

Communications Director Tompkins County

Department: County Administration

Classification: Non-competitive

Labor Grade: Management Grade 87

Approved: 1/6/2020

Revised: 6/22

By: RP, Commissioner of Human Resources

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: EITHER:

1. Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university with a Master's Degree in Communications, English, Journalism, Public Relations, Public Administration, Marketing, Public or Business Administration, Social Sciences or a related field; **OR**
2. Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university with a Bachelor's Degree in Communications, English, Journalism, Public Relations, Public Administration, Marketing, Public or Business Administration, Social Sciences or a related field; **AND** two (2) years of full-time paid (or the equivalent part-time) experience in a position with substantial public information responsibility; **OR**
3. Completion of two years of study (at least 60 college credit hours) in a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university with major coursework in Communications, English, Journalism, Public Relations, Public Administration, Marketing, Public or Business Administration, Social Sciences or a related field; **AND** four (4) years of full-time paid (or the equivalent part-time) experience in a position with substantial public information responsibility; **OR**
4. Any combination of training and experience equal to or greater than that described in (a), (b) and (c) above.

Tompkins County is Committed to Equity and Inclusion. We encourage those with similar values to apply.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

The Communications Director acts as a member of the Tompkins County leadership team, and is responsible for developing and managing the delivery of a comprehensive engagement strategy and communication plan for community outreach, public relations, public information and media relations that amplify the County's priorities and drives engagement across internal and external communities, while clearly defining objectives, channels, timelines, and measures for success. The incumbent develops and implements the organization's brand and the branding for County departments and programs and serve as the organization's primary point of contact for the local, regional, and national news media, delivering pitches, fielding questions, ensuring accurate coverage, and planning for media appearances by County officials. The Communications Director works directly with and assists the Legislature and department heads to develop and issue key information about County government, its services, finances, people, special projects, serving as a leader and advisor in all communications as needed.

The Director plays a critical role in building public trust through various communications programs and initiatives and advancing transparency and accountability of Tompkins County government. The Director ensures that critical public information is accessible in different languages, pursuant to policies on translation and language access. The incumbent issues policy level directives and functions in a highly autonomous manner, serving as lead emergency Public Information Officer (PIO) for Tompkins County working with community first-response agencies and other County and outside agency PIO's in the event of a widespread or long-term disaster. Supervision is exercised over the Media Production Assistant. The incumbent performs all related duties as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

- Directs staff and contracted vendors in the coordination, development and implementation of internal and external communications, public information and community relations activities (i.e., broadcasting or streaming of meetings, website, social marketing programs, special events, etc.);
- Supports County Administrator and other organizational leaders in the development of communications, including speeches, presentations and print/digital communications. Oversees the creation of background briefing documents for the Administrator before major interviews, meetings and presentations;
- Advises and counsels management and staff on policies, plans, and practices that affect the County's relationship with the public;
- Coordinates, plans, and manages integrated internal and external communication activities;
- Interacts with administrators, elected officials and staff across multiple departments and agencies to coordinate messaging and public information for special projects and during emergency events;
- Develops key messages, press releases, social media, website content, print and electronic communication;
- Assists departments with the development and implementation of communication strategies and crisis communications;
- Provides accessible, easily understood information about Tompkins County services and programs using various communication strategies, tools, and tactics, including language translation;
- Anticipates media responses, prepares spokesperson(s) accordingly and responds to media inquiries;
- Administers and manages public and employee information programs;
- Provides oversight and direction for digital communications, including the website, e-newsletters, digital signage, intranet, and social media;
- May act as lead Public Information Officer or a team member of the PIO team responsible for communication functions during emergency or crisis events;
- Manages Tompkins County's role with the government access channel and digital streaming services;
- Plans, organizes, and directs efforts that enhance Tompkins County's image in the community through relationship building, special events, branding, and information sharing;
- Manages the dissemination of prompt, accurate information during emergency and disaster situations;
- Develops and recommends new communication methods and enhancements to better achieve County goals, including fostering the organization's core values and marketing County services to residents, community groups, and other external organizations;
- Coordinates public events, including open houses, ceremonies, and other public functions;
- Works cooperatively with the Public Information Advisory Board;
- Supervises the broadcasting of County Legislature and other public meetings;
- Responds to requests to produce video programming and photography;
- Prepares Highlights of Legislature meetings;
- Advises and trains County staff and officials in effective use of media;
- Engages departments in community outreach and education events;
- Monitors and manages the public information program budget.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES, AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Thorough knowledge and understanding of the organization, functions, laws, policies, regulations, programs and goals of Tompkins County government;
- Superior oral and written communications skills, and the ability to create and articulate messages to a wide range of audiences;
- Advanced skills in graphic design and graphic software;
- Exceptional writing and presentation skills;
- Excellent organizational and strong project management skills to manage multiple projects which and the ability to design and execute process where none exists;
- Excellent editing and proofreading skills;
- Excellent organizational and interpersonal skills;
- Considerable knowledge of public relations principles and practices as they pertain to internal and external communication needs of a large organization;
- Ability to interact effectively with senior leadership, elected officials, community leaders and external constituencies;
- Self-starter, able to establish priorities and work independently;
- Demonstrated knowledge of current communications trends in a government setting, including extensive knowledge of the use of social media;
- Demonstrated ability to deliver complex messages in simple, concise and understandable ways;

- Attention to detail that drives high quality outputs;
- High-energy and optimistic;
- Comfortable with change and uses feedback to drive personal growth and development;
- Consistently acts with integrity and maintains a high degree of confidentiality;
- Initiative, courtesy, integrity and tact are required;
- The employee's physical condition shall be commensurate with demands of the position.

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