

[View in browser](#)



AFSA Meeting with USAID Administrator Power

January 9, 2024

USAID Administrator Power met with AFSA President Tom Yazdgerdi, USAID Vice President Randy Chester, and USAID Board Member Chris Saenger to discuss the future of the Foreign Service. In addition, Deputy Administrator Paloma Adams-Allen, Counselor Clinton White, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management Kathryn Davis Stevens, and Chief of Staff Dennis Vega participated in the meeting. This was the first meeting between current AFSA leadership and Agency leaders. The meeting provided AFSA an opportunity to express its gratitude for the Agency's support of the USAID Foreign Service Officer (FSO) corps and to highlight opportunities for collaboration and continued engagement.

The Administrator noted that "FSOs are the core of the Agency workforce," and her commitment to increasing not only its numbers but strengthening the overall health and professional status of the service. Tom Yazdgerdi used the opportunity to ask about her vision for strengthening the service and where AFSA can assist in the process. The Administrator pointed to efforts to improve mentoring and training for senior leaders (the Deputy Mission Director coaching and mentoring program in the Africa Bureau is one example), but she also noted the need for additional training (soft skills, diplomacy, and career planning to name a few), coaching and mentoring opportunities more broadly for FSOs at all levels. Both agreed that there is a need to address perceived and real skills gaps as part of reimagining development and diplomacy.

Mr. Yazdgerdi took the opportunity to discuss the Agency's planned Strategic Workforce Planning Committee. The Administrator noted this as an opportunity for the Agency to get a fuller understanding of its current and future workforce needs and provide a better means of oversight. AFSA asked to be a part of this important committee as it starts its work later this month. Agency representatives and USAID VP Chester are currently discussing how AFSA can participate in this on-going strategic workforce dialogue. Additionally, the AFSA President asked about USAID's funding issues – notably the challenges stemming from the funding split between programmatic and operational “pots” – that limit new FSO hiring. He noted that AFSA is in regular contact with supporters on the Hill and is willing to assist the Agency with messages to increase support for hiring new FSOs and other means to strengthen the workforce. Deputy Administrator Adams-Allen and others agreed that this would be beneficial and that she and VP Chester had previously discussed common messaging and will work closely on this and other areas where AFSA and Agency policy coincide; in December 2023, AFSA and the Agency earlier shared their policy objectives for 2024 as a starting point.

Lastly, AFSA expressed its commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) principles. The AFSA President conveyed his thanks for the Agency's commitment to DEIA and to affording AFSA representatives the opportunity and space to participate in this important dialogue. He noted that the State Department had just completed its first year implementing expanded DEIA considerations in their promotion process and that there was much to be learned and shared. The Administrator highlighted the importance of DEIA not in just how we treat each other but in how we hold ourselves accountable and how we program U.S. taxpayer funding.

The meeting highlighted the importance of a close and working relationship between the Agency and AFSA. Both leaders noted and all agreed that there is much to agree on and areas where we can work together towards advancing the work and life of our FSO corps. Both also noted that there will be times where we disagree, but that should not prevent us from moving forward with our common agenda.

For more information and/or to comment on this meeting, join VP Chester for his active duty members only meeting call on January 24. You can also reach out to chester@afsa.org or rchester@usaid.gov with any questions or issues.



American Foreign Service Association, 2101 E St. NW, Washington, DC 20037,
member@afsa.org, (202) 338-4045

[Unsubscribe](#) [Manage preferences](#)