# Public Information Officer – St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office

**Grade: 10**

**FLSA: Exempt**

**Date: 01/15**

**Job Summary:** This criticalposition serves as the principal advisor to the Sheriff on matters dealing with media relations and communication strategy for the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office. The employee will be the primary spokesperson for the Sheriff’s Office, directing the communications strategy for all matters of public policy and crisis communication. The employee will respond to media inquiries for the Sheriff and the Sheriff’s Office, developing an effective response that compliments the Agency’s mission to serve the citizens of St. Mary’s County.

**Essential Functions:**

1. Primary spokesperson for the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office;
2. This is a generalized job description. Specific duties and responsibilities may vary, depending on the assigned location. Duties and responsibilities may be added, deleted or changed at any time at the direction of management, formally or informally, verbally or in writing;
3. Develop and manage a proactive communications strategy to enhance community awareness and trust in the Sheriff’s Office;
4. Provide advice and guidance to the Sheriff and the Command Staff concerning public relations issues and the public impact of criminal investigations, Agency programs, and activities;
5. Attend County events and public forums to ensure maximum, effective, and accurate media coverage, when appropriate;
6. Evaluate and facilitate requests for interviews with the Sheriff, the Command Staff, or other Agency personnel, and develop appropriate background information briefings;
7. Prepare internal and external communications including press briefings, letters to publications, annual report, testimony and official statements/remarks;
8. Responsible for ensuring all internal and external communications are accurate, well written, professional, and consistent with the policies and mission of the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office;
9. Compose and edit press releases, and Social Media posts, prepare the Sheriff’s remarks, and assemble presentations to ensure effective and accurate communication to the public;
10. Facilitate external communications by advancing news stories, interviewing with reporters and publications, and working with the editors of publications to determine op-ed opportunities;
11. Promote public understanding of the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office, its programs, services, activities and events, through presentations to the public and representative community groups, and through news releases to, and press conferences with the media;
12. Keep abreast of local events and attend meetings as needed to remain informed of County programs, activities and events in order to advise on the necessity, method, and timing of press releases, press conferences, or potential public relations issues;
13. Manage press conferences, including preparing officials appropriately;
14. Write or edit correspondence for the Sheriff, as requested;
15. Perform other related duties, as assigned.

**Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

1. Knowledge of the principles and practices of journalism and public relations;
2. Knowledge of the principles of effective written communication;
3. Knowledge of public relations and marketing strategies;
4. Knowledge. Skill, and application of social media platforms to include, but not limited to,

Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Google Blogger, particularly using social media as a crisis communications platform;

1. Knowledge, skill, and application of computer graphics for use in creating online end of year reports and other ads, posts, and reports as required;
2. Knowledge, skill, and application in the use of camera and video equipment, computer

tablets, smart phones, and other devices;

1. Knowledge of information appropriate for the dissemination of various kinds of media and publicity material, including radio, television, cable television, photography, and print media;
2. Ability to develop and manage a high profile public relations initiative across all media formats while under intense public and media scrutiny, and respond appropriately as situations change;
3. Ability to creatively and effectively write, edit, and design reports and other publications covering a wide range of subject matter within particular timetables and deadlines;
4. Ability to manage press conferences and coordinate public outreach events sponsored by the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office;
5. Establish and maintain effective working relationships with the Sheriff, Command Staff, Agency personnel, County Commissioners, the media, community and citizen groups, members of boards and commissions, officials and staff members of local, state, federal offices, members of the legislature, and the general public;
6. Ability to predict and identify public relations opportunities and challenges to assist in managing a positive public image;
7. Ability to serve as the principle spokesperson for the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office in all situations and develop a media presence;
8. Must be able to speak and answer questions tactfully under pressure, maintaining interpersonal relationships, and recognizing the need for information confidentiality, when appropriate;
9. Read, write, comprehend, and speak English in a clear, effective manner, using proper pronunciation, diction, and grammar;
10. Ability to write, compose, and develop documents, manuals, and other literature;
11. Ability to utilize a high level of discretion, good judgment, and confidentiality;
12. Possess a valid driver’s license;
13. Required to be on-call and work varying hours, including days, evening, midnights, weekends, and holidays.

**Education and Experience:**

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in Public Relations, Journalism, Communications or Public Administration, or related field;

Five (5) years of experience representing government entities or elected/appointed officials, including proven success in developing and managing a dynamic public relations program, or, any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

**Physical and Environmental Conditions:**

Work requires light physical effort in the handling of light materials or boxes and tools or equipment in non-strenuous work positions up to 30 pounds and/or continual standing or walking.

Work environment involves everyday risks or discomforts, which require normal safety precautions typical of such places as offices, meetings and training rooms.

May stand exposed to weather elements and temperature extremes when working outdoors.

The above job description is not intended as, nor should it be construed as, exhaustive of all responsibilities, skills, efforts, or working conditions associated with this job.

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of this job.

I certify that this is an accurate statement of the essential functions and responsibilities of this position.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

HR Representative Date

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this position description.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Employee’s Signature Date