

CRITICAL LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Language skills are a strategic asset. Build yours this summer.

U.S. leadership abroad—in business, global affairs, and security—rests on Americans who can navigate other languages and cultures with expertise and fluency. The Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program delivers intensive summer language instruction to high-achieving undergraduate and graduate students, selected through a competitive, merit-based process.

Offered in nine languages overseas or virtually, the program condenses a full academic year of language study into eight weeks of rigorous instruction and cultural immersion.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Participants receive the equivalent of one year of college-level language study through intensive language instruction and cultural activities that reinforce language learning and intercultural competence.

- **8 weeks of intensive language study and cultural immersion**
- **18 hours per week of small-group instruction led by native speakers**
- **Weekly one-on-one sessions with instructors**
- **Regular conversation practice with local language partners**
- **Cultural activities and excursions**
- **Dedicated program staff support from start to finish**

LANGUAGES OFFERED

Arabic	Chinese	Hindi	Japanese	Korean	Persian	Portuguese	Russian	Swahili

Students from all majors and all levels of language experience are encouraged to apply.

APPLY BY NOVEMBER 17, 2026

WWW.CLSCHOLARSHIP.ORG

Scan to start your application.

The CLS Program is a U.S. Department of State program with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by American Councils for International Education.

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

CRITICAL LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP

PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Advance your language proficiency through intensive language instruction and cultural enrichment experiences
- Earn official certification of language gains through the ACTFL OPI test
- Build lifelong connections with host communities and fellow participants
- Join a distinguished network of U.S. Department of State Exchange Alumni

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be:

- U.S. citizen or national
- At least 18 years old by May 15, 2027
- Enrolled in an undergraduate- or graduate-level degree-granting program at a U.S. college or university at the time of application
- Applicants for the virtual institutes must be enrolled at the undergraduate level

The CLS Program awards preference to veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, in recognition of their service.



SELECT YOUR PROGRAM FORMAT

	BEGINNER LEVEL	HIGHER LEVELS
VIRTUAL	Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian	—
OVERSEAS	Hindi, Persian, Portuguese, Swahili	All CLS Languages

HEAR FROM OUR ALUMNI

"Studying Mandarin opened doors I hadn't imagined before. It directly helped me secure a position at an association of private equity companies, where my language skills and cultural insights became invaluable." - CLS Program Scholar

20 YEARS OF GLOBAL IMPACT

Since 2006, the CLS Program has equipped more than 10,000 U.S. participants across 430+ congressional districts with the linguistic skills, regional knowledge, and global networks to advance U.S. interests worldwide.

94% reach intermediate or advanced proficiency, verified by the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview

75% report CLS prepared them to support national security or global stability

66% apply regional knowledge at work

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AMERICAN COUNCILS FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION