

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: Under general direction, the incumbent of this class is responsible for planning, coordinating and controlling public information and relation activities for the County of Westchester. Work involves developing and coordinating a comprehensive program designed to keep the public informed about the objectives and operations of County government as well as gaining its understanding and stimulating its active support, and advising and assisting department heads and other top officials in the development and maintenance of good public relations practices. Frequent and significant contacts will occur with key 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 several County departments, where extensive public contact is maintained, and performing public relations activities are an integral part of the agencies' operation. Supervision is exercised over a number of subordinate professional, support and clerical personnel. Does related work as required.

EXAMPLES OF WORK: (Illustrative Only)

Directs and studies the public's knowledge and interest in various activities, services and objectives of the County of Westchester;

Formulates, implements and evaluates policies for public relations and promotion programs;

Directs the preparation of public information materials, programs and projects including news releases, publications and audio-visual materials;

Serves as a liaison with contractual services agencies for promotion programs;

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

Attends conferences, Committee meetings as well as public hearings in order to gather information;

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

In addition to the above:

If assigned to the County Executive's Office:

Represents the County Executive at conferences and meetings;

Oversees the operations of the County Information Center;

Oversees and approves the community information and public relations functions performed by all departmental public information officers.

EXAMPLES OF WORK: (Illustrative Only)

If assigned to the Board of Legislators:

Develops and prepares all necessary data for the Board of Legislators' annual newsletter questionnaire;

Edits the bi-annual Board of Legislator's booklet;

Develops committee reports and board policy position statements for release to the press, radio and other news media;

Counsels County Legislators on public relations and press relations issues;

Coordinates, schedules and tours for members of the public interested in attending public board meetings and forwards any available public information relative to the Board of Legislators to interested individuals and groups.

If assigned to the District Attorney's Office:

Keeps abreast of emerging public issues affecting the criminal justice system, and brings these issues and those covered by mass media to the attention of the District Attorney to develop programmatic and operational responses;

Develops and implements a comprehensive public awareness and public communication system using direct contact and mass media to make the criminal justice system accessible to the public;

Prepares and disseminates press releases dealing with trials, investigations, suspected criminal activities, arraignments, indictments, pleas and verdicts to promote public awareness, personal safety and to encourage other possible victims or witnesses to come forward;

Schedules, prepares and assists the District Attorney for personal appearances and interviews in the broadcast and print news media at the national, regional and local press level on current prosecutorial and criminal justice issues;

Responds to inquiries and access to investigative information by the press directed to the District Attorney and members of the staff (Assistant District Attorney in charge of the prosecution) in order to coordinate press releases and public information, and to protect against any obstruction of prosecutorial initiatives.

If assigned to the Department of General Services:

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;

Studies the impact of past and current marketing campaigns to project the benefits to the population served;

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

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

Assists in the formulation of County policy related to the marketing of County services, ensuring effective implementation by maintaining liaison with departments to provide guidance, instruction, and problem solving;

Coordinates County photography services and ensures the safekeeping and storage of all equipment; maintains inventory of same and ensures that equipment is replaced and/or repaired as necessary;

Prepares promotional materials, both in written and electronic formats;

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

Represents the County at seminars and presentations regarding new programs and initiatives, services or products.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND ATTRIBUTES: Thorough knowledge of the techniques of preparing, producing and disseminating information to the various media; thorough knowledge of the techniques and methods used in evaluating the effectiveness of a public information and relations program; thorough knowledge of the principles and techniques of establishing and maintaining effective public relations; good 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 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; tact; resourcefulness; initiative; imagination; integrity; good judgment; physical condition commensurate with the requirements of the position.

DESIRABLE TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE: Either: (a) Bachelor's Degree* and seven years of public information or relations experience, two years of which must have been at an equivalent level of responsibility as the Head of Information Services; or (b) satisfactory completion of 30 credits towards a Master's Degree* may be substituted on a year for year basis for the experience specified in (a), but must include the two years of specialized experience; (c) eleven years of public information or relations experience, four years of which must have been at an equivalent level of responsibility as the Head of Information Services (d) a satisfactory equivalent combination of the foregoing training and 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: Preferential consideration will be given to candidates who have a Law Degree and/or experience in the criminal justice system for the position in the District Attorney's Office.

West. Co.

DRC397

Job Class Code: E0440

Job Group: XVI

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J.C.: County Executive's Office: Exempt

Board of Legislators: Unclassified

DA's Office: Exempt

General Services: Competitive