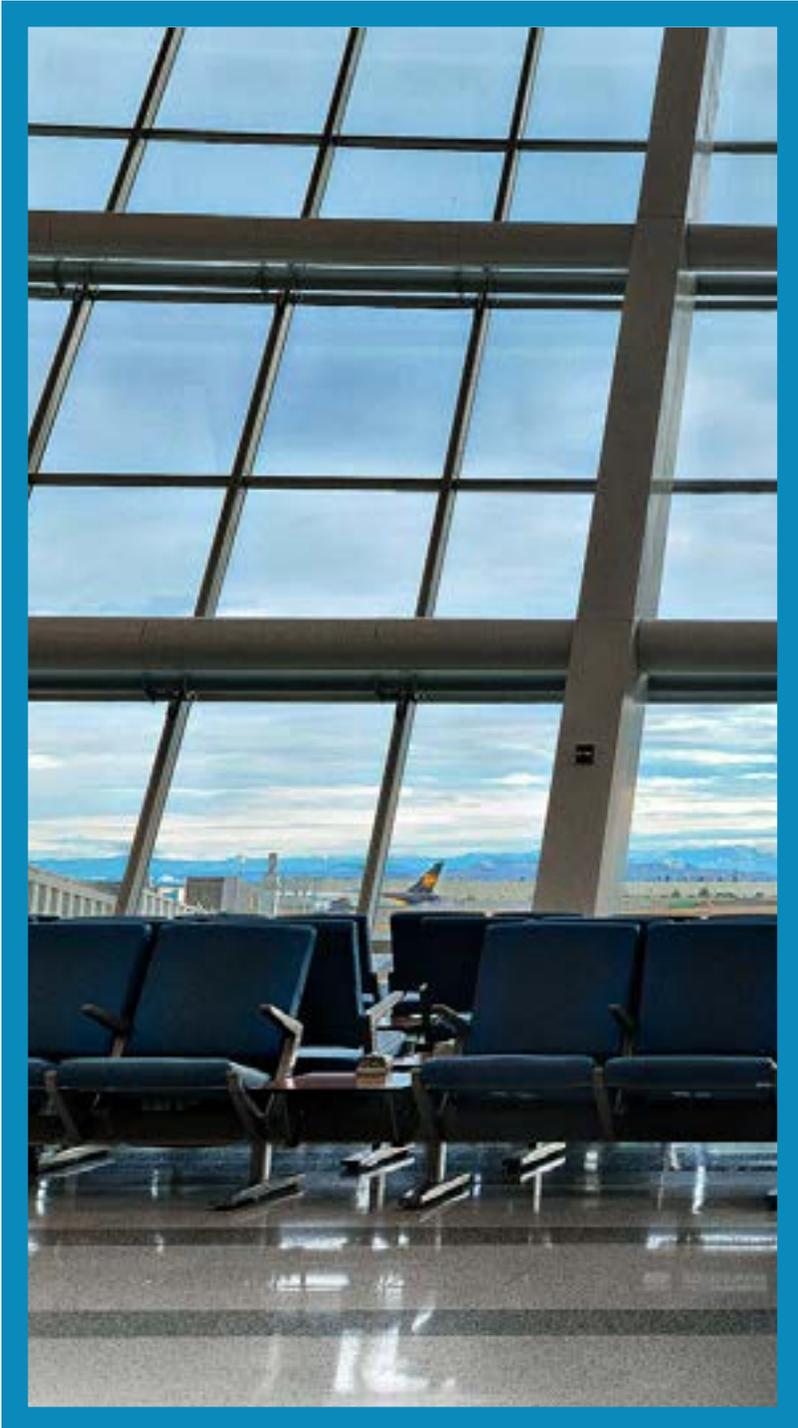




Exciting Opportunity in California!

This is an exceptional opportunity for a high energy airport professional to oversee a growing and strategic operation in the San Joaquin Valley. Fresno Yosemite International Airport is well positioned to quickly rebound to pre-pandemic levels, having achieved 1.9 million passengers in prior years. With expanded air service, increased interest in international travel to Mexico and the recent addition of Southwest Airlines, the Airport will now more effectively lean into the increased demands of the traveling public. The Airport also serves as the gateway to three national parks: [Yosemite](#), [Sequoia](#), and [Kings Canyon](#).

Top candidates interested in the Director of Aviation position will also have the ability to be creative and entrepreneurial in addressing long-term fiscal and capital planning and at the same time, have an uncanny ability to imagine and implement an exciting and growth-oriented future for Fresno Yosemite International Airport.



The Fresno Community and the Region

The City of Fresno, California is located in the heart of the state in the fertile San Joaquin Valley. From the agricultural fields on the valley floor to the snow-capped peaks of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range, the Fresno area offers something for everyone. With a population of approximately 540,000 residents, Fresno is the fifth-largest city in California and serves as the financial, industrial, trade, and commercial capital of the central San Joaquin Valley.

Travel from Fresno to other major metropolitan areas in California is convenient. The City is located approximately four hours north of the Los Angeles basin and three hours south of the San Francisco Bay Area. Residents and visitors enjoy Fresno's close proximity to the Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia National Parks and other sites of natural beauty, such as the majestic Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. The Mediterranean climate in Fresno allows year-round recreational activities including sailing, snow and water skiing, fishing, backpacking, and golfing.

An added benefit of living in Fresno is the excellent housing that is available at price levels, even in this accelerated housing market, that are considerably lower than California's other metropolitan areas. Additionally, the Fresno area offers four large school districts (Fresno Unified, Central Unified, Sanger Unified, and Clovis Unified), and a variety of private institutions offer excellent ongoing educational and enrichment opportunities. Also, the community is the home of California State University, Fresno as well as a number of other colleges and universities.

Many consider Fresno to be a community of the perfect size, offering the best urban amenities and opportunities along with the unique charm and easy living of a smaller town. Residents enjoy a wide variety of social, cultural, athletic, educational, and recreational activities in an affordable and clean-living environment.

City Government Structure

Fresno is a full-service charter city operating under a strong mayor form of government. There are seven Council Members elected to the City Council. The Council appoints the City Attorney and the City Clerk. The Mayor is elected at-large and does not serve on the Council but has veto power over certain actions taken by Council Members.

The City Manager, who is appointed by the Mayor, is responsible for appointing all other department heads in the City, including Fresno Yosemite Airport; Finance; Fire; Information Services; Parks, After School, Recreation and Community Services; Personnel Services; Planning and Development; Police; and Public Utilities, Public Works, and Transportation.

The City of Fresno has a total of 3,929 employees and an annual budget more than \$1.449 billion.





History and Overview of the Airport System

The Airport facility originally opened in June 1942 as Hammer Field, a military airfield. After World War II, Hammer Field was later reallocated to the City of Fresno and renamed Fresno Air Terminal (FAT). Today, the Airport is owned and operated by the City of Fresno and operates two runways on a property spanning 1,728 acres. Its airport code “FAT” remains in place today.

Due to its central location within the State of California, the Airport is also home to several military, law enforcement, firefighting, and medical air units. The Fresno Air National Guard Base is located on the southeast corner of the airport. Other government and military operators with facilities at the airport include the California Army National Guard, the California Highway Patrol, the Fresno County Sheriff’s Office, and the Fresno Police Department. Additionally, Fresno Yosemite International Airport is home to a large operations base for SkyWest Airlines, the nation’s largest regional airline.

The Director of Aviation is responsible for managing a City department with a current annual operating budget of \$23.6 million and a capital improvement budget of \$123.5 million. Operating revenue specifically related to airline operations is \$182.2 million and concessions is \$3.6 million.

Oversight of staff includes providing leadership and guidance to 123 current employees. In short order, after further assessing organizational needs, the new Director of Aviation will want to undertake a broad-based recruitment to hire the second in command position. Ultimately, the assignment of duties and allocation of specific responsibilities will be a decision for the Director based on his/her own skills and how the organization will address daily operations and the focus on managing anticipated growth and expansion.

Fresno Yosemite Airport has more recently experienced a considerable loss in the passenger count considerably due to COVID-19. Previous years had growth rates that were tracking at 17% annual growth rate in 2018 (1.7m passengers) and a further increase of 11% in 2019 (1.9m passengers). Future growth is expected to quickly rebound and escalate with a further increase in passenger count due to expanded air service and the addition of a key carrier.

Current Airlines serving Fresno Yosemite International Airport now include:

- American Airlines
- United Airlines
- Delta Airlines
- Alaska Airlines
- Allegiant
- Frontier
- Southwest Airlines (New effective April 2021)
- Volaris
- Aeromexico



Awards Received

2021

- 2021 Engineering New Record Project Acknowledgement

2020

- FAT Terminal Expansion Project 2020
- 2020 Airports Council International
- Excellence in Marketing & Communications and Customer Service Awards
- Best in Airport Partnership Winner

2019

- 2019 Airports Council International
- Excellence in Marketing, Communications, and Customer Service Awards
- Social Media Campaign – Honorable Mention

2018

- 2018 50th Annual HandsOn Central Valley Award Winner
- RSVP Site of the Year
- Airports Ambassadors

Fresno Chandler Executive Airport

The second airport under the City of Fresno's authority is one of the oldest operating airports in California and is officially called Fresno Chandler Executive Airport (FCH). The airport property was dedicated to the City of Fresno in 1929 by the Chandlers who previously allowed pilots to land on the unpaved and informal landing strip prior to that and sits on 200 acres. FCH terminal and three other buildings were constructed with funding from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and have been featured in an Indiana Jones movie.

The airport is considered a reliever airport to Fresno Air Terminal and is a General Aviation (GA) airport. Currently, Chandler Airport is home to over 150 aircraft from single engine to helicopters, electric, and experimental aircraft.

Because FCH has not had control tower operations since the mid 80's, the number of take-off and landings have not officially been captured although in the Master Plan process activity is estimated to be at 25,641 operations annually in 2022.





Overview of the Position

The Director of Aviation is an at-will (unclassified) position that serves at the pleasure of the City Manager. Day-to-day oversight and direction may also be received through the Assistant City Manager. This career position becomes available with the upcoming retirement of the Director of Aviation after serving 32 years with the City of Fresno and almost 10 years in this position.

Oversight responsibility of the Director of Aviation includes management of the airport systems that encompasses two airports: Yosemite-International and Chandler Executive. In addition to managing and providing the overall direction for the airports, the Director is responsible for operation, capital projects, infrastructure needs, long-range planning, maintenance, and fiscal management.

Responsibilities include managing and developing the airport system's various functions including economic development, airport expansion, development and construction, airport operations, maintenance and servicing, airport safety and security, environmental protection, surface transportation, labor relations, and business management (vendors and concessionaires).

The Director of Aviation coordinates and interacts with federal, state, and local officials. Also, the Director also interacts with a variety of local business and community leaders and groups.

Overview of Position *continued*

Other responsibilities of the Director include:

- Acts as technical advisor to the City Manager and City Council on department issues.
- Attends meetings of the City Council, boards, commissions, and committees regarding environmental assessments and Federal Aviation Administration regulations.
- Prepares and administers the Department's annual operation and capital budgets.
- Reviews plans, policy recommendations, budget estimates, and proposed ordinances submitted by division heads.
- Selects, supervises, coordinates, and reviews and evaluates the work of staff.
- Confers with the City Manager regarding on anticipated City and department needs including prioritization and feasibility of alternative approaches.
- Coordinates activities with other departments, division, sections, and outside agencies.

Importantly, the Director functions as the ambassador and liaison for building, strengthening, and expanding effective working relationships with all regulatory authorities; state and municipal policy makers; management professionals; and community, neighborhood, and business leaders and groups.



Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will exhibit creative vision, leadership, excellent management, and administrative skills as well as highly collaborative interpersonal skills required to maintain and develop the airport system as an international air transportation center.

This top candidate will be an experienced airport executive (or have held a supporting high-level position in the second position or an appropriate support position) with a proven record of accomplishment in managing an airport enterprise. The successful candidate will have a broad background in airport finance, operations, and development, and will be knowledgeable about contemporary “best practices” in the airport industry. The Director of Aviation will also be a strategically oriented, self-assured individual with the ability to exercise a high degree of common sense and sound judgment.

Other personal attributes and characteristics desired in the Director of Aviation include:

- Consistently communicate and implement the City's and the Airport's mission;
- High energy and engage style with the desire to manage this expanding business enterprise operation;
- Demonstrated leadership complemented by a high level of interpersonal and cultural sensitivity paired with excellent communication skills;
- Integrity and intellectual honesty; belief in the value and necessity of equity and diversity;
- Ability to identify and evaluate specific organizational needs;
- Creative entrepreneurship and effective financial management skills;
- An appreciation of the role of the Airport as a vital economic engine for jobs and prosperity in the region (agriculture, business, and tourism);
- Extensive knowledge of current trends and issues that influence airport and aviation related matters;
- Creative and flexible problem-solving capabilities with the ability to elevate concerns early to the City Manager's Office as well as the ability to analyze and resolve complex and sensitive issues; and
- Promote and articulate the City's commitment to the community, airlines, customer service, and supporting industries.

Ideal Candidate *continued*

Opportunities and challenges for the Director of Aviation include:

- Maintain, build, and grow airport operations with administrative and community support;
- Continuing to increase passenger counts growing above pre-pandemic levels and beyond with the addition of Southwest Airlines and added direct flights by carriers;
- Recruit and select an Assistant Director (vacant position);
- On-going review and evaluation of effective air service programs;
- Economic development in close collaboration with internal and external stakeholders;
- Addressing the broad array of environmental and sustainability issues that impact noise, emissions, and air quality including further treatment of homes in the flight path;
- Expansion of opportunities for small businesses;
- Explore opportunities to enhance and expand non-airline revenue;
- Long-term financial planning and continued prudent investment in capital expenditures including addressing more immediate capital needs including:
 - Terminal East Apron Design and Construction
 - TSA Baggage Inline System
 - Terminal and International Arrival Expansion Project
 - Ground Parking Lot Solar Project



Desired Qualifications



Experience: Well qualified candidates will have a minimum of five (5) years of progressively responsible and recent high-level experience managing a multi-purpose, multi-structure facility, preferably at an airport of comparable size or smaller in the capacity of Director. Alternatively, an Assistant Director of Division Head in a larger airport may also be well suited to this position.

Education: A Bachelor's Degree in business, public administration, aviation, or closely related field is preferred. A Master's Degree in public or business administration is desirable.

Accreditation: None required although applicants with AAEE Accreditation as an Airport Executive may be favorably received based on overall career experience.

All interested and qualified individuals with the prerequisite airport management experience are strongly encouraged to submit for consideration.

Compensation and Benefits

The City of Fresno offers an excellent compensation and benefit program. The salary range for this position is \$136,668 to \$196,128. Placement in the range will be dependent on career history and qualifications. Specific questions and further details on benefits offered should be directed to Ralph Andersen & Associates.

Other benefits offered by the City of Fresno include:

- **Auto Allowance:** \$300/month.
- **Moving and Relocation:** At the full discretion of City Leadership, moving and relocation assistance may be offered to the top candidate. This potentially would include a not-to-exceed amount that would encompass moving of household goods (lowest of 3 bids) and temporary housing. Important to note, it does not include any assistance on the buying or selling of a home.
- **Retirement:** Fresno City Retirement System; reciprocity with other public California systems. The City's pension funds are among the best funded public systems in California.
- **Health Insurance:** City contributes toward the current monthly premium for medical, dental, and vision for employee and dependents.
- **Annual Leave:** 23 days per year of annual leave with cash out provision upon separation from the City.
- **Management Leave:** 60 hours per fiscal year.
- **Holidays:** Ten (10) City-observed holidays annually, plus birthday and one (1) personal day per year.
- **Deferred Compensation:** 457 plan available.
- **Flexible Spending Account:** IRS 125 Plan for health/dependent care.
- **Life Insurance:** Equal to annual salary; premium paid by City.
- **Long-Term Disability:** City pays premium for 66 2/3% of monthly salary up to \$7,500 per month after 30 days.

Importantly, candidates should be aware, the City of Fresno does not participate in Social Security but does participate in Medicare.

Additional details about the benefits offered may be found by clicking [here](#).



To Be Considered

This is a confidential process and will be handled accordingly through all phases of the outreach and selection process. Closing date for receipt of interest is **September 30, 2021**. An electronic version of all submittals is required. Interested candidates should apply immediately by sending a comprehensive resume with a compelling cover letter of interest and accomplishments to apply@ralphandersen.com. References are not required at time of submittal and no contact will be made with references or current employer until mutual interest has been established in order to provide the utmost in confidentiality.

All highly qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. This is a national search effort and all highly qualified individuals with executive level airport management experience (or in a supporting high-level executive position) are encouraged to submit qualifications for consideration. Final selection of top tier candidates will be based on the combination of education and experience that best fits the needs of the City Manager's Office. Round #1 of interviews will be done using video technology in mid-October. On-site interviews (Round #2) is anticipated to take place later in October 2021. The new Director of Aviation will join the City of Fresno prior to the end of the year (or a mutually agreed upon date) with some degree of overlap with the outgoing Director. Ability to join the City of Fresno prior to the 2021 holiday season would be an added plus.

Questions, nominations, and confidential inquiries regarding this position or the recruitment process should be addressed to: Ms. Heather Renschler at (916) 630-4900 or submit email at heather@ralphandersen.com. Alternatively, a confidential discussion can be scheduled with Ms. Renschler by emailing scheduling@ralphandersen.com.

The City of Fresno is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Additional information regarding the City of Fresno is available at www.fresno.gov.