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The government continues to introduce initiatives that highlight the importance of foreign language programs among teachers, students and the U.S. population as a whole. In 2006, the National Security Education Program (NSEP) created the congressionally mandated pilot program-- the National Language Service Corps (NLSC) in an effort to gauge the interest of multi-lingual Americans willing to serve language communities and the government in times of national need.

The National Language Service Corps is a group of individuals united by the fundamental belief that *language has a tremendous impact on who we are; who we can be; and what we can do together*. In addition to making a significant and worthwhile contribution to the nation and its language communities, Members will become part of a unique language network of service-minded individuals. All Members must be U.S. Citizens who are at least 18 years or older, possessing language expertise and a genuine desire to help their fellow language communities.

This much-anticipated organization has captured the interest of teachers, government officials and individuals, who not only realize their language skills are valuable, but believe in the importance in having these skills available to help others in the event of a US national crisis. During the pilot program, Charter Members, the name that distinguishes the first 1,000 enrolled Members, will register in a national database. The NLSC is not intrusive on the member's current employment, nor is there a fee to join, and the members will be compensated for the service they provide during an assignment. For example, when Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast and affected the lives of over 35,000 Vietnamese residents, there was no federal agency that could mobilize volunteers with specific language skills to assist that community. The NLSC will fill that gap by maintaining a ready pool of volunteers who in addition to speaking, reading and understanding English can communicate in other languages. Accordingly, the NLSC was created to screen willing applicants, verify their language skills, gauge interest and practice scenario exercises in preparation of requests from federal agencies that have a requirement for language speakers but do not have a means to access them. During the pilot, fewer Members will be on assignment, but the organization has staff available to interact with these Members and receive feedback about their experience.

One might think that the NLSC is just a program for language professionals, or for those seeking eventual employment in the US Government. Au contraire! The NLSC needs all language advocates. Of course, language professionals are welcomed. Federal agencies may request an NLSC Member for an assignment, but members may opt out of the assignment based on their preferences whether agency, location or not being available.

Currently, the program has a goal of enrolling 1,000 Charter Members who speak English and one of the ten pilot languages: Mandarin Chinese, Thai, Russian, Vietnamese, Hausa, Swahili, Somali, Indonesian, Hindi and Marshallese. For those individuals interested in participating but whose language is not on the list, you can still complete an application to be held and converted for membership as the list of languages and the number of Members are expected to expand in the future.

Brochure links are listed below:

English Only: www.nlscorps.org/Documents/generic-red.pdf

Chinese Mandarin/English: www.nlscorps.org/Documents/mandarin.pdf

Hindi/English: www.nlscorps.org/Documents/hindi.pdf

Indonesian/English: www.nlscorps.org/Documents/indonesian.pdf

Marshallese/English: www.nlscorps.org/Documents/marshallese.pdf

Russian/English: www.nlscorps.org/Documents/russian.pdf

Vietnamese/English: www.nlscorps.org/Documents/vietnamese.pdf

Additional information about the National Language Service Corps is available at www.nlscorps.org or you can call 1-888-SAY-NLSC.

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