

# CITY OF BELLINGHAM

## JOB DESCRIPTION

**JOB TITLE:** COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

**E-PLAN**

**DEPARTMENT:** Executive

**SG :17**

**CS: N**

**FLSA :N**

**EEO4CODE: PR**

### **JOB SUMMARY:**

Position establishes, manages and implements effective communications and public involvement strategies Citywide to help provide timely, accurate, understandable information to the residents of Bellingham and others. Works with Mayor, City Council, department directors and their staffs, other governmental officials, boards, commissions, and community members. Responsible for developing and managing the City's communications policies and procedures and overseeing communications Citywide, including both external and internal mass communications, public information and outreach, public involvement, public opinion research and media relations. Develops and facilitates strategic approaches to emerging issues. Serves a direct role in emergency response within the incident command system. Serves as an internal consultant, advising the Mayor, City Council, department directors and other staff on communication strategies and implementation methods based on internal and external communication policies, needs and best practices. A high level of discretion and sensitivity is required in performing the work.

### **SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP:**

Works independently in carrying out responsibilities. Reports to the Mayor. Serves as a member of the City's Department Head team. Provides on-going and project-related direction to professional and administrative staff in the Executive Department and other departments, such as the City's webmaster, television station manager and department communications coordinators. Solicits, manages, reviews and coordinates the work of consultants. May supervise other Executive Department staff. Works under applicable federal, state and City regulations, policies and procedures.

### **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOB:**

1. Advises the Mayor, City Council and top management staff on communications strategies, policies, procedures and issues. Serves as principal staff consultant to department directors, program managers and other staff in the field of communications.
2. Develops, facilitates and assists with implementing strategic approaches to emerging issues.
3. Establishes, manages and implements effective communications, media relations and public involvement strategies Citywide to help provide timely, accurate, understandable information to the residents of Bellingham and others. Directs the organization, scheduling and production of informational and community information activities for the City.
4. Manages content and scheduling for City homepage, television programs and all mass communications, according to City policies, procedures, and communications best practices. Participates in decisions about website and television station operations, with Director of Information Technology Services Department.

5. Manages and coordinates City stakeholder and public opinion research efforts.
6. Plans, develops, coordinates and produces public information products including brochures, fact sheets, news releases, audio/visual and television programs, website and other informational, educational and promotional materials using current communications technologies. Plans and coordinates and/or supports the planning and coordination of events such as public forums and community activities.
7. Develops and implements plans to increase awareness of City programs and participation in the City's decision making processes. Directs the development of outreach programs to encourage citizen participation in City government and to encourage use of public programs and facilities.
8. Disseminates prompt, accurate emergency public information during emergency and disaster situations.

**ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:**

1. May be assigned special project work for the Mayor in carrying out the responsibilities of City management.
2. Performs related duties of a similar nature and level.

**PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities):****Knowledge:**

- 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.
- Knowledge of government systems, processes and procedures.
- Knowledge of public communication plan development and the production of support materials.
- Knowledge and understanding of the role of appointed and elected officials.
- Knowledge of public opinion research techniques and various methods of application in governmental issues.

**Skills:**

- Excellent written communication skills to prepare materials for diverse audiences.
- Excellent verbal communication skills to present information to the City Council, groups of employees and to the public.
- Strong analytical skills.

**Abilities:**

- Management abilities including planning, organizing and budgeting, problem analysis and decision-making, leadership, adaptability/flexibility, stress tolerance, time management, and interpersonal sensitivity.
- Ability to 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.
- Ability to serve as an internal consultant and provide guidance and training to a variety of staff on communication issues.
- Ability to plan effectively in an atmosphere of ambiguity or a rapidly changing environment.
- Ability to deal appropriately with sensitive and/or confidential information.

- Ability to assimilate complex information from a range of professional fields and sources and effectively summarize for diverse audiences.
- Ability to present information effectively to large and small groups and in pressure situations.
- Ability to gain and maintain confidence of Mayor, Council and others involved in policy and public processes.
- Ability to effectively work in a team environment, contribute openly, respectfully disagree, understand the ideas of others, listen well and work for consensus.
- Ability and willingness to demonstrate the Public Service Competencies of Service Orientation, Results Orientation, and Teamwork and Cooperation.
- Ability to maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
- Physical ability to perform the essential functions of the position including:
  - correctable visual acuity to read and computer screen and a typeset page;
  - fine finger dexterity to manipulate computer keyboard and mouse;
  - ability to talk and hear sufficiently to communicate in person and over the phone;
  - ability to lift up to 25 lbs.

**WORKING ENVIRONMENT:**

Generally works in an office environment with extensive time spent at a computer workstation. 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.

**EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:**

- BA degree in communications or related field required. Master's degree preferred.
- A minimum of seven years of experience in the field of communications with responsibility for advising senior management staff on communications and public relations issues is required. At least three years of this experience should be in a government environment.
- Demonstrated experience in working with print, broadcast and internet-based media is required.
- A combination of experience and training that provides the candidate with the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the responsibilities of this position will be considered.

**NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:**

- Valid Washington State driver's license and good driving record. Candidates must submit a three-year driving abstract prior to hire.
- Employment contingent upon passing a criminal convictions and local background check.
- Certification of National Incident Management System training is required within 6 months of hire, and at a level commensurate with local government employees who are charged with this responsibility.

**PREPARED BY:** Steve Mahaffey  
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10/00

**REVIEWED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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