

# NORTHFIELD, MA

## POLICE CHIEF Position Profile



### The Community

The Town of Northfield is a charming rural community of approximately 3,000 residents located in Franklin County in northwestern Massachusetts. It enjoys a tradition of open government with a high level of service, passionate citizen engagement, and respect for its proud history. There is a strong sense of community in Town.

[Northfield](#) was settled in 1673 and incorporated in 1723. The Town is 35.37 square miles in size, including 34.42 square miles of land area. Northfield is bordered by Vernon, Vermont, and Hinsdale and Winchester, New Hampshire, on the north; Warwick on the east; Erving on the south; and Gill and Bernardston on the west. It is the only Town in Massachusetts situated on both sides of the Connecticut River. Northfield is about 12 miles from Greenfield and 25 miles from Amherst. The Town also has easy access to Northampton, Mass., Brattleboro, Vermont, and Keene, N.H.

There are numerous cultural, educational, historical, and recreational [amenities](#) located within and in close proximity to Northfield, including colleges and universities; museums and artist galleries; historic sites; trails and conservation areas for skiing, hiking, walking; and lakes and rivers for fishing and paddling.

Northfield is a rural community with a substantial amount of open space. It is a town of farmland, forested hills, streams, wetlands, and abundant wildlife. There is interest in increasing thoughtful commercial development to bring additional commercial revenue to Northfield, to reduce the tax burden on residents and provide job opportunities. Northfield has been a designated Green Community since 2011.

The top employers in the Town are [Pioneer Valley Regional School District](#), which includes the [Northfield Elementary School](#), and [FirstLight Power Resources/Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage](#). The majority of residents in the workforce commute outside of Northfield for employment.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Town of Northfield's racial makeup is approximately 97.1% white, 1.8% Hispanic or Latino, 1.4% two or more races, 0.4% Black or African American, and 0.3% Asian.

The Town is demographically older than the state as a whole with the major difference being with the median age of Northfield residents being 45.7 years while the state median is 39.2 years. The under-18 year cohort in Northfield is nearly 23.1% of the population versus 18% for the state. In the 65 years and older cohort, Northfield has 14.8% of its population which is very similar to the state's 14%, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The median annual household income in Northfield is \$63,963, compared to the state median of \$75,297.

The Town is covered by local media through the *Greenfield Recorder* and the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, in addition to Northfield's municipal website at [www.northfieldma.gov](http://www.northfieldma.gov) and a bimonthly local newsletter.

### The Government

Northfield's government is comprised of a five-member Selectboard that serves as the Chief Executive Officers of the Town. Selectboard members are elected to staggered three-year terms and oversee all matters affecting the interest and welfare of the community and are responsible to ensure that Town government is responsive to and reflective of community needs and values. The Town has a full time Town Administrator who serves as the Chief Administrative Officer. Northfield has an Open Town Meeting form of government that serves as the legislative body of the Town.

There is also a 12-member [Pioneer Valley Regional School District](#) School Committee that oversees the policies and budget of the four-Town district's public K-12 elementary and secondary school system, a five-member elected Planning Board, and an elected Town Clerk. Other elected officials include: Board of Assessors, Board of Health, Board of Library Trustees, Recreation Commission, Moderator, Sewer Commission, and Board of Trustees of Veterans Memorials. The Town also utilizes a number of volunteer boards and commissions, with various modes of appointment, to conduct municipal operations. The Town's [by-laws & regulations](#) are located on its website.

The Northfield [Selectboard](#) appoints the position of Police Chief. The Police Chief serves as the Town's chief law enforcement officer in accordance with MGL c41, sec. 97A responsible for the overall supervision of the Police Department, including patrol work, short and long-term planning, administration, staffing, policies, rules, and regulations within the Department and for the enforcement of all laws and by-laws to preserve life, maintain public peace and to protect property within the Town's legal jurisdiction.

Under the general supervision of the Town Administrator with guidance from the Selectboard, the Chief carries out duties and responsibilities in accordance with municipal Bylaws, department goals and objectives as well as applicable state and federal regulations and laws. The Chief establishes short- and long-range plans and objectives for a major department of the Town; establishes Department and employee performance standards and assumes direct accountability for department results. The Chief is expected to consult with the Town Administrator and/or the Selectboard where clarification, interpretation, or exception to municipal policy may be required.

The Chief is accountable for the success of the department including programs and services accomplished through others. The Chief is responsible for analyzing program objectives, determining the various work operations needed to achieve them, estimating the financial and staff resources required, and allocating the available funds and staff.

The Chief supervises a major department in Town consisting of three (3) full-time and up to (12) twelve part-time employees. The Chief oversees the organizational structure and employee performance of all department staff including professional development, training, discipline, maintenance of equipment, crime prevention, community policing as well as well as maintaining the efficiency and effectiveness of the department.



## Challenges and Opportunities

- **Capital Needs.** Like many communities, the Town has infrastructure issues as programmatic needs have changed and facilities have aged. For example, in the last few years, Town Meeting voters approved spending \$450,000 on repairs and upgrades at Northfield Elementary School; approved taking ownership of land at the intersection of Main and School streets where the fire station now sits and approved appropriations to begin the management and design work for a new Emergency Services facility; and approved the purchase of a ladder truck for the Fire Department. The Town also does not have a Senior Center building. The Senior Center uses space on the first floor of Town Hall.
- **Economic Development.** The Town is facing fiscal pressures of funding capital needs as well as ongoing demands for services. Currently, the majority of the tax base is residential. Accordingly, additional revenues needed to fund expenditures related to these financial pressures can make the Town less affordable for residents unless creative revenue opportunities are explored.

The State is currently on track to begin construction of a \$25 million bridge rehabilitation project for the Schell Bridge, a historic structure (currently closed) that will be owned and operated by DCR as a state Greenway after completion. The Town is expecting this to be a tourist destination and included in several bikeway routes that commonly run through Town. Northfield is interested in attracting thoughtful commercial development that will fit with the Town's character. The Town is also looking to promote

economic development through several grants currently underway as well as the use of Recovery Funding.

- **Infrastructure.** The Town has two independent water districts and one sewer district. There are a few pockets of Town that lack Internet and cell service. Northfield has no interstate highways; the closest is Interstate 91 in neighboring Bernardston.
- **Housing.** There are approximately 1,400 housing units in town, most of which are owner occupied, with a median value of \$234,500, according to U.S. Census data. The Town's population is aging, so there is concern regarding a need for additional housing that is appropriate for older residents.
- **Education.** Education is a high priority in Northfield. Northfield is one of four communities, including Leyden, Bernardston, and Warwick, that belong to the Pioneer Valley Regional School District. The Northfield Elementary School, which serves students preK-6, and the Pioneer Valley Regional School, are both located in Northfield. The Town is also served by a regional vocational technical school located in nearby Turners Falls. Operating assessments for the two schools total approximately 61% of the Town's annual operating budget. Approximately 94.2% of Northfield residents have a high school diploma and about 38.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher, according to the U.S. Census.
- **Finances.** The FY22 budget is approximately \$11.6 million. The budget process faces challenges via a need for increased services without significantly increasing residents' taxes. Northfield, like many communities, is facing revenue constraints. When the portion of the Northfield Mount Hermon School campus, which had been located in Northfield, was sold to a taxable entity, the town was able to realize about \$400,000.00 in taxes annually. The property was gifted to two tax exempt organizations which ended that payment. The Town wisely had considered these funds (received between 2011 and 2017) as a one-time revenue source and used them for capital items or one-time expenses, thus the loss did not impact the operating budget, although it does make it more challenging to earmark funds for capital items.



- **Former Northfield Mount Hermon Campus.** The campus is now owned in part by the Moody Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to the promoting the legacy of Dwight Moody, a 19<sup>th</sup> century evangelist. The Moody Center intends to become a destination for persons interested in Moody and his teachings and is currently renovating several historic structures to act as bed and breakfasts for their anticipated retreats and conferences. Part of the campus is owned by Thomas Aquinas College, a small (400 student) satellite from its main campus in California. Both organizations appear willing to collaborate with the town on their developments, which will obviously impact the community.
- **Land Use.** Northfield's [Master Plan](#), which was completed in 2014, details the Town's historic, cultural and natural resources, land use and zoning, economic development resources, transportation resources, demographics, and public facilities and services. Protection of natural resources is highly important; however, the Town is interested in thoughtful development to diversify its tax base as long as such development is consistent with Northfield's values.
- **Work Climate.** The next Police Chief should strive to foster and maintain a positive working climate in which the Town's policies and procedures are administered in an equitable manner and the office/work atmosphere is encouraging and supportive of all staff members.
- **Communications.** Open, accurate, and timely communications are important to Northfield citizens. Strong communication skills, both verbal and written, are necessary in order for the Police Chief to effectively engage and manage relationships with the various members of boards and commissions as well as with employees and residents. Various forms of communications, such as email, Code Red alerts, social media, newsletters,

should be strongly considered to be utilized to share information with as many citizens as possible.

- **Fire and EMS Departments.** The Town's Fire and EMS Departments are volunteer, call departments, including the EMS Chief, Fire Chief, and Assistant Fire Chief. The [EMS Department](#) is paramedic level and responds to over 400 calls per year in Northfield and two neighboring communities. There are 30 volunteer members of the [Fire Department](#) and an active Junior Firefighter program for teens ages 13-18. The Fire Department averages 165 calls annually, typically including one major and three to five minor structure fires. The current station house was constructed in 1953.
- **Highway Department.** The [Highway Department](#) has an annual budget of about \$1,000,000. There are six full-time and two seasonal part-time employees responsible for roads, cemeteries, tree work, and maintenance of town buildings. There are approximately 90 miles of roadway in Town.
- **Citizen Engagement.** The Town embraces strong civic engagement and would seek to encourage even higher levels of political participation and discourse.
- **Police Department.** The [Police Department](#) has an annual budget of about \$450,000, including salaries and operations. There are three full-time officers, including the School Resource Officer, plus 9 reserve officers. The Officers are represented by the New England Police Benevolent Association, Inc. The Department maintains a fleet of four (4) vehicles. Currently there is no separate police station; the department maintains an office in Town Hall as well as an evidence room and storage cabinets. The Town has just released an RFQ for a Project Manager in the first steps toward the building of an emergency services facility to house police, fire, and EMS.

## The Ideal Candidate

The Selectboard seeks a personable, proactive, and visionary Police Chief with municipal managerial experience who can work collaboratively with the Town Administrator and Selectboard on a strategic vision for the Department. The candidate should be competent in all areas of police law enforcement operations, including development of the department's organizational structure; staffing; law enforcement management, operations; budgeting, and capital planning.

The Police Chief must be a decisive administrator and leader who can work collaboratively with the various interests of the Town. He or she is expected to work cooperatively with all constituencies within the Town, including residents, elected and appointed officials, and volunteers. The Chief must possess good listening skills and be open to input from all constituencies.

The Police Chief must be able to, work with local, state, and federal government officials, community leaders and any other individuals to protect and promote government relations in the municipality's overall interest. He or she should have the ability to explain complex issues accurately and effectively to individuals, committees, and the citizenry. Strong written and verbal communication skills, including social media, are important for this position.

The Chief must also possess and demonstrate successful experience in personnel management. He or she must be able to develop and sustain strong and credible relations with employees, volunteers, and residents. The Chief must be a creative problem-solver who is accessible, trustworthy, collaborative, and a consensus-builder. He or she must lead by example, and be motivated, innovative, organized, and have a sense of humor.

The Chief should be able to build morale and trust within the Police Department and throughout the Town as well as be an energetic ambassador for the community. The Chief should enjoy working in a team-oriented organization, have a personality that focuses on the positive, and embrace becoming actively engaged with the community by attending local events and meeting with residents.

The successful candidate should possess a bachelor's degree and/or master's degree in a field related to public safety. Candidates should have a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, Police Administration, or related field. At least ten years progressively responsible law enforcement with at least five years in supervisory, command and administrative positions, or any equivalent combination of education and experience which demonstrates possession of the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

## Compensation

The Town of Northfield will offer an employment agreement and compensation package that is competitive with comparable Massachusetts' communities, with an annual salary of up to \$105,000+/-, depending on qualifications. An attractive benefits package, including health and retirement plans, is part of the Chief's total compensation. Residency is not required but the Chief is expected to live within a reasonable response time, estimated to be approximately a 15-mile radius.

## How To Apply

Send resume and cover letter in confidence as PDF attachment to:  
[recruitment@mrigov.com](mailto:recruitment@mrigov.com)

For additional information related to the search, contact Sean Kelly, Director of Services, Municipal Resources, Inc., at 603-279-0352, X321.

Or go to: [www.mrigov.com/career](http://www.mrigov.com/career)

The Town of Northfield is an EOE/AA employer.