



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JANUARY 3, 2023

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**THROUGH:** JAMES F. PARAION, CITY MANAGER /s/

**FROM:** DANA WEDELES, STRATEGIC INITIATIVES OFFICER

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of the Release of Language Contingency Funds for Employee Language Pay Program.

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**ISSUE:** Release of Language Contingency Funds to provide multilingual pay to City employees whose positions require the use of non-English language skills, and to expand the pool of available language translation and interpretation resources within the City.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council allocate contingency funds in the amount of \$300,000 to be available for language proficiency testing and a multilingual pay program.

**BACKGROUND:** This funding would provide additional pay to staff that utilize their language skills on a regular basis during the course of their regular workday, week, or if they enlist to be on called for language assistance, outside of their regular job duties, as overtime.

**DISCUSSION:** Staff have conducted research on regional pay programs and evaluated the Department of Community and Human Services pilot program. To keep aligned with regional pay, provide enough incentive to take the proficiency test, and to make an impact within our staffing and budgetary resources, staff recommend the contingency funds be used in the following way:

1. Multilingual employees using a second language more than 35% of the time to perform their job duties may take a proficiency test to be assessed as being proficient in performing non-English language skills; The initial test will be paid through the allocated funding sources.
2. Employees that pass the proficiency test can receive an additional pay of \$1,040 annually (\$0.50 per hour worked).

3. Once an employee passes the proficiency test, they may be contacted by other City Departments to provide language assistance, outside of their job duties. Employees will receive overtime pay from the sponsoring Department for their hours worked in providing language assistance.
4. Employees that are multilingual, but don't use another language more than 35% of the time, may take the proficiency test if they choose and can then receive overtime for assisting with language services above and beyond their daily job functions.

Funding is sufficient for approximately 330 employees, and all employees who qualify will be provided with the additional pay.

The program will be managed through the Department of Human Resources in coordination with the City's Language Access Coordinator in the Office of Communications and Public Information. This will include coordination with a contractor to administer the tests and management of a list of employees that have passed the test and may be called upon to assist with translation and/or interpretation needs.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** This request allocates \$300,000 in FY23 Language Contingency funds to a non-departmental account, to be redistributed to departments with qualifying employees.

**STAFF:**

Yon Lambert, Interim Deputy City Manager

Shania Wright, Talent Acquisition and Operations Manager, Department of Human Resources

Genevieve Babecki, Language Access Coordinator, OCPI