STARTALK Applicant Guide

STARTALK is a federal grant program funded by the National Security Agency and administered by the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland that has three goals:

1. Increase the number of students enrolled in the study of critical languages
2. Increase the number of highly effective critical-language teachers in the United States
3. Increase the number of highly effective materials and curricula available to teachers and students of critical-need languages

To meet these goals, STARTALK solicits proposals to run summer programs for student language learning and teacher development. STARTALK grants support programs for students and teachers of the following critical-need languages: Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Persian, Russian, Turkish, and Urdu. Teacher programs that are designed to serve teachers of two or more of those languages may also accept teachers of Spanish. The primary focus of STARTALK programs is summer learning, but applicants are encouraged to design follow-up opportunities for instruction or activities for participants to continue learning beyond the summer.

STARTALK welcomes applications from school districts, colleges and universities, state and local education agencies, heritage and community schools, private and public schools, and other educational institutions incorporated in the United States.

The National Foreign Language Center seeks proposals from applicants for five types of programs: independent student programs, three varieties of independent teacher programs, and a combination program model that supports a practicum experience for teachers within a student program.
Program Types & Funding Levels

**Student Programs:**
Student programs provide kindergarteners through twelfth grade and undergraduate students with language learning experiences that offer opportunities to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills through the three modes of communication.

*Award range: $54,000–$90,000*

**Overview Teacher Programs**
Overview programs provide practicing and pre-service teachers with opportunities to understand and explain the role of selected key concepts to provide an introduction to effective language teaching.

*Award range: $54,000–$90,000*

**Focus Teacher Programs**
Focus programs provide practicing teachers with opportunities to plan for implementation of selected key concepts for effective language teaching. Focus programs are focused on one key concept outlined in the STARTALK Principles.

*Award range: $54,000–$90,000*

**Demonstration Teacher Programs**
Demonstration programs provide teachers with opportunities to plan and implement key concepts in a highly structured peer- or micro-teaching experience. These programs are designed around a series of TELL criteria from one or more domains.

*Award range: $54,000–$90,000*

**Practicum Programs**
Practicum programs provide teachers opportunities to plan and implement key concepts in a direct teaching experience in a student program. Teacher participants will implement their new learning while teaching in STARTALK student program.

*Award range: $90,000–$130,000*

**Key Dates**

- **9/12/2019** Online application system (SOPHIE) opens for proposal development and submission.
- **9/26/2019** This live webinar will review the content requirements to complete the program narrative section of the application for teacher programs (4:00 PM) and student programs (5:00 PM) and will answer questions from webinar participants.
- **10/07/2019** 6:00 PM (EST) During this live webinar STARTALK Central team members will answer technical and content questions about submitting applications.
- **10/16/2019** 6:00 PM (EST) During this live webinar STARTALK Central team members will answer technical and content questions about submitting applications.
- **10/24/2019** Online application system closes at 7:00 PM (local time) to proposal development and submission.

To register for a STARTALK applicant webinar, please visit the applicant resource page: [startalk.umd.edu/public/resources/applicantresources](http://startalk.umd.edu/public/resources/applicantresources)
Eligibility for STARTALK Awards

**Student Programs**

For applications to be considered eligible:

- Applicants must provide evidence that participant safety, liability, and insurance issues are addressed.
- All instruction must occur in the United States (or within US territories or tribal areas); STARTALK funds cannot be used to fund study abroad programs.
- The applying organization must not be organized, chartered, or incorporated under the laws of any country other than the United States or its possessions or be controlled by an individual who is not a US citizen. STARTALK funds may not be used to support a foreign-owned entity.
- The applying organization must maintain an accounting system capable of accurately and adequately tracking the expenses associated with the STARTALK grant.
- Instruction must serve students in kindergarten through twelfth grade and undergraduate.
- Students participating in a STARTALK program must be enrolled in a US school or homeschooled in the United States.
- Proposals targeting middle school and above must run for three weeks or longer and provide at least ninety hours of instruction. For proposals targeting K–5, at least forty-five hours of instruction must be provided.

**Teacher Programs**

For an application to be considered eligible:

- Applicants must provide evidence that participant safety, liability, and insurance issues are addressed.
- All instruction must occur in the United States (or within US territories or tribal areas); STARTALK funds cannot be used to fund study abroad programs.
- The applying organization must not be organized, chartered, or incorporated under the laws of any country other than the United States or its possessions or be controlled by an individual who is not a US citizen. STARTALK funds may not be used to support a foreign-owned entity.
- The applying organization must maintain an accounting system capable of accurately and adequately tracking the expenses associated with the STARTALK grant.
- Teachers participating in a STARTALK program must be currently teaching or planning to teach one of the STARTALK languages in the United States. (Programs that plan to serve teachers in two or more STARTALK languages may also enroll teachers of Spanish.)*

**Teacher Program Priority:**

Programs that lead participants toward state certification or an alternative certification process by awarding credit hours for methodology-based courses/practicum experiences OR fulfilling professional development requirements for practicing teachers.

* Spanish teachers are welcome in STARTALK teacher programs with multiple languages. Thirty percent of teacher participants may be Spanish language teachers. For example, if an institution were to offer a program for teachers of Chinese, Arabic, and Hindi, and were to project an enrollment of twenty teachers, up to six of those teachers could be teachers of Spanish.
STARTALK Application Structure

To apply for a STARTALK grant, applicants will use SOPHIE (STARTALK Online Programs, Help, Information, and Events). The online grant application platform will allow applicants to respond to proposal questions, complete a budget, and submit all required federal forms. This guide will help applicants navigate the online proposal.

The STARTALK application is organized into different sections. The information presented in this guide follows the order of the application in SOPHIE. Click on a section below to jump to that section of the guide.
Managing Your Application in SOPHIE

Creating a SOPHIE Account

1. Using either Firefox or Chrome, go to startalk.umd.edu/sophie to set up an account by clicking “Sign in” either on the left-hand navigation menu, or the teal button on the top of the page.
2. On the sign-in page, directly below the blue “Sign in” button, it says “Need to Sign up?” with a “Register Now” button below it. Click the “Register Now” button.
3. Complete all fields and click “Create account.” You will use the email address used to register as your account login, and it will be the primary email address affiliated with your proposal. You will receive an email to confirm your account and login after clicking “Create account.”

An application is affiliated with the email account that you use to set up your SOPHIE account. Only one SOPHIE account can be affiliated with each application. Consider using a shared institutional email account instead of a personal email when setting up your SOPHIE account. This will allow multiple people working on a proposal to share the institutional email to access the proposal.

Creating a New Application

Once you are logged into SOPHIE, you can create a new application or access existing applications by using the navigation menu on the left-hand side of your screen, under “Dashboard.”

Click “New Application.” A page will open asking you to review the eligibility statement for all STARTALK applicants. Take a moment to ensure your organization meets these eligibility criteria, then click “Continue.”

Select your program type.
   a. Independent: For a student program or for an overview, focus, or demonstration teacher program, select “Independent,” then click “Submit.” New options will display, allowing you to select your specific type of independent program.
   b. Practicum: For a teacher practicum program that includes a student program, select “Practicum,” and then click “Submit.”

Navigating Your Application

Access the navigation menu. After you’ve selected your program type and hit “Submit,” a navigation menu will open on the left-hand side of the screen called “Grant Application.” It will have multiple sections, each of which are explained in this guide. You can use this menu to access any section of your proposal and work on that section. You may jump back and forth between sections of your proposal with ease but be sure to hit “Save” before clicking to move to a new section. You should only click on “Submit Application” once you’re ready to submit your final proposal.

Return to your application at any time. You can save and exit your proposal in SOPHIE at any time by hitting the “Save & Exit” button in the bottom right corner of the page. To return to your application, click “My Applications” in the left-hand navigation menu.

SOPHIE is optimized to work in the Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome web browsers. Be sure to use one of these browsers when working on your application in SOPHIE.
**Application Documents**

Some elements of your application require extra steps prior to submitting your proposal, such as collecting signatures or obtaining additional information from an external source. These items are indicated in this guide with the following icons:

**Requires signature**

Documents with this icon require the signature of an authorized representative from your institution. This representative may be a grants officer at your sponsored research office, if you are at a college or university, a chief operating officer, or a chief financial officer for independent organizations or schools. Check with your institution to find out who is authorized to sign grant proposal documents and notify them early of your intent to apply and when you expect to submit documents to them for signature. This advanced notification will allow the representative to plan for the review and signature of the document and avoid any delays that could jeopardize your application submission.

**Requires registration outside of STARTALK**

Items with this icon will require you to visit an external website and register to receive information you will need to enter into your STARTALK application before submitting. The speed with which these external organizations will process your request is outside of the control of STARTALK. Therefore, be sure to visit these sites and register, renew, or verify that your current registration is up to date and valid early on in your application preparation.

**Requires uploading a document**

Items with this icon are completed outside of SOPHIE and uploaded to the system on the “Upload Documents” page before application submission. Most of these documents can be prepared or collected well in advance of proposal submission. Do not wait until the last minute to prepare and upload them to the system. Your application cannot be submitted unless all documents have been uploaded, and all uploads must be completed before the application deadline.
1. Contract Information

In the contract information section of your application, enter important information about your organization that will help the federal sponsor, the National Security Agency (NSA), to process your grant should you receive an award. Complete this information with the help of your sponsored research office (universities and colleges) or your finance office (other organizations). The contract information section of the application has two parts: organization information and sponsored research office.

A) Organization Information

Use this part of the application to identify basic descriptive information about your proposed program.

DUNS number
This is an identification number assigned and maintained by Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) and referred to as the global location identifier. STARTALK grants require this number to be listed on grant applications. If your organization does not have one, you can apply for a DUNS number at https://www.dnb.com/duns-number/get-a-duns.html.

Employer/Taxpayer identification number
An employer identification number (EIN), also known as a federal tax identification number, is used to identify a business entity. This number is assigned to your organization by the Internal Revenue Service. Check with your finance office or sponsored research office for your EIN. You can learn more about EINs here: https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/employer-id-numbers.

Organization legal name
Your organization’s legal name is the name that is used by the federal government in your organization’s registration with the System for Award Management (SAM, http://www.sam.gov). Be sure to enter into your application the same legal name that you have in SAM.

Doing business as (optional)
Doing business as (DBA) is your organization’s commonly used other official name, such as a franchise name, licensee name, or an acronym. If your organization does not have a DBA, you may leave this item blank. Do not type “same” or “as shown above” in this field.

Common organization name
Enter your organization name as the public recognizes it. For example, if your organization’s legal name is The Rectors and Visitors of the University of STARTALK, but the public knows the name as the University of STARTALK, enter “University of STARTALK.” If your organization receives an award, STARTALK will use the name you enter in this field to promote your program to the public on our website. If your common organization name is the same as your organization’s legal name, enter the name again in this field. Do not leave the field blank or enter “same” or “as shown above” in this field.

CAGE code
A commercial and government entity (CAGE) code is a five-character code that identifies those companies planning to do business with the federal government. CAGE codes are assigned through SAM (http://www.sam.gov). You must have a CAGE code to receive a STARTALK grant. Applying for and receiving a CAGE code can take up to a week. Be sure to complete this task ahead of time. Check with your sponsored research office or finance office to find out if your organization needs a CAGE code or if your organization needs to renew its CAGE code.
Applicant type
Applicant type refers to the type of institution your organization is, as recognized by the government on federal forms like the SF-424; it does not refer to the type of STARTALK program you wish to apply for. You must select at least one applicant type from the drop-down menu, and you may choose up to three options that you feel best represent your organization, such as “Independent school district,” “Public/State controlled institution of higher education,” “Nonprofit with 501(c)(3) IRS status,” “Private institution of higher education,” “Small business,” and several others.

Congressional district number
Enter your organization’s congressional district number in this section of the application. You can look up your congressional district online at [http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/). Enter all district(s) affected by the program. Enter the district number in the following format: two-character state abbreviation, hyphen, three-character district number. For example: CA-005 for California’s fifth district, CA-012 for California’s twelfth district, NC-103 for North Carolina’s 103rd district. If all congressional districts in a state are affected, enter “All” for the district number (e.g., MD-all for all congressional districts in Maryland). If all districts within all states are affected—i.e., the program is nationwide—enter US-all.

Is the applicant delinquent on any federal debt?
This question applies to the applicant organization, not the person who signs as the authorized representative. Select “Yes” if your organization is delinquent on any federal debt. Categories of federal debt include, but may not be limited to, delinquent audit disallowances, loans, and taxes. If you select “Yes,” include an explanation of the federal debt in the budget worksheet notes in the budget information section.

Did your institution receive $750,000 or higher in total federal grant awards during your current fiscal year?
If your organization received $750,000 or more in total federal grant awards during your current fiscal year, you are required to submit the most recent copy of your A-133 audit report. You may enter a URL (link) to this document, or you can upload a PDF copy of the document to your application in the upload documents page if your organization does not have a link to it.

Do you have an agreement with the federal government for indirect charges?
You should answer “Yes” to this question if your institution has a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement. Your federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement is an agreement that establishes the indirect cost rates your institution may have established with the federal government. The agreement is usually negotiated with the Department of Health and Human Services or the Office of Naval Research. You must also indicate on the budget worksheet in the budget information section whether you have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement and upload a PDF copy of the agreement (labeled “Rate Agreement”) in the upload documents section of the application.

You should answer “No” if your institution does not have a federally negotiated indirect cost agreement. You will be required to upload a detailed breakdown of your program’s indirect costs as a PDF in the upload documents section.

Indirect costs are actual costs incurred to conduct the normal business of an organization that are not readily identified with, or directly charged to, a specific project or activity. These are costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives at an organization and therefore cannot be readily identified with a specific project or activity of an organization. The indirect costs are applied equitably across all of the business activities of the organization, according to the benefits each gain from them. Typical examples of indirect costs are the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, local telephone service, and accounting services.
Examples of items that may be included in this section:

- Clerical staff*
- Nurse/janitorial staff/security guards*
- Insurance
- Rent for kitchen space
- Utilities
- Rent

* In the case of clerical staff, nurses, janitors, or security guards working simultaneously for the program and for other areas of the institution, a prorated salary calculation should be included, and the employees should be included in the indirect cost category instead of in the employee category.

B) Sponsored Research Office

Enter contact information for the sponsored research office for your grant proposal. The information should be for the individual in the office who processes all grants for your unit of your organization. If your organization does not have a sponsored research office, you may list the individual in the accounting office of your primary organization who would manage and process the award documents and finances of the grant.
2. Program Information

In this section of the application, you will enter the details of the program that your organization is proposing. This section includes questions about the features of your program, a place to indicate whether you have received STARTALK funding in the past, the language(s) that are the focus of your program, contact information for program personnel, and responses to the proposal narrative questions about the content of your proposed program. If you are proposing a practicum program that includes both student and teacher activities, you will be asked to enter some of this information twice.

A) Program Features

This part of the application outlines basic descriptive information about your proposed program to help reviewers better understand the basics of your program.

Title
This is a short descriptive title for your proposed program. It should not be the organization name. Please be sure to use the word STARTALK somewhere in the title.

Website
If your organization or proposed program has or will have a website, please include the URL (link) in this field. Having a website is optional.

Number of program locations (student programs)
If your program will take place in only one location, please enter “1.” If your program will have multiple locations (such as multiple school campuses), indicate the number of locations here.

Program reach (overview, focus, demonstration, and practicum programs)
If your program will recruit participants only from your local region or state, select regional. If your program will recruit participants from all across the country, select national.

Summer program start dates and end dates
The program may start no earlier than June 1, and the core activities of the program should be completed no later than August 31. However, programs may identify follow-up learning opportunities for participants as part of the narrative.

Will your program have any continuing activities beyond the last day of summer instruction?
Select yes if you plan to plan offer any activities during the school year or plan to offer formal follow-up activities for participants, such as follow-up language or pedagogy workshops, graduate course enrollment, or online modules for teacher training or language learning.

Will you be using STARTALK funds to provide housing for any participants?
If your program will use any STARTALK funding to provide housing for one or more participants, or if your program will be an overnight (or residential) program, be sure to answer “Yes, all participants” or “Yes, some participants” to this question. Programs that answer “Yes” to this question are required to answer specific additional questions in the program narrative section of the application. It is very important to answer this question correctly.

In what environment will the majority of the program take place?
Indicate if any learning experiences of your program will take place online. Blended learning (also called hybrid or mixed learning) is an educational approach that combines both in-person and distance-learning environments. Blended learning requires that a single course or seminar be delivered partly in an online/technology-mediated format and partly in a conventional face-to-face format. Teachers and students interact in both environments but use technology or videoconferencing as more than simply a supporting tool for learning and instruction.
Does your program offer course credits?
Offering course credit is not a requirement for a successful proposal, however many programs are able to identify ways for student or teacher participants to receive academic credit for participating in a STARTALK program.

- **For student programs**: select whether your program will offer high school or undergraduate credits to participants.
- **For overview and focus teacher programs**: select whether your program offers continuing education credits.
- **For demonstration and practicum programs**: select whether your program offers continuing education, graduate, or undergraduate. Also indicate how many credits participants may earn.

Does the program target heritage speakers? *(student programs only)*
Indicate whether your proposal targets heritage speakers of the language(s) you are planning to teach. Heritage speakers are defined as individuals who were exposed to a particular language in childhood but did not learn it to full capacity because another language became dominant, or individuals who have been raised with a strong cultural connection to a particular language, usually through family interaction.

Participant background and participant *(overview, focus, demonstration, and practicum programs only)*
Indicate the backgrounds of your targeted teacher participants by selecting from “any teacher,” “certified teachers,” “seeking certification,” “certification not required,” and “heritage school teachers.” Under participant, indicate what level of students your targeted teacher participants teach or plan to teach, selecting from “all,” “elementary,” “middle,” “high school,” and “post-secondary.” You may select all categories that apply.

B) Program Funding
The purpose of the program funding section of the application is to determine whether your institution is a new applicant and to let STARTALK know whether your proposed program has received STARTALK funding in the past. We want to know how many new and returning applicants we have each year.

Ensure you answer this question accurately before developing your program narrative!
Changes made to this section later could affect specific questions in the program narrative section of the application that appear as a result of your response to this question. You could lose data if you make changes to this section later in the proposal development process.

If the STARTALK program you are applying for existed partially or entirely in or after 2018, and the same institution indicated in this application administered the program, you should answer “Yes” to this question. If the program for which you are seeking funding is adding a participant type (student or teacher), making it a practicum program, or removing a participant type, making it an independent student or overview, focus, or demonstration teacher program, OR if the program is adding or removing languages from its offerings, you should still answer “Yes” to this question. You will then be prompted to indicate whether your most recent STARTALK program took place in 2018 or 2019.

If the program you are applying for existed partially or entirely as a STARTALK program in or after 2018 at a different institution, you should answer “No, this application seeks to move the STARTALK program in or after 2018 to a new institution,” then indicate whether 2018 or 2019 was the most recent year of the program at the other institution.

If the program you are applying for did not exist in any form in or after 2018, you should answer “No, neither the institution in this application nor any other institution administered the proposed STARTALK program in or after 2018.” You will be prompted to indicate whether the program existed in any years prior to 2018, and if yes, indicate the most recent year.
C) **Language Features**

Use the language features section of the application to provide information on the languages and background of participants and indicate the number of instructional hours of your proposed program. Click “Add Language” to begin filling out the table and complete the table for each language you plan to offer.

For student programs:
Identify what language(s) you plan to teach, along with the grade level(s), target enrollment numbers for each grade level, and proficiency level(s) of your target population of students. You must also enter the total instructional time that students will receive during your proposed program. For day programs, instructional time includes all of the hours that students are in attendance. This includes lunch and other planned breaks, since it is assumed that language is an integral part of all activities. For residential programs, instructional time also includes the hours for supervised evening and weekend activities that relate to the instructional goals of the program. The expectation is that students in residential programs are normally engaged in organized instructional activities. Hours where students are not expected to be actively engaged in language learning should not be counted as instructional time.

**Ensure you plan enough instructional hours!** Proposals targeting middle school and above must run for three weeks or longer and provide at least ninety hours of instruction. For proposals targeting K–5, at least forty-five hours of instruction must be provided.

For teacher overview, focus, demonstration, and practicum programs:
Identify what language(s) you plan to focus on, along with target enrollment numbers for each language, and experience levels of the teachers you will recruit, and the planned instructional time for participants in your proposed program. You must also enter the total number of hours participants will spend in pre- and post-program activities.

D) **Program Personnel Information**

Every STARTALK program is supported by a team of qualified individuals who are passionate about language learning. In this part of the application, you must enter basic contact information for your program director, principal investigator, and instructional lead. These key roles in STARTALK programs are critical to program success. Optionally, you may also enter information about other roles or individuals working in your program, such as instructors, technical specialists, support staff, and points of contact. You will be required to provide more detailed information about the backgrounds and qualifications of each role or individual named in this section later on in the narrative section of your application.

**Program director**
Enter the contact information for the primary program director (you may list the information of a co-director in the other personnel section). You will also be required to list the responsibilities and qualifications of the program director in detail in the narrative section of your proposal.

**Principal investigator**
The principal investigator (PI) is the individual authorized by your institution to oversee a grant for your department and who holds ultimate responsibility for your grant’s compliance with sponsor rules and regulations. The principal investigator is often the same person as the program director. You need only provide contact information for the PI in your proposal.

**Additional point of contact**
The STARTALK additional point of contact (POC) is the person who, along with the program director, will receive all communications regarding the award, program implementation, and program administration. This may be the same person as the program director.
Instructional lead
The instructional lead works with the program director and is responsible for developing curriculum and coordinating all teachers and institutional staff. The instructional lead must be confirmed and listed by name in the proposal and budget. You should only have one instructional lead per target language. If you offer more than one target language and have more than one instructional lead, you should list additional instructional leads in the other personnel section. You will also be required to list the responsibilities and qualifications of the lead instructor in detail the narrative section of your proposal.

The program director and instructional lead cannot be entered as “TBD” in your proposal. These roles must be listed by name in the proposal and the budget.

Other personnel
The contact information for any additional program directors or instructional leads and any consultants you will work with must be listed in this section of the application. You may also list instructors, teaching assistants, program coordinators, or technology staff. Any personnel listed in this section must also be listed individually on the budget worksheet in the budget information section of your application. You are required to list all positions for which you plan to hire for your program. If you have yet to identify individuals by name, you may enter “TBD.” You will also be required to list the responsibilities and qualifications of the other personnel in detail in the narrative section of your proposal.

If your program plans to work with any consultants for professional development, you must 1) list them by name in the “Other Personnel” section, 2) describe their qualifications in the narrative section, and 3) include them as line items in your budget.

E) Program Narrative
In the program narrative section of the application in SOPHIE, you will respond to a series of questions to provide the rationale for the proposed program, outline instructional goals, describe program activities, and justify the personnel charged with implementing the program. Strong responses to the narrative questions include concrete and realistic plans for the design and implementation of the program goals and should be guided by a solid understanding of the STARTALK Principles for Effective Teaching and Learning (startalk.umd.edu/public/principles).

Because the program narrative is such a critical part of your application, separate guides have been created to help you prepare a strong narrative response. The narrative guides outline the questions and provides hints based on the review criteria used by proposal reviewers to rate applications in order to determine recommendations for funding. Applicants are advised to review the criteria prior to and while preparing the program narrative section of their proposal.

Student Program Narrative Guide:

Overview, Focus, and Demonstration Teacher Program Narrative Guide:

Practicum Program Narrative Guide:
3. Budget Information

The budget information section of your application is where you will enter all of your proposed program expenses. All STARTALK programs are required to provide comprehensive budget information. All planned costs for the proposed program must be documented, and the applicant must demonstrate that the costs are reasonable, justifiable, and allowed.

A) Budget Worksheet

The purpose of the proposal budget worksheet is to help you to present and justify all planned expenses for your program. Within the budget worksheet, you will enter the items, quantities, costs, calculations, and descriptions for your budget.

B) Budget Worksheet Notes

Use the budget worksheet notes to explain any line items in your budget that require additional detail, justification, or clarification, or to provide detailed itemization for any high-cost items (e.g., videographers or consultant services). If you indicated that your program is delinquent on any federal debt, you should also enter more information about the debts in the budget worksheet notes.

STARTALK budgets will be subject to rigorous review and may also be subject to audit. Because of the importance of having a complete and properly formatted budget, use the budget guide that provides in-depth information on preparing your budget.

STARTALK Program Budget Guide:

4. SF-424 Forms

All applicants must submit along with their application a set of federal forms, including the SF-424 application for federal assistance, SF-424A budget information, SF-424 key contacts form, SF-424 signed assurances, and a signed Grants.gov lobbying form. These forms are automatically populated for you as you complete your proposal in SOPHIE. In the SF-424 forms section of your application, you must click the following three tabs to complete the forms.

A) Authorized Representative Contact

Enter the contact information for an authorized representative contact. This should be the same person you put down as your sponsored research office contact.

B) Forecasted Cash Needs

This form asks how you plan to spend your funds in each quarter of the year and is used to populate the SF-424A budget information form. You must divide the grand total from your budget worksheet to complete this form. You may divide the funds however your organization will invoice for the funds. STARTALK recommends entering half of your total funds in the third quarter field and half in the fourth quarter field.

C) PDF Files

These files are generated automatically as you complete your application. Prior to submitting your proposal, you will need to download copies of each form, sign them, and upload the signed copies in the upload documents section of the application. Any time changes are made to your proposal, you must click “Update PDF form” to generate a new PDF, then sign and upload the new version.

Remember: Refresh, re-sign, re-upload!

If you make any changes to the contract information, personnel, or budget sections of your application, remember to generate updated PDFs, sign them again, and re-upload them to your application, replacing any outdated versions.
5. Upload Documents

Your application is not complete until all required documents are uploaded on the “Upload Documents” page.

To upload documents to your SOPHIE application:

1. Click “Upload Documents.”
2. Browse for the correct PDF file and select it or drag and drop files from your computer. Important: The file will appear in your documents list, but your upload is not yet complete.
3. In the field called “Purpose,” select the appropriate document type from the drop-down list; this label should match the type of document you are uploading.
4. Once you have selected a purpose, click “Upload” to add the document to your proposal.

A) Signed Budget Copy

After you have completed your budget, an authorized representative from your organization must sign it. Go to “My Applications.” In the Forms column is a link to a PDF of your budget. You can view your budget and print it. Have the budget signed by your authorized representative. Upload a signed copy of the budget to SOPHIE. If you need to make changes, the budget must be signed and uploaded again to your application.

B) Budget Support Documentation (Quote)

You must upload a properly formatted budget support document to your application prior to submission. See the budget guide for detailed instructions on how to format your budget support documentation.

C) Insurance Certificate

Applying organizations must provide proof of liability insurance to submit a proposal. You will need to provide a copy of your organization’s liability insurance, or, if you do not yet have one, a quote from an insurance carrier. Self-insured organizations need to provide a document signed by the appropriate authority to confirm that status. The insurance must be in effect throughout the length of the program.

D) Indirect Costs Rate Agreement or Indirect Costs Rate Justification

An indirect cost rate agreement or rate justification must be attached to your proposal before the proposal can be submitted. This document will be either your federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (for universities and colleges) OR your rate justification for indirect charges (for independent organizations). Upload a PDF copy of your document and select either “Rate Agreement” or “Rate Justification” as the label for the file.

E) Grants.gov Lobbying Form

This is generated in the SF-424 forms section of the application. Download the form, sign it, and upload a PDF copy of the signed version.

F) Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

This is generated in the SF-424 forms section of the application. Download the form, sign it, and upload a PDF copy of the signed version.

G) Budget Information SF-424A

This is generated in the SF-424 forms section of the application. Download the form for your records and upload a PDF copy.

H) Assurances-Non-Construction Programs SF-424B

This is generated in the SF-424 forms section of the application. Download the form, sign it, and upload a PDF copy of the signed version.

I) Key Contacts Form

This is generated in the SF-424 forms section of the application. Download the form for your records and upload a PDF copy.
Submit Application

Once you have completed all sections of the application and uploaded all required support documents, you may submit your application. Please note that once you submit your application, you will no longer be able to make any changes or add any documentation. Please allow yourself plenty of time to review your application and ensure it is complete prior to hitting “Submit.”

You’ve Submitted an Application: What Happens Next?

After you submit a STARTALK application, it will be carefully reviewed by a team of external reviewers. Proposal reviewers will review the narrative portion of your application and your budget. STARTALK Central will also review your budget and support documents to ensure that they are compliant with the grant requirements and may request modifications or additional information. Notification of award will be made in early 2020. Programs that are awarded STARTALK funding will receive a letter containing feedback and requirements that must be implemented to accept funding. Programs that are not selected for an award will also receive feedback on how they can improve future applications.