



## COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REQUEST FORM

The Board of County Commissioners meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month in the Columbia County School Board Administrative Complex Auditorium, 372 West Duval Street, Lake City, Florida 32055. The first meeting of every month is at 9:30AM while the second meeting of every month takes place at 5:30PM. All agenda items are due in the Board's office one week prior to the meeting date.

Today's Date: 2/12/2025 Meeting Date: 2/20/2025

Department: Human Resources

### 1. Nature and purpose of agenda item:

This newly created full-time position will ensure consistent County messaging across all channels.

### 2. Recommended Motion/Action:

Approve the position and position description

### 3. Fiscal impact on current budget.

This item has no effect on the current budget.



## POSITION DESCRIPTION

**POSITION:** Public Information Officer (PIO)

**LOCATION:** BOCC

**Responsible to:** County Manager and  
Assistant County Manager

**PAY GRADE:** Negotiable  
**EXEMPTION STATUS:** Exempt

**SCHEDULE:** Variable, on-call and available for after-hours meeting.

### ABOUT COLUMBIA COUNTY

Columbia County is one of Florida's best-kept secrets, with pockets of quiet and peaceful springs. Columbia County is the home of Florida's Springlands, with multiple natural springs, lakes, rivers, and nine beautiful state parks. In 2022, the US Census Bureau [QuickFacts](#) estimated Columbia County has a population of 72,000 residents. Columbia County is a southeast sports destination and hosts multiple tournaments and camps. Columbia County requires a diverse and dedicated workforce to provide services for Columbia County residents to live and work and for the visitors who experience our piece of the Florida playground. Consider applying for a position with us today.

### JOB DESCRIPTION

The position is responsible for developing and implementing effective communication strategies that enhance the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners brand, promote services, and engage target audiences. This role involves creating compelling content for various platforms, managing media relations, supporting internal communication efforts, and ensuring consistent messaging across all channels. The Public Information Officer will collaborate closely with County departments to align communication initiatives with organizational goals, by monitoring internal/external agency communications and keeping the County Manager and Assistant County Manager apprised of any adverse information that threatens the County's image or may reflect on the County, and take steps to counteract and neutralize it by acting as agency spokesperson working with other public information partners as needed. Develop, plan, and initiate awareness campaigns for Columbia County and emergency preparedness. Create, develop, and maintain website and social media materials. During times of crisis, responsible for all public communication (either in person or virtual) to ensure accurate, timely information is disseminated to the public. Write and distribute press releases/announcements and other media material to provide a discretionary disclosure of County internal affairs and/or activities, some of which may be sensitive information.

### ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Develop communications content for both print and web including website, brochures, social media, newsletters, press releases, presentation materials, annual reports, and marketing materials. Ensures content is on-brand, consistent in style, quality, and tone reflecting the County's values
- Builds and maintains relationships with local and regional media outlets. Manage press coverage to enhance the County's visibility and reputation
- Responds to questions about the county/department from the public, media, and special interest groups and act as the spokesperson on a wide variety of issues

- Acts as County liaison publicly, disseminating information to newspapers, radio, television, communication networks, internet-based media, governmental officials, and the general public. Creates and coordinates comprehensive campaigns to build and sustain preparedness. Speaks publicly to educate groups on preparedness: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery
- Collaborate with Departments to develop and design internal and external publications, audiovisual presentations, social media posts, displays, and fact sheets and disseminate to targeted audiences based on County strategy, annual report, legislative reports, and other pertinent documents
- Participates in various meetings, committees, task forces, or other related groups to communicate information regarding services, programs, areas of opportunity, and other pertinent information as appropriate. Communicates meeting outcomes and action plans as applicable, following up and reporting on expected results
- Implements and maintains social media presence (Facebook, Instagram, X, Truth Social, Bluesky, etc.) for use in emergent and non-emergent situations. This includes monitoring social media sites for rumors and trends, and taking action to eliminate rumors
- Work with the County Manager and Assistant County Manager; develop and maintain updated public information handouts for all hazard preparedness; support public outreach efforts; plan and implement monthly conference calls and quarterly meetings
- Supports the Emergency Operations Center when activated to ensure timely dissemination of lifesaving messages to the public. This includes messages about all hazards and technological and adversarial threats
- Serve as an essential worker during declared local state of emergencies

#### **NON-ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS**

- Special projects as assigned
- Attendance or involvement in local events, meetings, or functions

#### **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

The majority of work is performed inside an office at a centrally located desk within a multi-department facility. However, this position requires mobility to attend meetings outside the office and outside of normal working hours, as required.

#### **TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE**

Graduation from High School or possession of a High School Equivalency Diploma recognized by the State of Florida and either a Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Journalism, Public Relations or a closely related field; OR an Associate's degree in Marketing, Journalism, Public Relations or a closely-related field AND four (4) years of experience in Marketing or Public Relations. An equivalent year by year combination of education, training and experience may be substituted for the preferred degree.

#### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES**

- Knowledge of journalistic principles & methods
- Strong writing, editing, and proofreading skills with a keen eye for detail
- Proficiency in using content management systems, social media platforms, and analytics tools including graphic design tools and video creation tools
- Excellent verbal communication and people skills
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Strong project management skills with the ability to manage multiple tasks and meet deadlines
- Strong critical thinking skills and ability to manage sensitive and confidential information with discretion
- Ability to understand and follow specific instructions and procedures
- Understanding of local government procedures and Sunshine Laws
- Must have the ability to be on-call and to respond to rapidly developing event(s), including holiday(s), night(s) and weekends

**ESSENTIAL PHYSICAL SKILLS/DEMANDS**

- Acceptable eyesight (with or without correction)
- Acceptable hearing (with or without correction)
- Ability to communication both orally and in writing
- Light (up to 25 pounds)
- Walking, standing, bending, stooping, climbing
- Sitting and manual dexterity

**PROFESSIONAL LICENSES**

Must have a valid State of Florida driver's license or ability to obtain in the first six (6) months  
Columbia County residency required within six (6) months from date of employment  
FEMA basic POI within 12 months