



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Fire Chief

Join the City of Palo Alto team as its next Fire Chief



The Community

The birthplace of Silicon Valley, Palo Alto, is a community of approximately 68,000 residents and nearly 100,000 jobs. Located on the mid-Peninsula between San Francisco and San Jose, Palo Alto is recognized worldwide as a leader in cutting-edge technology, medicine, and green innovation. The community's tree-lined streets and historic buildings reflect its California heritage, and, at the same time, many world-class businesses maintain or started offices here, such as Stanford Health Care and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, Amazon, Broadcom, Hewlett-Packard, Houzz, Rivian, SAP and SAP Ariba, Tesla, and Varian Medical Systems. Numerous start-ups are also at home in Palo Alto, arguably making it the start-up capital of the world.

Stanford University is foundational to the history and prestige of Palo Alto, reflected in the community's dedication to lifelong learning. Stanford's cultural and educational offerings are integral to the vibrancy and charm of Palo Alto, while the City's exceptional K-12 school district ranks among the top public-school systems in the country. With more than 50% of adult residents holding a graduate degree or higher, Palo Alto is frequently listed as one of the most educated cities in the nation.

Palo Alto boasts a genuine sense of community and an active citizenry with strong environmental values. Beautiful neighborhoods are complemented by vibrant commercial corridors and a bustling economy featuring premium shopping and dining options. Excellent healthcare facilities, performing arts, and diverse recreational opportunities are some of the community's incredibly desirable and cherished amenities. To learn more, visit <https://www.paloalto.gov/Departments/City-Manager/Latest-News>

City Government

Palo Alto is a full-service charter city with a council-manager form of government. The seven-member City Council is elected at large, and the City Council annually selects the Mayor and Vice Mayor from among its members. The Mayor and City Council appoint the City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk, and City Auditor. The City Manager is responsible for the strategic direction and day-to-day operations of the City. Palo Alto is organized into 15 departments/offices with 1,092.10 authorized positions in FY 2025. There is also a FY 2025 capital budget of \$316.2 million.

Palo Alto owns and operates its own utilities, including electricity (carbon-neutral), gas, water, wastewater, and an expanding fiber network. This dynamic municipal environment ensures an ever-engaging platform for unique problem-solving and advances new initiatives, including sustainability, broadband, and effective service delivery.

Community assets also include five libraries, 36 parks, five community centers, a museum and zoo, youth centers, a general aviation airport, an 18-hole golf course, a regional water treatment plant, and wildland open space preserves at the San Francisco Bay and in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains offering 41 miles of walking/biking trails in addition to its police, fire, and ambulance services.

Palo Alto has long been a leader in sustainability, and the City's ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goals are part of what sets it apart. Since the City's first Climate Protection Plan was passed in 2007, Palo Alto has set goals that exceed State and Federal targets. Today, the City's goal to reduce emissions 80% below 1990 levels by 2030 (the "80x30" goal) and achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 guides sustainability efforts.

An award-winning City, Palo Alto is recognized nationally as innovative and well-managed, and one of a small number of California cities with an AAA general obligation bond rating. City services and performance also receive impressive marks from community members in the Palo Alto Community Survey. Many of those ratings put City programs and services in the highest percentiles among the hundreds of benchmark cities. Palo Alto makes decisions through comprehensive processes and proactively seeks to involve its extremely informed, educated, and engaged residents. Projects are naturally a cooperative effort among the City Council, Boards, Commissions, Committees, engaged residents, neighborhoods, businesses, property owners, and staff.

Palo Alto Fire Department

The Palo Alto Fire Department (PAFD) is a professional team dedicated to safeguarding and enriching the lives of everyone, at all times, everywhere, with compassion and pride. Supported by 116.5 FTE (97 FTE sworn) and a FY2025-26 operating budget of \$59.33 million, the department provides emergency response, fire, and life safety service to the Palo Alto community, Stanford University, and

beyond through mutual and automatic aid agreements with regional jurisdictions. PAFD responds to just under 10,000 calls for service per year. When called upon by the state or federal government, the department also provides fire suppression, medical response, and rescue services for large wildfires and large-scale emergencies and disasters. Medical-related calls are approaching 70 percent annually.

The department is organized across four divisions – Operations, Support Services, Fire Prevention, and Administration.

Fire Operations consists of the management and shift staff that respond to emergency calls for service 24/7. Three shifts staff a 2/4 schedule that enables the department to provide a 24/7 response.

The **Support Services** Division includes the management and oversight of Emergency Medical Service delivery and regulation compliance; operational staff training, hiring, and human resources for the department.

The **Fire Prevention** Division, housed within the City's Development Center, provides fire plan checks, reviews, permitting and fielding fire safety inspections.

Fire Administration encompasses executive management functions, budget and finance, performance measurement, educational outreach, and general administrative support.

PAFD recently completed its **2025-2030 Strategic Plan**, in pursuit of its vision to advance as a professional team committed to fostering a culture of growth, leadership, and excellence. By building on the values and traditions of Palo Alto Fire, we will ensure our legacy extends to future generations. We commit to providing our community with a robust, all-risk service model and strive to be an industry leader that is resilient in health, wellness, and operation. We will be an outcome-oriented department that values our team and culture to provide exceptional service to our community.



Important initiatives for the current fiscal year include, but are not limited to:

- Advancing the City's Emergency Medical Services through establishment of single-role EMT/Paramedic staffing and ambulance transport.
- Collaborate with the Public Works Department on the rebuilding of Fire Station 4, including managing the temporary deployment location arrangement.
- To strengthen department capability, add 3.0 Fire Captains to cross-staff a fire engine and an ambulance at Fire Station 4.
- Participate in the advancement of citywide diversity and inclusion efforts.
- Continue to recruit, hire, and train entry-level firefighters in response to projected turnover.

Palo Alto Fire serves the community from six fire stations and one seasonally staffed station in the foothills. Station 4 is currently being replaced, and the new state-of-the-art facility, slated for unveiling in 2027, will be LEED Silver certified. The department's apparatus includes six Type I engines, two Type III engines, one Type V engine, three paramedic ambulances, one aerial ladder truck, plus additional equipment and reserve engines and ambulances.



The Ideal Candidate

The City of Palo Alto is seeking a visionary and dynamic leader to serve as its next Fire Chief. A unique opportunity for an experienced professional to shape the future of fire, rescue, and emergency medical services in one of the country's most engaged and forward-thinking communities.

The ideal candidate will be a strategic leader who is known for their innovative thinking and operational excellence in a dynamic and diverse organizational setting. They will be energized by the opportunity to lead a high-performing department through continued evolution, advancing service delivery in response to emerging risks, changing demographics, and evolving community expectations.

Competitive candidates will bring strong backgrounds that include a combination of emergency services operations with experience in strategic planning, budget management, and organizational leadership. In addition, they will be technologically fluent and adept at using data, performance metrics, and predictive analytics to guide resource allocation and service delivery. Familiarity with emerging trends and promising practices is also necessary to be a good fit with the Palo Alto organizational culture.

As a transformational leader, the ideal candidate will be someone who can look beyond traditional models and embrace fresh approaches to public safety service delivery. This individual will have an impressive track record in strategic planning, organizational change, and the ability to build alignment around a bold and compelling vision. The successful candidate will be decisive, adaptable, and unafraid to take on complex challenges with integrity, passion, and purpose.

Palo Alto's Fire Chief must be an inspiring leader who resonates with a multi-generational workforce and has a history of consultation and collaboration with staff and labor groups while also being clear and decisive in their leadership. Serious candidates will exhibit a deep commitment to professional development demonstrated by a reputation for mentoring others, fostering strong teams, and cultivating a dedicated, diverse workforce. Proven success with cultivating a healthy and robust organizational culture and supporting continuous learning and leadership growth across all levels will be key.

Finally, the ideal candidate will be a catalyst for progress, driving innovation while honoring the department's core values and mission. Palo Alto's Fire Chief must be a visible and communicative public servant who values transparency, listens actively, and remains responsive to a highly engaged and informed community. This individual will exemplify the Fire Department's values of Integrity, Innovation, Professionalism, Diversity, Compassion, and Education in support of the Palo Alto community's needs.

Five years of experience in a major fire service function, with at least two years of experience serving in a command position and education equivalent to a bachelor's degree is required. Experience in a comparable community with similar wildland urban interface challenges and ambulance transport will be considered favorably. California experience is not required; however, competitive candidates will be expected to possess sophisticated knowledge of state legislation related to 201 rights and the Firefighters Procedural Bill of Rights (FBOR). A master's degree and/or Executive Fire Officer (EFO) certification is preferred.

Compensation & Benefits

The current salary range is \$244,608 – 366,912. Placement within the range will depend on qualifications and experience. In addition to salary, Palo Alto offers a competitive benefits package, described in more detail here: <https://bit.ly/pabenefits>, that includes but is not limited to:

Retirement: CalPERS 3% @ 55 formula for Classic members; 2.7% @ 57 formula for new members.

Medical Plan: City pays a flat rate contribution in 2025, up to \$2444 per month for family coverage and employee pays in accordance with health plan option selected, between \$62.00 to \$1,394.00 per month.

Life and AD&D Insurance: Fully paid up to annual salary. City offers voluntary life insurance options for employee, spouse, and children.

Gold Standard EAP Program: The City's partnership with CONCERN EAP has benefited employees in all aspect of their life from financial planning to proactive meditation courses and countless more in-person and virtual offerings, 10 in person sessions available per area of interest.

Flexible Spending Accounts: Daycare and Health Care.

Commuter Benefits: Benefits that allow you to deduct money pre-tax, match expenses in many cases and even receive fully subsidized transit in some cases. City participates in the Pilot Clipper BayPass program that allows employees to ride all BayArea transits, unlimited times, which accept clipper cards (excluding Cable Cars).

Additional Benefit: An annual benefit of \$2,500 for IRS Section 125 compliant uses such as Flexible Spending Accounts, Non-taxable Professional Development Spending Account, deferred compensation, or health club membership. This benefit will increase to \$3,000 starting January 1, 2026.

Employee Development Individual Fund: \$500 toward training, organization memberships, conferences, etc., plus a department wide training budget.

Deferred Compensation Plan: Allows employee to save money towards retirement in a 457 Plan through either Empower or Mission Square. Contributions can be made pretax or post-tax (roth).

Paid Parental Leave: Up to 6 weeks of paid leave within 12 months of birth or adoption.

Annual Day of Recognition: Floating holiday which can be used for individual days of cultural significance.

Management Leave: 80 hours per calendar year, eligible to convert into vacation time, allocate to a deferred compensation plan or cash-out .

Other Leave: 96 hours of sick leave per year; 12 paid holidays.

Flexible and Hybrid Work Schedules: Eligible positions may qualify for 2 remote workdays week and a 9/80 or 4/10 work schedule.

Pilot Childcare and Educational Benefits:

- The City offers an annual Pilot Childcare Assistance Benefit. Up to \$10,000 assistance for childcare costs at eligible childcare facilities located within Palo Alto City limits. [Find Childcare Resources](#).
- Through a new City of Palo Alto School District partnership, City employees are eligible to apply for their children to attend Palo Alto Unified District Schools. [Find Palo Alto Unified School District school information](#).

Application & Selection Process

The closing date for this recruitment is midnight, **Sunday, August 10, 2025**. To be considered for this opportunity, upload a compelling cover letter, resume, and list of six professional references using the "Apply Now" feature at www.tbcrecruiting.com. This is a confidential process and will be handled accordingly throughout the various stages of the process.



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Following the closing date, resumes will be screened in relation to the criteria articulated in this brochure. Applicants with the most relevant qualifications will immediately be granted preliminary interviews by one of the recruiters. Candidates deemed the most highly qualified will be invited to participate in additional interviews followed by further meetings with the City. Selection will be made shortly thereafter, following the completion of negotiations and extensive background and reference checks. Please note that references will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established.

