

PUBLIC INFORMATION SPECIALIST

DEFINITION OF WORK

Employee in this classification performs responsible professional public relations work coordinating the information flow to the public, employees and other units of governments on a broad range of County programs, activities and services and preparing informational materials for release to and maintaining effective relations with the news media and the general public. An employee in this class performs professional public relations work by gathering, disseminating timely and accurate information related to County government functions and events. The position works closely with and performs a coordinative role with the media, civic organizations, County government staff and officials in the accurate dissemination of information. Work includes providing information through various medium including press releases, taking photographs, updating the web site and social media, coordinating interviews with subject matter experts for radio and TV and overseeing the live broadcast feed for Board of Commissioner meeting. The position also assists in key communications during times of emergencies and disasters. The position works with a moderate degree of independence. Tact and sound judgment must be applied in performing work as the position is expected to disseminate potentially sensitive and critical information in unbiased fashion, and within the laws, statutes, and policies dictated by providing information in a government setting. Work requires knowledge of journalism and significant writing skills, as well as use of office and media technology and work requires coordination, organization and research skills. Work involves considerable contact with the public, local government officials, and the media. Work is performed under the direction of the Chief Public Information Officer and is evaluated through conferences and the analysis of work performed.

EXAMPLES OF WORK

Employee in this class writes news releases, weekly newspaper column, and bi-weekly newspaper section; designs bi-weekly newspaper section, coordinates with departments on content and topics to be covered, edits and proofreads materials created by departments, gathers information and photos for communications; assists with monthly television show production and weekly radio show appearances by arranging sources interviews, creating questions, and coordination with radio stations; updates website and social media outlets with timely news and serves on web content team tasked with improving the County website; takes photographs for website, social media and medial releases; coordinates submission for employee newsletter and prepares information for the graphic designer; writes remarks for Commissioners for public appearances; manages live broadcast feed of Board of Commissioners meetings; archives DVDs of meetings and submits to Information Services for website posting; assists with the coordination of outreach events, displays, presentation and programming with various community groups; provides media and public information requests as needed in the absence of the Chief Public Information Officer; performs related work as required.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Education and Experience:

Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with a Bachelor's degree in journalism, public relations, media communications, or closely related field and two years of a progressively responsible governmental public information experience; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Considerable knowledge of public information and principles and practices of public relations and media relations in a government setting; considerable knowledge of writing and editing; considerable knowledge of computer systems including social media and other methods of information research and distribution; general knowledge of public relations theories, principles, practices and techniques; knowledge of the geographic layout of the County; skill in effectively expressing ideas orally and in writing; ability to write public information reports and releases; ability to gather and analyze facts on a variety of subject matter and to assemble and present concise reports and presentations; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with County officials, news media, and the general public; ability to communicate complex ideas effectively, orally and in writing; ability to use common electronic devices efficiently and effectively; ability to exercise analytical judgment in applying standards to a variety of work situations.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Must be available for evening and week-end work as required. Background check with local law enforcement agency required. Some positions within classification may require a valid North Carolina driver's license. Condition of Employment: Each applicant who is tendered an offer for employment for any position with Cumberland County shall be tested for the use of drugs specified in the county policy. Refusal to submit to testing or a confirmed positive test shall be basis for withdrawal of the conditional employment offer.

ADA REQUIREMENTS

Requires the ability to perform simple movements requiring moderate coordination. Tasks regularly require oral communications ability. Tasks are regularly performed without exposure to adverse environmental conditions.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Must be able to physically perform the basic life operational functions of stooping, reaching, walking, fingering, grasping, hearing, talking, and repetitive motions.
Must be able to perform light work exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 10 pounds of force frequently, and/or up to 10 pounds of force constantly to move objects.
Must possess the visual acuity to prepare data and statistics, work with accounting processes, handle proofing tasks, do extensive reading, and operate a computer terminal.