



**THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP**

*Creating Global Professionals*

# **Language Flagship Technology Innovation Center**

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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AND  
APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS:**

**October 16, 2014**

## **SECTION 1: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS OVERVIEW**

The Institute of International Education (IIE), acting as the administrative agent of the National Security Education Program (NSEP), Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) for The Language Flagship, seeks proposals from U.S. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) for the development and management of a national Flagship Technology Innovation Center to support the mission of The Language Flagship to promote effective advanced language learning.

The primary purpose of the Flagship Technology Innovation Center will be to conceive, design, adapt or improve, deliver and test effective means to blend technology into existing Language Flagship Programs.

This solicitation is open to accredited U.S. IHEs with a demonstrated background in the areas of research, development, and successful execution of technology-based adaptive and blended learning systems.

Successful applicants must clearly define a plan to develop a resource center that coordinates and collaborates with NSEP-funded Language Flagship Programs in one or more of the Flagship-supported languages, including at least one of the languages with multiple Flagship Programs (Arabic, Chinese and/or Russian). Applicants must also be able to describe how they will bring experts in the areas of learning technologies and advanced language learning together to improve the quality of existing advanced language curricula in the Flagship languages.

### **THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP OVERVIEW**

The Language Flagship is a partnership between the Department of Defense and IHEs with the mission of creating new models of language learning that produce college graduates with professional-level (Interagency Language Roundtable Level 3 (ILR 3)/American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Superior level (ACTFL Superior)) proficiency in Arabic, Chinese, Hindi and Urdu, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Swahili and Turkish.<sup>1</sup> Flagship Programs set high expectations for participating students of all majors and provide the opportunity for these students to reach professional levels of proficiency in the target languages. All Flagship Programs include rigorous language training and cultural immersion at overseas Flagship Centers.

The Flagship community is currently composed of 27 Flagship Programs at U.S. IHEs and 10 Overseas Centers. Please visit <http://www.thelanguageflagship.org/?q=content/undergraduate>

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<sup>1</sup> The Interagency Language Roundtable (**ILR**) is an unfunded Federal interagency organization established for the coordination and sharing of information on language-related activities at the Federal level. The ILR classifies five primary levels, which are the official Government Language Skill Level Descriptions and known as the “ILR Scale” or the “ILR Definitions.” Flagship uses the ILR Definitions as the standard rubric to determine language proficiency in its programs. **ACTFL** (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) developed and published for academic use proficiency guidelines based on the ILR Definitions. The **ILR Level 3** and the **ACTFL Superior** ratings are similar in that they denote professional level proficiency. A description of these definitions may be found by visiting the ILR and ACTFL websites, <http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/ILRscale1.htm> and <http://www.languagetesting.com/actfl-proficiency-scale>, respectively.

for more detailed information about The Language Flagship as well as to see a list of currently funded Flagship Programs.

The objectives of The Language Flagship are to:

- Establish programs for undergraduate students of all majors and disciplines that teach critical languages to the professional level (ILR 3/ACTFL Superior) and beyond during their courses of study;
- Re-engineer existing language programs at all levels to provide students with opportunities and additional support for advanced language learning leading to professional-level proficiency;
- Promote and improve on teaching excellence in the target language;
- Stimulate institutional support and long-term commitment to reforming language learning;
- Articulate domestic programs of instruction with high-quality overseas study centers; and
- Improve national capacity in critical languages.

### **FLAGSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY**

All Flagship Programs integrate technology in some manner into their curricula. Flagship Programs recognize that technology is beneficial at all levels of instruction and is essential for helping students reach the advanced to superior levels of language proficiency. Many are currently using online course management systems and the internet for access to and delivery of television, film, talk shows, documentaries and other forms of media, as well as for access to existing courseware available through the web. In addition to technology used at the institutional level, The Language Flagship integrates technologies across programs in administering language proficiency assessments, as well as in registering and certifying student success in reaching Flagship goals. While all of these uses of technology are beneficial, this initiative will develop the means to capture best practices and assess which technologies are most effective for learning different skills. The initial goal is to identify and develop technology-based practices for effective instruction and learning within a select group of Flagship institutions. The ultimate goal is to create a strategic and comprehensive plan for integration of technology and effective practices for use across The Language Flagship. The Center will encourage the use of cutting edge, interactive language learning technologies such as augmented reality games, intelligent tutoring, online role playing, group and individual video teleconferences (VTCs) and targeted conversation practice through multiple platforms.

Based on recent feedback from Flagship Programs, there is strong support for examining better and more effective ways to blend technology into their program activities. Since The Language Flagship sponsors grants to multiple institutions for Chinese (12), Arabic (5) and Russian (4), there is also interest in developing a shared and collaborative approach towards language learning which draws upon the strengths of each of the programs and their staff. A successful applicant will take into account how the role of instructors and the use of classroom time may change in the technology integration process. Applications should specifically address how technology will enhance teaching, how teachers will be trained to integrate technology into courses, and how technology will be used in teacher professional development. The proposal should also offer a strategy for engaging select Flagship institutions for initial piloting of concepts with the goal of integrating technology and practices more broadly in later project stages. The Flagship Technology Innovation Center is intended to serve domestic Flagship

Programs primarily, but may also explore ways to link and strengthen domestic and overseas Flagship instruction more broadly.

Any design approach to new technologies should focus on freeing up classroom time for communication and interaction by identifying those activities that are best suited for the classroom and those which can best be enhanced through technology. Any plan to integrate technology should include elements of intelligent tutoring or adaptive learning technologies that support both teachers and students by providing ongoing feedback on a student's strengths, weaknesses and overall progress. All adaptive technologies should be user-friendly, be able to create a continuously updated learner profile, include recommender engines that specifically tailor instruction to a student's current needs and provide both formative and summative assessments.

The Language Flagship has spent over a decade developing high-quality classroom-based language learning coupled with activities that enhance the curricula (tutoring, workshops, cultural events, etc.) to address the unique challenges of supporting advanced language proficiency for students of all majors during their undergraduate studies. The Language Flagship model goes far beyond the classroom and impacts the entire career of an undergraduate Flagship student. Therefore, rather than a "stand-alone" technological approach to improve language learning, The Language Flagship is seeking a blended approach. Any proposed comprehensive design and development of technology integration must build on The Language Flagship's well-established best practices for innovative face-to-face, discussion and presentation opportunities that are integral to the Flagship curriculum. Effective integration of technology, therefore, will require a comprehensive analysis of which skills are best acquired in face-to-face environments and which are best enhanced through the effective use of technology outside of the brick and mortar setting. In short, how can the Flagship community improve the time spent in the learning experience through a well-designed blended learning process? All proposals should clearly demonstrate how the Flagship Technology Innovation Center will ensure that learning outcomes achieved through enhanced technology integration are as effective as or better than outcomes achieved through current Flagship practices.

## **SECTION 2: PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

### **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

The intent of establishing the Flagship Technology Innovation Center is to provide resources and support to identify, design, develop, deliver and evaluate effective means to blend technology into existing Language Flagship Programs.

Successful applicants will coordinate closely with The Language Flagship teams at NSEP and IIE throughout the project period, and will support The Language Flagship to achieve program goals through the integration of state-of-the-art language learning technology that improves program performance and outcomes.

Applicants must propose to draw on their existing capabilities as well as nationally-recognized practices and resources to develop a Center that provides a venue for conceptualizing, designing, developing and executing innovative technologies to support the Flagship mission. Working closely with the Flagship community, the Center will plan, develop, and execute short- and long-term plans for the effective integration of technology into selected Flagship curricula. The Center will work together with existing Flagship Programs to design, pilot, test and evaluate technology integration.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with current Flagship Programs (<http://www.thelanguageflagship.org/?q=content/undergraduate>) to determine the scope of the initiative. Successful applicants will identify and describe partnerships with institutions and organizations that support language teaching in at least one of the following Flagship languages:

- Arabic
- Chinese
- Russian

Strong proposals will clearly demonstrate how the applicant will take into account the specific needs and experiences of partner Flagship Programs, including curricular and co-curricular activities already developed that lead to ILR 2/ACTFL Advanced and ILR 3/ACTFL Superior language proficiency.

### **PROPOSAL STRUCTURE**

The proposal narrative should outline a clear implementation plan. The plan must include the vision of the Flagship Technology Innovation Center, a detailed work plan, a description of methods and approaches to technology to improve language instruction and outcomes, identification of individuals and resources to support the proposed Center, a clear explanation of the position of the proposed Center within the University's administrative structure (including clear reporting lines from project through university leadership levels) and a timeline of activities and major outcomes.

Competitive proposals will discuss the current uses of technology integration in learning environments and how the proposed Center would build upon, improve or create an approach to

integrating technology into Flagship curricula and teaching to increase the impact of the learning process in Flagship Programs. Applicants should present a timeline that outlines a process for developing a strategy paper for technology integration and steps that will be taken to work with Flagship Programs on implementation of strategy recommendations in consultation with NSEP and IIE. Applicants must also provide a detailed explanation of how the Center will be evaluated for effectiveness and improvement, including how the evaluation will take into account impact on established Flagship language proficiency goals and assessment. Applications must describe, at a minimum:

- **A Vision for the Proposed Center**, focusing on how the applicant would draw upon experts, experience, and best practices from all relevant areas (i.e., technology, pedagogy, language learning, curriculum development, teacher training, student learning, assessment, online course delivery) to ensure that innovative ideas are turned into effective practice within The Language Flagship.
- **A Work Plan for the Proposed Center**, focusing on how the applicant would implement the vision.
- **Effective Methods and Approaches in Using Technology**, especially to aid students in reaching advanced and superior language skills across all four modalities (Speaking, Reading, Listening, Writing).
- **Best Practices in the Use and Integration of Adaptive Learning or Intelligent Tutoring Technologies**, especially in the context of blended approaches of technology and classroom-based instruction.
- **The Expertise of the Proposed Team and Personnel**, especially in the areas of the design and implementation of learning management systems, curriculum, blended learning, technology-based learning, adaptive learning technologies, pedagogy and evaluation.
- **A Clear Understanding of The Language Flagship**, especially in regards to integrating technology with the goal of attaining advanced to superior level language proficiency during the undergraduate experience.

Applicants must also outline how they will work with The Language Flagship on activities and projects that include:

- Workshops and meetings to facilitate input from experts in the areas listed above and Flagship directors, faculty and staff to develop a strategy that outlines possible approaches and courses of action to improve technology integration within The Language Flagship.
- Design, development and completion of targeted plans to improve technology integration into selected Flagship Programs.
- Development and implementation of pilot or model technology integration into selected Flagship Programs or languages.
- Evaluation and assessment through independent means of the new approaches.

## **PROJECT TIMELINES**

IIE anticipates making an award under this solicitation with the effective start date of January 1, 2015. Proposals will address important outcomes and timetables for the period encompassing January 1 through December 31, 2015. Proposals should also outline benchmarks and plans through December 31, 2017.

## **FUNDING**

Institutional funding for one award will be administered by IIE. IIE anticipates that funding up to \$500,000 will be available for the period January 1, through December 31, 2015. Support for up to two additional years may be possible depending on the availability of funding and project performance.

Funding will be provided for administrative and personnel costs to prepare and conduct an analysis of existing practices, and collaborative development of a state-of-the-art approach that effectively integrates technology into selected Flagship curricula in a blended learning model and assesses its impact. Funding may be requested to support personnel and consultants who are subject matter experts, to travel to participating Flagship institutions and meetings of Flagship Program directors, to examine existing models using online technology and to convene workshops and planning meetings that include leaders in the fields of educational technology and foreign language pedagogy. Support may be requested to cover the costs of travel, lodging and meals for workshop and meeting participants.

### **SECTION 3: MERIT REVIEW PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Proposals will be evaluated by a merit-review panel organized by the Institute of International Education (IIE). The panel, which may include outside evaluators from academia, the private or federal sectors, or other individuals knowledgeable in the field, will rank proposals and make recommendations. Final funding decisions will be made by the National Security Education Program (NSEP), Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) in consultation with IIE, and will be based on the review panel recommendations, funding availability, and program priorities. Final award funding levels may be lower than those proposed.

IIE may discuss a grant application with an applicant if deemed necessary; IIE also reserves the right to award grants without discussion with any applicants. IIE may reject any or all applications, or cancel the competition, if applications do not sufficiently demonstrate their ability to meet the stated initiatives goals.

The proposal and budget will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Effective plan of operation (30 Points)
  - a. Comprehensive description of project design and plans for implementation, activities and roles and responsibilities and adequacy of resources to undertake the project.
  - b. Clear description of activities planned, timeline and projected outcomes.
  - c. Plans for analysis of Flagship technology practices and collaborative discussion, including a description of how the proposed Center would incorporate current Flagship and other best practices to build on existing infrastructure, resources, research, successful initiatives, etc.
  - d. Detailed description of collaboration among language departments, programs and institutional partners in the project.
  - e. Clear plan for project administration and management, individual project team member responsibilities and description of reporting lines.
  - f. Description of expected outcomes and assessment methods that will be used, in addition to a clear plan for evaluating outcomes and managing assessment data collected.
  - g. Clear plan for ongoing dissemination of technology innovation within the Flagship community and nationally, including sharing documentation, data, data-sets and other related research and education products.
  
2. Overall vision of the Center (30 Points)
  - a. Articulation of comprehensive vision for designing and developing blended and adaptive technology models for use within The Language Flagship as an integrated component.
  - b. Discussion of the anticipated impact of the initiative on the Flagship institutions and language programs involved.
  - c. Description of the proposed Center's fit within the applicant institution's mission and overall institutional support for the project.
  - d. Description of plans for sustainable integration of technology practices within The Language Flagship.
  - e. Clear description of the role of the Center in collaborative work with Flagship Programs and experts in the field, and national dissemination.

3. Strength of key personnel and project team (25 Points)
  - a. The qualifications of the project director and other key personnel.
  - b. Clear description of project team collaboration, including roles, responsibilities and reporting lines.
  - c. Time commitment of team members to the project.
4. Budget and cost effectiveness (15 Points)
  - a. Request must be adequate and reasonable to successfully meet project objectives.
  - b. Budget narrative must be clear and comprehensive.

All costs must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. IIE/NSEP/DLNSEO will consider whether the budget has the ability to support the proposed project in an efficient and effective way while demonstrating a reasonable and appropriate allocation of funding.

### **MINIMUM STANDARDS**

The applicant must meet the minimum standards for receiving federal funds, as defined in 32 CFR 22.415, which state:

To be qualified, a potential recipient must:

- a. Have the management capability and adequate financial and technical resources, given those that would be made available through the grant or cooperative agreement, to execute the program of activities envisioned under the grant or cooperative agreement.
- b. Have a satisfactory record of executing such programs or activities (if a prior recipient of an award).
- c. Have a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.
- d. Be otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a grant or cooperative agreement under applicable laws and regulations (see § 22.420(c)).

The applicant must agree to abide by all federal rules and regulations regarding performance and financial management, including, but not limited to:

- a) The International Air Transportation Fair Competitive Practices Act (Fly America Act) of 1974 (49 U.S.C. 40118) and the interpretative guidelines issued by the Comptroller General of the United States in the March 31, 1981, amendment to Comptroller General Decision B138942
- b) DoDGARs Part 32, "Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations, and the OMB Circulars below apply specifically to educational institutions"
- c) OMB A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions" or OMB A-122, "Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations", as applicable
- d) OMB A-110, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations"
- e) OMB A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations"

*The Institute of International Education and The Language Flagship are committed to the principle of diversity. No applicant will be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual preference, or national origin. Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Institutions are encouraged to apply.*

## **SECTION 4: APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

### **PROPOSAL CONTENT**

A successful proposal should include and/or address the following:

1. Title page
2. Abstract of no more than 250 words
3. Proposal narrative of no more than twenty (20) pages that responds to the guidance provided in this solicitation and in the selection criteria.
4. A list of key individuals directly involved in the development and management of the proposed Flagship Technology Innovation Center, including key partners across the institution and at other institutions and clear reporting lines from the project director to all levels of university leadership. Include complete contact information: mail and email addresses, and telephone and fax numbers
5. An appendix with short curricula vitae of no more than *three* (3) pages for each lead individual involved in the proposed Center and “mini-bios” for other key individuals
6. Support letters from appropriate senior university leadership (i.e., president, provost, vice president of academic affairs, deans, department chair) indicating institutional support, fit with mission, and willingness to host and support a Flagship Technology Innovation Center

### **BUDGET CONTENT**

A complete budget should include:

1. An itemized budget
2. A budget narrative
3. If applicable, an itemized budget and budget narrative for each subaward included in the proposal

Using the budget template found at <http://www.thelanguageflagship.org/content/funding>, provide a detailed, line-item budget for the periods January 1 through December 31, 2015 and January 1 through September 29, 2016. (Please note that the end date of this budget request corresponds to the end date of IIE’s prime agreement with NSEP.) As outlined below, also include a separate narrative budget justification in support of the budget request.

The following budget guidelines must be adhered to when developing the project budgets for the proposal. When developing the budget, best efforts should be made to include competitive costs and discounts in order to best leverage federal dollars. While all costs that comply with relevant OMB Circulars will be considered, IIE and NSEP reserve the right to reduce, revise or otherwise adjust proposal budgets in accordance with project needs and goals, and the availability of funds.

Please ensure that each line item is thoroughly justified in the budget narrative. The budget narrative should include a breakdown of the expenses, if not specified in the detailed budget, and a description of how the expenses benefit the project.

The budget and budget narrative must:

- a. Include a separate note for each line item in the budget. Budget notes must follow the order of the line items in the budget. (The only cost category not requiring individual line notes is fringe. In the case of fringe benefits, a summary description can be used. Additionally, a link to the university's fringe benefits rates and policies should be provided. If this information is not available online, provide a copy of the relevant documents with the budget narrative.)
- b. Include a clear description of responsibilities for any budget requests for salary support or contracted time. Descriptions should be included in the budget narrative and should be concise.
- c. If faculty are included in the budget, for non-classroom activities, the budget narrative must describe how this work will be covered (e.g., course buyouts, summer salary, etc.).
- d. Justify, in a detailed manner, any administrative positions included in the budget. Positions not justified in a detailed manner may not be supported.
- e. If travel is included in the budget:
  - provide a note explaining the university's travel policy, particularly noting its hotel and per diem policy
  - include the destination city and state or country, the number of travelers and the estimated number of days for the trip, and provide a breakdown of costs for each trip
- f. Explain the basis for estimating the costs of professional personnel salaries and wages, including annual salary or hourly wage rate and percentage of staff time; employee benefits per person, including rates and percentage of staff time; employee travel per person/per trip; consultants and subcontracts, including non-employee travel; materials and supplies; other costs, including printing, telephone expenses and equipment rental; and indirect costs.
- g. Explain how the major cost items relate to the proposed activities.
- h. Provide a link to the university's Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). If this information is not available online, provide a copy of the relevant documents with the budget narrative.
- i. Provide all of the above information for any budgets included for proposed subawardees.

#### **APPLICATION FORMAT**

***NOTICE: Failure to abide by the following requirements or failure to submit a complete proposal will result in disqualification.***

1. Margins: 1" on all sides
2. Type face: 12 pt., Times New Roman
3. Spacing: double-spaced throughout
4. Printing: double-sided for narrative sections
5. Binding: binder clip
6. Copies: one (1) signed original and ten (10) copies
7. Pages numbered consecutively, starting with title pages, and in the order specified in "Proposal Content"

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

A webinar will be held to field questions regarding this solicitation on:

- Tuesday, September 9, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. ET

To participate in the webinar, please send an e-mail to [flagship@iee.org](mailto:flagship@iee.org) indicating the name(s) and e-mail address(es) of the participant(s). Applicants will receive confirmation emails with instructions for participation in the webinar.

Following the webinar, FAQs will be posted to <http://www.thelanguageflagship.org/content/funding>

Applicants are encouraged to attend the scheduled webinar. Additionally, applicants may address questions regarding:

- The application process and general questions about The Language Flagship to [flagship@iee.org](mailto:flagship@iee.org)
- The Flagship Technology Innovation Center goals or requests for further consultation to Dr. Sam Eisen, Director of The Language Flagship at NSEP, at [samuel.d.eisen.civ@mail.mil](mailto:samuel.d.eisen.civ@mail.mil)

## TRANSMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Please send one (1) original plus ten (10) copies of your proposal by U.S. Postal Service or by delivery service (e.g., FedEx) to:

The Language Flagship  
National Security Education Program  
Institute of International Education  
1400 K Street, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20005  
[Telephone for delivery services: 202-898-0600]

**The DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT is 4:30 p.m. (EST), Thursday, October 16, 2014.** The burden of timely delivery is the applicant's. Proposals received after the deadline will be disqualified. Proposals must be mailed or delivered (e.g., FedEx). Faxed and emailed proposals will not be accepted.