

SENIOR 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 direction, performs a variety of complex professional-level duties involved in developing, implementing, and coordinating public relations, community outreach, and legislative affairs activities within the Public Affairs Division; provides creative services and technical writing for news releases, newsletters, brochures, presentations, information posters, and award applications; coordinates special events including displays in public venues; performs analysis of legislation, meets with elected officials, and works cooperatively with state and federal lobbyists; and performs duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

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

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This classification is the second of three levels within the public affairs job series. Positions at this level perform the more difficult assignments, projects, analyses, and programs assigned to classes within the series, requiring the use of considerable discretion and independent judgement in performing assigned work and full and thorough knowledge of the concepts, practices, procedures, and policies of public affairs. Assignments are given with general guidelines and positions are responsible for establishing objectives, timelines, and methods to deliver work products or services. Work is typically reviewed upon completion for soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and requirements. Responsibilities may include providing guidance on programs and/or projects and providing coaching and mentoring to lower-level staff. This class is distinguished from the Principal Public Affairs Specialist in that the latter is responsible for developing, implementing, and managing the most complex public affairs projects and programs having significant OC San-wide impact and providing functional and technical direction to assigned staff.

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 complex professional-level duties involved in developing, coordinating, and implementing assigned public affairs and community outreach activities; provides a wide variety of support including identifying events, defining outreach objectives, creating displays, recruiting staff, monitoring budgets, and tracking effectiveness.
- Creates and monitors the annual legislative plan by creating guidelines to determine OC San's position and ensure OC San's needs are met; analyzes legislative proposals; works with lobbyists and other organizations and guides and provides recommendations to OC San on legislative positions.

- Coordinates the communication and advocacy program for OC San; communicates and coordinates meetings with and between elected officials and staff; plans and holds advocacy days; advocates on OC San's behalf.
- Monitors grant opportunities; serves as OC San's coordinator for identifying grants, working with grant writers, and collaborating with the management team.
- 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; develops internal employee newsletter to include production schedule, content, photography, editing, design, layout, and production.
- Works with OC San departments in coordinating, developing, and clarifying information and ensuring accurate facts for projects; translates technical information into layman's terms.
- Develops and creates collateral material that visually communicates OC San information or services in a manner that will appeal to the target audience; creates and produces material under established time and budget constraints.
- Interacts with the general public and the media; keeps the public informed about OC San activities; responds to questions and inquiries regarding OC San operations and activities.
- Coordinates, manages, and participates in various special events.
- Participates in the development of OC San's websites; recommends site content.
- Participates in the preparation and administration of assigned budget; submits budget recommendations; monitors expenditures.
- Implements and administers special programs and projects; conducts special research assignments, gathers data, and prepares reports for consideration by management.
- Provides leadership and guidance to others on programs and/or projects; as a program and/or project leader, may direct, assign, train, monitor, and review 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.
- 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 as appropriate into programs.
- 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:

- Concepts, practices, procedures, methods, and techniques used in public relations, media relations, and community outreach.
- Operations, services, and activities of public affairs and community outreach programs.
- Methods and techniques used in developing communications for internal and external audiences.
- Legislative functions and processes.
- 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.
- 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.
- Basic principles and practices of budget preparation and grants administration.

- 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.
- Techniques for providing guidance and training to less experienced staff.
- 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 complex professional-level duties in support of public affairs and community outreach programs including researching, designing, planning, and implementing public affairs or educational campaigns.
- Apply creative and critical thinking and analysis to a broad range of situations including decision-making and problem-solving.
- 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, and develop and present recommendations and justification for solution.
- Respond tactfully, clearly, concisely, and appropriately to inquiries from the public, press, or other agencies on sensitive issues in area of responsibility.
- Speak publicly in front of large audiences.
- Prepare clear and concise reports, correspondence, policies, procedures, and other written materials.
- Maintain confidentiality in maintaining critical and sensitive information, records, and reports.
- Maintain accurate files and records.
- Provide direction to others in proper work procedures.
- Resolve conflict by establishing workable solutions and alternative approaches.
- Inspect the work of others and maintain established quality control standards.
- 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.
- Operate a motor vehicle and travel to various OC San events, sites, and/or meeting sites.
- Independently organize work, set priorities, meet critical 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.
2. Three (3) years of work experience in the development 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.