



COUNTY OF SONOMA

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Christina Cramer, HR Director

Employment • Classification • Employee Relations • EEO • Training • Risk Management

DATE: January 2, 2019
TO: Payroll Clerks, HR Liaisons
FROM: Rosie Rocha, HR Technicians
SUBJECT: Bilingual Testing Schedule for 2019

The Bilingual Proficiency Exam (Spanish/English) schedule has been set for calendar year 2019 for new and existing County employees.

Note: If you have a new/existing vacancy and would like to hire a bilingual employee, please contact your Human Resources Analyst to discuss bilingual recruitment options. Top candidates for positions that require bilingual skills should be tested by Human Resources as part of the department selection process, prior to a conditional job offer being issued. Once you have identified your top candidate(s), please contact Norma and/or Rosie to schedule a bilingual exam. Depending upon the timing of your request, Human Resources may or may not be able to accommodate candidates who have applied through a bilingual recruitment during the prescheduled bilingual exams listed in the following chart.

If a current County employee needs to be tested for bilingual (Spanish/English) skills, the following process will be utilized:

1. According to the applicable MOU or Salary Resolution requirements, the Department determines whether the use of the position requires bilingual skills and/or if the employee is required to use their bilingual skills for a predetermined amount of time.
2. The Department **determines the level of proficiency required** to perform the job duties of the position:
 - A. **Basic:** conversationally proficient in the other language; individuals with basic bilingual skills will be communicating in both Spanish and English, however, they will not be translating text or verbal communications. The individual would be speaking only and work should be limited to providing verbal information to clients and to the public. For example, if an Office Assistant or Receptionist is primarily assisting the public in answering questions, such as the location of another building, the restroom, locating an appropriate form, etc., the basic level of proficiency would be appropriate.

The basic conversational test is conducted in Spanish, where the candidate is asked six work-related questions. Questions may be simplified to aid the candidate in understanding and responding to the questions. They can use their current or previous jobs as examples when speaking. Raters check for their ability to understand and use common vocabulary of daily speech to be able to handle day-to-day verbal communication in any setting. They can be easily understood by a monolingual person. Speech may not be grammatically correct and there may be some mixed languages.

- B. **Fluent:** ability to speak, read, write, and translate between both languages at a highly proficient level. Proficiency test is conducted using a three-part exam: conversational, oral reading/translation, and a writing performance exercise.

At the fluent level, the test is conducted entirely in Spanish, and the candidate is expected to fully comprehend and correspond in both English and Spanish at this highly proficient level. This level is used for positions where employees may have a higher degree of interaction and responsibility to the public or clients. Raters assess command of language so that the candidate can perform in any position, with the understanding that specialized terms in their area of responsibility will be learned on the job. Please note that the definition of translation is as follows: the process of translating words or text from one language into another. For example, if a bilingual caseworker is in a court room setting where a client needs verbal information translated from English to Spanish, a fluent level of proficiency is required to perform this body of work.

3. The Department **completes a Bilingual Proficiency Exam Request Form** and submits it to HR. The form is signed by Department Head or his/her designee. These forms should be available from your payroll clerk or HR Liaison.
4. **HR schedules the individual(s)** for the next available exam, notifying them by email approximately one week prior to the exam. A copy of the exam invitation should also be sent to the HR Liaison/Payroll Clerk.
5. **HR tests the individual(s)** at the level requested by the Department.

NOTE: "No Shows" and last minute cancellations will not be automatically rescheduled.

6. Within approximately two weeks of the exam, **HR sends the results of the bilingual exam** to the employee and to the department payroll clerk. The notice should be placed in their personnel file and is viable for the duration of their employment with the County of Sonoma.
7. **Payroll clerks process the bilingual premium** for those who pass. The amount of premium is determined by the MOU or Salary Resolution representing the position. The premium amount is the same for Basic and Fluent level.

If you have any questions, please contact Rosie Rocha at rosie.rocha@sonoma-county.org 707-565-8870.

2019 BILINGÜAL SCHEDULED RATERS

January 2019 – December 2019

| EXAM DATE: | TIME: | PRIMARY RATER: | SECOND RATER: |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Thursday, January 24, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Veronica Peinado | Maria Gutierrez |
| Wednesday, February 20, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Adriana Call | Sylvia Lemus |
| Thursday, March 14, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Rosie Rocha | Dora Navarro |
| Wednesday, May 8, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Emma Cortez | Adriana Call |
| Thursday, June 20, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Maria Gutierrez | Dora Navarro |
| Wednesday, July 17, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Rebecca Barragan | Laura Zijlstra |
| Thursday, August 22, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Emma Cortez | Veronica Peinado |
| Thursday, October 17, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Rosie Rocha | Sylvia Lemus |
| Thursday, November 14, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Maria Gutierrez | Adriana Call |
| Wednesday, December 18, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Rosie Rocha | Adriana Call |

**COUNTY OF SONOMA HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT BILINGUAL PROFICIENCY
EXAM REQUEST**

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Employee Name | | Position Title | |
| New or Existing Employee | | Employee ID # | |
| Mailing Address | | | |
| Work Phone # | | Home or Cell Phone # | |
| Email: (Work or Home) | | | |
| Name of Supervisor | | Supervisor's Phone # | |

| LEVEL TO BE TESTED AT | DESCRIPTION |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Basic (Conversational) | <u>Speaking/Comprehension</u> : Conversationally proficient. Ability to understand and use common vocabulary of daily speech and to handle verbal communication tasks in any setting. Can be easily understood by monolingual individual. May not be grammatically correct. |
| Fluent (Highly proficient) | <u>Speaking/Comprehension/Reading/Writing</u> : Highly proficient in all applications. Verbally articulate; grammatically correct; clear, accurate, and precise in writing and in translating of written materials. |

I hereby certify that the position occupied by the individual named above is a Designated Bilingual Position and requires the use of the second language an average of at least 10% of the incumbent's time.

Signature of Department Head or Designee

Date

Position (if designee)

Phone #