

## **5 Tips for hiring a church secretary**

### ***1. Church Secretary job description***

A common mistake churches make is hiring employees without a written job description. We often think if we hire a secretary, that they will know what to do. That is a misconception that can lead to all kinds of issues. Invest the time in thinking through what the needs of the job are, determining how long it takes to perform those duties, and writing specific details of the job. Add details that clarify questions that a candidate might have. For instance, share the salary range, reporting relationships, goals of the job, and key responsibilities. The more detail you can provide, the easier it will be for the new hire to acclimate and begin job duties.

### ***2. Determine church secretary salary***

I get asked this question all the time. How much should we pay our church secretary? Don't throw a number out there without doing your due diligence to determine fair compensation for the position. The personnel committee or HR council should create salary ranges that are based on benchmark salary data for like positions. Determine salary ranges by utilizing available church compensation information and customize it for your church. Be cautious with paying at the top of the pay range. Standard practice is never to hire an employee above the mid-point of the range. The reason is, you want the employee to be able to increase their pay and have something to shoot for. Let them know what the range is and show them that there is room to grow in their job. This will motivate them to do a good job.

### ***3. Create church secretary interview questions***

Church secretaries are often hired from within the church. The great thing about that is this person will have an intimate understanding of the church, its mission, and how it operates. The challenge of hiring someone from within the ministry is familiarity and allowing that relationship to influence the hiring decision. All church hires should go through a specific hiring process, which includes a formal interview. Interview questions should be specific to the role and discern a candidate's intentions, commitment, and skills to perform job duties. Churches often make the mistake of hiring familiar people only to learn the hard way that their work ethic and job skills are lacking. Avoid these difficult issues by taking the time to do a formal interview. It is much easier not to hire the wrong person than it is to have to fire an employee who was someone you knew and thought could do the job.

### ***4. Church secretary training***

Every job needs training. Church secretaries benefit from training that can improve their computer, technology, and interactive skills. For instance, if your church uses specialized church management software, the secretary would benefit from specific training on that software. The secretary is often the point person for communication with volunteers, staff, or members. You can help her/him succeed by providing access to classes that teach communication, negotiation, or conflict resolution skills.

### ***5. Church secretary burnout***

Churches have very real issues with job burnout. There are many causes of burnout, but some common causes are:

- An employee's inability to know how or when to say no.
- The inability to set reasonable limits.
- Being a people pleaser for unrealistic expectations.
- Lack of clarity of job responsibilities or constantly changing job expectations.

- Lack of control over decisions that impact a job, specifically schedule, workload, or necessary resources to fulfill job responsibilities.
- Dysfunctional work environments do happen in churches and are caused by an office bully, coworkers undermining one's work, or a boss that micromanages daily tasks.

Protect your employees from job burnout by helping them with work-life balance and insisting they take necessary breaks. Use the personnel committee to help create paid time off benefits and requirements for using those benefits. For instance, if you have vacation benefits that accrue, make it a requirement for employees to use all vacation time by the end of the year instead of allowing vacation hours to roll into the next year.

Provide an outlet for employees to discuss internal matters that may weigh on them. Assign a pastor or leadership person to keep tabs on employees to ensure they are processing the job appropriately and not allowing themselves to burn the candle on both ends. Job commitment goes a long way, but there is a fine line between commitment and burnout. Help employees understand the difference.

Church secretaries can truly make the difference between a well-functioning church and one that is perceived as disorganized. Take the time to think through the role of a church secretary, put them through a structured interview process, and train them so they have the necessary skills to help your church fulfill its mission.