

City of
LYNDEN
Washington

FIRE CHIEF

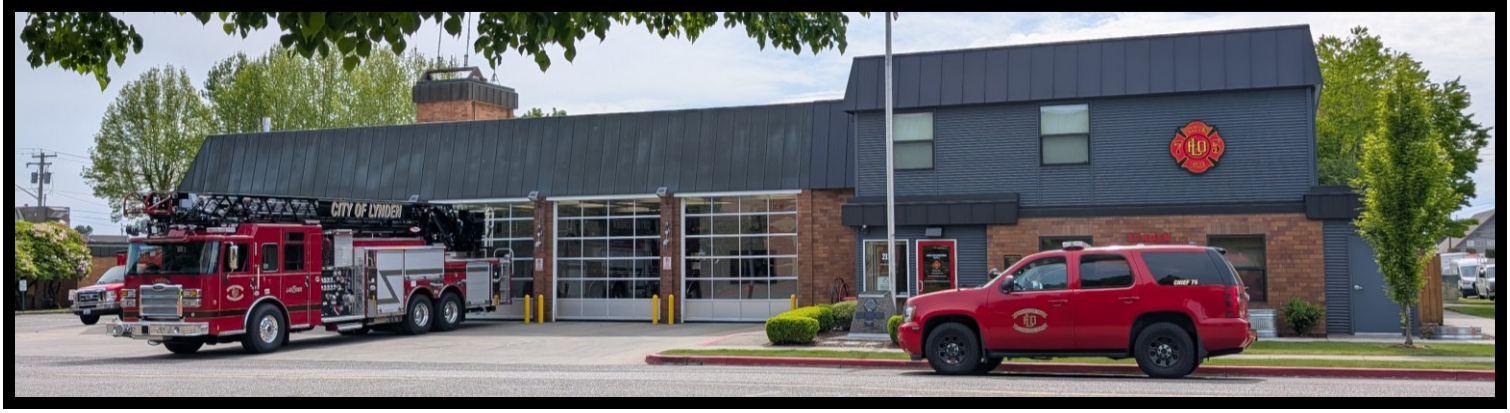
$136,790 - 178,480

(2026 RATE)

Plus Excellent Benefits

Apply by
December 6, 2026
(First Review, Open Until Filled)

PROTHMAN



WHY APPLY?



For a fire service leader who values knowing the people they serve, Lynden offers the opportunity to lead a department whose members have deep roots in the community.

The incoming Chief will join a collaborative City Leadership Team and work directly with firefighters, City officials, and county partners on decisions that will shape how Lynden responds to its next call.

From mentoring future department leaders to planning ambulance coverage and apparatus replacement, the Chief's work will have a lasting effect on both the members of the Department and the community they protect.

THE COMMUNITY

Known for its farms, berries, churches, and windmills, the Dutch-influenced community of Lynden is the third-largest city in Whatcom County, Washington. Lynden is approximately five miles south of the U.S.-Canadian border, 15 miles north of Bellingham, and 95 miles north of Seattle. Established in 1874 on the site of the Nooksack village of Squahalish, Lynden began as a pioneer settlement led by Holden and Phoebe Judson.

Lynden's agricultural roots are still very much a part of community life. Home to the Northwest Washington Fair, the City also hosts the annual Farmers Day Parade, a celebration of the local agricultural community that typically draws 7,500 to 10,000 people. Grand prize winner of the America's Main Streets contest, Lynden's downtown has drawn national attention and is home to local businesses such as the Inn at Lynden, Avenue Bread, and Village Books.

Lynden is known for its quality public and private schools and the school spirit that brings students, parents, and neighbors together. When local teams head to Yakima for state tournaments, many in town make the trip to cheer them on. Six City parks, a walkable downtown, and long-standing community traditions reflect the City's motto, "Lynden is a great place to live, work, play!"

THE CITY & DEPARTMENT

The City of Lynden operates under a strong mayor form of government with seven City Council members serving four-year terms. The City's 92 employees share a vision of "Cultivating Exceptional Service for Our Extraordinary Community." Five shared values guide their work with residents and with one another: communication, teamwork, community, excellence, and integrity.

The Lynden Fire Department has provided fire and emergency medical services to the Lynden community since 1910. A combination career and volunteer department, Lynden Fire protects the City's 6.5 square miles with 18.5 FTEs and a $4.7 million operating budget. Most of the Department's firefighters are full-time career personnel, with part-time firefighters helping cover shifts. The Department has historically enjoyed high retention, and many members live in the community they serve.

As Lynden has grown, so has demand for fire and emergency medical services. The Department responded to 2,741 calls in 2025 and 2,435 calls through October 30, 2026. During this period of growth, Lynden Fire has implemented standards and training requirements modeled on those of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The Department participates in the countywide emergency medical services system, with paramedic services based at the Lynden station.

The Department operates two Braun ambulances, a 2017 Pierce pumper, and a 2024 Pierce quint recently placed into service, along with two command vehicles and a utility vehicle.



THE POSITION

Under the direction of the City Administrator, the Fire Chief provides leadership and direction for all Fire Department functions, including personnel management, administration, fire inspection and investigation, health and safety awareness, and emergency services delivery and operations. The Chief supervises department officers, firefighters, and support personnel and serves as a member of the City's Leadership Team. The position involves significant community engagement and regular work with elected officials, fire and EMS providers, public safety agencies, residents, and business owners.



The Fire Chief oversees hiring, training, and personnel management, participates in contract negotiations and grievance resolution, and encourages open communication between employees and supervisors. The Chief develops and manages the Department's budget, including capital, operating, equipment, and personnel costs. This work includes monitoring expenditures, managing fees and charges, and pursuing state and federal funding. The Chief reports on Department activities to the Mayor, City Administrator, and appropriate City Council committees. The Chief works with City officials, staff, and partner agencies to develop long-range plans for meeting the community's fire and emergency medical service needs. Operational responsibilities include developing standard operating procedures and guidelines, overseeing pre-fire planning, and managing the City Emergency Response Plan. The Chief responds to multiple-alarm fires and assumes command as needed or when assigned as duty officer. The Chief also oversees fire prevention and code compliance, participates in inspections and plan review, and may serve as the City's Fire Marshal and Fire Investigator.

For a complete list of responsibilities, please review the full job description found here.

OPPORTUNITIES & PRIORITIES

Staffing & Shift Coverage: The Department has four budgeted vacancies following three lateral departures. The City Council also approved two new positions in the current budget cycle. A priority for the Chief will be filling vacancies, balancing shift coverage, and controlling overtime costs. The Chief will have an opportunity to build on the Department's history of retention by mentoring staff and developing an internal succession plan.

Strategic Planning & Standard of Cover: The Department needs a comprehensive strategic plan and a Standard of Cover. Department data indicate that subsequent alarms occur 30% to 40% of the time. Working with staff, the Chief will assess how well current staffing and deployment meets that demand. The Chief will also update the six-year plan for staffing and equipment and establish replacement schedules for heavy apparatus, ambulances, and personal protective equipment.

Fiscal Management & Ambulance Service: The Chief will work with City leadership to navigate ongoing municipal financial pressures while planning for public safety needs. The Ambulance Utility Study, updated in 2025, will help inform that work, along with a review of the Department's capital plan and fire impact fee schedule.

Labor Relations: The collective bargaining agreement with IAFF Local 106, representing Lynden firefighters, expired December 31, 2025. The incoming Chief will play an important role in contract negotiations and in maintaining a productive working relationship with labor. Open communication and a balanced approach to advocating for Department needs will be especially important as the City addresses staffing, shift coverage, and costs.

Regional Partnerships & Community Growth: Lynden Fire enjoys a reputation as a good partner among emergency services providers in Whatcom County. A long-term request has been submitted to the County to consider an additional medic unit in the countywide advanced life support system. The Chief will work with regional partners on training, facility sharing, and mutual and automatic aid. Within the City, the Chief will continue working closely with Community Development to anticipate fire protection and emergency service needs as new development occurs.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Lynden is seeking a transparent, self-aware, and confident Fire Chief who operates with a "no surprises" approach. The ideal candidate will take time to understand the Department's operational culture, listen to the people doing the work, and involve staff in decisions that affect them. Approachable, humble, and open-minded, this leader will explain the "why" behind decisions and follow through on commitments.

The successful candidate will build a cohesive team by setting clear expectations, delegating effectively, and giving staff opportunities to grow. The Chief will hold people accountable and approach discipline, when needed, as a teachable moment. A solution-oriented leader, the Chief will work with staff to establish consistency across shifts, assess processes for efficiencies, and understand what is working well before implementing major changes.

The ideal candidate will bring a demonstrated record of leadership in the fire service, with experience across operations, administration, and fire marshal or community risk reduction duties. A background in labor relations, sound fiscal judgment, and comfort using data and technology will serve the Chief well. As a member of a highly collaborative City Leadership Team, the Chief must be able to advocate for the Department while taking a broad view of issues affecting the entire organization.

Lynden values a Chief who is present and visible in the community. The successful candidate will be comfortable talking with residents and business owners and presenting information to elected officials. In each setting, the Chief will model the City's vision and values and maintain the highest standards of public service.



EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

Qualified candidates will have an associate's degree in fire science, public administration, or a closely related field, and a minimum of seven (7) years of fire service experience, with at least three (3) years of full-time administrative experience in an upper-level position in a public safety agency. Equivalent combinations of education and experience that provide the necessary qualifications may be considered. Completion of the Executive Fire Officer training program is preferred.



Certifications & Special Requirements

- Hold Incident Command System and National Incident Management System certifications for the 100, 200, 300, 400, 700, and 800 series.
- Hold Washington State Emergency Medical Technician-B, Firefighter II, and Fire Officer I and II certifications. The Chief must be able to obtain Fire Officer III and IV certifications within two (2) years of hire.
- Meet the City's IFSAC or WSP and BLS Instructor I certification requirements and be able to obtain Fire Instructor II certification within two (2) years of hire.
- Provide proof of a completed Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) and be able to obtain Emergency Vehicle Incident Prevention (EVIP) certification without a record of suspension or revocation in any state.
- A valid driver's license and appropriate insurance at the time of hire for work-related travel.
- Within six months of hire, reside within a 10-mile radius of the City of Lynden or within an eight-minute response time to the City.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- **$136,790 - 178,480 DOQ**
- Medical and prescription, dental, and vision insurance.
- LEOFF Retirement.
- Social Security replacement contribution, currently 6.2%, to a selected deferred compensation plan.
- Voluntary flexible benefits/cafeteria plan.
- Vacation leave, sick leave, and paid holidays.
- Industrial insurance and life insurance.
- Reasonable relocation assistance.

City of LYNDEN Washington

To learn more about the City of Lynden, please visit:

www.lyndenwa.org

www.lynden.org

The City of Lynden is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by **December 6, 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 **"City of Lynden, WA – Fire Chief"** and click **"Apply Online,"** or click here. Resumes, cover letters, and supplemental questions can be uploaded once you have logged in.

PROTHMAN

www.prothman.com

206.368.0050

© 2026 Prothman. All Rights Reserved.