

CITY OF BELLINGHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: City Council Communications & Community Relations Manager

EPLAN
SG:E2-9

DEPARTMENT: Legislative

CS:N
FLSA:N

EEO4/SOCCODE:PR/11-2032

JOB SUMMARY:

Develops, implements, and manages effective communications, community relations and public involvement systems and strategies to achieve Citywide goals of fostering meaningful public engagement and providing timely, accurate, and understandable information to the residents of Bellingham and others. Provides guidance and assistance as an internal consultant to the City Council in effective communications strategies, policies, procedures and issues. Develops communication strategies and implementation methods based on City Council and Citywide communication goals, policies, needs and best practices. Leads all City Council communications, community engagement, and outreach activities, including external mass communications, public information and outreach, public involvement, and media relations. Develops and facilitates strategic approaches to emerging issues. Participates in ensuring the City's commitment to equity and belonging is incorporated in communications and public involvement initiatives and actively contributes to an inclusive City government. A high level of discretion and sensitivity is required in performing the work, as well as extensive collaboration with elected officials and staff throughout the City.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP:

Reports to the City Council President, with significant interaction with the City Council Communications work group, and City Communications and Community Relations Director, along with regular interaction with City Council Members, the Council Office Manager, and the Council Legislative Analyst. Collaborates with communications team members such as other department communicators, IT, and BTV staff, and other staff Citywide. Works independently in carrying out responsibilities. Provides project-related direction to professional and administrative staff in the Council office. Solicits, manages, reviews and coordinates the work of consultants. May supervise other staff. Works under applicable federal, state and City regulations, policies and procedures. Reflects equity and belonging commitments in guiding and overseeing the work of staff and consultants.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOB:

1. Serves as an advisor to the City Council on communications strategies, policies, procedures and issues.
2. Under the guidance of the City Council Communications work group, leads, develops, and implements comprehensive City Council communications, including external mass communications, public information and outreach, community engagement, public involvement, public opinion research, and media relations to foster meaningful public engagement and ensure timely, accurate and understandable information about City Council is shared with residents of Bellingham and others.

3. Develops, recommends, facilitates and implements strategic approaches to emerging issues. Coordinates approaches with the City Communications and Community Relations Director, other communications staff, and other City staff when necessary to achieve consistent and accurate messages across branches of government.
4. Participates with other communications, community engagement and outreach staff in the City's communications and community engagement team.
5. Actively participates in ensuring accessible and inclusive communication and public engagement strategies are utilized in Council communications and engagement Citywide.
6. Plans and coordinates and/or supports the planning and coordination of events such as celebrations, public forums and community activities.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. May assist in developing and managing City communications and community engagement platforms, systems, and related policies and procedures, under the direction of the City Communications and Community Relations Director or designee.
2. May serve on the City's emergency communications team as a public information officer or other role. Assists in disseminating prompt, accurate public information during emergency and disaster situations, under the direction of the City Communications and Community Relations Director or designee, or the appropriate lead in an incident command structure.
3. May be assigned special project work.
4. May prepare requests for proposals and scopes of work for solicitation of consultants and manage consultant contracts and intergovernmental agreements.
5. May oversee public opinion research efforts.
6. Performs related duties of a similar nature and level.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities):

Knowledge of:

- The full range of current communication, media relations, public involvement and public opinion research strategies, tactics, techniques, formats and platforms and how to apply them in a municipal environment.
- Government systems, processes and procedures.
- Public communication plan development and the production of support materials.
- The role of appointed and elected officials.
- Public opinion research techniques and various methods of application in governmental issues.
- Principles and best practices in ensuring equity and belonging goals are incorporated into all communications and community relations initiatives

Skill in:

- Excellent written communication to prepare materials for diverse audiences and platforms.
- Excellent visual communication to prepare and consult on graphic design, video, and photography materials for diverse audiences and platforms.

- Excellent verbal communication to present information to the City Council, groups of employees, and to the public.
- Strong analytical thinking.

Ability to:

- Manage planning, organizing and budgeting, problem analysis and decision-making, leadership, adaptability/flexibility, stress tolerance, time management, and interpersonal sensitivity.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with elected officials and staff, City officials and staff, interest group representatives and other stakeholders in the public policy and legislative process.
- Serve as a consultant and provide guidance and training to elected officials on communication issues.
- Plan effectively in an atmosphere of ambiguity or a rapidly changing environment.
- Deal appropriately with sensitive and/or confidential information.
- Assimilate complex information from a range of professional fields and sources and effectively summarize for diverse audiences.
- Present information effectively to large and small groups and in pressure situations.
- Gain and maintain confidence of City Council Members and others involved in policy and public processes.
- Effectively work in a team environment, contribute openly, respectfully disagree, understand the ideas of others, listen well and work for consensus.
- Demonstrate the Public Service Competencies of Service Orientation, Results Orientation, and Teamwork and Cooperation.
- Maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
- Physical ability to perform essential functions of the job, including:
 - Frequently operate a computer and other office machinery such as a keyboard, mouse, phone and fax machine;
 - Sitting or standing for extended periods at a computer work station;
 - Communicate accurate information and ideas to City employees and the public;
 - Move between work sites;
 - Ability to transport objects weighing up to 25 lbs.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Work is primarily performed in an office setting and requires sitting or standing for extended periods at a computer work station. Work involves frequent interaction with City staff and the public. Duties are frequently performed under the stress of information deadlines, pressure from the public, and/or the press for information on sensitive issues. The conditions encountered will vary depending on the sensitivity and complexity of the information to be disseminated. Requires attendance and participation in evening and weekend meetings and events. May require occasional travel to professional seminars and meetings.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- Bachelor's degree in communications or related field required. Master's degree preferred.
- Five years of progressively responsible experience in communications, community relations, public engagement or related field, with responsibility for advising senior management staff required. Significant government experience preferred.
- Demonstrated ability to work with cross-functional teams and manage multiple projects simultaneously required.

- Demonstrated excellent communication, interpersonal and organizational skills required.
- Demonstrated experience developing and implementing communications and outreach strategies to achieve defined objectives required.
- Demonstrated experience in working with print, broadcast and digital media required.
- A combination of education and experience sufficient to provide the applicant with the knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully perform the essential functions of the position will be considered.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:

- Employment contingent upon passing a criminal background check.
- Requires evening and weekend work to attend meetings, respond to emergent issues and meet time-sensitive deadlines.
- Certificate of completion from Federal Emergency Management (FEMA)/Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Independent Study Courses within 12 months of hire:
 - IS-29.A Public Information Officer Awareness; and
 - E/L0105 Public Information Basics.
- Certificate of completion from Washington State Office of the Attorney General Open Government Training within 90 days of hire:
 - Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA); and
 - Public Records Act (PRA).

PREPARED BY: J. Keller
A. Sullivan
3/26

REVIEWED BY: _____
Hannah Stone
Council President