



FACT SHEET

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet

LANGUAGE ENABLED AIRMAN PROGRAM

Managed by the Air Force Culture and Language Center, part of Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala, the Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP) is a career-spanning program to sustain, enhance and posture for utilization the existing language skills of general purpose forces (GPF) USAF Airmen. The objective of LEAP is to develop cross-culturally competent leaders across all Air Force specialties with working-level foreign language proficiency per AFI 36-4001, *Air Force Language, Regional Expertise and Culture Program*. LEAP is a volunteer program open to Active Duty officers and enlisted Airmen in most Air Force Specialty Codes. To become a participant in LEAP, Airmen must already demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language specified on the Air Force Strategic Language List.

LEAP is founded on the principle that Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) are critical competencies. CJCSI 3126.01, *LREC Capability Identification, Planning, and Sourcing* explicitly identifies foreign language skills and regional expertise as “enduring warfighter competencies critical to global mission readiness” and states that “services and commanders in particular must weigh and stress the importance of LREC skills as critical competencies that are an integral part of the warfighter’s skill set.” This capability not only applies to those language professionals whose career specialties are exclusively focused on foreign-language-related operations, but also those in the GPF who require enabling language skills to support such requirements as language designated assignments, short-notice contingency requirements, and other mission needs.

Through annual LEAP boards, qualified volunteers are selected into the program. Selection is based on an Airman’s existing language abilities and potential to achieve higher levels of language proficiency as well as Air Staff requirements. Board members review an applicant’s current language proficiency(ies), past academic performance, Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) scores, Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) scores, Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) scores, previous foreign language exposure, performance in his or her Air Force duties, and commander recommendation before considering selection.

Following selection to LEAP, participants commit to maintaining their language skills throughout their careers while pursuing their normal operational assignments. Through LEAP, participants are provided opportunities to undertake immersive language training CONUS and OCONUS, called Language Intensive Training Events (LITEs), as well as through live, on-line language classes where they practice their language skills with language instructors and other LEAP participants, called the eMentor program.

LEAP assesses LEAP participants LREC capabilities using available resources, such as DLPTs and OPIs, as well as AFCLC-developed assessments and assigns them to one of four LEAP Levels. The LEAP Level tool distinguishes participants who are in the developmental stages of their language learning from those participants considered truly language enabled, or those Airmen who have achieved or surpassed working level foreign language proficiency. Enabled Airman are eligible for award of the LEAP Special Experience Identifier (SEI) and their numbers are forwarded to HQ AF to help increase the overall LREC utilization rate.

As of November 2016, LEAP comprises approximately 2,424 Airmen in 95 distinct foreign languages.

For more information, see <http://culture.af.mil/>, e-mail afclc.outreach@us.af.mil or call 334-953-7729.