



COUNTY OF SONOMA

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

REPORT TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION PROPOSED NEW CLASSIFICATION

Job Classifications Included:	Supervising County Communications Specialist
Department/Division:	CAO – Communications Division
Position Reports to (Classification):	County Communications Manager
Incumbent(s):	n/a
Bargaining Unit:	BU 50 – Administrative Management
Study Requested by:	County Communications Manager/ CAO
Recommendation:	
Approve the new job classification of Supervising County Communications Specialist for the Communications division of the County Administrator's Office.	
Justification:	
<p>The County Communications Manager requested Human Resources develop a new supervisory classification within the Communications division of the County Administrator's Office. This is a single position supervisory class that will oversee the work of an assigned unit of County Communications Specialists (CCS) in the development and implementation of county-wide communications initiatives and projects, as well as assist with the daily operations of the division, as assigned. Specifically, the new supervisory position will oversee the planning, development and delivery of marketing strategies for County public outreach, and communications efforts related to the County's strategic plan.</p>	
Background and Analysis:	
<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>In 2019, the County consolidated countywide communication functions into a centralized division within the County Administrator's Office (CAO). This led to the creation of the management classification of County Communications Manager (CCM) to perform and oversee the work of the division, including the development and implementation of a strategic communications plan, and to act as the official channel of communications between the County and the public. The Sheriff's Office, Sonoma Water, and Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District maintained their departmental communications structure.</p> <p>In 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved the reorganization of the CAO to include a centralized Communications division to ensure a cohesive communication approach for consistent and timely messaging to community groups, stakeholders, and the general public.</p> <p>To support the consolidation and new division, Human Resources developed the classification of County Communications Specialist (CCS). This professional level class works under general direction from the CCM performing the associated day-to-day public information and community engagement work, and coordinating departmental Communications efforts including social media, video, press releases, graphics, outreach materials, and website content and administration, along with providing advice and guidance to departments on County standards for public information and outreach issues. Incumbents in this class are considered subject matter experts on assigned</p>	

departmental communication programs and provide related context to these departments within the broader county communication strategy and goals.

Analysis

The newly formed County Communications division within the County Administrator's Office consists of twelve staff including the County Communications Manager (CCM) and an Administrative Aide. The CCM directly supervises all ten County Communications Specialists along with overseeing the daily operations of the division. In addition to these management and supervisory duties, the CCM serves as spokesperson for the County, working directly with the County Administrator's Office and Board of Supervisors on communications, transparency, and outreach to the citizens of Sonoma County.

The Communications division work continues to grow as it aligns with the newly adopted County Strategic Plan, County public outreach and communication initiatives, and the building of efficiencies in a countywide cohesive approach to communication plans during County emergency response. The proposed new class of Supervising County Communications Specialist will lead the division's efforts in these areas and perform the following:

- Supervise professional staff and support the implementation of County-wide communication strategies and programs.
- Coordinate associated work and deliver recommendations on public information messaging regarding the County's strategic plan, activities, and services.
- Provide oversight in the development and implementation of marketing and public outreach plans to enhance community engagement and to increase awareness of County departmental services.
- Act for the County Communications Manager during periods of absence and as directed.

The Supervising County Communications Specialist will work independently while directing assigned staff in the enhancement of community engagement efforts through marketing and public outreach plans. This class is distinguished from the County Communications Manager in that the latter has overall responsibility for the management and direction of County Communications Office and staff, and is engaged in all County-wide communications and community relations initiatives and activities. It is further distinguished from the next lower level in the County Communications Specialist series by its full supervisory responsibilities and its participation in the development and implementation of internal county communications policies and procedures, and assistance to the CCM in general supervision and daily oversight of assigned CCS staff.

Conclusion

The division's flat hierarchical organization structure contributes to an overburdened span of control for County Communications Manager. The introduction of a professional supervisory level class will provide better coordination and project oversight of professional staff and allow for greater efficiencies in divisional operations and project management. As such, given the broad scope of duties, span of control, and the responsibility for County's goals related to public outreach and marketing, Human Resources is recommending the adoption of the Supervising County Communications Specialist class to provide daily supervision to professional CCS staff, project

coordination and oversight, and to allow for greater efficiencies in operations and project management in the division.

Recommendation

Approve the new job classification of Supervising County Communications Specialist for the Communications division within the County Administrator's Office.

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Report Approved by: Spencer Keywood, Recruitment and Classification Manager

Date: April 15, 2021