



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Health and Social Services	Manager, Communications	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
49-0626	Yellowknife	Finance, Policy, Planning and Communications Branch/HQ

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Manager, Communications is responsible and accountable for providing overall leadership and strategic advice on all communications activities relevant to the Department of Health and Social Services (Department), with the overall goal of developing and delivering effective corporate communications for the HSS System. The Manager is responsible for the management, development and coordinated implementation of the Department's communication strategies and plans, including media/public relations, issues management, and program and service promotion. Work is undertaken in accordance with relevant policy and standards, including Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Communications Policy, Directives, Guidelines and Business Processes, as well as overall departmental and government strategic direction. The position is also responsible for ensuring that official language requirements are met.

The Manager provides expert, strategic and actionable advice, options and recommendations to the Senior Management, the Deputy Minister and the Minister of the Department and the CEOs of the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA) and Tłchǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) on issues management, public relations and communication matters. The incumbent also provides direct support to senior management, the Deputy Minister and Minister in appearances in the media and at public events.

## SCOPE

Located in Yellowknife, the Manager, Communications reports directly to the Assistant Deputy Minister, Finance, Policy, Planning and Communications, and oversees the development and implementation of timely and often politically sensitive communications for the Department and serves a leadership role in the management, co-ordination and execution of effective communication for the NWT Health and Social Services System (HSS System).



The Department is the largest, most broadly based department in the GNWT. The HSS System is comprised of the Department and three Authorities that deliver a complex array of programs and services, through multiple contracted service providers. The HSS system is also supported by contractual arrangements in other jurisdictions for services that are not available in the NWT. The HSS system directly employs over 2,000 staff members in a wide range of employment categories and provides services to approximately 43,000 residents.

HSS systems across Canada are facing dynamic and continual pressures; the NWT is in a similar position. As a result, efforts to focus on cost management, efficiency and effective care are very important; while balancing consideration to the dispersed nature of the population and the unique aspects of the health and social status found in the NWT.

Since 2013, the NWT HSS system has been engaged in a strategic renewal process. This began with System Transformation, a multi-year, community engagement-driven process to develop a model for an integrated health and social service (HSS) system. The resulting changes to the system's governance structure have enabled a one-system approach, allowing for greater efficiency and integration while better respecting the unique contexts and strengths of the NWT's distinct regions and cultures. All of this change requires a continued commitment to communications to ensure the residents of the NWT are included and informed.

Building off the results and momentum of System Transformation, the strategic renewal effort continues to shift the system and its care models towards team and relationship-based approaches that are driven by public participation, community feedback and data, and that are built on a foundation of trust and cultural safety. Using a community development approach, the HSS system is changing the way it works with people and communities, at every level, to enable public participation in priority setting, planning, and design that integrates the social determinants of health, with the goal of implementing cost-effective programs that are more culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs and priorities that have been identified by stakeholders themselves. This focus on public participation and engagement elevates the importance of effective communications.

HSS programs and services are highly visible and directly affect the lives of NWT residents. Clear communication, both internally to employees and externally to clients, stakeholders and the public at large, is essential to ensure appropriate and timely information is provided; 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 HSS System direction. It is the responsibility of the Manager to lead the development and implementation of appropriate communications strategies to meet these objectives. The incumbent has significant latitude in developing strategies to meet these challenges.



The Manager's degree of success has a significant impact on the internal and external relations of the Department and the HSS system, including those with stakeholders, political leadership and the public.

The Manager operates in a dynamic and complex environment and must carry out the responsibilities of the position recognizing the complexities, inter-relationships, and diverse goals of the system, and requiring collaboration and coordination with key partners. While directing the activities of the Division, the incumbent must work directly with senior managers and communications staff of the Authorities, and senior staff of the Executive and Indigenous Affairs (EIA) Cabinet Communications and the Department of Finance Corporate Communications Units. The ability to build and maintain relationships and work in a collaborative manner with staff at all levels across the HSS System and other GNWT departments, respecting that those interests and perspectives do not always align, is essential to ensure success. The Manager, Communications plays a pivotal role in the flow and alignment of information across these partners. This position also consults and works with Federal Government Ministries, and non-government and professional associations to develop and implement communications plans.

The Manager directly supervises Senior Communications Officer, Communications Officer, Senior Communications Advisor and Intern positions, and manages staff in accordance with GNWT Human Resource policies and procedures. Routinely, the position provides project leadership to and coordinates staff in other units. The Manager is expected to always honor and promote a culturally safe environment and to ensure they and their staff interact in a tactful, respectful and humble manner that is free of racism and discrimination.

Working outside of regular hours may be required to assist with issues management, media relations or emergency situations.

The Manager is accountable for the Division's budget in addition to managing marketing and communications-related contracts on behalf of other Department staff.

The Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Department's communications activities are carried out in a way that meets official language requirements and obligations and adheres to GNWT policies and procedures.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Provide strategic and expert communications advice.**

- Advise staff and Senior Management of the Department, including the Minister and the Authorities, on communications strategies, approaches and activities to advance and promote the overall mandate, vision, mission, goals and objectives of the Department. Advice is often in response to politically sensitive activities that directly impact



relationships with communities, Indigenous Governments and organizations, and other stakeholders.

- Advise on and recommend strategic communications approaches designed to complement and enhance the Department's policy, legislative and program initiatives.
- Provide advice on the development of public information, design of marketing initiatives and design and implementation of advertising and promotional activities.
- Lead and/or participate in interdepartmental and intergovernmental working groups established to advance projects or initiatives in which the Department has a role or an interest.
- Build collaborative relationships with key stakeholders (including communities and Indigenous governments and organizations) to support departmental and HSS System communication plans and strategies and to facilitate successful policy development and program delivery.
- Proactively monitor the internal and external environment to inform advice and changes necessary as a result of emerging issues and trends that may influence communication strategies.

**2. Direct and manage the development and implementation of communications plans and strategies for the Department, including operational public affairs, media relations, issues management, and marketing and promotional materials and activities.**

- Direct research to identify internal and external communications needs, risks and opportunities including identification of target audiences.
- Manage the development of appropriate and cost-effective communications plans and strategies to support the delivery of policy and programs to ensure messages reach target audiences.
- Ensure messaging is consistent with the mandate of the department and GNWT, and is aligned with GNWT policy, legislation, goals and objectives and focused for targeted audiences. Ensure that departmental communications products are aligned with communication objectives and communications plans,
- Embed milestones and measurable outcomes into communication plans. Monitor, evaluate and report on the effectiveness and impacts of communications activities and recommend options or revisions, as required.
- Develop and maintain a network of media contacts and manage those relationships.
- Manage media enquiries and recommend strategies and messaging to manage controversial or negative media coverage of the department or its business.
- Provide for after-hour services, including social media, to respond to high profile and emergency situations, particularly those that cause disruption of services to residents and businesses or present a public health risk.
- Work with Cabinet Communications the development of plans and materials in support of political communications.



- Manage and oversee the drafting and/or editing of public health advisories, public service announcements, news releases, collateral material, messages and speaking notes. This includes messages for delivery at community and public events, in the Legislative Assembly and at federal, Provincial Territorial (FPT and PT) tables.
- Ensure departmental communications products are developed in accordance with established government policies and guidelines, including the Visual Identity Program (VIP) and Common User Experience Guidelines, and in the appropriate languages.
- Manage the development and maintenance of the Department's public/internal web sites and social media accounts, ensuring content is compliant with policies and guidelines.
- Oversee the coordination of special events and media relations activities.

**3. Lead the development and implementation of communications standards, policies, directives and procedures for the Department, and monitor and evaluate their use and effectiveness.**

- Develop and implement standards, policies, directives, and procedures for communication activities, in accordance with GNWT Communication Policy, Official Languages Act, Visual Identity Program, Common User Experience Guidelines.
- Monitor communication activities across the HSS System for conformity to standards, policies, directives and procedures and take action to address problems or opportunities.

**4. Manage the Communications Unit.**

- Recruit and manage staff according to established GNWT human resource policies and processes.
- Develop and implement annual work plans to set objectives for the unit. Effectively communicate expectations and performance objectives to staff, and manage, monitor and evaluate performance at regular intervals.
- Develop staff through the provision of ongoing advice, direction and support including providing opportunities for training.
- Ensure staff have access to necessary resources, supplies, equipment, and information.
- Manage divisional budget.
- Manage development and implementation of training in communications and media relations to HSS staff generally and participate in delivery.
- Maintain an inventory of Department communications resources.
- Develop and advertise Requests for Proposals and award and manage contracts as necessary to retain contractors to undertake communications work for the department.
- Manage the Department's Official Languages function and provide advice to Senior Management in planning and implementation of official languages communications services.



## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

### **Physical Demands**

No unusual demands.

### **Environmental Conditions**

No unusual conditions.

### **Sensory Demands**

No unusual demands.

### **Mental Demands**

Frequently interacts with individuals and the media, which may be inconsistent with GNWT and HSS overall direction, requiring the incumbent to cope with conflict and animated discussion of issues.

There will be considerable demands placed upon the incumbent by internal and external stakeholders to quickly develop solutions and achieve results. Incumbent experiences very tight deadlines, competing priorities and complex issues.

In addition, the position will be required to negotiate a consensus among a variety of independent stakeholders in the health and social services system, including professional associations and health and social services authorities and the public.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Knowledge of relevant GNWT policies, procedures and guidelines including GNWT Communications Policy and directives, NWT visual Identity Program, the Official Languages Act, NWT Emergency Plan and Consistent User Experience.
- Knowledge of communications planning, public and media relations, including issues management, and evaluation methods.
- Knowledge of departmental goals and objectives and the political and social environment in which department programs and services are delivered.
- Knowledge of, or the ability to acquire knowledge of health and social services program delivery in the NWT.
- Ability to analyze, interpret and evaluate a wide range of information and apply it within the unique sociopolitical environment of the NWT.
- Ability to project manage and lead large and complex projects from development to implementation.



- Knowledge of and/or the ability to acquire and apply knowledge of the current political, economic, social and cultural environments of the NWT.
- Knowledge in communications strategic planning methods and principles.
- Knowledge of sources of statistical information and statistical techniques.
- Ability to problem solve.
- Knowledge of performance management and evaluation systems.
- Knowledge of management theory and principles.
- Computer and software skills including databases, spreadsheets and word processing.
- Interpersonal skills, with an ability to maintain working relationships.
- Staff management skills, with an ability to maintain positive and productive working relationships; Ability to supervise, train and mentor staff effectively.
- Management skills to lead, plan, organize, coordinate and complete complex and concurrent projects independently or in teams with time and resource constraints while monitoring progress and evaluating results.
- Knowledge of public consultation processes.
- Ability to communicate effectively in writing and verbally to a variety of audiences with varying backgrounds, knowledge and levels of education.
- Ability to understand, develop and communicate complex material.
- Ability to analyze, interpret and critically assess relevant information that impacts the Department's strategic communications.
- Ability to provide comprehensive advice to senior management based on analysis.
- Ability to make effective oral presentations.
- Skilled in emergency and crisis communication with an ability to communicate the Department's approach to these issues in a manner that will instill confidence in Departmental staff, Senior Managers, and Minister.
- Ability to organize, prioritize and work under pressure and with deadlines.
- Ability to work with and manage contractor relationships.
- 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 field (such as media relations, public relations, marketing or similar equivalent) and five (5) years of relevant experience, including one (1) year in a supervisory or team lead role.

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