



ISSUANCE DATE: October 17, 2016
CLOSING DATE: November 8, 2016 at 17:00 Hours Accra Local Time

SUBJECT: SOLICITATION NUMBER SOL-624-17-000002 FOR A U.S. CITIZEN OR A THIRD COUNTRY NATIONAL PERSONAL SERVICE CONTRACTOR FOR SENIOR AGRICULTURE TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The United States Government, represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is seeking applications of qualified U.S Citizen or Third Country Nationals (TCN) interested in providing Personal Services Contract services as described in the attached solicitation.

In order to be considered for the position, a candidate must meet the minimum qualifications listed in the solicitation at the time of submission and must submit all required documentations. The Senior Agriculture Technical Advisor position will be located in Accra, Ghana.

Interested candidates meeting the requirements of the solicitation must submit all the following required materials for consideration (see details on Section VIII):

- Cover Letter;
- Curriculum Vitae or resume;
- Signed Form AID 302-3 (available at <http://www.usaid.gov/forms/>);
- Supplemental document addressing the evaluation factors; and
- List of three to five professional references.

All application packages are to be submitted via email to: accrapsc@usaid.gov

Please cite the solicitation number and position title within the subject line of your email application. Any attachments provided via email must be in a format compatible with Microsoft Word 2003/2010 or PDF and not zipped. Note that attachments to email must not exceed 3 MB.

Any questions concerning this solicitation may be directed to Mildred Agbo at magbo@usaid.gov no later than October 25, 2016; no questions will be entertained after this date.

Application Form AID 302-3 must be signed. Incomplete and unsigned applications will not be considered. Late applications will not be accepted and will be handled in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) 52.215.1.

USAID/West Africa anticipates awarding one (1) Personal Service Contract as a result of this solicitation. Please note this does not constitute any guarantee that a PSC will be awarded as a result of this solicitation nor does it constitute any authorization by USAID to reimburse costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leslie Ann NWokora". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Leslie Ann NWokora
Supervisory Regional Contracting Officer
USAID/West Africa

SOLICITATION NUMBER: SOL-624-17-000002

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POSITION TITLE: Senior Agriculture Technical Advisor

MARKET VALUE OF POSITION: GS-14 (\$87,263 - \$113,444) Final compensation will be negotiated within the listed market value based upon the candidate's past salary, work history and educational background. **Salaries over and above the top of the GS14 pay range will not be entertained or negotiated.**

AREA OF CONSIDERATION: Open to U.S. Citizens (including Legal Permanent Residents) and Third Country Nationals.

Third Country Nationals means an individual (i) who is neither a citizen nor a permanent legal resident alien of the United States nor of the country to which assigned for duty, and (ii) who is eligible for return to his/her home country or country of recruitment at U.S. Government expense.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: Two (2) years with option to extend for three (3) additional years. Extensions will be contingent on satisfactory performance, continued need for the services and availability of funds.

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE: Accra, Ghana

SECURITY AND MEDICAL CLEARANCES: Selected applicant must obtain Secret Clearance (USPSC)/Facility Access (Permanent Resident)/Employment Authorization (TCN) and necessary Medical Clearance within a reasonable period of time. USAID will provide details regarding these clearances to the selected candidate. If such clearances are not obtained within a reasonable time or negative suitability issues are involved, any offer made may be rescinded.

1. BACKGROUND

The position is located in the USAID/West Africa Regional Economic Growth Office (REGO) which is comprised of Agriculture, Environment, Trade and Power Africa. The Senior Agriculture Technical Advisor will be responsible for providing expert advice and program management for the Regional Agriculture Team (AGR) under REGO, and will help to oversee all regional USAID Feed the Future (FtF) programs. The REGO/AGR works in close partnership with the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the West and Central Council for Agriculture Research and Development (CORAF), and a host of state and non-state actors to increase food security and agriculture investments across the region.

USAID/West Africa is a regional operating unit of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), responsible for managing development programs that cover 21 countries, six of which have bilateral USAID missions and six of which have a USAID presence. The USAID/West Africa Regional Agriculture Team is responsible for managing the cross-cutting FtF initiative in West Africa. It contributes to the overall economic growth Development Objective of “Advancing Economic Growth and Resilience through African Partners” under the USAID/West Africa Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS) and to the FtF Strategy for West Africa.

With more than 300 million inhabitants, the West Africa region ranks as the poorest in the world, with the lowest level of human capital development, the highest population growth, and the highest maternal and child mortality rates. Most institutions have limited absorptive capacity. Inter-governmental and national partners are limited by weak regional and national systems and inadequate financial support. The agriculture sector is critical to job creation and sustained economic growth in West Africa. The ECOWAS Policy for Agriculture (ECOWAP), together with its associated implementation plan, the Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (RAIP), guides the investments under the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) for the region, and provides an overarching framework for policies and programs to increase agriculture-based economic growth and food security in West Africa.

Another critical aspect of food security in West Africa is intra-regional trade. Because of the different agro-ecological zones, ranging from the Sahel desert to the humid coastal areas, each area is favorable to different types of agriculture; thus food security is heavily dependent upon the movement of agricultural commodities from areas where they are produced to areas of demand. West Africa is crisscrossed by ancient trade routes, many of which are still in use today. Livestock produced in the Sahel (cattle, sheep, goats) are regularly moved to coastal markets, while grains grown in coastal areas (rice, millet, sorghum) move inland to drier areas that are not as suitable for crop production. This exchange has continued for centuries, but is plagued by many barriers, including complicated border procedures, lack of harmonization of sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards, corruption, poor roads, lack of storage facilities, and inefficient transport. All of these factors drive up costs of agricultural commodities.

The strong linkage between West African countries’ National Agriculture Investment Plans and the ECOWAS Regional Agriculture Investment Plan, under the ECOWAS Agriculture Policy and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), provides a good avenue to improve the entire system. West African regional organizations are actively engaged in trying to improve this situation through adopting common regional policies and practices, improving regional standards, and working with countries to roll out the new approaches. ECOWAS has also made

great strides in developing important regional policies and initiatives such as the Zero Hunger Initiative, the Rice Self-Sufficiency Policy, the Fertilizer Regulations, the Trade Liberalization Scheme, and the Nutrition Fortification standards. There is also increasing commitment of member countries to enforce ECOWAS regulations through policy reform and capacity building. However, the limited capacity of regional organizations to assist and facilitate national implementation of agreed-upon agriculture policies remains a challenge, but regional leaders recognize that improving this capacity and assisting member states is a critical goal. At the same time, more regional private sector organizations, such as the West Africa Grains Network (WAGN), who support the agriculture sector, producer organizations, as well as processors, input-suppliers, etc.—are starting to emerge. These groups play a critical role in representing their members, by linking them to markets and services, and in working alongside the regional bodies such as ECOWAS to advocate for policy change at the national level.

Fortunately, together with ECOWAS and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), West Africa benefits from well-established regional organizations, including inter-governmental institutions such as CILSS and CORAF who play a vital role in developing the region's agriculture sector. Regional integration of agriculture in West Africa also has a well-defined framework, guided by CAADP and ECOWAS' RAIP. In addition, ECOWAS convened a meeting to develop a Plan of Action on Gender and Trade that should help identify some of the challenges and opportunities women face along the agriculture value chain. There is also increasing commitment of member countries to enforce ECOWAS regulations through policy reform and capacity building. However, the limited capacity of regional organizations to assist and facilitate national implementation of agreed-upon agriculture policies remains a challenge, but regional leaders recognize that improving this capacity and assisting member states is a critical goal.

REGO/AGR coordinates major regional programs under the Presidential FtF Initiative that is administered by USAID's Bureau of Food Security in Washington, D.C. The overall goal of the REGO/AGR is to improve food security for West Africans. This goal will be accomplished by enhancing the effectiveness and ability of regional institutions to address the myriad problems facing both ends of the agricultural spectrum, from the producers to the consumers.

The West Africa/REGO/AGR, with a technical team comprised of approximately three specialists, is responsible for directing between \$18-22 million USD annually of technical assistance to meet the regional challenges of food security. The specialists deliver direct support to regional institutions, but also target critical gaps in the agriculture sector such as a lack of quality seeds and fertilizer, the inability to trade efficiently across borders, the lack of market and trade related information for all those involved in the industry, and other barriers. The REGO/AGR manages a portfolio of over 14 distinct activities.

II. MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As the Senior Agriculture Technical Advisor, the incumbent will:

1. Serve as the principal agriculture technical advisor to the AGR Team Leader. S/he will support the Regional Agriculture Team to implement programs that respond to current and emerging regional agriculture issues, policies, and opportunities for engagement to ensure that the USAID program is positioned to affect the highest level of influence. S/he will advise the AGR Team Leader and others including the REGO Office Director and senior management, on program implementation options and programs' technical and policy

implications for the region. S/he will be expected to serve as an Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) on one or more activities.

2. As requested, represent USAID/West Africa at meetings with implementing partners (including major regional organizations that receive direct USAID support), donors, government, U.S. Government agencies, and international, and local partners.
3. Assist the AGR Team Leader and REGO in carrying out a full range of consultative, advisory, strategic, programming and planning responsibilities.

Specifically, the incumbent will perform the following tasks:

1. Technical Advice (60%):

The incumbent will support REGO/AGR in oversight for all USAID/West Africa FTF projects to ensure the successful achievement of the agriculture commitments under the Economic Growth Development objectives. The incumbent will serve as the senior agriculture technical advisor to the team and will have specific technical oversight responsibilities for assigned activities. Given the complex dimensions of the issues and actors in the agriculture sector in West Africa, the incumbent will be expected to quickly grasp the nature of regional interventions and how regional activities support the objectives of USAID/West Africa's major regional partners in implementing the ECOWAS Agriculture Policy. Specific duties may include:

- a) Support REGO/AGR interaction with West African regional organizations and private sector on technical policies affecting food security and economic growth in West Africa. This may include agricultural trade policies, agricultural productivity, regional food reserves, resilience, regional information sharing, agricultural research, trade in agricultural products, etc. Travel in the West Africa region to liaise with regional organizations and partners, bilateral USAID Missions and USAID Limited Presence Countries will be expected.
- b) Provide analysis and recommendations to address technical and policy constraints and advise the Mission on options. Provide guidance on regional policies, information systems and data collection related to resilience, agriculture, land use change and economic considerations in West Africa. Advise the REGO/AGR Team Leader, REGO Director, Mission Management and others on new regional developments and technical policies related to Mission priorities.
- c) Assess the progress towards achievement of the CAADP/ECOWAP goals, at the regional level and at the national level throughout the region. Work to advance integration and harmonization of technical policies and systems throughout the West Africa region by developing methods to record and understand the various policies, procedures and systems that are in place to support agriculture

development in the region.

- d) As requested-- represent USAID/West Africa before other donors, USAID Missions and USG agencies and officials, including coordinating site visits with other USG officials. Organize and hold workshops and seminars with ECOWAS, USG, national governments, CILSS, UEMOA, CORAF and/or other donors and to present and discuss common approaches, get feedback, and to achieve buy-in.
- e) Provide technical oversight, mentoring and training to junior officers within USAID/West Africa. Introduce junior staff to the functions and realities of regional systems and organizations in the region. Serve as mentor to advance the relationships of USAID staff with other regional organizations.

2. Regional Activity Design, Implementation and Management (30%):

The incumbent will ensure that all assigned activities are designed, implemented, evaluated, and documented in the appropriate manner. These responsibilities will include but are not limited to:

- a) Design/develop activities and instruments to further the FTF agenda, the Agency resilience policy and other presidential initiatives for West Africa. Provide estimates of funding requirements for programs developed to advance economic growth through regional integration, increase trade in agricultural products and improve agricultural productivity. Design/develop programs and options for deepening engagement of regional actors in climate smart agriculture.
- b) Serve as the AOR for major agriculture and policy activities. This may include one or more USAID/WA or Washington-based implementing mechanisms.
- c) For delegated activities, undertake program and budget monitoring, reporting and evaluation to ensure that adequate resources are appropriately budgeted, focused and achieving desired results, and undertake corrective action as needed.
- d) As requested, provide monitoring oversight and technical assistance for all AGR FTF activities funded by USAID/West Africa and/or others. Monitoring responsibilities will involve substantial regional travel. Provide advice and assistance in evaluating the impact of USAID-funded activities in achieving USAID/USG objectives
- e) Provide input into and ensure that all USAID reporting requirements on sustainability and impact (direct and indirect) are met and, where necessary, assist implementing partners in setting up reporting and tracking systems to provide such information in an efficient and timely manner.
- f) The incumbent shall be responsible for producing necessary documents as required, including working documents, position papers, concept papers, action memos, etc.

3. Communication, Reporting and Administration (10%)

- a) The Senior Agriculture Technical Advisor will participate fully as a member of the REGO/AGR in support of the current USAID/West Africa Agriculture portfolio. This includes contributing to team meetings, carrying out activities related to agricultural productivity, value chain development, agriculture policy, resilience, climate smart agriculture, reducing barriers to regional trade in staple foods and agricultural commodities, among other activities, as well as performing administrative activities including budgeting, accruals and monitoring and evaluation.
- b) Analyze data, prepare reports and perform office functions in support of the program; Respond to requests from other USAID offices, including requests for information from USAID/Washington; Draft materials for use in USAID communication relating to agriculture, food security and resilience-- this includes speeches, press releases, Ambassadorial memos, briefing papers, etc.; Write reports and assist in portfolio reviews for submission to the Mission and to Washington.
- c) Supporting the AGR Team Leader, the incumbent will be expected to maintain regular communication with USAID/Washington, such as with the USAID's Bureau for Food Security and the Bureau for Africa, other USAID Missions and offices in the region and other regional partners to ensure programs are coordinated and responsive to new sector technical developments and Agency priorities.
- d) Coordinate with the USAID/Washington Africa Bureau, Bureau of Food Security and other USAID/West Africa Missions and offices regarding Feed the Future and other agriculture and/or food security initiatives, resilience, program plans, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as preparation of background materials.
- e) Participate in USAID/WA regional agriculture and economic growth office meetings with other USAID Missions and /or with Washington to review progress in program implementation and seek technical guidance from officers in the region; Maintain and manage technical issues on sustainability and capacity development initiatives in with USAID/W to ensure that the regional program is using state-of-art practices.
- f) Perform other regular office functions as requested.

III. POSITION ELEMENTS

Supervision Received: The REGO/AGR Team Leader is the immediate supervisor. Assignments are in broad terms, primarily on overall objectives to be achieved and suggested approaches to consider. Performance is evaluated primarily in terms of results achieved and compliance with policy.

Supervision Exercised: The incumbent shall assist in providing technical guidance to REGO/AGR staff, helping to coordinate the work of these employees to achieve program objectives. The incumbent will be expected to mentor and train more junior staff, and may serve as Acting Team Leader as needed and requested.

Exercise of Judgment: A high degree of judgment will be required to provide guidance and assistance to a wide variety of high-level professionals in the USAID/West Africa Mission. As a recognized expert and highly qualified professional, substantial reliance will be placed on the incumbent to independently plan, prioritize, and carry out the specific activities entailed in fulfilling major duties and responsibilities. The incumbent will be expected to resolve problems that arise by determining the approaches to be taken and methodologies to be used; making independent judgments that can be defended as necessary.

Authority to Make Commitments: Because the position will be procured through a personal services contract, the incumbent cannot make financial commitments on behalf of the U.S. Government (USG). However, because of the incumbent's expertise and standing as a highly qualified professional in his/her field, weight will be given to his/her conclusions and recommendations when commitments are made by those with the authority to do so, or when s/he is in an Acting Team Leader role.

Nature, Level, and Purpose of Contacts: The incumbent will maintain contacts and work with USAID/West Africa staff, USAID and U.S. Government staff from other countries in the region including USAID bilateral missions and offices, high level officials from partner regional organizations, and high level officials from participating country governments (up to and including the level of Minister). The incumbent may also exercise considerable interaction with USAID/Washington Bureau of Food Security and Africa Bureau staff, to provide policy and procedural guidance and to obtain information relative to programs and activities.

IV. REQUIRED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS, SELECTION CRITERIA

1. A Master's degree or higher in agriculture, agribusiness, economics, international development, or related field;
2. Professional experience: A minimum of ten years of progressively responsible managerial positions working in International development organizations, of which at least five were spent in a developing country context supporting development programs in a senior position. Professional experience in West Africa and understanding and/or experience working on a regional level, with regional organizations, is highly preferred.
3. Experience successfully leading large international agriculture programs and working closely with senior-level officials. Applicants' technical and management skills will be given particular weight.

4. Fluency in English and professional competence in French (FSI S-3/R-3 or higher) is required. The applicants must address each Evaluation Factor listed below separately to demonstrate how s/he meets each criterion. Candidates will be evaluated and ranked based on the following evaluation criteria. When addressing the Evaluation Factors below, demonstrate how your experience relates to the duties and responsibilities listed.

V. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Education: (10 points)

Technical Knowledge (30 points):

- Level of demonstrated knowledge and understanding of agriculture issues in Africa (10 points).
- Level of demonstrated knowledge and understanding of FTF, Regional Agriculture Trade, CAADP and Malabo Declaration and the issues that must be addressed in order to achieve success in the sector. (10 points).

Professional Work Experience (40 points):

- Level of demonstrated experience working with international agriculture donors and other agriculture and trade programs in developing countries, drawing attention to any experience relating directly to the U.S. Government Feed the Future initiative and/or CAADP-led efforts. (10 points).
- Level of demonstrated experience working with developing country program managers, policy-makers and a broad array of agriculture sector technical donors and leaders at both the regional and national levels (15 points).
- Level of demonstrated effective leadership supervising or leading teams of professionals (15 points).

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (30 points):

- Level of demonstrated interpersonal skills and ability to work in a diverse, multicultural team setting (10 points).
- Level of demonstrated ability to produce written communication in a clear, concise manner (5 points).
- Level of demonstrated experience leading and facilitating dialogue among diverse groups (5 points).

VI. BASIS OF RATING APPLICATIONS

Applicants must possess the minimum qualifications for the position (see criteria above: Education, Technical Knowledge, Professional Work Experience, Interpersonal and Communication Skills). Additional factors to be taken into consideration include:

- Applicant is a U.S. Citizen, permanent U.S. resident, or Third-Country National.
- Completed and hand-signed form AID 302-3 is submitted by application deadline. (Note: All applicants must submit complete dates [months/years] and hours per week for all positions listed on the AID 302-3 to allow for adequate evaluation of their related and direct experience. Experience that cannot be quantified will not count towards meeting the experience requirements.).
- Cover letter and supporting documentation specifically addressing the minimum requirements for the position. Applicants must explain in their cover letter how they meet the requirements of the position. If excellent writing skills are required, applicants should submit a writing sample of a work document or publication, written by the applicant, covering a technical area relevant for the position applied for (include writing sample as an attachment to cover letter).
- All applications will be evaluated and scored based on the required qualifications and documentation submitted with the application. Those applicants who are short-listed (determined to be competitively ranked) may also be evaluated on interview performance and satisfactory professional reference checks. Failure to address the selection criteria may result in your not receiving credit for all of your pertinent experience, education, training and/or awards. USAID may contact the applicant's professional references and verify academic credentials. Applicants may also be evaluated based on the performance in an interview.

Applicants who do not meet all of the selection criteria or do not provide the required documentation are considered NOT qualified for the position.

VII. MEDICAL AND SECURITY CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS

The applicant selected to fill this position must be able to obtain a security clearance/employment authorization which involves applicant's comprehensive background investigation performed by a U.S. Government Agency.

The applicant selected to fill the position must also receive medical clearance to work worldwide. Details of how to obtain such clearance will be provided after selection and acceptance of the job offer.

The final selected candidates must obtain security and medical clearances within a reasonable period of time (USAID will provide details regarding these clearances to the selected candidates). A substantial delay in obtaining either required clearance will make the applicant ineligible for selection.

VIII. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

Submission of a resume alone IS NOT a complete application. This position requires the completion of additional forms and/or supplemental materials as described in this section. Failure to provide the required information and/or materials will result in your not being considered for employment.

Interested individuals meeting the Minimum Qualifications above are required to submit the following:

- Signed Form AID 302-3, Offeror Information for Personal Services Contracts (available at <http://www.usaid.gov/forms/>)

All applicants must submit complete dates (months/years) and hours per week for all positions listed on the form AID 302-3 to allow for adequate evaluation of your related and direct experiences. Applicants should note that the salary history for the purposes of the AID 302-3 is the base salary paid, excluding benefits and allowances such as housing, travel, educational support, etc.

- Cover letter and a current resume/curriculum vita (CV). The CV/resume must contain sufficient relevant information to evaluate the application in accordance with the stated evaluation criteria. Broad general statements that are vague or lacking specificity will not be considered as effectively addressing particular selection criteria. Complete dates (month/year) are also required on CV.
- Applicants must provide a minimum of three and a maximum of five references within the last five years from the applicant's professional life namely individuals who are not family members or relatives. Three references must be from direct supervisors who can provide information regarding the applicant's work knowledge and professional experience. Applicants must provide e-mail addresses and/or working telephone numbers for all references.
- Applicants also must address the above **Section VI**, in a summary statement to be included in the application. This summary statement, limited to two pages, must describe specifically and accurately what experience, training, education, and/or awards the applicant has received that are relevant to each selection factor above. The summary statement must include the name of the applicant and the announcement number at the top of each page.

IX. LIST OF REQUIRED FORMS FOR PSCS:

Forms outlined below can found at: <http://www.usaid.gov/forms/>

1. Application for Federal Employment (AID 302-3);
2. Contractor Physical Examination (AID Form 1420-62). *
3. Questionnaire for Sensitive Positions (for National Security) (SF-86), or *
4. Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions (SF-85). *
5. Finger Print Card (FD-258). *

* Forms 2 through 5 shall be completed only upon the advice of the Contracting Officer that an applicant is the successful candidate for the job.

CONTRACT INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIBs) AND ACQUISITION AND ASSISTANCE POLICY DIRECTIVES (AAPDs) PERTAINING TO PSCs

CIBs AND AAPDSs contain information or changes pertaining to USAID policy and General Provisions in USAID regulation and procedures concerning acquisition and assistance including Personal Service Contracts and can be found at: <http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/aapds-cibs>. AIDAR Appendix D and J apply to USPSC and TCNPSC respectively and can be found at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/aidar_0.pdf.

BENEFITS/ALLOWANCES

As a matter of policy, and as appropriate, a PSC is normally authorized the following benefits and allowances:

(NOTE: An individual defined as a USPSC employee may only be eligible for those benefits listed below.) TCNPSC MAY be eligible for benefits in accordance with AIDAR Appendix J, sec. 4(c)(2)(ii)(B).

BENEFITS:

- Employee's FICA and Medicare Contribution (USPSCs only)
- Contribution toward Health & Life Insurance
- Pay Comparability Adjustment
- Eligibility for Worker's Compensation
- Annual & Sick Leave
- Access to Embassy medical facilities, commissary and pouch mail service (USPSCs only)

*Note: If a US citizen, the Contractor's salary will be subject to employee's FICA and Medicare contribution.

ALLOWANCES (If Applicable):

- (1) Temporary Lodging Allowance (Section 120)*
- (2) Living Quarters Allowance (Section 130)*
- (3) Post Allowance (Section 220)*
- (4) Supplemental Post Allowance (Section 230)*
- (5) Post Differential (Chapter 500)*
- (6) Payments during Evacuation/Authorized Departure (Section 600)* and
- (7) Danger Pay (Section 650)*
- (8) Educational Allowance (Section 270)*
- (9) Separate Maintenance Allowance (Section 260)*
- (10) Educational Travel (Section 280)*

* Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians Foreign Areas).

FEDERAL TAXES: USPSCs are not exempt from payment of Federal and State Income Taxes