

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: Under general direction, the incumbent of this class is responsible for the administration and coordination of all county communication related issues, including public information and relation activities, and all communications related issues for the executive or legislative branch of the administration. Responsibilities include: planning, coordinating and implementing events, such as: speechwriting, press conferences, media stories, and related projects; the coordination and oversight of departmental public information officers and activities, such as: all press releases, brochures and related printed materials including marketing and advertising promotions; advising commissioners and division heads on media related matters; editing letters and reports that are written for executive staff; overseeing the production of in-house videos that inform and educate the public; and acting as the chief spokesperson for the administration. Frequent and significant contacts occur with high level officials at the federal, state and local levels of government, as well as with media representatives, various interest groups and the public. This position exists in the Department of the County Executive and the Board of Legislators. Supervision is exercised over a number of subordinate professional, support, clerical personnel, and college interns. Does related work as required.

EXAMPLES OF WORK: (Illustrative Only)

Oversees departmental public information officers, and coordinates and directs their community/public information and communications functions, including press releases, brochures, mailings, and other materials;

Serves as the chief spokesperson for the County Executive or Chairman of the Board of Legislators as well as chief liaison to the media;

Formulates, implements and evaluates policies for county-wide public relations and promotion programs, ensuring effective implementation by maintaining liaison with departments to provide guidance, instruction and problem solving;

Directs the preparation of public information materials, programs, promotions and projects, including news releases, publications and audio-visual materials, both in written and automated formats;

Schedules and accompanies the County Executive or Chairman of the Board of Legislators to local, regional and national press events, interviews, and editorial board meetings, and assists in the preparation of talking points and speeches;

Establishes and maintains liaison with press correspondents, television, radio, newspaper editors and publishers;

Directs and studies the public's knowledge and interest in various activities, services and objectives of the County of Westchester, including the impact of past and current marketing campaigns, to project the benefits to the population served;

Serves as a liaison with contracted service agencies for promotion programs;

Responds to all media inquiries and coordinates their handling with involved department commissioners;

EXAMPLES OF WORK: (Illustrative Only)

Keeps abreast of all mail, both electronic and postal, directed to the County Executive or Chairman of the Board of Legislators to keep apprised of issues that concern the public;

Coordinates community relations events, constituent affairs and outreach to communities and individuals;

Identifies target populations for advertising, promotional and marketing campaigns for County services by gathering demographic statistics and selecting various media that would best serve as tools for presentation to a variety of citizen groups;

Coordinates automated public information services, including but not limited to telephone information systems, public information kiosks, and the Internet;

Coordinate's the County's Internet Web Site and assists County departments in their preparation of text and graphics for the electronic media;

Develops presentations on new services and initiatives provided by the county, and informs the public of how these services can be used in their community;

Oversees the operation of the County Information Center;

Works in concert with other members of the County Executive or Board of Legislators staff on public information issues;

Keeps abreast of current or emerging public issues that have an impact on the policies or operations of the County of Westchester;

Attends conferences, meetings, seminars, public hearing, and presentations to gather information and represent the County Executive or Chairman of the Board of Legislators.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND ATTRIBUTES: Comprehensive knowledge of the techniques and methods used in evaluating the effectiveness of a public information and relations program; comprehensive knowledge of the principles and techniques of establishing and maintaining effective public relations; thorough knowledge of the techniques of preparing, producing and disseminating information to the various media; thorough knowledge of the functions and organization of the County of Westchester; ability to speak effectively in public; ability to deal with persons of divergent views in a courteous, tactful and effective manner; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships; ability to identify program problems and critical factors and to develop realistic solutions; ability to plan, coordinate and evaluate the work of assigned professional and clerical personnel; ability to read, write, speak, understand, and communicate in English sufficiently to perform the essential duties of the position; ability to use computer applications such as spreadsheets, word processing, e-mail and database software; tact; resourcefulness; initiative; imagination; integrity; sound professional judgment; diplomacy; physical condition commensurate with the requirements of the position.

MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE: Either: (a) Bachelor's Degree* in Communications, Journalism or closely related field and nine years of public information or related experience, four years of which must have been at an equivalent level of responsibility as a manager of information services, communications or community relations; or (b) thirteen years of public information or related experience, five years of the specialized experience as stated in (a); or (c) satisfactory equivalent combination of the foregoing training and experience.

SUBSTITUTION: Satisfactory completion of 30 credits towards a Master's Degree* may be substituted on a year for year basis for above general public information or relations experience, but no substitution is allowed for the specialized experience.

*SPECIAL NOTE: Education beyond the secondary level must be from an institution recognized or accredited by the Board of Regents of the New York State Department of Education as a post-secondary, degree-granting institution.

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, only experience gained after attaining the minimum education level indicated in the minimum qualifications will be considered in evaluating experience.

West. Co.
J.C.: Exempt
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Job Class Code: E0756
Job Group: Flat Rate