Fire Chief
Victoria, Texas
MISSION
To preserve life and property with dedicated and caring service.

VISION
The Leader in Emergency Service Excellence.

CORE VALUES
Professionalism
Leadership
Accountability
Teamwork
Employee Well-Being

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT
With a team of 130 highly trained and dedicated professionals and an annual operating budget of $16 million, the Victoria Fire Department is passionate about helping others and prides itself on providing the community with fire, medical, and rescue services.

While Victoria’s population is slightly over 65,000, its daytime population swells to about 98,000. The department covers an area of 900 square miles in total, serving Victoria County through an interlocal agreement. The department is recognized as a Texas Fire Chief’s Association Best Practices Department and holds honors as an American Heart Association Mission Lifeline Gold Plus and Texas EMS for Children’s Gold department.

In addition to traditional fire and EMS services, Victoria’s first responders are trained in technical rescue, hazardous materials response, confined space rescue, wildland fire fighting, and provide services like bariatric transport, public health support, fire/rescue training for industrial partners and members of the public, and more. The team is also active in mental health programming, cancer prevention initiatives, and community paramedicine. Innovative practices include body-worn cameras, a peer support team for mental health, vaccinations for vulnerable populations, and carrying whole blood to provide emergency transfusions to patients.
ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT continued

The Department responds to approximately 13,000 calls for service each year, with approximately 8,000 of those calls being EMS-related. The department is arranged into three major divisions:

- **Operations**: emergency response, EMS, emergency management, and community paramedicine/public health;
- **Administration**: managing facilities, fleet, equipment maintenance, logistics, hiring, training, Fire Academy, public training; and
- **Fire Marshal’s Office**: fire investigations, inspections, code enforcement, plan review, and public safety education.

ABOUT THE POSITION

Under administrative direction from the City Manager and reporting to an Assistant City Manager, Victoria’s Fire Chief provides strategic direction and planning for delivering the organization’s fire and emergency services. This includes coordinating mutual fire/EMS services with surrounding entities, including Victoria County. Planning, directing, and organizing activities such as firefighting, fire inspection, loss prevention, emergency medical services, and life safety activities; and providing guidance and information to City leaders regarding the department’s services and responsibilities.

This position works through four direct reports: assistant chiefs over each of the department’s three divisions and an executive assistant. Other essential duties include:

- Overseeing and reviewing all fire and emergency medical services and operations daily, including fire prevention and suppression activities, ensuring the overall success of the department
- Evaluating and examining departmental compliance with various agencies and governing regulatory forces
- Developing and managing the department’s budget and plans for resource and staffing allocation, including the purchase and maintenance of equipment and vehicles
- Works within interlocal agreement with Victoria County for OEM services. May be asked to craft, implement, and oversee the City’s readiness and preparedness in the event of a disaster
ABOUT THE POSITION continued

- Supports implementation of a comprehensive fire prevention program for the city by overseeing and reviewing services and operations for the Victoria Fire Marshal’s office.

- Leading, directing, and participating in various training and educational meetings related to firefighting, emergency medical service, and related duties; ensuring City standards are maintained and communicated to the department; and keeping up to date on industry best practices.

- Directing, monitoring, and evaluating the performance of department personnel and objectives, assigning tasks and projects, analyzing workload trends, and meeting established benchmark metrics for the department.

- Representing the Fire Department to other departments, elected officials, and outside agencies; performing departmental public relations activities; and serving as a liaison to key community partners.

- Preparing technical reports, ordinance recommendations, and EMS/firefighting regulations to meet City and department objectives.

- Overseeing and supporting the department’s physical and mental health programs, including the peer-to-peer support program, chaplain programs, annual fit-for-duty testing, and first responder health assistance programs.

IDEAL CANDIDATE

Victoria’s next Fire Chief will be an authentic, collaborative, and results-driven servant leader with proven fire and emergency services expertise and the knowledge, skills, and ability to lead the department’s daily operations and long-term vision successfully.

The City is seeking someone with exceptional communication, problem-solving, project management, and presentation skills who understands the importance of seamless customer service in providing fire and emergency services that are effective, efficient, and fiscally responsible. The selected individual will unite the Fire Department with a shared sense of purpose, promote teamwork, fully articulate expectations, delegate responsibility with clarity, and create a culture of integrity and accountability. The new Fire Chief will also inspire and motivate others by example, focusing on staff development and mentorship.

The nature of this position requires someone with excellent judgment who can lead effectively even in the most stressful of situations. Candidates should also have a thorough knowledge of modern fire prevention, life safety, fire suppression, emergency medical service, and incident command principles, methods, techniques, and laws. The right fit is humble, creative, and trustworthy, and they approach the job with sincerity and a true passion for public service, carrying out their duties with a commitment to organizational and community engagement and responsiveness.

The City expects the selected candidate to create a culture of excellence, employing fire service best practices, embracing innovation and technology, providing stability, and promoting continuous improvement throughout the department. Ensuring that the needs of residents will be met with the highest degree of professionalism and outstanding customer service will be an ongoing priority.
EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

This position requires a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in public or business administration, emergency management, fire science, or a related field. Candidates should also have at least 10 years of progressively responsible experience as a supervisor with command and administrative experience in a career fire department as a battalion chief or equivalent for at least 5 years.

The role also requires experience in fire-based 911 EMS transport and emergency management experience in an EOC operation at the command or policy level. Required certifications include TCFP Advanced Structural Fire Fighter, TCFP Fire Instructor II, TCFP Fire Officer II, DSHS EMT-Basic, NIMS 100, 200, 300, 400, and 700. Additional required certifications and education include graduating from the Texas Fire Chief’s Association – Fire Chief’s Academy and TEEX Fire Service Chief Executive Officer or TCFP Fire Officer IV. The selected candidate will be required to obtain the TCFP Head of Department Certification within one year of hire.

Experience in applying for and managing local, state, and federal grants is preferred. Along with certifications as a TCFP Master Structural Fire Fighter, TCFP Fire Investigator, TCFP Fire Inspector, and National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer designation.

An equivalent combination of education, training, and experience will be considered, and the city reserves the right to allow substitutions if an applicant exceeds requirements in one area but may be deficient in another.

Please note that the selected candidate must establish residency within Victoria County.
OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The new Fire Chief will first prioritize getting to know the community, delving into the organization’s operations, understanding resident expectations, and learning the department’s vision for the future. With that solid foundation, they will take on several opportunities and challenges.

In the short term, City leaders would like to see the new chief develop a plan for fire facilities and staffing, ensuring the department can continue meeting community needs in the years ahead. The selected candidate will also craft a community engagement strategy, prioritizing stakeholder voices and desires as decisions are made about customer service and strengthening bonds between fire department personnel and the community through programs focused on mental health, general preparedness, and bystander CPR.

As communities across the country are experiencing, particularly in public safety positions, recruitment and retention continue to be challenging. This position will assist in recruiting qualified applicants, ensuring the department provides a collaborative and supportive work environment, and training and developing staff with the goal of growing leaders. The rising costs of fire equipment and the sustainability of the whole blood program on Victoria’s ambulances have also been departmental concerns, and the new Chief will work on those challenges.

Fire Station #1 was recently renovated, and one of the department’s engines is being refurbished. City Council also approved contracts earlier this year to pave the way for a planned public safety headquarters that will house police, fire administration, 911 dispatch, and the municipal court, set to open in mid-2025. Other long-term priorities include maintaining the organization’s ISO 2 rating, managing capital improvement plans for the department focused on fire station and training facility construction and maintenance, and adapting recruitment and retention strategies as needed to see the average tenure of Fire Department personnel increase.
THE COMMUNITY

As one of the state’s most historic cities, Victoria is the place where Texas history was written and the legendary Texas cattle industry began. The original colony, founded in 1824 by impresario Don Martin de Leon, was named for the first president of Mexico, Don Guadalupe Victoria. The Town was established at a site known earlier as Cypress Grove due to the abundant cypress trees growing along the banks of the Guadalupe River. Victoria is the county seat of Victoria County and the third charter city created in 1836 under the Republic of Texas.

Victoria is located in the heart of the Golden Crescent of South Texas, with a diverse population of nearly 65,000 and encompassing an area of approximately 37 square miles. Victoria is a cultural, historical, medical, educational, and economic hub for the region. With major highways 77, 59, 87, and the future Interstate 69 intersecting in Victoria, coupled with its prime position along the NAFTA Corridor, the City is known as “The Crossroads of South Texas.”

Today, Victoria remains at the forefront of new business and technology, with a strong plastics manufacturing industry, petrochemical, industrial chemical plants, oil and gas exploration, and a growing medical service community. The availability of a high-speed fiber optics technology network, higher education, and a burgeoning retail trade sector has made Victoria an excellent location for businesses and residents.

The Coastal Plains region of Texas is renowned for hunting, fishing, and birding. Victoria also offers a variety of recreational opportunities and cultural outlets, with the Victoria Symphony, local theater, and several notable museums.
THE COMMUNITY continued

celebrating its heritage. The city is a certified Film Friendly Texas community, a designated Music Friendly community, and is among the Texas Historical Commission’s celebrated Texas Main Street cities.

Victoria is an inviting community with friendly residents and provides a great climate and hospitality for wintering visitors. With the major cities of South Texas nearby and the short distance to the Texas coast along the Gulf of Mexico, the city is ideal for permanent residents, visitors, and “Winter Texans” who come for the temperate climate. The community also enjoys coming together for special events throughout the year, including Downtown Rhythms, the Bach Festival, Merry on Main, and the Viva Texas Film Festival.

There are two higher education campuses within the City: the two-year Victoria College and the University of Houston at Victoria. Public education is offered by Victoria ISD, the largest public school system in the Golden Crescent, which serves nearly 13,500 students on 14 elementary campuses, four middle schools, and three high schools. Victoria also has a variety of private and parochial options.

Victoria’s median household income is approximately $59,350; an average home is just under $224,000.
GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

The City of Victoria was incorporated in 1915 and adopted its home rule charter in 1956. The charter provides for a council-manager form of government with a City Council comprised of the Mayor and six Council members. The Mayor is elected at large for a three-year term. Four Council members are elected from single-member districts, and two are elected by super districts. Members serve three-year terms. No elected official shall serve more than four consecutive terms of office. The Council, among other duties, appoints the City Manager, City Attorney, and Municipal Court Judge.

City Manager Jesús A. Garza was appointed Victoria’s City Manager in May 2019. A native of Brownsville, Mr. Garza previously served as the City Manager for the City of Kingsville, Texas. Before his three and a half years in Kingsville, Mr. Garza worked within the City Manager’s Office for the City of San Antonio, served as the first full-time City Administrator for the City of Von Ormy, Texas, and worked for the international non-profit organization Mexicans and Americans Thinking Together as Director of Economic Development Initiatives. Mr. Garza is involved with various nonprofit organizations and serves as a Trustee for the Texas Municipal Retirement System.

The City of Victoria is a full-service municipality, providing general administrative services, police and fire protection, emergency ambulance service, streets, water and sanitary sewer utilities, parks, and recreation services, public improvements, planning, and solid waste residential service provided by roughly 654 employees. The City’s Fiscal Year 2024 Budget is approximately $256 million, supported through a combined effective property tax rate of .4898 cents and a city sales tax of 1.5% (coupled with Texas and County sales tax rates of 6.25% and 0.5%, respectively).
The $256 million budget includes a $97.6 million capital improvement program for infrastructure projects, such as:

- A modern public safety headquarters that will house the Victoria Police Department, the Victoria Fire Department administration, and the Municipal Court
- Historic funding for street repairs, with an emphasis on residential streets
- Drainage and utility improvements
- Phase III of the citywide LED lighting project in partnership with AEP
- Additional vehicles for first responders
- A new compensation study to ensure that the city is staying competitive in the job market
- Improved compensation for eligible first responders and experienced employees

Finally, 2024 will have us celebrating Victoria’s 200th birthday in the fall and will include a large-scale celebration in the downtown area. The bicentennial will be a once-in-a-lifetime celebration of Victoria’s past, present and future.
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The City of Victoria is offering a salary of $120,000 to $140,000 for this position, dependent on experience, training, and qualifications. The organization’s competitive benefits package includes health, life, dental, and vision insurance; paid time off, paid parental leave, longevity pay, 15 paid holidays; and health club membership reimbursements. This position also receives a cell phone and computer, and the Fire Department enjoys flexible work schedules, a department gym, and a First Responder Health Program.

City employees contribute to Social Security, and Victoria participates in the Texas Municipal Retirement System (6% employee contribution, matched 2:1 by the City). An optional deferred compensation plan is also available.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please apply online

For more information on this position, contact:

Rudy Jackson, Senior Vice President
RudyJackson@GovernmentResource.com
817-897-8080

The City of Victoria is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists for this position will be subject to a comprehensive background check.

RESOURCES

City of Victoria
victoriatx.gov

Fire Department
victoriatx.gov/161/Fire-Department

Victoria EDC
victoriaedc.com

Victoria Convention and Visitors Bureau
explorevictoriatexas.com

Victoria Main Street Program
victoriatx.gov/163/Main-Street-Program

Victoria Chamber of Commerce
victoriachamber.org

VTV15
https://www.victoriatx.gov/209/Watch-TV15