



Placement Policies & Resources:

Substitutes

&

Job Vacancies

The Alamo Chapter of the American Guild of Organists provides assistance to its membership and the San Antonio community through its professional placement services. These services include: 1) maintaining a current substitute roster of organists available for hire on an interim or occasional basis (weekends, weekdays, or for special services such as weddings or funerals), as well as 2) the advertisement of vacant positions.

For more information, or to access either of these services, please contact the Placement Coordinator: Lena Gokelman at AlamoAGOPlacement@gmail.com.

SUBSTITUTE ROSTER

Substitute Availability

Access to the substitute roster for the chapter is provided as a free service to religious and educational institutions, organizations and individuals seeking the professional services of an organist. The substitute roster is accessible through the website of the Alamo Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Arrangements for a substitute are made directly between the party seeking service and the substitute. Occasionally, there are circumstances or seasons during the year when securing a substitute may prove more difficult (e.g., distance, worship time, holidays, etc.). Providing as much advance notice and information as possible is beneficial to the process.

The following should always be included in your communications:

- *Name of requesting institution, organization or individual*
- *Location of event*
- *Date and time of worship service/event (including warm-up time on the day of the worship service/event)*
- *Rehearsal date(s) and time(s)*
- *Type of professional service requested (e.g., organist, organist-pianist, organist-director, etc.)*
- *Description of duties*
- *Music for the service*
- *Worship/music schedule*
- *Information about the organ/piano and available practice time on the instrument(s)*
- *Fee, if known**
- *Name of contact person*
- *Contact phone number*
- *Contact email, if available*

*Though the Alamo Chapter cannot negotiate payment between parties, provide salary guidelines, or a fee schedule for events, the provision of fair compensation is a matter of economic justice. Factors to consider are: the skill level of the musician (e.g., experience, degrees or certifications acquired), preparation time (organ practice, rehearsals with other musicians), and travel (mileage to and from the event site for rehearsals and the event itself). Like many professions, skill development for the professional musician requires years of hard work and a hefty monetary investment. Personal preparation often comprises practice in addition to contracted rehearsal time. This may include learning new music or becoming familiar with a new organ. Lastly, consider the distance the musician must travel to and from the location for personal practice, rehearsal, or the actual service(s). Fees should always be discussed and agreed upon in advance between both parties. The AGO national website offers a wealth of information for both the musician and employing institution or party. These are accessible on the AGO National webpage:

<https://www.agohq.org/careers/ftccompliance-employee-vs-ind-contr/>

So that the chapter's substitute roster may remain effective, we welcome any feedback which can assist us in evaluating the experience between substitute and requesting institution/individual. Please contact the Placement Coordinator at AlamoAGOPlacement@gmail.com should you have any additional questions. To access the substitute roster, please go to: <https://www.alamoagosatx.org/jobs/>

Placement on the Substitute Roster

There are many benefits to participating as a substitute on the Alamo Chapter's official roster. Some include: experience, exposure, networking with local musicians, extra income, and even occasional opportunities for permanent job placement.

The opportunity to participate as a substitute on the Alamo Chapter's sub roster is a benefit of membership in the AGO. If not a current member of the AGO in good standing, then the applicant must apply for membership within (3) months.

Competent substitutes lend credibility to the service that the chapter provides. Therefore, the chapter must be able to make placement recommendations from its list with confidence.

In addition to a phone interview with the Placement Coordinator, participation as a substitute on the chapter's roster requires the applicant to possess at least **(1)** of the following:

- *AGO Guild certification (SPC, CHM, CAGO, AAGO, FAGO)*
- *A degree or artist diploma in organ performance*
- *An audition scheduled by the Placement Coordinator consisting of prepared hymns/service music and basic sight reading of hymnody*
- *Sponsorship/recommendation by at least **(1)** AGO board member (past or present) who has heard the individual play*
- *A recommendation from an organ instructor at an institution of higher education*

Substitutes must abide by the Code of Ethics and Code of Professional Standards of the AGO whether or not they are members at the time, and should exhibit professional standards expected in any other position, e.g. preparedness, respect and punctuality. To view these documents, go to <https://www.agohq.org/careers/codes-procedures/>. In addition, it is assumed and expected that those members who participate on the Alamo AGO Substitute Roster will return the phone calls/emails of a requesting institution/individual as promptly as possible.

Over the years, the chapter has received helpful feedback via follow-up evaluations with those who have utilized the chapter's placement services – both employing institution and substitute. The vast majority of comments received are positive. Should the chapter receive negative feedback about either party, however, the Placement Coordinator will contact the individual or institution. Feedback which warrants greater attention will be brought to the Executive Board for further discussion.

JOB VACANCIES

As a benefit of membership, the Alamo Chapter of the AGO publishes a monthly newsletter to its members – *The Tracker* – in which job vacancies are also advertised. Advertisement in *The Tracker* is provided as a free service to the San Antonio community and surrounding areas. The deadline for submissions to the newsletter is the 15th of each month. Submissions should be directed to the Placement Coordinator at: AlamoAGOPlacement@gmail.com

Providing much of the following information may prove helpful when advertising a vacant position:

- *Job title (e.g., organist, organist-director, choir director, etc.)*
- *Whether the position is full- or part-time*
- *When the position will become available (and, if applicable, when the search will close)*

- *Name of employer*
- *Location of employing institution*
- *Contact information of employing institution (address, phone, fax)*
- *Web address of employing institution, if available*
- *Day and time of worship service(s)*
- *Rehearsal day and times (including warm-up time on the day of the service)*
- *Brief list of responsibilities*
- *Salary range offered, if possible (refer to the AGO national website for helpful information: <https://www.agohq.org/careers/ftcompliance-employee-vs-ind-contr/>)*
- *Available instruments and worship resources (e.g., type of organ, grand piano, hymnal resources, etc.)*
- *Other information pertinent to the position (e.g., health benefits, vacation, continuing education, etc.)*
- *Contact person (with phone number & email)*

See our ***Job Advertisement Information & Form*** document for links to additional resources.

If there are updates to the position (or if it has been filled), the employing institution should inform the Placement Coordinator as soon as possible. Job advertisements appearing in *The Tracker* will run for one month and are renewable only by request of the employing institution.

Helpful resources available on the AGO national website: <https://www.agohq.org/> (see the “Careers” tab)

The AGO is not a union and, as such, cannot publish salary guidelines, model contracts, or model contract provisions. As a 501c3 non-profit entity, however, the AGO advocates for its members by providing a wealth of professional development resources to assist musicians and employing institutions in better understanding the role of music and responsibilities of the musician in the development of employment practices which are just and equitable for both parties. See: <https://www.agohq.org/careers/ftcompliance-employee-vs-ind-contr/>

Resource articles include:

- Understanding the difference between an Employee and Independent Contractor
- Employment Guidance (calculating weekly hour and tax planning)
- Career Advice (advice and advocacy for substitutes and p/t musicians, starting a career, etc.)
- Conflict Resolution
- Music in Seminaries (the role of music)
- Music Styles in Worship (contemporary worship music, Hispanic ministries, how music serves the congregation, etc.)
- Starting a Career (managing both career and self, job search links)
- *Coming soon:* understanding the elements necessary in job agreements between musician and employer

See also: <https://www.agohq.org/careers/career-development/>

- Considerations in Calculating the Weekly Hours of an Organist or Director of Music at a Religious Institution
- Ideas for Organists Seeking Employment in Religious Institutions
- Annual Employment Review Procedures & Form
- Mentor Program
- Denominational Music Associations

Of note is the newly published resource, “Employing Musicians in Religious Institutions: A Handbook for Committees and Candidates.” (October 2020) It is available as a free download:

https://www.agohq.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/AGO_Employment_Handbook_2ndPrinting_FNL_online.pdf