

Communications Specialist 4

I. KIND AND LEVEL OF WORK

Under administrative direction, this fourth-level professional classification serves as an agency communications strategic expert, providing high-level guidance and consultation in the areas of communications, journalism and media and public relations strategy involving planning, message development, outreach, and crisis communications. Positions at this level provide strategic advice and guidance to agency leadership for communications issues that are highly visible, sensitive in nature, and have major implications for the agency and its stakeholders.

II. DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Positions in the Communications Specialist 4 classification function as seasoned agency experts on communications strategy and planning for matters that are high profile, sensitive, and potentially controversial. They provide strategic communications advice and strategies aligned with agency goals to senior leaders and coordinate the communications work for a broad collection of agency programs or large divisions. They also support agency-wide and crosscutting statewide communications initiatives.

The Communications Specialist 4 differs from the Communications Specialist 3 in that the Communications Specialist 4 develops communications strategies and plans for issues that are multifaceted, highly visible, sensitive, and potentially controversial. Incumbents in the Communications Specialist 4 classification serve as expert consultants and advisors to agency leaders on broad communications strategies, and they often coordinate the work of other communications professionals located in the programs and divisions that they support.

The Communications Specialist 4 differs from the Communications Supervisor in that the Communications Specialist 4 does not provide formal supervision to other communications employees.

III. EXAMPLES OF WORK/DUTIES

(A position may not include all the work examples given, nor does the list include all that may be assigned.)

- Develop effective communications strategies for highly visible and sensitive issues involving the news media so that the department is portrayed positively, risks to the

agency's reputation are mitigated, and accurate and relevant information is disseminated to key stakeholders and the public.

- Consult regularly with agency leaders and division managers to determine strategic communications goals, challenges, and opportunities for communicating effectively and proactively with key stakeholder groups.
- Develop and approve messaging and strategies for communicating about high profile and sensitive issues, typically under tight deadlines.
- Review and approve communications materials and content developed by others to ensure quality, consistency, and cohesion with agency communication goals and brand.

IV. KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of:

- The principles and practices of journalism and public relations techniques sufficient to foresee potential media issues, prepare for questions the media may ask, and advise agency leadership on media relations strategies in response to high profile and sensitive issues.
- The agency's mission, goals, programs, operational issues, delivery structure, policies, procedures, and governing laws sufficient to represent the agency accurately and effectively in communications to the media, the public, and key stakeholders and to develop effective strategies for agency-wide and crosscutting statewide communications initiatives.
- Communications planning and strategies sufficient to survey the communications environment, develop goals and objectives, develop effective messaging, define target audiences, select appropriate strategies, incorporate feedback mechanisms, and evaluate the effectiveness of broad communications plans over time.

Skill in:

- Writing and editing for a variety of print and digital publications sufficient to review and approve the work of others and prepare communication materials such as speeches and public statements for dissemination to broad audiences.

Ability to:

- Identify and discuss differences between individuals and groups in relation to communication goals, target audience, and communication tactics sufficient to build support for communications proposals and strategies.

LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION/STATUTORY REFERENCES

N/A

SPECIAL WORK CONDITIONS

N/A

REFERENCES

Former title(s):

REVISION HISTORY

Established 03/2023

Revised 6/2026