

Two articles - New State aid funding and hiring (but only those with no AID experience). By Anna Gawel, *Devex*, 18 June 2026

Fr-UN-emies

The Trump administration has had a, shall we say, fraught relationship with the United Nations since the second term began, with the White House withholding dues and demanding reforms from the international body.

But when it comes to monetary injections for humanitarian assistance, it's whistling a different tune: The U.S. already [shelled out \\$3.8 billion](#) to the [U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#), and **now it's released another sizable tranche to two U.N. agencies** — \$218 million for [UNICEF](#) and \$800 million for the [World Food Programme](#).

The awards also reflect the department's focus on "hyper-prioritization" — a push to **center limited humanitarian aid around those facing the most extreme need** — which in a way echoes the U.N.'s ongoing humanitarian reset. Since March 2025, that reset has worked to reshape how its humanitarian system functions, including by prioritizing the 87 million people the U.N. deems to have the most severe needs.

"By directing resources to organizations that meet rigorous performance standards and deliver measurable results, **the United States is incentivizing the broader humanitarian system** to adopt the efficiency, transparency, and accountability that American taxpayers expect," the State Department writes.

The humanitarian surge also tracks with an emerging pattern at the State Department: [fewer, larger grants to a short list of hand-picked organizations](#), my colleague Elissa Miolene writes.

"The move toward fewer, larger awards and greater reliance on partner reporting is understandable given the closure of USAID and the State Department's limited staffing. Some of that could make responses faster and give partners more flexibility," says **Dina Esposito**, former assistant administrator for [USAID's](#) bureau of resilience and food security. "**But whether it actually delivers better results** — given the small number of partners, the vastly fewer dollars spent and the lack of U.S. eyes and ears on the ground — **remains a very open question.**"

You're ... hired?

Another question that's loomed large ever since the [State Department](#) absorbed USAID's portfolio — with only a tiny sliver of employees doing the job of what was once a 10,000-person workforce — is capacity. In other words, **does the State Department have enough people to get billions of dollars out the door?**

We're seeing clues that the agency recognizes it's short on manpower — and is doing something about it. In recent weeks, **it's been working to replenish its foreign aid ranks** — a portion of which it fired — with dozens of roles posted for its global health, foreign assistance, and disaster response bureaus.

“It's encouraging because it's starting to address the problem,” says **Tod Preston**, executive director of the [Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network](#). “Much more needs to be done, but they could be doing nothing — so it shows that they do want to increase the capacity to actually be able to implement these programs.”

It's important to remember that while USAID was fed into the proverbial wood chipper, the State Department underwent sharp layoffs of its own, slashing over 1,100 civil servants in Washington and 200 foreign service officers worldwide. **Today, just 200 people work** at the State Department's new Bureau of Disaster and Humanitarian Response, down from the 1,000 once employed by the bureau with the same focus at USAID.

But for months, the State Department has been replenishing staff [through the use of institutional support contractors](#), a longtime hiring mechanism used by USAID, Elissa writes.

Among the contractors hiring are the Hawaiian Nakupuna Companies, the Virginia-based [Dexis Consulting Group](#), Alaska-based [Akima](#), and Virginia-based [Credence LLC](#).

But there's a big caveat in some of the postings: **Anyone with prior USAID experience need not apply**. And in case you didn't get the message, it's written in bold lettering.