

USAID'S POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

USAID has zero tolerance for sexual misconduct, including harassment, exploitation or abuse of any kind, among staff or implementing partners. Sexual misconduct strikes at the very heart of development — respect for human dignity. In March 2018, USAID Administrator Mark Green established the Action Alliance for Preventing Sexual Misconduct (AAPSM), with two objectives: preventing sexual harassment in the workplace and protecting beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse.

What Is Sexual Exploitation and Abuse?

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) occurs when people in power exploit or abuse vulnerable populations for sexual purposes. If an aid worker uses their position of authority to solicit sexual favors in exchange for benefits, this would constitute an instance of sexual exploitation. If an aid worker uses force or coercion to engage in sexual acts with a beneficiary, or kisses or gropes them without their consent, this would constitute sexual abuse.

According to the U.N. Secretary-General's Bulletin on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, "Sexual exploitation refers to any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Sexual abuse refers to actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions."

All USAID awards with contractors or NGOs contain the following three provisions that address SEA.

Employee Misconduct

USAID implementing partners must ensure that their employees conduct themselves in a professional manner when carrying out awards, consistent with the standards for United Nations (UN) employees in Section 3 of the [UN Secretary General's Bulletin - Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#). In the event that an employee's conduct is not consistent with these standards, our partners must consult with the relevant Mission Director. The U.S. Ambassador may direct the removal of any U.S. citizen from the country and require termination of any employee from the award.

Counter-Trafficking in Persons (C-TIP)

USAID prohibits trafficking, the procurement of commercial sex acts, or the use of forced labor, consistent with [Trafficking Victims Protection Act](#) requirements. Violations of USAID's [C-TIP policy](#) must be addressed by implementing partners and USAID staff, and credible allegations of C-TIP violations must be immediately reported to USAID's Office of Inspector General. For awards over \$500,000, USAID requires its partners to certify that they have compliance plans in place.



Child Abuse, Exploitation or Neglect

As a condition of receiving funding, [Child Safeguarding Standards](#), included in all USAID awards other than contracts for commercial items, require recipients to abide by core principles that prohibit personnel from engaging in child abuse, exploitation or neglect; incorporate child safeguarding in project planning and implementation; and institute procedures to prevent and address violations. These protections stem from the [U.S. Government Action Plan on Children in Adversity](#) and the [Assistance for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children Act of 2005](#).

All USAID awards with contractors, NGOs and public international organizations involving International Disaster Assistance (IDA), Transition Initiative (TI) and Food for Peace Title II (Title II) funds must contain the following provision:

Code of Conduct in Humanitarian Relief Operations

Implementing partners must — in advance of receiving IDA, TI or Title II funding — adopt a code of conduct to protect beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian relief operations consistent with the six core principles adopted by the [U.N. Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises](#). Partners who receive IDA funds from USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance are also required to provide details on how the code of conduct will be implemented within a specific field project.

Reporting

Implementing partners must consult with the relevant Mission Director and the Agreement or Contracting Officer when addressing SEA allegations involving their employees. USAID further encourages implementing partners to report credible allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse to the USAID Office of Inspector General.

Implementing partners are required to report credible allegations of trafficking, the procurement of commercial sex acts, or the use of forced labor to the relevant Agreement or Contracting Officer **and** the USAID Office of Inspector General.

USAID policy requires its employees to report suspected cases of sexual exploitation, whether by Agency personnel or implementing partners, to the USAID Office of Inspector General.

Complaints can be submitted anonymously with an online form through the Office of Inspector General Hotline [website](#), via telephone at 1-800-230-6539 or 202-712-1023, via email at ig.hotline@usaid.gov, via fax at (202) 216-3801, or by mail to the following address: U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of Inspector General, P.O. Box 657, Washington, DC 20044-0657



What Happens When Exploitation/Abuse Is Reported?

USAID may direct partners to take specific steps to address an actual or alleged violation, and may impose special conditions as part of its awards, or take other remedial actions as may be necessary. Where implementing partner employees are involved, partners must consult with the Mission Director on a course of action, and the Ambassador may direct the removal of a U.S. citizen from the country and require termination of any employee from the award. The USAID Office of Inspector General may also investigate and take action as it deems necessary.