



JULY 2012
FLSA: EXEMPT

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

This class specification indicates, in general terms, the type and level of work performed as well as the responsibilities of employees in this classification. The job functions described are not to be interpreted as being all-inclusive to any specific employee.

DEFINITION

Under direct supervision, performs a variety of routine to complex professional-level duties involved in participating in the development, implementation, and coordination of public relations and community outreach activities within the Public Affairs Division; provides creative services and technical writing for newsletters, brochures, presentations, information posters, and award applications; participates in a variety of special events including tours of the District and displays in public venues; performs a variety of administrative tasks in support of assigned area of responsibility; and performs related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives direct supervision from the Public Affairs Manager. Exercises no supervision of staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is the entry-level class in the Public Affairs Specialist series providing assistance in the development of public affairs and community outreach programs. Positions at this level are not expected to function with the same amount of program knowledge or skill level as positions allocated to the Senior Public Affairs Specialist level and exercise less independent discretion and judgment in matters related to work procedures and methods. Work is usually supervised while in progress and fits an established structure or pattern. Exceptions or changes in procedures are explained in detail as they arise. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied and are performed with greater independence. This class is distinguished from the Senior Public Affairs Specialist in that the latter performs the full range of duties assigned to the class series and is responsible for the more complex assignments and projects that require a higher level of knowledge and skill.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

Management reserves the right to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.

- Performs a variety of routine to complex professional-level duties involved in participating in the development, implementation, and coordination of assigned public affairs and community outreach activities; provides a variety of support including identifying events, defining outreach objectives, creating displays, recruiting staff, monitoring budgets, and tracking effectiveness.

- Researches and prepares written materials for a variety of internal and external audiences; develops and reviews presentations; prepares various customer response letters; develops internal communications to employees and Board members; participates in the development of the internal employee newsletter including assisting with production schedule, content, photography, editing, design, layout, and production.
- Works with various District departments to coordinate and clarify information and develop accurate facts for projects; translates technical information into laymen terms.
- Assists in creating and producing media that visually communicates District information or services in a manner that will appeal to the target audience; assists in creating and producing material under established time and budget constraints.
- Interacts with the general public and the media; keeps public informed about activities of the District and District officials; responds to questions and inquiries regarding District operations and activities.
- Plans for and participates in various special events including tours of District wastewater facilities.
- Participates in the graphic development of the District's website; provides recommendations for site content.
- Participates in the preparation and administration of assigned budget; submits budget recommendations; monitors expenditures.
- Works with outside vendors to procure items for the Public Affairs Division; researches, tests, and recommends the purchase and installation of new equipment and materials.
- Assists with special research assignments, gathers data, and prepares reports for consideration; researches new programs and services and propose revisions.
- Implements and administers special programs and projects as assigned.
- Maintains awareness of new developments in the field of public affairs and community outreach; incorporates new developments as appropriate.
- Performs related duties as required.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Basic concepts, practices, procedures, methods, and techniques used in public relations, media relations, and community outreach.
- Basic operations, services, and activities of public affairs and community outreach programs.
- Methods and techniques used in developing communications for internal and external audiences.
- Basic principles and applications of critical thinking and analysis.
- Writing principles and practices including elements of persuasive writing and argument.
- Operational characteristics of desktop publishing operating systems.
- Graphics materials and tools used in the area of assignment.
- Applicable Federal, State, and local laws, regulatory codes, ordinances, and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility.
- Recent and on-going developments, current literature, and sources of information related to the operations of the assigned programs.
- Basic principles and practices of budget preparation and administration.
- Principles of business letter writing and basic report preparation.
- Principles and procedures of record-keeping and reporting.
- Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work, including word processing, database, and spreadsheet applications.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- Techniques for effectively representing the District in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, and various business, professional, educational, regulatory, and legislative organizations.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and District staff.

Ability to:

- Perform work of a specialized nature and develop the ability to use independent judgment and personal initiative.
- Perform a variety of routine to complex professional-level duties in support of public affairs and community outreach programs.
- Participate in researching, designing, planning, and implementing public affairs or educational campaigns.
- Apply critical thinking and analysis in completing assignments.
- Identify target audiences and develop pertinent messages.
- Participate in the development of a variety of written materials for informational purposes.
- Perform desktop publishing functions utilizing applicable computer software and graphics materials.
- Participate in the graphic development of the District's website.
- Create or develop solutions to design and communications problems.
- Work cooperatively with other departments, District officials, and outside agencies.
- Effectively represent the District to outside individuals, agencies and groups to accomplish the goals and objectives of the unit.
- Respond tactfully, clearly, concisely, and appropriately to inquiries from the public, press, or other agencies on sensitive issues in area of responsibility.
- Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with Federal, State, and local policies, procedures, laws, rules, and regulations.
- Express thoughts clearly and simply.
- Interpret technical information for a variety of audiences.
- Speak in public to large groups of people.
- Prepare clear and concise reports, correspondence, policies, procedures, and other written materials.
- Interpret, explain, and ensure compliance with District policies and procedures, complex laws, codes, regulations, and ordinances.
- Maintain confidentiality in maintaining critical and sensitive information, records, and reports.
- Maintain accurate files and records.
- Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner; organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical time deadlines.
- Use critical thinking techniques effectively.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and harmonious working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Employment Standards:

Any combination of education and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities may be qualifying as determined by OCSD.

1. Possession of a bachelor's degree from a college or university which is accredited by the US Department of Education, with major coursework in communications, public relations, marketing, or a related field; AND,
2. One (1) year of experience in public affairs and/or community outreach programs.

Licenses and Certifications:

Possession of, or ability to obtain, a valid California Driver's License by time of appointment.

Disaster Service Workers:

All Orange County Sanitation District employees are designated Disaster Service Workers through state law (California Government Code Section 3100-3109). Employment with the Orange County Sanitation District requires the affirmation of a loyalty oath to this effect. Employees are required to complete all related training as assigned, and to return to work as ordered in the event of an emergency.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone. This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing in and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Positions in this classification frequently lift and carry reports and records that typically weigh less than 25 pounds.

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.