

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)
FY 2017 NATIONAL SECURITY LANGUAGE INITIATIVE FOR YOUTH

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-17-010

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by the Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division for the FY2017 National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) program. Proposals must conform to the NOFO, the Guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Applications not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the Standard Guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific Guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying NOFO, the NOFO is to be the dominant reference.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

A. Overview

The FY2017 award will be executed as a cooperative agreement between the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and a single award recipient to support merit-based scholarships for American high school or recently graduated students for overseas intensive foreign language instruction in eight critical languages: Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Persian (Tajiki or Farsi), Russian, and Turkish. The award also supports programming for NSLI-Y alumni from all program years.

Applicants should identify sub-award recipients, hereafter known as "implementing organizations," to carry out overseas language programs that are in addition to those carried out by the applicant. Applicants are encouraged to propose a sub-award competition, as described below, to identify additional implementing organizations for selected summer programs.

B. Distribution of Scholarships by Language, Duration, and Location

Applicants should propose to select and place approximately 590 participants on overseas programs of two durations: summer (6-8 weeks) and academic year (8-10 months). An adequate number of alternates should be identified to replace finalists who may drop out prior to the start of the program.

The *approximate* target distribution of scholarships by language, duration, and location is detailed below. This distribution may be adjusted with the concurrence of ECA. ECA reserves the right to alter languages, locations, programs, and participant numbers based on participant demand, safety and welfare, security, the availability of funding, and other factors. The award

recipient should propose a minimum of five participants for each academic year program and a minimum of 12 participants for each summer program. Programs should be proposed for all eight languages.

1. **Arabic:** 88 for summer; 15 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Oman. If security considerations permit and ECA concurs, programs in Tunisia and Egypt may be added at a later time.
2. **Bahasa:** 15 for summer. Programs may be proposed for Indonesia.
3. **Chinese (Mandarin):** 160 for summer; 28 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for the People's Republic of China and Taiwan.
4. **Hindi:** 30 for summer; 5 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for India.
5. **Korean:** 80 for summer; 12 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for the Republic of Korea (South Korea).
6. **Persian (Tajiki or Farsi):** 12 for summer. One program may be proposed for Tajikistan.
7. **Russian:** 110 for summer; 15 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for Russia, Estonia, Latvia, and Moldova.
8. **Turkish:** 15 for summer, 5 for academic year. Programs may be proposed for Turkey.

C. Department of State Responsibilities

In a cooperative agreement, the U.S. Department of State is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The U.S. Department of State's activities and responsibilities for this program include the following:

- Provide guidance in the execution of major program components, providing concurrence as necessary.
- Review all recruitment and publicity materials prior to publication, including application forms, the program website, and brochures.
- Review and approve all participant award documentation, NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions, Operational Guidelines, and other key program documents.
- Collaborate on publicizing the program.
- Review and approve the participant recruitment strategy and selection process.
- Advise on outreach and programming for students with disabilities.
- Provide ECA-specific eligibility guidelines for use in the application process.
- If a subaward competition is proposed, concur on the solicitation documents and the selection of subaward recipients.
- Review implementing organizations' program descriptions and program plans/schedules including plans for language instruction, cultural enrichment activities, community service projects, peer tutoring, and excursions.

- Concur on general program location, host family/housing location, and host language institution or school.
- Participate in pre-departure orientations and re-entry orientations when possible.
- Support the award recipient's pre- and post-program standardized testing of participants' language proficiency.
- Provide a security briefing at the arrival orientation when possible.
- Provide coordination for the inclusion of NSLI-Y participants in appropriate Embassy/Consulate activities.
- Assist in liaison with appropriate U.S. Department of State offices, including the regional bureaus and overseas posts.
- Consult on participant support issues and concur on all participant early returns from the program.
- Concur on the Scope of Work and resumes for consultants hired to perform key program functions, such as evaluation, curriculum development, or overseas site visits.
- Review and approve modifications to program locations, placement numbers, implementing organizations, or program structure.
- Facilitate cooperation with other federally-supported programs aimed at critical language learning.
- Collaborate on and participate in the annual NSLI-Y planning meeting.
- Provide survey results to the award recipient for the purposes of program management.
- Consult on alumni activities and follow-up events.
- Facilitate access to the U.S. Department of State's international travel registration system (Smart Travel Enrollment Program or STEP) and to relevant consular forms as needed.
- Provide health benefits to participants through the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE).

D. Award Recipient Responsibilities

Key responsibilities of the award recipient include the following:

- Provide overall management and coordination for the NSLI-Y program.
- Identify qualified organizations as subaward recipients to implement NSLI-Y overseas programs and provide oversight of the subaward recipients.
- Conduct a subaward competition for implementing organizations, if proposed.
- Work with implementing organizations to develop quality language immersion programs.
- Conduct a nationwide marketing and recruitment plan to attract diverse applicants.
- Manage a nationwide, merit-based application process.
- Manage the selection and placement of NSLI-Y participants.
- Develop a plan for outreach and placement of students with disabilities.
- Maintain, and regularly update, a database of participant information, protecting personally identifiable information.
- Monitor participant safety and well-being, and ensure on-program support for participants.
- Ensure that all participants receive the required hours of language instruction.
- Assess participant language acquisition using standardized language assessment tools.

- Ensure that all implementing organizations coordinate with the respective U.S. Embassies/Consulates as required.
- Organize and facilitate a planning meeting for all NSLI-Y implementing organizations, overseas partners, and ECA staff.
- Evaluate the overall program and its various components.
- Manage all subawards, both programmatically and financially.
- Facilitate the development and activities of an alumni association, including alumni from all NSLI-Y program years.
- Submit all reports and requested program information to ECA in a timely manner.

E. Scholarship Coverage

The award recipient will ensure that the NSLI-Y scholarship is comprehensive and consistent across all implementing organizations, and covers the following expenses:

- **Travel:** Round-trip travel between the participant's city of official residence, to the pre-departure orientation location, and to the overseas NSLI-Y program location
- **Orientations:** Pre-departure, arrival, mid-program (academic year only), and re-entry
- **Visas:** Host country entry/exit and transit visas, as needed
- **Tuition and related academic expenses:** Including support and testing for placement and language acquisition
- **Educational and cultural programming:** Including overseas language-focused excursions, volunteer opportunities, and guided internships, if applicable
- **Meals:** Three meals per day
- **Accommodations:** With a host family for all or part of each program; or in a dormitory or other supervised group housing for part of the exchange
- **Health Benefits:** Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits, provided by the Department of State, or equivalent health insurance
- **Stipend:** To cover additional living expenses and incidentals if needed as determined by in-country implementer and approved by award recipient

The NSLI-Y scholarship **does not cover** the following:

- **Passports:** Costs associated with obtaining a valid U.S. passport, except in cases of unusual hardship, as determined by the award recipient
- **Medical:** Required medical examinations and immunizations
- **Incidentals:** Pocket money, except in cases of unusual hardship, as determined by the award recipient

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

The proposal must incorporate the following program elements:

A. Identification and Management of Overseas Implementing Organizations

Identification of Implementing Organizations: Propose overseas language programs to be implemented by the award recipient, and identify subaward implementing organizations to carry out additional summer and academic year programs. The applicant itself should propose to implement programs for no more than approximately 25% of the total NSLI-Y participants.

ECA encourages applicants to identify an adequate number of subaward organizations to provide a strong base of implementing organizations for each language. The applicant must also demonstrate how it will continue to explore potential new partners with the goal of strengthening and expanding program capacity for the FY 2017 program. Educational organizations that manage or implement other critical language programs and will support the continued language learning of alumni should be given special consideration.

The applicant must demonstrate that each implementing organization has significant and relevant experience and expertise in planning and carrying out overseas programs in the respective language(s) and country(ies)/location(s) where it proposes to implement the program(s). All implementing organizations must be capable of handling overseas on-program support (OPS) issues in a timely and transparent way that permits information to be conveyed to the award recipient and, through the award recipient, to ECA.

The applicant should identify the majority of program participants through the national merit-based competition described below. However, some implementing organizations may recruit and select some or all of their own participants, as long as the organizations comply with basic NSLI-Y eligibility requirements, utilize a transparent and merit-based selection process, and provide appropriate documentation.

Additional Subaward Implementing Organizations: Once the cooperative agreement is awarded, the award recipient may, with ECA concurrence, bring additional subaward implementing organizations into the program if needed to meet program requirements and scholarship distribution.

U.S. Embassy Liaison and Consultation: Ensure that all implementing organizations and overseas partners establish a working relationship with the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the relevant U.S. Embassy/Consulate. During the program planning phase, implementing organizations should contact PAS to obtain concurrence on program placement locations, including the host language institution/host school, and host family or other long-term accommodations locations (regions, neighborhoods, etc.).

Implementing organizations should invite PAS to participate in the arrival orientation *and* request a briefing by the Embassy's Regional Security Officer or other U.S. Embassy official to address matters of safety and security.

Implementing organizations should consult PAS staff regarding proposed activities with participants and/or alumni of other ECA-sponsored programs. Implementing organizations should invite PAS staff to participate in NSLI-Y program events as appropriate. If the political situation in any country results in the need for the Embassy to assume more responsibility, the overseas implementing organization should work with the Embassy as appropriate.

Program Planning Meeting: Organize and facilitate a planning meeting for all NSLI-Y implementing organizations, overseas partners, and ECA staff to ensure that a single worldwide program identity is cultivated and maintained, and to discuss policies, procedures, and best practices. Each implementing organization should be represented by at least one participant at the meeting.

Operational Guidelines: Review and refine, with ECA concurrence, comprehensive operational guidelines, including procedures for emergency situations. Distribute the guidelines to implementing organizations and ensure that they understand, implement, and adhere to them.

B. Nationwide Recruitment and Selection of NSLI-Y Scholars

Outreach: Propose a comprehensive outreach plan to publicize and recruit a strong national pool of qualified candidates that represents the United States' diversity. Diversity addresses, but is not limited to, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. To the fullest extent possible, the proposal should address and encourage the participation of traditionally underserved audiences in all program activities.

Merit-Based Competition: Conduct a nationwide merit-based competition for U.S. participants with clearly identified criteria and a formal selection process that includes documented in-person or telephone interviews for academic year participants.

Disabilities: Develop a plan for outreach and placement of students with disabilities. Demonstrate how participants with disabilities will be accommodated when possible through regular or specially-designed programs.

Recruitment Criteria: Ensure that the following minimum criteria are used to recruit NSLI-Y applicants: U.S. citizenship; 15 to 18 years of age at the approximate beginning of the program (the award recipient may select one cut-off date for summer programs and one for academic year programs); enrolled in high school or equivalent home school program at the time of application; and minimum 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale or equivalent.

Application: Develop a comprehensive online application. Monitor the online system to limit and address technical problems. The award recipient must be capable of accommodating applicants who cannot apply online. All application materials and associated data should be

available in a sortable, searchable, database format that can be easily shared with ECA upon request.

Applications from Alumni of NSLI-Y and other ECA-sponsored programs: Adhere to the ECA eligibility policy for alumni of NSLI-Y and other exchange programs funded by ECA's Youth Programs Division.

Public Inquiries: Respond to and manage general inquiries and application questions. Record and track all inquiries related to problems or issues with any part of the application process.

Selection Process: Plan for and conduct a transparent, criterion-based selection process. Screen and select participants who show maturity and strong evidence of the ability to succeed in an intensive, demanding language study program and who represent the diversity of the United States, including individuals from underserved populations and locales. Give preference to applicants who demonstrate the intent and ability to continue their language study beyond the scholarship period and apply their critical language skills later in their professional careers. Give preference to qualified participants who might not be able to study language abroad were it not for the NSLI-Y scholarship.

Department of State Notification: Provide ECA with lists of finalists and alternates at the time of participant notification. Identify finalists and alternates who have participated in a previous NSLI-Y program.

Program Placement: Assign finalists and alternates to particular programs based on language level, overseas experience, and other relevant criteria to ensure that each candidate is placed into an appropriate and challenging program. The proposal should address how the participants' language skills will be assessed for placement purposes, and on what basis program assignments are made. Notify all implementing organizations of finalists and alternates from the national application pool assigned to them.

Applicant Notification: Prepare and send notifications to all finalists, alternates, and non-selected applicants. Prepare program descriptions for each overseas program based on a standard template. Inform participants of their program placement (including implementing organization, city, and school) at the time of scholarship notification, unless this is not possible due to security or other concerns about the location or program. Inform participants of specific housing accommodations (host family name, location and, if applicable, dormitory or group housing location) no later than one week prior to departure from the United States and preferably earlier.

C. Subaward Competition for Implementing Organizations

To help ensure program applicant diversity and to increase the pool of implementing organizations, the applicants are encouraged to propose a subaward competition for non-governmental and educational organizations to submit proposals to implement NSLI-Y summer programs (6-8 weeks). Guidelines for the subaward competition, if proposed, include the following:

- **Languages:** The subaward competition may be used to identify implementing organizations for summer programs in any number or combination of the eight NSLI-Y languages.
- **Numbers:** Subawards granted under this competition may be used to select and place up to approximately 200 participants.
- **ECA Review and Concurrence:** Provide the solicitation documents for the subaward competition to ECA for review. Obtain ECA concurrence on subawards.
- **Recruitment of Applicants:** Subaward applicants may propose to:
 - Recruit applicants from one or more specific geographic areas in a merit-based process,
 - Recruit applicants nationwide from a specific group (for example, members of a nationwide youth organization) in a merit-based competition, or
 - Accept finalists from the national NSLI-Y competition described in Section II.B, rather than recruit their own participants.
- **Application Criteria for Locally-Selected Participants:** Subaward recipients that propose recruiting and selecting their own NSLI-Y participants must adhere to the general criteria for applicants detailed in Section II.B.
- **Diversity:** Subaward recipients that propose selecting their own participants should address plans for recruiting a diverse participant pool, with particular attention to applicants from underserved backgrounds and those who would not otherwise have an opportunity to participate in an overseas language program.
- **Database:** All subaward recipients must submit complete finalist application forms, appropriate background information, and host family placement information to be included in a central participant database.

D. Language Instruction and Assessment

Language Program Standards: Develop, implement, and monitor language program standards for language instruction and language-focused cultural activities and excursions for all NSLI-Y programs. Ensure that all summer programs include a minimum of 120 hours of classroom language instruction. Ensure that all academic year programs include a minimum average of ten hours per week of classroom language instruction for most weeks of the academic year. For both summer and academic year programs, classroom language instruction should generally not exceed five hours per day.

Language Goals, Curriculum, and Teacher Training: Ensure that each implementing organization proposes, implements, and maintains an appropriate curriculum for language instruction based on relevant standards and pedagogical best practices. Ensure that each implementing organization conducts appropriate teacher training. Provide advice and guidance

as needed to implementing organizations on their language goals, curriculum design, and teacher training.

Level of Instruction: Group participants in classes based on their language proficiency. Participants with widely varying levels of language knowledge must not be placed in the same class. In general, classes should be limited to approximately twelve or fewer students. Overseas implementing organizations must be informed of student language levels prior to the program start date in order to make appropriate student groupings, assign qualified teachers, and adapt the curriculum as needed.

Language Instruction in the Target Language and Local Dialect: A minimum of 70% of language instruction time must be devoted to the target language. A maximum of 30% of class time may be allotted to the local dialect, if applicable. This ensures that NSLI-Y students receive sufficient instruction in the target language, and are given enough language instruction to be able to communicate with their host families and others in the local community. For Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the target language and should be taught for at least 70% of language instruction time. Colloquial Arabic as spoken in the host country should be taught for 20% to 30% of the time, unless otherwise approved by ECA.

Language Assessment: Identify and use a standardized language assessment tool to evaluate the baseline and post-program language skills of all NSLI-Y participants. Provide to ECA the participant assessment results, including analyses and summaries, in a timely fashion after the completion of the post-program assessments.

Academic Credit: The applicant may propose a plan for NSLI-Y program activities to result in accredited academic credit for students who successfully complete the program.

E. Monitoring Participant Safety and Well-Being

Participant Monitoring: Develop a plan for monitoring participants' safety and welfare that parallels, to the extent possible, the standards for J-1 visa regulations for international secondary school students found in 22 CFR 62. This includes, among other points, the identification and use of appropriate means of verifying the integrity and suitability of each host family. The award recipient should also ensure that all implementing organizations and any volunteers and staff who have regular contact with the NSLI-Y participants have undergone screening for suitability.

In keeping with the J-1 visa regulations cited above, the award recipient must immediately report to ECA any incident or allegation involving the actual or alleged sexual exploitation, harassment, or abuse of an exchange student participant. Furthermore, the award recipient shall inform ECA promptly of any physical abuse or serious problem or controversy that could be expected to bring the Department of State or the exchange program into notoriety or disrepute.

The award recipient must ensure that implementing organizations have a plan for monitoring participants on a regular basis, and provide adequate support and guidance to participants during

their programs. All implementing organizations must maintain, at a minimum, a monthly schedule of personal contact with the participant and regular, monthly contact with the host family, addressing legitimate concerns in a timely fashion and apprising ECA in a timely manner about significant issues. All records and data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and be provided to ECA upon request.

On-Program Support (OPS): Management of OPS issues is among the most important participant monitoring functions and should be well-detailed in a monitoring plan. Provide regular monitoring of the program and its participants, dealing effectively with misunderstandings, adjustment issues, and emergencies. Provide guidance to implementing organizations on handling OPS issues. Convey serious issues and concerns to ECA in a timely fashion.

Ensure that all participants abide by U.S. and local laws; NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions; and other program standards and requirements. Develop, distribute, and publicize disciplinary procedures that include ECA concurrence for individual participants' dismissal from the program. Inform the Embassy/Consulate immediately in the event that a participant is involved in a civil or criminal police matter, or if a participant is admitted to a hospital.

Emergency Contact Information and Access: Supply each NSLI-Y participant with a cell phone with in-country calling capability and the means to communicate with a local representative in an emergency. Ensure that participants and their parents/guardians have access to emergency contact information for the award recipient, the U.S.-based implementing organization, and the overseas implementing organization prior to international departure.

F. Pre-Program Planning and Activities

Database: Ensure that lists of all finalists, including those from implementing organizations that identify their own participants, conform to ECA database requirements and are submitted in a spreadsheet that includes host family information, no less than one week in advance of international departure or general dates as agreed upon by ECA and the award recipient for each summer and academic year cohort. Secure and protect any personally identifiable information. All statistical information collected on ECA-funded program participants should be transferable to databases maintained by ECA.

Terms and Conditions: Ensure that all participants and their parents/legal guardians sign the NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions provided by ECA.

Release Form: Encourage all participants and their parents/legal guardians to sign the official *Minor Participant Name and/or Likeness Release* form provided by ECA to permit the award recipient, implementing organizations, and the Department of State to use their image and name for program promotion or other similar purposes.

Medical Clearance: Ensure that each participant meets minimum program medical and health

standards and has required immunizations prior to their departure from the United States.

Health Benefits: Enroll participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits program and facilitate claims as necessary. Applicants may propose to use a different health plan for some or all of the participants, but must demonstrate that the alternate plan provides comparable or more comprehensive coverage. Coverage must begin when students depart the United States and not conclude until they return to the United States. A copy of the alternate health insurance policy should be included with the proposal.

Travel Arrangements: Ensure that implementing organizations arrange all travel in accordance with the Fly America Act. Provide an adult flight chaperone with necessary language skills for group flights to and from all overseas destinations, unless this requirement is waived by the award recipient with ECA's concurrence. Provide dates of international and domestic travel to ECA in advance of travel.

Travel Documents: Provide information to participants about obtaining valid U.S. passports. Make arrangements and pay costs for obtaining all necessary visas, including transit visas.

Communication with Participants: Ensure that implementing organizations contact participants in a timely fashion in advance of departure to provide them with program information, language preparation materials, flight details, and accommodations information.

Host Family Placement: All overseas programs must include a host family stay for all or part of the program, unless otherwise approved by ECA. Ensure that all implementing organizations identify and screen host families in an appropriate manner. Ensure that proper reference checks are conducted, recorded, and maintained on host families. Records must be kept for three years and made available to ECA upon request. Ensure that implementing organizations obtain concurrence from the U.S. Embassy/Consulate Public Affairs Section on the general locations of host families.

Host families must have adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations, and may receive a reasonable reimbursement to cover the costs associated with hosting a student, but not to serve as a financial incentive. The amounts of any stipends or allowances should be justified based on the host country's local economy. All implementing organizations must maintain regular, at minimum monthly, contact with host families to answer questions, provide information, and assist in working out problems.

Alternate Housing: Ensure that non-host family housing arrangements, such as dormitories or group housing, provide safe, appropriate, and supervised living accommodations. Identify, screen, and orient the individual(s) responsible for supervising the participants in the group living environments.

Resident Directors/Local Coordinators: Work with all implementing organizations to identify, screen, and orient a resident director or local coordinator to serve as a cultural and academic liaison for NSLI-Y participants during their overseas program.

Registration: Ensure that participants and their parents/legal guardians complete relevant consular forms and participants are registered in the Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

G. Orientations

Pre-Departure Orientation: Ensure that all NSLI-Y programs include a substantive pre-departure orientation (PDO) for participants, held in Washington, DC if possible. Invite ECA to participate in all PDOs and provide copies of agendas to ECA in advance of PDOs. Provide guidance to implementing organizations to ensure that all key topics are covered and a common approach to PDOs is maintained across programs. Topics must include, but are not limited to, program goals and expectations, cross-cultural training, host country information, language program tips and requirements, personal safety and security, and information on identifying and reporting sexual harassment and abuse. Ensure that each participant receives the name and contact information for their resident director and/or local coordinator. Participants should be informed that NSLI-Y is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Orientation for In-Country Partners: In advance of the arrival of NSLI-Y participants, orient all in-country teaching staff and administrators about NSLI-Y goals and objectives, required language contact hours, learning styles of American high school students, and relevant safety and security guidelines.

Host Family Orientations: Ensure that all host families receive an orientation that includes information about NSLI-Y goals and objectives, responsibilities of being a host parent, support available to host families, and an introduction to the inter-cultural experience of hosting an American high school student.

Arrival Orientation: Organize an in-country arrival orientation. Contact the Embassy/Consulate in advance of arrival to arrange for their participation in the orientation, as noted above. Inform participants of relevant local and country-specific information including personal and general safety considerations, as well as emergency services offered by the Embassy to American citizens.

Mid-Program Workshop: All academic year programs must include a mid-program workshop during which participants share their experiences, discuss concerns, and speak one-to-one with the resident director/local coordinator.

Re-entry Orientation: Provide a re-entry orientation to prepare participants for their return to the United States. Re-entry orientations must include a discussion of the following topics: required post-program language testing; post-program evaluation; tips for cultural re-entry; ideas for future language study; information about other U.S. government-funded scholarships for continued language study; internships and careers that utilize language skills; and suggestions for sharing the NSLI-Y experience with other individuals and groups in the United States. The re-

entry orientation should also encourage participants to join the NSLI-Y alumni association and register on the Department's International Exchange Alumni website (<https://alumni.state.gov>).

Academic year programs should include a re-entry workshop in the Washington, DC area, unless otherwise approved by ECA. Implementing organizations should work with ECA to arrange a time for returning participants to visit the Department of State to share their experiences and receive information about careers and internships at the Department.

H. Key Program Activities

Design and Implement Overseas Language Programs: Design, and work with implementing organizations to design, plan, and implement overseas programs focused on language acquisition and cultural immersion. Work with implementing organizations to maintain program standards and meet all program requirements. Each implementing organization should provide a detailed program schedule for each program location. Program schedules must clearly delineate language instruction, cultural enrichment activities, and community service activities, and must be provided well in advance of the start of the programs so that they can be reviewed by the award recipient and ECA.

Enrichment Activities: Include cultural enrichment activities that reinforce language learning, such as planned excursions, guided internships, activities with local peers, and extra-curricular activities. Cultural activities should enhance the participants' understanding of contemporary society, culture, media, political institutions, ethnic diversity, history, and environment of the host country. Activities must be language-focused and promote NSLI-Y goals and objectives.

Community Service: Arrange volunteer community service activities that provide opportunities for language practice and enhance understanding of local culture and society. Approximately ten hours for summer programs and 20 to 30 hours for academic year programs are recommended. ECA may waive this requirement in situations where volunteer work is deemed inappropriate or risky.

Room and Board: Provide appropriate living arrangements for all participants, including housing and three meals per day. Refer to section II.F Pre-Program Planning and Activities above for host family and alternate housing guidance.

Stipends: The award recipient may propose a stipend for participants to cover incidental expenses. If proposed, all participants within one country and on the same duration of program (summer or academic year) should receive the same stipend amount, regardless of implementing organization.

Acknowledge the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs: Ensure that all print and electronic materials (online application, websites, digital resources, brochures, press releases, announcements, etc.) developed for promotional purposes and related to the program comply with [ECA's Communications Guidance](#). The award recipient will use the Department of State seal, the U.S. flag, and the NSLI-Y logo on all materials related to the

program as delineated in ECA’s Communications Guidance. The award recipient will obtain ECA concurrence on all print and electronic materials related to NSLI-Y in advance of publication and distribution. ECA retains copyright use of, and may distribute, materials related to this program as it sees fit.

Publicity: On a regular and timely basis, provide ECA with participant and program highlights, photos, videos, press coverage, and the like that may be used to publicize the program. The award recipient must inform ECA of any publicity that highlights the NSLI-Y program or NSLI-Y participants, or otherwise strengthens outreach efforts, particularly those that involve government officials and the media. When the media interacts with NSLI-Y participants or alumni, the award recipient should make every effort to identify NSLI-Y as a U.S. Department of State-sponsored program, unless otherwise advised by ECA or the Public Affairs Section of a U.S. Embassy/Consulate.

Build Relationships: Cultivate relationships with organizations that implement other U.S. government-funded critical language programs, such as STARTALK, The Language Flagship, Critical Language Scholarships (CLS), and Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP). Facilitate interactions and cooperation between NSLI-Y participants and the participants and/or alumni of other Department of State-sponsored programs, including, but not limited to, Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program, YES Abroad, Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX), English Access Microscholarship program, and Fulbright programs.

I. Follow-on Alumni Activities

Alumni Association: Manage an alumni association that includes alumni from all NSLI-Y program years. Provide opportunities for alumni to develop their leadership skills. Work with the alumni association leadership to set goals and priorities, plan and implement activities, recruit additional alumni, and encourage alumni to share their overseas experiences with their schools and their communities. Support participation in alumni activities, including travel as appropriate, for alumni of all NSLI-Y program years.

Language Study and Career Opportunities: Propose and/or develop creative and effective ways to assist alumni in continuing their foreign language studies in high school, in post-secondary educational settings, or in other settings. Follow-on activities should also introduce alumni to internship and career opportunities in which they can use their language skills.

Department of State’s International Exchange Alumni Website: Encourage participants and alumni to register on the *International Exchange Alumni* website (<https://alumni.state.gov/>).

Alumni Program Linkages: Encourage linkages to other federally-sponsored language programs to share resources, pursue common goals, and inspire NSLI-Y alumni to pursue language mastery.

Tracking Alumni: Track NSLI-Y alumni from all program years to determine whether and how their NSLI-Y language learning has influenced or affected their post-secondary experience and

career choices. Conduct at least one alumni survey during the three-year award period.

Alumni Involvement in NSLI-Y: Facilitate the involvement of NSLI-Y alumni in supporting the current and future program through recruitment, publicity, outreach, virtual exchanges, mentoring, pre-program preparation, and program planning.

J. Program Evaluation

Present a plan to monitor and evaluate the program's success, during the program implementation, as well as at the end of the program. ECA expects that the award recipient will monitor participants and be able to respond to evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, language acquisition, cultural learning, and changes in behavior as a result of the program. The award recipient should monitor the performance of all implementing organizations, including language learning, participant support, adherence to NSLI-Y operational guidelines, and other relevant criteria. Refer to D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation in the NOFO for additional evaluation guidance.

K. Reporting Requirements

Quarterly Performance Reports: The award recipient is responsible for implementing mechanisms to monitor participants and report to the ECA Grants Office and the Program Office success and impact on a quarterly basis through quarterly program and financial performance reports. The award recipient must submit quarterly program performance reports that address, at a minimum, the following topics: past and planned program activities, financial status (e.g., identify significant financial variations from original budgets), and the strengths and weaknesses of program design and implementation. Quarterly reports should include updates on the activities and achievements of each implementing organization, as well as for the overall administration of the program.

The award recipient must submit to the ECA Program and Grants Offices electronic copies of all quarterly performance reports no more than 30 days after the reporting period end dates.

Evaluation Reports: The recipient must share program evaluation reports, both interim and summary reports, with ECA in a timely manner, and make appropriate adjustments to the programs in consultation with ECA. Monitoring and evaluation results should be addressed in the quarterly and final program performance reports. The final program reports should include an analysis and summary of the language acquisition of participants, as well as a summary of the performance of each of the implementing organizations. Refer to F.3. Reporting Requirements in the NOFO for further guidance on reporting requirements.

L. Fiscal Management

The award recipient is responsible for the management of all financial aspects of the program, including the subawards to implementing organizations. Submit financial reports as detailed in F.3. Reporting Requirements in the NOFO.

III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)
- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items under the section headings in the GrantSolutions Application Checklist. All documents should be appropriately and clearly titled.

Online Forms

- SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance”
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424B, “Assurances – Non-Construction Programs”
- Include other attachments, if applicable, such as indirect agreements, form 990, SF-LLL, etc.

Executive Summary

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information:

- Program goals
- Name of applicant organization and subaward implementing organizations
- Plans for subaward competition, if proposed
- Key program activities
- Beginning and end dates of the program
- Bureau funding level requested, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources, and average per participant cost

Narrative

In a maximum of 20 double-spaced pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below.

- Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)

- Participating implementing organizations
- Number of anticipated participants for each language and duration, including percentages of participants assigned to each implementing organization
- Proposed locations of overseas programs
- Subaward competition, if proposed
- Program activities outlined in the POGI, highlighting any new initiatives
- Plans for outreach to a diverse applicant pool
- Monitoring of participant safety and welfare
- Language assessment
- Program evaluation
- Lessons learned from the implementation of previous award
- Follow-on activities for alumni
- Program administration and management
- Work plan/Time-frame

Additional Information to be Submitted

Calendar of Activities

The Calendar of Activities is a monthly plan of action or timetable that demonstrates the timing and organization of the major program activities.

Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative for applicant and proposed subaward implementing organizations. Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for more detailed guidance on the budget submission.

Under the mandated budget categories, allowable costs for the program may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Staff, chaperone, group escorts, resident director/group leader costs and per diem, in accordance with General Services Administration (GSA) standards, separating out: international airfare; in-country travel overseas; and domestic travel in the U.S.
- Participant travel costs
- Materials (film and video rentals, educational materials, etc.)
- Language program tuition
- Language-related enrichment and community service activities
- Costs associated with identifying host families and monitoring participants' safety and well-being throughout the program
- Costs associated with providing reasonable accommodations to participants
- Cell phones for participants for emergency use
- Food and lodging, when not in home-stay
- Alumni and follow-on activities for NSLI-Y alumni of all program years
- Program, teacher, and student evaluation
- Program planning meeting
- Promotional materials, including website development

- Stipends to participants (optional)
- Stipends to host families (optional)

Letters of Commitment from all subaward implementing organizations identified in the proposal.

Resumes of key staff members of the applicant organization and implementing organizations. No resume should exceed two pages.

Evaluation Plan and Sample Survey Instruments

First-Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation.

- 1) **Quality of the Program Idea:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, and relevance to the Bureau's mission and the purposes outlined in this solicitation. Proposals should demonstrate how participants will be recruited, selected, monitored, tested, and presented with continuing language learning opportunities.
- 2) **Program Planning and Ability to Meet Program Goals and Objectives:** Proposals should clearly indicate how the applicant will meet the program goals and objectives. A detailed work plan should demonstrate organizational competency and logistical capacity. Proposals should include plans for administering and managing the overall program, as well as working with subaward implementing organizations to carry out overseas programs. The responsibilities, capacity, and expertise of proposed implementing organizations should be clearly delineated.
- 3) **Support of Diversity:** Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content, and implementation, including subaward recipient and participant recruitment and selection. Proposals should clearly articulate a diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.

- 4) **Institution's Record/Institutional Capacity:** Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program's goals.
- 5) **Participant Monitoring:** Proposals should include a detailed plan for monitoring the safety and well-being of NSLI-Y participants.
- 6) **Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued contact with alumni to ensure that they are tracked over time, engaged in appropriate alumni activities, and provided opportunities to reinforce the knowledge and skills acquired on the NSLI-Y program.
- 7) **Project Evaluation:** Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the program's successes and challenges, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The evaluation plan should address the methodology to assess individual participants' language acquisition and show clear linkages between program goals/objectives and expected outcomes. Proposals should also include a plan to assess the performance of the implementing organizations. Draft survey instruments should be included in the appendix. A chart describing evaluation objectives, outcomes, indicators, data sources, instruments, and time line is recommended.
- 8) **Cost-effectiveness/cost-sharing:** Reviewers will analyze the overall budget and sub-budgets for clarity and cost-effectiveness. They will also assess the rationale of the proposed budget and whether the allocation of funds is appropriate to complete tasks outlined in the proposal narrative. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The NOFO indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline. For further information regarding this program or the competition, contact Carol Radomski at (202) 632-9354, or by email at RadomskiCA@state.gov.