

Jennifer Vitela

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Capabilities Summary

- *Staff management experience as the director of three offices within the California State Legislature and Interagency Coordinator at the Army's Mission Command Training Program*
- *Five years training senior U.S. Military and Allied Forces on how to conduct operations requiring Interagency and Intergovernmental collaboration to achieve U.S. national security objectives*
- *Served three tours advancing U.S. interests through governance and public diplomacy initiatives in Afghanistan and Iraq with the Department of State*

Key Skills

- Strategic Communications
- Outreach & Engagement
- Democracy and Governance Expert
- Public Diplomacy
- Relationship Building
- Project and Staff Management

Education

- Juris Doctor, Loyola Law School, 2002
- BA, Public Relations, University of Southern California, 1996

State Government Experience

Capitol Director and District Director, California State Legislature, January 2004 – January 2008

Managed staff handling operations, community outreach and constituent affairs; personally responsible for political strategy, legislative issues, and media relations

Drafted legislative packages in response to district issues of concern. Navigated legislation through the process by meeting with constituents and lobbyists, organizing stakeholders, writing support documents, negotiating with opposition and delivering committee presentations

Developed communications strategy for authored legislation, opposed legislation and district issues; also drafted and distributed press releases and media advisories, made successful pitch calls to reporters and editors and wrote articles for online political websites. In addition, researched and wrote speeches, policy positions and editorials

Federal Government Experience

Public Diplomacy Officer, U.S. Dept. of State, July 2010 - December 2011

Worked with NATO, ISAF and Afghan government officials to develop public outreach campaigns for international audiences to maintain support for the mission among donor and troop-contributing nations.

Produced media tours for journalists from foreign countries, including influential regional and Islamic nations, to increase stories about civilian assistance and civilian-military integration at work. Increased coverage of U.S. initiatives in the Afghan media by working with Afghan journalists to give them more access and information about stabilization progress and transition strategies in the provinces.

Managed U.S. Embassy Kabul's TV co-op program, assisting the seven top Afghan media organizations in developing ideas and facilitating programs in the United States to produce documentaries to counter extremist voices about American society and values.

Served as public affairs liaison to the USAID mission. Also provided public affairs support to various US government agencies, including FAA, USDA, Dept of Treasury, DHS, et al. Support included logistical planning, coordinating press participation and post-event publicity.

Planned and coordinated press events for Congressional and VIP visits, including the U.S. Secretary of State, Speaker of the House, National Security Advisor, Secretary of Defense, U.S. Attorney General, and US Ambassador to the United Nations and the Global Ambassador for Women's Affairs.

Senior Governance Advisor, U.S. Dept. of State, July 2008 – July 2009

Enabled the growth of civil society organizations to re-engage marginalized members of society. Most successful project was Dairy Development for Iraqi Widows, a dairy products co-op operated by women which was implemented with the cooperation of Land O' Lakes.

Wrote and published legislative resource manual for officials elected during 2009 provincial elections which provided a roadmap of roles and responsibilities and included suggested legislative process and procedures based on the Iraqi Constitution and the Provincial Powers Law.

Built capacity within the provincial government staff by teaching classes about public affairs, principles of press relations and the role of the media in a developing democracy. Also mentored the Women's Affairs Committee of the Anbar Provincial Council in public speaking, leadership, advocacy and community outreach.

Served as the electoral advisor, directing senior political staff on how to assist officials conducting voter registration efforts and preparing for the 2009 provincial elections.

Interagency Coordinator / Senior Trainer, Department of Defense Subcontractor, December 2011 – June 2017

Managed team of subject matter experts as the Interagency Cell Lead at the Army's Mission Command Training Program (MCTP) at Fort Leavenworth, KS. Served as an Instructor and an Observer Coach/Trainer for topics including Humanitarian Assistance / Disaster Response, Mass Atrocity Response Operations (MARO) and Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO).

Developed Programs of Instruction, recruited senior leader participation and conducted Table Top Exercises to educate the military on various operations that require coordination with civilian partners and foreign governments. Topics included nuclear Weapons of Mass Destruction Elimination, MARO and NEO.

Designed and conducted the Interagency training to prepare the 101st Airborne Division for the Ebola Response mission in Liberia

Completed TDY assignments to South Korea, Japan and Italy to train deployed U.S. forces and allied partners on humanitarian assistance, disaster response and genocide intervention missions.

Mentored brigade and battalion leadership at the Joint Readiness Training Center and the National Training Center on strategic communications, understanding Interagency roles, developing strategies to engage civilian populations, collaborating with senior officials and civil society leaders, and understanding IO/NGO capabilities. Also led the social media cell to replicate the cyber operating environment and educate troops how to leverage various platforms to understand attitudes and identify trends in their operating environment.

Security Clearance

- Secret

Courses, Certifications and Skills

- Foreign Policy Advisor course, Foreign Service Institute, August 2014
- USAID Joint Humanitarian Operations Course, January 2015
- Spanish: Reading Level III, Speaking Level II