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Diocese of Belleville
Archdiocese of Chicago
Diocese of Joliet
Diocese of Peoria
Diocese of Rockford
Diocese of Springfield-in-IL

Position Description

Director of Communications

Catholic Conference of Illinois

GENERAL SUMMARY:

Directs and oversees communications initiatives that effectively describe and promote the Catholic Conference of Illinois (CCI) and its advocacy agenda. Develops and promotes strategic methods to mobilize support for issues and ideas CCI supports.

SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Assist Executive Director with any project that may require those skills embodied by a communications professional and when appropriate, advise executive director and staff on effective communication techniques and messaging for television, broadcast or print media interviews as well as for social media.
2. Communicate to the diocesan and secular media by way of news releases and other means CCI's positions on various issues and events in consultation with Executive Director.
3. Establish rapport and maintain professional relationship, through regular contacts, with diocesan communication directors and print and electronic media persons both diocesan and secular.
4. At the discretion of the Executive Director, speak for CCI on issues to the secular and diocesan media and to groups and organizations about CCI.
5. In coordination and cooperation with CCI staff, maintain and update the CCI website and social media.
6. Develop CCI's ideas and policy objectives into sample op-ed essays, letters-to-the-editor, "talking points," position papers, speeches and/or testimony.
7. In cooperation with CCI staff, prepare electronically-based legislative updates, end of legislative session analysis, copy-ready bulletin announcements, and appropriate audio-visual presentations for CCI.
8. In cooperation with CCI staff, write, edit and produce a weekly update on CCI's activities, and as needed, assist CCI staff in the production of other newsletters and publications.
9. Monitor major daily newspapers in Illinois, social media and other news sources to provide the Executive Director and CCI staff with recommendations of potential news items in need of response and prepare response where appropriate.
10. At the appropriate times, arrange CCI press conferences.
11. Assist Executive Director in planning for monthly radio shows produced through the Archdiocese of Chicago, including identifying and communicating with potential guests for the shows.

12. Compose and proofread correspondence.
13. Develop and execute innovative programs that in part use web-based operations to identify, contact, educate and mobilize existing and potential supporters of Conference activities.
14. Convene diocesan communication directors on an ongoing basis to discuss pertinent legislative matters and any other CCI activity that would impact upon diocesan staff.
15. Perform other duties and tasks as directed by the Executive Director.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED:

1. Awareness and understanding of the CCI mission and the ability to carry out designated functions of CCI.
2. Requires knowledge of the Catholic Church including in-depth familiarity with its structures, functions, institutions, history and policy positions.
3. Requires working knowledge of government, especially state but also local and federal, and its functions. Furthermore, above-average understanding of the judicial, administrative, and legislative branches of government and a keen appreciation of the political process.
4. Must have the ability to comprehend and utilize advancements in communications, such as social media, technology, etc., to accomplish the objectives of the position.
5. Must have the ability to effectively interact with peers, subordinates, and the public at large; “team player” attitude important.
6. Must have a broad-based knowledge of the State of Illinois, its political, economic, cultural, and demographic composition.
7. Must have excellent verbal and written communication skills.
8. Broad knowledge of organizational operations and policy, and a high level of experience, discretion, integrity, and technical skills.
9. Willingness to travel overnight on occasion in order to participate in professional development seminars/conferences and to Springfield during the legislative session as needed.
10. Ability to meet deadlines, to concentrate and pay attention to details; also, ability to organize, prioritize and work independently as well as schedule and produce work in a timely manner.
11. Ability to promote a positive, professional, service-oriented image on behalf of the Conference.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

Bachelor’s degree, preferably in communications, journalism, the liberal arts or political science. Graduate degree in a related field is desirable. At least 5-7 years of experience in state or federal government, public relations, communications or with Catholic Church desirable.

The above is intended to describe the general content of and requirements for the performance of this job. It is not to be construed as an exhaustive statement of duties, responsibilities or requirements.