

US Agency for International Development

USAID staff placed on leave and ordered home from overseas posts

Trump ally Elon Musk has said aid agency will be dismantled



The US Agency for International Development building sits closed in Washington on Monday © Kent Nishimura/Reuters

Felicia Schwartz in Washington 6 HOURS AGO

The Trump administration will place most US Agency for International Development employees on leave beginning on Friday and is ordering overseas staff to return to the US within 30 days.

The move, communicated to [USAID](#) employees in an internal email and on its website, is the latest in a series of blows to Washington's main foreign assistance agency over the past two weeks, as President Donald Trump and his billionaire ally Elon Musk reshape the US government and cut what they describe as wasteful federal spending.

The announcement sparked panic among thousands of USAID personnel in Washington and around the world, many of whom are serving overseas with their families.

Since Trump took office, secretary of state Marco Rubio has [ordered a freeze](#) to all foreign assistance, later adding some exceptions for "life-saving" humanitarian assistance. Musk has said he is in the process of dismantling the agency.

Rubio notified Congress on Monday that he had [become the acting administrator](#) and was exploring absorbing parts of USAID into the state department.

After Friday, “all USAID direct hire personnel will be placed on administrative leave globally, with the exception of designated personnel responsible for mission-critical functions, core leadership and specially designated programs”, the agency said in a notice on its website.

It added that essential personnel expected to continue working would be informed of their status by Thursday afternoon. USAID will consider “case-by-case exceptions and return travel extensions” for family or personal circumstances and mobility and safety concerns, according to the notice.

About two-thirds of USAID’s 10,000 employees serve overseas in more than 60 missions, according to the Congressional Research Service.

Because USAID was established by Congress as an independent body, the president does not have the authority to abolish it. However, Trump in the past few days has demonstrated broad latitude to hollow it out.

“Congress still has to act if you really want to kill USAID, but until that happens this is the end,” said a former senior USAID official. “The nail in the coffin is being hammered in.”

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