



CITIZENS FOR
RESPONSIBILITY &
ETHICS IN WASHINGTON

February 7, 2025

U.S. Agency for International Development
M/MS/IRD, Suite 2.4.0A, USAID Annex
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523-2701

Re: Expedited FOIA Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (“CREW”) makes this request for records, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and U.S. Agency for International Development (“USAID”) regulations.

Specifically, CREW requests the following records from January 20, 2025, to the date of processing of this request:¹

- All USAID reports, memoranda, directives, and plans regarding any actual or potential closing, reorganization, or restructuring of USAID
- All communications between the offices of the USAID Administrator, General Counsel, Office of Budget and Resource Management, Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Chief Financial Officer, or Chief Information Officer and any personnel at the United States Department of State (State Department) about making USAID part of the State Department
- All communications from USAID leadership to USAID personnel regarding the status of USAID or USAID personnel being placed on leave
- All communications between USAID personnel and personnel affiliated with the U.S. DOGE Service (“DOGE”)
- All communications between USAID personnel and Elon Musk, Katie Miller, Luke Farritor, Edward Coristine, Jeremy Lewin, Gavin Kliger, or Peter Marocco
- All communications, reports, memoranda, and directives regarding access to classified information in the possession of USAID or accessible through USAID systems
- All communications from the United States Marshals Service to USAID personnel regarding the removal of any person from USAID facilities or offices

Please search for responsive records regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. We seek records of any kind, including paper records, electronic records,

¹ For purposes of these requests, requests for “reports,” “memoranda,” “directives,” and “plans” are for any such documents issued or in effect from January 20, 2025, to the date of processing of this request.

audiotapes, videotapes, photographs, data, and graphical material. Our request includes without limitation all correspondence, letters, emails, text messages, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages, and transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings, telephone conversations, or discussions. Our request also includes any attachments to emails and other records, and anyone who was cc'ed or bcc'ed on any emails. If it is your position any portion of the requested records is exempt from disclosure, CREW requests that you provide it with an index of those documents as required under *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). If some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure, please disclose any reasonably segregable non-exempt portions of the requested records. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). If it is your position that a document contains non-exempt segments, but that those non-exempt segments are so dispersed throughout the document as to make segregation impossible, please state what portion of the document is non-exempt, and how the material is dispersed throughout the document. See *Mead Data Central v. U.S. Dep't of the Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

Please be advised that CREW intends to pursue all legal remedies to enforce its rights under FOIA. Accordingly, because litigation is reasonably foreseeable, the agency should institute an agency wide preservation hold on all documents potentially responsive to this request.

Fee Waiver Request

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A) and agency regulations, CREW requests a waiver of fees associated with processing this request for records. The subject of this request concerns the operations of the federal government, and the disclosures likely will contribute to a better understanding of relevant government procedures by CREW and the general public in a significant way. See *id.* § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). Moreover, the request primarily and fundamentally is for non-commercial purposes. See, e.g., *McClellan Ecological v. Carlucci*, 835 F.2d 1282, 1285 (9th Cir. 1987).

On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order pausing all “foreign development assistance” for 90 days and instructing all department and agency heads to “immediately pause new obligations and disbursements of development assistance programs to foreign countries” and implementing organizations.² Just over a week after the freeze on foreign aid, hundreds of USAID internal contractors were put on unpaid leave while others were terminated.³ USAID’s website went down on February 1, 2025.⁴ Also on February 1, a senior deputy to Elon Musk, who has publicly identified himself as the leader of DOGE, appeared at USAID’s offices and DOGE members demanded access to classified

² Exec. Order, *Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid*, (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/reevaluating-and-realigning-united-states-foreign-aid/>.

³ Simon Lewis et al., *Hundreds of USAID internal contractors put on leave, terminated amid US freeze on global aid*, Reuters, (Jan. 29, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/hundreds-usaid-contractors-put-leave-terminated-amid-us-freeze-global-aid-2025-01-29/>.

⁴ Melody Schreiber, *Why does Musk want USAID ‘to die’? And why did its website disappear?* NPR (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/sections/goats-and-soda/2025/02/02/g-s1-46007/usaid-web-site-trump-state-department>.

material in restricted areas of USAID for which they apparently lacked “high enough security clearance to access that information.”⁵ Two USAID security chiefs who refused to grant them access because they “believed themselves legally obligated” to do so were reportedly first threatened that United States Marshals would be called to grant the DOGE members the access they demanded and then placed on leave.⁶ Public reporting further indicates that DOGE thereby gained access to USAID’s classified information, including intelligence reports.⁷ According to the reporting, Mr. Musk personally made three calls to USAID’s security officers and political leadership demanding “the suspensions of dozens of the agency’s leading officials” and threatened senior officials to give his DOGE team access to private data and restricted areas, including threatening to “call in the Marshals Service.”⁸ On February 3, 2025, Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced he is the acting administrator of USAID and claimed the agency has refused to respond to State Department policy directives.⁹ Secretary Rubio also indicated “a ‘review’ is underway aimed at the agency’s ‘potential reorganization.’”¹⁰

During a live “Space” conversation on X on February 3, 2025, Elon Musk said DOGE was in the process of “shutting down USAID.”¹¹ Mr. Musk said on X, “USAID is a criminal organization. Time for it to die.”¹² On February 3, 2025, Mr. Musk described the shut down, saying “[n]one of this could be done without the full support of the president, you know. And with regard to the USAID stuff, I went, went over it with him, you know, in detail, and he agreed with that we should, we should shut it down.”¹³

⁵ Andrew Roth, *Senior USAID officials put on leave after denying access to Musk’s Doge team*, The Guardian (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/02/usaaid-officials-put-on-leave-musk-doge>; Ellen Knickmeyer, *Elon Musk says President Donald Trump has ‘agreed’ USAID should be shut down*, Associated Press (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/doge-musk-trump-classified-information-usaid-security-35101dee28a766e0d9705e0d47958611>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Andrew Roth, *Doge v USAID: how Elon Musk helped his acolytes infiltrate world’s biggest aid agency*, The Guardian, (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/05/musk-doge-takeover-usaid>.

⁹ Melody Schreiber, *Why does Musk want USAID ‘to die’? And why did its website disappear?*, NPR (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/sections/goats-and-soda/2025/02/02/g-s1-46007/usaaid-web-site-trump-state-department>.

¹⁰ Alex Leff, *Musk and Trump aim to shut down USAID, leaving humanitarian work in doubt*, NPR (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/03/nx-s1-5285409/usaaid-trump-state-department-rubio>.

¹¹ Melody Schreiber, *Why does Musk want USAID ‘to die’? And why did its website disappear?* NPR (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/sections/goats-and-soda/2025/02/02/g-s1-46007/usaaid-web-site-trump-state-department>.

¹² Ellen Knickmeyer, *Elon Musk says President Donald Trump has ‘agreed’ USAID should be shut down*, Associated Press (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/doge-musk-trump-classified-information-usaid-security-35101dee28a766e0d9705e0d47958611>.

¹³ Melody Schreiber, *Why does Musk want USAID ‘to die’? And why did its website disappear?* NPR (Feb. 3, 2025),

On February 4, 2025, USAID announced on its website “all USAID direct hire personnel will be placed on administrative leave globally, with the exception of designated personnel responsible for mission-critical functions, core leadership and specially designated programs,” on February 7, 2025, at 11:59 pm (EST).¹⁴ USAID indicated in the order it is preparing a plan to arrange for USAID personnel posted outside the United States to return to the United States within 30 days, subject to case-by-case exceptions.¹⁵ A senior USAID official called the announcement “essentially a shutdown of USAID.”¹⁶ Public reporting indicates much of USAID has been dismantled, including through orders to stop work and spending, furloughs of leadership and staff, disciplinary leaves and firings, the website being taken offline, and computer servers being carted away.¹⁷ On January 7, 2025, President Trump called for the closure of USAID on Truth Social, posting, “USAID IS DRIVING THE RADICAL LEFT CRAZY, AND THERE IS NOTHING THEY CAN DO ABOUT IT BECAUSE THE WAY IN WHICH THE MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT, SO MUCH OF IT FRAUDULENTLY, IS TOTALLY UNEXPLAINABLE. THE CORRUPTION IS AT LEVELS RARELY SEEN BEFORE. CLOSE IT DOWN!”¹⁸

The Associated Press described Mr. Musk and the Trump administration forming DOGE “with the stated goal of finding ways to fire federal workers, cut programs and slash federal regulations.”¹⁹ DOGE also conducted “a similar operation at the Treasury Department” and reportedly gained access to sensitive Medicare and Social Security information.²⁰ The public has an interest in understanding the current state of USAID, the process of its shutdown, to what extent DOGE and Mr. Musk were involved in that process, and whether any DOGE employees accessed classified information without the required security clearance.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goats-and-soda/2025/02/02/g-s1-46007/usa-id-web-site-trump-state-department>.

¹⁴ USAID, <https://www.usaid.gov/> (last visited Feb. 5, 2025); see Phil Helsel et al., *USAID announces nearly all direct hires will be placed on administrative leave*, NBC News (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/usa-id-nearly-direct-hires-placed-administrative-leave-rcna190736>.

¹⁵ USAID, <https://www.usaid.gov/> (last visited Feb. 5, 2025).

¹⁶ Jenna McLaughlin et al., *‘Thank you for your service’: Trump administration puts USAID staff on leave*, NPR (Feb. 4, 2025),

<https://www.npr.org/2025/02/04/nx-s1-5287053/usa-id-trump-overseas-withdrawal>.

¹⁷ Ellen Knickmeyer et al., *Trump and Musk move to dismantle USAID, igniting battle with Democratic lawmakers*, Associated Press, (Feb. 3, 2025),

<https://apnews.com/article/trump-musk-usaid-c0c7799be0b2fa7cad4c806565985fe2>.

¹⁸ Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social (Feb. 7, 2025, 9:31 AM),

<https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/113963085497636545>; Karoun Demirjian, *Trump Calls Directly for Closure of U.S.A.I.D.*, The New York Times (Feb. 7, 2025),

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/07/us/politics/usa-id-trump.html>.

¹⁹ Ellen Knickmeyer, *Elon Musk says President Donald Trump has ‘agreed’ USAID should be shut down*, Associated Press (Feb. 3, 2025),

<https://apnews.com/article/doge-musk-trump-classified-information-usaid-security-35101dee28a766e0d9705e0d47958611>.

²⁰ Ellen Knickmeyer, *Elon Musk says President Donald Trump has ‘agreed’ USAID should be shut down*, Associated Press (Feb. 3, 2025),

<https://apnews.com/article/doge-musk-trump-classified-information-usaid-security-35101dee28a766e0d9705e0d47958611>.

CREW is a non-profit corporation, organized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. CREW is committed to protecting the public's right to be aware of the activities of government officials, to ensuring the integrity of those officials, and to highlighting and working to reduce the influence of money on politics. CREW uses a combination of research, litigation, and advocacy to advance its mission. CREW intends to analyze the information responsive to this request and to share its analysis with the public through reports, press releases, or other means. In addition, CREW will disseminate any documents it acquires from this request to the public through its website, www.citizensforethics.org. The release of information obtained through this request is not in CREW's financial interest.

CREW further requests that it not be charged search or review fees for this request pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(II) because CREW qualifies as a member of the news media. *See Nat'l Sec. Archive v. U.S. Dep't of Defense*, 880 F.2d 1381, 1386 (D.C. Cir. 1989) (holding non-profit a "representative of the news media" and broadly interpreting the term to include "any person or organization which regularly publishes or disseminates information to the public").

CREW routinely disseminates information obtained through FOIA to the public in several ways. For example, CREW's website receives hundreds of thousands of page views every month. The website includes blogposts that report on and analyze newsworthy developments regarding government ethics, corruption, and money in politics, as well as numerous reports CREW has published to educate the public about these issues. These reports frequently rely on government records obtained through FOIA. CREW also posts the documents it obtains through FOIA on its website. Under these circumstances, CREW satisfies fully the criteria for a fee waiver.

Expedited Processing Request

CREW requests expedited processing of this request, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552 and 22 C.F.R. § 212.8(e). CREW is entitled to expedited processing because (1) there is "[a]n urgency to inform the public about an actual or alleged Federal Government activity" and CREW "is primarily engaged in disseminating information," 22 C.F.R. § 212.8(e)(1)(ii), and (2) the request involves "[a] matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity that affect public confidence," *id.* § 212.8(e)(1)(iv).

- (1) CREW is "primarily engaged in disseminating information" to the public. This "standard 'requires that information dissemination be the main [and not merely an incidental] activity of the requestor,'" but "publishing information 'need not be [the organization's] sole occupation.'" *Protect Democracy Project, Inc. v. U.S. Dep't of Def.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293, 298 (D.D.C. 2017). CREW routinely disseminates information obtained through FOIA to the public in several ways. For example, CREW's website receives hundreds of thousands of page views every month. The website includes blogposts that report on and analyze newsworthy developments regarding government ethics, corruption, and money in politics, as well as numerous reports CREW has published to educate the public about these issues. These reports frequently rely on

government records obtained through FOIA. CREW also posts the documents it obtains through FOIA on its website. CREW is a credible requestor and disseminator of information often relied on by major media outlets.²¹

On February 4, 2025, USAID published on its website that on February 7, 2025, “all USAID direct hire personnel will be placed on administrative leave globally, with the exception of designated personnel responsible for mission-critical functions, core leadership and specially designated programs.”²² The announcement came following aggressive efforts by Mr. Musk and DOGE to shut down the agency.²³ Mr. Musk described on social media, “[w]e spent the weekend feeding USAID into the wood chipper.”²⁴ During the takeover process, Mr. Musk reportedly made three calls to USAID’s security officers and political leadership demanding “the suspensions of dozens of the agency’s leading officials” and threatened senior officials to give his DOGE team access to private data and restricted areas, including allegedly threatening to “call in the Marshals Service.”²⁵ On February 1, 2025, a senior deputy to Mr. Musk appeared at USAID’s offices and DOGE members demanded access to classified material in restricted areas of USAID for which they apparently lacked “high enough security clearance.”²⁶ According to

²¹ See, e.g., *Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington*, N.Y. Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/topic/citizens-for-responsibility-and-ethics-in-washington> (last visited Jan. 28, 2025) (list of numerous New York Times articles referencing CREW spanning over a decade); Ed Pilkington and Dharna Noor, *Top US ethics watchdog investigating Trump over dinner with oil bosses*, The Guardian (May 15, 2024), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/may/15/ethics-watchdog-investigating-trump-big-oil> (referring to CREW as “Top US ethics watchdog”).

²² USAID, <https://www.usaid.gov/> (last visited Feb. 5, 2023).

²³ Suzy Khimm, *Crucial aid sits in warehouses worldwide as USAID employees are told to stop working*, NBC News (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/politics-news/trump-usaid-upheaval-paralyzing-global-delivery-food-medicine-rcna190565>; Karoun Demirjian et al., *Trump Appointees to Put Almost All U.S.A.I.D. Workers on Leave*, The New York Times, (Feb. 4, 2025) <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/04/us/usaid-musk-trump-rubio-cuts.html>; Noah Weiland and Stephanie Nolen, *What Is U.S.A.I.D., and Why Do Trump and Musk Want to Close It?*, The New York Times, (Feb. 3, 2025). <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/03/us/politics/usaid-foreign-aid-musk.html>; Beatrice Nolan, *EXCLUSIVE: Leaked messages show chaos at USAID as HR staff dealing with employee exits are placed on administrative leave*, Fortune, (Feb. 5, 2025); <https://fortune.com/2025/02/05/usaid-trump-musk-doge-administrative-leave-hr-teams-chaos/>; David Ingram, *Elon Musk and DOGE are hacking the government*, NBC News, (Feb. 4, 2025); <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/elon-musk-doge-usaid-treasury-government-rcna190450>.

²⁴ Joel Schectman et al., *How Trump Gutted America’s \$40 Billion Aid Agency in Two Weeks*, The Wall Street Journal, (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/how-trump-musk-doge-killed-usaid-b649f1f5>.

²⁵ Andrew Roth, *Doge v USAid: how Elon Musk helped his acolytes infiltrate world’s biggest aid agency*, The Guardian, (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/05/musk-doge-takeover-usaid>.

²⁶ Andrew Roth, *Senior USAid officials put on leave after denying access to Musk’s Doge team*, The Guardian (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/02/usaid-officials-put-on-leave-musk-doge>; Ellen Knickmeyer, *Elon Musk says President Donald Trump has ‘agreed’ USAID should be shut down*,

reporting, two USAID security chiefs refused to grant them access because they understood themselves to be legally obligated to do so, and were threatened that United States Marshals would be called to grant the DOGE members the access they demanded and then placed on leave.²⁷ Public reporting further indicates DOGE thereby gained access to USAID's classified information, including intelligence reports.²⁸

USAID's shut down and restructuring included making Secretary of State Marco Rubio the acting administrator of the agency.²⁹ Secretary Rubio has stated a review is being conducted regarding the agency's "potential reorganization."³⁰ Pete Marocco, the newly appointed USAID deputy administrator, instructed State Department leadership to evacuate all USAID employees out of their respective countries by February 7, 2025, and claimed the USAID staff would be evacuated by the U.S. military if the State Department did not do so.³¹

Reporting indicates that the shut down of "USAID appears to be a test case for whether the Trump administration can effectively restructure a decades-old agency without meeting much legal or political resistance."³² The Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 presented USAID "as a pilot test for a large-scale overhaul of the federal government that would downsize agencies and arbitrarily move federal employees to looser contracts that made them easier

Associated Press (Feb. 3, 2025),

<https://apnews.com/article/doge-musk-trump-classified-information-usaid-security-35101dee28a766e0d9705e0d47958611>.

²⁷ Andrew Roth, Senior USAID officials put on leave after denying access to Musk's Doge team, The Guardian (Feb. 3, 2025),

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/02/usaid-officials-put-on-leave-musk-doge>; Ellen Knickmeyer, *Elon Musk says President Donald Trump has 'agreed' USAID should be shut down*, Associated Press (Feb. 3, 2025),

<https://apnews.com/article/doge-musk-trump-classified-information-usaid-security-35101dee28a766e0d9705e0d47958611>.

²⁸ Ellen Knickmeyer, *Elon Musk says President Donald Trump has 'agreed' USAID should be shut down*, Associated Press (Feb. 3, 2025),

<https://apnews.com/article/doge-musk-trump-classified-information-usaid-security-35101dee28a766e0d9705e0d47958611>.

²⁹ Melody Schreiber, *Why does Musk want USAID 'to die'? And why did its website disappear?* NPR (Feb. 3, 2025),

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goats-and-soda/2025/02/02/g-s1-46007/usaid-web-site-trump-state-department>.

³⁰ Alex Leff, *Musk and Trump aim to shut down USAID, leaving humanitarian work in doubt*, NPR (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/03/nx-s1-5285409/usaid-trump-state-department-rubio>.

³¹ Sara Cook and Caitlin Yilek, *USAID to put nearly all staff on leave Friday; overseas missions shuttering*, CBS News, (Feb. 4, 2025),

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/usaid-missions-overseas-ordered-shutdown-by-friday/>.

³² Joel Schectman et al., *How Trump Gutted America's \$40 Billion Aid Agency in Two Weeks*, The Wall Street Journal, (Feb. 4, 2025),

<https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/how-trump-musk-doge-killed-usaid-b649f1f5>.

to fire.”³³ DOGE was designed “with the stated goal of finding ways to fire federal workers, cut programs and slash federal regulations” and previously conducted “a similar operation at the Treasury Department.”³⁴ On January 7, 2025, President Trump called for the closure of USAID on Truth Social, posting, “USAID IS DRIVING THE RADICAL LEFT CRAZY, AND THERE IS NOTHING THEY CAN DO ABOUT IT BECAUSE THE WAY IN WHICH THE MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT, SO MUCH OF IT FRAUDULENTLY, IS TOTALLY UNEXPLAINABLE. THE CORRUPTION IS AT LEVELS RARELY SEEN BEFORE. CLOSE IT DOWN!”³⁵

Under these circumstances, “[t]here is an urgency to inform the public about an actual or alleged Federal Government activity” about which this request seeks information, namely the current structure of USAID and plans for its continued reorganization within the State Department, the role of DOGE in shutting down the agency, the facts surrounding the DOGE takeover of USAID, and DOGE employees’ apparently unlawful access to classified information, all of which could urgently affect not only the more than 10,000 USAID employees, but the untold number of American citizens who are impacted by their work, the sudden restructuring and shutdown of federal agencies, and the unlawful exposure of classified material. See 22 C.F.R. § 212.8(e)(1)(ii).

- (2) The same facts raise “possible questions, in a matter of widespread and exceptional public interest, about the Government’s integrity which affect public confidence,” *id.* § 212.8(e)(1)(iv). As described above, USAID was shut down and reorganized rapidly with little to no warning and DOGE employees gained access to the agency’s confidential information,³⁶ but the Trump administration has offered no meaningful information to the public about how USAID will be organized in the future, its budget, resources, and staffing, the details of the administrative leave, and USAID’s structure within the State Department. There have been numerous news reports concerning efforts to

³³ Andrew Roth, *Doge v USAid: how Elon Musk helped his acolytes infiltrate world’s biggest aid agency*, The Guardian, (Feb. 5, 2025),

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/05/musk-doge-takeover-usaid>.

³⁴ Ellen Knickmeyer, *Elon Musk says President Donald Trump has ‘agreed’ USAID should be shut down*, Associated Press (Feb. 3, 2025),

<https://apnews.com/article/doge-musk-trump-classified-information-usaid-security-35101dee28a766e0d9705e0d47958611>.

³⁵ Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social (Feb. 7, 2025, 9:31 AM),

<https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/113963085497636545>; Karoun Demirjian, *Trump Calls Directly for Closure of U.S.A.I.D.*, The New York Times (Feb. 7, 2025),

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/07/us/politics/usaid-trump.html>.

³⁶ Phil Helsel et al., *USAID announces nearly all direct hires will be placed on administrative leave*, NBC News (Feb. 4, 2025),

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/usaid-nearly-direct-hires-placed-administrative-leave-rcna190736>; Ellen Knickmeyer, *Elon Musk says President Donald Trump has ‘agreed’ USAID should be shut down*, Associated Press (Feb. 3, 2025),

<https://apnews.com/article/doge-musk-trump-classified-information-usaid-security-35101dee28a766e0d9705e0d47958611>.

shut down USAID and the lack of transparency around these efforts.³⁷ The administration also has not explained the role of DOGE in the shutdown of USAID, including how DOGE employees accessed classified information and whether the United States Marshals were called in support of DOGE's efforts. Legal experts and lawmakers have warned that the Trump administration's dismantling of USAID is an unconstitutional infringement on the power of Congress.³⁸ The lack of information about the apparently unlawful takeover and shutdown of an independent agency by the executive branch and the ongoing operations and structure of that agency raise significant questions of widespread and exceptional public interest regarding the integrity of USAID, DOGE, and the Trump administration's efforts to shut down agencies.

The undersigned certifies that the representations in this expedited processing request are true and correct to the best of his knowledge and belief.

³⁷ Brandy Zadrozny and Lora Kolodny, How Elon Musk boosted false USAID conspiracy theories to shut down global aid, NBC News (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/doge/elon-musk-boosted-false-usaid-conspiracy-theories-global-aid-rcna190646>; Ellen Knickmeyer, Trump administration plans to slash all but a fraction of USAID jobs, officials say, Associated Press (Feb. 6, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-usaid-musk-doge-7ec0a2b4032d4782d41c00164003b5de>; Jennifer Hansler et al., Elon Musk said Donald Trump agreed USAID needs to be 'shut down', CNN (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/02/politics/usaid-officials-leave-musk-doge/index.html>; Jennifer Hansler et al., Rubio says he's acting director of USAID as humanitarian agency is taken over by the State Department, CNN (Feb. 4, 2025); <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/03/politics/usaid-washington-workers/index.html>; Karoun Demirjian, Trump Calls Directly for Closure of U.S.A.I.D., The New York Times (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/07/us/politics/usaid-trump.html>; Karoun Demirjian, End Appears Near for U.S. Aid Agency, Democratic Lawmakers Say, The New York Times (Feb. 1, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/01/us/us-aid-agency-trump.html>; Fatima Hussein, DOGE was tasked with stopping Treasury payments to USAID, AP sources say, Associated Press (Feb. 6, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/treasury-doge-musk-read-only-access-489231c6db1a9f07fc68f9f08803f815>; Ana Faguy, USAID staff will be put on leave starting on Friday, BBC (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx253xjnxrmo>; Melody Schreiber and Fatima Tanis, Why is the Trump administration targeting USAID? (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/sections/goats-and-soda/2025/02/07/g-s1-46239/why-is-the-trump-administration-targeting-usaid>.

³⁸ Taylor Giorno, *Lawmakers, legal experts warn shuttering USAID is unconstitutional*, The Hill (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://thehill.com/policy/international/foreign-aid/5123972-lawmakers-legal-experts-warn-shuttering-usaid-is-unconstitutional/>.

Conclusion

If you have any questions about this request, please email foia@citizensforethics.org or call (202) 408-5565. Also, if CREW's request for expedited processing is denied, please contact our office immediately upon making such a determination.

Where possible, please produce records in electronic format. Please send the requested records to agoldstein@citizensforethics.org and foia@citizensforethics.org. Thank you for your assistance in the matter.

Sincerely,

Alex Goldstein

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Associate Counsel
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in
Washington (CREW)