
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPENSATION FOR MUSICIANS

FROM THE OFFICE OF WORSHIP, DIOCESE OF DALLAS

In an effort to provide just compensation (stipends) for musicians, taking into consideration both experience and time of preparation for a liturgical event, the following guidelines are suggested for consideration. These guidelines are intended *for substitute and paid-for-service musicians*. These guidelines are the result of consultation with personnel services of three dioceses, five (arch) diocesan worship offices, and eight music directors who serve large, multicultural parish assemblies, and the Dallas Chapter of the National Pastoral Musicians. All stipends would depend strongly on the skill level and experience of the musician. In addition, consideration could be made for distance traveled, complexity of music, and length of the liturgy. Consistency in stipends is a must.

To accompany, conduct, or cantor one liturgy (presumes 15-25 minute warm up/rehearsal, cues, prelude/postlude time at instrument)	\$100-150
For each additional liturgy without extra rehearsal	\$75-\$100
To engage in two of the above (example: accompany and conduct, cantor and conduct, accompany and cantor) for one liturgy	\$140-\$200
<i>Note that the above is a MODEL that is not recommended. It is only to be used if there is no other alternative.</i>	

Rehearsal: to accompany a rehearsal or to conduct a rehearsal	\$35-\$50 per hour
Rehearsal: to accompany AND conduct a rehearsal	\$70-\$100 per hour

Funerals may be compensated as the categories listed above. Funeral directors may benefit from reading these guidelines, especially regarding compensation that is collected in advance and remitted to the parish after the funeral for the services of the musicians.

Wedding compensation is suggested for one musician at the wedding liturgy (Mass or service)

\$150-\$350

Please note that compensation for a wedding liturgy includes rehearsal (15-20 minutes only) before the wedding with other musicians. If rehearsal is more than an hour before the official starting time of the wedding, or on a different day, then the hourly rate of \$35-\$50 per hour is suggested. It is presumed that cantors and accompanists who are not at their regular place of ministry will honor the policies of the parish in which they are professionally serving at a wedding. Consideration for music selection, appropriate attire, and liturgical practices must be present.

A further consideration regarding wedding musicians is a recommendation that the cantor (psalmist presumed here) *is a regular cantor at the parish*. The parish cantor supports the

assembly in their song, especially because s/he is familiar with the sound system and has the necessary invitational skill for leading the “wedding assembly” (often from many other places, parishes, and religions) in prayer. This is a hospitality consideration as well as a music ministry issue. Couples to be married often suggest friends or family as possible music ministers (i.e. soloists); the music director should be supported in his/her decision to accept—or not to accept—musicians who may be unfamiliar with a Catholic wedding Mass or service, and who are typically unfamiliar with the church where the wedding occurs.

Parishes that lack the financial resources to honor these recommendations should move in the direction of *budgeting for* and *meeting* just compensation standards for the professional services that are expected at liturgical events. A candid discussion between the pastor and the music leaders (or the director of music) will help to determine parish standards and procedures.

An Additional Consideration

The suggested guidelines may serve to support discussion and provide some background for determining salary scale for (paid, regular parish) music staff. Further guidelines for “regular” staff are available at <http://www.agohq.org/profession/indexsalary.html> (from the American Guild of Organists [AGO]) and also at <http://www.npm.org/Sections/DMMD/salaryguidelines.htm> (from the National Pastoral Musicians [NPM]). Both organizations have thoroughly researched U.S. congregations before making determination regarding salaries. NPM is an organization that includes pastors, music directors, ensemble members, composers, instrumentalists (handbell, guitar, piano, organ for example), choir directors, and supports both volunteers and professionals in the Catholic parish music ministry. The AGO is non-denominational.