

CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH
CLASS SPECIFICATION



TITLE: PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

PERSONNEL COMMISSION APPROVAL: APRIL 16, 2025 (REVISED)

COUNCIL APPROVAL: NOVEMBER 15, 2022

JOB CODE: 0780

EMPLOYMENT STATUS: REGULAR FULL-TIME

UNIT REPRESENTATION: MEO

FLSA STATUS: EXEMPT

EEOC CODE: PROFESSIONALS

JOB SUMMARY

Under administrative direction, oversees and manages programs and activities of the public information function within the City Manager's Office or the Police Department; coordinates media and community relations activities to ensure publicity and outreach for City or Safety programs, services, and events.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Reports to: Assistant City Manager / Deputy City Manager, Public Affairs Manager,
Police Lieutenant / Police Captain, or as assigned by department head
Supervises: Administrative and/or clerical staff

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The Public Affairs Officer's primary responsibility is to manage assigned public information functions for the City and/or Police Department and be relied upon to act as a spokesperson for the City of Huntington Beach. It differs from the Public Affairs Manager in that the Manager coordinates the City's overall public information function and short and long-term strategic planning.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL DUTIES

- Researches, composes, edits and issues press releases, news articles, feature stories and public service announcements for print, radio, cable television, and electronic media.
- Interfaces with the media and conducts on camera interviews
- Organizes/conducts press briefings and works with City Council and the Executive Team to develop messaging

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- Responds to inquiries from the media, City officials, community groups, businesses, the general public, and employees
- Acts as the City's Public Information Officer for disaster events and works effectively in an Emergency Operations Center setting
- Develops, implements, and coordinates a comprehensive communications program for the City or Police Department; identifies appropriate messages and communications tools for targeted audiences; employs evaluation measures to assess impact
- Integrates the City's vision, mission, strategic goals and key issues into educational, informational and marketing communications aimed at the general public and employees
- Coordinates and participates in presentations to City visitors and community members; coordinates, schedules and may lead public tours of City facilities
- Provides briefings to the City Council, City Manager, and/or Police Chief concerning public information program activities and events within the City
- Oversees staff and manages projects of the City's public access cable channel
- Assists with the development of the budget for public information activities; authorizes expenditures and approves invoices
- Oversees the database of public relations contacts and distribution of media materials
- Takes photos as necessary for use in media materials
- Attends leadership, management, supervisory and other relevant training to stay abreast of industry best practices
- Travels to offsite locations within and outside the City
- Reports to work as scheduled and works a variety of schedules including evenings, weekends and holidays as required for events and public safety response
- Maintains regular and consistent attendance record
- Performs other related duties as assigned

The preceding duties have been provided as examples of the essential types of work performed by positions within this job classification. The City, at its discretion, may add, modify, change or rescind work assignments as needed.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination of education, training, and experience that would likely provide the knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform in the position is qualifying. A typical combination includes:

Knowledge of:

- Principles and practices of public information and media and community relations

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in a municipal government environment

- Federal, State and local laws, rules, and regulations governing the disclosure of information by a public agency
- Principles and practices of research, journalism, graphic design, print media layout and broadcast media production
- Interview techniques, communications media services and resources
- Strategies of external and internal marketing, public relations, public information, community outreach, community partnerships and media relations
- Corporate advertising, including electronic, print, outdoor and direct mail research techniques and methods
- Emergency Operations Center functions and practices
- Office procedures, methods, and equipment including computers and applicable software applications
- English usage, spelling, grammar, and punctuation

Ability to:

- Develop and implement comprehensive public information programs utilizing various forms of media
- Communicate a consistent and effective message through various mediums – including digital, live in-studio, radio, print, etc.
- Manage and respond to media inquiries relating to public safety incidents, taking into consideration regulations related to HIPAA and active investigations
- Gather, assess, and summarize information for public distribution, remaining mindful of potential political and public safety impacts
- Effectively utilize current and trending social media tools and applications
- Prepare comprehensive reports, correspondence, press releases, speeches, information and promotion packages and news articles
- Manage a variety of complex and challenging projects simultaneously to completion
- Exercise judgment, initiative, decisiveness, and creativity necessary in situations involving the direction, control and planning of multiple programs, and in critical or unexpected situations involving considerable risk or loss to the City
- Establish and maintain effective professional relationships with those contacted in the course of work
- Communicate and interact effectively both verbally and in writing with elected officials, the public, and staff
- Operate a variety of office equipment including computers and associated word processing applications

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Education: Bachelor's degree in communications, public relations, public administration, journalism, marketing or a related field; Master's degree desirable.

Experience: Five (5) years' increasingly responsible public information, public affairs, or media relations experience, including three years' experience performing public relations for a municipal agency or other public sector organization. Prior experience working in a Police Department desired, if assigned to Police.

Licenses/Certifications: Possession of a valid Class C California driver's license and an acceptable driving record are required at time of appointment and throughout employment.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Employees regularly assigned/required to drive a city or personal vehicle in the course and scope of work shall be required to participate in the DMV Employer Pull Notice program due to the performance of field duties that may require operation of a City vehicle.

Public Employee Disaster Service Worker: In accordance with Government Code Section 3100, all Huntington Beach city employees are required to perform assigned disaster service worker duties in the event of an emergency or a disaster.

PHYSICAL TASKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

The incumbent must be able to meet the physical requirements of the class and have mobility, balance, coordination, vision, hearing and dexterity levels appropriate to the duties to be performed.

Work is performed primarily indoors. The incumbent sits for prolonged periods of time; standing and walking to retrieve work files or to other departments or office locations; leaning, bending and stooping to perform work behind a desk or to retrieve information; pushing, turning or twisting to move chair or body from desk; reaching to place or retrieve files or open file drawers or cabinets; light grasping to hold a writing instrument or documents; firm grasping as needed to lift and carry work files or operate office equipment; finger dexterity to type on a computer keyboard; and, hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone. Work is performed in a general office environment. When work is performed outdoors or at events, there is full

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exposure to various weather conditions.

Reasonable accommodation(s) for an individual with a qualified disability will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Est. 09/2002
Rev. 10/2013
Rev. 05/2021
Rev. 03/2023
Rev. 01/2025