Title 21 Vacancy Announcement
Public Affairs Specialist
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER)
Office of Communications (OCOMM)
Division of Health Communication (DHC)

Application Period: October 28, 2024 – November 8, 2024

Area of Consideration: United States Citizenship is required. You must be a U.S. Citizen or U.S. National. Foreign nationals or legal permanent residents are not eligible for consideration.

Position: Public Affairs Specialist

Series: AD-1035

Location(s): Silver Spring, MD

Salary:
$99,200 - $133,845 (Band B)
$117,962-$164,260 (Band C)

Work Schedule: Full-Time

Cures Band(s): Band B

Full Performance Band Level: Band C

Travel Requirements: 25% or less

Bargaining Unit: 3591

Relocation Expenses Reimbursement: You may qualify for reimbursement of relocation expenses in accordance with agency policy.

This position is being filled under a stream-lined hiring authority, Title 21, Section 3072 of the 21st Century Cures Act. The candidate selected for this position will serve under a career or career-conditional appointment and be paid under the provisions of this authority. Additional information on 21st Century Cures Act can be found here:
21st Century Cures Act Information

Introduction

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is the regulatory, scientific, public health and consumer protection agency responsible for ensuring all human and animal drugs, medical devices, cosmetics, foods, food additives, drugs and medicated feeds for food producing animals, tobacco and radiation emitting devices safe, and effective.

The mission of the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) is to perform an essential public health task by making sure that safe and effective drugs are available to improve the health of people in the United States. CDER regulates over-the-counter and prescription drugs, including biological therapeutics and generic drugs.

The Office of Communications (OCOMM) is a multi-faceted organization with responsibility for the overall communication efforts within the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER). The Office has a variety of responsibilities including advising Center leadership on communications strategies and providing leadership and direction for all Center internal/external communications.

The Division of Health Communication (DHC) is a multi-faceted organization with responsibility for a full-spectrum messaging and outreach efforts within the Center for Drug Evaluation (CDER). The division has a variety of responsibilities including informing and educating CDER offices and programs about topics affecting their work, developing, and implementing appropriate messaging to external audiences (industry, health care professionals, media, patients, and consumers). DHC collaborates with all stakeholders on how to strategically communicate our messaging to obtain the most beneficial effect while managing the center's relationships with trade press. DHC's Trade Press Team works directly with reporters to answer questions on behalf of the center regarding FDA activities for specialized audiences, such as health care professionals, industry, or the science community.

Duties/Responsibilities

As a **Public Affairs Specialist,** the incumbent in the Division of Health Communication within the Office of Communication (OCOMM) is responsible for the coordination of trade press media relations activities for assigned "beat" areas of issue specialization that is reported in industry Trade publications. These media relation activities are instrumental in providing communications counsel and technical writing support to the CDER super offices.

Band B:

- Assist with arranging press conferences, media briefings, media availabilities, interviews and other news events.
- Develop and cultivate strong working relationships with all CDER offices and employees in order to collaborate on the development of communication materials.
- Provide media relations advice to CDER staff and leadership about newsworthy and controversial issues involving CDER's work and regulated products.
- Facilitate media interviews with subject matter experts and assist in providing guidance to interview subjects on advisable conduct during media contacts.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with the trade press and other external stakeholders and provide timely and accurate information.
- Respond to questions and/or criticism from members of the trade press with supervisor

input only when necessary or on a high-profile topic.

- Work with CDER super offices, senior officials and the DHC Strategic Communication Team to develop clear, concise key message and reactive Q&A (Questions and Answers) and other communication documents.
- Consult with photographers, illustrators, and audio-visual personnel to use photographs, illustrations, animation, video and/or sound files to help explain scientific concepts covered in written material.
- Use new media/social networking tools and platforms to communicate to lay audiences about FDA programs, actions and accomplishments.
- Serve as the point of contact for news media at advisory committee meetings, workshops, Congressional hearings or other meetings as required.
- Conduct media training for CDER staff to improve subject matter expert interaction with reporters.
- Monitor trade press publications and distribute relevant articles to CDER staff.

Band C:

- Arrange press conferences, media briefings, media availabilities, interviews and other news events.
- Independently develop and cultivate strong working relationships with all CDER offices and employees in order to collaborate on the development of communication materials.
- Provide media relations advice to CDER staff and leadership about newsworthy and controversial issues involving CDER's work and regulated products.
- Facilitate media interviews with subject matter experts and provide guidance to interview subjects on advisable conduct during media contacts with minimal supervisor input.
- Initiate, develop and maintain effective working relationships with the trade press and other external stakeholders and provide timely and accurate information.
- Respond to questions and/or criticism from members of the trade press, with supervisor input when necessary, or on a high-profile topic.
- Work independently, when appropriate, with CDER super offices, senior officials and the DHC Strategic Communication Team to develop clear, concise key message and reactive Q&A (Questions and Answers) and other communication documents.
- Consult with photographers, illustrators, and audio-visual personnel to use photographs, illustrations, animation, video and/or sound files to help explain scientific concepts covered in written material.
- Use new media/social networking tools and platforms to communicate to lay audiences about FDA programs, actions and accomplishments.
- Serve as the point of contact for news media at advisory committee meetings, workshops, Congressional hearings or other meetings as required.
- Conduct media training for CDER staff to improve subject matter expert interaction with reporters.
- Monitor trade press publications and distribute relevant articles to CDER staff.

- Coordinate internal trade press team processes including maintaining and organizing a shared inbox.
- Update and maintain the Trade Press Standing Operating Procedure.
- Maintain and update the internal CDER subject matter expert list.
- Maintain an understanding of the trade publications the DHC subscribes to and coordinate for renewals at the appropriate times
- Coordinate trade press team coverage throughout the day to be responsive to incoming media inquiries

Supervisory responsibilities: N/A

Conditions of Employment

- U.S. Citizenship requirement or proof of being a U.S. National must be met by closing date.
- Employment is subject to the successful completion of a background investigation, verification of qualifications, completion of onboarding forms, submission of required documents, and any other job-related requirement before or after appointment.
- Applicants must meet all qualification requirements by the closing date of this announcement.
- Direct Deposit: You will be required to have all federal salary payments electronically deposited into a bank account with a financial institution of your choice.
- FDA participates in e-Verify: All new hires must complete the I-9 form; this information will be processed through e-Verify to determine your employment eligibility. If a discrepancy arises, you must take affirmative steps to resolve the matter.
- Males born after December 31, 1959, must be registered with the Selective Service.
- One-year probationary period is required.
- Financial Disclosure is required.
- Ethics Clearance is required.
- Background Investigation/Security Clearance is required.

Qualifications

To be placed into a Cures position, candidates must meet the following criteria:

1. Scientific, Technical, and Professional Fields
2. Qualified and Outstanding Candidates
    a. ***Qualified*** applies to all candidates for Cures appointments. The FDA OTS will use the basic requirements defined in the OPM Qualification Standards as a baseline for comparing experience levels and other candidate attributes for relevant positions.
    b. ***Outstanding*** candidates can be defined by existing outstanding work experience, outstanding performance rating, or both.

To qualify for this Title 21 Cures position, the candidate(s) must meet the following **required**

qualifications. *Please note: Additional education and experience listed that is not indicated as required is preferable and desired. Candidates who do not meet the "desired" criteria will not be excluded from consideration for this position.*

Education Requirement:
Public Affairs Specialist, AD-1035 Series:

Experience: There are no individual Occupational Requirements for this series.

Desired Skills, Experience, or Education:
Our ideal candidate will possess:

- Undergraduate Education: Major study—journalism, communications, or other fields related to the position.
- Knowledge of how to apply communication principles, methods, theories, practices, and techniques as a technical authority.
- Experience working in media relations serving as a communication/public affairs/public relations professional responding to news media inquiries and providing strategic communication advice on topics dealing with human (pharmaceutical) drugs, vaccines or other biological products for human use, medical devices, or other FDA-regulated products. Alternatively, may have experience working as a journalist/member of the news media reporting on scientific or public health issues.
- Demonstrated knowledge of news media communication approaches.
- Skill in building and maintaining relationships with disparate stakeholders.
- Knowledge of public health terminology and of how public health program(s) and strategies work at local, state, federal, and international levels.
- Demonstrated critical thinking skills, excellent written/verbal communications, and compelling presentation skills.

Education Transcripts

SUBMITTING YOUR TRANSCRIPTS: Positions which are scientific or technical in nature often have very specific educational requirements. A transcript is required to verify educational achievement. Pay careful attention to the Qualifications and Education sections to identify vacancies where a transcript is required. Even if you hold a similar position or are a current FDA employee, you are not exempt from transcript requirements.

FOREIGN EDUCATION: If you are using education completed in foreign colleges or universities to meet the qualification requirements, you must show that the education credentials have been evaluated by a private organization that specializes in interpretation of foreign education programs and such education has been deemed equivalent to that gained in an accredited U.S. education program; or full credit has been given for the courses at a U.S. accredited college or university. For more information about this requirement, please visit the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications | International Affairs Office (ed.gov)

Security Clearance Requirements

Background Investigation/Security Clearance Requirements: Non-Sensitive/Low Risk

A background security investigation will be required for all appointees. Appointment will be subject to the applicant's successful completion of a background security investigation and favorable adjudication. Failure to successfully meet the requirements may be grounds for appropriate personnel action. In addition, if hired, a background security investigation or supplemental investigation may be required later.

Applicants are also advised that all information concerning qualification is subject to investigation. False representation may be grounds for non-selection and/or appropriate disciplinary actions.

Ethics Clearance Requirements

This position requires financial disclosure reporting and will be subject to FDA's prohibited financial interest regulation. If you are hired, you may be required to divest of certain financial interests. You are advised to seek additional information on this requirement from the hiring official before accepting any job offers. For more information, please visit the FDA Ethics web page: https://www.fda.gov/about-fda/jobs-and-training-fda/ethics.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

The United States Government does not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, membership in an employee organization, retaliation, parental status, military service, or other non-merit factor.
Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) for federal employees & job applicants

Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable Accommodation Policy:

Federal agencies must provide reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities where appropriate. Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation for any part of the application process should follow the instructions in the job opportunity announcement. For any part of the remaining hiring process, applicants should contact the hiring agency directly. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis. A reasonable accommodation is any change to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done that enables an individual with a disability to apply for a job, perform job duties or receive equal access to job benefits.

Under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, federal agencies must provide reasonable accommodations when: An applicant with a disability needs an accommodation to have an equal opportunity to apply for a job. An employee with a disability needs an accommodation to

perform the essential job duties or to gain access to the workplace. An employee with a disability needs an accommodation to receive equal access to benefits, such as details, training, and office-sponsored events. You can request a reasonable accommodation at any time during the application or hiring process or while on the job. Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. Learn more about disability employment and reasonable accommodations or how to contact an agency.

E-Verify

The Food and Drug Administration participates in the USCIS Electronic Employment Eligibility Verification Program (E-Verify). E-Verify helps employers determine employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their Social Security numbers.

How to Apply

Submit resume or curriculum vitae with cover letter by **November 8, 2024,** to: CDER-OCOMM-AMT@FDA.HHS.GOV On the subject line, please reference "**Public Affairs Specialist-Band B"**. Candidate resumes may be shared with hiring officials within CDER with a similar job vacancy. Candidates can opt out of this process by annotating resume with "do not share".

How I Will Be Evaluated

Candidates may be evaluated based on an interview, review of requested work samples, writing samples, most recent performance evaluation(s), professional references, results of an oral presentation or work-related test. Failure to comply with any of the additional assessment requirements will result in removal from further consideration.

Announcement Contact

For questions regarding this Cures position, please contact CDER-OCOMM-AMT@FDA.HHS.GOV

The Department of Health and Human Services is an equal opportunity employer with a smoke free environment.

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