

PUBLIC INFORMATION SPECIALIST

MAJOR FUNCTION

This is an administrative para-professional staff position providing proficiency in public relations, information programs for the Board of County Commissioners and the Board's departments and agencies; coordinating the action and work in the public information and citizen service/referral division of a particular department office; and assisting with various administrative duties as assigned.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The following statements describe the principle functions of this job and its scope of responsibility, but should not be considered an all-inclusive listing of work requirements. Individuals may perform other duties as assigned, including working in other functional areas to cover absences or relief, to equalize peak work periods, or otherwise to balance the work load.

- Possesses knowledge of the functions, operations, and structure of County government and the community. Knowledge of basic journalistic principles and practices.
- Coordinates the action and work of the citizen service center in the referral and resolution of customer issues, as part of the public affairs division in the department assigned, by responding to the public information needs of the citizens of Marion County. Maintains a database of complaints and resolutions. Customer issues may be received by a variety of media, including the Internet.
- Provides information about government services, and assistance to the public in matters concerning Marion County government. Assists with referrals to ensure citizens receive accurate direction regarding County government offices and information.
- Acts as a mediator in disputes between the public and county departments. Performs field investigations, when necessary, and present written opinions of findings to the Director, County Administrator, and the Board or various boards associated with the department to which assigned.
- Plans, designs, writes, edits, and produces informational publications on County government and related public interest material.
- Writes and develops the vehicle for dissemination of public information through the media, including newspapers, radio and television regarding public events involving members of the Board of County Commissioners and other various boards.
- Maintains media contacts for all regular Board meetings and special events.
- May assist with the television production of meetings, including coordination of equipment. Attends meetings and functions on behalf of the County to provide information on County services.
- May be required to make presentations regarding County programs and make public service announcements.
- Updates voice mail and voice response messages and coordinates such information

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with departments to ensure accurate timely information.

- Prepares and distributes the employee newsletter; updates telephone directory and assists with editing all types of public information brochures. Assembles information, including information for the Board's annual report.
- Serve as photographer in the support of communication activities.
- Reports to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at MCSO/DEM, when activated, [or in the field with the Emergency Mobile Command Center (EMCC)] and advises the media, State of Florida DEM, County Administrator, and County Commissioners of existing situations within Marion County to reference the particular department assigned.
- Establishes a mechanism that efficiently provides and disseminates vital information to the public in the event of, or threat of, an actual or potential major catastrophic emergency or disaster (this ESF applies to natural & man-made disaster having any effect on Marion County and the need for the coordination of public information arises).

SECONDARY FUNCTIONS

- Performs other duties as assigned.
- During natural or man-made disasters, may perform duties as agent for Emergency Support Function 14 (ESF-14) by communicating with the Marion County Sheriff's Office, Division of Emergency Management (MCSO/DEM) during such disasters.
- Performs emergency management PIO duties during such events by coordinating response information between emergency operations and field information offices, and disseminates information received from DEM to County departments.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

This is a front-line position for providing excellent customer service, in person or by telephone, to the general public, County employees, County residents, and the news media.

SUPERVISION

Functions as a lead worker for a small group of employees (one to five) in the absence of a designated lead position. May review the work product of others. Provides guidance, advice, and assistance to others on work assignments. Provides work direction.

EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, LICENSES, AND CERTIFICATIONS

Education and Experience

Two years college course work in administration or public relations with a Bachelor's Degree in Communications preferred; with three years of progressively responsible experience working in the field of public information and public relations or closely related areas; or an equivalent combination of education or experience. Additional experience in the above is desirable.

Licenses

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Possession of a valid Florida Drivers License.

JOB SKILLS

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements are representative of the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Language Skills

- Ability to read, analyze, and interpret common scientific and technical journals, financial reports, and legal documents.
- Ability to speak effectively and clearly in public, to prepare clear and concise reports, and make oral presentations to groups.
- Ability to respond to common inquiries or complaints from customers, regulatory agencies, or members of the business community.
- Ability to communicate tactfully, courteously, and effectively with disgruntled and dissatisfied customers.
- Ability to effectively present information to top management, public groups, and/or boards. Ability to establish and maintain good working relationships with other County departments and outside agencies.
- Ability to plan and organize effective community information programs. Develop, plan and write publications, pamphlets and newsletters using available graphic tools and resources.
- Ability to understand and explain technical information to the public and answer questions.
- Ability to plan and organize informational programs and to coordinate special events.
- Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing.

Mathematical Skills

- Ability to add, subtract, multiply, and divide in all units of measure, using whole numbers, common fractions, and decimals.
- Ability to compute rate, ratio, and percent and to draw and interpret bar graphs.

Problem Solving Abilities

- Ability to plan, organize, and supervise assigned projects.
- Ability to solve practical problems and deal with a variety of concrete variables in situations where only limited standardization exists.

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- Ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form. Interprets complex and detailed technical data.
- Study manual work process to determine most effective methods for essential tasks.

Specialized Skills and Abilities

- Ability to prioritize data and tasks and meet multiple deadlines.
- Ability to coordinate citizen service center activities within the public information office.
- Ability to compile, organize, and analyze data.
- Knowledge of computer applications with the ability to enter, access, retrieve, and extrapolate information. Ability to use a computer spreadsheet program.
- Ability to perform photography assignments.
- Ability to remain calm in stressful situations.
- Ability to take a teamwork approach to the job by cooperating with others, offering to help others when needed, and considering the larger organizational or team goals rather than individual concerns. Includes the ability to build a constructive team spirit where team members are committed to the goals and objectives of the team.

Machines and Equipment

The employee will be required to operate a computer, calculator, telephone, fax machine, copy machine, 35 mm camera, video camera, digital camera, overhead projector, video projector, video tape recorder, copier, and other general office equipment in the completion of the tasks of the position.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

While performing the duties of this job, the employee will occasionally be required to climb or balance, stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl; will regularly be required to stand, walk, and sit; and will frequently be required to use hands to finger, handle, or feel, reach with hands and arms, talk or hear, and lift up to twenty-five pounds. Vision requirements are close, distance, color, and peripheral vision, depth perception, and ability to adjust focus, with normal or corrected vision to 20/20 for video and photographic purposes.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. The majority of essential functions are performed in a desk area. Manual dexterity to use computer keyboard, answer phone, use copier, fax machine, and video/photography equipment. While performing the duties of this job, the employee will occasionally be exposed to the risks of outdoor weather conditions. The noise level for this environment will be moderate.

Established: 2/00

Category:5

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Pay Grade: 16

Job Description Number: 5011

Status: E

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