

Position Title:

Communications Director

Location:

Houston, Texas (Greater Houston Area)

Company Description:

The Gulf Coast Protection District is a special district created in 2021 by the 87th Texas Legislature to oversee the implementation of a comprehensive coastal resilience strategy for the upper Texas coast, assuming the role of non-federal sponsor in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers led Coastal Texas and Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay Projects. The GCPD contains approximately 5,220 square miles of land covering Chambers, Galveston, Harris, Jefferson, and Orange counties. The GCPD's mission is to protect Gulf Coast communities, the environment, and economic activity from storm surge. For more information about the GCPD, visit <https://www.gcpdtexas.com>.

Job Description:

The District has an immediate opening for a senior-level position to provide leadership and oversight of the District's external communications activities. This includes raising awareness of the District, its mission and purpose, educating and engaging with critical stakeholders, and supporting advancement of the District's strategic priorities and projects, specifically the Coastal Texas Project and the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay Project.

- For more information about the Coastal Texas Project, visit <https://coastaltexasproject.com>.
- For more information about the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay Project, visit <https://www.swg.usace.army.mil/S2G/>.

The Communications Director for the District will play a pivotal role in shaping and executing the District's Strategic Communications and Outreach Plan and leading a team of professional services contractors to effectively disseminate information, proactively manage media relations, and enhance public understanding of the District's initiatives and responsibilities.

The successful applicant should be based in the greater Houston area or be able to efficiently relocate to the greater Houston area. This full-time position reports directly to the Executive Director.

Responsibilities:

- **Implement the District's Strategic Communications and Outreach Plan:** Lead and execute on the District's Strategic Communications and Outreach Plan in a manner that is both timely and in alignment with organizational goals and objectives, ensuring consistency in messaging across various platforms.
- **Media Relations Management:** Proactively execute media relations strategy on behalf of the District while concurrently cultivating and maintaining relationships with national, state, and local media outlets, journalists, and key stakeholders to secure positive coverage and manage crisis communications effectively. External communications will generally be delivered in coordination with the District's project delivery partners, e.g., the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Texas General Land Office, and others.
- **Content Creation and Management:** Oversee the creation of compelling content, including press releases, articles, presentations, and social media posts, ensuring accuracy, relevance, and adherence to District guidelines.

- Digital Media Management: Direct the District’s digital media presence, including website management, social media platforms, and email newsletters, to engage audiences and convey key messages effectively.
- Internal Communications: Develop strategies to facilitate transparent and effective internal communication, ensuring that all District representatives are informed and aligned with organizational objectives.
- Crisis Communication: Oversee and execute protocols and procedures for managing crisis communication situations, including rapid response strategies and spokesperson training.
- Budget Management: Responsible for managing the communications budget effectively, allocating resources appropriately to maximize impact and achieve strategic objectives.
- Team Leadership: Provide guidance, leadership, and management to the contractor-based communications team, fostering a collaborative, proactive, and high-performing environment.
- Represent the Gulf Coast Protection District at conferences and events as needed.
- Perform other duties that may be added or changed as the course and scope of the job directs.

Qualifications:

Minimum:

- Professional Experience: Minimum of 15 years of experience in external communications, with a proven track record of success in a leadership role, preferably within a governmental or public sector organization.
- Strategic Thinking: Strong strategic planning skills, with the ability to develop and execute communication strategies that support organizational objectives and advance key priorities.
- Media Relations Expertise: Demonstrated experience in building and maintaining relationships with media outlets, handling media inquiries, and managing press conferences and interviews in coordination with project delivery partners.
- Exceptional Writing Skills: Excellent writing and editing abilities, with the capacity to create clear, concise, and persuasive written content for diverse audiences and platforms.
- Digital Media Proficiency: Proficiency in digital media platforms and tools, including social media management, website content management systems, and email marketing software.
- Leadership and Team Management: Proven leadership abilities with experience in leading and motivating teams to achieve goals, as well as fostering a collaborative and inclusive work environment.
- Adaptability and Resilience: Ability to thrive in a fast-paced environment, navigate complex situations with diplomacy and tact, and remain calm and composed under pressure.
- Bachelor's Degree: Bachelor's degree in communications, public relations, journalism, or a related field is required. Advanced degrees or certifications are a plus.

Preferred:

- Master’s degree in communications or other applicable graduate degree
- 10 years of experience in external communications related to infrastructure projects and programs
- 10 years of experience in senior people or project leadership roles
- Experience with federal regulations and laws, for example, National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)
- Prior experience building strong relationships with community and professional organizations
- Prior experience managing professional services contractors to achieve external communications goals

- Knowledge of the greater Houston area and the Gulf Coast, in addition to familiarity with project partners and key stakeholders
- General familiarity with the Coastal Texas Study / Coastal Texas Project and/or the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay Project

Additional Information:

We offer a competitive salary and comprehensive benefits package, including participation in the Texas County & District Retirement System (TCDRS) and the Texas Municipal League (TML) health insurance plans, sick leave, state holidays, and paid time off. TCDRS may be compatible with other State of Texas retirement plans. The offered rate of compensation will be based on individual education, qualifications, and experience. The salary range for this position is \$115,000- \$135,000.

Note:

- This position does not include sponsorship for United States work authorization
- This position does not include relocation costs
- The ability to travel within District territory is required. Most travel will not be overnight though some overnight travel may be necessary (e.g., out of state or to other locations in the State).

Other: Must have a valid Texas driver's license and safe driving record. Applicants may be subject to a driving record and criminal background check. Employment of selected candidate is contingent upon the receipt of an acceptable criminal background check. Must have reliable transportation. Mileage reimbursed at the current allowable rate.

How to Apply: To be considered for this position, submit resume and cover letter to Dedrea Norman at dedrea.norman@gcptexas.com. All applications must contain complete job histories, which include job title, dates of employment, name of employer, and a description of duties performed. You may also include up to three references. If this information is not submitted, your application may be rejected as incomplete. Only interviewed applicants will receive notice of the final disposition of the selection process.

This position will remain open until filled.

An Equal Opportunity Employer

The Gulf Coast Protection District is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability in employment or in the provision of services. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any requests for reasonable accommodation needed during the application process should be communicated by the applicant to Grace Bader at grace.bader@gcptexas.com.