



April 24, 2025

Ms. Sepideh Keyvanshad
Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of Human Capital and Talent Management

Ms Keyvanshad,

Again, AFSA respectfully requests that you and other senior FS leaders host a Foreign Service town hall. We understand that you are holding periodic calls with Mission leadership and have released a number of FAQs. However, with all due respect, Mission Director message relays and FAQs are not a substitute for FS leadership directly speaking to and answering questions. It is past time for you and other FS leadership to address staff. The FS deserves to hear from its senior FS leadership.

AFSA continues to be inundated with questions and pleas for support. Many issues and questions are best addressed by HCTM, but the FS is not getting the support and answers they need to make timely and informed decisions about their and their family's future. Some of the issues have been addressed by FAQs and other documents. However, there remain several areas that the Agency must address.

Questions:

1. Voluntary vs Involuntary: Recently, we have seen that FSOs are being told by STATE GTM that their retirements are being processed as voluntary and many have received separation cables also indicating voluntary separation. To be clear, there is NOTHING voluntary about the Reduction in Force (RIF). Classifying any retirement or resignation as voluntary has serious financial implications for an FSO.

AFSA requests that you confirm that all retirements and other separations are in fact INVOLUNTARY and that you direct HCTM to correct all previously issued separation cables to note INVOLUNTARY separation. Additionally, we ask you to direct relevant staff to communicate to STATE that all retirements must be processed as INVOLUNTARY.

2. Home Service Transfer Allowance (HSTA): FSOs are seeing that HSTA will end on their individual RIF date. Terminating HSTA has a negative financial impact on FSOs who are required to stay at Post and unable to depart early.



AFSA proposes the Agency provide a lump sum payment for the full 60 days for all eligible FSOs. This would remove the financial bias experienced by FSOs with an earlier retirement date and less ability to exercise the full HSTA allotment as part of their resettlement.

3. CTAP and ICTAP: There remains confusion about CTAP and ICTAP.

AFSA proposes that the Agency host a webinar on these mechanisms.

4. Agency pledge to provide job placement support: Time is growing short. When will FSI announce new courses and will FSOs and FSLs be allowed to participate after their RIF dates?

Other Outstanding Issues that the Agency needs to address:

1. Continuing Service Agreements (CSA): AFSA has asked multiple times for the Agency to waive all CSAs (FSO and FSL). Given the involuntary nature of the RIF, we again urge the Agency to waive all CSAs and have requested that Sec of State Rubio to rule on the issue.
2. Retirement, Severance, and Annual Leave Pay: We strongly urge the Agency to host FSO only retirement calls in the coming weeks specifically focusing on the FSPS system and FS severance.
3. STATE Department hiring plan: AFSA is aware that STATE expects to begin the hiring process by May 11 with final offers expected by June 1. In the absence of a RIF registry and Reemployment Eligibility List, how with STATE and the Agency ensure that USAID FSOs and FSLs are provided appropriate consideration?

We look forward to seeing the Agency address the above questions and issues.

Respectfully,

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

Randy Chester
USAID AFSA Vice President