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The Mississippi State Department of Health’s (MSDH) mission is to protect and advance the health, well-being, and safety of everyone in Mississippi. MSDH is offering an outstanding opportunity as the Communications Director/Public Information Officer (CDPIO).Come join our dedicated and mission-driven team, and you will enjoy excellent benefits and work/life programs, a superior retirement package, and the chance to see how your work directly improves the health of our state. MSDH has achieved Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) accreditation, distinguishing it as a top health department, and prides itself on providing a diverse and inclusive work environment with opportunities to grow and develop professionally.

The CDPIO will lead a proactive communications and branding strategy to further strengthen the Department's mission of working together to promote, protect, and improve public health. It will lead efforts to inform, engage, listen to, assess, and motivate external and internal audiences consistently and effectively.

Our work helps ensure MSDH is viewed as a credible source of health information and a great place to work. The CDPIO handles all media requests, develops responses to inquiries, and coordinates with internal programs and external partners to further strengthen department messaging. Providing citizens with trusted health information, clear public health messages, and resources is a department priority led by this position. Ensuring accurate and accessible health information requires the Officer to supervise and guide the development of the Department's website and social media accounts. The CDPIO serves as advisor, coach, and trainer for staff to enhance our overall capacity to respond to media requests.

**Required Education and Related Experience:**

* Typically requires a bachelor’s degree and 5+ years of experience with a major in communications, graphic or fine arts, journalism, graphic design, marketing, public relations, health promotion/communication, English, or related field.
* ***Preferred:*** master’s degree or higher in communications, public relations, journalism, or closely allied field. Three (3) to five (5) years of progressively responsible professional work experience in public relations, marketing, communications, journalism, health promotion, or closely related field is strongly preferred. Experience communicating public health messages. The ideal candidate will be passionate about serving the public. Qualified candidates should have proven experience in a field requiring writing skills and applying problem-solving and critical thinking skills in various situations.

**Required Skills:**

* ***Writing skills:*** public and media relations; social media platforms; editing and copy writing; strategic communications; marketing strategy development; customer service and public engagement tactics; issue management.

Knowledge of graphic design software and social media management. Cultural humility and knowledge of best practices in communication with diverse populations; knowledge of intercultural communication.

* ***Knowledge of health behavior change:*** theories, demographics, psychographics. Knowledge of health literacy, causal factors, outcomes, healthy literacy screening, plain language use, numeracy, science literacy, media literacy. Ethics and law in health communication. Social Marketing: segmentation, marketing mix, consumer behavior, research, strategy.
* ***Media Planning:*** channel selection and mix, social media platforms, use of management tools, analytics, purchasing, preparing content. Knowledge of public health.
* ***Crisis and risk communication:*** risk appraisal, risk presentation and framing, psychology of risk and crisis, crisis, and risk preparation.
* ***Organizational Communication:*** leadership, mediation, conflict management.
* ***Media and Journalism:*** media economics, news gatekeeping, public opinion, media effects.
* ***New Media and Tools; accessible design:*** website, course, and other tools to enhance accessibility for visually and/or hearing impaired.
* ***Strong communication skills***: supervisory skills; creating social media posts based on best practices; designing and maintaining internet and intranet sites; experience developing website content; working cooperatively with others in a team environment; establishing effective working relationships with internal and external constituencies; detail-orientation; strong proofreading skills in multiple formats.
* ***Interpersonal and Group Communication:*** public speaking, negotiation, persuasion, presentation.
* ***Expository Writing:*** preparing memos, policy briefs, summaries, white papers.
* ***Social Media Proficiency:*** use interactive platforms to create and distribute content across multiple sites, maintain content production and distribution calendars.
* ***Journalistic/Public Relations Writing:*** preparing Q&As, speeches, press releases, content editing for news for different platforms.
* ***Data Visualization:*** design storyboards, graphs, charts, and/or infographics using software.
* ***Web/New Media Design:*** applying information architecture principles, user friendly interface design, web content management.
* ***Scientific Writing:*** preparing scientific articles for publication, literature reviews, research summaries.
* ***Abilities:*** Communicate information clearly and concisely in aesthetically pleasing and understandable formats; develop and execute Department-wide communications strategy through publications, media, social media, and presentations; analyze and interpret information; organize and prioritize multiple projects simultaneously; design educational materials; organize data and facts for accurate information sharing; meet short deadlines; remain calm under pressure; respond to urgent situations in a timely and professional manner; research and implement new communications strategies and techniques. Leadership abilities.
* ***Physical Requirements:*** This is largely a sedentary role, with most of the duties performed on a computer and phone. This role routinely uses standard office equipment such as computers, phones, photocopiers, and filing cabinets. Desk and workspaces can accommodate a wheelchair.Will travel within the area and occasionally attend out of state training.

**Job Duties/Responsibilities:**

* ***Management/Leadership:*** Provides direction, support, and quality control of the department’s communications planning, messaging, and public relations priorities. Supervises members of the communications team. Manages department’s branding goals.
* ***Communication Strategy and Policy:*** Anticipates communication needs, opportunities, impacts, and expectations for agency and other parties related to public health issues. Uses proven strategies and best practices to ensure communication objectives are met, and trust in the agency is maintained. Develops communication and marketing plans. Manages numerous complex issues and projects simultaneously. Researches and develops internal policies and procedures for public information, utilization of social media platforms, and any disseminated or distributed public information. Uses marketing and communications strategy to change human behavior. Works with subject matter experts, program staff, agency leaders, and external partners to ensure accuracy and consistency of information to maintain agency credibility, with a focus on information that changes over time; works with subject matter experts to coordinate communication initiatives.
* ***Writing:*** Writes news releases, brochures, newsletters, publications, consumer, and other informational media; coordinates and scripts public service announcements; drafts and edits materials for printing or publication and distribution. Develops and reviews content and materials to support public health priorities, including speeches, presentations, news releases, media advisories, press kits, briefing packages, key messages, talking points, fact sheets, social media messages, FAQs, and web content. Develops ideas into articles, etc., with input into style, format, presentation, context, and accompanying graphics. Ensures accessibility of communication to varying audiences, especially those with disabilities.
* ***Media Relations/Community Partnerships:*** Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with state and local government officials and media representatives; responds to queries and directs questions to appropriate staff; arranges press conferences and notifies media representatives of newsworthy events. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with program staff in the divisions, communication staff in the department, local health agencies, other state agencies, and other organizations. Coordinates and disseminates information to media, state agencies, MSDH staff, and other key partners, including the governor’s office and other elected officials, related to public health priorities; provides timely media response; facilitates information sharing with partners on emerging and ongoing issues. Identifies target audiences and determine the best platforms and messages to engage customers and community partners.
* ***Technical Support:*** Provides technical assistance and oversight on complex or high-profile work on department initiatives. Supports media relations capacity development efforts for agency staff and leadership. Advises the senior leadership and agency staff on media engagements. Prepares and coaches agency staff before media events and provides candid feedback. Provides support for a variety of staff to ensure effective and consistent messaging.
* ***Spokesperson:*** Develops and delivers key messages to the media and the public. Acts as liaison or spokesperson for priorities and issues. Attends meetings to monitor media presence and inquiries.
* ***Social Media/Digital Communications:*** Manages the planning and implementation of social media content and community campaigns with partner agencies. Creates high-caliber interactive designs and tests communication campaigns for the Web, online advertising, and other new media delivery modes, such as PDAs, podcasts, or any other media channel.
* ***Design:*** Manages, prepares, or assists with preparation of graphics compositions and layouts.
* ***Branding/Advertising:*** Establishes and coordinates branding. Coordinates and evaluates advertising and promotional materials.
* ***Emergency Response/Risk Communication:*** Prepares for and assists with emergency response activities assigned during a public health emergency. Uses risk communications best practices for public health theory and application. Is available 24/7 in case of a public health emergency, physical facility problem, and/or functional/operational emergencies. Serves as public information officer on agency Incident Management Team as required.
* ***Budget:*** Assists MSDH administration with the marketing and education budgets for the agency.
* ***Reporting:*** Produces reports to include tracking of local, state, and national media impressions, agency website, and social media platforms.
* ***Vendor Relations:*** Collaborates and works with vendors for the web site, social media, and special campaigns. Implements contract with agency chosen vendor.

**Indicators of success for this position:**

* Increased visibility of agency issues and opportunities.
* Ability to coach, mentor for improved success.

**Starting Salary Range: $74,308.36 - $101,430.91** (based on education and experience)

**State Employee Benefits include:**

Comprehensive benefits package, including: 10 paid holidays; medical, dental, and vision coverage; disability insurance; life insurance.

* Training, development, and promotional opportunities
* A guaranteed pension plan, via Public Employees Retirement System
* Opportunities for Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program for eligible workers
* Commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity, and a welcoming environment. Affirmative action commitment.

**Location: Hinds County**

**How to apply:** Interested applicants should submit: 1) Cover letter indicating the title and location(s) for the area in which he/she is applying; 2) State of Mississippi Employment Application (<http://www.mspb.ms.gov/media/6595/application%20word%20template.pdf>)

and resume to:

Mississippi State Department of Health

Office of the Senior Deputy

P.O. Box 1700 Jackson, MS 39215

Email: Christina.Adcock@msdh.ms.gov

To learn more about the Mississippi State Department of Health, please visit our website at <http://www.msdh.state.ms.us>. **Cover letters and applications should be submitted no later than Friday, August 18, 2023.**