

Police Chief Search

The City of Cedar Rapids engaged the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to conduct a nationwide search for a new Chief of Police. The City selected IACP through a competitive RFP process for their extensive experience in conducting national searches and placing police chiefs. The City is dedicated to finding a leader who can build trust between residents, the Police Department, and the larger community. To achieve this, IACP leveraged an extensive network of law enforcement professionals and marketing best practices in their outreach efforts. A community-feedback-driven process informed the creation of a Candidate Profile used in the job posting.

About the Chief of Police

The Chief of Police in the City of Cedar Rapids is the highest-ranking law enforcement officer, responsible for managing and leading the Police Department while ensuring compliance with laws and regulations. They oversee all employees in the Police Department, including the hiring and training process, and work with other law enforcement agencies and community organizations to maintain public safety. The Police Chief is appointed by the City Manager, with the advice and consent of the Council. Currently, Tom Jonker is serving as interim Police Chief for the City of Cedar Rapids. After a new Police Chief is appointed, Tom Jonker will resume his duties as Deputy Chief.

Search Process & Timeline

Provided by the **International Association of Chiefs of Police**
and the **Cedar Rapids Civil Service Commission**

Step One: Job Description and Candidate Profile Created (August–September 2023)

IACP undertook a thorough exploration to build a Candidate Profile based on community-identified qualifications for the ideal Chief of Police candidate.

According to IACP, Candidate Profile criteria typically include management style, policing philosophy, education, police-command experience, demonstrated ability to work with stakeholders in pursuit of common goals, an unquestionable record of integrity, and demonstrated leadership, management, team-building, and program-implementation skills.

A contemporary Police Chief is expected to:

- promote professional ethics and values,
- foster support for the agency,
- ensure stakeholders are satisfied with police services,
- establish and achieve agency objectives,
- create and maintain an effective and motivated police force,
- manage resources productively,
- demonstrate professional police practices,
- function productively with external agencies, and
- remain accountable to the governing body.

The Chief of Police is a highly visible and influential leader, touching many aspects of the community. Soliciting and incorporating the views of stakeholders within the Cedar Rapids Police Department, City leadership, and the community was an essential part of the process to create a Candidate Profile. The process included:

- stakeholder interviews to gather diverse perspectives,
- a detailed job analysis to understand the intricacies of the role,
- an evaluation of the policing environment to comprehend challenges and opportunities, and
- community and City Department engagement through surveys.

IACP used insights from this process to build a Police Chief Candidate Profile that reflects the needs of the position in serving the Cedar Rapids community. Based on the feedback received, IACP determined the ideal candidate would have experience in the following areas:

- **Community Engagement:** Building strong relationships with the community presents an opportunity for the Cedar Rapids Police Department to gain trust and cooperation from residents. Initiatives such as community policing can help officers connect with citizens, address their concerns, and collaborate on crime prevention efforts.
- **Technology Advancements:** Embracing modern technology, including body-worn cameras, advanced data analytics, and predictive policing software can enhance law enforcement capabilities. This can lead to more effective crime prevention and better resource allocation.
- **Diversity & Inclusion:** Promoting diversity within the police force can improve cultural competency and help officers better serve a diverse population. It can also enhance community trust, reduce bias, and create a more representative police force.
- **Training & Education:** Ongoing training and professional development opportunities can empower officers to handle complex situations with skill and sensitivity. This includes de-escalation training, crisis intervention, and mental health awareness programs.

- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Partnering with other law enforcement agencies, social service organizations, and community groups can help address the root causes of crime, such as poverty, homelessness, and substance abuse, through a comprehensive approach.
- **Accountability & Transparency:** Promoting transparency in police operations, including clear policies on the using of force and a robust system for civilian oversight, can foster trust and credibility with the community.

IACP developed a digital, full-color recruitment booklet describing the position, an overview of the Police Department, and information about the City — designed to elicit responses from the most qualified candidates.

Step Two: Marketing and Recruitment (September–October 2023)

IACP leveraged an extensive network of law-enforcement professionals and marketing best practices in their outreach efforts to recruit nationwide candidates for the position.

In addition to reaching out to over 32,000 IACP members, IACP solicited candidates from diversity-oriented groups like the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA), and the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE). IACP used digital messaging and social media to reach prospective candidates on accounts with more than 60,000 combined followers. IACP further promoted the position through *The Lead* (with more than 30,000 recipients), IACP’s member-only daily law enforcement news briefing; and *IACP Monthly* (with more than 55,000 recipients), IACP’s monthly e-newsletter designed to notify IACP members and partners of important events, announcements, opportunities, and resources.

The posting closed on October 15, 2023, with 17 submissions.

Step Three: Screening and Evaluation (November 2023–January 2024)

Application Material Intake & Initial Review

IACP collected all applications and categorized applicants based on their qualifications relative to the Department’s needs as identified in the Candidate Profile. Evaluation factors included:

- experience as a Chief or at a command level, including breadth and depth of experience;
- employment history;
- experience in an agency and policing environment similar to the Cedar Rapids Police Department;
- demonstrated record of accomplishments in areas of specific relevance to the Cedar Rapids Police Department;
- formal education and training;
- written communication skills and the extent to which the candidate expresses an understanding of the Cedar Rapids Police Department; and

- the candidate’s ability to present and correlate their qualifications with Cedar Rapids’ needs.

This review process included independent ratings by an IACP panel of subject matter expert (SME) assessors. The panel identified highly qualified candidates for initial screening.

IACP determined three applicants did not meet the minimum standards outlined in the posting, moving 14 applicants to the next step. The Civil Service Commission accepted this recommendation.

Candidate Evaluation

After the Civil Service Commission identified a pool of qualified candidates, IACP completed internet screenings to gain insights into candidates’ current agencies, news stories, and social media accounts. This allowed IACP to determine direct questions for virtual, structured interviews. These interviews include a mix of standard executive-search questions and those based on the job profile. Trained police executive subject matter experts independently scored the interviews.

This process allowed IACP to form accurate understandings of each candidates’ background and qualifications. The IACP then created a list of those recommended to move forward in the process, including a recommendation of the five to ten most capable and compatible candidates to the Civil Service Commission.

Semi-Finalist Group Profiles

IACP provided profiles of each semi-finalist to the Civil Service Commission, summarized each candidate’s experience and background, and reviewed their qualifications and characteristics with the Commission.

The IACP recommended eight candidates proceed to the assessment center phase. The Civil Service Commission accepted the recommendation.

Assessment Center

All IACP assessment centers are designed in accordance with the “Guidelines for Ethical Considerations for Assessment Center Operations,” issued by the International Task Force on Assessment Center Guidelines.

IACP incorporated information gathered from the job analysis and identified aspects unique to the Cedar Rapids Police Department. This included desired skills and qualities of the ideal Police Chief as well as the local policing environment. This information helped IACP develop exercises that evaluated both the technical competence and appropriate fit of the finalist group of candidates. This also provided a method for content validation.

The Civil Service Commission provided written interview questions for the semi-finalists to complete as part of the Assessment Center Phase.

One candidate withdrew prior to participating in the assessment center phase. Seven candidates participated in the assessment center phase.

Finalist Evaluation & Summary Report

IACP compiled a detailed summary of each candidate’s performance through the evaluation process, presenting a Finalist Evaluation Report to the Civil Service Commission, which met on 12/13 to

interview the seven remaining candidates. The IACP also conducted in-depth background checks on the applicants and will report the findings to the Civil Service Commission, facilitating a comprehensive and informed decision-making process.

The Civil Service Commission will meet on Tuesday, January 30. During the session, the Commission members are expected to certify a list, which would be presented to City Manager Jeff Pomeranz.

Step Four: Finalist Selection & Interviews (January–February 2024)

Candidates Selected for In-Person Interviews

City Manager Pomeranz carefully reviewed the Certified List and invited all four candidates to Cedar Rapids for both in-person interviews and a meet-and-greet session with members of the community on Wednesday, February 7, 2024.

Pomeranz considered the candidates' demonstrated experience in areas identified by the community as crucial for the next Police Chief in Cedar Rapids when making his invitations.

Interview Panels

Various individuals from a cross section of our community provided feedback throughout the Civil Service Process. City Manager Pomeranz invited members of several of the engaged groups to participate in interview panels on February 7, including all members of the City's Executive Team, who asked traditional interview questions; a selection committee, including a member of the Citizen Review Board, as laid out in Chapter 74.03 of Municipal Code; a six-person focus group from the Police Department, which participated actively throughout the process to maintain a steady line of communication regarding the search process open to Police Department employees; and a group of community members committed to enhancing community-police relationships, each passionate about ensuring the next selected Police Chief is the most qualified candidate for the community.

Those serving on interview panels submitted surveys detailing strengths of each candidate and areas each candidate could improve. The community members on the following page were invited to participate in the panels. Those noted with an asterisk (*) attended the interviews.

PANEL	PANEL MEMBERS
City Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Jeff Pomeranz, City Manager *Angie Charipar, Assistant City Manager
Executive Team Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Vanessa Chavez, City Attorney *Kevin Ciabatti, Building Services Director *Ahbi Deshpande, Finance Director *Amanda Grieder, Assistant to the City Manager Bob Hammond, Public Works Director *Roy Hesemann, Utilities Director *Tom Jonker, Interim Police Chief *Bill Micheel, Development Services Director *Phillip Platz, Communications Manager *Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director *Alissa Van Sloten, City Clerk *Greg Smith, Fire Chief *Shawn Smith, Information Technology Director *Rachelle Stewart, Human Resources Director *Hashim Taylor, Parks and Recreation Director
Selection Committee (Municipal Code — Chapter 74.03)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Anthony Betters Jr., NewBoCo Community Engagement Manager *Erin Byers, Foundation 2 Crisis Services COO *Arthur Kim, Citizen Review Board Member Nick Maybanks, Linn County Attorney *Al Pierson, Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association President *Jordan Schier, Assistant Linn County Attorney
Police Department Focus Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Mike Bailey, CRPD *Jacob Briley, CRPD *Michael Kern, CRPD *Sarah Lacina, CRPD *Cory McGarvey, CRPD Matt Messer, CRPD Nick Nolte, CRPD *Tyler Richardson, CRPD
Community Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Craig Byers, Commercial Realtor *Keeyon Carter, Wellington Heights Community Church Pastor Jon Dusek, Downtown Business Owner/Downtown SSMID *Pramod Dwivedi, Linn County Public Health Director Tawana Grover, Cedar Rapids Community School District Superintendent *Corey Jacobson, CR Pride President *Jaye Kennedy, Waypoint CEO James Klien, Business Owner/Downtown SSMID Rama Muzo, Intercultural Center of Iowa *David Parmley, First Interstate Bank *Monica Vallejo, League of United Latin American Citizens of Iowa, Cedar Rapids Council President *Harold Walehwa, Citizen Review Board Member *Doug Wheeler, College Community District Superintendent

Community Meet and Greet Event

City Manager Pomeranz invited the general public to attend an open house Meet and Greet event from 5–7 PM on Wednesday, February 7. Community members were able to meet each candidate individually during the event.

Appointment (February 2024)

City Manager Selection

City Manager Pomeranz reviewed data gathered from community members to build the Candidate Profile, candidates' experiences, scores from the Civil Service Commission, surveys from interview panel members, and direct feedback received from community members throughout the process in considering his selection.

On Sunday, February 11, 2024, Pomeranz notified the City Council of his selection of David L. Dostal as the candidate who best demonstrated the ability to serve the needs of the City organization and Cedar Rapids community, seeking the Council's advice and consent in appointing Dostal as the next Police Chief, per Municipal Code Chapter 7 — Police Department.

City Council Confirmation

City Council met in Regular Session at Noon on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, during which time they approved a resolution supporting the City Manager's appointment of David Dostal as Police Chief of the Cedar Rapids Police Department.