

RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY POSITION DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Director Public Affairs

Date: January 2019

Department: Office of Strategic Advancement

Supercedes: July 2014

Reports To: Chief of Strategic Advancement

Summary of Position:

The Director Public Affairs Officer (DPAO) will serve as the central source for external and internal communications for the Rhode Island Transit Authority (RIPTA) by developing and implementing strategies to protect and enhance RIPTA's mission to provide high quality public transit service in Rhode Island. As the central source of strategic communications, the DPAO will serve as the principal public affairs officer and will be responsible for all informational materials and public relations activities in accordance with the agency's goals and objectives while keeping key constituencies informed about service initiatives, program and events.

The position will initiate, plan, coordinate, review and supervise a continuous information and public relations program; serve as the central source for preparation and release of information materials; provide media relations support and response to the CEO and designees; write media advisories and/or releases; develop, draft and implement media affairs policies; coordinate with other public agencies; create press events and do related work as required.

The DPAO will work closely with RIPTA's Customer Service, Marketing, Outreach and Commuter Resource Rhode Island (CRRRI) programs and staff. Additionally, the DPAO will cultivate new relationships and maintain established relationships with universities and employers in order to promote transportation alternatives for Rhode Island.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

Media Relations:

1. The DPAO will serve as the principal source within the Agency for the preparation and release of media informational material. Receives and responds to media calls and disseminates accurate information to press;
2. The DPAO will research, write and edit news releases, articles, and feature materials for use by news, media and advertising agencies;
3. Creates and cultivates positive media relationships that can be leveraged to promote messaging; secures interviews and positive story placements in a variety of media outlets;
4. Utilizes social media channels in support of the agency's communications strategy;
5. Manages media training for any personnel who represent the agency to outside groups;
6. Build models and measure performance of PR campaigns and return of investment.

Communications:

1. Lead the development and implementation of the company's external and internal communications strategy to protect and enhance the agency's image within the community;

2. Schedule a continuous flow of informational material to the general public and affected riders and communities for the purpose of providing timely information to improve public understanding and reception to agency services and objectives;
3. Provide information to governmental officials, the public or interested parties in accordance with established policies;
4. Conduct fact-finding investigations of complaints and/or objections. Prepare reports on the complex cases as needed for consideration and decision by the CEO and/or departmental officials;
5. Keep departments informed of the CEO's decisions and recommendations on programs and policies; contact department heads at frequent intervals relative to such decisions and recommendations and make reports thereon;
6. Continuously oversee the development and maintenance of all agency Internet and Web Site information and communications programs;
7. Monitor issues that could potentially impact the agency and keep CEO informed; maintains agency's crisis communications plan to ensure timely responses to incidents; draft statements in response to incidents;
8. Support employee morale and teambuilding through internal communications efforts;
9. Plan creative outreach efforts;
10. To do related work as required.

Qualification Requirements:

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disability to perform the essential functions of this position.

Education:

Such as may have been gained through: possession of a Masters Degree in Communications, Marketing, Public Administration, Journalism or a related field from a college of recognized standing. A thorough knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques of communication programs; a thorough knowledge of, and the ability to evaluate, the attitudes and reactions of interested and affected groups as well as other demands and needs for information about the department's programs and objectives; the ability to research, write and edit news releases, articles and feature materials for use of media and publicity agencies; the ability to communicate effectively with media representatives, educational institutions, community organizations and the general public; and related capacities and abilities.

Excellent writing and grammar are expected. Candidates should be able to speak clearly and effectively in public. Working knowledge of languages used by our riders and constituent groups is desirable but not required.

Experience:

The successful applicant should have experience such as may have been gained through; considerable employment in a highly responsible position involving responsibility for the research, analysis, policy development and dissemination of information.

Consideration will be given to any combination of qualification requirements.

Independent Action:

Work is performed independently within broad guidelines in accordance with Authority and departmental policies and/or practices.

Supervisory Responsibility:

The DPAO is responsible for the management of Marketing, Community Outreach Officer and Commuter Resources employees