CITY OF BELLINGHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	**Public Works Communication and Outreach Coordinator**	**UNION: 231** **SG: 4** **CS: N**
DEPARTMENT:	**Public Works, Administration**	**FLSA: N** **EEO4CODE: PR**

JOB SUMMARY:

Develops and coordinates strategic communication planning for the Public Works Department, including inter-departmental and employee communication, external and public information, public involvement, community relations, media relations and crisis communications. Works with the Public Works Communications and Outreach Manager, Department managers, leads, and other staff on communication strategies. May support the City Communications team to meet internal and external communication needs for the City and its programs. Serves as a first point of contact for inquiries to the Public Works Department and triages requests for information. Responds to inquiries directly within scope of knowledge.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP:

Reports to the Public Works Communications and Outreach Manager. Works under general supervision and the guidance of City and Departmental policies and procedures as well as applicable federal, state and local statutes, regulations, and contractual agreements. Works in coordination with department managers, City Communications Director, and other staff.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOB:

1. Advises staff on public information policies and issues. Serves as a staff specialist and professional consultant to the Department in the field of communications and media relations. Provides support and assistance by advising and coordinating with others in the Department who are preparing communication materials, outreach, news media engagement, and educational or other similar materials.

2. Develops, coordinates, and produces public information products such as brochures, fact sheets, news releases, audio/visual programs, website and social media content, and other informational, educational, and promotional materials. May plan, direct, coordinate and/or support the planning and coordination of events such as public forums, project open houses, and community activities.

3. Coordinates between Public Works and Finance Departments on citywide means, methods, and content on communications related to utility billing.

4. Monitors, responds, or directs to appropriate staff incoming electronic communications submitted through general public works and work email accounts.

5. Assists the ADA Coordinator in monitoring obligations under state and federal law for methods and languages used to communicate information.

6. Partners with other City communicators, departments and as appropriate, including with community Public Information Officers for coordinated emergency communications. Engages with professional organizations (APWA, e.g.) as appropriate. Develops and delivers communication and media trainings for internal stakeholders. Represents the Department at public meetings and events as liaison, spectator, or presenter as assigned.

7. Based on general direction provided by the Director and Assistant Directors, develops, coordinates and implements strategic communications plans to increase public awareness of Public Works programs including capital projects. Encourages public participation in the City's decision-making processes.

8. Coordinates interdepartmental and interagency efforts to maintain and promote Public Works web pages. Monitors the process whereby content is placed in the Public Works sections of the City's website. Coordinates with department staff to ensure information is current, relevant and accurate. Coordinates with Information Technology staff to ensure that web links are viable.

9. Serves as Department Public Information Officer (PIO) during emergencies to coordinate, develop and release information. Coordinates with and supports the Office of Emergency Management during emergency and regular operations. May serve as PIO or other supporting role during an event under the Incident Command System within the City or externally, including for Whatcom Unified Emergency Management.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. May prepare scopes of work for solicitation of consultants on small communications contracts.

2. May train, direct, and review the work of lower classified staff as assigned to assist with education and outreach programs.

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

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities):

Knowledge of:
- Communication, education, and public involvement strategies, and how to apply them in a municipal environment.
- Government systems, processes and procedures preferred.
- Public Works Department and its role in the community preferred.
- Communication plan development and the production of support materials.
- Computer graphics and layout applications.
- Website software and social media applications.
- Spanish, American Sign Language, Russian, or other second language is preferred.

Skill in:
- Demonstrated computer skills, including proficiency in standard applications for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, databases, manipulating images, desktop publishing and creating print illustrations and layouts.
- Demonstrated analytical skills and attention to detail.
- Mastery of English language and Associated Press (AP Style), with professional proofreading and editing ability of print, web and social media materials.

- Excellent communication skills to present information to the City Council, groups of employees and to the public.
- Excellent written communication skills to prepare materials on deadline for publication and information for the public.

Ability to:
- Express a positive and service orientated attitude during initial contact.
- Communicate complex technical ideas or policies to non-technical audiences.
- Present information using print, web, social media, and broadcast media.
- Plan effectively in an atmosphere of ambiguity or rapidly changing environment.
- Present information effectively to large and small groups and in pressure situations.
- Serve as an internal consultant and provide guidance and training to a variety of staff on communication issues.
- Effectively work in a team environment: contribute openly, respectfully disagree, understand the ideas of others, listen well and work for consensus.
- Understand the role of appointed and elected officials.
- Basic desktop publishing with the ability to design products from concept to completion.
- Be organized, attentive to details, and able to ensure accuracy of information and communications.
- Must be able and willing to attend evening and weekend meetings, events, trainings and drills.
- 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 communicate accurate information and ideas with others;
    - Frequently operate a computer and other office machinery such as a keyboard, mouse, phone, and fax machine.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Generally works in an office environment with extensive time spent at a computer workstation. Work may occasionally be performed outdoors in all weather and on uneven terrain. Duties may frequently be performed under the stress of information deadlines, pressure from the public, and/or news media for information on sensitive issues. The conditions encountered will vary depending on the sensitivity and complexity of the information to be disseminated. Work requires attendance at evening meetings and response to after-hours callouts. This is a sedentary position with minimal physical exertion requirements.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- Bachelor's degree in communications, journalism, public relations, public administration, or related field.
- Three years of increasingly responsible experience in communications with responsibility for advising staff on communications and public relations issues.
- Demonstrated experience in working with print, broadcast and social media.
- 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:

- Adaptability and flexibility to accept schedule changes, as necessary, and willingness to accept "call out" status for emergency situations.
- 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.
- National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) training, or the ability to obtain within 18 months, including Incident Command Systems 100, 200, 300, 700 and Washington State G290 and Emergency Management Institute E388.

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