



USAID Alumni Association

May 2026 Newsletter

Note from the UAA Board

The USAID Alumni Association brings together those who share a deep commitment to public service and the mission that defined our careers.

As Congress designates the first Friday in May to honor members of the U.S. Foreign Service, this moment offers an opportunity to reflect on that service—and to recognize the contributions made in support of both global partners and the American people.

The USAID Memorial Wall honoring those who lost their lives in service has been installed at the State Department's D Street entrance. A rededication ceremony is expected to take place on May 4, during which additional names will be formally recognized. This tribute ensures that the sacrifices of our colleagues are permanently acknowledged. We have requested that the USAID Alumni Association be represented at this important event, alongside former colleagues and family members of the fallen, so that we can join in paying our respects. We are awaiting confirmation.

UAA has also engaged the State Department to express our concerns regarding recent restrictions that affect FSNs. These measures have serious implications for former local staff, many of whom worked alongside U.S. personnel under difficult and often dangerous conditions. The UAA has strongly urged that clear exceptions be included in all relevant immigration and travel policies to protect these individuals.

We are particularly concerned by recent reporting that approximately 1,100 Afghans—including interpreters, military partners, civil society leaders, and families of our local staff—may be redirected to third countries following the suspension of U.S. resettlement pathways. These individuals placed their trust in the United States, often at great personal risk. We will continue to advocate on their behalf.

Finally, we want to underscore the importance of outreach. We hope those who participated in recent training sessions found them valuable, and we encourage you to share your experiences and efforts. Outreach materials are now available on the UAA website, and we look forward to building greater engagement across our community.

We also hope to see many of you at the Spring Reception on May 28—a chance to reconnect, reflect, and reaffirm the shared values that unite us.

Calendar of Upcoming UAA Events

***New!* Tuesday, May 12, 11:45-2:00 at DACOR for a UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue with former A/AID Brian Atwood.** He will speak on “State and AID – Building Back Better”. Known to many of you, Brian has had an exemplary leadership career in development, diplomacy, Capitol Hill and academia. Currently a Senior Fellow at Brown University’s Watson Institute, he was USAID Administrator in the Clinton Administration, Under-Secretary of State for Management, President of the National Democratic Institute, Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, and much more. Please join us for lunch at DACOR (or online) for a lively discussion of this important topic with a person who has lived in both worlds. Click [here](#) to register.

***New!* On Tuesday, May 19, at 11:00 a.m. the Development Issues Committee is planning a discussion with the Senate Appropriations Committee on State and Foreign Operations (SACFO)** Democratic clerk Alex Carnes. This session will be conducted over Zoom. Click [here](#) to register.

***New!* Tuesday, May 26, 12 noon to 1:30 pm, the third Development Issues Foreign Assistance 2.0 session:** Adventures in Transitioning – Notes on “Policy” in Six Administrations with Mike Crosswell, details to follow.

***New!* May 28 Spring Reception at DACOR Bacon House 3-5 pm**

New! On Friday, June 5, from 11:45 – 2:00 pm there will be a **UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue lunch at DACOR (also virtual) featuring Nicholas Enrich**, former longtime USAID staff member and author of the new book [Into the Wood Chipper – A Whistleblower’s Account of How the Trump Administration Shredded USAID](#). Further details available later.

New! June 10, from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM, **Development Issues Discussion with Sarah Rose on Government Partnerships in Global Health Cooperation**. This session will be conducted over Zoom. [Click here](#) to register.

New! **Wednesday, August 5, 2026, the annual Vermont UAA picnic** will be held in Rochester VT. All alums and friends of USAID who will be in New England in early August are most welcome to attend. For further details, please get in touch with Ann Van Dusen (avandusen4@gmail.com), Anne Aarnes (ahaarnes@hotmail.com) or Connie Carrino (cacarrino@gmail.com)

New! **August 30 UAA Annual Picnic at Ft Hunt Park Area A1 12-3 pm**

New! **October 30 Post-AGM Dinner and a Show**

New! **December 5 UAA Friendsgiving**

What is New on the Website

In Memoriam:

John Holliday Zentay, Ina O. Milton, Thomas “Tom” William Merrick

News About USAID

Unless otherwise stated, the links below are for information purposes only and do not convey the endorsement of the UAA, its members, or its Board. See:

- 1) **Bulletin Board**, including **Statements from UAA about Current Events**
- 2) **Articles**

Bulletin Board

- UAA is pleased to highlight the important work of a group of USAID Alumni — the Democracy Renewal Group (DRG). [Click here](#) for details.

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 articles.)

- **Costs of Closing Down USAID.** *Devex*, 27 April 2026
- **Legislative Update from Dottie Rayburn,** UAA, 25 April 2026
- **Strategy, not charity. World Affairs Council of Central Illinois program addresses USAID.** By Karen Ackerman Witter, *Illinois Times*, 23 April 2026
- **The Demoralization of Foreign Aid.** By Patrick Fine, former USAID Mission Director, *Devex*, 22 April 2026
- **Foreign Assistance in the News.** By Dottie Rayburn, USAID Alumni Association, 17 April 2026
- **A Year After U.S.A.I.D.’s Death, Fired Workers Find Few Jobs and Much Loss.** By Elisabeth Bumiller and Eileen Sullivan, *The New York Times*, 21 April 2026
- **Former USAID health chief documents agency’s turbulent end in new book.** By Sara Jerving, *Devex*, 15 April 2026
- **Whistleblower says Trump officials thought USAID did ‘just abortions,’ asked for ‘Barney-style’ slides before gutting agency, per new book by Nicholas Enrich.** By Marisa Kabas, *The Handbasket*, 13 April 2026
- **The Impact of Ending U.S. International Media Assistance.** By Daniel Sabet and Susan Abbott, both former USAID employees, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 9 April 2026
- **Closing USAID and its deadly consequences.** Op-ed by Mellen Duffy Tanamly and Arthur Greenberg, *The New Hampshire Union Leader*, 10 April 2026
- **Survey: Impacts of the Dismantling of USAID on Aid Sector Employees & Families.** OneAID, 6 April 2026
- **Food systems in ‘triage’ as US aid cuts ripple from farms to food aid.** By Kelli Rogers, *Devex*, 2 Apr 2026
- **Trump’s Cuts Have Eviscerated Once-Bipartisan Foreign Aid Programs.** By Catie Edmondson, *The New York Times*, 2 April 2026
- **Impact of AID cuts in Sudan.** *Devex*, 2 April 2026

Podcast & Recorded Media

- **‘America First’ aid policy reshapes how U.S. delivers global health assistance.** By Fred de Sam Lazaro and Simeon Lancaster, *PBS News Hour*, 23 April 2026

UAA-DACOR Career Panel: Transition to Teaching

On Tuesday, April 21, UAA partnered with DACOR Bacon House to host a Career Panel on Transition to Teaching. The panel featured five representatives, including officials from Fairfax County Public Schools — the largest school system in Virginia and the ninth largest in the nation, with 160,000 students and 13,000 teachers — as well as representatives from the colleges of education at George Mason University and the University of the District of Columbia. The hybrid event drew 12 in-person attendees at DACOR and 45 virtual participants.



The panelists discussed the requirements for becoming a teacher and the various ways to obtain a teaching certificate while working in the classroom. Fairfax County Public Schools hires about 1,500 teachers each year, and the district is eager to recruit candidates with international experience. Fairfax students speak nearly 200 languages and come from many countries, making international experience an asset for understanding student needs.



*The panelists included (left to right in photo):
Tyler Bagi, Social Studies Teacher, Fairfax County Schools
Josh Price, MS, Recruitment Outreach Specialist, College of Education, George Mason University
Anika Spratley Burtin, Ph.D., Interim Dean, School of Education and Learning Services., University of the District of Columbia
William Solomon, Chief Human Resources Officer, Fairfax County Public Schools
Dr. Ann Bonitatibus, Ed.D., Executive Director, Talent Acquisition and Management. Fairfax County Public Schools*

The panelists left a lasting impression with their genuine enthusiasm for transitioning into teaching careers. Their willingness to share personal experiences and insights made the discussion engaging and informative, and their candid discussion of the challenges and rewards of such a shift offered valuable perspectives for anyone considering a similar path. They also offered a wealth of practical advice for navigating this significant career change.

USAID Alumni Regional Activities

From UAA's Regional Chapter in Florida: An Afternoon of Collegiality and Inspiration

On April 25, 2026 a small but mighty group of USAID alums gathered for the first USAID Orange County Alumni meeting. Thanks to tandem couple Leslie Reed and husband Martin Fischer for hosting this meetup at the beautiful Mozambique Rooftop in breathtaking Laguna Beach. Conversations included initial ideas for the "Regional Activities/Chapters, Hubs, etc." substantive role in the October UAA Annual General Meeting. *Those UAA members across the country who have ideas of how we can be represent our regional priorities and activities "outside the Beltway," please contact: cmtsheckler@gmail.com.*



(left to right: Jeffrey Cohen, Leslie Reed, Martin Fischer, Christine Sheckler, Claudia Chang (CARE), Cristina Olive, Steve Olive)

UAA Announcements

Exciting Opportunity for UAA Members - Elections to UAA Board 2026

The UAA Board has three positions available opening in October 2026 and we seek your participation. This is an opportunity to help guide the organization and options for the future of international development, and to support USAID staff. You are a key element in making this happen. Your vast development and organizational experience is critically needed at this time. We are asking you to nominate yourself or to nominate someone else who would be an excellent board member. You only need to be a UAA member in good standing to nominate yourself or someone else.

- Nominations - June 1st, 2026 to July 15th, 2026
- Ballots will be distributed and voting begins September 1-30, 2026
- The election announcement will take place at the Annual General Meeting in October 2026, date to be confirmed.

UAA Board Members Stephen Haykin, Christine Sheckler and Jeanne Briggs are the members of the Nomination Committee 2026 to oversee the nominating process and the elections. Instructions for nominations will be provided in the June 2026 newsletter.

Please send nominations or questions to office@usaidalumni.org.

Free and Low-Cost Primary Health Care Facilities in the DMV area

Many former USAID and Implementing Partner staff living in the DMV area who lost their jobs in 2025 have been unable to find appropriate health insurance. If you are in this category, you may find the attached list of free and low-cost primary health care facilities area useful. The list may be especially useful for those not eligible for Medicaid. Please feel free to share the list with any USAID Implementing Partner staff who might need this information. While this information is publicly available, UAA of course cannot attest to the quality of the providers. Since this list is limited to the DMV area, alumni in other areas may want to develop similar lists if there are former USAID staff and partners in those areas who would benefit from this information. Such lists can also be posted on the UAA website. [Click here](#) to see the DMV list.

Development Dialogues

Multiple Events Ahead with the Development Issues Committee

UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue, Lunch at DACOR (and virtual), BRIAN ATWOOD, "State and AID - Building Back Better," May 12

Tuesday, May 12, 2026 : 11:45 - 2:00 pm. The last fifteen months have been very depressing, to say the least, for those of us interested in development cooperation and the role of USAID in that effort. While dwelling on the past is not fruitful, we can learn from experience, and we must urge decision-makers now and in the next few years to draw on people with special knowledge and skills. An invaluable such expert is Brian Atwood. At a UAA/DACOR lunch on May 12 he will focus on how best to exploit the capacities of the State Department and AID - or its successor - and "Build Back Better." Many of you know and worked with Brian at USAID or State, and you know how he fought, successfully, to maintain AID's independent status in the mid-1990s. Join us to see what Brian thinks about today's situation, what he learned from his experience in the 1990's and since, and what he thinks should happen now. Please join us for lunch and the discussion at the DACOR-Bacon House (1801 F St. NW), or join on-line if you cannot come in-person. [Register here](#).

Development Issues Discussion with Alex Carnes on FY 2027 Appropriations, May 19

Please join us on May 19 from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM for a Development Issues Discussion (virtual) with Alex Carnes, Clerk/Staff Director, of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on the Department of State and Foreign Operations (SACFO). Alex represents one of what are often called “the four corners of appropriations” — i.e. the four committees responsible for drafting and shepherding through the Congress the annual appropriations bill which funds the State Department and other foreign affairs agencies, as well as exercising oversight of all the programs and activities implemented by those agencies. With the Senate currently in Majority Republican control, SACFO is chaired by Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), with the Vice Chairman, or Ranking Member, being Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI) for whom Alex works.

In his discussion with us, Alex can provide insights into Congressional priorities for foreign affairs and foreign assistance programs, as represented in the Fiscal Year 2026 foreign operations funding bill, as well as the outlook in Congress for the President’s foreign affairs budget request for FY 2027. Alex has more than 15 years of experience in the foreign affairs arena, including serving as Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources at the State Department during the Biden Administration. He is a distinguished graduate of the Naval War College, and travels widely to oversee foreign affairs activities. [Click here](#) to register.

Development Issues Discussion with Mike Crosswell, May 26

Adventures in Transitioning – Notes on “Policy” in Six Administrations with Mike Crosswell, details to follow.

Development Issues Discussion with Nicolas Enrich on his book, “Into the Woodchipper,” June 5

UAA will host a Development Issues Discussion at DACOR (also virtual) with Nicolas Enrich on June 5 from 11:45 AM to 2:00 PM. Enrich was a fierce advocate for Global Health programs as one of the last senior officials of the Global Health Bureau in 2025. He will discuss his new book, *Into the Wood Chipper - A Whistleblower’s Account of How the Trump Administration Shredded USAID*, and recommendations for moving forward with international development. This will be an opportunity to share perspectives on current opportunities and risks and on constructive ways forward. A registration link will be forthcoming.

Development Issues Discussion with Sarah Rose on Health Partnerships, June 10

Sarah Rose will address our members regarding government partnerships in global health cooperation on June 10, from 11:30 AM

to 1:00 PM (virtual). Ms. Rose is a co-author of the article, "[New U.S. Foreign Aid Emphasis on Government Partnerships is Encouraging — If Done Right.](#)" She will share perspectives on current opportunities and risks and on constructive ways forward. This deeper dive on current partnership efforts can enrich our internal discussions on the future of government-to-government programs. [Click here](#) to register.

Sarah Rose is the Director of Policy at The Share Trust, an organization that--through research, tools, capacity strengthening, and advocacy--helps strengthen the environment for locally led development and humanitarian response and community-driven collective action. She previously served as the Senior Advisor for Localization at USAID, where she coordinated an agency-wide reform effort to advance locally led development and humanitarian assistance. Prior to her role at USAID, Sarah was a policy fellow at the Center for Global Development, where her research focused on aid effectiveness and US development policy. Sarah's previous experience also includes working as a monitoring and evaluation specialist in the health office of the USAID Mission in Mozambique and coordinating country selection and eligibility in the department of policy and evaluation at the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

Profile: Alexious M. Butler

Alexious M. Butler began her international career working on democracy and governance programs with the National Endowment for Democracy and the National Democratic Institute. She joined USAID via the Africa Bureau on the Conflict, Peacebuilding, and Governance team before moving to Afghanistan as an Elections and Political Process Advisor.



Alexious' next assignment took her to Iraq, first as a member of an embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Al-Mada'in District of eastern Baghdad Province, and then in the Democracy and Governance Office in Baghdad. There she managed elections support programs, including the Iraq out-of-country voting initiative implemented by IFES, which expanded participation for Iraqis

abroad during a critical period.

Alexious went on to serve as Director of the Democracy and Governance Office in Bangladesh, where she oversaw the first ever South Asia Women Members of Parliament Conference, which brought together female MPs from seven countries to identify common concerns. She served in the same role in South Sudan, arriving shortly before the outbreak of the 2013 civil war. Ultimately, she and her colleagues were evacuated from Juba with AFRICOM support and spent six months in Washington before returning to complete their assignments. Recognizing a significant information gap, Alexious expanded an Internews program to provide live coverage of peace talks to refugees and internally displaced persons.

She later served in Haiti initially as head of the Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Office and subsequently as Deputy Mission Director. Despite the challenges Haiti and Haitians continue to face, the four years Alexious and her daughter spent there made it, by far, their favorite assignment as they fell in love with the country and the people.

After attending the U.S. Army War College, she served as USAID's Development Diplomat in Residence at Morehouse College in Atlanta. There, she launched the Agency's first HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) conference and developed the Minority Serving Institutions Partnership Initiative, establishing five new partnerships that laid the groundwork for expanded Agency engagement with a broader group of academic institutions.

One of her most challenging assignments was as Senior Development Advisor at U.S. Central Command in Tampa, FL where she focused on integrating development perspectives into military planning. Alexious later became Mission Director for Guinea and Sierra Leone, where she ultimately managed the Mission's closure, while also helping many local staff transition to new employment.

A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Alexious now lives in Manassas, Virginia with her fiancé, Sam Padron, and their dog, Bridget Jones. She currently serves as Professor of Practice at Georgia Tech and teaches global development to the next generation of international affairs enthusiasts. Alexious' daughter, who accompanied her on assignments in Bangladesh and Haiti and studied at the University of the Arts in London, is now in Atlanta pursuing a career in the performing arts.

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USAID Alumni Association

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