**PLUS 2: Your Position**

Congregational consultant Susan Beaumont says that a position description “holds a set of shared expectations and is a container for dialogue.”

You deserve a clear understanding of what your job is about – its overall purpose and specific responsibilities. You and your supervisor should be in sync about your general goals and priorities. Spend some intentional time with your position description in PLUS 2. (Don’t have a current position description? Let this be an opportunity to start the process of creating or updating it.)

This unit deals with job purpose, accountability, responsibilities, and hours, but does not directly cover compensation. The UUA offers guidance on salaries and other benefits on its [Fair Compensation](http://www.uua.org/careers/compensation/fair) pages.

**Read**

* In [*From Starting to Parting*](http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/recc/starting_to_parting.pdf)*,* read the following sections:
  + Skim the Introduction section, from the beginning through “Best Practices.”
  + “Creating and Modifying the Job Description” (Pages 15 to 18, as of this writing. This document will be modified over time.)
    - If you are a religious educator, read the RE Staffing Levels document, linked within the Creating and Modifying section.
    - Musicians, read the portions of the music-related documents referred to in this section (links provided) that deal with setting hours.
    - If you are neither a religious educator nor a musician, look at both the RE and music documents and think about how you might adapt one of them for your situation.

*Note: All of these hours guidelines are just that – guidelines. Your mileage may vary.*

* + If you are an interim, acting, or consulting professional (or have a similar “qualifier,”, look at the Interim or Acting section, under Special Situations (currently on page 12).
* Your job description – most recent version, if there is one. If not, think about what you think it should say as you journal!

**For Your Journal**

*Your journal is just for you. You can type it. You can scribble it. You can use complete sentences or quick phrases. Responses need not be lengthy. You can type or write directly onto this document or in a spiral notebook. Writing something down for each question forces you to clarify your thoughts, helps you remember your ideas, and gives you something to return to later.*

1. Does your church have a mission statement? Does your website include a “tag line” (catchy phrase that expresses the point or flavor of your congregation)? Intuitively, how do you see your work supporting this mission or point?
2. What is the general purpose of your role? Is it articulated reasonably well in the position description?
3. Do you think that your title is appropriate? For instance, are you a Coordinator or a Director, and does that feel like the right word, relative to your scope and authority? If you are Acting, Interim, or Consulting, is it clear to you (and others) what that means? Music Director or Choir Director – is your title the right fit for your responsibilities? If you are “Lifespan,” are you serving the lifespan? Is it clear what areas of church life a Director of Membership or Congregational Life includes?
4. Who is your supervisor? Is this accountability listed in the job description? How are you in relationship with your supervisor? (Do you meet regularly? How are those conversations structured? If not, how do you connect on matters of shared concern?)
5. Is there a performance review system in place in your congregation? Aside from the responsibilities outlined in your job description, have particular goals been set and/or priorities been named for the year or for the immediate future?
6. Is your position exempt or non-exempt? This is an important and often confusing distinction. Churches have gotten in trouble for getting it wrong. If you aren’t sure (or aren’t sure if it’s right), be sure to talk to your supervisor and find out how to get it clarified.
7. Your hours and responsibilities: Okay, it’s almost a given that there’s more to be done than you have time to do. Looking at your position description (or the best concept of your job that you have), what are the true priorities? What gets in the way of focusing your time where it most needs to be focused? Are your hours generally realistic, relative to the scope of your responsibilities?
8. Which responsibilities do you gravitate to? (Is it because they are most important or because you most enjoy them?) Which pieces of your job would you be glad to let go of –because you aren’t fond of them, aren’t good at them, or don’t think they should be your job?
9. Is an expectation of professional development and/or connection with your professional organization colleagues built into your job description? If so, do you have a budget to support such activities?

**Connect**

* With Susan Beaumont’s words in mind (see top), have a conversation with your supervisor about any of your journaling responses above. Consider which questions most intrigued you or which ones made you uncomfortable. What’s clear to you and what isn’t? Is it mostly all good right now or are there red flags? If you have no written job description, talking with your supervisor about creating one is a priority.

**Journal Again**

* Make notes about the conversation with your supervisor. How did it go? Are there new understandings? Next steps? Points of tension?

The PLUS Program will evolve over time, with units added, removed, and modified in response to user feedback, changing needs, and new information. Please take a minute to tell us what you think of any PLUS unit, to share your general experience with the PLUS program, or to ask to be notified when the next unit is available: [PLUS Feedback Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PLUSprogramfeedback).