

USAID closeout chaos. *Devex*, 6 Mar 2026

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The long goodbye at USAID is getting messy. Inside the agency's so-called legacy unit — the tiny team left to close out the remains of what was once a 10,000-person aid powerhouse — morale is grim. Check out my colleague [Michael Igoe's special newsletter](#) for more on this.

A few dozen career officials are now trying to untangle thousands of terminated awards and hundreds of millions of dollars owed to former partners, all while operating under what insiders describe as **toxic mistrust, impossible deadlines, and constantly shifting instructions** from political appointees at the White House Office of Management and Budget.

The process was supposed to be done by tomorrow. That deadline has quietly slipped, with remaining staff now extended through Sept. 30. In the meantime, insiders say the process has ground down even the officials who stayed out of a sense of duty to partners they hoped to get paid. **“Their intention is not to pay,”** says a former [USAID](#) official who was involved in the closeout process. “They’re pushing back against everything.”

Even routine closeout tasks can take months — and in this case, they’re being done without the country mission staff who knew the projects best. Meanwhile, contractors say **they haven’t been paid termination costs since September**, leaving some to rely on loans while they wait. One CEO sums up the mood: “They think that we are part of this woke den of thieves who somehow have been getting fat on foreign assistance.”