

**VOLUME 7A, CHAPTER 19: “FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY BONUS”****SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES**

All changes are denoted by [blue font](#).

Substantive revisions are denoted by an asterisk (\*) symbol preceding the section, paragraph, table, or figure that includes the revision.

Unless otherwise noted, chapters referenced are contained in this volume.

Hyperlinks are denoted by [\*\*\*bold, italic, blue, and underlined font\*\*\*](#).

The previous version dated [July 2016](#) is archived.

<b>PARAGRAPH</b>	<b>EXPLANATION OF CHANGE/REVISION</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
All	Updated hyperlinks and formatting to comply with current administrative instructions.	Revision
190205	Added a note to reference the “Pay and Allowance Continuation Program” in accordance with Title 37, United States Code, section 372.	Addition
190305	Extended “Duration of Authority” to December 31, 2017.	Revision
Bibliography	Updated statutes and references.	Revision

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## CHAPTER 19

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY BONUS**

## 1901 GENERAL

## 190101. Purpose

This chapter establishes policy pertaining to Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) for members of an **Active Component (AC)** or **Reserve Component (RC)** of the uniformed services.

## 190102. Authoritative Guidance

The bibliography at the end of this chapter lists the authoritative references.

## 1902 ENTITLEMENT

## 190201. General Provisions

A. The Secretary of the Military Department concerned will pay FLPB to a member of an AC or RC, that has been certified as proficient in one or more foreign languages, or dialects identified on the Department of Defense (DoD) Strategic Language List (SLL) in the Immediate and Emerging category (see Table 19-1, Payment Category A).

B. The Secretary may pay FLPB to a member of an AC or RC of the uniformed services who has been certified as proficient in one or more foreign languages or dialects:

1. Identified on the DoD or Service Secretary SLL in the Enduring category (Service Secretaries may choose to pay or not pay FLPB, see Table 19-1, Payment Category B); or

2. Not identified on the DoD SLL, but designated by the Secretary concerned as a foreign language or dialect for which proficient personnel are required to accomplish DoD Component specific missions (see Table 19-1, Payment Category B).

C. The Secretary may not vary the criteria or rates for the proficiency bonus paid for officers and enlisted members.

## 190202. AC Eligibility

A. The Secretary concerned will pay a FLPB to a member of an AC of the uniformed services who meets at least one of the following conditions:

1. Is qualified in a military career specialty requiring proficiency in a foreign language or dialect and is certified proficient in that foreign language or dialect;

2. Has received training, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary, designed to develop proficiency in a foreign language or dialect;

3. Is assigned to military duties requiring a proficiency in a foreign language or dialect for which the DoD or the Secretary concerned has identified a need; or

4. Is certified proficient in a foreign language or dialect in accordance with paragraph 190204 for which the DoD or the Secretary has identified a critical need.

B. The member must execute a written agreement with the Secretary concerned that specifies the:

1. Amount of FLPB awarded;

2. Period for which the FLPB will be paid;

3. Initial certification or recertification necessary for the FLPB payment; and

4. Repayment provision of the unearned portion of any remaining FLPB if the member does not satisfy the eligibility and certification requirements for the length of the written agreement.

C. The member must achieve a minimum of Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) skill level 2/2 (ILR skill level 1/1 if authorized by the Secretary concerned) or higher in any two modalities on a DoD or Service Secretary SLL, Service-approved foreign language or dialect in order to receive FLPB, except as outlined in paragraphs 190206 and 190207.

#### 190203. RC Eligibility

A. In order to receive FLPB in a similar fashion as a member of the AC, a member of the RC must:

1. Meet the eligibility certification requirements outlined in paragraph 190202, 190204, 190206, and 190207; and

2. Fulfill the minimum annual service requirements for retirement eligibility, as defined in [Title 10, United States Code \(U.S.C.\), section 12732](#) unless waived by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned.

B. An RC member must earn a minimum of 50 retirement points, regardless of the RC source, in each full anniversary year to have that year creditable towards verification of the total years of qualifying service for non-regular retired pay and payment of FLPB.

1. A partial qualifying year is any period of less than 12 full months during which the RC member earns a prorated share of 50 retirement points and an identical prorated share (or smaller percentage of full FLPB annual payment) of FLPB.

2. An RC member who performs a partial qualifying year of less than 12 full months and earn less than 50 retirement points in a year will have their FLPB prorated at a value of 2 percent for each retirement point less than 50 points.

C. The total of FLPB paid to an RC member in good standing, and who has not been adjudicated as an unsatisfactory performer in the previous 12 months, must equal the annual FLPB paid to an AC member with the same certified language proficiency.

D. For RC members, the requirement to attain 50 points during a separation year is waived for a FLPB calculation if the member separates before 12 months in the anniversary year. The RC member will be paid the standard FLPB monthly allotment for months in good standing, with the last month prorated if separation occurs before the last day of the month. RC members in a separation year, which are no longer in good standing, will have their FLPB terminated in the month in which they fall from good standing. The exception to the 50-point standard in a separation year is an RC member who serves the entire anniversary year. The individual must earn 50 points to collect the last month of FLPB prior to separation.

#### 190204. Certification

A. A member must be eligible and certified by the Secretary concerned as being proficient in a foreign language or dialect for which the bonus is offered.

B. The certification of a member's foreign language or dialect proficiency will expire at the end of the 1-year period beginning on the first day of the first month after the certification date. A member must test annually in each foreign language or dialect in order to continue receiving FLPB, unless recertified under the conditions stipulated in paragraphs 190206 and 190207. The Secretary concerned may retest a member no earlier than 6 months from the last administration of a test in that foreign language or dialect unless the member has completed a significant language education or training event (at least 150 hours of immersion training or 6 consecutive weeks of 5-hour-a-day classroom training) in that foreign language or dialect.

C. A member must be certified as proficient in any combination of two of the three modalities (reading (R), listening (L), and speaking (S)) to receive FLPB, except as noted in Table 19-1, Note 2.

#### \*190205. Amount and Method of Payment

A. The bonus rate of FLPB may not exceed \$12,000 per 1-year certification period. The Secretary of the Military Department concerned may pay a bonus in monthly installments or a lump sum during the certification period.

B. The monthly rate will not exceed \$500 per month for a single foreign language or dialect, or \$1,000 per month for two or more foreign languages or dialects. The total annual FLPB amount may not exceed \$12,000 for each 1-year period of certification.

C. To receive the maximum monthly bonus installment allowed in any payment category (A or B), a member must acquire 3/3/3 proficiency in all three modalities or achieve an ILR skill level 4/4 or above in any two modalities (see Table 19-1).

D. The Secretary concerned:

1. May authorize FLPB at either Payment A or B rates (see Table 19-1) for DoD-approved languages not on the SLL and where there is a need to ensure a sufficient number of proficient personnel to accomplish DoD Component specific missions;

2. May, in the case of foreign languages considered prevalent in the force, limit the payment of FLPB to those Service members whose duties require proficiency in such languages or as determined by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned; or

3. May authorize the payment of FLPB to Service members whose duties require an ILR skill below level 2 in the L, R, or S modalities.

*\*Note: Hospitalized members may be entitled to FLPB under the Pay and Allowance Continuation (PAC) Program. See Chapter 13 for PAC entitlement eligibility.*

190206. Waiver of Recertification of Proficiency

A. The Secretary concerned may waive the certification requirement and pay FLPB to a member who:

1. Is assigned to duty in connection with a contingency operation;

2. Is unable to schedule or complete the test for certification because of that assignment; and

3. Except for the lack of such certification, satisfies the eligibility requirements cited in paragraphs 190202 or 190203.

B. The Secretary may treat the date the member was assigned to duty in connection with a contingency operation as equivalent to a certification date.

C. When a member whose certification will expire during a contingency operation assignment or within 6 months following return to the continental United States or to an overseas permanent duty station, the Secretary concerned will authorize the Service member those 6 months after returning as a mandatory grace period to recertify for FLPB.

D. If a member fails to obtain the required certification by the end of the 6-month period, then the Secretary may require the Service member to repay all or a portion of the FLPB received in accordance with paragraph 190303.

E. The Secretary may waive the annual certification in subparagraph 190204.B and the duration of certification requirements in paragraphs 190206 and 190207, if the Service FLPB regulation addresses the specific circumstances under which the Service Secretary may waive either or both of these certification requirements.

#### 190207. Exceptions to Recertification

The Secretary **concerned** may elect to recertify a member's foreign language or dialect proficiency using their last recorded DoD Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) scores when:

A. A member is assigned to duty outside the continental United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii) at a location where web-delivered testing facilities are not available or accessible. In such cases, member may complete the recertification requirements provided in paragraph 190204, no later than 6 months after the date released from the duty assignment. The Secretary is responsible for determining which locations qualify for this recertification and the duration (not to exceed 6 months) of the Service recertification grace period;

B. A member's certification expires while attending a significant language education or training event (at least 150 hours of immersion training or 6 consecutive weeks of 5-hour-a-day classroom training) or other significant events as defined by the Secretaries of the Military Departments, Defense Agencies, and DoD Field Activities heads. The next 1-year certification period will begin when they retest after they complete the significant language education or training event. The member's FLPB will continue while in training up until completion of the course retest event. Further FLPB entitlement will be based on the results from that event; or

C. A member who initially certifies or recertifies proficient through the DLPT system, at or above ILR skill levels 3/3 or 3/3/3 in a foreign language or dialect, must take an approved test within the DLPT system no less frequently than every 2 years for recertification, in which case recertification in the off year may be accomplished using a method selected by the Secretary of the Military Department.

#### \*1903 CONDITIONS OF ENTITLEMENT

##### 190301. Requirements

A member must qualify under any additional eligibility requirements prescribed by the Secretaries concerned, and is subject to Service specific certification requirements and amount of payment restrictions as outlined in:

A. DoD: DoD Instruction ([DoDI 1340.27](#)), Military Foreign Language Skill Proficiency Bonuses and [DoDI 5160.71](#), DoD Language Testing Program;

- B. Army: Army Regulation [11-6](#);
- C. Navy: Chief of Naval Operations Instruction [7220.7G](#);
- D. Air Force: Air Force Instruction [\(AFI\) 36-2605](#), Attachment 10 and 14, and [AFI 36-4002](#); or
- E. Marine Corps: Marine Corps Order [7220.52F](#).

NOTE: Pay authorizing officials must access the current DoD SLL and the Component's unique foreign language bonus pay authorizations, additional eligibility rules, and certification requirements in order to ensure the correct FLPB payment is authorized.

190302. Tax

FLPB is an item of pay subject to federal withholding tax. It is not subject to the Federal Insurance Contributions Act tax.

190303. Repayment

A member who receives FLPB, but does not satisfy eligibility and certification requirements specified in section 1902 will be subject to the repayment provisions of Chapter 2.

190304. Relationship to Other Pay and Allowances

A member may not be paid more than one Skill Incentive Pay or Proficiency Bonus in any month for the same period of service and skill. A member may be paid skill incentive pay or the proficiency bonus in section 1903, in addition to any other pay and allowances to which the member is entitled, except that a member may not be paid skill incentive pay or a proficiency bonus and hazardous duty pay in accordance with Chapter 24 for the same period of service in the same career field or skill.

\*190305. Duration of Authority

Unless authorized by the Congress, no FLPB agreement may be entered into after [December 31, 2017](#).



Table 19-1. FLPB Installment Rates (Note 1)

Proficiency in any combination of the R, L, and S modality of the Service's determination (note 2)	Payment Category A (A-rate) For Immediate and Emerging (note 3) DoD SLL Languages or Dialects (note 4)	Payment Category B (B-scale) For Enduring (note 5) Languages or Dialects (note 4)	Payment Category B (B-scale) for Languages and Dialects not on the DoD SLL (note 4)
ILR SKILL LEVELS	MONTHLY PAY (in \$)	MONTHLY PAY (in \$) (note 6)	MONTHLY PAY (in \$) (note 6)
1/1 (note 5)	\$100.00	0-100.00	0-100.00
1+/1+ (note 5)	\$150.00	0-150.00	0-150.00
2/2 (note 3)	\$200.00	0-200.00	0-200.00
2/2+ (note 3)	\$250.00	0-250.00	0-250.00
2+/2+ or 2/3 (note 3)	\$300.00	0-300.00	0-300.00
2+/3 (note 3)	\$350.00	0-350.00	0-350.00
3/3 (note 3)	\$400.00	0-400.00	0-400.00
3/3/3 or 4/4 (note 3)	\$500.00	0-500.00	0-500.00

**NOTES:**

1. All possible ILR skill level proficiency combinations are not depicted. In the case where a member's certified proficiency falls between two skill levels depicted, the member must be paid at the next lower skill level depicted (if at or above ILR skill level 2/2) where both proficiencies meet or exceed that lowest depicted payment threshold.
2. The member must be certified as proficient using the proficiency skill levels shown in any combination of two of the three modalities (L, R, and S) of the Service's determination in order to receive FLPB.
  - A. In the case of languages or dialects where there is only a single modality Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Personnel & Readiness (OUSD P&R)-approved test (L or R score), the Secretary concerned may:
    1. Require the member to also take an OUSD P&R-approved Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) to achieve the requirement of two modality scores for FLPB eligibility; or
    2. Use a corresponding modality from a different dialect of the same language to serve as the second modality for FLPB eligibility (i.e., combine the Modern Standard Arabic R DLPT modality score with an L score from a different dialect of Arabic).
  - B. In the case of foreign languages or dialects where a DLPT or another test approved by OUSD P&R does not exist but an OUSD P&R-approved OPI is available, the Secretary may pay FLPB for the single S modality only.
3. The Secretary must pay Immediate and Emerging DoD SLL category languages (at ILR skill level 2/2 and above).
4. The Secretary may pay FLPB at the Category B scale to Service members who test proficient in an additional DoD or Service-approved dialect of a language for which they receive FLPB at the Category A rate.
5. The Secretary has discretion to pay FLPB at the ILR skill levels 1/1 and 1+/1+.
6. The Secretary has discretion to pay or not pay FLPB on the scale bounded by zero and the Category A rate and at any 25 dollar increment between those lower and upper FLPB pay limits.

## \*BIBLIOGRAPHY

**CHAPTER 19 – FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY BONUS**

## 1902 – ENTITLEMENT

190201	DoDI 1340.27, May 21, 2013 37 U.S.C. § 353(b)(1) & (c)(2)
190202	DoDI 1340.27, May 21, 2013
190203	DoDI 1340.27, May 21, 2013
190204	37 U.S.C. § 353(d)(1) & (2)
190205	37 U.S.C. § 353(c)
* Note	37 U.S.C. § 372
*	Public Law (P.L.) 110-181, section 661, January 28, 2008
190206	37 U.S.C. § 353(d)(3)
190207	DoDI 1340.27, May 21, 2013

## 1903 – CONDITIONS OF ENTITLEMENT

190303	37 U.S.C. § 353(g)
190304	37 U.S.C. § 353(h)
190305	37 U.S.C. § 353(i)
*	P.L. 114-328, section 614 (9), December 23, 2016
Table 19-1	DoDI 1340.27, May 21, 2013