



Town of Bladensburg

Administrative Directive

Directive Number: 26-02

Subject: Bilingual Pay for Town Employees

Effective Date: April 1, 2026

Authorized By: Town Administrator

Purpose

The Town of Bladensburg recognizes that fluency in a second language or signing is of great benefit in serving the needs of the community. The purpose of this Administrative Directive is to establish a standardized policy for the compensation of employees who possess verified bilingual language skills that assist the Town in effectively delivering services to residents, visitors, and community members who have limited English proficiency.

Policy

It is the policy of the Town to recognize the operational value of bilingual communication and signing by Town employees. Employees who demonstrate verified proficiency in a language other than English and who utilize those skills in the performance of their official duties may be eligible to receive bilingual pay in accordance with this directive.

Bilingual pay is intended to enhance the Town's ability to communicate with the public, improve service delivery, and support effective response during routine operations and emergency situations.

Employees who demonstrate basic or advanced skills as defined below, and where a position is determined to require the regular use of signing or foreign language skills, will be afforded an opportunity to qualify for multilingual pay differential.

Basic Skills: Basic skills are defined as those skills primarily required for signing or oral communications and comprehension such as those used in conversation with clients and community members.

Advanced Multilingual Skills: Advanced skills are defined as those skills required for written communication and comprehension in a second language, in addition to skills in oral communication and comprehension.

Certification: Prior to becoming eligible for the pay differential, the Employee must successfully pass a language certification examination required by the Town and

Administered through Human Resources. Language proficiency shall be verified through a process approved by the Town and may include formal language proficiency testing, certification through a recognized language assessment program, and demonstrated proficiency verified by a qualified evaluator. The evaluation shall confirm the employee's ability to effectively communicate in both English and the designated language in situations commonly encountered during operations.

Testing will consist of a performance examination for those employees who claim basic multilingual skills. A written examination assessing comprehension/translation skills will also be administered for those Employees claiming advanced skills.

Eligibility

Employees may be eligible for bilingual pay if they meet the following criteria:

1. The employee demonstrates proficiency in a language other than English as determined by an assessment method approved by the Town.
2. The employee's position or job duties reasonably require or benefit from the use of bilingual communication skills.
3. The employee receives written authorization from the Town Administrator or designee confirming eligibility for bilingual pay.

Verification of Proficiency

Language proficiency must be verified through a Town-approved assessment process, which may include testing, certification, or demonstrated competency as determined by Human Resources or a designated evaluating authority.

Compensation

Employees approved for bilingual pay shall receive compensation in accordance with the Town's compensation plan or as otherwise approved by the Town Administrator. The amount and structure of the bilingual pay may be modified by the Town from time to time based on operational needs and budget considerations.

Multilingual pay is available *only* from the time the employee is certified by passing the language proficiency test. Compensation is determined by the Employee's certified language skill level. Compensation is paid for all hours actually worked during the pay period and is not increased during overtime hours worked.

The compensation may be structured as:

Basic Skills- \$1.00 per hour for all hours actually worked during the pay period. This does not increase during periods of overtime

Advanced Multilingual Skills- \$1.50 per hour for all hours actually worked during the pay period. This does not increase during periods of overtime

Utilization of Bilingual Skills

Employees receiving bilingual pay may be called upon and expected to use their language skills in the performance of their duties, including but not limited to:

- Communication with residents or visitors during calls for service
- Assistance during public service and other interactions
- Translation of routine documents or information
- Support during emergencies or critical incidents

Bilingual duties shall not replace professional translation services when such services are required.

Review and Revocation

Bilingual pay eligibility may be reviewed periodically to ensure the continued operational need for the language skill and the employee's continued proficiency. The Town reserves the right to discontinue bilingual pay if:

- The operational need no longer exists,
- The employee changes positions where bilingual skills are not required, or
- The employee no longer demonstrates the required proficiency.

Administration

The Town Administrator or designee shall be responsible for implementing and administering this policy.

Authority

This directive is issued under the administrative authority of the Town Administrator and may be amended as necessary to meet operational or fiscal needs.

Vendor

Language Testing International/The American Council on Teaching of Foreign Language Testing Office has been identified as the vendor who will administer the oral and writing test for the evaluation of language proficiency.

The Center for American Sign Language Literacy/Gallaudet University or Language Testing International have been identified as the vendor who will administer the sign language proficiency evaluation.

Process

The department head must complete Attachment 1 (Multilingual Certification Form) designating the employee and position eligible for multilingual pay. Employees in positions eligible to receive multilingual pay must make a passing score in the testing process established to measure proficiency in the foreign language.

Arrangements to take the language certification test will be coordinated through the

Human Resources Department. The Town will assume the cost for any employee's language certification test.

Employees who successfully complete the oral and/or written examination will be required to use their multi-language skill on the job and to assist their department in accomplishing its mission. In addition, certified employees agree to use their multilingual skills, although it is not part of their job description.

Employees who do not pass the required certification test, will be eligible to take the test again in six months.

Acquiring Language Skills

Employees may acquire language skills through any source. Employees taking language courses through area educational institutions may apply for tuition reimbursement subject to the Tuition Reimbursement policy. In all cases, employees must pass the Town language certification test *to* be eligible for multilingual pay.

Compensation

Multilingual pay is available *only* from the time the employee is certified by passing the language proficiency test. Compensation is determined by the Employee's certified language skill level; Compensation is paid for all hours actually worked during the pay period. Employees certified at the basic *skill* level will receive \$.75 per hour for all hours actually worked. Employees certified at the advanced skill level will receive \$1.25 per hour for *all* hours actually worked.