



American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan

Position Description: Communications Strategist

Position Overview: The Communications Strategist works with the Communications Director and Digital Media Strategist to develop and implement communication and media strategies. The Communications Strategist is responsible for “deep dive” research that helps frame the scope of ACLU of Michigan work for internal and external messaging purposes; communicating with the media, the public and members on a wide variety of civil liberties issues by creating public education materials; drafting and editing blogs, reports, and other communications materials; and helping to manage the ACLU of Michigan’s robust traditional media program. The Communications Strategist also aids volunteer-led efforts to publicize public events and manages internal systems.

Specific Responsibilities

Advocacy and Public Education Campaigns

- Provide journalism-style research across a variety of topics for use with ACLU-driven content such as reports, editorials, letters, etc.
- Provide in-depth editing of reports and other long-form education/messaging materials for quality, style, accuracy and tone.
- Collaborate with staff to conduct integrated issue advocacy campaigns and high-impact strategies utilizing ACLU of Michigan’s communication, legislative, field organizing and legal programs.
- Work with the legislative department to develop and maintain a communications agenda related to policy priorities.
- Prepare fact sheets, position papers and policy statements on priority legislative issues.
- Serve as backup to Digital Media Strategist for all email marketing, including writing and producing emails through the Springboard content management system to engage and build public involvement in the ACLU’s advocacy efforts, promoting local events, recruiting members, announcing significant news, and generating legislative action.
- Work with national staff as appropriate on communications around joint lawsuits, promote national messaging campaigns and alignment of messages, and liaison with national communications staff as needed.

Media Relations

- Pro-actively cultivate relationships with reporters, editors, producers, bookers, bloggers and other media professionals through phone, email and in-person meetings.
- Draft and edit news releases, op-eds, blog posts, letters to the editor, fact sheets, talking points, and other press materials.

- Pitch news and feature stories to journalists and media outlets and actively follow up to garner maximum media coverage. Keep track of journalists contacted to expand networks and measure success.
- Develop and strategize media plans in collaboration with Digital Media Strategist & media colleagues as well as the legal and advocacy colleagues.
- Organize press conferences, teleconferences and other media events.
- Analyze media market trends and develop effective strategies for wide and effective broadcast of ACLU of Michigan messages.
- Coordinate media campaigns targeted to ethnic media outlets and youth-oriented media outlets to increase the ACLU of Michigan's visibility and engage the media and target populations with the ACLU of Michigan's programmatic activities and mission.
- Provide support to the Executive Director, preparing advance materials for interviews, facilitating interview requests, and identifying impactful opportunities.
- Consult with the Communications Director on appropriate spokespeople for media interview requests that best advance public perception of an issue.
- Provide support to staff responding to media interview requests.

Institution-Building

- Work with the Communications Director and Digital Media Strategist to develop cross-platform campaigns on selected issues.
- Guide and oversee the production, design, bidding process, and distribution of publications and local event invitations.
- Maintain an inventory of ACLU educational materials, such as press clippings, videos, publications, newsletters and other civil liberties literature produced by the state and national ACLU, and create effective distribution networks.
- Coordinate speaking requests with staff and volunteer speakers, maintain database of speakers and prepare materials for staff and volunteers to bring to events.
- Consult with Communications, Deputy and Executive Directors on how to use analytical reports to guide the formulation of strategy.
- Empower ACLU of Michigan staff to share content by initiating opportunities, and providing guidance and support;
- Ensure adherence to ACLU branding protocols and use of ACLU brand;
- Contribute to the staff's understanding of messages, messaging, and relevant news and news opportunities by sharing internal content and successes.

Qualifications

- Educational background in communications and/or at least two years of public relations and media experience, including experience writing press materials and organizing press conferences.
- Experience with advocacy-oriented media campaigns, a plus.
- Demonstrated ability and success in pitching stories to news outlets, newspapers, TV networks and cable shows, radio and bloggers.
- Established contacts with reporters, editors, producers, bloggers and other media professionals.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and the ability to contribute to a collegial work environment.
- Experience using public opinion research to frame issues and develop messages, a plus.

- Ability to manage multiple projects in a busy office environment, and strong attention to detail; ability to work with minimal supervision and to meet deadlines.
- Ability to work flexible hours and travel when necessary.
- Ability to supervise volunteers, work under supervision of others, work cooperatively with groups, and develop consensus.
- A commitment to diversity; a personal approach that values the individual and respects differences of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability and socio-economic circumstance.

Personal Characteristics

- Personally committed to advancing the ACLU's values, mission, goals and programs, with an understanding of the range of civil liberties issues and their implications.
- An energetic person who can handle and prioritize multiple activities and responsibilities; a self-starter and finisher.
- A team player that inspires collaboration and functions decisively; flexible and well organized.
- Emotionally mature and self-confident, with a sense of humor in order to maintain balance and perspective.

Supervision: The Communications Strategist is supervised by the Communications Director.

Compensation and Benefits

Salary is commensurate with experience and qualifications. Excellent benefits including health insurance and a 401(k) plan. This is a grant-funded position.

Application Procedure

Please submit in digital form, a detailed letter of interest, resume, writing sample and contact information for three references to ACLU of Michigan Communications Director Darrell Dawsey at commsstrategistjob@aclumich.org. Please include Communications Strategist and your name in the subject line of the email.

Application review begins May 5, 2017. Position will remain open until filled.

The ACLU of Michigan is an equal opportunity/ affirmative action employer. Women, people of color, persons with disabilities, returning citizens, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are encouraged to apply.

The ACLU of Michigan comprises two separate corporate entities, the ACLU of Michigan and the ACLU Fund of Michigan. The ACLU of Michigan and the ACLU Fund of Michigan share the same mission, office space, and employees. This job posting refers collectively to the two organizations under the name "ACLU of Michigan."