



# USAID Alumni Association

## April 2025 Newsletter

### Note from the UAA Board

It may be tempting to think that the events concerning USAID over the past two months may be a part of an elaborate April Fools' joke. It is not. On Friday March 28<sup>th</sup>, the Administration notified Congress that it is basically dissolving USAID and moving its now much-reduced functions to the Department of State. As if to underscore that reality, the news of the earthquake in Myanmar (Burma) has been dominating the international news. Conspicuously so far without help from the American people although the Administration has said it will provide assistance. Many of our active-duty colleagues also received RIF notices.

Your association led by the Board, Executive Committees, and volunteers is busy working on ways to assist and to coordinate efforts with other organizations and the many other folks responding to the demise of USAID. The UAA has organized its efforts along the following lines: Communications and Media, Support to Colleagues (Repatriating Staff, FSNs, US based Staff), Keeper of the Flame (including Foreign Aid 2.0), and coordination with Allied Organizations and Groups.

On another front, several ideas, suggestions, proposals and recommendations have started to appear regarding the future of USAID after merger with State. Two main ones are the recommendations from [Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network \(MFAN\)](#) and a report by the [Center for Strategic and International Studies \(CSIS\)](#). Lastly, the State Department, in the context of the 2025 budget and the recently passed Continuing Resolution, has submitted a CN which includes the plan for the remainder of FY2025, and plans for absorbing USAID in 2026. This CN explicitly recognizes the need for legislation to implement their plans. The CN can be accessed [here](#).

As always please let us know if you have questions or ideas. We are an all-volunteer association, so we need you to sign up for our various committees. In particular please consider declaring your interest in filling the upcoming Board vacancies. You will be getting more information on this later this month. Finally, do not neglect to read the final article in today's Newsletter, an open letter to the American people from an FSO in Kampala.

## Calendar of Upcoming UAA Events

***New!* Spring Reception – May 29, 2025, 3-5:30 at DACOR Bacon.** We're planning for a hybrid event, and we are seeking a few volunteers to facilitate the discussion. Please reach out to Karen Freeman at [ugandakaren@hotmail.com](mailto:ugandakaren@hotmail.com) if you can serve as moderator. This is a free event for UAA members.

***New!* Save the date for the Annual "Development Wallahs" picnic. The picnic will take place on Wednesday, July 23, 2025, in Rochester, Vermont.** Everyone is welcome and we are looking for a great turnout! For more information, please contact Ann Van Dusen ([avandusen4@gmail.com](mailto:avandusen4@gmail.com)), Anne Aarnes ([ahaarnes@hotmail.com](mailto:ahaarnes@hotmail.com)), or Connie Carrino ([cacarrino@gmail.com](mailto:cacarrino@gmail.com)).

***New!* Save the date for the annual picnic that will take place on Sept 7 at Ft Hunt Park.** This year we will open the event to UAA members as well as USAID former FSNs here in the U.S.

**Informal Gatherings.** Several concerts this summer at Wolf Trap caught our interest – Chicago will be playing on July 23. Pink Martini plays on July 29 and Emmylou Harris & Graham Nash on July 31. Please reach out to Karen Freeman ([ugandakaren123@gmail.com](mailto:ugandakaren123@gmail.com)) or Margot Ellis ([ellismargot@gmail.com](mailto:ellismargot@gmail.com)) if you are interested in joining us for any of the events.

## What's New

**In Memoriam:** Margaret Ann Healey, Patricia Kasdan, Harold Freeman, Roy L. Prosterman, Roy A. Stacy, Barbara Stumpf Adams, Derek Staughton Singer, John J. Gaudet

**NOTE: Bulletin Board and Article entries during the last month have been too numerous to list all of them here, so only a few that deserve special mention and did not receive wide distribution follow. For those interested in seeing more, please follow these links:**

- 1) [Bulletin Board](#)
- 2) [Articles](#)

### **Bulletin Board**

- **UAA Letter to SecState Rubio, March 15, 2025**
  - **Special Note from the UAA Board, March 12, 2025**
  - **Stand Up for Aid Situation Report #7 04.04.2025**
  - **Stand Up for Aid Foreign Aid Review Timeline 03.28.2025**
  - **OneAID Community Update, 1 Apr 2025**
  - **OneAID Community USAID Administrative Leave & RIF FAQ Guide, updated 26 Mar 2025**
  - **OneAID Community Flash Update, 19 Mar 2025**
  - **LITIGATION TRACKER: LEGAL CHALLENGES TO TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS through March 24, 2025.** Attached is a Litigation Summary (“LS”) updated through March 24, 2025. The LS is adapted from the comprehensive “Litigation Tracker” prepared and updated by the folks at Just Security (<https://www.justsecurity.org/>). The full “Litigation Tracker” can be found at <https://www.justsecurity.org/107087/tracker-litigation-legal-challenges-trump-administration/>. All material added to the LS since the March 19 update is highlighted in red. From Rob Sonenthal, UAA.
  - **Friday Round-Up: Litigation Updates and ICYMI Highlights from AFSA, 21 Mar 2025**
  - **AFSA Resources on Retirement, Separation, and Post-Foreign Service Life.** 5 Mar 2025
-

## **Articles**

(Click on the "Articles" link above for more articles posted on our website. Click on the boldface item headings there and below for a hyperlink to the full article or video.)

- **Liz Schroyer Reports, and THE GLOBAL GAB: America Stepping Back, Rivals Stepping In, and Growing Action for International Assistance.** USGLC, 3 Apr 2025
- **USAID's big moving plans and 'final mission' for staff.** By Anna Gawel, *Devex Newswire*, 31 Mar 2025
- **The gutting of U.S.A.I.D. is likely to hinder recovery efforts in Myanmar.** By Tim Balk, *The New York Times*, 29 Mar 2025
- **Trump gets it wrong on foreign aid. Column by Jim Bednar in Valley News of West Lebanon, NH, 28 Mar 2025**
- On Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Resilience. By Ambassador Mark A. Green, *Wilson Center blog*, 5 Mar 2025
- **Trump administration reveals its plans to Congress to 'abolish' USAID.** By Adva Saldinger and Elissa Miolene, *Devex*, 28 Mar 2025

---

## **Jobs & Volunteer Opportunities**

[Upcoming Job Fairs in Virginia and DC, April and May 2025 \(click to follow link\)](#)

## Recent UAA Regional Gatherings Across the Country

### In Florida



Carey Gordon flanked by State colleagues

On Friday March 21 UAA Board members Roberta Mahoney and Ken Yamashita traveled to St Petersburg, Florida to take part in the quarterly meeting of the Florida chapter of the Foreign Service Retired Association (FSRA). David McCloud, UAA's main point of contact for the UAA initiative to create a USAID support fund, also attended. Over 70 attendees listened and shared concerns regarding the dismantling of USAID and where the assistance functions might end up at State.

Following the meeting, the UAA members from Florida met separately with California-based alumni who are establishing a second UAA regional chapter. The two groups discussed future events and greater engagement with state-level alumni, especially as USAID employees start to return to the U.S.

## **In California**

In response to the dismantling of USAID and the subsequent return of our USAID family from abroad, the UAA California Regional Branch (CRB) is rapidly growing and updating its USAID members' spreadsheet, identifying those who are already living in California (and where) and those who plan to return/move to California from overseas (where and ETA California). Our current list: 25 current California residents, 31 planning to return/move to California.

On 14 March 2025, UAA/CRB hosted its first state-wide Zoom. 14 former USAID California FSOs were on the call. Ken Yamashita, Jim Bever, and Miles Toder joined us. We introduced ourselves, shared memories, and concluded with a commitment to support our USAID family's return/move to California in response to the unplanned dismantling of USAID. We plan to welcome and support them as we build our California USAID community.

## **In New Hampshire**



In March, UAA sponsored "From the American People: Why Foreign Aid Matters", a panel discussion organized by New Hampshire-based UAA members Jim Bednar, Susan Fine and retired State FSO Tom Hull. The first event, held at a church in Sunapee, attracted an audience of 60 and inspired the panelists to organize a second event in

neighboring Grantham that attracted 30 people on a snowy Monday night.

The presentation explained what foreign aid is, USAID's role, how America benefits – using examples from panelists' experience - and the impacts of the aid cut-off and dissolution of USAID. Attendees expressed how much they learned and were alarmed by the toll of aid cuts. Many were energized and asked what they could do. The panelists advised the audience to spread the word about how cutting foreign aid hurts America and to press legislators to preserve foreign aid and the capacity to deliver it responsibly. A USAID cake (not UAA-funded) was served at the end!



## Notes from the Social Committee

**Winterfest 2025.** Due to other vital issues, we did not post photos from Winterfest in the last newsletter. We link those [here](#). Thank you all for your support and participation. We had record participation, a good discussion, and an outpouring of support for plans to engage and support our foreign service colleagues in their return to the US.

**Spring Reception – May 29, 2025, 3-5:30 at Dacor Bacon.** Please bring your partner or a guest and join us on May 29 from 3 – 5:30 pm for this great opportunity to see former colleagues and old friends and spend some time catching up on what everyone is doing and the future of the Agency we have been following so closely. We expect to identify our keynote speaker soon, and we hope to have a panel representing the development community and think tanks. We also look forward to sharing information on UAA actions. We're planning for a hybrid event, and we are seeking a few volunteers to facilitate the discussion. Please reach out if you can serve as moderator. We plan to share the program and allow for interaction from 3:30 – 4:15 PM EDT to connect with our colleagues from across the country. This is a free event for UAA members. As always, we're on a drive to increase the membership of UAA so we encourage you to bring or invite those eligible to become new members. The link for registration will be provided at a later date.

## Development Dialogues

### UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue

#### Dr. Charles Pannenberg and Richard Seifman on The Severe Impact of a Plastics Pandemic



*Richard Seifman and Dr. Charles "OK" Pannenberg at DACOR*

"The Severe Impact of a Plastics Pandemic" was the topic of the UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue on Friday, February 7, 2025. Dr. Charles "OK" Pannenberg and Richard Seifman led attendees (both in-person and on-line) through the very serious health concerns – including fertility ramifications – caused by the already widespread and increasingly dangerous presence of plastic in everyone's lives. If you missed it, please [click here](#) to see the video.



## Profile

(Please note that our monthly Profile has been temporarily suspended.)

**In its place this month we provide a very thoughtful piece, an open letter to the American people from USAID FSO Meghan Waters in Kampala. It was written the day after the RIF notices went out.**

---

Last night, all US staff at USAID were given notice that we will lose our jobs as of July or September 1. We were told this is being done for the good of the nation and because we don't seem to understand how to align with the America First agenda. People keep telling me how sorry they feel for us and how it's just so sad for those of us impacted.

It's hard to respond to this reaction because it's not us I feel most sorry for. I could write books on how horrible I feel for the millions and millions of people whose lives this is going to upend, or even end, all around the world. Who I also feel so sorry for, though, are the American people who don't work for USAID.

I'm sorry that you never had the opportunity to come to the field and see how very much we do for you. What we do for the most vulnerable people in the world is amazing, but what I'm sorry for is that a majority of US citizens don't seem to understand what we do for them, with less than 1% of the US budget.

I'm sorry that you never had the opportunity to sit under a mango tree with men, women and children in a conflict prone area who tell you how grateful they are to the American people for keeping them alive with food and clean water. I'm sorry you don't hear them tell you how that alone helps keep the conflict from worsening. I'm sorry that you may not understand how that impacts US national security, making America safer. Don't believe me? Ask someone who works with DoD.

I'm sorry that you can't meet with the farmer cooperatives in Paraguay who used USAID funding to develop dairy and beef industries to a level they are ready for export, opening a way for US importers to be more prosperous.

I'm sorry that you couldn't spend a week visiting hospitals to see children being vaccinated, patients with rare diseases being treated,

malaria patients receiving medication, all thanks to the American people. I so desperately wish you could realize how that work keeps those diseases from reaching your shores.

I'm sorry that not every American person could spend a week in the life of USAID to understand how our tiny little Agency moves the world in your favor.

This is an awful situation, but there is no reason to feel sorry for us. We have spent our lives working with the world's most vulnerable people, we know what real challenges look like. We see people hurting or even dying and we don't turn away, we let it push us to do more, to be better. We have served in war zones, amidst life threatening pandemics, in places where we are constantly being attacked and even as our families are being evacuated, we keep focused on saving as many lives as we can. We have looked dictators in the eye and told them we will not let them win. We have a global network of contacts and people whose back we have had, who will surely have ours when needed. Do not feel sorry for us. We will be ok. I hope we can say the same for the country we so proudly served, on your behalf, American people.

**Make Your 2025 UAA Membership Contribution**  
**USAID Alumni Association**