



## IDENTIFICATION

| Department                     | Position Title               |                                                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Environment and Climate Change | Senior Communication Officer |                                                  |
| Position Number                | Community                    | Division/Region                                  |
| 23-14160                       | Yellowknife                  | Policy, Legislation, Evaluation & Communications |

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Senior Communications Officer is responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating departmental communications plans, policies and procedures and initiatives to ensure the Department's communications are strategic, effective and consistent with Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and departmental policies and guidelines.

## SCOPE

Located in Yellowknife and reporting to the Manager, Public Affairs & Communications, the Senior Communications Officer provides expert communications advice and direction on the web, publications, communications planning, and media relations to departmental managers and staff. The incumbent also prepares communications materials for use by the Premier, Minister and Deputy Minister, as well as for public dissemination. The Senior Communications Officer works closely with the Communications Officer to support the overall communications strategy within Department, Environment and Climate Change and with divisional staff who provide sectorial expertise.

The Senior Communications Officer works within a regulatory environment which includes the *Territorial Lands Act and Regulations*; *Commissioner's Land Act and Regulations*; *Planning Act and Regulations*; the *Area Development Act and Regulations*; and the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and Mackenzie Valley Land Use Regulations*; *Canada Mining Regulations*; as well as the settled Lands, Resources and Self-government Agreements within the NWT; Interim Measures Agreements; and the Devolution Final Agreement. The position also works within a Cabinet approved policy framework including the Land Pricing Policy; the Land Lease Only Policy; the Land Use and Sustainability Framework; Northern Lands-Northern Leadership; Sustainable Development Policy and the Recreational Leasing Policy.

The mandate of the Department, Environment and Climate Change is to support, manage and



administer the sustainable use of public land in the NWT. Land Management and Administration is considered core public good and critical infrastructure that needs to be effectively and efficiently managed. The importance of land as a core public good is articulated through the Land Use and Sustainability Framework and Northern Lands - Northern Leadership. Land provides for ecological, spiritual, cultural, recreational and economic goods and services and well as being a predominant and key driver of the NWT GDP.

Land management and administration in the NWT occurs in a unique context and is influenced by distinct social, economic and cultural factors and complex regulatory considerations. The Department often addresses controversial issues and competing interests related to the debate between development and conservation. It is further complicated by the unique land ownership dynamics within the NWT as well as the geo-political circumstances related to Aboriginal self-government. The Department must communicate with an audience that includes different levels of government, non-governmental organizations, Aboriginal groups, industry, and the public. Diverse and vocal groups, some of whom are unfamiliar with the NWT, scrutinize the activities of the Department and the incumbent must understand the balance proactive communications planning with crisis management.

The Senior Communications Officer leads the development of innovative and creative solutions to communications challenges and opportunities. The position assumes a proactive approach to departmental communications and takes the lead in developing solutions, both alone and in collaboration with the Manager of Communications and senior management. The incumbent also develops communications strategies, plans, policies and guidelines, and provides media relations advice and responds to media and general inquiries to the Department. Part of the correspondence that the incumbent is tasked with is mass communication such as news releases and advertisements in consultation with program managers.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1. Provides 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.**
  - Leads and supports 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.
  - Provides expert communications support, media and public relations services which entail reviewing departmental print, electronic and broadcast communications to ensure messages are clear and consistent with GNWT and departmental goals and objectives.
  - Participates in the analysis of emerging issues or potential crisis situations and in the development of communications responses to the situation.
  - Monitors the effect of actions taken and recommending strategies required.



- Prepares speeches, statements, speaking notes and other public messages for Minister or senior staff as and when required.
- Conducts research to collect, analyze and assess the views of the general and interested publics about the Department's priorities and objectives, as well as programs and services.
- Coordinates and collaborates with other GNWT departments to develop communications campaigns and materials to support programs and services that affect more than one department.

**2. Lead in the production of communications material.**

- Provides expert advice and direction about message, content, design and medium (e.g., brochures, advertising, exhibits, etc.).
- Provides design and communications expertise and advice to departmental staff in the preparation of communications products by third parties.
- Reviews public materials to ensure they conform to department and GNWT standards.
- Ensures that all public communications are in accordance with the GNWT web standards, and the GNWT Visual Identity Program.

**3. Provides media relations advice and support.**

- Provides effective media relations services and supports through advice and training, fostering effective relations with local, national and international media agencies, and monitoring and evaluating the political, public and media environment.
- Acts as first point of contact for media enquiries and coordination of media spokespeople as and when required.
- Coordinates and develops Ministerial and departmental news conferences, media releases and advisories, special events and speeches.
- Liaises with other GNWT departments as well as other government and non-government agencies in assessing and responding to media relations events and inquiries.

**4. Supports the delivery of Official Languages Services for the Department.**

- Provides advice on the implementation of official languages communications and services.
- Contributes to interdepartmental official languages initiatives and activities.
- Ensures that public communications are in accordance with the *Official Languages Act*.

**5. Responds to general inquiries on the department's priorities, objectives and activities by acting as a contact point for the general public and departments, including inquiries from the main Department and GNWT websites.**



## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

### **Physical Demands**

No unusual demands.

### **Environmental Conditions**

No unusual demands.

### **Sensory Demands**

No unusual demands.

### **Mental Demands**

While most working conditions will be in a regular office environment, there will be periods of travel, often to remote and isolated communities along with periods of work outside of regular office hours (providing communications support, delivering presentations to the public and other stakeholders, etc.).

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Expert knowledge of best practices in strategic communications planning, public relations and media relations.
- Knowledge of GNWT communications priorities and goals, as well as applicable policies and procedures governing the management of GNWT communications programming, including the GNWT Official Languages Policy.
- Knowledge of internet-related technologies, web development programs, desktop publishing (including graphics), and electronic mail and communication programs.
- 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 in which departmental programs and services are delivered.
- Excellent analytical skills; the ability to analyze critically and suggest an appropriate means of action, often within a short timeframe.
- Excellent oral and written communications skills, as well as the ability to adapt communication styles to accommodate different needs.
- Management skills to lead, plan, organize, coordinate and complete complex and concurrent projects independently or in teams.
- 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, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

**Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:**

A degree in a specialized communications discipline such as journalism, or public/media relations or a similar equivalent, and three years of direct progressive experience in the communications field.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Position Security** (check one)

- ☐ 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