

GUIDELINES FOR HIRING A PARISH DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

June 2003 | Reviewed May 2021

INTRODUCTION

"The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people is their right and duty by reason of their baptism. This full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else." (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no.14) The pastoral musician helps foster this full, conscious and active participation by the musical decisions and selections he/she makes for accompanying the liturgy.

The following guidelines have been developed to assist parishes in searching for and hiring a music director and the implementation of the parish music program. Adaptations to these guidelines may be necessary, but every effort should be made to give liturgical music its rightful priority in preparation, financing, and formation.

The Diocesan Office of Worship retains current resumes of available liturgical musicians. Guidance also is available for interviewing a prospective candidate, creating a job description, salary guidelines, and sample letters of intent. Members of the Diocesan Music Committee are available to assist parishes in the interviewing process. For current resumes or other assistance, contact the Office of Worship.

THE ROLE OF A PASTORAL MUSICIAN

Every parish should have a Director of Music Ministry [DMM] who leads in the musical/liturgical life of the parish, and who is empowered by the pastor and pastoral staff to accomplish this task. It is desirable that the pastor and the DMM work collaboratively. A detailed job description with clear responsibilities and goals should be developed for the DMM (see *Appendix III – Job Description*).

The professional liturgical musician should be encouraged to continually strive for musical excellence. This involves years of practice, musical education, and liturgical formation. The Church needs the gifts of liturgical musicians. "The musician's gifts must be recognized as a valued part of the pastoral effort, and for which proper compensation must be made." (*Liturgical Music Today*, no. 66)

The role of the pastoral musician is both a vocation and a profession for which proper compensation must be made.

Music is an integral part of the liturgical action. The pastoral musician should be competent in effectively integrating music within liturgy and leading the assembly in sung prayer. The role of the liturgical musician is as much a vocation as it is a profession. The liturgical musician should be a member of the Christian faithful, who desires to place their gifts at the service of the community's prayers. Equally important are the musician's personal spirituality and ability to nurture the faith of the Church.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

The following is a description of the work of a Director of Music Ministry [DMM] and provides a thorough picture of this full-time ministry. In developing a job description, specific tasks could be selected and/or defined from the general overview in the following seven areas. See *Appendix III* for a model job description.

AREA 1: Pastoral Leadership Skills

Communication skills and sensitivity to the cultural/worship experience of parishioners are essential for the DMM. This person must have the personality and the leadership skills that allow him/her to interrelate on various levels with a broad mix of people. As a pastoral minister, they must be able to enter into dialogue with people while guiding them to a deeper understanding of liturgy and the role of music in liturgy.

AREA 2: Continuing Formation

A. *Music Formation* - The DMM has a responsibility to develop and sustain his/her artistic abilities for the good of the Church. This would include:

1. educational advancement of musical skills as these pertain to the needs of the parish;
2. the ability to research new music;
3. a regular pattern of rehearsing the music to be used at liturgy;
4. and the creative integration of music with ritual prayer.

B. *Liturgical Formation* - The DMM should keep current with official statements and documents on music and the liturgy. This effort includes:

1. the ongoing study of various liturgical/musical documents and publications;
2. membership and participation in professional organizations;
3. attendance at local and national workshops and conferences;
4. and periodic coursework in the field of music and liturgy.

This commitment to personal development is a mutual responsibility of the DMM and the parish. The DMM must be willing to maintain his/her artistic ability and to pursue professional advancement in the fields of music and liturgy. The parish, in turn, ensures that the DMM has sufficient time for these pursuits and makes the necessary financial provisions for this development.

AREA 3: Parish Formation

A. *The Liturgical Assembly*

1. The DMM helps the parish to grow in its understanding and appreciation of the various musical styles and the role of music and in the liturgy.
2. The DMM helps the parish to learn new liturgical music.

- B. *Parish School/Religious Education/Youth Ministry* - The Director of Music Ministry [DMM] may serve as a resource person for the parish school, religious education, and youth ministry programs.
- C. *Parish Organizations and Pastoral Staff* - The DMM may serve as a resource person for the liturgical/musical education of these groups and others in the parish.

AREA 4: Music Leadership

- A. For the liturgical celebrations of Sundays, feasts, seasons, and special liturgical events (e.g., penance services), it is the responsibility of the DMM to work collaboratively with other staff in the selection and placement of music, to coordinate the music ministry, and for some liturgies, to act as the leading musician (i.e., accompanist, choir director, cantor).
- B. In line with the above, the DMM is responsible for recruiting, scheduling, and rehearsing the various music ministers (i.e., choir members, cantors, instrumentalists) for liturgical celebrations.

AREA 5: Liturgical Preparation

The responsibilities of the DMM should include the following:

- to work with those involved in the preparation of parish liturgies;
- to consult with the DRE, Youth, and school staff in the preparation of liturgies for children;
- to work with engaged couples in preparing their wedding liturgies;
- to work with the bereavement coordinator or bereaved in preparing funeral liturgies;
- and to provide musical input and copyright information for the preparation of worship aids.

AREA 6: Music Resources

The DMM will manage the parish music department budget for:

- developing and maintaining a parish music/choral library;
- providing for the maintenance of the parish musical instruments;
- and making recommendations for the purchase of new instruments.

AREA 7: Liturgy Committee and Pastoral Staff

It is strongly recommended that the DMM:

- participate in liturgy committee meetings;
- serve as liaison between the ministers of music and other liturgical ministers;
- provide resources for prayer at parish meetings;
- make recommendations regarding musical/liturgical policy;
- formulate a parish music department budget;
- attend meetings of the pastoral staff;
- and participate in any worship space construction or renovation.

DIVISION OF TIME

The responsibilities of the Director of Music Ministry [DMM] require varying amounts of time depending on the number of liturgies, choirs, cantors, and meetings in which they participate. Some of their work is easily observed (e.g., accompanying liturgies), but most goes unseen (i.e., practice, selecting music, studying, and preparing liturgies). A well-crafted job description will indicate who the DMM reports to, how they will spend their time in their ministry, and articulate a process of annual/bi-annual performance evaluation (see *Appendix II & III*).

What follows below is an example of how a DMM's time might be divided in an average workweek.

Please Note: It is not offered as the “ideal” division of time, but rather as an example that is commonly experienced by a full-time DMM.

Division of Time for a Full-time Director of Music Ministry <i>A Sample Breakdown</i>	
5-10 hours	Accompanying liturgies
5-10 hours	Rehearsal of music ministers (i.e., choirs, cantors, instrumentalists)
3-5 hours	Preparation for rehearsal
5-10 hours	Liturgy preparation, selection and placement of music, researching new music, advance seasonal planning
2-5 hours	Personal instrument practice
1-2 hours	Professional and ministerial study
8 hours	Other administrative tasks (i.e., meetings, copyright procedures, recruiting and maintaining choirs, maintaining choral library)

The nature of this ministry is such that the DMM should be allowed flexible hours, i.e., not held to a regular 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. office schedule.

This division of time is for a typical week in a parish and does not include special celebrations such as daily mass, confirmation, first eucharist, penance services, holy week, holy days, liturgy of the hours, etc. Sensitivity should be given to the demands of the liturgical seasons; the seasons of Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter, and parts of Ordinary Time will require varying amounts of the DMM's time.

SALARY GUIDELINES

In determining the appropriate salary for the full-time DMM (see also *Appendix IV: Those Responsible for Music & Part-time or Substitute Musicians*) the level of education, competency in liturgy/music, and experience are three principle factors to be taken into account.

Competency can be determined in various ways. Education and accredited academic degrees in music are valued and one way to evaluate competency. A degree, however, is not always proof of the necessary musical, liturgical and pastoral leadership skills. Checking references from the individual's liturgical/musical peers and from ordained and lay leaders who know his/her abilities is

an important way to judge competency. An audition will help to ascertain a musician's musical competency.

The interview process that takes place when hiring a Director of Music Ministry [DMM] is critical. As mentioned earlier, members of the Diocesan Music Committee are willing to assist parishes with interviews by offering a sample procedure and/or by suggesting a local pastoral musician who would be willing to be a part of the interviewing committee. It is very important that there be someone involved in the interview who is skilled in music, knowledgeable in liturgy, and has pastoral experience.

Level of competency can best be determined by:

- **education & experience**
- **an interview with a music committee**
- **an audition**
- **checking references**

Experience in the field of liturgical music is another major factor when determining salary. A year of DMM experience, when discussed here, refers to a year of full-time work. Thus, a person with two to three years of part-time experience (i.e., an assistant or accompanist who is not responsible for the music program, but works collaboratively with a DMM) may in fact have the equivalent of one-year of full-time experience.

A recent college graduate who is beginning to work in the field of music ministry should expect to receive a smaller salary than the musician who enters the same position with 15 years experience. However, the competencies of both individuals must still be assessed in order to determine the appropriate starting salary for either one.

Years of experience may also demonstrate that a person without a degree in music has the equivalent skills and knowledge of someone who holds a Bachelor's degree, or someone with a Bachelor's the equivalent of a Master's degree. Once again, the level of competency is important and is best judged by involving a hiring committee, other musicians, and most importantly, auditioning candidates for the position.

With the above considerations in mind, salary guidelines for a full-time Director of Music Ministry are offered. These may be found in *Appendix I*.

CONCLUSION

Because of the importance music plays in our liturgical celebrations, every parish should have a DMM with pastoral, musical and liturgical sensitivity. Decisions with regard to music ultimately should rest with the DMM. Parishes that have the good fortune of being blessed with a pastoral minister of this kind should place its trust in this person as one who comes both to serve and lead.

Finally, every effort should be made to have a collaborative relationship between the DMM (or the person responsible for music ministry) and the pastor. This relationship is most important. Collaboration also should take place between the DMM and every other musician involved in the parish music program, recognizing that the DMM is ultimately responsible for the overall music program. The pastor's support and role in this collaborative relationship is vital to all the musicians involved and to the parish's liturgical celebrations.

APPENDIX I

SUGGESTED SALARY SCALE FOR FULL-TIME MUSICIANS (Year 2003)*

The following levels of competency and salaries are recommended for full-time Directors of Music Ministry [DMM]. This implies that the DMM's sole employer is the parish church. The DMM is responsible for all liturgical music in the parish including all weekend liturgies, holy days, special sacramental celebrations, penance services and other liturgical celebrations. Depending on the scope of the full-time position, and the candidate's competency and experience, different levels of salary are justified.

LEVEL 1

- Formal study of music and liturgy, but no degree
- Under three years experience in pastoral liturgical music
- Responsible for:
 - one or two choirs
 - all weekend masses
 - holy days
- Serves as organist, accompanist or choir director
- Participates in staff and liturgy committee meetings
- Suggested starting salary: \$28,500* + benefits

LEVEL 2

- Level 1 duties plus:
- Bachelor's degree in music or its equivalent
- Three to seven years experience in pastoral liturgical music
- Serves as the Director of Music Ministries
- Two or three choirs - Cantor training
- Suggested starting salary: \$30,500* + benefits

LEVEL 3

- Level 2 duties plus:
- Master's degree in music or its equivalent
- Over seven years experience in pastoral liturgical music
- Three choirs - Cantor training
- Suggested starting salary: \$36,500* + benefits

LEVEL 4

- Level 3 duties plus:
- Doctorate degree in music or its equivalent
- Over 14 years experience in pastoral liturgical music
- Three or more choirs - Cantor training
- Suggested starting salary: \$43,000* + benefits

Weddings & Funerals

Regarding weddings and funerals, the Director of Music Ministry should be remunerated for these services. Normally they are supplemental income not part of the DMM's salary. It is left to each parish to negotiate whether or not weddings and funerals are a part of the DMM's salary.

The suggested salary ranges are only suggested "starting" salaries. The parish Search Committee will need to establish a just salary by taking into consideration the musician's experience, education, and competency as well as the parish's budget. Cost of living increases, as well as merit increases should be considered in future budgetary planning.

***Salaries are computed by using Catholic Schools Teacher's scales, other dioceses, and other like professionals.**

APPENDIX II

NORMS RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT & BENEFITS

All Directors of Music Ministry [DMM] within the Diocese of St. Petersburg are considered employees of their respective parishes. As such, they should be given a copy of the respective parish employee handbook outlining and describing the various employee benefits.

Following the Diocesan Personnel Initiative, parishes are encouraged to develop a handbook of employee policies and benefits. The handbook establishes an employment relationship between the parish and the employee for an indefinite period of time and addresses the need for detailed job descriptions (see *Appendix III* for a sample), annual performance evaluations, and progressive discipline procedures, etc. Questions regarding employment policies and procedures may be directed to the Department of Human Resources, Diocese of St. Petersburg.

A Parish Employee Handbook should:

- **Address job descriptions**
- **Explain annual evaluations**
- **Describe discipline process**
- **Describe benefits package**

Given the fact that the work schedule for the DMM is significantly different than other parish employees, there are a few “norms” that should be addressed to clarify the work relationship and expectations.

1. **Days off.** The DMM generally works weekends and perform at the various liturgies of the parish. It follows, then, that the “two-day weekend” for the DMM should consist of two other days during the week. Likewise, it is essential that they work on certain holidays and therefore should substitute another day(s) for their “holiday.”
2. **Vacation.** In scheduling weeklong vacation time, the DMM should be allowed to take weeks that are consistent with their workweek, i.e., including Saturdays and Sundays.
3. **Time off.** The amount of vacation time given should be determined by the individual parish policy and the DMM’s experience. Guidance could be drawn from the diocesan guidelines.
4. **Substitutes.** For vacations and other times away from the job, the DMM is expected to find an appropriate substitute who will serve at the expense of the parish.
5. **Continuing Education.** Time and reimbursement for continuing education is according to individual parish policy. It is, however, strongly recommended that parishes pay the expenses for registration, travel, room, and board for mutually agreed upon conferences and workshops that relate to the DMM’s field. Continuing education should not be considered as part of the DMM’s vacation time.
6. **Cost of Living/Merit.** Cost of living adjustments and merit pay should be reviewed each year following the annual performance evaluation between the pastor and the DMM.
7. **Other.** The parish should provide the DMM with office and rehearsal space and adequate storage for music, books and instruments. The DMM should also be provided a budget for the purchase of music, musical instruments, equipment, maintenance, and other expenses.

APPENDIX III

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Director of Music Ministry at St. Gregory Parish, Anywhere, U.S.A

Reports to: Pastor [or Director of Liturgy]

Status: [Indicate Full-time - Part-time, exempt - Part-time non-exempt]

Date:

1. The goals for the Director of Music Ministry will be (*Here you might articulate a number of goals, for example*):
 - to develop a prayerful, singing assembly through celebration, preparation and evaluation, education, and personal ministry;
 - with the cooperation and assistance of all the parish ministers, the Director of Music Ministry supports the gospel message through song and challenges the assembly to live it more fully.

2. The goals for the overall music ministry program will be (*Here you might articulate specific goals for the music program, for example*):
 - to build and sustain congregational song at the parish's weekend liturgies;
 - to deepen the liturgical understanding and prayer of these assemblies through quarterly education sessions;
 - to help to increase regular attendance at these liturgies through the quality of music selected and learned;
 - to develop a plan in collaboration with the Liturgy Coordinator/Parish Staff to expand the choir membership;
 - to recruit, train, and sustain cantors for the parish liturgies;
 - (*You could add other goals that pertain to your parish.*).

3. The duties and responsibilities of the Director of Music Ministry are (*Here you might articulate specific duties & responsibilities, for example*):
 - to be responsible for all music associated with worship, religious education, youth ministry, social ministry, and evangelization in the parish;
 - to be responsible for coordinating and staffing all other liturgies with competent musicians;
 - to participate in planning the liturgies with the Parish Liturgy Committee and will be primarily responsible for the music selection of all regular and special celebrations (*Here you could list: Sunday eucharistic celebrations, Easter Vigil, Holy Week liturgies, holy days of obligation, Thanksgiving, Memorial Day, All Souls Day, First Communion, confirmation, baptism, reconciliation, anointing of the sick, wedding, funeral, etc.*);
 - to select and maintain musical instruments;

- to attain copyright permission for music;
 - to provide liturgical formation, music education, and practical preparation for cantors/leaders of song, choral, and instrumental groups;
 - to keep current concerning developments in liturgy and in music and to serve as a resource consultant for parish staff and groups regarding pastoral music;
 - *(You could adapt/change these according to parish need.)*
4. The Director of Music Ministry will be responsible to attend the following meetings:
- the parish staff meetings;
 - and the liturgical committee meetings.
5. The Director of Music Ministry will be responsible for participating in the parish budget process by:
- formulating an annual music budget;
 - submitting the annual music budget to the parish's Budget/Finance Committee;
 - and participating in the budget revision process.
6. The Director of Music Ministry will continue to develop their personal and professional skills by taking courses and/or participating in non-degree workshops and conferences that are generally related to their work, the mission of pastoral liturgy, and the future direction of the parish. *(Here the specifics of time off and budgeting for conferences could be addressed.)*
7. The performance of the Director of Music Ministry shall be evaluated [annually/bi-annually] by the pastor (or Director of Liturgy) and based on the statement of personal goals contained in this job description. This material will serve as the basis for any annual salary increase.

Resources helpful for hiring a Director of Music Ministry from the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM):

An NPM Workbook: Job Descriptions, Contracts, Salary. Revised Edition, by Rev. Virgil Funk © 1996. ISBN: 1-888360-01-1

Hiring a Director of Music © 1991. ISBN: 0-912405-83-X

The Director of Music Ministries in the Parish: Work and Remuneration © 2001. ISBN: 1-888360-03-8

Phone: (240) 247-3000 – E-mail: NPMSING@npm.org

APPENDIX IV

THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR MUSIC & PART-TIME OR SUBSTITUTE MUSICIANS

Some parishes are unable to employ a full-time Director of Music Ministry [DMM], but do have a regular part-time musician that is responsible for the music ministry of the parish. The salary levels in *Appendix I* should be used as a guide in determining the salary for those part-time persons responsible for the parish's music ministry, taking into account the number of hours expected to work and the musician's competency and experience.

Some parishes employ part-time musicians either in addition to a primary musician or in place of one. Substitutes are sometimes also needed from time to time. Part-time non-salaried musicians and substitute musicians should be paid based on the following :

Wedding Liturgies	
Preparation, including consultation with the couple, serving as the principal musician, including warm up if needed	\$75 - \$125
Additional rehearsals with musicians	\$25 - \$35
Wedding liturgy rehearsal (if the couple wants them in attendance)	\$25 - \$35
Consultation with couples and meeting with outside musicians if not acting as the principal musician	\$25 - \$75
Funeral Liturgies	
Serves as principal musician	\$75 - \$100
Various Other Fees	
Organist/Principal accompanying instrumentalist:	
• Rehearsal	\$35 - \$50
• One liturgy	\$50 - \$75
• Additional liturgies	\$50 - \$75
Cantor/Leader of song:	
• One liturgy	\$50 - \$75
• Additional liturgies	\$35 - \$50
Choir Director:	
• Rehearsal	\$50 - \$75
• One liturgy	\$50 - \$75
Choir Director & Accompanist (including warm-up)	\$100 - \$125

These guidelines are intended to articulate common fee schedules at the date of publication. Stipends should be commensurate with the education and experience of the musicians as well as the extent of their involvement with the liturgical event, e.g., number of meetings involved, preparation, etc.

Published: May 2003

APPENDIX V

STEPS FOR HIRING A PARISH DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY [DMM]

- Step 1:** **Form a Search Committee.** Experience has shown a committee of six to eight persons is most effective. The pastor or his representative should be a part of this committee as well as someone who is knowledgeable about music and liturgy.
- The committee will need to establish a time line for hiring a musician that is realistic and that is not rushed.
- Step 2:** **Evaluate the Parish Needs and Create a Job Description.** This is a wonderful opportunity to evaluate the needs of the parish and the current state of the music program.
- *Define the community.* Evaluate the present music program (i.e., who is involved, what criteria is used for music selection, what resources are used, how is the music program integrated in other programs, etc). Evaluate the musical instruments. Evaluate the facilities available to the music program.
 - *Draft a job description* that includes as much detail as possible. See *Appendix III* for a sample job description.
 - *Determine salary and benefits* once you have decided upon what the parish needs from the DMM.
- Step 3:** **Advertise the Position.** When writing an advertisement you should include: salary range, special features of the parish (i.e., unique features of the position attract better and more qualified candidates), types of instrument(s) available, and timetable.
- *Where to advertise?* A.) Local Worship Office/Diocesan newspaper; B.) Local American Guild of Organists (AGO) chapter; C.) Music Schools of Local Colleges and Universities; and D.) National Placement Services (i.e., the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, the American Guild of Organists, the National Catholic Reporter, America magazine, National Referral Service for Church Musicians, etc.)
 - Be sure to acknowledge each initial inquiry.
- Step 4:** **Evaluate the Applications.** It is important to look over resumes carefully. This is why having a musician or a liturgist on the Committee is important. Determine whether the candidate's degrees are related to liturgical music. Check whether the candidate's major instrument is of practical value to the parish music program. Contact the references the candidate gives. Review previous jobs, especially in regards to responsibilities and how long they were employed at each job.
- Step 5:** **Interview and Audition the Candidates.** Decide on how many candidates you wish to interview and then have the Chair of the Committee schedule the interviews. You may wish to do phone interviews (conference calls) first, especially if candidates live out of state and your budget is limited. Once you have decided upon the top 2-4 candidates, invite them to an interview and audition before the Search Committee.
- Step 6:** **Hire the best candidate for the position –OR- continue the search if necessary.**