

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Class Definition

Under administrative direction, performs difficult professional and administrative work, managing and directing a comprehensive, proactive and influential public information program through a variety of media.

Distinguishing Characteristics

Public Affairs Officer responsibilities include handling most assignments and issues with considerable independence under general management direction. There are regular contacts with elected and appointed officials, the various media, staff, citizens and a variety of other customers. These contacts require tact, discretion and persuasion. This is an unclassified position in which the incumbent serves at the will of the City Manager.

Typical Tasks

(This list of samples of job duties and responsibilities is neither inclusive nor exclusive. Consequently, this information may not reflect Essential Functions for this class.)

Serves as spokesperson and liaison for the City to the media on a variety of topics. Establishes, promotes and maintains effective relations with the media and advises officials, departments and employees on how to properly frame issues and present information to facilitate public understanding.

Oversees the City Image program. Assures that the City's website is current and relevant, and that City accomplishments are highlighted and reported to appropriate media sources.

Keeps informed on programs and projects and provides advice on the level, method and timing of press releases, press conferences, and media events.

Creates pro-active relationships with members of the local media and serves as the staff's contact person with the media to ensure a single source of the most accurate information.

Prepares and assembles information for the Mayor and Council as they meet with Federal and State officials regarding City matters.

Provides guidance and advice to the Mayor and Council, City Manager, and other staff on public relations matters and the impact of various programs and projects. Identifies opportunities for promoting the City's programs and projects. Develops, manages and administers strategic communication plans, public education and awareness campaigns and community relations initiatives.

Implements a City Cable TV Channel to feature activities from each Council District, including programs with the Council members.

Prepares and directs the drafting of speeches, press releases, public service announcements, brochures, flyers, pamphlets, newsletters, articles and scripts for City officials and staff which enhance the City's public image.

Ensures sensitive and controversial matters are managed in the most discreet manner possible.

Proactively solicits information from officials and staff regarding important projects and programs and produces timely release of information on their progress and status.

Plans, organizes and implements multimedia events and special publicity campaigns for various projects, programs and issues.

Attends all Council meetings and other official City functions, actively participates in a variety of organizations and may either assist or coordinate City's efforts to obtain various awards and recognition.

Performs related duties as required.

Knowledge, Abilities and Skills

Knowledge of the principles and practices of journalism and public relations, including understanding of requirements of various media.

Knowledge of the informational media appropriate for the dissemination of various kinds of information and publicity material.

Knowledge of the principles and practices of public administration, local government organization and administration.

Knowledge of the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and the Brown Act.

Knowledge of the principles of marketing and promotion.

Skill in proper written, visual and verbal communication.

Skill in handling multiple projects, diverse activities and events simultaneously.

Skill in effectively dealing with the media and the public.

Ability to maintain effective working relationship with the Mayor and Council, Department Directors, employees, media and the general public and to operate effectively regardless of circumstances.

Ability to carry out, under direction, special and continuing assignments requiring organization of materials, concepts and ideas.

Ability to write creatively and to edit reports and publications covering a wide range of subject matter.

Ability to target messages effectively to various and multiple audiences; to leverage Internet and Cable TV technologies to facilitate information sharing; and manage crisis communications.

Minimum Qualifications

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's Degree, with major course work in business/public administration, public relations, journalism, mass communication, or related field; and three years of public relations or mass communications experience. Additional qualifying experience may be substituted for the required education on a year for year basis.

Necessary Special Requirement

Possession of a valid California Driver's License may be required at time of appointment.

APPROVED: (Signature on File)
Director

DATE: 05/18/2001

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