

UTAH COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

CLASS TITLE: PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER / RISK COMMUNICATOR
CLASS CODE: 2240

FLSA STATUS: EXEMPT
SUPERVISORY STATUS: NONE

EFFECTIVE DATE: 5/27/2015 (REVISED 2/2/2012 VERSION)
DEPARTMENT: HEALTH

JOB SUMMARY

Under the direction of the Health Promotion Director and Emergency Response Planner/Coordinator, builds the Utah County Health Department's capacity to provide needed health/risk information to the public and key partners during a bioterrorist event or other public health emergency. Coordinates and implements all public information needs for the health department.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Educates the public about Health Department programs, services, rules, regulations and policies approved by the Board of Health and implemented by the divisions and bureaus within the Utah County Health Department (UCHD) utilizing media sources and other public relations and marketing vehicles.

Establishes the capacity to conduct awareness and outreach campaigns, including social media efforts, town hall meetings, focus groups, and community outreach to civic organizations, schools, businesses, and special ethnic and cultural groups.

Prepares verbal and written communication tailored to each type of media (e.g., newspaper, radio, television, web, social media); produces effective and culturally appropriate materials.

Prepares and distributes press/news releases. Works with the media to promote understanding of UCHD and its programs. This involves both response and placement of planned messaging, responding to media inquiries and working proactively with the media to place stories.

Plans, organizes and conducts news conferences. Monitors media and community environment to detect issues that are emerging and analyzes the potential impact of these issues on the UCHD and its programs.

Promotes department-wide programs and services by posting and updating promotional information on the Health Department's website and social media channels.

Establishes mechanisms for tracking and monitoring message dissemination and exposure, media coverage, audience reactions and feedback, and changing communication issues and practices.

Establishes critical baseline information about the current communication needs and barriers within individual communities in Utah County.

Evaluates the impact of communication on public health practice and community behaviors.

Identifies and implements effective channels of communication for reaching the general public and special populations during periods of calm as well as during public health emergencies.

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Acts as a subject matter expert and resource to others within the UCHD by demonstrating an understanding of how the media works, and experience in dealing with media coverage of controversial issues, particularly issues that affect public policy or the image of the UCHD and public health.

Acts as spokesperson, or identifies key public health spokespersons within the department and ensures their competency, awareness, and ongoing training necessary to effectively communicate with the public and media for regular UCHD programs and services or to prepare for and respond to public health emergencies.

Works in conjunction with the Executive Director, Emergency Planner, Epidemiologist and resources for bioterrorism and emergency response planning; reviews appropriate risk communication strategies and resources.

Assists the Emergency Planner with the development of operational drills and/or exercise scenarios designed to train, test and evaluate emergency response concepts or standard operating guidelines.

Conducts needs assessments to evaluate the communication and information needs for public health threats and emergencies.

Develops information dissemination plans, procedures and protocols to educate the public regarding exposure risks and effective public response.

Assesses existing standard policies, procedures, and legal authorities and agreements for conducting department-wide media relations and risk communication; ensures that consistent and accurate information is disseminated.

Learns the principles, practices and techniques involved in public relations and emergency management/risk communication.

Participates in related training programs as directed, completing courses, workshops, seminars, and other public relations and risk communication training.

Responds to public health emergencies as required by the department or division administration; carries provided pager, cellular phone, or other emergency communication devices during all work hours and at all other times when unavailable by phone at home.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Basic Knowledge of:

Public health terminology, methodology, organization, and practices.
Epidemiology and communicable disease.

Knowledge of:

The principles, theories, and practice of media and public relations techniques.
Advertising and printing industries.
Pre-print, desktop publishing, and graphic design and layout.

Skill in:

Verbal and written communication.
Making professional presentations.
Basic website maintenance and design.
Conducting information research from local and national information resources.
Using style/editing techniques and the correct use of punctuation and grammar rules.
Interpersonal relationships.

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Ability to:

Promote programs and services through social media platforms and other electronic resources.
Establish and maintain effective relationships with the media, local and State personnel, public health professionals, and community organizations.
Work well under pressure and handle high stress situations and impending deadlines.
Work with other agencies on shared projects and in team situations.
Manage various tasks simultaneously.
Write technical reports, press releases, brochures and informational pamphlets.
Self-motivated and self-directed.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Regularly: sits at a desk or table; walks, stands, or stoops; drives a motor vehicle; works for sustained periods of time maintaining concentrated attention to detail.

Occasionally: lifts or otherwise moves objects weighing up to 30 pounds.

Accommodation may be made for some of these physical demands for otherwise qualified individuals who require and request such accommodation.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Work is typically performed in an office or other environmentally controlled room. Work regularly requires in-state travel and occasionally requires out-of-state and/or overnight travel.

EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Bachelor degree in Mass Communication, English, Journalism, Public Relations, Health Education, or a related field and three (3) years of work experience as a journalist, public relations specialist, or health educator. Equivalent combinations of education and experience may also be considered.

Selected applicants shall be strongly encouraged to receive immunizations according to the Center for Disease Control and/or County Health Department Policy. Selected applicants are subject to, and must pass, a full background check. Incumbents may be required to complete training courses as recommended and made available through the Utah Comprehensive Emergency Management (CEM) Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

LICENSING

Applicants must possess a valid driver's license and obtain a valid State of Utah driver's license within 60 days of employment.

This description lists the major duties and requirements of the job and is not all-inclusive. Incumbent(s) may be expected to perform job-related duties other than those contained in this document and may be required to have specific job-related knowledge and skills.