

State Dept Bureau of Disaster and Humanitarian Response. *Devex*, 23 Mar 2026

Lean and mean, or just mean?

The [State Department](#) is touting the fact that while its **newly announced Bureau of Disaster and Humanitarian Response** is smaller than its predecessor at USAID, [it will be “faster, more targeted, efficient, and effective.”](#)

It’ll have to be a hell of a lot more efficient to make up for the sheer loss in size between the two bureaus. The old Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance employed over 1,000 staff members. According to planning documents obtained by Devex last month, this **new version will consist of a little more than 200 employees**. At \$5.4 billion, the budget has been hollowed out — much like the other former [USAID](#) functions that absorbed massive cuts during their transition to the State Department.

The new bureau also comes with fresh leadership, my colleague Michael Igoe writes. **Ryan Shrum**, who served as USAID’s senior adviser for legislative and congressional affairs, will become the senior bureau official. **Karrie Peterson**, who has served at the State Department since 2018, will be chief of staff. **Paul Seong**, a former foreign service officer, will serve as principal deputy assistant secretary, and **Meghan Hanson, Dan Dieckhaus, and Taylor Garrett** will hold the remaining deputy assistant secretary positions.

Eventually, the bureau will be led by its own assistant secretary, though this person has yet to be named and nominated, according to an internal note obtained by Devex.

It will also “consolidate disaster response, humanitarian assistance, and food security capacities,” and represents “a critical milestone in the Department’s efforts to deliver on Secretary Rubio’s America First foreign assistance agenda,” reads the notice.

An official with the new bureau who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity ahead of the announcement said it would **focus on “life-saving” aid rather than “social causes,”** according to [Reuters](#).

“We are going to pick more carefully the stuff that we respond to. It’s not the United States’ responsibility to respond to every disaster, every crisis, especially when our adversaries or groups that hate the United States are at issue,” the official said.

Read: [State Dept. announces new humanitarian bureau, leadership team](#)