

San Francisco International Airport
is accepting applications for the position of

Airport Director



A Rare and Incredible Opportunity

The pending retirement of the highly respected Airport Director Ivar C. Satero will take place at the end of 2024, creating this exceptional career opportunity. At the San Francisco International Airport (SFO) – the 12th largest airport in the United States, based on passenger count – the new Airport Director will oversee a robust enterprise business operation with a proposed fiscal year 2024/25 operating budget in excess of \$1.6 billion supported by more than 2,000 Airport Commission employees. Top candidates will have a career history that demonstrates outstanding leadership skills and the ability to determine ongoing infrastructure demands; understand the financial structure of a residual rate-setting airport; engage the community; and attract, expand, and secure other non-airline revenue. Importantly, this highly accomplished individual will also be strategic and well prepared to implement an \$11 billion Capital Improvement Plan and related funding mechanisms. This top executive will also have the rare ability to oversee the exciting future and continue SFO’s vision of “Inspiring the Extraordinary” by planning for a future that sets new standards and achieves bold new heights.

San Francisco International Airport

San Francisco International Airport is a world-class, award-winning airport approaching nearly 50 million guests this year.

Among the three Bay Area airports, SFO provides 90% of the international flights. SFO offers non-stop flights to 56 international cities on 44 international carriers. The Bay Area’s largest airport also connects non-stop with 82 U.S. cities on 16 domestic airlines. The Airport, an enterprise department of the City and County of San Francisco, accounts for \$6.1 billion in business activity and supports nearly 28,500 direct jobs and manages over 700 commercial accounts. SFO recently completed the renovations for Harvey Milk Terminal 1, the largest project in the Airport’s Capital Improvement Plan, and also extended the AirTrain people mover connecting with Long-Term Parking.



SFO has a new five-year strategic plan to guide its priorities, resources, and investments towards an even brighter and more sustainable future for the Airport, the economic vibrancy of the San Francisco Bay Area, and the people it serves. View SFO’s Strategic Plan ([“Inspiring the Extraordinary Strategic Plan 2023-2028”](#)).





San Francisco International Airport was named Best Airport in the United States in 2022 by the Wall Street Journal.

Governing Structure

San Francisco is the only city in California that is also a county. Its governing powers are vested in an eleven-member Board of Supervisors elected by district, with each Supervisor serving a four-year term.

The Mayor – the chief executive of the city – is elected by the voters for a four-year term, as are the City Assessor, Treasurer, City Attorney, Public Defender, District Attorney, and Sheriff. Ms. London N. Breed is the 45th Mayor of San Francisco, serving in this position since 2018, and was previously President of the Board of Supervisors from 2015 to 2018. Mayor Breed is seeking re-election in the next mayoral election in November 2024.

The San Francisco Airport Commission is the oversight body for SFO. The Airport Commission is a policy body of five members, each appointed to four-year renewable terms by the Mayor of San Francisco. The Airport Commission has authority over the construction, management, supervision, maintenance, extension, operation, use, and control of all Airport property. It sets policies and approves contracts and other major Airport initiatives. The Commission is prohibited by Charter from involving itself in the day-to-day operation of the Airport. That function is vested in the Airport Director as the chief executive officer of the enterprise department. The Mayor appoints the Airport Director from nominees determined by the Airport Commission to have executive, administrative, and technical qualifications. The Airport Director serves at the pleasure of the Airport Commission.

SFO is owned and operated by the City and County of San Francisco and is located approximately 14 miles south in neighboring San Mateo County. The Airport operates under and complies with federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The Federal Aviation Administration, a branch of the Federal Department of Transportation, is the primary regulatory agency. Additionally, the Airport, as part of San Francisco City and County government, is subject to the San Francisco Charter and Municipal Codes.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate for the Airport Director position will be a strong leader with an entrepreneurial and creative mindset. This individual should be adept at empowering staff to excel in their roles, supporting a sense of pride and ownership, and celebrating their contributions and successes on behalf of SFO. Key attributes and characteristics sought in this accomplished professional include:

- **Visionary and forward-looking executive:** Open to new ideas and innovative approaches to airport business and operations.
- **Respected individual:** Known for business acumen, honesty, integrity, and empathy.
- **Strong and bold leader:** Embraces partnering, collaboration, innovation, and transparency.
- **Promoter of continuous improvement:** Especially in Safety and Security.
- **Innovative manager:** Willing to explore advancements in technology, passenger services, and safety and security initiatives.

Additionally, the ideal candidate for Airport Director will embrace SFO's mission and vision, demonstrating a passion for:

- **Revolutionizing the passenger experience:** Through an extensive capital program and long-term Airport Development Plan.
- **Leading in safety and security:** Continuing to be an industry leader.

- **Delivering exceptional business performance:** Ensuring operational excellence and efficiency.
- **Overseeing an exceptional airport:** Providing outstanding service to Bay Area communities.
- **Advancing equitable business opportunities:** Supporting small, local, and historically underutilized businesses.
- **Ensuring an exceptional workplace:** Empowering the team with the resources that enable success and opportunities that promote professional development.

The Airport Director will also have a dedication and willingness to:

- Promote and ensure creative approaches to enhance the passenger's experience;
- Maintain an unwavering commitment to fair and open-air service competition;
- Fully engage in the "partnering approach" for the Airport's capital program;
- Achieve SFO's bold goal of attaining net zero energy and zero waste on capital projects and net zero carbon by 2030;
- Strengthen workplace inclusion and belonging so that employees feel respected, valued, and engaged to bring their personal best to meet the Airport's mission of delivering an airport experience where people and our planet come first; and
- Ensure that all Airport employees are properly trained (e.g., safety, customer service).

In summary, the next Airport Director of SFO will be a skilled professional able to manage this complex organization, lead staff, and offer significant contributions and, at the same time, embody and uphold SFO's Core Values.



Desirable Qualifications

Experience: Airport management experience is highly desired by the Airport Commission. In addition to those individuals with highly desired airport management experience, other highly qualified individuals are also encouraged to submit credentials for consideration. Suitability and match for this executive position will be evaluated based on a variety of factors including submitted materials, career history, and accomplishments.

Candidates at this executive level should have a minimum of eight (8) years managerial experience including C-Suite experience in a significant organization with comparable organizational complexities.

Additional experience with capital projects, major capital programs, financial management, strategic planning, and overseeing emergency response will be a strong advantage for top contenders.

Education: A Bachelor's degree is required. An advanced degree may be a plus combined with applicable experience.

With the Commission's desire to consider a broad field of candidates, it is expected that candidates will be summarized, presented, and submitted in two broad areas of career expertise: (1) airport executives (highly desired); and (2) those with experience running a major public enterprise with C-Suite experience. Additionally, strong leadership, fiscal acumen, and political skills are key to being successful in this executive position.

Appointment Type

This is an exempt and at-will position within the City and County of San Francisco's civil service system. The Airport Director (Classification #0965) is the administrative head of the SFO organization, an enterprise department of the City, and serves at the pleasure of the Airport Commission.

Since 1981, SFO has had only three Airport Directors, demonstrating a stable, effective, and pro-active organization. Current Airport Director Ivar C. Satero has held the position since 2016 and will retire at the end of December 2024 following a long-term and distinguished career with a total of 30 years of service at the Airport.

The candidate selected for employment will be required to complete a full application for the City and County of San Francisco and obtain Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Security Clearance and U.S. Customs Clearance.

Compensation and Benefits

The annual salary range (Classification #0965) for the Airport Director, effective July 1, 2024, is \$303,888 to \$387,790 (Range A). Appointments above this range may be considered for a top candidate. Placement may be authorized in Range B (\$387,816 to \$448,816). For further discussion, inquiries on compensation should be directed to the search firm of Ralph Andersen & Associates. Moving and relocation financial aid will be available for the selected candidate as per the City and County of San Francisco's policies.

For additional benefits information please review this link: <https://careers.sf.gov/benefits/>.



To Be Considered

This is a confidential process and will be handled accordingly throughout the various stages of the process. References will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established. Interested candidates are encouraged to apply immediately. This position will be considered “open” until a final selection is made. Electronic submittals to apply@ralphandersen.com are strongly preferred and should include the following:

- Compelling Cover Letter; and
- Comprehensive Resume

Only the most highly qualified candidates will be invited for an interview with the Airport Commission. Interviews by a professional panel will be held during early September and top contenders presented to the Airport Commission in late September. The finalists (typically three) will be forwarded to Mayor London N. Breed for a final decision and selection. Detailed backgrounds and an offer are anticipated by late September/early October. Ideally, the new Airport Director will join SFO by late October to allow for a smooth and well-planned transition with Director Satero for the remaining months of 2024.

Confidential inquiries and questions regarding this career opportunity are highly encouraged and should be directed to Ms. Heather Renschler, Project Director, at Ralph Andersen & Associates at (916) 630-4900. Alternatively, interested individuals should feel free to send an email to scheduling@ralphandersen.com to schedule a confidential discussion.

The City & County of San Francisco is an equal opportunity employer, values workforce diversity and seeks to create an environment and culture that embraces employee differences. All qualified applicants are considered in accordance with applicable laws, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, marital status or veteran status or any other legally protected status. We will provide assistance in the recruitment, application and selection process to applicants with disabilities who request such assistance.

