This guide explains STARTALK’s proposal process, the criteria reviewers use for rating submitted proposals, and the resources available to help prepare prospective teacher program applicants.

**IMPORTANT:**
You *must* have a CAGE code to submit your proposal. If your institution does not have one, apply for one *immediately* so that you receive your code in time to submit your proposal before the deadline. You can apply for a CAGE code at [http://www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).

### About the Proposal Review Process

The STARTALK proposal review process consists of three stages: an external review, an internal review, and a final determination made by the funding agency.

Following the close of the proposal submission period, each STARTALK proposal is reviewed and rated by three randomly assigned external reviewers. External reviewers are selected from among national experts and leaders in the field of world language education. The external reviewers focus on the academic and logistical viability of the proposed program and assign responses to each question one of four ratings: clearly evident, evident, weakly evident, or not evident. The following is a breakdown of the four ratings:

- A rating of *clearly evident* indicates that the applicant has provided many details or strong connections between aspects of the program and the item criteria.
- A rating of *evident* indicates that the criteria are referenced in meaningful ways in the proposal.
- A rating of *weakly evident* indicates that the criteria are mentioned or alluded to without much detail.
- A rating of *not evident* indicates little or no reference to the criteria.

Based on these ratings, external reviewers then assign an overall rating: highly recommended, recommended, recommended with support, or not recommended. These overall ratings are defined as follows:

- *Highly recommended* refers to a program proposal that receives ratings of *clearly evident* for most of the criteria. These programs are most likely to create meaningful and successful learning experiences for intended teacher trainee populations within the specified time frames and with reasonable costs.
- **Recommended** refers to a program proposal that receives a mix of *clearly evident* and *evident* ratings for most of the criteria. These programs are likely to create meaningful and successful learning experiences for intended teacher trainee populations within the specified time frames and with reasonable costs.

- **Recommended with support** refers to a program proposal that receives a mix of *evident* and *weakly evident* ratings for most of the criteria. These programs have the potential to provide meaningful and successful learning experiences for teacher trainees but will require support from STARTALK in planning curriculum, developing appropriate assessments, identifying suitable instructional strategies, and/or other areas critical to program success.

- **Not recommended** refers to a program proposal that receives ratings of *weakly evident* or *not evident* for most of the criteria. These programs are not likely to provide meaningful and successful learning experiences for intended teacher trainee populations.

External reviewers also provide brief explanations to justify their recommendations. These explanations sum up the most salient arguments for or against a program. Any additional or important information that calls for special attention by STARTALK Central is also included.

The external reviewer ratings are then reviewed internally by STARTALK Central, which considers the external ratings in light of considerations such as cost effectiveness and national need. STARTALK Central then compiles a list of recommended programs and shares its recommendations with the funding agency. The funding agency then makes final decisions about granting awards.
Proposal Criteria

The following section describes the criteria that the external reviewers use to rate each section of a proposal. When responding to each proposal question, try to be as specific as possible. One of the most common critiques reviewers make is that responses lack specific details or examples. Strong responses generally demonstrate not only a solid understanding of STARTALK principles, but also a concrete and realistic plan for the design and implementation of the program.

Program

**Question 1: Executive Summary**

The executive summary should be an overall summary statement that should show that the program is well designed with a strong potential to be successfully implemented. The executive summary is shared with others and should be clearly written so that the reader understands at a basic level what the program will deliver. It should be a statement that can stand alone as a summary of the program.

**Question 2: Please write a summary of your program of up to five sentences being sure to include the following: the outcomes; number of participants and their teaching levels; number of instructional hours and the duration of the program.**

This question is primarily for administrative purposes. If the proposal is awarded a STARTALK grant, providing the information in this format facilitates the award process.

**Question 3: Describe the compelling reason/rationale for offering this program in your community. How will your program enhance the quality and availability of language teacher education for STARTALK languages?**

Is there a compelling and realistic rationale for providing the program? Why is it important for your particular program to be offered in your particular community? What features make this program a strong candidate for STARTALK funding? How will the program support the STARTALK mandate of increasing the number and expertise of teachers of designated languages? Are pathways to certification included in the program? Will credits or professional development units be offered?
Major Goals and Personnel

**Question 1:** Comment on the major goals of your program, and how you will know if they have been achieved. How will your selected content topics align with your goals and address the specific needs for your targeted audience?

This item refers to the program goals, while question two in the implementation section refers to the assessment of teacher development. Does your program have a comprehensive plan for internal evaluation based on the stated goals and indicators of success? What is the plan, and how will evidence be collected? How will your program know if the major goals have been achieved?

**Question 2:** Name your program director and lead instructor(s). Describe how their backgrounds match the specific responsibilities that each person will have in order to ensure the success of your program.

Applicants are required to name both the program director and lead instructor(s) in their proposals. While the proposal may include a CV-like summary of the director and instructor’s qualifications, this alone is not sufficient. It is important that the proposal explain clearly the expertise that each person has as it relates to the proposed program. Does the explanation make it clear why the named person should be the program director? Is it clear why the lead instructor is the best possible person to work in the specified instructional setting? Both the program director and lead instructor should be involved in the program on a daily basis. It is critically important that the program director and/or the lead instructor have

- proficiency in the target language(s) and a high level of familiarity with the target culture(s),
- expertise in world language pedagogy,
- expertise in working with the target audience (e.g., adult learners and K–16 teachers),
- expertise in working with students at the appropriate grade level(s), and
- direct experience working in or strong knowledge of US education systems.

**Question 3:** What other personnel will you need to run your program? What are their qualifications and job responsibilities?

The proposal should identify all additional staff positions that will be needed to run the program. If a position is listed in the budget as a payroll staff position, it should be explained here. Please consult the [budget guide](#) and [glossary](#) for clarification if needed. Applicants are free to identify additional staff members by name, though this is not required. If, however, an additional position is identified, the responsibilities and qualifications for that position must be clearly stated.
For example, what will the roles and qualifications of additional instructional staff members be? If your program identifies the need for an administrative support position, specific responsibilities should be identified for that position. Be sure that your personnel list also addresses all aspects of the program, including any specialized needs of the program, to demonstrate to reviewers that all needs of the program will be met. For example, if the program will train participants to work with elementary school students, is there someone with elementary expertise involved in the program? Please also use this section to address any potential concerns that reviewers might have about the program being understaffed or overstaffed.

**Implementation**

**Question 1:** Describe how the curriculum of your program will address the goals that are outlined in by the ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. Comment on what participants will know and be able to do as a result of this program.

Is your curriculum aligned with national teacher professional standards and research on adult learning and teacher professional development? Does your program’s content address national student content standards and best practices related to world language pedagogy? Will participants have opportunities to observe and discuss best practices and acquire hands-on experience? Does your proposal outline clearly what participants will know and be able to do? Are these learning outcomes in line with the program goals? Does your proposal clearly address the five goal areas of the World-Readiness Standards: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons and communities? Does the proposal provide evidence that participants will develop their competence in instructing/incorporating/addressing the three modes of communication? (For your reference, the ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages can be found here: https://startalk.umd.edu/resources/WorldReadinessStandardsForLearningLanguages.pdf.)

**Question 2:** Describe how you plan to assess participants’ learning. Comment on how you will know if participants have met the major instructional goals of your program.

Does your proposal clearly outline what participants will know and be able to do, and are the learning outcomes in line with the program goals? Is it clear how participants will demonstrate what they have learned? Are the assessments performance based? Are the assessments realistic and meaningful considering the participants, the length of the program, and the context of learning? How will your program know if participants have achieved these learning outcomes? What evidence will the program require instructors and participants to collect in order to demonstrate participant growth?
Question 3: Describe how your program will differentiate professional development experiences to meet the various needs of your participants.

What provisions will your program make for participants with varied experiences in a wide range of teaching situations and with different levels of target language proficiency? How will your program determine participants’ incoming level of understanding? Are the strategies that are suggested specific in nature (i.e., not just suggesting that participants will work in groups)?

Question 4: Describe how the STARTALK-endorsed principles for effective teaching and learning and characteristics of effective language lessons will be promoted by your program. If the program includes a guest speaker, what part of the curriculum will they address, and what activities will be conducted with him/her?

Are activities or tasks meaningful and purposeful in ways that participants will be able to learn from experts and peers? If your program includes activities with guest speakers, is it clear how guest lectures will coordinate with the curriculum? Will participants have opportunities to gain insight and experience through practice while learning theories? Do the instructional strategies and activities allow your program to achieve its stated goals and objectives? Is it clear that the program has focused on specific TELL domains (www.tellproject.org) and their connections to STARTALK-endorsed principles for effective teaching and learning (https://startalk.umd.edu/principles/)? Be sure to consider the following:

- **Environment**: How does the program promote a safe and supportive environment for student learning?
- **Planning**: How does the program prepare participants to plan learning experiences that advance student learning? How does the program address implementation of a standards-based and thematically organized curriculum? How does the program address the integration of culture, content, and language in a world language classroom?
- **The learning experience**: How does the program provide meaningful learning experiences that focus on ways to advance student learning? How does the program prepare participants to work in a learner-centered classroom? How does the program focus on the use of the target language and comprehensible input for instruction?
- **Performance and feedback**: How does the program prepare participants to use performance and feedback to advance student learning? How does the program focus on performance-based assessment?
- **Learning tools**: How does the program prepare participants to capitalize on a variety of learning tools to advance student learning? How does the program encourage the use of age-appropriate authentic materials?
• **Collaboration:** How does the program encourage collaboration with stakeholders in ways that support student learning?

• **Professionalism:** How does the program promote continued growth among participants in order to help them better support student learning?

**Question 5:** If you plan on using technological tools, explain how those tools will support instruction and learning. If technology is part of your budget, describe how items purchased will support instruction and enhance learning.

Programs are not required to use technology; however, if your program does plan to use technology, your proposal should explain how the technology will be used to enhance instruction or learning. If STARTALK funds are used to purchase technology, this question is mandatory.

**Question 6:** Describe the process that you will follow to coordinate the curriculum goals among all instructors involved in the course.

Does your proposal clarify who will be involved in the process? Is it clear that there is a plan for how the work will be done? Will those who are teaching in the program be involved in the design of the curriculum? Do those who are developing the curriculum have expertise in working with adult learners and with students?

**Proposed Schedule**

**Question 1:** Describe what a typical day would be like for a participant.

This section can be used to describe your participants’ daily schedule. Does the day allow for a blend of activities that integrate theory and practice? What time will the program start and end? Is the length of day reasonable in terms of program goals? Remember to allow time for your participants to reflect on the day’s concepts and activities.

**Question 2 (residential programs only):** Please explain your rationale for offering a residential program. Describe the types of activities that will occur during the evening and on weekends.

Residential programs are very costly. Is there a compelling reason for your decision to offer a residential program? Does the schedule for the typical day extend to evenings and weekends? Are evening and weekend activities integral to the learning experience?
Recruitment

**Question 1: Describe your targeted population. Discuss how you will publicize and market your program to reach the targeted population.**

Keep in mind that all teacher participants must be currently teaching or planning to teach in the United States. Does your proposal provide a clear description of the targeted population? Given your program’s goals, is targeted enrollment as inclusive as possible? Is a plan in place to market the program to attract the targeted teacher population? Is the projected enrollment realistic?

**Question 2: Justify your target enrollment numbers.**

This question focuses on whether the proposed program’s target enrollment numbers are realistic in light of the targeted population and the stated marketing plan. Given the size of the target population, is it likely that the targeted enrollment can be reached? What is your program’s plan to reach the targeted population through marketing? Will this plan be sufficient to draw the intended number of students?

Outreach

**Question 1: Describe the opportunities you will organize or recommend for continued learning beyond this program.**

In addition to facilitating the proposed summer activities, STARTALK programs should provide or link to opportunities or programs that will enable participants to continue their professional development. Is a plan in place to allow participants to continue their professional development after the program ends?

STARTALK Legacy

**Question 1: Describe the steps your program will take to facilitate the continued training of teachers of the STARTALK languages.**

*Examples include the following:*

- Activities to generate interest in the pedagogy of STARTALK languages
- Activities that contribute to the teaching of STARTALK languages online
- Activities that increase the number of teachers of STARTALK languages who pursue certification
- Activities that facilitate teachers’ pursuits of alternate paths to certification in the STARTALK languages
• Activities that facilitate the development of new language and/or education degree programs

• Activities that facilitate the development of resources (print and online) that can be used by STARTALK language teachers nationwide

As the STARTALK program begins its ninth year, there will be a focus on building and maintaining the STARTALK legacy. This question asks what you will do to facilitate the continued training of teachers of STARTALK languages. Programs that offer strong plans for legacy building will receive preference during proposal review.

**Question 2: Describe in detail how your program will lead to certification, recertification, or licensure. If your program does not have a path to certification, enter *not applicable.*

Examples include the following:

• How will your program be structured to facilitate participant enrollment in a certification program?

• How will your program provide credit toward an existing certification program?

• How will your program facilitate the continuation of certification coursework among participants?

In an effort to increase the number of teachers who are certified to teach STARTALK languages in US schools, STARTALK will give preference to those teacher program applications that describe in detail how their programs will lead to certification, recertification, or licensure. This question allows you to provide details on your proposed program’s contribution to participant certification.

**Budget**

**Question 1: Provide an explanation for all costs listed in your budget that are not addressed in the personnel sections.**

External reviewers will review this section and the personnel section of the proposal to ensure that the proposal aligns with the budget. Please make sure that all payroll staff positions that appear in the budget are explained in the personnel section. List and explain all additional budgeted expenses in this section.

STARTALK Central will also conduct an internal review of all programs’ budgets. In this review we will examine all budget items to ensure that they are transparent, reasonable, nonduplicative, and cost effective. Please familiarize yourself with STARTALK’s budget resources to ensure that your budget meets STARTALK’s guidelines. These resources include a [budget guide](#), [budget samples](#), and a [budget glossary](#).
Reflection

**Question 1 (previous STARTLK programs only):** Describe how the lessons you learned in previous STARTALK program(s) are reflected in your proposal.

If your program was a previous recipient of STARTALK funding, has your program taken the time to reflect on the suggestions made by last year’s site visit team? Consider the program from a management point of view. What did you learn from your STARTALK program last year? What positive elements will you work into this year’s STARTALK program, if you are funded? What problems will you address? For example, did you modify how you recruited participants based on your experience last year? Did you shift duties and responsibilities from one staff member to another based on your experiences with your staff last summer?

**Question 2 (previous STARTLK programs only):** List the challenges and recommendations provided in your 2014 site visit report. Explain how you will address each recommendation. If you cannot address a recommendation, provide a reason.

If your program was a previous recipient of STARTALK funding, look at the recommendations made by the site visit team that came to observe your program. List the recommendations they made and how you attempted to address the recommendations in planning this year’s program. Proposal reviewers will have access to the previous year’s site visit report for your program, so please make sure that all issues from last year are adequately addressed. If there are any recommendations that your program will not be adopting, please provide an explanation.