CITY OF BELLINGHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: **Communications and Community Relations Director** **E-PLAN SG:E2-14**

DEPARTMENT: **Executive** **CS:N FLSA:N EEO4/SOC:PR/11-2032**

JOB SUMMARY:

Serves as a key leadership partner in ensuring City communications in all forms reaches and resonates broadly with members of our community and reflects the values of the City and the community. Works with internal and external stakeholders to accomplish the work, mission, strategic goals and vision of the City. Develops and leads strategic communications approaches to emerging issues. Establishes and oversees the implementation of effective communications and public involvement strategies, policies and procedures Citywide to provide timely, accurate, understandable information and engagement opportunities to the residents of Bellingham and others. Works closely with the Mayor, City Council, department heads and their staff, other governmental officials, boards, commissions and community members. Oversees communications Citywide, including strategic communications, external and internal mass communications, website, social and other digital media, public information and outreach, public involvement, public opinion research and media relations. Serves a direct role in emergency response within the incident command system. Provides leadership in efforts to ensure the City's commitment to Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) commitments are 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.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP:

Reports to a Deputy Administrator. Works independently in carrying out responsibilities under the guidance of applicable federal, state and City regulations, policies and procedures. Serves as a key advisor to the Mayor and City Council members and is a member of the City's Department Head team. Supervises Assistant Communications Directors and other assigned staff. Provides on-going and project-related direction to professional and administrative staff in the Executive Department and all other employees that support communications Citywide. Solicits, manages, reviews and coordinates the work of consultants. Reflects ADEI commitments in guiding and overseeing the work of staff and consultants.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOB:

1. Serves as a key leadership partner in ensuring City communications in all forms reaches and resonates broadly with members of our community and reflects the values of the City and the community.

2. Establishes, directs, manages and implements effective communications, media relations and public involvement strategies Citywide to foster meaningful public engagement and provide timely, accurate, understandable information to the residents of Bellingham and others.

3. Advises the Mayor, City Council and executive management staff on communications strategies, policies, procedures and issues. Serves as principal staff consultant to elected

leaders, department directors, program managers and other staff on communications, community relations, public engagement and related needs.

4. Develops, recommends, facilitates and implements strategic approaches to emerging issues. Serves in a leadership role managing communications, community relations and/or intergovernmental relations during urgent, emergency and/or disaster situations. Serves a direct role in emergency response within the incident command system.

5. Directs, recommends, 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 public engagement and participation in City government and to encourage use of public programs and facilities.

6. Directs the organization, scheduling and production of community information activities for the City. Oversees and manages content and scheduling for City homepage, social media, television programs, newsletters and all mass communications, in accordance with City policies, procedures, and communications best practices. Directs and/or co-leads strategic planning and decisions about website and television station operations, with the Director Information Technology Services.

7. Responsible for selecting, directing, coordinating and evaluating the efforts of assigned staff. Establishes training and performance standards, assigns and supervises work, and conducts and/or reviews performance evaluations. Interprets and applies personnel policies and applicable collective bargaining agreements. Documents and implements disciplinary actions, works in conjunction with Human Resources concerning personnel matters.

8. Convenes interdepartmental staff teams and other stakeholder groups to support and inform policy, strategy and project development.

9. Represents the City's interests in interagency and/or partner efforts.

10. Manages and coordinates City stakeholder and public opinion research efforts.

11. Directs, 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.

12. Directs and/or coordinates the planning and implementation of events such as public forums and community activities.

13. Directs efforts to ensure accessible and inclusive communication and public engagement strategies are utilized Citywide.

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

15. Manages requests for proposals and scopes of work for solicitation of consultants and consultant contracts. May prepare and manage intergovernmental agreements and other types of contracts.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. May be assigned to work on special projects 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 of:
- Strategic approaches and best practices in managing communications, community relations and intergovernmental relations, especially in addressing emerging issues and emergency or disaster situations
- The full range of current strategic communication, media relations, public involvement and public opinion research strategies, tactics, techniques, formats and platforms and how to apply them in various circumstances.
- Government systems, processes and procedures. Knowledge and understanding of the role of appointed and elected officials.
- Public communication and engagement plan development and the production of support materials.
- Public engagement and public opinion research techniques, best practices 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:
- Demonstrated strong leadership and interpersonal skills.
- Demonstrated strong written communication skills to prepare materials for diverse audiences.
- Demonstrated strong verbal communication skills to present information to the City Council, groups of employees and to the public.
- Strong skills in planning and organizing, budget and personnel management, problem analysis, problem solving and decision making, interpersonal sensitivity, adaptability/flexibility, stress tolerance and time management.
- Demonstrated technology skills, including use of standard computer programs for word processing, spreadsheets, financial analyses, project scheduling and demonstrated ability to learn new applications.

Ability to:
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with community members, 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 and perform effectively in an atmosphere of ambiguity or in a rapidly changing environment. Demonstrate a high level of discretion and sensitivity.
- Assimilate complex information from a range of sources and effectively summarize for diverse audiences.
- Present information effectively to large and small groups and in high pressure situations.
- Gain and maintain confidence of Mayor, 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.

- Maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
- Ability and willingness to demonstrate the Public Service Competencies of Service Orientation, Results Orientation, and Teamwork and Cooperation.
- Physical ability to perform the essential functions of the job, including:
  - Frequently operate a computer and other standard office equipment;
  - Frequently communicate accurate information and ideas with others;
  - Move between work sites;
  - Occasionally transport objects weighing up to twenty-five (25) pounds.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Generally works in an office environment with extensive time spent at a computer workstation. Work involves frequent interaction with City leaders, staff, partners and the public. Duties are frequently performed under the stress of information deadlines, pressure from the public, and/or the news media for information on emerging or sensitive issues. The conditions encountered will vary depending on the sensitivity and complexity of the information to be disseminated. Requires frequent attendance and participation in local evening and weekend meetings and events. May require occasional travel to professional seminars and meetings outside the local area.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- Bachelor's degree in communications or related field required. Master's degree preferred.
- A minimum of seven years of experience in the field of communications including responsibility for advising leadership and senior management staff on communications and community relations issues is required. Significant experience in a government environment preferred.
- Demonstrated ability to lead and work successfully with cross-functional teams required.
- Demonstrated experience directing, developing and implementing communications and engagement strategies to achieve defined objectives required.
- Demonstrated experience in working with print, broadcast and digital media is required.
- A combination of education, experience and training that provides the applicant with the knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully perform the responsibilities of this 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.
- Must complete National Incident Management System ICS 100, 200, 300, 400 and 700 training following hire.

PREPARED BY: Steve Mahaffey
Don Keenan
10/00

REVIEWED BY: _____
Kim Lund, Mayor

REVISED BY: J. Keller
L. Klemanski
L. McGowan-Smith

7/07

K. Linville
V. Blackburn
L. Klemanski
7/2014

J. Keller
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A.Sullivan
6/2024