

OneAID Community Updates

March 14, 2025

www.OneAIDCommunity.org

A Note from OneAID Community Organizers

The last seven weeks have felt like seven lifetimes for those of us working in the international assistance space. We have watched a rapid dismantling of an architecture that may have been ready for reform but did not need to be destroyed with a sledgehammer. We have witnessed devastating impacts on the communities we have committed our lives to serving as the United States abandoned its commitments abroad, and we have watched dedicated colleagues from around the world begin to walk into the unknown as we lose the mission-driven careers we loved. As a cadre of doers, and fixers, and people who just generally want to make the world a better place, sitting idly by in this moment just wasn't an option. Instead, the community came together. USAID staff, implementing partners, friends, family, supporters, and others rallied together trying to find some hope and trying to stop the unraveling of an agency that was not perfect, but did so much good in its 63 year history.

OneAID Community came into being as two USAID colleagues met on February 1 and decided to use their skills from careers across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus *[there's some USAID work for you all!]* to bring people together and try to do the right thing. We found the other doers and the helpers, hopped on Signal calls, and figured out where the gaps were that needed to be filled in this rapid response advocacy movement. We sought out the trailblazing team behind USAIDStopWork.com whose Stop-Work Order (SWO) groups were already leveraging the expertise of USAID's implementing partners, and we built out a network of networks focused on factual, consistent messaging that could resonate with all Americans, and help them understand why fighting for USAID and international assistance was not only the important thing to do but the right thing to do.

Dedicated OneAID volunteers and collaborators built this community from there and have since accomplished incredible things, from pounding the pavement on Capitol Hill and in their districts and bringing constituents together for meetings with their representatives, to making sure the press and legal teams in the various court cases got their facts right by sharing the knowledge and expertise from decades of experience, to providing support and care for fellow USAID staff and partners impacted by this tremendous loss.

In just seven short (but long) weeks, the OneAID Community has:

- Built a grassroots effort, coordinated by **30** lead organizers working with over **250** volunteers on press and congressional engagement, information management, staff support, community coordination, social media, and legal issues.
- Supported the establishment of **36** state groups now partnered with OneAID.
- Shared information through our three broadcast channels with over **2,200** Signal users.
- Launched a [public-facing website](#) to ensure you have the consistent and reliable information and support you need.
- Published **15** editions of the [Community Updates](#) tracking key developments and impacts of the dismantling of USAID and the dramatic changes in international

assistance as we knew it, that has become a resource for hill staff, policymakers, and others.

- Facilitated over **30** meetings with Congressional offices in a rapidly changing landscape where the judicial and congressional branches of government were our only means to change the course of events.
 - Within the first 48 hours of being furloughed, a group of more than 25 USAID-contracted staff (ISCs) met with the staff of 8 House Foreign Affairs Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee members, both Democratic and Republican, some of whom USAID staff continue to follow up with.
 - On March 12 alone, more than 80 foreign aid supporters delivered over 250 constituent letters to over 100 Senate and House offices. In addition, constituent-led groups of current and former USAID and implementing partner staff attended scheduled meetings throughout this week (in addition to meetings and letters delivered during previous weeks) with Members and/or staffers in 33 Congressional offices to share their experiences and how foreign aid makes America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

Next week the **OneAID Community is taking a strategic pause** to regroup and refocus for the marathon ahead. During this period we will not publish our regular updates but will remain ready to issue flash updates if the ever-changing context requires. Today and always, the OneAID Community stands in solidarity with those who support continued international assistance and believe in upholding democracy—we remain committed to serving as a nonpartisan communication and coordination platform to facilitate our collective efforts.

We would also like to acknowledge and express our sincere appreciation for those beyond this community that have welcomed the information we offer and have used our updates for advocacy. To ensure we are publishing Community Updates that support your efforts and keep you informed, **please let us know what is most helpful for you** by completing [this survey](#) by **Wednesday, March 19 at 5:00 pm EST**.

Key Updates

- **The Senate is likely to advance a continuing resolution on Friday** that undermines international assistance and gives away much of Congress's "power of the purse" to the executive branch.
- **The Trump Administration and DOGE continue to gut the government and obfuscate:** After DOGE illegally dismantled U.S. foreign assistance agencies, this model is now being applied to other agencies. Documents the government provided in the *Does v. Musk* case raise as many questions about who ordered what as they answer.
- **Courts provide some checks to overreach with latest orders to reinstate probationary federal employees**, while other requests for payment and relief are still pending. AFSA and AFGE, now with Oxfam, are renewing efforts to block the Trump administration from dismantling USAID itself. Most USAID staff remain in limbo, with recent evacuees from overseas posts owed thousands of dollars.

- **Keep calling your senators and representatives.**
 - Use the [OneAID call script](#) to **demand your representatives vote NO on the Continuing Resolution that not only undermines international assistance, but doesn't even guarantee how the money will be spent.** Directly contradicting Article 1 of the Constitution, this unprecedented measure would give away Congress's "power of the purse" to defer to the executive branch.

More details below...

Senate to Advance Continuing Resolution on Friday, with Requisite Number of Democrats Planning to Vote for Cloture

- Today, March 14, the Senate plans to take up a House-passed bill to fund the government through September, avoiding a government shutdown with funding expiring at 11:59 pm. Republicans need 60 votes to invoke cloture (definition: limiting debate on a measure of a matter) and advance the measure and allow a final vote on passage.
- Senator Schumer said on Thursday night that he would vote for cloture and had reportedly lined up enough other Democratic votes to allow the Republican bill to pass ([New York Times](#)). On Monday, Democrats had introduced an alternative, shorter-term resolution, criticizing "Speaker Johnson's slush fund continuing resolution" as "empower[ing] President Trump and Elon Musk to pick winners and losers with taxpayer dollars", as it "shortchanges families and includes painful funding cuts for bipartisan domestic priorities like cancer research, Army Corps projects, and much more." ([House](#))
- Constituents are urging their elected leaders to vote against cloture and against the current budget resolution, which fails to put into place safeguards to hold the Trump administration accountable in the wake of its major violations of Congress's power of the purse as it was drafted without Democratic input and fails to protect foreign aid funding that benefits [their states](#). ([NPR](#))
- The bill also cuts almost \$1B of the District of Columbia's budget, which is funded by D.C.'s own taxpayer dollars. ([The Hill](#))

The Trump Administration and DOGE Continue to Gut the Government

- After DOGE illegally dismantled U.S. foreign assistance agencies, this model is now being applied to other agencies.
- The Department of Education and IRS seem to be next on the list after objectives for USAID were achieved (see: [Project 2025 Tracker](#)), with DOGE proposing to downsize the IRS by 20 percent in the middle of tax season. ([CNN](#), [WaPo](#))
- On March 13, the Government defendants in the Does v. Musk case produced a number of redacted emails and other documents in response to Plaintiff's request for documents explaining the authority under which a number of recent decisions were taken, including several rounds of placing staff on administrative leave, the shutdown of USAID headquarters, and the termination of nearly 800 personal services contractors.
 - The responses were widely noted as being problematic, both in terms of their timing—as some documents purported to explain who authorized decisions were dated after the decision occurred—and in terms of whether they were actually

- responsive to the Judge's information requests, as some only showed that a decision had been implemented, not who ordered it. ([Anna Bower, Lawfare](#))
- The Trump administration continues to misrepresent their dismantling of USAID as a sincere effort to consider and retain valuable programs. In reality:
 - Only after the Trump administration's February 26 court filing claiming Rubio had "individually reviewed" each program and determined whether terminating it was in the country's "national interest" did the government instruct USAID staff and implementing partners to complete a "foreign assistance review" survey assessing their programs against the administration's priorities.
 - Before the survey's March 11 deadline, Secretary Rubio tweeted that the review was officially over and that USAID was retaining 1,000 programs while cutting 5,200. Since then, the USAID staff assigned to review awards, including those already canceled, *were instructed to make sure the number of awards they cancel match Rubio's tweet*. Per a USAID staff member involved in the review: "After going through this exercise to really demonstrate why a lot of this stuff contributes to saving lives, and have it dismissed as saying: 'Well, we've got a target that was determined by a tweet, and we have to hit that benchmark?' It's not a good look." ([Devex](#))

Courts Provide Some Checks to Overreach with Latest Orders to Reinstate Probationary Staff, Other Relief Still Pending

- Employees from several agencies have received additional relief from the courts, including in a lawsuit brought by federal employee unions. On March 13, U.S. District Judge Alsup ordered the Trump administration to "immediately" reinstate all fired probationary employees in the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, Energy, Interior, Treasury, and Agriculture. ([New Republic](#))
- Later on March 13, in a lawsuit brought by Democratic state attorneys general, a second federal judge ordered the mass reinstatement of probationary federal workers fired by the Trump administration from 18 agencies. ([NPR](#))
- On March 13, Judge Nichols issued an order setting up a schedule for AFSA and AFGE's motion for summary judgment that stretches into early May, with the Government's brief in support of their motion to dismiss the case due on May 5. AFSA and AFGE have now added Oxfam to their suit and this week argued that the effort to decimate USAID violates Constitutional separation of powers as well as the statute establishing USAID and appropriations law, which requires Congressional approval before initiating any reorganization. ([GovExec](#))
- However, most USAID staff remain stuck in limbo. For example, the U.S. government reportedly still owes a cumulative \$400,000 in payments to a group of USAID employees evacuated from the Congo. One USAID official describes escaping violence in an emergency evacuation and the difficult return to the United States amid leadership turmoil and limited support from their government employer. Responding to Trump administration criticisms that USAID workers are anti-American, this worker said, "We love America more than anybody. We love it so much we're trying to export the ideas of America to the Congo, which is a difficult assignment even by USAID standards." ([ABC](#))

Happening Next Week

- **Wednesday, March 19 [Atlantic Council Event](#):** Director of Foreign Assistance, and key architect of USAID's dismantling, Pete Marocco, speaks to "The Future of U.S. Foreign Aid and Global Development" in a fireside chat moderated by Atlantic Council president Fred Kempe.

Consistent Topline Messages (Talking Points)

Preserving Foreign Assistance as a U.S. Foreign Policy Tool

- An effort from the Trump administration and Congress to reform and streamline U.S. foreign assistance is welcome, however, **the current approach is not a serious reform effort**: it is an ineffective, sloppy power grab that is—unintentionally or not—destroying U.S. foreign assistance apparatus and depriving the U.S. of a critical soft-power tool. Foreign assistance keeps us safer here at home while demonstrating American generosity and saving millions of lives worldwide.
- This flawed power grab is evident in the **broken waiver process, which lacked clear procedures and failed to operate effectively, as well as the cancellation of over 10,000 State and USAID contracts**, some of which had already been granted waivers.
- Despite the Administration's claims, **even life-saving and critical national security projects approved for waivers by Secretary Rubio have not received funding**. This stems from rushed, careless efforts to alter USAID's financial system (Phoenix), rendering it non-operational and incapable of processing payments. This includes efforts to stem an Ebola outbreak that could infect Americans, HIV prevention and treatment, and sensitive work in conflict zones.
- The Trump Administration's efforts to dismantle USAID has **left the U.S. without the systems, experienced personnel, or partners necessary to responsibly and strategically implement foreign assistance**.
- Americans agree: foreign assistance is a powerful U.S. soft-power tool, and [89 percent](#) of Americans support spending at least 1 percent of our federal budget on foreign aid. For this reason, **Congress must halt these illegal actions by DOGE and instead implement a more strategic, sensible reform effort that restores the legislative branch's important oversight function**.

USAID: The first, but not the last

- USAID is the playbook for President Trump and Elon Musk's plan for a **rapid and potentially illegal overhaul of the U.S. Government** without required Congressional approval and oversight for agencies codified by statute. Reform is welcome, but what DOGE is doing is not reform, it is taking a sledgehammer to destroy a vital tool of U.S. national security.
- Rep. Bacon (R-NE) underscored this in his comments to the Wall Street Journal: "[USAID was] funding a lot of stupid stuff—that's a fact. But they're also doing a lot of good stuff too. So you don't want to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Instead of taking a sledgehammer, let's get out the scalpel."

- **Some Republican Senators have joined their Democratic colleagues in expressing alarm** over the Trump administration’s foreign aid freeze and gutting of USAID. [Lindsey Graham \(R-SC\), Lisa Murkowski \(R-AK\), and Susan Collins \(R-ME\) wrote](#) to Secretary Rubio stating they believe the State Department is acting unlawfully by failing to notify and consult Congress during the process.
- Instead of undertaking a reform effort—working closely with Congress as is required by law—DOGE has taken a “burn it all down” approach, including mass firings and major infringements on Congress’s power of the purse. This may work for tech firms, but it is a **dangerous approach for government institutions that must remain accountable to taxpayers, enforce and follow laws, and deliver public goods.**

Additional Resources for Information and Messaging

- [USAIDStopWork website](#) and [USAIDStopWork Bluesky](#)
- <https://www.foreignaidfreeze.org/>
- Friends of USAID: [Instagram](#), [X/Twitter](#), [YouTube](#)