



SOUTH WHATCOM FIRE AUTHORITY

ASSISTANT CHIEF OF SUPPORT SERVICES

EXECUTIVE JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

SALARY RANGE (2027)	POSITION	LOCATION
\$153,797 - \$162,062	Full-time, exempt	Bellingham, Washington
FIRST REVIEW	STATUS	REPORTS TO
November 12, 2026	Open until filled	Fire Chief

LEAD THE SERVICES THAT KEEP US READY!

South Whatcom Fire Authority is seeking an experienced, forward-thinking fire service leader to serve as its first Assistant Chief of Support Services. This executive-level position offers a unique opportunity to shape a new division responsible for the facilities, technology, logistics, assets, and community risk reduction programs that support the Fire Authority's operational readiness.

The successful candidate will combine proven fire service leadership with strong administrative, technical, project management, and relationship-building skills. This individual will join the Fire Authority's management team, report directly to the Fire Chief, and help develop sustainable systems that support employees, volunteers, partner agencies, and the communities we serve. The position may also represent the Fire Authority during collective bargaining and may serve as Fire Chief, when needed.

Our Community

South Whatcom Fire Authority serves communities within the greater Bellingham and south Whatcom County area, including Chuckanut Drive, Lake Samish, Yew Street Road, Geneva, and Sudden Valley. There are approximately 13,700 residents within the 21 square mile Fire Authority jurisdiction, along with numerous visitors to our adjacent outdoor recreation areas that include Lake Whatcom, Lake Samish, Galbraith Mountain, Larrabee State Park, and many others.

The Fire Authority also protects major transportation corridors for both commercial and recreational use along Interstate 5, Pacific Highway, and Chuckanut Dr – State Route 11.

About South Whatcom Fire Authority

South Whatcom Fire Authority is a regional fire service authority, formed in 2009, that is committed to protecting life, property, and the environment through effective and efficient fire and emergency life-safety services. The organization is supported by career firefighters, chief officers, volunteer and part-paid firefighters, administrative personnel, and an elected Board of Fire Commissioners.

The Assistant Chief of Support Services is a newly established executive position designed to improve the coordination, consistency, and long-term management of logistical support and community engagement functions. The Board of Fire Commissioners approved the position's job description as part of the Fire Authority's effort to strengthen operational support, organizational efficiency, and long-term readiness.

The Position

The Assistant Chief of Support Services assists with planning, organizing, directing, implementing, and monitoring support service functions and community risk reduction activities. The position directly supervises the Facilities Maintenance Technician and Information Technology Systems Administrator (or vendor) and may supervise additional employees or volunteers as assigned. When assigned a supervisory role within the Incident Command System, the position will also supervise operations personnel.

This is an ideal opportunity for a collaborative leader who can move effectively between strategic planning and hands-on implementation. The successful candidate will understand that reliable facilities, secure technology, accountable asset management, coordinated logistics, and proactive risk reduction are essential components of emergency service delivery.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the implementation, maintenance, readiness, and lifecycle management of Fire Authority facilities, equipment, and support systems.
- Manage Fire Authority assets.
- Coordinate and oversee information technology systems, technology planning, and cybersecurity considerations.
- Manage facility maintenance and improvement projects.
- Develop, implement, and oversee community risk reduction programs.
- Assist in development and management of the annual budget.
- Prepare reports concerning facilities, support services, technology systems, and community risk reduction activities.
- Supervise employees, establish expectations, support professional development, and conduct performance appraisals.
- Participate in local, regional, and state organizations and serve on committees as assigned.
- Coordinate with emergency management partners, including Community Emergency Response Team and Auxiliary Communication Service participants.
- Respond to major incidents when requested and, when authorized, assume command or another supervisory Incident Command System role.
- Participate in the rotating Duty Officer schedule as assigned.

Minimum Qualifications

- High school diploma or GED.
- Associate degree or higher, or an equivalent combination of knowledge, skills, and experience as determined by the Board of Fire Commissioners.
- Ten years of prior firefighter experience.
- Current Washington State Emergency Medical Technician certification.
- One of the following supervisory experience pathways:
 - At least five years of supervisory experience as a fire lieutenant or higher with South Whatcom Fire Authority;
 - At least four years of career supervisory experience as a fire lieutenant or higher; or
 - Equivalent supervisory experience as determined by the Board of Fire Commissioners.
- IFSAC or NFPA-equivalent Instructor I certification and an Incident Safety Officer certificate, or the ability to obtain both within six months after appointment.

- Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II qualifications consistent with NFPA 1021, or the ability to obtain them within 12 months after appointment.
- Successful completion of the Whatcom County Fire Officer I and II Tactics course or an industry-equivalent program.
- Greater than basic proficiency with commonly used business and communications software and technology devices.
- At least 21 years of age at the time of appointment.
- Valid Washington State driver license by the time of appointment, without a record of suspension or revocation in any state.
- Commercial driver's license endorsement or Emergency Vehicle Incident Prevention program endorsement.
- Ability to meet the Fire Authority's medical/physical standards.
- Must hold primary residency within 20-minutes of a Fire Authority station for incident response requirements.

Desired Qualifications

- A bachelor's degree in education, public policy or administration, management, fire protection, fire technology, fire command and administration, or a related discipline.
- Certifications, education, or relevant experience in facilities management, information technology, cybersecurity, fire prevention, community risk reduction, public education, or capital project and asset management.
- Experience developing and administering budgets, managing projects, supervising multidisciplinary personnel, and working with elected officials, labor organizations, partner agencies, and community groups.

The Ideal Candidate

- Thinks strategically while remaining attentive to implementation details.
- Builds practical, sustainable systems that support emergency operations.
- Communicates clearly with employees, volunteers, elected officials, vendors, partner agencies, and the public.
- Uses sound judgment and makes timely, defensible decisions.
- Understands public-sector accountability, procurement, budgeting, technology, infrastructure, and regulatory compliance.
- Supports a respectful, inclusive, and service-oriented organizational culture.
- Can balance competing priorities while maintaining transparency, consistency, and follow-through.
- Approaches technology and cybersecurity as essential components of organizational readiness.
- Values prevention, public education, and data-informed community risk reduction.
- Is comfortable working in office, vehicle, outdoor, and emergency-scene environments.

Salary & Benefits

2027 Salary Range: \$153,797 – 162,026

Initial placement within the salary range will depend on qualifications and the terms of an individual employment agreement negotiated with the Board of Fire Commissioners.

- Medical, dental, and vision coverage through the WFCA PPO-100 Plan.
- Employer-paid premium coverage of 100% for the employee and 88% eligible dependents.
- 25 vacation days.

- 11 paid holidays.
- Eight hours of sick leave accrued each month.
- Full tuition reimbursement for degree achievement, subject to applicable Fire Authority requirements.
- Typically a 40-hour workweek, although work assignments and hours may vary.
- Washington State LEOFF II retirement pension system.
- Deferred compensation matched up to 6.2%.

Benefit terms are subject to the governing employment agreement, plan documents, applicable law, and Fire Authority policy.

How to Apply

Submit a complete application packet containing:

1. A signed South Whatcom Fire Authority employment application, including Authorization for Release of Information form;
2. A cover letter explaining your interest in the position and describing your leadership experience in support services, facilities, technology, logistics, prevention, or community risk reduction;
3. A professional résumé;
4. Copies of applicable degrees, licenses, and certifications;
5. A photocopy of a valid Washington State driver's license.

SUBMIT BY EMAIL

apply@swrfa.org

SUBMIT IN PERSON OR BY MAIL

South Whatcom Fire Authority
Attn: Assistant Chief of Support Services
Recruitment
2050 Lake Whatcom Boulevard
Bellingham, WA 98229

Recruitment questions: Mitch Nolze, Fire Chief | Email: mnolze@swrfa.org | Office: (360) 676-8080

Recruitment Timeline

Recruitment Milestone	Target Timing
First review of applications	November 12, 2026
Assessment and/or interview invitations	Week of November 16, 2026
Assessment and interview process	Week of November 30, 2026
Finalist interview and conditional selection	By December 18, 2026
Background investigation, reference checks, and pre-employment requirements	Following conditional selection
Anticipated appointment	As early as February 1, 2027, or as soon as practicable following successful completion of the selection process.

Applications received by 4:00 PM on November 12, 2026 will receive first consideration. The position will remain open until filled.

Equal Employment Opportunity

South Whatcom Fire Authority is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Employment decisions are based on job-related qualifications, merit, experience, and organizational needs. We are committed to maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace and encourage qualified individuals from all backgrounds to apply, including women, veterans, and members of underrepresented groups.

South Whatcom Fire Authority provides reasonable accommodation to qualified applicants and employees with disabilities in accordance with applicable federal and state law. Applicants who require accommodation in any phase of the recruitment, application, examination, or selection process should contact the Authority's designated recruitment representative.

Important Notice

This announcement summarizes the position and is not intended to replace the official job description. Applicants should review the complete Assistant Chief of Support Services job description before applying. Final appointment is contingent upon successful completion of all required selection and pre-employment processes including comprehensive background investigation, reference checks, medical/physical exam, and drug screening.