

# NSLI Frequently Asked Questions

## **What is NSLI?**

In January 2006, President Bush announced the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), an inter-agency effort coordinated by the White House to increase dramatically the number of Americans learning, speaking, and teaching critical-need, foreign languages. Foreign language skills are essential for engaging foreign governments and peoples, especially in critical world regions, and for promoting understanding, conveying respect for other cultures, and encouraging reform. These skills are also fundamental to the economic competitiveness and security interests of the Nation.

The Secretaries of State, Education, and Defense, and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), launched this comprehensive and coordinated national initiative. It was based on a strategy developed during more than a year of joint advance planning to expand U.S. critical foreign language education beginning in kindergarten and continuing through elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education and into the workforce. NSLI programs target the Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian languages and the Indic, Persian, and Turkic language families, as determined by the four agencies.

## **What are NSLI's goals?**

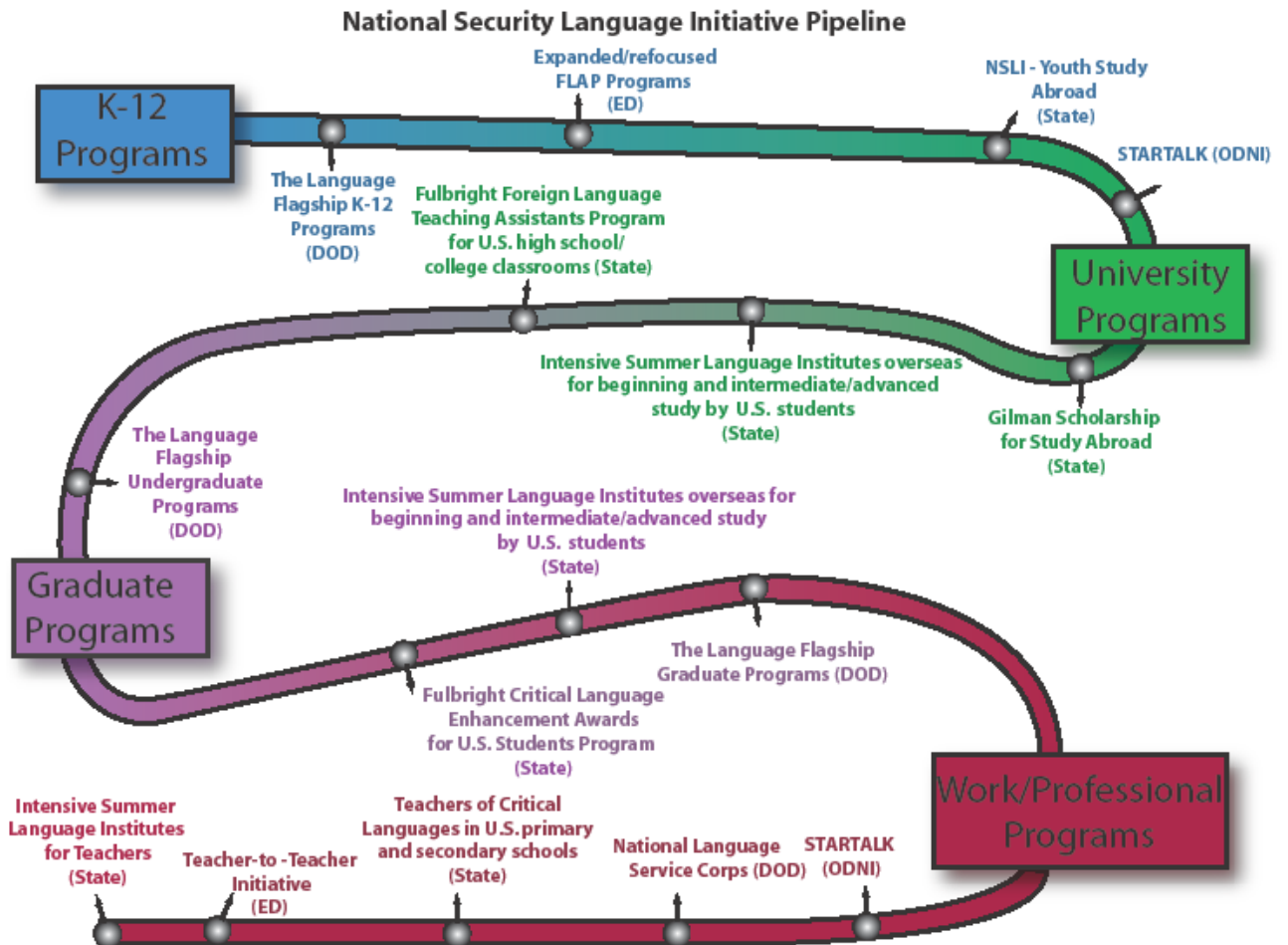
NSLI is committed to making a long-term investment in the nation's critical foreign language learning capabilities and competencies by accomplishing the following goals:

1. Increase the number of Americans mastering critical need languages and starting learning at an earlier age.
2. Increase the number of advanced level speakers of foreign languages with an emphasis on mastery of critical languages.
3. Increase the number of teachers of critical need languages and provide resources for them.

## **What is the NSLI "Pipeline" and how does the inter-agency partnership work?**

NSLI represents an extraordinary partnership among four federal agencies under the leadership of the White House. It focuses federal resources and expertise to strengthen critical language capacity across key components of the K-16 pipeline. Ongoing consultation and collaboration among the agencies promotes coordination, avoids redundancies, and engages a large community of stakeholders. At the same time, the four agencies fulfill their individual missions, leverage their individual and collective strengths, and use models that fit their institutional mandates.

The NSLI goals and the targeted effort by the four federal agencies to achieve them through investments across the learning continuum, from K-12 through graduate education and professional programs, provide: a shared purpose and framework; promote strategic thinking and analysis; and strengthen individual programs and the overall effectiveness of the initiative.



**Where can I find more information on NSLI grants, scholarships and study abroad opportunities?**

To learn more about individual programs, visit the [NSLI program web sites](#). You can also learn more about NSLI at the [NSLI website](#).

**What are “critical-need languages?”**

Chinese, Russian, Arabic, Korean, and the Indic, Turkic, and Persian language families.

**How were these languages selected?**

The criteria for selecting the languages were:

1. The number of people speaking the language.
2. The official status and political importance of the language.
3. The historical and academic interest in the language.

**Who determined the list?**

The NSLI inter-agency team selected the languages in 2005 from the 1985 Federal Register list. It was their intention that the NSLI list would be revised as needed. The list is currently being revised to reflect the nation's need.

**Is there more than one list?**

Yes. One list would not meet the various needs of 4 agencies and multiple programs with different purposes and beneficiaries. HOWEVER, all of them draw from the 1985 Federal Register list.

**What are the NSLI Programs and who do they serve?**Department of Education

- Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP)
- Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative
- Advancing America Through Foreign Language Partnerships (authorized, not appropriated)

Department of State

- Fulbright Critical Language Enhancement Awards for U.S. Students Program
- Intensive Summer Language Institutes
- Gilman Scholarships for Study Abroad
- Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants
- Teachers of Critical Languages Program
- Intensive Summer Language Institutes for Teachers
- High School Summer Language Institutes
- High School Study Abroad

Department of Defense

- The National Flagship Language Initiative
- The National Language Service Corps

Office of the Director of National Intelligence

- STARTALK

## ACTIVE NSLI PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES BY PIPELINE TARGET

		Elementary	Middle	High School	Undergraduate	Graduate	Workforce	Teacher and Professional Development
Education	Foreign Language Assistance Program	X	X	X				X
	Teacher-to-Teacher							X
State	Intensive Summer Language Institutes				X	X		
	Critical Language Enhancement Awards for Fulbright U.S. Student Program					X		
	Gilman Scholarship Awards				X			
	NSLI-Youth (includes Summer Language Institutes for High School Students)			X				
	Intensive Summer Language Institutes for Teachers							X
	Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants			X	X	X		
	Teachers of Critical Languages	X	X	X	X			X
Defense	The Language Flagship	X	X	X	X	X		X
	National Language Service Corps						X	
ODNI	STARTALK			X				X

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