



IDENTIFICATION

Department		Position Title	
Municipal and Community Affairs		Senior Communications and Planning Advisor	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region	
21-5416	Yellowknife	Corporate Affairs/HQ	

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Senior Communications and Planning Advisor is a key position with departmental-wide responsibilities to lead the development and implementation of communication strategies and media relations for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) in accordance with Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Communications Policy and supporting directives, guidelines and programs. This includes the provision of advice, support and coordination on all communications initiatives for programming and issues associated with the Emergency Management Organization, Office of the Fire Marshal, Consumer Affairs, 9-1-1 Services, Community Governance, Community Operations, School of Community Government, Sport, Recreation and Youth and five regional MACA offices. The position is also responsible for assuming the Emergency Management Organization (EMO) Information Officer role during emergency and crisis situations (i.e., community floods, forest fires). The position is responsible for providing direction, advice and support across the strategic communications business lines to departmental communicators, leading interdepartmental communications work and providing advice to senior GNWT decision-makers.

SCOPE

MACA is responsible for the development and maintenance of community governments, responsive and responsible to the residents, with sufficient legal authority and resources to carry out community responsibilities, to provide public programs and services essential to good community life and to deal effectively with other government organizations. MACA is also responsible for protecting the interests of consumers. MACA accomplishes this mandate through supporting capable, accountable and self-directed community governments in providing a safe, sustainable and healthy environment for community residents.

Located in Yellowknife, the Senior Communications and Planning Advisor reports directly to the Director of Corporate Affairs. The position supports the Director by providing expert advice and direction to MACA staff, senior managers, and collaborates with the GNWT communications staff on areas such as strategic communications planning, territorial emergency communications, communication planning tools, templates and processes, as well as the coordination of multi-departmental initiatives.

The position works within a framework of stated goals and objectives of the Department and the GNWT; GNWT public relations and communications strategies; and available resources. Within this framework, the position is required to lead and develop innovative and creative solutions to communications challenges and opportunities. The incumbent is expected to anticipate the Department's communications needs and to take the lead in proposing and developing solutions, alone or in collaboration with others. Communications proposals and plans are reviewed by the supervisor and senior management against broad Department concerns, goals and objectives.

The *Emergency Management Act* (EMA) establishes a system designed to prepare for and manage civil emergencies in the Northwest Territories (NWT) and ensures the safety and security of residents. The EMA details the functions, duties and powers of the GNWT and community governments in relation to emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. For the GNWT, the EMA establishes an Emergency Management Organization (EMO) and a Territorial Planning Committee (TPC), and during major emergencies, provides authority for the use of extraordinary powers under a State of Emergency.

The EMA is supported by the NWT Emergency Plan, which provides the structure and guidelines for the GNWT and its partners to deal with territorial emergencies and meet a collective responsibility to support communities during emergencies. During emergencies, the Senior Communications Planning Advisor assumes the role Information Officer on the Incident Management Team and exercises a high degree of direction and control coordinating media requirements and developing and managing internal and external communications materials dealing with sensitive and urgent issues for the Incident Manager and up to the executive level.

This position requires the incumbent to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff in the department and across regions of MACA. There is considerable need for attention to detail when editing, proof reading, and drafting, and the incumbent deals with shifting/changing priorities on a daily basis and must consistently meet set deadlines. These work duties may impact the timing of the incumbent's annual leave.

The incumbent may be required to be on standby frequently throughout high-risk periods (April-September including weekends) and must be available to respond to emergency management issues and response activities during periods of increased risk to communities.

The incumbent may be required to work extended hours in a crisis support role.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Lead the development and implementation of communications strategies and plans for the Department to support clear and concise information with respect to the department's mandate.

- Lead the development of communications strategies and standards for departmental plans and activities.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of communications plans and activities and action alternatives or revisions as required.
- Provide specialized advice related to promotion of information.
- Provide specialized advice related to matters of protocol and public affairs.
- Build collaborative relationships with stakeholders to facilitate successful plan delivery.
- Maintain standards for public information, design of communications initiatives and activities, and promotional activities in keeping with Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) communications strategies.
- Coordinate the production of materials (print, audio-visual, etc.).
- Prepare, or support the preparation of materials for the MACA website including using updated content as a communications tool.
- Provide communications advice to support the completion of briefing material, Executive Council and Financial Management Board submissions.

2. Assume the role of Information Officer on the Incident Management Team during major emergency events.

- Coordinate the implementation of the Emergency Communications Protocol implementing the following activities:
 - Assuming the Information Officer role
 - Support the Minister's involvement in emergency communications
 - Undertake the communications requirements related to declaring a State of Emergency
 - Act as the spokesperson for the GNWT related to emergency management.
- Participate in Incident Management Teams formed to respond to territorial emergencies.
- Assess incident complexity and potential public interest.
- Ensure emergency communications are coordinated, comprehensive and timely.
- Provide daily incident updates to departmental communications officers.
- Designate, prepare, and provide support to spokespersons.
- Serve as the media point of contact for the event; manage media requests, and coordinate interviews and press conferences.
- Assist in the production and distribution of incident specific public alerts.
- Follow incident documentation and filing procedures.
- Participate in After Action Reviews of emergency events and provides recommendations to update emergency communications plans and protocols.
- Will be placed on call to support public safety information requirements during emergencies.

3. Lead the development and implementation of media relations regarding the GNWT preparedness and response efforts relating to major emergencies and incidents.

- Lead in the development and implementation of proactive media campaigns and relations.
- Lead the development and implementation of standards for media relations in keeping with the GNWT media policies.
- Monitor for conformity with standards and take action to address problems or opportunities.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of plans and activities and instruct alternatives or revisions as required.
- Develop and maintain a network of media contacts.
- Lead the development and implementation of training in communications and media relations and participate in its delivery to staff as required.
- Monitor media for emerging issues and provide advice and recommendations to the Director, Assistant Deputy Minister and Deputy Minister.
- Provide advice and support the development of material for media.
- Oversee the development of Issues Management Plans and messaging.
- Assist with the development of media plans for the Minister's office to facilitate television, radio and print interviews.
- Direct the development of media events and opportunities, media messages and media backgrounders.
- Oversee and coordinate the drafting of news releases, advisories and statements.
- Serve as the departmental spokesperson to media outlets and representatives.

4. Lead strategic communications planning, advice and support for the Minister, Deputy Minister, senior management and departmental staff to ensure messages are presented in an accurate, coordinated and effective manner.

- Lead and support the development of department-wide and program-specific communications plans, strategies, policies and procedures in accordance with GNWT and departmental policies and guidelines, and provide leadership in implementation.
- Provide communications support, media and public relations services which entails reviewing departmental print, electronic and broadcast communications to ensure messages are clear and consistent with GNWT/departmental goals and objectives.
- Link MACA's communications activities to the strategic objectives of the GNWT.
- Identify and communicate emerging issues or potential crisis situations and lead the analysis and development of communications responses to these situations.
- Monitor the effect of communications actions taken, recommend solutions, and lead strategies as required.
- Prepare speeches, statements, speaking notes and other public messages for Minister or senior staff as and when required.

5. Support the departmental Official Languages Coordinator to ensure that all communications materials and products, including the MACA website, meet the requirements under the *Official Languages Act*.

- Provide strategic advice to departmental staff on Official Languages requirements and support strategies and products to ensure the department fulfills its obligations.
- Contribute to departmental official languages initiatives and activities to assure that they meet the Official Languages standards.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

No unusual demands.

Environmental Conditions

No unusual conditions.

Sensory Demands

No unusual demands.

Mental Demands

The incumbent is required to provide advice and services to a great number of people with senior level authority who frequently have conflicting interests, perspectives and demands. The incumbent must be sensitive to political situations. The incumbent may be exposed to emotionally and/or politically charged situations when dealing with emergency response events and interacting with staff, media and residents who have been impacted by emergencies or disasters and have experienced personal loss. A high degree of sensitivity, professionalism and cultural understanding may be required to support response and recovery activities.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of best practices in strategic communications planning, public and media relations.
- Knowledge of emergency response systems and management (such as the Incident Command System).
- Ability to maintain calm, exhibiting controlled and professional behavior at all times during incidents/emergencies.
- Interpersonal skills.
- Knowledge of research techniques and methodologies.
- Knowledge and understanding of theory and principles to provide practical communications advice in response to emerging or crisis situations.
- Knowledge of northern communications media and audiences.
- Knowledge of the political and social environment in which department programs and services are delivered;
- Knowledge of internet-related technologies, web development programs, desktop publishing (including graphics), and electronic mail and communication programs.
- Ability to coordinate and facilitate interdepartmental meetings.

- Oral and written communications skills, as well as the ability to adapt communication styles to accommodate different needs.
- Analytical skills; the ability to critically analyze and suggest an appropriate course of action, sometimes in a short time frame.
- Ability to work independently on complex matters and to lead and work effectively in teams.
- Ability to build and sustain effective working relationships and work collaboratively with media, stakeholders, departmental staff and ministerial staff by demonstrating an ethic of support, teamwork and service.
- Ability to work under pressure and manage projects within tight timeframes and with strict deadlines which often requires prioritizing workloads and shifting priorities.
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness; and safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

A degree in public relations, journalism, communication, public administration or relevant equivalent, and five (5) years of progressive communications experience. Assets include:

- Experience working as part of an Incident Management Team.
- Experience with major community emergency events.
- Experience in a northern environment or with a government department or agency.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Position Security

- ☐ No criminal records check required
- ☒ Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- ☐ Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

French Language (check one if applicable)

- ☐ French required (must identify required level below)
 - Level required for this Designated Position is:
 - ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION
 - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
 - READING COMPREHENSION:
 - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
 - WRITING SKILLS:
 - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
- ☐ French preferred

Indigenous Language: Select Language

- ☐ Required ☐ Preferred