

Inviting Applications for Chief of Fire Rescue



HALL COUNTY
GEORGIA *We have it all in Hall*

About the Community

If there is such a thing as the perfect place to make a living and raise a family, Gainesville-Hall County ranks high on the list. Bordered by Lake Sidney Lanier and the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the sheer beauty of the landscape inspires families to grow and thrive. Lake Lanier attracts over 10 million visitors annually to enjoy boating, fishing, water sports, and parks along the 400 miles of shoreline. Hall County, with a population of over 200,000 and an area of 393 square miles, is the epicenter of a diversified economic base in Northeast Georgia that provides shopping, medical, financial, and educational institutions that are second to none. The labor market is stable and thriving with a regional labor market estimated to be 775,000 from Hall and surrounding counties. Gainesville, the county seat, is a bustling city of more than 41,000 people. Located 50 miles northeast of Atlanta and 35 miles northwest of Athens, Gainesville is the trade, medical, educational, industrial, retail, cultural and recreational center of Northeast Georgia. Eight other municipalities are located in Hall County: Oakwood, Flowery Branch, Buford, Braselton, Clermont, Gillsville, Rest Haven, and Lula.

Hall County has excellent educational opportunities from pre-kindergarten to college. Gainesville-Hall County offers students educational opportunities of the highest caliber. There are two public school systems, several private schools, a public university, private university and technical college. Eight major universities are located within an hour's drive of Gainesville-Hall County.

About the Government

Hall County operates as a Commission/Administrator form of government governed by a five-member elected Board of Commissioners. The County has a history of being a stable local government and being supportive of professional management. The Board appoints a County Administrator who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the government, including appointment of all Department Directors not appointed directly by the Elected Officials. The Fire Chief is appointed by the County Administrator and serves as a key member of the County Administrator's management team.



Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will provide service to the Hall County Fire Rescue Department that has 394 full-time positions providing fire services primarily to the unincorporated areas of Hall County, including all municipalities with the exception of Gainesville, and EMS to all citizens of the County. Last year, the Department responded to approximately 500 fire calls, 24,000 EMS calls, and 7,800 miscellaneous service calls. The Department operates from 16 stations (17th under construction) with 16 fire pumpers, 2 aerial apparatus, one heavy rescue vehicle, 1 hazardous materials response vehicle, 1 marine rescue vessel, 1 water tender, and 16 ambulances. The operating budget is \$56.2M and the department has maintained an ISO rating of Class 2X since 2018.

The ideal candidate will be a dedicated and ethical team player who can quickly gain the confidence of the community, department staff, elected officials, and business owners. The Chief must possess the ability to build community trust through the development of partnerships with stakeholders.

Hall County seeks a Chief of Fire Rescue of high integrity and moral character who is a strategic thinker, collaborative leader, team player and leads by example.

The new Chief must be focused on continuing to develop a committed professional departmental workforce. As a key member of the County's leadership team, the successful candidate will be expected to articulate a vision of excellence, establish credibility and consistency in delivery of services, motivate staff to embrace cultural diversity, implement data driven solutions to problems, and communicate effectively across all platforms.



Challenges and Opportunities

The new Chief will be expected to work collaboratively with the County Administration, Elected Officials, Fire Recue Staff, and Community Stakeholders to address the following:

- The new Fire Chief will need to develop, articulate, and implement an operating plan that focuses on the Fire Rescue Department's current vision of "improving lives through excellent service" and supports strategic plans of the Hall County Commission. The recent Covid 19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the need for continuation of essential services during periods of major crisis. The new chief will need to provide leadership to the development of an effective Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).
- Building relationships with key stakeholders in the community, including municipal governments, City of Gainesville Fire Department, Northeast Georgia Health System, higher education institutions, school systems, and community/civic groups will need to be a focus of the new Chief.
- Approximately 85% of the Department's service calls are related to EMS. The Department is the sole provider of emergency medical services and medical transport for Hall County citizens. The new Fire Chief will need to place a strong value on this service in order to develop a sustainable Emergency Medical Service (EMS) program that focuses on recruiting, training, and retaining paramedics in a professional manner while being as cost effective as possible.
- The new Chief will need to give priority to recruiting and retaining a staff that builds upon the current professional foundation of the department, is reflective of the demographics of the Hall County community, and is intentional in its efforts to develop future leadership within the department though succession planning.
- The new Chief will be expected to demonstrate a leadership style that values regular interaction with staff, provides timely and informative communication about issues important to the department, and encourages employee input from all levels related to department needs and possible areas of improvement.
- Utilizing the services of educational institutions in Hall County and other resources, it will be important for the new Chief to develop a quality, sustainable training program that ensures staff not only acquires the basic skillsets needed for job performance but also encourages staff to pursue enhanced professional development opportunities to be prepared for future leadership positions.
- The Department currently is participating in a standard of cover study which will need to be a high priority for the new Fire Chief to ensure it is successfully completed and a strategy is developed for implementation of critical recommendations from the study.
- There are no immediate major equipment needs for the Department. However, the new Chief will be involved in the completion of Station # 17 and the relocation and development of the Fire Training Center to ensure it is properly sized and equipped to meet Department needs.

About the Position

Fire Chief Essential Job Responsibilities

Supervises and coordinates all fire rescue activities of the department to include administration, operations, fire marshal's office, emergency medical, training, support services, and communications/public education. This includes enforcing policies, procedures, and regulations; delegates and assigns subordinates to carry out day-to-day operations in alignment with service delivery agreements.

Develops and oversees long-range goals, objectives, and strategic plans for the entire department that are in alignment with overall vision, organizational values, strategic plan, master plans, annual work plans, and county operating and capital budgets. Prepares and directs departmental budget, makes financially prudent recommendations; confers with staff and develops final recommendation for submission to County Administration; oversees all purchases of equipment and apparatus.

Prepares and directs departmental financial activities, coordinates activities with the Department of Financial Services to produce cost-effective results, and develops/implements long-range capital plans and programs to support the goals and objectives of the department and County.

Oversees and participates in the departmental procurement process in alignment with the Hall County Purchasing Ordinance, including but not limited to, all competitive bidding requirements, contract negotiations and administration, and asset purchases/disposals.

Recruits and makes hiring recommendations for top management positions; conducts performance evaluations on selected personnel. Controls and disciplines all officers and members in accordance with rules, regulations, and civil service laws.

Directs the preparation and analysis of department records and reports to secure efficient operations, meet service demands, and comply with authorized requests for information regarding departmental activity and personnel. Conducts research and compiles information to prepare concise reports, memorandums, letters, and e-mails.

Implements plans for any station expansion or service delivery changes. Oversees and ensures compliance with Hall County Risk Management best practices that focus on establishing and maintaining safety work culture for employees, citizens, and other stakeholders. Makes presentations to civic clubs or other groups regarding department activities and promote public understanding of department operations.

Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor's Degree required in Fire Sciences, Public Administration, EMS Administration/Management, Business Administration or related degree from an accredited university. A master's degree is preferred.
- A minimum of seven years of executive management experience at the Battalion level or above in a fire department with similar complexity to Hall County is expected.
- Evidence of continued professional development such as the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program designation as Chief Fire Officer/Executive Fire Officer, the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) designation as Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and completion of upper-level NIMS ICS training are positive indicators of dedication to the profession and will be noted during the candidate vetting process.

Benefits & How to Apply

Compensation and Benefits

The expected starting salary range for this position is **\$160,000 - \$175,000 DOQ** (depending on qualifications), with a very comprehensive benefits package, including:

- Health, dental and vision insurance
- Family Health Center
- Comprehensive Wellness Program
- Flexible Spending and Health Savings Accounts
- Short-term, Long-term Disability and Life Insurance
- 457 Deferred Comp and 401 (a) plans with County matching 401 (a)
- Paid time off (personal time, vacation and holidays)
- Relocation assistance negotiable

Interested candidates must submit by email a cover letter, resume, at least five job related references (with email and phone numbers), as well as salary history **no later than February 26, 2024 to lisaward912@gmail.com**

Please direct any questions to Lisa Ward, Senior Associate, Mercer Group Associates, at lisaward912@gmail.com or 706-983-9326 or Alan Reddish, Senior Associate, Mercer Group Associates, Cell: 706-614-4961.

