

U.S. Embassy Baghdad Public Affairs Section

Request for Proposals: Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program (IYLEP) in Arabic for High School Students

Funding Opportunity: DOS-Baghdad-PD-2016-001
CFDA: 19.021

Opening Date: April 01, 2016
Closing Date: May 16, 2016

SUMMARY

The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad invites eligible organizations to submit proposals to develop and implement a 2017 Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program (IYLEP) in Arabic for High School Students. Since its launch in 2007, the annual IYLEP program has been conducted in English. This pilot program in Arabic will test the feasibility and effectiveness of a program for Iraqi youth with little to no English language skills. The goal of the pilot program is to reach greater numbers of talented but underprivileged or marginalized Iraqi youth who meet all of the IYLEP eligibility requirements except the English language component. Participants would be high achieving future young Iraqi leaders whose socio-economic circumstances do not afford opportunities for quality English language learning.

The goal of IYLEP is to foster the next generation of Iraqi leaders by exposing Iraqi high school students to U.S. society and culture and providing them with skills development in leadership, civic education and responsibility, diversity awareness and tolerance, and civil engagement. Proposals should include a U.S.-based exchange component and explain how program activities will promote mutual understanding between American and Iraqi youth. IYLEP advances the goals of the 2008 U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement to forge strong and lasting bonds of friendship and mutual understanding through exchange and other programs. Subject to the availability of funds, the Embassy expects to award one cooperative agreement for up to \$500,000 to carry out IYLEP in Arabic for High School Students.

Authority: Overall grant-making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is “to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and other countries of the world.”

Eligibility: Applicants must:

- Be a U.S. non-profit organization meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c) (3); an internationally based non-profit organization; an academic institution; or other institution for which profit is not a primary motive;
- Have demonstrated experience administering exchange programs focused on youth; and
- Have the capacity to operate in Iraq, or have or develop active partnerships with organization(s) operating in Iraq.

All Federal assistance recipients must have a Dun & Bradstreet Number (DUNS) and a CCR (CAGE) number prior to funds disbursement. A DUNS number may be acquired at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or requesting on-line at www.dnb.com.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Proposals should describe how the program will engage approximately 20 Iraqi secondary school students aged 15-17 representing all parts of Iraq with at least one academic year of study remaining as well as up to five adult mentors fluent in both Arabic and English. The centerpiece of the program should be a four-week program in the United States that includes significant interaction with American youth and civic organizations. Proposals should outline programs for imparting IYLEP objectives, including leadership skills, civic education and responsibility, diversity awareness and tolerance, and the values of civic engagement. Proposal should explain how the program will function effectively for Arabic speakers such as whether through translators, use of Arabic-speaking interlocutors, or a combination of strategies. Participants should be identified through open competition and demonstrate leadership capacity.

Program activities should include, but not be limited to:

- Academic and leadership training on U.S. college campuses;
- Visits to U.S. high school summer programs;
- Volunteer work with community organizations;
- Participation in cultural programs;
- Meetings with U.S. youth organizations;
- Visits, homestays, and activities with U.S. families; and
- A basic English language learning component.

The anticipated timeline for the 2017 IYLEP in Arabic for High School Students is:

September 2016:	Outreach and recruitment begins.
January 2017:	Participant selection is finalized.
February-May 2017:	Visa applications are processed.
June 2017:	Program orientation in Iraq is held.
July-August 2017:	Participants travel to the United States.
October-December 2017:	De-briefing sessions with returned participants in Iraq.
February 2018:	Alumni networking reunion held in Iraq.

Organizational Capacity: Applicant organizations must demonstrate the capacity to implement youth exchange programs and to work in Iraq, either directly or through a partner organization. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to work in Arabic and to carry out program activities for Iraq's Arabic-speaking population.

Guidelines: The award will begin on or about September 1, 2016. The award duration will be 15-20 months and will cover all aspects of program planning, participant recruitment, interviews, and selection, in-country pre-departure orientations, U.S.-based exchange activities, and follow-on activities in the participants' home communities, including through alumni activities focused on leadership development. Applicants should propose a specific program timeline that includes exchange dates in the summer of 2017, but the exact timing may be altered through mutual agreement between the Embassy and the award recipient.

In consultation with Embassy staff, the awardee will:

Conduct open and competitive recruitment for the program in both public and private high schools in each of the 18 provinces of Iraq to seek a diverse applicant pool with appropriate gender balance and that is representative of Iraq's geographic and socio-economic diversity. Proposals should address how recruitment would seek a diverse composition of participants from all socio-economic spheres, in particular the inclusion of future Iraqi leaders from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Arrange interview panels of prospective participants in Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, and elsewhere as needed in Iraq; panels should be made up of a minimum of three persons with a mix of program staff, IYLEP alumni, and U.S. Embassy representatives;
- Serve as the primary point of contact and source of information for students and their families in Iraq and the United States throughout the entire program process;
- Coordinate with the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad on providing information to generate documents, including the Department of State issued DS-2019, for U.S. visa issuance for participants;
- Manage all logistical elements of the exchange, including facilitating Iraqi students' travel to the Embassy for U.S. visa interviews, international and U.S. domestic travel, ground transportation, accommodations, group meals, and disbursement of pocket money;
- Design and conduct a program orientation for Iraqi participants and the parents of high school participants prior to their travel to the United States to review program logistics and agendas;
- Design and conduct a program orientation in the United States for Iraqi participants and U.S.-based program staff and partners;

- Organize and carry out the U.S.-based program as described in the award agreement;
- Provide a closing session to summarize and evaluate the program, prepare participants for their return home, and further prepare them for follow-on activities and alumni programs;
- Plan and organize follow-on activities in their home communities in Iraq to help participants implement what they learned in the United States;
- Organize one alumni networking and leadership conference for IYLEP in Arabic for High School Students in Iraq.

It is recommended that the U.S.-based program include visits, activities, and homestays with American families. The awardee will be responsible for arranging these with properly screened and briefed host families for a significant portion of the exchange period. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for host families and other members of household who are more than 18 years of age.

The U.S.-based component should include a separate program and activities for the adult mentors designed to improve their skills in leadership, youth counseling, cultural understanding, group organization, and other fields. The mentor program should run concurrently with the youth program and be held at the same location.

The awardee must demonstrate a plan to monitor the participants' safety and well-being while in the United States, including proper staff supervision and mechanisms for resolving problems that might arise. Program staff and adult mentors should assist youth participants with cultural adjustments, provide context to enhance learning, and counsel students as needed. Criminal background checks, including a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for all program staff.

The Embassy will be substantially involved in carrying out this project, including, but not limited to:

- Approving all 2017 IYLEP in Arabic for High School Students recruitment, application, publicity, notification, topics/themes of academic training, and other materials;
- Approving lists of all selection panel members and approving questions to be asked during candidate interviews.
- Approving final candidate and alternate selection;
- Monitoring and evaluating the program through regular communication with the award recipient and site visits as necessary.
- Publicizing the program on Embassy social media platforms.

Embassy staff will assist in coordinating with the Embassy Consular Section in arranging visa application appointments. Participation in IYLEP is contingent upon the ability of the visa applicant to receive the J Exchange Visitor Visa.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Applications must be prepared and submitted using the Public Diplomacy Grants Program Application form, available on www.grants.gov or by request from baghdadpdgrants@state.gov. Please submit questions and completed applications to baghdadpdgrants@state.gov.

Cost-sharing is strongly encouraged. Cost sharing can take the form of both allowable direct and indirect costs. For accountability, the recipient must maintain records to support all costs claimed as part of the cost-share agreement. Such records are subject to audit. Please refer to Title 2 CFR 200.306 Cost Sharing or Matching.

All sections of the applications must be completed. In addition to information about project personnel as requested on the application form, please provide complete resumes for key personnel, such as Project Director.

The deadline for receipt of applications is May 16, 2016 close of business Baghdad, Iraq time. The Embassy reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and/or participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program, the availability of funds, and concurrence of the applicant.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The Embassy Public Diplomacy Grants Committee will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals received in response this NOFO:

Introduction/General Summary: The general summary must describe the need for the program with regards to: location, the extent and nature of the program and the population being targeted for the program. It should identify, if any, the existing resources in the location, as well as general internal and external support mechanisms.

Project Goals and Objectives/Implementation Plan: Proposals should address the goals of the IYLEP in Arabic for High School Students program as outlined in this solicitation. Proposals will be evaluated for originality, substance, precision, and relevance to IYLEP goals. They will be evaluated for the potential for long-term impact and sustainability of IYLEP in Arabic in developing Iraq's future leaders. The Embassy Public Diplomacy Grants Committee will closely consider whether the goals lead to the overall objectives of the program. Applicants should describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The proposed activities must directly

relate to meeting the goals and objectives, and applicants should include information on how they will measure activities' effectiveness. The Grants Committee will evaluate the activities planned in terms of their relevance to the current situation and the program goals and objectives, the feasibility of the proposed activities and their timeline for completion, and the extent to which the impact of the program will continue beyond the conclusion of the funding period.

Organizational Capacity: Applications must include a clear description of the applicant's management structure, previous experience with similar programs, and organizational background in the country/region as these relate to the proposed activities. Besides information about the organization as a whole, this section must also identify the proposed management structure and staffing plan for the proposed program. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to work in English and Arabic. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to carry out programs in Iraq.

Budget: Costs should be reasonable and realistic in relation to the program activities. Applicants are encouraged to provide as much detail as possible so that the committee may determine the extent to which the request represents an efficient use of USG resources. The budget should be consistent with the narrative description of the program and should reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by Title 2 CFR 200.306 (part 230) on cost principles for non-profit organizations.

Monitoring and evaluation plan: proposals should have a clear monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure proper implementation of the project;

Key Personnel: the organization is to demonstrate the competency of the staff involved in the project implementation;

Cost Sharing: it is always encouraged in order to demonstrate the level of commitment to the idea and the project.

Indirect Cost Rate: consideration will be given of the indirect cost rate proposed by the applicant.

NOTIFICATION

Applicants can expect to be notified of the status of their application within thirty (30) days of the submission deadline. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the United States government. It does not commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. The U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Embassy.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, please contact the U.S. Embassy Baghdad at baghdadpdgrants@state.gov.