

USAID Policy and Expectations for Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Zero Tolerance

- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) prohibits sexual misconduct of any kind, including harassment, exploitation, or abuse, among USAID staff or our implementing partners.
- USAID reaffirms that sexual misconduct is counter to our Agency's core values, and we hope you agree it violates your organization's core values as well.
- This means that USAID will take necessary and appropriate steps to prevent and address sexual misconduct within our workforce and programs, while also accounting for survivor needs.
- Sexual misconduct fundamentally strikes at the very foundation of international development by causing intolerable harm to its victims, threatening our mission, and undermining the credibility of the entire aid sector.

Definitions

- Sexual misconduct is an umbrella term that encompasses any inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature or that is sex-based, including sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, stalking, voyeurism, and any other such conduct that is non-consensual or has the purpose or effect of threatening, intimidating, denigrating, or coercing a person.
- The misconduct need not rise to the level of civil or criminal illegality to warrant corrective or disciplinary action.
- The three categories of sexual misconduct to which we refer to most frequently are sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse.
- "Sexual harassment" is misconduct of a sexual nature or about a person's sex that is so frequent or severe as to create a hostile or offensive work environment or that results in an adverse employment decision, such as the victim being fired or demoted. It can include verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature, as well as offensive remarks related to a person's sex.
- "Sexual exploitation" includes any actual or attempted abuse by aid workers of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- "Sexual abuse" includes any actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Action Alliance for Preventing Sexual Misconduct (AAPSM)

- In March 2018, Administrator Green launched the Action Alliance for Preventing Sexual Misconduct, or "AAPSM."

- The Action Alliance is an intra-agency working group charged with leading USAID's efforts to improve prevention and response to sexual misconduct—both in Washington and here in our Mission.
- USAID, through the AAPSM, is taking steps to ensure that allegations of sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse within USAID's workplace and programs are reported immediately and addressed appropriately.

AAPSM Resources and Policies

- USAID has a number of resources available online. The AAPSM website at www.usaid.gov/PreventingSexualMisconduct, features fact sheets, flowcharts, and information on USAID's policies and processes, which are equally helpful to USAID's staff and implementing partners.
- In addition, USAID is developing two, new comprehensive policies targeted for release in the coming weeks.
- The first will be a new Chapter in the Agency's operational policy, the Automated Directives System (ADS), related to internal sexual misconduct and harassment. This policy will lay out expectations for USAID staff, and guide the Agency's response in cases of internal sexual misconduct.
- The second will be a brand-new policy on Protection from Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) that will clarify roles, responsibilities, and processes for protecting USAID's beneficiaries.
- Additional tools and guides will accompany both policies to help translate them into direct action.
- USAID will also consult closely and meaningfully with a wide range of stakeholders, including implementing partners, to make sure these policies are rigorous and responsive to evolving needs on the ground.

Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

- All USAID staff and implementing partners are responsible for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in USAID-funded programming.
- USAID prohibits all of our contractors, sub-contractors, grantees, and sub-grantees (including their employees), during the period of performance of their contracts or awards, and regardless of award amount, from engaging in trafficking in persons, procuring commercial sex acts, and using forced labor.
- For awards with services performed overseas greater than \$500,000, the prime partner must annually certify to its USAID Contracting or Agreement Officer that it has a compliance plan in place to prevent prohibited trafficking-related activities, including procuring commercial sex.
- USAID also includes additional protections in grants and contracts to promote the safeguarding of children and youth under the age of 18, and to protect them against

abuse, exploitation, and neglect in the implementation of USAID-funded programs.

Partner Codes of Conduct

- Last year, we updated our grant standard provisions and contract clauses to clarify that codes of conduct for all USAID implementing partner employees must meet internationally-recognized standards on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, namely the six core principles of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Task Force .
- This update was consistent with existing requirements for any organization that receives International Disaster Assistance, Transition Initiative, or Title II Food for Peace funding from USAID, which mandate a written code of conduct consistent with the IASC principles.
- This change facilitates reporting by requiring implementing partners to consult with the relevant Agreement Officer, or Contracting Officer, and the Mission Director, when an employee's conduct violates the IASC standards—and requires that implementing partners propose an appropriate course of action for that employee.
- It also means that the Ambassador in any given country is empowered to require that the implementing partner remove problem employees from USAID-funded awards, and if the employee is a U.S. citizen, to direct the removal of that individual from the country.

Reporting Requirements

- In addition, USAID strongly encourages contractors and grantees to notify the Office of USAID's Inspector General (OIG) immediately of suspected allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, and to cooperate in any audits, investigations, or corrective Actions.