

DIRECTOR, PORTLAND BUREAU OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Annual Base Salary Midpoint:
$203,174

Salary Range:
$165,610–$240,739 | Depending on Qualifications (DOQ)

Portland, Oregon

City of Portland

Are you a seasoned, collaborative emergency-management executive who builds trust, professional capacity, and reliable coordination across a complex organization? If so, the City of Portland invites you to apply to become its next Director of the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management (PBEM).

Reporting to the Deputy City Administrator for Public Safety, the Director will strengthen Portland's emergency-management capabilities over time—building trust, professional competency, and shared purpose across City bureaus and regional partners. The Director leads a small professional bureau with substantial citywide responsibilities for preparedness, coordination, response, and recovery.

We're seeking a leader who is:

- An experienced builder of emergency-management programs and measurable readiness.
- Technically credible, with sound executive judgment and a low-ego, listening-first style.
- Skilled at leading through influence across independent bureaus and jurisdictions.

Help build a stronger, better-integrated emergency-management system for one of the nation's major metropolitan cities—read on to learn more about this opportunity!

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Portland is Oregon's largest city and a major Pacific Northwest regional center. Set at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, the city anchors a metropolitan region with deep ties across Oregon and southwest Washington, and its transportation connections link residents and businesses to the broader West Coast and beyond.

Portland's economy is broad and resilient, with strengths in healthcare, higher education, technology, manufacturing, logistics, transportation, and professional services. Distinctive neighborhoods, independent businesses, a thriving arts and culinary scene, and respected civic and academic institutions give the city its well-known character.

Residents enjoy an extensive network of parks and trails within the city and easy access to Mount Hood, the Columbia River Gorge, and the Oregon Coast. The community is well educated, with more than half of adults holding a bachelor's degree or higher.

Portlanders are deeply engaged in civic life, with active neighborhood organizations and community partnerships. The region's exposure to earthquakes, severe weather, flooding, wildfires, and infrastructure disruptions makes emergency preparedness especially important. These community relationships provide a valuable foundation for building resilience throughout Portland.

POPULATION
635,109

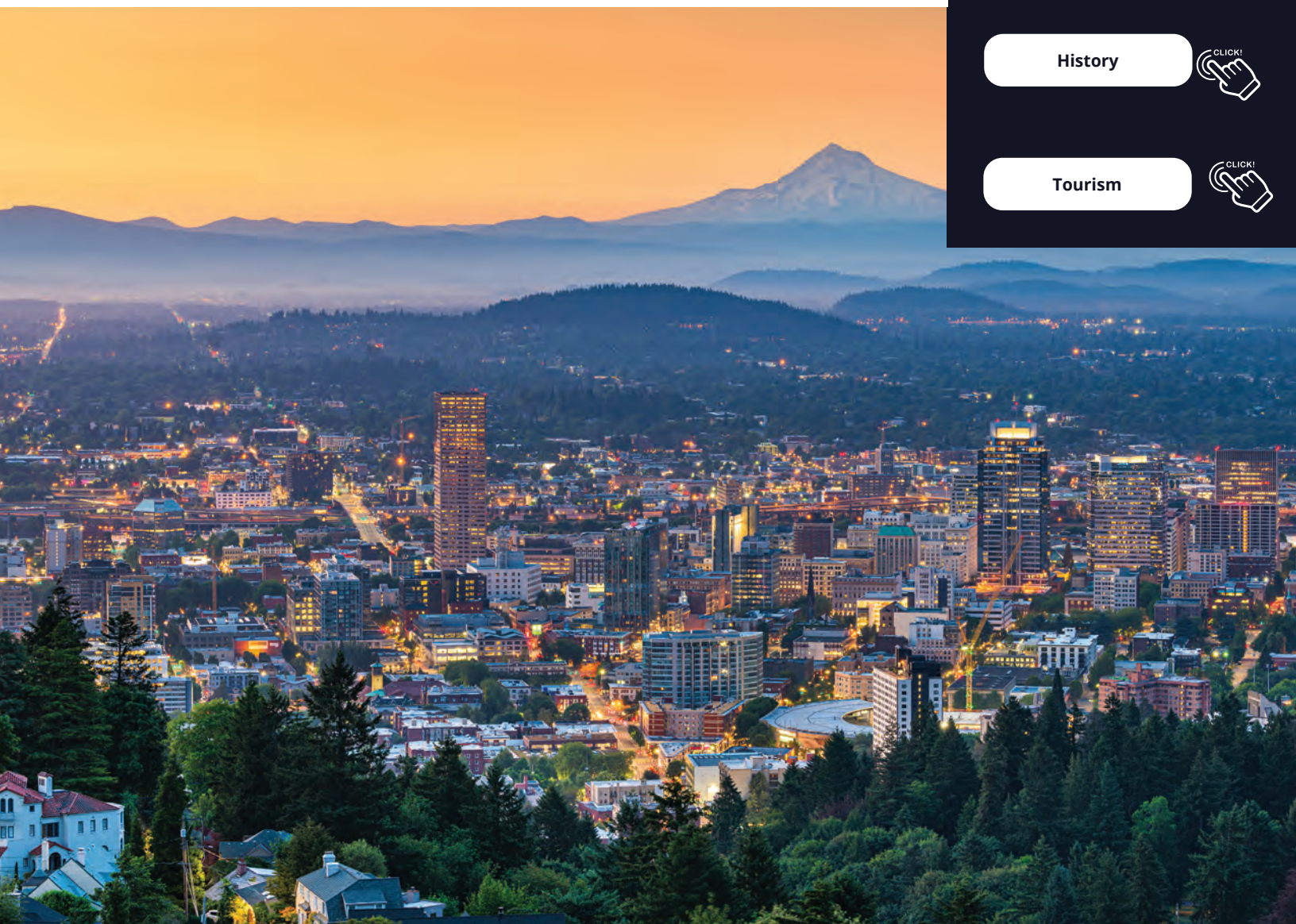
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
$90,919

MEDIAN HOME VALUE
$581,500

MEDIAN GROSS RENT
$1,655

History CLICK!

Tourism CLICK!



ABOUT THE PORTLAND BUREAU OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

PBEM's mission is to promote readiness, coordinate response, and build resilience for Portland. As the City's coordination bureau for disaster risk reduction, PBEM develops and implements the strategic planning, programs, and policies that advance Portland's mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities. Its vision is a resilient Portland—one whose residents, infrastructure, organizations, and businesses recover quickly from everyday emergencies or citywide disasters and emerge stronger as a community.

PBEM creates and maintains citywide emergency plans, conducts training and exercises, educates the public about preparedness, and coordinates emergency response and recovery operations and public information. The bureau maintains the readiness of the City's Emergency Coordination Center (ECC), the central location that coordinates the City's response to emergencies and disruptions to essential services.

PBEM supports community-led resilience through Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NET) and Basic Earthquake Emergency Communication Nodes (BEECN). The bureau supports the five-county Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) and its regional grant-funded preparedness programs.

Learn More



GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

Portland adopted a substantially revised form of government effective January 2025. A citywide-elected Mayor serves as chief executive, a 12-member City Council elected from four geographic districts serves as the legislative body, and a professional City Administrator oversees City operations through Deputy City Administrators who lead major service areas.

PBEM is part of the Public Safety Service Area, which includes:

- Portland Police Bureau
- Portland Fire & Rescue
- Bureau of Emergency Communications
- Portland Bureau of Emergency Management
- Community Safety

The Director works closely with the Mayor, City Administrator, Public Safety Deputy City Administrator, and the City's Disaster Policy Council, and partners with Transportation, Water, Environmental Services, and other operating bureaus essential to readiness and response.

Government Structure

Public Safety Service Area





ABOUT THE JOB

The Director reports to the Deputy City Administrator for Public Safety and sets strategic direction for PBEM while overseeing day-to-day bureau operations. The role carries citywide responsibilities far larger than the bureau's direct staff. The Director advises the Mayor, City Administrator, Deputy City Administrator for Public Safety, and Disaster Policy Council on emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery, and represents the City in regional emergency-management partnerships.

PBEM coordinates and supports emergency response rather than displacing the incident-command authority of Police, Fire, or other lead agencies. At the same time, City Code and the position description give the Director real responsibility for citywide planning, training, ECC readiness, and evaluation. The Director must be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to respond to emergency incidents and ECC activations.

The successful candidate will provide executive leadership for:

- Citywide emergency plans, coordination procedures, exercises, training, and readiness systems.
- ECC readiness and development of a qualified citywide activation cadre.
- Coordination of significant emergency operations, situational awareness, alerts and warnings, and recovery support.
- Community preparedness, neighborhood resilience, and partnerships with volunteers, businesses, and institutions.
- The bureau's budget, federal grants, compliance, performance measures, and professional staff.

Full Job Description CLICK!

DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

PBEM is a compact, professional bureau whose work reaches every City bureau and many regional partners.

Positions Reporting to the Director

- Deputy Director
- Manager
- Analyst III

Organizational Quick Facts

- **Reports To:** Deputy City Administrator for Public Safety
- **Staff:** 16 positions reporting through the Director
- **Key Facility:** Emergency Coordination Center, 9911 SE Bush Street
- **Regional Role:** City representative to the RDPO and its Steering Committee, which administers the five-county regional federal grant program
- **Community Programs:** Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NET) and Basic Earthquake Emergency Communication Nodes (BEECN)

KEY INITIATIVES

The next Director will develop a robust emergency-management function over time, building trust and professional capability to unite City bureaus and community partners around shared priorities.

Strengthen and Integrate the Citywide System
Advance the bureau's capacity in deliberate stages: confirm essential functions and readiness, establish clear priorities and shared responsibilities, strengthen trust and competence across participating bureaus, and track measurable progress. Update the bureau's strategic plan with practical implementation milestones.

Build Trust, Collaboration, and Accountability Across Bureaus
Emergency management is a team sport. Build strong working relationships with Police, Fire, Emergency Communications, Transportation, Water, Environmental Services, and other bureaus. Strengthen the Emergency Management Steering Committee as a forum for joint planning, preparedness, shared responsibilities, and accountability.

Improve Readiness, Planning, and Coordination
Update and maintain practical emergency plans and test readiness through exercises and corrective-action tracking. Strengthen Emergency Coordination Center staffing, training, activation procedures, public warning and notification systems, and executive policy coordination. Advance continuity of essential services, recovery, and hazard mitigation while applying established emergency-management standards to Portland's organizational responsibilities and resources.

Lead and Develop the Bureau's Professional Staff
Build on recent gains in trust and coordination. Set clear priorities, delegate authority, recruit and retain talented staff, provide meaningful professional development, and sustain leadership continuity in a small bureau.

Strengthen Regional Partnerships and Community Resilience
Deepen working relationships with Multnomah County, neighboring jurisdictions, state and federal partners, the RDPO, infrastructure operators, healthcare partners, and the private sector, and steward regional grant responsibilities. Build on NET and BEECN with accessible, multilingual emergency communications and attention to residents facing heightened risk or barriers to preparedness.





THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is a proven emergency-management program builder and executive who combines substantive technical credibility with mature management judgment. They have developed, improved, or scaled emergency-management programs and organizational capacity, and can point to measurable gains in readiness. They understand incident management, Emergency Coordination Centers, preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery, and established doctrine.

This leader brings integrity, transparency, high emotional intelligence, and low ego. They build trust through clear communication, collaborative relationships, and consistent follow-through. Technically credible and politically astute, they can engage confidently with experienced public safety executives, navigate competing priorities, and strengthen accountability without relying on command authority.

A strong people leader, the next Director develops, delegates to, retains, and holds professional staff accountable. They are adaptable and practical, working effectively with limited resources and evolving governmental arrangements, and they build trusted relationships with jurisdictions, utilities, healthcare, businesses, nonprofits, and community groups



EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

- Bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, or a closely related field.
- At least ten (10) years of progressively responsible experience in public administration, emergency management, or a related field, including at least three (3) years supervising staff.
- Incident Command System (ICS) training (FEMA).
- Demonstrated knowledge of emergency-management systems and emergency response.
- Ability to be available 24/7 to respond to emergency incidents and ECC activations.

Preferred:

- Master's degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, or a closely related field.
- Leadership of complex emergency-management programs, readiness improvements, and Emergency Coordination Center functions.
- Demonstrated results working across independent departments and jurisdictions, including grants, intergovernmental coordination, and high-stakes communications.
- Security clearance (DHS).
- Experience managing public safety budgets, navigating politically sensitive situations, and leading change in a complex public organization.

SALARY & BENEFITS

The City of Portland offers a competitive salary and a comprehensive benefits package. Final base salary will be based upon experience and qualifications.

Compensation

- Annual Base Salary Midpoint: $203,174 | Authorized Range: $165,610–$240,739 | DOQ
- Relocation assistance of up to $10,000.
- Eligibility for the City's Language Pay Differential for qualifying employees.

Health & Wellness

- Choice of three medical plans (Moda CityCore, Kaiser Permanente, or CityHD); the City pays 95% of CityCore and Kaiser premiums and 100% of CityHD premiums.
- Dental and vision coverage with buy-up options; outpatient mental health office visits with waived copays.
- City-paid $50,000 basic life insurance and long-term disability coverage, with supplemental options.
- Free, confidential counseling through the Employee Assistance Program, plus fitness classes and family-building support.

Retirement

- Oregon Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), including employer contributions to an Individual Account Program.
- Voluntary 457(b) deferred compensation plan (pre- or post-tax).

Paid Leave

- Vacation, sick leave, and paid holidays

Other Benefits

- Healthcare and dependent care flexible spending accounts.
- Home buying assistance and one-on-one financial planning.
- Travel assistance coverage.

This is an exceptional opportunity to shape the emergency-management system of a major metropolitan city while enjoying everything the Pacific Northwest has to offer.



HOW TO APPLY

Apply Here

Oregon Veterans' Preference applies to this recruitment; eligible applicants will receive instructions for requesting preference and submitting documentation.

For more information on this position, contact:
Clay Pearson, Senior Vice President, Executive Recruitment
claypearson@governmentresource.com | (713) 816-8639

The City of Portland is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists will undergo a comprehensive background check.