



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

December 10, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Submitted by: Aram Kouyoumdjian, Director of Human Resources

Subject: Revise Job Class Specifications – Communications Specialist

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution (1) revising the Communications Specialist job class specifications to allow Charter departments and offices to utilize the classification and (2) providing a 5% differential to Communication Specialists assigned to the City Manager's Office.

FISCAL IMPACT

The modification will add a 5% differential to the base pay of Communications Specialists assigned to the City Manager's Office.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Communications Specialists – who are housed in the City Manager's Office and report to the Communications Director – perform professional communication duties to facilitate dissemination of information to the public and media. Charter departments and offices, including the Office of the Director of Police Accountability, Library, and Rent Board, have also identified a need for professional public communication support. Expanding the job class to include Charter departments and offices would allow them to hire and oversee employees who perform this work. Adding a 5% differential for Communications Specialists assigned to the City Manager's Office would recognize the Citywide breadth of their duties, as opposed to department-specific communications.

BACKGROUND

The proposed modifications to the class specifications were unanimously approved by the Personnel Board.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

These changes will ensure that Charter departments and offices are able to utilize the Communications Specialist classification for their communications and public information-related needs, and that Communications Specialists assigned to the City Manager’s Office are recognized for the Citywide breadth of their work.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Aram Kouyoumdjian, Director of Human Resources, (510) 981-6807.

ATTACHMENTS

1: Resolution

Exhibit A: Communications Specialist – Revised Job Class Specifications

RESOLUTION NO. XX,XXX- N.S.

REVISE JOB CLASS SPECIFICATIONS – COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

WHEREAS, the Human Resources Department maintains the Classification and Compensation plan for the City of Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, job specifications are foundational components of the City’s Classification and Compensation plan; and

WHEREAS, Communications Specialists are currently housed in the City Manager’s Office, report to the Communications Director, and perform professional communication duties to facilitate dissemination of information to the public and media; and

WHEREAS, Charter departments and offices, including the Office of the Director of Police Accountability, Library, and Rent Board, have also identified a need for professional public communication support; and

WHEREAS, expanding the job class specifications to include Charter departments and offices would allow them to hire and oversee employees who perform this work; and

WHEREAS, adding a 5% differential for Communications Specialists assigned to the City Manager’s Office would recognize the Citywide breadth of their duties, as opposed to department-specific communications.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the job specifications for the Communications Specialist classification are revised to allow utilization of the classification by Charter departments and offices, as shown in Exhibit A, effective December 10, 2024;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Unrepresented Employee Manual be revised to add a 5% differential for Communications Specialists assigned to the City Manager’s Office.

Exhibit A:

Communications Specialist – Revised Job Class Specifications

EXHIBIT A

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

CLASS CODE

9011

SALARY

\$49.24 - \$58.41 Hourly

\$3,938.99 - \$4,673.03 Biweekly

\$8,534.48 - \$10,124.89 Monthly

\$102,413.79 - \$121,498.72 Annually

ESTABLISHED DATE

September 14, 2021

REVISION DATE

June 3, 2024

Description

DEFINITION

Under general supervision, performs professional public communication duties to facilitate Citywide initiatives that include the coordination and dissemination of information to the public and media; develops methods and techniques for accomplishing improved communication between the general community, special targeted audiences, the media and the City; and provides professional level support to the Communications Director/Assistant to the City Manager; or the director of a charter department/office.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is the journey level class, fully competent to perform responsible and difficult communications duties in support of various departments. Incumbents are expected to exercise independent judgment in the development and implementation of communications strategies.

Example of Duties

The following list of duties is intended only to describe the various types of work that may be performed and the level of technical complexity of the assignment(s) and is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of duties. The omission of a specific duty statement does not exclude it from the position if the work is consistent with the concept of the classification, or is similar or closely related to another duty statement.

1. Coordinates and performs professional public service communication duties involving the coordination and dissemination of information to the public and media; develops methods and techniques for accomplishing improved communication between the City and general community;

2. Collaborates with City staff to develop a comprehensive communication plan; outlines the City's communication objectives, identifies tools and activities to implement those objectives; improves public access to timely, accurate, helpful information about the City and its services; provides the public with a variety of easy and accessible ways to engage with the City;
3. Develops and utilizes communication strategies to inform and promote City activities, both internally and externally, through written and visual communications with distribution through a variety of channels, including digital platforms such as the web and social media, and print; creates and writes daily content regarding City news and events;
4. Serves as back up to the Communications Director or the director of a charter department/office in crisis communications efforts in emergency situations; under the Incident Command System, would serve as lead PIO;
5. Develops, implements and coordinates outreach programs for community engagement; strengthens social media outreach; proactively addresses issues and misinformation through communication;
6. Analyzes the effectiveness of communications and outreach efforts via digital analytics and quantitative and qualitative data;
7. Coordinates the creation and dissemination of assets and resources designed to serve the public through information; writes and creates news and informational content via print, digital and multimedia platforms;
8. Responds to public, radio, television, print media and other electronic media and forums with Information about programs and services as well as unusual circumstances/situations of immediate public interest; will act as a City media representative and spokesperson;
9. Coordinates with departments to ensure information to the community is clear, accurate and Comprehensive; works with staff to plan, organize and launch programs; writes copy for materials of public interest;
10. Develops positive relationships with media by proactively reaching out to them with City news and information and preparing news releases; researches and organizes information and material and writes copy; be available to the media to ensure information is being provided in an effective and efficient manner;
11. Provides technical assistance to City management and staff on digital communications software, how to effectively talk with the news media, and social media best practices;
12. Builds and maintains positive working relationships with co-workers, other employees and the public using principles of good customer service;
13. Performs related duties as assigned.

Knowledge and Abilities

Note: The level and scope of the knowledges and skills listed below are related to job duties as defined under Class Characteristics.

Knowledge of:

1. Principles, best practices and modern techniques of public information, dissemination, communication program development, media relations, crisis communication, and content-marketing;
2. Techniques of effective interviewing, writing, layout, editing, and multimedia production;
3. Methods and procedures to utilize computer applications and technology related to the work, including but not limited to, web design and maintenance, photography, video production, presentation software, and image editing software;
4. Information dissemination techniques and method;
5. Methods and techniques of clear, concise and accurate oral and written communications.

Ability to:

1. Develop and manage complex communication projects in support of City operations;
2. Effectively prepare and deliver oral presentations and compose clear and organized correspondence, reports, press releases, proclamations, speeches, articles and other written materials;
3. Effectively represent the City with governmental agencies, news media, community groups, employee groups, and various business and professional organizations;
4. Communicate technical information including complex rules, regulations, legislation, and laws in a manner that is appropriate for the intended audience;
5. Use sound judgment in recognizing scope of authority;
6. Operate and use modern office equipment including computers and applicable software;
7. Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work;
8. Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing;
9. Work nights and weekends.

Minimum Qualifications

A TYPICAL WAY OF GAINING THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OUTLINED ABOVE IS:

Equivalent to a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in journalism, communications, public relations, or a related field and four years of responsible professional public communications, media relations, public relations or content-development experience including the development and implementation of communication programs.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

Revise Job Class Specifications – Communications Specialist

Consent Calendar
December 10, 2024

Must be able to travel to various locations within and outside the City of Berkeley to meet program needs and to fulfill the job responsibilities. When driving on City business, the incumbent is required to maintain a valid California driver's license as well as a satisfactory driving record.

Classification History

Established: 09/2021

Revised: 06/2024 – Add charter departments and offices

