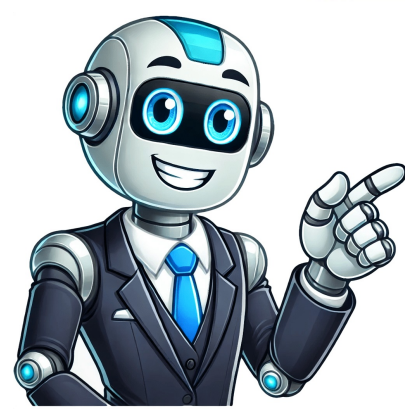


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Developing bilingual pay differential policy for your organization. Step 1: Identify positions requiring bilingual skills Step 2: Define language proficiency levels Step 3: Assess employee language proficiency Step 4: Determine pay differentials Step 5: Extend policy to freelance and contract employees Step 6: Provide training and education Step 7: Conduct regular proficiency assessments Step 8: Ensure fairness and consistency A bilingual pay differential is key for companies seeking to capitalize on the benefits of bilingual employees. The demand for multilingual talent remains high in today's job market, highlighting the importance of linguistic diversity. Implementing this differential in your compensation strategy serves as a strong incentive for attracting and retaining bilingual professionals. It acknowledges the value language skills bring and underscores a commitment to diversity. Creating a fair policy requires balancing budgetary constraints with the market value of language skills. Transparency and equity are paramount to ensure all bilingual employees receive appropriate compensation. However, what's the best approach to develop a bilingual pay differential policy that's equitable for employees and meets your company's requirements? A bilingual pay differential refers to a monthly additional payment given to an employee certified as bilingual and occupies a designated bilingual position. Employers recognize the significance of language skills in the workforce by implementing a bilingual pay differential policy that acknowledges the value of being proficient in more than one language. This policy manifests in various ways, with some companies offering bonuses or stipends to employees proficient in multiple languages. Others opt for a percentage increase in salary or hourly wage for bilingual staff compared to their monolingual counterparts. Factors such as the frequency of language use in the workplace and individual proficiency levels, often assessed through language proficiency tests, may also influence compensation. Does being bilingual mean a higher paycheck? Yes, bilingual employees can earn higher than those who speak one language. According to a study, bilingual employees can earn between 5 percent and 20 percent more money per hour than those who speak only one language. If your workplace has a shortage of employees who speak the required language(s), you are likely to receive a higher pay differential compared to situations where there are many employees available to perform translation tasks. Can I ask for a raise if I'm bilingual? Yes, while the career benefits of being proficient in more than one language are often significant, timing is crucial when requesting a raise. Introduce the topic gradually and naturally during ongoing discussions with your supervisor. Additionally, consider making your request in the morning before decision fatigue sets in, and avoid asking for a raise during periods when the company is implementing budget cuts. Schedule a dedicated meeting with your boss and come prepared to justify your request. Research the compensation rates for bilingual employees at other companies and have relevant figures ready. Determine a reasonable amount that reflects your worth. Exercise patience if your boss needs more time to decide. Regardless of the outcome, refrain from making threats to quit and always thank your boss for their time. Unlocking the potential of multilingual employees offers several benefits: Enhanced customer relations: A bilingual worker can establish deeper connections with customers, facilitating smoother interactions and fostering trust. Being able to communicate in the customer's language not only expands outreach but also signifies a genuine commitment to their satisfaction, ultimately bolstering loyalty. Global business expansion: Embracing linguistic diversity equips companies with the tools to overcome language barriers and tap into new markets, both domestically and internationally. With bilingual employees proficient in multiple languages, businesses can extend their reach to diverse customer bases, thus fueling growth opportunities. Facilitated teamwork and collaboration: Bilingual team members serve as vital conduits for communication, bridging gaps between various stakeholders within and outside the organization. Their ability to translate and liaise with customers, colleagues, and partners promotes seamless collaboration, fostering a culture of teamwork and mutual understanding. Sectors experiencing increased demand for bilingual abilities The advantages of multilingual employees extend across diverse industries, but certain sectors have a particularly high demand for these skills. Here are some instances where businesses heavily rely on bilingual staff: Healthcare In healthcare, bilingual employees are indispensable for effective patient communication, particularly with individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Their ability to converse in patients' native languages enhances satisfaction, ensures accurate diagnoses, and promotes adherence to treatment plans. Hospitality and tourism The hospitality and tourism industry thrive on seamless interactions with international visitors. A bilingual employee contributes to a more personalized experience, which promotes higher satisfaction levels and encourages repeat patronage. Technology With globalization shaping the tech landscape, bilingual professionals play a pivotal role in bridging communication divides with global clients, customers, and partners, thereby facilitating smoother operations and stronger relationships. Legal and law enforcement Bilingualism is increasingly critical in legal and law enforcement domains, where effective communication is paramount. Bilingual lawyers, police officers, and court personnel uphold fairness and accuracy in dealings with non-English speakers. Customer service and sales Industries reliant on customer interactions, such as retail and telecommunications, benefit greatly from bilingual staff. Their ability to cater to a broader clientele enhances customer loyalty and drives sales growth. Government and nonprofit organizations Government agencies and nonprofits serving diverse communities greatly value bilingual employees. These individuals bridge communication gaps, ensuring equitable access to services and resources for all. Developing and implementing a bilingual pay differential policy is a strategic move for businesses aiming to leverage the advantages of multilingual talent effectively. Here's how to do it: Step 1: Identify positions requiring bilingual skills While not every job role requires a bilingual position, the availability of language solutions in software is changing the landscape. While not every job role requires a bilingual position, the availability of language solutions in software is changing the landscape. Compensation Software's Market Data allows users to access HR-reported pay data, from 15,000 unique job titles and 225 industries. This data can help employers find roles where being bilingual is most useful and plan accordingly. Step 2: Define language proficiency levels Beyond identifying roles, it's important to determine the required proficiency levels in each language. For instance, a contractor might only need basic language skills for safety signs, whereas a sales representative necessitates fluency for effective client communication. Step 3: Assess employee language proficiency Once the required proficiency levels are established, evaluate employees' language skills to ensure alignment with job demands. This assessment can range from interviews conducted in the target language to standardized language proficiency tests. Step 4: Determine pay differentials Linking pay differentials to language proficiency levels can be efficiently achieved with resources like Compensation Software's Market Data. HR professionals can scope jobs using a vast data library and find the data most relevant to their organization. This can help determine pay differentials, which optimizes workforce management and promotes inclusivity. Step 5: Extend policy to freelance and contract employees Freelancers proficient in multiple languages can also contribute significantly to businesses. Offer additional compensation for language-specific services or negotiate prorated rates for multilingual tasks. Step 6: Provide training and education Complement the pay differential with language training programs to enhance overall communication within the organization. Invest in cultural education to promote a deeper understanding of diverse clientele and future-proof the workforce. Step 7: Conduct regular proficiency assessments Regular assessments ensure that employees can improve their language skills, maintaining fairness and accuracy in pay differentials. Incorporate scheduled tests or continuous monitoring to track language proficiency growth. Step 8: Ensure fairness and consistency Transparent communication ensures fairness and consistency in implementing the bilingual pay policy. Clearly articulate the rationale behind the policy, eligibility criteria, and the process for qualification. Ensure fairness by using Detailed Pricing Reports. These reports provide a comprehensive view of compensation for any job, including bilingual roles. They empower decision-makers to clearly communicate why a job is paid a certain amount and demonstrate that the organization offers competitive wages. Introducing bilingual differential pay offers several advantages, including improved customer service and expanded market reach. Utilizing Compensation Software's Market Data ensures accurate pricing based on linguistic proficiency, which promotes fairness and competitiveness in attracting bilingual talent. The tool also features a customizable dashboard to give you the data you need at your fingertips and mobile access, allowing you to access data anytime, anywhere. In a diverse and globalized world, many organizations provide additional compensation to employees who have the skills to communicate with clients and partners in more than one language. This pay incentive for a specific skill – in this case a language skill – is known as a pay differential. Pay differentials for language skills are common in government agencies, law enforcement, foreign service, healthcare, defense and intelligence, and customer service. Salaries are generally 5-20 percent higher for bilingual employees. Why Create a Bilingual Pay Differential Policy? Organizations use pay differentials for a variety of reasons, including: Relationships: A bilingual pay differential helps your organization serve diverse customers, members or residents. It may also develop or strengthen international relationships by way of multilingual employees. Hiring: A bilingual pay differential helps to attract and retain employees who speak the languages you need. Compliance: A pay differential may ensure compliance with laws and regulations mandating that people have equal access to services, regardless of their language of preference. Title VI of the Civil Rights of 1964 is one such standard. Regulations may also mandate that a bilingual position receive more compensation. Questions to Ask When Implementing a Bilingual Pay Differential While establishing a bilingual pay differential might seem overwhelming, the process has well-defined steps. Before you develop a final program and policy, it may be wise to seek input from your HR department, labor organizations, and local or professional legal authorities. After reading this guide, you may still need to brainstorm, research, make a list and contact pertinent associates or authorities. When establishing designated bilingual positions with extra compensation, ask yourself: What positions need to be bilingual? What languages might you need? Are there records indicating which languages? What language skills does the position require? What level of language proficiency is needed in the position? Do you already have any employees who speak those languages? What percent of work will be conducted in other languages? Who will draft and finalize the pay differential policy? Who will need to approve the policy? What information must be gathered for these individuals? Some of these questions will be more straightforward to answer than others. One question of particular importance to establish is: What language skills does the position require? Language Skills and Testing Languages have four major skills and other important skill considerations. Reading, writing, listening and speaking are the four broad skill categories. Pronunciation is sometimes delineated. Industry, governmental or academic standards make language skills transparent and comparable. The questions below will help you establish the necessary language skills for a position and should be answered before developing a bilingual pay policy. What combination of the four abilities do you need? What proficiency level is needed for each skill? Will the employee need to perform intermediate and advanced language tasks? These may include persuading clients or describing abstract concepts like a liability. Will they convert language via interpretation or translation? This can take a higher level of proficiency, as well as more industry-specific vocabulary or language conversion experience. Translation or interpretation can require formal training, especially in the legal or medical fields. Are there legal, medical or monetary risks of incorrect language conversions? Must pronunciation be excellent from the hire date, or is there room to develop it? What tasks do they need to perform in that language? For example, collecting patient histories, selling parking permits or writing emails? How will you test proficiency in these skills? It's important to use a third party to test language proficiency. To find an employee who can do the job correctly and award them an appropriate pay differential, use a language testing company that meets or exceeds industry standards. They will administer tests that have the following attributes: objectiveness - (unbiased) measures of language skills validity - the test truly measures the skills it claims to measure reliability - the test yields consistent results Selecting Cut Scores for Pay Differentials As an employer, once you've decided what skills you need to test, you'll also need to decide on or consult with a company on, the cut score (or minimum acceptable passing score) for each skill. Designating cut scores helps you hire candidates with the right combination of language skills. Again, the skills might be all or a combination of these four: reading, writing, listening and speaking. To help create cut scores, ALTA can provide a job analysis to determine the type of skills and level of skill needed in a particular position. Otherwise, we recommend consulting our ALTA scale to determine the skill level at each score, and which score level is right for your position. Finally, in addition to determining what score is necessary to hire a candidate, determine what happens if a candidate does not pass. Will retesting be allowed? Decide on a retesting interval and who will cover the cost. Can they retest during work hours? Creating a Written Bilingual Pay Differential Policy The process for setting up a bilingual employee program varies based on your organization. One way to speed up the process is to check your preparation by consulting with an organization comparable to yours that already has a bilingual pay program. Don't reinvent the wheel. Note measures you need to implement or eliminate unnecessary setup steps or policy components. Most considerations are detailed above and especially below, but check your action-step list against comparable organizations' existing differential programs before taking massive action. Most organizations, except perhaps small businesses, will need a written policy. It should outline the necessary steps. We have included below the section headings for two sample policies. Beyond deciding on a testing service, remember to develop testing policies. When creating new bilingual-titled and differential-compensated positions, there may be many steps. Bilingual-designated specifications shall need to appear in many layers of the organization: in the hiring processes, payroll, training, timekeeping and organizational charts. Brainstorming early can save you from doubling back later. A bilingual employee differential is often calculated as a percentage added to a monolingual position's salary. A flat sum could be added per pay period or per monthly salary as well. Often, the extra compensation is prorated if the employee works part-time. Usually, a differential isn't paid if they're not actively working. For example, it's not added to sick pay or vacation compensation. Basic Structures for Sample Written Policies: Below are two sample structures for written differential policies. Sample 1: Introduction of policy and basic explanation of the rationale for, and scope of, policy Eligibility requirements based on position The process to designate current employees as bilingual The process to hire new employees Language proficiency requirements & testing process Bilingual pay specifications Operating as a bilingual employee: considerations Sample 2: Purpose of bilingual policy Percentage of pay and list of compensated languages Eligible Positions Testing requirements Retesting and missed testing policies Language usage authorization (can write documents, unofficial translation or interpretation) General language communication expectations in the Workplace Why Companies Chose ALTA for Bilingual Employee Testing ALTA Language Services has been in the language business since 1980 and has provided language testing services since 1996. We have language tests available for all major industries. We're also knowledgeable about the language needs and practices of many industries. We help solve organizations' bilingual hiring problems by handling the testing. ALTA language tests are a valuable tool in the recruitment and training processes for government agencies, healthcare entities, school districts, major airlines, financial institutions and non-profits. Our thorough job analysis process defines the language requirements for any job in any industry, recommends the best test and sets a legally defensible cut score. We deliver thorough, sensitive and transparent (easy-to-understand) scores that enable organizations' managers and compliance officers to make fast, informed bilingual hiring decisions. Setting us apart from other affordable language solutions, our assessments are scored by trained expert evaluators who are educated native speakers of the target language. They're not English speakers who learned it as a second language. Our evaluator training program and strict quality assurance system provide the highest levels of inter-rater reliability in the language testing industry. With little or no scheduling time required, and results guaranteed within two business days or sooner, our unparalleled suite of language testing tools will provide value to your organization as you define and implement your bilingual pay differential. Bilingual Pay Policy and Guidelines A salary differential allowance shall be paid to employees in positions requiring bilingual proficiency as designated by their respective Department Heads or their designee. Said differential shall be prorated for employees working less than full-time or who are in unpaid leave of absence for a portion of any given pay period. Designation of bilingual required positions is the sole prerogative of the Department and is based on operational and staffing needs of the Department. Human Resources will oversee the bilingual examination, certify exam results and determine effective date of the bilingual pay. General Eligibility Requirements All non-management positions are eligible for bilingual salary allowance including limited term and extra help positions. Management employees are not eligible for this allowance. Department has determined that a second language is critical to the day to day operations of the unit to which the position is assigned. Designating New Positions Department Department completes the top section of the attached Bilingual Pay Form. Forms must be complete upon submission. Managers and supervisor signatures are required. Incomplete/Outdated forms will be sent back. Department forwards the completed form to the Bilingual Pay Coordinator. Bilingual Pay Coordinator The Bilingual Pay Coordinator reviews the request and ensures the form is complete. The Bilingual Pay Coordinator assigns the form to in-house examiners or coordinates the scheduling of a language proficiency examination with outside examiner. The bilingual examiner conducts the exam, completes the Exam Evaluation section of the form, and returns the form to the Coordinator for approval. The Bilingual Pay Coordinator will forward the results of the examination to the department payroll specialist along with the effective date of the Bilingual Pay. If the employee does not successfully pass the exam the Coordinator will contact the manager to advise. Department Payroll/Personnel Coordinator Upon receiving the approved Bilingual Form, the department processes a compensation change in Workday. Please see Bilingual Pay QRC for instructions. Compensation Employees will receive bilingual salary differential allowance as specified by current Memoranda of Understanding. Bilingual pay shall be prorated for employees working less than full-time and/or who are in a non-pay status for any part of the biweekly pay period. Do bilingual people get paid more than monolingual individuals? Should you pay your bilingual employees more money for their world language skills? Bilingual differential pay is a topic you must consider as you seek to pay your employees fairly and attract more bilingual talent to your team. Test Your Employees' Language Skills Many employees and potential employees who know two or more languages wonder if they could get paid more for being bilingual. The short answer is yes. Bilingual workers undeniable value to a business and should be paid more if they use their language skills daily to complete required tasks. On average, those who are bilingual and multilingual earn 5%-20% more per hour than those who aren't. Here is some information to help you understand the value of bilingual employees and how to establish a bilingual pay differential policy. The Benefits of Bilingual Employees Bilingual employees offer many benefits to the businesses they work for. More companies have realized this in recent years, with the demand for bilingual and multilingual employees more than doubling between 2010 and 2015. Even with today's uptick in remote working situations, roles that require bilingual language skills continue to increase. Here are some of the main benefits bilingual employees bring to businesses: Better customer connections: Over 75% of customers report being more likely to buy a product if information about it is available in their native language. Bilingual employees can ensure more customers get the information they need about a product in a language they understand. This makes customers feel more comfortable and allows for a deeper relationship with your brand. Successful expansion into new territories: Companies that want to expand their business operations into other countries need bilingual employees for proper communication, planning, and growth. Money savings: Bilingual employees can translate important documents and accurately engage in critical correspondence. In addition to reducing the chances of costly communication errors, hiring bilingual employees will also let you skip engaging costly third-party translators. Multi-tasking and problem-solving abilities: Individuals proficient in more than one language can process information more efficiently than their monolingual peers. This may contribute to better problem-solving and multi-tasking abilities in your teams. Why Pay Bilingual Employees More There are many reasons your company should pay bilingual employees more. Most importantly, higher compensation for employees who command multiple languages recognizes the value they bring to a company and helps businesses stay competitive in the rapidly changing global economy. Here are additional benefits of establishing a bilingual pay differential policy at your company: Relationships: Successful businesses make lasting relationships with their members and customers. Bilingual employees can help your company forge diverse relationships that it would otherwise be unable to achieve, both domestically and internationally. Hiring: Having a bilingual pay differential policy will attract more bilingual employees to your business. If you're looking to hire more employees with world language skills beside English, then offering qualified candidates more money could be the factor that draws them to your business instead of another. Regulation compliance: Incentivizing bilingual workers to your business with a pay differential can help you follow regulations. Regulations like Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 mandate that people, including employees and customers, have equal access to services despite their language preferences. Having workers who command multiple languages will help you follow these regulations. How to Set up a Bilingual Pay Differential Setting up a bilingual pay differential starts with asking and answering these important questions: Which positions must be bilingual? What languages do you need employees to be proficient in? Does a certain position require a specific world language? What is the minimum level of language proficiency a qualified candidate should possess? Do candidates need to possess speaking, reading, writing or listening skills — or a combination of each? Do any existing employees speak the required languages? What percentage of work tasks will occur in other languages? Who will create and complete the bilingual pay differential policy? Which parties must approve the policy before implementation? Does any information need to be presented to these parties? Once you've answered these questions, you're ready to set up your company's bilingual pay differential. Language Testing International (LTI), the sole provider of ACTFL language proficiency assessments, offers support throughout this process with our Task Analysis procedure. We'll help you determine the required minimum proficiency levels needed for your bilingual roles and work with you to create a language assessment plan to meet the reporting and assessment needs of your position and work roles. With our help, you can qualify actual talent for your company's bilingual positions. Set up Skills and Testing Requirements Once you're ready to begin developing your bilingual pay differential policy, you must determine your skills and testing requirements. Language proficiency tests provide objective results on an employee's or potential employee's second language skills. By setting test results requirements, you'll have a benchmark when hiring bilingual employees. This will show interested candidates what minimum proficiency level they must have to qualify for the higher pay. ACTFL proficiency tests through LTI are the industry standard for measuring world language proficiency. Depending on the bilingual role specifications, have candidates take tests for one or more of the following skills: Reading Writing Listening Speaking Reliable language proficiency assessments, such as those developed by ACTFL, help eliminate subjectivity and bias. By using standardized testing methods, you ensure a fair recruitment process as all candidates are measured against the same criteria. Test results will be objective, verifiable, and reliable according to your chosen proficiency scale. This will help you gain accurate insights into someone's bilingual proficiency during the hiring process. Select Cut Scores for Pay Differentials The cut score refers to the minimum acceptable passing score of a given language skill proficiency test. Cut scores are essential in finding the right candidates to fill your job openings. You need bilingual employees with the right combination of language skills to meet your goals, so accepting a candidate with low proficiency may be out of the question, depending on your organization's needs. Potential job candidates must earn a proficiency test score higher than your company's set cut score to qualify for the position. This process will help you hire confidently, knowing your new employees have the bilingual language skills you're looking for in reading, writing, listening, or speaking. Put Together a Written Policy Every organization will have a different bilingual payment differential policy, but most businesses will need to put it in writing for it to be official. Your written policy should outline all the necessary steps to attaining the payment differential. It should also include the testing requirements, like which test to take and what provider can administer the test. The policy should include details about every layer of your organization, including hiring, payroll, training, organization, and timekeeping. The differential you award to qualified bilingual employees will generally be a calculated percentage added to an equivalent monolingual salary. You can also add the differential as a flat sum awarded every pay period. Language Testing through Language Testing International Language Testing International offers ACTFL proficiency tests for organizations to help you measure bilingual language skills in your employees and potential employees. And with our Task Analysis procedure, we can help you develop a functional and efficient plan for achieving a working bilingual payment differential policy. Contact us today to take the next step!