



April 2, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

The decision to dissolve USAID and enact a 100% Reduction in Force (RIF) has led to serious disruption of assistance programs and to the lives of those dedicated employees who are forced to end their careers involuntarily. Now that the State Department has authority for the remaining people and programs of USAID and RIFs have been issued to all USAID staff, there are several issues that need to be addressed without delay. We are respectfully asking that you and the relevant State Department offices move expeditiously with the necessary decisions and actions needed by our USAID members.

First and foremost, USAID officers require clarity on the processes whereby they will be eligible to apply for positions involved with US assistance programs in the new State Department structure. The March 28, notice of "Transition to State Department" sent to all USAID staff notes that the State Department will establish a hiring process for USAID personnel. We urge you to complete this process, announce all new positions, and complete the transfer of staff prior to June 1, 2025.

As we edge closer to the first RIF date, July 2, 2025, more and more employees are facing a lack of clarity about where they should plan to live, including schooling for their children and employment for their spouses. This is especially true for those being forced to return from overseas, but domestic FSOs also face a similar choice dilemma as they assess their final government paid move out of the DC area.

In February, the Agency requested overseas staff submit requests to waive/extend their return dates past May 30. The requests were submitted through the PCS portal and were to be reviewed by one of the now dissolved CSTs. To date, no one has received any information on the status of their request. We ask that you direct the relevant authority to provide clear guidance for each extension/waiver request. This should include the following: if denied, the reason for denial and appeal process; if granted the extension should include and change the individual's RIF date to at least one week beyond the date of the waiver.



Next, there are several actions that you can take to provide fair and humane treatment of USAID staff, ensuring a smooth transition for those who will no longer be employed by the organization. First, severance payments that are provided by law to all separated employees ineligible for immediate retirement should be payable at one time instead of being spread over three years to provide employees with a better financial cushion during this transition. We note that in your role as Secretary of State you have this authority. Next, any USAID FSOs with current Continuing Service Agreements (CSAs) for student loan repayment programs, professional training, graduate fellowships, travel, or other should receive blanket waivers that exempt separating employees from having to pay back funds to the USG.

In a letter to Randy Chester, AFSA/USAID Vice President, on March 28, Jeremy Lewin stated that "the Agency intends to provide the Foreign Service Institute retirement seminar and job search program for employees who are retiring (voluntary or involuntary). FSI is currently determining how they can expand their offering to make this available to more employees." We ask that these training courses be open to all Foreign Service Officers and Foreign Service Limited Officers. If FSI is unable to hold the required number of courses needed to service all staff prior to July 2, we ask that FSOs and FSLs be allowed to enroll to take the courses after their final dates with USAID.

Further, with the end of the rating cycle on March 31, USAID staff need to receive their required annual reviews. The Foreign Service is a meritocracy and regardless of whether they continue to be employed by State in the future, these annual reviews are important records of their service and are critical in maintaining accurate records in their personnel files and for use in future promotion cycles and job applications.

Additionally, now-expired Senior Foreign Service promotion lists not considered by the Senate during the 118th Congress should be resubmitted for consideration. Lastly, those USAID FSOs approved by the USAID Winter Tenure Board should likewise also have their tenure approved by the USAID Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator as outlined in USAID's ADS policy.

Finally, we regretfully have to report that the RIF letters sent to staff on March 28 were nearly universally incorrect and not all staff received a letter. Clearly, whoever oversaw the action failed to conduct any data quality or accuracy checks. The letters include major

errors across all main data points including Service Computation Date, Tenure Group, and Performance Ratings. We ask that you direct USAID to reissue all of the RIF letters as soon as possible. The erroneous data has added to the stress and mental anguish of staff going through an already emotionally difficult period in their lives. Having accurate data is vital for FSOs to assess their pension, severance, and plan for life post RIF.



We ask for your assurance that these data errors will be corrected and that you confirm there will be no delays in receiving pension payments or severance.

Altogether, we believe that these proposals represent a fair and cost-effective process for employees of USAID, both those continuing and those who will be separating from the government through no fault of their own, to navigate the upcoming transition. Thank you for your leadership and your attention to these matters and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Tom Yazdgerdi, AFSA President

Randy Chester, AFSA USAID Vice President

CC:

Department of State

Amb. Tibor Nagy, Acting Undersecretary for Management
Catherine Rodriguez, Senior Bureau Official, GTM
Steve Polson, Chief Labor Management Negotiator, GTM/PC

U.S. Agency for International Development

Jeremy Lewin, performing the duties of Deputy Administrator
Sepidah Keyvanshad, SDAA and Acting CHCO
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