

If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.



2026 Critical Language Scholarship Program Printable Application

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please write to cls@americancouncils.org.

Section 0: Pre-Application Form

Privacy Notice and Consent

Before you begin your application, we would like to inform you about the data we will collect from you and how we will use and store it. Most data that we collect is necessary to perform under the [CLS Terms and Conditions agreement](#) we may conclude with you at a later stage in the application process. Some data will be required to perform certain legal obligations that American Councils is subject to, and for other data, we will ask for your explicit consent. Please note that, if you choose not to give us your consent, you will not be able to start an application.

Questions?

If you have any questions about this Privacy Notice and Consent form, please contact the program staff at: cls@americancouncils.org.

Privacy Notice

1) Applicant Name

First/Given Name:

Middle Name/Patronymic:

Last/Family Name:

2) Country of Participation:

3) Country of Current Residence:

4) Date of Birth:

American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, Inc., (American Councils, we, us, or our) based at 1828 L Street NW, Suite 1200, Washington, D.C. 20036-5136, United States of America, would like to inform you about the **Critical Language Scholarship (CLS)** program. To participate in the CLS Programs, American Councils requires certain data about you. Your written consent is required to continue with your application.

What Regulation Governs Our Processing of Your Data?

See our [About Your Data](#) page.

What is the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program?

The Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program is a program of the [U.S. Department of State](#) with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by [American Councils for International Education](#).

The CLS Program provides immersive summer programs for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students to learn languages of strategic importance to the United States' national security and economic prosperity. Participants receive the equivalent of one year of language study in eight weeks, through intensive language

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instruction and cultural activities that reinforce both language learning and intercultural competence. Since 2006, the CLS Program has supported over 10,000 U.S. undergraduate and graduate students. CLS alumni represent all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

For additional information about the CLS Programs, please visit: <https://clscholarship.org>.

What Data Will Be Collected and for What Purposes, and with Whom Will We Share It?

For this program, your personal data will be collected, used, shared, and stored. Different data is collected for different processes. For more information on the processes for which we collect data, please see Table 1 in the Appendix.

How Long Will American Councils Retain My Data?

In line with Article 13(2)(a) GDPR, American Councils will retain personal data collected for only for as long as one or more of the following objective criteria continue to apply:

1. Program administration needs: the data remains necessary to verify eligibility, manage placements, and deliver participant support. This applies to the current program and any other program the participant may apply for in the future;
2. Post program obligations: the data remains necessary for follow up monitoring obligations, impact evaluations, alumni engagement, or mandatory reporting periods are still open;
3. Legal or contractual requirements: the data is required for financial grant rules, audit requirements, child protection or immigration laws, and other statutory record keeping or limitation periods have not yet lapsed;
4. Potential claims or investigations: the data may be required to establish, exercise, or defend legal rights; and
5. Long-term public interest archiving or research: fully anonymized statistical data continues to offer demonstrable value without allowing re-identification.

Once none of these criteria apply, the information is either irreversibly anonymized or securely destroyed in accordance with our data deletion procedures.

What Risks May I Have If My Data Is Sent Outside the EEA or My Country?

See our [About Your Data](#) page.

What Are My Options?

You have the following options in relation to personal data:

1. The option to access the personal data we hold about you.
2. The option to withdraw your consent. If you withdraw your consent, your personal data will be deleted or anonymized after you have withdrawn your consent, except for the personal data we are obliged to store in compliance with legal obligations.

**If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.**

3. The option to have your personal data corrected if any of your personal data held by us is inaccurate or incomplete. Please contact us using the contact details found at the end of this Privacy Notice and Consent form.
4. Under certain conditions, the option to be forgotten, which is the option to ask us to delete or otherwise dispose of any of your personal data that we have.
5. The option to restrict, or prevent, the processing of your personal data.
6. The option to data portability. This means that you can ask us for a copy of that personal data to re-use with another service or business in applicable cases.
7. The option to object to us using your personal data for a particular purpose or purposes.
8. The option to be informed about our collection and use of your personal data.
9. The option to lodge a complaint with the relevant Data Protection Authority.

All data subject access requests should be made in writing and sent to privacy@americancouncils.org. Please note that we may ask you to verify your identity before responding to such requests. We will respond to your request within 30 days of receiving such request.

Making a Request or Asking a Question

See our [About Your Data](#) page.

Contacting the Relevant Data Protection Authority

See our [About Your Data](#) page.

Consent for the Collection, Use, and Storage of Personal Data

Please indicate your consent choice for data processing activities related to special categories of your personal data that reveal racial or ethnic origin, reveal religious or philosophical beliefs, or concern health.

- ☐ Yes, I consent
☐ No, I do not consent

If you answer no, [1] American Councils will not be permitted to collect, use, or store your personal data; [2] your application form will be erased; and [3] you will not be able to participate in the CLS Program.

Date of Consent:

Applicant's Signature:

Please indicate your consent for the transfer of personal data outside your country or the European Economic Area (the EEA consists of all EU Member States, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway).

- I consent that my personal data be transferred to the United States of America (USA) and, on a limited basis, to other countries outside of my country or the EEA.

**If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.**

- I understand that the standard protections afforded to those in my country or the EEA may not fully apply to my data that I voluntarily consent to be transferred to the USA or other countries outside of my country or the EEA.

- ☐ Yes, I consent
- ☐ No, I do not consent

If you answer no, [1] American Councils will not be permitted to collect, use, or store your personal data; [2] your application form will be erased; and [3] you will not be able to participate in the CLS Program.

Date of Consent:

Applicant's Signature:

Opt-in to Email Communications from American Councils

May we contact you by email to alert you to programs, grants, or other opportunities and information available for CLS applicants?

Choose one

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

NOTE: You may give or withdraw your consent to receive application support or marketing emails from us at any time. You can do this by writing to us by email at: cls@americancouncils.org.

Campus Advisors Acknowledgement and Consent

The CLS Program collaborates with faculty and staff at colleges and universities across the United States who volunteer to support applicants. As part of the application process, advisors are granted access to an online portal containing the names, email addresses, degree programs, and languages of interest of their student(s). Advisors may use this information to promote the CLS Program, assist students, or encourage application submission.

We strongly encourage you to connect with the CLS advisor(s) on your campus. You can find a list of CLS advisors at <https://clscholarship.org/universities>. Other helpful resources may include study abroad advisors, fellowships advisors, academic advisors, or a campus writing center.

I understand that CLS will share limited application information, as indicated above, with my campus advisor(s).

- ☐ Yes

I would like to receive the following type(s) of information from the CLS Program during the application process:

- ☐ Reminders as the deadline approaches
- ☐ Worksheets to help with drafting essays
- ☐ A schedule of webinars and drop-in office hours
- ☐ Tips and best practices for completing the application
- ☐ I do not wish to receive any additional information

**If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.**

I am currently enrolled in a degree program at the following college or university. (If you are studying abroad this semester, you should list your home institution.)

- College or University Name

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Section 1: Program Overview and Requirements

Below is basic information about the CLS Program, including eligibility criteria and requirements for participation. Afterward, you will be asked to certify that you have read the information.

Critical Language Scholarship Program

The Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program is a program of the [U.S. Department of State](#) with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by [American Councils for International Education](#).

The CLS Program provides immersive summer programs for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students to learn languages of strategic importance to the United States' national security and economic prosperity. Participants receive the equivalent of one year of language study in eight weeks, through intensive language instruction and cultural activities that reinforce both language learning and intercultural competence. Since 2006, the CLS Program has supported over 10,000 U.S. undergraduate and graduate students. CLS alumni represent all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

The CLS Program reserves the right to change, cancel, or hold some or all of the 2026 CLS institutes virtually, based on a range of factors, including, but not limited to, safety, health, and security considerations.

Who is Eligible for the CLS Program?

To be eligible for the CLS Program applicants must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or national at the time of application.
 - Permanent Residents and individuals awaiting naturalization are not eligible.
- Be at least 18 years old by May 15, 2026.
- Be enrolled in an accredited U.S. degree-granting program at the undergraduate (associate, bachelor's) or graduate (master's, doctoral, professional degree) level at the time of application. Graduating seniors and students enrolled in one-year master's programs are eligible.
 - Applicants must be enrolled in a program that results in a degree. Those taking stand-alone or continuing education classes or pursuing a certificate are not eligible.
 - Applicants must be enrolled at an accredited U.S. institution. Students earning degrees at foreign institutions that are not based in the U.S. or its territories are not eligible, even if those institutions are accredited by a U.S. agency. Students enrolled in dual-degree programs involving coursework at both a U.S. institution and an international institution may be eligible if they can provide a transcript from the U.S. institution.
 - Applicants must be enrolled in at least one credit-bearing class at or through their home institution in fall 2025. Exceptions may only be granted in three cases as described below, and are reviewed case-by-case starting in late January.
 - If applicants are enrolled in a degree-granting program but taking a leave of absence to participate in an organized term- or year-long study abroad program; national scholarship or fellowship program; or to participate in a substantive co-operative or internship program, they may request an exception to the enrollment requirement.

If you have questions about the application or accessibility, please write to cls@americancouncils.org.

- **If applicants are not taking classes at or through their home institution in the fall term, they must submit a CLS Enrollment Confirmation form completed by their home registrar in the U.S. Applicants must also submit a signed letter from the program provider explaining the opportunity and confirming their participation. American Councils will provide the CLS Enrollment Confirmation form and further instructions to applicants selected as semi-finalists. If selected as a finalist, American Councils may ask the finalist to submit updated documentation from the program provider confirming their successful completion of the program.**
 - Applicants must successfully complete fall academic requirements and maintain good academic standing to remain eligible. Applicants who withdraw or fail to maintain good academic standing with their institution are not eligible to participate in the program.
 - Applicants must be enrolled for the spring term unless they graduate in December 2025. The CLS Program reserves the right to revoke awards from applicants who withdraw or fail to maintain a good academic standing with their institution during spring 2026.
- Undergraduate applicants must complete at least one full year of study (two semesters or three quarters) by the beginning of the CLS Program in summer 2026.
- Applicants must meet the language requirements, if applicable, of the program to which they apply.
- Applicants may only apply once, for one language, each year. Applicants who submit multiple applications will be considered ineligible.

The following persons are ineligible for the CLS Program for a period ending one year following the termination of such employment, association, or service:

- **Employees of the U.S. Department of State.** This provision includes all employees, paid or unpaid (including part-time or temporary employees, consultants, externs, fellows and personal services contractors). This provision does not apply to interns.
- **Immediate family members (e.g., spouses or dependent children) of employees of the U.S. Department of State.** This provision includes immediate family members of all employees, paid or unpaid (including part-time or temporary employees, consultants, externs, fellows and personal services contractors). This provision does not apply to immediate family members of interns.
 - Self-supporting children living apart from their parents are eligible to participate, provided that their parents/guardians do not work directly on the Critical Language Scholarship Program.
- **Employees (and their immediate family members) of private and public agencies under contract or grant with the U.S. Department of State who perform services on behalf of the ECA USA Study Abroad exchange programs.** This provision does not apply to immediate family members of interns. Self-supporting children or children who live apart from their parents are qualified to participate.

Military Affiliation

The CLS Program welcomes applicants with affiliation to the U.S. armed services. All applicants with military affiliation, including all U.S. Department of Defense military and civilian personnel, service academy cadets,

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service members of active and reserve components, as well as inactive service members, including members of the Individual Ready Reserves (IRR), may be subject to passport or visa requirements, special waiver requirements, prohibition of travel to the host country, and/or other restrictions. Applicants affiliated with the U.S. armed forces should consult their commanding officer regarding travel restrictions and requirements, and review the CLS Program guidance provided in the Frequent Asked Questions section: <https://clscholarship.org/faqs>.

Participation Requirements

The CLS Program is rigorous and immersive, requiring full commitment from participants. Reasonable accommodations are provided, and participants in the CLS Program must:

- Stay alert and focused for up to several hours at a time during classes, while participating in cultural activities, and when receiving staff instructions;
- Attend the pre-program orientation and all daily classes and activities, as dictated by the program schedule and for the duration of the program (program dates will be announced prior to the deadline for accepting the award, if offered);
- If taking prescription medications, be able to maintain proper dosage without assistance from instructors or others (except in emergency situations);
- Perform necessary self-care, including maintaining adequate nutrition and hydration, dressing appropriately for environmental conditions, maintaining personal hygiene, and managing known medical conditions;
- Follow detailed instructions on travel, risk management, and personal care;
- Navigate transportation independently between housing and the institute site (up to one hour each way);
- Work effectively as a member of a team despite potentially stressful and difficult conditions. This may require problem solving on an interpersonal or group level as well as a willingness to accept differences;
- Contribute to a safe learning environment. No inappropriate verbal or physical behavior toward others, either in person or online, is tolerated for any reason; and
- Communicate ideas and concerns on an individual and group level.

Program dates may overlap with academic terms, requiring participants to coordinate with their institutions.

Medical Review

Selected participants must submit a medical information form and physician's statement for review by an independent medical professional contracted by the CLS Program. You must also inform the program of any changes in your health status between submission of these forms and the start of the program in order to participate. Falsifying or omitting medical information may result in revocation or termination of the CLS award at any time prior to, or during, the program. Students who are not medically cleared by both their own medical professional and by the CLS-contracted medical professional may not be allowed to participate in the CLS Program.

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Passports, Visas, and Entry Requirements

CLS participants must enter the host country using a U.S. passport. Dual citizens may face restrictions if host country laws require entry on the local passport. Applicants are responsible for determining whether they hold, or are eligible for, dual citizenship with the host country, and addressing any potential consequences before accepting a CLS award. Failure to obtain a valid U.S. passport by the specified deadline may result in visa denial and disqualification from the program.

Participants must secure an appropriate visa, if required, and meet all local entry requirements, including vaccinations and/or health tests.

- **Visa issuance is at the discretion of the host country.**
- Finalists may be required to work closely with program staff to complete visa paperwork well in advance of regular deadlines. This may include submitting passports for visa processing in the spring before the program begins, which could require canceling or rescheduling planned international travel.
- If traveling with a valid U.S. passport with an X sex marker, participants should check the travel advisory for immigration regulations at your destination, as acceptance may vary. The United States government cannot guarantee entry or transit through other countries. Participants should consult the foreign embassy or consulate in the United States for more information.

Terms and Conditions of Award

Selected participants must agree to the CLS Program's terms and conditions, which are updated annually.

You may review a [sample of the terms and conditions](#) from a previous year.

Program Benefits

Participants in the CLS Program will receive:

- Language instruction and cultural programming;
- Textbooks and language learning materials;
- ACTFL OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) certification of language gains;
- Academic credit issued through Bryn Mawr College;
- International and domestic travel between the student's home city in the U.S. and the CLS Program site abroad;
- Visa application fees, where applicable; and
- Room, board, and program-sponsored travel within the host country or location.

Additional program benefits may be provided at a later date.

Participants are responsible for:

- U.S. passport fees (except for those eligible for [CLS Passport Assistance](#));
- Cost of medical exams and any follow-up visits necessary to pass the medical review process, as determined by the CLS Program; and
- Cost of any immunizations required for entry and travel health clinic appointments.

For more information, please visit the CLS website (<https://clscholarship.org/about>).

**If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
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Selection Criteria and Process

Applicants are selected based on:

- Commitment to language learning;
- Preparation for and alignment with program expectations;
- Contribution to the citizen diplomacy and national impact; and
- Connection between language and academic and professional goals.

All other factors being equal, the CLS Program gives preference to veterans of the United States armed forces. Alumni of the 2025 CLS Spark virtual initiative who maintain eligibility and apply for the same language will receive automatic semifinalist status.

Notifications of semifinalist status will be sent by email in **late January 2026**.

Finalists, alternates, and non-recipients will be notified by email in **early March 2026**.

Finalists will have approximately two weeks to accept or decline, and alternates may be promoted on a rolling basis.

For full selection criteria visit <https://clscholarship.org/applicants/selection>.

If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.

Section 2: Application Instructions

How to Apply

Eligibility

- Review the eligibility requirements at www.clscholarship.org/applicants/eligibility.

Detailed Instructions

- Review the [detailed instructions for the application](#).

Application Submission

If unable to submit online, mail your application to the address below. Materials must be received by **November 18, 2025**.

ATTN: CLS Program
American Councils for International Education
1828 L St NW, Suite 1200
Washington DC 20036-5136

Questions?

- Visit the CLS website: www.clscholarship.org
- Review the Frequently Asked Questions page: <https://clscholarship.org/faqs>
- Contact CLS Program staff during business hours (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. U.S. EST Monday-Friday)
 - **Toll-free number:** 1-877-257-9922
 - **Email:** cls@americancouncils.org

**If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.**

Section 3: Eligibility

Please refer to the Eligibility Requirements listed in Program Overview and Requirements.

1) Are you a U.S. citizen or national?

Naturalized citizens must be naturalized by the date of the application deadline, November 18, 2025. For more information about naturalization, please visit the [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website](#).

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2) Will you be at least 18 years old by May 15, 2026?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3) Are you currently enrolled in a degree-granting program?

Students taking stand-alone or continuing education classes or pursuing certificates are not eligible.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3a) If yes, please indicate your degree type.

- ☐ Undergraduate (Bachelor's or Associate's)
- ☐ Master's
- ☐ Dual or joint undergraduate-graduate degree
- ☐ Doctoral (PhD)
- ☐ Professional (DDS, MD, DO, PAC, JD, etc.)

3b) If no, please explain.

Maximum of 100 words allowed.

4) Are you currently taking at least one class for credit at or through my home institution?

Students not taking classes at or through their home institution are only eligible if they are participating in an organized semester- or year-long study abroad program, a national fellowship or scholarship program, or a substantive co-operative or internship program and intend to re-enroll following its completion.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4a) If no, are you currently participating in a study abroad, scholarship or fellowship, or co-operative or internship program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please provide details.

**If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.**

5) Is your institution accredited and based in the United States.

Students earning degrees at foreign colleges or universities that are not based in the United States or its territories are not eligible. All finalists will be required to submit a transcript from an accredited U.S.-based institution to confirm eligibility.

If you have questions or concerns about your institution's eligibility, please email cls@americancouncils.org.

☐ Yes

☐ No

6) Are you enrolled in a dual-degree program involving coursework at both a U.S. institution and an international institution?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7) Will you have completed at least one academic year of study at the undergraduate level (two semesters or three quarters) by summer 2026?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8) Are you submitting only one CLS Program application for only one language?

☐ Yes

9) Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?

All other factors being equal, the CLS Program gives preference to veterans of the armed forces. Active-duty members of the military do not qualify for a veteran's preference.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Decline to State

9a) If yes, attach a copy of your DD214 or NGB-22 Form as proof of your veteran status.

10) Do you understand that if selected, you will be required to submit a medical information form and physician's statement for review by an independent medical professional?

Results of the medical review will determine if I meet the medical requirements necessary for program placement and participation in the CLS Program.

For more information about participation requirements, please visit the CLS website (<https://clscholarship.org/applicants/participation-requirements>). The CLS Program does not discriminate on the basis of medical condition or disability.

☐ Yes

**If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.**

11) Do you understand that if selected, your participation depends on the decision by the host country to issue you a visa that is appropriate and valid for the CLS Program.

For more information about participation requirements, please visit the CLS website (<https://clscholarship.org/applicants/participation-requirements>).

☐ Yes

12) Do you certify that you have reviewed the eligibility and program requirements, and that you are eligible to apply for the CLS Program?

CLS Program staff will review each applicant's eligibility for the program during the evaluation process. A full description of the eligibility requirements is available at <https://clscholarship.org/applicants/eligibility>.

☐ Yes

Section 4: Applicant Information

Contact Information

Notifications about selection status will be sent in January and March 2026, with program updates continuing through October 2026. Provide contact information where you can be reached through October 2026.

1) Primary Email Address:

This email address will be used through October 2026.

2) Alternate Email Address:

This address will only be used if we cannot reach you at the address provided above..

3) If selected as a finalist or alternate, do you give American Councils permission to contact you via telephone?

Choose one

Note: Selecting No means you will only receive email communication, which may lead to missed deadlines. Standard texting rates apply.

☐ Yes

☐ No

4) Primary Telephone Number:

This number will be used through October 2026.

5) Alternate Telephone Number:

This number will only be used if we cannot reach you at the number provided above; a friend or family member's number is recommended.

Biographical Information

Please provide your preferred name, legal name (if different), and any previous legal names you have used.

6) Preferred Name (please provide your preferred name that you would like to be called)

7) Is your legal name different from your preferred name?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7a) Legal name (i.e., the name on your government-issued ID):

8) Have you had a different legal name before?

☐ Yes

☐ No

**If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.**

8a) Previous legal name(s) used:

9) Sex

Please select the option that best describes your gender. This information will not be shared with application evaluators.

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

10) Date of Birth:

11) Place of Birth

Birth City:

Birth State/Province/Region:

Birth Country:

Congressional District

The CLS Program reports to members of Congress when constituents from their states or districts receive a CLS award.

12) U.S. Congressional District

Enter your U.S. Congressional District. If unsure, find it at: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

Note: *This may be where your permanent residence is located or where your institution is located.*

State/Territory:

District:

Enter "At Large" for states with only one Congressional representative (Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming), and for the District of Columbia and U.S. territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands)

Passport Information

You do **not** need to have a passport to apply for the CLS Program.

Note: All finalists must have a valid U.S. passport by March 2026; failure to do so may prevent visa issuance and program participation. You may need to apply for a new passport if you do not currently have one, if it will not be valid through the required dates, or if it lacks at least two blank visa/stamp pages. [CLS Passport Assistance](#) may be available to help with costs associated with passport procurement (excluding expedited processing and shipping fees).

13) Do you hold dual citizenship with another country?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.**

13a) If yes, please indicate the other citizenship country:

13b) If yes do you understand that you will be required to travel on your U.S. passport to participate in the CLS Program?

☐ Yes

14) Do you have a U.S. passport with your legal name valid through March 1, 2027 with two blank visa pages?

☐ Yes

☐ No

14a) If yes, what is the date of issue?

14b) If yes, what is the date of expiration?

Routine passport processing can take up to eight weeks from the date of application to the receipt of a new passport. If you do not take timely measures to secure a valid U.S. passport by March 2026, you will be responsible for any fees associated with expediting your passport.

For more information on securing a passport, please visit <https://travel.state.gov>.

Section 5: Current Academic Information

List the college or university where you are enrolled in a degree program. If studying abroad, list your home institution.

- 1) Current College or University Name:**
- 2) University City and State:**
- 3) Start Date:**
- 4) Anticipated Date of Graduation (if applicable):**
- 5) Current or Anticipated Academic Major(s):**
- 6) Current or Anticipated Academic Minor(s):**

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7) Will you be enrolled in courses at this college/university or transferring to another U.S. institution during the spring 2026 academic term?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7a) If yes, when is the anticipated date of your last final exam?

8) Will you be graduating before spring 2026 (i.e., in December 2025)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9) Will you be studying abroad during the spring 2026 academic term?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9a) If yes, where?

(i) City:

(ii) Country:

Fall 2026

10) Will you be enrolled in courses at this college/university during the fall 2026 academic term?

This has no impact on your application, it is used for internal purposes only.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

10a) If yes, when is the anticipated date of your first day of class for fall 2026?

Section 6: Language Choice and Past Experience

The CLS Program provides instruction in nine critical languages through summer study abroad institutes. Applicants of all levels, including beginners, are welcome. Please provide accurate information about your language experience to help reviewers assess your application.

Language	Beginner (No Prior Language Study Required)	Advanced Beginner (Requires One Year of Prior Study)	Intermediate and Advanced (Requires Two Years of Prior Study)
Arabic		✓	✓
Chinese		✓	✓
Hindi	✓	✓	✓
Japanese			✓
Korean		✓	✓
Persian	✓	✓	✓
Portuguese	✓	✓	✓
Russian		✓	✓
Swahili	✓	✓	✓

1) Indicate the language and level for which you are applying.

Indicate the level you anticipate achieving by the program start date in June 2026. Assess yourself according to the [Language Levels and Prerequisites guidelines](#).

Post-Secondary Courses in Your CLS Target Language

2) Which statement best describes your post-secondary (university or college) language experience with your CLS target language?

Select one

- ☐ I have taken classes in my CLS target language
- ☐ I have studied or have other experience in my CLS target language, but have not taken formal classes
- ☐ I have never taken classes in my CLS target language nor do I have any other experience in my CLS target language

2a) If you have taken college or university level classes in your target language, please provide details. Include the following information about your past, current, and planned language courses, starting with the most recent.

This includes literature or other content courses in the target language, where readings and written assignments were completed in the language.

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- Course Title
- Institution
- Start Date
- End Date
- Average Number of Hours Per Week Spent in Classroom
- Grade

Other Language Experience with Your CLS Target Language

3) Which statements best describe any additional ways, if any, in which you have engaged with the target language?

Check all that apply

- ☐ Private or small group study or tutoring in the target language
- ☐ Formal classes in high school/elementary school
- ☐ Interactions with family, friends, coworkers, or community members who speak the language
- ☐ Self-study (e.g., apps or software, podcasts, films, TV, books, music, etc.)
- ☐ I am a heritage speaker (family background in the language, practicing the language at home)
- ☐ None of the above

3a) If you indicated you had any additional experience, please provide details about your coursework and/or activities in the target language. Include the frequency, number of hours, materials used, topics covered, and level of engagement. If you are a heritage speaker, describe your language use at home. If you are a beginner, you may have limited or no activities to describe.

Target Language Travel

4) Have you previously visited or lived in any countries where the target language is spoken?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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4a) If yes, please provide details about your past, current, and planned travel to countries where the target language is spoken, starting with the most recent. Include the following information:

- Country
- Year of Visit
- Sponsoring Organization (if any)
- Travel Duration
- Travel Purpose (Study, vacation, family, work/internship, other)

Other Language Experience

5) Have you studied or do you speak languages other than English and/or your target language?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

5a) If yes, list the other language(s) you speak or have studied. Include the following information:

- Language
- Primary Study Method (High school, college/university, tutoring, self-study, other)
- Number of Years Spoken/Studied

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Section 7: Transcript and Grades

1) Are you currently in your first semester at your current college or university?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please provide a list of the courses and grades from your current college or university. If accepted, you must submit an official transcript to verify this information. Discrepancies between your CLS application and official transcript may result in award revocation unless verified by your institution.

You may attach an unofficial transcript that includes past courses and in-progress coursework for fall 2025. First-year students without grades may upload proof of enrollment, such as a screenshot of their enrollment status, or request a document from their registrar showing in-progress courses. Grades for the current semester are not required.

**Please contact us with any questions regarding the transcript reporting requirements:
cls@americancouncils.org.**

If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.

Section 8: Previous Academic Information

Please contact us with any questions regarding previous academic information:

cls@americancouncils.org.

1) Have you completed college-level coursework in the past five years that is not reflected on your current institution's transcript?

☐ Yes

☐ No

1a) If yes, please list all previous colleges and universities you attended in the past five years and provide related transcripts. If relevant, you may also list previous colleges and universities from beyond five years ago.

If the courses you took already appear on your current institution's transcript, you do not need to fill out this section.

- Country
- College or University Name
- Type of Program (Undergraduate, Master's, Doctoral, Professional, Non-Degree)
- Field of Study
- Start Date
- End Date

Section 9: Previous Programs, Activities, Honors, and Fellowships

CLS Program Awards

1) Have you applied for the CLS Program overseas in the past?

This includes programs that were virtual due to the pandemic or other unanticipated circumstances.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

1a) If yes, have you received a CLS award for overseas study in the past?

- ☐ No, I have not received a CLS award
- ☐ Yes, I received a CLS award for overseas study and completed the program
- ☐ Yes, I received a CLS award for overseas study, but declined or did not begin the program
- ☐ Yes, I received a CLS award for overseas study, but did not successfully complete the program

1b-i) If yes, explain your circumstances and how this application builds on your previous experience. Please include whether you are applying for the same language.

Maximum of 150 words.

2) Have you applied for the CLS Spark virtual initiative in the past?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2a) If yes, have you received a CLS award for CLS Spark in the past?

- ☐ No, I have not received a CLS Spark award
- ☐ Yes, I received a 2025 CLS Spark award and completed the program
- ☐ Yes, I received a CLS Spark award for a year other than 2025 and completed the program
- ☐ Yes, I received a CLS Spark award, but declined or did not begin the program
- ☐ Yes, I received a CLS Spark award but did not successfully complete the program

2b-i) If yes, explain your circumstances and how this application builds on your previous experience. Please include whether you are applying for the same language.

Maximum of 150 words.

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3) Please indicate all CLS Programs completed from 2006-2025. Include the following information:

- Year
- Award type (Overseas, Virtual (due to the pandemic), CLS Spark)
- Language
- Level
- City

U.S. Government Programs

4) Which of the following language programs have you participated in?

This list is for statistical purposes and may not include all programs. If you participated in a language program that is not listed here, you are welcome to discuss it in your essays or elsewhere in the application.

Check all that apply

- ☐ Boren Award (Fellowship or Scholarship)
- ☐ Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX)
- ☐ Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS)
- ☐ Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Abroad
- ☐ Language Flagship Program
- ☐ National Security Languages Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y)
- ☐ STARTALK
- ☐ Title VIII Award (Research and Training on Eastern Europe and Eurasia)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4a) If you checked any boxes above, please indicate the program, year and country for each. Include the following information:

- Program Name
- Program Location, including city, state/region, and country
- Language studied (if applicable)
- Year

Activities, Honors, and Employment

5) List up to five jobs, internships, fellowships or academic honors, and/or volunteer or campus activities that you have engaged in that demonstrate leadership capacity, community involvement or a connection to your professional goals. Include the following information:

- Activity Name
- Start Date
- End Date

Section 10: Essays

The following essays are designed to allow the reviewer to connect with your story and understand your motivations for applying for this federally funded scholarship. Using AI to generate content for your essays may hinder this process and make it difficult for reviewers to assess your fit for the program. Likewise, using materials from previous applications to CLS or other opportunities may be a helpful starting point in the writing process, but ultimately evaluators are looking to understand your goals and interests in the present moment. Please review resources on the CLS website before you start your essays.

1) Commitment to Language Learning

Maximum of 300 words allowed.

The CLS Program supports U.S. students dedicated to acquiring a high level of linguistic and cultural knowledge about the regions and locations/countries in which they study.

Please address the following points:

- Why are you interested in your target language and culture?
- Have you encountered challenges in pursuing your target language? If so, how will CLS help you overcome these barriers?
- How does CLS fit into your plan to begin or continue studying your target language? If you have prior experience, how will CLS build on that experience?
- How will you continue to study and engage with your target language and culture after the CLS Program? What strategies will you use to continue language learning, even if resources are limited on your campus?

2) Preparation for the CLS Program

Maximum of 300 words allowed.

Studying abroad requires resilience and adaptability. CLS scholars navigate daily life in a different language and culture while building relationships with host community members and collaborating with a unique cohort of American students. They are exposed to new perspectives in the host culture and within their cohort.

Please address the following points:

- How do you see yourself meeting the demands of an intensive language-focused program, adapting to life in an overseas host community, and collaborating with a group of peers from across the United States?
- What knowledge, skills, or experiences have prepared you to meet these challenges? What potential challenges do you anticipate, and how would you approach them?
- Give an example of when you navigated an unfamiliar situation. How did you respond, what perspectives did you learn from, and what did you take away from the experience?

3) Citizen Diplomacy and National Impact

Maximum of 300 words allowed.

The CLS Program is designed to expand the number of Americans who study and speak languages of strategic importance to the United States' national security, economic prosperity, and engagement with the world. While the program's primary focus is language learning, CLS scholars are also expected to cultivate a better

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understanding of the culture of their host community.

As citizen diplomats, CLS scholars have the opportunity to represent the United States abroad, and to deepen understanding of American culture within their host community. In doing so, CLS scholars contribute to stronger international networks that support long-term U.S. national security and economic competitiveness.

After the program, alumni will share the knowledge and skills learned overseas with their communities, campuses, families, and/or peers back in the United States.

Please address the following points:

- Describe how you plan to develop an understanding of your host culture and community.
- What specific experiences and perspectives have prepared you to represent the United States as a citizen diplomat?
- What steps will you take to share the knowledge and skills gained through CLS with your community upon return to the United States?

4) Personal Statement

Maximum of 500 words allowed.

The CLS Program empowers U.S. students to grow as leaders by providing an immersive opportunity to study critical languages overseas. Participants gain valuable skills that are in demand in a global workforce and contribute to the United States' engagement with the world. CLS scholars come from across the United States and share their unique perspectives in a mutually respectful environment. They apply their critical language skills in fields that support American competitiveness, innovation, and prosperity.

Please address the following questions:

- What are your academic and professional goals?
- How integral is knowledge of your target language and culture to your goals?
- What qualities, perspectives, and/or experiences make you a good candidate for the CLS Program?
- After the program, how will you use what you've learned to make a positive impact in the United States? For example, how will your participation contribute to broader goals, such as strengthening international relationships, supporting innovation, or benefiting your community?

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Section 11: Statistical Information

This information will **not** be shared with application reviewers and will have no bearing on your selection for the CLS Program. It may be used in aggregate for the production of external reports or public presentations.

The CLS Program welcomes all eligible applications without discrimination.

1) How did you learn about the program?

Check all that apply

- ☐ CLS Alumni or Participants
- ☐ Email Announcement
- ☐ School Presentation
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Study Abroad Fair
- ☐ College/University Staff (e.g., Academic Advisor, Fellowship Advisor, Study Abroad Advisor, Teacher/Professor, Career Counselor)
- ☐ Website or Internet Search
- ☐ Other

1a) If you checked Other above, please specify:

Maximum of 250 characters allowed.

2) What is your race or ethnicity?

*Check all that apply. **Note:** Categories adhere to Office of Management and Budget's Statistical Policy Directive No. 15: Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting, which also guide the U.S. Census.*

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Middle Eastern or North African
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Some Other Race
- ☐ Decline to State

2a) If Some Other Race, please explain:

Maximum of 20 words allowed.

4) Are you a first-generation college student?

Answer No if one of your parents or guardians graduated from a four-year college.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I decline to state

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5) Are you a Pell Grant recipient?

Note: Federal Pell Grants are generally awarded only to undergraduate students. If you are a graduate student, please indicate whether you received a Pell Grant as an undergraduate.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I decline to state

6) Are you a veteran, or active or reserve duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I decline to state

7) Do you have a disability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I decline to state

8) Select the location that best describes where you grew up.

- ☐ Major City
- ☐ Other City or Town
- ☐ Rural Area

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Section 12: Review and Submit

Final Review of Application

Before you mail your application, please be sure to review all sections. Make sure you have answered all the questions, attached all the required documents, and that you are satisfied with your responses.

Once you submit your application, you will no longer be able to make changes to any section of the application. Please note that due to the large volume of applications received, the CLS Program is unable to provide feedback on individual applications.

Certification

1) Please sign your name below to indicate your agreement with this statement:

I certify:

- I completed this application and the written portions are my own work;
- All information in my CLS application is truthful and accurate, and I understand that misrepresentation or omissions may result in disqualification or award revocation;
- No supplemental materials have been included nor will supplemental materials be accepted after the application is submitted;
- I understand that American Councils and the U.S. Department of State will not discuss individual selection decisions with applicants; and
- I understand that my application is in no way an offer or a guarantee of an offer for a Critical Language Scholarship award.

Signature:

Date:

If you have questions about the application or accessibility,
please write to cls@americancouncils.org.

Appendix

Table 1

Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
Recruitment	Application and testing for programs, tracking, and support and encouragement for submitting an application	- Biographical information - Contact details - Cultural information (<i>which may include data revealing race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs</i>) - Educational history - Essays - Non-English language skills - Program participation history - Related-party information - System access history - Work and volunteer history	- Cloud computing platforms - Communications platforms - Third-party system developer - U.S. Department of State - Program advisors at universities and colleges	- Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject - Performance of a contract - Performance of a legal obligation - Explicit consent for special categories of personal data
Evaluation and Selection	Evaluating candidates and selecting finalists and semi-finalists	- Biographical information - Cultural information (<i>which may include data revealing race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs</i>) - Educational history - Essays	- Cloud computing platforms - Evaluators - Third-party system developer - U.S. Department of State	- Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject - Performance of a contract - Explicit consent for special categories of personal data

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Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
		- Non-English language skills - Program participation history - Related-party information - Work and volunteer history		
Notification and Registration	Notifying candidates of their status and confirming program participant enrollment	- Biographical information - Confirmation of identity - Contact details - Cultural information (<i>which may include data revealing race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs</i>) - Deposit account information - Essays - Health information - Non-English language skills - Photographs and videos - Program participation history - Related-party information - System access history - Work and volunteer history	- Banking services provider - Cloud computing platforms - Communications platforms - Consulting medical professionals - Implementing organizations - Learning management systems - Third-party system developer - Third-party testing service providers - U.S. Department of State	- Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject - Performance of a contract - Performance of a legal obligation - Explicit consent for special categories of personal data
Visa Issuance*	Securing international visas	- Confirmation of identity - Contact details - Passport information	- Cloud computing platforms - Non-U.S. Embassies	Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject

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Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
(For overseas programs, only)		o Additional personal biographical and health information required for visas, including marital status, photographs, health information, and biometric data	- o Implementing organizations - o Third-party system developer - o U.S. Embassies - o U.S. Department of State	- o Performance of a legal obligation - o Explicit consent for special categories of personal data
Travel* (For overseas programs, only)	Booking participant travel and providing travel support	- o Confirmation of identity - o Contact details - o Passport information	- o Accommodations providers - o Cloud computing platforms - o Implementing organizations - o Third-party system developer - o Travel services provider - o U.S. Department of State	- o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject - o Performance of a legal obligation
Participant Medical Insurance* (For overseas programs, only)	Securing medical insurance coverage for participants	- o Contact details - o Health information	- o Cloud computing platforms - o Insurance providers - o U.S. Department of State	- o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject - o Performance of a legal obligation - o Explicit consent for special categories of personal data

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Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
Orientation	Preparing participants for programs	○ Contact details	○ Accommodations providers ○ Cloud computing platforms ○ Communications platforms ○ Learning management systems ○ Third-party system developer ○ U.S. Department of State ○ U.S. Embassies	○ Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject ○ Performance of a legal obligation
Program Placement	Placing participants in host families and host institutions	○ Biographical information ○ Contact details ○ Cultural information (<i>which may include data revealing race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs</i>) ○ Housing preferences ○ Essays ○ Health information ○ Non-English language skills ○ Photographs	○ Cloud computing platforms ○ Implementing organizations ○ Third-party system developer ○ U.S. Department of State ○ U.S. Embassies	○ Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject ○ Performance of a legal obligation

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Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
On-Program Support	Providing ongoing support to participants during their exchange, including assistance with academic challenges, host family changes, and health-related concerns, while ensuring personal data is processed securely by designated staff to maintain safety, well-being, and clear communication with relevant parties (e.g., emergency contacts, etc.)	○ Academic information ○ Behavioral information ○ Biographical information ○ Communication information ○ Complaint and investigation information ○ Contact details ○ Deposit account information ○ Digital and online activity information ○ Emotional and psychological information ○ Family circumstance information ○ Health information ○ Legal and disciplinary information ○ Non-English language skills ○ Photographs and videos ○ Related-party information	○ Accommodations providers ○ Banking services provider ○ Cloud computing platforms ○ Communications platforms ○ Healthcare providers ○ Implementing organizations ○ Insurance providers ○ Social media platforms ○ Tax authorities ○ Third-party system developer ○ U.S. Department of State ○ U.S. Embassies	○ Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject ○ Performance of a contract ○ Performance of a legal obligation ○ Protecting the vital interests of the data subject ○ Explicit consent for special categories of personal data

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Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
Post-Program Reporting	Participants prepare and deliver an anonymous survey on their program activities and results	- Biographical information - Confirmation of identity - Contact details - Cultural information (<i>which may include data revealing race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs</i>) - Deposit account information - English language skills - Essays - Non-English language skills - Photographs and videos - Program participation history - Related-party information - System access history - Work and volunteer history	- Banking services provider - Cloud computing platforms - Communications platforms - Implementing organizations - Learning management systems - Program funders - Recruiting organizations - Third-party system developer - Third-party testing service providers - U.S. Department of State - U.S. Embassies	- Performance of a contract - Performance of a legal obligation - Explicit consent for special categories of personal data
Post-Program and Alumni	Providing professional development, volunteering, and grant opportunities to alumni	- Biographical information - Confirmation of identity - Contact details - Cultural information (<i>which may include data revealing race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs</i>) - Educational history	- Accommodations providers - Cloud computing platforms - Communications platforms - Evaluators - Insurance providers	- Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject - Performance of a contract - Performance of a legal obligation - Explicit consent for special categories of personal data

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Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
		○ Health information ○ Passport Information ○ Photographs and videos ○ Related-party information ○ System access history ○ Work and volunteer history	○ Social media platforms ○ Third-party system developer ○ Third-party testing service providers ○ Travel service providers ○ U.S. Department of State ○ U.S. Embassies	
Marketing	Promoting the organization and its programs	○ Contact details ○ System access history ○ Photographs and videos	○ Cloud computing platforms ○ Social media platforms ○ Third-party system developer	○ Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject