



GRAND RAPIDS,
MICHIGAN

FIRE CHIEF



ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

[Grand Rapids](#) is the second-largest city in Michigan, and the largest city in West Michigan. It is on the Grand River about 30 miles east of Lake Michigan and three hours from Chicago. The City's population is 198,829 and covers an area of 45 square miles. The combined statistical area of Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland is 1.3 million. The [Gerald R. Ford International Airport](#) transports two million passengers worldwide each year via six carriers. Grand Rapids is also connected to Chicago and Detroit by Amtrak.

The City recently received numerous recognitions ranging from the **Best U.S. City to Invest in Housing** and the **Fastest Growing Economy in the U.S. (Forbes)**; the **#1 City to Raise a Family**; the **#1 Hottest Real Estate Market to Watch (Trulia.com)**, and **#28 Most Hipster City** in the world. The **Art Prize Festival** was ranked one of the **Top Five Festivals Worldwide (Time)**. Fifteen craft breweries are located within Grand Rapids making it locally known as Michigan's "Beer City."

Grand Rapids provides a full range of services to a multicultural group of residents, students and visitors. The Grand Rapids metropolitan area hosts fifteen institutions of higher learning. Grand Rapids has 67 parks with sports and recreation activities year-round. Salmon weighing up to 35 pounds are caught during the annual upstream migration of the Grand River.

From world-class [attractions](#) and [outdoor recreation](#) to nationally ranked [food](#) and [craft beverage](#) scenes – Grand Rapids is filled with a host of great things to do. USA Today calls Grand Rapids the [Craft Beverage Capital](#) of the United States as well as being a Top 20 U.S. Foodie City. Residents and visitors can enjoy a myriad of spectacular art and many [live music](#) venues creating many [family fun](#) opportunities.

GRAND RAPIDS BY THE NUMBERS

Median Property Value

\$156,500

Home Ownership Rate - **55%**

Median Household Income

\$51,333 - \$140,313

Population

58.2% Caucasian, 17.5% African American (Non-Hispanic),
15.62% Hispanic (White, Other and Multiracial), 3.22%
Asian, 4.75% Multiracial

Square Miles - **45.27**



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS GOVERNMENT

The City operates under the Commission-Manager form of government with an elected City Commission and appointed City Manager as the Chief Executive Officer. The Commission consists of a directly- elected Mayor and six Commissioners elected for staggered 4-year terms. The fire chief is appointed by the City Manager and is responsible for a budget of \$33,690,496 (FY2022).

CORE VALUES

The City's Core Values are the foundation of how the City makes decisions and are embedded through the entire [strategic plan](#) and drive all City Work. They consist of:

ACCOUNTABILITY	COLLABORATION	CUSTOMER SERVICE
Always acting with integrity and transparency and being responsible for what we do and say.	Working together in partnership with others; teamwork.	Professionally serving those who live in, work in or visit the city. Providing respectful, excellent, high quality service and assistance before, during and after the person's interactions with the City.
EQUITY	INNOVATION	SUSTAINABILITY
Leveraging City influence to intentionally remove and prevent barriers created by systemic and institutional injustice.	Challenging how things have been done before. Fulfilling community needs by offering new ways to serve our customers and enhance operations. Being nimble, self-aware and open to feedback.	Making decisions with the goal of achieving long-term net positive benefits that are informed by an understanding of how those decisions will impact climate resiliency and the environment, people and communities, and finances, both today and in the future.

EDUCATION

For more than 150 years, [Grand Rapids Public Schools](#) (GRPS) has been a leader in West Michigan. With over 40 schools in one dynamic district, they take pride in preparing our scholars for the real world.

GRPS is Michigan's eighth-largest public school district and the third-largest employer in the City of Grand Rapids. Every day over 1,800 employees, including more than a thousand dedicated teachers, educate more than 14,000 scholars. Their scholars represent more than 70 countries with over 75 different languages spoken, creating a value-added educational experience and benefit that is above and beyond basic education.

Higher Level Education

The Grand Rapids areas offers a variety of college experiences to choose from including state universities, private colleges, Christian Colleges and one of the nation's finest community colleges. Downtown campuses offer the opportunity to live and study in the midst of dynamic business and entertainment district. Suburban campuses offer more of a secluded environment, in more rural settings.



PARKS AND RECREATION

Grand Rapids has more than 1,800 acres of parkland at more than 120 locations throughout the City. Many provide facilities for team sports such as softball, soccer, volleyball, and basketball. Bike lanes are installed in roadways whenever the City reconstructs or re-surfaces streets. There are 83 miles of bike lanes so far. There are 288 miles of bicycle trails within the City and surrounding areas. The Grand Rapids area is popular for sports and recreation activities year-round including: Skiing, hiking, boating, fishing, hunting, golfing, and camping.

DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS

The Grand Rapids community is incredibly active and known for sponsoring a multitude of community events including the Hispanic Festival, Fiesta Mexicana, African American Art and Music Festival, Festival of the Arts, and ArtPrize – the world's largest public art competition.



Grand Rapids has a rich history of supporting the arts, including a variety of cultural and entertainment activities such as the Grand Rapids Symphony, Grand Rapids Ballet, Grand Rapids Civic Theater, Children's Museum, Public Museum, Fine Art Museum, and the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum.

The 12,000-seat Van Andel Arena, DeVos Place, and the 20 Monroe Live event venues attract thousands of visitors who attend national headlining concerts, sporting events, and community gatherings.

Grand Rapids is also home to the Grand Rapids Griffins (American Hockey League), the Grand Rapids Gold (NBA Development League), and the West Michigan Whitecaps (Class A Baseball League).



TEAMWORK
EXCELLENCE

MISSION



The [Grand Rapids Fire Department](#) values all people by saving lives, protecting property and responding to the needs of our community.

VISION



Providing world class fire services for our community by employing a diverse workforce, which respects values and develops our members.

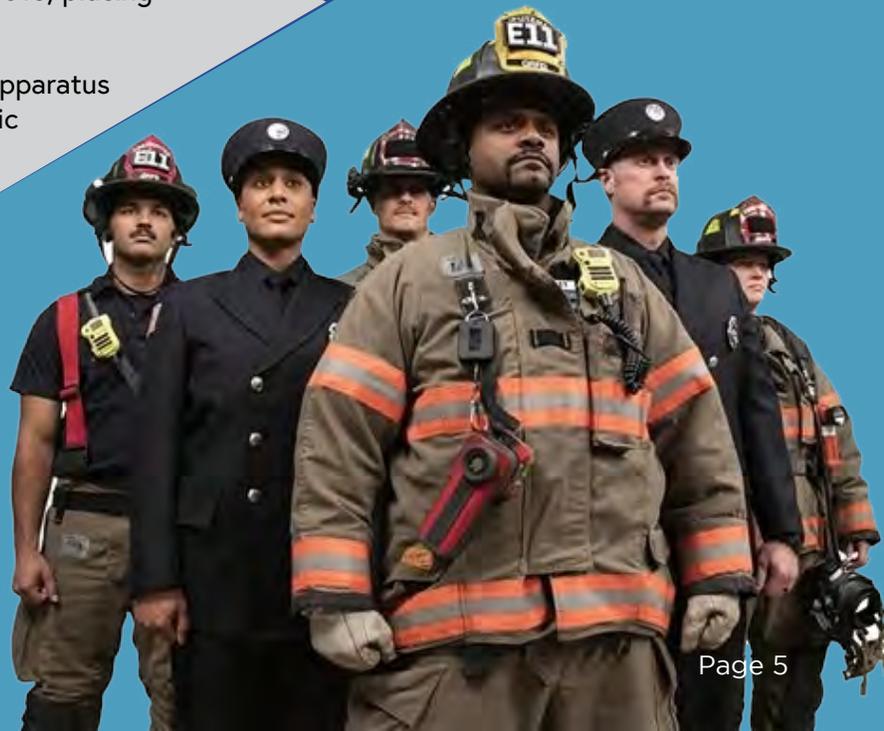
VALUES



- ▶ Honesty
- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Loyalty
- ▶ Teamwork
- ▶ Excellence

The Grand Rapids Fire Department received international accreditation for the second time in June of 2021. That makes them one of 293 accredited fire agencies in the world. Fire service accreditation is administered by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) and requires an embedded culture of quality throughout an organization, which is a key element to the success of the department. The department has also obtained an ISO Class 1 rating in 2018, placing them in the top 1% of agencies in the country.

In 2021 there were 23,986 total incidents with 33,536 apparatus responses. 101 of these calls were mutual and automatic aid assisting neighboring communities. 16,394 were medical related incidents as Michigan First Responders supported by local private ALS/BLS response and transport. During 2023 the agency will be moving to the EMT-Basic level for medical responses.



SUPPRESSION

The Suppression Division of the Grand Rapids Fire Department is comprised of eleven (11) fire stations with fifteen (15) front-line emergency vehicles (4 Ladders, 2 Rescues and 9 Engines) staffed with trained personnel to limit life and property loss when emergencies occur. Full-time professional firefighters work a rotating 24-hour shift to provide emergency response to calls for fires and special operations such as medical emergencies, industrial rescue, water rescue, dive-rescue, confined space rescue, high-angle rope rescue, trench rescue, building collapse, hazardous materials, weapons of mass destruction response, and vehicle extrications within the City of Grand Rapids. There are 194 personnel in the Operations Division.

In addition to responding to emergencies, the on-duty fire crews spend time training to maintain and increase their skill levels. They also conduct fire prevention inspections of local businesses, oversee fire drills in the city's schools, and interact with the community whenever possible.

One of the missions that the Grand Rapids Fire Department enjoys providing to our visitors and citizens is high quality and professional Emergency Medical Service. The department is licensed with the State of Michigan as a Medical First Responder Agency with twenty-four (24) licensed apparatus, all of which carry Automated External Defibrillators (AED), and two hundred twelve (212) medically licensed providers.

PREVENTION AND INVESTIGATION

The Fire Prevention Division is a principal component of the Grand Rapids Fire Department's efforts to protect against loss of life and property in our city. The Fire Prevention Division focuses its efforts by proactively enforcing the City's Fire Code (currently adopting the 2021 IFC with plans to be in place by early summer) to ensure that existing commercial buildings remain fire-safe, by educating both the business community as well as the community at large in fire safety procedures and practices, and by providing technical expertise to the City's Development Center and Building Inspections Division on life-safety systems installed in new and remodeled buildings.

The responsibilities also include responding to fires to identify the origin and cause of accidental and intentionally set fires in order to prevent future fires. The department designs fire safety education around the fire cause and origin that are obtained from each investigation. There are nine (9) full-time personnel in the Prevention and Investigation Division, supplemented by part-time fire inspectors from fire suppression who assist on their days off with prevention efforts.





TRAINING

The Grand Rapids Training Division is staffed with a Battalion Chief, a Captain and 2 Lieutenants. Training for live fire is accomplished at our Domtar site in a 1403 compliant 2 story Burn building using class A combustibles. The Coldbrook training center houses 2 classrooms and a large indoor space for year round training including a 3 story multi use residential prop. The training division is responsible for running 17 week fire academy classes and EMS training as well as department wide training.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Strategic Planning Division aids the fire department in terms of planning for both short and long term decision making and associated operational changes. They focus on a broad variety of insights and viewpoints utilizing various means such as historical data, projected performance, risk benefit analysis and comparison to the best practices of the fire service. Staffed by a Captain, Lieutenant, Information Systems Coordinator and a Performance Management Specialist, they are also responsible for administration of accreditation, ISO, and continuous improvement efforts.

BUILDING AND FLEET MAINTENANCE

The Maintenance Division of the Grand Rapids Fire Department is responsible for the maintenance and repairs of seventy (70) vehicles and the eleven (11) Fire Stations. The Fire Department fleet consists of a wide range of vehicles. The front-line fleet consists primarily of engines, rescues, aerials and command vehicles. The fleet also has vehicles that respond to a wide variety of more specialized emergency responses. These additional units range in size from tractor trailers for operations such as Hazardous Materials responses, to boats for river rescue operations.



Recruitment and Retention

The GRFD Recruitment Team is composed primarily of suppression personnel (non-administrative) who perform work beyond their normal duty shifts to reach out to bring high caliber applicants into this organization.

In 2021, the Recruitment Team partnered with four interns from the University of Michigan's Engineering program to develop a website (www.joiningfire.com) that provides information on the GRFD, programs demonstrating what the department provides to the fire service and links to allow people to immediately apply for employment with.

The programs supporting the outreach effort by the department include:

- Fire Youth Academy - A week-long "miniature" Fire Academy where high school aged participants engage in various firefighter skills, drills and physical fitness activities.
- JROTC - Year-round involvement with the Grand Rapids Public School's JROTC programs where we expose those students to the fire service.
- Explorer Program - Boy Scouts of America based volunteer program for youths aged 14-24 where Explorers can work with fire service personnel while performing volunteer services in the community.
- Fire Cadet Program - A program that was developed to employ paid interns with the department. Interns work alongside firefighters in non-hazardous environments while learning firefighter and medical skills. Cadets who find this profession to be a good fit are eligible to apply for the GRFD as career firefighters.

Emergency Management

Mission – Working toward creating a resilient and prepared community through preparedness, response and recovery. The division is tasked with finding opportunities to continue work on key projects and develop the City's Emergency Management Program. Some recent accomplishments include:

- Obtained the incident management tool, VEOCI, to improve operational coordination and communication during incidents. Information is shared on a single platform and provides communication for personnel in the field, at the command post and in the Emergency Operations Center.
- Lead the development of a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to ensure mission essential functions of the City are uninterrupted when emergencies arise.
- Collaborated with Kent County and Ottawa County to produce an updated Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan which provides a framework to minimize the impact of future disasters and also makes the City eligible to receive Hazard Mitigation grant funds.
- Developed an all-hazards, whole community Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) structured with Emergency Support Functions (ESF) that aligns with the structure of Federal and State plans. The plan provides a solid framework for how the City prepares for, responds to, recovers from and mitigates future incidents.

Homeless Outreach Team (H.O.T.)

The mission of the [H.O.T. Program](#) is fostering supportive relationships with people impacted by homelessness through outreach, education and advocacy. In 2022, the HOT team had over 5,000 contacts and 59 diversions and 3,500+ Field interactions. This is done in collaboration with the fire department, police department and Network 180 (Kent County Community Health Authority). This program was developed with the vision of the current GRFD Administration and is supported by the City as a very successful and effective community outreach program.

- Collaborating with Network 180 to embed Social Workers, Recovery Coaches, and Peer Support Workers within the team.
- Relationship building among homeless individuals, agencies, businesses, residents and officials.
- Research and promotion of a storage program currently in the pilot phase.
- Fostered a relationship between Mel Trotter Ministries and Crossroads Bible Church to provide a warm and private area for weekly showers, breakfast and outreach.
- Advocated for removing barriers at shelters to allow for couples to be sheltered together and a storage program so individuals can retain their possessions while attending appointments.
- Supported Kent County Health Department for several mobile vaccine clinics.



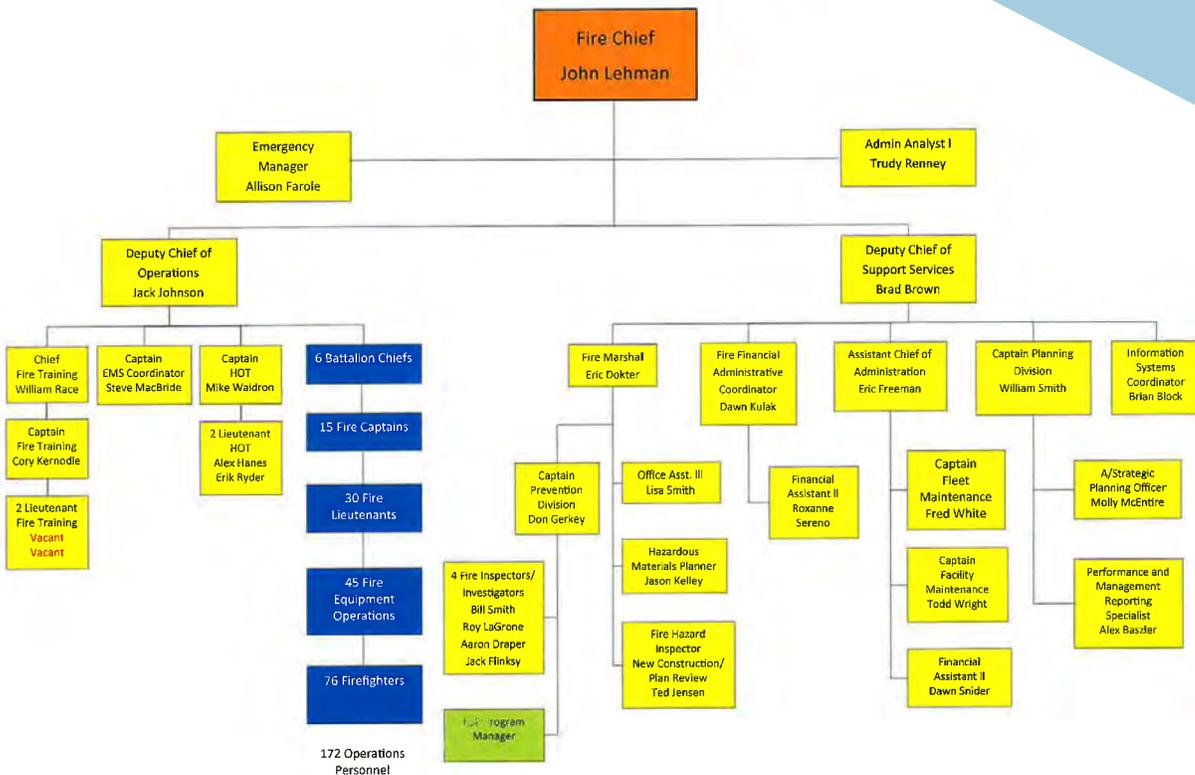
GRAND RAPIDS FIRE DEPARTMENT



Administration

The administrative offices are located on the second floor of the LaGrave Avenue Fire station at 38 LaGrave SE. Administration is comprised of the executive chiefs, Emergency Manager, Fire Marshal, EMS coordinator, and various support staff.

GRFD ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



DEPLOYMENT ANALYSIS AND CHALLENGES



Risk categorization, service impact considerations and deployment practices are analyzed for efficiency and effectiveness measurements that consider overall response, consistency, reliability, resiliency and outcomes. The department has demonstrated that the current deployment strategy does address the risk in the community, while adapting to or improving upon effectiveness, efficiency and safety of the overall operations. The following represents findings for future consideration.

Fire

- City continues to experience population growth along boundaries, resulting in extended response times, especially in the third ward/Kalamazoo district.
- On scene communication challenges with police (encryption) and surrounding departments (different terminology/channels).
- Safety officer deployment can be extended during off hours due to on call status of responders.

EMS

- Decreased number of ALS units by Life and AMR (private companies that run ALS in Grand Rapids) is resulting in longer on scene times for GRFD.
- Transition to EMT (from MFR) service delivery by GRFD during 2023 brings additional training and equipment requirements.

Technical Rescue

- January 2023 go live for GRFD dive team (formerly swift water only).
- Water rescue needs changing with bringing back the rapids to the Grand River.
- Need to revitalize elevator rescue program due to long hiatus in responding to these types of alarms.

Hazmat

- Continued increase in call volume (CO alarms/ EV fires).
- Recent certification with MABAS FEMA Type 1 team.

Community Risk Reduction

- Inability to inspect all buildings on a regular basis.
- Currently working to adopt 2021 International Fire Code.

Emergency Management

- Single person office responsible for entire city.
- Multiple EOC activations each year.

Other Challenges

- Remodel or reconstruction of multiple fire stations.
- Reduction of mandatory overtime/overtime reliance.
- Ensure properly maintained fire apparatus are returned to service quickly.
- Large turnover of personnel necessitates strong succession planning.





► **FIRE DEPARTMENT
2023 - 2025
STRATEGIC PLAN**

**20²³
25**
STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

The Grand Rapids Fire Department values all people by saving lives, protecting property, and responding to the needs of our entire community.

VISION

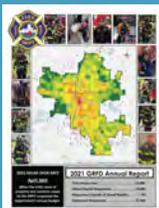
Providing world class fire services for our community by employing a diverse workforce which respects, values, and develops our members.

VALUES

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Loyalty
- Teamwork
- Excellence



	RESPONSE Owner: Chief Johnson Support: Chief Lehman	TRAINING Owner: Chief Race Support: Captain Kerneffe	PREVENTION Owner: Fire Marshal Dokter Support: Captain Gerkey	WELLNESS Owner: Chief Freeman Support: Chief Thompson	SUPPORT SERVICES Owner: Chief Brown Support: Captain Marchitka
DESIRED OUTCOMES	 Increase and then maintain response capabilities to meet the growing and evolving needs of our community by meeting the 90% critical performance metric compliance.	 Provide the appropriate skills and education to ensure all ranks can address existing and emerging threats.	 Continue to foster a safe community by improving the Community Risk Reduction program through measurable outcomes.	 Provide progressive wellness programming that improves the well-being of our members, families, and communities.	 Ensure systems and processes meet the needs of the organization.
FISCAL 2023 STRATEGIES	Forecast and analyze our response model	Ensure training curriculum meets existing and emerging threats	Provide sustainable Residential Safety Program services	Align resources to desired outcomes	Analyze and improve maintenance programs, hiring process and information systems
FISCAL 2024 STRATEGIES	Modify our response model to maximize critical performance metrics	Elevate department-wide training experience	Develop a Public Education Program for the whole community	Deliver progressive wellness programming	Ensure policies and guidelines align with ISO qualifications and accreditation needs
FISCAL 2025 STRATEGIES	Analyze effects of response model modification and make adjustments accordingly	Ensure training resources meet our training needs	Partner with Emergency management to build a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Community Outreach	Evaluate Effectiveness of Wellness Programming	Analyze and improve facilities, supplies and internal/external communications



► **2021 FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

“Innovative, Dynamic and Visionary Leader”

- An inclusive leadership approach that provides the ability for the staff of the department to be "counted" in the development of the future of the department. This is a critical feature in creating a workplace that has an environment in which everyone is treated fairly and respectfully, has equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the success of GRFD.
- A transformative leader that is energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate for the city and the organization focusing on helping every member of the department. Grand Rapids fosters raising each other to a higher level of motivation and morality.
- Has the ability to demonstrate being a servant leader putting the needs of the personnel first, helping them to develop and perform as highly as possible meeting the goals and objectives of the City and the fire department.
- An experienced and collaborative fire/EMS leader with demonstrated managerial, interpersonal, and customer service skills.
- A strong communicator with all facets of a modern fire/EMS provider.
- An individual committed to the process of continuous improvement through study, data analysis, risk taking, and follow through.
- Steady, approachable, and dependable.
- A commitment to the organization with a genuine confidence and approachability to residents, business, and governmental leaders featuring strong communication skills.
- A Fire Chief that is an integral and engaged leader, with a strong background in modern fire, EMS, emergency management, and all hazards practices.
- A Fire Chief that understands the need to use data for problem solving and community risk reduction efforts.
- The ability to mentor and foster leadership roles within the staff, succession planning, and a global vision of the community's needs are critical. Creativity and the ability to guide and balance change is a must.
- Strong budget skills supported by responsible fiscal management.
- Demonstrated experience with managing career personnel.
- Demonstrated experience with working with a collective bargaining group.
- Successful candidates should also:
 - Possess a bachelor's degree in fire administration or related field from an accredited college or university is required. A master's degree is highly desired.
 - Must have 5 years of senior officer leadership serving a community of similar size or greater with a comparable budget and personnel staffing levels is required.
 - Other additional desirable qualification include: a graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer (or enrolled with a specific completion date), Chief Fire Officer Designation (or in process with a specific completion date), or similar certifications.



COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The annual salary range for this position is \$135,481 - \$174,651. The City offers a competitive [benefits package](#).

HOW TO APPLY

Candidates should apply by March 1, 2023 with resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related references to www.GovHRjobs.com.

Questions may be addressed to the attention of T.E Sashko, Vice President, GovHR USA, 630 Dundee Road, #225, Northbrook, IL 60062. Tel: 847-380-3240x123, or tsashko@govhrusa.com.

The City of Grand Rapids is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.



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**EXECUTIVE
RECRUITMENT**