

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

**Code No. 000810
Grade 25**

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER II*

DEFINITION OF CLASS:

This is professional journalistic and media relations work at the full-performance level in the Office of Public Information and the Office of The County Executive involving the preparation and dissemination of information and informational materials in support of County Government programs, services and activities. Personal contacts include County Government managers, supervisors and key staff to exchange information and provide advice to them about media relations and appropriate avenues of communication of programs and events; representatives of print and broadcast media to provide information and respond to inquiries about routine and controversial issues, garner support and maintain favorable working relationships; and graphic designers and cable television staff to discuss the design and content of informational publications and newsletters and cable television show programming. 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 is fully skilled to develop and prepare a variety of informational and promotional materials concerning the operations, programs, and services of County Government departments and agencies for dissemination to the public. Employees have full technical responsibility for their work, and plan and carry out the work in accordance with professional journalism principles and practices, applicable laws and regulations and established policies and procedures. Completed work is reviewed for compatibility with other work and policy direction, and effectiveness in meeting program objectives. Guidelines are available in the form of policies, procedures and precedents as well as laws and regulations. Employees in this class use initiative to selectively apply or creatively adapt and adjust guidelines, based on their experience and judgment, to high visibility and/or controversial situations requiring release of information to the media. The complexity of the work of this class is marked by abrupt shifts in priorities, press deadlines and the use of critical judgment when releasing information to the media or when preparing speeches, remarks, talking points and/or letters for the County Executive or the Chief Administrative Officer. The employee participates decisively in important new projects and policy initiatives concerning complex and sensitive issues that have substantial countywide impact. Work is performed with considerable latitude for decision making and is reviewed for effectiveness in meeting program objectives. This class is distinguished from the Public Information Officer I class by the increased complexity and difficulty of assignments, greater scope and effect, and more limited guidelines and supervisory review. Work is primarily sedentary and is performed in an office environment. Employees occasionally attend groundbreaking ceremonies which may be held outside as well as reporting to a scene of an accident/incident. 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.
- Plans, develops, writes and issues press releases and other informational materials for print and broadcast media, other departments and agencies and the public.
- Produces County newsletters including planning and selection of materials to be covered; researching, writing, and editing articles; coordinating with contributing departments and with graphics designers; reviewing and proofreading; and adherence to deadlines.
- Responds to crime scenes and records information to relate to the press.
- Responds to interview questions with radio/television/newspaper reporters.
- Gathers information, writes and arranges for the publication of newspaper articles, press releases, press advisories, public service announcements, flyers, brochures, bulletins and pamphlets in conjunction with promotional programs for publicizing departmental functions.
- Plans and writes scripts for weekly radio and cable television public affairs talk shows; selects topic and guests, and hosts shows.
- Coordinates publicity for press conferences and special events.
- Meets with news reporters and photographers and radio and television representatives to arrange for release of materials, to provide background information, and to respond to questions.
- Researches various subjects and writes and edits speeches, feature articles, special articles for County newsletters, scripts, and material for cable television informational programming.
- Responds to requests for information from representatives of the media concerning a variety of issues by researching and verifying information.
- Represents work unit to which assigned on committees, and before the public.
- May serve as photographer for County events, including proclamations, awards ceremonies, and special events; arranges for film development and distribution.
- Performs related duties as required.

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 work cooperatively and effectively with representatives of the media, with employees and officials of County, bi-County, State, and Federal agencies and with officials, groups and organizations interested in the Montgomery County Government and its operations.
- 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, if necessary.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Experience: Three (3) years of professional experience in journalism, public relations, or 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 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: May 1977

Revised: August 1986

Classification Study: January 1994 (M)

Classification Study: September 2000 (M)

August 2013

December 2013

October 2014

Formerly Titled: "Information Officer II"