



May 16, 2025

J Sidari  
Acting Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator?  
Office of Human Capital and Talent Management

Mr Sidari,

AFSA has been made aware that you have replaced Ms Keyvanshad as the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator. We have been communicating with her and others requesting information and actions regarding a variety of issues that Foreign Service staff face because of the Reduction in Force action. Before restating the outstanding questions that we have posed many times since February, I want to highlight and thank you for action on a few areas:

1. Cancellation of Continuing Service Agreements;
2. Expansion of JSTP courses at FSI and OPM retirement courses; and
3. Extensions of RIF dates for FSOs with medical issues.

These are all good first steps, but there remain a host of issues and questions that the Agency must answer ahead of July 1.

First, as we have requested since the beginning, AFSA respectfully requests that you and other senior FS leaders host a Foreign Service town hall. We understand that there are 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. Some of the issues have been addressed by FAQs and other documents. However, there remain several areas that the Agency must address.

Questions:

1. STATE Department LNA hiring: AFSA is aware that STATE has started hiring USAID FSOs through the LNA and Schedule A mechanisms. From the emails we have received it appears that many Posts have already pre-made decision on who will be hired and/or closed the application period. We were able to listen in to both sessions and note that there were serious technology issues, breakout rooms with no STATE or USAID staff present to lead the discussion or answer



questions, contradictory information provided on how and when to apply, a lack of information on positions duties and the actual positions, and on this morning's call people were locked out as it was oversubscribed. Finally, many FSOs have reported that they did not get the invitation to the meetings till this morning and that contact emails are not open to non-State email accounts. AFSA requests:

- a. An extension of deadline to apply and that the extension applies to all posts and includes those that closed their application period and have already selected candidates.
  - b. Provide a complete list of all positions, their PDs, contact information for each position, and decision criteria for hiring.
  - c. Hold an additional meeting next week, ensure that all breakout rooms are staffed, and provide at least 48 hours' notice of the session to all USAID staff.
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. We have put this proposal to Sec Rubio and State leadership.

3. 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.

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



AFSA proposes that the Agency host a webinar on these mechanisms. We have communicated with Sec Rubio and State GTM asking for them to clarify CTAP for USAID FSOs.

5. Retirement, Severance, and Annual Leave Pay: We strongly urge the Agency to host FSO only retirement calls specifically focusing on the FSPS system and FS severance.

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