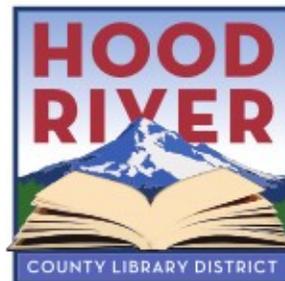


# Bilingualism Proficiency Pay Policy



It is estimated that over 30% of the population of Hood River County speak Spanish as their primary language. Hood River County Library District ("District") recognizes the value of employees who can communicate with patrons in both Spanish and English, as well as those who can communicate in American Sign Language (ASL). Accordingly, the District would like to offer additional compensation to eligible employees who can communicate effectively in both Spanish and English, or in ASL (hereafter referred to as "bilingual") when bilingual skills are a benefit to their specific job duties.

## **Purpose**

The objective of this policy is to establish uniform guidelines and criteria for additional compensation for employees who have bilingual skills. Such bilingual skills include the ability to communicate in writing, reading, and conversing, with full comprehension proficiency in both Spanish and English, or the ability to communicate fluently in American Sign Language (ASL).

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all Hood River County Library District employees who meet the eligibility requirements.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for bilingual pay, employees must work in a capacity where bilingual skills are:

- Necessary for the performance of their job duties, or
- Considered beneficial to Hood River County Library District's service delivery

The Library Director, or designee, will determine whether bilingual language skills are necessary for an employee's job performance or beneficial to service delivery. The job description will indicate if the position has been reviewed and approved for bilingual pay compensation. At any time, the District can discontinue offering bilingual pay when, in the discretion of the Library Director, bilingual skills are not necessary or beneficial to the duties assigned to the employee. Additionally, the District may determine whether other languages may be added for bilingual pay due to various external factors and needs of the District.

## **Testing Requirements**

To receive bilingual pay, eligible employees must demonstrate proficiency in Spanish and English, or in American Sign Language (ASL). Proficiency will be established by achieving the required minimum score on testing administered through a vendor determined by the District.

- Employees who fail to achieve the required minimum score may retest after 60 days with Library Director or designee approval

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- Employees may not test more than twice in a calendar year
- Employees are only eligible to receive bilingual pay for Spanish or ASL language skills, unless other languages are determined by the District to be necessary or beneficial for the employee's position
- Employees will incur no cost for the test; all fees will be paid by the Library District.

Employees who are unable or unwilling to use bilingual skills in their Hood River County Library District work may have bilingual pay revoked.

### **Testing Format and Compensation**

Language proficiency will be assessed using the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency scale for Spanish. The employee will need to test at ACTFL Level Advanced Low or higher on the oral examination and Intermediate High or higher on both the written and reading competency tests.

ASL Language proficiency will be assessed using the Sign Language Proficiency Interview in American Sign Language (SLPI:ASL). The employee will need to test Advanced or higher. Compensation for bilingual skills is separate from base pay and cannot be paid retroactively.

### **Recertification and Discontinuation**

To continue receiving bilingual pay, employees must recertify their proficiency every three (3) years from the date of initial certification.

Bilingual pay must be discontinued if:

- An employee's certification expires,
- The employee is reassigned to a position where bilingual skills will not be used, or
- The employee's position duties no longer meet the qualifying criteria

### **Compensation**

Employees eligible for bilingual pay will receive additional compensation equal to five percent (5%) of their base pay rate. Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit or discourage employees from communicating with library patrons in Spanish, ASL, or any other language, as appropriate in the discretion of the employee.

Adopted by the Board of Directors: August 19, 2025  
Revised 2/17/26, 1/13/26