



Department of Employee Relations

July 22, 2019

Tom Barrett
Mayor

Maria Monteagudo
Director

Renee Joos
Employee Benefits Director

Nicole Fleck
Labor Negotiator

MEMORANDUM

TO : Finance and Personnel Committee Members

FROM : Maria Monteagudo, Employee Relations Director

RE : Bilingual Practices Survey

On July 10th DER was asked to research bilingual employment and pay practices in municipalities across the nation. Approximately 72 public sector employers members of the International Public Management Association- HR (IPMA-HR) were surveyed. Additional information was sought from MRA, the Milwaukee Public Schools and Milwaukee County.

The survey questions were designed to identify actual policies relative to pay, the methods or tools used to measure proficiency, the requirements to be met to be eligible to receive and retain the bilingual pay, and the impact of the policy on the employer's ability to attract and retain a diverse workforce. The questions included as part of the survey are presented below.

1. Please describe how you satisfy the need for services to be provided in multiple languages?
2. Are certain positions/classifications designated as bilingual? If so, which ones?
3. Are the bilingual designated positions compensated at the same level as their non-bilingual counterparts? If no, what is the difference?
4. For positions that are not designated as bilingual, do you have a bilingual pay policy that allows for a salary adjustment or incentive when an employee is utilizing language skills to facilitate communication with a customer or client? What is the differential? How do you track the amount of time the bilingual skills are being used?
5. Do you administer a proficiency test before pay is given for those non-bilingual positions? Does the policy require proficiency in both interpretation (verbal) and translation (written)?
6. Do you require any language license, certification, or education to be eligible for the pay? If, so please describe the requirements.
7. Is there a pay distinction between interpretation and translation?
8. Is the bilingual pay a fixed amount or does it vary by position or level of certification?
9. How do you determine which positions must require the utilization of a second language in order to receive bilingual pay? (e.g. 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.)
10. Are department directors, managers, and supervisors eligible for bilingual pay?
11. Under what circumstances is the bilingual pay discontinued? (e.g. the functions of the position no longer meet the requirements, employee's usage of bilingual skills no longer satisfies guidelines)
12. How has bilingual pay helped as a recruiting tool? Has it diversified your workforce?

A summary of the responses received so far is attached for your information. We will continue to analyze the responses and make recommendations for changes as necessary later this year.