



Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST I/II

DEFINITION

Under direct or general supervision, plans, develops, coordinates, and provides project management and technical support for District Public Affairs functions, projects and programs, including public information, media relations, marketing, community outreach and engagement, and digital, website and social media content creation. Responsible for creating and maintaining a high level of positive public awareness of the District through a variety of public information mechanisms; develops and coordinates a variety of special projects aimed at providing information and assistance to the general public, community groups, organizations, local government agencies, partner agencies, and the media on District open spaces and related projects and programs; and performs related work as required. Ability to work directly with constituents while developing personal contact with community and youth groups, local governments, business and health organizations and other interest groups.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives direct or general supervision from a Public Affairs Specialist III and/or the Public Affairs Manager. Exercises no direct supervision over staff. May provide technical and functional direction and training over lower-level staff, interns, and/or volunteers, and/or consultants.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

Public Affairs Specialist I: This is the entry-level class in the Public Affairs Specialist series, which works on the development, planning, implementation and evaluation of public affairs programs and projects including: public information, media relations, marketing, community outreach and engagement, and digital, website and social media content creation. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied and are performed with greater independence. Positions at this level usually perform most of the duties required of the positions at the II level but are not expected to function at the same skill level and usually exercise less independent discretion and judgement 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. Since this class is often used as a training class, incumbent may have limited direct work experience.

Public Affairs Specialist II: This is a journey-level class in the Public Affairs Specialist series, responsible for the full range of duties required to independently developing and implementing projects and programs in alignment with the District's policies and procedures. Successful performance of the work requires the frequent use of tact, discretion, and independent judgement, knowledge of best practices and District/departmental activities and priorities, along with extensive staff, public and organizational contact. Team members in this role support the work of the District by providing a professional-level communications expertise and project/program management in the areas of public information, media relations, marketing, community outreach and engagement, and digital, website and social media content creation.

Positions in the Public Affairs Specialist I and II series are flexibly staffed based on skill and experience. Advancement from the I level to the II level requires at least two (2) years of experience at the I level and after gaining the knowledge, skill, and experience which meet the qualifications for and after demonstrating the ability to perform the work of the higher-level class.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS *(Illustrative Only)*

Management reserves the right to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of various positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.

- Plans and participates in the operations and activities of the District's public affairs programs and special projects, including the development, planning, and implementation of a variety of communications activities aimed at increasing public knowledge of, support for, and participation with the District and its projects and programs.
- Creates content for a variety of uses, including web pages, social media posts, newsletter articles, videos, brochures, reports and other collateral, press releases/media alerts, op-eds, memos, signage, presentations and other materials to create and maintain a prominent level of positive public awareness and trust; creates, edits and proofreads text to ensure accurate, effective and consistent communication; follows brand standards and Associated Press (AP) style guidelines.
- Develops and implements communication and public relations plans for assigned projects, preserves and programs; establishes, tracks, analyzes metrics and reports results to evaluate effectiveness of plans and propose creative solutions to meet goals; participates in the preparation and administration of the budgets for assigned projects and programs; forecasts additional funds needed for materials and supplies.
- Plans and oversees development of printed and digital publications and other outreach materials, including articles, maps, brochures, newsletters, reports, and other promotional materials; serves as editor for paper/electronic publications; serves as project manager for internal and contracted contributors, reviewing materials to ensure quality and brand standards are met.
- Plans, coordinates, and executes community outreach, engagement and events in relation to project, preserve and programs; represents District at community and partner events related to District business, including partnering on special projects related to public relations and speaking at various community events and industry association meetings.
- Establishes and maintains liaison, communication, and cooperation with a wide range of constituent groups and individuals, organizations, associations, and appropriate governmental bodies to achieve District goals and objectives; endeavors to improve methods, techniques, and materials to increase ongoing communication and cooperation with stakeholders served by the District.
- Receives inquiries and provides prompt, clear and accurate information to the public regarding a wide variety of topics, including by successfully communicating with a variety of news media as related to assigned projects.
- Researches publicity and media opportunities, drafts releases, proactively pitches stories, monitors coverage and corrects errors promptly as needed.
- Implements departmental and District objectives, policies, procedures and work standards, including recommending improvements.
- Participates in professional group meetings; stays current on trends and innovations in the field of communications, media relations, marketing, community outreach and engagement, digital, web and social media content creation; researches emerging products and enhancements and their applicability to District needs; takes active role in professional development.
- Serves as project manager for special projects as assigned; prepares work plans, staff reports, memos, and presentations as directed.
- Plans, organizes, assigns, supervises, and reviews the work of assigned staff, interns and volunteers performing work on behalf of Public Affairs.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

When serving as media relations lead *(including those required in the Examples of Essential Functions)*

- Serves as public information officer. Develops and maintains strategic relationships with a wide range of media outlets, including local, state and national contacts. Keeps media list updated in contacts database.
- Coordinates response to media inquiries, press conferences and other special events related to media and public information. Prepares key messages and coaches subject matter experts to prepare for interviews. Provides training directly or through consultants to other staff on media skills.
- Monitors, analyzes and reports on media coverage in relation to KPIs; develops strategies to improve media relations program; coordinates media roundup email.
- Creates editorial calendar, coordinates and edits content and oversees production of quarterly print newsletter.

When serving as community outreach and public engagement lead *(including those required in the Examples of Essential Functions)*

- Coordinates large event production, including writing requests for proposal, identifying and selecting consultants, contractors and vendors, drafts and monitors contracts through completion.
- Develops, coordinates and implements community outreach plan and calendar, including presentations, events and activities for community fairs, festivals, community-based organizations, open houses, schools, service clubs and business associations that raise awareness of the District with target audiences. Serves as the Public Affairs Department liaison to Visitor Services and coordinates, communicates with and provides guidance to community outreach volunteers.
- Builds and maintains positive relations with community-based organizations; keeps contacts database updated with relevant partner contacts. Develops, coordinates and implements community outreach partnerships that advance District priorities and goals.
- Manages District donations, commemorative benches, photo contest and other public-facing outreach programs.
- Manages District contact database, maintains interested party notification and list hygiene procedures. Trains other staff on appropriate use of tools to maintain database quality.
- Coordinates production of and maintains supply of outreach materials and items.

When serving as web administration/digital content creation lead *(including those required in the essential functions)*

- Oversees and administers the District's digital content channels, including website, social and app platforms and related systems and equipment.
- Develops strategy, content and related procedures and guidelines for digital channels, including multiple social media platforms.
- Creates, writes, curates, edits and proofreads content for multichannel communications, upholding brand standards and ensuring high-quality, error-free public information; able to independently seek content material for posting and prepare print-ready written and graphic material.
- Utilizes a wide range of software and hardware to successfully complete projects, including converting text, images and video into web-appropriate formats.
- Conceptualizes and prepares preliminary designs through final products to translate abstract ideas into viable formats for various digital communications products. Manages contract process and collaborates with external graphic design and web development contractors.
- Maintains responsibility for the overall navigational design, functionality and content quality of the website, and plans strategies to disseminate information to the public in an effective and positive manner.

- Creates editorial calendar, coordinates and contributes content and produces monthly newsletter.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Principles and practices of Public Affairs program goal setting, development, implementation and evaluation.
- Practices of researching program issues, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.
- Principles, practices, and techniques used in the conduct of an effective public information and publicity program in a public agency.
- Principles and applications of marketing communications.
- Basic principles and practices of graphic design and print/digital content production, including an understanding of design concepts and applications.
- Methods and techniques of public speaking.
- Recent and ongoing developments, current literature, and sources of information related to public relations.
- Basic principles of supervision and training.
- Basic principles and practices of budget development, administration, and accountability.
- Applicable Federal and State laws, District regulations, codes, policies, and procedures.
- Record-keeping principles and procedures.
- Modern office practices, methods and computer equipment.
- Computer applications related to the work, including Microsoft Office, Teams and Adobe Acrobat.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation.
- Techniques for effectively representing the District in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, and various business, professional, educational, regulatory, and legislative organizations, and various media.
- Techniques for providing a prominent level of customer service to public and District staff, in person, virtually and over the telephone.

Ability to:

- Plan, research, organize, coordinate, and implement a variety of public information, media, and legislative related activities and programs.
- Identify and implement effective course of action to complete assigned work.
- Interpret, apply, and explain complex laws, codes, regulations, and ordinances.
- Effectively represent the District in meetings with the public, community groups, organizations, other governmental agencies, and professional, regulatory, and legislative organizations.
- Research, analyze, and evaluate new service delivery methods, procedures, and techniques.
- Research, develop, write, and deliver accurate and effective communications.
- Develop effective public and community outreach strategies and campaigns; work effectively with diverse groups of different ages and various socio-economic backgrounds; listen to and discuss problems and complaints tactfully.
- Effectively tell stories using written materials, graphics, video, etc.
- Analyze, interpret, summarize and present administrative and technical information and data in an effective manner.
- Assist in the preparation and administration of assigned budgets; allocate limited resources in a cost-effective manner as directed by the Public Affairs Manager.
- Prepare clear and concise reports, correspondence, policies, procedures, and other written materials.
- Make accurate arithmetic, financial, and statistical computations.

- Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner; organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical time deadlines.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and specialized software applications programs.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence and independent judgment within general policy, procedural and legal guidelines.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.
- Compose clear and concise correspondence and reports.
- Understand and follow oral and written instructions.
- Establish and maintain a variety of filing, record-keeping, and tracking systems.
- Provide guidance and training to District staff and assigned interns and volunteers.

When serving as web administration/digital content lead (*including those required in the Qualifications section under Knowledge of and Ability to*)

Knowledge of:

- Advanced knowledge of website administration, content creation, strategy and development, manipulation and finalization.
- Principles and practices of creating effective digital content, design and layout, web user interface and navigation.
- Principles and practices of social media content marketing for the public sector.
- Applications and functions of computer hardware, software, and peripheral devices.
- Customer relationship management and content management platforms, such as Hubspot, and Drupal, including add-in tools such as Wufoo Forms, Microsoft Forms, Google Analytics and more for usability, analytics, etc..
- Graphic and video programs such as Canva, ArcGIS, Adobe Creative Suite and similar other applications.
- Front-end web development languages such as HTML, CSS and Java Script, as well as current desktop and mobile browsers, and the ability to learn other emerging web technologies.

Ability to:

- Independently create, maintain, and update website content, page layouts and overall usability; curate and create content that resonates or is timely, develop wording and visual graphics to inform and inspire readers.
- Write clearly and concisely for a variety of content channels, including online, video and social; edit and proofread the content written by others.
- Create, edit and produce effective short-form video content for use in social and other digital platforms.
- Create attractive web page designs and social media post graphics that follow brand guidelines.
- Effectively integrate front-end templates with back-end functionality.
- Analyze and evaluate data to formulate, propose and implement recommended action plans.
- Learn to use new and existing software and hardware.
- Present effective training programs and train users in the application and use of website content management, customer relationship management, email production and social media platform software.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

Public Affairs Specialist I/II: Equivalent to graduation from an accredited college or university with major coursework in public relations, communications, business administration, or a related field, plus the following based on the position level:

Public Affairs Specialist I: No experience is required. One (1) year of increasingly responsible experience in a public affairs or community outreach program is highly desirable.

Public Affairs Specialist II: Two (2) years of increasingly responsible experience in a public affairs or community outreach program.

When serving as web administration/digital content creation lead

Equivalent to graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in journalism, public relations, marketing, computer science, information systems, or a related field, and three (3) years of increasingly responsible experience in digital content strategy, website design, administration, and development.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of a valid California Driver's License.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various District and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen, including colored marketing material and web content; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone. This is primarily a sedentary office classification, although standing in work areas and walking between work areas is often required. Finger dexterity is needed to frequently access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard, or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification frequently bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects weighing up to 25 pounds.

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may work in the field and occasionally be exposed to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, or road hazards. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

WORKING CONDITIONS

May be required to work evenings, weekends, and holidays.

EFFECTIVE: March 2018
REVISED: October 2023
FLSA: Exempt