

Thoughtful Ideas for Organists Seeking Employment in Religious Institutions

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Pursuant to the agreement with the FTC, the AGO is no longer permitted to post model contracts and salary guidelines on its website. However, we are allowed to continue providing our membership with relevant information pertaining to employment opportunities. The following document is offered as information for those seeking employment in an educational or religious institution.

Seeking new employment can be exhausting and trying both for the musician and the congregation. Experienced musicians are usually aware of all the details and time consuming activities that are part of any job – especially the invisible workday hours during the week. Many congregants are still under the illusion that musicians only work during rehearsals or services and often ask questions regarding how the remainder of the work hours are spent. Often, they are surprised to learn that a church musician can be a full-time employee.

Following are some items that both the musician and the religious institution might want to consider during the negotiation/hiring process. While many of these can be appropriate for full or part time positions, others may apply only to those musicians in full-time employment.

- 1) Number of regularly scheduled services per week
- 2) Number of extra scheduled services per year
- 3) Number of regularly scheduled rehearsals per week
- 4) Number of extra rehearsals per year
- 5) Number of weeks choirs are expected to sing and how summer music is handled
- 6) Number of regularly scheduled meetings per week/month/year:
 - a) planning with clergy
 - b) meetings with committees and/or supervisors
 - c) performance reviews
 - d) other meetings or planning sessions
 - e) requirements for attendance at other church functions
- 7) Hours allotted per week for selecting and preparing music for various choirs, soloists, ensembles, etc.
- 8) Hours allotted per week for organ practice
- 9) Expectations of Responsibilities/Administration for the program and estimated hours per week:
 - a) leading and/or accompanying choirs/ensembles
 - b) oversight of other employees
 - c) preparation of budget for music program
 - d) purchasing music and supplies for all ensembles
 - e) overseeing or maintaining music library (sorting, filing, logging in new purchases)
 - f) overseeing and hiring for maintenance all instruments
 - g) hiring/auditioning professional and guest musicians
 - h) staff support for compliance with copyright laws

- i) use of computers and other necessary internet and electronic devices
 - j) preparation of bulletin materials (weekly and for special services)
 - k) education through bulletin, newsletters, church classes on songs and hymns and organs
 - l) expectations for composing or arranging for local congregation
 - m) supervising maintenance of robes or costumes
 - n) overseeing or administering a concert series
 - o) recruitment
 - p) pastoral care duties – for musicians, for other congregants
 - q) participation in community outreach such as community concerts/festivals
 - r) other duties if relevant
- 10) Separate and secure office space with computer, electronic keyboard/midi controller for composing/arranging with computerized notation software, musical instrument for practice and rehearsal, etc.
 - 11) Arrangements concerning music for weddings and funerals
 - a) expectations for availability – consultation, rehearsal, service, extra rehearsals with soloists
 - b) how is fee structure determined and who is responsible for billing/collecting
 - 12) Rules for use of instruments and space for teaching private lessons
 - 13) Package offered by the institution to the musician
 - a) paid vacation leave
 - b) paid sick leave
 - c) paid or unpaid maternity/paternity leave
 - d) weekly days off
 - e) sabbatical leave
 - f) life insurance
 - g) health insurance
 - h) major medical insurance
 - i) disability insurance
 - j) pension/retirement
 - k) social security
 - l) education allowance
 1. workshops
 2. conferences
 3. books
 4. music
 5. other forms of continuing education
 6. professional dues/memberships
 - 14) Congregation's expectations for growth/new ensembles
 - 15) Review of compensation as duties expand or contract
 - 16) Church membership a requirement
 - 17) Requirements for both parties to terminate employment