

# CITY OF HELENA



**Position Title: Public Information Officer**

**Department: Public Works**

**Division: Administration**

**FLSA: Non-Exempt**

*The City of Helena is an equal opportunity employer. The City shall, upon request, provide reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities.*

**Job Purpose:**

This position is the Communications Specialist for the Public Works Department and is responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring the department's public information program. The position is the key point of contact for the media and may represent the department with the Commission, other departments, and the community; develops public relations strategies and programs to support and enhance the mission of the department; and serves as quality control for all department communication products and efforts. The position reports to the Public Works Director.

**Essential Duties:** *These job functions are the essential duties of the position and are not all-inclusive of all the duties the incumbent may be assigned.*

**Communication Planning and Implementation**

This position will coordinate with all Public Works Divisions to develop thorough communication plans that recognize, articulate, advocate, and represent the needs and interests of the Department and the City, to ensure accurate and timely distribution of information, and to encourage support and cooperation for Department objectives with the City Commission, other City and County departments, and stakeholders.

The PIO will establish short and long-term goals and objectives for the Department's public information and outreach program with the Director, Assistant Director, and in close coordination with Division Superintendents; identify issues affecting the department and citizens and evaluate department goals, objectives and programs to determine their impact on the public information strategy; design and produce program informational and educational materials such as brochures, newsletters, magazine and newspaper articles, radio spots, web and social media content, and videos to provide pertinent, current and technically accurate information to the public; evaluate the effectiveness of public works public information activities to ensure consistent and accurate information is distributed and to assess the degree of success in meeting objectives; and develop and implement communication improvement strategies within the department and review the department's media and communication plan on an annual basis. This includes developing a strategy for community and stakeholder outreach for Public Works programs or special projects.

**Media Management/Spokesperson**

The PIO will provide advice to Public Works management on the best approach to take regarding communications with stakeholders and the public and give direction and expert advice for developing responses and strategies when dealing with issues of high public interest including coordinating department responses to inquiries and serving as the main point of contact with the media. The incumbent will work with appropriate staff to develop press releases, statements or advisories as well as talking points and fact sheets regarding issues or events pertinent to Public Works and follow the appropriate approval channels prior to release; establish and maintain effective working relationships with media contacts and ensure that appropriate media are contacted for issues relating to their specific publication; and perform a variety of communications activities such as planning and on occasion giving presentations and attending meetings to build public awareness of Public Works programs.

They will provide guidance and technical advice to Public Works management and staff on their interactions with the media including reviewing and revising correspondence prepared by staff throughout the department. This includes developing model responses to anticipated questions, ensuring public statements are accurate, and developing department responses to inaccurate portrayals in the media. The PIO will arrange interviews with appropriate staff as needed and confer with, or later report to, Public Works Administration.

This position will develop and maintain reference sources, standard position statements, information release formats, photo files, etc. for Public Works with general and specific information on subjects pertinent to the department, and maintain department files of all news stories in which department personnel are mentioned; and assist Public Works Divisions with compiling reports or memorandums on operations, activities and situations in the community, for use by Public Works Administration in determining programmatic effectiveness and/or determining whether a proposed project should go forward.

### **Internal Communication strategies and procedures**

In addition to external communications, this position will identify and coordinate needs and systems for effectively communicating directives from Public Works Administration, the City Manager, the City Commission, information requests, policy changes, personnel updates, and programmatic successes across all divisions of Public Works through the use of on-and-offline communication tactics. The position is also the lead on providing communications training to Department staff. The PIO will develop, document and implement department-wide protocols and procedures for dealing with the media, special interest groups, other agencies, etc.; review memos, testimony, and other information for presentation to the City Commission or other public entities; and advise Public Works Administration on department communication issues to ensure effective and consistent communication.

The PIO will direct the development of the Public Works web site and social media to provide effective, timely and accurate informational materials and links to information sources; review, suggest changes to and approve all materials submitted by divisions for posting on the web site for content and overall appropriateness to overall site design and objectives; review and approve effective marketing images and program information to determine the most effective design and interactive elements for the department's electronic marketing media while ensuring consistency with other department materials and strategies; and respond or coordinate responses to all information requests received via the homepage or email.

### **Other**

The PIO will perform a variety of other professional, administrative, and public relations activities as assigned by Public Works Administration in support of the mission and objectives. This includes representing Public Works at conferences and meetings, directing special projects, and attending on-going education and training as directed.

### **Essential Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Related to this Position:**

#### **Knowledge of:**

- Effective public relations strategies
- Newspaper, radio, television and social media production procedures
- Various forms of communication, especially writing, editing, and public speaking
- Relationships between citizens and public agencies

#### **Skill or ability to:**

- Quickly learn Public Works programs and functions
- Effectively write and speak in public
- Operate standard equipment for photography, recording, audio editing, and videotaping
- Display poise and professionalism in all situations and tact and respect for other points of view
- Use word processing, graphic design, and publications programs
- Develop strategic plans
- Facilitate public meetings

### **Physical Demands:**

The position requires the ability to work in a standard office environment using computer equipment, with ability to travel to different sites and locations. The individual may at times be exposed to outdoor environment including hot and cold temperatures, dirty, dusty, smelly environments, some mechanical or electrical hazards, confined spaces and possible exposure to chemicals.

### **Safety**

Performs all functions in the safest possible manner and according to policies and procedures. Participates fully with safety trainings. Reports unsafe work conditions and practices, work-related injuries, illnesses, and near-misses as soon as possible to assigned supervisor.

**Minimum Qualifications (Education, Experience and Training):**

This position requires training equivalent to a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with an emphasis in communications, journalism, public relations, or mass media communication and 3 years job-related work experience. Other relevant combinations of education and work experience may be evaluated on an individual basis.

**License or Certificate:**

Must possess a valid driver's license with acceptable driving record at the time of hire and have the ability to obtain a valid MT driver's license within six months of hire.

**Supervision Received:**

Supervised by the Public Works Director.

**Supervision Exercised:**

None

<p>The specific statements shown in each section of this position description are not intended to be all inclusive. They represent typical elements and criteria considered necessary to perform the job successfully.</p>
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