



March 31, 2025

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USAID | U.S. Agency for International Development

Subject: RIF, PCS, and Administrative Leave Notices

On behalf of the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) as the Vice President representing nearly 2,500 Foreign Service and Foreign Service Limited Officers, I am again forced to write to you to express my continued disappointment with the Agency's treatment of its professional Foreign Service corps.

AFSA received your Notice of Reduction in Force (RIF) on March 28 at 12:04pm. Less than 10 minutes later, the Agency notified the entire workforce of the pending RIF and began sending individual notices to all staff of either their termination for Foreign Service Limited Officers or RIF. Sadly, those in charge of sending the notice proved incapable of successfully conducting a simple mail merger. Based on questions to AFSA and HCTM it seems that nearly all RIF notices are incorrect. This and other unclear or missing information in the RIF notices raise serious issues the Agency must complete immediately:

1. Reissue all RIF notices with accurate information.
2. Clarify the State Department hiring process: will it rehire USAID FS staff into the State Department FS? In the absence of retention points, how will it determine eligibility for rehiring? How will the Agency establish its "Registration on the Agency Reemployment Priority List"?
3. Confirm that rights under CTAP and the Re-employment Priority List are transferred to the State Department for all future vacancies, as the State Department is now the home for USAID.
4. Clarify what re-employment rights are being afforded to Foreign Service Limited officers as required by ADS 450.3.4.
5. Confirm and notify all staff that the Agency intends to follow 3 FAM 2589.4 Transition Assistance
  - a. Except as provided in section 3 FAM 2589.4 b, a member who is identified for separation from the Service pursuant to a RIF is eligible to participate in the full job search program as set forth in 13 FAH-1 H-422, while in a paid status, including entitlement to per diem in Washington for the member and his/her family during participation in the program for those employees who had been assigned outside Washington.
6. Confirm and notify all staff that the Agency intends to follow 14 FAM 613.1b which includes both overseas and domestic based FS staff.



- a. An employee retiring or separating from the Foreign Service is authorized to ship from their current assignment and from storage locations where they possess property stored at U.S. Government expense. However, the employee may cost-construct any remaining weight not shipped from post up to the authorized weight amount from post, e.g., 7,200 pounds from a limited shipment post.

AFSA recommends that the Agency arranges town hall meetings with FSOs to address the above and other questions that FSOs are raising. This would be a very effective way of moving forward and may limit the number of future HCTM tickets. We suggest at least two calls for overseas staff and a single call for DC based staff.

Similarly, the March 29 message on "PCS Portal and RIF Data" require the Agency to:

1. Explain the need to depart post 2 weeks prior to termination date. AFSA can find no FAM or ADS reference that requires an early departure date, only that a FSO must be in the U.S. prior to their last date with the Agency.
2. Explain if requested for waivers to extend the time of officers overseas will be honored. Are these waivers going to be considered if not why? If a waiver is granted will the FSO remain on Active Duty or Administrative Leave status until their new departure date? Will their termination/RIF date be extended to the end of their waiver?
3. Provide a name and contact email for waiver requests.
4. Extend the deadline for overseas staff to update the PCS portal from April 2 to April 9. Three business days to make a life altering decision is insufficient. The added time will allow FSOs the time needed to discuss options with their families, assess their financial capacity, and determine the best landing location for their future. A week's delay will have no significant impact on the Mission, State Dept PCS team, or the Agency, but will provide FSO staff with the mental and emotional space needed to make a decision.
5. Provide all staff with new accurate RIF notices.
6. Commitment that no staff will be separated/terminated until all the relevant data is accurate.

Additionally, the March 29 message on "Preferred Status" raises several concerns. The notice provides all staff with one business day to make a difficult decision, and it fails to provide sufficient information on what Active-Duty status will mean and the Agency's commitment to ensure staff who opt out do not suffer any future negative actions by the Agency. At a minimum, if the Agency does indeed need this information, it should extend the deadline to April 5 11:59pm EST and answer the following questions:

1. Where is the duty station? In office, or tele-work.
2. Will staff be assigned to their existing Bureaus/Offices or detailed to others?
3. Who will be supervising staff? And what are the individual work duties?
4. Will people on Active Duty have their RIF dates amended to 9/2/2025?
5. What will happen to those opting for Active Duty if they are not needed? Will they be forced back to Administrative Leave?
6. Will people choosing to opt out have their systems access shut off?



7. What guarantees exist for staff who remain on Administrative Leave that the Agency won't furlough them in the future without pay and benefits prior to their RIF or termination date?
8. Will the Agency guarantee that choosing to stay on Administrative Leave won't result in any negative personnel or performance actions?

Finally, AFSA requests the Agency address issues we have previously raised. These include:

1. The Agency owes money to FSOs and FSLs for travel and other expenses incurred. Many FSOs on evacuation status from the DROC are accruing \$10,000s of debt and some report not receiving a single payment, new C-3s have not had their transfer allowances paid, and other FS staff report travel and/or transfer vouchers from 2024 remain unpaid;
2. Confirm that all Continuing Service Agreements (CSA) will be or are now waived. This includes among others: Payne Fellowships, FSI language or other training, PCS/Home Leave allowances, Student Loan Repayment Program, and payroll overages;
3. Approve the Winter Tenure Board recommendations currently waiting SDAA authorization; and
4. Open the performance reporting portal to allow FSOs to complete their Annual Accomplishment Records and download all their prior performance materials; and
5. Approve the lump sum payment of the severance allowance to eligible staff over three annual installments.

AFSA looks forward to seeing the Agency correct the numerous errors contained in nearly all the RIF notices sent on March 28, clarify its March 29 regarding Administrative Leave, and extend the time to update the PCS portal to April 9 to allow our overseas colleagues time to better assess and make decisions regarding their future.

As always, AFSA remains ready to meet and discuss with you or your designated representatives on the above issues.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Chester".

Randy Chester  
USAID AFSA Vice President