

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Information Specialist

Class Code: 11722

Pay Grade: GH

A. Purpose:

Plans, writes, edits, and disperses informational and educational materials to provide accurate, timely, and useful information about department services and activities.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Information Specialists develop informational communications within professional standards, established department guidelines, and under direct supervisory review.

Information Assistants provide administrative support to staff in the development and distribution of informational materials and products.

Information Officers prepare and implement complete information project plans and budgets, and work independently with minimal oversight from supervisors; and work in agencies where there is no Information Supervisor.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Develops informational and promotional materials to provide accurate and understandable communications about department services and activities.
 - a. Plans the most appropriate materials to develop, and conducts research or interviews to obtain applicable information.
 - b. Creates narrative for ads, brochures, fliers, newsletters, on-air promos, and press releases; and proofreads them for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and content.
 - c. Creates publications such as fliers, brochures, and other specialty items by using desktop publishing software.
 - d. Recommends printing budget estimates, requisitions, and specifications.
 - e. Coordinates printing and dissemination of materials.
2. Participates in development and maintenance of department websites and social media outlets to ensure current, easily accessible information about department services and activities.
 - a. Prepares designs, layouts, and content of informational links; and keeps them current and accurate.
 - b. Scans web properties to evaluate usability and find broken links.
 - c. Monitors department forms to ensure electronic and paper forms are uniform.
 - d. Updates graphs and tables that display department-related data, ensuring that formats conform to existing internet formats.
 - e. Works with department managers and programmers to develop databases of department information that can be accessed by the public via internet links.
 - f. Develops and maintains listservs and other mailing lists.
3. Conducts research, collects data, and prepares reports to answer questions and provide information about department activities and services to the public, other agencies, and other entities.
 - a. Gets questions from entities or individuals contacting the department; conducts

- research to ensure responses are factual, accurate, and timely; and prepares appropriate, understandable responses.
- b. Develops and maintains databases of information, and runs and distributes regular and ad hoc reports.
 - c. Makes presentations or provides training regarding department products and services.
4. Determines photographic needs for internet and social media pages, publications, and promotional projects to portray the department's activities.
 - a. Takes a variety of pictures to keep on hand for project use.
 - b. Maintains photograph files and coordinates use and distribution to field offices, the public, and other entities.
 - c. Coordinates with other photographers to fill photographic needs.
 - d. Maintains photographic equipment, and orders supplies and materials.
 5. Participates in marketing and special promotional activities to enhance awareness of department activities and services.
 - a. Coordinates scheduling and staffing of display booths for sport and travel shows.
 - b. Participates in cooperative promotions such as travel guides and video and photo projects with other entities; and solicits partners and sponsors.
 - c. Coordinates filming and editing of ads for television, radio, and print.
 - d. Recommends media plans and negotiates and purchases media time.
 6. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Reports to an Information Supervisor or an exempt program manager. Typically does not supervise.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenged to know about department services and activities in order to answer questions and develop accurate informational materials. This is difficult because departments are so diverse in the services they provide, and information often has to be translated into language which the general public can understand and relate to. Further challenged to be proficient in specialized types of computer technology such as desktop publishing, mapping, database management, web publishing, photo editing, and social media software. This is difficult because of the variety of software available, adapting one software to work with another, and the rapid changes in technology.

Problems resolved include creating web pages within allocated space while still meeting users' needs, making sure hard copy and website information are consistent, creating effective publications and media ads to get the most exposure with limited resources, capturing high-quality photographs in unpredictable circumstances, short turn-around times between receipt of data and publishing deadlines, keeping an ample but not excessive supply of printed materials on hand, and ensuring materials are edited by all who should see them.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include the format of new web pages and when to update existing pages and social media outlets; recommendations for website and social media development and enhancement; recommendations for selection of articles for newsletters; recommendations for publication design, layout, and content; which computer software to use to develop specific products; photographic needs; recommendations for cooperative promotions; recommendations for media plans; and research resources.

Decisions referred include final approval of website content and enhancement; final approval of budget allocation and expenditure; final approval of contractual obligations; priority and final approval of publications; final approval of media plans; resolution to questions about appropriateness of information and interpretation of confidentiality laws; and acceptance or rejection of book manuscripts.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with office and field staff to solicit and exchange information on projects, and collect articles for publications; with newspapers, television and radio stations to provide information about department services and activities; and with the general public to respond to requests for information; and occasional contact with consultant programmers regarding website development; with printing facilities regarding bids and requisitions; and with authors and researchers regarding potential articles or as needed for revisions to manuscripts.

H. Working Conditions:

Works in a typical office environment.

I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- English usage and types of written communications;
- journalism procedures such as research techniques; writing, design, and layout; editing and proof marks; and publishing and printing;
- computer software pertinent to desktop publishing, social media and website development;
- esthetic and technical aspects of photography;
- media resources.

Ability to:

- organize and express information concisely and effectively;
- review and extract information from various reference materials and other resources;
- understand and apply various computer software.