

STATE OF WISCONSIN
CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATION
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of This Classification Specification

This classification specification is the basic authority under ER 2.04, Wis. Adm. Code, for making classification decisions relative to present and future professional positions which function as the director of an agency-wide communications program within a medium, large, or major state agency. This classification specification is not intended to identify every duty which may be assigned to positions, but is intended to serve as a framework for classification decision making in this occupational area.

Classification decisions must be based on the “best fit” of the duties within the existing classification structure. The “best fit” is determined by the majority (i.e., more than 50%) of the work assigned to and performed by the position when compared to the class concepts and definition of this specification or through other methods of position analysis. Position analysis defines the nature and character of the work through the use of any or all of the following: definition statements; listing of areas of specialization; representative examples of work performed; allocation patterns of representative positions; job evaluation guide charts, standards or factors; statements of inclusion and exclusion; licensure or certification requirements; and other such information necessary to facilitate the assignment of positions to the appropriate classification.

B. Inclusions

The positions in this classification are professional positions which function as the director of an agency-wide communications, public information and public relations program within a medium, large, or major state agency and report directly to the Department Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Executive Assistant/Assistant Deputy Secretary, or Agency Head. Positions develop and implement the entire communications program for a state agency; identify, analyze, and evaluate issues, events, and trends which impact departmental programs and initiatives; formulate communication methods and strategies to use in response to these occurrences; prepare departmental policy statements, speeches, announcements, background and briefing information for the Secretary, the Governor, and other executive staff; and function as the department’s media spokesperson. Positions in this classification may also supervise and, if so, must meet the statutory definition of supervisor as defined in s. 111.81(19), Wis. Stats.

C. Exclusions

Excluded from this classification are the following types of positions:

1. Positions which do **not** meet the statutory definition of management and/or supervisor as defined in ss. 111.81(13), and (19), Wis. Stats., as administered and interpreted by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.

2. Positions which are more appropriately classified within the Communications Specialist, or Publications Editor classification series.
3. All other positions which are more appropriately identified by other classification specifications.

D. Entrance Into This Classification

Employees enter positions within this classification by competition.

II. DEFINITION

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

The positions in this classification are professional positions which function as the director of an agency-wide communications, public information and public relations program within the following two allocation patterns: 1) for a medium, large, or major state agency, or 2) functioning as the sole communications position for the Wisconsin Elections Commission. Both require the position to report directly to the Department Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or Executive Assistant/Assistant Deputy Secretary, or Agency Head.

Positions develop and implement the entire communications program for a state agency; oversee and manage the Secretary's Office outreach, promotional, media and public relations activities, events, and announcements; identify, analyze, and evaluate issues, events, and trends which impact departmental programs and initiatives; formulate communication methods and strategies to use in response to these occurrences; provide complex and critical strategic planning, policy, trends, and tactical advice; advise the Secretary on potential controversies, sensitive issues, problems, or negative impact on the department and recommend communication strategies which are responsive to these issues; direct the preparation and distribution of or prepare and distribute press releases, news stories, opinion essays, and related information to the media; prepare departmental policy statements, speeches, announcements, background and briefing information for the Secretary, the Governor, and other executive staff; coordinate and oversee requests for the Secretary's Office participation in public relations events; arrange press conferences and media interviews for the Secretary's Office and the department; function as the department's media spokesperson, directly respond to the media, and conduct press conferences; guide, review, and evaluate video presentations and publications for compliance with departmental policies and the Secretary's standards; and design, develop, and implement media campaigns for the purpose of explaining, promoting, and sharing departmental programs, initiatives, and opinions.

III. QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications required for these positions will be determined at the time of recruitment. Such determinations will be made based on an analysis of the goals and worker activities performed and by an identification of the education, training, work, or other life experience which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been acquired.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

This classification was created effective March 12, 2000, as a result of the broadbanding study and announced in Bulletin CLR/SC-109 to describe professional positions which function as the director of an agency-wide communications program within a medium, large, or major state agency. These positions were previously classified as Communications Officer 1 and 2.

This classification was modified effective September 22, 2024, in bulletin DPM-0632-CC/SC, to remove the prohibition from positions being classified in this classification which also supervise and to clarify that position in this classification must meet the definition of supervisor or management.

This classification was modified effective March 23, 2025, in bulletin DPM-0638-CC/SC, to allow for use by the Wisconsin Elections Commission by adding a second allocation pattern.

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