

**Summary of Survey Results Regarding Other Municipalities Bilingual Practices with a
Focus on Pay Practices**

July 2019

Department of Employee Relations

A. PARAMETERS

1. **Municipalities Surveyed.** Survey was sent to members of The International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IMPA-HR) and the following cities either provided a response or their policies are publicly available.
 1. Austin, TX
 2. Casselberry, FL
 3. Chandler, AZ
 4. Cincinnati, OH (university)
 5. College Station, TX
 6. Denver, CO
 7. Eastern Municipal Water District, CA
 8. Fort Worth, TX
 9. Kentwood, MI
 10. Little Rock, AR
 11. Minneapolis, MN
 12. Oakland, CA
 13. Salt Lake City, UT (no bilingual pay practices)
 14. San Mateo County, CA
 15. Santa Cruz County, CA
 16. Waco, TX
 17. Washington County, OR
 18. Yakima County, WA

2. **Milwaukee.** DER also contacted Milwaukee County and Milwaukee Public Schools. Neither pay employees additional money for translation and interpretation.

The rest of the information in this summary relates to the 17 municipalities that have a bilingual pay policy or practice.

B. ELIGIBILITY

1. **Position v. Employee.** In the majority of the policies, the position, not the employee, receives bilingual pay.

2. **Certification and Testing.** Only one municipality requires a language certification from a third-party, license or education to be eligible for bilingual pay. The rest of the municipalities administer (or contract with a vendor to administer) a proficiency test before the employee is eligible for bilingual pay. Most require proficiency in verbal or written, but not both. A few require only a written test, only a verbal test, or both tests.
3. **Management Eligibility.** Directors, managers, and supervisors are not eligible for pay in the majority of the municipalities.
4. **Discontinuation.** Specific policy provisions vary greatly, but they usually have a statement about bilingual pay being discontinued in instances if the employee is reassigned to a different position; the functions of the position no longer meet the requirements; employee voluntarily withdraws from the program; employee's usage of bilingual skills no longer satisfies guidelines or is no longer recommended by the Department Director or authorized by HR.
5. **Criteria.** All but one policy include some criteria in determining if the position is eligible for pay. They typically require that the employee is frequently using bilingual skills with the public. When there is a percentage of time that will be spent speaking another language, it is almost always 20%.
 - a. When language service supports the department's service delivery model; and when language service is for public facing positions (and in a classified service); and when language service meets the Public Good threshold: legitimate and defensible reason for compensating for language; and successfully deemed proficient by the City's language certification vendor; and have department head approval.
 - b. Public contact with job duties involving regular and frequent use of bilingual skills; bilingual skills are necessary for service to the community and essential to successful performance of the functions of the Department; bilingual skills are an essential element of the job duties; positions are in a setting where there is a demonstrated public need.
 - c. Job duties require the use of non-English language skills on a regular basis and 50% of its job duties require working with the public; the position must have direct public contact on a regular basis with residents or customers who do not speak English.
 - d. A second language is critical to the day to day operations of the unit; or the need of the position to use a second language on the job 20% or more; or the position carries a caseload of 50% or more non-English speaking clients. Supervisory positions are eligible for bilingual salary differential only if: the position requires the use of a second language for conferences with clients who are dissatisfied with the decisions rendered by employees; or the position requires the use of a second language 20% or more to interact with clients.

- e. The duties of the position AND The percentage of time the skill is used (25% or greater) AND The responsibility of the position in relationship to other designated positions
- f. The employee's supervisor has determined that the employee's position requires that the employee use bilingual skills regularly to perform their work; and the classification specification for the employee's classification does not require bilingual skills for all incumbents of that classification
- g. Bilingual pay is for positions that require a substantial amount of bilingual translation as an essential duty of the position. An essential duty is defined as a core function of a position that forms the basis for establishing the position. It is not available for positions that may use bilingual skills on an incidental or occasional basis.
- h. In order to be eligible for a second language differential, the Department must determine that the position requires regular, on-going use of second language skills to assist in the performance of the essential job functions. A guideline of at least 20% of be used when evaluating regular and on-going use of the second language skills.
- i. To be eligible for consideration, employees must be in a position in which they use their bilingual skills in the normal course and scope of their employment with the City.
- j. Position that serves the public in which there is a reasonable likelihood of ongoing interaction with customers who speak another language other than English
- k. Determined by department. Customer-facing. Must be a significant portion of their time.
- l. Based on job duties, operational needs, and percentage goal.

C. PAY

- 6. **Fixed Rate.** The majority of policies have a fixed rate of pay, but some vary by position and tier of language skills.
- 7. **Interpretation vs. Translation.** The majority of policies do not have a pay distinction between interpretation and translation. When there is a distinction, it is typically a base rate for interpretation and then an additional rate for translation. Example: Bilingual pay is \$25 per month for conversational proficiency in the language and an additional \$25 per month may be paid for written proficiency in the language.
- 8. **Rate of Pay.** Rates of pay vary ranging from \$58 per week down to \$15 per week.
 - a. Certified full-time employees who have passed the assessment are eligible to receive a differential of fifty-eight dollars (\$58.00) per week.
 - b. About \$1800 per year

- c. Tiers by level of certification: \$1,200 annually or \$600 annually
- d. Bilingual pay is \$25 per month for conversational proficiency in the language and an additional \$25 per month may be paid for written proficiency in the language.
- e. Eligible full-time regular employees will receive \$75.00 of additional pay each month, paid bi-weekly. Eligible part-time regular employees will receive \$37.50 of additional pay each month, paid bi-weekly.
- f. Per month: Oral Language Skills \$25.00; Written Language Skills \$35.00; Oral and Written Language Skills \$60.00. In addition to the above, employees who are proficient in sign language may be compensated at a rate of \$35.00 per month.
- g. Fifty dollars (\$50) per pay period
- h. Non-exempt employees will be compensated at the rate of \$0.60 per hour when language is both assigned and used. Exempt employees will be compensated at the rate of \$24.00 per week when language is both assigned and used.
- i. Compensation shall be based on a flat rate of \$30 per pay period, pro-rated for any leave without pay status during the pay period.

D. HIRING

- 9. **Diversity and Recruitment.** When asked if bilingual pay diversified the workforce or if bilingual pay is a useful recruiting tool, no one responded affirmatively. Most did not respond to this question and the ones who did indicated that it has had no effect on either diversity or recruiting.