



COMMANDER'S STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

Please reach out to Colorado National Guard Public Affairs for assistance with command messages, civic engagement, media relations, event coverage, and other communication matters.

Commander's Intent

Communication is every leader's responsibility but is also a team effort.

This Commander's Strategic Communications Toolkit is a roadmap for concentrating our communications efforts on building advocacy for the CONG that is vital to the present and future readiness of our force. Every CONG member is also a recruiter. By sharing stories about National Guard experiences and conveying its opportunities and benefits, we will attract new members to our force.

This toolkit is a quick reference containing talking points and a communications goal along with objectives, strategies, tactics and messages that you and your team can use at the unit level to support CONG priorities and lines of effort while engaging key audiences.



Overarching Talking Points

- Our 5,500 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen are Always Ready, Always There to serve our communities, state and nation.
- We deploy to support the joint force and allies during overseas operations and training.
- We are the first military responder during domestic emergencies, supporting the state of Colorado and local jurisdictions to help save lives, reduce suffering, and mitigate property damage.
- Through the National Guard State Partnership Program with Slovenia and Jordan, we conduct military-to-military exchanges in support of enduring relationships and defense security objectives.
- To enhance readiness and interoperability, we build community partnerships while contributing to the local economy.
- We are an organization of values-based leaders—professionals who are multipliers for Colorado's employers and workforce.



Communication Goal & Objectives

Communication Goal

Promote shared understanding and public support by strengthening awareness of CONG Soldiers, Airmen and civilians while informing key audiences that we are Always Ready, Always There—now and into the future

Communication Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1

Share the stories of our people, in their own words, with each other and our community

OBJECTIVE 2

Internal and external communications address at least one of the Colorado National Guard's three priorities — people, readiness and modernization — so that we speak with one voice

OBJECTIVE 3

Inform key internal and external audiences about how the DMVA is serving our community, state and nation

OBJECTIVE 4

Increase our reach to build public trust and support from partners to create an expanding and more engaged community committed to the success of the CONG

Tactics

Tactics commanders can use to communicate priorities for all four communication strategies outlined in the CONG Strategic Communications plan:

Strategy 1: Integrate and synchronize internal communications

- Emphasize CONG priorities at commander's calls
- Post CONG priorities poster in work centers
- Encourage unit members to participate in Lines of Effort initiatives

Strategy 2: Engage our organization to tell our collective story

- Ask service members and civilians to volunteer to participate in public affairs videos
- Tell PA about story ideas regarding initiatives, operational ideas, best practices, cutting-edge capabilities, and modernization
- Share success stories from military and civilian life with the PAO

Strategy 3: Engage our community

- Encourage and identify volunteers for speaking opportunities in the community
- Plan unit community outreach events
- Coordinate with PA about unit training that the public can observe

Strategy 4: Increase and improve our online presence

- Tell PA about facilities innovation, cutting-edge capabilities, and modernization
- Tell PA about your unit's mission
- Tell PA if you have a newsworthy event in your unit
- Ensure your unit's website and social media pages are up to date with information/contacts
- Seek out PA to cover your unit



Key Messages

People:

- We are an inclusive organization where everyone is welcomed, valued, respected and heard.
- We are focused on ways to provide the best care for our service members, civilians, and their families since they are the foundation of our force.
- We are dedicated to building a resilient force through understanding signs and symptoms of at risk behavior and encouraging our people to seek support through available resources. Asking for help is a sign of strength.
- All our people have an equal opportunity to maximize their unique talents and potential.

Readiness:

- Readiness requires support from our families, employers, community, and each other.
- Through continued investment in recruiting and retention, training, and equipment, we will remain ready to fight our nation's wars and protect the homeland.
- We meet readiness requirements so that we are prepared to answer the call of our community, state and nation.

Modernization:

- Growing our capabilities leads the way to new frontiers.
- For our people to continue to succeed in an ever-evolving environment, we must leverage technology and modernize our equipment, infrastructure, processes and organization.
- We must ensure we have a relevant force structure to accompany modernized weapons systems.
- We must be at 100 percent assigned strength to be ready and to modernize our force for the future.

Internal Audiences

Audience	Why
<p>CONG <i>(Soldiers, Airmen, civilians, veterans/retirees, and their families)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize their contributions and sacrifice • Demonstrate how and why we care about them and the benefits of their service. Build morale and increase recruiting and retention • Strive to be an employer of choice
<p>Governor, staff, and State agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep them informed, confident, and invested in our capability to support domestic and overseas operations
<p>National Guard Bureau / Active Duty and Reserve / Office of the Secretary of Defense</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform on our capabilities and issues when making decisions that directly impact Service members, veterans, and/or their families • Demonstrate our ability to be a force-multiplier and interoperable with Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve counterparts
<p>National Guards of other states, territories, and District of Columbia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share best practices and promote inter-operability for domestic and overseas operations



External Audiences

Audience	Why
<p>American People <i>(Members of the public who have no military affiliation)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster support and trust by building awareness of our presence, role and impact • Increase recruitment and advocate for the CONG
<p>Allies and Partners <i>(U.S. Allies, State Partnership Program partners, community partners, Veterans Service Organizations, federal agencies, local jurisdictions, first responders, defense contractors, etc.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a stake in achieving our CONG priorities • Convey benefits of partnering with the CONG such as increased readiness
<p>Influencers <i>(Employers of National Guard members, business leaders, nonprofit leaders, museums, Chambers of Commerce, social media influencers, associations, news media, entertainers, etc.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals and groups who can carry our message and help champion CONG priorities • Show the wide range of CONG capabilities to capture the attention of these audiences
<p>Elected Officials and their staff <i>(Congressional Delegation, State Legislature, and elected City and County leaders external to our chain-of-command)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase our capacity and capability to serve our community, state and nation
<p>Affiliated Educational Programs <i>(High Schools, JROTC, ROTC, Tuition Assistance Institutions, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, Civil Air Patrol, Youth Programs, etc.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform interested parties involved in these programs about professional development opportunities within the CONG to increase recruitment





> Access the Colorado National Guard Strategic Guidance



> Access the Colorado National Guard Strategic Communications Plan

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