

**STATE OF WISCONSIN
CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATION

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
CLASSIFICATION SERIES**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of This Classification Specification

This classification specification is the basic authority under ER 204, Wis. Admin. Code, for making classification decisions relative to present and future professional positions located in a variety of state agencies and University of Wisconsin campuses which function as Communications Specialists. Positions allocated to this classification develop and administer public information, educational, and promotional communications programs. 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 series are professional positions located within a variety of state agencies and University of Wisconsin campuses which function as Communications Specialists and perform the following duties: develop, write, and edit news releases, articles, feature stories, speeches, pamphlets, brochures, and scripts for print and electronic media; design, implement, and evaluate Web pages for the Internet; conduct research necessary to develop and publish materials; assist in the coordination of or coordinate the formulation and implementation of departmental information, educational, and promotional programs; respond to written and verbal inquiries relating to the assigned program area; direct the communications program for a department or program segment; provide consultation to the department secretary and other high level management staff in communications strategy and program planning; and function as the spokesperson for media contacts.

C. Exclusions

Excluded from this classification series are the following types of positions:

1. Positions which meet the statutory definitions of supervisor or management as defined in Wis. Stats. 111.81(19) and (13) as administered and interpreted by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.

2. Positions which perform, for a majority of the time, duties and responsibilities which are more appropriately classified as Publications Editor.
3. Positions which perform, for a majority of the time, duties and responsibilities which are more appropriately classified as Marketing Specialist.
4. Positions which perform, for a majority of the time, duties and responsibilities which are more appropriately classified as Medicaid Publications Coordinator.
5. Positions which perform, for a majority of the time, duties and responsibilities which are more appropriately classified as Publications Supervisor.
6. All other positions which are more appropriately identified by other classification specifications.

D. Entrance and Progression Through This Series

Employees enter positions within this classification series by competitive examination. Although this is not a progression series, a position may be filled below its objective level for the purpose of training and development. Such positions may be reclassified to their objective level if the employee satisfactorily attains the specified training, education, or experience and the position spends the majority of its time (50% or more) on duties identified at the Senior or Advanced level.

II. DEFINITIONS

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Positions allocated to this classification develop, write, and edit news releases, newsletters, articles, feature stories, pamphlets, and brochures; conduct research necessary to develop and publish materials; develop the layout, including color, type and spacing determination of publications and pamphlets; and respond to written and verbal inquiries relating to the assigned program area. Positions at this level develop a limited number of publications for a relatively narrow, specialized audience and are either responsible for segments of a department's communications program or are responsible for a board's or commission's entire communications program which is limited in scope and impact. Work is performed under general supervision.

In order to be appropriately classified at this level, positions must spend the majority of their time (50% or more) performing professional Communications Specialist duties which are of similar scope, impact and complexity as the representative positions identified at this classification level.

Representative Positions:

Arts Board Communications Specialist - Edits the Arts Board's quarterly newsletter and annual report; produces the annual art/craft fair directory, bi-annual cultural resource directory and touring artists directory; and writes and edits news releases.

Educational Communications Board Telelink Editor - Edits TELELINK, the bimonthly newsletter for adult distance learning professionals; edits teacher manuals and handbooks and assists in editing and proofreading other publications; and writes promotional pamphlets, brochures, fact sheets, press releases and informational links.

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST - SENIOR

Positions allocated to this classification perform all of the duties identified at the Objective level and in addition, function in one of the following capacities: (1) direct significant segments of a department's communications program; (2) direct a department's communications program which is broader in scope and impact than those positions identified at the Objective level; (3) direct a large communications program segment, within a large or major department; (4) direct the development and production of a division's multi-program communications materials and activities within a large or major department; (5) direct the comprehensive communications program of a department which generates a large number and variety of publications, advertising campaigns, audiovisual productions, and media information kits; or (6) direct a large multi-divisional communications program segment, within a medium-sized department

A comprehensive communications program is defined as one which covers a wide variety of complex professional programs within the department; requires the development of a wide variety and number of publications with distribution to large audiences which represent a significant portion of the state's population; includes the development of print and audiovisual materials; and requires significant interaction with the news media and the general public in providing information relating to the department's programs and activities.

Positions at this level are also differentiated from positions at the Objective level in that these positions develop a greater number and variety of information, educational and promotional publications and audiovisual materials and activities for a wider variety of departmental programs. In comparison to the Advanced level positions, the Senior level positions direct communications for departmental programs which are relatively stable in terms of changes in program policies and organization and involve relatively non-controversial program areas.

Positions allocated to this level write scripts for radio, television, internet and other electronic media; design, implement, and evaluate Web pages for the Internet; develop or direct the development of videos or films; work with contracted advertising or media agencies in developing campaigns for the department or division; develop media information kits relating to the assigned program area; act as the division's or department's media contact and provide the media with information as requested; monitor selected major news media to stay current with media and public viewpoints and concerns regarding departmental programs and issues; and make presentations on division or department activities and programs before interested groups. Work is performed under general supervision.

In order to be appropriately classified at this level, positions must spend the majority of their time (50% or more) performing professional Communications Specialist duties which are of similar scope, impact, and complexity as the representative positions identified at this classification level.

Representative Positions:

Department of Military Affairs - Under the direction of the Public Affairs Director, works closely with other department public information staff in the development and implementation of the department communications program; writes and edits news releases, feature articles, speeches and audiovisual scripts; contributes articles and photography to three in-house periodicals; oversees the department's visual media center; serves as a member of the Adjutant General's Public Affairs Council; and plans, coordinates and executes media campaigns to inform the public about the department's projects and activities.

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Division Communications Specialist - Develops informational and educational materials and activities relating to the assigned division and the

variety of programs within the division, such as compliance, regulatory, inspection, and consumer protection programs; researches and writes brochures, fact sheets, reports, manuals and press releases; coordinates the printing, production, and distribution of publications; develops and makes public presentations or coordinates speakers for public presentations regarding the division's programs; functions as the division's spokesperson with news media; and develops electronic media programs.

State Fair Park Public Relations Director - Writes, edits and updates materials for publicity and publication, including news releases, feature stories, agency reports, fact sheets, public information announcements, premium books, and daily fair schedule pamphlets; produces drafts of audiovisual scripts, slide shows, and speeches; coordinates the development of publications, photography, toll free informational phone lines and internet pages; works with graphic artists, typesetters and printers to design and produce brochures and other graphic media; prepares and presents public information for seminars, conferences and other meetings; functions as the department's media contact; develops media kits for statewide media; and assists with the development of press/news conferences.

State Historical Society Public Contacts Coordinator - Develops and implements a comprehensive public information program for the society, including the historic sites, museum, library, archives and research services, development and state relations, and the executive office; develops and implements a promotional program for the seven historic sites, including the development of news releases, feature stories, public service announcements, brochures, and audiovisual scripts; develops publications including brochures, posters, fliers and other promotional materials, including working with graphic artists and printers; and functions as the department's media contact.

Public Service Commission Consumer Education Specialist - Directs a large multi-divisional communications program segment for the agency; specifically, the consumer education program for four regulated utility industries (electric, natural gas, telecommunications, and water and sewer). Primary areas of responsibility include designing, coordinating, and implementing consumer education programs; preparing and updating various publications and informational materials; responding to oral and written requests for information; and serving as the agency spokesperson in a back up capacity or for assigned issue areas.

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST - ADVANCED

Positions allocated to this level perform all of the duties identified at the Senior level, and in addition, function in one of the following capacities: (1) coordinate or direct the communications program for a medium or large department's comprehensive communications program, with a large number and variety of publications distributed to a large, diverse audience. Positions are responsible for the department's entire public information and communications program which encompasses a broad variety of complex professional programs; (2) direct a comprehensive district or regional communications program within a major department which encompasses a variety of complex professional programs; or (3) coordinate a communications program for multiple divisions, districts or regions within a major state agency on a central office basis.

Positions allocated to this level develop and administer very complex and controversial public information, educational, or promotional communications programs. Positions formulate and implement departmental, regional or district information, education, and promotional programs; advise the department secretary or regional or district director in communications policies and strategies; act as the department, regional or district spokesperson with media representatives, public and private sector officials, and the general public; monitor selected major news media to stay current on media and public concerns regarding departmental programs, activities, and issues, and bring items of significance to management's attention with recommendations for action; make presentations on departmental, regional

or district activities and programs before interested groups; and direct, review and approve the work of private advertising and media firms.

Positions at this level direct the development and distribution of the largest number and variety of publications, audiovisual productions, and advertising and promotional campaigns for departments with a variety of complex professional and technical programs.

Positions at this level direct very complex communications programs which continually generate a large number of contacts from the print and broadcast news media and the general public due to the department's high-profile, controversial, politically sensitive issues and programs and/or programs which are volatile in terms of major policy changes which affect large segments of the state population; direct communications programs which involve crisis incidents and situations which require the position to coordinate and respond to a massive number of media contacts; and direct communications programs which cross programmatic and divisional lines of authority. Work is performed under general supervision.

In order to be appropriately classified at this level, positions must spend the majority of their time (50% or more) on professional Communications Specialist duties which are of similar scope, impact, complexity, and discretion as the representative positions identified at this level. Work is performed under general supervision.

Representative Positions:

Department of Veterans Affairs Public Relations Director - Directs the agency's public information programs, including the Division of Veterans Programs, Wisconsin Veterans Museum, Veterans Assistance Program, Wisconsin Veterans Home, and the Southeast Wisconsin Veterans Cemetery; researches, develops and monitors strategic communication plans through consultation with the Secretary and the agency's other highest level managers; provides counsel, technical assistance, direction regarding public information procedures to department staff throughout the state; designs, implements and evaluates effective public information and media relations programs, including newsletters, feature articles, speeches, audiovisual presentations; special reports, media information kits, and special publications; functions as the department's special events coordinator and coordinates ground-breaking ceremonies and dedications of new department facilities, as well as veterans' ceremonies, commemorations, parades and other events; functions as the department's Webmaster; and functions as the department's public relations liaison.

Department of Natural Resources Regional Communications Specialist - Develops and directs a comprehensive regional information and education program for forestry, land, water, air and waste, enforcement and science issues; formulates communications policies concerning information and education programs, citizen involvement and crisis management; serves as principal staff advisor to regional director identifying and evaluating public issues, public involvement options and action recommendations; provides expert citizen involvement consultant services for specific department committees working on statewide initiatives; as a US Forest Service-certified Incident Command System Fire Information Officer, responds with Wisconsin or outside the state as part of a multi-state, multi-agency or International Incident Response Team; provides expert crisis communications counsel to other state and federal agencies; coordinates multi-agency responses to regional concerns including information released concerning state and federal enforcement cases within the region; develops news releases, articles, reports and statements for use by senior agency officials, print and broadcast media; directs the design of brochures, maps, graphics, and audiovisual programs involving print, video and still photography; prepares news articles, speeches, magazine articles, and regional internal publications; and develops broadcast public service announcements, media information kits, photos, and advertising.

Department of Natural Resources Creative Products Manager - Monitor, develop and recommend opportunities to develop creative communication products related to environmental and natural resources programs, activities and policy initiatives. Develop concepts for potential creative product ideas and guide the selection of communication approaches to emerging issues and audiences. Manage creative product development cycle with clients. Serve as the Associate Editor for the Natural Resources Magazine.

Department of Transportation District Communications Specialist - Directs a district communications and public relations program which disseminates information regarding district, Division of Transportation Districts, and DOT initiatives and activities to the public, district and central office DOT staff, media, municipalities and other interested parties; develops communication strategies to effectively inform local officials, legislators and the public of key transportation projects and programs; advises district director on communications policies; acts as district spokesperson to interpret and explain DOT district policies; works with local officials, industry, commerce and district staff to strategize on how to minimize impacts to local business as a result of transportation improvement projects; oversees print and electronic informational materials, including newsletters, brochures, phone and fax hotlines, news releases and worldwide web documents; directs the development of maps, graphics, audiovisual programs, broadcast public service announcements, media information kits, photos, newspaper supplements, and advertising; prepares public information materials, announcements and news releases; coordinates or assists in the coordination of public informational meetings, ribbon cutting or related media events, with some events involving the Secretary and the Governor; and assists in the preparation of speeches and issue papers and keeps the central office and Office of Public Affairs advised on emerging issues.

Department of Transportation Office of Public Affairs Communications Specialist - Provides policy analysis and department-wide communication support to effectively inform and educate the public on the department's key initiatives, programs and services; writes speeches for the department Secretary and the Governor; serves as the information officer for assigned divisions and identifies, researches, analyzes and develops short and long range public affair goals; functions as the spokesperson for the assigned divisions in interpreting and explaining policies; prepares issue papers which address sensitive issues which cross divisional and departmental lines of authority; leads department-wide teams to develop effective communications programs; develops and writes policy statements, news articles, feature stories, television and radio scripts, media campaigns and events, and other information materials; reviews all electronic and print information prepared within the department to ensure consistency with departmental policies; and works with elected officials, other departments, district communication specialists and the public to solve their concerns.

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 series was created effective January 4, 1998 as a result of the Public Information Officer and Publications Editor Survey and announced in Bulletin CC/SC-80. This survey was an extension of the Professional Program Support Personnel Management Survey. This classification was modified effective September 9, 2001 and announced in Bulletin CLR/SC-133 to add an allocation to the Communication Specialist – Senior classification for position that direct a large multi-divisional communications program segment within a medium-sized department.

This classification series was created effective May 18, 2003 and announced in Bulletin MRS-SC-158 as a result of the WPEC Broadbanding and Class Collapsing Study. This specification was updated April 15, 2007 to add the Department of Natural Resources Creative Products Manager as a representative position.

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