

BILINGUAL PAY POLICY

Effective XX/XX/2022 (tbd upon approval)

Williamson County recognizes that employees with proficiency in more than one language improves the quality of service we can give our citizens. Full-time regular employees are eligible to receive bilingual pay, subject to the following provisions. For the purpose of this policy, English is considered to be the primary language, and Spanish only will be considered as the second language.

Department Responsibility

Departments are responsible for identifying the need to provide services in a second language; coordinating with Human Resources for testing; and coordinating with Payroll to process, once approved. After the initial set up in FY22 and FY23, departments will need to enter bilingual pay requests into PowerPlan for FY24, using the same process for annual stipend approval by the Budget Office.

Human Resources Responsibility

Human Resources will assist departments in recruiting bilingual candidates and updating job descriptions. Once a department recommends an employee for a bilingual stipend, Human Resources will review, and if the stipend request is approved, set up proficiency tests. As needed, a random sample of all positions and incumbents may be screened to ensure the continued need for additional language skills, and that employees remain proficient in these skills.

Position Criteria

The position must be in a work setting with a demonstrated flow of citizens, phone calls, or correspondence where bilingual skills are regularly needed to meet the needs of the public, examples of need include direct public contact position, facility setting dealing with patients or inmates, or a position needed to perform interpretation, translation or specialized activities for the department and the public. Those departments who rarely need bilingual skills will continue to use language lines, interpreters, non-designated employees, and shared departmental resources. Non – designated employees that are known to possess bilingual skills but who are not receiving bilingual pay will not normally be called upon to use their skill, except when circumstances prevent the use of a designated bilingual employee. If a non-designated employee is frequently called upon to provide bilingual service, the department leadership will consider requesting an additional bilingual stipend for the next fiscal year.

Testing

The basic stipend will require a speaking and listening test (oral) and the advanced stipend will require an additional written assessment. Both testing avenues will be administered virtually by ALTA Language Service Inc. Testing results must be attached to the PAS submitted for both the basic and advanced stipend. A description of the bilingual duties to be performed in sufficient detail to indicate a specific bilingual skill, purpose and frequency of use must be included in the notes in the PAS for a basic and an advanced stipend, as well as the job description must be updated. Please note: Taking a proficiency test is compensable time. The scoring will be pass/fail, and that score will remain in place for the duration of the stipend. An employee who fails a bilingual examination must wait a period of six months before repeating the test and the department will need to request the retest. To start the testing process for an employee, please contact your Departments HR Generalist.

Compensation

Bilingual stipend pay is at the rate specified in the Budget Order and is effective the first day of the new payroll period following the approval of the payroll action sheet. Retroactive bilingual pay will not be authorized, and approval is pending budget availability. The bilingual stipend will cease when the employee is transferred, promoted, or demoted to a position that is not designated as a bilingual position, the department leadership has determined that the position should no longer be designated as a bilingual position, or the last day worked for Williamson County upon separation.

Notice

The County reserves the right to amend, change or delete any of its personnel policies and benefits plans at any time, with or without prior notice. Furthermore, this policy does not grant a right or benefit to any employee, either expressed or implied, that in any way alters the “at will” basis of employment that is intended.