

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 supervision, performs a variety of routine professional and technical duties involved in participating in the development, implementation, and coordination of public relations and community outreach activities within the Public Affairs Division; coordinates with other staff to write and edit copy for newsletters, brochures, presentations, information posters, and award applications; participates in a variety of special events including tours of OC San and displays in public venues; performs a variety of administrative tasks in support of assigned area of responsibility; and performs duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general supervision from assigned supervisory and/or managerial staff. Exercises no direct supervision of staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This classification is the first of three levels within the public affairs job series. The focus at this level is both a technical and professional role with work involving assisting 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-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)

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.

- Performs a variety of routine professional and technical 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 by gathering information, writing copy, editing, and preparing for publication; develops and reviews presentations and press releases; prepares various customer response letters; develops internal communications to employees and Board members including participating in the development of the internal employee

newsletter by assisting with production schedule, content, photography, editing, design, layout, and production.

- Promotes OC San on social media sites; posts, updates, and removes content from internal communication sites; responds to comments as appropriate.
- Assists in creating and producing media that visually communicates OC San 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.
- Plans for and participates in various special events including tours of OC San's wastewater facilities and hosting OC San's booth at community events.
- Assists in analyzing legislative proposals; participates in working with lobbyists and other organizations and provides preliminary recommendations to OC San on legislative positions.
- Assists with special research assignments, gathers data, and prepares reports for consideration; assists with preparation of award submittals.
- Attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast and maintains awareness of new trends, developments, and innovations in the field of public affairs and community outreach; researches emerging products and enhancements and their applicability to OC San's needs; incorporates new developments as appropriate.
- 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:

- 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, business letter writing, and basic report preparation.
- Principles and procedures of record keeping and reporting.
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, and ordinances relevant to the area(s) of responsibility.
- 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:

- Perform a variety of routine professional and technical duties in support of public affairs and community outreach programs including participating in researching, designing, planning, and implementing public affairs or educational campaigns.
- Identify target audiences and develop pertinent messages.
- Participate in the development of a variety of written materials for informational purposes.
- Respond tactfully, clearly, concisely, and appropriately to inquiries from the public, press, or other agencies on sensitive issues in area of responsibility.
- Express thoughts clearly and simply.
- Speak publicly in front of large audiences.
- Operate a motor vehicle and travel to various OC San events, sites, and/or meetings.

- Prepare clear and concise reports, correspondence, and other written materials.
- Maintain confidentiality in maintaining critical and sensitive information, records, and reports.
- Maintain accurate files and records.
- Understand, interpret, and apply all pertinent laws, codes, regulations, policies and procedures, and standards relevant to work performed.
- Independently organize work, set priorities, meet critical time deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and legal 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.

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.