



## CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER/PIO

*Job Announcement*

### About Pierce Transit

Pierce Transit improves people's quality of life by providing safe, reliable, and innovative transportation services that are locally based and regionally connected.

Founded in 1979, Pierce County Public Transportation Benefit Area Corporation (Pierce Transit) is a nationally recognized leader in the public transportation industry. Pierce Transit covers 292 square miles of Pierce County containing about 70% of the county population. Serving Washington's second largest county, Pierce Transit provides three types of service: Fixed Route, Paratransit (SHUTTLE), Runner and Rideshare that help get passengers to jobs, schools and appointments.

The agency provides a vital link in the regional transportation system by making connections with King County through express bus services. Pierce Transit is a municipal corporation, not part of the City of Tacoma, Pierce County or Sound Transit.

Pierce Transit is currently governed by a ten-member Board of Commissioners. The Board is currently made up of elected officials representing Pierce County, Tacoma, Lakewood, Puyallup, University Place and the smaller cities and towns in Pierce County. The governance structure allows for a non-voting union representative. The Board is responsible for adopting policies that govern the operation of the transit agency and its services and employs the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to carry out the day-to-day management and administration of the agency.



## Pierce Transit's Sustainability Commitment

- In the 1980s, Pierce Transit was among the first transit agencies in the nation to move most of its' fleet to running on clean, compressed natural gas (CNG).
- Today, 61% of Pierce Transit's bus fleet runs on CNG, 37% are diesel-electric hybrids, and 2% are electric.
- In 2018, Pierce Transit began a concerted effort to move a portion of its' fleet to battery electric buses. The agency currently has six electric buses.
- Pierce Transit has signed onto the American Public Transportation Association's Sustainability Commitment, committing to sustainable environmental practices.
- Pierce Transit has an internal Green Team, which establishes sustainability outcomes and develops best practices, for example, upgrades to LED lighting, which reduced the agency's carbon footprint by 14 metric tons.

### Riders and where they are going

**43%** have no working vehicle

**67%** use ORCA card

**29%** from households with annual incomes below **\$30,000**

### Trip purposes include:

**45%** commute to and from work

**33%** medical appointments

**47%** shopping and errands

**37%** fun, recreation and social

**14%** commute to school/college





## About the Position

Pierce Transit is seeking a strategic and forward-thinking Chief Communications Officer (CCO) to lead the agency's communications and marketing functions and help shape how Pierce Transit connects with employees, riders, partners, elected officials, and the broader community.

The Chief Communications Officer guides Pierce Transit's communications and marketing strategies to effectively connect, communicate, and engage with multiple internal and external audiences including employees, customers, the general public, Board members, public officials, community organizations, and local and regional partners. Using a broad range of media and communication channels, the CCO communicates and interprets Pierce Transit's mission, vision, core values, and strategic priorities through a cohesive communications strategy that reflects industry best practices in public sector communications and marketing.

This position reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer and serves as a member of the Executive Leadership Team. The CCO plays a key leadership role in helping the agency navigate complex public environments and ensures communications are clear, proactive, transparent, and aligned with agency priorities.

The Chief Communications Officer leads the Communications and Marketing Department and works collaboratively across the organization to ensure consistent messaging, effective public engagement, and coordinated outreach efforts that support Pierce Transit's services, initiatives, and long-term strategic goals.

*Key responsibilities include:*

- Serves as a strategic advisor and thought partner to the CEO and executive leadership team on communications, messaging, and marketing strategies that support agency initiatives, projects, and public engagement efforts.
- Leads the development and implementation of agency-wide communications and marketing strategies that strengthen Pierce Transit's reputation and build understanding of the agency's mission and services.
- Serves as the agency's primary media contact and spokesperson, managing media relations and ensuring timely, accurate, and transparent communication with the public and news media.
- Provides visionary leadership for the agency's communications and marketing functions, ensuring messaging and campaigns are aligned across departments and communication channels.
- Identifies key audiences and develops outreach strategies to increase awareness, engagement, and understanding of Pierce Transit services and initiatives.
- Oversees marketing programs that promote Pierce Transit services, support ridership growth, and effectively communicate service changes, programs, and customer information.
- Works collaboratively with departments across the agency to support public outreach, service communications, customer information initiatives, and community engagement efforts.
- Anticipates emerging issues and ensures the agency is prepared to respond to media inquiries, public concerns, and rapidly evolving communication needs.
- Champions transparency and accountability by ensuring clear, accessible communication with employees, customers, and the community.
- Leads and mentors communications and marketing staff, establishing clear priorities, goals, and performance expectations.
- Participates in agency-wide planning, organizational initiatives, and strategic discussions as a member of the Executive Leadership Team.
- Develops and manages the department's budget and oversees contracts, vendor relationships, and external communications services.
- Ensures all agency communications are following all applicable laws and regulations including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), coordinating applicable agency-wide training.



## The Ideal Candidate

Pierce Transit is seeking an experienced communications professional who is both a strategic thinker and an effective communicator. The ideal candidate will bring strong leadership skills, creativity, and the ability to build trust and credibility with internal and external stakeholders.

The successful candidate will have a demonstrated ability to lead integrated communications and marketing programs within a complex organization and will be comfortable advising executive leadership in a highly visible public environment.

*In addition, the ideal candidate will demonstrate success in the following areas:*

- Strategic communications leadership and long-range communications planning
- Media relations, public affairs, and crisis communications
- Integrated marketing strategies and public outreach campaigns
- Building strong relationships with community partners, stakeholders, and elected officials
- Leading and mentoring high-performing communications and marketing teams
- Developing messaging that resonates with diverse audiences and communities
- Navigating complex and highly visible public sector environments
- Managing multiple communication channels including traditional media, digital media, and social media platforms
- Advising executive leadership on messaging, reputation management, and public engagement
- Promoting transparency and accountability through effective public communication
- Collaborative leadership and the ability to work effectively across departments and organizational levels



The ideal candidate will be a strong relationship builder who can translate complex transit issues into clear and accessible messaging while advancing Pierce Transit's mission of improving quality of life through safe, reliable transportation.

## Desirable Qualifications

A Bachelor's Degree in communications, journalism, marketing, public relations, or a related field and seven years of progressively responsible leadership experience in communications, marketing, or public relations, including supervisory experience.

Experience working in the public sector or transportation industry is highly desirable.

An advanced degree in communications, public administration, marketing, or a related field is a plus.



## Salary and Benefits

The annual of the salary range for this position is \$208,318.44 to \$263,589.28. The salary offered will depend on experience and qualifications. Pierce Transit offers a generous benefit package including medical/dental, retirement, life and disability insurance, paid holidays, vacation and sick leave and optional deferred compensation.



## APPLICATION PROCESS

**Persons interested in this position must submit a cover letter and a current resume.**

If you have questions regarding this announcement, please call Marissa Karras at 360-956-1336. The position will remain open until filled; however, the screening process will move quickly. Please submit your application materials as soon as possible but no later than May 14, 2026 by visiting [www.karrasconsulting.net](http://www.karrasconsulting.net) and clicking on “view open positions.”

Pierce Transit is an equal opportunity employer, values workplace diversity and seeks to create an environment and culture that embraces employee differences. All qualified applicants are considered in accordance with applicable laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, marital status or veteran status or any other legally protected status. We will provide assistance in the recruitment, application and selection process to applicants with disabilities who request such assistance.