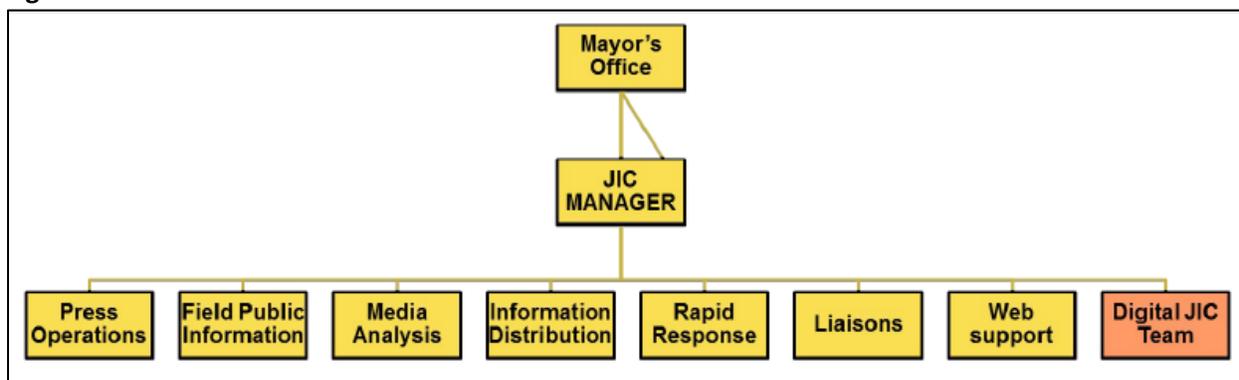


## Appendix C: New York City Joint Information Center Case Study<sup>14</sup>

Both in theory and in practice, New York City has successfully incorporated social media into the Joint Information Center structure. To address the real-time coordination and dissemination needs of a successful social media strategy during a larger-scale emergency, the City amended its Joint Information Center structure to formally incorporate social and digital communication. A “Digital JIC Team” was added to the Joint Information Center structure to allow social media monitors and managers to work in real time with public information officers to address the monitoring, development and dissemination of information in a collaborative and structured environment. This ensures that all messaging is coordinated and consistent, regardless of the outlet. In addition to training and exercising this new structure with both public information officers and social media managers who may be assigned to work in a JIC activation, this new role was tested and proved successful during the September 2015 Papal visit to NYC.

**Figure 3: NYC JIC Structure**



The JIC for the Papal visit included public information and social media staff from a variety of city, state and federal agencies. At its peak, the JIC was staffed with 20 representatives, six of whom were dedicated to social media monitoring, response and message creation. “Having a social media presence in the JIC during the Papal visit was a successful model,” said Brandon Pender, communications specialist for New York City’s Emergency Management Department. The information streaming was crucial for NYC Emergency Management and the other agencies present in the JIC. Having city, state, and federal partners engage in a real-time dialogue about social media messaging showed the true importance of the role it plays during emergencies.”

By incorporating the digital team into the JIC structure, several emerging issues were quickly addressed. For example, in the hours before Pope Francis visited Central Park, several media outlets were reporting overcrowding and lines of thousands of people waiting to get past security to see the Pope’s motorcade. Simultaneously, social media users shared photos and posts of the lines to get in.<sup>15</sup> Those monitoring

<sup>14</sup> Pennisi, Allison and Nancy Silvestri, New York City Office of Emergency Management. Information provided October 2015.

<sup>15</sup> (rachelnewsnyc). “Line of people waiting to go thru security to catch a glimpse of the Pope in Central Park. #PopeinNYC.” Instagram. 25 September 2015. <<https://instagram.com/p/8EBZvuBuBS/>>.

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social media were able to work seamlessly with PIOs to provide situational awareness to the EOC. The JIC quickly received information that security lines were long yet moving, and all participants were expected to gain entry before the start of the motorcade. PIOs communicated this information to media outlets, while the digital team relayed the same message via social media channels. The seamless integration of the digital team ensured that information was developed, cleared and shared as efficiently as possible.