

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Assistant Director, Various
Working Title: Assistant Director, Communications and Public Affairs
FLSA Status: Exempt
Salary Grade: 11B

PURPOSE OF POSITION

The Assistant Director, Communications and Public Affairs, shapes how Metrolink engages with and is understood by customers, stakeholders, communities, and the broader public. This role provides strategic direction for communications and public affairs efforts that advance agency priorities, strengthen relationships, and protect and enhance Metrolink's reputation. Working across the organization and with external partners, the Assistant Director helps balance competing perspectives and interests surrounding Metrolink's most significant initiatives and investments. As a key agency spokesperson and senior advisor, the Assistant Director guides responses to high-profile, sensitive, and emerging issues and provides strategic leadership during crises. This critical work helps Metrolink navigate a complex and highly visible regional landscape while maintaining public confidence and delivering value for Southern Californians.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The classification is not part of a job series.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED AND RECEIVED

- Receives general oversight from the Director and/or executive-level management.
- Responsible for supervising and monitoring the performance of a regular group of employees or a department and outside agencies and consultants.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The duties listed below are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed and are not to be interpreted as an exhaustive list of responsibilities.

- Develop and execute high-impact strategic communications plans that integrate media, stakeholders, community, and public relations to advance Metrolink goals and priorities, including customer campaigns, safety initiatives, and capital projects.
- Build and maintain constructive relationships with local jurisdictions, elected officials, industry and community stakeholders, media, and member agencies.
- Collaborate across departments, member agencies, and industry partners to surface, shape, and package proactive storylines and develop appropriate responses to community, public, and media inquiries about Metrolink services and projects.
- Represent Metrolink as an official spokesperson when interacting with media and presenting at special events and public meetings; help prepare other spokespeople for press interviews and public appearances.
- Serve as a leader on Metrolink's 24/7 public affairs on-call team, providing expert crisis communications support, participating in the team rotation (typically one week as backup and one week as lead each month), and training new team members to ensure a consistent, disciplined response during incidents.



- Through a variety of sources, identify emerging capital, state-of-good-repair, and maintenance project issues, including construction impacts, environmental concerns, or political resistance, and coordinate timely strategic outreach plans to mitigate risk to project delivery or public perception.
- Facilitate briefings, meetings, and presentations with stakeholders, including the public when appropriate, to provide updates, gather feedback, and address concerns.
- Create presentations, community notices, press releases, media advisories, talking points, video scripts, newsletter articles, board notices, all-staff communications, and other high-quality materials.
- Maintain continuously refined community databases, media distribution lists, and stakeholder contacts to support outreach and rapid response as appropriate.
- Track and report media coverage, flagging risks and opportunities.
- Direct and oversee the work of internal staff and contractors performing communications, public affairs, and community relations activities; establish clear expectations and ensure quality compliance.
- Champion a high-performing team culture by mentoring and developing team members.
- Manage department budgets and contracts.
- Develop and present Board items as needed.
- The responsibilities outlined above are representative of the role but not exhaustive. Additional duties may be assigned as needed, and reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with applicable laws.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree in Communications or a related field.
- A minimum of eight (8) years of experience in communications, government relations, public relations, journalism, community outreach, or a similar field.
- A minimum of five (5) years of experience in successfully directing, managing, and supervising contractors and/or consultants.
- A combination of training, education and/or experience that provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities may be considered when determining minimum qualifications. Advanced relevant coursework may also substitute for a portion of the required experience.
- A valid Class "C" California driver's license with a satisfactory driving record of no more than two moving violations and no DUIs within the last three years.

Preferred Qualifications

- A minimum of three (3) years of experience in a public or governmental agency as an employee, contractor, or consultant with a Class 1, intercity passenger, major commuter railroad, or transit provider in a 24/7 operations environment.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge of:

- Strong and effective leadership, team building, communication, and time management.
- Project and event management and coordination.
- Capital projects, programs, and associated priorities in communicating with the public.



Skilled In:

- Exceptional verbal and written communication.
- Political sensitivities.
- Customer service.
- Coaching and mentoring junior teammates.
- Principles and practices of municipal budgeting.
- Microsoft Office.

Ability to:

- Translate Metrolink's vision, mission, and strategic goals into clear, compelling messaging that educates, informs, and inspires.
- Simultaneously balance multiple initiatives and drive them to successful completion.
- Adapt quickly and thoughtfully to evolving conditions, maintaining message discipline and composure.
- Establish and nurture effective relationships and appropriately represent SCRRA to outside agencies and the public.
- Prepare analytical reports and distill media monitoring data and stakeholder sentiment into actionable insight, identifying trends and surfacing risks and opportunities to inform decisions.
- Develop and modify departmental policies, strategies, and/or methods.
- Exercise the judgment, decisiveness, and creativity required in situations involving the direction, control, and planning of an entire program or multiple programs.
- Work weekends and extended hours when required.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Transition between a stationary position at a desk or work location and move about Metrolink facilities or other work site locations.
- Operate tools to perform the duties of the position, such as computers, office equipment, and work-related machinery.
- Transport equipment or boxes up to 25 lbs.
- Exchange ideas by means of communication.
- Visual acuity to detect, identify, and observe employees or train movement and any barriers to movement when working on or near railroad tracks.
- Hear and perceive the nature of sounds when working on or near railroad tracks.
- Balance, ascend/descend, climb, kneel, stoop, bend, crouch, or crawl within assigned working conditions and or locations.

Working Conditions

Position requires work in a normal office environment with little exposure to excessive noise, dust, or temperature. Work may also be conducted in outdoor environments, at construction sites, Railroad Track and Right-of-Way environments, and warehouse environments, with possible exposure to individuals who are hostile or irate, moving mechanical parts, and loud noises (85+ decibels, such as heavy trucks, construction, etc.).



Southern California Regional Rail Authority is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Authority will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities and encourages both prospective and current employees to discuss potential accommodations with the employer.

Last Updated: August 2026

