

**THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS**  
*Tri-Chapter Placement Information Service*  
*of the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and Potomac, MD Chapters*

Thank you for contacting the Placement Information Service of the three local chapters of the American Guild of Organists. We provide this packet to assist you in:

1. Defining the responsibilities of a church musician,
2. Determining compensation commensurate with work and skills required, and
3. Selecting an individual to meet the specific needs of your congregation.

Upon return of the Advertisement Information Form, along with a \$35.00 fee (make checks payable to **Tri-Chapter AGO**), your position will be entered into our job bank and listed in the next three issues of the three Chapter newsletters which are sent out to approximately 600 AGO members in the metro Washington, DC area. The deadline is the 15th of the month before publication (*e.g.* January 15 for February issues). The position will also be listed on each Chapter's website, normally within two weeks after receipt of the ad input and your check.

Positions are normally listed in three consecutive newsletters. Before requesting another listing, the position should be discussed with the Placement Coordinator so that possible reasons for its continued vacancy may be addressed. The Coordinator should be advised ***as soon as*** an advertised position is filled.

DC area churches, as in other metropolitan areas, are experiencing a shortage of trained church musicians, especially organists. Jobs are remaining vacant for longer periods of time, and hiring committees report smaller numbers of candidates. This is often due to a disparity between compensation offered and the amount of work required. Churches may underestimate the workload by considering just the *visible hours* - only a portion of the work required. Included in this packet are a *Worksheet* and *Formula for Determining Workload*.

Salary is one part of a compensation package -- benefits are also important. Employees who work 20 hours per week often qualify for denominational benefits (pension, insurance, etc). Many churches employ part-time musicians who may not receive such benefits in their other part-time jobs. Offering benefits (*e.g.* health coverage) obviously makes a position more attractive.

Also important are the condition of the instrument(s) and work areas (rehearsal areas, musician's office, octavo/score storage, and choir vesting areas). Are they well maintained and equipped in ways so that effective musical work can be done?

Please mail your completed Advertisement Information (p. 2) and check to:

Donald W. Frazier, CAGO, Placement Coordinator, Tri-Chapter AGO  
8315 Georgian Ct Manassas, VA 20110 703-368-0936 [dfrazier@ieec.org](mailto:dfrazier@ieec.org)

## ADVERTISEMENT INFORMATION

### CONGREGATION:

Church/Synagogue Name:

Address and Phone:

Size of Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact:

### POSITION:

Position Title:

Date position is available:

Number/type of music groups directed by this position:

Number of staff supervised (if any): \_\_\_\_

Average hours per week (including preparation time):

Organ: \_\_ Pipe No. of manuals \_\_\_\_ No. of ranks \_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_ yrs

Instrument: \_\_ Electronic \_\_ Piano Make \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_ yrs

### COMPENSATION:

Annual salary (or range):

No. of weeks' paid vacation: \_\_\_\_

No. of weeks' continuing education: \_\_\_\_

\_\_ Health Insurance      \_\_ Car Allowance      \_\_ Books/Music Allowance

\_\_ Retirement      \_\_ Sick Leave      \_\_ Maternity/Paternity Leave

\_\_ Housing Allowance      \_\_ Unemployment      \_\_ Continuing Education Fund

Brief statement about your congregation and its worship/music environment:

# WORKSHEET

*Please note the various tasks required for services and rehearsals apart from the services and rehearsals themselves. Determine if the job you expect is average or if you, as the employer, are asking for considerable extra requirements, both in time and level of performance. Finally, enter total average weekly hours on the Advertisement Information form you send to the Placement Coordinator.*

## Avg. Number of Hours Per Week

1. Maintenance of technique and repertoire (practice) ( )
2. Preparation for rehearsals (music review, marking scores, etc.) ( )
3. Time spent in rehearsals ( )
4. Service planning ( )
5. Service performance ( )
6. Supervision of other musicians (volunteer or paid) ( )
7. Meetings (staff, committee, other directors, congregational) ( )
8. Administrative and/or secretarial duties/Music library maintenance ( )
9. Interaction with congregation (coffee hours, church dinners, visits) ( )
10. Instrument maintenance (organ, piano, handbells) and demonstrations ( )
11. Program building and recruiting ( )
12. Review of new music, journals, articles as they pertain to the position ( )
13. Continuing education, professional meetings, workshops, conferences ( )
14. Custodial work (furniture moving, setting up spaces, de-cluttering) ( )
15. Composition and/or arrangement of music to be performed ( )
16. Concerts or special-event planning, performance and supervision ( )
17. Other: ( )

Total:

## FORMULA FOR DETERMINING WORKLOAD

The most common duties of organists and directors are listed on the WORKSHEET (Page 3). If the hiring committee is well-versed in the responsibilities of the position for which it is hiring, it can use the WORKSHEET to determine the workload. Whichever method is used, enter the total weekly hours on your Advertisement Information form.

If a committee is less confident of its understanding of the musician's work, we recommend the following formula as a starting point to determine the average number of hours required by a position. Multiply the number of Visible Hours (hours spent in rehearsals, meetings, classes, and services) by 2.5-3.0 for organist or director only, or by 3.5-4.5 for organist/director. The range of multipliers reflects the range of experience of the applicant. The multipliers themselves represent "non-visible" time spent in rehearsal, preparation, individual practice, music selection, conferences, continuing education, communications and other duties listed on the WORKSHEET. Workload examples:

<b>Organist Only -</b>	<b>Avg. Weekly Hours</b>
Choir rehearsals	2.00
Pre-service warm-ups	0.50
Actual Service	1.00
Meetings with director/worship committee	0.50
Rehearsals with soloists	0.25
Visible Hours	4.25

Multiply result (4.25 hours) by 2.5-3.0 => Avg. work time, or 10.5-12.75 hrs/wk

<b>Organist/Director Combination -</b>	<b>Avg. Weekly Hours</b>
Choir rehearsals	2.50
Weekly staff meetings	1.00
Pre-service warm-ups	0.50
Actual Service	1.00
Visible Hours	5.00

Multiply result (5.00 hours) by 3.5-4.5 => Avg. work time, or 17.5-22.5 hrs/wk

*Institutions with needs/expectations requiring more time commitment should adjust the formula upwards.*

## Employee or Independent Contractor?

An employer must generally withhold federal income taxes, withhold and pay social security and Medicare taxes, and pay unemployment tax on wages paid to an employee. An Institution does not generally have to withhold or pay any taxes on payments to independent contractors.

To determine whether an individual is an employee or an independent contractor, the relationship of the musician and the Institution must be considered. In any such determination, all information that provides evidence of the degrees of control and independence must be considered, and usually falls into three categories: behavioral control, financial control, and the relationship of the two parties.

**Behavioral control** - Facts that show whether the Institution has a right to direct and control how the musician does the task for which s/he is hired include the type and degree of:

**Instructions that the Institution gives to the musician.** An employee is generally subject to the Institution's instructions about how to work. Examples of such instructions are -

- When and where to do the work,
- What tools or equipment to use,
- What other musicians to hire to assist with the work,
- Where to purchase supplies and services,
- What work must be performed by specified individuals.

The amount of instruction needed varies among different jobs. Even if no instructions are given, sufficient behavioral control may exist if the employer has the right to control how the work results are achieved. An Institution may lack the knowledge to instruct some highly specialized professionals; in other cases, the task may require little or no instruction. The key consideration is whether the Institution has retained the right to control the details of a musician's performance or instead has given up that right.

**Training that the Institution gives to the musician.** An employee may be trained to perform services in a particular manner, whereas independent contractors ordinarily use their own methods.

**Financial control** - Facts that show whether the Institution has a right to control the business aspects of the musician's job include:

**The extent to which the musician has un-reimbursed business expenses.** Independent contractors are more likely to have un-reimbursed expenses than are employees. Fixed ongoing costs that are incurred regardless of whether work is currently being performed are especially important. However, employees may also incur un-reimbursed expenses in connection with the services that they perform for the Institution.

**The extent of the musician's investment.** An independent contractor often has a significant investment in the facilities he or she uses in performing services for someone else.

**The extent to which the musician makes his or her services available to the relevant market.** An independent contractor is generally free to seek out other business opportunities. Independent contractors often advertise, maintain a visible business location, and are available to work in the relevant market.

**How the Institution pays the musician.** An employee is generally guaranteed a regular wage amount for an hourly, weekly, or other period of time. This usually indicates that a worker is an employee, even when the wage or salary is supplemented by a commission. An independent contractor is usually paid by a flat fee for the job.

**The extent to which the musician can realize a profit or loss.** An independent contractor can show a profit or loss on his/her Schedule C.

**Type of relationship** - Facts that show the parties' type of relationship include:

- *Written contract describing the relationship the parties intend to create,*
- *Whether or not the Institution provides the musician with employee-type benefits, such as insurance, a pension plan, vacation pay, or sick pay,*
- *The permanency of the relationship,*
- *The extent to which services performed by the musician is a key aspect of the operations of the Institution.*

## AGO National Salary Guide for Musicians Employed by Religious Institutions

- The current Guide (a .pdf file) may be obtained by going to [www.agohq.org](http://www.agohq.org) and clicking on “Salary Guide”, then clicking on the Salary-Guide icon for current figures. Musicians with less than five years’ experience should be considered at the lower levels, and those with greater experience at the higher. Musicians with outstanding abilities, or positions that require exceptional performance, may well exceed the Guide figures.
- The second figure in each box represents the average cost of health insurance and pension benefits offered by denominational plans (25-35% of Base salary). When such benefits are not offered by an employer, this amount *should* be added to the Base salary.
- The ranges of salaries, as well as the Fees below, are for musicians with degrees in Organ /Church Music or various AGO Certifications. Fees will vary based on training, experience, availability, responsibility, and specific Services required.
- A “model” Contract *template* (from August 2005) may be obtained by going to [www.agohq.org/profession/contract.html](http://www.agohq.org/profession/contract.html) and clicking on the ‘Word’ icon.

### RECOMMENDED\* SUBSTITUTE MUSICIAN FEES

#### ORGANIST OR DIRECTOR ONLY- no evening/separate rehearsal

Single service	\$200.00
Additional services not requiring additional preparation	\$125.00 per service
Evening rehearsal	\$ 50.00 per hour, minimum

#### ORGANIST/DIRECTOR COMBINATION - no evening/separate rehearsal

Single service	\$275.00
Additional services not requiring additional preparation	\$150.00 minimum
Evening rehearsal	\$75.00 per hour, minimum

#### WEDDINGS/FUNERALS

Wedding (Service only)	\$250.00 minimum
Separate rehearsal with bridal party	\$75.00 per hour, minimum
Consultation fee	\$50.00 per hour

Funeral (Service only)	\$175.00 minimum
Rehearsal (other than basic run-thru before Service)	\$75.00 minimum

Mileage (if trips exceed 25 miles RT)	\$0.50 per mile
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\* These recommendations are reflected in the 2011-2012 Tri-Chapter Directory.

## INTERVIEW AND AUDITION GUIDELINES

Before being interviewed, each candidate should receive a copy of the written Position Description and background information on the congregation (brochure, annual report, etc.). Interviews and auditions should be conducted with ALL committee members present and within a short-enough period of time that candidates can be effectively compared. *The committee should gear the audition toward what the congregation considers important in its musical life -- choral ability, organ performance, hymn playing, familiarity with various musical styles, etc.* Please keep the following guidelines in mind.

1. Each candidate should be auditioned and interviewed separately, and should not come in contact with other candidates.
2. State clearly to all candidates well in advance of the audition what the audition requirements are. Copies of chants, anthems, and special music to be played or conducted should be provided well in advance.
3. In interviewing for an organist or keyboard player, allow time for a short program of music to be played by each candidate (this may be as short as two contrasting pieces). The music should be practical for Sunday morning (Friday evening for synagogue) use. These works need not be difficult, but should be played well and give an indication of the candidate's general facility and musicality at the organ and/or piano. Sight-reading ability on the instrument(s) should be evaluated by asking the candidate to play two or three hymns of diverse character. The committee may wish to hear the candidate in other playing roles that are appropriate to a service -- accompaniment of anthems, chants, psalms, etc.
4. The committee may wish to ask a candidate's preference as to type and style of music. It should discuss the institution's previous and present use of styles of music, and its hopes for the musician to be hired.
5. The committee should be prepared to discuss the music budget, the organ and other instruments and their maintenance, and provide the candidate a tour of the building and facilities. It should be prepared to address questions about the choral library, the equipment in the music office (computer, phones, etc.) and related items.
6. The committee may wish to have the finalist(s) conduct a rehearsal with the choir(s) and/or conduct a regular service with the full committee present, for which the candidates should be fully compensated with a professional fee (see Page 6). As part of the selection process, the committee may wish to visit the church where the candidate is presently employed.
7. Compensation should be openly discussed. The committee should be prepared to state what is being offered, in what increments it will be paid, taxes and pension withheld, benefits offered, vacation time, and substitute arrangements. Wedding and funeral fees should be discussed and responsibilities should be clearly outlined in the Position Description (NOT the same as a Contract). Use of the organ and teaching privileges using the institution's instruments should also be clearly stated.