

Director of Communications
Washington, DC

Position summary

Smart Growth America (SGA) seeks a visionary leader, exceptional writer, editor, and strategic communicator with significant experience in smart growth principles, land use, housing, economic development and/or transportation to lead the organization's multi-faceted communications efforts to stakeholders, members, coalition partners, funders, donors and employees. We deeply believe that improving racial disparities is at the core of a smart growth approach, and the Director of Communications will play a key role in continuing the evolution of SGA's organization-wide voice on [racial equity](#), climate mitigation and resilience, and creating healthier, more connected communities.

Reporting to the President & CEO, the Director is a member of the senior management team, acting as an internal resource and advisor. The Director will collaborate closely with the CEO and SGA's senior leaders to develop and implement the organization's communications strategy in conjunction with departmental staff; oversee all content production and release; manage the brand identity, marketing, messaging, digital and social media campaigns; spearhead all proactive and reactive earned media, and oversee the day-to-day communications operations and systems, managing department staff and outside relationships and vendors. The Director will also work closely with the CEO and senior staff to inform, create content for, and support SGA's organization-wide and programmatic fundraising efforts.

Organization overview

SGA is a national non-profit organization that envisions a country where no matter where you live, or who you are, you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient. That vision is our North Star, and we empower communities through technical assistance, advocacy, and thought leadership to realize our vision of livable places, healthy people, and shared prosperity.

Communications team overview

The Director manages the team's day-to-day operations and collaboratively guides the conception, production, and release of all public-facing content. The communications team is the internal hub of SGA, always connected to the multi-faceted work of [our many programs](#) and charged with conceiving, producing, sharing and elevating their work and the organization as a whole. From this unique vantage point within the organization, the Director and team works closely with each of our three core teams (Land Use and Development, Economic Development, Transportation and Thriving Communities), to develop strategic communications plans to further each team's work, helping to conceive, manage and execute all public releases and content to enhance SGA's overall brand and advance the organization's overall mission and the cause of smart growth.

Key areas of responsibility

Strategic planning and counsel

- Develop and implement a multi-channel, integrated communications and marketing strategy that increases awareness of and engagement with SGA across channels and achieves SGA's organizational goals.
- Create and implement a strategy to use social media to advance strategic goals, develop and oversee staff in creating and distributing content and messaging via SGA social media channels, and increase followers and engagement.
- Provide ongoing counsel to the President & CEO. This may include but not limited to:
 - Offer strategic counsel to the President & CEO. Advise and provide broad feedback.
 - Assist in development and implementation of select annual communications or media initiatives, as requested.
 - Evaluate and recommend thought leadership opportunities for the President & CEO and SGA, including but not limited to appearances at events, media interviews and organizational partnerships.
 - Together with the CEO, provide regular reports to the Board, documents for Board meetings, and regularly advise as necessary; and serve as staff representation on Board committees at the direction of the CEO.

Content production

- In collaboration with staff across the organization, assist with the conception, production and successful release of multiple forms of content, including flagship reports, other research, blog posts, emails, and others, in service of the organization's broader goals.
- Provide strategic and tactical advice to staff to help them improve their written products.
- Develop and write regular, original content (blog posts, essays, opinion pieces), as well as enterprising, original content about our work, our issues and current events writ large.
- Collaborate with teams across the organization to amplify programs, projects, and campaigns.
- Manage the organization's editorial calendar and help plan out all content in a systematic way.

Branding and messaging

- Keep the organization's written and visual style guide up-to-date and help ensure that staff is compliant across all channels, ensuring all content stays consistent with regards to message, clarity, style, and visuals.
- Capitalize on SGA's role as the leader of the smart growth movement in the US and help market both the organization and the concept of smart growth.
- Build, hone, and advance the organization's brand and overall message.

Media relations

- Lead SGA's media relations, including but not limited to pitching stories, responding to media inquiries, cultivating relationships with key media contacts, assembling media lists, preparing SGA experts to be spokespeople and marketing them publicly, and serving as SGA spokesperson as appropriate for a variety of print, broadcast and digital media.

Team and systems management

- Managing and developing a communications staff, which includes both the direct supervision of communications associates, and more informal management and coordination of staffers (supervised by others) who fulfill communications duties within several of the teams and programs.
- Develop a coordinated approach to print and electronic communications including marketing collateral and identify and develop relationships with vendors needed to create and disseminate these materials.
- Measure and report metrics of communications and marketing activities to the SGA management team and staff and optimize communications efforts in response as needed.
- Serve as lead for managing and maintaining the SGA website; spearhead a planned effort to rebuild and reconceive SGA's web presence with an outside consultant or firm.
- Manage various internal systems, including Salsa Engage for grassroots email, online advocacy, donor and member dues management; Wordpress for website management; and other various systems.
- Help create and manage to an overall communications budget and the communications budget within various projects and programs.
- Plan and execute the organization's year-end fundraising campaign each year, in addition to other potential donor cultivation efforts throughout the year.

Knowledge and skills

Required

- Bachelor's degree in business, communications or relevant field required.
- 8 years of progressively responsible communications management experience in a nonprofit organization, leading the development and fulfillment of a communications/marketing/public relations plan, and helping to achieve an organization's strategic goals.
- Experience and interest in one or more of SGA's focus areas, including land use, transportation and transit, urban planning, racial equity and justice, climate resilience, economic development and equitable real estate development. The ideal candidate will be able to write and communicate about a variety of these focus areas in an integrated and compelling way, particularly with respect to the intersection of these issues with racial equity.
- Experience with issues-based (digital/online) advocacy and the process of organizing grassroots and grassroots support for policy change at various levels.

- Demonstrated experience in managing a communications department: planning, management, and trend analysis, and creating and managing to an overall communications budget.
- Ability to develop and oversee an integrated communications strategy that supports and achieves organizational objectives.
- Demonstrably excellent and efficient writing and editing skills, with a keen eye for design and style, regardless of the medium. Experience producing reports and marketing collateral in print, digital, and other emerging forms.
- Some experience with or familiarity in Adobe Creative Suite and graphic design is essential.
- An understanding of social media, including the ability to manage overall content, responses and campaigns to build engagement and increase followers.
- Demonstrated success in working with reporters, writers, and opinion leaders in print, broadcast, online, and social media.
- Skilled at measuring communications and marketing activities to achieve organizational goals and provide a return on investment.
- Experience and senior management to deliver strategic communications objectives.
- Excellent interpersonal, influencing & negotiating skills, to develop effective long-term relationships with staff & external stakeholders. Demonstrated ability to act as an internal advisor.
- Demonstrated experience in leading, and managing communications staff, including strong ability to delegate, train, coach and motivate staff. Collaborative management and working style with a diverse workforce.
- Experience managing and working with outside vendors and consultants.
- Hands-on management with the ability to think strategically and act tactically.
- Ability to balance attention to detail with big-picture thinking.
- Ability and desire to translate complex concepts to employees at all levels of the organization, including non-communications managers.
- Strong integrity, ethics and professionalism.

Preferred

- Master's (communications, journalism, media, public relations or related program) or MBA preferred.
- 10+ years of progressively responsible communications management experience in a nonprofit organization, leading the development and fulfillment of a communications/marketing/public relations plan, and helping to achieve an organization's strategic goals.
- Experience creating and leveraging communications strategy and content to support and further an organization's fundraising efforts and goals.
- Experience working with Boards of Directors to deliver strategic communications objectives.
- Deep experience with Adobe Creative Suite, including the ability to produce graphics or other collateral in a pinch.
- Ability to provide trainings for staff or external stakeholders on effective communication and messaging.

Compensation and location

Salary is commensurate with experience, with a set range of \$120,000-130,000 per year. The successful candidate who would be in consideration to be compensated near the top of this range would need to have almost all of the communications and managerial experience listed in the “required” section above, and meet many of the “preferred” criteria. SGA offers a robust benefits package, including health insurance, 401k, paid vacation, and sick leave. SGA staff are currently working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic (likely through at least the Fall of 2021); therefore, the successful candidate will be able to live anywhere in the US during the remote working period. However, they should be prepared to move to DC within 60 days of notice if the office is reopened. No relocation is offered at this time.

How to apply

Expand HR Consulting (EHR) has been retained to search for this position. Please send a letter of interest and resume to Erica Raphael, Sr. Consultant, eraphael@expandhr.com.

SGA is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion/creed, sex, national origin, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, veteran or active military status, alienage or citizenship status, arrest or conviction record, credit history, salary history, caregiver status, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or partnership status, familial status, unemployment status, status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual violence or any other status protected by applicable law.