

**ILLINOIS AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION  
AND AFFILIATED COMPANIES**

**POSITION DESCRIPTION**

Management

**Company:** IAA  
**Division:** News & Communications  
**Department:** Issue  
**FLSA:** Exempt  
**Last Update:** 08/15/2018

**Position Title:** Director of Issues Management - IFB  
**Job Code:** D477  
**Reports to:** Executive Director of Operations, News & Communications  
**Direct Reports:** 3  
**Indirect Reports:** 0

**Overall Purpose and Main Objectives:**

Monitors media coverage, and, working across IFB divisions, tracks policy developments and identifies and addresses issues likely to impact the organization, agriculture, and/or farmers. Coordinates publicity, messaging, social media and communication activities for priority issues across the organization and county Farm Bureaus; seeking consistency and effectiveness. Oversees media relations functions.

**Duties and Responsibilities (List in order of importance):**

1. Monitors media coverage of agriculture, as well as political, regulatory and societal developments for emerging issues which could impact the business of farming; assesses issues for current or potential impact; develops action plans to influence issues to mitigate or enhance impact on IFB and its members.
2. Works across divisions—GAC and MSPR— and with internal media to coordinate communication activities to influence policy on Farm Bureau’s behalf; supports GAC staff by developing communication tools (communications plans, fact sheets, letters to the editor, letters to elected officials) to further Farm Bureau priorities.
3. Supervises Media Relations Manager. Develops multi-media action plans to communicate IFB positions on federal and state issues to internal and external media.
4. Supervises Senior Social Media Specialist. Oversees organization social media efforts through training, equipping and coordinating of IFB employee and social media activities.
5. Develops agenda for, schedules, and facilitates twice-monthly, cross-divisional Issue Management Working Group (IMWG) meetings. Convenes Emerging Issues Task Force 2-3 times/year; communicates outcomes to leadership
6. Provides strategic guidance, vision, and counsel to IFB on public relations issues and positioning of the organization.
7. Works closely with the MSPR marketing department to identify and develop materials, graphics to support IFB messaging and communications on priority issues. Oversees placement of issue talking points to CFB’s and Farm Bureau leaders.
8. Coordinates intentional, comprehensive communication initiatives across platforms and social

media; including the use of video.

9. Maintains contacts with individuals, organizations, and groups, including Illinois commodity organizations, newspapers, news wire services and news and farm magazines.
10. Counsels IFB and CFB staff on media relations approaches. Serves as back-up media contact for the organization, responding to media calls, pitching story ideas, and writing and distributing media advisories and news releases.

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11. Identifies and coordinates opportunities for media relations and A/V functions to support each other in furthering organizational priorities.
12. Assists county Farm Bureaus with media relations and issue management.
13. In collaboration with the Media Relations Specialist, identify and train issue spokespersons for media interviews.
14. Makes presentations on issue management and develops training programs around expertise upon request.
15. Performs other related work as required or requested.

### **Required Qualifications and Skills:**

#### Education

Typically requires Bachelor's degree and 8 years of journalism or communications experience, including 2 years management experience or Master's degree and 6 years of journalism or communications experience, including 2 years of management experience or 10 years of journalism or communications experience, including 2 years management experience.

#### Experience

See Required Education.

#### Knowledge

- Working knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook.
- Familiarity with multi-media processes.
- Knowledge of issues impacting agriculture; passion to engage and address these issues.

#### Skills

- Proven ability to develop effective communication/PR strategies and to execute action plans.
- Excellent verbal and written word communicator with internal and external audiences.
- Strong interpersonal skills.
- Ability to think strategically.
- Creative problem-solving abilities.
- Ability to work effectively with policy experts, association leaders, and members.
- Ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously.

### **Preferred Qualifications and Skills:**

#### Education

N/A

### Experience

- At least ten years' experience in a communications position including experience in public relations or issue management.
- Experience managing relationships with outside vendors.

### Knowledge

- Fluency with multi-media, agricultural issues and communication strategies and tactics.
- Established working relationships with news media.
- Familiarity with the workings of federal, state and local government as well as regulatory agencies that govern farming.
- Working knowledge of IFB organization as well as workings of external news media.
- Working knowledge of public opinion research and public relations.
- Professional accreditation by the Public Relations Society of America.

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### Skills

- Excellent news judgment.
- Creative, analytical problem solver.
- Proven ability to successfully manage both issues and people.
- Capable of maintaining interest in and enthusiasm for long-term issues that may take months or years to resolve.

### **Physical Requirements:**

- Normal office environment.
- Work may extend beyond normal business hours as business needs dictate.
- The position involves occasional travel including some overnight travel.
- The position requires long periods seated at a computer as well as in office, conference and meeting settings.

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by people assigned to this job. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, or skills required of personnel so classified.