

A NATIONAL SEARCH
is underway for a new Fire Chief



Minneapolis, MN



FIRE CHIEF

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

THE 01. OPPORTUNITY

Minneapolis
Fire



A national search is underway to attract an exceptionally qualified and forward-thinking leader to serve as the next Fire Chief for the Minneapolis Fire Department (MFD).

This is a rare opportunity to serve as a senior executive leader within Minneapolis' integrated public safety framework, directing a highly respected, all-hazards fire and emergency services organization in one of the nation's most dynamic and civically engaged cities.

Minneapolis continues to evolve in response to heightened community expectations, public safety reform, and increasing service demands across a diverse and complex urban environment. The next Fire Chief will play a critical role in shaping policy, operational performance, organizational culture, and public trust during this pivotal period. This leader will guide a department committed to excellence in fire suppression, emergency medical response, technical rescue, fire investigation, community risk reduction, and public education, while strengthening collaboration across city departments and regional partners.

The City seeks a Fire Chief who is prepared to lead at a consequential moment—someone capable of strengthening community trust, advancing organizational accountability and inclusion, navigating a complex governance and labor environment, and driving thoughtful modernization within a large, unionized public safety organization. The next Fire Chief will advance the department's effectiveness, its culture, and long-term resilience.



THE 02. GOVERNING STRUCTURE

In November 2021, Minneapolis voters approved a charter amendment establishing an Executive Mayor–Legislative Council form of government, under which executive authority is vested in the Mayor, while legislative authority resides with a 13-member City Council elected from individual wards.

The Mayor and City Council serve concurrent four-year terms. The City operates with an annual budget of approximately \$1.5 billion and employs roughly 4,292 personnel. As part of this restructuring, the Mayor integrated community safety services—including the Minneapolis Police Department, Fire Department, 911, Emergency Management, and Neighborhood Safety—under a single Office of Community Safety.

While the Fire Chief retains full operational command of the Fire Department, the position functions within a coordinated executive framework designed to align strategy, resources, and accountability across the City’s public safety enterprise. The Fire Chief reports to the Community Safety Commissioner, who reports directly to the Mayor.



THE 03. COMMUNITY.

Minneapolis lies along both banks of the Mississippi River and adjoins Saint Paul, the state capital of Minnesota.

With a population of approximately 444,000, Minneapolis, the state's largest city, is a core component of the Twin Cities metropolitan region.

The city is nationally recognized for its award-winning park system, interconnected by the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway, and for its extensive network of walking and biking trails. Offering a vibrant downtown, Minneapolis boasts a nationally acclaimed culinary scene, award-winning

breweries and distilleries, and a robust arts and music culture. World-class healthcare institutions and the University of Minnesota reinforce the city's reputation for innovation, research, and academic excellence.

Minneapolis is a regional powerhouse and home to a significant concentration of Fortune 500 companies and global firms. Its diverse business base supports a strong labor market and a highly engaged civic environment.

Minneapolis' neighborhoods vary widely in character, from historic residential districts and cultural enclaves to dense high-rise corridors and areas facing longstanding economic and social disparities. Some neighborhoods continue to experience gun violence, poverty, and strained relationships with public safety institutions—conditions that translate into high EMS demand, complex incident management, and elevated expectations for transparent, community-centered leadership.





THE MINNEAPOLIS FIRE DEPARTMENT 04.

The Minneapolis Fire Department (MFD) is a full-service, all-hazards emergency response organization dedicated to protecting life, property, and the environment across a complex and evolving urban landscape.

With a 2026 budget of \$95,745,742, the MFD operates from 19 strategically located fire stations. The department is staffed by over 440 sworn and civilian personnel and responded to over 60,000 calls for service, including over 40,000 Fire/Rescue/EMS incidents.

At its core, MFD delivers comprehensive emergency response services through its Operations and Emergency Medical Services functions, including fire suppression, fire-based EMS, technical rescue, hazardous materials mitigation, and coordinated incident command for both routine and large-scale events. District command staff and specialized teams ensure rapid, effective response throughout the city.

Committed to preparedness, prevention, and professional development, the Training Division oversees recruitment, academy instruction, advanced certifications, and ongoing education for the demands of modern urban fire service. Community Risk Reduction and Fire Prevention programs complement these efforts through inspections, investigations, public education, and targeted outreach designed to reduce preventable fires, injuries, and fatalities.



MFD also maintains specialized capabilities for complex, low-frequency, high-risk incidents through Special Operations programs, including hazardous materials response, technical and water rescue, urban search and rescue, and participation in Minnesota Task Force One, ensuring readiness for incidents that extend beyond routine emergency response.

MFD also oversees and administers the City's Behavioral Crisis Response (BCR) program, an innovative expanded 911 response option that was piloted by Minneapolis in 2021. This city-wide program operates 24/7 to respond to 911 calls involving behavioral or mental health crises, and is recognized as a nation-leading service that addresses key needs for Minneapolis residents.

Administrative and support services—including personnel, finance, logistics and engineering, health and safety, data and technology, and employee assistance—provide the infrastructure to sustain frontline operations, formulating a cohesive organization focused on readiness, resilience, and service.

Recent planning and budget initiatives underscore the department's continued evolution, emphasizing interagency coordination, data-informed deployment, modernized technology, and reporting systems that focus on ensuring response times are paramount amid increasing demand.



MINNEAPOLIS FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mission

To protect lives, property, and the environment through fire suppression, emergency medical services, fire prevention, community risk reduction, and public safety education.

Vision

A modern, trusted, and resilient fire service that is community-connected and reflects Minneapolis' values of service, equity, accountability, and innovation.

Core Values

Service • Integrity • Equity • Professionalism • Accountability • Collaboration

05. THE POSITION

The Fire Chief provides strategic leadership and executive oversight of all departmental functions, including administration, fire prevention, and suppression operations.

Overall Management

The Fire Chief directs all operational, administrative, and policy functions of the Department and oversees the development and continuous evaluation of a multi-year business and performance framework grounded in accountability, transparency, and measurable outcomes. The Chief ensures compliance with applicable laws and leverages information systems and data to enhance organizational effectiveness, decision-making, and service delivery.

Human Resources

The Fire Chief cultivates a respectful, inclusive, and high-performing workforce through strong leadership presence, clear communication, and employee engagement. Responsibilities include maintaining constructive labor relations; advancing equitable recruitment and promotional practices; overseeing training, performance management, and leadership development; and ensuring fair, timely, and consistent investigations and disciplinary processes. The Chief champions employee health, safety, and wellness.

Operations

The Fire Chief ensures the effective delivery of fire suppression, EMS, hazardous materials response, and technical rescue through the strategic deployment and maintenance of facilities, apparatus, and equipment, supported by data-informed response models. The Chief serves as Incident Commander during major emergencies and assists in ongoing refinement of the Emergency Operations Plan while supporting Citywide preparedness, training, and interagency coordination. The Chief also supports the administration of the City's BCR program.

Finance

The Fire Chief provides disciplined fiscal stewardship of operating and capital budgets, ensuring accountability and compliance with appropriations. The Chief leads long-range capital planning, pursues sustainable revenue opportunities, proactively manages organizational risk, and maintains the City's ISO rating to support community safety and economic stability.

Community Risk Reduction

The Fire Chief oversees fire and building code enforcement, prevention-focused education, outreach, and fire investigation activities designed to reduce community risk. The Chief advances environmental protection and sustainability initiatives aligned with broader City priorities and long-term resilience.

Public Leadership

The Fire Chief serves as the Department's principal public representative and a credible voice at local, state, and national levels. The Chief builds strong relationships with fire service and public safety partners, participates in professional associations, advocates for policies that enhance firefighter safety and community protection, and strengthens intergovernmental coordination and interoperability.



06 THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Minneapolis seeks a Fire Chief who is a collaborative, steady, and principled executive capable of leading within a complex public safety ecosystem and highly engaged civic environment.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate calm, credible command presence in both routine operations and high-consequence incidents, coupled with emotional intelligence, authenticity, and empathy. This leader must inspire trust internally and externally, exercise sound judgment under pressure, and lead with humility, courage, and consistency.

The successful candidate will be a systems-oriented leader who understands that community safety is a shared responsibility across departments and jurisdictions. A demonstrated record of collaboration with fire, police, emergency management, 911, and regional partners is essential, with a focus on coordination, interoperability, and unified outcomes. Significant experience operating within National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Unified Command structures during complex, multi-agency incidents is required.

Minneapolis seeks a clear and trusted communicator. Internally, this leader must foster transparency, strengthen relationships across the chain of command, and reinforce accountability and professional development. Externally, the Fire Chief must serve as a steady public voice who views the media as a partner in education and prevention, while empowering members of the department to help tell its story and strengthen community trust.



The next Fire Chief must be a proven change leader capable of guiding cultural transformation within a large, unionized organization. This includes a demonstrated commitment to equity, inclusion, and belonging, supported by measurable progress in recruitment, promotion, discipline, and leadership development. The City seeks a leader who sets clear expectations, applies standards consistently, and holds all members accountable regardless of rank.

Strong operational and fiscal acumen are critical. The ideal candidate will evaluate performance and deployment models, present data-informed options in a constrained budget environment, and effectively manage workforce fatigue, staffing challenges, leave policies, and labor relations. The successful Fire Chief will be politically astute without being political—able to navigate complex labor and governmental dynamics with integrity, discretion, and firmness.

Above all, Minneapolis seeks a Fire Chief who leads with integrity, resilience, and purpose—someone who listens first, acts deliberately, and makes difficult decisions in service of the organization and community. This leader does what is right, not merely what is popular, and brings the credibility and vision necessary to guide the Minneapolis Fire Department into its next chapter.



07. QUALIFICATIONS

To be considered for this exceptional leadership opportunity, candidates must possess a bachelor's degree in fire science, fire administration, public administration, business administration, or a closely related field, or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Qualified candidates will have a minimum of ten (10) years of progressive operational experience in a large, paid municipal fire department, including at least five (5) years of upper-management and supervisory experience.

Licenses/Certifications:

Fire Chief Certification, EMT Certification, Hazardous Materials Certification, Valid Driver's License. Advanced professional education and executive-level fire service training is a plus.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS



This at-will position offers a highly competitive salary commensurate with the scope of responsibility and experience required. An excellent benefits package is provided. Additional details are available through Public Sector Search & Consulting, Inc.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES.



APPLY TODAY!

The position will remain open until a final selection is made. Candidates are encouraged to apply early for optimal consideration. The initial review will be on April 3, 2026.

Electronic submissions should be directed to apply@publicsectorsearch.com and should include a compelling cover letter, a comprehensive résumé, and a list of professional references. Only the most highly qualified candidates will be invited to participate in the selection process.

APPLY WITH CONFIDENCE

Confidential inquiries and questions regarding this career opportunity should be directed to:

Public Sector Search & Consulting, Inc.

(916) 789-9990 (office)

www.publicsectorsearch.com

Ron Walsh, Senior Consultant
City Manager / Police Commissioner, (Ret.)
Cell: (516) 672-5031

ron@publicsectorsearch.com



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ADDRESS

6520 Lonetree Blvd.
Suite 1040
Rocklin, CA 95765

PHONE & FAX

Phone (916) 789-9990
Fax (916) 290-0201

WEB & EMAIL

Email info@publicsectorsearch.com
gary@publicsectorsearch.com
Web publicsectorsearch.com

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