



Language Proficiency Assessments

The purpose of this brochure is to provide information about the State Farm® selection tests. Unauthorized exposure to actual tests or test questions prior to taking the tests will automatically disqualify an applicant from employment.

Important:

If you believe that you have a condition or circumstances which might affect your ability to take these types of tests, please contact your employment representative **prior to testing** to discuss your possible need for accommodation. Once requested, please be prepared to provide verification of your need for accommodation.

Many State Farm jobs have language proficiency requirements. The language proficiency assessments are designed to ensure we are placing individuals who can meet the proficiency requirements into these jobs.

Most jobs require oral (speaking) proficiency, but in some cases, certain jobs may require additional proficiency in writing, reading, and/or listening. You may be asked to take one of these assessments, or a combination of assessments, as determined by the requirements of the job for which you are applying.

A description of the various assessments, along with evaluation criteria and tips for test taking, can be found in this document.

Oral Proficiency

The Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) is a structured phone conversation between you and a trained, certified language proficiency tester from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). During this conversation, you will engage in a recorded interview that lasts 15-30 minutes. This interview may include a role play.

You will be rated based upon your language usage during the interview. The factual accuracy of your answers, responses or opinions does not affect the rating. The rater only evaluates how well you express yourself in the target language. To do this, the rater evaluates how you perform specific communication tasks over a range of common topics.

An oral proficiency rating is assigned by comparing your performance of specific language tasks with the criteria for each of ten proficiency levels described in the ACTFL *Revised Proficiency Descriptions for Speaking*. The final proficiency rating, and **only** the rating, is reported to the State Farm Human Resources Department.

What do I do in the interview?

- When taking the OPI, you should participate as much as you can in the interview to demonstrate your ability to speak the language. Giving

short answers to avoid making mistakes does not improve your rating as much as your ability to give detailed responses does.

- During the interview, the tester will ask you questions about your life experiences and topics related to those experiences to ensure you are given familiar topics to discuss.
- If at any time during the interview, you do not understand something the tester asks, you should seek clarification.

How am I evaluated?

During the interview, your language proficiency will be evaluated based on your ability to:

- Speak the standard form of the language without using English or slang.
- Speak the language informally and formally.
- Speak the language with sufficient accuracy to converse and be understood by native speakers, who do not understand English, without difficulty.
- Compensate for not knowing exact terminology by defining or describing any unknown terms.
- Describe objects, routines and events in detail.
- Narrate about things that have happened, are happening, and will happen in cohesive paragraphs.
- State and support a point of view on topics that are relevant using general/public information, and/or occurrences in extended discourse.

What happens next?

After the interview is concluded, the rater will review the recording and assign the rating that best describes your speaking proficiency during the interview.

The specifics of your conversation, or the recording itself, will not be shared; only your final score will be made available to State Farm Human Resources. Performance in the OPI only affects candidacy for jobs in which bilingual speaking skills are required.





Writing Proficiency

The Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) is composed of five sections that will measure your ability to write memos, letters and other kinds of business-related documents in a second language other than English. The test is produced by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The written passages are compared against the criteria for written proficiency of the target language established by the ACTFL. It is administered online and is 80 minutes long.

What are the criteria?

You will be asked to demonstrate your mastery of a specific written language. Your writing will be judged on the following factors:

- Extent and appropriateness of vocabulary.
- Grammatical accuracy.
- Overall fluency, style and manner of expression as related to the particular type of document and communication intent involved.

Tips for taking the WPT

- Read instructions carefully: before you begin, make sure you have a clear and detailed understanding of all the characteristics your response should have. Note, in particular, the identity of the person or group involved and the specific effects that your communication is intended to have.
- Plan your responses: for each task, collect your thoughts before providing an answer.
- Content tips: you are encouraged to be imaginative in elaborating your responses and to use information drawn from your own business knowledge and experience. Remember that you should always try to write as an educated, native speaker of the target language.

What happens after I'm done?

Once completed, your responses will be rated by the ACTFL testing office. Only your final score will be reported to State Farm Human Resources; the specifics of your answers will not be shared.



Reading Proficiency

The Reading Proficiency Test (RPT) consists of reading passages at various levels of proficiency. There is a range of informal and formal speech on general, social, and academic topics, such as daily interactions, reports, discussions and broadcasts. Each passage has three questions and each question has four multiple-choice answers, of which only one is correct.

The RPT measures the level and ability to comprehend written passages of a target language. It is an online test that takes 50 minutes. It is auto-scored according to the ACTFL proficiency scale. Only your final score will be made available to State Farm Human Resources; the specifics of your answers will not be shared.

How am I evaluated?

Reading comprehension is based largely on the amount of information you can retrieve from a text as well as the inferences and connections made within and across texts, and under different circumstances.

What can I do to prepare?

- You may want to practice reading on a wide range of topics: novels and other literary works, newspapers, magazines, and journals (print or electronic) in the target language.
- Reading is an interpretive skill, so you should practice reading for greater comprehension of texts, to understand all the facts, to interpret the connections between different parts of the texts, and to make inferences based on the information, organization, style and other rhetorical devices.

Tips for taking the RPT

- Read the questions you will need to answer before you read the text.
- Use time wisely: do not spend too much time on any one text or set of questions.
- Choose an answer to every question. There is only one correct answer for each question. Any unanswered question will count as "incorrect."
- Refer to the Task Navigation Tree within the assessment to keep track of texts and questions that are not completed. This online tool allows test-takers to move on to the texts and questions further in the test and leave those they are unsure of for review at the end.



Listening Proficiency

The Listening Proficiency Test (LPT) is a standardized test for the assessment of listening ability in a language. It measures how well a person understands spoken discourse. All listening passages are in the target language.

The LPT is an online test that is 90 minutes long. It consists of recorded passages at various levels of proficiency. Each passage has three questions; each question has four multiple-choice answers, of which only one is correct. The passages cover both informal and formal speech on general, social, and academic topics, such as daily interactions, reports, discussions and broadcasts.

Only your final score will be made available to State Farm Human Resources; the specifics of your answers will not be shared.

How can I prepare for the LPT?

- Listen to a variety of sources on a wide range of topics such as news programs, talk shows, and political debates.
- Listening is an interpretive skill; practice listening for greater comprehension of passages, to understand all the facts, to interpret the connections between different parts of passages, and to make inferences based on the information, organization, style, and other rhetorical devices.

Tips for taking the LPT

- Read the questions you will need to answer before you listen to the passage. This will help you listen to the passage for specific information.
- Use the digital notepad. On the right-hand side of the screen, a digital notepad is provided for note-taking. Use your notes to help you answer the questions.
- Use time wisely. Do not spend too much time on any one passage or set of questions.
- Do your best to answer every question, as any unanswered question(s) will count as "incorrect" on the LPT.