CITY OF BELLINGHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: **Communications and Public Engagement Manager** **UNION:231**
SG:6
DEPARTMENT: **Planning & Community Development** **CS:N**
FLSA:N
EEO4CODE:PR

JOB SUMMARY:

Develops, implements and manages effective communications and outreach systems and strategies to inform and involve the Bellingham community and City staff in the work of the Planning & Community Development Department, with a focus on transparency and access to timely, accurate and understandable information about both City and Department actions and services. Leads all communications, marketing and outreach activities for the Department, including media relations, print and digital communications, special events, community engagement and public opinion research. Develops and facilitates strategic communications and community relations approaches to ongoing and emerging issues. Ensures the City's commitment to Acessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) is incorporated in communications and public outreach initiatives and actively contributes to an inclusive Planning and Community Development department. Participates in strategic planning and development of new initiatives. Maintains a regular working relationship with the City's Communications Director and contributes to Citywide communications priorities as assigned.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS:

Reports to the Director of Planning & Community Development. Works with independence under general supervision and the guidance of City and Department policies, procedures and communications and professional best practices. Serves as a member of the Department management team, the City's communications team under the direction of the Communications Director and various project teams. Provides professional and technical guidance to staff throughout the Department.Oversees, trains, and directs the work of other staff, consultants, interns, extra labor and temporary employees as assigned. Reflects ADEI 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 communications professional best practices. Ensures accessible and inclusive communication strategies are utilized.

2. Serves as the Department public information officer and, along with the Director and Division Managers, as primary media spokesperson for the Department. Manages Department interaction with news media. Develops and implements 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. Monitors news coverage for impacts, evaluation and follow up.

3. Manages communications across all print and electronic media according to Department and City policies 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 electronic communications. Monitors and evaluates content and comments for compliance with Department and City policy and communications professional best practices.

4. Manages and coordinates Department stakeholder outreach, public engagement and public opinion research efforts. Drives engagement of unrepresented communities in stateholder and community outreach efforts. Meets with community members, community groups and professional associations as needed to achieve communications, outreach and public engagement goals.

5. Plans, develops, oversees, coordinates and implements strategic communications, outreach and community relations programs for the Department. Directs or coordinates initiatives designed to increase public awareness of growth management, land use/zoning, development/construction, and/or community and economic concerns related to Department services, events and accomplishments. Implements and evaluates outcomes.

6. Develops, implements and monitors annual work plans for Department communications and outreach programs. Supports the development and monitoring of budgets for new and existing program areas. Prepares budget proposals and estimates.

7. Contributes to Citywide communications needs and projects as part of the City communications team and other interdepartmental teams. Contributes to emergency communications and serves as staff in joint information centers and emergency operations as assigned.

8. Conducts research and analysis of 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 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 Department's and City's ability to reach target audiences in an effective and coordinated way.

12. Ensures consistent use of 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. .

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 used in communications such as portable document format software, website content management software, graphic design software and photo management software and 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 relations and their application in a local governmentsetting.
- Principles, best practices and current trends in ensuring ADEI goals are incorporated into all communications and community outreach initiatives.
- General knowledge of government decision-making processes.
- General principles, practices and methods of land use, zoning, growth management, topics and challenges.
- Diverse marketing and communications tools and resources.
- 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, supervising and staff training.
- 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.
- Technology and digital communications platforms.

Ability to:
- Plan and organize meetings, and present recommendations and reports.
- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Ability to 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.
- Maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
- 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 office machinery such as a keyboard, mouse, phone, and fax machine;
    - Ability to communicate accurate information and ideas with city employees and the public;
    - Operate a motor vehicle;

- Move between work sites;
- Occasionally traverse undeveloped land;
- Lift and carry materials weighing up to 25 pounds on an infrequent basis.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Work is performed in an office setting with extensive work at a computer work station 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 other conditions typical of construction sites. 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, city and regional planning, geography, 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 city and regional planning or related field preferred.
- Experience in a government agency preferred.
- Master's degree in related field preferred.
- An equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to provide the applicant with the knowledge, skills and ability to successfully perform the essential functions of the job will be considered.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Employment contingent upon passing a background check.
- 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 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 six months of hire: IS-29.A Public Information Officer Awareness; E/L0105 Public Information Basics.

PREPARED BY: B.Lyon
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12/22

REVIEWED BY:_____
Blake Lyon, Director
Planning & Community Development