

National Security Language Initiative for Youth – Short-Term Programs, Summer 2009, 2010

Request for Grant Proposals

Application Deadline: December 22, 2008



I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose

The National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) is a critical component of a multi-agency Presidential Initiative to increase U.S. citizens' capacity to engage foreign governments and peoples through the critical languages of Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Farsi, Hindi, Korean, Russian, and Turkish. The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), in cooperation with a consortium headed by American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS (American Councils) in coordination with AFS-USA, Concordia Language Villages (CLV), and iEARN-USA, are seeking non-profit organizations to implement short-term exchange programs for high school and recently-graduated students (ages 15-18) to participate in exchanges focused on these languages in countries where these languages are widely spoken. Programs should immerse participants in the cultural and political life of their host country, giving them invaluable formal and informal language practice, sparking a lifetime interest in foreign languages and cultures.

The National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) emphasizes life-long learning of foreign languages and cultures in order to develop a cadre of Americans with advanced linguistic skills and cultural awareness that will advance international dialogue, promote the security of the United States, and allow the U.S. to compete effectively in the world economy. The NSLI-Y program will fund grants to non-profit organizations (including schools, universities, and school districts) for overseas summer institutes focusing on Arabic (60 participants), Mandarin Chinese (90 participants), Korean (30 participants), and Turkish (30 participants) languages and cultures during the summers of 2009 and 2010. It is anticipated that half the participants will travel during the summer of 2009, the remainder during 2010. In addition, Consortium members will offer programs in Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Farsi, Hindi, Korean, Russian, and Turkish languages for summer, semester, and academic year. The total combined number of high school students participating in the exchange will be 550.

Goals of the NSLI-Y Program

- Improve the ability of Americans to engage with the people of Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Farsi, Hindu, Korean, Russian, and Turkish-speaking countries through shared language;
- Develop a cadre of Americans with advanced linguistic skills and related cultural understanding who are able to advance international dialogue, promote the security of the United States, compete effectively in the global economy;
- Provide a tangible incentive for the learning and use of foreign language by developing additional overseas language study opportunities for U.S. high school students;
- To spark a lifetime interest in foreign cultures among American youth; and
- Create new institutional language teaching capacity overseas.

This funding mechanism will send U.S. high school exchange participants (ages 15 – 18 at the start of the program) overseas for six- to eight-week educational programs focusing on language acquisition and improved knowledge of the host culture. While it is anticipated that programs will be summer programs, other time frames will be considered with a justification. Language study should be the focus of these programs and programs should provide intensive language instruction in a classroom setting.

Program Components

The program should include the following components:

A. Recruitment, Application, and Selection Processes

1. The Consortium prefers that all institutional grantees use candidates chosen through the Consortium's national competition and application process. However, with compelling justification, grantees may select their own participants as long as their recruitment and selection process complies with Consortium application and selection guidelines, including medical screening.
2. Institutional grantees must use the Consortium's online application, but, with prior Consortium approval, may supplement or adapt it to meet their programmatic requirements.
3. Institutional Grantees must use program-wide terms and conditions, including parental/participant release forms.

B. Recruitment and Pre-Program Preparation

1. Pre-program language preparation is required if students have no knowledge of the target language.
2. Conduct baseline pre-program and post-program testing of language proficiency. Consortium members will provide guidance in this regard.
3. Grantees will hold pre-departure orientations in Washington, DC. With persuasive justification, Grantees may hold pre-departure orientation in another city.
4. Provide substantive pre-departure and overseas arrival orientations for participants, including general and program-specific information, as well as intercultural training. Proposals should provide specific examples of cultural training that will be offered to participants in order to ensure that they are fully aware and sensitive to the nuances of the host culture. Grantees should prepare American participants for encountering potentially difficult or challenging U.S. policy positions and/or alternative historical interpretations. Participants should also receive preparatory materials, either printed or electronic, including cultural information and logistical information about packing requirements, flight arrangements, etc.
5. International flight arrangements must be on U.S. carriers to the greatest extent possible and must adhere to the "Fly America" regulations. All international flights must be accompanied by an English-speaking adult.
6. The overseas arrival orientation should include a briefing by the Regional Security Officer from the U.S. Embassy.
7. Provide participants with information on applying for passports and obtain appropriate documentation, including visas for destination and transit countries and host country identification cards and/or resident permits as required.
8. Make all housing arrangements for participants throughout the program. Preferable accommodations overseas for participants will be in a well-screened host family. Other housing arrangements will be considered, but the program plan must provide for frequent, significant contact with local citizens including peers. Verify that prospective host family members aged 18 and over and any volunteers and staff who have regular contact with the exchange students have undergone screening for suitability. Applicants should describe in their proposal a standard screening process for host families that includes in-home interviews. While full-time host family placements are preferred, students may also be placed in a dormitory setting that includes constant adult resident supervision that ensures the security of participants and affords the opportunity for visits with designated and screened families which can offer brief homestays throughout the course of the exchange. In either case, the student must be ensured his or her own bed. Long-term housing arrangements must be approved in consultation with the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate and by ECA. Ensure that hosts are qualified, motivated, hospitable, and supportive of the program's goals and objectives.
9. Orient host institutions, staff, and families to the goals and anticipated outcomes of the program and provide intercultural training. Provide teachers with information on U.S. classrooms and teaching

methodology. Ensure host country staff supporting American participants are capable of communicating cultural differences Americans must navigate in order to have a successful exchange.

10. Obtain permission from each student's natural family to have their photo taken and reproduced in ECA-approved printed and web-based promotional materials. American Councils can provide a form for this purpose.

C. Program Activities

1. Register all participants with the appropriate U.S. Embassy or consulate and be on the warden system for notices regarding safety.
2. Design, plan, and implement an academic course of study for U.S. high school students abroad, focusing on acquisition of one of the specified languages. Programs should include six to eight weeks overseas and provide language instruction in formal as well as informal settings. Instruction should be an average of four to six hours per day and include the four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). Students may be beginning and/or intermediate/advanced students of the target language. Instruction should provide a solid foundation for future study of the language. All activities must promote program goals.
3. Provide all accommodations, including three meals a day. While participants may receive meal stipends for some meals, program organizers should ensure that a majority of meals are provided through homestays, pre-paid board plans, group meals, etc. to ensure that students are eating properly.
4. Provide regular and consistent monitoring of participants, including academic counseling, cultural adjustment, and medical and emotional support. English-speaking staff should be physically present and available to support participants throughout the course of the program, including on an emergency basis. Plans should be made (and described) to keep in close touch with students in case of emergencies, so that students can be located at a moment's notice. Inform Consortium and PAS personnel immediately of any significant health or safety issue affecting program participants.
5. Arrange appropriate community, cultural, social, and civic activities, including formal education about the host country through lectures, discussions, and site visits.
6. Provide a closing session to summarize the project activities, prepare participants for their return home, and to plan for the future.
7. Include a program of enhancements, excursions, briefings, discussions on key cultural issues that reinforce and support the language program. The program activities should introduce the students to the community, its leaders and institutions, and ways that governments and citizens interact and societal problems are resolved. Educational excursions will serve to enhance the participants' understanding of contemporary life through study of the community's history, culture, media, political institutions, ethnic diversity, and environment. Volunteerism and community service should be included. Enhancement activities will increase the students' appreciation and understanding of the host culture, history, beliefs, and practices and may include integrated projects with host country nationals, particularly peers, including alumni of ECA programs. These activities should increase students' appreciation of the importance of tolerance and respect for the views, beliefs, and practices of people from other cultures. Embassy and Consular personnel may post limits or guidelines on all aspects of the community and outreach portions of the exchange.
8. Supply each U.S. student with the means to communicate with a local representative in an emergency, including, if necessary, a cell phone with in-country calling capability.
9. Programs should include diversity in all aspects, including all participants (students, hosts, etc.), hosting communities, orientation, and program activities. Proposals should articulate plans for including diversity in the program.
10. Participants will be expected to share and expand on their program experiences by using online communities before, during, and after the program. These resources will be provided by the Consortium. Grantees should encourage all participants to enroll on the State Alumni website administered by ECA.
11. Programs must be assessed and evaluated by participants using assessment tools provided by the grantee, the Consortium, and the Department of State.
12. The grantee must use program-wide terms and conditions, including parental/participant release forms.
13. Enroll students in the ASPE health insurance plan for the duration of the exchange and assist with claims as necessary.

D. Follow-on Activities

1. Conduct follow-on activities with program alumni that enable them to effectively share their experiences overseas with their schools and communities, particularly during International Education Week (November each year).
2. Provide follow-on sessions for program alumni within two months of re-entry to develop alumni plans, discuss the impact of the program, and make recommendations for future programs.
3. Applicants should present creative and effective ways to assist students in continuing their language studies, particularly if the language is not readily available at U.S. schools or colleges in their area. Substantive follow-on activities (which may include alumni conferences, “virtual” networking meetings and lectures, and/or alumni presentation at their high schools) are required and can be funded by this funding opportunity grant. Additional activities should be supported by non-Bureau sources.

E. Management and Administration

1. Work in consultation with the Consortium in the implementation of the program, provide timely reporting of progress, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.
2. Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend disbursements to the participants.
3. Respond fully and promptly to requests for information relating to the participants and alumni
4. Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the impact of the program as outlined in Monitoring and Evaluation below.

The grantee organization will be responsible for the entire program cycle including management of travel documents (passports, visas), U.S. domestic and international travel arrangements, staffing, preparation and oversight of all program components in the U.S. and overseas. Applicants should describe in detail the major components of the program including program planning; publicity and recruitment; the host venue overseas; orientations; educational program, including the language program, enrichment activities, excursions, and cultural activities; accommodations and housing arrangements; and participant monitoring, including host families and living situations. Proposals should include information about staffing (resumes) and a timeline. The NSLI-Y Consortium organizations will provide guidance on language assessment tools to be used before and after the program to demonstrate results.

A successful project will be one that nurtures a cadre of students to be actively engaged in international studies and that equips students with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to continue their language study upon return. Participants will develop an appreciation for the host culture and learn more about the society and traditions through their study and stay in the host country.

Participant Requirements

Participants must be:

- U.S. citizens
- Currently enrolled in high school or have just graduated
- Between 15 and 18 years of age at the start of the program
- Have a GPA of at least 2.5

Monitoring and Evaluation

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project’s success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. Your proposal should include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The grantee will be expected to track participants and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions

(institutions in which participants study or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

We encourage you to assess the following levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. Participant satisfaction with the program and exchange experience.
2. Institutional change, particularly establish of new language programs in the U.S. or overseas, new linkages, etc.
3. Participant learning, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, language skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
4. Participant behavior, concrete actions to apply knowledge in study or community; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, plans to continue language study and engagement with the target country, and others.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it (1) specifies intended outcomes; (2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; (3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and (4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with satisfaction will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria. Grantees will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to American Councils in their regular program reports.

As a part of the NSLI-Y program, all participants will take three ECA online E-Goals surveys:

- Standardized pre-program surveys, at the beginning of the program;
- Standardized post-program surveys, at the end of the program; and
- Standardized follow-up surveys, approximately six months to one year after the conclusion of the program.

In addition, all participants will be required to use Consortium-guided language assessment tools at the beginning and end of the program to measure language gain.

II. Budget, Submission Instructions, and Evaluation Criteria

Budget

Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Funding is available in the amount of \$1,500,000 for 210 participants. Applicants must provide a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity for clarification.

Allowable costs include but are not limited to:

- Recruitment/selection
- Materials
- Meeting costs
- Preparation/orientation
- Visas and associated costs
- Travel (staff, participant, and chaperone)
- Academic program costs (including language instruction, tuition, tutoring, program activities, and monitoring)
- Student stipends, typically \$125/month
- Room and board as necessary
- Cultural activities

- Food and lodging, when not in homestay
- Administration
- Follow-on activities and alumni tracking
- Evaluation
- Emergency funds (no more than \$100 per student, to be disbursed on the basis of receipts)

Budgets should follow a standard 3 column format: Budget Request, Cost Share, Total Costs. Please submit a comprehensive line item budget including an explanatory budget narrative.

Approximate Total Funding: \$1,500,000

Number of Awards: Several in each funding category

Anticipated Award Date: February 1, 2009

Anticipated Project Completion Date: Approximately 8 months after award date (September 30, 2009)

Cost Sharing

There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, applicants are encouraged to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved grant agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23—Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, your budget request will be reduced in like proportion.

Eligibility Information

Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3).

Because this funding is provided by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Bureau guidelines will apply in terms of eligibility. Guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$60,000 in funding.

Note: Please read the complete request for proposal before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the deadline has passed, Consortium staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the review process has been completed.

Your organization must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. You must submit documentation to verify nonprofit status. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared ineligible.

Programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content.

Proposal Contents, Requirements, and Guidelines

All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, budget, and budget narrative. Proposals should include a project timeline, a sample day schedule, and a sample week schedule. Proposal narratives can be a maximum of 20 pages in length, double spaced, single-sided. Proposals must adhere to the tabbed organization method described below.

The tabs should be:

Pre-tab: Completed title page, per attached.

- A. Executive Summary
- B. Proposal Narrative and Calendar of Activities/Timeline
 - 1. Vision (need, objectives, goals, benefits)
 - 2. Participating organizations
 - 3. Program activities including recruitment and selection (if not using the Consortium process), language training programming/academic program, logistics, enhancement activities, participant monitoring
 - 4. Program evaluation
 - 5. Follow-on
 - 6. Project management
 - 7. Work plan/time frame
- C. Budget and Budget Narrative
- D. Resumes
- E. Other Appendices – including letters of support, overseas partner information, certification of non-profit status, relevant attachments, etc.

Application Deadline and Submission Instructions

Application Deadline: December 22, 2008

Applications may be submitted in one of two ways:

- 1) In hard-copy, via a nationally recognized overnight delivery service (i.e., DHL, Federal Express, UPS, Airborne Express, or U.S. Postal Service Express Overnight Mail, etc.), or
- 2) In hard-copy by courier. If submitting by courier, applicant must inform American Councils by e-mail no later than one week before the application deadline. If sending by courier, the proposal must arrive on or before the stated application deadline.

Submitting printed applications by mail service. Applications must be shipped no later than the above deadline. Delivery services used by applicants must have in-place, centralized shipping identification and tracking systems that may be accessed via the Internet. Proposals shipped on or before the above deadline but received more than three days after the deadline will be ineligible for further consideration under this competition. Proposals shipped after the established deadlines are ineligible for consideration under this competition. American Councils will not notify you upon receipt of application. It is each applicant's responsibility to ensure that each package is marked with a legible tracking number and to monitor/confirm delivery via the Internet. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time.

The tabbed original and four tabbed copies of the application with Tabs A-E (for a total of 5 copies) should be sent to: American Councils for International Education, Attn: NSLI-Y, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036.

Required Electronic Submissions

In addition to the hardcopy submission of the proposal, Applicants must submit the executive summary, proposal narrative, budget, and budget narrative in e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word and Excel to the following e-mail address: nsliy@americancouncils.org.

In the e-mail message subject line, include the name of the applicant organization and the partner country.

Review Process

American Councils will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the American Councils program office and/or Consortium partners, as well as the Youth Programs Division of the U.S. Department of State. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Review criteria include:

1. Quality of the program idea. Proposals should show a good understanding of the program goals and how to achieve these goals. Programs should deliver high quality language instruction and strengthen long-term mutual understanding. Proposals should demonstrate how students will be recruited and selected (if applicable), monitored, taught the foreign language, and supported as alumni. Proposals should include creative ways to involve students in their host communities.
2. Program planning. Proposals should clearly show an understanding of the program's objectives and how the organization will achieve them. The narrative should address the program elements described above. A detailed agenda and work plan should demonstrate capacity.
3. Support of diversity. Proposals should demonstrate support of diversity in all program aspects including participants, sending and hosting communities, orientation, and program activities.
4. Institutional record/capacity. Applicants must demonstrate a well-established infrastructure in the country or countries where they plan to send students. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program's goals. Proposals should demonstrate the capacity of in-country organizations to fully support and ensure the safety and well-being of participants throughout the duration of their program.
5. Program evaluation. Successful applicants will demonstrate clear program goals and objectives as well as strategies for monitoring student and alumni progress. Proposals should include an evaluation plan that includes assessment as activities unfold as well as at the end of the program. The final project evaluation should provide qualitative and quantitative data about the project's influence on the participants as well as their surrounding community.
6. Cost effectiveness/cost sharing. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Preference will be given to organizations whose proposals demonstrate a quality, cost-effective program.

Relevant federal circulars include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments".

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Reporting Requirements

Reporting Requirements: Grantees must provide American Councils with an electronic copy of the following reports:

(1) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. A template for the financial report will be provided;

(2) Interim program and financial reports based on the calendar due April 15, July 15, and October 15.

Grantees will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to American Councils in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided upon request.

Contacts: For questions about this announcement, contact: Lisa Choate (choate@americancouncils.org) or Loren Kupferschmid (lkupferschmid@americancouncils.org), American Councils for International Education, NSLI-Y Staff, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036, (t) 202-833-7522, (f) 202-833-7523