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WASHINGTON-- On Sept. 1, the Air Force Senior Language Authority (SLA) announced changes to the Air Force Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) policy.

The updated policy modifies the criteria Airmen must meet to qualify for FLPB and will affect individual Airmen when they re-certify for FLPB.

The new AF FLPB policy ([AFI 36-2605, Air Force Military Personnel Testing System, Guidance Memo 4](#)) is targeted to meet the needs of the Air Force by incentivizing Airmen with proficiency in languages that align with AF requirements.

In cases where the Air Force has more than sufficient existing language capability to meet validated requirements, Airmen will not receive FLPB unless they are serving in a Language Designated Position, are in a language inherent specialty or otherwise require a language to perform their duties. These languages will be listed as Prevalent in the Force (PIF) on the AF Strategic Language List (SLL). The AF SLL is available from base Test Control Officers.

Under previous Air Force policy, Airmen received FLPB if they demonstrated exceptionally high proficiency in a PIF language. With the new policy, Airmen are incentivized in foreign languages and dialects that are of the most strategic importance to the AF mission and where there is insufficient proficient capability to meet validated requirements.

The Air Force is making a requirements-based change to its foreign language proficiency bonus policy. "The service needs Airmen to focus on languages that help us fulfill our mission. This change is for the good of the force" said Ms. Barbara Barger, the AF SLA.

"Given the dynamic and challenging nature of today's global environment, the Air Force needs to be a truly cross-culturally competent force capable of accomplishing its mission in every area of the world" Ms. Barger reiterated.

Airmen who currently receive FLPB can determine if, and/or how these changes will affect them by reaching out to their Test Control Officer.

### **FLPB Background**

FLPB is a monetary incentive paid to eligible and qualified military personnel possessing foreign language proficiency. FLPB was established to encourage Total Force Airmen to acquire, maintain, and enhance foreign language skills vital to national defense.

The ability of the Air Force to interact in the international arena and respond effectively to any global contingency mandates the need for qualified personnel to communicate with allies, local populations and our adversaries.

In addition to receiving monetary benefits provided by FLPB, Airmen with LRC capabilities provide additional value to the Air Force. FLPB is used to incentivize acquisition of and improvement in those languages that meet validated AF requirements. Airmen should contact their Career Field Manager to learn about Language Designated Positions in their respective AFSCs. Participants in the Language Enabled Airman Program can find more information on this, and other news, through

the LEAP Facebook Group. To request to join, search Facebook for USAF Language Enabled Airman Program, and send a "Join Group" request."

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. *Why is the FLPB policy changing?***

The Air Force's long-term goal is to incentivize foreign language proficiency that matches with validated Air Force requirements to enhance the mission. The previous two FLPB guidance memos reflected this policy transformation and began to outline the shift from mapping foreign language proficiency to shaping proficiency to meet specific requirements. Initially, the Air Force Senior Language Authority (SLA) used the incentive bonus to identify language-proficient Airmen. At the same time, the SLA was also gathering foreign language requirements from the Component Numbered Air Forces (CNAFs), so that the AF could understand the inventory of Airmen with language proficiency as compared to the number of requirements for each foreign language. Based on these results, there are many more Airmen with language proficiency than validated requirements in some languages. The new FLPB policy will now aim to incentive language proficiency that more closely aligns with the Air Force mission and validated requirements.

### **2. *Who qualifies for FLPB?***

All Airmen can qualify for FLPB by taking the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) or Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) in the language to which they are qualified. The recent change to policy allows all Airmen, regardless of their career fields, to receive FLPB in all languages provided they achieve requisite proficiency levels and meet the appropriate guidelines. Please see AFI 36-2605, Air Force Military Personnel Testing system, for more information on these guidelines. Please contact your local education center to schedule a DLPT or an OPI.

### **3. *What is PIF and what languages are PIF languages?***

PIF stand for "Prevalent in the Force." PIF languages are those languages for which the Air Force has many more proficient Airmen than requirements. In those cases, the languages were designated PIF and bonus payments for PIF languages are limited to Airmen who are utilizing the language to perform their duties. In addition to the PIF designation, there are also two languages categories for which an Airman is eligible for FLPB.

Enhancement Languages (includes Immediate Investment and Emerging languages) are those in which the Air Force would like to enhance its capability. Enhancement languages are those for which DoD and the Air Force project an immediate need to meet urgent, current demands or for which there is an anticipated future need.

Sustainment languages are those for which there is a continuing, or sustained, need during the next 10-15 years. Whether or not a particular language is considered to be PIF will continue to change with the needs of the Air Force.

The AF Strategic Language List (SLL) is a complete list of the current languages for use in administering testing, training, recruiting and retention incentive programs, including those languages that are PIF languages. Ask your base Test Control Officer for a copy. The AF SLL is For Official Use Only.

**4. *Who will be affected most?***

- Airmen who are proficient in Prevalent in the Force (PIF) languages
- Airmen not in a language-designated position or not utilizing the PIF language in support of the Air Force mission
- Airmen who are proficient in PIF languages, whose primary duty requires or is coded for another language, will be most affected.

**5. *How can I still get paid for PIF languages?***

Your position must require the language in order to perform your duties. Typically, this means filling a language-designated position. Because many AFSCs use language skills, Airmen possessing these talents increase their eligibility for diverse career opportunities across the Air Force. Airmen should contact their Air Force Specialty Manager to learn about language-designated positions in their respective AFSCs. Another option is studying a language on the SLL that is not PIF. Finally, you could consider an application to the Language-Enabled Airman Program (LEAP). Additional information is available from the Air Force Culture and Language Center at: <http://www.culture.af.edu/leap/>. If you would like to maintain your current language or begin to learn a new language, please contact AF/A1DG at [af.a1dgworkflow@pentagon.af.mil](mailto:af.a1dgworkflow@pentagon.af.mil) for information on free, virtual language resources.

**6. *When will the changes take place?***

The first changes were effective 1 Sep 2011, when languages of primary training for Cryptologic Language Analysts were separated and paid differently from languages outside of the language of primary training. The second change is effective on the date of publication of the AFI 36-2605, Guidance Memo 4. These changes will more closely focus the Air Force incentive bonus on languages for which the AF has requirements. The policy will affect individual Airmen's FLPB upon re-certification.

**7. *How frequently does and will this policy change?***

While not frequently, FLPB policy changes as Air Force mission and requirements evolve.