

THE CITY OF SANDUSKY, OHIO  
IS SEEKING CANDIDATES TO SERVE AS

# City Manager



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## ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

The City of Sandusky is a scenic Great Lakes port and tourism community and the county seat of Erie County, Ohio, with a population just over 25,000. The City is located on Sandusky Bay on the southern shore of Lake Erie, midway between Cleveland and Toledo. The total area of the City is about 22 square miles with water covering roughly 12 square miles of that area. Over 22 miles of shoreline are located within the City limits.

The European settlement of Sandusky was closely linked to its location on the shores of Lake Erie. The English, French, and Americans all had trading posts and forts in the Sandusky area in the 1700s. Sandusky was incorporated as a City in 1824 as the City became a transportation hub, stone quarrying, and manufacturing center in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The City location also led to it becoming a major refuge for slaves on the Underground Railroad as they made their way to Canada. The City remains a proudly diverse community with approximately a third of its population non-white. It offers safe small town living with easy access to the benefits of major metropolitan areas. The distinctive historic architecture, beautifully-landscaped

parks and friendly atmosphere offer an appealing charm to Sandusky visitors and residents.

Sandusky's walkable neighborhoods are filled with quality, affordable, and diverse housing. Housing options include historic, new construction, lofts and town homes, and are in close proximity to over 30 City parks. Approximately 40% of the population are renters.

The overall cost of living in Sandusky is significantly lower than the average cost of living in the United States. Sperling's Best Places estimates that the Sandusky cost of living is 34.2% lower than the national median.

The City continues to benefit from the easy access to its waterfront for both residents and visitors from throughout the Midwest. Cedar Point Amusement Park, Sandusky's most famous attraction and the most visited seasonal amusement park in the United States, has 3.5 million visitors annually and has been named the "best amusement park in the world" several times by the Golden Ticket Award Program. Cedar Point is not the only recreational attraction offered by the City. Lake Erie has popular islands that are accessible from Sandusky along with

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boating, fishing, and other water sports. In addition, there are many indoor and outdoor water parks. Sandusky is currently experiencing a downtown renaissance, becoming a cultural and recreational destination with quality shopping, dining and entertainment for residents and visitors to enjoy. The Jackson Street Pier is a newly renovated tourism destination in Downtown Sandusky. It features an event center, great lawn, ferry dock, selfie locations, boardwalk around the edge, benches, fishing, ice cream vendors, and more.

### **The Schools**

The Sandusky School District operates 10 public schools including five elementary schools, one middle school, one traditional high school, an alternative high school, a school for gifted students in grades 3–12, and a career center with programs for adults. Approximately 87% of the residents age 25 or higher have a high school or higher level of education.

Alternatively, St. Mary Central Catholic High School, a private Roman Catholic school, focuses on giving students a faith-centered learning environment.

Monroe Prep Academy is a private charter school.

### **Awards that the City has received:**

- *USA Today* Best Coastal Small Town (2019 & 2023)
- *Ohio Magazine* Best Hometowns (2021-2022)
- *Realtor.com* #1 Most Affordable Lake Town in America (2021)
- *US News & World Report* Top 20 Best Family Vacations in the USA (2021)

### **ABOUT THE CITY GOVERNMENT**

Since 1978, by a vote of the City residents, the City has operated under a commission/manager form of government. Seven commission members are elected on a nonpartisan basis for overlapping four-year terms. The City Commissioners make policy decisions which are implemented by the City Manager and City staff.

Every two years, Commissioners elect one of their members as the Commission President and another as Vice-President. Current Commissioners are of divergent political philosophies who treat each other with courtesy and respect as public policy is developed.

The President presides over Commission meetings, participates, and votes as a member of the Commission but does not have

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veto authority. The President also functions as the official head of the Commission for all ceremonial purposes.

The City has 241 full-time employees. Most of the employees are in one of the three recognized unions, police (FOP), firefighters (IAFF) and general employees (AFSME). The City provides a full range of municipal services including police, fire, planning and zoning, engineering and public works, transit, economic development, code compliance, IT, building department, finance department, customer accounting, human resources, recreation, streets and utilities, facilities, maintenance and properties, cemetery, forestry, horticulture, fleet maintenance, water treatment, and wastewater treatment.

Sandusky President and City Commissioners	
Richard Brady	Commission President
Dennis E. Murray, Jr	Commission Vice President
Blake Harris	Commissioner
Mike Meinzer	Commissioner
Steve Poggiali	Commissioner
Wes Poole	Commissioner
Dave Waddington	Commissioner

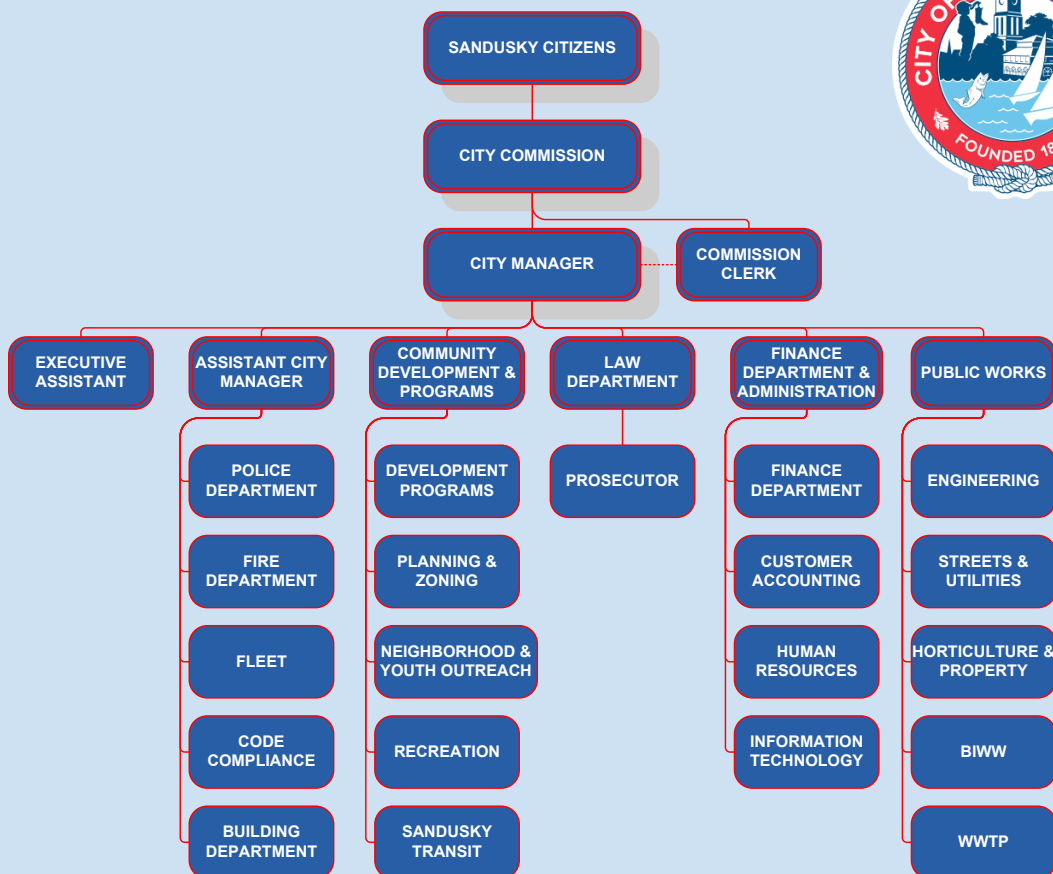
#### Financial Condition

Sandusky is in sound financial condition. The total City 2023 budget is \$89.5 million with \$29.3 million allocated in the General Fund. The local earnings tax is the primary funding source for the General Fund, providing 42% of the General Fund

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## CITY OF SANDUSKY, OHIO

### ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

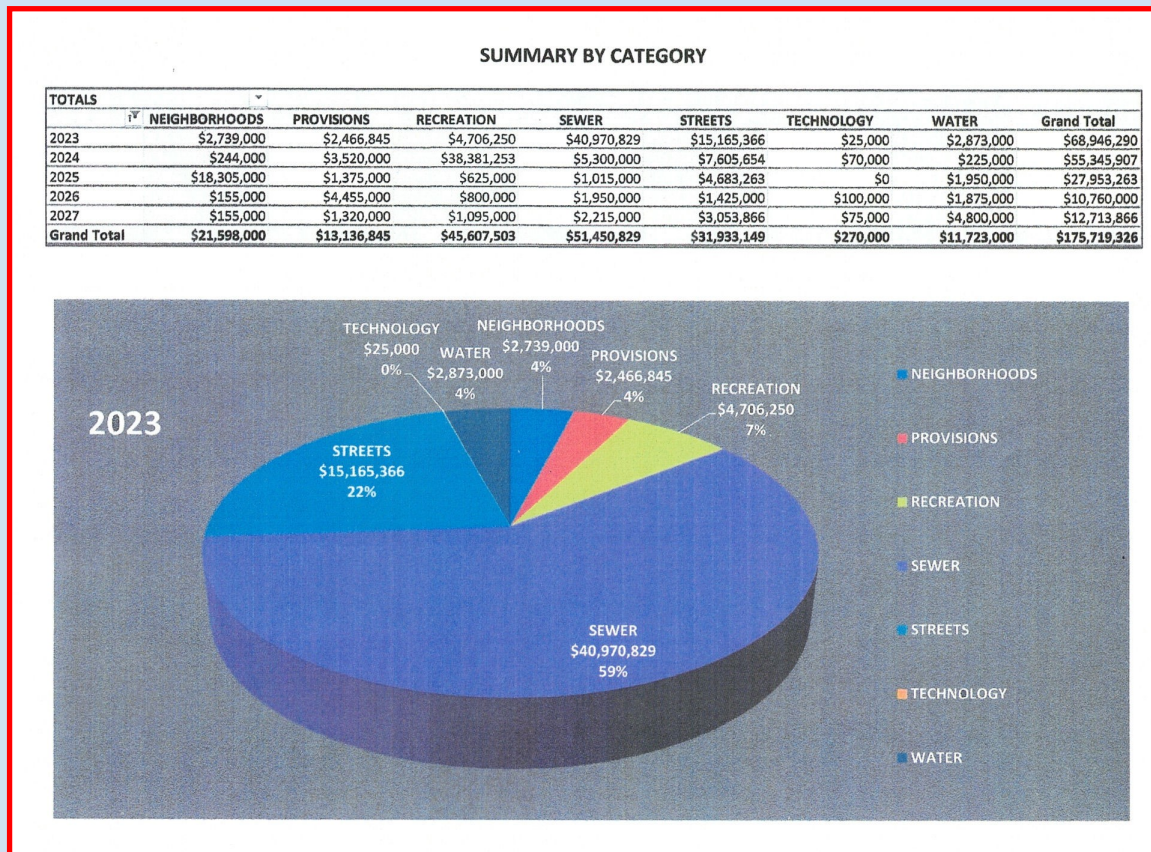


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revenue. The Admissions Tax provides 29% of the General Fund revenue while the Property Tax and Lodging Tax each provide approximately 6 % of the General Fund revenue. The General Fund has an unallocated balance of \$5.5 million.

The City is credit rated A1 by Moody's Investors Service. Sandusky was awarded over \$18 million in American Rescue Plan funds.

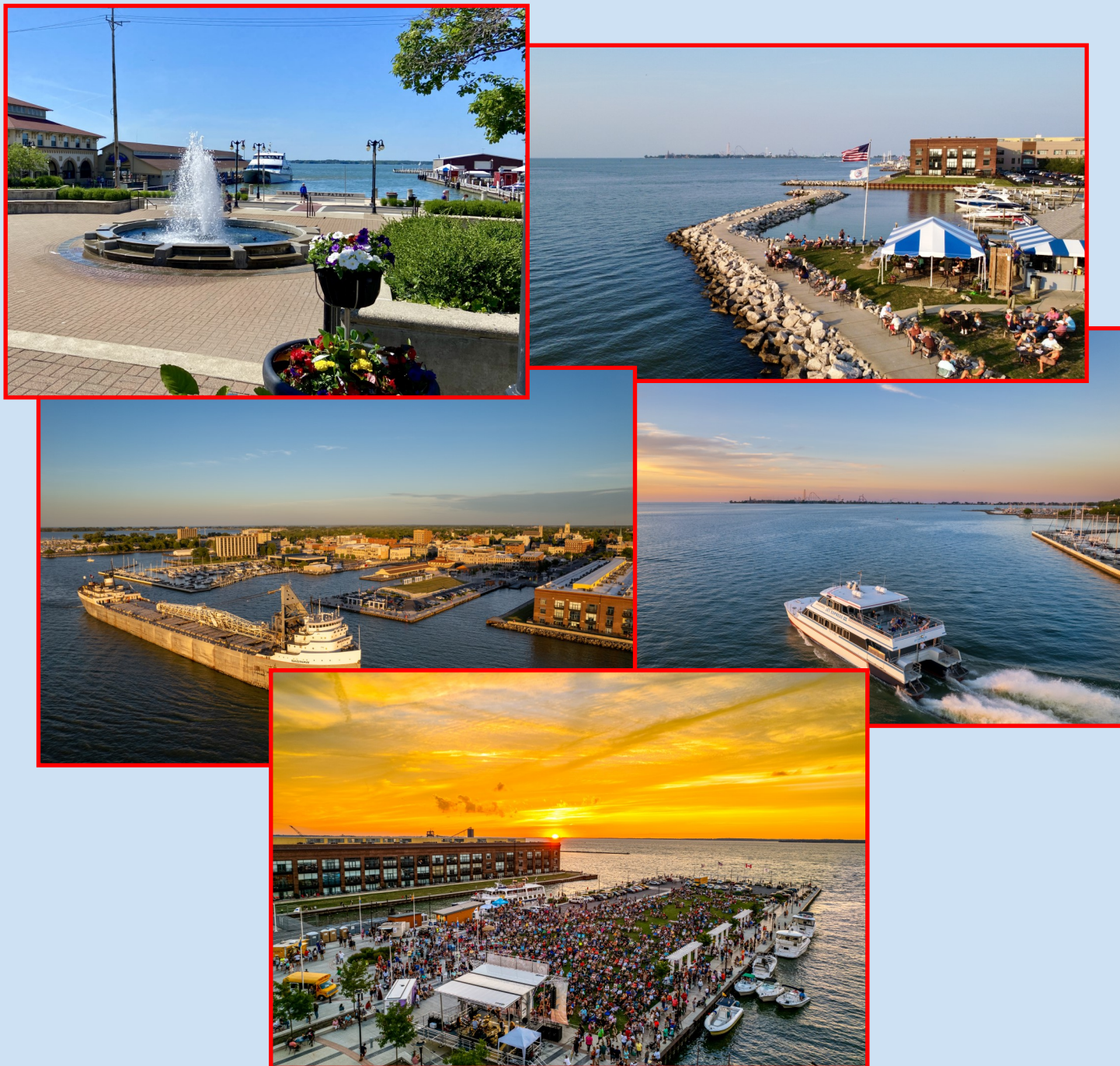
In furtherance of these and other goals, the Commissioners have approved a five-year Capital improvements Plan totaling \$176 million with \$69 million planned for expenditure in 2023.



### ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES (not prioritized)

- The Commission is generally supportive and appreciative of the current staff. However, it believes that team building to further interdepartmental teamwork and departmental oversight to lessen the impact of “organizational silos” is in order.
- The Commission is proud of the successful projects undertaken in recent years to improve the quality of life and the economy in Sandusky. Building on that record is desired along with increased attention to the overall approach to the conduct of City business.
- American Rescue Plan funds will not be available for future projects and expectations for future projects must be adjusted to recognize the continued availability of traditional funding.
- The strategic plan needs to be evaluated, reviewed, and updated.
- Commission members seek development of a better base of senior and affordable housing.

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- Neighborhood development is desired and should be a focus of the City Manager.
- Commissioners have expressed interest in setting and meeting goals including: growth planning and economic development resulting in a tax base adequate to support City operations; provision of quality infrastructure adequate to meet the City's needs; and provision of affordable housing.

## **THE CITY MANAGER**

The City Charter specifies that the " City Commission shall appoint a City Manager who shall be the administrative head of the municipal government under the direction and supervision of the City Commission and who shall hold office at the pleasure of the City Commission."

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**The City Charter provides that the powers and duties of the City Manager shall be:**

- A. To see that the laws and ordinances are enforced.
- B. Except as herein provided, to appoint and remove all heads of departments, and all subordinate officers and employees of the City: all appointments to be upon merit and fitness alone.
- C. To exercise control over all departments and divisions created herein or that hereafter may be created by the City Commission, except as otherwise provided in this Charter.
- D. To see that all terms and conditions imposed in favor of the City or its inhabitants in any public utility franchise are faithfully kept and performed; and upon knowledge of any violation thereof to call the same to the attention of the City Solicitor who is hereby required to take such steps as are necessary to enforce the same.
- E. To attend all meetings of the City Commission, with the right to take part in the discussions but having no vote.
- F. To recommend to the City Commission for adoption such measures as he or she may deem necessary or expedient.
- G. To act as Budget Commissioner and to keep the City Commission fully advised as to the financial condition and needs of the City; and
- H. To perform such other duties as may be prescribed by this Charter or be required of him or her by ordinance or resolution of the City Commission.

**Position Requirements**

*Education and Experience*

Education and increasingly responsible local government management experience gained in a community or other public agency with similar complexity to Sandusky is preferred.

***Characteristics of the Ideal Candidate***

The successful candidate is:

- a trustworthy, competent leader and manager who will always further the best interests of the City;
- looking for a long-term commitment to Sandusky;
- a person with the strength of character to honestly advise the Commission on matters that may become controversial;
- politically astute but not politically active;
- possessing exceptional interpersonal skills, a sense of humor and an outgoing, friendly personality;
- clearly possessing superior management and leadership abilities;
- a visionary who can see Sandusky in the future, understands strategic planning, and is willing to take risks to set and meet objectives;
- strong in finance and budget expertise to maintain a balanced budget with adequate reserves;
- current in the profession through active membership in professional associations or by other means;
- a strong collaborator among residents, policy makers, and staff;
- comfortable working in a midwestern community with a diversified population.

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### ***Style with the Commission:***

The successful candidate will:

- support the Commission in service to the residents and businesses of Sandusky;
- view the City Manager position as a technical and professional resource and advisor to the Commission;
- project a management style that facilitates collaboration among the staff and Commission;
- routinely provide informative updates to both the Commission and staff regarding emerging issues and progress toward meeting goals set by the Commission;
- have an independent, professional, and collaborative approach to the Commission by being available and accessible to all Commission members;
- provide credit to the Commission when Commission goals are set and met.

### ***With Staff***

The successful candidate will:

- encourage and facilitate communication among departments;
- not micromanage or “blind side employees” while demonstrating trust in the staff and supporting employees so that they can perform at their highest potential;
- be easily accessible and visible to employees at all levels of the organization, including those in remote locations;
- function as a coach and mentor who encourages, supports, and recognizes individual professional development and achievement.

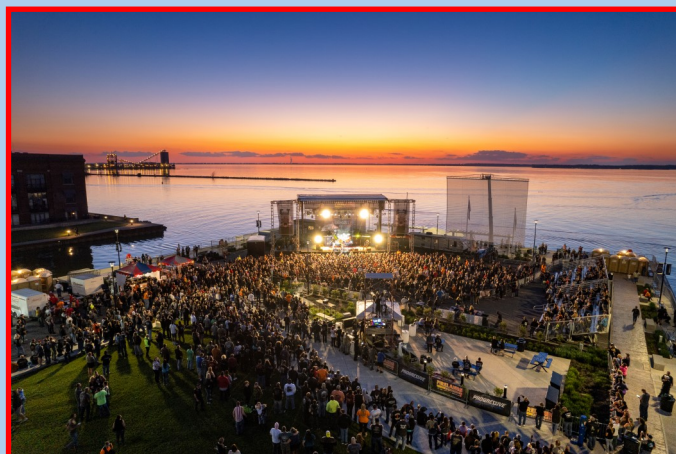
### ***With the Community***

The Commission considers community involvement to be a very significant factor in the performance of a successful City Manager. The Commission does not expect the Manager to meet every factor of community involvement. Rather, it looks for the overall engagement with the community.

### ***Examples evidencing this approach include:***

- taking the time to be visible and integrated with the community to collaborate regarding City projects and potential impacts on residents while developing strong relationships with residents;

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- attendance at civic and community meetings;
- membership in service organizations like Rotary;
- visibly participating in community events such as parades, ribbon cuttings etc.;
- Residence within the City.



In addition, the successful City Manager understands that all neighborhoods have legitimate demands for service and will strive to equitably serve all sectors.

#### ***With Other Governments including County, State and Schools***

The successful candidate will:

- strengthen the working relationships with State, County, Townships, and School Districts to foster cooperative approaches to public service;
- appreciate the State legislature's approach to home rule, local government tax policy, economic development, regional transit, and other aspects of municipal operations;
- be an effective advocate for the City.

#### ***Compensation and Benefits***

The compensation for the position is negotiable based on qualifications and experience.

#### ***Application and Selection Process***

The recruitment will remain open until the position is filled. The first review of applications is scheduled for June 9, 2023. To apply, please send a letter of application, detailed resume, and current salary to:

Robert E. Slavin, President or David Krings, Midwest Regional Manager.

#### **SLAVIN MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS**

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Phone: (770) 449-4656

Fax: (770) 416-0848

e-mail: [slavin@bellsouth.net](mailto:slavin@bellsouth.net)

[www.slavinweb.com](http://www.slavinweb.com)

David Krings Phone: (513) 200-4222

**Electronic submissions are preferred.**



**The City of Sandusky is an Equal Opportunity Employer that Values Diversity and is committed to hiring a qualified, diverse workforce.**