



# United Church of Christ Musicians Association, Inc. Guidelines for the Ministry of Music

## FOREWORD

The United Church of Christ Musicians Association offers these guidelines for the use of music committees, musicians, and pastors. The goal is to improve understanding of the ministry of music and its relationship with the church and its representatives.

The impact of a vital ministry of music is of great value to congregations. The strength and spirit of worship is greatly enhanced by the talent, skill, and dependability of the church musician.

These *Guidelines* have been prepared to guide both musicians and churches in developing a more effective working relationship with the goal of strengthening the ministry of music. While most of this document is directed toward the process of hiring a new musician, it also can be used effectively to review present programs and personnel.

The decision to hire a musician is an important one in the life of a congregation. It means that a search process will take place to help the church find the best candidate. These *Guidelines* will be helpful to musicians seeking a call, and to churches seeking to call a staff person to lead the ministry of music.

If a church is seeking a new music staff person, it will be necessary to assemble a committee or task force to do some needs assessment. An accurate identification of needs, growth expectations, and program development leads to the development of a statement that answers the question: "What does the church want in a new staff position?" The worksheets provided in these *Guidelines* will help you answer this question.

With these thoughts in mind, please read the entire document. We invite your reactions and recommendations for future *Guidelines*.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>FOREWORD</b>	page 1
<b>THE CHURCH PROFILE</b>	pages 3-6
<i>Constructing a profile of the church is the first step in the hiring process. It is suggested that the profile form be copied and the copies used to compile the profile. Use additional pages if necessary to provide complete answers to questions that require a narrative answer. Share the information developed in this section with applicants.</i>	
<b>THE POSITION DESCRIPTION</b>	page 7
<i>Completing the position profile worksheet and clarifying your current expectations for the work of a musician will do much to prevent potential conflicts and misunderstandings.</i>	
THE POSITION PROFILE	page 8
THE POSITION PROFILE WORKSHEET	pages 9-10
AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY	page 11-12
WRITING A JOB DESCRIPTION	page 13
TIME REQUIREMENT WORKSHEET	page 14
JOB DESCRIPTION WORKSHEET	page 15-18
<b>COMPENSATION</b>	page 19
<b>CONTRACT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	page 20



4. In what ways is the music program of the church affected by the community? In what ways does the program involve the community?
5. What opportunities and challenges does your congregation offer to a Music Director, Organist, or Minister of Music?

## ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The area of the community or neighborhood served by this church encompasses an area of

\_\_\_\_\_ square miles, with a population of approximately \_\_\_\_\_ people.

The area in which the church is located can be described as:

- |  |                                       |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inner city        | <input type="checkbox"/> Town         | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urban downtown    | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational/<br>Resort |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urban residential | <input type="checkbox"/> College      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban          | <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement   |  |

**MEMBERSHIP**

Current church membership \_\_\_\_\_ Membership five years ago \_\_\_\_\_

Average worship attendance \_\_\_\_\_

Christian Education enrollment \_\_\_\_\_ Average CE attendance \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the approximate number of people, by age, who are actively involved in the following activities.

<b>Ages</b>	<b>Worship</b>	<b>Christian Education</b>	<b>Music Program</b>
0-4 years old			
5-12 years old			
13-18 years old			
19-25 years old			
26-40 years old			
41-65 years old			
Over 65 years old			

What educational levels, professions, and occupations are represented in this congregation?

Pastor and other professional staff of the church.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>ORDAINED?</b>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

## MUSICAL OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR CONGREGATION

List below the choirs and other groups in your church that provide musical opportunities for people in your church. Include a brief description of what the group does, and any other information about the group that you feel is significant. Use additional sheets if necessary.

NAME OR DESCRIPTION	SCHEDULE (days/seasons/hours)	AGES INCLUDED	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
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1.

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2.

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3.

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4.

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5.

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## **THE POSITION DESCRIPTION**

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Regardless of the job description, title, and areas of responsibility, all positions include several characteristics:

- Musical leadership of some group(s)
- Knowledge of the church year and music appropriate to it
- Program planning skills
- Training and support of volunteers
- Continuing professional and personal growth in music-related and church-related studies
- A commitment to the Christian faith and service

In general, there are three categories of positions. Any of these positions can be considered to be full-time or part-time, depending upon the job expectations and compensation. The general descriptions that follow provide only an overview of what the position entails. Many specific activities such as involvement in recruiting activities, practice time, evaluation and selection of new music, etc., are implied instead of being stated explicitly.

### **ORGANIST**

Areas of responsibility include playing for all services and weekly choir rehearsals (if any) of the church including weddings and funerals, planning worship contributions and attending appropriate meetings.

### **ORGANIST/CHOIR DIRECTOR**

Areas of responsibility include playing for all services of the church including weddings and funerals, accompanying and directing the choir(s), planning worship contributions, attending appropriate meetings, overseeing the music library; supervising other musicians.

### **MUSIC DIRECTOR or MINISTER OF MUSIC**

Areas of responsibility may include all areas included under the position of Organist/Choir Director, or may include only supervision of other music staff. There may also be responsibility for concert programs and other community outreach.

*If a musician wishes to pursue the ministry of music as a calling to ordained or commissioned status, it may be possible to do so. Discussions with the appropriate clergy association committee would be necessary.*

## THE POSITION PROFILE

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Completion of the position profile worksheet on the following pages is the next step in clarifying your present expectations about the work of a musician. It is also used in negotiations. The information that you provide here will serve you throughout the search process.

It is suggested that the worksheet on the following pages be copied and completed by the music committee or the search committee. Use additional pages if necessary to provide more information or explanations that you feel might be helpful.

An excellent technique for using this worksheet is to have each member of the committee fill out a copy of the form independently. Next, the information from the individual forms should be compiled into a final document. This will enable the committee to arrive, by consensus, at a better understanding of the position. It also provides an opportunity to resolve differences of opinion that may exist so that the committee can present itself as a unified body.

Because music candidates' concerns will be directed almost exclusively to this information, it would be helpful to share the final compiled worksheet with serious candidates.

When a candidate is eventually selected for the position, it is important to return again to this worksheet. Have the candidate fill out the Expectation, Areas of Responsibility, and Special Interests sections of the worksheet from his or her own point of view. Then compare the results. Discuss the discrepancies with the candidate and work out an agreement.

It is important to acknowledge expectations that fall outside of the terms of the contract. This exercise will do much to prevent potential conflicts and misunderstandings with your staff person.

## POSITION PROFILE WORKSHEET

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### Expectations

Check the frequency that each of the following possible expectations applies in your church.

Do you expect that the musician will:	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. Attend stated meetings, annual meetings, budget hearings, church council?	_____	_____	_____
2. Participate in regular staff meetings?	_____	_____	_____
3. Select service music?	_____	_____	_____
4. Select hymns?	_____	_____	_____
5. Serve as a resource to committees other than the music committee?	_____	_____	_____
6. Be available for conferences on an individual basis with persons seeking the musician's help and advice?	_____	_____	_____
7. Work on committees and projects when asked or appointed?	_____	_____	_____
8. Cooperate with other churches' music programs?	_____	_____	_____
9. Be knowledgeable about current trends and resources in church music?	_____	_____	_____
10. Be personally responsible to enlist music group members?	_____	_____	_____
11. Be personally responsible for hiring directors or accompanists of music groups not under personal direction?	_____	_____	_____
12. Be personally responsible for hiring substitutes for all absences, including vacations and illnesses?	_____	_____	_____
13. Spend an extended portion of time in training soloists or instrumentalists?	_____	_____	_____

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
14. Be personally responsible for planning extra music programs beyond regularly scheduled Sunday morning worship?	_____	_____	_____
15. Spend a major portion of time working directly with music groups?	_____	_____	_____
16. Attend coffee hours before or after church?	_____	_____	_____
17. Attend other church social or fellowship groups?	_____	_____	_____
18. Keep regular specified office hours at the church?	_____	_____	_____
19. Visit in homes of the congregation on a regular basis?	_____	_____	_____
20. Do his or her own secretarial work?	_____	_____	_____
21. Prepare publicity for special programs?	_____	_____	_____

**Other particular expectations of this congregation:**

## AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

This section helps to identify the relative priority of the many responsibilities that are included in the work of a church musician.

Check “1” for an activity that the congregation places highest in priority and check “4” for an activity that the congregation places at the lowest priority. Check “2” or “3” for intermediate priorities. Check no more than six in the highest priority (“1”).

	<b>High</b>			<b>Low</b>
1. Rehearsal (leading persons in the preparation of music for worship services).	1	2	3	4
2. Preparation (planning for and practicing the music to be taught to music groups).	1	2	3	4
3. Administration of the church’s music program (maintaining oversight of various delegated responsibilities assigned to music group leaders).	1	2	3	4
4. New music programs (devising new programs for the church).	1	2	3	4
5. Building the music library (ordering music, and submitting the bills to appropriate church officials).	1	2	3	4
6. Planning worship with other staff, committees, church groups, etc.	1	2	3	4
7. Playing and directing music for worship services.	1	2	3	4
8. Music outreach (enabling the community to be drawn into the church through its music).	1	2	3	4
9. Personal and professional development (attention to personal, family, and spiritual life, time to attend professional meetings and conventions, taking music courses during the summer, etc.).	1	2	3	4
10. Music program development and administration (establishing goals and organization to create and implement programs).	1	2	3	4
11. Church membership (musician is expected to join this church).	1	2	3	4

12. Denominational service (serving in the work of and on committees of the denomination).	1	2	3	4
13. Inter-church cooperation (working in denominational programs in the community or elsewhere).	1	2	3	4
14. Counseling and crisis visitation	1	2	3	4

### Special Interests and Experience

Check any of the following that you hope the applicant has particular interest and skill.

#### AGE GROUPS

- Early Childhood
- Elementary
- Youth
- College
- Young Adult
- Singles
- Middle adults
- Older adults
- Family

#### MUSIC

- Choral Music
- Organ
- Piano
- Conducting
- Liturgical Dance
- Theatrical Arts
- Guitar
- Keyboard

- Handbells
- Orff instruments
- Other instrument
- Organ maintenance
- New Organ Selection

### AREAS of RESPONSIBILITY REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

List three high priority concerns or activities to which the Music Director should devote major time and energy during the first twelve months. Describe the concern or activity and tell what you hope the Music Director will do to address each of them.

MOST IMPORTANT TO US

SECOND-MOST IMPORTANT TO US

THIRD-MOST IMPORTANT TO US

## WRITING A JOB DESCRIPTION

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In previous steps, you have identified many facets of your church's situation and have determined many of the things that you would like to see in a musician.

The next step is to write a job description that includes the highlights of what you have already determined. It is good practice to state the formal working relationships and review practices that exist. It is also important to evaluate the scope of the position in terms of the approximate hours per week. The following table is one way of identifying the approximate relationship between job expectations and the approximate number of hours required to achieve those expectations. Note that the hours will average over the year and the actual hours will vary depending upon the complete job description.

Approximate Hours/week	Job Expectations
10	Organist only for 1 or 2 services Director only for 1 or 2 services
20	Organist and Director of 1 or 2 choirs Director only for 2 or 3 choirs
30	Organist and Director of 3 choirs Director only for 4 choirs
40	Organist and Director of 4 or more choirs Director only for 4 or more choirs and music series

Use the information that you have entered on the Church Profile and Position Profile worksheets to complete the Job Description worksheet on the following pages.

## Worksheet to Determine Time Requirements for an Organist And/or Director of Music in a Church Position

*Prepared by the American Guild of Organist*

1. **Time spent in worship services** \_\_\_\_\_hrs./wk.  
Calculate total time spent in worship during one complete representative week.
  
2. **Rehearsals** \_\_\_\_\_hrs./wk.
  - a. Total hours spent in rehearsal, including on Sunday before worship
  - b. Rehearsal (score study, keyboard and/or conducting practice, room Set-up, robes, distributing and collecting music, etc.)  
*Minimum of 4 hrs. /wk. per choir for organist/director*  
*Minimum of 2 hrs. /wk. per choir for accompanist only*
  
3. **Organ Practice** (hymns, service music, prelude, postlude, registrations) \_\_\_\_\_hrs./wk.  
*Minimum of 4 hrs. /wk. for each non-identical service*
  
4. **Selection of music** (lectionary/scripture study, clergy consultation) \_\_\_\_\_hrs./wk.  
*Minimum of 2 hrs./wk. for each non-identical service*
  
5. **Preparation of special services** (Christmas, Easter, special Sundays, etc) \_\_\_\_\_hrs./wk.  
*These services take extra preparation. Budget 1hr./wk. per choir, handbell group, etc*
  
6. **Maintenance of music library** (sorting, filing, ordering new music) \_\_\_\_\_hrs./wk.  
*Minimum of 1 hr./wk. per choir*
  
7. **Administration** (seasonal planning, budget, bulletin preparation, recruitment, auditions, contacting musicians and tuners, etc) \_\_\_\_\_hrs./wk.  
*Minimum of 2 hrs./wk. for each non-identical service*
  
8. **Meetings** (Calculate total time spent in clergy consultations, staff, committees per week.) \_\_\_\_\_hrs./wk.
  
9. **Educational Opportunities** (writing for bulletins and newsletters, teaching and participating in religious education, presentations on songs, hymns and the pipe organ.) \_\_\_\_\_hrs./wk.
  
10. **Other** (Concerts, concert series, education programs, additional services such as prayer services, church dinners, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_hrs./wk.

**Basic hours per week \_\_\_\_\_ Total**

Additional consideration should be given to

- Hours required to maintain keyboard proficiency and work on new repertoire
- Personal musical growth and development through ongoing study, research, periodicals, conventions, concerts, etc.

## JOB DESCRIPTION FOR CHURCH MUSICIANS

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Date form Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Church Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**TITLE OF POSITION** \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose of Position**

**Responsibilities** (for what specific tasks, assignments, or program areas will this person have responsibility?)

**Working relationships** (List persons, boards, and /or committees with whom this person will work most closely. Describe any special relationships to the community.)

**Accountability** (List persons, boards, or committees to whom this person is accountable. For example, operational accountability is who takes responsibility for selecting hymns, anthems, special music, choir schedules, etc.)

Financially accountable to

Operationally accountable to

**Basic and special qualifications** (personal and professional)

**Evaluation and review** (Who is responsible for performance and salary reviews? How often are they held?)

**Office** (What office arrangements are made for the musician – office space, equipment, secretarial assistance, etc?)

**Instruments**

What instruments are available to the musician?

Is he/she free to teach upon them? What restrictions apply?

Who maintains the instruments?

How often are they tuned?

**Work Schedule**

Use the worksheet on page 14 to answer the following questions.

How many hours per week is this job on average? \_\_\_\_\_ hours

How many hours per week, excluding rehearsals and services, should be spent in the church? \_\_\_\_\_ hours

**Time off**

Refer to the Compensation guidelines regarding time off.

The musician will be granted the following time off

\_\_\_\_\_ days per week

\_\_\_\_\_ weekends per year

\_\_\_\_\_ weeks vacation per year

\_\_\_\_\_ sick/personal days per year

In addition, the musician will receive \_\_\_\_\_ weeks per year for continuing education.

**Salary and benefits**

Check the benefits that are available. Explain the details in the space provided.

- Salary range\* (Non-ordained musicians and part-time ordained persons, are usually not paid a housing allowance.)
- Social Security
- Retirement Annuity
- Health/Medical Insurance
- Group Life Insurance
- Disability Insurance

**Reimbursed Expenses**

- Moving (relocation)
- Auto/travel
- Telephone
- Books and other resources
- Continuing education
- Professional dues
- Purchase of music
- Robe care and replacement

## COMPENSATION

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The church musician offers the church special skills that require specialized training to acquire and continued training to maintain and develop. The church as employer needs to keep this in mind as it establishes compensation and support for the staff person.

### Salary Guidelines

Remuneration for services performed by church musician consists of more than basic salary, although the salary is the primary portion of the total compensation package.

### Benefits

There are benefits that should apply to all musician positions regardless of the number of hours per week that the position requires.

- Social Security
- Paid vacation  
A musician should receive a minimum of 4 weeks per year paid vacation. This should not include time spent in continuing education. Churches are also encouraged to consider additional time off by permitting the musician to pay a substitute.
- Sick leave (paid)  
It is suggested that a part-time employee should be eligible for 2 weeks of sick leave including 2 service days per year. A full-time employee would be eligible to receive 15 days including 4 service days.
- Personal leave (paid). It is suggested that the musician receive one Sunday per year for personal leave.
- Continuing education  
It is suggested that all musicians receive 2 weeks per year to pursue additional education. This is in addition to vacation time.
- Book and music allowance

There are also expenses that should be considered for reimbursement.

- Automobile and travel expenses, excluding commuting costs
- Telephone
- Professional dues

## CONTRACT CONSIDERATIONS

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The value of a letter of agreement or a contract is found in the spirit of mutual understanding of responsibilities when employment begins. It puts into writing exactly what is expected of the musician for the benefit of future clergy and committees. This letter or agreement may include goals of the ministry of music and a job description for the church musician. Many UCC churches prefer a letter of agreement or covenant.

### **Items to be considered in a letter of agreement or contract**

- A job description
- Title and expectations for the position
- Salary and benefits
- Accountability
- Division of responsibilities in worship planning
- Assurance of the right to serve as organist for all weddings and funerals
- Budgetary resources and special information about the music program
- Terms of job reviews
- Terms of termination