

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
 FY 2027 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
 Budget Questions & Answers**

April 9, 2026

Question:

Can staff provide an update on the bilingual pay program?

Response:

On January 10, 2023, City Council voted unanimously to approve \$300,000 in contingency funding to establish the Bilingual Pay Program. The intended goals of the BPP, as stated by Council during the January 2023 meeting, were employee retention, attraction, recognition, and promoting cultural competency. The program was launched in February 2024 and was found to supplement vendor services by leveraging internal bilingual staff to support departmental translation and interpretation needs. Through the pilot program, OCCE observed a year-over-year reduction in the Office’s use of third-party vendors.

The program is voluntary and open to employees who pass a standardized proficiency test in any language other than English receive a \$0.50/hour stipend.

Program Overview:

(Program launched February 2024)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY2026 (current YTD)
Active Bilingual Pay Program Applicants	11	112	137	166
Proficiency Tests Cost	\$2,145	\$4,862	\$1,902	\$1,983
Bilingual Pay Program	\$1,290	\$82,733	\$112,255	\$96,484
BPP Annual Requests Fulfilled		46	60	26
BPP Employees Fulfilling Requests		12 out of 112 employees	12 out of 137 employees	15 out of 166 employees
Languages Requested		Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, Pashto, Dari	Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, Pashto, Dari, Farsi, Russian	Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, Pashto, Dari, Chinese
Total FY26 Language Access Spending (BPP and OCCE vendors)	\$3,435	\$87,595	\$114,157	\$98,467