

FIRE CHIEF

ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT



Why Apply?



Estes Valley Fire Protection District offers a unique opportunity to lead a high-performing combination organization in one of Colorado's most distinctive and engaged communities. The District is operationally sound, well-equipped, and supported by a motivated volunteer force and dedicated administrative staff. Serving a tourism-driven, family-oriented mountain community with complex wildfire risk, the organization plays a critical role in public safety and resilience. Backed by strong community support, a rich volunteer tradition, and growing opportunities in mitigation and service delivery, the next Fire Chief will help shape long-term strategy, strengthen organizational culture, and guide the District into the future.



Welcome to ESTES VALLEY

Estes Valley is a scenic mountain community located about 70 miles northwest of Denver at the eastern entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park. Anchored by the town of Estes Park, the valley sits at an elevation of approximately 7,500 feet in Larimer County and is known for its dramatic mountain setting, abundant wildlife, strong sense of community, and more than 300 days of sunshine a year.

Surrounded by some of the most spectacular scenery in the Rocky Mountains, Estes Valley serves as a gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park, which draws more than 4 million visitors each year. The region features over 350 miles of hiking trails, along with iconic destinations such as Trail Ridge Road—the highest continuous paved highway in North America—and Longs Peak, one of Colorado’s most recognized 14,000-foot mountains.

Estes Park (pop. 5,700) serves as basecamp to the national park and the cultural and commercial center of the valley. Its historic downtown has a lively yet relaxed atmosphere, with more than 200 locally owned shops, galleries, and restaurants—and the occasional wandering elk. The popular Riverwalk offers a meandering stroll through downtown, guiding visitors past storefronts along the Fall River and Big Thompson River.

On the edge of town lies Lake Estes, a picturesque reservoir offering fishing, paddleboarding, kayaking, and boating, along with a 4-mile multi-use paved path that circles the lake. Outdoor recreation defines life in the valley, from hiking, mountain biking, and rock climbing in summer to snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in winter.

The valley enjoys a close-knit feel and celebrates their community spirit and sense of place with annual events like Elk Fest, Rooftop Rodeo, Scottish-Irish Festival, and Catch the Glow Parade. Historic landmarks such as The Stanley Hotel—famous for inspiring Stephen King’s *The Shining*—add to the area’s character.





THE ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

The Estes Valley Fire Protection District (EVFPD) is a combination fire department providing fire protection and emergency services to approximately 12,000 year-round residents across 77 square miles in the town of Estes Park, unincorporated areas of Larimer County, and portions of Rocky Mountain National Park. As a premier tourist destination, the valley experiences seasonal population surges to more than 50,000 during peak months.

Volunteer firefighters have proudly protected the Estes Valley for over 100 years. Originally founded as an all-volunteer department in 1907, EVFPD became a special district in 2009. The District is governed by a five-member Board of Directors, elected at large to four-year terms, and with a maximum of two terms. With a 2026 budget of \$3.1 million, the District operates two stations and responds to roughly 800 calls annually. Staffing includes 10 budgeted full-time positions and approximately 45 volunteer firefighters and auxiliary members. The administrative team consists of the Fire Chief, Division Chief of Operations and Training, Division Chief of Community Risk Reduction, Executive Assistant, and Administrative Specialist. The District is also a regional training leader and proudly hosts the Estes Valley Regional Fire Academy. Emergency medical services are provided by Estes Park Health (UCHealth).

EVFPD lies in the heart of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) with a diverse and challenging mountain environment. While the valley's population is almost evenly divided between the Town and surrounding district areas, the Town comprises only about 10% of the District's service area. The geography ranges from a high-traffic downtown commercial center to remote forests, rivers, and lakes. As a highly desirable place to live, the District's total property values are only surpassed within Larimer County by the cities of Loveland and Fort Collins. In addition to mutual agreements with neighboring jurisdictions, the District works closely with Larimer County, the State Forest Service, and Rocky Mountain National Park.





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THE FIRE CHIEF

Reporting to the District Board of Directors, the Fire Chief is responsible for the overall management of the Fire District, including administration, community risk reduction, training, logistics and facilities support and emergency response operations. The Fire Chief responds to and assumes command of emergency scenes as needed and must live within the District’s primary response area.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES:

Volunteer Culture & Alignment

The next Fire Chief must bring greater unity to the organization by recognizing the importance of its volunteers, building trust with all District members, reinforcing accountability, and ensuring that all members feel valued, heard, and aligned around the shared goal of maintaining a world-class volunteer system.

Funding, Elections, and Capital Planning

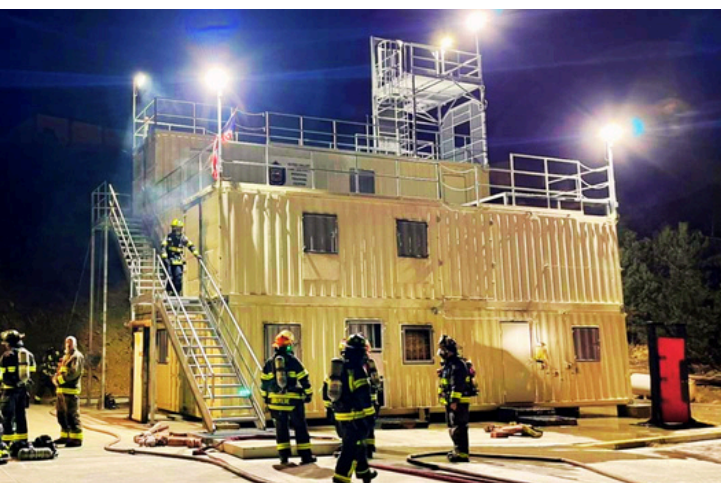
Long-term financial sustainability will be a central challenge. The District faces pressures related to cost of living, capital expenditures, apparatus replacement, and facility needs. Future funding mechanisms—such as mill levies or sales tax measures—will require a Chief who is politically savvy, comfortable with elections, and capable of clearly communicating needs to the community, the membership, and Board.

Wildfire Risk & Community Expectations

Operating in a high-risk wildfire environment, the District must continue advancing mitigation efforts, preparedness, and response capabilities. With significant mitigation funding and increasing community expectations, the Chief must balance operational readiness with long-term planning, working closely with town leadership, regional partners, and federal partners to ensure a coordinated and proactive approach.

Growth, Strategy, and Regional Awareness

While operationally sound, the organization must continue evolving to keep pace with industry standards, technology, and regional collaboration. Opportunities exist to strengthen strategic planning, improve situational awareness of emerging trends, and enhance interoperability with mutual aid partners. The Chief will play a key role in positioning the District as a forward-thinking leader in the region.



IDEAL CANDIDATE TRAITS

- **Servant Leader with Presence** – Visible, approachable, and actively engaged in the community, district response, and with members at all levels.
- **Culture Builder** – Promotes cohesion between administrative staff and volunteer personnel, fostering a unified, respectful, and accountable organization.
- **Strategic Leader & CEO** – Looks beyond daily operations to design and execute long-term strategy, develop and manage responsible budgets, and confidently guide the organization’s future.
- **Political & Community Acuity** – Builds strong Board and Town Trustee relationships; stewards and educates the community through future funding elections; and manages community expectations with transparency, trust-building, and credibility.
- **Operationally Credible** – Brings strong structural and wildland fire experience, while remaining focused on the District's mission and strategic objectives.
- **Volunteer System Advocate** – Respects, enhances, and strengthens the District's volunteer system through recruitment, retention, and engagement.
- **Collaborative Regional Partner** – Works effectively with law enforcement, mutual aid partners, and state, regional, and federal fire agencies.
- **Strong Communicator** – Transparent, honest, and consistent in messaging—able to clearly articulate vision, expectations, and the “why.” Excels in active listening.
- **Coach & Mentor** – Invests in succession planning and leadership development, building the next generation of leaders for the entire organization.
- **Financial & Governance Competence** – Understands special district finance, capital planning, elections, and long-term funding strategies.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

- Bachelor's degree in fire science or administration, or related field.
- 10+ years of progressive fire service experience, including 5+ years in a supervisory or management capacity.
- Or a combination of education and experience that demonstrates the ability to perform the job.

CERTIFICATIONS:

- CPR/AED
- NIMS 100, 200, 300, 400, 700, 800
- DFPC Fire Officer II or equivalent

DESIRED: Experience in special districts, wildland fire suppression and risk reduction, budget development and implementation, and leadership in a combination department with fire/EMS.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

EVFPD is offering an annual salary range of \$150,941 to \$169,886 for this position, depending on qualifications and experience, along with a comprehensive [benefits](#) package.

- Medical, Dental, & Vision Insurance
- Flexible Health Spending Account (FSA)
- Paid Vacation, Sick Leave & 10 Holidays
- FPPA Retirement/ Death & Disability
- 457 (District contributes \$75/pay period)
- Take-Home Vehicle



RESOURCES

[2026 Budget](#)

[2024 Year End Report](#)

[2026 Org Chart](#)

[District Map](#)

[2022 ISO Report](#)

[Wildfire Protection Plan](#)

[Visit Estes Park](#)



TO APPLY

Apply Online: gmphr.com

First Review: **May 17, 2026**

More Info: Don Lombardi, GMP Consultants
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