



**DONA ANA COUNTY
JOB DESCRIPTION**

POSITION TITLE: Communications Specialist	PAY GRADE: 18
DEPARTMENT: Public Information	FLSA: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exempt <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Exempt
REPORTS TO: Director, Public Information and Special Projects	LEAD: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
BARGAINING UNIT: N/A	SUPERVISOR: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
APPROVED:  _____ Department Head	<u>6.7.11</u> Date
 _____ Human Resources Director	<u>6/7/11</u> Date

I. PURPOSE SUMMARY.

Primary spokesperson for the Sheriff's Department and secondary spokesperson for all other County public relations matters under the supervision of the Director of Public Information. Plans, organizes, and implements a wide range of law enforcement communications and public relations activities/services to assure that the Sheriff's Department and County's key messages reach the public; manages public information activities, including press releases, special events and electronic-media programs. Monitors local issues, assesses value and impact of information, and recommends courses of action; cultivates relationships with local media to increase positive exposure and timely media responses for the Sheriff's Department and the County.

II. ESSENTIAL DUTIES.

Serves as primary spokesperson for the Sheriff's Department, duties include but are not limited to:

- Composes, edits and issues news releases for the Department and authorized statements concerning Departmental policy
- Develops, coordinates and maintains web-based information/releases
- Coordinates and leads Departmental news conferences
- Coordinates and seeks authorization from the Sheriff/designee for the release of information concerning confidential or high-profile investigations, and for the release of information concerning internal investigations of employees, either of this Department or other governmental agencies
- Assumes control of the release of information to the news media and / or the public in the event of a critical incident, or as prescribed by the Director of Public Information, Sheriff/Designee or Incident Commander
- Coordinates the release of Departmental information meant to generate public interest and/-or request public assistance
- Refers news media personnel to the appropriate Departmental personnel who may be authorized to release certain information on specific items.
- Periodically meets with representatives of the news media to resolve differences and improve relations.

Serves as secondary spokesperson to the Director of Public Information for all other County public relations matters, duties include but are not limited to:

- Coordinates and manages public information activities; coordinates public information programs with other departments, agencies, organizations and businesses to accomplish public-outreach goals

- Coordinates activities with County directors and elected officials on commission action and information to be released to the public
- Coordinates public relations activities for programs and departments to assure that the County's key messages reach the public
- Develops and coordinates media strategies and campaigns for programs and departments; places stories in media outlets, and participates in interviews with the media; develops and coordinates the printing and distribution of publications and information packets; prepares, reviews, and edits information releases, publications, and scripts; coordinates assigned projects, and special events.
- Composes communications on a wide variety of subjects; edits correspondence, speeches, technical documents, information packets and other communications for County departments; interprets the actions and strategies of County programs to specific groups and the media; assesses local and regional issues and develops communications strategies
- Maintains records and files; prepares special and recurring reports

III. **ADDITIONAL DUTIES.**

Performs other duties as assigned

IV. **QUALIFICATIONS.**

A. Education.

Bachelor's degree in Journalism, Public Relations or a closely related field

B. Experience.

Four (4) years experience in mass communications programs

C. Education/Experience substitution. In accordance with County policy, one year of education/experience may be substituted one for the other on a year-for-year basis.

D. Licenses/Certifications. Valid unrestricted driver's license is required.

E. Other (e.g., post-offer medical exam, polygraph, background check, driver's license record, etc.). Must pass background check.

1. **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES REQUIRED BY THE POSITION:**

Must have knowledge of principles and practices of administrative management, including personnel rules, budgeting, strategic planning and effective employee supervision and training; current principles, techniques, and objectives of marketing, public information, media relations and community relations programs; professional journalistic methods, including research, publication and presentation; principles and practices of files and records management; state, and local community and media resources; print and broadcast media information channels; video production equipment, techniques and quality standards; business and personal computers, and spreadsheet software applications; County organization, operations, policies and procedures.

Must have excellent computer skills including MS Office Suite and statistical software. Must have excellent communication skills to work effectively with County employees, members of the media, other agencies, and the public by telephone, in person, and in group settings; maintaining composure, and working effectively in a high-pressure environment with changing priorities; preparing and presenting information for diverse audiences; coordinating the activities in a public relations program; analyzing communications issues, evaluating alternatives, and making logical recommendations based on findings; assessing and prioritizing multiple tasks, projects and demands; using initiative and independent judgment within established procedural guidelines; assessing project needs, and developing effective solutions; effectively managing and leading staff, and delegating tasks and authority.

Must have leadership capabilities that include how to identify and respond to public and County Commission issues and concerns; learn the organization, operation and purpose of the County; interpret and apply County policies, procedures, rules and regulations. Analyze problems, identify alternative solutions, project consequences of proposed actions and implement recommendations in support of goals; support the public relations program as developed by the Director of Public Information; prepare and deliver effective verbal presentations; prepare and write effective letters, press releases and promotional materials; communicate clearly and concisely, both verbally and in writing; establish and maintain effective working relations with co-workers and representatives from other businesses and agencies.

Must have the ability to adapt to changing needs and priorities as circumstances dictate or as directed by the Sheriff and or the Director of Public Information

2. FREEDOM TO ACT.

The Department Director sets the overall objectives and resources. This position is responsible for planning and carrying out the assignment, resolving most conflicts, and interpreting policy in terms of established objectives. Work is reviewed for feasibility, compatibility with other work, and effectiveness in meeting expected results.

3. GUIDELINES AND JUDGMENT.

Employee must be able to independently direct and carry out the assignments as delegated within the allotted timeframe.

4. PHYSICAL DEMANDS.

The work is sedentary, typically requiring the employee to sit comfortably to do the work. There may be some walking, standing, bending, carrying of light items, or driving an automobile.

5. WORK ENVIRONMENT.

The work area is adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated, and involves everyday risks or discomforts that require normal safety precautions and safe work practices.

6. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY.

No supervision exercised. Reports to the Director of Public Information

V. EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I have read my Job Description and understand my assigned responsibilities, and have been given a copy of this Job Description. I have also received a copy of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Handbook, and understand that I am responsible for reading and following all relevant policies and procedures outlined in it. I also certify by my signature below that I am able to perform the essential functions of this Job Description with or without reasonable accommodation.

Accepted by: _____
Employee *Date*

04/2011