



Bilingual Employee Policy

Bilingual employees are people who conduct court business with limited English proficient (LEP) persons in a language other than English, also called the target language. In accordance with Chief Justice Directive 06-03, the Office of Language Access (OLA) will facilitate the testing of bilingual employees to provide an independent and objective verification of an employee's language skills. OLA will contact Administrative Authorities to identify employees who use a target language while working.

OLA has selected the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) to test bilingual employees. The OPI is given by a third-party vendor over the phone, and employees will need approx. 30-40 minutes to take the exam. OLA will pay all testing fees.

The OPI scoring scale is from 1-12+. At the lowest end, a "1" means the "speaker has no ability whatsoever in the language. He/She cannot understand anything and can convey nothing." The highest score is a "12+", indicating the speaker "is a well-educated, distinguished speaker with superior native fluency. A person at this level not only speaks in a native-like manner and is perceived as native but can express himself or herself articulately on any subject."¹

OLA has identified an "8" as the preferred score for bilingual employees, because a person at this level can participate in general conversations surrounding routine topics in most social and work-related settings. Employees scoring below an 8, will be examined on a case by case basis, in consultation with OLA and the Administrative Authority.

OLA will receive the OPI results and forward them to the Administrative Authority and will keep a record of employee scores. Every July OLA will reach out to Administrative Authorities to inquire about the district's hiring of bilingual employees. Absent extenuating circumstances, employees will only need to be tested once during their employment with the Colorado Judicial Department. Please note, being an authorized bilingual employee does not make one certified to interpret. By testing a bilingual employee, the district is complying with the mandates in CJD 06-03. Questions about bilingual employees can be directed to interpreters@judicial.state.co.us.

Revised June 10, 2021

¹ Language about the meaning of numeric scoring values was taken from *Alta's Scoring Protocols For Language Testing*, available here: <https://www.altalang.com/language-testing/protocols/>