City of Salem - VA

Public Information & Engagement Manager

CLASS CODE		SALARY	
ESTABLISHED DATE	9/1/2026	REVISED DATE	

Class Concept

Performs complex professional and administrative work managing the City's public information, communications and community engagement efforts. Serves as the City and City School's Public Information Officer (PIO) and FOIA Officer, coordinates the creation and distribution of communication materials across multiple platforms; works close with departments and community groups to promote City Initiatives and ensure consistent public messaging. Develops and executes communication strategies that provide clear, timely, accurate information to City and School employees, citizens, media and community partners. Work is performed under the limited supervision of the City Manager.

Essential Functions

- Serve as the Public Information Officer and the FOIA Officer for the City and Schools working with appropriate staff to evaluate requests under state law and to track request status and associated costs and expedite responses to citizens and media.
- Serves as the City's primary spokesperson for the City; including crisis communication, major breaking news, and high-profile inquiries.
- Works closely with staff to maintain an effective and coordinated information program; serves as a liaison to the City Council, City Manager, Department Directors, neighborhood and citizen groups, and the business community; anticipates potential problem areas and ensures proactive communication to keep the public informed about major policy issues.
- Plans and executes communication strategies and oversees the production of City and School media content, publications, press materials, advertising, news releases, etc.
- Documents City and School events, including photography and videography for public information purposes; serves as the primary point of contact for event communication needs.
- Ensures accuracy and consistency of messaging across departments and platforms;
- Provides strategic oversight of the City's social media and other digital media platforms and directs the creation of new, engaging content.
- Establishes strategies to build community relationships by ensuring the open exchange of accurate information through community input and partnerships.
- Attends regular and special meetings of Council and School Board.
- Prepares speeches, talking points, proclamations, special recognitions and subject matter

briefs for City Council and City Manager as necessary.
- Monitors community feedback and questions across multiple communication channels to ensure citizen inquiries are properly addressed by City staff and identifies opportunities to improve public outreach.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

Supervisory Responsibilities

Supervises approximately one full-time employee in the Communications Office. Responsibilities include interviewing, hiring, and training employees; planning, assigning, and directing work; appraising performance.

Qualification Requirements

Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities

Comprehensive knowledge of the principles and practices of public and media relations, writing and editing, and print and broadcast media.; ability to gain a working knowledge and understanding of FOIA requirements, the organization; function, and method of operation of the City Council, School Board, administrative staff, and operational departments; ability to obtain/develop and disseminate information related to City services, initiatives, programs, incidents, etc.; skill in the use of personal computers, associated software packages, hardware, and peripheral equipment; skill in writing and presenting public information reports and releases; ability to communicate complex ideas effectively in oral and written form; ability to gather and analyze facts on a variety of subject matter and to assemble and present concise reports and presentations; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with the media, City and School employees, public and private agencies, and the general public.

Education & Experience

Bachelor's degree from four-year college or university in communications, public relations, marketing, journalism or related field; five years related experience in community engagement; The ability to learn a variety of digital communication tools including graphic designs, social media management, etc. This position requires well developed writing and communication skills, judgement, and discretion in maintaining effective relationships with the public, media, and various agencies. An acceptable combination of education and experience may be considered in lieu of the more specific criteria listed above.

Special Requirements

Requires the possession of a driver's license valid in the Commonwealth of Virginia. May be required to be on-call and to work non-standard hours including occasional weekends.
The following pre-employment screenings must be successfully completed with satisfactory results for this position:
- Drug/Alcohol Screening
- Criminal Background Investigation

Physical Requirements

This work requires the occasional exertion of up to 25 pounds of force; work regularly requires speaking or hearing and using hands to finger, handle or feel, frequently requires sitting and occasionally requires standing and walking; work has standard vision requirements; vocal communication is required for expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word; hearing is required to perceive information at normal spoken word levels; work requires preparing and analyzing written or computer data, using of measuring devices, operating motor vehicles or equipment and observing general surroundings and activities; work occasionally requires exposure to outdoor weather conditions; work is generally in a moderately noisy location (e.g. business office, light traffic).

EEO and Affirmative Action

The City of Salem, an Affirmative Action and EEO employer, welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds and recognizes the benefits of a diverse workforce. Therefore, the City of Salem is committed to providing a work environment free of discrimination and harassment. Employment decisions are based on business needs, job requirements and individual qualifications. We prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, mental or physical disabilities, political affiliation, veteran status, gender identity, or other non-merit factors.

The City of Salem is proud to be a Certified Virginia Values Veterans (V3) program employer.