



MEMORANDUM
OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER
COUNTY OF PLACER

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: David Boesch, County Executive Officer
Submitted by: Holly Heinzen, Chief Assistant CEO 

Date: July 22, 2014

Subject: Director of Communications and Public Affairs

ACTION REQUESTED:

- 1) Approve the Class Specification and Salary Grade for the Director of Communications and Public Affairs in the County Executive Office;
- 2) Approve the placement of the Director of Communications and Public Affairs position in the unclassified service; and
- 3) Direct staff to reflect these approvals in the ordinance as appropriate with adoption of the Final Budget.

BACKGROUND:

As discussed with adoption of the Proposed Budget, key County initiatives including Economic Development, Priority Based Budgeting and Employee Engagement are predicated on a high degree of communication and interaction with the public, employees and other community stakeholders. The County Executive Office has prioritized a more comprehensive, coordinated approach for public outreach, media communications and County events with creation of this class.

The Director of Communications and Public Affairs classification would encompass development of strategic communication planning, leveraging technology including social media to enhance outreach efforts, provide consistent messaging and improve the public understanding of County services. A primary focus of the position will be to further public communication efforts and increase transparency both within and external to the organization.

The position as proposed would be responsible for planning, organizing and directing civic engagement communications, issues management, special events and neighborhood outreach services.

The Director of Communications and Public Affairs classification would be a management level position serving at the will of the County Executive Officer. A copy of the proposed classification specification is attached for your review.

In order to set the salary, a salary analysis was undertaken to recommend a salary that most closely aligns with other jurisdictions with similar positions and would result in a salary that would be competitive in the region. Consistent with this review, it is recommended that the Director of Communications and Public Affairs be placed at salary grade 454 with an approximate annual salary level of \$98,280 to \$119,454 annually.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no net additional cost with approval of the Class Specification and Salary Grade for the Director of Communications and Public Affairs. Funds for this position are included in the FY 2014-15 Proposed Budget having been redirected from existing unfilled funded positions. There is no net additional cost with this action.

Attachments:

- 1) Revised Classification Specification

Director of Communications and Public Affairs

Unclassified – At Will

DEFINITION

To plan, organize, direct and coordinate the activities and operations of the County Executive Office around civic engagement, media communications, issues management, special events and neighborhood outreach services; to coordinate communications and advocacy activities with other departments and outside agencies to engage community stakeholders; and to provide highly responsible and complex administrative support to the County Executive Officer.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The Director of Communications and Public Affairs level recognizes a single position class that assumes responsibility for planning, organizing and directing the civic engagement, media communications, issues management, special events and neighborhood outreach services for the County. This position is distinguished from other positions assigned to public relations by the difficulty and complexity of work assigned and the overall responsibility to oversee and administer such programs. This position serves at the pleasure of the Appointing Authority having no specified term and no property right to continuous employment and can be released without cause.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED AND RECEIVED

Receives administrative direction from the County Executive Officer.

Exercises direct supervision over assigned professional, technical and administrative support personnel; may exercise technical and functional supervision over volunteer public information officers.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL DUTIES – Duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Plan, organize and direct the County's communications, civic engagement, media relations, neighborhood outreach services, special events and public information activities; including, developing and implementing internal and external communications, facilitating meetings, utilization of the internet and intranet, and government relations strategic plans. Initiate and implement strategic communication plans and support County departments in developing communication strategies to address emerging issues.

Coordinate with agency directors, department heads and management and employees in developing consistent messaging and strengthening county image. Direct, plan and support departmental social media strategies to enhance effective communication to stakeholders. Conduct analysis and evaluation of the public's interest and extent of understanding of County programs and services through focus groups, surveys and other methods. Advise management regarding program and service understanding, acceptance and effectiveness and potential strategies for enhancing same. Support development of e-government strategies and utilization of technology to create accessible, transparent, inexpensive and effective interaction between government and stakeholders.

381

Coordinate activities and special events with those of other departments, outside agencies and organizations, public and private sector officials, and representatives of industry and businesses; provide staff assistance to the Board of Supervisors and County Executive Office in preparation of presentations, written materials, and media communications; prepare and present staff reports and other necessary correspondence; Train and coach staff on effective practices and media communications.

Develop, plan and implement department goals and objectives; recommend and administer policies and procedures. Direct, oversee and participate in the development of the division's work plan; assign work activities, projects and programs; monitor work flow; review and evaluate work products, methods and procedures. Participate in the development of funding requirements and administration of Community Engagement/PIO resources. Provide forecasts of programmatic needs and funding strategies for public information and civic engagement functions. Direct and monitor use of funds dedicated to public information and community engagement functions to ensure appropriate use of funds.

Select, train, motivate and evaluate personnel; provide or coordinate staff training; conduct performance evaluations; maintain discipline and high standards necessary for the efficient and professional operation of the department.

Direct communication content in newsletters, news releases, County Website and electronic communications; prepare speeches, scripts, responses and related materials for public information purposes to strengthen and promote the County's identity.

Serve as public information contact in emergencies and other critical events and develop communication strategies to ensure consistent, accurate messaging to the public. Provide support to regional emergency operations as requested.

Represent the CEO and BOS to outside agencies and organizations; participate in outside community and professional groups and committees; provide technical assistance as necessary.

Research and prepare technical and administrative reports; prepare written correspondence.

Build and maintain positive working relationships with co-workers, other County employees and the public using principles of high quality customer service.

Perform related duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

Principles and practices of community engagement and public relations.

Principles and practices of communications methods and marketing techniques.

Effective public presentation methods to attract and inform a variety of audiences.

Principles and practices of leadership, motivation, team building and conflict resolution.

Pertinent local, State and Federal rules, regulations and laws.

Organizational and management practices as applied to the analysis and evaluation of programs.
Principles and practices of organization, administration and personnel management.
Social media, web design, and graphic/visual presentation methods.
Principles and practices of budget preparation and administration.

Ability to:

Plan, direct and control the administration and operations of the community engagement and public outreach functions.

On a continuous basis, analyze budget and technical reports; interpret and evaluate staff reports; know laws, regulations and codes; observe performance and evaluate staff; problem solve department related issues; remember various rules and procedures; and explain and interpret policy.

On a continuous basis, sit at desk and in meetings for long periods of time. Intermittently twist to reach equipment surrounding desk; perform simple grasping and fine manipulation; use telephone, and write or use keyboard to communicate through written means; and lift or carry weight of 10 pounds or less.

Make effective public presentations in routine and emergency situations.

Supervise, train and evaluate assigned personnel.

Gain cooperation through discussion, persuasion and group facilitation.

Analyze problems, identify alternative solutions, project consequences of proposed actions and implement recommendations in support of goals.

Interpret and apply County and department policies, procedures, rules and regulations.

Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing.

Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Experience and Training

Any combination of experience and training that would provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required knowledge and abilities would be:

Experience:

Seven years of increasingly responsible experience in communications or public relations, including three years of administrative and management responsibility.

AND

389

Training:

Equivalent to a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in communications, journalism, marketing, or a related field.

License or Certificate

May need to possess a valid driver's license as required by the position. Proof of adequate vehicle insurance and medical clearance may also be required.

Possession of an Accredited Public Relations (APR) Certificate issued by the Public Relations Society of America is desirable.