

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

June 12, 2025

2. Department

Transportation

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

District 7/Executive/Communications & External Affairs

4. CEA Position Title

Deputy District Director of Communications & External Affairs

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose. (2-3 sentences)

The Deputy District Director of Communications & External Affairs (DDDCEA) serves as the communications and external affairs representative and legislative policy advisor for the District 7 Director and Executive Team. Plan, organize, and coordinate the agency's external affairs activities to effectively and efficiently communicate key information to the public, legislature, local municipalities and various stakeholders; direct outreach functions to engage stakeholders and ensure they are fully informed of the relevant initiatives and programs. The DDDCEA is responsible for Communications, Public Information, Legislative and Governmental Affairs, Small Business Outreach, and Audio Visual/Graphics Services. The incumbent examines the political environment and complexity of regional transportation priorities in the Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, advising on and leading the communication to external constituencies.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

District 7 Director, CEA Level C

7. Relationship with Department Director (Select one)

- Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(Explain):

8. Organizational Level (Select one)

- 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

CEA ACTION PROPOSAL

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B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST**9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.**

Serves as the communications and external affairs representative and legislative policy advisor for the District 7 Director and Executive Team. Plan, organize, and coordinate the agency's external affairs activities to effectively and efficiently communicate key information to the public, legislature, local municipalities and various stakeholders; direct outreach functions to engage stakeholders and ensure they are fully informed of the relevant initiatives and programs.

Communications & External Affairs:

- Directs District communications operations including developing relationships with the media, crafting official comments and press releases, and providing guidance to staff on media-related issues including news media inquiries regarding Caltrans actions, policies, and programs.
- Performs duties associated with both proactive and reactive press relations including overseeing organizational responses to inquiries, finding spokespeople, preparing media releases, and monitoring media coverage. Oversees speeches and other communications for District 7 Director and other leaders to deliver at events, conferences, and other public forums. Works with the Department's management and key staff members to produce critical written materials that will explain in understandable language the Department's goals, initiatives, proposals and progress of work. This will include both writing and editing written materials. Works with District Executive Team in the development of talking points and presentation materials on key initiatives and serves as a consultant on the development of key written materials. Reviews staff work as requested (e.g., news releases, talking points and media advisories).
- Identifies and develops communication strategies for newsworthy actions and activities. Serves as a key advisor to the District Director on public affairs issues related to Department and District 7. Develops and executes plans, goals and objectives that align with Department priorities. Provides guidance to program staff and management on possible impact and reaction of the news media and public to departmental decisions and activities. Acts as a spokesperson for the office/agency by disseminating accurate information to the news media. Provides support and advises on existing policy related to social media and branding.
- Oversees development of outreach materials for the public, public website, coordinates activities of the internal social media team, participates in collaborative projects, and provides crisis communications messaging for the agency when necessary to ensure consistent and positive brand messaging on a variety of social media platforms that support district and department activities and initiatives.
- Works closely with District 7 Director and Executive Team developing messaging of policy positions.
- Oversees responses to Public Records Act requests for District 7
- Develop and oversee the implementation of the External Affairs Crisis Communications Plan, ensuring that the PAO is prepared to respond effectively during emergencies to support public information and safety efforts. This entails ensuring that staff receive the latest SEMS/NIMS training and coordinating with Department and District Security and Emergency Management Program (SEMP) to align the Crisis Communications Plan with the Department-wide Emergency Communications Plan. The position will also attend emergency response exercises and active member of the District Emergency Operations Center.
- Oversees the development of communication standards across all entities within District 7.

Legislative Affairs:

- Directs District responses and communicates to concerns and issues from legislatures. In cooperation with Headquarters Legislative Affairs, analyze alternatives, develops recommendations, and identifies strategies concerning potential legislative proposals and develop policies to align with enacted legislation. In the analysis and recommendations, collaborates with subject matter experts to determine the full impact on the department.
- Serves as liaison between the district and various legislative bodies (federal, state and local) to provide recommendations on transportation policies, evaluate the impact on the receipt of funds, and recommend alternative language when appropriate. The incumbent works directly with the Legislature and legislative staff in promoting the State's transportation related goals and initiatives and influencing policies with non-governmental organizations and other states' transportation agencies to develop and organize support for California's transportation initiatives.
- Negotiates with legislative staff and principals, collaboratively determines best approaches to creating, promoting, and resolving legislative issues, including analyzing alternatives and solutions. Advise District 7 Director District Executive Team on legislative matters.

Small Business:

- Responsible for and oversees District 7's Small Business Outreach and other related programs.
- Leads the District 7 Small Business Advisory Council.
- In cooperation with the Headquarters Office of Civil Rights, initiates activities in District 7 to increase the participation of Small Business (SB), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) firms in both Federal and State contracting and procurement

Other Duties:

- As a member of the Director's Executive Staff, confer with, and provide advice to the District 7 Director and other members of the Executive Office team on the development of policies and policy documents that require precise communications and engagement with other agencies, the California Transportation Agency, the Governor's office, the Legislature, stakeholders or the public.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description:

This position is critical to advancing Caltrans' mission of "Improving lives and communities through transportation". 25 percent of the state's population within Los Angeles and Ventura counties, which are the boundaries within which Caltrans is responsible for planning, designing, building, maintaining and operating the state's highway system. There are over 100 cities and unincorporated areas within Los Angeles and Ventura counties. The Deputy District Director of Communications and External Affairs serves as District's primary liaison and advisor to all of the District's elected officials (over 300), agencies and communities at the state, regional and local level. The Deputy District Director is responsible for all activities related to the communications, media, legislative, small business and other external affairs for the District. The Deputy District Director will develop policies and procedures pertaining to external affairs and partnerships to align District program and projects with state transportation priorities.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

District 7 requests approval for utilizing a Career Executive Assignment (CEA) in lieu of an Exempt position for the District 7 Deputy District Director of Communications & External Affairs (DDDEA) position.

The DDDCEA is responsible for Communications, Public Information, Legislative and Governmental Affairs, Small Business Outreach, and Audio Visual/Graphics Services. Examining the political environment and complexity of regional transportation priorities in the Los Angeles and Ventura Counties will give some insight into the difficult task of communicating and being responsive to external constituencies.

A Career Executive Assignment will better serve the duties of the position. A CEA candidate pool would applicants who likely have civil service experience, which is crucial as the DDDCEA is responsible for close coordination and effective communication across all Divisions in the District when providing service to the public, by crosscutting complex issues and resolving them within the District. The DDDCEA is an independent, semi-autonomous policy-setting position with focused interest and commitment to District programs

The issues for which the DDDCEA represent are highly complex, sensitive, controversial, have heavy publicity, media interest, scrutiny by Legislature and have extensive impact to a high volume of travelers. The consequences of error are significant as they can cause impact to the public, loss of resources, funding support, federal reimbursement, legislative support, and the opportunity to solve critical transportation problems within Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

This position reports to the District 7 Director, a CEA Level C. A CEA candidate pool would more likely include persons with relevant transportation experience to address issues to implement and develop policy which affect usage and appearance of the State highway system. Due to public scrutiny and the constant focus on safety and timely delivery of services, this position is key to improving the relationships with the public, the local agencies and creating a more efficient response overall to the District's needs.

The incumbent is retiring effective May 30, 2025. The incumbent/current position is exempt (appointed position). The Department of Transportation is seeking to change the Deputy District Director of External Affairs from exempt to CEA.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The Deputy District Director of Communications and External Affairs works with local government agencies, elected officials, private organizations and individuals to coordinate State transportation policy matters with local activities and plans.

The Deputy District Director of Communications and External Affairs serves as liaison between the district and various legislative bodies (federal, state and local) to provide recommendations on transportation policies. They will evaluate the impact on the receipt of funds, as well as recommend alternative language when appropriate. The incumbent will work directly with the Legislature and legislative staff in promoting the State's transportation related goals and initiatives, as well as influencing policies with non-governmental organizations and other states' transportation agencies to develop and organize support for California's transportation initiatives.

The California State Transportation Agency's (CalSTA) CAPTI is the framework by which transportation programs and policies are carried out throughout the state. The Deputy District Director of Communications and External Affairs will be responsible for reviewing existing policies developed by CAPTI and will work across all levels of government, and communities, in an effort to align District 7's programs and projects with the CAPTI policies to ensure consistency and compliance. CAPTI 2.0 was released in February 2025. The incumbent will be responsible for working with District 7 stakeholders to communicate the new policy related to this plan and work with those stakeholders to shape its implementation into actions that benefit the communities of the district.

The Deputy District Director of Communications and External Affairs is responsible for community outreach activities that actively involve the community in project planning and development, and in engagement that can broaden, deepen, and better inform transportation policy initiatives whose implementation results in improving lives and communities in the district through transportation. These types of outreach activities lead to policy that this position would have responsibility or assist in drafting and/or implementing. Some examples of such policies developed from this position previously and implemented can be seen in a variety of activities including those related to housing (SB 275, SB 51 and SB 1257), persons experiencing homelessness (AB 2525), and the repurposing of SR 710 stub (SB 710).

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The incumbent works with a wide range of individuals, employees, public organizations and elected officials and is responsible for making sensitive and diplomatic decisions consistent with state policy. Lack of tact and/or errors in judgment in disseminating information could result in project delays or project cancellation due to community pressure, political unacceptability, and/or lawsuits by special interest groups. The incumbent serves as a major focal point for the District Director's office during emergency operations and major incidents with the media and elected officials.

Provides the media with timely transportation information. This involves press releases, radio and television appearances, internet presence and graphic services. Incumbent is responsible for the Division staff activities and for the coordination of consultants and their timely provision of services and products associated with project delivery. Responses and decisions in error could result in project delivery failures, loss of credibility and lawsuits against the state.

Poor decisions affect the Department's credibility and relationships with others, as well as lead to inefficient use of resources. Incumbent has general management responsibility for resources (dollars, staff, facilities, real and personal property) and program support administered in the Division. Decisions made by the incumbent typically affect all District 7 organizations and functions. Errors in judgment could result in the organization being exposed to internal grievances, external criticism, and lawsuits. At a minimum, errors could result in erroneous budget allocation and/or projections leading to inefficient use of public monies and/or lack of required funds.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The incumbent serves as liaison between the district and various legislative bodies (federal, state and local) to provide recommendations on transportation policies, evaluate the impact on the receipt of funds, and recommend alternative language when appropriate. The incumbent works directly with the Legislature and legislative staff in promoting the State's transportation related goals and initiatives and influencing policies with non-governmental organizations and other states' transportation agencies to develop and organize support for California's transportation initiatives.

The incumbent drafts and reviews letters involving transportation policy for the District Director and Director of the Department.

Develops and implements policies regarding the Legislature, media and organized major public relations efforts publicizing district and department programs.