

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
CLASS SPECIFICATION**

**Code No. 000811
Grade 21**

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER I

DEFINITION OF CLASS:

This is developmental professional journalistic and media relations work within the Office of Public Information involving the preparation and dissemination of information and informational materials in support of County Government programs, services, and activities. Personal contacts occur on a regular and frequent basis with co-workers to exchange information, coordinate assignments, and resolve problems. Other regular contacts include representatives at all levels of departments and agencies to obtain information and advise them about procedures for information dissemination and media relations; graphics designers concerning the design and content of materials; and representatives of print and broadcast media to exchange information concerning a variety of issues. While this class of work occasionally requires employees to meet with or speak before the general public and citizen groups, it does not require employees to provide direct public service or assistance on a one-to-one basis.

An employee in this class develops and prepares standard assignments of informational and promotional materials concerning the operations, programs, and services of County Government departments and agencies for dissemination to the public. The supervisor defines the objectives, priorities, and deadlines for the work, but the employee plans and carries out various phases of recurring assignments. Employee refers to the supervisor when unusual situations without clear precedents are encountered. The employee independently arranges the work sequence and selects the work methods or procedures. Completed work is reviewed for adequacy of treatment, soundness of technique, conformance to established policies and procedures, and other aspects of technical and non-technical treatment; accuracy is expected in all cases. Guidelines are available in the forms of conventional approaches, policies and procedures, as well as laws and regulations. Employees are required to handle unusual or non-standard situations by selecting, interpreting and applying or adapting and adjusting the right guideline(s). The complexity of the work is marked by stringent press deadlines and varied assignments involving a variety of processes and methods. The primary emphasis of work is upon media information writing and preparation of promotional materials. Work has an impact on the public's knowledge and understanding of the organization, operation, and services of the County Government. Work is primarily sedentary and is performed in an office environment. Employees occasionally attend groundbreaking ceremonies that may be held outside. Typically, employees sit comfortably to do their work, interspersed by periods of standing, walking, bending, and extensive periods requiring the use of computer terminals to accomplish work objectives.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES: (Illustrative Only)

- Serves as media relations point of contact for assigned departments and agencies. Works with department and agency representatives to plan publicity for programs, services, and events. Maintains liaison with department/agency program directors to assess and fulfill their publicity needs. Prepares communications and responds to inquiries.
- Gathers information, writes and arranges for the publication and distribution of press releases, newspaper articles, bulletins, pamphlets and other news and promotional materials concerning

County Government programs, services, accomplishments, and events of public interest.

- Contributes to the development of articles by researching, writing and editing articles for publication in County newsletters.
- Assists in writing and editing scripts for cable television informational programming.
- Responds to requests for information from print and broadcast media.
- Assists in arranging press conferences.
- May serve as photographer for special events, such as awards ceremonies and proclamations.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

- Thorough knowledge of the principles and practices of journalism and public relations.
- Thorough knowledge of and the ability to utilize the print and electronic media – how they function, what they need and what it takes for a story to move from being a local story to a major event of broad significance – to present stories to the media for maximum, positive impact. This includes selection of the most appropriate, highest impact media and information organizations.
- Considerable knowledge of national, state and County government issues, programs and activities and the executive, legislative and judicial bodies, and how they interact.
- Considerable knowledge of the requirements of the Maryland Public Information Act, Montgomery County Charter and other local laws and how to apply them for successful results, such as fair and favorable coverage of non-controversial issues.
- Considerable knowledge of and skill in English usage, spelling, punctuation, and grammar, and of writing and editing techniques.
- Skill in creative, effective writing to edit and design reports and other publications covering a wide range of subject matter.
- Ability to critically evaluate a variety of subject matter from the standpoint of reader interest, appropriateness, organization of materials, and content, style and English language usage.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with representatives of the media, managers and employees of the County Government and related governmental agencies.
- Ability to meet deadlines and to work under pressure.
- Ability to effectively speak in public.
- Ability to attend meetings or perform other assignments at locations outside the office.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Experience: Two (2) years of professional experience in journalism, public relations, or closely related field.

Education: Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism, Communications, Public Relations or related field.

Equivalency: An equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted.

LICENSE: None.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD:

Individuals appointed to a position in this class will be required to serve a probationary period of six (6) months, during which time performance will be carefully evaluated. Continuation in this class will be contingent upon successful completion of the probationary period.

MEDICAL EXAM PROTOCOL: Medical History Review.

Class Established: May 1977

Revised: August 1986

Classification Study: January 1994 (M)

Classification Study: July 2000 (M)

August 2013

October 2014

Formerly Titled: "Information Officer I"