

Police Chief

RECRUITMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Why Apply?

This position offers an opportunity to lead a professional, dedicated workforce and partner effectively with the community to ensure continued exceptional service delivery in one of Washington State's largest cities. The Vancouver Police Department enjoys strong support from the community and the City's elected and administrative officials. The next Police Chief will benefit from increased resources from the State of Washington and a local public safety sales tax to support additional staffing for this fast-growing community. The Chief will also have an opportunity to help advance plans for a new police headquarters and expansion of the Neighborhood Police Officer program.



Welcome to Vancouver

Located alongside the Columbia River across from Portland, Vancouver is a vibrant and growing community of 200,000—Washington's fourth-largest city. With an expanding culinary and art scene, Vancouver offers the excitement of a major metropolitan area along with small-town charm and family-friendly neighborhoods.

As one of the oldest cities in Washington state, Vancouver offers a unique mix of historic heritage and revitalized urban areas like the Vancouver Waterfront, which features restaurants, public art, and scenic walking trails along the river. Vancouver's commercial districts are anchored by national retailers alongside thriving local businesses and growing tech and manufacturing sectors. Clark College and Washington State University Vancouver also contribute significantly to the local economy and add a youthful energy to the city.

Vancouver benefits from its proximity to Portland, expanding economic and cultural opportunities for residents. Vancouver has also become increasingly attractive to remote workers and creative professionals who appreciate its lack of a state income tax and lower cost of living.

With Mount St. Helens to the north, the Columbia River Gorge and Cascade Range to the east, and the Pacific Coast to the west, the city is perfectly positioned for year-round outdoor recreation and exploration. For winter sports enthusiasts, Mount Hood's ski areas are just over 90 minutes away. The nearby Willamette and Columbia Valleys offer wine enthusiasts a collection of renowned wineries and tasting rooms.

Residents enjoy more than 100 parks, miles of scenic trails, and annual events like the Vancouver Farmers Market, summer concerts, and the monthly First Friday Art Walk. Vancouver enjoys mild weather with four distinct seasons and less annual rainfall than Boston or Atlanta. Summer temperatures hover around the 70s–80s, and winter nights seldom drop below 30°F.





The City of Vancouver

Founded in 1825 and incorporated in 1857, the City of Vancouver operates with a 2027-28 biennial budget of \$2.3 billion and 1,430 full-time equivalent positions. The City Manager's Office leads 12 departments: City Attorney, Communications, Community Development, Economic Prosperity & Housing, Financial & Management Services, Fire, General Services, Human Resources, Engagement & Access, Police, Public Works, and Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Services.

The City operates under a Council-Manager form of government, with a seven-member City Council—including the Mayor—elected at large to four-year terms. Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle has been serving in her role since 2018. City Manager Lon Pluckhahn has served in his current role since 2024, following his previous position as one of the City's deputy city managers.

In 2023, the City adopted its Strategic Plan, identifying Community Safety, Climate Action, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as strategic priorities. The City is also guided by five organizational values: Collaborative, Inclusive, Innovative, Compassionate, and Empowered.





The Vancouver Police Department

The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) is a full-service, 24-hour municipal police agency operating across 51.84 square miles in Southwest Washington. The Department operates with a budget of \$85 million and is authorized for 254 sworn personnel and 57.5 professional staff positions. VPD handles approximately 115,000 dispatched incidents annually, ranging from routine calls for service to serious crimes and complex public safety emergencies.

VPD provides comprehensive police services through its Patrol Bureau, Investigations Division, Special Operations Division, and Administrative Bureau. The Patrol Bureau provides around-the-clock response with approximately 100 patrol officers and supervisors. Community-focused resources include four Neighborhood Police Officers and the Homeless Assistance and Resource Team (HART). The Investigations Division maintains specialized units addressing violent and property crimes, domestic violence, crimes against vulnerable populations, financial crimes, cybercrime, and other public safety threats.

Special Operations includes the Southwest Washington Regional SWAT Team, Tactical Services Unit, Traffic Unit, Uncrewed Aerial System (UAS) Program, and K9 Unit. These teams provide specialized capabilities for high-risk incidents, traffic enforcement, tactical operations, and investigations. Additional resources include the Public Order Specialist Team and Cops Having a Talk (CHAT), which emphasizes communication and de-escalation during public-order events.

The Administrative Bureau supports Department operations through training, recruitment, records, evidence management, finance, and policy development. The Professional Standards Unit oversees internal affairs investigations, complaints, use-of-force reviews, and compliance with professional standards. VPD also emphasizes employee wellness through its Peer Support and Resilience Program and community engagement through Neighbors on Watch (NOW), a volunteer program supporting crime prevention and community partnerships.

The Police Chief

As Vancouver grows, the City needs a Police Chief who understands the community's expanding demand for police services and can steward recent police funding investments with a clear strategic vision aligned with the City's values, City Manager direction, and City Council priorities.

The Chief will lead by example, holding the department to high standards of integrity and accountability, treating residents and staff with respect, and guiding the department through change with compassion, agility, and transparency. Dedicated to equity and responsive to Vancouver's diverse community, the new Chief will foster deep, trust-based relationships within the City organization and across Vancouver.

Ideal Candidate Traits

- Skilled communicator who can ensure open, transparent communication up and down the chain of command.
- A forward-thinking, personable leader with unimpeachable integrity and ethics who embraces being visible and engaged in the community.
- Actively supports diversity in hiring and promotion opportunities and understands the importance of succession planning.
- A leader who prioritizes officer wellness and demonstrates a strong understanding of established practices that support officers' physical and mental health, including stress management, peer support, and access to wellness resources.
- Demonstrates high emotional intelligence and relates to all segments of the community.
- Is thoughtful, compassionate, respectful, and honest.





Opportunities and Challenges

Annexation

The City and Clark County are currently engaged in discussions about the potential annexation of large swaths of land within the City's urban growth area. The next Police Chief will need to work with the elected and administrative officials to develop a strategic vision and plan to ensure public safety resources are in place if annexations occur.

Staffing and Growth

Currently Washington's fourth-largest city, Vancouver could become the state's second-largest over the next 20 years if major annexations occur. The next Police Chief will need to work with the City's elected officials, administrative team, and community at large to ensure adequate staffing levels to maintain community safety and quality of life.

Regional Leadership

Vancouver is the largest city in Clark County. The next Police Chief will need to evaluate existing agreements related to regional policing activities such as SWAT to ensure that the county's smaller cities are participating at a proportional level.

Technology and Innovation

The next Police Chief will need to be well versed in the latest developments in policing technology, including the use of artificial intelligence, body-worn cameras, cloud-based records management, drones, and electric pursuit vehicles.

New Police Headquarters

The next Police Chief will have an important role in bringing a new police headquarters into operation in the next few years. The City is currently determining whether to retrofit an existing building or build a new facility.



Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree in criminal justice, psychology, business, or a related field, or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience.
- Washington State certification as a Police Officer or the ability to obtain certification within one year of hire.
- Demonstrated progressive supervisory/management experience across a broad range of law enforcement operations, including at least five years of executive leadership experience at the rank of Captain/Commander or higher in a similarly sized organization.
- Experience working in a strong union environment and managing HR, legal matters, discipline, hiring, and budgets.
- Experience working within a Council-Manager form of government.

Preferred

- Relevant master's degree
- Command experience in a similarly sized northwest city
- Attendance at the Senior Management Institute for Police, the FBI National Academy, or a similar executive leadership training program

Compensation and Benefits

Vancouver offers an annual salary range of \$174,780–\$305,868 based on qualifications and experience, along with a comprehensive benefits package:

- Medical, Vision, Prescription, and Dental Insurance
- Personal Time Off and Paid Holidays
- Washington State LEOFF Retirement System
- Deferred Compensation (457 Plan) and 401 Plan with 1% City match
- Other benefits such as life and disability insurance



Resources

City Budget

City Strategic Plan

City Comprehensive Plan

Police Department

Department Annual Report

Visit Vancouver



To Apply

Apply Online: gmphr.com

First Review: **November 15, 2026**

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