



# City of Rockford, Illinois



*is accepting applications for the position of*

***Fire Chief***

Recruitment and testing services provided by CWH Research





## The Opportunity

Recruitment is underway for an exciting career opportunity with the City of Rockford Fire Department. The Fire Chief is a key city official charged with both ensuring that the citizens of Rockford, IL are provided the best Fire and EMS services available, while also ensuring that these services are provided at a reasonable budget to the taxpayers. This is a great opportunity for a well-qualified individual to forge with community leaders and the City's administration towards making a difference and improving the quality of life for Rockford's citizens.

## The City

Rockford is the Forest City, where you can find affordable homes on tree-lined streets in friendly neighborhoods. Its central location, with easy access to major highways and one of the fastest growing airports in the country, makes Rockford a great location for new business development. Rockford is the home of Illinois' largest music festival, On the Waterfront; Jane, the dinosaur, at the Burpee Museum of Natural History; and the hometown of the internationally-known rock group, Cheap Trick. Rockford has a proud past and an even brighter future. You'll find that Rockford is a wonderful place to raise a family. Learn more about Rockford at [www.ci.rockford.il.us](http://www.ci.rockford.il.us), [gorockford.com](http://gorockford.com) or [rockfordchamber.com](http://rockfordchamber.com).

## The Department

The Rockford Fire Department is under the direction of the Fire Chief who reports to the Mayor and the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners. Previously, the department had operated under four distinct divisions: Administration, Operations and Training, Fire Prevention, and the 911 Center, each under the direction of a Division Chief or Administrator. However, with increasing emphasis in the training arena to meet the many new challenges resulting from the terrorist attack of 9/11, changes in personnel status and other issues, especially in the EMS arena regarding both paramedic training and delivery of EMS services, the department began the transition process to a five division configuration. This

split training off from operations as a separate division with separate training coordinators for EMS and Fire. The complete changeover to this configuration took place in 2003.

The department is budgeted for 282 people including secretarial staff, mechanics, inspectors, trainers, administrative staff, and 252 company personnel (firefighters and paramedics). Additionally, there are 53 employees associated directly with the 911 Center, which falls under the authority of the Fire Department per intergovernmental agreements. The Fire Chief will also serve as a board member on the Winnebago County E-911 system.

The Rockford Fire Department is a "full service" department in that it handles everything from firefighting to emergency medical services, Haz-Mat mitigations and extrications, inspections and pre-plans of buildings, hydrant testing, confined space rescue and high angle rescue. The E-911 system functions as a call center for the City of Rockford as well as the dispatch center for the Rockford Fire Department, the Rockford Park District Police, the Rockford Police Department, and five volunteer fire departments. The E-911 system is also a back-up for Winnebago County Sheriff and other emergency calls.

Operating in a city of 150,000 residents, the department is rated by ISO as a Class 2 City. In the early spring of 2007 the Rockford Fire Department began pursuing a goal of achieving Accredited Agency Status. The purpose is to develop a "Community-Driven Strategic Plan" for the Fire Department. This plan is intended to guide the organization through a self-assessment process for the purpose of self-improvement and attaining international fire service accreditation. In 2007, the department responded to over 18,634 calls for assistance. The city is served by 11 fire stations with a total of 13 pieces of fire apparatus including 8 engines, 3 quints, and 2 ladder companies, as well as 5 paramedic ambulances. The city is divided into two districts for management and response



purposes with a District Chief in charge of each side of the city.

## **The Position**

Reporting directly to the Mayor and the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners, the Fire Chief serves the public with responsible work in planning, organizing, and directing all activities of the Rockford Fire Department. The position oversees career firefighters and support employees providing services both in maintenance and 911 operations. The Fire Chief will need to work with the City's Administration, Fire Union, and support staff to ensure excellent services are provided to the citizens of Rockford.

Working closely with a variety of divisions and departments, the Fire Chief will need to establish strategic short-term and long-range plans to address the needs of the Fire Department weighed with the needs of other City Departments. The Fire Chief will also be responsible for directing and developing any programs and initiatives taken by the department to create more awareness of activities such as fire prevention. The Fire Chief will meet regularly with the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners to discuss changes to rules and policies, make promotions, and discuss other personnel matters.

## **The Ideal Candidate**

The ideal candidate will be an insightful and dynamic leader with well-rounded experience in the fire service. The successful candidate will bring an engaging, team-oriented approach to the position and the understanding of the necessity of weighing the needs of the department against the resources and needs of the City of Rockford.

The Fire Chief will welcome input from all stakeholders prior to making a decision and embrace honest and thorough discussion of issues. The ideal candidate will keep a constant eye on win-win outcomes and be a creative problem solver, decisive and accommodating, and able to build a consensus among various parties.

The Fire Chief will have strong interpersonal skills and will bring a clear perspective to the position. The new

Chief will need to quickly establish rapport with individuals and groups at all levels within and outside the organization. With the Mayor moving all departments in the city to an accountability driven CompStat model, the new Fire Chief will need to think and operate strategically in this accountability driven system.

## **Minimum Qualifications**

*Overview:* At least five (5) years of experience in the Fire Service at the Rank of Captain or higher. Specific experience managing in a department that performs both Fire and EMS duties is strongly preferred. A candidate with experience managing a 911 call center is desirable. All qualified candidates are encouraged to submit required information for consideration.

### ***Necessary Qualifications:***

Possession of a Bachelor's degree, preferably with major coursework in Fire Science, Management, or other related field. A Master's degree is preferred.

*and*

Ten (10) or more years of progressively responsible Fire service including five (5) or more years in the rank of Captain or higher.

## **Compensation**

Initial salary negotiable within existing approved range dependent upon qualifications and experience. Other benefits offered with this position include:

- Medical Insurance
- Defined Retirement Plan
- Deferred Compensation
- Social Security
- Long-term Disability Plan
- Life Insurance
- Vacation/Holiday/Sick Time

## Application Process

This is a confidential process and will be handled accordingly throughout the various stages of the search and testing process. However, references will be contacted once a mutual interest has been established. Evaluation of candidates by the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners and CWH Research will be done upon receipt of completed materials. Candidates are encouraged to submit prior to August 30, 2008. **Electronic submittals are strongly preferred** and should include the following:

- Completed application
- Cover letter
- Comprehensive resume
- Minimum of six (6) professional references

**To apply, submit via email to [apply@cwhms.com](mailto:apply@cwhms.com). Visit [www.rockfordil.gov](http://www.rockfordil.gov) or [www.cwhms.com](http://www.cwhms.com) and click on the resource center** to download the required forms. Interested candidates may also apply to CWH Research:

**Via U.S. Mail**  
CWH Research, Inc.  
9360 Teddy Lane, Suite 203  
Lone Tree, CO 80124

CWH Research, Inc. will conduct the initial evaluation of submitted materials. A select group chosen by the City of Rockford Board of Fire and Police Commissioners and CWH will move forward to the next step of answering a detailed supplemental questionnaire. Candidates meeting the criteria set for this supplemental questionnaire will undergo further background investigations. The top candidates will then move forward to an Assessment Center process conducted by CWH Research Inc.

Outside candidates are strongly encouraged to apply for this position. However, in the spirit of full disclosure, it should be noted that the city council, fire department, and fire union strongly feel that there are several highly qualified internal candidates.



*The City of Rockford is an equal opportunity employer and encourages all qualified individuals to submit an application for this exceptional career opportunity.*



**CWH Research is a premier consulting firm based in Lone Tree, Colorado. For over 28 years, CWH has been trusted by Fire and Police Departments to conduct entry-level selection, promotional assessment, and executive recruitment and assessment. CWH is proud to be partnered with the City of Rockford and the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners on this project.**