

CITY OF COLUMBUS, GA



Currently Recruiting for CHIEF Fire & Emergency Medical Services



**COLUMBUS
GEORGIA**





About the Community

Located in west-central Georgia on the banks of the Chattahoochee River, Columbus is a dynamic cosmopolitan community of nearly 200,000 citizens within its 221 square miles. Columbus is Georgia's first consolidated city/county government, the third largest city in Georgia and is a recognized leader among its peer cities, takes pride in its operational efficiency and the excellent quality of life it fosters. The city has become a model for effective public/private partnerships. Such partnerships have spurred significant economic development as well as cultural and recreational growth.

Columbus is known for its historic downtown/uptown district located near the breathtaking Riverwalk. Columbus is home to Fort Benning, the Best Army Installation in the World; the 148-year old Springer Opera House – the State Theater of Georgia; and the corporate headquarters of AFLAC, Total Systems Services (TSYS) and Synovus Financial Corp. Livability.com recently named Columbus as one of the 100 Best Small to Medium –sized cities in the U.S. In addition to its thriving economic development, Columbus offers excellent education, housing, entertainment, and retail/shopping/dining opportunities and experiences that are second to none. The cost of living is quite competitive, and the quality of life gives you a sense of belonging.

The beautiful year-round temperature in Columbus is a magnet for those who enjoy golf, zip line rides, riding the longest urban whitewater rapids in the world on the Chattahoochee River or bicycling along the River walk. In other words, Columbus provides an excellent quality of life to those who call this “home”.



CITY OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA



Demographics

- Population – 194,160
- Muscogee County – 221 square miles
- Median Age – 33.7
- Median household income - \$42,239
- Unemployment Rate – 3.5%
- Muscogee County Schools – 32,000 Students, 62 schools and alternative centers
- Community Growth and Development - \$6 billion invested over past 10 years
- Crime Statistics – 12,392 crime totals in 2015; down 14%
- Fort Benning and the Maneuver Center of Excellence - 40,000 military personnel
- Parks –Over 46 community parks including 4 Super Centers

About the Government

The Columbus Consolidated Government is the local municipality of Muscogee County. It is governed by an elected mayor, and ten council members (two at-large and eight district representatives). An appointed city manager administers governmental operations and finances. The mayor and councilors are elected for four-year terms. The Columbus Consolidated Government employs a diverse workforce of 3,000 full and part time employees working in Public Safety (Police, Fire & Emergency Medical Service, Sheriff, Marshal, Muscogee County Prison and Coroner); General Government (Public Works, Metra Transit, Parks and Recreation, Civic Center, Planning and Community Development, Tax Assessors, etc.); and the Judicial Courts (Superior Court, State Court, Juvenile Court, Municipal Court, Probate Court, Environmental Court and Records Court). The annual operating budget is \$284.7 million.



About the Department

The Fire and Emergency Medical Services is a department rich with tradition with over 180 years of service to the citizens of Columbus, Georgia. The department obtained an ISO Class 1 rating September 1, 2017. This rating has been achieved by less than .5% of Fire & EMS Departments nationwide. Columbus Fire & EMS is one of only 7% in Georgia and is one of only 2% of departments across the United States that are Internationally Accredited and an ISO Class 1.

With a staff of 363 dedicated professionals, the department provides high quality fire, emergency medical, hazardous materials response, and rescue services to the citizens of Columbus from fourteen locations throughout the City. The department is currently organized into five divisions: Fire Prevention, Operations, Administrative Services, Training, and the Office of Emergency Management. The Chief of Fire and Emergency Medical Services serves as the Chief Administrative Officer and is responsible for the overall operation of the department. The Chief reports directly to the Mayor who is the Public Safety Director.





About the Position

The City of Columbus is seeking an experienced and professional leader to serve as Chief of Fire and Emergency Medical Services. The successful candidate must be a strong and visionary leader who is team-oriented, possesses exceptional communication skills, and utilizes a management style that supports mutual trust and openness both within and outside the department. The Fire and EMS Chief will be a key member of the City's leadership team possessing highly developed communication and presentation skills with an ability to perform well under pressure and meet deadlines. The successful candidate will have in-depth knowledge and experience in the management of a municipal Fire and EMS department, providing a high level of community engagement.

- This position is responsible for managing the overall operations of the Fire/Emergency Medical Services. Manages and directs the overall operation and management of fire prevention and suppression activities within the guidelines of local, state, and federal fire codes, local ordinances, and department rules and regulations.
- Ensures that department maintains ISO Fire Suppression Rating. Maintains department's International Accreditation.
- Ensures that Homeland Security initiatives are met. Develops and manages department goals and objectives.
- Coordinates and oversees the work of each division within the department.
- Conducts and administers planning activities, including Emergency Operations Plan, Strategic Plan, Five Year Plan, Risk Assessment, Mass Casualty Plan, National Incident Management System Operating Guide, and other Annexes and Contingency Plans.
- Develops strategies and timelines for long-term delivery of fire suppression, special operations, fire prevention, emergency medical services, and emergency management services. Develops annual department objectives and goals.
- Develops, implements, and monitors department's annual operating budget.
- Directs the preparation and analysis of Fire and Emergency Medical Services records and reports.
- Coordinates recruitment, promotion, and retention of department employees.
- Develops personnel policies; conducts disciplinary processes; conducts and monitors employee evaluations.
- Reviews recommendations for the repair, replacement, and procurement of firefighting, rescue, communications, and emergency medical vehicles, equipment, and supplies.
- Attends Council meetings as needed; advises the Mayor and Council on emergency and non-emergency services matters. Attends seminars and participates in training programs and certification classes as required. Addresses community groups to promote understanding of fire safety and prevention.





Opportunities & Challenges

The new Columbus Fire Chief/EMA Director will be expected to work collaboratively with Elected officials, City Management staff, Department employees and local stakeholders to address the following:

- Proactively support efforts to enhance the department's commitment to hiring decisions based upon objective position qualifications while creating a workforce that is more reflective of Columbus' demographics to include female and ethnically diverse candidates from entry level to senior management appointments.
- Identify and implement strategies that are not primarily salary-based for recruiting and retaining a highly qualified staff.
- Clearly articulate and provide leadership to a department vision that focuses on a progressive, innovative approaches to the delivery of fire and EMS services; establish obtainable goals and objectives that support the strategic plans of the City and enhances working conditions of the Department staff.
- Focus on succession planning in response to a significant number of retirements within the Department. The plan should be based upon best practices that have demonstrated success through structured mentorships, focused professional development, and continued formal education.
- The Department has been accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International since 2002 and has maintained an ISO rating of 1 since 2017. The new chief will need to ensure that the Department retains both designations.
- Assist in future compensation studies to ensure issues of competitive pay, compression of pay grades, and professional development incentives are addressed.





Opportunities & Challenges Cont.

- Evaluate the increasing number of calls for EMS service which accounts for approximately 80% of all Department calls; develop strategies based upon best practices that will better educate citizens concerning appropriate requests for EMS assistance. Evaluate and enhance the in-house training program for ALS and paramedic certification to ensure staffing needs are fully met.
- The new Chief will need to assess the Department's capital needs and priorities to develop a defensible long-term capital improvement program that will ensure resources are available to meet service needs with minimum risk to staff. The Chief will be expected to help identify potential new funding sources with a possible focus on developing partnerships with private entities who can provide corporate foundation support.
- Create a proper balance of being an advocate for the overall needs of the City while also being supportive of the needs of the Fire/EMS department; ensuring that critical Department issues such as administrative support, employee health/ wellness, capital and operational needs are clearly articulated while recognizing the budget constraints of the City.
- The new Chief will be expected to provide input and oversight for future construction projects to include new fire stations, upgrading existing fire stations, and efforts to expand and enhance the capabilities of the new training facility that will allow for consolidation of all training components at one location.
- Research best practices for the delivery of services provided by the Department to determine if a Department reorganization is needed, including the possibility of assigning some services to the private sector and/or creating a separate entity within the Columbus Consolidated Government for some services.





Ideal Candidate & Qualifications

The City of Columbus seeks a Fire/EMS Chief of high integrity and moral character who is a strategic thinker, collaborative leader, team player and leads by example. The new Chief must quickly gain the confidence of a committed professional departmental workforce, elected officials, and the community. As a key member of the City'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.

Candidate 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 Columbus is expected.
- Evidence of continued professional development such as the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program, Chief Fire Officer/Executive Fire Officer designation, 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.



Compensation & Benefits

The Columbus Consolidated Government offers an exceptional compensation and benefits packet for the right candidate. The expected salary range is **\$106,000 - \$117,000** dependent upon qualifications and experience of the selected candidate. Relocation Assistance is negotiable. Benefits include the following:

- Medical/Dental and Vision Plans
- Flexible Spending Account
- Retirement Plan & Deferred Comp
- Life Insurance Plans
- Long Term Disability
- Employee Assistance Program
- Health and Wellness Center
- Paid Time Off including holidays, vacation and sick leave



How to Apply

Interested candidates must submit, by email a cover letter, resume, five (5) job related references and salary history not later than May 15, 2020 to: Lisa Ward, Senior Vice President, The Mercer Group, Inc. at lisaward912@gmail.com

Please direct any questions to Lisa Ward at 706-983-9325. Interviews are expected to be conducted the middle of June 2020.

Alan Reddish, Senior Vice President
The Mercer Group, Inc.
Cell: 706-614-4961



The Mercer Group, Inc.

Consultants to Management



CITY OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA