National Institutes of Health

Competency Model

GS-1035 Public Affairs

Occupation Competency Model

Public Affairs Competency Model

Competency	Definition	Key Behaviors
Communications Counsel with Senior Leadership	Partners with and advises key senior leadership on strategic communications related matters.	• Serves as a trusted advisor, providing strategic communication advice to senior leadership regarding media interviews, speaking engagements, and other events • Supports key leadership by planning and managing the communication of information to relevant constituencies including media, advocacy groups, internal audiences, and the general public • Coordinates and facilitates speaker's preparation (e.g., preparation for media interviews, conferences) • Advises senior leadership on how to handle crises and controversial issues, including providing background materials and talking points to facilitate senior leadership's communication • Presents information clearly and concisely to senior leadership avoiding miscommunication and misunderstandings • Provides and/or facilitates coaching for senior leadership to enhance media interview and public speaking skills • Provides "resolution-based" information, identifying problems and providing recommended solutions and alternatives
Data Gathering and Information Briefing	Gathers data and provides relevant information in a summarized format	• Researches issues, histories, previous treatment, media and all other pertinent data to establish a planning baseline • Maintains competency in fact finding (e.g. PubMed searches) • Researches and prepares a variety of communications including news releases, feature articles and/or public statements Represents the organization at public meetings and hearings on a wide range of controversial and highly visible issues • Provides media with wide ranging background briefings and follow up information on all routine and sensitive facets of the organization prior to these interviews and/or in story-line preparations • Understands when a briefing is required to communicate a summarized message or status update • Prepares briefing reports, either verbally or in writing, to update personnel of key developments • Provides impromptu briefings as spontaneous or unexpected developments occur, or time sensitive issues arise • Prepares background material for interviews, including issue statements and position papers (e.g., Congressional and organization positions) and recommends subject treatment • Establishes credibility and/or rapport with audiences and utilizes presentation techniques and strategies for engaging and maintaining audience interest

Competency	Definition	Key Behaviors
Development of Policies and Standard Operating Procedures	Compiles and analyzes regulations, policies, and procedures in order to provide an organization with a consistent, well-defined infrastructure	- Develops, coordinates and releases policy/position statements on controversial issues for Institute leadership - Analyzes and evaluates all available information (media reports and public statements), and applies judgment in recommending the organization's position - Documents long range policies, plans and programs designed to encourage support for, and /or active involvement, in the organization - Researches current standards/policies/procedures, utilizing all available resources - Monitors relevant issues that impact the organization - Writes and edits standards/policies/procedures documents and manuals - Analyzes and implements standards/policies/procedures
Message Delivery	Strategically delivers messages by evaluating the most appropriate media channel(s) for the particular needs of the target audience(s)	- Anticipates audience needs and interests and actively seeks the most appropriate avenue for informing others (e.g., national and local media forums, internal NIH publications, etc.) - Establishes partnerships with internal and/or external organizations (e.g., radio, television, newspaper, magazine, internal publications) to facilitate the most efficient means for disseminating information - Identifies specific materials (e.g., documents, articles, formal papers, brochures, photos, press releases, on-line etc.) that need to be processed and distributed - Cultivates and maintains contacts with internal and/or external centers of influence, such as institutions, government officials, community organizations, and/or industry to improve the public's understanding and awareness of organizational activities - Selects appropriate target audiences for information dissemination, seeking input from others as necessary and disseminates information to appropriate internal and/or external parties - Prepares, and approves the release of all information (e.g., news releases, written publications) - Articulates organization's position orally and/or in writing via appropriate channels (e.g., national and local media, federal and state government agencies) - Follows up as necessary with recipients and/or target audiences to ensure receipt of information/materials in desired timeframe and/or need for additional information/materials - Ensures recipients understand legal issues regarding use of information/materials (e.g., use of reprints, photos, quotes)

Competency	Definition	Key Behaviors
Message Development	Develops messages for various audiences	- Provides background materials and talking points to prepare speakers (e.g., scientists) for the communication of information, especially in regard to controversial issues and/or crises - Understands and outlines the goals and primary messages to be conveyed to target audiences - Researches the subject matter and audience to anticipate questions and the reception of messages - Ensures all quotes, citations and information sources are accurate - Writes and/or edits content for communications - Ensures plain language is used and identifies and eliminates superfluous words so that information is communicated as concisely as possible - Ensures content is appropriate for targeted audiences (e.g. technical terms that will not be understood are either removed or explained further)

Proficiency Scale

Score	Proficiency Level	Description
N/A	***Not Applicable***	You are not required to apply or demonstrate this competency. This competency is not applicable to your position.
0	***Not Demonstrated***	You have not demonstrated this competency and likely have not had related training or experience.
1	***Baseline*** (theoretical knowledge)	Shows basic knowledge and understanding sufficient to handle routine tasks. Focus is on learning. • You are training or on-the-job training; beginning to develop this competency and have completed formal • You understand and can discuss terminology, concepts, principles, and issues related to this competency; • You utilize the full range of reference and resource materials in this competency.
2	***Progressing*** (limited practical application and experience)	Has depth/breadth of knowledge to handle non-routine situations. Begins to take initiative. Focus is on applying and enhancing knowledge or skill. • You have applied this competency in occasional situations and still require minimal guidance to perform successfully; • You understand and can discuss the application and implications of changes to processes, policies, and procedures in this area.
3	***Proficient*** (practical application and experience)	An expert who can handle broad organizational/professional issues; works independently; has long-term perspective; coaches, guides and empowers others. • You have consistently provided practical/relevant ideas and perspectives on process or practice improvements which may easily be implemented; • You are capable of coaching others in the application of this competency by translating complex nuances relating to this competency into easy to understand terms; • You participate in senior level discussions regarding this competency; • You assist in the development of reference and resource materials in this competency.
4	***Master*** (recognized thought leader)	An expert whose advice is sought out by administrative staff in other NIH offices or in other OPdivs; shapes the organization/profession; is visionary; focus is strategic; copes with the unknown. • You have demonstrated consistent excellence in applying this competency across multiple projects and/or organizations; • You are considered the "go to" person in this area from within NIH and/or outside the OPDIV; • You create new applications for and/or lead the development of reference and resource materials for this competency; • You are able to diagram or explain the relevant process elements and issues in relation to organizational issues and trends in sufficient detail during discussions and presentations, to foster a greater understanding among internal and external colleagues and constituents.