

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

**Code No. 004445
Grade 21**

VISUAL INFORMATION SPECIALIST

DEFINITION OF CLASS:

This is full performance level work in the Public Information Office designing and producing, in close collaboration with Public Information Specialists and other authors/editors/principals, a wide variety of informational and promotional visual materials concerning the missions, operations, policies, programs, services and messages, principally of the Executive Branch of Montgomery County, for dissemination to the public or County employees. Products include but are not limited to news releases, posters, slides, brochures, pamphlets, annual reports, banners, signs, report covers, videos and website pages. May provide videographer services to capture quality, attractive, clear and creative video for use in news, magazine-style and studio productions aired on the county government cable channel, provides to other news channels and in public service announcements. The visual information provided is as diverse in content and audience as the County's functions, operations and demography. Personal contacts typically including Public Information Specialists, other professionals, administrators, officials and others they support with visual information products to exchange factual information, ideas and suggestions about content and treatment. There is contact with in-house and contract printers, in-house and contract artists and others to acquire final copy, get publications printed and obtain related services. There is also contact with the news media. The work may include some public service/assistance, but it is incidental to the primary focus of the work performed.

An employee in this class designs, develops and coordinates production of visual materials that blend word and art to convey special information as well as routine and non-routine information. Work requires a good understanding of special public information objectives and options for visual treatment that may be used to advance those objectives and to collaborate on the integration of verbal and visual content. Work also requires knowledge of and skill in using the principles of visual design (principally for publications and the Internet, but also for elementary exhibits and similar products), various media for informational and promotional purposes, and printing processes to effectively convey a subtle message or a continuing theme in addition to straightforward routine or non-routine information. The work also requires skill in creative aesthetics to provide a quality artistic design. Continuing assignments are usually received as part of the continuous flow of office work, with additional instructions provided for new or unusual assignments. Work is performed in accordance with established formats and processes, relying on previous training (including scales of design, size, shape, color matching and similar matters), experience and creativity. General supervision by the supervisor typically focuses on policies, priorities, time lines, costs, customer service, etc., not artistic content. The work may be reviewed when completed for adequacy and soundness, or may enter into further processes un-reviewed. Guidelines include County and departmental policies, procedures and branding, industry standards, trade practices and special graphics and web design packages. The Visual Information Specialist uses experienced judgment, resourcefulness and, at times, discretion, to select and apply or adapt/modify or depart from guidelines in searching databases and selecting and using various design elements, visual

images and typography to effectively communicate straightforward information, subtle messages and recurring themes consistent with any special public information objectives.

The complexity of this class involves working with Public Information Specialists and other clients to develop mutual understanding of special information objectives and options for visual treatment that may be used to advance those objectives and to collaborate on the integration of verbal and visual content. Ingenuity and imagination are imperative for effective planning, problem solving and decision making. Good reasoning in problem solving is needed to identify, recommend and then execute design options that include complex content or audience factors, advance difficult objectives or are disseminated in a complicated environment. The work is intended to inform, educate, emphasize, inspire, energize, convince, persuade one or spur to act one or more target audiences in consultation with the client. Work is performed in an office environment and presents no significant hazards. Work is mainly sedentary but requires moving about and, in some assignments, lifting and carrying and moving of equipment weighing up to twenty (20) pounds. Work requires considerable keyboarding, some equipment operation, constant identification, selection and application of basic colors, shapes and sizes, and occasional fine distinctions in color.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (Illustrative Only)

- Meets with own Public Information Specialists, other authors/editors/principals or the supervisor concerning wants and needs for design and production of visual information products for print applications (including but not limited to news releases, brochures, flyers, reports, guides, charts, newsletters and banners) or web applications (such as text and art on web pages or web links);
- Provides creative and technical assistance to customers concerning combinations of text and art in graphic presentations to help convey intended information to intended audience(s) in a careful blend of words and imagery to achieve such objectives as convincing, persuading and spurring to action; recommends design options to customers, informs them of processes and procedures, including branding and corporate graphic standards, and advises them of media options, materials, costs, time and other factors; provides or coordinates agreed-upon design and production services (which may include creating custom artwork as well as using a library of images); and coordinates or assists customers with the procurement process.
- Coordinates pre-press production functions and printing with County Government print shop or outside contractors, making pre-press corrections to files (such as correcting images, changing fonts, making color adjustments and changing positions and dimensions to fit paper sizes); prepares projects for printing by various printers, which require different set-ups; writes work specifications for work to be performed by contractors; monitors contracts and makes recommendations on the acceptability of services; and serves as liaison between contractor and customer.
- Installs computer software, upgrades and manufacturer-recommended software modifications; and troubleshoots and resolves specialized computer system problems. Recommends new software and equipment.
- Works with paper suppliers, typesetters, printers, and/or silk screeners to establish cost and schedule implications for alternative designs.
- Develops formats for standard publications.
- Develops typesetting and printing specifications for each graphic communication designed.
- Checks color and press proofs for adherence to specifications.
- Dummies publications for client review.
- Illustrates publications with drawings, photos, type designs, or special treatments of any of these.

- Selects and crops photos, adjusting color modes, balance, contrast, resolution , sharpness, brightness, hue and saturation levels; and computes percentages for enlargements and reductions.
- Recommends and produces special effects, such as line conversions, mezzotints, and posterizations.
- Prepares special charts or other graphic material as requested.
- Critiques the work of other staff members from graphics art perspectives.
- In collaboration with Public Information Specialists and other customers, blends art and text for enhanced impact. May edit and reorganize material for cost effectiveness.
- Maintains an electronic library of art (photos, drawings, clip art and other images).
- Stays abreast of developments in the graphic arts as they may impact assignments.
- Stays abreast of major developments in the County as general background for collaboration with Public Information Specialists.
- Takes photos of events, sites, etc. to create copy for publications or web pages.
- May create or maintain web pages, coordinating with the webmaster and others, as appropriate.
- May installs computer software, upgrades and manufacturer recommended software modifications; maintains an electronic library of video images and troubleshoots and resolves specialized video camera and other equipment issues.
- Sets up lights, sound systems, podium and backdrops for press events and provide other logistical and staging support.
- Edits video footage and sound tracks to create professional quality shows and for cost effectiveness and efficiency.
- May maintain studio mobile van equipment in good working order.
- Performs related duties as required.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

- Knowledge of and skill in using the principles of visual design (principally for publications and the Internet, but also for elementary exhibits and similar products), various media for informational and promotional purposes, and printing processes to effectively convey a subtle message or a theme in addition to straightforward routine or non-routine information. This includes (1) knowledge of best practices in overall design and design elements, such as typography, composition and layout, color, line, shape, mass and texture as well as balance, rhythm and proportion and their roles in visual communication, (2) knowledge of appropriate typographic specifications, such as type fonts, style, size, leading, kerning, spacing, alignment and line length, (3) knowledge of the theory, techniques and equipment utilized in producing, videotaping and editing video programs; (4) skill in designing and composing page payouts using grid formats, headers, footers, folios, margins, columns and pagination, and (4) skill in selecting, scanning, cropping and scaling photographs, illustrations and other graphic images.
- Knowledge of the background, substance and nuance of specialized or sensitive public information themes, messages or information to be presented, along with the intent of the Public Information Specialist(s) involved, to develop mutual understanding of special public information objectives and options for visual treatment that may be used to advance those objectives and to collaborate on the integration of verbal and visual content.
- Knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques of effective television post-production services.
- Skill in creative aesthetics to provide a quality artistic design.

- Skill in problem solving to select, organize and logically process relevant information (verbal, numerical and ideational) to solve a problem, particularly in working through design problems to the design solution and collaborating with others in conceptualizing and finalizing well-integrated verbal and visual information products (which may be parts of a comprehensive campaign), sometimes with unique formats, and often intended to energize, inspire, convince, persuade, spur to action, etc.
- Skill in verbal communication to understand verbal information (including instructions, descriptions and ideas) and to express such information verbally so that others will understand. Examples include exchanging information with customers or printers concerning customer wants, needs and graphics options, developing and presenting informational and promotional visual information concerning operations, programs and services, and collaborating with others in conceptualizing and finalizing well-integrated verbal and visual information products.
- Skill in written information to understand written information (including instructions, descriptions and ideas) and to express such information in writing so that others will understand. Examples include presenting verbal information in appealing and evocative artwork, which includes checking artwork or signage for proper spelling, basic grammar and other aspects of business English, and collaborating with others in conceptualizing and finalizing well-integrated verbal and visual information products.
- Interpersonal skills to interact effectively with personal contacts in a businesslike, customer service-oriented manner.
- Skill in the use of a computer, web content management software, specialized graphics software and modern office software suites (particularly for scheduling, email and word processing).
- Discretion and tact to work with sensitive information/issues.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Experience: Five (5) years of experience in commercial art, graphic design, television production or a related field, with strength in the design of total visual information products or a related field.

Education: Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in Graphic Arts, Commercial Art, Commercial Design, Television Production, or a 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 twelve (12) months and, if promoted to a position in this class, will be required to serve a probationary period of six (6) months. Performance will be carefully evaluated during the probationary period.

Continuation in this class will be contingent upon successful completion of the probationary period.

MEDICAL EXAM PROTOCOL: Medical History Review.

Class Established: June, 2008

Revised: December, 2009

August, 2013

October, 2014