

## COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

### **DEFINITION**

Under administrative direction, plans, organizes, coordinates, and administers public information program activities of the Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco; represents the Court on public and media relations matters; produces Court publications, prepares reports, and organizes certain community outreach efforts; and does related work as required.

### **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

This is a single position executive management classification that receives direction from and works closely with the Presiding Judge and the Chief Executive Officer. Assignments are broad in scope and allow for a high degree of administrative discretion in their execution.

### **REPORTS TO**

Chief Executive Officer

### **CLASSIFICATIONS SUPERVISED**

This is an executive management classification that may be assigned to supervise subordinates engaged in the Court's public information program, as well as coordinating activities for other management directors and personnel on a project basis, as assigned.

### **EXAMPLES OF IMPORTANT AND ESSENTIAL DUTIES** *(The following is used as a partial description and is not restrictive as to duties required.)*

Provides communication to the media and the public concerning court-related information, ranging from the routine to highly sensitive and potentially explosive issues and incidents; mitigates hostile public interactions; takes proactive steps to build positive relationships with members of the media; reviews and clears media quotes with Court representatives and legal counsel. Develops strategies for media management and provides appropriate media access on cases of significant media interest; provides media orientations to judicial officers, security personnel and staff; provides coaching to judicial officers on effective interview techniques. Establishes and maintains radio and televisions contacts and arranges for program interviews involving business of the Court; coordinates walk-through programs for the legal community to familiarize attorneys with court procedures; and coordinates non-CRC Rule 1.150 requests from outside organizations to film in court facilities.

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Conducts presentations to the media, government agencies, civic and professional organizations and other related groups on court-related topics.

Prepares speeches, or assists in the preparation of speeches, to be given by the Presiding Judge, Chief Executive Officer, other judges or court officials.

Develops public information policies and procedures and makes recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer and the Presiding Judge concerning public and media communication programs and activities.

Prepares news releases and clips, public service announcements, speeches, fact sheets, newsletters, brochures, reports, correspondence, pamphlets, audio-visual presentations and posters and other materials for internal and external distribution; develops video productions and radio and television public service announcements; directs the Court's community education programs; directs and participates in community outreach programs, including community outreach initiatives, developed and executed by staff.

Serves as court wide coordinator of the Court's community outreach activities.

Provides advice and counsel on public affairs and community outreach/education strategies, programs and techniques to Court management, judicial officers, staff and other public agencies; confers with Court management and judicial officers to obtain feedback and provide advice on public affairs initiatives; collaborates with Court management and judicial officers to promote and publicize Court programs and events.

Interfaces with various judicial committees, divisions of the Court and other government agencies to carry out the public information function; provides answers on a daily basis to numerous inquiries received in person, by phone, and by mail from Judges, staff, the media, lawyers and the public; receives visitors to the court, provides pertinent information related to court affairs; and arranges for and provides tours, civic events and presentations.

Monitors and analyzes proposed local, state and federal legislation and regulations for their impact on Court practices and operations; coordinates, with other Court managers, civic and governmental activities to influence legislative and regulatory change consistent with the Court's interests and needs; drafts and/or coordinates development of position papers and public testimony; testifies before public bodies when requested; serves as a sounding board to other Court staff on political and legislative advocacy issues.

Maintains records and files of information and photographs regarding the Court, its Judges and Commissioners and the legal system.

Prepares recruitment materials for the County's annual Grand Jury application process.

Serves as liaison with the Administrative Office of the Courts with respect to public information program activities and issues.

Oversees the contents and layout of the Court's Internet website.

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Arranges for and coordinates a daily clipping service. Maintains an annual yearbook of such clippings. Produces judicial biographical data and incorporates into the yearbook.

**TYPICAL PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Strength, dexterity, and coordination and/or ability to use a computer keyboard and read a video display terminal on a regular basis and for extended period of time; ability to read and listen to verbal or written requests and then respond accordingly; dexterity and coordination to handle files and single pieces of paper; ability to lift and move objects weighing up to 25 lbs. Standing and sitting for long periods of time is periodically required; use of office equipment, including, telephone, calculator, copiers, and FAX.

**TYPICAL WORKING CONDITIONS**

Work is performed in an office and in various courtroom locations throughout the City and County; continuous contact with judicial officers, attorneys, litigants, the news media, community organizations, other staff and the general public. The incumbent works under sometimes difficult and stressful conditions, with frequent deadlines and with the expectation to produce high quality work under limited time constraints. The ability to work independently as well as closely with others is required. This is an executive management position exempt from the FLSA. Often, the incumbent must be available for contact and comment during both normal and off duty hours.

**DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS**

**Knowledge of:**

- Principals and techniques of effective public communications, public relations, news media relations, and community outreach programs;
- Methods and techniques of issues and image management;
- Public relations strategies, including methods and techniques for creating effective media and public relations materials;
- Industry trends and media practices, as they apply to developing and implementing public information/public affairs programs;
- Court functions and operations and associated public information and media relations issues;
- Principles and practices of sound business communications, including correct English usage;
- Layout and editing techniques; automated techniques in developing audiovisual presentations;
- Interviewing techniques;
- Research methods and analysis techniques;
- Legal terminology and procedures used in court cases;

- Program development, implementation, and evaluation.

**Ability to:**

- Plan and direct a broad range of program and services directed to building and maintaining the Court's image in the community and with key stakeholders;
- Analyze and make sound recommendations on complex civic, community and governmental relations, media relations, community outreach and public affairs issues and strategies;
- Understand, interpret, explain and apply local, state and federal policies, laws, regulations and court decisions governing areas of responsibility;
- Develop concepts and design specific methods and techniques to improve internal communication and the distribution of information of general interest to other agencies.
- General interest and convey message through the development of graphic treatments and persuasive writing;
- Present proposals and recommendations clearly, logically and persuasively;
- Represent the Court effectively in public settings and with media representatives on a variety of issues;
- Exercise sound, expert independent judgment and political acumen within general policy guidelines;
- Exercise tact, diplomacy and discretion in dealing with highly sensitive, complex, confidential and controversial issues and situations;
- Maintain confidentiality of Court documents and records;
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with judicial officers, Court managers and employees, other governmental agencies, the public and others encountered in the course of work;
- Interpret, explain, and apply a variety of codes, statutes, policies, rules, procedures, instructions, and regulations related to Court functions and courtroom procedures;
- Develop and implement goals, objectives, policies, procedures and work standards;
- Prepare clear, concise, and accurate records and reports;
- Use a personal computer and appropriate software for word processing, record keeping, and court administrative functions;
- Effectively represent the Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco in answering questions, responding to inquiries, providing assistance, and dealing with concerns from the public, community organizations, other Court staff, and other government agencies;
- Maintain confidential information when required by legal or ethical standards;
- Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships.

**Training and Experience:**

The knowledge and abilities required to perform this function are listed below and are acquired through training and experience. A typical way to obtain the required knowledge

and abilities would be:

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in journalism, business administration, public administration, industrial relations or other related field, and

Four years of increasingly responsible work experience in journalism, public information, or public relations, with primary emphasis on the dissemination of information through various communications media.

**Special Requirements:**

Incumbents may be required to pass a criminal history background check. Information discovered through such a background check may become grounds for dismissal from employment.

*The contents of this class specification shall not be construed to constitute any expressed or implied warranty or guarantee, nor shall it constitute a contract of employment. The contents of this specification may be modified or revoked without notice. Terms and conditions of employment are "at will" employment at the pleasure of the Judges of the Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco.*