

NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION PROGRAM

*Strengthening U.S. National Security through
Critical Language and Culture Expertise*





What is NSEP?

The National Security Education Program (NSEP) is a major Federal initiative designed to build a broader and more qualified pool of U.S. citizens with foreign language and international skills. It consists of five initiatives that represent broad strategic partnerships with the U.S. education community designed to serve the needs of U.S. national security and national competitiveness:

1. David L. Boren Scholarships
2. David L. Boren Fellowships
3. The Language Flagship
4. English for Heritage Language Speakers
5. The Language Corps

NSEP is implemented as a component within the U.S. Department of Defense and is guided by a 13-member National Security Education Board as instructed by Federal law.

NSEP focuses on the critical languages and cultures of Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Participants are involved in innovative, intensive, and long-term programs designed to provide meaningful opportunities to gain significant competencies in these languages and cultures.

NSEP is unique in the commitment of its award recipients to pursue public service upon completion of their academic studies. Each NSEP award recipient must demonstrate a commitment to bring his or her exceptional skills to the Federal Government through employment at one of its many agencies or departments.

“America needs people who understand foreign cultures and who are fluent in locally spoken languages. The stability and economic vitality of the United States and our national security depend on American citizens who are knowledgeable about the world. We need civil servants, including law enforcement officers, teachers, area experts, diplomats, and business people with the ability to communicate at an advanced level in the languages and understand the cultures of the people with whom they interact. ”

– Senator Daniel Akaka (D–HI)

Introduction of the National Foreign Language Coordination Act, 2005

NSEP Initiatives

David L. Boren Scholarships

NSEP awards Boren Scholarships to outstanding U.S. undergraduates. Since 1994, NSEP has awarded approximately 2,000 Boren Scholarships. Boren Scholars travel to countries critical to national security and study their languages and cultures. Awards are for up to one academic year. Boren Scholars demonstrate their merit for an award of up to \$20,000 in part by committing to work for the U.S. Government for at least one year.

David L. Boren Fellowships

NSEP awards Boren Fellowships to outstanding U.S. graduate students. Since 1994, NSEP has awarded more than 1,100 Boren Fellowships to degree-seeking masters and doctoral students. Boren Fellows are awarded to motivated individuals who develop independent overseas projects that combine language and culture study with practical experience. Awards for up to \$30,000 over two years are given to applicants who demonstrate the highest intellectual and professional capacity along with a commitment to U.S. Government service for at least one year. Former Boren Scholars may compete for Boren Fellowships.

The Language Flagship

The Language Flagship is a breakthrough in foreign language and culture instruction in the United States designed to help individuals achieve superior-level proficiency. The program focuses on a limited number of critical languages including Arabic, Hindi/Urdu, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Persian/Farsi, and Russian. Beginning in 2002, NSEP established Flagship sites that offer instruction in the United States and further instruction and professional externships at select sites abroad. Flagship Fellowships for up to two years are competitively awarded to individuals with advanced-level proficiency in one of the Flagship languages who are committed to working for the U.S. Government.

Through The Language Flagship, NSEP has advanced the concept of building articulated programs of language instruction that begin in elementary school and progress through advanced learning at the university level. NSEP leads the way in this effort through its partnership with innovative universities and kindergarten through 12th grade school systems.

English for Heritage Language Speakers

In 2005, Congress tasked NSEP to create a program to provide training in English to professional-level native speakers of Arabic, Chinese, and other critical languages. These individuals develop superior-level proficiency in English through intense classroom instruction, interaction with government and private business experts, and development of projects that prepare them for positions in the Federal Government. This project is the first of its kind to help individuals gain high-level English proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking simultaneously in preparation for public service.

The Language Corps

In 2003, Congress tasked NSEP to explore the feasibility of establishing an organization comprised of Americans with skills in critical languages who would serve the Federal Government during times of emergency or national need. This feasibility study has led to the initiation of a pilot implementation of The Language Corps (TLC) from 2007 to 2009. TLC will provide a major opportunity for many Americans with language skills to serve the Nation.

“I believe that we are now faced with a more fundamental need for permanent change in our approach to the peoples and cultures of the rest of the world. National security and national interest could once be discussed in terms of physical borders and cultural boundaries. It is indisputably no longer so. National security concerns have taken us from the streets of Manhattan to the mountains of Afghanistan and to the resort cities of Bali. Our economy has brought workers here to America and sent jobs to a hundred countries around the world. Within one generation, we have become integrated into the world as never before.”

– Dr. David Chu

Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
National Language Conference, 2004

Breaking the Barrier to Advanced Language and Culture Learning

NSEP is dedicated to applying *principles of excellence* to promote the acquisition of language and culture skills.

NSEP award recipients simultaneously develop professional, intellectual, and social skills in the context of building proficiency in languages and cultures critical to national security. The United States needs individuals who excel in foreign languages and are comfortable in an array of professional and social contexts. NSEP offers individuals opportunities to become highly skilled in less commonly taught languages and cultures in conjunction with their professional fields.

NSEP award recipients concentrate on languages and cultures of countries not frequently studied by most U.S. students. NSEP focuses on languages and cultures (other than those of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Western Europe) that are critical to U.S. national security. Only 20 percent of U.S. postsecondary students studying abroad are in countries that NSEP award recipients study.

NSEP award recipients participate in longer-term overseas study. Language and culture skills are best gained through a combination of domestic and overseas immersion experiences over longer periods of time that include purposeful language study in professional, academic, and social settings. While fewer than seven percent of American students study abroad for a full academic year or longer, more than half of all NSEP award recipients undertake a full year of study.

NSEP award recipients study languages critical to national security and reach levels of proficiency rarely found in the U.S. population. All NSEP award recipients are tested for foreign language proficiency as they enter and complete their NSEP-supported programs. Scores from more than 3,000 participants demonstrate extraordinary language gains at all levels of proficiency.



“To solve most of the major problems facing our country today — from wiping out terrorism to minimizing global environmental problems to eliminating the scourge of AIDS — will require every young person to learn more about other regions, cultures, and languages.”

– Former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell
“Closing the K–12 International Knowledge Gap:
Putting the World into World Class,” Asia Society, 2003



A Continuum of Language Learning

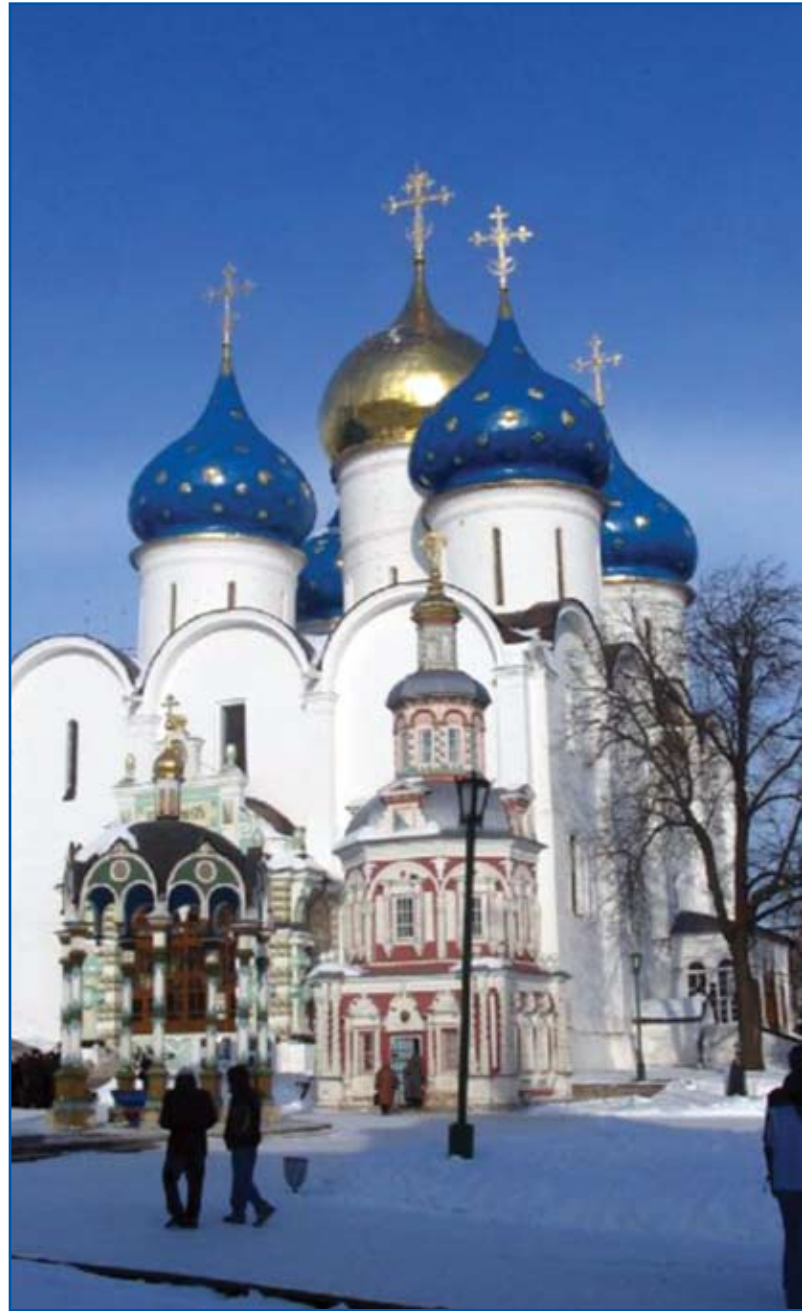
One award recipient completed three of NSEP's initiatives. He represents the continuum of language and culture learning NSEP provides, and its emphasis on developing superior-level language proficiency.

In 2001, a student from the University of Kansas won a Boren Scholarship to study Russian at the International University of Moscow. While enrolled in the university's Moscow Institute for Advanced Studies Language Program he earned a 4.0 grade point average and a professional certificate in Russian.

He proceeded to work on a master's degree in international relations at the University of Kansas, and received a 2003 Boren Fellowship to study Hungarian, international relations, and European studies at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. In addition to his studies, he worked as an instructor at Eötvös Loránd University and as a researcher with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization examining Russian media and its coverage of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2004, he received a Flagship Fellowship to attend The Language Flagship in Russian at St. Petersburg State University (SPSU), and develop superior-level Russian language and culture skills. During his studies, he presented a paper in Russian, "The Development of Wahhabism in Russia in the 20th Century," for the Special Faculty of the Department of Philology at SPSU, and he interned as a consultant on international project development for the Leningrad Oblast Press Center.

This Boren Scholar/Fellow and Flagship Fellow serves the Nation as a defense policy analyst and Russian linguist for a Department of Defense contractor. He works on projects for the Office of the Secretary of Defense and U.S. Strategic Command as a subject matter expert in militant radical Islam on the territory of the former Soviet Union, and he provides analysis of Russian language material in the form of reports and policy papers.



“It is increasingly important that America be better versed in the languages, cultures, and traditions of other world regions . . . so that we can build a more secure future for both our nation and the world. As citizens of the world, we must teach our students the importance of working well with other countries to advance our common goals of peace and prosperity.”

– Education for Global Leadership,
Committee for Economic Development, 2006



A Unique Commitment To Public Service

NSEP award recipients are deeply committed to serving the U.S. Government. NSEP works closely with each Scholar and Fellow and with U.S. Government agencies to identify employment opportunities and recommend appropriate matches. More than 800 NSEP award recipients have already contributed to the Federal effort and are recognized across Federal departments as ideal candidates for positions.

NSEP Alumni Serving Our Nation

- A Boren Fellow spent a year at American University in Cairo combining Arabic studies with research on the role of Islamic law and economic development with the modern Egyptian legal system. After completing a master's degree in Middle Eastern studies from the University of Michigan, she received a 2003 Flagship Fellowship to study Egyptian Arabic at American University in Cairo, where she attained professional-level proficiency. She now works for the Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer in Jerusalem, Israel.
- A Boren Scholar and graduate of Georgetown University in the area of international politics now provides analysis of Eurasia for Joint Staff counterintelligence in the Defense Intelligence Agency. NSEP funded her study in Moscow, where she achieved advanced proficiency in Russian.
- A Boren Fellow and PhD candidate in linguistic anthropology at the University of Texas used her fellowship to study Turkish and to conduct dissertation research on language ideology and practice in the creation and maintenance of relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics of Central Asia. She recently became a linguist and analyst for the Department of Defense focusing on Turkey and Central Asia. Prior to this, she worked as an intelligence specialist in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the Department of State, where she reviewed time-sensitive intelligence to provide alerts to analysts and Department principals. She was also responsible for maintaining relationships with the Intelligence Community and White House Situation Room and acting on critical intelligence received through the National Operations and Intelligence Watch Officer's Network.
- A Boren Scholar attended the Universidad Blas Pascal in Argentina and returned to complete his studies as a history major at the University of Minnesota, Morris. He now is a Border Patrol Agent with the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Customs and Border Protection. He is responsible for the enforcement of federal immigration and naturalization laws in the Yuma Sector of the U.S. Border Patrol.
- A Boren Fellow used his award to study Chinese and to conduct dissertation research on Sino-American crisis diplomacy in China during the 1954 Taiwan Straits Crisis and during the early period of the Vietnam. Upon completion of his Ph.D. in Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he became a Professor of Political Science at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. He teaches about the Chinese political situation to officers from U.S. uniformed services as well as military leaders from 30 other countries.

“We need people in America who can go and say to people [in other countries that] living in freedom is not the American way of life, it is a universal way of life.... And the best way to do that is to have those of us who understand freedom be able to communicate in the language of the people we’re trying to help. In order to convince people we care about them, we’ve got to understand their culture and show them we care about their culture.”

– President George W. Bush

Unveiling the National Security Language Initiative,
January 5, 2006

National Security Language Initiative

In January 2006, President George W. Bush launched the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI). The initiative represents a vital collaboration among the Departments of Defense, Education, and State, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to strengthen national security and economic competitiveness in the 21st century through strategic investments in our national educational infrastructure. The goals of the NSLI are to expand the number of Americans mastering critical need languages and start instruction at a younger age; to increase the number of advanced-level speakers of foreign languages with an emphasis on critical needs languages; and to increase the number of foreign language teachers and the resources for them. The NSLI will dramatically increase the number of Americans learning critical languages and cultures such as Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Hindi, and Russian, and others through new and expanded programs from kindergarten through college and into the workforce.

NSEP represents the Department of Defense in this Presidential initiative with its commitment to expansion of The Language Flagship and a pilot implementation of The Language Corps. NSEP will work closely with its Federal counterparts to ensure the success of the NSLI.

“When I was chairing the Intelligence Committee we brought in all the old pioneers: those [who] were there from the beginning with intelligence, helped start the CIA [and] helped us win World War II... They said the most important thing you can have is a group of highly intelligent people who are extremely well educated, who understand the cultures and speak the languages, who can go into [other] countries and be advocates for the United States.... It’s human talent that is key to our national security.”

– U.S. Senator David L. Boren (D-OK)

National Security Education Program, *Breaking the Language Barrier* (DVD), 2005

About NSEP

Legislative History

NSEP was established by the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991 (U.S. Code 50, 1901 et seq.). NSEP represents an important post–Cold War investment in vital expertise in languages and cultures critical to U.S. national security. The program is implemented by the Secretary of Defense, who has delegated his authority to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. NSEP is administratively housed within the National Defense University.

National Security Education Board

The National Security Education Board (NSEB) provides guidance of the National Security Education Program. Representatives from seven U.S. Government departments and six non-Federal members appointed by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate serve on the NSEB, which is chaired by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

Group of Advisors

A group of 13 advisors from institutions of higher education provides expert advice to the NSEB. These advisors ensure that a continuing dialogue between higher education and NSEP is in place.



Senator David L. Boren

As a U.S. Senator from Oklahoma from 1979 to 1994, David L. Boren served on the Senate Finance and Agriculture Committees and was also the longest serving chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. He is author of the National Security Education Act,

which established NSEP. Senator Boren currently serves as the 13th president of the University of Oklahoma.



The Future for NSEP

NSEP will continue to innovate and lead as it provides professional-level specialists with language and culture skills for positions in the Federal Government.

NSEP will carry on its mission of providing language and culture learning opportunities for U.S. citizens interested in public service. The program is committed to advancing curriculum and instruction in languages critical to national security. NSEP will play a leadership role in partnering with U.S. higher education to enhance and expand opportunities for language learning.

NSEP will continue to partner with Government agencies and departments that need to recruit and hire professionals with language and culture skills critical to national security. Furthermore, the Department of Defense has selected two components of NSEP to represent its contribution to the NSLI. The Language Corps and The Language Flagship are anticipated to increase activities as the NSLI transitions from idea to action over the coming years.

NSEP will represent and promote issues that intersect at the point of national language policy, public service, and instruction of less commonly taught languages.



“We have a critical national need to know other cultures and to be competent in communication with other people. These are not new needs. We have heard many calls to action to address these needs.... So it is past time for a renewed focus on our role as members of the world community. Last call; it is time for action.”

– Dr. Robert A. Scott, President, Adelphi University
National Language Conference, 2004