

NSLI-Y Tutorial Session

Q: What is NSLI-Y?

The National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) program was launched in 2006 to promote critical language learning among American youth. The U.S. Department of State, in cooperation with American Councils for International Education, awards and administers merit-based scholarships to high school students for participation in summer and academic year immersion programs in locations where the seven NSLI-Y languages are spoken. NSLI-Y immerses participants in the cultural life of the host country, giving them formal and informal language practice and sparking a lifetime interest in foreign languages and cultures.

Q: What are the minimum requirements for eligibility?

- US citizen
- 15-18 years old at the start of the program
- 2.5 or higher GPA on a 4.0 scale
- Enrolled in high school (home school included) at the time of application
- Not an immediate family member of Department of State's Education and Cultural Affairs Bureau or an administering organization

Q: What is the complete application checklist?

- Complete and submit the Online Application by **October 27, 2016**, at 4:00 P.M. U.S. Eastern Time.
- Have one (1) parent/legal guardian complete the Online Parent Statement by **November 10, 2016** at 4:00 P.M. U.S. Eastern Time.
- Have one (1) teacher recommender complete the Online Teacher Recommendation by **November 10, 2016** at 4:00 P.M. U.S. Eastern Time.
- Submit the completed signature page of the Terms & Conditions Form, by uploading it to your application or by mailing it to the address below by **October 27, 2016** (postmarked). (Note: Terms and Conditions form must be signed by hand. Digital signatures will not be accepted). If you choose to mail the signature page, please note that the Terms and Conditions and transcripts should be mailed separately and to different mailing addresses.
ATTN: NSLI-Y File Processing (#1100-TC)
American Councils for International Education
1828 L St NW Ste 1200 Washington D.C. 20036-5136
- If currently enrolled as a 10th, 11th, or 12th grader, ask your school registrar to mail in your grade transcript to the address below by **October 27, 2016** (postmarked). Transcripts must include completed courses, grades, and GPA. Transcripts must be mailed directly to American Councils in a sealed and unopened envelope.
- If currently enrolled as a 9th grader, ask your school registrar to mail in your grade transcript from junior high/middle school AND a list of current classes enrolled in at high school by **November 10, 2016** (postmarked). Both must be mailed by the registrar to American Councils in a sealed and unopened envelope.
ATTN: NSLI-Y File Processing (#1100-G)
American Councils for International Education
1828 L St. NW, Ste. 1200 Washington DC 20036-5136 USA

Q: What effect will participating in NSLI-Y have on my high school graduation in the US? Can I get credit for NSLI-Y?

Graduation requirements vary from state to state, so you should discuss your plans to participate in NSLI-Y with your guidance counselor. The primary focus of NSLI-Y is language learning, and most classes will be language classes, though students may also have an opportunity to attend academic classes in the target language. Your high school will make the final decision on whether or not to grant academic credit. You should take into consideration that such U.S. specific subjects as English, Literature, World History, State History, etc. are unlikely to be offered at an equivalent level or offered at all. You might want to arrange to take certain required courses prior to, or after your participation in, the NSLI-Y program.

Please note that NSLI-Y is a rigorous immersion program and requires your full attention and effort; participants should not plan on completing academic study for their U.S. schools while on program.

Q: I am a senior. Can I still apply?

Yes, graduating seniors who will complete high school between December 2016 and June 2017 are eligible to apply for the 2017-18 NSLI-Y program, provided they meet the age eligibility guidelines.

Q: Is prior language learning required?

Absolutely not, but you must be passionate about language learning! The goal of NSLI-Y is to increase the number of Americans studying and speaking critical languages, so students with all levels of language experience and ability may apply. Previous language study is not required to apply for NSLI-Y. Applicants with previous knowledge of or proficiency in the target language are not given preference in the review process. All applicants are encouraged to discuss their interest and commitment to language learning in their essay responses.

Q: May I apply to multiple programs in different languages?

NSLI-Y applicants are asked to designate language and duration preferences in their application. Applicants are only required to designate one preference for language and duration, but may designate one additional language/duration preference. Applicants are not given the option to designate preferences for implementing organization or program location. A finalist's placement with a specific implementing organization or in a specific host country is determined by NSLI-Y staff.

Q: Do I need to submit my transcripts?

Applications without transcripts will not be considered, so be sure to have your most recent transcript sent by the deadline specified in the online application instructions, even if the current semester grades are not available.

Q: Who should I ask for teacher's recommendation?

You may ask any academic instructor or counselor who can attest to your readiness to be an exchange student to write your Teacher Recommendation. It is a good idea to ask an individual with whom you have taken a class or worked with within the last two years.

Give your recommender plenty of time to complete the recommendation. As you are requesting a professional service from your recommender, you should request the recommendation as soon as you decide to apply for NSLI-Y.

The confidential Teacher Recommendation is used to determine an applicant's academic motivation and promise as an exchange student. The recommendation form asks for information about the applicant through both multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions permit the recommender to provide specific examples of how the student is prepared for an overseas language immersion program. In order for your teacher to write a strong recommendation, you should give him/her a description of the NSLI-Y program and explain why you want to participate.

Q: Are past NSLI-Y participants eligible to apply for a second time?

Past NSLI-Y summer participants are eligible to apply for an academic year program, but are not eligible to apply for another summer program. Successful alumni of summer programs will be considered more competitive if they apply for an academic year program in the same language (with the exception of Persian, which has no academic year program). No applicant is eligible for a third NSLI-Y program.

Q: What costs are covered and not covered by NSLI-Y?

The costs covered by the scholarship are:

- Round-trip travel between the participant's home city to the pre-departure orientation and the overseas host program location
- Pre-departure, arrival, and end-of-stay orientations
- Tuition and related academic program costs including preparation, support and testing
- Educational and cultural programming, including program travel
- In-country support
- Room and board
- Visas for entrance and exit of the host country
- Secondary medical benefits

The costs **not** covered by the scholarship are:

- Costs associated with obtaining a valid U.S. passport
- Required medical examinations and immunizations for the NSLI-Y medical review or visa requirements
- Pocket money for personal items
- Excess baggage fees

Q: Can I use NSLI-Y scholarship for a study abroad program of my choosing?

No, the NSLI-Y Scholarship is not transferrable. Scholarships are offered for a specific NSLI-Y program and requests to change language, location, or program will not be considered. The placement of selected students is at the discretion of NSLI-Y administration and implementing organizations based on program preferences indicated on the application form, proficiency in the target language, and other considerations.

When you are accepted by the NSLI-Y program, you may not request to be placed in a certain city. Program locations and student placements are determined at the discretion of NSLI-Y administration and the implementing organization.

Q: What does a typical day look like for NSLI-Y?

NSLI-Y experiences vary across program sites and from year to year. In general, NSLI-Y summer programs are quite structured. During the summer, participants typically have breakfast with their host families or in their group housing, commute to their local host institution, and attend language class for 3 to 4 hours each morning. After morning language classes, participants have lunch with peers, and spend afternoon hours attending language classes, conversing with language partners, participating in cultural activities or community service, and/or completing assignments or projects. In the evening, participants often spend time with their host families and completing homework.

The daily experience of academic year participants varies greatly from one program to another. All academic year participants receive at least 10 hours of formal language instruction per week at a local school or post-secondary institution, and may take other academic or enrichment classes. Some programs place participants with host families for the full academic year, while others combine shorter host family stays with monitored dormitory or group housing arrangements. Participants often spend time working on semester and/or year-long projects.

Q: What is the likelihood that I will travel with the University of Minnesota for my NSLI-Y program?

The placement of students is determined centrally by American Council of International Education, and the University of Minnesota does not select students. Most students who are placed with University of Minnesota are intermediate level students, who have studied Chinese for three years, although their proficiency level vary greatly. There are other implementing organizations, can you can find out more at the NSLI-Y [website](#).

Q: When and how will I know about my application results?

All applicants are notified in December by email if they are selected as a semi-finalist or not.

Finalist notifications are sent on a rolling basis beginning in early March. All semi-finalists for summer programs will be notified via email of their status by mid-April. All semi-finalists for academic year programs will be notified of their status by late April.

Please note that all contact regarding your NSLI-Y application will be sent to the email address you supplied in your application.

Please do not call or email American Councils or other implementing organizations to find out if you have been selected; NSLI-Y staff will inform you as soon as information is available.

Q: How much independence does a participant have for NSLI-Y program?

As a program designed for youth aged 15-18, participants on NSLI-Y should not expect a lot of independence. NSLI-Y is a structured language-learning experience. Participants attend language classes, cultural activities, and excursions with others in their group. In the evenings and on weekends, participants have planned activities, study time, and/or time with their host families. Participants typically have a curfew and should not expect to travel independently while on program. Participants who travel without authorization will be considered for program dismissal. In addition, participants are not permitted

to consume or purchase alcohol on program and those who do so will be considered for program dismissal. Please refer to the [NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions](#) form for more information about program policies.

NSLI-Y participants should not expect to travel independently while on program. Participants who travel independently without permission from their implementing organization will be considered for program dismissal. Trips may be planned by the program implementer to various cultural and historical sites in your host country. Please refer to the Travel Policies section in the NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions form for more information.

Q: I may still have exams and/or graduation at the pre-departure orientation, can I join the programs a few days late?

All NSLI-Y participants must attend the pre-departure orientation and travel with their program group to the host country. Individual school and activity schedules vary widely and NSLI-Y cannot make exceptions for students who have scheduling conflicts. If your graduation or other important event conflicts with your NSLI-Y program dates, you will have to make a choice about participating in one or the other.

Q: Can my family and/or home country friends visit me during the program?

Visits from natural family, home country friends, and relatives are **STRONGLY** discouraged during the program and require advance permission from the implementing organization. Such visits can interrupt the continuity of the relationship with the host family and diminish the exchange experience for both the participant and the host family. Participants and their families must follow the requirements of their implementing organizations. See the NSLI-Y Terms and Conditions for more information.

Q: What kind of post-program requirements are there for participants?

All NSLI-Y participants are required to complete post-program language tests. Further, participants are expected to complete several post-program surveys from their implementing organization and American Councils for International Education.

NSLI-Y alumni are strongly encouraged to share their NSLI-Y experience with their home community and school, using the [NSLI-Y Alumni Outreach Toolkit](#). Alumni are encouraged to be active members of the [NSLI-Y Alumni Association](#) to contribute to the ongoing development of NSLI-Y.