THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP
*Creating Global Professionals*

# Language Flagship Technology Innovation Center

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AND APPLICATION GUIDELINES

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS:**

**August 31, 2018**

## 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 continued development and management of a national Flagship Technology Innovation Center to support the mission of The Language Flagship to promote effective advanced language learning.

In May 2015, NSEP funded the first Flagship Technology Innovation Center.  The primary purpose of the Flagship Technology Innovation Center has been to conceive, design, adapt or improve, deliver and test effective means to blend technology into existing Language Flagship Programs.

This current solicitation to support the Language Flagship Technology Innovation Center for the 2018-2021 cycle is open to all IHEs that currently have NSEP-funded Language Flagship Centers.  Competitive institutions will demonstrate background in the areas of development and successful execution of technology-based adaptive and blended learning systems as well as a clear dedication to improving language learning within all facets of the Flagship undergraduate experience.

Successful applicants must clearly define a plan to establish a resource center that improves coordination and collaboration across all NSEP-funded Language Flagship Programs in Flagship-supported languages, but especially supporting collaboration across institutions that teach Arabic, Chinese, and 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, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, and Turkish.[1] 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.

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[1] 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.

The Flagship community is currently composed of 25 Flagship Programs at U.S. IHEs and 7 Overseas Centers.  Please visit https://www.thelanguageflagship.org/content/languages-programs 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.

## GOALS OF THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP TECHNOLOGY CENTER

The primary goal of the Language Flagship Technology Center is to outline clear strategies to support the entire Flagship Program in the exploration and implementation of innovative approaches to language learning across the Flagship Program. Such strategies will incorporate multiple stakeholder inputs and perspectives to ensure that Flagship Centers, staff, and students are involved in the design and implementation of innovative technologies.

Successful applicants will explain how they will work with and support Flagship Directors and other institutional personnel to improve the use of instructional time inside and outside of the classroom. Applications should specifically address which strategies they will employ to ensure that the Technology Center works in partnership with Flagship-funded institutions to address specific language learning challenges identified in close consultation with the Flagship community. Applications should 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 strengthen instruction for both domestic and overseas Flagship instruction as well as improve the coordination between domestic and overseas instruction.  Teaching materials and resources designed or supported by the Flagship Technology Innovation Center must be either open source or open access depending on the functionality and usage of the resources.

**Primary areas of focus for the Flagship Technology Innovation Center may include:**

- Innovative learning strategies that involve technology in and outside the classroom
- Means and methods to draw upon existing technologies and strategies
- Partnerships with public, non-profit, and private organizations
- Micro-learning strategies that focus on specific learning improvements related to Flagship Goals, such as targeting increases in specific skills such as speaking, listening,

reading, and writing, or

- Challenges involving specific skills involved in initial language learning, or at well-defined stages in the undergraduate student experience
- Efforts to improve articulation between domestic Flagships in a shared language
- Effective means to improve articulation between domestic and overseas partners that will directly benefit instruction
- Technologies that will enhance independent student learning and enable students to increase their time in language using technology on their own
- New ways to exploit natural language processing (existing technologies) into effective language teaching processes

The Language Flagship is seeking strategies that outline how the Center will work with current curricular and pedagogical strategies in an approach that optimizes blending technological solutions across the curriculum. 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 careful consideration 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 well-designed blended learning integration? All proposals should clearly demonstrate how the Flagship Technology Innovation Center will ensure that learning outcomes that integrate technology add lasting and measurable value for learners.

## SECTION 2: PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

The intent of 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 draw upon the current status and activities of Flagship Programs (https://www.thelanguageflagship.org/content/languages-programs) to outline clear strategies as well as the scope of the initiative. Successful applicants will identify and describe ideas to build partnerships with institutions and organizations that support language teaching in all three 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 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 on learning 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.  Experts will include individuals from Flagship Institutions, other academic institutions and organizations, non-profits, government, and commercial enterprise.

- **A Work Plan for the Proposed Center**, focusing on how the applicant would implement the vision. This work plan should cover all three years of the proposed Center and will include strategies and venues (meetings or other events) that ensure the best form of outreach to the broader technology and learning community.

- **Effective Methods and Approaches in Using Technology**, especially to aid students in reaching advanced and superior language skills across all four modalities at critical junctures in their Flagship experience (Speaking, Reading, Listening, Writing). For example, the applicants could explain how they will work with the Flagship institutions to identify specific learning interventions that address identified skill improvements within the overall Flagship curriculum.  Applicants may break out approaches to focus on overall curriculum, specific approaches to out of classroom "micro-learning," or propose pilots in well-defined problem areas for language learners such as advanced listening, vocabulary retention, and pronunciation.

- **Best Practices in the Use, Adaptation, and Integration of Existing Technologies to Support Innovative Language Learning Approaches**, especially in the context of blended approaches of technology and classroom-based instruction.  For example, applicants will explain strategies of how they might best explore existing natural language processing into productive learning.

- **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 Management Plan**, that describes how the applicant institution will support the proposed team to lead this national effort through coordination, website development, strategic communication across the Flagship community, and bringing stakeholders together at regular intervals to share best practices.

- **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 entire The Language Flagship program 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.

- Development of an annual update of a Strategic Language Technology Roadmap that outlines clear goals for language learning and technology.  This plan should include both short term goals and a 5-year vision for moving the field forward.

## PROJECT TIMELINES

IIE anticipates making one award over a total of 36 months.  The award will begin on October 1, 2018. Applicants will address important outcomes and provide timetables in their proposals for the follow periods:

> Project Year 1: October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019
> Project Year 2: October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020
> Project Year 3: October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021

Continuation of funding beyond project Year 1 is contingent on program performance and availability of funds.

## FUNDING

Institutional funding for one award will be administered by IIE.  IIE anticipates that funding up to $500,000 will be available for the initial period October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019. Support for up to two additional years will 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.

In pursuing partnerships with outside organizations, federal funds may not be used to support staff or faculty time dedicated to applying or bidding for other private or federally funded grants and contracts.

## SECTION 3: MERIT REVIEW PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated by a merit-review panel organized by 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 NSEP, 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. 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 implementation plan, including a clear description of planned activities, project timeline, projected outcomes, roles and responsibilities, and adequacy of resources to undertake the project.
   b. Plans for analysis of national 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, successful initiatives.
   c. Detailed description of opportunities for collaboration among experts, language departments, programs, institutional partners in the project and other stakeholders.
   d. Description of assessment and evaluation methods that will be used to measure project outcomes and overall Center effectiveness. A clear plan for managing assessment data collected.
   e. Clear plan for ongoing dissemination of technology innovation within the Flagship community and nationally, including sharing documentation, data, data-sets and other related and education products. These work products must be open source or open access as appropriate to functionality and usage.

2. Overall strategic vision of the Center (30 Points)
   a. Clear understanding of technology integration and proficiency goals of The Language Flagship.
   b. Discussion of the current uses of technology in learning environments and how the proposed Center will build upon, improve, or create an approach to integrating blended technology models into Flagship curricula and teaching.
   c. A description of how experts, experience and best practices will be used to ensure that innovative ideas are turned into effective practices within The Language Flagship.
   d. Discussion of the anticipated impact of the initiative on the Flagship institutions and language programs involved.
   e. Description of the proposed Center's fit within the applicant institution's mission and overall institutional support for the project.

f. Description of plans for sustainable integration of technology practices within The Language Flagship, including the development and implementation of pilot or model technology integration.

g. 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 and expertise of the project director and other key personnel.
   b. Clear plan for project administration, management, and collaboration, including the position of the proposed Center within the IHE's administrative structure, individual project team member responsibilities, and a description of 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 and 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:

1. 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

2. DoDGARs Part 32, "Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations"

3. 2 CFR 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards"

*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**

Information outlined in the previous sections provides guidance regarding required components of proposals being submitted to IIE. Proposals that fail to include required sections may not be accepted or reviewed.

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

1. Transmittal letter from the applicant institution's Sponsored Projects/Research Office.
2. Title page.
3. Abstract of no more than 250 words.
4. Proposal narrative of no more than twenty-five (25) pages that contains:
    a. A plan that clearly describes the development and sustainment of a Language Flagship Technology Innovation Center that emphasizes the foci described in the solicitation guidelines.
5. A program timeline that indicates the faculty and/or staff members that would be responsible for each task.
6. 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
7. An appendix with short curricula vitae of *no more than three pages* for each lead individual involved in the proposed Program and "mini-bios" for other key individuals.
8. Support letters from appropriate senior university leadership (i.e., president, provost, vice president of academic affairs, dean, department chair) indicating institutional support, fit with mission, and willingness to institutionalize the proposed Program.

**BUDGET CONTENT**

A complete budget should include:

1. Budget Summary
2. Itemized Budgets (see template)
3. Budget Narratives

Using the budget template found at http://www.thelanguageflagship.org/content/programs-and-competitions prepare a detailed, line-item budget for each year of the project. The Excel template consists of two sheets. By entering data into the sheet entitled "Itemized Budget" the sheet entitled "Summary Budget" will auto-populate. Additionally, submit three separate narrative budget justifications. The first justification should correspond to the October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019 budget. The second justification should cover October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020. The third should cover October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021.

Please ensure that each line item is thoroughly justified in the budget narratives. The budget narratives should include a breakdown of the expenses, if not specified in the detailed budgets,

and a description of how the expenses benefit the Program.

The budgets and budget narratives must:

a. Include a separate note for each line item in the budgets. Budget notes must follow the order of the line items in the budgets. (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 concise.

c. For each staff position, state whether it is fixed fee, hourly or salaried.

d. If faculty are included in the budgets for non-classroom activities, the budget narratives must describe how this work will be covered (e.g., course buyouts, summer salary, etc.).

e. Justify, in a detailed manner, any administrative positions included in the budgets. Positions not justified in a detailed manner may not be supported.

f. Include all travel funds required by your program. For travel:

   i. Provide a note explaining the university's travel policy, particularly noting its hotel and per diem policy.

   ii. 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.

g. 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.

h. Explain how the major cost items relate to the proposed activities.

i. 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 narratives.

**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"
8. No use of first person pronouns, with the exception of support letters

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A webinar will be held to field questions regarding this solicitation on **August 3, 2018, 2:00 p.m. EST.**

To participate in the webinar, please send an e-mail to flagship@iie.org indicating the name(s) and e-mail address(es) of the participant(s). Each participant will receive an email with instructions for registering for the webinar.

Following the webinar, FAQs related to this solicitation will be sent to eligible applicants.

Applicants are encouraged to participate in the scheduled webinar. Applicants may submit questions to flagship@iie.org. Questions will be answered by e-mail and will be included in a Q&A document, which will be posted to http://www.thelanguageflagship.org/content/programs-and-competitions and updated periodically.

Information about The Language Flagship can be found at www.thelanguageflagship.org.

## TRANSMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Please send one (1) signed 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]

In addition, the completed proposal, including the budget, all appendices and attachments must be submitted as a single PDF file to flagship@iie.org.

The **DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT** of both paper and email submissions is **4:30 p.m. (EST), Friday, August 31, 2018.** The burden of timely delivery is the applicant's. Proposals received after the deadline will be disqualified.