



CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT

Summit Fire & EMS Fire Protection District

Annual Salary:

\$195,000–\$235,000 DOE/DOQ

Summit County, Colorado



SUMMIT FIRE & EMS

Are you an accomplished, forward-thinking fire and emergency services leader who can balance operational excellence with fiscal sustainability, workforce development, and long-range planning? If so, consider becoming Summit Fire & EMS Fire Protection District's next Chief of Department!

We're looking for an exceptional executive leader who is:

- Fiscally rigorous and comfortable with multi-year financial planning
- Experienced in all-hazards emergency response and WUI/wildland operations
- A visible, transparent relationship builder who can effectively engage employees, labor partners, the Board, community stakeholders, and regional agencies

Join a respected, community-centered organization serving the heart of Colorado's High Country.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Summit County, Colorado, combines world-class outdoor recreation with vibrant mountain communities and convenient access to the Denver metropolitan area. Located in the Colorado Rockies less than 75 miles west of Denver, the county offers residents an extraordinary opportunity to live and work amid some of Colorado's most celebrated mountain destinations.

Year-round recreation is central to life in Summit County. Breckenridge, Keystone, Copper Mountain, and Arapahoe Basin offer premier winter recreation, while warmer months bring hiking, mountain biking, fishing, boating, camping, and other activities throughout Dillon Reservoir and the surrounding White River National Forest. Residents also enjoy more than 300 days of sunshine annually.

The area is more than a resort destination. Its distinct communities offer strong schools, local services, cultural activities, restaurants, shopping, and community events. Festivals and gatherings such as the Dillon Farmers Market and Silverthorne First Friday contribute to the county's strong community identity.

Summit County also offers mountain living without complete isolation. Denver, its metropolitan amenities, and a major international airport are within a comfortable drive. Summit Fire & EMS itself is deeply woven into this community, making the Chief of Department a highly visible public-service leader.

GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

Summit Fire & EMS Fire Protection District is a legally designated special district organized under Title 32 of the Colorado Revised Statutes and funded primarily through property taxes and fees. The District is governed by a five-member, publicly elected Board of Directors serving staggered four-year terms. The Board appoints the Chief of Department, District Legal Counsel, and the Board Secretary and Treasurer positions. The organization has approximately 115 employees and an annual budget of approximately \$32 million.

Summit Fire & EMS provides comprehensive all-hazards emergency services, including:

- Fire suppression
- Emergency medical services
- Hazardous materials response
- Technical rescue
- Wildfire response and mitigation
- Community risk reduction and public education



POPULATION
~31,289



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
\$109,773



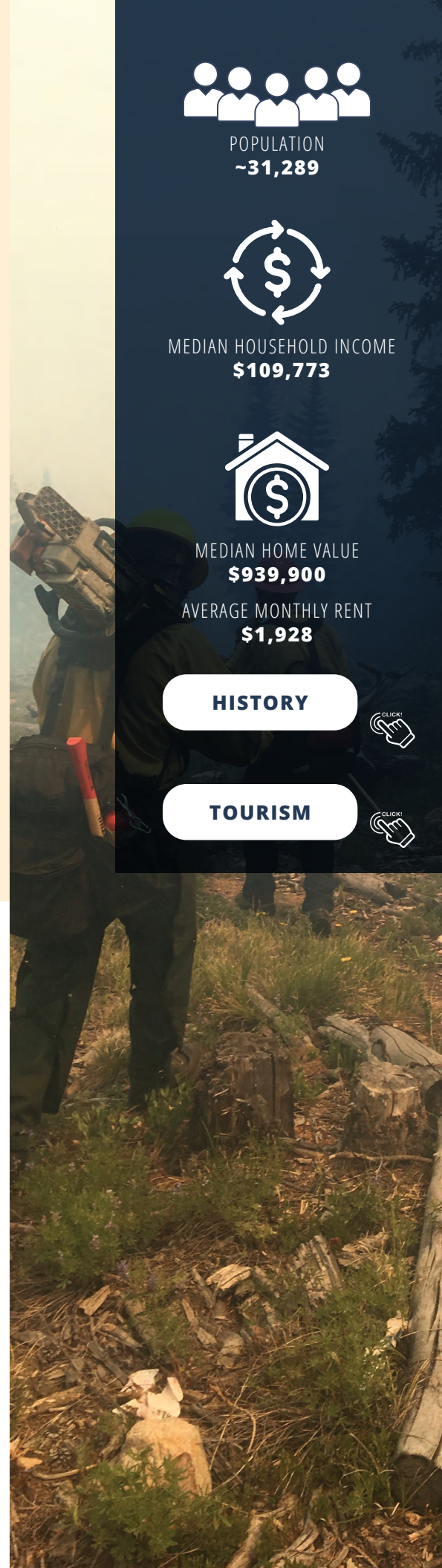
MEDIAN HOME VALUE
\$939,900

AVERAGE MONTHLY RENT
\$1,928

HISTORY



TOURISM





ABOUT THE JOB

The Chief of Department serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Summit Fire & EMS and reports directly to the Board of Directors. The Chief oversees the District's administrative, financial, operational, and strategic functions while ensuring exceptional fire and emergency medical services and alignment with the District's mission and values.

The new Chief of Department will:

- Direct and oversee all-hazards emergency operations and organizational strategy
- Lead long-range financial planning, budgeting, forecasting, and fiscal sustainability efforts
- Guide capital planning, including station replacement and future land needs
- Evaluate staffing, apparatus deployment, and service-delivery models
- Develop the executive leadership team and establish succession and accountability systems
- Strengthen recruitment, retention, labor, community, and interagency relationships
- Maintain CFAI accreditation and the District's current ISO rating while evaluating CAAS accreditation
- Lead development of the District's next strategic and vision plan

JOB DESCRIPTION



DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

Service Areas / Functions:

- Fire Suppression
- Emergency Medical Services
- Hazardous Materials Response
- Technical Rescue
- Wildfire Response and Mitigation
- Community Risk Reduction/Public Education

QUICK FACTS

- **Employees:** 115
- **Emergency Responders:** More than 85
- **Annual Budget:** Approximately \$32 million
- **Stations:** 5 strategically located stations
- **District Area:** 185 square miles
- **Total Response Area:** 479 square miles, including unincorporated and federal lands
- **Permanent Population Served:** Approximately 31,000
- **Peak Visitors:** 1 million visitors per year
- **Accreditation:** Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI)

Summit Fire & EMS also serves as the primary emergency-response agency for U.S. Forest Service lands in northern Summit County.

KEY PROJECTS FOR 2026-2029

- **Fiscal Sustainability & Long-Range Financial Planning:** Develop a 5- to 10-year financial scenario model and a Board-approved five-year financial plan, addressing revenue volatility, payroll, benefits, overtime, and potential supplemental revenue sources.
- **Capital Facilities & Land Strategy:** Complete a facilities master plan addressing Stations 2, 11, and 12 and establish 10- and 20-year strategies for identifying and securing land in a severely constrained real estate environment.
- **Staffing & Deployment Review:** Conduct a comprehensive review of staffing and apparatus deployment and develop a five-year roadmap addressing right-sized apparatus, cross-trained staffing, and tiered response configurations.
- **Executive Development & Succession:** Establish an accountability and performance framework and create a documented succession plan.
- **Workforce Strategy:** Develop hiring, recruitment, and retention strategies that address ambulance transport demand, overtime reliance, and Summit County's cost of living.
- **Labor Relations:** Prepare for the District's 2028 collective bargaining agreement negotiations.
- **Accreditation:** Maintain CFAI accreditation and the District's current ISO rating and evaluate pursuing CAAS accreditation for EMS and ambulance operations.
- **Strategic Planning & Engagement:** Develop the successor strategic and vision plan with input from the Board, employees, and community while expanding external partnerships.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal Chief of Department will be a fiscally disciplined, visible, and collaborative executive who understands the operational and financial complexities of leading an all-hazards emergency services organization. The successful candidate will be comfortable developing multi-year financial models, managing payroll and overtime pressures, and making evidence-based decisions about staffing and deployment.

The Chief will bring genuine command competence across fire suppression, EMS, hazardous materials, technical rescue, and wildland response, with particular understanding of WUI environments and wildland division development. They will be willing to challenge longstanding assumptions when evidence supports a different approach.

Equally important, the Chief will be direct, transparent, receptive, and highly visible. They will build credibility with crews while communicating effectively with the Board, labor representatives, municipal and county leaders, healthcare partners, neighboring agencies, and the community.



EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

- Bachelor's degree in Fire Science, Public Administration, or a related field
- 10–12 years of Fire and EMS experience, including at least five years in a Chief Officer role, with at least two years in a non-operational and/or administrative role
- Executive Fire Officer (EFO) certification from the National Fire Academy
- Chief Fire Officer (CFO) designation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence
- ICS 300 certification
- Must reside within Summit County within nine months of hire

Preferred:

- Master's degree in Fire Science, Public Administration, or a related field
- ICS 400 certification
- Colorado Fire Officer III certification
- Chief EMS Officer (CEMSO) credential from the Center for Public Safety Excellence

All required certifications must be held at the time of hire. The CFO designation is particularly important to the Board.

SALARY & BENEFITS

- **Compensation:** \$195,000–\$235,000 annually, commensurate with experience and qualifications
- **Work Schedule:** Four-day workweek
- **Health Benefits:** Comprehensive medical, vision, prescription, and dental coverage with a 90/10 employer/employee premium split
- **HRA/HSA:** Employer-funded Health Reimbursement or Health Savings Account
- **Retirement:** FPPA Statewide Defined Benefit Component for commissioned personnel
- **Deferred Compensation:** 457 plan with employer match and contributions
- **Paid Leave:** Generous vacation and sick leave
- **Disability:** Long-term and short-term disability coverage
- **Vehicle:** Assigned marked District vehicle with 24-hour use, including commuting and incidental personal use within District boundaries
- **Professional Development:** Tuition reimbursement, professional memberships, conferences, and continuing education within the approved annual budget
- **Additional Benefits:** Communications equipment and uniforms, onsite fitness facilities, health and wellness resources, annual flu shots, and wellness programming
- **Relocation/Housing:** Relocation or housing assistance may be considered
- **Social Security:** The District does not withhold or contribute Social Security/OASDI for commissioned personnel; Medicare withholding applies

Severance and other employment agreement provisions will be established during contract negotiations with the selected candidate.



HOW TO APPLY

APPLY HERE



For more information on this position, contact:

Rudy Jackson, Senior Vice President Executive Recruitment

rudyjackson@governmentresource.com | 817-897-8080

The Summit Fire & EMS Fire Protection District is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other status protected by law. Applicants selected as finalists for this position will be subject to a comprehensive background investigation, physical assessment, and psychological assessment.