CLASS SPECIFICATION
Public Information Officer

FLSA Status: Exempt
Union Representation: Nonrepresented

GENERAL PURPOSE

Under policy direction, serves as the top public information and involvement professional for a bureau; plans and carries out public relations, media relations and marketing activities to achieve bureau communication and outreach objectives; and performs related duties as assigned.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

A Public Information Officer is responsible for directing media relations, public relations, marketing and informational efforts for a moderate to large-size bureau; acts as spokesperson for the bureau with the media and develops and facilitates communication that builds effective relations with bureau stakeholders and awareness of bureau programs and initiatives.

Public Information Officer is distinguished from Public Information Manager in that an incumbent in the latter class is responsible for managing the programs, resources and people of a bureau section, in addition to carrying out broad bureau public information, involvement and education programs and projects.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Any one position in this class may not perform all the duties listed below, nor do the listed examples of duties include all similar and related duties that may be assigned to this class.

1. Develops comprehensive strategic communication programs that include community objectives, primary messages, research, strategy, tactics and budget.

2. Manages internal and external communications; develops and directs production of fact sheets, news releases, advertising, promotional and public information materials for programs and projects.

3. Writes and directs production of materials including newsletters, annual reports, direct mail, advertising, logo and identification support.

4. Develops and directs outside media relations, citizen involvement, public information and assistance programs; researches and prepares news releases and feature articles.

5. Coordinates press conferences, editorial boards, special events and bureau educational offerings; presents information at public events and professional meetings.

6. Acts as bureau spokesperson with the media and the public; represents the bureau at conferences and meetings.

7. Develops positions, public responses and information to resolve public and media communication concerns and to clarify issues to groups or individuals who disagree with bureau policies or decisions; explains position issues or problems in a larger context.

8. Provides strategic direction regarding public communication designed to defuse situations that could damage the bureau's reputation or ability to perform in the public arena.

9. Ensures understandability of issues, public image and overall public perception of the bureau.

OTHER DUTIES

1. Acts as the responsible bureau public information agent for crisis and emergency management operations.

2. Coordinates and provides citizen participation programs and associated training.

3. May manage an outreach, involvement or change management process; advises management on strategies to implement change, promote discussions, identify and resolve issues, and encourage acceptance and involvement; develops messages, facilitates discussions, dialogues, consensus building and problem solving; designs collaborative processes.

DESIRED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

1. Principles, methods and practices applied in design and implementation of public affairs, community outreach and advertising programs.

2. Methods and techniques of writing for advertising, marketing and public relations.

3. Principles and practices of sound business communication; correct English usage, including spelling, grammar and punctuation.

4. Principles, methods and techniques of graphic design, layout and print production.

5. Advertising and public relations industry practices and trends.

6. City and bureau policies, programs, functions, regional and environmental issues, and legal and regulatory provisions and associated public information, communication and involvement issues and challenges.

7. Crisis management techniques and Incident Command Emergency Operations for emergency response.

Ability to:

1. Represent the bureau effectively in public settings and with media representatives on a variety of issues.

2. Operate a computer using word processing, graphics and other standard software.

3. Apply writing style and techniques appropriate for differing business and journalistic/public relations purposes.

4. Create effective graphic designs and creative approaches for use in public information and education programs.

5. Edit written materials.

6. Interpret information and situations and make recommendations in accordance with applicable policies, regulations and guidelines.

7. Exercise sound judgment within established guidelines.

8. Communicate clearly and concisely, orally and in writing.

9. Maintain accurate files and records.

10. Establish and maintain effective working relationships with all levels of City management, elected officials, representatives of other governmental agencies, business and community leaders, employees, media representatives, the public and others encountered in the course of work.

Training and Experience:

A typical way of obtaining the knowledge, skills and abilities outlined above is graduation from a four-year college or university with major coursework in public relations, communications, public administration or a closely related field; and five years of progressively responsible professional experience involving the development and coordination of public affairs or community outreach programs and projects similar to those administered by the City; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.

Licenses; Certificates; Special Requirements:

A valid state driver’s license may be required for certain assignments.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DEMANDS

Persons with disabilities may be able to perform the essential duties of this class with reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation will be evaluated on an individual basis and depends, in part, on the specific requirements for the job, the limitations related to disability and the ability of the hiring bureau to accommodate the limitation.

Class History:

Adopted: 07-01-02
Class created as a result of Nonrepresented Classification & Compensation Study, 2000-2002. This class is composed of positions from the following class(es):
0970 PROGRAM MANAGER II. Adopted: 07-01-92

Revised:
June 2009 - Change Job Class number from 7206 to 30000495, due to system change.
October 2010 – Added Other Duty to cover possible assignment of internal outreach, change management responsibilities.