



Request for Proposals

REDESIGN AND MAINTENANCE OF NSLI-Y WEBSITE

American Councils for International Education (American Councils) seeks a vendor to redesign and assist in maintenance of the NSLI-Y program's website at <https://www.nsliforyouth.org/>.

Vendors responding to this request for proposals (RFP) should have experience in designing and creating high-quality websites with visual appeal for educational or other not-for-profit institutions.

1. Background

American Councils is a not-for-profit, non-governmental corporation exempt from taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. American Councils strengthens international ties and mutual understanding through excellence in academic, professional and cultural exchange, language acquisition, educational development, and research. With nearly 50 years of experience, American Councils operates in 130 countries, facilitating over 250 programs in 40 languages with 650 employees. For more information see www.americancouncils.org.

American Councils is the lead organization in the administration and implementation of the U.S. Department of State's National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y). The U.S. Department of State, in cooperation with American Councils, awards and administers merit-based scholarships to high school students to study critical languages. NSLI-Y immerses participants in the cultural life of the host community, giving them formal and informal language practice and sparking a lifetime interest in foreign languages and cultures. Participants receive intensive language instruction and participate in a variety of cultural activities. Its [goals](#) include providing a tangible incentive for the learning and use of foreign language by creating overseas language study opportunities for U.S. high school students. In addition to the traditional overseas programs, American Councils implements a virtual version of the scholarship called [Virtual NSLI-Y](#) which is also represented on the NSLI-Y website.

2. Overview

NSLI-Y's current website requires upgrades and enhancements to improve its functionality, user experience, and overall appeal to audiences interested in learning about and applying for the NSLI-Y scholarship. Further, the website requires updates to be more in line with current industry standards.

The NSLI-Y website must be in line with the U.S. Department of State's [Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' Communication Guidelines](#).

NSLI-Y staff will need to be able to make in-house edits to the content. NSLI-Y will need tracking and monitoring capabilities built into the website to measure effectiveness and outreach campaign success.

GOALS

- Enhance the NSLI-Y website's user experience (UX) and user interface (UI) design.
- Ensure mobile responsiveness and accessibility compliance.
- Ensure satisfactory website performance and security.
- Foster better engagement with target audiences (students, parents, educators).

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a modern, clean, and user-friendly website design meeting current industry standards.
- Implement an intuitive navigation structure.
- Provide access to a content management system (CMS) for NSLI-Y staff to make simple updates.
- Ensure compatibility with all major browsers and devices.
- Optimize website for speed and SEO best practices.

3. Work Scope

American Councils seeks a vendor to design and help maintain the NSLI-Y website. The website shall include information about NSLI-Y's offered languages and study abroad locations, application information, program impact data, alumni information, FAQs, and more. It will also cover information about the separate but related Virtual NSLI-Y scholarship. The website must be professional and easy to read, and design elements should have visual appeal.

WEBSITE RE-DESIGN

1. Discovery and Planning

- Conduct interviews and surveys with stakeholders (e.g. NSLI-Y program alumni, staff) to understand needs and preferences.
- Perform a comprehensive review of the current website to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Develop a project plan with timelines and milestones.

2. Design

- Draft and create wireframes and design prototypes in consultation with NSLI-Y staff.
- Present design mockups for feedback and approval (which will include input from both American Councils and the U.S. Department of State).

- Ensure designs reflect the NSLI-Y brand and mission.

3. Development

- Implement the approved design using modern web technologies and coding.
- Develop a responsive layout that works across all devices.
- Integrate a CMS for content management.
- Migrate existing and new content and ensure smooth transition to the upgraded site.

4. Testing

- Conduct comprehensive testing to ensure functionality, usability, and compatibility.
- Perform user acceptance testing (UAT) with NSLI-Y stakeholders.
- Address any issues identified during testing phases.

5. Launch

- Develop a launch plan to minimize downtime.
- Provide training for NSLI-Y staff on editing/managing the new site.
- Ensure a seamless transition to the live site.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

1. Technical Support and Updates

- Provide regular updates to ensure the website remains secure and functional.
- Perform routine backups and maintenance tasks.

2. Content Updates

- Assist with periodic content and design updates/changes as needed (typically on a quarterly basis).
- Ensure content aligns with SEO best practices.

3. Performance Monitoring

- Monitor website performance and resolve issues promptly for one year from date of website upgrade, with possibility for renewal.
- Integrate tools for NSLI-Y staff to track, website traffic, and user behavior.

4. Proposal Requirements

- **Company information.** Brief overview of the company, including years in business, services offered, and experience with similar projects; relevant case studies or portfolio examples.
- **Project approach.** Detailed description of the proposed approach to the re-design and maintenance project; project timeline with key milestones and deliverables.
- **Team composition.** Information about the project team, including roles and relevant experience.
- **Budget.** Detailed cost proposal, including a breakdown of costs for design, development, launch, and maintenance; payment schedule.
- **References.** Contact information for at least two references from similar projects.

5. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience with similar projects.
- Quality and creativity of proposed design concepts.
- Technical expertise and approach to development and maintenance.
- Cost-effectiveness and budget alignment.
- References and past performance.

6. Submission Guidelines

Proposals must be submitted by August 1, 2024.

Please send proposals electronically by attachment to nsliy@americancouncils.org.

For any questions or clarifications, contact Angela MacDougall, Senior Program Officer.

7. RFP Schedule

- RFP Issued: June 12, 2024
- Submission Deadline: August 1, 2024
- Vendor Selection: September 10, 2024
- Project Kick-off: October 10, 2024
- Completion and Final Invoice: March 30, 2025

8. Confidentiality

All information provided in response to this RFP will be considered confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of evaluating potential vendors.

We look forward to receiving your proposal and working together to enhance the NSLI-Y website.