

PREVENTION FIRST

Special Initiatives Communications Specialist

POSITION SUMMARY

The Special Initiatives Communications Specialist focuses on enhancing visibility, engagement, and outreach for Prevention First's special initiatives. This position will dedicate their efforts to the Chicago Strategic Action Council (CSAC), the Community Gardening Initiative, and various other projects/programs. They will develop and implement communication strategies that amplify the CSAC's objectives and community engagement activities. They will craft narratives and campaigns that highlight sustainable agriculture practices, prevention, youth involvement, and community-driven planning for the Community Gardening Initiative. This position will also support various other projects (e.g. annual reports, prevention first conferences, marketing endeavors, newsletters, general program support, etc.) to ensure cohesive messaging and alignment with broader organizational goals.

This role requires a dynamic communicator who can tailor messages to diverse audiences, foster community connections, and drive awareness and participation in special initiatives. While this role will be supervised by the Director of Communications, they will work closely with the Chief Development Officer on the CSAC and other personnel on the Community Gardening Initiative and Prevention First tasks.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The following duties are normal for this position. These are not to be construed as exclusive or all-inclusive. Other duties may be required and assigned.

- Help create and execute comprehensive communication plans to support the CSAC and the Community Gardening Initiative. Ensure these plans align with project goals and effectively promote substance misuse prevention, mental health promotion, and sustainable farming practices.
- Generate engaging content for various platforms, including newsletters, social media, websites, and press releases. Ensure that all communications are clear, consistent, and aligned with the organization's branding and messaging guidelines.
- Facilitate effective communication among stakeholders, including community organizations, schools, prevention service providers, and project participants. Serve as the primary communication liaison to ensure stakeholders are informed and engaged.
- Manage relationships with media outlets to secure coverage and enhance the visibility of the CSAC and Community Gardening Initiative. Prepare and distribute press releases, media kits, and respond to media inquiries.
- Help plan and execute communication aspects of project-related events, including workshops, training sessions, and community meetings. Coordinate logistics, develop promotional materials, and ensure successful event execution.
- Work with Communications Team to oversee the social media presence of the CSAC and Community Gardening Initiative. Help create and schedule posts, engage with followers, and monitor social media trends to enhance online engagement and outreach.

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- Compile and analyze communication metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies and campaigns. Prepare regular reports on communication activities, highlighting successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.
- Work closely with project coordinators, data analysts, and other team members to ensure communication efforts are integrated with overall project strategies and objectives. Support the development of project reports and presentations
- Develop new and creative design concepts, update existing designs, and develop digital media within the agency brand for marketing and program materials utilizing graphic design software (primarily Adobe Creative Cloud).
- Assists in research and development (copywriting, editing, design, production, layout, graphics, and distribution) of agency publications such as annual reports, newsletters, and social media posts. Prepares and proofreads a variety of data, documents, reports, and correspondence.
- Assists in creating production schedules; coordinates project parameters and timelines with staff, consultants, and contractors as needed.
- Performs related administrative tasks; maintains and updates organizational style guide; photographs activities at conferences, training, and other related events.
- Demonstrates commitment to valuing diversity, equity, and belonging and contributing to an inclusive working and learning environment.
- Operates basic office equipment and presentation technology; utilizes communications and conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom, Webex, Teams, etc.); uses best practices in all programs, including Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Creative Cloud, and related programs, including website content management system.

POSITION QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

Bachelor's degree in Journalism, Communications, English, Graphic Design, or related field with a minimum of three years experience in writing and editing publications and performing related tasks or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience that provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job.

DESIRED SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Attention to Detail – Ability to achieve thoroughness and accuracy when completing a task.
- Creative - Ability to produce new concepts, ideas and solutions.
- Goal Oriented - Ability to focus on a goal and obtain a pre-determined result.
- Communication Skills – Ability to organize and convey ideas clearly in writing and verbally.
- Critical Thinking – Ability to analyze and evaluate an issue in order to form a judgment.
- Interpersonal - Ability to get along well with a variety of personalities and individuals.
- Experience with designing and implementing public awareness campaigns.

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ABOUT PREVENTION FIRST

Prevention First is a nonprofit and the leading organization for knowledge-building and the dissemination of evidence-based prevention strategies. Our mission is to advance efforts to promote healthy behaviors and prevent substance misuse in every community through a variety of evidence-based and collaborative approaches, including training, support, and public awareness. Since 1980, Prevention First has provided training, technical assistance, and resource materials to thousands of schools, community groups, parents, and youth. We specialize in building the capacity of practitioners to build and sustain effective community coalitions to prevent substance abuse, develop comprehensive strategic prevention plans, and select and implement appropriate evidence-based prevention strategies. We are funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services and offer our services throughout the state.

We offer an exceptional benefits package to our full-time employees (80% and above):

- Paid Time Off Accrual System (eligible day 1)
- Paid holidays
- Medical, dental & vision
- 401(k) plan (eligible after 90 days, vested after 1 year)

This is a full-time, FLSA exempt position, reporting to the Director of Communications. This position is based in Chicago, with the option to work from home. The starting salary is \$52,000.

Prevention First is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We're committed to having an inclusive and transparent environment where every voice is heard and acknowledged. We are dedicated to equality and believe deeply in diversity of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, national origin, and all the other unique characteristics that make us different.

APPLICATION

To apply for this position, please submit the following:

- A cover letter that includes how your experience relates to this role's essential functions.
- A current resume
- A link to your portfolio containing design and writing samples.

We strongly encourage people from underrepresented groups to apply. Please email your cover letter and resume to humanresources@prevention.org