



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Infrastructure	Senior Communications Officer	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
33-10472	Yellowknife	Policy, Planning and Communications/HQ

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Senior Communications Officer is responsible for leading the development, implementation and evaluation of departmental communications plans, products, 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 and Communications, this position is in the Policy, Planning and Communications division of the Department of Infrastructure. The Senior Communications Officer provides expert communications advice and direction on communications planning and activities to departmental senior management and staff. The incumbent also prepares communications materials for use by the Premier, Minister and Deputy Minister, as well as for public dissemination.

The Department of Infrastructure is highly decentralized in the delivery of its programs and services and is responsible for territory-wide government programs such as the operation and maintenance of public buildings and transportation infrastructure and systems, project management, facilities planning, design and technical support services, environmental assessment and remediation, property management, information technology, information management, disposal of surplus property and goods motor vehicle and mechanical/electrical regulatory services and fleet management.

The Department is also responsible for programming aimed at increasing the use of domestic energy resources and reducing energy costs in the NWT, delivering renewable energy solutions, providing energy supply services to non-market communities, and leading efforts in energy conservation and efficiency.



On behalf of the GNWT, the Department of Infrastructure is also responsible for strategic planning for the GNWT's (Government of the Northwest Territories) long term investment in the development of public transportation, airports and energy production and distribution systems for the Northwest Territories, as well as the continuity of marine transportation services for the provision of fuel and dry goods to northern destinations.

Clear communication of the Department's role and function internally to employees and externally to stakeholders, the public, and other GNWT departments is essential to ensure:

- Appropriate and timely information is provided to the public.
- Clients are aware of available programs and services and how to access them.
- Stakeholders are aware of departmental initiatives and how they may be affected; and
- Staff are informed of Departmental direction.

The programs and services of the Department are highly visible and directly affect the lives and public safety of NWT residents. The Department must communicate with a wide audience that may include diverse and vocal groups, some of whom are unfamiliar with the NWT. Clear communication of facts, statistics, strategies, and activities of the Department of Infrastructure is essential.

The Senior Communications Officer leads the development of innovative and creative solutions to communications challenges and opportunities. This 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 Public Affairs and with senior management. The incumbent also provides media relations advice and responds to media and general inquiries to the Department.

Working closely with senior managers, managers and program staff across the Department, the incumbent is responsible for developing comprehensive communications plans and producing ongoing public affairs programming and support designed to promote awareness of Departmental initiatives and activities. Responsible for a dedicated portfolio, the incumbent is required to advise and provide expert guidance on all communications-related materials and initiatives of the portfolio, including planning, materials, recommendations, implementation, and evaluation.

The Senior Communications Officer must maintain a broad understanding of all Department programs, services, operations, legislative and policy frameworks, and political matters related to the scope of the Department's mandate. The incumbent must ensure that departmental communications are presented in a clear and consistent manner in accordance with GNWT Communications policy and directives and the *NWT Official Languages Act*.



## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Develop communications strategies for the department by:**

- Conducting research to collect, analyze and assess the views of the general and interested public about the Department's priorities, objectives and programs and services.
- Developing communications strategies in collaboration with Divisional, Department and cross-GNWT colleagues.
- Monitoring and evaluating conformity by line divisions and regions with the Department's communications strategies, monitoring the effect of actions taken, and recommending adjustments as required.

### **2. Lead in the development and implementation of communications plans by:**

- Leading and/or collaborating with divisional and departmental, and interdepartmental colleagues in the preparation of communications plans (e.g. identifying target audiences, goals and objectives, and the means for reaching those objectives).
- Developing or supervising vendors as they develop public information and other communications materials under the plan.
- Evaluating or participating in the evaluation of the plan's success in achieving its objectives.
- Participating as required in working groups established for the purpose of developing communications plans with cross-departmental implications or representing the Department on other interdepartmental or intergovernmental working groups as directed.

### **3. Provide communications planning and support services by:**

- Providing expert communications planning advice to Headquarters and Regional Offices.
- Ensuring compliance of GNWT standards for media relations, public information, delivery of public education programs and activities and promotional activities in keeping with the Department's communications plans.
- Leading coordination and development of departmental news conferences, media releases and advisories, special events and speeches.
- Responding to general inquiries on departmental programs and services by acting as an information contact point for general public and regions, including inquiries from the Department of Infrastructure and main GNWT websites.
- Participating in the analysis of emerging issues or crisis situations and leading in the development and implementation of communications responses to the situation.
- Assisting divisions in complying with any communications guidelines or processes in accordance with the GNWT's Communications Policy, including the government's Visual Identity Program (VIP).
- Representing the department's interests, and collaborating with others in the GNWT, nationally and internationally in the development of communications plans, campaigns and materials to support programs and services that affect shared audiences.



**4. Lead production of communications materials by:**

- Preparing, reviewing and editing departmental communications materials including publications, online content, advertising, products, briefing materials, speaking notes, etc.
- Preparing speeches, statements, speaking notes and other public messages for Minister or senior staff as and when required.
- Providing advice about the message; content and medium (e.g., video scripts, advertising, etc.).
- Reviewing materials prepared for conformance with the Department's and the GNWT's stated goals and objectives and taking action to revise where required.

**5. Manage the Department's website and online presence, including social media platforms and profiles.**

- Working with divisions to maintain information on the Infrastructure website to ensure that content is current and timely.
- Working with divisions on web page and social media platform content in response to communications needs identified by the Department and in a manner that is consistent with communications standards of the Department and GNWT.
- Researching and writing content for the website using industry-standard knowledge about the unique writing style for web-based communications.
- Ensuring consistency in website design and layout to reinforce the visual identity of the Department and GNWT.
- Monitoring website use and social media platforms to determine user interests and needs.
- Researching and evaluating the effectiveness of web and social media communications for the public as well as key users/visitors.
- Providing reports, strategies and plans to improve online communications.

**6. Provide media relations advice and support by:**

- Providing effective media relations service and support through advice and training, fostering effective relations with local, national, and international media agencies, and monitoring / evaluating the political, public and media environment.
- Acting as first point of contact for media enquiries and coordination of media spokespersons as and when required.
- Coordinating and developing of Ministerial and departmental news conferences, announcements, media releases and advisories, special events and speeches.
- Liaising with other GNWT departments as well as other government and non-government agencies in assessing and responding to media relations events and inquiries.
- Acting as the departmental media liaison officer during emergency and crisis situations (e.g. road or airport closures, major accidents, petroleum based fires, oil spills and environmental emergencies, etc.).



- Responding to general inquiries on departmental programs and services by acting as a contact point for the public and regions, including inquiries from the Department of Infrastructure and GNWT websites and social media platforms.
- Tracking the number, type, frequency and subject of media and public inquiries to anticipate emerging issues and facilitate strategic and proactive communications planning.

**7. Supports the delivery of Official Languages Services for the Department by:**

- Ensuring that public communications are in accordance with the *Official Languages Act*.

**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.). The incumbent may be required to respond to situations of a traumatic or sensitive nature.

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.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Knowledge of communications, public and media relations theories and best practices, including issues management and strategic communications planning.
- 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 the North's socio-economic, cultural and political environment.
- Knowledge of NWT-audience-specific communications needs and challenges, and an ability to employ or adapt communications theories and best practices to meet those needs, with minimal direction.



- Knowledge and understanding of crisis communications theory and principles to provide practical advice in response to emerging or crisis situations.
- Ability to work independently to build and sustain strong working relationships and work collaboratively with media, stakeholders, department and ministerial staff by demonstrating an ethic of support, teamwork and service.
- Project management skills to lead, plan, organize, coordinate and complete complex and concurrent projects independently or in teams within time and resource constraints while monitoring progress and evaluating results.
- Ability to work independently under pressure and manage projects within tight timeframes and with strict deadlines which often requires prioritizing workloads and shifting priorities.
- Knowledge of print, design, audio-visual and multi-media production techniques, including internet-related technologies, web development programs, desktop publishing (including graphics), and electronic mail and communication programs.
- Ability to analyze issues and suggest and influence appropriate means of action related to communications planning and execution, often within a short timeframe.
- Ability to accommodate different audience needs by developing and expressing ideas, concepts, judgments and recommendations in clear and concise ways, including plain language use, using appropriate verbal, written and graphic means.
- Political sensitivity, self-confidence, tact and diplomacy are critical in contacts with stakeholders and politicians.
- 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 bachelor's degree in communications, journalism, or public relations and two (2) years of relevant experience.

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