

POSITION DESCRIPTION: Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Trainee) – FSN09

BASIC FUNCTION OF POSITION:

The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Trainee) shall be required to perform a variety of acquisition and assistance duties including reviewing and recommending scopes of work (SOW); draft requests for proposal or quote; perform cost and price analysis; analyze proposals or quotes received; analyze contractor's proposed budgets; draft contracts, grants, cooperative agreements and other procurement instruments and prepare amendments in support of the Mission; recommend revisions to various contract provisions; write memoranda of negotiation; and, prepare other required documentation.

The Specialist (Trainee) reviews and recommends approval or revision of requisitions in the Global Acquisition and Assistance System (GLAAS). The Specialist (Trainee) maintains contract files and records up to date, and supports award closeouts. The Specialist (Trainee) is responsible for carrying out day-to-day activities under the mentorship of the Senior Acquisition & Assistance Specialist.

The initial grade of this position is FSN-09 and is a part of an established career ladder, which provides for the potential to progress to the FSN-10 and, subsequently, to the FSN-11 grade level. There is no potential for the incumbent to become a permanent FSN-09 in this work assignment. Attainment of the higher grade levels is contingent upon the Specialist (Trainee) successfully completing required training, meeting appropriate objectives and milestones, and performing at the Fully Successful (or equivalent) level. Promotion to the FSN-10 and to the target FSN-11 grade levels is not mandatory, and failure to achieve that high level of performance may be the basis for reassignment, change to lower grade, or dismissal.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Specialist (Trainee) is responsible for providing basic acquisition and assistance support to USAID/Rwanda Technical Offices, Development Objective (DO) Teams, and designated clients. USAID programs are diverse and multi-sectoral. The Specialist (Trainee) is required to provide basic and limited acquisition assistance to designated Technical Offices and/or DO Teams, and to support a variety of programs/projects/activities. These programs/projects/activities are implemented through complex Government contracting and grant mechanisms, including but not limited to purchase orders, competitively negotiated technical assistance agreements, contracts, cooperative agreements, and sole source contracts, requiring the Specialist (Trainee) to become familiar with the full range of USAID procurement instruments

The Specialist (Trainee) is assigned work in such a manner as to provide the basis for independent selection of appropriate procurement instrument types for the situation at hand, and to accurately apply USG procurement laws, regulations, policies, and procedures governing each type of instrument. The developmental nature of the assignment provides exposure to the acquisition of goods and various types of services. The Specialist (Trainee) will become equally

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familiar with the procedures for acquisition of goods, and for managing personal service and non-personal service contracting actions

The Specialist (Trainee) is expected to work with the Senior A&A Specialist, and with technical specialists/activity managers in DO Teams of the entire Mission, assisting in the preparation of annual procurement plans, clear and concise statements of work, and supporting documentation. The Specialist (Trainee) will develop the ability to provide authoritative technical guidance to technical specialists/activity managers/CORs/AORs pertaining to their procurement-related responsibilities and procedures. Specific developmental duties include:

Pre-Award Duties – the Specialist (Trainee) participates in meetings on procurement planning; collates data, and prepares and updates tracking tools in order to monitor pending procurements; works with clients to assist in the preparation of justifications, waivers, and other necessary approvals, as needed; and, reviews GLAAS Requisitions (REQs) for completeness and clarity before endorsing them to higher-level Specialists/Officers. Prepares solicitation documents in GLAAS, and the electronic posting of Simplified Acquisitions; works with higher-level Specialists/Officers to ensure compliance with FAR and AIDAR advertisement requirements, including publication of synopses and solicitations, as prescribed. Works with higher-level Specialists/Officers to prepare Requests for Proposal and Requests for Application. The Specialist (Trainee) assists higher-level Specialists/Officers in pre-award activities for competitive solicitations, and with pre-award assessment surveys of potential contractors or recipients, in order to ensure eligibility prior to an award being made.

Post Award Duties – the Specialist (Trainee) assists higher-level Specialists/Officers in monitoring performance as required by the terms and conditions of the award, through reviews of performance and reviews of financial reports. The Specialist (Trainee) manages the assigned developmental portfolio, assuring that funding is available when required, and under the guidance of higher-level Specialists/Officers works with DO Teams/CORs/AORs to assure targets/milestones are set and being met (or that remedial action is taken), and that the overall goals of the program/project/activity are met. As assigned, the Specialist (Trainee) conducts site visits and attends meetings. Provides guidance to technical personnel and assists in programmatic duties as required to avoid contractual/legal improprieties, seeking guidance from higher-level Specialists/Officers as required. The Specialist (Trainee) assists in researching and resolving issues that may arise during contract performance, including changes, work stoppages, disputes, implementation problems, defaults, cost overruns, unacceptable performance, and payment problems.

The Specialist (Trainee) assists in the conduct of closeouts of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements after completion. These include ensuring contract audits are conducted in a timely manner, preparing performance documentation, and resolving outstanding issues noted in audits.

Perform other duties as assigned.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- A. **EDUCATION:** Possession of a Master’s Degree in Business Administration, Political Science, International Relations, International Procurement, Supply Chain management, Social Science, or related field is required. NB: Additional education may NOT be substituted for Experience.

- B. **PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE:** Three or more years of progressively responsible experience in acquisition and assistance, development assistance, or a closely related field is required. One year of this experience must have been gained working in a position equivalent to no less than the next lower level of FSN responsibility in this or a related occupation, within a USG organization or within an international or donor organization, in an English-language work environment. NB: Additional experience may NOT be substituted for Education.

- C. **POST ENTRY TRAINING:** The Specialist (Trainee) will be provided training in, and must successfully complete, all mandatory Federal Acquisition Certification – successful completing of Contracting (FAC-C) Level I, along with at least a Fully Successful or equivalent evaluation, is required for progression to the FSN-10 level, in accordance within a formal individual development plan (IDP). In addition, the Specialist (Trainee) will be provided with formal or on-the-job training in the US Federal and USAID Acquisition Regulations (ADS, FAR, CFR, OAA-Intranet, the AIDAR, and OAA operating and administrative procedures). Formal training, other than FAC-C Level I, will be provided based on availability of course offerings, and availability of funds.

- D. **LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:** Level IV (Fluent) in spoken & written English and fluent Kinyarwanda are required.

- E. **KNOWLEDGE:** Knowledge of public and/or private-sector business processes, or the ability to quickly gain such knowledge, is required. An understanding of US Federal and USAID Acquisition Regulations, or knowledge and understanding of how to execute and administer a complex acquisition portfolio, is desired, particularly as it relates to acquisition through methods of negotiation, sealed bidding, small purchase procedures, and that result in standard and established contract types. A basic understanding of markets pertaining to program/project/activity requirements for services and commodities, and a good knowledge and understanding of US market and pricing methods is desirable.

- F. **SKILLS AND ABILITIES:** The potential to acquire the ability to plan and administer acquisition activities, and provide acquisition assistance and support for Agency programs and projects in a timely manner, is required. The potential to gain the ability to apply contracting regulations, procedures, and policies to individual acquisition and assistance programs is required. And, an ability to deal effectively with high-level representatives of the US and Regional business community, and with colleagues in USAID/Rwanda and/or host government is required. Skill in the use of most elements of the Microsoft Business suite is desired.

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Good analytical, negotiating, and time management skills, along with strong proofreading skills and attention to detail, are required. The ability to work calmly, tactfully, and effectively under pressure is essential, as well as the ability to maintain strict CONFIDENTIALITY AND HIGH ETHICAL STANDARDS throughout all phases of acquisition and assistance procurement

POSITION ELEMENTS:

- a. *Supervision Received:* The Acquisition Specialist (Trainee) works under the general guidance of the TCNPSC Senior A&A Specialist who makes assignments in terms of the broad range of developmental procurement actions the Trainee will perform. The Specialist (Trainee) will independently initiate necessary coordination with requesting Mission CORs/AORs, Technical Offices, and AO Teams, providing basic policy guidance on how to best fulfill requirements, and staffs of other agencies, and with awardees. The Specialist (Trainee) will keep the Senior A&A Specialist updated through status reports and verbal briefings. Completed work is reviewed closely at this level, in terms of reviewing the procurement approach for results achieved, in meeting delivery schedules, and in the selection of appropriate contract methods.
- b. *Available Guidelines:* At this level the Specialist (Trainee) will be introduced to the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), USAID Acquisition Regulations (AIDAR), the Automated Directives System (ADS), Contract Information Bulletins (CIBs), US Department of State Standardized Regulations, Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars, Mission Orders, and grant format requirements. Guidelines often are not directly applicable to the task at hand, and the Specialist (Trainee) is expected to use limited judgment in their application, requesting guidance in cases where the Specialist (Trainee) has not used the particular guideline in the past.
- c. *Exercise of Judgment:* The Specialist (Trainee) is expected to exercise limited judgment in handling pre-award and post-award actions, when advising CORs/AORs and Mission staff, and when interacting with implementing partners to resolve complex issues arising during program/project/activity implementation. The Specialist (Trainee) is expected to apply good judgment in dealing with visitors and callers; in the analysis of cost, financial, and other characteristics of prospective contractors and grantees; and, in deciding what questions need to be asked of client Mission representatives and proposed contractors/grantees, to ensure achievement of the acquisition objectives on contract, grant, or other assistance instrument. At this level the Specialist (Trainee) is expected to refer more difficult decisions and matters of policy to the TCNPSC Senior A&A Specialist.
- d. *Authority to Make Commitments:* At this level, the Specialist (Trainee) will primarily participate in discussions and negotiations with potential contractors and grantees to reach agreement on statements of work/program descriptions and budgets, under the guidance of a higher-level Specialist/Officer. The Specialist (Trainee) may be delegated the authority to conclude negotiations and to structure the final terms and conditions of less-complex USAID acquisition and assistance instruments. The agreements will be reviewed by the TCNPSC

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Senior A&A Specialist and approved and signed by a warranted USDH Contracting Officer, or his/her designee, in order to obligate funds.

- e. *Nature, Level, and Purpose of Contacts:* The Specialist (Trainee) is in daily contact with staff throughout Mission, and with grantees, potential grantees, visitors, and mid-level officials from both the public and private sectors, as well as with NGOs and implementing partners, in order to exchange and/or collect information, and to provide advice relating to program implementation.
- f. *Supervision Exercised:* Not Applicable.
- g. *Time Required to Perform Full Range of Duties:* One year.