



**THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP**

*Creating Global Professionals*

**Request for Proposal**

# **The Language Flagship Proficiency Initiative**

**Application Guidelines**

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF PROPOSAL:**

**Friday, April 4, 2014**

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

The Institute of International Education (IIE), acting as the administrative agent of the National Security Education Program (NSEP) for The Language Flagship, seeks proposals from U.S. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) for projects that integrate Flagship proficiency assessment practices and processes within existing high quality academic language programs.

The purpose of this initiative is to introduce the Flagship proficiency assessment process to established academic foreign language programs to measure teaching and learning, and to evaluate the impact of such testing practices on teaching and learning.

Project results will lead to the 1) establishment of language proficiency baselines and scores over a period of three years for undergraduate students from any major taking courses in the target language or languages on one campus or across partner campuses; 2) institutionalization of language proficiency assessments on one or more campuses; 3) alignment of placement testing and language courses to proficiency goals and certification of student proficiency; 4) analysis of outcomes of instituting language proficiency assessment based on scores, goal setting, interviews with students and faculty, and 5) development of effective language education policy and practice that could serve as a model practice for peer institutions.

This solicitation is open to U.S. IHEs and their partners. Institutions that are not currently receiving grant support as part of the National Security Education Program's Language Flagship are encouraged to apply. Institutions currently receiving NSEP support through The Language Flagship may apply to conduct assessments in languages not already supported by The Language Flagship at that institution. Institutions currently receiving NSEP support through ROTC Project Global Officers (Project GO) may apply for this initiative, but may not request funding for assessment costs of ROTC participants already covered under Project GO.

Institutions may apply for funding to support any of the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Spanish or Russian. Proposals for institution-wide initiatives that include other languages must indicate how the costs for including the other languages will be supported.

Successful applicants must demonstrate that they will be working with programs that already have well-established language offerings in any of the above mentioned languages at the time of application. Applications from institutions without evidence of strong institutional capacity and enrollments in the proposed target language(s) will not be considered competitive.

Applications that: 1) support department- or university-wide approaches to establishing proficiency based language instruction; 2) include approaches with more than one language or 3) propose partnerships with one or more additional IHEs with evidence of well-established language programs will be considered more competitive than those that focus on a single language or a single institution. Proposals that include institutionalizing language proficiency assessment and articulation between a four-year institution and a community college partner are encouraged.

## 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, 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. Please visit <http://www.thelanguageflagship.org/?q=content/undergraduate> for more detailed information about The Language Flagship as well as to see a list of currently funded Flagship programs.

## FLAGSHIP AND PROFICIENCY-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING

A hallmark of The Language Flagship is proficiency-based language learning. Over the past six years, The Language Flagship has worked in partnership with IHEs and other non-governmental organizations to improve the overall process for language testing and assessment for undergraduate language learning. This partnership with the academic community has created a range of language testing instruments as well as processes and means to administer tests to assess student language proficiency at the lower, mid, and higher levels of proficiency. Whereas the establishment of proficiency assessments for Flagship programs is still in development, the ultimate goal is to enable testing in four modalities: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Language proficiency testing is a key tool to ensure the overall goal of The Language Flagship to produce “global professionals” through a language infused undergraduate experience. Unlike traditional language programs, Flagship establishes clear expectations for the learner and communicates these expectations through examples and evidence from the novice to the superior levels. Flagship programs use assessment and testing as a means to help inform the curriculum and the educational process. Flagship students, for example, are required to meet the proficiency goal of ILR 2/ACTFL Advanced in order to qualify to participate in a Flagship capstone overseas study program.

Another hallmark of the Flagship program is in its design to provide opportunities for students of all majors across the disciplines to achieve high level language proficiency. For this reason, this proficiency initiative stresses the importance of targeting a broader array of language students than those identified as language majors. Successful applications, therefore, will identify means

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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.

to ensure that a maximum number of students learning in the target language are involved in the planned assessment and testing process in the languages identified in the proposal.

In addition to The Language Flagship, the NSEP supports recruitment for pipeline programs such as ROTC Project GO.

### **GOALS OF THE INITIATIVE**

The goal of this initiative is to create a viable process to assess proficiency learning in high quality, well-established academic language programs and to document the impact of introducing rigorous proficiency assessment on language pedagogy practice and outcomes. The Language Flagship has directly invested over the past six years in developing infrastructure and procedures to allow for academic language testing and assessment in collaboration with a number of partners from the higher education, non-profit and association sectors.

Through this solicitation, The Language Flagship is seeking applications that demonstrate clearly how institutions can introduce language proficiency assessment and testing protocols into all levels of their academic language program. Participating grantees will be provided direct funding to introduce and implement established tests and testing processes that measure language proficiency in Speaking, Reading and Listening according to either the ACTFL or ILR scale. Applicants will seek to institutionalize proficiency assessment practices that align student placement, course goals, and certification of student proficiency for language students from any major. Applicants should also outline how assessment results will be integrated into practices for continual improvement of foreign language teaching and curriculum. Applicants will document program results and impacts on language teaching and learning and share practices and experience with peer institutions.

## SECTION 2: PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

The project narrative should outline specific ways in which the applicant intends to ensure that a maximum number of students enrolled in the target language(s) will be tested during the course of their language studies at the primary as well as at any partner institutions.

Applicants must propose to use existing language proficiency assessment instruments that measure each of the three modalities (Speaking, Reading, Listening) in the target language(s) from Novice to Superior on the ACTFL scale or 0+ to 3 on the ILR scale. Applicants must explain and justify their rationale for selecting the existing assessment instrument. Where necessary, projects including multiple languages may need to select different assessment instruments according to the availability of instruments for each language. However, applicants must use one consistent scoring scale (either ACTFL or ILR) across all tests and instruments for all testing conducted under this initiative.

Applicants must describe in their proposals the administrative and academic structure of the target language program, including:

- Clear description of the language program or programs that will be participating in the Proficiency Initiative at each participating institution. Applicants must describe:
  - Breadth and depth of language offerings
  - List of faculty and other instructional staff who actively teach in the target language
  - Number of years the language is offered and targeted levels of language proficiency
- Enrollments and the estimated number of students to be tested at each participating institution
  - Overall language enrollments in the target language(s)
  - Estimated number of students to be tested by targeted levels of study (e.g., beginner, first year)
  - Type of language study to be assessed (e.g., domestic first or second year, summer immersion, overseas immersion)
- Clear description of the overall administrative structure of language instruction at each participating institution, including
  - Description of administrative and academic leadership overseeing language education
  - Roles and responsibilities of the project lead in implementing the Proficiency Initiative
  - Roles and responsibilities of lead and partner institutions, including communication and reporting lines

Applicants must present clear plans for implementation, including roles and responsibilities, testing schedules and plans for data recording and analysis of testing results. In particular, applications must describe:

- Plans for collection and analysis of proficiency data, including
  - An outline of planned procedures for administering proficiency assessments and collecting data
  - Formats and data elements for tracking and presenting proficiency data
  - Methodology for measuring language program and institutional impacts of introducing language proficiency assessment protocol

- Planned schedule for language proficiency testing (i.e., at what points in the curriculum will proficiency testing be administered? Will proficiency testing be integrated for placement for students entering university with prior knowledge of the language and/or after study abroad or off-campus language study experiences?)
- Coordination of responsibilities for testing and data tracking and management
- Plans for integrating proficiency assessment into student placement, course alignment, and certification of student proficiency levels
- Plans to use assessment data for continual improvement of language teaching and curriculum and to survey instructors and students as appropriate to monitor changes and improvements in language teaching
- Plan for final presentation of program data, analysis and results
- Plan to ensure compliance with all institutional requirements with regard to data collection and analysis

In addition to the above-noted elements, proposals must address plans to share products of the research, including documentation, data, data-sets and other related research and education products, nationally. Proposals must also include recommendations for institutionalizing cost-effective language testing practices at each participating institution, as well as how these practices can be maintained and continued as part of the language curriculum in a cooperative and sustainable basis. In doing so, applicants should briefly outline plans for how assessment practices could be maintained and funded after the scope of this project, including plans to approach or cooperate with other funders and partners to disseminate practices and strengthen sustainability of the initiative.

## **PROJECT COLLABORATION**

NSEP encourages the development of a community of practice around improving foreign language instruction and outcomes. Grantees must plan to meet at least annually with other grantees within the language proficiency initiative to share experience and practices related to the initiative. Grantees are encouraged to outline consultation or collaboration with existing Flagship programs willing to share experience, expertise, and developed practices of assessment and continual program improvement.

## **PROJECT TIMELINES**

IIE anticipates awarding grants with the effective date on or around July 1, 2014. Proposals will address important outcomes and timetables for the period encompassing July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2016. This timetable should be divided into two grant year segments of July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 and July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. A third year of support may be possible depending on the availability of funding and project performance.

## **FUNDING**

Institutional funding will be administered by IIE. Awards are anticipated to be in the range of \$200,000 to \$400,000, although final award amounts will depend on the number of institutional partners and students participating in successful applications. Depending on the quality of applications received, IIE anticipates funding up to five awards.

### **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), 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, including: (40 Points)
  - a. Comprehensive description of project design and plans for implementation, and the adequacy of the resources to undertake the project
  - b. Clear description of language programs to be assessed, including number of course offerings by level, faculty, and student enrollment
  - c. Overview of assessment data to be collected, including a clear schedule/timeline for conducting proficiency assessments
  - d. Detailed plan for data analysis
  - e. Detailed description of collaboration among language departments and programs, and institutional partners in the project
  - f. Clear plan for project administration and management, and individual responsibilities
  - g. Clear plan for managing assessment data for all stakeholders, partners, and institutions
  - h. Clear plan for on-going dissemination of project outcomes nationally, including sharing documentation, data, data-sets and other related research and education products
2. Impact, institutionalization and project sustainment (30 Points)
  - a. Discussion of the anticipated impact of the initiative on the institution(s) and language program(s)
  - b. Complete plan to implement and institutionalize the assessment practices
  - c. Clear description of how proficiency assessment practices will be integrated as a core practice for student placement, course alignment, continuous improvement of language instruction and the language curriculum and certifying student proficiency assessment levels
  - d. Clear description of institutional support, including intended project cost share and plans/recommendations to approach or cooperate with other funders and partners to disseminate practices and invest in the long-term sustainment of this effort
3. Strength of key personnel and project team (15 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. Budget narrative must be clear and comprehensive
  - b. Request must be adequate and reasonable to successfully meet grant objectives

All costs must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. IIE/NSEP 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.

## **SECTION 4: APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

### **PROPOSAL CONTENT**

The sections described above represent the body of a proposal submitted to IIE. All guidance above relates to required components of the proposal, and must be submitted. Failure to submit the required sections may result in the proposal not being accepted or reviewed.

A successful proposal must 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-five (25) pages that respond to the guidance provided in the solicitation and the selection criteria.
4. A list of key individuals directly involved in the development and management of the proposed project, including key partners across the institution. Include complete contact information: mail and email addresses, and telephone and fax numbers.
5. An appendix including short curriculum vitae of no more than three pages for each lead individual involved, with mini-bios for other key individuals.
6. Appendix including a timeline for project activities.
7. Appendix including any tables or graphics necessary to present survey methodology, protocols or to clarify information more effectively.
8. Support letters from appropriate senior university leadership (i.e., president, provost, vice president of academic affairs, deans, department chair) at each participating institution indicating institutional support and fit with mission.

### **BUDGET CONTENT**

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

Use the preliminary budget summary form (provided below) to present a complete budget overview, following the project timelines included at the end of Section 1. Please follow all directions on the budget sheets. Provide a separate, detailed, line-item budget for each year of the project (using the budget template provided below; please email [flagship@iie.org](mailto:flagship@iie.org) to request an Excel version of the template) and a separate narrative budget justification.

The following budget guidelines must be adhered to when developing the program 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 narratives. The budget narrative should include a breakdown of the expenses, if not specified in the detailed budgets, 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 and must explain how costs relate to the proposed activities. (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. Explain the basis for estimating the costs included in the budget;
- c. 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.
- d. For each staff position, state whether the staff member will be paid a flat rate or will be paid for actual hours worked.
- e. Justify, in a detailed manner, any administrative positions included in the budget. Positions not justified in a detailed manner may not be supported.
- f. If travel is included in the budget, provide a note explaining the university's travel policy, particularly noting its hotel and per diem policy.
- g. For all travel, 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.
- h. Provide a link to the university's NICRA agreement. If this information is not available online, provide a copy of the relevant documents with the budget narrative.

## **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 when possible
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

Two webinars will be held to field questions regarding this solicitation:

- Wednesday, February 19, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. ET
- Wednesday, March 19, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. ET

To participate in a webinar, please send an e-mail to [flagship@ie.org](mailto:flagship@ie.org) indicating the names and e-mail addresses of the attendees, along with the date of the webinar(s) that the applicant would like to attend. The applicant will receive a confirmation email with instructions for participation in the webinar.

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

Applicants are encouraged to attend one or both of the scheduled webinars. Additionally, applicants may address questions to [flagship@ie.org](mailto:flagship@ie.org) prior to either of the webinars. Questions will be answered by e-mail *and* addressed in one of the webinars. As necessary, telephone calls may be scheduled to answer more complex questions.

Additional information about The Language Flagship can be found at [www.thelanguageflagship.org](http://www.thelanguageflagship.org).

## 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), Friday, April 4, 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.

**BUDGET FORMS**

**BUDGET SUMMARY  
THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP PROFICIENCY INITIATIVE**

<p><b>Name of Applicant Institution</b></p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Please list all funds requested. <b>Remember to include separate budget spreadsheets and accompanying budget justifications detailing your funding request.</b></p>
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**FUNDS REQUESTED**

Budget Categories	Year 1	Year 2
1. Personnel		
2. Fringe Benefits		
3. Travel		
4. Supplies		
5. Contractual		
6. Other		
7. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-6)		
8. Indirect Costs @ ____%		
<b>9. Total Budget Request</b>		

Please use the following table as a model for developing an itemized budget for your application submission. E-mail [flagship@ie.org](mailto:flagship@ie.org) to request an Excel version of the template. Provide as much detail as you can for the proposed costs associated with the requested grant funding.

INSTITUTION NAME							
PROFICIENCY INITIATIVE							
THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP FUNDS - DETAILED BUDGET							
		Project Year 1 (7/1/14-6/30/15)			Project Year 2 (7/1/15-6/30/16)		
<b>PERSONNEL</b>	<b>Role on Project</b>	<b>Inst. Salary</b>	<b>% Effort</b>	<b>IIE</b>	<b>Inst. Salary</b>	<b>% Effort</b>	<b>IIE</b>
				\$0			\$0
				\$0			\$0
			<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>FRINGE BENEFITS</b>		<b>Salary</b>	<b>Fringe</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Fringe</b>	<b>Total</b>
				\$0			\$0
				\$0			\$0
			<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>TRAVEL</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
				\$0			\$0
				\$0			\$0
			<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
				\$0			\$0
				\$0			\$0
			<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
				\$0			\$0
				\$0			\$0
			<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>CONTRACTUAL</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
				\$0			\$0
				\$0			\$0
			<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>OTHER EXPENSES</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
				\$0			\$0
				\$0			\$0
			<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>
				<b>Total</b>			<b>Total</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL DIRECT COSTS</b>				<b>\$0</b>			<b>\$0</b>
<b>MODIFIED TOTAL DIRECT COSTS</b>				<b>\$0</b>			<b>\$0</b>
<b>TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS</b>				<b>\$0</b>			<b>\$0</b>
<b>TOTAL COSTS FOR IIE</b>				<b>\$0</b>			<b>\$0</b>