**Communications Director - Contract**

**Grade: AE**

**FLSA: Exempt**

**Date: 01/19**

**Job Summary:**  Plans, organizes and directs activities and services of the department to ensure effective and cohesive internal and external communications. The work involves planning, developing and implementing integrated communications strategies and policies, including strategic communications, media relations, social media, video and graphic services. Provides public information services for county government. Manages, directs and coordinates the work of the Public Information Office. Incumbent is an authorized spokesperson and news media liaison for county government. The work involves writing, editing and preparing informational materials for the news media, county residents, county employees and others; conducts news conferences and other public events; counsels other staff regarding effective public information practices and activities; responds to inquiries from the public; provides vital information from county government to the public during emergencies. The incumbent works closely with high profile Elected Officials, County Administrator, county department directors, managers and employees, supplying and seeking information on specific matters. The work requires strong administrative skills, strong experience, training in communications and communication strategies, strong working knowledge of county government and established relationships, both internal and external.

**Essential Functions:**

1. Chief spokesperson for St. Mary’s County Government;

1. Primary point of contact between county government and the media for:
   * Severe weather and other disaster incidents
   * Exercises (to include Calvert Cliffs NPP biennial exercise)
   * Public forums and hearings
   * News releases
   * Response to media inquiries
2. Develops strategic communication strategies and plans; oversees execution of programs and campaigns to enhance awareness of county government involvement in the community, major projects and policies. Maintains and updates media contact lists;
3. Plans, develops, writes and issues news releases, media advisories and other promotional or informational materials for print, broadcast and online media;
4. Works with Commissioners of St. Mary’s County, County Administrator, department heads and managers to recognize communications opportunities and execute appropriate strategies to support and promote. Works to ensure commissioner objectives are promoted to further enhance the county’s brand with the public, Develops messaging, internal communications and external media relations activities;
5. Acts at the direction of the Director of Emergency Services and/or Emergency Services Manager in matters relating to emergency communications to the media and public;
6. Attends emergency training sessions and drills;
7. Serves as emcee for special events, moderates public forums and select public hearings;
8. Manages daily operations of the county’s cable TV station St. Mary’s County Government TV 95; edit videos for presentation on channel; oversee photography and videography of county events, including proclamations, awards, ceremonies and special meetings;
9. Authors scripts and materials for St. Mary’s County Government TV 95 informational programming;
10. Conceptualizes and oversees development of annual State of the County video report; conducts on-camera interviews of department directors; serves as program anchor; manages post production process; designs accompanying State of the County Executive Summary; ensures items are posted to county website;
11. Serve as Editor in Chief of quarterly employee newsletter, including planning and selection of stories/materials to be included; coordinate with contributing departments on content; research information; serve as writer;
12. Researches and verifies information on a variety of issues in response to requests for information from media representatives;
13. Meets and coordinates the release of background information with the media and respond to inquiries;
14. Writes and edits speeches and talking points for commissioners; develops feature and special articles for county brochures and materials;
15. Advises department and agency representatives concerning publicity for programs, events and media relations practices;
16. Coordinates events sponsored by the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County(CSMC), including Flag Day, Fire Rescue Appreciation Day and annual Leonardtown Veterans Day Parade; oversees management of weekly Commissioners Calendar of Events (Blue Sheet);
17. Provide communications counsel to elected officials, County Administrator, department directors and managers; conduct media training for elected officials, directors and managers; proactively develop and update the county’s media relations policy as necessary;
18. Administers, posts and monitors content on county government’s official social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr; author and update county’s social media policy; approves pages/channels, provides oversight and guidance to departments seeking to establish a presence on social media;
19. Serves as Subject Matter Expert regarding matters of protocol (i.e. display of flags, recognition of dignitaries at events, etc.);
20. Develop presentations for use by commissioners and County Administrator as requested;
21. Manage and mentor Public Information Office staff and interns;
22. Coordinates website management; ensures new and updated information regarding public hearings and special meetings is posted and maintained regularly;
23. Performs other duties as assigned.

**Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

1. Ability to gain thorough knowledge of St. Mary’s County Government policies and procedures;
2. Ability to effectively represent St. Mary’s County Government to the public;
3. Ability to effectively communicate with other managers, staff and the public;
4. Advanced knowledge of the principles and practices of journalism and public information in relation to local government;
5. Ability to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with the media, key stakeholders, other government agencies, vendors and the public; handle public relations problems with courtesy and tact;
6. Excellent writing and communication skills;
7. Must possess valid license and be willing to work some holidays, weekends, and evenings.

**Education and Experience:**

1. Bachelor’s degree in Public Relations, Journalism, Communications or related field;
2. Five or more years of increasing experience in marketing, public relations, public information, media relations or related field, preferably in a governmental environment;
3. Experienced public speaker; ability to communicate with high profile elected officials and citizens;
4. Or equivalent training, education, and/or experience;
5. Possess a valid driver’s license and satisfactory driving record.

**Physical and Environmental Conditions:**

Work requires no unusual demand for physical effort.

Work environment involves everyday risks or discomforts which require normal safety precautions typical of such places as offices or meeting rooms, e.g., use of safe work place practices with office equipment, and/or avoidance of trips and falls.

The above job description is not intended as, nor should it be construed as, exhaustive of all responsibilities, skills, efforts, or working conditions associated with this job.

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of this job.

I certify that this is an accurate statement of the essential functions and responsibilities of this position.

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County Administrator Date

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this position description.

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Employee’s Signature Date