



# CHIEF OF POLICE

## CITY OF WILMINGTON NORTH CAROLINA

The City of Wilmington is seeking a dynamic and experienced leader to serve as its next Chief of Police, guiding a nationally accredited department in a city that blends Southern hospitality with progressive momentum. Located in New Hanover County, Wilmington is home to a diverse, vibrant, family-friendly community of approximately 123,000 residents. It spans 52.97 square miles and lies 43 feet above sea level, highlighting an eclectic landscape of scenic waterfronts, historic districts, and thriving residential communities.

Recognized as one of the “Most Charming River Towns in North Carolina” (*World Atlas* 2023) and one of the “15 Most Beautiful Coastal Towns in the South” (*Southern Living* 2024), Wilmington offers residents and visitors the perfect blend of coastal charm with the convenience of urban amenities. The city’s bustling Riverwalk is ranked among the top 10 in the nation by *USA Today* and serves as a focal point for dining, shopping, and entertainment. Wilmington is also known for its thriving arts and music scene, with the Greenfield Lake Amphitheater (capacity 1,400) and the Live Oak Bank Pavilion (capacity 7,200) hosting dozens of concerts each season. The city also boasts a deep-water port, one of North Carolina’s largest, playing a critical role in regional commerce and trade.

Wilmington continues to strengthen its focus on elevating community voices and makes public safety a shared priority. From its historic downtown and vibrant entertainment districts to its coastal and residential neighborhoods, the city’s varied communities call for a thoughtful and adaptable approach to policing that balances innovation, tradition, and dedicated service.

This dedication to inclusive progress is deeply rooted in Wilmington’s complex and resilient history. Founded in 1739 along the Cape Fear River, Wilmington has played a vital role in key moments throughout American history, including the American Revolution and the Civil War. In 2020, the city was named the first World War II Heritage City in the United States, recognizing its contributions to the war effort and its lasting legacy as a military hub.





The city was also the site of the only successful coup d'état in U.S. history in 1898—an event that continues to shape its path forward. Today, 1898 Memorial Park serves as a symbol of the city's continued work towards unity and progress.

## CITY GOVERNMENT

The City of Wilmington operates under a Council-Manager form of government.

- The City Council consists of seven elected members, including the mayor, who set policy direction for the city.
- The City Manager is responsible for daily operations, overseeing all city departments, including the Wilmington Police Department.

The City Council and City Manager are very supportive of public safety and initiatives geared toward creating a superior quality of life for residents and a thriving business environment for community partners. The Chief of Police reports directly to the City Manager and serves as a key advisor on all public safety initiatives, crime prevention strategies, and community policing efforts.

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Wilmington Police Department is a community-focused police agency with an annual budget of \$42 million. The department is currently authorized for 281 sworn officers and 78 professional staff, with an actual complement of 263 sworn officers and 64 professional staff members. The command staff comprises the Chief of Police and three Deputy Chiefs, each of whom leads one of the department's three primary bureaus: (1) the Office of the Chief, (2) the Support Services Bureau, and (3) the Field Services Bureau. There is currently one Deputy Chief vacancy, which the city will seek to fill after the selection of the Chief of Police.



In 2024, the department responded to nearly 150,000 calls for service. As the largest and busiest department in the region, the department is deeply committed to responsive, effective, and efficient service delivery and prides itself on its culture of innovation, which includes a cutting-edge Real-Time Crime Center that seamlessly delivers intelligence to officers in the field to help enhance situational awareness, improve response times, and drive proactive policing efforts. These efforts also contributed to a 15 percent decrease in homicides, a 26 percent decrease in robberies, and a 22 percent decrease in burglaries from 2023 levels. You can learn more about this dynamic agency in the [WPD 2024 Annual Report](#).

Demonstrating its deep commitment to community-based policing, the Wilmington Police Department strengthens relationships with residents through a variety of unique initiatives, such as the “Frozen Five-0 Van,” which connects officers with the city’s youth and young at heart by serving up sweet frozen treats at various community events. The department also uplifts its unhoused population through the “Getting Home Street Outreach Program,” a collaboration between police and social workers to connect individuals to essential services such as storage access, transportation, laundry services, and other critical resources. To further enhance training and community engagement, the department established the Haynes/Lacewell Police and Fire Training Facility, a state-of-the-art center designed to provide advanced training for both police officers and firefighters. This facility has a 100-yard firing range and multiple simulation training modules and offers citizen academies and immersive interaction simulations to individuals and businesses, promoting transparency and strengthening the relationships between public safety personnel and the Wilmington community.





The department holds dual accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) and the North Carolina Law Enforcement Accreditation (NCLEA), reflecting its dedication to best practices, accountability, and continuous improvement in public safety, ensuring that the Wilmington Police Department operates under nationally recognized standards in law enforcement policy, operations, and professional conduct.



## POSITION OVERVIEW

The Chief of Police is responsible for the leadership, strategic direction, and operational effectiveness of the Wilmington Police Department. The selected candidate will do the following:

- Lead a forward-thinking, community-centered police department, preparing officers to succeed in their mission to provide fair, effective, and ethical public safety services.
- Work collaboratively with city leadership on responsible financial planning, including budget management, forecasting, and securing funding to support departmental priorities.
- Champion officer recruitment, retention, and career development initiatives, advocating for competitive pay, professional growth opportunities, wellness initiatives, and appropriate resources.
- Create a departmental culture of accountability, integrity, and respect, ensuring that policies are applied fairly and consistently while promoting clear and professional communication at all levels, fostering an environment in which officers and professional staff will feel valued, supported, empowered, and motivated to serve.
- Enhance crime reduction strategies through innovative approaches, including data-driven policing, crisis response coordination, and community-based interventions that engage key stakeholders.
- Develop relationships with business leaders and community advocates to promote public safety initiatives that support economic growth and neighborhood well-being.
- Strengthen partnerships with local and state agencies and organizations to ensure preparedness for emergency situations, including natural disasters, major events, and public safety crises.



# THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The next Chief of Police will be a proactive and visionary leader who authentically cultivates trust, transparency, and collaboration while ensuring professional excellence and accountability in the department and building a coalition of community and business partnerships to enhance outreach and promote public safety through prevention, intervention, preparedness, and enforcement.

At a minimum, the selected candidate will have a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, business, or other relevant field and five years of command-level experience or an equivalent combination of education, experience, and training. The successful candidate will also need to complete a thorough background investigation successfully.

Candidates are required to possess a valid North Carolina C Class driver's license and be certified or have the ability to successfully complete Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification within the required state time frames. A master's degree or other advanced degree, along with additional leadership education, such as FBI National Academy, Senior Management Institute for Police, or the Southern Police Institute, is also highly desirable.



In addition to being visible and accessible, certain traits will be essential for the success of the next Chief. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated effectiveness in the following areas:

- Strategic thinking with the ability to set and articulate long-term goals, align departmental priorities with community needs, and lead transformative change
- A leadership style defined by integrity, ethical decision-making, collaborative problem-solving, and a commitment to fairness and equity at all levels of the organization
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage effectively in the department and across all segments of the community, including residents, business leaders, advocacy groups, and elected officials
- A track record of assessing, implementing, and sustaining meaningful improvements to policing services to ensure fair, equitable, and consistent public safety outcomes across all communities in a growing and diverse city
- Extensive command experience and a deep understanding of the evolving challenges facing modern policing, with the education, training, and expertise necessary to implement contemporary, accountable, and community-centered public safety practices
- A demonstrated history of strong administrative leadership, with expertise in managing and optimizing the delivery of policing services in a growing and diverse city
- Advocacy for employee wellness and safety, ensuring that mental health, resilience, and professional development are priorities in the department
- Proven experience in designing and implementing innovative and inclusive hiring, retention, and staffing strategies that reflect the diversity of the community
- A history of proactive outreach and engagement, with a commitment to visibility across all levels of the department, ensuring officers feel heard, supported, and valued

## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The expected hiring range for this position is \$180,000 to \$195,000, with the final salary based on qualifications and experience. The City offers a comprehensive benefits package, including health coverage, retirement plans, and wellness programs. The Police Chief will participate in the North Carolina Local Government Employees' Retirement System (LGERS). In addition, the City provides an automatic contribution to a 401(k) plan, and employees have the option to make additional contributions to either a 401(k) or a 457 plan. Relocation assistance may also be provided if the selected candidate qualifies.





## CONFIDENTIALITY

North Carolina law considers applications for employment to be part of a potential employee's personnel records, and personnel records are not public records that are subject to disclosure by the employer under state law.



## HOW TO APPLY

The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) is assisting the city in the selection process. For questions about this position, contact Antoinette Tull at [antoinette@hurtlellc.com](mailto:antoinette@hurtlellc.com) or (804)640-0323 or Rebecca Neuburger at [rcneuburger@gmail.com](mailto:rcneuburger@gmail.com) or (202)997-6287.

Qualified candidates may apply in confidence and should send a cover letter, resume, and a list of five references by May 5, 2025, to [WilmingtonPC@policeforum.org](mailto:WilmingtonPC@policeforum.org).

The City of Wilmington is an Equal Opportunity Employer. It does not discriminate based on race, sex, age, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or disability status.

