



The City of Mesa invites applications for
Airport Director

Falcon Field Airport (FFZ)
Mesa, Arizona

EXECUTIVE SEARCH SERVICES PROVIDED BY ADK CONSULTING & EXECUTIVE SEARCH



The Airport

Falcon Field Airport (FFZ) is a general aviation airport owned and operated by the City of Mesa, Arizona. Located in northeast Mesa in the heart of the Phoenix metropolitan area, FFZ is one of the busiest general aviation airports in the nation and a thriving hub for flight training, business aviation, and aerospace manufacturing.

Falcon Field occupies 784 acres and is home to more than 800 based aircraft, including single- and multi-engine airplanes, turboprops, business jets, and helicopters. An FAA air traffic control tower manages the airport's Class D airspace, and activity continues to grow: FFZ recorded more than 475,000 takeoffs and landings in 2025, up from approximately 354,000 in 2023.

Governance

FFZ is operated by the Airport Division of the City of Mesa, which has a council-manager form of government led by an elected Mayor and City Council. The Airport Director leads the Falcon Field Management Team and works under the general direction of the Assistant City Manager. The airport operates as a self-sustaining enterprise and has received approximately \$18 million in FAA and State of Arizona grants over the past decade.

A Storied History

Falcon Field was established in 1941 as a World War II flight training base for British Royal Air Force and American pilots, and several thousand pilots trained there before the war's end. The field was transferred to the City of Mesa as a municipal airport in 1948, and the City has operated it since 1968. That aviation heritage lives on at the Commemorative Air Force Airbase Arizona Museum on the airfield, where visitors can climb aboard historic bombers and take flights in vintage warbirds.

Airfield and Operations

Falcon Field has two parallel runways: Runway 4R-22L, which is 5,100 feet long, and Runway 4L-22R, which is 3,800 feet long. The air traffic control tower operates daily from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., with seasonal adjustments. Of the airport's 2025 operations, about 305,000 were local operations by aircraft based at Falcon Field and about 170,000 were itinerant flights from other airports. A full-service fixed-base operator provides fueling and pilot services, and more than a dozen flight school operators train pilots from around the world at FFZ.



The Airport (*continued*)

Facilities and Tenants

Falcon Field offers City-owned T-hangars and private ground-lease facilities for aircraft owners and aviation businesses. The Civil Air Patrol operates a facility on the airport, and on-airport businesses provide aircraft maintenance and overhaul, flight instruction, charter, aerial photography, and other aviation services.

Business and Economic Impact

More than 130 on-airport businesses provide over 1,100 jobs at Falcon Field. Tenants include MD Helicopters and CAE's flight training academy, and Boeing manufactures the AH-64 Apache helicopter at its adjacent Mesa campus. Falcon Field reports more jobs and annual economic benefit than any other general aviation airport in the Phoenix area, and the Arizona Department of Transportation's aviation economic impact study found that FFZ supports more than 16,000 jobs, \$1.3 billion in earnings, and \$6.2 billion in total economic activity.

Planning and Development

FFZ plans its growth through its Airport Master Plan, approved by the Mesa City Council in 2019, an updated Airport Layout Plan, and a five-year Capital Improvement Program. The City recently received a \$3.77 million FAA grant for taxiway construction and realignment. The Falcon Field Employment Center Strategy Plan guides economic development and business expansion on the airport and in the surrounding area. Much of the land available for development at Falcon Field is leased or under negotiation, and the 63-acre Falcon Tech Center site is available for developer proposals.





The Community

With approximately 514,000 residents, Mesa is the third-largest city in Arizona and one of the 40 largest cities in the United States. Located in the East Valley of the Phoenix metropolitan area, Mesa covers 138 square miles against a backdrop of desert mountains, with the Tonto National Forest and the Superstition Mountains close by. Mesa offers the amenities of a major city with a strong sense of community, abundant sunshine, and mild winters.

Greater Phoenix is home to more than 5.2 million residents. It is the 10th most populous metropolitan area in the nation and one of the fastest-growing, offering a wide range of career, cultural, and lifestyle opportunities within easy reach of Mesa.

Economy

Mesa's economy is anchored by aerospace and defense, health care, education, and technology. Major employers include Mesa Public Schools, Banner Health, and Boeing, and the region is home to a strong cluster of aerospace, aviation, and defense companies. Mesa's Elliot Road Technology Corridor hosts data center operations for companies including Meta and Amazon, and Mesa Gateway Airport in southeast Mesa anchors another growing employment center.

Neighborhoods and Housing

Mesa offers a wide range of housing, from historic homes near downtown to established neighborhoods and newer master-planned communities such as Eastmark in southeast Mesa. Many neighborhoods feature mountain views and easy access to parks, trails, golf, and shopping, and the city's median home value is about \$408,000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.



The Community (*continued*)

Education

More than 40,000 college students attend over 10 institutions in Mesa. Arizona State University's Polytechnic campus offers programs in engineering, technology, and aviation, and Mesa Community College serves more than 24,000 students. A.T. Still University's osteopathic medical school is also located in Mesa. Mesa Public Schools is one of the largest school districts in Arizona.

Health Care

Residents have access to comprehensive health care close to home. Banner Health, one of Mesa's largest employers, operates Banner Desert Medical Center and Banner Children's at Desert in Mesa, and the greater Phoenix area offers a wide range of specialty and academic medical centers.

Arts and Culture

The Mesa Arts Center is Arizona's largest arts center, presenting performances, exhibitions, and classes throughout the year. The Arizona Museum of Natural History showcases dinosaur skeletons and regional history, and the i.d.e.a. Museum offers hands-on exhibits for young children. Downtown Mesa features nearly 40 public art sculptures and a dozen murals, along with local restaurants, breweries, and shops.

Dining and Entertainment

Mesa's dining scene ranges from family-owned restaurants and food trucks to more than 15 local breweries, taprooms, and cafés. The Fresh Foodie Trail connects visitors with local farms and producers, and Organ Stop Pizza is home to the world's largest theater organ.





The Community *(continued)*

Sports and Recreation

Mesa is a hub of Cactus League spring training baseball. Sloan Park is the spring training home of the Chicago Cubs, and Hohokam Stadium also hosts spring training games. Mesa offers more than 40 golf courses with mountain views, and Red Mountain Park's 1,146 acres include lakes, trails, and athletic fields.

Outdoor Adventure

Some of Arizona's most scenic landscapes are minutes from home. Residents kayak, tube, and paddle on the Salt River, where wild horses graze along the banks, and enjoy boating and fishing at Saguaro Lake. Usery Mountain Regional Park offers about 30 miles of trails through the Sonoran Desert, and the historic Apache Trail winds through the Superstition Wilderness.

Getting Around

Valley Metro light rail connects downtown Mesa with Tempe, downtown Phoenix, and Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. The Loop 202, Loop 101, and U.S. Route 60 freeways provide direct access throughout the Valley, and Mesa Gateway Airport offers commercial airline service close to home.

A Place to Grow

With a growing economy, a wide range of housing, year-round outdoor recreation, and the amenities of one of the nation's largest metropolitan areas, Mesa offers an appealing setting for professionals and families alike.

Community Information: visitmesa.com, mesaaz.gov





Position Overview

The Airport Director leads the City of Mesa's Airport Division and oversees the operation, maintenance, and development of Falcon Field Airport. Working under the general direction of the Assistant City Manager, the Director leads the Falcon Field Management Team, oversees the division budget and twenty-year financial plan, and directs the staff responsible for all airport operations. The Airport Director serves as the City's liaison with federal and state regulatory agencies and represents the airport before tenants, aviation users, public groups, and regional partners.

About the Role

This at-will executive position guides the future of one of the nation's busiest general aviation airports. The Airport Director plans for future airport services through the Airport Master Plan and division strategic plan, negotiates and administers leases with fixed-base operators and industrial tenants, and promotes economic development and business expansion at the airport and in the surrounding area in support of the Falcon Field Employment Center Strategy Plan.





Key Responsibilities

- Plan, direct, and lead the operations and maintenance activities of the Airport Division and the Falcon Field Management Team.
- Develop short- and long-range goals and objectives and implement the division strategic plan and Airport Master Plan.
- Prepare and administer the division budget and twenty-year financial plan.
- Negotiate and administer leases with fixed-base operators, industrial tenants, and other airport businesses.
- Promote economic development and business expansion at the airport and in the surrounding sub-area.
- Coordinate with the FAA air traffic control tower on matters affecting airport operations, and ensure compliance with FAA and other federal, state, and local regulations, airport rules, and ordinances.
- Represent the City with the FAA, Maricopa County area governments, and other civic, political, and regulatory bodies, and speak before public groups on airport plans, programs, and goals.
- Coordinate with other City departments and build effective working relationships with tenants, pilots, aircraft owners, developers, and the community.
- Supervise, train, and evaluate staff.

Leadership Qualities and Style

The ideal candidate is a collaborative, relationship-focused leader who builds effective working relationships with staff, tenants, aircraft owners, pilots, fixed-base operators, City colleagues, and the public. They communicate clearly, represent the airport confidently before public groups and regulatory bodies, and bring sound judgment to planning, leasing, and development decisions. The Airport Director upholds the City of Mesa's shared employee values of Knowledge, Respect, and Integrity and develops a capable, engaged team.

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in airport management, business administration, or a closely related field.
- A minimum of seven years of progressively responsible managerial, supervisory, and administrative experience.
- Valid Arizona driver's license by the date of hire.

Preferred Qualifications

- Accreditation from the American Association of Airport Executives (A.A.E.).
- Master's degree in airport management, business administration, or public administration.

For the full job description, [click here](#).

Salary and Benefits

Salary is dependent on qualifications and will be based upon the knowledge and experience of the individual selected. The annual salary range for this position is \$143,062-\$192,545 and is accompanied by a competitive benefits package.

How To Apply

To apply online, [click here](#).

Deadline for applications: November 11, 2026

The contacts for this search are:

Rod Dinger, A.A.E.

rod@adkexecutivesearch.com

Barry Bratton, A.A.E.

barry@adkexecutivesearch.com

The City of Mesa is an equal-opportunity employer. We support diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for employees.



Cover photo: Ivan Martinez Photography

