



Central City Colorado

FIRE CHIEF

\$118,000 - \$160,000

Plus Excellent Benefits

Apply by

June 21, 2026

(First Review, Open Until Filled)

PROTHMAN



THE COMMUNITY



Located 38 miles west of Denver in Gilpin County, Central City is one of Colorado's most historic mountain communities. Set high in the Rocky Mountains and encompassing one square mile,

the City holds designation as a National Historic Landmark District; a distinction shared by only a small number of communities nationwide. Founded during the 1859 Pike's Peak Gold Rush and long known as "The Richest Square Mile on Earth," Central City's identity remains closely tied to its mining heritage, reflected in the preserved buildings, brick streets, cultural landmarks, and mountain setting that continue to define the community.



Life in Central City is shaped equally by the mountains and the region's rich history. At an elevation of 8,500 feet, residents enjoy clear alpine air, walkable historic streets, and direct access to the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests. World-class skiing at Eldora, Winter Park, and Loveland is within an hour, and Rocky Mountain National Park, the Continental Divide, and the rivers of the high country are all easily accessible. Denver and its international airport sit a straightforward drive down the canyon, offering convenient connection to the broader Front Range.

The community is small, close-knit, and deeply proud of its heritage. The Central City Opera House, in operation since 1878, draws audiences from across the country each summer. The Teller House and its renowned Face on the Barroom Floor, the Gilpin County Museum, working mine tours, historic cemeteries, local galleries, shopping, dining, and year-round events give the City a cultural life well beyond its size. Casinos within the downtown area also support tourism and the local economy through every season.



Central City is also a community in motion, focused on renewal, reinvestment, and long-term resilience. The City has established a vision centered on livability, economic vitality, historic preservation, adaptive reuse, infrastructure investment, housing, and responsible growth, while remaining committed to protecting the historic and cultural assets that make Central City unique. For the next Fire Chief, this is an opportunity to succeed a long-serving and highly regarded Fire Chief whose nearly 50 years with the City have left a lasting impact on the organization and community. With the current Chief preparing for retirement, the role offers significant visibility, strong community support, and the ability to help shape the future of public safety in a place where the work matters and the results are seen.

THE CITY

With a 2026 General Fund of approximately \$5.8 million and 29.5 employees, Central City operates under a Mayor-Council-Manager form of government, where elected officials set policy and a professional City Manager oversees daily operations and service delivery. The City provides a broad range of municipal services, including administration, finance, human resources, planning and community services, public works, water utilities, fire protection, and law enforcement services.



THE DEPARTMENT

Established in 1869, the Central City Fire Department has a long history of service to the community. Originally founded as a volunteer organization, the department has evolved to meet the emergency response needs of Central City's residents, businesses, visitors, and historic downtown. Today, it provides all-hazards emergency response, including structural and wildland fire response, emergency medical response, rescue, vehicle extrication, hazardous materials response, fire prevention, inspections, public education, and community safety services.

The department has historically operated on a strong volunteer foundation and is now transitioning toward a more sustainable combination staffing model. The department maintains two full-time and three part-time positions. Personnel include the Fire Chief, a firefighter, a fleet and resource specialist, a fire and rescue specialist, and a fire department apprentice, supported by volunteer firefighters and mutual aid partners. Additional positions and budget will be evaluated as the Department's paid staff grows.

The department operates from two fire stations, one in downtown Central City and one on Golconda Road, providing an important operational presence across the City and surrounding service area. The City is planning for future fire facility improvements to better support modern fire operations, including apparatus space, firefighter accommodations, training, equipment storage, and overall station functionality. The department maintains an ISO Class 5/5X rating and operates in a uniquely complex service environment. Historic buildings, narrow streets, steep terrain, limited access points, wildland-urban interface exposure, a variable visitor population, aging infrastructure, and the potential for major downtown or wildland fire events create significant operational demands, which require fire leadership capable of managing both day-to-day emergency operations and long-range system development. Apparatus inventory includes both newer and aging suppression, rescue, utility, tender, UTV, and support assets, underscoring the need for disciplined fleet planning, apparatus replacement, and capital investment.

Fire protection services are budgeted at \$573,887, with additional public safety resources budgeted through a Public Safety Fund of \$512,396.

THE POSITION

Reporting to the City Manager, the Fire Chief is responsible for administering all operations of the Central City Fire Department, including budgeting, purchasing, personnel supervision, emergency response, fire prevention, public education, training, planning, policy development, interagency coordination, and operational readiness. The Fire Chief serves as the City's Designated Emergency Response Authority for hazardous materials incidents and maintains command responsibility at structural, wildland, and interface fire scenes.

The Fire Chief prepares and manages the department budget, monitors expenditures, oversees purchasing, prepares RFPs, and pursues grant opportunities that support department growth. This includes identifying and administering federal, state, and private funding opportunities, such as FEMA SAFER, Assistance to Firefighters Grants, and Colorado-based public safety funding. The Chief will also develop and maintain accurate records, prepare reports, track operational data, support compliance, and strengthen internal systems for planning, accountability, and transparency.

The next Fire Chief is expected to guide the department through a period of significant organizational development, including staffing expansion, volunteer recruitment and retention, apparatus and equipment planning, capital project planning, and the pursuit of a modern fire station. The Chief will work closely with the City Manager, City leadership, department personnel, volunteers, mutual aid partners, regional agencies, and community stakeholders to build a sustainable department infrastructure while maintaining strong daily operations and emergency response readiness.

For a complete list of responsibilities, please review the full job description found [here](#).



OPPORTUNITIES & PRIORITIES

Advancing Fire Station Planning and Development: Central City is in need of a new fire station. The current facilities cannot accommodate a Type 1 pumper and do not meet the needs of a department moving toward 24-hour staffing. In 2024, the City engaged ESCI to develop a Long-Range Master Plan for the Fire Department, which is available on the City's website. The City recently received a \$568,000 grant for fire station design, and an RFQ was issued in April 2026 seeking an experienced firm to assist with the project.

Supporting Staffing Coverage and Volunteer Recruitment: The department currently has 15 volunteers and, like many agencies, continues to face recruitment and retention challenges. To support response coverage during daytime hours, when many volunteers are at work, Central City has added part-time firefighters assigned to day shifts.

Planning for Apparatus Needs: Central City received a new Type 3 pumper and tender in 2023. The department also needs a Type 1 pumper, which is directly connected to the need for a new fire station that can accommodate this type of apparatus.

Strengthening Mutual Aid and Training Partnerships: Central City would benefit from an updated mutual aid agreement with Black Hawk and additional joint training with Gilpin Ambulance Service and the Timberline Fire Protection District. Continued attention to regional coordination will help strengthen response readiness, clarify expectations, and support effective operations during larger or more complex incidents.



EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

Required Education & Experience

- A high school diploma or equivalent (GED).
- A bachelor's degree in fire science, business management, public administration, or another applicable field. However, a combination of education, training, and experience will be considered.
- A minimum of seven (7) years of firefighting experience, including at least three (3) years in a Captain or equivalent leadership role for a full-time fire service organization.
- Experience working with or supervising volunteer fire personnel.
- A valid Driver's License.
- NIMS Incident Command training at the level appropriate for the Department.
- Must hold and maintain a credential or equivalent experience to perform command or support functions in all-hazards or wildfire incidents.
- EMT Certification, including EMT-B, EMT-B+, or EMT-I.

Preferred Education & Experience:

- Colorado Fire Officer Certification.
- Completion of fire science coursework and courses offered by the Division of Fire Safety or the National Fire Academy.
- Ideally, five (5) years of experience as a Chief Officer.
- Demonstrated experience contributing to or leading department growth initiatives, such as capital facility projects, new station planning, staffing expansion, or organizational restructuring.
- Demonstrated success in recruiting, retaining, and integrating volunteers within a combination department.
- Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) experience.
- Residency within the City or in the immediate area, or as mutually agreed upon between the new Fire Chief and the City Manager.
- Ability to respond to the scene within 30 minutes.
- Desirable professional certifications and training include: Executive Fire Officer Certification or IFSAC/Pro Board Fire Officer IV, Emergency Medical Dispatcher, Basic Life Support (BLS), IFSAC or Pro Board Fire Instructor II, and IFSAC or Pro Board Hazardous Materials Operations.

Necessary Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- A present, visible, and engaged leadership style within the organization and the community, with the ability to work effectively with elected officials, the City Manager, department directors, staff, volunteers, regional partners, and residents.
- Experience working in a combination fire department setting, with an understanding of the operational, administrative, and cultural needs of a department that relies on a volunteer firefighting force.
- A strong operational background, ideally gained by working up through the ranks, with experience in wildland, structure suppression, and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) environments.
- Broad knowledge of modern fire department administration, including financial and budget practices, capital expenditures, fire prevention, fleet management, grants, strategic planning, succession planning, human resources, mentorship, training, and policy and procedure development.
- Familiarity with department growth initiatives, including capital facility projects, new station planning, staffing expansion, organizational restructuring, mergers, or consolidations.
- An understanding of Colorado statutes and requirements affecting the City and fire department, including applicable Colorado Revised Statutes, the Colorado Firefighter Safety Act, TABOR, and the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control.
- The capacity to serve as a key member of the City's Leadership Team and work closely with the City Manager and other department directors to help lead the City in a strategic way.
- A collaborative and regionally minded approach, including the ability to work closely with area fire departments and the Gilpin Ambulance Authority.
- Sound business and political acumen, along with a high degree of emotional intelligence.
- The judgment to advocate for staff and volunteers while balancing the needs of the City.
- The ability to engage department members, delegate appropriately, include those closest to the work in the decision-making process, and foster trust, accountability, coaching, mentoring, continuous improvement, and recognition of strong performance.



- A leadership presence that reflects honesty, consistency, accountability, and professionalism during both good and difficult times.
- A firm, fair, and consistent approach to applying programs and standard operating procedures, including the ability to use teachable moments when appropriate and take corrective action when warranted.
- Clear, direct, and transparent communication with department members, the City Manager, City Council, and the community, including an approachable and open-minded style, the ability to explain decisions, listen for understanding, consider new ideas, and pivot when appropriate.
- Fiscal responsibility and accountability for community assets, with the ability to work closely with the City Manager and staff to advocate for a level of service that meets community needs within the authorized budget.
- The ability to hold self and staff accountable for assigned work, projects, and special assignments.
- A strong commitment to operational readiness, training, and the acquisition of appropriate, reliable, and required equipment as resources allow.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- **\$118,000 - \$160,000 DOQ**
- Comprehensive medical, dental, and vision insurance, with the City paying 100% of premiums for employees and dependents.
- City-paid long-term disability coverage and life insurance.
- Employee Assistance Program offering support for personal and work-related needs.
- Generous paid time off, with approximately 120 hours of vacation and 95 hours of sick leave earned annually.
- Increased vacation accrual after five years of service.
- 15 paid holidays annually, including one personal holiday.
- City match of up to 5% for employee contributions to a 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan.
- City-paid job training and certification renewal costs.
- Potential for alternative scheduling options as Fire Department staffing grows.
- Participation in FPPA benefits, which may include retirement, death, disability, and survivor benefits, depending on position and hiring status.
- Coverage may include the FPPA Statewide Death & Disability Plan and eligible FPPA retirement options, such as a Defined Benefit pension, Money Purchase Component, or other applicable plan options.



Central City Colorado



To learn more about
Central City and the local
community, please visit:

centralcity.colorado.gov

www.centralcityfire.com

www.visitcentralcity.com

Central City is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by **June 21, 2026** (first review, open until filled). Applications, supplemental questions, resumes and cover letters will only be accepted electronically. To **apply online**, go to www.prothman.com and click on "**Open Recruitments**", select "**Central City, CO – Fire Chief**" and click "**Apply Online**," or click [here](#). Resumes, cover letters, and supplemental questions can be uploaded once you have logged in.

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206.368.0050