Request for Information – IHE partner for the English for Heritage Language Speakers Program

1. Background and Purpose

The U.S. federal national security community needs professionals with higher levels of proficiencies in critical foreign languages. Most U.S. government funded language training focuses on native English speakers acquiring foreign language skills. Nevertheless, there are numerous naturalized U.S. citizens who are native speakers of critical foreign languages interested in working for the U.S. Federal Government and in need of professional English language skill development.

The English for Heritage Language Speakers (EHLS) Program, established under the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991, as amended, (NSEA) 50 U.S.C. § 1901 et seq., establishes and improves opportunities for U.S. citizens who are highly skilled native speakers of languages critical to national security to develop professional level English skills (Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Level 3 (see www.govtilr.org).

EHLS Scholars enter the program with ILR Level 2 and above English skills. These students still need support with advanced writing and public presentation skills, along with federal workplace familiarization needed for effective public service.

The Center for Applied Linguistics is seeking sources for an Institute of Higher Education (IHE) subcontractor to support the implementation of the English for Heritage Language Speakers (EHLS) program. Funding for this project is contingent on the continued funding of the prime contract.

Period of Performance:

The period of performance of this subcontract is a one year base period plus four option years for a total of five years.

1. Base period: August 27, 2026 through August 26, 2027
2. Option year 1: August 27, 2027 through August 26, 2028
3. Option year 2: August 27, 2028 through August 26, 2029
4. Option year 3: August 27, 2029 through August 26, 2030
5. Option year 4: August 27, 2030 through August 26, 2031

The EHLS Program provides an opportunity for native speakers of critical foreign languages to develop their English language and professional skills to a level that is needed by the national security community.

All EHLS participants receive a full scholarship from the National Security Education Program (NSEP) that includes tuition and a living stipend. The EHLS program is open to native speakers of the following languages: Arabic, Hausa, Kazakh, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Persian Farsi, Russian, Turkish, and Ukrainian. This list is slightly adapted each year based on national security priorities and the needs of federal organizations that hire EHLS Program graduates.

Instruction for the EHLS Program is provided by an institution of higher education (IHE). The EHLS curriculum focuses on tasks that are crucial to professional interactions in a government workplace such as: Making oral presentations, conducting research for federal agencies, drawing sound analytical conclusions, organizing and writing concise reports, using accepted email protocol, negotiating with supervisors and clients, running effective meetings, creating resumes, preparing for job interviews.

Besides regular classes with dedicated EHLS faculty, program activities include guest speakers, seminars with recruiters, one-on-one faculty tutorials, and a capstone open source analysis research project.

2. Eligibility Criteria:

To apply, organizations must:

- Be an accredited institute of higher education
- Be located within the Washington, DC metropolitan area
- Maintain an English language program that provides instruction to higher level adult students

3. Dates

- RFP Release: March 16, 2026
- Letter of Intent Due: March 27, 2026
    - To ensure that CAL retains sufficient staff to review proposals, we request an informal letter of intent from institutions intending to submit by March 27. The letter is not a requirement and does not bind respondents to submit a proposal. In order to receive responses to all questions, respondents must submit a letter of intent.
- Questions due to CAL: March 27, 2026
- Reponses to questions: April 3, 3026
- Proposals due to CAL: May 14, 2026

Letters of intent and questions may be sent to contracts@cal.org.

4. Process to Apply

Please submit applications to this RFP by email to contracts@cal.org. In your application, please include the following:

1. ***Eligibility*** – Please provide information on how you meet the eligibility criteria
2. ***Organizational Capacity***
    a. Outline your prior experience in delivering high level English language programs to adult learners of professional English, including a description of the expertise of your instructional team.
    b. Outline your prior experience with federal government, including (a) delivering federally funded programs of similar size and scope; and (b) your prior experience in preparing students for federal government careers.
    c. Describe your capacity and experience in implementing a hybrid ESL program. Include detail about your technological platform, your approach to and experience with online learning, and ways in which you intend to create an engaging and collaborative experience for students. Include detail on any institutional policy or other mechanism by which you ensure appropriate time and effort commitments from students
3. ***Management Plan*** –Provide detail on your proposed staffing plan including the name and qualifications of the proposed project director, qualifications and key roles of instructional and other staff, and a management plan for delivery of the program
4. ***Scope of work*** – outline how you plan to meet the tasks within the scope of work
5. ***Budget*** – provide a program budget aligned to the instructions in Section 6, Budget, below.
6. ***Health Insurance Plan*** – CAL will provide scholarship supplements, available upon request to awardees for partial support of specific program costs including health insurance. Outline your institution's healthcare policy for students (you may provide a link to an online description of the plan) and provide the cost of the health insurance, per student, in the manner specified in the budget section below.

CAL may request that finalist respondents host a visit to their campus location and provide an in-person presentation about their approach to the program.

5. Scope of Work

The subcontractor will implement curriculum and materials that lead to ILR Level 3 competence in English, and that include instruction in specialized professional English suitable for federal government employment and lead to a capstone open source analysis research project for 18 EHLS scholars annually.

Subsequent to the completion of the program, scholars should gain skills in professional level English suitable for making oral presentations, conducting research for federal agencies, drawing sound analytical conclusions, organizing and writing concise reports, using accepted email protocol, negotiating with supervisors and clients, running effective meetings, creating resumes, and preparing for job interviews.

Besides regular classes with dedicated EHLS faculty, program activities include guest speakers, seminars with recruiters, one-on-one faculty tutorials, and a capstone open source analysis research project.

1. Planning for Implementation

Within two weeks of a signed contract, attend a kickoff meeting with CAL.

Develop an instructional plan based on successful historical practices that enables professional-level speakers of a critical language to develop professional-level English skills, achieving Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) level 3 in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Provide a planning calendar of up to two years forward from the onset of the program and thenceforth in the July of each calendar year.

Deliverables:

- Curricular Plan
- Initial Planning Calendar
- July 2027 Planning Calendar

2. Administer EHLS Program

2.1. Administer the Intensive Professional Language Phase of the EHLS Program

The final structure of the 2027 EHLS program is contingent upon confirmation and approval from CAL and DLNSEO. For review purposes, please outline your approach to, and construct budget for the parameters outlined below.

18 EHLS scholars will participate in a full-time hybrid program that runs calendar weeks 1-20 (for 2027, Jan 4- May 21), with two weeks of instructional break, for a total of 18 weeks of direct instruction. This phase will include online synchronous instruction as well as select in-person events, to be held at a Washington DC metropolitan area IHE location.

Phase 1 Session 1 will consist of 8 instructional weeks. The first of these will be an in-person orientation week at the host IHE; the remaining 7 weeks will include online synchronous instruction as well as time for scholars to complete assignments. Scholars will have a week of break after Session 1.

Phase 1 Session 2 will consist of 5 instructional weeks. In the first week, scholars will participate in a 2-day in-person session at the host IHE to include the OSAP kickoff and mentor open house. The remaining 4 weeks will include online synchronous instruction as well as time for scholars to complete assignments. Scholars will have a week of break after Session 2.

Phase 1 Session 3 will also consist of 5 instructional weeks. In the first week of Session 3, scholars will complete their Practice Symposium. Session 3 will be entirely online, including synchronous instruction and asynchronous work time for scholars.

During the 18 instructional weeks of Program Phase 1, scholars will engage with the following coursework:

- Professional Oral Communication – 10 hours per week of instruction. The goal of this course is to improve scholars' ability to read, write, and interact clearly and effectively in English in professional settings.
- Professional Reading and Writing – 10 hours per week of instruction. This course focuses on practicing formal and informal presentations appropriate to the government workplace. Other areas of coverage include effective team communications, negotiation strategies and development of active listening skills. Attention will be paid to pronunciation as well as usage of conversation management strategies and listening comprehension skills.
- News Analysis- 5 hours per week of instruction. In this course, scholars focus specifically on improving their analytical thinking and briefing skills by analyzing news articles in terms of their objectivity, bias, currency, reliability, and accuracy.
- Tutorial – 2 hours per scholar per week of 1-1 instruction

Note that the subcontractor is not required to develop the curriculum for these courses. CAL will make curricular materials available.

The EHLS curriculum builds toward a capstone analytical research assignment, the Open Source Analysis Project (OSAP). Using non-classified open source materials, scholars conduct research in English and their native languages on topics provided by federal agencies. In Phase 2 of the program, scholars present these analytic findings to federal agency representatives and government contractors both orally at a formal symposium and in a written report. Instruction in the above courses should directly support the creation of the OSAP capstone products.

2.2. Furnish the Virtual and In-person Locations for the Intensive Professional Language Phase

The IHE should be prepared to furnish both a virtual and in-person location for the hybrid Intensive Professional Language Phase of the program. While it is intended that most participation will be virtual, scholars will come together for in-person collaboration at targeted points in the program.

2.3. Host an In-Person Symposium and Graduation Event

The culminating week of Phase 2 of EHLS program will include a two-day in-person open source research project symposium at for up to 75 government officials and government contract partners hosted by the university partner, and on the second day will include a graduation ceremony for the scholars, their families, and select EHLS partners.

The contractor will provide event space, a registration table and name badges, morning coffee and refreshments for two days, lunch for two days, and a printed program for up to 100 total participants in the symposium. The contractor will provide event space and a printed program for up to 75 participants in the graduation ceremony.

3. Reporting

Provide quarterly reports to CAL that summarize:

- funding usage for program administration and implementation
- progress on administration of the instructional program and progress toward instructional goals

4. Instructional Materials

By no later than the end of July, provide CAL with the full set of instructional materials for the three IPL core courses:

- Reading and Writing for Professionals
- Professional Oral Communications

- News Analysis

Optional Task 1 – Summer Facilities

Contractors may bid on the following optional task. You may provide your regular price list for these items.

1. Provide housing for up to 18 scholars at a location convenient to the campus for four weeks in the summer. Please provide a description of available housing and per person pricing details.
2. Provide facilities on or near campus for four weeks of classes in the summer for program partners to conduct classes, speaker events, and individual coaching meetings.

6. Budget Requirements

Costs will be reimbursed as accrued by the program.

Provide a program budget for one year for the period August 27, 2026 through August 26, 2027, that includes costs for and a justification for the following.

- Salaries -- Detail the total number of staff that would be required to carry out the scope, their proportion of effort and a short description of their role
- Fringe – Provide the rate and amount
- Sustenance – Provide itemized detail of what funds would cover
- Other Direct Costs – Provide itemized detail of other direct costs
- Indirect Costs – Provide the rate and amount
- Tuition*
- Total Costs for Year 1

*Indirect costs may not be applied to tuition. For the direct instruction components of the program, institutes may either charge tuition per student, or include instructional staff as part of the program cost, but not both. This is a non-degree non-credit certificate program.

Health Insurance

In addition to the budget categories provided above, a scholarship supplement will be available for students upon request. Please provide a separate estimate of your institution's health insurance costs, per student, for health insurance programs that can be made available to participants. Note that health insurance costs will be covered as a stipend to students – do not include them in your primary budget.

Optional: Budget for Summer Facilities Costs

If you are responding to Optional Task 1 – Summer Facilities, provide a budget for costs for that task.