

New York State Department of Civil Service
DIVISION OF CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION

Classification Standard

Occ. Code 2211100

Public Information Specialist 1, Grade 18 2211100
Public Information Specialist 2, Grade 23 2211200

Brief Description of Class Series

Public Information Specialists draft, edit and disseminate written materials; and develop content concerning the programs and activities of an agency for website, print and electronic publications, and digital and social media. They also respond to media inquiries regarding agency's initiatives, programs, and services.

Public Information Specialists are classified in various State agencies.

Distinguishing Characteristics

The level and number of Public Information Specialists classified is dependent on factors such as the presence of other professionals performing such work, degree and sophistication of public information activity, and reporting relationship. Agencies with large and active public information offices may support multiple positions at each of the two levels.

Public Information Specialist 1: full performance level; incumbents work independently and perform the full range of public information activities. They may oversee all such activities in an agency with a small public information unit or a segment of a large program. Incumbents may act as spokesperson for an agency to the news media and to individuals who inquire regarding the agency's activities. They may supervise administrative support, and lower level creative and information technology staff.

Public Information Specialist 2: advanced performance level; incumbents direct and evaluate a public information program or a major segment of a large program. They may supervise administrative support, and lower level creative and information technology staff.

Related Classes

Public Information Specialist 3 (Digital Content) and Public Information Manager (Digital Content) manage the digital communications strategy for an agency in all digital

platforms including web applications, intranets, document sharing and standards, social media, and other multi-media platforms.

Graphic Designers conceptualize, design and create graphics to communicate messages for educational, commercial or promotional purposes in print and electronic media. They consult with and advise clients, and develop design and layout, using various tools, to produce communications products that are effective and aesthetically pleasing.

Assistant Public Information Officers are exempt positions that prepare press releases and statements for distribution to media outlets; assist with the records access function relating to the Freedom of Information Act; research and design departmental publications distributed to the public; and oversee all material published on the agency's website.

Multimedia Production Program Specialists and Multimedia Production Program Managers design and produce educational, informational and promotional materials including publications, multimedia and video products to support the agency's mission. The positions are responsible for a variety of projects depending upon the focus of the agency's program such as web design, multimedia, graphics, audio, digital media, and print production.

Multimedia Production Representatives are responsible for the multimedia production, operations, engineering support, and technical consulting for the Executive Chamber and all Executive Branch agencies. The positions contribute to the development of multimedia productions that include but are not limited to video, radio, and web-based material for all customers.

Illustrative Tasks

Drafts informational materials concerning agency activities.

- Reviews subject matter ideas and suggestions received to determine nature and amount of information needed and where it may be available.
- Collects and confirms data from within and outside the agency by conducting interviews, attending conferences, visiting facilities, and reviewing files.
- Selects the appropriate information for the assignment, prepares draft or final copy, and submits to higher level staff for approval.

Writes, edits, and distributes informational materials such as press releases, briefings, brochures, and other publications.

- Drafts news releases, scripts, and other informational materials.

- Proofreads, rewrites, and edits documents submitted by others for style, content, and conformity to agency standards and policy.
- Plans or recommends layout, and the graphics to use.
- Arranges for preparation of materials by authors, artists, photographers, information technology staff, and others, consistent with the publications goals.
- Checks proofs and prepares or assists in the preparation of final copy.
- Prepares layouts and headlines, images and captions.

Participates in various activities related to or in support of an agency's public information program.

- May conduct tours, make speeches and presentations, and prepare displays for use at fairs, conferences, conventions, seminars, and training sessions.
- Designs, assists in the design or arranges for the design, set up, staffing, and operation of displays and exhibits.
- Answers inquiries from the public and the news media concerning an agency's programs.
- Maintains schedule of agency events and notifies the news media.
- Arranges for press conferences, seminars, public hearings, and other informational gatherings by securing speakers, creating agenda, preparing invitation lists, administering physical arrangements, preparing publicity materials and supplying the media with information.
- Reviews external publications for items related to the agency and assists in drafting appropriate response.
- Coordinates public appearances for agency staff to explain programs and initiatives and to gain stakeholder support for agency activities.
- Provides assistance and advice on community outreach and public participation and advises agency staff on matters regarding public presentations and media relations.

Maintains an agency's website content and social media channels.

- Establishes and manages social media presence by creating, publishing and maintaining content (text, images, video, etc.).

- Creates content for and maintains an agency's website using content management software.
- Coordinates agency responses to inquiries received through various channels, including social media.
- Monitors and tracks feedback related to agency programs and initiatives in digital environments and posts appropriate response.
- Captures and analyzes social and digital media metrics and assists in addressing issues.

May supervise lower level employees including support, creative, and information technology staff.

- Establishes and maintains work and production schedules.
- Assigns work to subordinate employees, suggesting topic and format and providing technical assistance.
- Reviews work in progress and upon completion for adherence to instructions, appropriateness of style and treatment, accuracy of content and grammar.
- Trains subordinate staff in writing, public relations techniques, and interacting effectively with news media.
- Evaluates staff performance against acceptable standards.

Assists supervisor and other agency officials in planning, executing and evaluating the public information program.

- Proposes public information policies for the agency, or changes in policies, on such matters as handling inquiries from the news media and releasing material under Freedom of Information legislation.
- Suggests changes in the agency's public information objectives or new techniques for accomplishing objectives.
- Periodically reviews materials issued by the agency and recommends changes in subject matter, format and distribution method.
- Advises agency officials on the most effective methods of preparing and disseminating materials for existing and new policies, programs and activities.

- Work with supervisors or program staff to evaluate the effectiveness of communications; may analyze internal agency input or external customer input collected through surveys, focus groups, or interviews.

Communication

Public Information Specialists have frequent verbal and written communications with various individuals. Within the agency, they interview program staff to collect and confirm information for use in various documents or responses. Some of this information may be technical or scientific in nature. They also communicate with the public by responding to requests for information. Tours of State facilities may also be arranged for and led by incumbents for the public, at which time the agency's programs and facilities are described and questions related to such programs and facilities are answered.

Minimum Qualifications

Public Information Specialist 1

Promotion: one year of permanent competitive or non-competitive experience as:
Either A: Public Information Specialist, OR,
B: Multimedia Production Technician, Graphic Designer 1, or Photographer 2.

Open Competitive:

Either 1: a bachelor's degree in media, new media, English, communications, journalism, broadcasting, public relations, films, TV productions, or digital marketing AND two years of experience in public or governmental relations, and/or in writing or producing content for various media;

OR 2: a master's degree in media, new media, English, communications, journalism, broadcasting, public relations, films, TV productions, or digital marketing AND one year of experience in public or governmental relations, and/or in writing or producing content for various media;

OR 3: six years of the experience described above.

Public Information Specialist 2

Promotion: one year of permanent competitive or non-competitive service as:
Either A: Public Information Specialist 1, OR,
B: Graphic Designer 2, Multimedia Production Representative 1, Multimedia Production Program Specialist 1, or Photographer 4.

Open Competitive:

Either 1: a bachelor's degree in media, new media, English, communications, journalism, broadcasting, public relations, films, TV productions, or digital marketing

AND three years of experience in public or governmental relations, and/or in writing or producing content for various media;

OR 2: a master's degree in media, new media, English, communications, journalism, broadcasting, public relations, films, TV productions, and digital marketing AND two years of experience in public or governmental relations, and/or in writing or producing content for various media;

OR 3: seven years of the experience described above.

Attachment

Note: Classification Standards illustrate the nature, extent and scope of duties and responsibilities of the classes they describe. Standards cannot and do not include all of the work that might be appropriately performed by a class. The minimum qualifications above are those which were required for appointment at the time the Classification Standard was written. Please contact the Division of Staffing Services for current information on minimum qualification requirements for appointment or examination.

Date: 05/2018

Public Information Specialists (Digital Content) exclusively perform digital communications related duties across a wide variety of social media and digital media platforms.

Public Information Specialist 1 (Digital Content): Incumbents in these non-competitive positions are exclusively responsible for planning and executing the digital media campaign for a State agency, in addition to coordinating and reviewing the posting of information to agency Facebook and Twitter accounts as directed. They may supervise one or more lower-level subordinates with a Digital Content parenthetical. Incumbents report to higher-level supervisors who also have a Digital Content parenthetical. Illustrative duties include:
Participate in the creative development, technical implementation, and curation of online content for websites and related digital platforms. This includes use of the digital content management system to create, modify, and edit webpages.

Implement recommended updates to agency online documents, including PowerPoint, forms, reports, and training and guidance documents using Adobe Acrobat.

Follow best practices and style guidelines to produce high-quality and accurate work.

Follow agency policies and strategies for digital communications.

Public Information Specialist 2 (Digital Content): Incumbents in these non-competitive positions lead digital media campaign planning, including research, development, and scheduling posts specific to departmental needs. They also coordinate, review, and edit the posting of information to agency Facebook and Twitter accounts. Incumbents are responsible for supervising lower-level subordinates with a Digital Content parenthesis. They report to Public Information Specialist 3 (Digital Content). Illustrative duties include:

Monitor websites, social media sites, and digital communications to ensure that information is kept current, fresh, informative, and appealing.

Coordinate and review the upload content to YouTube and Flickr.

Perform quality assurance checks of work to ensure that all editorial and graphic assets have been uploaded properly to the page, and are free of technical issues.

Use the content management system to create, modify, and edit webpages under the direction of management.

Work with staff and serve as liaison with Information Technology staff as needed to manage HTML coding for e-mail blasts and custom media projects.

Provide support executing social media strategies.

Minimum Qualifications

Public Information Specialist 1 (Digital Content)

Non-competitive: six years of experience in public relations, social media, and digital communications. Associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree in Communications, English, Public Relations, Social Media, Digital Communications, or similar degree, substitutes for two, four, or five years.

Public Information Specialist 2 (Digital Content)

Non-competitive: seven years of experience in public relations, social media, and digital communications. Associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree in Communications, English, Public Relations, Social Media, Digital Communications, or similar degree, substitutes for two, four, or five years.

Promotion: one year of experience as a Public Information Specialist 1 (Digital Content).