Communications Specialist

University of Minnesota School of Public Health

About the Job

The School of Public Health’s Cannabis Research Center is seeking applications for a full-time Communications Specialist (9703CG–M&C Professional 3, Communications Generalist).

The School of Public Health is committed to anti-racism and anti-oppression in our mission and operations. In pursuit of this goal, we consider an applicant’s record working with individuals from historically marginalized backgrounds, and experience identifying and eliminating systemic barriers to success in an academic environment. SPH seeks to increase the diversity of its workforce. We particularly encourage applications from those who belong to groups that have been historically underrepresented in our discipline, including those who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color, those with disabilities, and those from LGBTQIA+ communities.

Starting Salary Range: $68,000-80,000, dependent upon the selected candidate’s relevant qualifications, experience, and internal equity.

Work Arrangements: The University of Minnesota endorses a “Work. With Flexibility.” and we offer a flexible work environment that meets the needs of our students, faculty, staff, and partners we serve. This position will have a hybrid work option with a preferred 3 days onsite during core business hours. The successful candidate will be provided University-configured equipment and supportive technology tools, however, they are expected to have access to a reliable internet connection for duties undertaken remotely. Work arrangements will be discussed during the interview.

Position Overview

In 2023, the State of Minnesota granted an appropriation for a Cannabis Research Center (CRC) at the University of Minnesota’s School of Public Health (SPH). This new research center presents a significant opportunity to advance understanding of the role cannabis legalization will play in the health, safety and well-being of Minnesotans. The CRC will investigate the effects of cannabis use on health as well as other topics related to cannabis, including but not limited to prevention and treatment of substance use disorders, equity issues, education, and decriminalization.

The Communications Specialist will lead strategic communications with a wide range of audiences regarding the CRC and its efforts to answer the most important research questions related to cannabis and health.

Position Responsibilities

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

Strategic Communications and Content Creation (75%)

- Working with the CRC leadership to develop and implement a strategic communications plan
- Developing and implementing content across multiple platforms, including print, social media, public relations, web, photo and video, ensuring consistent and effective messaging in alignment with School of Public Health (SPH) and University of Minnesota branding.
- Developing effective and appropriate content for a variety of audiences, including researchers, state and local governmental agencies, legislators, community organizations, and the general public.
• Establishing high-quality CRC communications materials to build reliability and trust with key audiences.
• Translating scientific information into clear, concise, audience-appropriate language.
• Developing or helping to develop research briefs, infographics, media releases, posters, slides, and newsletters in partnership with the SPH communications team and University Relations.
• Communicating with multiple audiences to protect and promote the reputation and brand of the CRC, including active issue management.
• Tracking and reporting appropriate communications metrics.

Media and Partner Relations (25%)
• Cultivating, managing, and maintaining relationships with communicators in the school and at the University as well as media contacts.
• Facilitating and managing media engagement with CRC staff.
• Collaborating with and serving as liaison to communications staff in the School of Public Health and University Relations.

**Qualifications**
All required qualifications must be documented on application materials.

**Required Qualifications**
• Bachelor’s degree with at least four years of relevant experience
• Excellent written and verbal communication skills
• Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences
• Experience producing print, social media, and web content
• Proficiency with appropriate software for developing and implementing communications materials, such as tools for social media scheduling, project management, and client management for mass emails
• Basic graphic design skills or familiarity with tools like Canva
• Excellent project management skills with the ability to collaborate and coordinate with research and community partners as well as the School of Public Health communications team
• Experience and demonstrated success in establishing and maintaining effective and collaborative working relationships with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, communities, and organizations
• Demonstrated capacity for independent, proactive problem-solving while working in a collaborative environment as a team member
• Demonstrated capacity for creating a strategic communications plan that directly supports CRC goals
• Demonstrated commitment to antiracism (see the [University of Minnesota School of Public Health’s Strategic Plan for Antiracism](#))

**Preferred Qualifications**
• Experience producing effective and appropriate content for a variety of audiences
• Experience interacting with media representatives
• Demonstrated interest in substance use research
• Demonstrated success in building authentic, long-term professional relationships
• Experience making public presentations
• Master’s degree and/or professional certifications in communications or related field

Are you excited about this job and meet the required qualifications, but your past experience doesn’t align perfectly with every preferred qualification? Studies have shown that women and people of color are less likely to apply to jobs unless they meet every single qualification. If this is you, we strongly encourage you to apply because you just may be the right candidate for this role.
About the School of Public Health
The School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota is a nationally ranked institution. Our school offers a superior array of advanced degrees and is home to numerous world-renowned research and training centers. Through excellence in education, research, and community engagement, the University of Minnesota School of Public Health advances health — from scientific discovery to public impact — by enhancing population health and preventing disease in the United States and globally. The school has 21 master’s degree programs, 6 minors, over 130 faculty members and 1,256 current students.

Benefits
Working at the University
At the University of Minnesota, you’ll find a flexible work environment and supportive colleagues who are interested in lifelong learning. We prioritize work-life balance, allowing you to invest in the future of your career and in your life outside of work.
The University also offers a comprehensive benefits package that includes:
• Competitive wages, paid holidays, and generous time off
• Continuous learning opportunities through professional training and degree-seeking programs supported by the Regents Scholarship
• Low-cost medical, dental, and pharmacy plans
• Healthcare and dependent care flexible spending accounts
• University HSA contributions
• Disability and employer-paid life insurance
• Employee wellbeing program
• Excellent retirement plans with employer contribution
• Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) opportunity
• Financial counseling services
• Employee Assistance Program with eight sessions of counseling at no cost
Please visit the Office of Human Resources website for more information regarding benefits.

How To Apply
Applications must be submitted online at https://hr.myu.umn.edu/jobs/ext/360481. Please click the Apply button and follow the instructions. You will be given the opportunity to complete an online application for the position and attach a cover letter and resume.

To be considered for this position, your application must include the following materials:
1. Cover letter
2. Resume
3. Professional Writing Sample (Please submit a sample of your writing that you shared across platforms. For example, include a news article that discusses research and the social media post(s), newsletter blurb(s), and/or website content that came from that article.)

Additional documents may be attached after application by accessing your "My Job Applications" page and uploading documents in the "My Cover Letters and Attachments" section.
To request an accommodation during the application process, please e-mail employ@umn.edu or call (612) 624-8647.

Diversity
The University recognizes and values the importance of diversity and inclusion in enriching the employment experience of its employees and in supporting the academic mission. The University is committed to attracting and retaining employees with varying identities and backgrounds.

The University of Minnesota provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. To learn more about diversity at the U, visit diversity.umn.edu.
Employment Requirements
Any offer of employment is contingent upon the successful completion of a background check. Our presumption is that prospective employees are eligible to work here. Criminal convictions do not automatically disqualify finalists from employment.

About the U of M
The University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (UMTC), is among the largest public research universities in the country, offering undergraduate, graduate, and professional students a multitude of opportunities for study and research. Located at the heart of one of the nation’s most vibrant, diverse metropolitan communities, students on the campuses in Minneapolis and St. Paul benefit from extensive partnerships with world-renowned health centers, international corporations, government agencies, and arts, nonprofit, and public service organizations.

At the University of Minnesota, we are proud to be recognized by the Star Tribune as a Top Workplace for 2021, as well as by Forbes as Best Employers for Women and one of America’s Best Employers (2015, 2018, 2019, 2023), Best Employer for Diversity (2019, 2020), Best Employer for New Grads (2018, 2019), and Best Employer by State (2019, 2022).