

Jurisdiction: City of Ithaca
Jurisdictional Class: Competitive
Adopted: 09/06/17, 09/07/22

PUBLIC INFORMATION SPECIALIST

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: The work involves responsibility for preparing, producing and disseminating information about the City of Ithaca's activities, services, programs, legislation and news to the media and the public. The Public Information Specialist manages and disseminates news and information through a variety of media, including media releases, community newsletters, the City website, social media accounts, the City digital television channel and the City mass notification system. The Public Information Specialist also assists with the daily activities of the City Clerk's office as needed, including serving as the first point of contact with the City, issuing a variety of licenses and permits, and taking and transcribing minutes of official meetings. The work is performed under the general supervision of the City Clerk, in accordance with established laws, practices and procedures. Supervision may be exercised over the work of student interns, part-time temporary staff or volunteers. Does related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

Writes, edits and prepares media releases, articles, newsletters, brochures and audiovisual materials for internal and external publications, the City website, social media, the City mass notification system and the City digital television channel;

Manages and updates information on the City website, social media accounts and mass notification system; posts and disseminates news, information and announcements;

Maintains working relationships with the news media to disseminate information and publicize municipal events or issues of interest;

Confers with City staff to obtain content information for published material, including news releases, newsletters, brochures and web pages;

Interviews City staff, elected officials and board members on stories of interest, including legislative topics, City services and programs, construction and development projects, the City's workforce, etc.;

Manages information and programming on the City's digital television channel, including posting and indexing meeting videos, managing an information scroll between programming, and acquiring and creating videos and other television programming;

Assists with the development, editing and production of videotaped programming for the City's digital television channel;

Takes photographs and videos of City officials, staff, programs, facilities and events for public information purposes;

Organizes and indexes City photograph collection; edits photos, videos and graphics for appropriate uses;

Distributes newsletter and other informational materials to distribution centers;

Assists City staff with maintenance of departmental website pages and social media accounts;

Creates information materials in multiple formats and languages; develops methodology to provide information in multiple languages;

Provides information regarding City records, functions and activities in person, by mail, by email and over the phone to City staff, community residents, elected officials and news media;

May prepare, maintain and distribute official City records, including minutes, agendas, ordinances, local laws, etc., in both written format and through electronic media;

May take, transcribe and distribute minutes for various governmental boards and commissions;

May issue a variety of licenses and permits, including marriage licenses and transcripts, domestic partnership certificates, dog licenses, sporting licenses, parking permits, etc.;

May administer oaths of office.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS, ABILITIES, PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Good knowledge of the principles and practices of preparing, producing and disseminating information to the media and the public; good knowledge of the methods and technologies used to produce, publish and distribute printed, electronic and audiovisual informational material; good knowledge of the structure and organization of local government; strong creative writing skills; strong computer skills, including word processing, presentation, publishing, photo management, website and social media software and platforms; strong organizational, interpersonal, written and verbal communication skills; strong research skills; strong interviewing skills; ability to write clearly and concisely; ability to edit and proofread written or electronic material; ability to prepare written material with graphics; ability to read and understand complex information; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others; ability to deal effectively with the public; ability to work independently; ability to successfully work with and serve a diverse local community; physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- A. Possession of a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism, Communications, Creative Writing, English, Media Arts, Public Relations or a closely related field with similar course curriculum; or
- B. Possession of an Associate's Degree in Journalism, Communications, Creative Writing, English, Media Arts, Public Relations or a closely related field and two (2) years of full-time paid experience, or its part-time or volunteer equivalent, in public information, journalism, public relations, advertising or community relations, in a capacity which included writing as a primary job duty; or
- C. Graduation from high school or possession of a high school equivalency diploma and four (4) years of full-time paid experience, or its part-time or volunteer equivalent, in public information, journalism, public relations, advertising or community relations, in a capacity which included writing as a primary job duty; or
- D. An equivalent combination of training and experience as defined by the limits of (A), (B) and (C) above.

Note: College degrees must have been awarded by a college or university accredited by a regional, national, or specialized agency recognized as an accrediting agency by the U.S. Department of Education and/or U.S. Secretary of Education. If an applicant's degree was awarded by an educational institution outside the United States and its territories, the applicant must provide independent verification of equivalency. A list of acceptable companies who provide this service can be found at <https://www.cs.ny.gov/jobseeker/degrees.cfm>. Applicants are responsible for payment of the required evaluation fee.