



THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS

ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

DIVISION OF FIRE



FIRE CHIEF
CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO

ERS

**EXECUTIVE
RECRUITMENT
SOLUTIONS**

AN OUTSTANDING CAREER OPPORTUNITY

The City of Columbus is seeking an exceptional fire service executive with a demonstrated record of career accomplishment to serve as its next Fire Chief. This progressive and effective leader will bring immediate credibility to the highly acclaimed Columbus Division of Fire – one of only a select group of U.S. fire departments to hold both CFAI accreditation and an ISO Class 1 rating.

Top candidates for this challenging leadership role will thrive in a dynamic, fast-paced, and complex environment. They will be creative and strategic, with the ability to fully implement best practices and use data to guide the deployment of resources. Delivering exceptional services across Columbus's diverse and expansive geographic area requires a servant leader who is prepared to build upon the Division's strong foundation and progressive approach.

The next Fire Chief must be a courageous, forward-thinking leader committed to advancing efforts to make Columbus "America's Equal Opportunity City." This well-rounded and accomplished professional will also recognize, appreciate, and celebrate the outstanding contributions and performance of employees at every level of the Division.



ABOUT COLUMBUS, OHIO

The City of Columbus is one of the fastest-growing cities in the U.S. and offers the amenities of a big city with the accessibility, charm, and community of a small town. As the 14th largest city in the U.S. with an estimated population of 938,396, spread over 220 square miles, Columbus boasts the renowned Columbus Zoo, top-notch culinary, fashion, music, and entertainment, exciting Ohio State football and professional sports such as the NHL's Columbus Blue Jackets and the Columbus Crew. With a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, burgeoning downtown, and a diverse array of welcoming neighborhoods, the City of Columbus enjoys a tradition of working across the entire community.



ABOUT COLUMBUS, OHIO *CONT.*

Dynamic Communities

The region offers a wide variety of housing options, from charming historic neighborhoods and downtown lofts to new suburban developments and multi-acre living.

Diverse, Strong Economy

Columbus ranks 7th in economic strength among the 102 largest metropolitan cities in the country. In 2025 Columbus was named the top metro area in the country in Site Selection Magazine's Global Groundwork Index, which assesses business growth and public infrastructure investment. These rankings highlight Columbus's diverse economy, driven by sectors such as education, insurance, banking, technology, and healthcare. Columbus benefits from a dynamic, yet stable, economy, with a collaborative business environment earning its recognition as one of the top metros for job creation. As an emerging tech city, its research and technology institutions attract the brightest minds from around the world.

Arts and Culture

Columbus has an energy that radiates through its thriving industries, neighborhoods, and educational institutions. The City offers a rich cultural landscape, from the renowned collections at the Columbus Museum of Art to Gallery Hop, the monthly celebration of creativity in the Short North Arts District.

Throughout the year, Columbus hosts a wide array of signature events that draw thousands of visitors, including the Columbus Arts Festival, Red, White & Boom, The Ohio State University football games, the Jazz & Rib Fest, the Columbus Marathon, and the Italian Festival.

The City is also home to a vibrant performing arts scene, anchored by the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, BalletMet, and the Columbus Association for the Performing Arts, as well as professional sports, including the Columbus Clippers.

Education

The Columbus region's K-12 education options include U.S. News & World Report top-ranked high schools as well as U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon schools. The region has excellent public schools, 140 private institutions, and 54 higher education campuses with nearly 150,000 college students.

Highlights

- 14th most populous city in the U.S.
- #11 fastest growing city and #6 for corporate HQ leaders
- Ohio ranked #2 in the U.S. for corporate investment, with the Columbus region in the Top 10 for cities
- #1 real estate market in US
- Top 30 cities for minority entrepreneurs
- Top 10 rising city for startups
- Top 20 best US cities for startups
- #8 best city for millennials to buy home where housing is affordable and jobs are strong
- Top 10 smart cities in the US
- #1 American city to Work in Tech in 2019
- #1 city for tech jobs
- Columbus is the best U.S. city for tech jobs
- #8 best city for STEM Jobs
- #3 best city for new grads to live, work, play
- Top 10 best city for Veterans to Live
- Top 10 best city for young, growing families

Learn more about Columbus at www.experiencecolumbus.com

CITY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Columbus operates under a strong-mayor form of government with a nine-member City Council. Mayor Andrew J. Ginther was elected the 53rd mayor of Columbus on November 3, 2015, and is currently serving his third four-year term. He has announced his intention to seek a fourth term in 2027.

The Columbus Fire Chief is appointed by and reports to the Director of Public Safety, who serves at the pleasure of the Mayor. The City provides a full range of municipal services, supported by an FY 2026 operating budget of \$1.26 billion and approximately 8,904 full-time employees.

COLUMBUS DIVISION OF FIRE

The Columbus Division of Fire (CFD) is a full-spectrum public safety agency protecting the residents, businesses, and visitors of America's 15th-largest city. The Division provides comprehensive services, including fire suppression; emergency medical services (EMS); technical rescue, including urban search and rescue; hazardous materials mitigation; fire prevention and investigation; domestic preparedness; and community fire and EMS safety education.

With an approved FY 2026 operating budget of more than \$363 million, CFD's approximately 1,700 uniformed personnel safeguard lives, property, and the environment through emergency response, disaster preparedness, public education, and community service. Their work is supported by approximately 300 highly skilled civilian employees who provide essential technical, professional, and administrative expertise. More than 99 percent of CFD employees are represented by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Columbus Fire Fighters Union Local 67.

As Ohio's largest fire department, CFD operates 35 fire stations across seven battalions and serves an area of approximately 220 square miles. The Division's sworn ranks include Firefighter, Lieutenant, Captain, Battalion Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant Chief, and Fire Chief.

In 2025, CFD responded to approximately 170,000 incidents. Approximately 140,000—or nearly 85 percent—were EMS and rescue-related calls for service. To meet this demand, the Division employs a robust deployment model that includes 36 engine companies, 17 ladder companies, five heavy rescue companies, seven battalions, 44 EMS transport vehicles, 14 boats, a Mobile Stroke Unit, and a bariatric transport unit. These resources help ensure a rapid and effective response throughout the City.

CFD's special operations capabilities include tactical EMS, a FEMA Type I Bomb Squad, and hazardous materials teams serving the City of Columbus and 36 surrounding counties.



COLUMBUS DIVISION OF FIRE *CONT.*

Operations and Innovation

CFD operates several innovative programs designed to improve patient outcomes and enhance system efficiency. In partnership with three of the region's four hospital systems, the Division operates a Mobile Stroke Transport Unit that brings advanced diagnostic technology—including a CT scanner—and specialized stroke care directly to patients in the field.

The Division is also implementing a nurse-led healthcare navigation line that connects nonemergency 911 callers with the most appropriate care settings and community resources, helping reduce unnecessary emergency department visits. CFD's community medicine initiatives include the Rapid Response Emergency and Addiction Crisis Team (RREACT), which assists individuals experiencing substance use disorders, and the Specialized Program Assessing Resource Connectivity (SPARC), which connects vulnerable populations with health and social services.

To further strengthen operational effectiveness, CFD uses advanced geographic information systems (GIS) to optimize resource deployment, conduct systemwide performance reviews, and provide incident commanders with enhanced decision-support tools.

The Division of Fire engages in a dynamic and evolving service environment:



Community & Regional Scale

- Serves a major metropolitan area with a diverse and growing population.
- Supports large-scale events including festivals, cultural celebrations, Red, White & Boom, and Ohio State home football games, with individual event attendance ranging from over 100,000 to more than 400,000 participants.

Advanced Healthcare & Emergency Medicine

- Four independent hospital systems, providing broad clinical partnerships and specialty care access.
- Mobile Stroke Unit, delivering hospital-level stroke care directly in the field and improving patient outcomes.

Innovative Service Delivery & Public Health

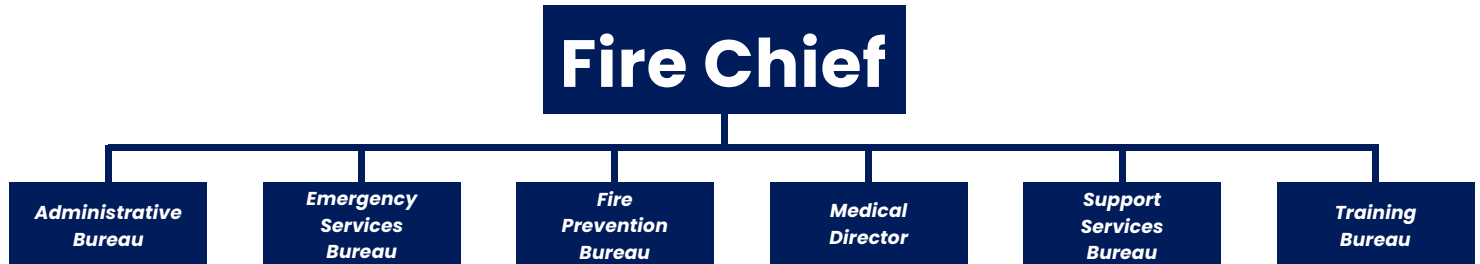
- Health Care Navigation Line, helping residents access appropriate care and reduce unnecessary emergency responses.
- Forward-thinking Alternative Crisis Response, integrating behavioral health and community-based solutions into emergency services.



THE FIRE CHIEF

The Fire Chief is a key member of the Mayor's executive leadership team and is expected to lead with integrity, communicate effectively, and work closely with the Mayor and Director of Public Safety. The Chief will join a high-energy, creative, and professional executive management team while assuming command of an organization with a proud tradition of service excellence.

In addition to overseeing the Division's day-to-day operations and providing strategic leadership, the Fire Chief will serve as a technical advisor to other City departments on matters related to fire protection, disaster management, and emergency medical services. The Chief is also responsible for fostering positive employee and labor relations and ensuring the effective and responsible use of the Division's human and financial resources.



Specific responsibilities and skills required of the Fire Chief include:

- Organizes and directs all Division of Fire resources to protect lives and property efficiently and effectively and ensures compliance with City of Columbus ordinances;
- Plans, directs, and reviews personnel activities to ensure the effective delivery of fire prevention and inspection services; emergency medical, fire, and rescue response; water supply operations; hazardous materials response; and bomb disposal services, making recommendations as needed;

THE FIRE CHIEF *CONT.*

- Monitors and modifies fire service programs to meet the evolving needs of the community and the Division;
- Assumes command at major incidents and responds to emergency calls while off duty, as needed;
- Assigns and supervises subordinate officers responsible for the care and maintenance of equipment, stations, hoses, appliances, and other supplies, as well as the development and administration of fire training and prevention programs;
- Directs the Division's communications system and fire equipment maintenance program;
- Initiates and advises on the development of ordinances and regulations, reviews reports on Division activities, and prepares reports for City officials and state and national organizations with an interest in fire prevention;
- Oversees the preparation and maintenance of records and reports and meets with community groups and officials involved in planning and approving Division programs;
- Attends conferences and meetings and coordinates the Division's activities with those of other City divisions and governmental and private agencies;
- Directs, supervises, and evaluates assigned staff; addresses employee concerns and workplace issues; provides counseling and discipline when appropriate; and completes performance evaluations;
- Establishes Division priorities and develops policies under the direction of the Director of Public Safety;
- Directs the preparation, review, and updating of long-range and strategic plans;
- Oversees the development of the Division's annual budget request for submission to the Director of Public Safety;
- Recommends priorities for capital improvement projects and major equipment purchases;
- Represents the Division in multiagency initiatives and assists in developing multiagency plans as directed by the Director of Public Safety;
- Reviews the Division's disaster plan annually; and
- Performs other duties as assigned.



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will be an accomplished fire service manager and administrator with exceptional interpersonal, organizational, and leadership skills. This executive will demonstrate a strong command presence, complemented by confidence, strength of character, excellent communication skills, and a clear sense of purpose.

The successful candidate must be able to develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan that addresses the Division's immediate priorities while also providing a forward-looking vision for the next 10 to 20 years.



The ideal candidate will be politically astute and recognized as an honest, fair, and consistent leader. An exemplary record of ethical and professional conduct is essential. The next Fire Chief must quickly establish trust and credibility among a wide range of audiences and stakeholders. The Chief must also be an attentive listener who carefully considers all perspectives before making objective, well-informed decisions. The Mayor and Director of Public Safety expect the Fire Chief to present a thorough assessment of available options and alternatives, accompanied by clear and well-supported recommendations.

Through frequent and meaningful engagement, the Fire Chief will build positive relationships with employees throughout the organization and place a high priority on their professional growth. The Chief will be recognized as a progressive fire service leader who contributes to the continued advancement of the profession. The successful candidate must also have a demonstrated ability to develop, motivate, and evaluate personnel while ensuring equitable access to training, education, and professional development opportunities.



Few individuals nationwide will possess the full range of leadership qualities and experience required to oversee an organization of CFD's size, scope, and complexity. Candidates invited to interview will have demonstrated the ability and record of success necessary to lead one of the nation's premier fire and emergency services organizations. In making the final selection, the Mayor will identify the candidate best equipped to provide executive leadership and strategic guidance to this dynamic Division. The selected candidate will have the courage to lead and the resolve to guide CFD toward new levels of operational excellence, workforce diversity, and organizational health.



EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Education and Experience – Possession of a Bachelor’s degree and one year of service as a permanent appointee in the class of Fire Assistant Chief OR five years with any combination of service as a Fire Assistant Chief, Fire Deputy Chief, and/or Fire Battalion Chief or comparable experience elsewhere.

Certification Required – The selected candidate will also be required to successfully complete (or maintain) valid Firefighter II and Fire Safety inspector certifications issued by the State of Ohio by the completion of the first-year probationary period.

Desirable Residency – Upon hire, residency within the corporate limits of the City of Columbus is highly desired, but not required.

Final Selection and Appointment – The search committee, Mayor, and Director of Public Safety will identify the final candidate for appointment by the Director Public Safety, based on a combination of education, experience, and credentials that best fit the needs of the City of Columbus.

Probationary Period – There is a first-year, 365-day probationary period. After the successful completion of this probationary period, this position is protected for the next four years, with the City having the option to re-appoint the incumbent for one additional five-year period. Once the initial 365-day probationary period is successfully completed, an incumbent can only be terminated for cause.



COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

A competitive compensation package, with excellent benefits, will be offered for this executive position.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Interested candidates may apply by sending their resume, cover letter, and six professional references to Executive Recruitment Solutions via apply@executiverecruitmentsolutions.com. Candidates are requested to submit materials prior to **Monday, November 2, 2026**.

Interested individuals should be aware that Executive Recruitment Solutions will work closely with the City throughout this process to fully ensure confidentiality is possible. References will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established. If you have questions or would like to discuss this opportunity further, please call Mr. Robert Burg at (805) 264-2663.

Notice: In accordance with Ohio law, all applications and resumes for public positions are a matter of public record and will be disclosed to the media or public upon proper request. Serious candidates are encouraged to discuss their interest with the Search Firm, Executive Recruitment Solutions, in advance of submitting their qualifications. If you have questions, please call Robert Burg to schedule a confidential telephone appointment to discuss this career opportunity.

The City of Columbus is an equal employment opportunity employer and encourages all qualified individuals to apply for this exceptional career opportunity.