

Fire Chief

Grand Junction Fire Department

CITY OF Grand Junction COLORADO



THE COMMUNITY

Grand Junction is Western Colorado's hub for healthcare, education, culture, and commerce. Nestled at the confluence of the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers and framed by the Grand Mesa, the Book Cliffs, and the Colorado National Monument, the city offers a rare combination of natural beauty and opportunity.

With more than 70,000 residents and a regional reach of over 160,000, Grand Junction provides the amenities of a larger city while maintaining a welcoming, small-town feel. Boasting over 245 days of sunshine each year, it is a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts who hike, bike, raft, fish, and ski against some of the West's most breathtaking backdrops.

Downtown is vibrant with festivals, art walks, and public art, while the surrounding wine country features more than 30 local wineries. Colorado Mesa University, enrolling over 11,000 students, further enriches the community's cultural and educational life. The Grand Junction Regional Airport provides convenient access to major destinations across the West, enhancing both connectivity and opportunity.

Learn more about all that Grand Junction has to offer at Visit Grand Junction.

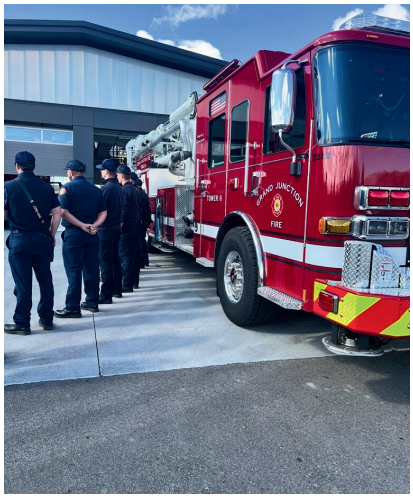
THE ORGANIZATION

The City of Grand Junction is a home-rule municipality operating under a Council–Manager form of government. With more than 880 full-time employees, the City provides a full spectrum of municipal services, including public safety, utilities, transportation, parks and recreation, and destination marketing.



City employees are guided by three core values: Continuous Improvement, Collaborative Partnerships, and Exemplary Service. These values are reflected in the City's approach to governance, where innovation, teamwork, and accountability are embedded in the culture. City leadership takes pride in building strong community connections and regional partnerships to advance long-term priorities.







THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Founded in 1889, the Grand Junction Fire Department (GJFD) is celebrating 135 years of service to the community. It is the largest fire department between Denver and Salt Lake City and is recognized as the premier provider of fire and emergency services in western Colorado.

GJFD is an all-hazards, full-service career department that responds to a wide range of emergencies including fire suppression, hazardous materials response, wildland fire, technical rescue, and EMS first response and transport (including interfacility). Crews train extensively to ensure readiness across all these disciplines, supported by a culture of professionalism and dedication. The department's personnel are represented by IAFF Local 2808, with a labor-management relationship that fosters effective communication and partnership.

The department currently provides service from seven stations, a fire administration building, and a regional training complex. It responds to more than 21,000 incidents annually, serving a first-response area of 93 square miles and an ambulance service area of 649 square miles. With 187 personnel and a budget of $36.5 million, the department has experienced significant growth in recent years, fueled by community support and a dedicated first responder tax that has funded new facilities, apparatus, and staffing. In 2026, GJFD will host the inaugural Colorado Smoke Diver training, further demonstrating its commitment to innovation and professional excellence.

GJFD is nationally accredited through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), a mark of organizational excellence achieved by only a select number of departments nationwide. The department also holds an ISO Public Protection Classification of 2/2X, with a commitment to achieving Class 1 in the future.

Together, these designations reflect both the department's operational strength and its dedication to continuous improvement.

THE FIRE CHIEF POSITION AND THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The Fire Chief serves as the Department Director for the Fire Department and as a member of the City's Executive Leadership Team, contributing to the organization's strategic direction and helping guide citywide priorities.

The City seeks a visionary and collaborative leader with a demonstrated career path of progressive responsibility in Fire and EMS. The ideal candidate will have risen through the ranks and bring credibility that resonates with both frontline personnel and senior leadership. This experience should reflect a balance of operational knowledge and executive-level leadership.

The successful candidate will have the ability to articulate a clear vision for the department's future while engaging meaningfully with employees, community members, and elected officials. This leader will value internal development, ensuring that career pathways exist for future leaders across all ranks, and will foster a workplace culture where trust, accountability, and innovation thrive. Just as important, the Chief will serve as a visible community ambassador, representing the department and City with integrity and purpose.

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

The City of Grand Junction has identified a set of leadership competencies as essential for the next Fire Chief. These qualities represent the foundation of how the City expects its leaders to inspire, guide, and deliver results. The successful candidate will embody these attributes and bring them to life through their leadership:

- Instills Trust – Demonstrates honesty, integrity, and authenticity.
- Collaborates – Builds partnerships and works effectively across divisions and with community partners.
- Drives Vision and Purpose – Paints a compelling vision that motivates others.
- Communicates Effectively – Tailors messages for diverse audiences and connects meaningfully across all levels.
- Builds Effective Teams – Fosters cohesion and develops future leaders from within.
- Strategic Mindset – Anticipates challenges and positions the department to succeed.
- Ensures Accountability – Holds self and others responsible for commitments.
- Courage – Addresses difficult issues directly and constructively.
- Decision Quality – Makes sound and timely decisions that keep the organization moving forward.
- Being Resilient – Adapts to setbacks and leads effectively through change.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

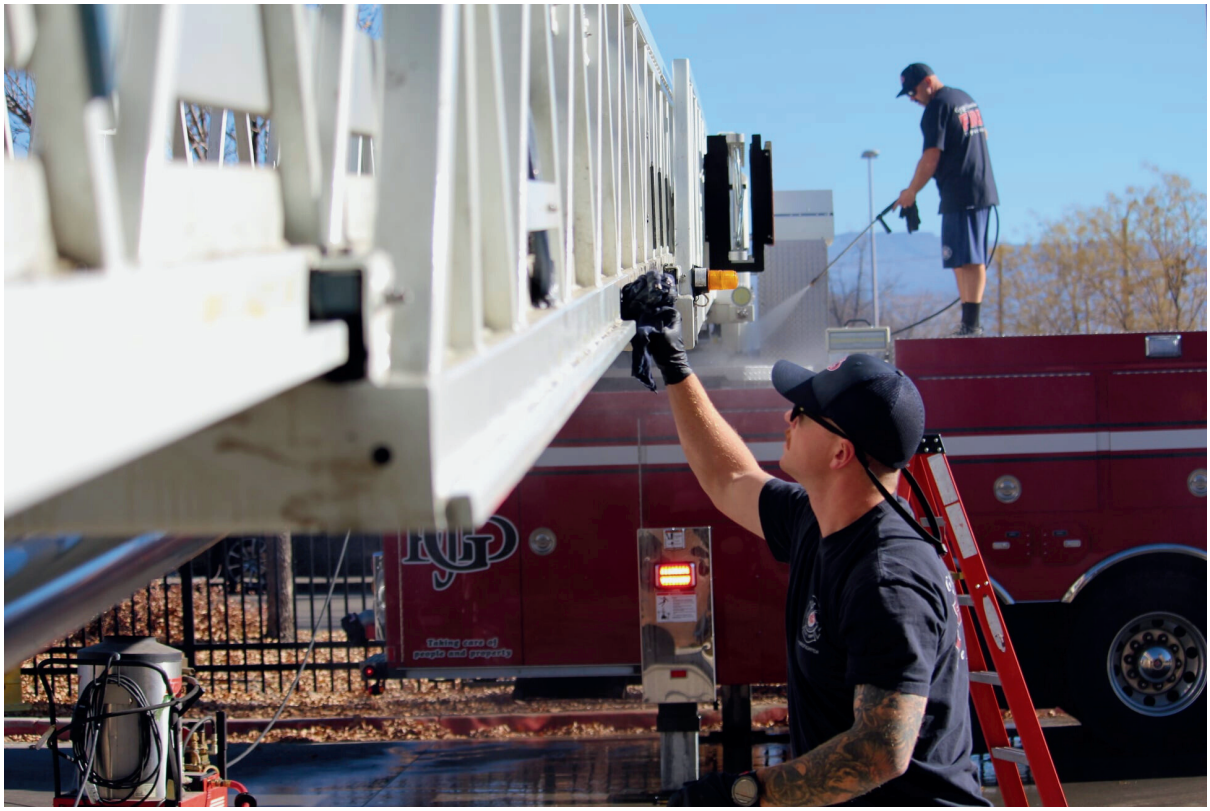
- At least ten years of progressively responsible fire service experience, with two years in a Chief Officer Position (e.g., Battalion, Division, Assistant, Deputy Fire Chief, or Fire Chief).
- Associate's degree in Fire Science, Fire Service Administration, Public Administration, or a related field.
- A valid Colorado State driver's license, or the ability to obtain one, is required by the time of hire.
- Able to pass city-required background, drug screen, and medical examinations.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree (or higher) in Leadership, Fire Science, Fire Service Administration, Public Administration, or a related field.
- Senior Leadership role, such as the Fire Chief or a Chief Officer reporting directly to the Fire Chief or part of the Fire Chief's Command Staff (e.g. Division, Assistant, or Deputy Fire Chief).
- Experience and demonstrated ability in working effectively with City leadership, department directors, and elected officials in complex and politically sensitive environments.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

- The Fire Chief is expected to reside within 25 minutes of the City.



STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEXT FIRE CHIEF

The Grand Junction Fire Department has a strong record of service and enjoys an exceptional reputation locally and regionally. Like any high-performing agency, however, it faces important challenges that will require focused leadership from the next Fire Chief. Key challenges include:

- **Addressing Call Volume and Strategic Staffing:** The department's most immediate challenge is ensuring that existing stations are staffed to manage increasing call volume, particularly in the city's core, where vertical growth is driving demand. Some stations are carrying a disproportionate load, creating strain on personnel. The next Fire Chief will be expected to align staffing with current service patterns, provide relief for the busiest stations, and thoughtfully evaluate how the eighth station may contribute to future deployment needs.

- **Leadership:** The department has strong leaders, but there is a perceived gap in defining and articulating a clear long-term direction. The next Fire Chief will be expected to strengthen the organization's capacity for leadership, planning, and transparent communication to build trust across the department and with the city. In addition, the Chief will need to implement a comprehensive professional development plan for all ranks, with particular focus on developing and cultivating Chief Officer leadership.

- **EMS:** The department enjoys an exceptional reputation for the delivery of emergency medical services. However, the department is also responsible for interfacility transports —non-emergent calls that can strain 911 resources. The next Fire Chief will need to assess the current model and develop strategies to ensure strong, sustainable service delivery for both emergency and interfacility transport.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- **Expected Hiring Range:** $210,000 – $223,000, DOQ
- **Comprehensive Executive Benefits Package,** including:
  - Medical, dental, and vision insurance
  - Life and AD&D, short- and long-term disability
  - Choice of FPPA Defined Benefit Pension (for sworn fire) or Empower 401a with 9% City match
  - 457(b) deferred compensation with 1% City contribution
  - Paid Time Off, including eleven paid holidays
  - 40 hours of Paid Time Off awarded upon hire
  - Access to the City's Employee Health Clinic (primary care, physical therapy, massage therapy, behavioral health)
  - City's Employee Child Care Center
  - Employee Assistance Program, wellness incentives, and voluntary benefits
  - Take-home City vehicle

HOW TO CONFIDENTIALLY EXPLORE THIS OPPORTUNITY

Confidential inquiries are encouraged prior to submitting a formal application.

The City has engaged Dan Petersen Consulting and Coaching LLC to assist with this process. Interested individuals are encouraged to contact Dan directly to confidentially learn more about the department, the selection process, and the position requirements.

- Dan Petersen: danvpete@gmail.com

VISITING GRAND JUNCTION

Serious candidates are welcome to visit the community and the city prior to the formal process. Candidates interested in meeting with city staff, including the fire department, are asked to coordinate their visit with:
Shelley Caskey, Human Resources Director,
970-244-1492 or shelleyc@gjcity.org



HOW TO APPLY

Submit a City application and resume at www.gjcity.org/jobs.
The City will accept applications between September 12 and October 26, 2025.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The city will review applications and resumes to invite a selected number to a virtual interview.

Selected applicants will be invited to an on-site process that will include a City Tour (spouses or significant others are welcome to participate), meet-and-greet events with Fire Department personnel, City Council, invited community members, and the City's executive leadership team, as well as a presentation, a written exercise, and various interviews.

Top candidate(s) will be asked to submit to a background investigation, with the selected candidate completing a medical exam and drug screen.

HIRING TIMELINE

The City will strive to adhere to this schedule; however, adjustments may be made as necessary. Those invited will receive confirmation of the final dates.

- Virtual interviews will occur the weeks of November 3 and November 10
- On-site process will occur the week of December 1
- Background Investigations commencing within one to two weeks of the in-person process

START DATE

The City's preference is for the new Fire Chief to begin as soon as possible after background investigations are complete. At the same time, the City recognizes that most candidates are serving in critical roles within their current organizations and will need to ensure a smooth transition. Accordingly, the City will work collaboratively with the selected candidate to determine an appropriate start date.