

# Village of Villa Park

November 2022



## FIRE CHIEF RECRUITMENT PROFILE







## VILLAGE OF VILLA PARK, ILLINOIS FIRE CHIEF RECRUITMENT PROFILE

The Village of Villa Park is pleased to announce the recruitment of candidates and selection process for the next Fire Chief for the Village of Villa Park.

### About the Community

The Village of Villa Park (population 22,263) is ideally located as an "inner" western suburb of Chicago, with direct access to downtown Chicago as well as the rest of the western suburbs. Located just 19 miles directly west of the Chicago Loop, Villa Park is in east central DuPage County. Villa Park covers 4.74 square miles of land area and is served by two fire stations. The Village is bisected by the Union Pacific-West line, that carries the Metra passenger rail service and Canadian National Rail Line.



Residents enjoy a 'small town' atmosphere, highlighted by excellent schools and superior village services, including outstanding police and fire protection, state of the art paramedic service, and exceptional parks and recreational facilities. Public transportation is readily available to ample shopping opportunities, including both local 'mom and pop' stores and nationally recognized businesses. A variety of convenient health services are located in the vicinity including medical centers and community hospitals. Service clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions and the Veterans of Foreign Wars contribute to the active community.

Named *8<sup>th</sup> Best Place to Raise a Family* and *28<sup>th</sup> Best Place to Live in America* by Time Magazine in 2017, Villa Park is a stable community comprised of richly diverse residents from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Villa Park residents are comfortable with a wide variety of housing options including single family and multi-family dwellings that are close to convenient shopping areas.



### About the Department

The Fire Department is staffed with a Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Administrative Assistant, six (6) Lieutenants, eighteen (18) Firefighters/Paramedics and operates two fire stations. Personnel are divided into three shifts who work 24-hour shifts, off for 48 hours. All shift personnel are certified firefighters and licensed paramedics. Sworn Firefighters are represented by the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Villa Park Professional Firefighters Association Local No. 2392. In 2021, the department responded to 3,216 calls.

The Village is a member agency of Du-Comm Public Safety Communications, provide safety communication services to Police, Fire and EMS agencies and is a member of Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) Division 12 which allows for the sharing of resources between area fire departments and fire protection districts and specialty teams. The Village has a total operating budget (FY 2022) of approximately \$78 million with a department budget of approximately \$7.4 million (inclusive of pension contributions).



### About the Position

The next Chief of the Villa Park Fire Department will be a proven leader who can work with all people. The next Chief will strive to create a department that is stronger than the one he/she inherits. While we have an excellent group of men and women with an excellent public service ethic, in no small part due to the current Chief who is retiring after over ten years, all as Fire Chief, the next leader will develop a servant leadership style that will, ideally, create the next leader from within. The next Fire Chief will build leaders at all levels, showing humility, dedication to a shared mission over personal achievement, and they will have a vision of the future and how to get there. The next leader will be confident enough to take full charge of emergency situations, but also be able to have the empathy to counsel staff or direct them to resources after traumatic events. The next leader will have enough self-confidence to not have to come up with all the ideas, and will be able to recognize the best ideas from the entire department, and from other departments.

The successful candidate will need to recruit, hire, and train new members of the team and to build them into leaders that are prepared to serve the community. To do this, the next leader will need to be open to recruiting new firefighter/paramedics from all segments of the Villa Park community (and surrounding areas) without weakening the organization. They will also build on cooperative relationships with neighboring villages and forge new ones to continue to learn.



Qualified applicants must have a bachelor's degree in Fire Science, Public Administration, Business Management or related field and ten (10) years of experience in firefighting, fire rescue, fire prevention and education. Applicants must meet all requirements of 65 ILCS 5/10-7.3 and possess certifications in Firefighter I & II, ACLS, EMT, and CPR.

Per Village Code, all sworn firefighters of the Village of Villa Park must live within thirty (30) miles of the territorial limits of the Village within one (1) year of hire. It is strongly preferred for Chief to live in that area. Living within 5 miles and 15 minutes of the Village boundaries is desired. The next Chief must be available to take a leadership role in fire suppression and other major emergency situations.

## Current Opportunities and Challenges

### Opportunities

- The current Fire Department has a strong, supportive culture and is well trained to serve the community.
- With the purchase of a new fire engine that will be delivered in late summer/early fall, and possibly a new chassis with the old ambulance we will be back on a schedule of buying a fire engine every six years (21 years in service), and an ambulance every three (nine years in service).
- The Village has excellent relationships with neighboring fire departments and fire districts – especially Lombard, Elmhurst, Addison, and Oak Brook Terrace. Many of those chiefs and senior leaders have experience working with and in Villa Park. This regional network as well as the retiring Chief who lives nearby, will be excellent resources.
- You will be joining a leadership team in Villa Park of department heads that are dedicated to dissolving silos and working in cross-functional teams. Aside from the Parks Director Greg Gola, who has been in his position since 2010, the rest of the team has under three years of service here, but a combined decades of experience in other communities. You are urged to join the leadership book club, lead emergency management training across department lines, and bring your own ideas to Villa Park.

### Challenges:

- Full Staff Level currently is one chief, one deputy chief, six lieutenants and eighteen firefighter/paramedics, one part-time fire inspector, one administrative support staff and part-time firefighters. Currently three firefighter/paramedic positions are open. We do not have any part-time fire fighters currently filling in shifts regularly. Several members of the current staff are within five years of being able to retire. A test is being administered on November 19<sup>th</sup> with a goal of identifying three recruits. Finding good candidates for these positions has been difficult. Looking to improve recruiting and identifying part-time or contract labor assistance will be options.
- The rolling stock is good now, with one new fire engine on order and re-chassised ambulance that may be approved by the Village Board this year. However, future capital purchases will become less timely if additional revenues cannot be located as costs for equipment continue to rise. Generally, the Village has reduced staffing levels and used various short-term fixes to address a problem of many built-out, land-locked municipalities: expenses growing a rate much faster than revenues. Regional cooperation will almost certainly eventually give way to regional service. The challenge is how to get there.
- The current contract with the IAFF Local 2392 runs until April 30, 2023. Currently wages for Villa Park are lower than most surrounding locations.
- Currently Village code requires that we hire certified paramedics who also want to be firefighters. The Village has the ability under our Code to contract for paramedic/firefighter service, but the Collective Bargaining Agreement limits how that can be done. Until staffing levels are increased, the overtime burden on the staff is great, and contracting for paramedics would help that burden.





### **Compensation and Benefits**

The anticipated starting salary is \$140,000 +/- DOQ. A comprehensive benefit package includes health insurance including medical, dental, and vision coverage (also available to dependents), life insurance and participation in a pension program. The Village also offers paid vacation, holidays, personal days and sick time.

### **Selection Process**

Candidates should apply immediately with a resume, cover letter, and contact information for three professional references online to Assistant Village Manager, Suzanne McVey at [smcvey@invillapark.com](mailto:smcvey@invillapark.com). First review of candidates shall occur on November 28, 2022.

A full job description and additional information about the Village of Villa Park can be found at [www.invillapark.com](http://www.invillapark.com). The Village of Villa Park is an Equal Opportunity Employer.