

Supreme Court Public Information Officer

JOB FAMILY DEFINITION

This classification falls within the Communications Job Family, encompassing a range of work in which incumbents are responsible for providing communications support and analyses for the organization.

CLASS SUMMARY

This is a single-incumbent class. The Supreme Court Public Information Officer is responsible for developing, organizing, implementing, and maintaining the court's media services program and formal and informal public communications for the Supreme Court, the Chief Justice, and the Commission on Judicial Appointments. The incumbent operates with the highest degree of integrity to uphold the public's trust and confidence in the administration of justice by representing the court to the news media and providing professional guidance to judicial officers, executives, managers, and court staff related to internal communication, civics education, public affairs and media relations, community outreach, and other related duties as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The Supreme Court Public Information Officer class is distinguished from other Judicial Council classes in that the Supreme Court Public Information Officer manages public relations and communications for the Supreme Court and acts as the designated spokesperson for the Supreme Court and the Chief Justice, enhancing transparency and improving the understanding of judicial procedures, programs, and high-profile cases to promote public trust and confidence.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL DUTIES *(The duties listed are illustrative only and represent the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on business needs.)*

- Plans, prepares, and determines the best approach for communicating important court news and activities to the public through a variety of media outlets to promote consistent, effective, and relevant information sharing.
- Serves as primary spokesperson for the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court and primary point of contact for press inquiries, interviews, and appearance/engagement requests for the Chief Justice, clerk/court executives, and Supreme Court justices related to the business of the court.
- Strategizes with the Chief Justice and court leadership on media relations and communications goals and objectives; serves as point of contact for queries relating to dissemination of sensitive communications and case statuses to the public.

- Drafts and disseminates official comments, remarks, statements, and quotes from the Chief Justice and other branch officials on matters related to the Supreme Court; prepares press releases, public service announcements, articles, bulletins, reports, brochures, videos, and other media; and coordinates communications releases on the California Courts Newsroom.
- Advises the Chief Justice and senior branch management on communications and media trends; collaborates with senior executives in the development of media-related policies for the court.
- Works closely with the Judicial Council’s primary communications staff to align messaging, leverage platforms, coordinate joint/related communications, and collaborate on joint projects.
- Formulates policies and procedures for responding to requests for public records and information in coordination with legal counsel; responds to inquiries from justices, staff, news media, and the public, providing pertinent information related to court affairs.
- Attends high-level meetings and conferences as a public relations representative for the court; provides oversight and participates in committees pertaining to community outreach, communication, and digital strategies; consults with court leadership on media issues.
- Oversees media relations activities in support of the Commission on Judicial Appointments; coordinates media activities with the Clerk/Executive Officer of the Supreme Court and the Commission’s Secretary.
- Designs and distributes internal and external communications through leverage of technology and social media; directs content and regular updates for the California Courts website and social media programs.
- Defines, develops, and manages the creative direction, brand, tone, and voice of communication pieces, ensuring alignment with the court’s strategic plan and values.
- Develops, implements, and participates in community education and outreach events and various conferences and workshops; represents the courts at public events; provides communications counsel and programmatic support to the Chief Justice’s current initiatives, projects, and activities.
- Maintains accurate and current lists of key statewide and regional news media as well as legal/judicial media nationally and other specialty press.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Bachelor’s degree, preferably in communications, journalism, public relations, or a directly related field, and five years of professional media-relations experience, including one year of experience with a public sector organization or government agency. *An additional four (4) years of professional experience as noted above may substitute for the bachelor’s degree. Or, additional directly related experience and/or education may be substituted on a year-for-year basis.*

OR

Master's degree in a directly related field such as communications, journalism, or public relations, and two (2) years of experience developing and administering a comprehensive communications or public relations program, including dissemination of information to internal and external audiences through various communications media.

LICENSING AND CERTIFICATIONS

None.

KNOWLEDGE OF

- Principles and practices of journalism, media, public relations, strategic communications planning and measurement, crisis communications, public outreach, and community engagement;
- Principles and practices of online communications, including web content strategy and social media; project planning and management principles;
- Advanced principles and practices of professional writing and editing, proofreading marks, editorial style guides, and graphics standards;
- The California judicial system and court operations and procedures;
- Statutes, laws, and court policies and procedures governing the release of court information, media access to courtrooms, case confidentiality, and right to privacy restrictions;
- Legal terminology and legal citation style;
- Emerging and evolving digital communications technologies and platforms; principles and practices of multimedia content development, including photography, video, and audio;
- Customer service principles;
- Problem solving techniques and approaches; and
- Applicable work rules and policies.

SKILL IN

- Developing and deploying creative content across multiple platforms and media channels; utilizing various digital media, social media platforms, and multimedia content creation tools;
- Planning, coordinating, administering, and implementing communications strategy;
- Professional writing and editing;
- Acting as liaison of the court by sharing information on its programs, policies, and procedures with members of the media, other government agencies, and the public;
- Performing legal research;
- Writing clearly and concisely for court and public audiences;
- Staying abreast of trends and changes in the communications field, including methodology and technology changes related to print and electronic media;
- Maintaining a professional demeanor, using tact and diplomacy in representing the court effectively in dealings with the media and multiple external organizations;

- Using initiative and independent judgment; managing crisis communications; and
- Organizing, prioritizing, and coordinating multiple work activities and meeting critical deadlines.

WORKING CONDITIONS, ADA, AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The Judicial Council is an equal opportunity employer. The Judicial Council will comply with its obligations under the law to provide equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities.

Positions in this class typically require sitting, stooping, kneeling, crouching, reaching, standing, walking, pulling, lifting, fingering, grasping, talking, hearing, seeing, and repetitive motions.

Sedentary work: Exerting up to 10 pounds of force occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to lift, carry, push, pull, or otherwise move objects. Sedentary work involves sitting most of the time. Jobs are sedentary if walking and standing are required only occasionally, and all other sedentary criteria are met.

Incumbents generally work in a typical office environment with adequate light and temperature. The Judicial Council will make all reasonable efforts to minimize the need for employees to travel by taking advantage of virtual conferencing tools as much as possible. However, positions in this class may require local and statewide travel as necessary. Depending on the assignment, incumbents in this classification must be available to occasionally work evenings, weekends, and holidays, as necessary. Extensive phone contact with media requires availability throughout the workday.

Please Note: *The Judicial Council classifies work based on organizational need. The distinguishing characteristics, essential duties, and minimum qualifications described in this specification relate to the body of work required and not to the attributes of an incumbent assigned to perform the work.*

As a government body charged with improving the statewide administration of justice, the Judicial Council has multiple offices with diverse responsibilities relating to court policy and operations. As employees of the council, every member of staff should view and approach their work as one Judicial Council with a public service mission that is greater than the sum of its parts.