

The Humanities in Our Lives



THE VALUE OF LEARNING A LANGUAGE ON ONE'S HEALTH

Scientific studies indicate significant health benefits associated with learning a second language, as bilingualism offsets certain types of dementia by 4 to 6 years, regardless of age, occupation, sex, rural/urban residence, or even education level. Other studies found that being bilingual assisted with cognitive recovery following a stroke.

LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

A 2015 Census report found that at least 350 languages are spoken at homes across America. Recent studies point to a range of unexpected cognitive and life benefits for those who speak a second language. For instance, a recent study out of the University of Chicago indicates a person makes better financial decisions when utilizing another language.

KEY FACTS

- Harvard scientists found that on average a second language earned a worker a 2% yearly salary increase.
- Regardless of the benefits, college language enrollments fell 15% from Fall 2009 to Fall 2016, according to the Modern Language Association.

Fall Language Enrollments at U.S. Colleges



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

The National Security Education Program, Center for Applied Linguistics, and Georgetown University have collaborated on the **English for Heritage Language Speakers** program. This program recognizes the need for foreign language proficiency across the federal government, and it supports participants in the program with a full scholarship and living expenses as they attend an eight-month-long course at Georgetown University to prepare them for a job in the federal government.

"The curriculum provides a holistic approach conducive to honing every participant's linguistic aptitude while gaining guided insight and assistance to enter the federal job market."

The program seeks a diverse base of native speakers that includes Arabic, Korean, Persian Farsi, Turkish, and other "critical need" languages. Upon graduation, these bilingual workers are in a prime position to join the federal workforce and strengthen the government with their expert language capabilities.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.



For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

