

BILINGUAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM**Purpose:**

The County recognizes the importance of special skills held by employees that will benefit the County. With the importance of Diversity Equity & Inclusion steadily increasing in our communities, there is a growing need to have personnel employed with the County who possess and utilize bilingual skills. As such, Rockdale has implemented a Bilingual Incentive Program that will recognize and reward employees who pass a certified test called an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) administered by Language Testing International (LTI) and proctored by a Talent Management Program representative. The intent of the bilingual program is to increase our service to the minority communities by using/encouraging our ability to communicate in those languages represented in the community.

Policy Statement:

It shall be the policy of Rockdale County to utilize the Bilingual Incentive Program to compensate eligible Bilingual employees who pass certification and utilize their special skills in their respective departments while conducting official County business. The Bilingual Incentive Program shall be a voluntary agreement between Rockdale County and an employee based primarily on the business needs of the County and is not an employee entitlement.

Testing Administration:

The Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), administered virtually by Language Testing International (LTI), is a 30-minute recorded interactive conversation between the candidate and a virtual tester in which the candidate is assessed on his/her ability to speak a foreign language. During the OPI, the candidate will be asked questions about his/her interests, work experiences, and other familiar topics in order to tailor the assessment to the candidate. The candidate's overall ability to communicate orally in the designated language is the only skill being assessed and not the content of his/her answers, responses, or opinions. The recording of the candidate's test is reviewed by 2 certified language proficiency experts in order to issue the approved rating. Test results are provided to Talent Management for review.

Eligibility:**A. Employee Eligibility**

Not all employees are suitable for this program. All employees considered for the Bilingual Incentive Program shall be approved by the Department Head (or designee) and Talent Management.

The following employee criteria should be considered when evaluating an employee prior to scheduling an OPI:

1. Must be a current active County employee or new hire candidate.
2. Employee must not be on any active PIP or disciplinary action to be eligible to participate in the program.

B. Position Eligibility

Not all positions are suitable for this program. All positions selected for the program shall be approved by the Department Head (or designee), and Talent Management.

The following job characteristics should be considered when evaluating a position for eligibility:

1. Employees must be assigned to speak or translate the foreign language in their current position and that there is a need to use the language skill to complete their job duties and/or to support the department's goals and initiatives.
2. The position requires direct interaction with citizens, departmental customers, or 3rd party vendors who possess limited or no English communication abilities.
3. The employee must regularly and frequently speak and translate the language; and communication can be successfully achieved through verbal methods such as video conferencing, telephone, and/or face-to-face.

Please note: If a certified employee transfers, reduces, or promotes to a new assignment, bilingual certification must be redetermined or bilingual pay will be discontinued.

Procedure

1. The Department Head or designee shall complete and submit the Bilingual Incentive Program Request Form to Talent Management via HR.Records@rockdalecountyga.gov
2. Upon receipt of the request form, the Talent Management Department program representative will review the Program request form to determine the candidate's eligibility for the OPI testing.
 - a. If the Candidate Meets Eligibility:
 - i. Should the candidate meet the eligibility, Talent Management Department will schedule the test directly with LTI, requesting for the day and time indicated on the request form.
 - ii. Within 48-72 hours, Talent Management will notify the requestor and the candidate, and confirm the date and time of the test.
 - b. If the Candidate does NOT meet Eligibility:
 - i. Talent Management will notify the requestor of the denial decision and provide written support as to the candidate's ineligibility. A copy of the denial will be placed in the employee's personnel file.
3. The candidate must report to Talent Management 10-15 minutes prior to the test. In order for the Talent Management program representative to verify identity, the candidate must bring a photo ID with them.

Please note: It is important to notify the Talent Management Department program representative immediately if the candidate is unable to take the scheduled assessment.
4. The candidate will be placed in a Conference Room (designated and approved by Talent Management) with a laptop and will be provided with a copy of the Oral Proficiency Interview description, along with the access information. The candidate will be allowed the opportunity to review the information that explains OPI and what is expected of them. The room must remain quiet for proper testing. The candidate must not use a cell phone or any other unauthorized device during the assessment. Should the candidate attempt to utilize an unauthorized device, they will be disqualified from taking the assessment and further disciplinary actions may apply.
5. The Talent Management program representative will assist the candidate in getting logged in and setup on the LTI assessment website, and then leaves the room.

6. Following the assessment, results will be determined by LTI and will be made available to Talent Management within 1 week of the assessment. The rating report will include the language assessed, the name, ID number of the candidate, and the LTI rating.
7. Candidates shall receive a certificate which shows their level of proficiency. This certificate will be sent to both the requestor and the employee by Talent Management, and a copy placed in the employee's personnel file.
8. The Department must submit a Personnel Action Form for the incentive. Once received, Talent Management will process the pay increase, update the HRIS system, and file the executed form in the employee's personnel file.

Incentives and Proficiency ratings:

1. There are ten proficiency ratings as follows: Superior, Advanced High, Advanced Mid, Advanced Low, Intermediate High, Intermediate Mid, Intermediate Low, Novice High, Novice Mid, and Novice Low.
2. In order for candidates to receive a Bilingual Incentive increase, they must meet a minimum of an Intermediate Low rating.
3. Candidates will be compensated based on the listed ratings, not to exceed the approved increase percentage listed below:
 - i. Superior -7% incentive
 - ii. Advanced -6% incentive
 - iii. Intermediate -5% incentive
 - iv. Candidates rated Novice shall not receive any additional pay.
4. Employees meeting the above criteria will receive additional pay for all hours paid while in the Bilingual Pay Program and not just the number of hours spent speaking and/or translating the foreign language.

Testing Fees & Retest:

1. The testing fees are determined by OPI. Department Heads will be notified of fee schedule and shall be responsible for the cost of the initial test.
2. If, however, the candidate fails (i.e., Novice) and the candidate wishes to take the test again, the re-test policy is 90 days, and the candidate will be responsible for paying for the re-testing fee should they wish to retest.
3. If the candidate was rated Advanced or Intermediate and later wishes to take the test again to see if his/her skills have improved, the candidate may request to take another test again after 6 months from the date of the prior test. The candidate will be responsible for paying for the re-testing. If the candidate scores higher than the first time, the candidate shall receive the difference in percentage. *For example, if a candidate is rated Intermediate and receives a 2% increase in pay and then later takes the test again and is rated Superior, the candidate shall receive a 1% increase in pay.*
4. Department Heads may wish to test their employees annually to determine if the employee's skills are maintained. If the Department Head wish to do this, the cost of the test shall be paid by the department; however, the employee will not be given an increase in pay unless the employee scores at a higher proficiency level. If an employee scores lower, any removal of incentive pay shall be at the Department Director's discretion.
5. Employees are required to retest every 3 years in order to maintain their Bilingual certification with Rockdale County, should the employee fail to test, or the newest rating fails to meet the minimum requirements, the previously awarded incentive percentage will be removed.

Termination of Bilingual Incentive Program:

Rockdale reserves the right to terminate the program, or an individual's participation within the program, if the determination is made that the arrangement is no longer appropriate. A 30-day notice will be provided prior to the termination of the associated incentive.

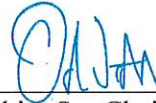
This policy may be subject to change in the event that the County changes testing institutions.

Policy Changes:

The County reserves the right to delete, modify, amend, or terminate this policy at any time with or without prior notice.

Approved this 27th day of August, 2024.

Rockdale County, Georgia
Board of Commissioners



Osborn Nesbitt, Sr., Chairman

ATTEST:



Jennifer O. Rutledge, County Clerk/
Executive Director of Government Affairs



**Board of Commissioners
Agenda Item Transmittal Form
Policy Transmittal Form**

Type of Request: New and Amended Employee Policies		County Clerk Use Only Policy #:
☐ Submission Information Contact Name: Chantall Hunt Department: Talent Management	☐ Information Summary of Request: This request includes the adoption of five (5) new employee policies and the amendment of six (6) existing policies.	
☐ Department Director /Elected Official Signature I have reviewed the attached, and it is approved as to substance. Signature: <i>Kimberly Redd</i> Date: <i>8/21/24</i>	☐ Chief Operating Officer Signature I have reviewed the attached, and it is approved for processing. Signature: _____ Date: _____	
☐ County Attorney Signature I have reviewed the attached, and it is approved as to form. Signature: _____ Date: _____	☐ Executive Director of Government Affairs/County Clerk Signature I have reviewed the attached, and it is approved for processing. Signature: _____ Date: _____	

Notes and Comments:		
Title	Type	Policy Number
Rehabilitation Policy	New	
Severance Pay Policy	New	
Travel Per Diem & Mileage Policy	New	
Civility & Anti-Bullying Policy	New	
Bilingual Incentive Program Policy	New	
Fire and Rescue Incentive Pay Policy	Amendment to Existing	2017-4-33 (Amended 10/10/2017)
Disciplinary Procedures Policy	Amendment to Existing	2006-4-29 (Amended 12/8/2020)
Tuition Reimbursement Policy	Amendment to Existing	2006-4-2 (Amended 12/13/2022)
Drug & Alcohol Use Policy	Amendment to Existing	2018-4-22
Sick Leave Policy	Amendment to Existing	2022-4-40
Non-Discrimination & Anti-Harassment Policy	Amendment to Existing	2006-14-7 (Amended 12/10/2019)