

MUSICIANS IN PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

PREPARING FOR A JOB INTERVIEW

MUSICIANS SEARCHING for a church or synagogue position are most likely aware that a majority of these positions are for part-time employment. Whether you have found a job opening for a full- or part-time position, the interview process may include many of the same components. Here are a few practical suggestions to help you with an interview.

Before the Interview

Create or update your résumé. There are many resources available to help you organize and write a clear and professional-looking résumé that will provide necessary information for any potential employer.

Learn what you can about the church before your interview by visiting the church's Web site to become familiar with its staff, facilities, and ministries or by requesting recent newsletters and/or worship folders.

Prepare a list of possible questions you may be asked. Often the questions asked in the interview will be related to something on your résumé, or they may be about your job experience, your philosophy of church music, or about you.

Some questions may not be legally asked by the employer. These usually deal with matters of personal life, family background, and other non-job-related areas such as questions about your family, your marital status or sexual orientation, your race, physical disabilities, or age-related issues.

You may also wish to prepare a list of questions that you would like to ask the interviewers. These may be to clarify the job description or to specify what you may or may not be allowed to do, such as using the church's facilities for teaching, or charging fees for weddings and funerals.

Prepare for the interview by practicing the questions and answers in front of a mirror or with a family member or friend. Assemble a folder with samples of programs, bulletins, compositions, or other pertinent materials you will take to the interview. If you will demonstrate your organ skills during the interview, take the music you plan to perform, your shoes, and other necessary items. Become familiar with the instrument ahead of time so you will be ready to perform.

At the Interview

Arrive on time, dressed appropriately, and with any materials you may need for the interview. Greet the interviewers and make an effort to learn names. Take notes for future reference. Take time to formu-

late your answers to questions in a thoughtful and clear manner. Thank the interviewers for meeting with you.

Some important items to discuss during an interview:

A Job Description. This will help specify what your responsibilities will be, how many hours you are expected to work, and other requirements. The job description should be a separate document from the statement of salary and benefits or the employment agreement.

Salary and Benefits. The interview should cover salary and benefits. Be sure to discuss and come to an agreement on salary, Social Security, and what benefits will be included, such as retirement benefits, health and hospitalization plan, dental benefits, travel reimbursement, continuing education, vacation, and compensation for a substitute during illness or vacation.

Contract/Employment Agreement. This document will outline employment details such as date of your employment, its term, period of probationary employment (if any), terms of cancellation (when, how, how much notice to be given, and so on), and severance pay. For more information, the AGO provides a Model Contract that can be adapted to any employment situation.

The interview process can be a stressful experience, but it is also an opportunity to learn and grow. Prepare yourself, and be ready to demonstrate why you are qualified for the position. Best wishes!

Resources

The following materials are available from AGO Headquarters:

- *Interviewing for a Job* (CD)
- *Music in the Church: Work and Compensation* (Seattle Chapter and Boston Chapter)
- *AGO Model Contract*
- *Resources in Professional Concerns*

There are also a variety of articles about healthy relationships between church and synagogue musicians and the communities they serve, as well as other documents available on the Guild's Web site (Agohq.org) under the heading of Professional Development.

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