City of Kansas City, Missouri
Job Class Specification

Job Title: SENIOR PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER **Department:** City Manager
Job Code: 1531 **Status:** EXEMPT **Grade:** EX-3

Summary

This is highly skilled communications work as a highly experienced embedded communication partner for multiple City departments or for departments with complex, high-visibility, or sensitive operational needs.

Work involves providing elevated strategic counsel to department directors and City leadership; leading sophisticated internal and external communications initiatives; managing media relations; developing proactive communications plans; ensuring digital accessibility, plain-language, and equity-centered communication standards; and supporting crisis and high-impact issues with sound judgment and discretion. Employees in this classification are responsible for translating City and departmental priorities into clear, timely, and effective public information strategies with measurable outcomes tied to departmental and enterprise goals. Work requires a high degree of independent judgment, political acumen, confidentiality, and initiative, and may include after-hours response for urgent or emergency communications matters.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Serves as a senior embedded communications strategist for multiple departments or departments with complex, high-profile, sensitive, regulatory, legal, public safety, or operational issues.
- Develops and executes communications plans aligned with departmental priorities, Citywide goals, and Communications and Engagement team objectives.
- Provides advanced strategic counsel to department directors, executive leadership, and key stakeholders on sensitive, confidential, or high-impact matters.
- Coordinates and manages internal and external communications to ensure messaging is timely, accurate, consistent, accessible, and aligned with City standards.
- Identifies reputational, operational, and communications risks and recommends proactive mitigation strategies.
- Serves as spokesperson for assigned departments and manages complex media relations, including high-profile inquiries, executive messaging, interviews, press events, and major announcements.
- Writes, edits, and publishes content across approved channels
- Manages media relations for assigned departments by monitoring inquiries, drafting releases and statements, coordinating interviews and events, and preparing briefing materials.
- Ensures content adheres to City brand, editorial, and style standards.
- Supports after-hours and on-call communications and media response for urgent, breaking, or high-profile matters.
- Supports crisis and emergency communications by preparing rapid-response messaging, coordinating with leadership and partner agencies, and helping implement emergency public information protocols.
- Applies plain-language, accessibility, brand, and style standards to all communications materials and coordinates translation, language access, and related support as needed.
- Incorporates inclusive communication practices, community engagement, and resident input into communications planning and content development.
- Monitors communications performance, media coverage, public sentiment, and related outcomes to evaluate effectiveness and adjust strategies.

- Provides mentorship, guidance, and lead support to Public Information Officers and may coordinate coverage during vacancies, emergencies, or high-demand periods.
- Performs related duties as required.

Technical Skills

Thorough knowledge of:
The principles and practices of business or public administration.
The principles and practices of media relations
Municipal communications needs and public-facing service delivery
Customer service principles for public interaction
Accessibility, plain language, and inclusive communication practices
Crisis communications principles and rapid-response messaging

Considerable knowledge of:
Established guidelines for writing, editing and/or revising a variety of City documents.
Translating technical, operational, legal, or sensitive information into understandable public-facing language.

Working knowledge of:
The rules, regulations and ordinances governing the organizational unit to which assigned.
The use of project management systems (e.g., Asana)

Ability to:
Organize, create, coordinate and review multiple projects, communications, and platforms
Communicate information clearly, accurately, and diplomatically
Interpret and apply City communications standards, procedures, and protocols
Adapt messaging for different audiences and platforms
Establish and maintain effective working relationships with employees, municipal officials and the general public.
Maintain confidentiality when required

Education and Experience

High school graduation and nine (9) years of experience in public information, media relations, public affairs, journalism, or strategic communications.

OR

An accredited bachelor's degree and five (5) years of experience in public information, media relations, public affairs, journalism, or strategic communications.

OR

An accredited master's degree and three (3) years of experience in public information, media relations, public affairs, journalism, or strategic communications.

Certificates/ Licenses/Special Requirements

Must pass a background check as prescribed by the City.

Supervisory Responsibility

None

Supervision Received

Work is performed under general direction of a department head or an assigned designee and affords wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment and initiative.

Note: This job description should not be construed to imply that these requirements are the exclusive standards of the position. Incumbents will follow any other instructions, and perform any other related duties, as may be required. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities. The City of Kansas City has the right to revise this job description at any time. The job description is not to be construed as a contract for employment.

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