



City Hall
53990 Enterprise Way
Coachella, CA 92236
Telephone: (760) 398-3502

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FLSA: EXEMPT

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

DEFINITION

Under general direction of the City Manager or his/her designee, the Public Information Officer develops, organizes, directs and evaluates a comprehensive communications, marketing and community relations program for the City; promotes the City's image by raising the level of public awareness of City operations and accomplishments in providing services to its customers; writes, edits and designs a variety of public information materials; oversees content of City website and cable channel; acts as the City's point of contact for all media relations; and coordinates assigned activities within and among City departments and in conjunction with other agencies. Exercises supervision of video production staff and volunteers, interns, community volunteers and public information specialists.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives administrative direction from the City Manager. Exercises no supervision of staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is a Management Deputy Director classification that oversees, directs, and participates in all activities of the Public Information Officer department, including short- and long-term planning, development, and administration of departmental policies, procedures, and services. This class provides assistance to the City Manager in a variety of administrative, coordinative, analytical, and liaison capacities. Successful performance of the work requires knowledge of public policy, municipal functions and activities, including the role of an elected City Council, and the ability to develop, oversee, and implement projects and programs in a variety of areas. Responsibilities include coordinating the activities of the department with those of other departments and outside agencies, and managing and overseeing the complex and varied functions of the department. The incumbent is accountable for accomplishing departmental planning and operational goals and objectives and for furthering City goals and objectives within general policy guidelines.

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.

- Organizes communication activities to foster public understanding of City goals, policies, programs and services;
- Brings to public attention through various forms of media, significant facts, opinions and interpretations to keep the public informed;
- Develops materials to be presented in press announcements, including press releases, press briefings, press conferences and feature articles on various City services;
- Develops, coordinates and participates in news conferences, special events, and other programs of City and public interest;

- Facilitates the accurate and full coverage of City issues by the news media;
- Takes photographs for publications, audiovisual presentations and public displays;
- Consults with Police and Fire department field supervisors and/or incident commanders, is reasonably available for call-out to public safety incidents, and serves as liaison to the media to assure appropriate access and flow of information;
- Reviews daily police logs for release to the press;
- Organizes emergency public information in the event of a local disaster;
- Supervises operations of the City's government access cable television channels and facilities;
- Supervises script development and production of original video content for government access cable channel as well as audiovisual content for other media, including, but not limited to, podcasting and web-based video;
- Supervises the content and design of City publications, including newsletters, informational booklets, pamphlets and fliers;
- Advises City staff and elected officials in media relations and public information policies and procedures;
- Consults with staff and elected officials in the preparation of speeches and letters on behalf of the City;
- Coordinates and conducts special events ceremonies and City functions;
- Develops and implements methods and materials to promote special events sponsored by the City or its departments;
- Coordinates assigned activities with other City departments;
- Prepares, maintains, files and disseminates a listing of media contacts, including names, addresses, email, phone and fax numbers;
- Maintains files of newspaper articles and other related media clippings;
- Logs and maintains files of City press releases;
- Maintains a photo library of City events and personnel;
- Monitors news coverage and/or public information regarding the City or pertinent to City activities;
- Responds to difficult and sensitive public inquiries and complaints and assists with resolutions and alternative recommendations.
- Performs duties of a disaster services worker in event of an emergency.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Media operations, story placement and public agency marketing strategies used in both print and electronic media;
- Principles and practices of public administration;
- Principles, practices, terminology and regulations of Public Safety agencies;
- Newspaper, magazine and broadcast writing theories and practices;
- Current English and Spanish usage and journalistic styles, both for broadcast and print;
- Print publication editing and layout methods;
- Media tactics, including basic interview techniques and preparation;
- Current media trends and practices;
- Safe work methods and regulations pertaining to work;
- Record keeping principles and procedures;
- Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work;
- English and Spanish usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation;
- Safe driving principles and practices;
- Basic photography;

- Basic video production techniques;
- Techniques for effectively representing the City in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, and various business, professional, educational, regulatory, and legislative organizations.

Ability to:

- Write in a variety of formats, including, but not limited to print and broadcast press releases, video and audio scripts, business and professional letters, speeches and articles;
- Review, proofread, edit and verify written materials for accuracy and adherence to policies and procedures;
- Gather and verify news information through interview, observation and research;
- Accurately interpret policies and procedures to provide and clarify information;
- Write articles of a caliber required for professional publication;
- Write scripts for public service announcements, video and audio productions;
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing;
- Maintain a professional demeanor during stressful and highly visible situations;
- Work within stringent deadlines to complete projects and assignments;
- Exercise sound judgment in safeguarding confidential or sensitive information;
- Read, comprehend and interpret complex and sensitive information on a wide range of subjects and topics;
- Respond to citizen and media requests in a courteous, effective manner;
- Perform varied and responsible assignments involving the use of initiative and independent judgement;
- Use digital camera equipment, video equipment and software;
- Maintain effective audio-visual discrimination and perception needed for making observations, communicating with others, reading and writing, and operating assigned office equipment;
- 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.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and specialized software applications programs, including audio, video and photo editing;
- Use English and Spanish effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and harmonious working relationships with the public, news media, city staff, elected officials and others contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of training and experience, which would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities, is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

Equivalent to a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in journalism, communications, public relations or a related field; and, three (3) years of experience working in the field of journalism, primarily with writing and editing responsibility, and three (3) years of experience in an administrative or staff capacity in a private or public organization involving regular contact with elected/appointed officials and/or media representatives.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Valid California class C driver's license with satisfactory driving record and automobile insurance.

Other Requirements:

- Must be bilingual in English and Spanish.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer. Must be able to operate a motor vehicle, and to visit various City and meeting sites. Must have 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 work areas 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. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push and pull materials and objects weighing up to 25 pounds. During emergencies, may be called on to work extended periods of time as needed.

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.