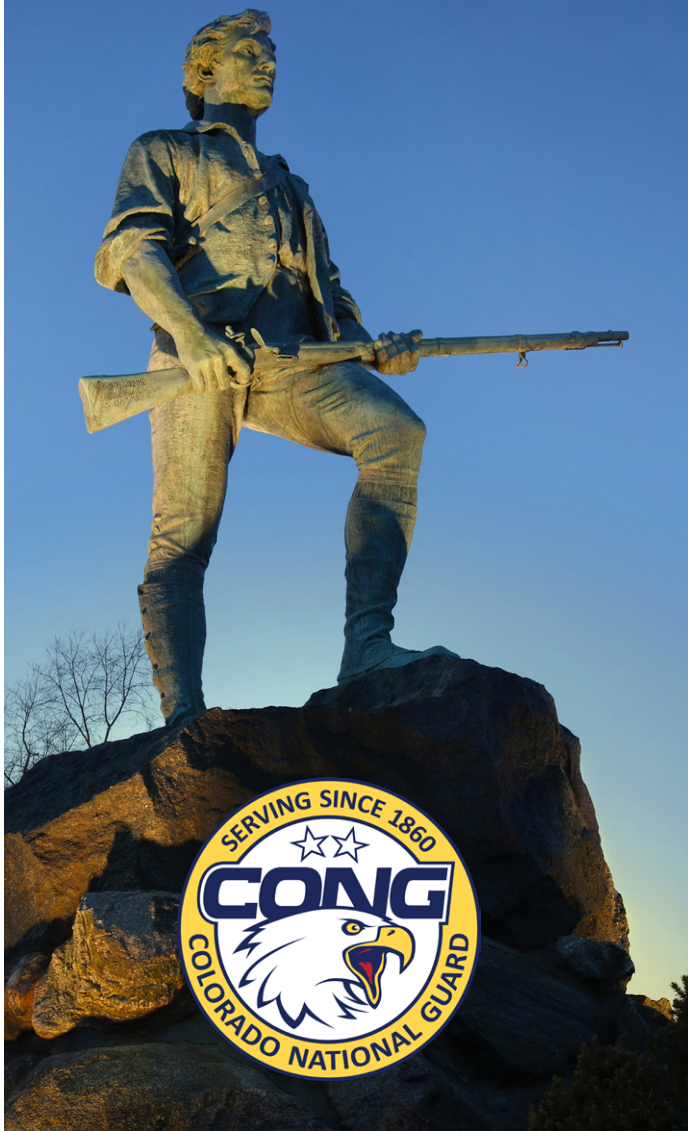


# COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2025-2028





*We are one  
in who we are  
and all that we do.  
Always Ready,  
Always There  
to serve our communities,  
state, and nation—today  
and into the future.  
Hold the High Ground!*



## **Executive Summary**

The Colorado National Guard Strategic Communications Plan guides our communication efforts over the near term to ensure the Colorado National Guard vision: We are a cohesive organization committed to our service members, employees, and our families, innovating in support of our state and the defense of our nation.

- The SC plan supports the CONG Strategic Plan, which operationalizes CONG's Strategic Guidance by advancing our mission along three lines of effort: people; warfighting readiness; innovation and modernization.
- The SC plan articulates the CONG's communications goal to tell our story in such a way that supports these LOEs.
- The SC plan provides key messaging, identifies key audiences, and maps out effective communication strategies and timely tactics to accomplish the overarching communications goal.

## **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 CONG's three priorities—people, warfighting readiness, and innovation/modernization—so that we speak with one voice

**Objective 3:** Inform key internal and external audiences about how the CONG is serving our communities, 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

### **Overarching Themes**

We are **one** in who we are and all that we do. **Always Ready, Always There** to serve our communities, state, and nation—today and into the future. Hold the High Ground!

# Communication Lines of Effort

*The CONG will deliberately communicate the three lines of effort: people; warfighting readiness; innovation and modernization. Allies and partners should also be a key theme integrated into CONG communication efforts.*

## 1. People.

People are our number one priority. Our people are Soldiers, Airmen, civilians, and our families. Our people are the core of our organization. They are the ultimate denominator of our capabilities and what we do. Our missions begin and end with our people.

Our diversity as a force is our strength. Our people come from communities across our great state. Our people's varying ideas, beliefs and backgrounds help make our organization what it is today.

Our organization rejects hate and prejudice in all its forms. These things have no place in our organization because they degrade morale, cohesion, and the readiness of our force.

Our organization is committed to attracting, recognizing, developing, and retaining talent. We recognize our people for their service, so they feel valued. Deliberate development of our people ensures that our organization has the talent to accomplish its missions. We take care of our people and invest in them so they are ready and resilient to serve our community, state and nation.

Our families play an essential role in our mission success, and we are committed to keeping them informed and connected. We ensure that our families are involved, feel valued, and are aware of resources and programs available to them. We honor the sacrifices of our fallen and their Gold Star Families.

### Key Messages:

- We invest in our most valuable asset, our people.
- We foster a professional and respectful workplace for all.
- We are a cohesive organization where everyone is welcomed, valued, respected and heard.
- We are proud of the dedication, courage and service of our CONG members, who are Always Ready, Always There.
- We are focused on ways to ensure the readiness and resilience of our CONG members, civilians, and our families since they are the foundation of our force.
- Our people have an equal opportunity to apply their unique talents and maximize their potential.

- Recognizing our members' achievements reinforces a culture of excellence, fosters unity, and ensures that every CONG member feels valued, supported and integral to our mission's success.
- By investing in development and retention programs, we support our members' growth and ensure they feel valued throughout their careers.
- We are the organization of choice by supporting and caring for our CONG members, civilians, and our families.
- We honor the lives of our fallen and pay tribute to our heroes and their Gold Star families who have sacrificed in defense of freedom.
- Our families are the heart of our force, providing the support and resilience that strengthen our service members and the entire CONG community.

## 2. Warfighting Readiness.

Warfighting Readiness is the foundation of our ability to defend our nation and respond to the evolving complexities of Great Power Competition. It is the measure of our capacity to meet both state and federal mission requirements, ensuring we are prepared for any challenge, at home or abroad.

We protect our Warfighting Readiness by mitigating risk and preparing for simultaneous, emerging contingencies. This means our members must be well-versed in the mission and always ready to respond to the needs of our community, state and nation at a moment's notice.

We continuously fortify our readiness through strategic partnerships, innovative technologies, and additional resources, leveraging Colorado's diverse force structure and the National Guard's citizen warrior concept.

We maximize our diverse force structure through Joint exercises and cross-training, strengthening our readiness across military services. Our partnerships with military and civilian organizations enhance readiness by providing new resources, expertise, and expanded capabilities for complex missions.

To ensure that there is no loss of readiness, we meet the end-strength goals of our workforce. To do this, we optimize effective manning, balancing recruiting and retention. We achieve readiness metrics on an

individual and collective basis. Warfighting Readiness is crucial to securing our organization's future and ensuring national safety, as it highlights the proactive measures we take to prepare every member to meet the challenges of a dynamic and evolving security environment.

### **Key Messages:**

- We exemplify the Warrior Ethos and prepare our forces for the demands of Great Power Conflict through advanced training, enhanced resilience, and adaptive strategies to protect our state, nation and allies.
- We remain ready to respond to domestic emergencies, fight our nation's wars, and protect the homeland.
- We demonstrate high standards in readiness so that we are prepared to answer the call of our community, state and nation.
- We recruit and retain talent to build and maintain ready teams to meet our many missions.
- We leverage civilian occupations and skill sets within our unique force to improve readiness.
- We prioritize rigorous, realistic training to enhance our lethality and prepare our forces for the complexities of modern warfare.
- We build mutually beneficial partnerships that contribute to the readiness of our people.
- We take advantage of training and integration opportunities between the services and within our force.
- We cultivate a culture of resilience, ensuring that each member is physically and mentally prepared for the challenges ahead.
- We achieve readiness with support from our families, employers, community, and each other.

## ***3. Innovation and Modernization.***

We must acquire a force structure aligned with national-level strategy and postured to support all missions in an emerging operational environment.

Modernizing equipment, systems and processes, investing in infrastructure, and expanding airspace, and promoting a culture of innovation, will enable us to recruit, train and sustain a 21st-century workforce.

Whether facilities, equipment, people or processes, we must ensure readiness for emerging, complex threats. This increases our capability to execute future state and national missions.

We remain relevant and ready to meet state and federal missions by harnessing employee skills and efficiently leveraging organizational energy.

By embracing modernization, leveraging advanced technology, and fostering a culture of innovation, the CONG stands as a national leader in readiness and operational excellence, well-positioned to meet future state and federal mission demands.

### **Key Messages:**

- We need a force modernized for the future.
- We campaign for high-tech capabilities including weapons systems, modern facilities, land, and future force structures for our people to continue to execute all state and federal missions.
- We value and support boldness, initiative and innovation among our members.
- We prioritize aggressive modernization across our force to achieve dominance in the multi-domain environment and ensure readiness for emerging and complex threats. We maintain interoperability with the Joint Force by delivering the combat capabilities needed for any conflict, anywhere, anytime, through long-term strategies and targeted investments.
- We maintain interoperability with the Joint Force by delivering the combat capabilities needed for any conflict, anywhere, anytime, through long-term strategies and targeted investments.
- We foster a culture of innovation and continuous learning across all levels, ensuring every member of our force is equipped to succeed in a Joint All Domain Operational Environment.
- We modernize and maintain existing facilities to ensure they meet the needs of our Soldiers, Airmen and civilians, providing resilient, energy-efficient spaces that reflect the quality and professionalism of our organization.

# Key Audiences

## Internal Audience:

CONG (Soldiers, Airmen, civilians, veterans/retirees, and their families)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize their contributions and sacrifice</li> <li>• Inform them of opportunities and resources</li> <li>• Build morale to retain talent and encourage recruitment</li> <li>• Strive to be an employer of choice</li> </ul>
Governor, staff, and State agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep them informed, confident, and invested in our capability to support domestic and overseas operations and partnerships</li> </ul>
National Guard Bureau / Active Duty and Reserve / Office of the Secretary of Defense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform on our capabilities and issues when making decisions that directly impact CONG members, civilians, and/or their families</li> </ul>
National Guards of other states, territories, and District of Columbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share best practices and promote interoperability for domestic and overseas operations and partnerships</li> </ul>

## External Audience:

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



# Communication Strategies and Tactics

## Strategy 1: Integrate and synchronize internal communications

Our people must communicate a unified, consistent message about who we are, what we do, where we are headed, and our value to our communities, state and nation. For our people to speak as one, everyone in the organization, down to the lowest level, must be knowledgeable of and understand our priorities and lines of effort to convey our mission and messages. Our priorities must be visible and accessible to everyone in our organization. Our communication efforts must also combine and reinforce each other to support our communications and brand strategy.

### Tactics:

- a. Three calendar-year Public Affairs Strategic Communications Plan
- b. Monthly mandatory division PA planning teleconferences to synchronize/reinforce PA messages, build standards for tactics, and create shared situational awareness
- c. Monthly synchronization between PA and DMVA Public Information Officer to identify key issues, communication, and collaboration opportunities
- d. Disseminate priority-focused senior leader messages to all members of the force to increase transparency
- e. Support directorate initiatives
- f. Participate in the annual joint PA training workshop
- g. Partner with J3 to distribute the Commander's Toolkit for Strategic Communications to all commanders

Evaluation tools: Social media analytics; website analytics; radio and television analytics

## Strategy 2: Engage our organization to tell our collective story

The people doing the mission are the best spokespeople when engaging our internal and external audiences and the best testament to our priorities. Our people must know our themes and messages and seek and exploit opportunities to communicate them. CONG members need to be engaged in moving the organization toward the desired end state of being a modern warfighting organization of warriors prepared to defend the homeland. Our stories inspire others to serve in defense of our state and nation.

### Tactics:

- a. Distribute stories to the entire CONG via email and newsletter
- b. Success stories from mentorship and coaching programs
- c. Stories about LOEs, with an annual minimum of 4 stories each by Joint and Division PAs which support the LOEs
- d. Solicit photos and short videos from CONG members
- e. Media roundtables featuring Soldiers/Airmen who have redeployed

Evaluation tools: social media analytics; website analytics; radio and television analytics

## Strategy 3: Engage our community

Show that we not only serve our community but are part of it as well. Create and strengthen partnerships within our community and leverage these relationships through collaborative communications to build support and develop our force. Showcase our people and our missions so that our audiences get to know our people and understand what they do. Build trust, confidence, understanding and support among stakeholders and influencers. If our community acknowledges our people's dedication, hard work, and accomplishments, then morale, readiness, and vision awareness will increase within our organization. Those without prior association or knowledge of the military will have a better opportunity to understand, relate and connect with us. By providing an understanding and awareness of the opportunities that the CONG offers members of our communities, we help build and strengthen our team of the future.

### Tactics:

- a. Facilitate monthly engagement with civic organizations in Colorado to facilitate CONG speaking engagements
- b. Establish and market a speaker's bureau to the public and CONG employees to deliver key messages about priorities at Community Relations Outreach events
- c. Invite civic leaders, employers, and media to observe military training, open houses, tours, and other unit events

- d. Build and leverage communication partnerships within our communities to amplify our story and recruit into the CONG
- e. Tie into military-themed community events (air shows, military & veterans' appreciation events, etc.). Leverage the CRO program to maximize CONG messaging at supported military-themed community events
- f. Ensure all external messaging supports at least one of the three priorities
- g. Maintain CONG trifold and distribute
- h. Publish and distribute the annual Year in Review

Evaluation tools: community attendance at community engagement events; Community Relations Operations requests; social media analytics; website analytics; radio and television analytics

#### Strategy 4: Increase and improve our online presence

Through digital platforms, we can appeal to a larger audience and be more accessible. Through compelling content, we showcase our lethality, warfighting readiness, and commitment to our mission.

We build our brand and reputation, attracting talent to our force. By being transparent, visible, and responsive, we gain credibility with our members and the public and counter misinformation. Our online presence increases engagement, leading to greater morale and pride among CONG members.

#### Tactics:

- a. Planned posts employing LOE messages:
  - i. Key Leadership Engagements
  - ii. Organizational history
  - iii. Profiling our people
  - iv. Demonstrating our warfighting readiness
  - v. Employer support
  - vi. Innovation/best practices from our people
- b. Utilize collaboration features on social media platforms to cross-promote content to increase engagement and maintain uniformity across our platforms
- c. Develop targeted social media campaigns (environmental, fitness, etc.)
- d. Engage with audiences on social media with likes and responses

- e. Content of public-facing websites supports priorities; video of TAG speaking about priorities
- f. Use History Colorado's online platform to share content on social and cross-promote

Evaluation tools: Social media analytics; website analytics

## Plan Distribution

This Strategic Communications plan should be distributed to our people since everyone has a role in supporting the CONG's LOEs.

Distribute this plan via the following means:

- a. Fragmentary Order
- b. Mass email to force with link to website and COARNG/COANG portals
- c. Graphic displays with QR code for digital and print signage in CONG facilities
- d. Graphic with QR code in newsletters
- e. Provide flyer with QR code to Points of Contact for: COARNG Reception; COANG Newcomers Orientation; Leadership Summits; Military Balls and Dining-in events; National Guard Association of Colorado conference; major unit commander's calls; Retiree events; Enlisted Advisory Councils; TAG Staff call; COANG leadership meeting; Unit sponsorship packets; COARNG Battalion staff call; COARNG Major Support Command Staff call
- f. Provide printed plan brochure to: Governor's Office; TAG's Office; DMVA PIO (Congressional Delegation, State General Assembly); civic leader influencers; COARNG and COANG Recruiting.

#### Key Performance Indicators

We utilize targeted key performance indicators across monthly and quarterly reporting periods to promote shared understanding and public support for the CONG. These KPIs will help us measure progress across the four strategies: *storytelling; alignment with CONG priorities; audience engagement; and, broadening of public trust and support.*

#### Monthly KPI

Conduct monthly sync meetings to review and assess the effectiveness of implemented tactics for each strategy. This monthly review will provide the opportunity to identify trends and adjust tactics as needed to ensure alignment with annual engagement goals.

### Quarterly KPI

Achieve a 5% increase in engagement across all social media platforms measured on an annual basis. Monitoring this KPI on a quarterly basis will track engagement trends to ensure ongoing progress towards the annual 5% increase and will provide insights into how well social communications resonate with internal and external audiences.

### Annual KPI

Publish 12 stories (print, video, digital) annually that support the priorities and achieve our communication strategies. Each story will align with at least one of the CONG's three priorities—people, warfighting readiness, or innovation/modernization.

### Conclusion

The CONG STRATCOM plan provides tools and tactics for achieving our organizational vision by focusing on our people, warfighting readiness, and innovation/modernization.

The plan will ensure that the CONG's Strategic Plan is available, visible and understood at all echelons within the organization and by our allies and partners.

Successful implementation of the STRATCOM plan will: integrate and synchronize internal communications; engage our organization to tell our collective story; attract talent to our organization; engage our community to build morale, continued support, and expanded partnerships; and, enable us to increase and improve our online presence by conveying key information about the CONG in a timely and accessible manner.

*The Colorado National Guard has three priorities as part of all lines of effort:*

- **People**
- **Warfighting Readiness**
- **Modernization and Innovation**

