

Organizational Policy

LANGUAGE PAY DIFFERENTIAL

Purpose

The City of Rochester is committed to providing high-quality service to community members who feel most comfortable speaking a language other than English. Accomplishing this goal will involve hiring and retaining employees who are able to easily and effectively communicate in languages other than English. Therefore, the City will compensate employees who demonstrate their proficiency in languages other than English, as long as they fulfill the criteria outlined in this policy. Nothing stated in this policy creates an employment contract between the City of Rochester and its employees.

Eligibility

Any regular, full-time employee is eligible to receive the language pay differential. Employees interested in testing for the pay differential should notify their supervisor prior to reaching out to HR to set up a test.

As of the effective date for this policy, qualifying languages will include the following:

- Spanish
- Somali
- Arabic
- Khmer
- Mandarin
- American Sign Language
- Other languages as designated by the City of Rochester

Pay

The Language Pay Differential will be paid each pay period. Upon receiving departmental approval and passing the proficiency test, the incentives paid out to qualifying employees will be the following:

Pay Schedule	
Listening and Speaking Certifications	\$55/pay period, or up to \$1,430 annually.
Translation Certification	\$55/pay period, or up to \$1,430 annually.
Both	\$75/pay period, or up to \$1,950 annually.

This policy will apply regardless of the frequency or total time of interpretation or translation duties.

Expectations for Employees Receiving the Differential

Employees receiving the differential are expected to help meet the City's language access needs, such as communicating with community members who do not speak English or verifying the quality of a translated document.

This assistance could take place within the employee's existing role or to help assist a teammate within their department or another department, if doing so does not notably interfere with their existing work. For example, a teammate who is operating a snowplow would not be

expected to stop their work to speak with a community member at the Clerk's Office window in City Hall. Otherwise, employees receiving the differential are expected to be on call during work hours to help provide assistance as needed.

Additionally, employees receiving the differential are expected to:

- Participate in training about the ethics of providing casual interpretation for community members.
- Keep track of how often they interact with community members with limited English proficiency. Administration and HR will provide a mechanism to quickly registers that data.
- Be part of a group that meets quarterly to explain their experience and comment on trends.

The above expectations will help inform the City's approach to the language pay differential over time to make it as effective as possible for City staff and community members.

This policy will not conflict with any department's policy regarding flexible work arrangements.

Testing and Recertification

Prior to receiving the pay differential, employees must pass a proficiency test. Testing to determine language proficiency will be run through an outside language services company, which will be with ALTA Language Services. Tests will be administered by the Human Resources Department.

The cost for tests to determine listening and speaking proficiency and translation proficiency will be paid by the requesting department.

Employees will need a passing score to receive the differential, which will be set at a 9 for both the Listening and Speaking test and the Translation test based on ALTA's scale. Additional information about the test will be shared upon request.

If an employee does not pass the test, they can retest after six months or completion of a training program (with proof of completion required), whichever happens first.

Employees receiving the pay differential will have to take the test every three years to retain their benefit.

If an employee receiving the differential fails their recertification test, they can retest within four weeks and will be responsible for the cost of the test. Their differential will end unless they pass that test within those four weeks.

If an employee fails more than twice, they will be responsible for covering the costs of future tests.

Administration

The Human Resources Department will oversee administration of the following:

- Adding the appropriate pay differential to each employee's paycheck each pay period. The approving department will submit the PAF to initiate and end the pay differential.
- Keeping records of each employee's language proficiency assessments and certifications

Policy Review

The language pay differential policy will be reviewed periodically to reflect language needs in the community and to ensure quality service delivery for community members. Revisions to the plan may be made as deemed necessary by the City Administrator in consultation with the Human Resources Director.

This policy is a pilot program, and it will be evaluated based on how often staff receiving the differential are serving the community members with limited English proficiency. Collection of that data will inform whether this policy will be approved as an ongoing baseline cost in the budget.

If you have questions, improvements, interested in learning more, or signing up to participate, please complete this [form](#).

Policy revisions approved by City Administrator:



Alison Zelms

07/01/2024

Date

Policy History

Current Revision: 07/01/2024

Previous Revision(s): N/A