



COUNTY OF HIDALGO

Department of Human Resources

Job Title: **PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST**
Grade: 10

The County of Hidalgo Department of Human Resources reserves the right to select candidates considered to be the most highly qualified based on education and experience. The hiring department will interview and select the candidates provided by the Department of Human Resources.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Under general direction, assists in public relation activities designed to provide County employees, citizens and area media with current information regarding all aspects of County operations; Supports Commissioners Court and County Departments in the areas of public information, media relations, and other communications services.

EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED

Performs substantial background research, writing, content development, fact-checking and editing for press releases, talking points, presentations, issues briefs, and other print, broadcast, and online publications

Assists in responding to information requests and inquiries from media and the public

Assists citizens and media during Commissioners Court and other public meetings

Assists in planning and coordination of special events, press conferences, and other County activities

Writes news releases, newsletters, information articles, legislative testimony, speeches, and other materials as assigned; distribution of information including posting and updating the County website, and the County's social media sites

Designs and prepares for online or print publication newsletters, invitations, programs, special reports, advertisements, graphics, and other items as assigned

Interacts with the Commissioners Court, elected officials, County departments, media, community and civic organizations, government and public organizations, private and business organizations and the general public

Assists with Public Information Requests. This involves seeking responsive documents from departments, tracking the status of the requests, drafting responses to the requestor, interacting with departments and, possibly with legal counsel, and other duties as assigned

Performs all other related duties involved as assigned or required

Work in fast-paced, demanding environment to meet all deadlines

Must be able to multi-task

Must be able to stay late, work weekends or be on call as needed to complete deadline assignments and in emergency response situations

EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

Bachelor's degree in Journalism, English, Public Relations, Marketing or related field

Experience involving public relations and writing for publications, or an equivalent combination of education and experience

Two (2) years of related experience may be substituted for one (1) year of education

CERTIFICATES, LICENSES AND REGISTRATION

Must have a current valid Texas motor vehicle operator's license

Must be able to be insured by the County's insurance carrier

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of principles and practices of public relations, journalism, and mass communication
Basic knowledge of local government, including Texas Open Records and Open Meetings laws and procedures

Knowledge of marketing techniques and practices, including public opinion research techniques, methods, and tools

Knowledge of AP Style for news writers

Advanced skills and proficiency in photography and graphic design – including, but not limited to, framing, lighting and printing photographs or preparing photographs for print publications. Advanced skills in design, editing and preparing publications for print.

Excellent written and verbal communication skills required, including proper grammar, spelling and punctuation

Bilingual (Spanish and English) with the ability to converse fluently in both languages, preferred

Ability to research, produce, fact-check, and edit for style and content written material on deadline

Ability to enunciate and articulate well enough to speak to groups of people

Ability to keep abreast of emerging issues, media trends, best practices

High standards of excellence, tact, discretion, honesty, integrity and professionalism in internal and external communications

Ability to use independent judgment and maintain confidentiality

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to talk or hear. The employee frequently is required to stand. The employee is occasionally required to walk; sit; use

hands to find, handle, or feel objects, tools or controls; reach with hands and arms; climb or balance; stoop and kneel.

The employee must occasionally lift and/or move over twenty-five (25) pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, depth perception, and the ability to adjust focus.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounter while performing the essential functions of this job.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Maintain physical conditions appropriate to the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities which may include the following:

- sitting for extended periods of time
- standing for extended periods of time
- operating assigned equipment

Maintain mental capacity which permits:

- making sound decisions and using good judgment
- demonstrating intellectual capabilities

Effectively handle a work environment and conditions which involve:

- working closely with others
- working in a multi-task environment

Maintain effective audio-visual discrimination and perception needed for:

- making observations
- reading and writing
- operating assigned equipment
- communication with others
- required to follow the County of Hidalgo Accident Prevention Plan and department's safety regulations