

Democrats demand answers on USAID close-out costs. By Helen Murphy, Devex, 21 May 2026

Fuzzy math

House Democrats are demanding receipts on the Trump administration's USAID shutdown — and accusing the White House of **turning an “efficiency” drive into an expensive mess.**

In a May 19 letter first seen by Devex, Rep. **Gregory Meeks** of New York and Rep. **Robert Garcia** of California pressed **Eric Ueland**, the White House Office of Management and Budget official overseeing USAID's closeout, [to explain how the administration plans to finish dismantling the agency.](#)

“American taxpayers should not have to pay for this Administration's waste and ineptitude, especially when the Trump Administration's purported justification for dismantling USAID was to boost efficiency,” they wrote.

The lawmakers said Ueland **failed to explain the math behind the administration's plan** to use \$19.2 billion to complete the closeout, or when American companies and nonprofits owed money by [USAID](#) will actually be paid. They also warned there is no contingency plan if the process stretches beyond the current Sept. 30 deadline.

That matters because the so-called Legacy Unit has about four-and-a-half months to close out more than 4,000 terminated USAID awards — after managing just over 1,000 in the past six months. Meanwhile, contractors brought in to help were reportedly barred from having prior USAID experience, **“leaving a skeleton staff to shutter a \$30 billion agency.”**

The backdrop is not exactly confidence-inspiring: [USAID Office of Inspector General](#) found the agency paid nearly \$9 million in interest fees last year on unpaid vendor debts — **more than six times the previous 10 years combined.** Now, Democrats want another briefing, written answers, and a clearer accounting of how much this shutdown is really going to cost.

Read: [Democrats demand answers on USAID closeout process](#)