

AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT REVIEW FOR CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE MUSICIANS

These guidelines for an annual employment review for musicians are intended to serve as a starting point for developing a review format that fits the local congregation. Individual practices in church/synagogue government and personnel supervision will determine elements of the review, as will denominational guidelines, if available.

An annual review will be only one of a year's worth of informal and formal evaluations, staff and committee meetings. Feedback is most useful when there are no surprises at the employment review. Ideally, the review time is predominantly positive. All evaluations should be in writing and signed by the musician and reviewer, with copies for the institution and the musician.

We cannot overstate the importance of the annual employment review. In fact, it provides essential information for the budgeting process. These guidelines cover the facts of the process and present sample questions in major categories of the musician's work:

- people skills and working relationships
- music and worship skills
- business and administrative skills

These are followed by a sample form which may be adapted for individual use.

Introduction

The AGO recommends an annual review:

- to foster good relationships among musicians, clergy and congregations
- as a communication tool
- as an opportunity to review goals and accomplishments
- to aid in short-term and long-term planning
- as a time to take stock, not only of people, but also of facilities

The Review Process

Reviews:

- assume the existence of a contract and job description.
- include a review of the job description to make sure it matches current responsibilities.
- recognize that music is an integral part of the overall ministry of the institution.
- assume a level of trust between the parties so both can be open and honest.
- are “two-way” with input from the person reviewing and the person being reviewed.
- address the areas that comprise the musician’s job: people skills/working relationship; music/worship skills; business/administrative skills.
- allow the person being reviewed the opportunity to share what s/he considers to be significant accomplishments of the past year.
- are timed to coincide with the end of the program year to allow for development of next year’s program.

Look at the previous year’s review. Have you met the goals you set last year?

SAMPLE QUESTIONS IN MAJOR CATEGORIES OF THE MUSICIAN’S WORK

People Skills/Working Relationships

Which areas do you feel are your strengths and which areas need improvement?

- Relationships with clergy and other staff; considering the size of the staff, separate questions may be required for each.
- Relationships with and supervision of other music staff, paid and volunteer.
- Planning for worship and other activities:
How frequently do you meet with others involved with planning?
Is it enough? Do you need more?
- Relationships with choirs:
Level of satisfaction, support?
Recruitment and response?
Ministry, including awareness of and response to personal situations affecting individuals in choirs?
- Relationships with congregation:
Level of satisfaction, support?
Providing opportunities for education and outreach?
How do you see your “musical fit” with the congregation?

What were your accomplishments in these areas during the past year?

What specific goals do you have for the coming year?

Music/Worship Skills

Which areas do you feel are your strengths and which areas need improvement?

- Your level of preparation and practice for rehearsals and services?
- The variety of music experiences that you provide?
- Your ability to adjust to the changing character of the staff or congregation?
- Your development of musical resources in the church?
- Your professional development?
Are you given enough time and monetary support to do your job properly?
- The leadership that you give in vocal and choral training?
- Your knowledge of hymnody and your ability to lead the congregation in hymn-singing?
- Your knowledge of the liturgy and worship traditions of this faith?

What were your accomplishments in these areas during the past year?

What specific goals do you have for the coming year?

Business/Administrative Skills

Which areas do you feel are your strengths and which areas need improvement?

- Your ability to plan, defend and work within a budget?
- Meeting deadlines for newsletters, worship bulletins, etc.?
- Your stewardship of the church's music and maintenance of the music library?
- Care and maintenance of instruments?
- Meeting contractual and licensing obligations?
- Hiring other musicians such as substitutes and instrumentalists?
- Planning concerts and other special programs with the attendant publicity?
- Necessary custodial work?

What were your accomplishments in these areas during the past year?

What specific goals do you have for the coming year?

03/01

**MODEL ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT REVIEW
FOR CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE MUSICIANS**

*The following form provides guidelines only.
Users are encouraged to adapt and re-format this form to serve their own needs.*

Name and Position Title _____ Date hired _____

Review period _____ Date of last review _____

The following items are to be completed by the musician:

1. Does your current job description/contract adequately match the work which you are required to do? If not, how should the job description be changed?
2. What have been your accomplishments and successes in the past year?
3. Are there any particular aspects of your work that you especially enjoy or find rewarding? If so, what are they?
4. Are there any particular aspects of your work that you do not especially like? If so, what are they? What changes would you like to see with regard to these concerns?
5. Is there any way in which the clergy-person/(appropriate supervisor) could be of better help to you in your work? If so, please describe.
6. Is there any way in which your fellow staff members and lay leadership could be of better help to you in your work? If so, please describe.
7. What goals would you like to set for yourself for the next year?
8. In general, how would you evaluate your performance over the past year? To what extent were last year's goals met?
9. Is there anything in particular which you would like to discuss with the clergy-person/reviewer? If so, please describe.

MUSICIAN _____

The following questions are to be completed by the clergy-person/reviewer:

1. Does the current job description/contract adequately describe the work expected of the musician? If not, how should the job description be changed?
2. In general, what is your evaluation of the musician's performance over the past year? To what extent were last year's goals met?
3. Has the work been done in a manner that facilitates good relationships on the part of co-workers? If not, what improvements should be made?
4. What goal(s) do you set for the musician for the next year?
5. Evaluate how well the musician interacts with choir members and members of the congregation.
6. If applicable, evaluate how well the musician supervises the work of other persons.
7. How could you be of better help to the musician?
8. Is there anything in particular which you would like to discuss with the musician? If so, please describe.

CLERGY-PERSON/REVIEWER _____

The musician and the clergy-person/reviewer are to meet and discuss the comments on the previous pages. After the conversation, each should respond to the following questions:

What goals have been set for the musician for the next year?

Has this evaluation process been beneficial to you? If not, how could it be improved?

MUSICIAN'S RESPONSE:

REVIEWER'S RESPONSE:

MUSICIAN'S SIGNATURE

REVIEWER'S SIGNATURE

DATE