



COUNTY OF SONOMA  
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

**DATE:** December 17, 2020  
**TO:** Payroll Clerks, HR Liaisons  
**FROM:** Rosie Rocha, HR Technician  
**SUBJECT:** 2021 Bilingual (English/Spanish) Proficiency Process, Schedule, and Request Form

As the County is still largely teleworking, Human Resources has decided to continue scheduling and administering bilingual proficiency testing on an as needed basis. If/when a bilingual proficiency test is needed, please submit a Test Request Form to Rosie Rocha, [Rosie.Rocha@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Rosie.Rocha@sonoma-county.org) and Coralia Garcia, [Coralia.Garcia@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Coralia.Garcia@sonoma-county.org). Test dates and times will be scheduled as requests are received. At present, Human Resources is administering the exam over Zoom or WebEx, using video conferencing.

- Per the applicable MOU or Salary Resolution, designated bilingual positions require specific bilingual language skills on an average of at least 10 percent of the position's work time
- Top candidate(s) for designated bilingual positions must be tested by the Human Resources Department prior to issuing a conditional job offer

If you have a vacancy and would like to open a recruitment to hire a bilingual employee, please contact your assigned [Human Resources Recruitment and Classification Analyst](#) to discuss recruitment options, including whether your request meets the criteria of being a bona fide occupational qualification for employment.

If you have questions regarding the enclosed Bilingual Proficiency Exam Request Form and Testing Process, please contact Rosie Rocha, [Rosie.Rocha@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Rosie.Rocha@sonoma-county.org), 707-565-8870 or Coralia Garcia, [Coralia.Garcia@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Coralia.Garcia@sonoma-county.org), 707-565-2831.

**The following process will be used to test bilingual (English/Spanish) skills:**

1. The Department Head or Designee determines the level of proficiency (basic/fluent) required to perform the duties of the position:
  - a. **Basic:** ability to, verbally communicate in English and Spanish effectively, conversationally proficient. The individual will speak only and work will be limited to providing verbal information to clients and to the public. They will not translate text or transcribe verbal communications.
    - i. Example: an Office Assistant or Receptionist primarily assists the public by answering questions, such as the location of another building, the restroom, locating an appropriate form, etc.
  - b. **Fluent:** ability to speak, read, write, and translate between English and Spanish, at a highly proficient level. Translation is defined as the process of translating words or text from one language into another. This level is used for positions where employees may have a higher degree of interaction with and responsibility to the public or clients.

- i. Example: a Social Service Worker primarily assigned to work in a court room setting, in which their clients need verbal information translated from English to Spanish.
2. The Department submits a certified/complete Bilingual Proficiency Exam Request Form to HR.
3. HR schedules the individual(s) for the next available exam session. A reminder notification will also be sent via email (with a "Cc" to the HR Liaison & Payroll Clerk) approximately one week prior to the exam.
  - a. **"No Shows" and last minute cancellations will not be automatically rescheduled.**
4. HR tests the examinee(s) at the level requested by the Department.
  - a. **Basic:** This exam has 7 work-related exam questions. Exam Raters may allow some mixed language use and can simplify the questions in order to aid the examinee in understanding and responding to the questions. Speech may not be grammatically correct. The Raters will assess the examinees ability to understand and use common vocabulary, handle day-to-day verbal communication, and determine whether or not the examinee can be easily understood by a monolingual person.
  - b. **Fluent:** This exam has 3 sections: conversational, oral reading/translation, and a writing performance exercise. At this highly proficient level, the examinee is expected to fully comprehend and correspond in both English and Spanish. With the understanding that specialized terms in their area of responsibility will be learned on the job, Exam Raters assess the examinee's command of language to determine their ability to perform the duties of the position.
5. Within approximately one week of the exam, HR sends exam results to the examinee and HR Liaison & Payroll Clerk. This formal notice is viable for the duration of the examinees' employment with the County of Sonoma and should be placed in their personnel file.
6. If the examinee passes the exam, Payroll Clerks process the bilingual premium. 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.

**County of Sonoma  
Bilingual Proficiency Exam Request Form**

**Level to be Tested**

- Basic (Conversational):** Speaking/Comprehension: Conversationally proficient. Ability to understand and use common vocabulary of daily speech and handle verbal communication tasks. Can be easily understood by monolingual individual. May not be grammatically correct.
- Fluent (Highly Proficient):** Speaking/Comprehension/Reading/Writing: Highly proficient in all applications. Verbally articulate; grammatically correct; clear, accurate, and precise in writing and translation of written materials.

**Candidate/Employee Information**

<b>Candidate or Existing Employee</b> (If this is an existing employee, provide their employee number)	
<b>Was a recruitment conducted to advertise this position?</b> (If "Yes", provide the Requisition Number)	
<b>Job Title</b>	
<b>First and Last Name</b>	
<b>Phone Number(s)</b>	
<b>Email Address (Work or Home)</b>	
<b>Mailing Address</b>	
<b>Name of Payroll Clerk and Contact Number</b>	

**I hereby certify that the position occupied by the individual named above is a designated bilingual position that 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(If Designee Signature, Position Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number