# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Undersecretary for public diplomacy, Department of state

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | Foreign Relations |
| Agency Mission | The Department of State is the lead institution for the conduct of American diplomacy, and the secretary is the president’s principal foreign policy advisor. |
| Position Overview | The undersecretary for public diplomacy serves as the principal foreign policy advisor to the secretary and deputy secretaries in the formulation, conduct and coordination of a comprehensive outreach and public affairs strategy that supports key diplomatic policies, priorities and initiatives worldwide. |
| Compensation | Level III $165,300 (5 U.S.C. § 5314)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of State[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | In fiscal 2014, the State Department spent $1.069 billion of public diplomacy funding.[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Serves as the principal advisor to the secretary and deputy secretaries in the formulation, conduct and coordination of a comprehensive outreach and public affairs strategy in support of key diplomatic policies, priorities and initiatives worldwide * Provides direction and coordination in the areas of international educational, academic and professional exchanges, international cultural diplomacy, international information policy, public affairs, foreign public opinion and U.S. government international civilian broadcasting * Oversees the execution of such policies and programs, and chairs the interagency policy coordinating committee on public diplomacy and strategic communications * Reconciles policy differences among assistant secretaries before presenting unified proposals to the secretary and deputy secretaries * Testifies before congressional committees and appears in the media * Coordinates closely with the White House communications director, the deputy secretary of defense for public information, the assistant secretary for legislative affairs, the broadcasting board of governors and other senior officials from departments and agencies[[4]](#endnote-4) * Prepares an annual strategic plan for public diplomacy in collaboration with overseas posts and in consultation with the department’s regional and functional bureaus * Ensures the design and implementation of appropriate program evaluation methodologies * Provides guidance to department personnel in the U.S. and overseas who conduct or implement public diplomacy policies, programs and activities * Submits statements of U.S. policy and editorial material to the Broadcasting Board of Governors for broadcast consideration (22 U.S.C. 2651a) |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Experience in media and/or government * Understanding of the public diplomacy field both academically and practically |
| Competencies | * Strong communication and outreach skills dealing with external constituencies * Comfortable in large bureaucracies |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Richard Stengel (2014 to 2016): Trustee, Board of Trustees, City Year, Inc.; Managing Editor, Time; Nation Editor, Time[[5]](#endnote-5) | |
| Tara D. Sonenshine (2012 to 2013): Executive Vice President, United States Institute of Peace; Strategic Communications Advisor, United States Institute of Peace; Strategic Communications Advisor, the International Crisis Group[[6]](#endnote-6) | |
| Judith A. McHale (2009 to 2011): Trustee, Board of Trustees, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; President, Brimark Ventures Group; Director, Board of Directors, The Africa Society of The National Summit on Africa[[7]](#endnote-7) | |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/99484.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.state.gov/pdcommission/reports/c68558.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Leadership Directories [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://smpa.gwu.edu/tara-d-sonenshine [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Leadership Directories [↑](#endnote-ref-7)