



## **New England News Council**

### **POSITION DESCRIPTION PROGRAM ASSISTANT (draft: Sept. 23, 2006)**

#### **OBJECTIVE**

Working frequently from the UMass Amherst journalism program office, and around metro Boston, assure the smooth launch of the website, workshops, forums/hearings, member services and fund-raising efforts of the New England News Council. The New England News Council is a collaboration among news professionals, citizen journalists and the public to promote vigorous, trusted, accountable journalism -- and accountable government.

We examine and promote standards of fairness, seek openness in government and public institutions, and spotlight abridgements of press freedom. We use the web, and articles, forums, seminars, workshops, papers and public talks to advance best news practices, ethics, standards, innovative news coverage, open records and open government.

#### **NARRATIVE DETAILS**

This job requires significant personal contact with members, users and donors by phone, email and in person. The program assistant will have major responsibility, and will take major credit, for the successful launch of a new regional member organization, the New England News Council. The ideal candidate is super detail-oriented, with excellent telephone and personal-interaction skills. The candidate should be cheerful, optimistic, service-oriented with a genuine concern for the future of media and democracy at the local, civic level. Some travel around the region is required.

#### **REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES**

- Assure active, effective collaboration with multiple civic and business organizations committed to improving and extending constructive relationships among news creators, consumers and democratic institutions.
- Receive and respond to routine email, phone and physical-mail correspondence regarding the New England News Council.
- Assist with writing and editing of NENC white papers and other resource documents, compilations and listings.
- Assist with engaging primary and secondary educations in the region to embed consideration of First Amendment, free press, free speech and open-government practices within curriculum.
- Help organize and execute member solicitation of bar associations, trade associations, major civic-facing businesses, individuals and news organizations in the six New England States.

- Share with director the responsibility for editing and maintaining NENC website, including blogs, forums and news areas.
- Lead the organizing and staging of NENC introductory forums in each New England state during January, February and March, 2007.
- Help develop and then execute concept for a New England Common Summit in fall, 2007, at UMass Amherst.
- Handle other assignments from the director or Principal Investigator as requested or required.

## REQUIREMENTS

- Bachelors degree or higher in journalism, communications or other relevant field and/or relevant media or non-profit-organization fund-raising, membership and event-planning experience.
- Excellent and fast computer skills, especially editing web pages. Facility with MS Office Suite, especially Word and Excel.
- Excellent discussion and speaking skills, especially on the phone.
- Demonstrated ability to manage and switch among multiple projects.
- Reliable automobile suitable for reimbursable travel around New England.
- Flexible schedule
- Familiarity with and interest in principles and issues facing journalism, media and democratic institutions.
- Excellent and fast writing and editing capability.
- Ability to work at times from home or off-campus location with high-speed Internet access and reliable phone service.

## REPORTING RELATIONSHIP:

Reports to the executive director of the New England News Council. Assists the project Principal Investigator as requested.

## JOB TYPE:

This is a part-time, temporary, contract position based in the Journalism Program office at the University of Massachusetts Amherst averaging 16 hours per week from Oct. 1 through June 30, 2007 with the possibility of an up-to-one-year contract extension thereafter. There are no benefits. The opportunity for partial telecommuting may be negotiable.

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