



# Public Information Officer

## Job Description

Department: Health  
Position: Career Service  
Grade: 512  
Supervisory: No  
Reports to: Health Promotions Director

### Summary

Under the direction of the Health Promotion Director, 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

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Promotes department-wide programs and services by posting and updating promotional information on the Health Department's website and social media channels.
7. Establishes mechanisms for tracking and monitoring message dissemination and exposure, media coverage, audience reactions and feedback, and changing communication issues and practices.

### For Office Use Only

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Public Safety: No

Worker's Compensation: Clerical  
Background Level: I  
Safety Sensitive: No  
DOT: No  
ML: Manager

8. Establishes critical baseline information about the current communication needs and barriers within individual communities in Utah County.
9. Evaluates the impact of communication on public health practice and community behaviors.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. Conducts needs assessments to evaluate the communication and information needs for public health threats and emergencies.
16. Develops information dissemination plans, procedures and protocols to educate the public regarding exposure risks and effective public response.
17. 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.
18. Learns the principles, practices and techniques involved in public relations and emergency management/risk communication.
19. Participates in related training programs as directed, completing courses, workshops, seminars, and other public relations and risk communication training.
20. 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
- Basic knowledge of epidemiology and communicable diseases
- Knowledge of the principles, theories, and practice of media and public relations techniques
- Knowledge of advertising and printing industries
- Knowledge of pre-print, desktop publishing, and graphic design and layout

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- Skilled in verbal and written communication
- Skilled in making professional presentations
- Skilled in basic website maintenance and design
- Skilled in conducting information research from local and national information resources
- Skilled in using style/editing techniques and the correct use of punctuation and grammar rules
- Skilled in interpersonal relationships
- Ability to promote programs and services through social media platforms and other electronic resources
- Ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with the media, local and State personnel, public health professionals, and community organizations
- Ability to work well under pressure and handle high stress situations and impending deadlines
- Ability to work with other agencies on shared projects and in team situations
- Ability to manage various tasks simultaneously
- Ability to write technical reports, press releases, brochures and informational pamphlets
- Ability to be self-motivated and self-directed

### **Supervisory Responsibility**

This position has no direct supervisory responsibility but does serve as a coach and mentor for other positions in the department.

### **Work Environment**

This job operates in a professional office environment. This role routinely uses standard office equipment such as a laptop, desktop, smartphone, photocopiers, shredders, and filing cabinets. The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate. The incumbent may be required to drive Utah County owned vehicles in the course of conducting County business and must abide by the Utah County Vehicle Policy.

### **Physical Demands**

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is required to use manual dexterity to handle, feel, and operate objects, tools and controls, and reach with hands and arms. The employee regularly sits at a desk or table and is regularly required to walk, stand, or stoop. The employee works for sustained periods of time maintaining concentrated attention to detail. Specific vision abilities by this job include close vision and ability to adjust focus. The employee is required to type, file, and lift supplies up to thirty (30) pounds. The employee regularly drives a motor vehicle.

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**Position Type / Expected Hours of Work**

Incumbent must work eighty (80) hours each pay period to maintain full-time status. There may be availability to work out a flex schedule ahead of time that works for both the County and the employee. Occasional evening and weekend work may be required as job duties demand.

**Travel**

Travel is primarily local during the business day, although some out-of-area and overnight travel may be expected, up to five (5) percent.

**Required Education and Experience**

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

**Additional Eligibility Qualifications**

1. Applicants must possess a valid driver's license and obtain a valid State of Utah driver's license within sixty (60) days of employment.
2. Selected applicants will be required to submit to a pre-employment drug screen and background check.
3. Selected applicants shall be strongly encouraged to receive immunizations according to the Center for Disease Control and/or County Health Department Policy.
4. Incumbent 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).

**AAP/EEO Statement**

It is the policy of Utah County Government to assure equal employment opportunity to its employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, genetic status or gender identity.

**Other Duties**

Please note this job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties, or responsibilities that are required of the employee of this job. Duties, responsibilities, and activities may change at any time.

Utah County Government is a drug-free workplace.

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**Acknowledgement below to be completed after an offer has been extended and accepted.**

This job description has been approved by the Office of Human Resource Management in consultation with the Department Head.

Signature below constitutes an understanding of the requirements, essential functions and duties of the position.

Candidate / Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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