



Administrative Policy

Bilingual Pay Policy for Municipal Employees

A.P. No.

A.P 3-9

Effective Date:

Upon Approval

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. It is the policy of the City of Houston ("City") to recruit and retain qualified candidates and employees with bilingual ability in order to better serve the needs of its diverse community.
- 1.2. It is not the City's policy to pay bilingual pay differential to every municipal employee who has bilingual ability.

2. POLICY PURPOSE

- 2.1. To provide bilingual pay for municipal employees whose position responsibilities require a demonstrated knowledge and ability to communicate in a language other than English.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This policy applied to municipal employees.
- 3.2. Classified employees covered by Chapter 143 of the Texas Local Government Code may be separately eligible for bilingual pay in accordance with applicable labor agreements or pursuant to City Ordinances No. 91-609 and No. 92-1486.

4. POLICY DETAILS

- 4.1. Absent a recognized labor agreement, the Human Resource (HR) Director shall establish and periodically review compensation paid to an employee for bilingual pay differential.
- 4.2. Each of the following criteria must be met for an employee to be eligible to receive bilingual pay differential:
- 4.2.1. The individual employee's responsibilities shall, as evidenced by the duties specified on the job positing, their employee performance plan, and/or employee performance evaluation and/or job posting, be beneficial in the performance of the position's regular duties and require the fluent (verbal and/or written) use of a language other than English on a continuing and frequent basis to meet the public service responsibility of the department.
- 4.2.2. The individual employee must possess a demonstrated ability to communicate verbally and/or in writing, in a language other than English, unless the department complies with section 4.6.
- 4.3. Any language, including American Sign Language, is eligible if it is deemed necessary to perform the regular functions of the job on a continuing and frequent basis.
- 4.4. All employees who meet the eligibility criteria shall pass bilingual screening and/or testing prior to the HR Director or their designee approves bilingual pay differential.
- 4.5. Any employee, who the department director requests to receive bilingual pay differential, shall receive notice of submission, as well as notice of approval or denial of bilingual pay differential.
- 4.6. An employee who was approved for bilingual pay differential on or after July 1, 2024 are required to

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pass bilingual screening and/or testing to continue to be eligible to receive bilingual pay differential.

- 4.7. Employees who do not pass the bilingual pay differential screening and/or testing shall have their bilingual pay differential stop on the 1st day of the next available pay period after the employee has been notified.
- 4.8. If an employee changes positions, the need for bilingual pay shall be reassessed by the Department for the new position; if found the new position requires bilingual, a bilingual pay a request form shall be submitted for the new position. And may be required to pass the bilingual screening and/or testing at the discretion of the HR Director or their designee.
- 4.9. Periodically the HR Director shall administer bilingual screening and/or testing to a sample of current recipients based on available funding.
- 4.10. With consultation and approval from the HR Director or designee, Department Directors may develop their own departmental testing procedures at a frequency that meets the needs of their organization; however, all such testing shall be conducted at the department's own expense.
- 4.11. All bilingual screening and/or testing results shall be maintained by the Human Resources Department, regardless of whether a department develops its own internal procedure to conduct such testing.
- 4.12. If an employee receiving bilingual pay is reassigned to a position that does not require bilingual ability, the bilingual pay shall be discontinued on the date of reassignment.
- 4.13. Bilingual pay shall be discontinued if the functions of the position no longer require bilingual ability.
- 4.14. Each department shall re-evaluate its bilingual needs at least annually.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1. Department Directors or their designee is responsible for:
 - 5.1.1. Determining the positions and affected employees in their department who are eligible to receive bilingual pay based on all criteria in Section 4.1.
 - 5.1.2. Notifying an employee of the submission of the department director's request for the employee to receive bilingual pay; and
 - 5.1.3. Notifying an employee of the approval or denial of bilingual pay differential.
- 5.2. The Human Resources Department (HR) or their designee is responsible for:
 - 5.2.1. Bilingual screening and/or testing employees to ensure they meet the criteria set forth in Section 4.1;
 - 5.2.2. Periodically administer bilingual screening and/or testing to a sample of current recipients based on available funding; and
 - 5.2.3. Developing any additional procedures and/or forms to administer this policy

6. PROCEDURES

- 6.1. The following procedures shall be used to request bilingual pay differential for employees:
 - 6.1.1. Department Directors or their designee shall complete and submit a Bilingual Pay Differential form (Attachment A) to their Talent Acquisition representative, with a copy provided to the

employee by the department director or their designee.

- 6.1.2. Upon receipt of the completed Request for Bilingual Pay Differential form, the Talent Acquisition representative shall consult with the HR Director or their designee to review the employee's duties and responsibilities, which may include a review of the employee's current performance plan and/or job posting for the position.
- 6.1.3. Once it has been determined that the employee's position is eligible for bilingual pay differential, the Talent Acquisition representative shall schedule the bilingual screening and/or testing as soon as practicable.
- 6.1.4. Upon receipt of the results of the bilingual screening and/or testing, the Talent Acquisition representative shall submit the Request for Bilingual Pay Differential form and the screening and/or testing results to the HR Director or their designee for review and final disposition.
- 6.1.5. The Talent Acquisition representative shall notify the department director or their designee of the HR Director's or their designee's decision.
- 6.1.6. The department director or their designee shall provide a copy of the HR Director's decision to the employee.
- 6.1.7. If the employee fails the bilingual screening and/or testing, the department director or their designee shall notify the employee.
 - 6.1.7.1. If the employee is currently receiving bilingual pay differential, the department director or their designee shall submit a bilingual pay form denoting to delimit bilingual pay differential from the employee's pay.

6.2. Employees who fail the bilingual screening and/or testing may considered for rescreening and/or testing after the expiration of at least ninety (90) calendar days from their last screening and/or testing.

7. CONFLICT AND REPEAL

This Administrative Procedure supersedes AP 3-9, signed 01/04/2011, which shall be of no further force or effect.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION

- Article VI, Section 7a, of the City Charter of the City of Houston
- City Ordinances No. 91-609 and No. 92-1486
- Attachment A – City of Houston Bilingual Pay Request Form

9. POLICY SPONSOR

Department: Human Resources Department