

MELISSA AYALA

EXPERIENCE

Waterloo Greenway Conservancy | Austin, TX (2017-Present)

Communications & Engagement Director (2020-Present)

Community Engagement & Government Relations Manager (2017-2020)

- Share the story of Waterloo Greenway to help communicate project milestones, operations and programming narratives, and fundraising goals for external audiences.
- Lead development of communications strategy, announcements, writing and copy editing.
- Build relationships with media, conferences, and other external industry partners.
- Collaborate with PR consultants and external key teams including City of Austin partners.
- Responsible for executive communications, including developing talking points, speeches, FAQs, crisis communications plans, strategic plans, stakeholder updates, blogs, social media posts, letters to donors, invitations, and presentation materials.
- Proficiency in adapting to unique brand style, executive voice and tone, while aligning with organizational messaging goals.
- Develop and execute annual marketing campaigns with integrated, multi-channel print, social, web, and sponsorship components, managing a \$330K annual budget.
- Establish continuous, meaningful dialogue with a diverse range of stakeholders, including park guests, concert attendees, elected officials, and the broader community.
- Lead public policy and advocacy strategies, emphasizing equity and access.
- Spearhead organizational messaging, public relations, social media, visual identity, and marketing efforts.
- Elevate brand awareness, garnering 12 local and industry awards and achieving a 600K increase in park attendance to date.
- Direct media relations and outreach, orchestrating 20+ annual announcements and six press events/previews, resulting in 900 pieces of earned media coverage, with a publicity value of \$100K and a total reach of 120M.
- Oversee two organizational brands (Waterloo Greenway & Moody Amphitheater), managing websites and communication channels with 100K email subscribers and 56K Instagram followers.
- Manage and review promotional content, including approximately 1,250 creative assets such as advertising, signage, and digital promotions for 170+ annual programs and concert series.
- Thorough editing experience, including collaborating with multiple topic experts, and internal and external stakeholders, to ensure message clarity and accuracy.
- Serve as Spanish-speaking spokesperson, translating, and expanding community-based media relationships.

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EXPERIENCE - CONTINUED

Capital Metro | Austin, TX (2012 - 2017)

Communications Specialist I & II

- Focus on cross-platform communications strategy, emphasizing public opinion through external communications and media relations.
- Build transparency and facilitated community engagement through clear, concise and consistent communications.
- Responsible for writing and distributing proactive and engaging press releases, announcements, fact sheets, and speeches & talking points for executives.
- Supervise response strategy and media coordination during crisis events (inclement weather, service disruptions, accidents, emergencies, etc.).
- Maintain dedicated media relationships, responding to over 700+ agency inquiries per year.
- Launch & manage agency's daily social media presence, with accounts totaling over 10,000-15,000 followers, growing 300% over two years.
- Engage in social media dialogue, actively responding to service inquiries and questions, monitoring trends and identifying growth opportunities.
- Track metrics to analyze effectiveness of campaigns and quantify successes for leadership.
- Create strategic, meaningful campaigns to inform and engage traditionally underrepresented populations.
- Leverage communications tools to facilitate public participation during tri-annual service changes, fare changes, and fiscal year budget cycles.
- Serve as Spanish-speaking spokesperson, translating announcements, and expanding community-based media relationships.

EDUCATION

University of Texas at Austin
Bachelor of Journalism
Minor in Spanish

CONTACT

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