

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM MANAGER



ROLE OVERVIEW

JLA is seeking a full-time strategic communications program manager to plan, manage and implement public communications campaigns and projects for government agency clients based in Oregon and Washington. In this role, you will craft communications that inspire action, use storytelling to demonstrate how public projects can shape our communities, and illustrate how public input can inform public project outcomes.

As a strategic communications program manager, your daily work activities and responsibilities will include:

- **Planning and implementing public-interest communications programs** for public projects that speak to and engage the wider community on a wide range of topics such as transportation, parks, water and climate change. You will need to develop relatable communications that outline benefits and trade-offs for a wide range of project considerations to support better governmental decision-making. You will work closely with public agency clients and others in a team environment to lead the development of and implement communications plans. This will include providing written and verbal strategy advice to clients and development of Strategic Communications and Public Communications Plans. You will write and edit copy for print and online communications, including media releases, website updates, social media campaigns, video scripts and print materials like newsletters and project factsheets. You will support teammates at JLA with copyediting and message development. On projects that you manage, you will be responsible for upholding a quality control process, completing a final review of materials to make sure they are high-quality and meet project needs. You will work closely with JLA's creative services and online engagement teams to ensure project key messages are translated into engaging materials and tools that are compelling and understandable.
- **Managing communications projects, including quality review and being responsible for details, budgets and deliverables.** Communications projects can be fast-paced work and require tracking overlapping deadlines, including the design process, ad and media release publishing dates, construction timelines, and both internal and client editing and review processes. A big piece of this job will be to provide a critical eye for understanding the goals and audience for communication and reviewing deliverables to ensure that clients receive polished and accurate work products. You must feel comfortable managing and working closely with others in a team environment, as well as working on your own to ensure delivery of high-quality deliverables. This role involves being responsive to government clients and their needs, which requires thoughtful planning, organization and flexibility.
- **Solving problems and being curious.** As public involvement specialists, we are naturally collaborative and work closely with clients and team members to implement meaningful engagement processes. In addition, this management role requires self-led task management and problem-solving. You will be supported by advice and mentorship from many members of the firm, but it often may be up to you to know when you need to call on this advice. You can expect to regularly research topics that may be new to you, be an active listener and capture key messages and take away's from meetings, know when to ask

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questions (internally and with clients), and understand what the public should know and when to deliver the message, including during emotionally charged situations.

- **Bringing diversity, equity and inclusion principles to the work.** Everyone at JLA is expected to contribute to public involvement strategies that apply a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion, and consider historic inequities and systemic oppression. JLA's staff are committed to continuing to learn, share and improve our processes and approaches through personal and company-wide research, trainings, and activities. Experience working and implementing strategies to increase authentic engagement with diverse communities is vital. The ability to speak Spanish (or another language besides English) is a wonderful asset to being able to directly engage with community members who prefer engagement in that language.

Key Experience

Studies show that women and people of color are less likely to apply for jobs unless they can meet every experience or skill listed in the job description. However, we know that each new JLA staffer brings unique skills (some that we haven't considered) to our collaborative team. We encourage you to apply, even if you don't feel like you have all of the listed skills! If we sound like a good fit, we're interested to hear what you can bring to the role.

Required

- **5+ years of work experience** in journalism, communications, government affairs, public affairs, public relations, public involvement, or a similar public-facing field.
- **2+ years of management experience** including coaching, delegation, quality oversight and working with a team. Ability to develop, track, and communicate with others about schedules, production timeframes, budgets, and other resource needs.
- **Understanding of public information principles and practices**, an interest in public involvement and information-based communications and/or an interest in government projects and decision-making.
- **Experience developing strategic communications plans** and implementing resulting communications programs.
- **Strong communication skills**, including editing and technical writing, and drafting press releases, talking points, FAQs, articles and presentations.
- **Ability to communicate effectively** with diverse groups of people both in-person and in virtual meetings.
- **Comfort working with limited information, asking questions, and rewriting/explaining complex information** so that the public can understand the issue; the ability to feel comfortable and curious about learning.
- **Flexible and adaptable in a fast-paced environment** with a strong attention to detail to ensure quality control.
- **Experience leading the development of graphic/ visual communications**, working with a creative team and a keen understanding of what makes successful visual communications.
- **Comfortable communicating and collaborating directly with clients** and providing advice on the best course of action. Familiarity with scope and budget development and review of contracts and invoices. Understanding of proposing on projects and maintaining relations with clients.

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- **High emotional intelligence** and ability to create an environment of trust and confidence in others. Passion for the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as JLA's mission.
- **Strong attention to detail and project management skills**, including organizational and time management skills to smoothly navigate and deliver complex projects with collaborative teams. Flexible and adaptable in a fast-paced environment with a strong attention to detail to ensure quality control.
- **A strong proficiency in standard office procedures**, Microsoft software including Word and Excel, and common digital communications platforms.
- **Desires success for everyone in the team** and takes time to provide positive coaching and mentoring of internal colleagues. Is receptive to feedback with a willingness to learn and grow.

Desired

- **Experience leading or facilitating meetings.**
- **Comfort with public speaking.**
- **Experience drafting media pitches, managing press inquiries, briefings and interviews.** Professional relationships with members of the media a plus.
- **Recent experience with social platforms, algorithms and engagement** best practices as well as experience implementing successful digital and traditional media campaigns.
- **The ability to speak Spanish or another language** besides English and use language skills to support engagement activities according to your comfort level. Professional interpretation is not necessary.
- **Previous experience working for a consulting firm** or a job where you needed to track and report the hours you work to specific jobs or clients.
- **Construction/trade skills or working with others in these fields.** We often work with contractors that are building roads, large infrastructure, and other government agency projects during construction.

About JLA

Founded in 1988, JLA Public Involvement is a leading public involvement consulting firm in the Pacific Northwest. We help people communicate with and influence local, regional, and state government and non-profit projects that affect their everyday lives. We're not advocates for an outcome, but rather champions for a fair and equitable process that empowers, educates, and involves the community in ways that help our clients meet their goals of serving the public good. We are "public process specialists," dedicated to building constructive two-way communication between government agencies and the communities affected by their planning and decision-making efforts.

We communicate complex information to the public about a range of projects from transportation to wastewater treatment to parks development. We use a wide variety of engagement tools and tactics including video, websites, postcards, in-person interviews, going door-to-door to local businesses, public meetings, virtual meetings, surveys, and more.

Our mission is to create collaborative, meaningful and exceptionally effective public processes that lead to better, more inclusive outcomes.

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We are a small, women-owned firm in Portland, but we work across Oregon and SW Washington. Here's what it's like to work with us:

- **There's always something new.** We work for a variety of public clients, topic areas, and project types (construction, design, planning, policy), so there is always something new to learn.
- **We believe in what we do.** Our work helps create a better life for people living and working in the Pacific Northwest by supporting transportation, water, wastewater, park, and other beneficial projects.
- **We want new ideas.** We value and encourage collaboration and creative problem solving. We want to ask questions, to grow, and help provide new and better solutions to how we engage and communicate with communities.
- **We want you to grow.** You will have opportunities for continued education, training, promotion, and personal growth.
- **We're flexible.** We support home/off-hours and are a family-friendly company. We take care of one another with clear communication, honesty, integrity, and a passion for pitching in for the team.
- **We have some pretty fast paced days.** JLA teammates work together to assess project needs and implement projects. This can mean quick decisions or changes to provide quality products and hold events for our clients and the community.

Compensation and Working Conditions

This is a full-time exempt position. You will typically work long periods at a desk but also have expectation of attending meetings and events in person, including facilitating meetings and giving presentations to small and large groups. Our work requires a flexible work schedule, and you will be expected to work evenings and weekends both virtually and in-person around the state, with adequate notice. Employees may work under the stress of contact from clients, community members, co-workers and business partners, and the pressure to meet deadlines. It will occasionally be required to lift and/or move up to 25 pounds, accommodations can be provided.

There is the option to work remotely or from home when project needs allow, though some work in JLA's office and/or other project-specific locations will be required. *This expectation may vary or change over time.*

Salary: \$85,000-110,000/year at 40 hours per week depending on experience

Benefits: JLA Public Involvement pays 90% of medical insurance premiums for employees and 50% for dependents for regular, full-time employees (working 30 or more hours per week). Dental insurance and paid sick time are also provided for full-time staff. We provide ten vacation days in your first year, with an additional day for each year worked, plus nine paid holidays. A 3% retirement plan match, with access to a financial advisor through an EAP (employee assistance program). Opportunities for professional development and paid training, including tuition reimbursement for relevant programs, internal trainings, and attending relevant courses/trainings to support your career development. We also offer employees access to a flexible spending account (cafeteria plan).

How to Apply

To apply for this position, please submit your one-page resume and one-page cover letter that **describes communications project/program you developed and implemented and some communications examples from that project** through [Indeed](#).

We love learning about people — so let's start a conversation! If you have questions about this job description, please reach out to Kendra Roberts, HR Manager at info@jla.us.com subject heading "Strategic Communications Program Manager Application Questions."

A FOCUS ON EQUITY

Engaging diverse communities in a meaningful way is the most pressing issue facing our profession. We are committed to continually learning, listening and improving practices to create effective, community-centered strategies. Our team engages in conversation and personal reflection around identity, bias, racism and equity, and what they mean to our team and our work.