

*Thornton, Colorado, is seeking an experienced police executive to serve as the next Police Chief.*



Thornton is the 6th largest city in Colorado and benefits from its proximity to downtown Denver, Denver International Airport, and the foothills of the beautiful Rocky Mountains. Thornton has a current population of just under 150,000 people and is expected to grow by another 100,000 people in the next 30-years. The City offers both established neighborhoods, and newer, affordable homes, creating a safe, sought-after, and active environment with a wide variety of municipal services. Thornton has a very diverse population with a wide range of socio-economic conditions for residents throughout the city.

While early development in Thornton was primarily residential, it has become a destination for primary employers and regional retail. The City hosts three Regional Transportation District commuter rail districts with two additional planned investments. The City's Comprehensive Plan, current development code update and several key projects will invite greater density and additional mixed uses to build on Thornton's already high quality of life.

Thornton has aggressively pursued recreation programs with nearly 1,000 acres of land developed or designated for public parks. The numerous lighted tennis courts, athletic fields, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, recreation centers and gymnasiums offer recreation opportunities for people of all ages and activity levels. Thornton recently opened a new community center with an attached library and a partnership to produce an innovative nature library is under construction.

Today, Thornton continues moving forward in a responsible manner that strengthens the City's increasing footprint. This includes the City's responsiveness to growth with an ever-growing menu of city services, programs, and capital investments.

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Thornton is a home rule city operating under the Council - Manager form of government. The city council consists of the Mayor who is elected at large, and eight council members, two elected from each of the city's four wards. The Mayor and council members each serve four-year terms, and all have an equal vote. The City Council enacts ordinances, approves the city budget, and appoints the City Manager, City Attorney, and Municipal Judge. The City Manager administers the daily operations and programs of the City through the department heads, other staff members, and employees. The Police Chief currently reports to the City Manager. The current City Manager was appointed to her role in October of 2024.

The current Police Chief retired in September after four years as Thornton Police Chief and 29 years in law enforcement. The current Interim Police Chief has served the Department for 34 years. He has served admirably as Interim Chief and does not intend to seek permanent appointment.

The Thornton Police Department is an innovative department whose defined Core Values of Leadership, Accountability, Teamwork, Safety, Service and Integrity guide the organization towards the vision of being the standard of excellence in law enforcement. With only 50% of Thornton land currently developed, the expected growth will provide an excellent opportunity for career advancement. With 258 authorized sworn police officers, and 88 non-sworn staff, Thornton is currently the fourth largest Denver metro police department. Our police department strongly emphasizes community involvement and is committed to providing high-quality police services, which are reflected in both the Department's mission and values.



**MISSION:** To serve and protect in partnership with the community, working to reduce crime and disorder, while providing the highest quality police services.

**VISION:** A safe and prosperous city served by a police department recognized as the standard of excellence.

During a time when many Police Departments have struggled with recruitment and retention, Thornton has maintained a relatively low vacancy rate. With its incoming 2025 academy class, the City will increase its sworn staffing rate to 97%. A focus on competitive pay and strategic investments like the City's newly opened police training center should preserve this strength. Thornton has enjoyed a positive, productive relationship with the Police Union under the leadership of the Interim Chief. The ranks of Police Officer and Police Sergeant are currently in the second year of a two-year agreement. The next union negotiation will be conducted in the first and second quarters of 2025 and should have a finalized agreement around May 2025.

A new Police Chief will join a stable, professional organization that is valued by its community. The 2023 Satisfaction Survey found that performance had increased in several areas between 2020 and 2023 including the professionalism and timeliness of police responses; safety on parks and trails; and animal control. A new Police Chief will have an opportunity to contribute to continuous improvement as the survey found the overall feeling of safety in the community lags compared to some peer communities. A recent departmental reorganization, significant operational accomplishments, and recent feedback from employees and community members further illustrate areas of accomplishments and ongoing priorities.

The department is guided by the **Office of the Chief** which is responsible for executive leadership, strategy, intergovernmental relations, and management of special projects. The functions and units assigned to the Office of the Chief include Budget and Grants Administration, Media and Community Engagement, and Policy and Planning. The chief of police and deputy chiefs are responsible and accountable for the efficient operations of the department's two Bureaus: Operations Bureau (Patrol, Detectives), and Administration Bureau.

The **Patrol Division** provides a highly visible presence, forging partnerships, responding to calls for service, and engaging the community at events, regular neighborhood safety meetings, and through informational campaigns. The Patrol Division has two district stations: District One, located at police headquarters, and District Two, located at Fossil Ridge Public Safety Center. Among other units and functions, Patrol consists of the following:

- Neighborhood Patrol
- Animal Control
- Youth Services (SRO)
- Co-Responders
- SWAT
- K9 Service Dogs
- Traffic Enforcement
- Traffic Investigations
- Crisis Negotiations

The **Detective Division** supports the efforts of Patrol by conducting investigations and follow-up on major cases, including homicides, shootings, serious assaults, robberies, burglaries, and other incidents. Detectives also participate in local and federal task forces that focus on violent crimes, aggravated robberies, white collar crimes, and narcotics trafficking. The major units within the division include:

- Crimes Against Persons
- Property Crime
- Victim Services

The **Administration Division** supports department operations and manages risk and liability through training and active accountability measures. The Administration Division plays a vital role in the department's success and includes:

- Support Services
- Professional Standards
- Emergency Communications/911
- Training
- Records Management
- Internal Affairs
- Property and Evidence
- Audits and Inspections
- Vehicle Services
- Accreditation
- Field Technology
- Recruiting





The City opened a state-of-the-art training facility located at Riverdale Road and Colorado Boulevard on December 1, 2022. The facility has advanced scenario-based simulator training, a slow-speed driving skills pad, defensive tactics training areas, large classrooms to host outside training, and an indoor shooting range. The new 17,269 square foot police training facility will combine aspects of physical, mental and technological training for the modern police officer. Training areas will be provided to improve and practice skills

needed in police training through the lenses of theory, fitness and real-time critical thinking of how scenarios can be de-escalated through safe, and thoughtful communication. Additionally, phase two of the training center (indoor shooting range) opened in October 2024. This is highly beneficial, allowing officers to train on critical job functions.

The Department received their initial Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) accreditation in April 2022, and has successfully completed two subsequent annual performance reviews as part of the maintenance process. The next full re-accreditation review is scheduled to take place in 2025.

In 2024, the police department's training unit became state-certified by Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to conduct basic police certification for individuals interested in entering a law enforcement career. The inaugural class for Thornton Police's first ever state-certified police academy, North Metro Police Academy, is set to kick off in March of 2025.



Nearly 350 community members and 100 Police Department employees participated in a survey to help inform priorities for this recruitment.

Community members including residents, board members, elected officials, and business owners the most important skills and experiences for the Thornton Police Chief are:

- Track record of reducing crime and promoting community safety
- Track record of building community trust
- Experience implementing effective recruitment and retention strategies

The leadership qualities they value are honesty and integrity, holding employees accountable, and embracing transparency.

Similarly, Thornton Police Department employees believe the most important skills and experiences for the Thornton Police Chief are:

- Track record of reducing crime and promoting community safety
- Experience implementing effective recruitment and retention strategies
- Implementing contemporary and innovative policing practices

The leadership qualities they value are honesty and integrity, promoting development of staff, training, and succession planning, and embracing transparency.



The City of Thornton is looking for an exceptional leader with at least ten years' full-time professional law enforcement experience that includes significant management and supervisory experience, preferably in a similarly sized city and police department operation.

This position requires certification, or ability to obtain certification, as a police officer as required by Colorado POST:

<https://post.colorado.gov/certification/certification-types/provisional-certification>

Qualified candidates will clearly exemplify the department's values of integrity, service, accountability, leadership, teamwork, and safety and the City of Thornton's values of stewardship, trust, collaboration, respect, accountability, excellence and innovation. Consistent with the feedback above, the City will looking for evidence of the following skills and experiences:

- A track record of reducing crime and promoting community safety
- A track record of building community trust
- Experience implementing effective recruitment and retention strategies
- Experience implementing contemporary and innovative policing practices

The Police Chief reports to the City Manager or Designee and is responsible for the direction and oversight of the Police Department. The City Manager prioritizes collaboration in leadership and will be looking for candidates that effectively build partnerships in the community, regionally and across the City organization.

### **Compensation and Benefits:**

The City of Thornton offers a competitive salary of \$191,803 to \$253,180 annually commensurate with the successful candidate's qualifications and experience. The City provides a comprehensive benefits package to support employees through important events in their life, to enhance their life outside work, and to help them plan and prepare for the future. The Police Chief will also participate in the Fire & Police Pension Association of Colorado.

### **Application and Selection Process:**

For optimal consideration, candidates are encouraged to apply immediately by completing an application and attaching a comprehensive resume and compelling cover letter via [this link on Neogov/Government Jobs](#).

References will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established. This position will accept applications until February 5, 2025.

Thornton will review applications as they are received. Only the most highly qualified candidates will be invited to participate in the selection process which will be conducted in March 2025. A public town hall is anticipated to take place for the final two candidates.



Questions or inquiries regarding this position or the  
recruitment process should be directed to  
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