SUBJECT: Solicitation for a United States Personal Service Contractor (USPSC) – Contracting Specialist, GS-14

Dear Prospective Offerors:

The United States Government, represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is seeking offers from qualified persons to provide personal services under contract as described in this solicitation. For further information about USAID/Afghanistan please visit https://www.usaid.gov/afghanistan.

Offers must be in accordance with Attachment 1 of this solicitation. Incomplete or unsigned offers will not be considered. Offerors should retain copies of all offer materials for their records.

This solicitation in no way obligates USAID to award a PSC contract, nor does it commit USAID to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of the application.

Any questions must be directed in writing to KblAIDHR@usaid.gov.

Sincerely,

Julie Lamadrid
Contracting Officer
I. GENERAL INFORMATION

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<td>1.</td>
<td>SOLICITATION NO.:</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>ISSUANCE DATE:</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>CLOSING DATE/TIME FOR RECEIPT OF OFFERS:</td>
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<td>POINT OF CONTACT:</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>POSITION TITLE:</td>
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<td>MARKET VALUE:</td>
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<td>Final compensation will be negotiated within the listed market value.</td>
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<td>PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:</td>
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<td>PLACE OF PERFORMANCE:</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>ELIGIBLE OFFERORS</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>SECURITY LEVEL REQUIRED:</td>
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11. STATEMENT OF DUTIES:

1) General Statement of Purpose of Contract:

This position is an exciting opportunity for the incumbent to provide hands-on support to implement USAID/Afghanistan’s development assistance to the people of Afghanistan. Following the Taliban’s sweep to power in August 2021, the State Department and USAID confirmed interagency support for continuing certain select foreign assistance programs for Afghanistan that will advance U.S. national interests.

2) Statement of Duties to be Performed:

a. The specialist provides high-level acquisition and assistance planning advice and guidance to USAID/Afghanistan Technical Offices, including advice on A&A policy and procedures in the design and implementation of Mission activities. The specialist coordinates the development of A&A objectives for assigned portfolios in terms of potential implementing partner (IP) organizations, competitive issues, and socioeconomic issues, and identifies and constructs appropriate contract and/or grant instruments. Ensures A&A plans are current, have appropriate milestones, and related schedules are adequate. Alerts mission management of specific problems or anticipated needs and provides guidance on forthcoming actions or recommendations.
b. The specialist reviews GLAAS Requisitions (REQs) requesting acquisition and assistance awards for major and complex programs/projects/activities and/or services. The specialist analyzes requirements, and determines instrument selection or approach, if SOWs or other PDs are complete, and if the request meets FAR, AIDAR, ADS, CFR, and/or other Mission, Agency, or USG policies; ensures that necessary Mission clearances have been obtained, and that waivers and other supporting documentation are complete; recommends revisions regarding SOWs or PDs, budgets, classification of terms, reporting requirements, and any special conditions, and ensures that required performance indicators are developed and included in the initial Request for Proposal or Request for Application; and, develops solicitation documentation in accordance with all appropriate regulations, selects and includes correct required clauses or provisions, and transmits solicitations for proposals or applications using Internet-based technology. The specialist responds to offeror or applicant questions during the solicitation phase; and determines the need for, and prepares, clarifying amendments as required for solicitation documents. As necessary, the specialist holds pre-bid or consultative meetings with partners to fully explain the Agency and partner needs, and to discuss solicitation documents. The specialist applies a high degree of judgment and analysis when deciding among and between competing and often conflicting regulations and objectives, where the activities involved include multi-million-dollar issues, often with significant political and/or legal implications.

c. The specialist evaluates offers and applications for responsiveness to solicitations and documents the relative strengths and deficiencies of each proposal or application; guides technical office staff and A&A staff in the practice of 'best value' selection, and in performance-based technical approaches (if applicable); and obtains reports and references, ensuring that past performance of the offerors and applicants is relevant and reliable. The specialist ensures that partners have adequate management, accounting, personnel, and procurement systems, and appropriate corporate leadership, resources, and quality control systems to satisfactorily carry out awards. The specialist requests audit reports or pre-award surveys from the Office of the Inspector General, and/or the Defense Contract Audit Agency, and obtains clearance from the Department of Labor and/or the Small Business Administration on a variety of EEO and workplace issues. The specialist analyzes cost proposals and technical scores from technical evaluation committees; and, based on the analyses, establishes the competitive range when appropriate. The specialist performs analyses of cost issues, considering economic conditions; examines cost and pricing data submitted by offerors to substantiate direct and indirect costs and profit; determines reasonableness of costs submitted; ensures data provided is consistent with USAID requirements on eligible geographic sources, and that salary structures are consistent with Agency policy; and identifies circumstances that may require waivers. The specialist coordinates issues of technical weakness and excessive cost with technical evaluation committee members prior to commencement of negotiations; and clarifies, and as necessary, instructs the members of technical evaluation committees on the USAID selection process. The specialist designs the negotiation strategy, identifies areas subject to negotiation, and consults with technical specialists concerning data submitted by offerors; conducts extensive negotiations on cost and technical issues prior to award; upgrade technical deficiencies and reduce costs; requests submission of revised final proposals; coordinates the last stages of selection with technical office staff and/or the technical evaluation committee(s); and prepares appropriate contract instruments for award; negotiates grants and cooperative agreements with US-based organizations, and other non-profit organizations. The specialist
executes award decisions, with all the appropriate supporting documentation, including the
development of appropriate performance indicators, in conjunction technical teams; and
organizes and conducts orientation meetings with selected contractors and recipients, to
ensure that mobilization efforts will be conducted efficiently, and that all terms and
conditions of awards are clear and well-understood by all parties. The specialist provides
support debriefings to unsuccessful offerors and feedback to unsuccessful applicants.


d. The specialist monitors award performance in relation to the completion schedule required
by the contract or assistance instrument; ensures timely submission of technical progress
reports, making periodic visits to awardee work sites, and representing the contracting office
at performance-related meetings held by other Mission Offices; assists clients to develop
appropriate indicators for work plans and award documents; ensures awardees are fully
compliant with performance standards contained in the award, and seeks corrective action in
cases of non-compliance; expedites change orders or revisions when circumstances require;
and, issues 'show cause' or 'cure notices,' and/or recommends termination of contracts for
default or for convenience, and negotiates termination settlements.

e. The specialist analyzes, and takes action to resolve, audit findings, such as cost items
questioned or unresolved; supports recommendations with detailed analysis of each cost,
category, or element as necessary; prepares necessary documents to resolve all aspects of
audits, questioned or ineligible costs, and accounting issues; and makes determinations as
appropriate. The specialist reviews completed (after full performance) award files to
determine that all terms and conditions actions are satisfied, and that there are no pending
administrative actions to be resolved; ensures that all file documents are signed, that there are
no litigation actions pending, and that the award is complete in every respect and ready to be
closed; and, ensures that awards nearing annual anniversaries or final completion have a
completed performance report from the COR/AOR, and submits reports to the awardee for
comment.

f. The specialist provides training, guidance and mentoring to A&A staff on basic principles
of USG and USAID acquisition and assistance, general procurement management,
procurement policy direction, new/changed procurement policies, as required.

g. The specialist will be expected to provide information and advice to the technical offices
and Mission management on critical A&A issues, or on the effect of new or revised USG,
USAID, or host-country requirements. The specialist attends key Mission meetings on behalf
of OAA.

3) USAID Consultation or Orientation:
The selected applicant may be required to proceed to Washington, D.C. for mandatory
training or consultation.

4) Supervisory Relationship:
The employee works with the Supervisory Contracting Officer to plan his/her work; carry out
successive steps of assignments; to handle problems and/or deviations that arise in
accordance with instructions, policies, and guidelines; and refers new or controversial issues
to the supervisor for direction. S/he reviews work products from an overall standpoint in
terms of feasibility, compatibility with other works, or effectiveness in meeting requirements and exercises use of an Agency-issued delegation of authority (warrant).

5) Supervisory Controls:

Incumbent may supervise A&A Specialists.

12. PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

The work requested does not involve undue physical demands.

II. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR THIS POSITION

In order to be considered for the position, a candidate must meet the Minimum Qualifications. Offers will be pre-screened and only those that meet the Minimum Qualifications will be considered. The minimum qualifications necessary to be considered for the position are as follows:

a) Education: Baccalaureate Degree in accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, organization and management; or another relevant field is required. In addition, a full structured training program referred to as Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) is required. Documentation of training, certifications, and previous warrants required to qualify for the issuance of USAID USPSC Ad Hoc delegation of authority warrant is required. (Education requirement must be met at the time of application for the subject position).

b) Work Experience: A minimum of six (6) years of progressively responsible professional Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) experience as a Contracting Officer with the U.S. government, with complex pre-award, award, and post-award responsibilities. A minimum of three (3) years exercising warrant authority within the US government or in the private sector equivalent to, or greater than, a Level I ($5M) A&A warrant. (Work experience requirement must be met at the time of application for the subject position).

III. EVALUATION AND SELECTION FACTORS

The Government may award a contract without discussions with offerors in accordance with FAR 52.215-1. The Contracting Officer (CO) reserves the right at any point in the evaluation process to establish a competitive range of offerors with whom negotiations will be conducted pursuant to FAR 15.306(c). In accordance with FAR 52.215-1, if the CO determines that the number of offers that would otherwise be in the competitive range exceeds the number at which an efficient competition can be conducted, the CO may limit the number of offerors in the competitive range to the greatest number that will permit an efficient competition among the most highly rated offers. FAR provisions of this solicitation are available at https://www.acquisition.gov/browse/index/far.

The Evaluation Factors listed will be the basis for evaluating and ranking applicants for the position. Only finalists will be contacted by USAID/Afghanistan with respect to their
applications. Applicants must submit a supplemental document outlining their responses to the evaluation factors to be considered. USAID/Afghanistan reserves the right to interview only the highest ranked applicants in person or by phone OR not to interview any candidate.

Those applicants who meet the minimum education and experience qualifications will be evaluated based on the content of their application as well as the applicant’s writing, presentation, and communication skills. Applicants will be evaluated against the following criteria, listed in order of descending importance:

**EVALUATION FACTORS**

**Technical Knowledge: 30 points**
In 800 words or less, outline how you have demonstrated your knowledge in Acquisition and Assistance; provide examples of your success in one or more of the position’s responsibilities: planning, solicitation, analysis of proposals, complex award negotiation, cost and price analysis, award terminations or other relevant examples.

**Demonstrated Adaptability and Additional Skills: 15 points**
In 400 words or less, outline how you demonstrated
1) strong organizational and adaptability skills, in planning and providing required support for OAA in a timely and effective manner;
2) an ability to quickly assimilate information and quickly learn required procedures;
3) good analytical, negotiating, time management, strong proofreading, and attention to detail skills; and
4) the ability to work calmly, tactfully, and effectively under pressure, as well as the ability to maintain strict confidentiality and high ethical standards throughout all phases of acquisition and assistance actions.

**Communication and Interpersonal: 5 points**
In 300 words or less, outline how
1) you have demonstrated excellent interpersonal skills,
2) you have proven ability to communicate clearly and concisely – both orally and in writing in English.

The factors will be the basis for scoring the applications and creating an initial ranking of candidates. Only the highest-ranked applicants (finalists) will be interviewed. Those finalists will also be evaluated on their interview performance, and finally, satisfactory professional reference checks. In summary, the steps in the applicant rating system are as follows:

**BASIS OF RATING**

Applicants who clearly meet the Education/Experience requirements and basic eligibility requirements will be further evaluated based on scoring of the Evaluation Factors. Those applicants determined to be competitively ranked may also be evaluated on their interview performance and satisfactory professional reference checks. The Applicant Rating System is as follows:

Evaluation Factors:

Factor #1 30 points
Factor #2  15 points  
Factor #3  5 points  

Interview Performance:  50 points  

If the selection committee determines an interview will be part of its selection process, interview questions will focus on the candidate’s technical knowledge and qualifications, professional experience in Afghanistan, and interpersonal skills, professionalism, and ability to manage time effectively.  

Satisfactory Professional Reference Checks – Pass/Fail (no points assigned)  
Total Possible Points: 100  

IV.  SUBMITTING AN OFFER  

All applications must be submitted electronically by e-mail with the subject line SOL-72030622R00025 – Contracting Specialist to: Afgpsejobs@usaid.gov  

Attention: Executive Officer  
USAID/Afghanistan  
Human Resources Office  

Offerors must be received by the closing date and time specified in Section I, item 3. Eligible offerors are required to submit the following documents to be considered for this position:  

1. Cover Letter  
3. A current curriculum vitae (CV) or resume.  
4. A supplemental document with written responses to the evaluation factors.  
5. Ensuring Adequate COVID-19 Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors - The Offeror will be required to show proof that the Offeror is fully vaccinated against COVID-19 on or before the first date of onboarding or submit an approved reasonable accommodation to the CO. If the contract or does not meet this requirement the contract may be terminated.  

Short-listed candidates will be requested to provide educational documents such as degrees, diplomas, certificates and other pertinent documents as needed. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in removal from further consideration.  

Any attachments provided via email must be compatible with Microsoft Word or PDF and not compressed (.rar/.zip etc).  

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.  

The Agency retains the right to cancel or amend the solicitation and associated actions at any stage of the recruitment process.  

V. LIST OF REQUIRED FORMS FOR PSC HIRES
Once the Contracting Officer (CO) informs the successful Offeror about being selected for a contract award, the CO will provide the successful Offeror instructions about how to complete and submit the following forms:

1. Contractor Employee Biographical Data Sheet (AID 1420-17);
2. Declaration for Federal Employment (OF-306);
3. Medical History and Examination Form (DS-6561);
4. Pre-Deployment Physical Exam Acknowledgement Form (DS-6570);
5. Questionnaire for Sensitive Positions for National Security (SF-86), or Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions (SF-85);
6. Finger Print Card (FD-258);
7. Statement of Prior Service (SF-144A).

VI. BENEFITS/ALLOWANCES

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

1. BENEFITS:
   1) Employer’s Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA) Contribution (for USPSC’s only)
   2) Contribution toward Health & life insurance
   3) Pay Comparability Adjustment
   4) Eligibility for Worker's Compensation
   5) Annual & Sick Leave
   6) Access to Embassy medical facilities, commissary and pouch mail service as per post policy
   7) Annual Increase (pending a satisfactory performance evaluation)

2. ALLOWANCES:
   Section numbers refer to rules from the Department of State Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians Foreign Areas), available at [https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=282&amp%3Bmenu_id=101](https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=282&amp%3Bmenu_id=101)

VII. TAXES

USPSC’s are required to pay Federal income taxes, FICA, Medicare and applicable State income taxes.

VIII. USAID REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND CONTRACT CLAUSES PERTAINING TO PSCs

USAID regulations and policies governing USPSC awards are available at these sources:

2. PART 52—SOLICITATION PROVISIONS AND CONTRACT CLAUSES
Subpart 52.2—Text of Provisions and Clauses


ENSURING ADEQUATE COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR FEDERAL CONTRACTORS (OCT 2021)-Alternate 70 (OCT 2021) (M/OAA-DEV-FAR22-01c)

(a) Definition. As used in this clause -

United States or its outlying areas means—

(1) The fifty States;

(2) The District of Columbia;

(3) The commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands;

(4) The territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the United States Virgin Islands; and


(c) Personal Services Contracts with individuals. As a matter of policy, the contractor must comply with the USAID’s guidance applicable to direct-hire federal employees.

Notice Regarding Any Court Order Affecting the Implementation of E.O. 14042

USAID will take no action to enforce the clause (FAR 52.223-99) implementing the requirements of Executive Order 14042, absent further written notice from USAID, where the place of performance identified in the contract is in a U.S. state or outlying area subject to a court order prohibiting the application of requirements pursuant to the Executive Order (hereinafter, “Excluded State or Outlying Area”). In all other circumstances, USAID will enforce the clause, except for contractor employees who perform substantial work on or in connection with a covered contract in an Excluded State or Outlying Area, or in a covered contractor workplace located in an Excluded State or Outlying Area. A current list of such Excluded States and Outlying Areas is maintained at https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/contractors/.

3. Contract Cover Page form AID 309-1 available at https://www.usaid.gov/forms. Pricing by line item is to be determined upon contract award as described below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM NO</th>
<th>SUPPLIES SERVICES (DESCRIPTION)</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
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<tr>
<td>0001</td>
<td>Base Period Compensation, Fringe Benefits and Other Direct Costs (ODCs) –</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>LOT</td>
<td>$ TBD</td>
<td>$ TBD at award after negotiations with contractor</td>
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<td>Appropriation: 7213/141037</td>
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<td>1001</td>
<td>Option Period 1 – Compensation, Fringe Benefits and Other Direct Costs (ODCs) –</td>
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<td>LOT</td>
<td>$ TBD</td>
<td>$ TBD at award after negotiations with contractor</td>
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<td>Accounting Info: To be incrementally funded</td>
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- AAPD 21-05
- AAPD 21-04
- AAPD 18-02
- AAPD 10-01
- AAPD 06-10
- AAPD 22-02

5. **Ethical Conduct.** By the acceptance of a USAID personal services contract as an individual, the contractor will be acknowledging receipt of the “**Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch,**” available from the U.S. Office of Government Ethics, in accordance with General Provision 2 and 5 CFR 2635. See [https://www.oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/OGE%20Regulations](https://www.oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/OGE%20Regulations).

6. **PSC Ombudsman**

The PSC Ombudsman serves as a resource for any Personal Services Contractor who has entered into a contract with the United States Agency for International Development and is available to provide clarity on their specific contract with the agency. Please visit our page for additional information: [https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/personal-service-contracts-ombudsman](https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/personal-service-contracts-ombudsman)

The PSC Ombudsman may be contacted via: PSCOmbudsman@usaid.gov.