



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Health and Social Services	Senior Communications Officer	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
49-17657	Yellowknife	Finance, Policy, Planning and Communications Branch / HQ

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Senior Communications Officer supports the Department of Health and Social Services by developing, implementing, and evaluating internal and external communication strategies, plans, policies and procedures to ensure departmental communications are strategic, effective, and consistent across the Northwest Territories (NWT).

This position also coordinates and monitors the Department's official languages communications and services, ensuring compliance with the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services, the NWT *Official Languages Act*, and related regulations. The position plays a key role in improving public access to information and services in French, and where applicable, NWT Indigenous Languages, and in advancing the GNWT's commitments to support and promote official languages in the delivery of programs and services.

The Senior Communications Officer provides strategic communications advice and support to senior management and program areas, develops and evaluates communications products and initiatives, and contributes to the Department's overall public image, transparency, and accessibility.

## SCOPE

Located in Yellowknife, the Senior Communications Officer (Officer) reports to the Manager of Communications (Manager) in the Finance, Policy, Planning and Communications Branch. This position provides expert communication planning, advice, and support to departmental senior management and staff, and leads the coordination and delivery of official language communications and services in compliance with the NWT *Official Languages Act* and related regulations.



The incumbent administers the Department's French Language Services budget and provides advice to staff and senior management on the promotion, delivery, and support of official languages communications and services. The position also supports the implementation of the Indigenous Languages Service Standards and the GNWT Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services, ensuring consistent and equitable access to programs and services in both English and French, and other NWT official Indigenous languages where applicable.

The Department delivers programs and services that are highly visible and have a direct impact on the health and well-being of NWT residents. Clear, consistent, and timely communication is essential to ensure the public understands available programs and services, how to access them, and how departmental initiatives may affect them.

The Senior Communications Officer leads the development of proactive and creative communication solutions to address challenges and opportunities, particularly those related to official languages. The incumbent collaborates closely with the Manager of Communications, staff, and senior management, provides media relations advice, and responds to inquiries from media and the public.

To be effective, the position must maintain a broad understanding of departmental programs and services, operations, legislative and policy frameworks and the political environment in which the Department operates.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

- Support the Manager in developing and implementing communications strategies and plans that align with departmental, HSS System, and GNWT priorities.
- Identify and analyze public and media attitudes to inform communications strategies and anticipate emerging issues.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate communications initiatives to promote departmental programs, policies, and services.
- Provide advice on messaging, tactics, and communications channels for public awareness campaigns, press releases, and related materials.
- Support Cabinet Communications on issues management and coordinated messaging during emerging or urgent issues.

### **2. Support media relations and issues management.**

- Provide expert advice and support to senior management on media relations to ensure accurate, timely, and consistent information is shared with the public.
- Develop and implement standards for media relations in keeping with the GNWT media policies.



- Monitor local and national media for emerging issues and provide strategic advice and recommendations.
- Maintain a network of media contacts and prepare materials such as news releases, public service announcements, media statements, and public health advisories.
- Support media event planning, including press conferences, backgrounders, and public briefings.
- Maintain records of departmental spokespeople and coordinate media training as required.

### **3. Lead the Department's official languages planning and compliance.**

- Coordinate official languages translation requests for departmental materials, including website content, phone recordings, social media, and other public facing messages.
- Maintain an inventory of bilingual materials and ensure accessibility and consistency across platforms.
- Manage contribution agreements and contracts related to the delivery of French language services and programs.
- Lead the implementation, monitoring, and annual updating of the Department's French Language Communications and Services Operating Plan.
- Advise senior management and program staff on options for official languages communications and services that reflect the needs of both the Francophone and Indigenous communities.
- Assess proposed program and service changes to ensure they meet French, and where applicable, NWT Indigenous Official Languages service delivery and communications requirements.
- Facilitate provision of training and guidance to departmental staff and contractors on the Department's obligations for active offer under GNWT standards.
- Monitor and report on implementation of the Operating Plan, including progress, challenges, and corrective actions.
- Coordinate internal reviews of the Operating Plan and support audits and evaluations led by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.
- Support the implementation of Indigenous Languages Service Standards and report on progress in coordination with system partners.
- Record and track formal language-related complaints with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and recommend actions for resolution.
- Contribute to the preparation of the French and Indigenous Languages sections of the Annual Report on Official Languages by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and the Indigenous Languages Secretariat, as well as the production of the department's activity report for the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Indigenous Languages in the NWT.
- Prepare briefing notes, updates, and related documentation on official languages matters as required.



- Develop and administer annual work plans and budgets for French language services in consultation with Manager, Communications and the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

### **Physical Demands**

No unusual demands.

### **Environmental Conditions**

No unusual conditions.

### **Sensory Demands**

No unusual demands.

### **Mental Demands**

No unusual demands.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Knowledge of the theories, principles, and best practices of strategic communications, public relations and media relations in a government context.
- Knowledge of and/or the ability to acquire knowledge of the NWT *Official Languages Act*, the GNWT Official Languages Policy, and the GNWT Strategic Plan on French Language Communication and Services, and the ability to apply these to departmental communications and service delivery.
- Knowledge of and/or the ability to acquire and apply knowledge of the northern communications environment, including diverse audiences, cultural contexts, and community sensitivities.
- Knowledge of and/or the ability to acquire and apply knowledge of organizational structures, governance, and decision-making processes in a public-sector setting.
- Ability to analyze complex issues, identify opportunities and risks, and recommend clear, actionable communication approaches.
- Leadership and collaboration skills to work effectively within the Department, across the Health and Social Services System, and with interdepartmental or community partners.
- Political sensitivity, discretion, tact, and diplomacy when managing sensitive or high-profile issues.
- Problem solving and innovation skills to address communications or service delivery challenges.
- Written and verbal communication skills to develop and adapt materials for diverse audiences in plain language.



- Computer literacy, including Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Teams, and Outlook.
- Ability to analyze, synthesize, and present information clearly and concisely to support informed decision-making.
- Ability to learn and adapt to emerging communications technologies, tools, and trends.
- Ability to build and maintain productive relationships with internal and external parties, knowing when and how to share information appropriately.
- Commitment to upholding and consistently practicing diversity, inclusion, cultural safety, and sensitivity in all aspects of work.
- 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 communications or related discipline such as journalism, public/media relations, marketing or a similar equivalent, and three (3) years of experience in a communications 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