

Debra Johnson

(b)(6)

Experience

JUNE 2018 – PRESENT

Director of Public Affairs / Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (Olympia, WA)

- Drive year-round public affairs strategies while leading communications operations, strategic vision, and long-range planning with full responsibility for internal staff and legislative engagement and media relations.
- Direct interagency communications efforts in support of the Agency Secretary and executive leadership team.
- Serve as the executive leader on multiple projects and oversee a \$3.5 million budget while working effectively under the pressure of changing priorities.
- Facilitate planning, organization, and implementation of key policy priorities of the agency.

Key Accomplishments:

- Led strategic campaign to secure \$25 million in state funding for investments in youth behavioral congregate care facilities.
- Developed a media strategy to share a step-by-step plan for the agency to return nearly 80 youth to in-state facilities safely.
- Created the unified Office of Communications to represent a new government agency after the merger of three existing state departments into one organization.
- Built a 12-member communications team and created the protocols for managing the agency's communications goals with 4,500 employees.

JANUARY 2013 – DECEMBER 2017

Director of Communications / Office of U.S. Representative Bobby L. Rush (Washington, D.C.)

- Oversaw all aspects of a Congressional Office's internal and external requirements for effective communications.
- Served as on-the-record media spokesperson and initiated consistent messaging with stakeholder groups, including with other legislators both in D.C. and within the district.
- Developed effective strategies to align the Congressman's legislative objectives and social justice issues and positively impact his outreach with constituents.

Key Accomplishments:

- Secured funding for a national gun violence summit within the Congressman's district, recruited a panel of speakers, and generated media support for the event.
- Effectively led a letter-writing campaign that resulted in the enactment of legislation supported by the Congressman.

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2012

**Director of Political Engagement and Communications / Office of Mayor
Pete Buttigieg (South Bend, IN)**

- Led internal and external communications efforts that provided media and constituents with the Mayor's official position on policies and issues.
- Collaborated with department heads and city council members on communicating decisions made about the funding of city budgets, projects and programs.

Key Accomplishments:

- Created an "Ask the Mayor" column in the local newspaper that responded directly to constituent concerns and requests.
- Initiated and facilitated a cross-organizational network of communication directors that shared updates on citywide projects.

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2011

On-Air Reporter / WVON Radio (Chicago, IL)

- Researched, wrote, and reported on disaster assistance programs, political events and current affairs.
- Represented WVON as a personality host at public events.
- Recorded on-air promotions for the station.

Key Accomplishments:

- Created the WVON blog to provide up-to-date information for the radio station's audience.
- Generated timely and meaningful content for all social media platforms.

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2010

**Press Secretary / U.S. Senator Carol Moseley Braun Mayoral Campaign
(Chicago, IL)**

- Organized community events and stakeholders to support candidate's issue positions and policies.
- Created a strategic media engagement plan and served as on-the-record spokesperson.
- Represented the candidate at political meetings.

Key Accomplishments:

- Planned favorable media coverage of the candidate.
- Garnered support from key stakeholders and increased backing for the candidate's policy positions and campaign platform.

Education

AUGUST 2005 – JUNE 2009

Bachelor of Arts: Communications and Political Science / St. Louis University

- Recipient of McKenna Scholarship for Academic Excellence
- Study Abroad at the John Felice Rome Center (2007)

Volunteer Service

- Daniel Murphy Scholarship Foundation Alumni Board (2010-Present)
 - Gives high school scholarships and educational support to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- HFS Chicago Scholars, Board Member (2007-2009)
 - Helps economically disadvantaged high school students flourish in and out of the classroom by providing educational enrichment programs.