

**ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Subject: Bilingual Pay Authorization

Number: C 45

Approved:

Date: 03/11/08

I. PURPOSE

To establish a uniform process for ensuring compliance with State and Federal civil rights laws and California Department of Social Services regulations, in the provision of bilingual services, to applicants and recipients of public assistance and Social Services Agency (SSA) programs. To designate divisional responsibilities regarding required testing certification for assignment of bilingual duties and authorization of bilingual pay.

II. POLICY

Beginning August of 2004, employees assigned to perform bilingual duties and receive bilingual pay premiums, whether they are newly hired, promoted, transferred, or reduced to/reassigned to another position, must be certified through a testing process measuring proficiency in a language other than English. Staff member who passed a job-level appropriate bilingual test prior to July 2004, are considered to have met the certification requirement if there is no position change. State regulations no longer allow self-certification of language proficiency. Depending upon job requirements, job level appropriate testing materials will be used. Testing may include oral, reading, and writing elements as appropriate to the assignment.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. Each employee must meet the following criteria to be eligible for bilingual pay:
1. (S)he must be assigned by Agency management to speak or translate a language other than English.
 2. (S)he must regularly and frequently speak and/or translate a second language, e.g., once daily.
 3. (S)he must be certified as a qualified translator by the County Department of Human Resources Director.
- B. Testing Process
1. Employees seeking bilingual certification must be certified as qualified bilingual translator through a testing process that meets the following criteria:
 - a. internally developed using job-related testing materials, and certified testers instructed in appropriate methodology; or,
 - b. professionally developed by a contracted vendor using County-approved testing materials and methodology.
 2. Each SSA division shall be responsible for testing, or arranging the bilingual testing of, job applicants who are on the eligible list and have been certified for hiring consideration, and for current employees assigned to perform bilingual duties. Each division shall schedule testing times, places and raters as necessary.
 3. SSA Human Resources and Career Development (HRCDD) shall coordinate with division staff, who will identify potential bilingual raters for the testing of job applicants competing in a bilingual specialty recruitment prior to being placed on an eligible list. If a contracted vendor is used, HRCDD shall make arrangements with divisional supervisors for the testing as part of the recruitment process.

4. Testing process and materials shall be based upon job classification and responsibilities. Every effort shall be made to use certified supervisory staff to conduct bilingual testing in order to reduce Agency cost. For example:
 - a. A County-approved standardized testing process will be administered to the candidates.
 - b. Generally, employees, who are in job classifications assigned to receive exceptional bilingual premium pay, must pass both oral and written skills tests. Employees in job classifications with duties not requiring written skills shall not be tested in these areas.
 - c. Employees in classifications assigned to receive regular bilingual premium pay must pass the oral skills test.
 - d. Raters shall be provided with testing questions, guidelines, instructions and rating forms.
 - e. SSA Division or SSA HRCD shall notify candidates of test results.
 5. Contracted vendors conducting the bilingual tests shall use testing materials approved by County of Orange, SSA HRCD.
 6. After the candidate successfully completes the appropriate bilingual test(s), the SSA assigned Division Personnel Liaison shall submit documentation of the employee's eligibility for bilingual premium pay to SSA HRCD.
 7. Employees, who were previously tested and are receiving bilingual premium, must re-take the test if their new assignments require additional language skills not previously tested.
- C. Documentation of Bilingual Pay Authorization
1. A Bilingual Pay Authorization form (Attachment A) must be completed. The SSA Division Personnel Liaison shall be responsible for:
 - a. Position Certification, which involves documenting that the position/function is bilingual, and identifying whether eligibility is for Regular or Exceptional bilingual premium as per the appropriate Memo Of Understanding (MOU). An appropriate supervisor's and/or manager's signature may be required depending upon the staff's classification and SSA division.
 - b. Employee Certification Option 1, which involves documenting that the employee was tested for the appropriate classification, and for providing testing date and titles of raters.
 - c. Employee Certification Option 2, which involves documenting that the employee was tested by the contracted vendor. The vendor shall provide test results to the appropriate supervisor and SSA HRCD.
 2. The completed and signed form attached with test results shall be submitted to SSA HRCD.
 3. The assigned HRCD Administrative Manager shall verify testing results and sign off on the authorization form.
 4. The HRCD Office Specialist shall complete the automated processing of bilingual pay authorization and file authorized bilingual form in the personnel file.
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IV. ATTACHMENTS

- A Bilingual Pay Authorization Form