

PRINCIPAL 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 general direction, develops, coordinates, implements, and manages the most complex public and legislative affairs programs and activities having significant OC San-wide impact; develops new programs or enhancements to existing programs; serves as OC San's expert and/or internal consultant on highly complex public affairs and community outreach activities within the Public Affairs Division; provides technical and functional direction to lower-level staff; works closely with OC San's management staff in providing professional technical expertise and advice; and performs duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general direction from assigned supervisory and/or management staff. Exercises no direct supervision of staff. Exercises technical and functional direction and provides training to lower-level staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This classification is the third of three levels within the public affairs job series responsible for performing the most difficult and responsible assignments, projects, analyses, and programs requiring advanced knowledge of the concepts, practices, procedures, and policies of public affairs programs and functions. Positions at this level provide technical and functional direction and leadership to assigned staff. Assignments at this level have significant impact on OC San's operations. Completed work is reviewed only from an overall standpoint in terms of feasibility, compatibility with other work, and/or effectiveness in meeting requirements and expected results. This class is distinguished from the Administration Manager in that the latter has full supervisory authority for planning, organizing, and overseeing the full scope of assigned public affairs functions and programs within the department.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

The following essential job functions are typical for this classification. Incumbents may not perform all of the listed job functions and/or may be required to perform additional or different job functions from those set forth below to address business needs and changing business practices.

- Serves as an expert and/or internal consultant to management in the development, coordination, and implementation of public affairs, community outreach, and legislative activities, including the larger and most complex public affairs programs having significant OC San-wide impact.
- Participates in the development of public relations strategies; recommends and assists in the implementation of goals and objectives; monitors program performance; recommends and implements modifications to systems and procedures.
- Develops and implements new or enhanced systems, methods, and procedures; monitors program progress in meeting goals and objectives; conducts updates with management staff to inform and advise on program progress; makes adjustments as necessary.
- Develops, prepares, and administers approved budget; monitors expenditures.

- Serves as advocate for OC San; builds and maintains relationships with the general public; interacts with the public and the media; keeps the public informed about OC San activities; responds to questions and inquiries regarding OC San operations and activities.
- Represents OC San at various industry and community presentations and meetings; serves as community liaison and one of the primary spokespersons for OC San.
- Plans, researches, develops, writes content for, and reviews internal communications and written materials, including presentations, scripts, speeches, response letters, and press releases; participates in the preparation of OC San's annual report.
- Coordinates assigned services and program activities with other OC San departments, internal and external agencies, and other stakeholders and ensures alignment with OC San's strategic plan.
- Attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast and maintains awareness of new trends, developments, and innovations in the field of public affairs; researches emerging products and enhancements and their applicability to OC San's needs; incorporates new developments into programs as appropriate.
- Provides leadership and guidance to others on programs and/or projects; as a program and/or project leader, directs, assigns, trains, monitors, and reviews the work activities of team members; determines work priorities; oversees quality and quantity of work performed and ensures adherence to established procedures by instructing employees accordingly; is a resource to employees by possessing specialized skills; and develops and implements work improvements.
- Ensures safety and health procedures and precautions are adhered to, corrects unsafe work conditions/practices, and/or reports unsafe work conditions/practices to assigned supervisory or managerial staff.
- Performs duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Principles of providing functional direction and training.
- Advanced concepts, practices, procedures, methods, and techniques of public affairs, legislative, and community outreach programs.
- Operations, services, and activities of public affairs, legislative, and community outreach programs.
- Principles and practices of program and project management.
- Principles and practices of budget preparation and administration.
- Advanced principles and applications of critical thinking and analysis.
- Advanced methods and techniques used in developing communications for internal and external audiences.
- Advanced writing principles and practices including elements of persuasive writing and argument and business letter writing.
- Methods and techniques of data collection, research and analysis, and report preparation.
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, and ordinances relevant to the area(s) of responsibility.
- Recent and on-going developments, current literature, and sources of information related to the operations of the assigned programs.
- Principles and procedures of record keeping and reporting.
- Techniques for effectively representing OC San in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, and various advocacy, business, professional, educational, regulatory, and legislative organizations.
- Principles and techniques for working with groups and fostering effective team interaction to ensure teamwork is conducted smoothly.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.

- Current equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination, including computers and software programs relevant to work performed.

Ability to:

- Plan, schedule, assign, and oversee activities of assigned workgroups or teams on a project and/or ongoing basis and promote the individual professional growth and development of less experienced staff; train others on work procedures; identify and implement effective course of action to complete assigned work; inspect the work of others and maintain established quality control standards.
- Recommend and implement goals and objectives for assigned public affairs, legislative, and community outreach programs.
- Perform the most complex public affairs work and provide professional support in the research, planning, design, and implementation of public affairs, community outreach, and legislative activities.
- Evaluate, develop, recommend, and implement new or enhanced systems, methods, policies, and procedures; monitor program progress in meeting goals and objectives; conduct updates with management staff to inform and advise on program progress; make adjustments as necessary.
- Prepare and administer an assigned program budget.
- Apply creative and critical thinking and analysis to a broad range of situations and in decision making and problem solving.
- Provide management with guidance and counsel on matters having public affairs impact.
- Identify target audiences, interpret technical information, and develop pertinent messages and a variety of written materials and content for informational purposes.
- Identify problems, research and analyze relevant information, evaluate alternative solutions and project consequences of proposed actions, develop and present recommendations and justification for solution, and implement recommendations.
- Respond tactfully, clearly, simply, concisely, and appropriately to inquiries from the public, press, or other agencies on sensitive issues in area of responsibility.
- Speak in public to large groups of people.
- Prepare clear and concise reports, correspondence, policies, procedures, and other written materials.
- Maintain confidentiality and be discreet in handling and processing confidential information and data.
- Effectively represent the department and OC San in meetings with governmental agencies, community groups, various business, professional, and regulatory organizations, and in meetings with individuals.
- Understand, interpret, and apply all pertinent laws, codes, regulations, policies and procedures, and standards relevant to work performed.
- Understand the organization, operation, and services of OC San and of outside agencies as necessary to assume assigned responsibilities.
- Operate a motor vehicle and travel to various OC San events, sites, and/or meeting sites.
- 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 tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, legal, and procedural guidelines.
- Comply with safe work practices and procedures in the workplace.
- Provide a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and OC San staff.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications relevant to work performed, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective 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 OC San.

1. Bachelor's degree from a college or university accredited by the U.S. Department of Education, with major coursework in communications, public relations, marketing, or a related field.
2. Five (5) years of increasingly responsible work experience in the development and implementation of public affairs, communication, and/or community outreach programs.

Licenses and/or Certifications:

- Must possess a valid California Class C Driver's License.

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

- Mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; ability to travel to various OC San events, sites, and/or meetings; primarily a sedentary office classification although standing in work areas and walking between work areas may be required; occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information; ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials, displays, equipment, and objects up to 35 pounds.
- Vision to read printed materials and a computer screen.
- Hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone.
- Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment.

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

- 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.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- May be required to work extended hours, including nights, weekends, and holidays when necessary.
- Probationary Period: All OC San employees, except classifications considered "at-will", are subject to the probationary period provisions as specified in the applicable Memorandum of Understanding, policies, and/or resolutions. Employees who have not yet successfully completed their initial probationary period serve "at-will" and may be released from employment without cause or recourse to any appeal or grievance procedures.
- Pre-Employment: All employment offers are contingent upon successful completion of OC San's pre-employment process, which includes a background investigation, a physical examination, and a drug screen.
- Work Location Assignment: Employees will be assigned to a work location based on business needs which may be located at any/all of OC San locations; this work location may be changed at any time.