

Request for Proposals – Small Business to Provide Intensive Instruction on Career Skills Development for Federal Government Applicants

The Center for Applied Linguistics is seeking a qualified small business that can provide services in delivering a course to support English for Heritage Language Speakers (EHLS) scholars in their search for positions with the federal government, including coursework that supports producing effective cover letters, KSAs, Statements of Interest, Objectives Statements, and Narratives.

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. As part of the scholarship obligation, participants agree to fulfill the EHLS service requirement, which requires scholars to work for the federal government in a position with national security responsibilities for one year after completing the program.

EHLS Scholars will be expected to seek a position that has national security responsibilities. All positions in the Department of War, Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, and the Intelligence Community fit this definition, as do some positions in other agencies and positions with some government contractors.

EHLS scholars will be encouraged to seek a position that meets their interests and aligns their skills and background. In general, participants who complete the EHLS Program pursue federal jobs in administration, management, or professional fields. Some work as

analysts or linguists/translators; others find positions in their original professional fields. The EHLS Program will not give EHLS Scholars a federal job; EHLS scholars must make a full and good faith effort to find a position for themselves. EHLS scholars receive assistance during and after the program to help identify appropriate federal job opportunities. The Center for Applied Linguistics is seeking expressions of interest from small businesses who can provide services in delivering a 3.5 week intensive professional course in skills required to secure federal employment. The course is expected to be delivered in summer 2027 to a total of 18 EHLS scholars.

2. Eligibility Criteria

- Applicant falls into one or more of the following categories:
 - Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB)
 - Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB)
 - Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSI)
 - SBA Certified HUBZone Small Business (HUBZone)
 - Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB)
 - SBA Certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)
 - Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs) and Indian Tribes That Have Not Been Certified by the Small Business Administration as Small Disadvantaged Businesses
- Applicant can provide services in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area
- Applicant has experience in delivering high-quality adult education
- Applicant has extensive experience with US Federal government hiring processes and procedures
- Applicant certifies that it is in good standing with the federal government, maintains an active registration in SAM.gov, and is not debarred or suspended from federal contracting.
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Period of Performance:

The period of performance of this agreement 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 includes an Intensive Professional Language phase provided by an institution of higher education (IHE), followed by a Career Preparation and Capstone Institute phase. This RFP is for instruction for the Career Preparation and Capstone phase. The instructional phase will take place over 3.5 weeks in summer.

3. Dates

RFI Release: April 27, 2026

Responses due to CAL: May 12, 2026

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, including the small business category requirements that your organization meets.
2. **Capacity and Experience**
 - a. Outline your prior experience in delivering high-quality adult education for professionals.
 - b. Outline your prior experience with federal government hiring processes and procedures.
 - c. Describe any prior experience you have in delivering courses or instruction that support applications for federal government service.
 - d. Describe your experience in delivering instruction to audiences with a broad range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

3. **Staffing plan** –Provide a short biographical sketch of proposed staff who will support the efforts, addressing their capacity to provide the required services, as well as resumes for those staff.
4. **Scope of work** – outline how you plan to meet the tasks within the scope of work, including how your approach incorporates best practices in adult education.
5. **Budget** – provide a program budget and narrative

5. Scope of Work

1. Plan for Implementation

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

CAL will provide copies of historical curricular materials to support the course, which has previously been run with fewer instructional hours per week across a longer period of implementation. Within eight weeks of a signed contract, the subcontractor will provide a plan for updated implementation based on the new program structure of Career Skills Development instruction (described below in Task 2).

Attend two planning and check-in meetings prior to course implementation, in January of 2027 for an update and orientation to the new EHLS cohort, and another meeting 8-12 weeks prior to course implementation.

2. Provide Instructional Services

The small business contractor will provide instructional services to support the EHLS Career Skills Development course in summer 2027 and potentially for future years of the 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.

The Career Skills Development course will run May 31, 2027 through June 23, 2027, for three full weeks and one partial week. The course will be in-person in a Washington, DC metro area location.

The goal of this course is to prepare EHLS scholars for working in the federal government by providing approximately 5 hours per day of coursework that focuses on skills required to secure federal employment and to succeed in the federal work environment.

The course will improve scholars' ability to find a job in the US government. Scholars develop a professional portfolio and identify appropriate positions within federal agencies. Activities include using online tools for the job search, evaluating positions, researching agencies, preparing targeted documents, and honing interview skills.

In addition, each scholar participates in a weekly individual 30-minute coaching session with a Career Skills Development instructor to identify career goals, target appropriate agencies and positions, and complete application materials.

Learning Activities

- Listening in formal and informal settings such as classroom interactions, simulated job interviews, career-related workshops, and lectures on government agencies, their missions, and their job requirements;
- Speaking in settings such as individual, pair, and group work, simulated job interviews, class presentations, and salary negotiations;
- Reading a variety of career-related materials in order to understand main ideas and supporting points as well as to acquire specific vocabulary related to federal careers; and
- Writing effective professional/career search correspondence and documents with cohesion, coherence, and control of mechanics.

Historically, the course has used the following materials:

- *Federal Resume Guidebook*, 8th edition. Kathryn Troutman, 2025.
- Authentic materials from online news sources and government publications

In parallel with the Career Skills Development coursework, scholars also attend a speaker series in which scholars are introduced to representatives from various federal agencies and government contractors who describe their organizations' mission and identify relevant employment opportunities. Note that the small business contractor is not responsible for this series, which is conducted collaboratively by DLNSEO and CAL.

3. Reporting

Provide quarterly reports to CAL that summarize:

- funding usage and activities
- progress on administration of the instructional services

4. Instructional Materials

CAL anticipates providing an initial set of curricular materials prior to the first implementation of the career course. This task calls for the delivery of instructional materials at the close of the course, to maintain an up-to-date set of records that include any instructional change for the year.

By no later than the end of July, provide CAL with the full set of up-to-date instructional materials used for the summer course.

6. Budget

Please provide a budget and budget narrative for the services requested.

7. Optional Task: Provide Physical Premises to Conduct Career Skills Development Course

The location of the in-person course is yet to be determined. We invite small business providers to bid on this function. If you wish to bid on this function, please provide separate specifications and budget for facilities for three weeks and three days of facilities suitable for conducting classes, speaker events, and individual coaching activities. Facilities must be located in the Washington, DC, metro area.