
Senior Manager Communications & External Affairs

[The Great Lakes Observing System](#) (GLOS) is a nonprofit that provides end-to-end data services that support science, policy, management, and industry in the U.S. and Canada. Whether deciding to venture out on a boat or confronting the effects of climate change, we want to equip observers with high-quality, up-to-date lake information from the region's observing network.

GLOS is seeking to fill the full-time role of Senior Manager, Communications & External Affairs to serve as GLOS's editorial lead for communications, stakeholder engagement, and external relations. Reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer, this role is responsible for elevating GLOS's visibility through high-quality content, proactive media relations, and effective stakeholder communications. This position will supervise GLOS's Communications Team, including the Communications Specialist and Strategic Initiatives Manager, along with any communications-related fellows and interns. The role includes responsibility for regional stakeholder tracking, public sector informational reporting, audience-facing messaging, media relations, stakeholder communications, and editorial approach.

This role leads the development, drafting, and day-to-day execution of GLOS's external communications. Candidates must demonstrate exceptional communication skills and fluency in managing a small team and a full slate of digital and public engagement platforms. Success in this role means building trust with the Board, staff, and external stakeholders; being proactive rather than reactive; and demonstrating accountability as a steady, credible voice for the organization. Anticipated travel is 15-20%, primarily within the Great Lakes region.

This is an in-person or hybrid role dependent upon the location of the selected candidate. This position is open to U.S. Citizens or permanent residents.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Communications & Media Relations

- Lead development and implementation of an annual communications strategy aligned with GLOS's strategic plan.
- Serve as GLOS's primary point of contact for day-to-day media relations; supervise the Communications Specialist to develop press releases, news stories, and human-interest features that elevate the impact of GLOS's work.
- Monitor news cycles and recommend proactive communication opportunities across GLOS's priority areas.
- Coordinate with media outlets and partners to disseminate key messages.

Content Creation and Review

- Create and oversee creation of high-visibility content (e.g. external communications, funder and annual reports) while establishing and enforcing an editorial review process for all content produced by the team before external release.
- Provide editorial oversight of the Communications and Engagement team that includes the Communications Specialist and Strategic Initiatives Manager.
- Maintain GLOS's annual editorial calendar and content standards, style guide, and brand across web, social, and print materials

Analytics and Digital Performance

- Provide oversight of the GLOS website and digital presence, using tools such as Google Analytics and social media platform insights to evaluate website, campaign, and content performance.

- Establish and oversee tracking of key communications metrics (e.g., engagement, reach, click through to GLOS data platforms) and use findings to adjust strategy and demonstrate impact to the CEO, Board, and funders.
- Report regularly to the CEO on communications performance and stakeholder engagement trends.
- Produce and oversee the production of compelling graphics, infographics, presentations, and branded collateral that support GLOS initiatives and partner programs.

Stakeholder Communications

- Develop and lead audience facing engagement strategies for GLOS with Great Lakes rights holders, stakeholders, funders, and partner networks.
- Serve as a trusted point of contact for key stakeholders and direct regional and transboundary information sharing efforts carried out by the Strategic Initiatives Manager.
- Oversee stakeholder communications tracking and ensure consistent, well documented follow-up across the network.
- Coordinate with board committees as needed on outreach, communications, and strategic initiatives.

Public Policy Information and Reporting

- Direct development of summaries, data sheets, and program updates regarding Great Lakes water observing to share with public officials, regional rights holders, and partner networks across the eight Great Lakes states and two Canadian provinces.
- Direct the development of briefing materials to provide scientific information to federal and state policymakers including coordination with the IOOS Association.
- Monitor state and federal policy developments relevant to Great Lakes observing and recommend reporting opportunities.

Team Leadership and Supervision

- Supervise two employees (Communications Specialist; Strategic Initiatives Manager), including workload management, performance feedback, and professional development.
- Participate in recruiting, onboarding, and supervising fellows and interns supporting communications and stakeholder engagement work.
- Maintain sustainable team workflows and capacity.

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree in communications, public affairs, journalism, marketing, or related field.
- Minimum 7 years of progressively responsible experience in communications, stakeholder engagement, or nonprofit/public sector relations, including demonstrated experience supervising staff.
- Demonstrated experience in media relations and messaging to multiple stakeholder groups.
- Experience with presenting scientific data or environmental information to public sector entities, state agencies, or regional working groups for at least one of the following Great Lakes states: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin.
- Strong writing, editing, and storytelling skills, with the ability to translate technical and scientific content for diverse audiences and to review and improve the work of others.
- Working proficiency with web and social media analytics tools (e.g., Google Analytics) to evaluate performance and inform strategy.
- Proven ability to manage multiple priorities, staff, and deadlines independently.
- Must be able to pass Federal background check screening due to GLOS offices being in a Federal building.
- Must reside in one of the eight U.S. Great Lakes states: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, or Wisconsin

There will be some travel associated with this position. Estimate 5-6 trips per year throughout the Great Lakes region (including Canada). A valid passport is required.

PREFERRED EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- A Master's degree in a relevant field.
- Familiarity with Great Lakes issues, freshwater or ocean science, or environmental policy.
- Prior experience supporting or liaising with nonprofit boards.
- Experience with federal grant environment standards and/or federally funded (e.g., NOAA, IOOS) grant environments.
- Background in graphic design or visual storytelling.
- Proficiency with CRM platforms, WordPress, and Adobe Creative Suite.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

- This is a full-time, exempt in person position with a salary range of \$98,000-\$110,000.
- Medical, Vision and Dental coverage options
- Flexible Spending Account (FSA) option
- 401K retirement plan
- Generous paid time off including U.S. Federal holidays and 26 annual PTO days

TO APPLY

Please submit a cover letter, resume, and three references to the hiring committee at jobs@glos.org by November 13, 2026. Salary is commensurate with education and experience.