

CLASS SPECIFICATION
County of Fairfax, Virginia

CLASS CODE: 1163

TITLE: DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

GRADE: E-09

DEFINITION:

Under direction from the County Executive, serves as the county's media spokesperson and Director of the Office of Public Affairs, a full-service communications department managing the county's emergency, external and employee communications; directs a countywide digital team; develops and implements policies, procedures, standards and controls for countywide messaging, digital communications, media relations, public information, community relations, marketing, advertising, internal and crisis communications; and to do related work as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CLASS:

This class is exempt from the County's merit system under Article 4, Subsection 15.2-821 of the Code of Virginia and Section 3-1-2(b)(1) of the Merit System Ordinance.

ILLUSTRATIVE DUTIES:

Manages, directs and coordinates the activities of the Office of Public Affairs, providing day-to-day communications support for countywide issues and initiatives; Provides counsel, research and analysis, issues management, technical assistance and project coordination to the Board of Supervisors, the County Executive, Deputy County Executives and county agencies;

Leads a coordinated, countywide communications program that connects the public with information about the government's services, operations and policies;

Leads the countywide employee communications efforts;

Oversees and coordinates all internal and external communications during Emergencies;

Leads the external affairs component (ESF-15) of the county's emergency operations plan;

Leads communication planning for countywide initiatives and develops countywide communication policy and standards;

Leads a digital team responsible for developing, testing, and implementing a strategy to reach and target audiences through digital channels like web, mobile, and social;

Responds to inquiries and manages the dissemination of information to the local, metropolitan-wide, national and international media. Serves as the county's media spokesperson;

Creates and implements a digital-first content strategy by implementing cross-channel analytics, identifying relevant emerging trends, and providing comprehensive guidelines for the county workforce;

Ensures that the county's public information and communication efforts are integrated across agencies and on all platforms by coordinating and leading public information officers (PIOs) who are based in other departments, through a matrix reporting relationship;

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Enhances day-to-day countywide communication, providing messaging guidelines, eliminating gaps in information dissemination, and strengthening skills and relationships among all communicators to facilitate the creation of a common look, feel and message;

Plays a leadership role in regional crisis communications and emergency information dissemination;

Oversees presentations and public recognitions at meetings of the Board of Supervisors;

Coordinates countywide responses related to media requests under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act;

Serves on the County's Senior Management Team;

Serves in an on-call status 24/7/365.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

Extensive knowledge of the principles and methods of public affairs work;

Knowledge of social media, web design and usability, search engine optimization, video/photo editing, audio, hashtags and other digital components that enable talking, engaging and interacting directly with the public;

Knowledge of different forms of digital media, enabling government communicators to directly publish information and prevent and refute misinformation;

Knowledge of communication principles, procedures and practices, including search, social, mobile and other digital components;

Knowledge of management and organizational analysis and methods;

Knowledge of the characteristics, uses and requirements of various media and reproduction processes;

Ability to direct a high-performing digital team and effective public affairs program;

Ability to serve as a resource to countywide communicators in the development of a full spectrum social media, mobile, and overall digital strategy;

Ability to be flexible and act with agility to make sound and reasonable decisions based on limited information, in accordance with laws, ordinances, regulations and established procedures;

Ability to communicate effectively online, in group settings and one-on-one and maintain effective working relationships with elected officials, county management,

community and business groups, media and the general public;

Ability to develop and implement communication plans and strategies;

Ability to stay current with search, social, and mobile trends and innovations, conduct research and analyze metrics data to enhance public and workforce awareness of county operations and activities;

Ability to select, supervise, train and evaluate subordinate staff;

Ability to maintain a professional demeanor during stressful situations;

Ability to respond to requests in an effective manner utilizing all appropriate tools and venues;

Ability to perform a wide variety of duties and responsibilities with accuracy and speed under time-sensitive deadlines;

Ability to demonstrate integrity, ingenuity and creativity in the performance of assigned tasks;

Ability to write clear, concise and effective informational material and skill in editing written material;

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Ability to establish and maintain an effective relationship with the public, the press, County officials and employees.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS:

Any combination of education, experience, and training equivalent to:

Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with a bachelor's degree in journalism, public relations, communications, public administration or a related field: PLUS eight years of progressively responsible management experience, including supervision of professional and technical personnel; and experience working for a large public or private sector organization.

REVISIED: October 29, 2013
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