



National Association of Pastoral Musicians

January 23, 2025

Press Release:

NPM Releases Updated Hiring Guides for Parish Musicians, Directors of Music

The National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM) has released an updated version of its resource, “Hiring a Director of Music: A Handbook and Guide,” first published in 1991 and later revised in 2006. The document is a guide for pastors (and equivalent clergy leaders) and search committees to the hiring of a Director of Music Ministries.

The most current revisions to the guidelines were spearheaded by the Director of Music Ministries (DMM) Forum, with additional editorial work by NPM Forum leadership and a small subgroup of clergy and pastoral musicians within North America. The genesis of the document’s revisions came from the shifts seen in music ministry positions as of late. According to DMM Forum chair Dr. Henry Bauer:

It’s been over ten years since any of NPM’s extensive employment resources have been updated. The Director of Music Ministries Forum leadership team saw an opportunity to update these documents to consider the many developments in music ministry leadership and in hiring practices that have taken place over the past decade and to make the documents more widely available through online publication. The team decided that this document should be revised first. The new edition takes into account how the role of a Director of Music Ministries has evolved, gives a pastor and a search committee the means to assess the qualifications of a prospective candidate, and includes new online resources since the previous document was last revised in 2006.

“Hiring a Director of Music: A Handbook and Guide” goes step by step through the hiring process, including information on forming a search committee; drafting a position description (including a just estimate of working hours and responsibilities); advertising the position; interviewing and auditioning candidates; and making the final selection for a Director of Music Ministries. An important purpose of this guide is to educate clergy and lay people on the many responsibilities that comprise a Director of Music Ministries position and the qualities of an effective Director of Music Ministries,



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so that they may select the best person for their particular position and also ask of that person a fair workload while providing them just compensation.

Professional advocacy for parish musicians has been – and continues to be – an important priority for the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. NPM’s Executive Director, Dr. Jennifer Kluge, emphasizes the need for such support in the field of pastoral ministry today:

Directors of Music Ministry are called to a vocation that is often enigmatic as so much work happens unseen by the assembly. What we see in a single liturgy is the result of many hours of planning and preparation. This guide is a critical step to assessing all of their responsibilities and ensuring a fair, just, and living wage across parishes, schools, dioceses, and regions. When followed, the concrete steps outlined in the guide enable any pastor and search committee to select the right candidate for the position. This edition of *The Hiring Guide* represents countless hours of research, writing, and revision. I am grateful to the writers of the original guide and those who have edited the current version. I pray that by making this guide publicly available, more liturgical ministers are recognized for their extraordinary work.

David Mathers, member of the DMM Forum, shared his excitement for the resource to be released to the sacred music community:

We are excited about this document because it details the entire process of hiring a Director of Music Ministries, including an evaluation the current music ministry’s needs, concrete tools for evaluating candidates, and a method for determining a fair workload for the holder of this position so crucial to the life of a parish or other ecclesial community. We are also happy that these updated hiring guides will be offered free of charge on the public pages of npm.org so parish hiring teams and pastors can access this valuable resource, whether they are NPM members or not.

Additionally, NPM will host a live Zoom webinar on Monday, February 24 at 3 pm ET/12 pm PT to explore the document further and answer any questions. This Zoom webinar will be free and open to the public. Registration for this webinar – and the hiring guide itself – can be found at NPM.org.

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Related links:

NPM Website: www.npm.org

Hiring a Director of Music Ministries: A Handbook and Guide (2025 Edition):

<https://npm.org/wp-content/uploads/NPM-Hiring-a-Director-of-Music-Ministries-A-Handbook-and-Guide-2025-Edition-.pdf>

Registration – Hiring Guide Webinar, February 24, 2025: <https://npm.site-ym.com/event/HiringGuideWebinar>