



CENTER *for* PLANNING EXCELLENCE

Job Description: Communications Manager

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) is a unique non-profit planning organization that provides planning and policy services, drives cross-agency and collaborative statewide planning initiatives, and guides urban, rural, and regional planning implementation in Louisiana. We provide best-practice planning models, innovative policy ideas, and technical assistance to individual communities that wish to create and enact a broad spectrum of plans, including master plans and those dealing with transportation and infrastructure needs, environmental issues, and healthy community design. CPEX brings together community members and leaders from across the state and provides guidance as they work toward a shared vision for future smart growth and sustainable development. CPEX continues to be on the cutting edge of climate, resilience, and healthy community design in Louisiana.

ABOUT THE ROLE

CPEX seeks a full-time **Communications Manager** who will lead day-to-day communications operations and shape CPEX's voice to effectively engage a wide range of audiences. This role offers the opportunity to lead storytelling that inspires action and to build recognition of CPEX's thought leadership across the state and beyond. The ideal candidate is both strategic and detail-oriented, with fresh ideas and a desire for continuous learning and innovation. We're looking for a collaborative, creative professional who can support every facet of CPEX's communications—from content development and media relations to brand consistency and digital strategy.

The Communications Manager will report to the Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing and collaborate closely with project staff, leadership, and external partners to ensure consistent, values-driven communications that amplify the impact of CPEX's work.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Messaging & Storytelling (~40% of effort)

- Shape and maintain a clear, compelling, and consistent CPEX voice across all platforms and materials
- Develop talking points, presentations, and briefing materials for staff and leadership
- Lead content creation for websites, newsletters, reports, press releases, print materials, and digital communication
- Ensure communications efforts reflect and enhance CPEX's brand identity and strategic goals

- Manage and maintain CPEX's websites, ensuring timely updates and engaging content
- Coordinate with project teams to tailor messages to specific audiences, including citizens groups, policymakers, funders, and technical partners
- Stay informed of trends and opportunities to position CPEX as a thought leader in planning, resilience, and community engagement
- Oversee and innovate around communication tools and techniques, including social media, email campaigns, and emerging platform
- Produce regular newsletters and updates, including a quarterly e-newsletter and timely news flashes
- Collaborate with CPEX's contractor partners (e.g., graphic designers, media consultants, web developers) to execute high-quality communications deliverables

Media Relations (~20% of effort)

- Develop and maintain relationships with press, TV, radio, and online content outlets
- Write and distribute press releases, media advisories, pitch letters, and other press materials
- Coordinate media outreach for CPEX projects, announcements, and events
- Train and support staff to prepare for media interviews and public communications
- Collect stories and project outcomes that demonstrate impact and can be shared with media or incorporated into broader communications strategies

Event & Presentation Support (~20% of effort)

- Lead media relations and marketing for major CPEX events, including the Louisiana Smart Growth Summit
- Support preparation of materials and visuals for public presentations and events
- Assist event teams in identifying and securing media coverage and sponsorship visibility
- Identify communications opportunities to maximize event impact and audience engagement

Internal Communications & Administration (~10% of effort)

- Collaborate with leadership and staff to ensure alignment between internal and external messaging
- Maintain a functional, up-to-date contact and communications database
- Support basic technology needs and communications platforms (e.g., email systems, content management tools)
- Assist with internal documentation and staff-wide communications training as needed

Other CPEX Duties (~10% of effort)

- Participate in regular staff meetings, events, and retreats
- Track and submit time and expenses
- Assist in preparing for, and occasionally attend, other CPEX events including public meetings
- Support and attend CPEX board meetings
- Provide support to other CPEX initiatives as needed

DESIRED SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

The following skills and qualifications represent our ideal candidate. We encourage potential candidates to apply even if they do not meet all below criteria.

- Degree in communications, journalism, public relations, marketing, planning, or a related field
- At least five years relevant experience
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills
- Strong organizational and project management skills with an eye for detail
- Ability to translate complex planning, policy, and technical information into accessible language
- Demonstrated experience with media relations, storytelling, and message strategy
- Experience managing websites, social media, and digital communications platforms
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office and Google Suite; familiarity with tools like Canva, Mailchimp, Adobe Creative Suite, or equivalent
- Strong interpersonal skills and a collaborative spirit
- Passion for CPEX's mission and commitment to equity and sustainability

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

- Location: CPEX's office is located in downtown Baton Rouge and offers a flexible work environment. After an initial fully in-office period, CPEX employees may work some days remotely as the role allows. As a CPEX employee, the successful candidate will be expected to participate in CPEX events, occasionally on evenings and weekends with advance notice.
- Compensation: This is a full-time, salaried position with a competitive benefits package. Salary range is \$70,000–\$85,000, commensurate with the successful candidate's experience.
- Application Requirements: Applicants must submit **a resume, cover letter, and portfolio or writing samples (optional but encouraged)** to **Kierra McHenry at kmchenry@cpex.org**. Applicants must be authorized to work in the United States. The position will remain open until filled.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT CPEX

CPEX is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in every aspect of our work. We believe that sustainable prosperity and community resilience cannot be achieved without equity and the inclusion of all Louisianans. We strive to uplift diverse voices and to foster authentic community engagement in shaping Louisiana's future. A successful candidate will share and support these values as an integral part of their work.