

AID on the Hill's founders. By Anna Gawel, *Devex*, 15 June 2026

Hill's angels

The Trump administration's halt on U.S. foreign aid spending in early 2025 set off a scramble to save it. Supporters of the imperiled USAID flocked to the halls of Congress to make their case that the agency should be preserved.

We all know the ending wouldn't be what they wanted, but **USAID workers didn't take being laid off lying down**. [They quickly banded together and formed various groups](#) — some to support, others to advocate. One of those groups started after **Amanda Nataro, Ariella Bock, and Julianne Weis** found themselves during those early days in an elevator on Capitol Hill — frustrated.

“We wanted to actually have sit-downs, talk to staff, establish relationships, and become a trusted entity,” says Nataro, who had been a program officer at [USAID](#) before July 2025. “We looked at each other, and we were like: This isn't getting through to the people we want to talk to.”

Within hours, **Nataro set up a group for USAID employees** on the encrypted messaging app Signal. Soon after, the group hit nearly 100 members — all of whom were asking: What now?

“**We realized that USAID as we knew it wasn't coming back** because of the nature of how [the Trump administration torched it], but the problems still persisted,” Nataro says. “We wanted to go bigger.” So they did.

Today, Aid on the Hill's membership exceeds 700 people and it's become one of the most active grassroots advocacy operations working the foreign assistance portfolio in America's capital, my colleague Elissa Miolene writes.

Just this month, the group's first two grants from [Carnegie Corporation of New York](#) and [Founders Pledge](#) have allowed the once fully volunteer-based Aid on the Hill to employ four full-time staff, two part-time staff, and five consultants for the next six months.

Even though the [U.S. State Department](#) has begun releasing billions in foreign aid funding, **Aid on the Hill knows more battles lie ahead**. The organization's latest newsletter notes a series of amendments and budget news that could dictate the future of U.S. foreign aid, while also encouraging members to **join an advocacy day on Capitol Hill on July 16**.

“They definitely went after the wrong set of people. **Not only are we pissed, but we know how to navigate these situations,**” Nataro tells Elissa. “You've unleashed them and left them unemployed. So, what did you think was going to happen?”