

CITY OF BELLINGHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Public Safety Communications & Outreach Manager

UNION:231

DEPARTMENT: Police Department

SG:6

CS:N

FLSA:N

EEO4/SOCCODE:PR/11-9199

JOB SUMMARY:

Assists Communications and Community Relations Director in leading and coordinating unified public safety and emergency communications across City departments. Develops, implements and manages effective communications and outreach systems and strategies to inform and involve the Bellingham community in the City's public safety work with a focus on transparency and access to timely, accurate and understandable information about Citywide public safety actions and services. Leads all communications, community engagement, and outreach activities for the Police Department, including media relations, print and digital communications, special events, community engagement, and public opinion research. Serves a lead role in the City's emergency communications team, and develops and maintains the City's emergency communication plans, protocols, and templates. Develops and facilitates strategic communications and community relations approaches to ongoing and emerging public safety issues. Ensures the City's commitment to equity and belonging is incorporated in communications and public outreach initiatives and actively contributes to an inclusive City. Participates in strategic planning and development of new initiatives. Contributes to Citywide communications priorities as assigned.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP:

Reports to the Police Chief. Works under the technical guidance and oversight of the Communications and Community Relations Director to establish strategic priorities and work plans for Police Department and general public safety communications. Work is performed independently under general supervision and the guidance of City and Department policies, procedures and communications and law enforcement professional best practices. Serves as a member of the Police Department management team, the City's communications team, and various Department- and Citywide-project teams. Provides professional and technical guidance to staff throughout the Department. Oversees the work of staff and consultants as assigned. Reflects equity and belonging commitments in guiding and overseeing the work of staff.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOB:

1. Develops and implements effective communications, outreach and public engagement strategies, policies and procedures to promote transparency and access to accurate, understandable and timely communication consistent with Department and City policies, procedures, and law enforcement and communications professional best practices. Ensures accessible and inclusive communication strategies are utilized. Develops, oversees, coordinates and implements strategic communications, outreach and community relations programs for the Police Department. Under direction from the Communications and Community Relations Director and the Police Chief, develops and implements Police Department strategic communications and community engagement plans to enhance the

- department's proactive, transparent communication and engagement activities that inform and engage the public and other stakeholders. Directs or coordinates initiatives designed to increase public awareness of law enforcement and public safety issues and to solicit feedback about the City's public safety services, events and accomplishments.
2. Serves as the Police Department's public information officer and, along with the Police Chief, as primary media spokesperson for the Department. Serves as the primary media contact and manages Department interaction with news media. Coordinates media relations with other City communications staff. Develops and implements Department-level protocols and strategies for timely, effective media response. Serves as spokesperson at events where media representatives are present. Writes and edits news releases and other communications intended for a news media audience. Writes talking points and prepares Department or other City spokespersons for media interviews. Monitors news coverage for impacts, evaluation and follow up.
 3. Along with the Communications and Community Relations Director, serves a lead role in the City's emergency communications team. Develops and maintains the City's emergency communication plans, protocols, and templates to guide public safety messaging before, during, and after an emergency. Creates, oversees, and conducts training, drills, and tabletop exercises for emergency communications staff to strengthen communication readiness and coordination. Collaborates with City and County emergency management staff, as well as staff from other jurisdictions. Serves as Lead PIO or JIC Manager during emergency response incidents.
 4. Manages communications across all print and digital media according to Department and City policies and law enforcement and communications professional best practices. Leads and oversees content creation and optimization for the Department's sections of the City website, social media sites, video productions and other digital and print communications. Monitors and evaluates content and comments for compliance with Department and City policy, and law enforcement and communications professional best practices.
 5. Develops, implements, and monitors annual work plans for Police Department communications and outreach programs. Supports the development and monitoring of budgets for new and existing program areas. Prepares budget proposals and estimates.
 6. Contributes to Citywide communications needs and projects as part of the City communications team and other interdepartmental teams.
 7. Manages and coordinates Police Department and emergency communications stakeholder outreach, public engagement, and public opinion research efforts. Drives engagement of unrepresented communities in stakeholder and community outreach efforts. Meets with community members, community groups and professional associations as needed to achieve communications, outreach and public engagement goals.

8. Conducts research and analysis of Police Department communications and outreach programs by gathering data and preparing reports to analyze impacts of efforts. Evaluates existing measures, maintains program databases, files and records.
9. Prepares and administers contracts for program and consultant services including requests for proposals, scopes of work and cost estimates, monitoring progress, preparing reports and providing recommendations on findings.
10. Responds to questions and concerns from Police Department staff, other City staff, partner organizations, local agencies and others. Develops response protocols in coordination with the Department management team and City administration.
11. Collaborates, coordinates and networks with other City staff, City departments, professional organizations, jurisdictions, agencies and educational institutions on topics that expand the Police Department's and City's ability to reach target audiences in an effective and coordinated way.
12. Ensures consistent use of Police Department and City standards in all print and electronic materials, including logo use, image quality, and accessibility requirements. Observes established best practices and City and Department policies and guidelines to ensure effective copywriting, proofing and editing in coordination with various staff, City administration and consultants.
13. Assigns, coordinates, oversees and reviews work of staff, consultants, interns, extra labor and temporary employees as needed to achieve communications and outreach program goals.
14. Serves as the Police Department's Language Access Coordinator. Ensures appropriate language access services (interpretation, translation) are provided in compliance with City's Language Access Plan. Develops and maintains Department-level Language Access Plan.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. Performs other related work of a similar nature or level.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities):

Knowledge of:

- Thorough knowledge of Microsoft Office suite software and common software or technology used in communications such as portable document format software, website content management software, graphic design software, video production technology and editing software, and photography technology and photo management software or other related technology.
- Principles, best practices and current and emerging trends in communications, marketing and community relations.

- Digital communications strategies and best practices, including skills in and proficiency with technology, including website, social media and other common communications-related technology platforms.
- Principles, best practices and current and emerging trends in communications and community engagement and their application in a law enforcement setting.
- Principles, best practices and current trends in ensuring accessibility, equity and inclusion goals are incorporated into all communications, marketing, and community outreach initiatives in order to reach diverse audiences.
- General knowledge of government decision-making processes.
- General principles, practices and methods of law enforcement management, topics and challenges.
- Applicable local, state and federal laws and standards.
- Knowledge of and ability to apply a variety of regulations, statutes, and instructions.

Skill in:

- Strong leadership skills including planning and organizing, project management, problem-solving, leading diverse teams.
- Skills and experience communicating with the news media. Strong knowledge of local and regional media contacts and/or proven ability to quickly develop such relationships.
- Excellent written communication and editing skills to develop, write and proofread applications, reports and written communications, and to prepare materials for various media including print, television and web publication, reports, and other written communications.
- Excellent visual communications skills to develop, create, and edit videos, graphics, photos, and other visual communications for various digital or print platforms.
- Technology and digital communications platforms.

Ability to:

- Plan and organize meetings, and present recommendations and reports.
- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Prepare technical materials and reports.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with individuals and groups, other employees, and the public.
- Multitask, meet deadlines and shift priorities as needed.
- Manage communications to successful outcomes.
- Be organized, attentive to details, and ensure accuracy of information and communications.
- Work and remain dependable in a fast-paced environment while juggling multiple priorities; think quickly, assess a situation and make sound decisions and recommendations.
- Read and interpret statutes.
- Exercise discretion and protect privileged or confidential information.
- Ability and willingness to demonstrate the Public Service Competencies of Service Orientation, Results Orientation, and Teamwork and Cooperation.
- Maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
- Physical ability to perform the essential functions of the job, including:
 - Frequently operate a computer and other office machinery such as a keyboard, mouse, phone and fax machine;
 - Communicate accurate information and ideas with city employees and the public;
 - Operate a motor vehicle;
 - Move between work sites;
 - Lift and carry materials weighing up to twenty-five (25) lbs. on an infrequent basis.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Work is performed in an office setting with extensive work at a computer workstation with periods of prolonged sitting or standing. Work involves frequent interaction with co-workers and the public. Work is occasionally performed out-of-doors which may include exposure to the elements, noise, and emergency scenes. Employees are required to use appropriate safety equipment and follow standard safety practices.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- BA/BS degree in communications, marketing, public relations, law enforcement, criminal justice, or related field required.
- Three years of professional experience coordinating, developing, and implementing communications, media relations, public relations and/or public engagement activities required. Experience in law enforcement, public safety, criminal justice or related field preferred.
- Experience in a government agency preferred.
- Master's degree in related field preferred.
- 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, background investigation, polygraph examination and fingerprinting. Criminal convictions check subject to re-check every five years.
- Valid Washington State driver's license and good driving record. A three-year driving abstract must be submitted at the time of hire, with periodic submission of driving abstract per City policy.
- Requires ability to work a flexible schedule including evening and weekend work to attend meetings, respond to emergencies, and meet time-sensitive deadlines.
- Certificate of completion from Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) /Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Independent Study Courses within six months of hire: IS-29.A Public Information Officer Awareness; E0105 Public Information Basics.
- Must be able to obtain Level I ACCESS operator and CJIS certification within six months of hire.

PREPARED BY:

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