

# Guidelines for Job Descriptions

The following links will connect you with real job descriptions used by one or more of the 65 churches in the Austin district. The job descriptions available range from part-time (PT) staff with very specific responsibilities to full-time (FT) clergy positions. With 65 unique congregations, church staff positions vary in order to meet the needs of a given church or parish area. Every church may not need staff to accomplish all the tasks listed and some churches have need of a specific PT position that is not included on this list. Below are guidelines for using one of the job descriptions (or a part of one) provided.

Below are guidelines for using one of the job descriptions (or a part of one) provided. General Principles of Job Descriptions There are typically two common uses of job descriptions (JDs) in churches, in the hiring/recruiting process and in the review of performance. As church staffs increase, an examination and comparison of job descriptions clarifies and/or eliminates over-laps in responsibilities and reporting lines. If a church is led by a solo pastor, there is more than enough responsibility listed in Chap. Two, Art. IX, sec. 340 of The Book of Discipline, although some discussion within the PPR about a pastor's priorities within the mission area is necessary year to year. In those churches that have more staff than a solo pastor, job descriptions are extremely helpful and should be reviewed regularly. A job description should include a general description or scope of the position, basic qualifications, a list of responsibilities including reporting lines. Increasingly, churches are placing in their job descriptions a statement of mission for the position and a generic statement of servant leadership, meaning in essence "we know you have list of duties and a perhaps even a set number of hours you work, but we'd like you to be available to help where needed for the cause of Christ and the advance of His church."

Quite often, churches get carried away with their JDs and put in too much information.; a nine-page job description is too heavy an undertaking for a single person to handle, even if it does take nine pages to list the duties of an administrative assistant. Hire for an administrative assistant in church membership, for example, and then create the list of duties in consultation with the supervisor of that person as a separate task document. Examine your job description and ask: is this a job that a single person is capable of doing? Not every individual is equally versed in originality and organization; God has provided us each with special gifts, but none of us has all the gifts. When used as a part of a comprehensive performance review process, revisiting a JD is quite helpful, particularly if that JD has been built carefully on the competencies, knowledges, skills and attributes necessary for that position. Using the JD as a resource allows the Senior Pastor or supervisor to make relatively unbiased judgments as to whether a particular aspect or element of the job has been completed satisfactorily, or enough effort expended towards that end, thus eliminating or at least reducing, personal likes or dislikes. The SPR/PPR can use the JD for the same purpose of review, and even distribute parts or all of the JD to committees or members of the congregation for performance review by that person/ministry touched by the employee.

Part of the performance review process should include a future cast, the next period of review, as for example, the next year. What are the stretch goals for performance? Where would you like to see the employee grow and develop? What are the specific outcomes needed in the next year? And, perhaps most importantly, how will progress be measured? This process is best when it is dialogical, that is, a two-way conversation between committee and the staff person/employee. Increasingly, churches in the Austin District, as is true for UM churches in Southwest Texas Conference, will have to think (Re-think Church!) about JDs that encompass more than some traditional sets of duties within the walls of the church. The District Superintendent, as encouraged by the Bishop and the Cabinet, will be overseeing pastoral appointments to parish areas, not just churches. What kind of pastoral leadership is needed for this parish or mission area to meet the human, social and spiritual needs of the surrounding community, not just the church membership? And so, of course, similar questions can be raised for each staff member: how will the church staff minister not only to members of the church but engage the hearts and minds of those within a determined mission area. This may result in an entirely different skill set than is currently the norm in that church. For example, as we heard From Rachel Wright during the district meeting on May 17, some 600,000 people are projected to move to the Austin area in the next 10 years. Trends seem to indicate that between three and four percent of that mix already carry the name of Methodist in their faith journey. That is 24,000 people coming near the 65 churches that are in the four-county area within the footprint of the Austin District. Obviously now is the time to re-visit your job descriptions to be certain that your church council is thinking (Re-think Church!) about these additional Christians and others in your parish area.

The Austin District will offer some future training on the use and role of Job descriptions for effective ministry. None of these job descriptions are perfect, each one could be improved. If you have questions about any of these job descriptions, rather than contact a single church that might be identified, it is best to contact the district office 512-444-1983 or Mike Renquist, 512-663-9868, or [mrenquist@umcad.org](mailto:mrenquist@umcad.org).

## Some Resources:

[www.churchstaffing.com](http://www.churchstaffing.com)

[www.churchjobs.net](http://www.churchjobs.net)

[www.buildingchurchleaders.com](http://www.buildingchurchleaders.com)

Pastor Parish Relations, Abingdon/Cokesbury The Big Book of Job Descriptions for Ministry: Identifying Opportunities and Clarifying Expectations for Ministry , Paperback w/ CD ROM, Gilbert/Spear, Gospel Light Church Administration Handbook, Powers, B&H Job Descriptions and Duties For Church Members and Workers, Byrne, Xulon