

## IMPACT STATEMENT

**Legislation title:** Establish a language pay differential for multilingual City employees and authorize the Bureau of Human Resources and the Office of Equity and Human Rights to establish processes and procedures necessary for implementation (Resolution)

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### **Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:**

Language is a major barrier for the public in accessing basic City services, programs, activities and communications. This has been abundantly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic as immigrant and refugee community members expressed difficulty in accessing vital information in their language.

One of the goals of instituting this proposed language pay differential policy is to increase equitable access to government for linguistically and culturally diverse community members served by the City of Portland. As we strive to be a more inclusive, multicultural institution serving the public equitably, increasing the number of different languages spoken by City staff to serve the public, demonstrates a proactive effort to comply with institutional civil rights obligations to reduce institutional language barriers and increase access to government programs, services, activities, and communications.

Multilingual City of Portland employees are currently providing language assistance without being compensated; this is a workplace equity issue that needs to be rectified.

This policy supports the City of Portland's adopted commitment to be an "Employer of Choice" in attracting, developing and retaining a diverse, culturally competent, and fully engaged workforce.

### **Financial and budgetary impacts:**

City of Portland employees who qualify for the language pay differential would receive an additional \$1.00 per hour to their base salary. The differential is only paid on hours worked, it does not apply to vacation time, sick time, and is suspended while employees are on leave.

The largest determinant of policy cost is the scale of employee participation in the program and differential. The City of Portland does not currently collect data on employees' language abilities, so there is no definite way to calculate the number of employees eligible to receive the proposed differential. With this limitation, the City Budget Office (CBO) drew from different available sources such as existing bureau employee language capabilities surveys and participation rates of other jurisdictions with language pay differential policies to inform their budget analysis of the language pay differential policy.

CBO estimated a broad range of City employee participation of 3% to 25%, the top end representing bureaus with a higher concentration of outwardly facing work and direct community service. This translates into an estimated cost of \$450,390 to \$3,753,247 in a given fiscal year.

The program shall be implemented on a pilot basis for the FY 2021-22 fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2021. Bureaus shall track any additional costs associated with the program and absorb the costs of the initial pilot within their existing FY 2021-22 budgets. If necessary, bureaus may request resources to help pay for program costs on a one-time basis during the FY 2021-22 Spring Budget Monitoring Process.

The data collected through the tracking requirements of the Language Access Resolution passed by City Council on November 12, 2020 will help bureaus demonstrate the language needs of community in accessing their bureau's services and inform budgeting.

Each bureau is also responsible for paying the fees associated with testing. Typically, tests cost approximately \$60 - \$150.

### **Community impacts and community involvement:**

According to most recent data from the U.S. Census, 19.4% (well over 117,000 people 5 yrs. and over) of Portland's population speaks a language other than English at home, and 8.1% (well over 49,000 people 5 yrs. and over) of the city's population speak English less than "very well."

As our community continues to grow and diversify, the City of Portland recognizes its obligation in providing equitable service delivery and meaningful access to city government to all community members.

The City of Portland is responsible for taking reasonable steps to provide equitable and meaningful access to its programs, services, activities, and communications to members of the public who have limited English proficiency and experience institutional language barriers.

Increasing the number of City staff who can connect with the public whose primary language is not English, and experience institutional language barriers, and paying staff for the skills they bring to the workforce, demonstrates a proactive effort to comply with Title VI national origin non-discrimination obligations.

A policy team with representatives from different City bureaus led the development of the language pay differential policy. Primary policy development activities included internal outreach, external outreach, and stakeholder engagement.

Internal outreach activities included focus groups with City Latinx PDX Affinity Group members, an online survey sent to the Information and Referral Program list of multilingual employees and the Diverse and Empowered Employees of Portland (DEEP) member list.

External outreach activities included research of existing language pay differential policies, informal interviews with jurisdictions both in the state of Oregon (i.e. Multnomah County, City of Hillsboro, State of Oregon), and out of state (i.e. City of San Jose and City of Denver), and a meeting with the New Portlanders Policy Commission.

Stakeholder engagement included meetings with customer service managers (i.e. 311, Water Bureau, and Parks & Recreation), the Bureau of Human Resources, City Attorney's Office, Equity Managers, and Labor Representatives.

**100% Renewable Goal:**

N/A

**Budgetary Impact Worksheet**

**Does this action change appropriations?**

- YES:** Please complete the information below.
- NO:** Skip this section

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount