CITY OF BELLINGHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: ASSISTANT COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIRECTOR – Intergovernmental Focus

E-PLAN
SG :E2-9
DEPARTMENT: Council and Executive **CS: N**
FLSA :N
EEO4CODE: PR

JOB SUMMARY:

Assists in establishing, managing and implementing effective communications, community relations and public involvement strategies to achieve Citywide goals of fostering meaningful public engagement and providing timely, accurate, understandable information to the residents of Bellingham and others. Serves a unique role in fostering relationships and streamlining communications for and between branches of government. Provides guidance and assistance as an internal consultant to the City Council, as well as the Mayor, Deputy Administrator, department heads and other staff in effective communications strategies, policies, procedures and issues. Works in tandem with another Assistant Director and the City's communications team to develop communication strategies and implementation methods based on internal and external communication goals, policies, needs and best practices. Assists the Communications Director in developing and managing the City's communications and related 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. Participates in ensuring the City's commitment to Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) 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 Communications Director, with significant interaction with the City Council President, City Council members, the Council Office Manager, the Mayor, the Deputy Administrator and other members of the Mayor's Office. Collaborates with the Assistant Communications and Community Relations Director and communications team members Citywide. Serves as a member of the Council Office and Executive Department teams. Works independently in carrying out responsibilities. Provides project-related direction to professional and administrative staff in the Council Office, Executive Department and other departments, such as the City's webmaster, television station manager and department communications managers and coordinators. Solicits, manages, reviews and coordinates the work of consultants. Represents the City in interagency projects. May supervise other staff. Works under applicable federal, state and City regulations, policies and procedures. Reflects ADEI 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, Mayor and executive management staff on communications strategies, policies, procedures and issues. Consults with department directors, program managers and other staff on communications, community relations, public engagement and related needs.

2. Fosters relationships and streamlines communications for and between branches of government.

3. Under the guidance of the Communications Director, establishes, manages and implements effective communications, media relations and public involvement strategies in assigned areas of responsibility to foster meaningful public engagement and provide timely, accurate, understandable information to the residents of Bellingham and others. Responsible for the organization, scheduling and production of community information activities.

4. Develops, recommends, facilitates and implements strategic approaches to emerging issues.

5. Develops, recommends, and implements plans to increase awareness of City programs and participation in the City's decision-making processes. Works with other City staff in the development of outreach programs to encourage public engagement and participation in City government and to encourage use of public programs and facilities.

6. Participates in strategic planning and manages content and scheduling for City web pages, television programs, social media, newsletters and other mass communications, according to City policies, procedures, and communications best practices.

7. Convenes City communications staff teams, interdepartmental project teams, and other internal stakeholder groups to support and inform policy development, strategies and projects.

8. Represents the City's communications, community relations and public engagement interests in interagency and/or partner efforts.

9. 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.

10. Serves as a public information officer and disseminates prompt, accurate public information during emergency and disaster situations.

11. Actively participates in ensuring accessible and inclusive communication and public engagement strategies are utilized Citywide.

12. Assists with forming, convening and facilitating advisory boards, commissions and other stakeholder groups.

13. Plans and coordinates and/or supports the planning and coordination of events such as celebrations, public forums and community activities.

14. Serves as backup to the other Assistant Director position, when needed.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. May be assigned special project work.

2. May prepare requests for proposals and scopes of work for solicitation of consultants and manage consultant contracts and intergovernmental agreements.

3. May oversee public opinion research efforts.

4. 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.
- Principles and best practices in ensuring ADEI goals are incorporated into all communications and community relations initiatives.

Skill in:

- 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.

Ability to:

- Management abilities including 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 an internal consultant and provide guidance and training to a variety of staff 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.
- Ability to gain and maintain confidence of Mayor, 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.
- 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 position including:
  - frequently operate a computer and other office machinery such as a keyboard, mouse, phone and fax machine;
  - ability to 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:

Generally works in an office environment with extensive time spent at a computer workstation. 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.
- A minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience in communications, community relations, public engagement or related fields, with responsibility for advising senior management staff, is 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 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:

- Employment contingent upon passing a criminal background check.
- Valid Washington State driver's license and good driving record. Candidates must submit a three-year driving abstract prior to hire.
- 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; E/L0105 Public Information Basics.

PREPARED BY: J. Keller
A.Sullivan
4/23, 2/24

REVIEWED BY:_____
Kim Lund, Mayor