2019 Foreign Area Officer Regional Skill Sustainment Initiative

Request for Proposals Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: May 9, 2019

PROGRAM

QUESTION: What are your expectations from the participating institutions?

Answer: We are seeking proposals that will provide Foreign Area Officers (FAOs) with professional development and skills enrichment in regional and area studies through an in-residence seminar up to 4 days in length. Section 2 of the Request for Proposal (RFP) provides specific guidelines on the curriculum and instruction requested under this solicitation.

QUESTION: What language proficiency and academic level can we expect from FAOs when they attend the seminar?

Answer: FAOs typically have a minimum language proficiency level 2 on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale for at least one of the dominant regional languages. FAOs also possess a graduate-level education focused on their assigned region and have regional duty experience.

QUESTION: Are the participants experienced FAOs that are assigned or soon to be assigned to the specific geographic area for that seminar?

Answer: FAOs participating in the seminars have already completed at least one FAO utilization tour or are currently serving in a FAO position.

QUESTION: How many FAOs will attend a seminar?

Answer: Expect approximately 25 FAOs per seminar class.

QUESTION: Are we responsible for recruiting FAOs or the Navy will identify them?

Answer: The institutional grantee will not be responsible for recruiting participants to the seminars. Participants for this program are selected by their Services’ FAO Proponent Office. Each Service compiles a list for each seminar and forwards the list to DLNSEO. DLNSEO will then share the participant list to the institutional grantee.

QUESTION: Are the Language Training Centers (LTCs) for FAOs significantly different from the existing ones? Where does language fit in the curriculum?

Answer: The goal of this special initiative is to provide FAOs with advanced understanding of the most current regional security affairs and the impact of regional activities on interagency and joint operations in a seminar forum. Emphasis is more on regional and area studies than language.
QUESTION: Is the curriculum controlled by the grantee or a designated entity other than the grantee?

Answer: The curriculum will be controlled by the grantee in collaboration with the Department of the Navy, the Department of Defense (DoD)-partner under this initiative. Institutions should develop suggested syllabi and lists of speakers in their proposal submission. Institutions should possess a level of expertise and breadth of connections such that they are capable of planning and executing seminars as stated on page 4 of the request for proposal (RFP). DLNSEO and IIE play coordinating roles, and the FAO Council will also provide content recommendations based on current events.

QUESTION: Are we allowed to use flipped classrooms or other active pedagogies?

Answer: We encourage you to present any active pedagogical strategies you feel will significantly contribute to overall instruction in your proposal.

QUESTION: Should each of the five seminars focus on one of the five geographic commands?

Answer: As stated on the proposal guidelines (page 4 of the RFP), no fewer than five in-residence seminars will focus on the geographic commands: European Command, Africa Command, Central Command, Southern Command, and Indo-Pacific Command.

QUESTION: Should potential applicants develop each seminar to address all of the issues on Page 4 of the RFP or can each seminar focus exclusively on one or two issues?

Answer: A seminar’s curriculum should touch on each of the issues identified for instruction. This might mean that the topics are intertwined throughout the curriculum in order to achieve a more in-depth perspective on the issue presented.

QUESTION: Since the participating FAOs are usually senior officers with experience in a geographic command region, will information from designated representatives of these regions be available to assess a FAOs level of expertise and specific needs?

Answer: The Department of the Navy will inform the institution what topics are relevant to FAOs. The Department of the Navy is the conduit to the FAO community in this initiative.

QUESTION: Should potential applicants contact regional command centers inquiring about potential rental space for seminars, or will that be coordinated by DLNSEO or the Department of the Navy?

Answer: Potential applications should identify facility space at each location where seminars will be offered and should allocate an estimated portion of the budget for facilities costs. Should rental space be available at a regional command center, the institution awarded the LTC FAO initiative grant will have the opportunity to revise the budget accordingly.
QUESTION: How will monitoring and evaluation work for the sustainment skills program?

Answer: DLNSEO and Navy personnel will attend the seminars to observe interactions between students and professors and to address individual FAO concerns or issues. Applicants must present clear plans for assessing or measuring the program’s effectiveness. Seminar participant survey or feedback may be a tool that can be used to evaluate and improve seminar courses and inform future program planning.

QUESTION: Who should quarterly reports be submitted to?

Answer: Quarterly reports will be submitted to IIE.

QUESTION: Will FAO community leaders attend the seminars?

Answer: Yes, senior representatives from the FAO community will be in attendance at the seminars.

QUESTION: How much technology do you expect to see used at these seminars?

Answer: In the past, seminars have included PowerPoint and videos. You are encouraged to use the technology deemed best for instruction, so long as there is interaction with students.

QUESTION: Will the proposed Center be on the grantee’s campus or at one of the 3 designated seminar locations?

Answer: As stated on pages 4-5 of the RFP, for the regional and area studies seminars, no fewer than five seminars per year will be offered in a geographic command’s area of responsibility and at least two seminars will be held in the Washington, DC area to maximize participation of FAOs.

QUESTION: What will the major role of the Center be if it were to be established on campus?

Answer: The “Center” can be on a grantee’s campus, however, as stated on pages 4-5 of the RFP, at least five of the regional seminars will be held in a geographic command’s area of responsibility and the rest of the seminars held in the Washington, DC area to maximize participation of FAOs.

QUESTION: Is engagement of foreign nationals, resident or non-resident in the United States, acceptable or are there restrictions and security concerns that we should consider in developing the proposal?

Answer: Engagement of foreign nationals, resident or non-resident in the United States, is acceptable. Please keep in mind that since the Department of the Navy is the DoD partner for this initiative, they will play a key role in the development of seminar topics/curriculum to include seminar speakers.

QUESTION: Can institutions use subcontractors, even if they are for-profits?

Answer: Yes, subcontractors, even if they are for-profit, may be proposed. Please provide justification for inclusion of all subcontractors and a description of their expertise.

QUESTION: Does the LTC FAO program have any connection to CENTCOM’s Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Program?

Answer: No.
**PROPOSAL**

**QUESTION**: Is there a possibility of multiple small awards to two or more existing LTCs or accredited institutions that have specific expertise in one or more of the targeted international regions of interest?

*Answer*: This RFP is seeking proposals from existing LTCs as well as non-LTC institutions. Although collaborating with other institutions is encouraged, only one proposal should be submitted for this project, as a consortium. All aspects of collaboration should be addressed in your proposal, to include any consortial or contractual agreements.

**QUESTION**: If multiple institutions are collaborating on a proposal, should one organization have the lead role in the proposal submission and the administration/management of the grant?

*Answer*: Yes. All aspects of collaboration should be addressed in your proposal to include any consortial or contractual agreements and the roles and responsibilities of each participant.

**QUESTION**: Do applicants need to identify regional experts prior to receiving an award?

*Answer*: Applicants do not need to identify experts and speakers for every seminar and topic, but should identify and maintain a pool of experts in order to give review panelists a sense of who the applicant will engage if it is awarded a grant.

**QUESTION**: Should sample syllabi be submitted in the appendix or as part of the proposal narrative?

*Answer*: Please include your sample syllabi as appendices in your application.

**QUESTION**: The selection criterion makes reference to “project sustainment.” Is this initiative intended to become a more permanent program offering at the grantee institution, similar to other established programs funded through tuition or similar sources?

*Answer*: The grant under the Language Training Center program is for one year with the possibility of renewal up to two years. The Language Training Center program is designed to leverage capacity in higher education for training of DOD personnel. Creating ongoing capacity in higher education for language, culture and regional training for DOD personnel is an integral part of the LTC program.

**QUESTION**: The RFP states that the proposal narrative should address comprehensive plans for the grant year, and also states that topics, seminar locations, and other logistics will be determined after the grant is awarded. What major components should we include in our comprehensive plan, if topics, locations, and timing will not be determined until after the award?

*Answer*: Given the close collaboration with the Navy, we understand that components proposed may be different than what is executed, if granted the award. For the purpose of this proposal, we ask that you demonstrate your capacity to deliver such seminars, and explain your planned delivery method, potential topics, curriculum development, and general logistics. Regarding locations, there is not a need to identify specific venues at this time, but you can indicate the type of venue at which the seminars could take place.
QUESTION: Could you identify a set of regional and global topics of particular interest to the FAOs?

Answer: We would like the applicant to provide us agenda topics and recommend venues for these seminars in their proposal. Once an institution is selected for this initiative, further refinement of the agenda and seminar topics will be conducted in collaboration with the Department of the Navy.

QUESTION: Can institutions that are geographically close to Washington, D.C. walk the proposals to the IIE office in the city? Will we receive delivery confirmation?

Answer: Yes, proposals may be hand delivered to IIE. IIE will provide delivery confirmation.

QUESTION: Will the faculty teaching the courses done at the COCOMs be staying on military bases? If so, is there a standard cost per person, per night?

Answer: In the past, faculty and staff has stayed on the local economy. Therefore, for budgeting purposes, we recommend that you utilize the per diem rates in calculating travel costs for your faculty and staff.

QUESTION: Is there a cost for room rental from the COCOMs for the courses?

Answer: Potential applicants should identify space at each location where seminars will be offered and should allocate an estimated portion of the budget for facilities cost.

QUESTION: Given the security issues, we are assuming we cannot bring laptops. Do we need to add the cost of hiring the technologies necessary for running the courses at the COCOMs?

Answer: You may bring and utilize your laptops when you conduct the seminars. However, if applicants feel the need for an IT specialist to support the seminars, you may include this in your budget and provide a justification for this requirement under the budget narrative.

QUESTION: For the budget content section, is there a page limit for the information?

Answer: There is no page limit for the budget content. Please provide as much detailed information as you can on the budget narrative.

QUESTION: Should our budget numbers cover food during the day for the seminar participants or should we organize lunch as an “on your own” event?

Answer: Meals and lodging will be the responsibilities of the seminar attendees as stated on page 3 of the RFP so please do not include these in your budget.