

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

This is a managerial position in the Office of the County Executive which is responsible for public communications and relations work performed in the implementation of a public information program for County government. The person in this position is responsible for researching, collecting and providing information and providing confidential advice on issues which will result in policy determinations by the County Executive and high level administrative staff. These policy determinations have economic, political or social implications of considerable impact on the public, business and specialized agencies and groups in the County. The work also involves advising the County Executive, department heads and other managerial staff in the communication of county government information, programs and policies to the media and the general public. The incumbent acts as spokesperson for the Office of the County Executive and coordinates press conferences with the media. Work is performed under the general direction of the County Executive with latitude for the exercise of independent judgment in carrying out work assignments to promote the County's programs and policies. This position is privy to information relating to a number of confidential and sensitive issues that are generated from the County Executive's office. Supervision may be exercised over the work of technical and support staff in the area of communications and public relations. Work is often performed outside of conventional hours and under tight and changing deadlines.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

The following is indicative of the level and types of activities performed by incumbents in this title. It is not meant to be all inclusive and does not preclude a supervisor from assigning activities not listed which could reasonably be expected to be performed by an employee in this title.

1. Acts as spokesperson for the Office of the County Executive and acts as liaison with County departments in their relationships with the media, approving any responses to inquiries relating to the County;
2. Plans and directs major media releases from all County departments on a variety of topics, and interprets new policies and procedures as directed by the County Executive;
3. Formulates, implements and evaluates policies for county-wide public relations and promotion programs, ensuring effective implementation by maintaining liaison with departments to provide guidance and review prepared materials;
4. Directs the preparation of communication materials, programs, promotions and projects, including news releases, publication medias, social media, video materials, etc., both in written and automated formats;
5. Establishes and maintains liaison with press correspondents, television, radio, newspaper editors and publishers;
6. Keeps apprised of all issues in the County that are of concern to the Executive office and the public; keeps abreast of current or emerging public issues that have an impact on the policies or operations of the County;
7. Attends conferences, meetings, seminars, public hearings, and presentations to gather information and represent the Office of the County Executive;
8. Gathers confidential data and other information as needed and requested by the County Executive; prepares reports, news releases, speeches and other types of presentations;
9. Attends fiscal and policy planning meetings to provide input and to prepare communication material which interprets and conveys the intent of the County Executive;
10. Maintains a variety of databases and files with contact information and other reference materials on a wide variety of topics which would be useful to the Executive and Budget offices;

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR (Cont'd)

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES: (Cont'd)

11. Writes, edits and reviews drafts and final texts of speeches and other communications made by the County Executive;
12. Serves as official photographer at a variety of public functions and events for the Executive office;
13. Researches and compiles statistical and informational data and prepares written and oral presentations as needed by the County Executive and other governmental officials;
14. Prepares and edits County newsletter, news releases and reviews and edits material prepared by other staff before release to the press and public.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

Thorough knowledge of the principles and practices of public relations and effective communications;

Thorough knowledge of the techniques and practices of verbal and written communications;

Thorough knowledge of writing style, vocabulary, spelling and grammar;

Good knowledge of the use and limitations of various media needed to reach specific audiences of importance to particular agencies or interest groups;

Good knowledge of the functions, goals and programs of county agencies;

Ability to use computer applications such as spreadsheets, word processing, e-mail, database and photographic software;

Ability to research and verify information and develop it into a variety of informative reports;

Ability to develop and maintain effective relationships with a wide variety of people including government officials, agency representatives, media personnel and the public;

Ability to proofread prose and graphic materials and edit the work of others;

Ability to exercise tact and good judgment in maintaining the confidentiality of issues and policies that are under consideration;

Personal characteristics commensurate with the demands of the position;

Physical characteristics commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: (SUGGESTED ONLY)

Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university with a Master's degree in journalism, public relations, communications or a closely related field and five years of public information or related experience, at least two of which must have been at an administrative or managerial level.

ADOPTED: 01/01/13