



Title: Communications Specialist
Reports to: Executive Director

Are you a skilled communicator excited about working to ensure that everyone in Washington has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home? Consider applying to join our team.

The **Housing Alliance** is a 501(c)(3) that develops and advocates for public policy solutions to Washington's affordable housing and homelessness challenges. Our organizational members include housing and service providers across the state, and we mobilize those organizations plus a broad base of individuals to advocate for solutions.

The **Housing Action Fund** is the political voice in Washington for expanding access to affordable homes and solutions to homelessness. We are a 501(c)(4) that educates voters, promotes strategic public policy, and supports candidates who share our vision that all Washington residents have the opportunity to live in safe, healthy, affordable homes, in thriving communities.

We believe that achieving our mission of affordable homes for all requires an awareness of current and historical injustice – from the redlining that once prevented African American families from purchasing homes using federally-backed mortgages to the legal discrimination that occurs today, which allows landlords to deny tenancy. We are committed to critically examining how racism and power dynamics impact individuals, communities, and larger systems, and to working to become a multi-cultural and anti-racist organization. We practice a commitment to dismantling structural, institutional and personal experiences of oppression in regard to both process (how we work) and product (what we work on), to help create conditions in which all people have opportunity to thrive.

Position Summary: This position manages our communications work to ensure strategic and effective messages are presented to the public, lawmakers, members of the media, and others about affordable housing and homelessness issues. The position is shared between the Housing Alliance and Housing Action Fund and provides some communications support to the Resident Action Project (an initiative that organizes with residents of affordable housing communities and others with personal experience with housing instability) and the Board Advocacy Project (an initiative that engages our member organizations' boards of directors in advocacy). The person in this position will ensure that our communications lift up the expertise of people struggling to afford a home and support our efforts to reduce racial and other disparities in homelessness and housing instability.

Our staff are currently based in Seattle, Spokane, and the Vancouver area. The person

in this position will need to be based in the Seattle area. For our staff based in Seattle, we tentatively expect to return to working from our office in Lower Queen Anne a few days per week starting in September, but will continue offering staff the flexibility to work from home most of time.

Essential Responsibilities:

Media, Public Relations, and Message Development (40%)

- Collaborate with appropriate staff to develop communication strategy for public policy priorities and other organizational goals that elevates the voices of people experiencing housing instability and homelessness and promotes policy solutions grounded in racial equity.
- Implement overall media strategy, including development and distribution of press releases, guest editorials, letters-to-the-editor campaigns, and social media campaigns.
- Develop and maintain relationships with members of the media.
- Coordinate press conferences and interviews for key staff and/or members media contacts.
- Track and record coverage of affordable housing and homelessness in Washington.

Publications, materials, and training (30%)

- In collaboration with appropriate staff, produce legislative agenda materials, fundraising documents, conference collateral, and other organizational publications and reports.
- Collaborate with policy staff to develop and refine messaging and produce clear and compelling documents about our policy priorities, highlighting solutions that reduce racial and other disparities among people experiencing homelessness and housing instability.
- Provide messaging training and tools to our members and other advocates to help build a consistent narrative about solutions to Washington's affordable housing and homelessness challenges.

Website, Brand, and Social Media (20%)

- Develop website, blog, and social media strategies, and develop and post content.
- Write and/or edit and send email blasts.
- Provide communications support to the Resident Action Project (with its own website and social medial channels) and Board Advocacy Project.
- Ensure consistent visual presentation of the Housing Alliance and Housing Action Fund.

Other (10%)

- Participate in organizational equity and racial justice work.
- Regularly evaluate all communications efforts.
- Manage communications interns and contractors as needed.
- Participate in staff meetings, training, and retreats.
- Participate in communications coalition efforts as needed.

This job description is not intended to represent an absolute or final list of all elements, activities, or duties of the job. The statements above are intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed by the person assigned to this position. Time percentages are estimates and may change based on the season and needs of the organization.

What we're looking for:

Our ideal candidate is an experienced advocate with exceptional writing skills and an eye for detail. You'll need to be able to communicate in a way that inspires others to take action – whether that is by voting, contacting a decision maker, writing a news story, or making a donation. If you already have relationships with members of the media, that's great. If not, that's okay too – you'll just need to be comfortable and proactive about reaching out and building those relationships.

Over the next two years we'll be doing important narrative development and messaging work using what we're learning from the [Housing Justice Narrative](#). The person in this position will play a leadership role in developing that narrative and creating tools and trainings for advocates. You'll also be communicating about sometimes complex policy so you should be good at distilling complicated issues into accessible language.

You should be excited about working on a statewide level and effecting change through public policy advocacy. We're a small team that does a lot. We try to have fun doing it and encourage (but want to get better at) work life balance. Since we juggle a lot at once you'll need good organizational skills to manage your work. We all work independently and as part of various teams, so you'll do best if you are proactive and able to motivate yourself and can also collaborate and communicate well with colleagues.

Our staff and board are committed to working toward becoming a fully equitable and anti-racist organization and are looking to bring on new team members who share that commitment and also have a commitment to self-reflection, personal growth, and working on their own internal racial and other biases.

Ideal candidates will have many of the following qualifications:

- At least five years of experience in communications, advocacy, or a related field;
- An understanding of structural racism and a strong commitment to undoing racism and other forms of oppression;
- Be a skillful verbal communicator with exceptional writing skills;
- Be detail oriented (e.g., be able to conduct the final review of documents before they are made public);
- Be comfortable using social media platforms;
- Be flexible and responsive in a fast-paced and changing environment;
- Have a commitment to public policy advocacy as a social change strategy;
- Have an understanding of institutional racism and a strong commitment to undoing racism and other forms of oppression;
- Be able to work occasional evenings and weekends;

- Demonstrated experience making complex public policy issues clear and accessible to a wide variety of audiences;
- Familiarity with accessible website design;
- Familiarity with values-based messaging;
- Experience with Drupal, Salsa Engage, Canva, and Microsoft Office suite;
- Familiarity with affordable housing and homelessness issues in Washington;
- Understanding of the Washington state legislative process.

Salary & Benefits: The starting annual salary range for this position is \$62,000-72,000 depending on experience. Generous benefits package includes health, dental, and vision insurance with premiums covered by the Housing Alliance; employer contribution to retirement account (equal to 5% of your salary); subsidized ORCA pass; life insurance; health care/child care flexible spending account; 3 weeks paid vacation; paid sick and safe leave; and 11.5 paid holidays per year.

How to Apply: Please send resume and succinct cover letter (describing your relevant experience, why you are interested in this position, how you would use this role to advance equity and racial justice, and how you learned of the opportunity) to jobs@wliha.org. We also request that you complete [our voluntary, anonymous demographic survey](#) to help us improve our hiring processes. No phone calls, please.

Hiring Timeline: The position is open until filled. We will give priority consideration to applications received by August 15. We will follow up with candidates as applications arrive in hopes of making an offer by August 27. The position will ideally begin in late September or sooner.

We are committed to providing equal opportunity for all employees and applicants. We value and desire a diverse workplace and strongly encourage people of color, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, and people who have experienced homelessness or housing instability to apply.