

Who we are:

Transportation is so basic that many of us overlook its overwhelming importance in our daily lives. Practically everything used in our homes, offices, or schools across Tennessee – from furniture to food items to clothing – requires a large and complex transportation network. The Tennessee Department of Transportation provides citizens of Tennessee and travelers with one of the best transportation systems in the country. TDOT is a multimodal agency with responsibilities in building and maintaining roads, aviation, public transit, waterways, railroads, cycling and walking. Our involvement ranges from airport improvements to funding transit buses to planning for river ports. The Department of Transportation has approximately 3,500 employees with four statewide region facilities in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, and Jackson.



Creative Lead

Communications & Legislative Affairs Division
External & Internal Communications Section
\$90,000 - \$105,000 annually

Job Overview

The Creative Lead is a leader on the External and Internal Communications team at the Tennessee Department of Transportation. This role leads visual storytelling and multimedia production, translating brand, content, and marketing strategy into compelling creative execution.

The Creative Lead is responsible for the crafting innovative end-to-end creative process, from concept and storyboarding through production and post-production. The role ensures TDOT effectively captures and activates high-value moments across all forms of media. Reporting to the TDOT Assistant Director of External and Internal Communications, this role partners closely with TDOT Human Resources, IT, Operations, Legal, Safety, Construction, Regional teams, and more. The role will manage one Graphic Designer and one Multimedia Production Specialist.

Essential Job Responsibilities

Creative leadership: Lead and inspire a graphic designer and multimedia production specialist in their day-to-day work. Foster a culture of bold creativity where the team feels empowered to push boundaries and bring the TDOT brand to life in impactful, innovative ways. Support training or mentoring for junior team members in brand design and editorial layout best practices. Foster a team culture where excellence in customer service is the rule, rather than the exception.

Elevating the TDOT brand, internally and externally: Oversee the creative execution of all campaigns across digital, print, and experiential channels. From major project updates to innovative achievements, you'll ensure the TDOT name remains synonymous with innovation, integrity, safety, stewardship and professionalism.

Creative visualization of strategic brand development: Collaborate across TDOT departments and regions to drive the development of TDOT's creative brand strategy, ensuring consistency in brand voice, positioning, and visual identity. You will be responsible for elevating the TDOT brand's statewide presence while staying true to our culture.

Crafting stories that resonate with all audiences: Lead the creation of powerful narratives that celebrate the teams that drive TDOT projects across the state.

Whether through digital content, video storytelling, or publications, you will craft moments that educate, inform and inspire.

Innovation meets best practices: Push creative boundaries by integrating new trends, technologies, and cultural insights into the TDOT brand's DNA. From leveraging cutting-edge digital tools to exploring new mediums, you'll ensure TDOT stays at the forefront of communications and brand innovation in transportation.

Communications collaboration: Collaborate with our Director of Communications and Assistant Bureau Chief of Communications and Legislative Affairs, social media manager, graphic designer, web designer, publications, content & editorial manager, graphics designer, videographer, regional communications teams and legislative affairs team to build campaigns together that are grounded in impactful and authentic brand storytelling. Participate in design reviews and provide constructive feedback to team members. Maintain design documentation and contribute to a shared brand standards library. Your creative leadership will ensure that our story is told in the most effective and collaborative way possible.

Creative performance insights: Leverage analytics and insights to measure the impact of creative campaigns, using data and user feedback to continually refine and optimize brand initiatives. Balance artistic vision with TDOT strategic outcomes, ensuring TDOT's creative work drives brand trust with both internal and external audiences.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in marketing, communications, design, or a related field. An advanced degree (MBA, MFA) is a plus.
- Advanced experience with Adobe Creative suite applications, such as Photoshop, Premiere, and Illustrator.
- 10+ years of experience in creative leadership roles, preferably in transportation or a transportation-related industry.
- A proven track record of developing and executing impactful campaigns that balance brand-building with organizational objectives.
- Experience leading creative teams and overseeing complex, multi-channel creative projects.
- An impressive portfolio that demonstrates your ability to bring visionary ideas to life through storytelling, design, and strategy.

Preferred Experience & Skills

- Certification in design platforms.
- An understanding of how AI can help us innovate in the design and communications sphere.
- Excellent visual, editorial, and information design sensibility.
- Strong written communication and editing skills.
- Collaborative mindset with strong project management abilities.
- Adaptability and problem-solving in a fast-paced, multi-project environment.

Ideal Candidate

The ideal Creative Lead will have a strong passion for defining the overall creative, artistic, and conceptual direction for internal and external campaigns with meaningful experience in creative leadership roles. They will understand how to effectively align vision, strategy, communication, operational acumen, and team management with organizational objectives. The Ideal Candidate understands the importance of staying up to date with best practices and emerging trends in design. Experience in content structure, editorial layout, and storytelling design is also needed. The ideal candidate is a leader who can inspire their team while managing competing priorities and deadlines.

How to Apply:

Application for this position requires completion and submission of the following items:

1. Letter explaining applicant interest in the position.
2. Résumé that is a maximum of two (2) pages.
3. Personal work sample or portfolio.

The items should be emailed to James.Dillard@tn.gov by Friday, May 1, 2026.