



CRITICAL LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP

SAY YES TO CLS!

The Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program is an immersive summer opportunity for American college and university students to learn languages essential to America's national security, economic prosperity, and engagement with the world. The CLS Program, through its CLS Spark initiative, provides beginner-level virtual instruction for Arabic, Chinese, and Russian for competitively selected U.S. undergraduate students.

WHO ARE CLS SCHOLARS?

CLS scholars are students like you! The CLS Program, a program of the U.S. Department of State, strives to reflect the diversity of the United States. We encourage students of all races, ethnicities, and fields of study to apply for the CLS Program. Across backgrounds and geographic locations, CLS scholars share a commitment to language and cultural learning.

13% of scholars are STEM majors.

30% of scholars have high financial need.

50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam & Puerto Rico represented.

IMMERSIVE, INTENSIVE & REWARDING

GROUP FOCUSED:

You will spend 8-10 weeks with fellow students in an environment designed to foster linguistic growth and facilitate greater understanding of the local culture. You'll participate in 3-4 hours of language classes daily and live with a host family or in a dorm with local students, all while speaking in your CLS target language.

LANGUAGE PARTNER:

Once a week, you'll meet with a language partner, a fellow student who attends the host institution where you take courses or is a member of the local community. Language partners help to accelerate your language and cultural learning by building your vocabulary and knowledge of the host country and culture outside of class. They also become friends and confidants.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS:

CLS is not only a language immersion program, but a cultural immersion experience too! You'll participate in weekly cultural activities and travel with your cohort on day trips or weekend excursions.



CLS Portuguese students practice a traditional Samba rhythm during a cultural activity. Samba is one of the most well-known types of Brazilian music.



CLS 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.

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WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK!

As a CLS scholar, you have a network of support. The CLS Program offers on-site support from pre-departure to return and beyond. We connect all CLS finalists to a dedicated program officer who has knowledge of the language and region where you will participate. Once you are on your program, you will also have a CLS resident director at your program site who can provide guidance and resources on health, safety, and cross-cultural interactions.

ALUMNI BENEFITS

CLS alumni develop and hone skills that employers seek, such as resilience, adaptability, confidence, and a growth mindset. They join a rich and diverse network of U.S. Department of State International Exchange Alumni. Alumni have received grants to support their language learning, professional development, and conduct community outreach related to CLS languages or their corresponding region.

Another perk, CLS alumni receive a special hiring status called Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE). With NCE, CLS alumni can compete for jobs with the federal government that are only open to federal employees and/or others with NCE status. As you can see, CLS alumni have access to a wealth of opportunities to help them succeed in their lives and careers beyond their CLS Program.

95% of alumni used their CLS language in their academic and professional lives in the past year.

CONNECTIONS & CAREER

CLS scholars make tremendous gains in their target language and in intercultural fluency. The language skills and cultural competence cultivated from their CLS experiences make CLS alumni competitive candidates across career fields. CLS alumni secure positions in the government, private sector, non-profit work, STEM fields, and the arts.

"CLS allowed me to connect with other students studying Arabic with the same level of rigor. It introduced me to different career paths, particularly in the federal government. CLS has made it possible for me to see that my hobby of studying Arabic can lead me to a fulfilling, and good-paying job."

- Jeniffer Acevedo Castro (Arabic 2021)



**Rana Yelen
(Korean 2022)**

"As a citizen diplomat in my host country, I not only proudly represented what it means to be American, but I represented my native culture. Upon my return, I shared numerous stories with my community and university about the welcoming hospitality of Korean citizens, the rich culture, and of course, the amazing cuisine."



**Eugeniu Prodan
(Indonesian 2022)**

"If you are considering applying for the CLS Program, please know that everyone at CLS wants you to succeed. The program staff and teachers have created many support systems that ensure you are making progress in your language study and are having a great experience."



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