Title 21 Vacancy Announcement
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
Office of the Commissioner (OC)
Office of External Affairs (OEA)
Office of Media Affairs (OMA)
Posting No: FDA-OEA-PAS-002

Application Period: July 5 – July 29

Area of Consideration: The Public. 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 (Press Officer)  
Series: 1035

Location(s): Silver Spring, MD  
Salary:  
Band D: Starting at $126,233

Work Schedule: Full Time  
Full Performance Band Level: $164,102
Band D FPBL – Band D

Cures Band(s): Band D

Travel Requirements: 25% or less

Bargaining Unit: 8888

Relocation Expenses Reimbursement: No

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 is the regulatory, scientific, public health, and consumer protection agency responsible for ensuring that all human and animal drugs, and medical devices are safe and effective, that cosmetics, foods, food additives, drugs and medicated feeds for food producing animals, and radiation emitting devices are safe, and that all such products marketed in the United States are adequately, truthfully and informatively labeled and safely and properly stored, transported, manufactured packaged and regulated. FDA’s programs are national in scope and effect, and the agency’s activities have a direct and significant impact on multi-billion-dollar industries, in addition to protecting the health and safety of American Consumers. The work of the Agency is carried out by a staff of more than 18,000 scientists, physicians, regulatory and other personnel stationed throughout the United States.

This position is located in the Office of Media Affairs (OMA), Office of External Affairs (OEA), Office of the Commissioner. OEA is responsible for leading the development and execution of all communications for the FDA.
Media relations are primarily coordinated out of the OMA and OMA public affairs specialists serve as the main points of contact for the news media. OMA provides direct communications counsel, content development, execution and technical writing and media relations support to the agency’s medical product centers, including the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER), Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER), and Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH).

**Duties/Responsibilities:**
The incumbent serves as a Public Affairs Specialist (internally referred to as Press Officer) responsible for the coordination of media relations activities for assigned “beat” areas. Public Affairs Specialists are instrumental in providing communications counsel and technical writing support to the medical product centers. This role involves interpreting complex medical and scientific information from guidance documents, product labeling, reviewing safety information that result in public facing communications documents such as news releases, fact sheets, messaging for external stakeholder audiences (e.g., media, patient advocacy groups, Members of Congress). OMA works closely with the people and programs across the agency on a daily basis and plays a key role in the overall development and implementation of agency policies and objectives. OMA staff develop, formulate, determine and influence the communication policies, communication plans and courses of action surrounding announcements that support the agency’s mission. This includes determining and/or influencing, and executing a program to inform and educate general and specialized stakeholders about the organization’s programs, activities and services. The incumbent advises on the potential public reaction to proposed policies and actions, and plans, organizes, and evaluates communication strategies, programs, and materials. Generally, specialists are assigned to support medical product areas and the Commissioner’s scientific, public health priorities.

Specifically, the incumbent will:

- Arrange press conferences, media briefings, media availabilities, interviews and other news events.
- Develop and cultivate strong working relationships with key FDA offices, officials and deliver outstanding customer service.
- Provide media relations advice to senior agency officials about newsworthy and controversial issues.
- Coordinate and facilitate media interviews with senior agency officials and subject matter experts and provide guidance to interview subjects on advisable conduct during media contacts.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with the news media and other external stakeholders, and provide timely and accurate information.
- Respond to questions and/or criticism from members of the news media concerning sensitive and complex policies and issues.
- Independently initiate, create, write and edit materials, including news releases, about complicated public health and scientific subjects directed towards journalists and lay audiences; choose language appropriate for target audience(s).
- Work with FDA centers and senior officials 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 and decide what photographs, illustrations, animation, video and/or sound files are appropriate 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, policy, actions and accomplishments.
- Brief FDA officials and serve as the point of contact for news media at advisory committee meetings, workshops, Congressional hearings or other meetings.
- Study the effectiveness of communications tactics, conduct assessments and evaluations to ensure objectives were met and identify quality improvements for improving effectiveness to OMA leadership.

**Supervisory Responsibilities:** None.

**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 may be required.
• Financial Disclosure may be required.
• Ethics Clearance may be required.
• Background Investigation/Security Clearance is required. All employees must pass a security investigation. Failing to pass the background check may be grounds for removal or legal action. If hired, you may be subject to additional investigations at a later time.

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.

In order 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: Candidates must possess the required individual occupational requirements to qualify for the appropriate series applicable to the position. Please use the following link to determine the series for which you qualify: https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-standards/#url=List-by-Occupational-Series

Desired Education: Our ideal candidate will possess a degree in communication (public relations, journalism, or similar degree) with a strong focus on medical science (public health, medicine, biology, chemistry, pharmacy).

Professional Experience: Must have 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) or veterinary 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.

Desired Professional Experience: Our ideal candidate will have experience working in media relations serving as a senior communication/public affairs/public relations professional responding to and overseeing news media inquiries and providing strategic communication advice on complex scientific topics dealing with human (pharmaceutical) or veterinary drugs, vaccines or other biological products for human use, medical devices, or other FDA-regulated products. Alternatively, our ideal candidate will have experience working as a
journalist/member of the news media reporting on public health and scientific issues and a demonstrated ability to translate complex scientific and technical information into accurate and understandable information for the public.

**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 U.S. Department of Education website for Foreign Education Evaluation.

**Security Clearance Requirements:**

Background Investigation/Security Clearance Requirements: Background Investigation/Security Clearance is required. All employees must pass a security investigation. Failing to pass the background check may be grounds for removal or legal action. If hired, you may be subject to additional investigations at a later time.

**Vaccination Requirements:**

To ensure compliance with an applicable preliminary nationwide injunction, which may be supplemented, modified, or vacated, depending on the course of ongoing litigation, the Federal Government will take no action to implement or enforce the COVID-19 vaccination requirement pursuant to Executive Order 14043 on Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees. Therefore, to the extent a Federal job announcement includes the requirement that applicants must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 pursuant to Executive Order 14043, that requirement does not currently apply. Federal agencies may request information regarding the vaccination status of selected applicants for the purposes of implementing other workplace safety protocols, such as protocols related to masking, physical distancing, testing, travel, and quarantine.

**Ethics Clearance Requirements:**

This position may require 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:**

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:
Please submit electronic resume or curriculum vitae (please be sure to clearly define the number of years using month and year training completed, in addition to describing duties performed during that time period), copy of your unofficial transcripts (if applicable), SF50 (if applicable), latest PMAP (if applicable), and letter of interest with “CURES OEA Public Affairs Specialist FDA-OEA-PAS-002” in the subject line to: OEOOperationsSupport@fda.hhs.gov. Applications will be accepted through July 29, 2022.

Announcement Contact:
For questions regarding this Cures position, please contact OEOOperationsSupport@fda.hhs.gov.

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FDA is an equal opportunity employer.