



connections
FOR THE HOMELESS

2121 Dewey Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201
847.475.7070

JOB DESCRIPTION

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

FLSA Status: Exempt

Summary of Position: The Director of Communications creates the voice for Connections' communications, working across the organization to reflect the full scope and impact of the organization to its many constituents including supporters, staff, program participants, elected representatives, and the community at large. This leader is responsible for developing effective messaging and communication strategies and creating and coordinating the flow of communications and information between Connections and its constituents. The Director oversees both internal and external communications.

The primary goal of this position is to develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy that increases Connections' visibility and invites constituents into the work of ending homelessness. Strategies to achieve the goal include messaging and website (external and internal) development, collateral planning and production, boosting fundraising efforts, writing speeches and communications for the agency and executive leadership, and managing all facets of media relationships.

This position will supervise the communications team members. The Director of Communications works closely with both the Chief Development Officer (CDO) and Chief of Governmental Affairs. The Director of Communications serves as a senior leader on the Development team and reports to the CDO.

Schedule and Work Environment: Connections for the Homeless offers a flexible work environment, as positions and business needs allow. This position's home office is located at our Lake Street Church location in Evanston, IL. It is expected that evening and weekend work will be required on occasion to participate and support agency events as well as board/volunteer committee meetings.

Specific Duties:

Branding, Messaging, and Communications Strategies (20 %)

- Develop and manage a robust, multichannel communications strategy for the agency at large, including Joining Forces for Affordable Housing (the advocacy arm of Connections for the Homeless).
- Build strategy, narrative, and communication calendars for targeted audiences and groups including donors, volunteers, in kind donors, and all types of community partners and government relations.
- Develop and steward the agency's voice and vision through all channels including social media and websites.
- Use data to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of communication strategies.

Communications Materials and Assets (40 %)

- Oversee and manage website development and content for both Connections for the Homeless and Joining Forces for Affordable Housing to ensure they are specific to their purposes yet cohesive.
- Provide oversight and execution of all agency collateral material production including the annual report, newsletters, impact cards, program brochures, and presentations.
- Serve as lead writer or editor to develop content in collaboration with advocacy, program, and development staff such as briefings, collateral, solicitation letters, articles, newsletters, and reports.
- Support executive communications by generating presentations, speeches, solicitation letters, and digital content.
- Edit and oversee internal agency communications, including internal website, all agency announcements and general HR communications.

Visibility, Fundraising, and Media (30 %)

- Develop strategies to increase the organization's visibility with likely supporters and volunteers.
- Develop strategies to increase the organization's position as a respected thought leader that provides effective solutions that end homelessness in Evanston and Northern Cook County.
- Manage media relationships by writing press releases and cultivating relationships with editors and reporters to pitch stories and drive awareness in the community.

- Support the Development team, when appropriate, in developing marketing materials for fundraising activities such as events, direct mail appeals, and online fundraising campaigns.
- Help craft executive responses to crises or challenging situations, quickly and professionally.
- Help promote special events to encourage attendance and participation.
- Guide the development of messages and speeches for guest speakers and event presenters.

General Development Responsibilities (10 %)

- Build relationships with participants, staff, key volunteers, community members, agency supporters, and board members.
- Attend donor events, community meetings, and external agency presentations.
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct and Core Values of Connections for the Homeless.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

The following qualifications are requirements for the position:

- Must have experience leading a team.
- At least 7 years working in NFP, preferably a social service organization.
- At least 5 years managing communication strategy for a NFP.
- Flexible schedule – may be required to attend after hours' meetings, community events, and/or volunteer activities.
- Able to work independently and with diverse populations.
- Excellent writing and interpersonal skills.

The following qualifications are highly desirable:

- A team player, with excellent leadership and team building skills.
- Familiarity with the principles of Ethical Storytelling.
- Excellent computer skills, including MS Office (Word, PowerPoint, and Excel) and Adobe Creative Suite.
- Experience with content management software and Google analytics.
- Experience with email marketing tool Constant Contact or similar.
- Experience with web-hosting platform Square-Space or similar.

- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills and must operate well in a fast-paced environment.
- Goal and results-driven with the ability to meet deadlines in a fast-paced service environment.
- Accountable, with an attention to detail and strong organizational skills.
- Ability to take initiative and anticipate the needs of donors, stakeholders, and colleagues.
- Proactively share information and communicate effectively with diverse audiences.
- Able to overcome obstacles, working independently and as part of a team.
- High degree of emotional intelligence.

Other Requirements:

- Must submit to a criminal background check and submit to or provide evidence of a recent test for tuberculosis.

Reports to: Chief Development Officer

May, 2023