



September 14, 2023

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Comer:

We write regarding your May 18, 2023, letter on telework and remote work policies and practices at federal agencies. Attached here please find USAID's responses to the questions posed by the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

We are committed to working cooperatively with the Committee. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Jodi B. Herman
Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs

Attachment: a/s

cc: Ranking Member Jamie Raskin
Committee on Oversight and Accountability

Attachment: USAID Responses

1. *With respect to employees whose primary office location is at the agency's Washington, D.C.-area headquarters:*

- a. *How many such employees do you currently have?*

Response: USAID's workforce includes over 13,000 individuals globally, of which 2,190¹ domestic federal employees (civil and foreign service) have a primary office location of the Agency's Washington, D.C.-area headquarters.²

- b. *How many are in telework-eligible positions?*

Response: All of USAID's federal employees whose primary office location is the Agency's Washington, D.C.- headquarters are eligible for telework.

- c. *How many have telework agreements in place with the agency?*

Response: As of September 2023, 2,052³ domestic federal employees have active telework agreements.

- d. *Of this number, how many are engaging in telework?*

Response: All of USAID's domestic employees who are not on remote agreements are expected to sign new telework agreements based on the Agency's updated telework posture. USAID offers two types of telework arrangements: regular/recurring and situational/unscheduled. A regular/recurring telework arrangement is where an employee has a pre-approved schedule of telework days per pay period. A situational/unscheduled telework arrangement is where an employee performs telework on an irregular, unscheduled, or case-by-case basis; the employee does not have an ongoing and regular telework schedule.

- e. *What is the average number of days that employees with telework agreements telework per week?*

Response: The average number of telework days per week for the 1,729 regular/recurring telework arrangements is two days of telework per week.⁴ In response to M-23-15, USAID will be requiring that all

¹ Source: National Finance Center and LaunchPad telework agreements, 9/11/2023.

²Nearly 70% of USAID's workforce is non-direct hire staff on primarily contractual mechanisms who work at our headquarters and missions

³ Source: LaunchPad telework agreements, 9/11/2023.

⁴ Source: LaunchPad telework agreements, 9/11/2023

employees with a telework agreement and duty station at headquarters attend work in-person at least 3 times per week (i.e. 6 days per pay period) by September 24, 2023.

2. *How many of your agency's employees based in offices located in the Washington, D.C. area have returned to the office on a full-time basis (engage in no regular telework)?*

Response: USAID offered all telework-eligible employees the opportunity to submit an updated telework agreement request by August 18, 2023. Thus far, of the federal employees based in offices located in the Washington, DC area, 323 (15% of USDH) employees opted for situational/unscheduled telework agreements, which means they may telework periodically.⁵ Thus far, 111 Direct Hires in supervisory roles have opted for situational telework and 481 for scheduled telework for a maximum of two days of telework per week. However, supervisors and senior leaders are expected to be in the office as warranted by operational needs.

3. *What is the average occupancy rate of each of your Washington, D.C.-area office locations on each day of the week?*

Response: Based on badge-in data over pay periods 14 and 15 (July 6-29, 2023) U.S. direct hire staff had a range of 12 to 20 percent occupancy on Mondays and Fridays and 27 to 34 percent on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. During that same time period, U.S. Personal Services Contractor staff had a range of 3 to 14 percent occupancy on Mondays and Fridays and 15 to 42 percent on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.⁶ Per USAID's new policy, by the end of September, all staff with a telework agreement and headquarters as their duty station must be in person at least 3 days per week.

4. *What plans has your agency made to adjust its real estate footprint based on current and future telework plans?*

Response: USAID's *Washington Real Estate Strategy (WRES)* emphasizes a flexible, modern workspace that prioritizes more efficient use of our buildings. As part of this strategy, USAID has reduced its footprint in Washington from four buildings to two. Implemented phases of the WRES showcases modular furniture that allows for adjustments to configuration with the space, infrastructure that allows for more rapid adjustment to restricted-space requirements, collaboration spaces, conference center spaces, and technology that allows Washington-based personnel to connect with expanded worldwide audiences. While the vast majority of our Washington, DC based workforce has dedicated

⁵ Source: LaunchPad telework agreements, 9/11/2023.

⁶ Source: Badge-in data for Ronald Reagan Building and USAID Annex, 7/6/2023-7/29/2023.

workspaces, the WRES includes a requirement for desk sharing to ensure the existing or future increases in staff can be consolidated into two headquarters facilities.

For all agency employees, regardless of official duty station:

1. *OMB Memorandum M-21-25 stated agencies should rely on evidence when making post reentry personnel policies and work environment decisions. Describe the evidence your agency utilized to determine how personnel policies and procedures were impacting mission delivery and outcomes. Provide the Committee with documentation of all such evidence and any related assessments used to inform current and future policies.*

Response: The following evidence was used to determine how personnel policies and procedures were impacting mission delivery and outcomes: responses from our global workforce to a management survey of in-office presence needs and concerns; an all-staff survey on the Future of Work, including telework preferences; the latest Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey; consultations with the Civil Service and Foreign Service employee unions; several all-staff Town Halls where feedback was solicited and addressed; listening sessions held with Employee Resource Groups (ERGs); weekly information sessions open to the global workforce; and a virtual suggestion box available to all staff. The data and feedback gathered was supplemented by interagency consultations with the State Department, our closest counterpart in government, the Office of Management and Budget and a working group comprising the Chief Human Capital Officers across the Executive Branch. USAID's Human Capital and Talent Management Team captured findings and key recommendations in a 2021 Future of Work Report, a document used to inform our phased approach to re-entry and subsequent telework policies post-pandemic.

2. *Are all agency workers teleworking only pursuant to written telework agreements? If not, please explain why.*

Response: Yes.

3. *Describe the management controls your agency has implemented to ensure workers are either adhering to the provisions of a telework agreement or are otherwise fulfilling their official duties.*

Response: Supervisors are responsible for ensuring their employees are fulfilling their official duties, whether they are performing them while teleworking or working from a USAID facility. Supervisors provide oversight through a variety of management controls, including employee performance metrics, log-in sheets, daily activity reports, team and individual meetings/check-ins, and time and attendance certifications, among other tools. All employees, regardless of their

location of work, abide by existing performance measures. USAID also issues reminders and additional guidance to supervisors and employees about performance expectations. USAID also currently collects in person occupancy levels through badge swipes and time-and-attendance data, and the agency utilizes this data to periodically verify that employees are abiding by their telework agreements.

4. *Provide annual leave and sick leave usage data for employees of your agency for years 2018-2022.*

Response⁷:

Annual Leave (AL) used by Agency Employees 2018: 517,276 hours

AL used by Agency Employees 2019: 557,302 hours

AL used by Agency Employees 2020: 427,488 hours

AL used by Agency Employees 2021: 619,284 hours

AL used by Agency Employees 2022: 693,917 hours

Sick Leave (SL) used by Agency Employees 2018: 234,764 hours

SL used by Agency Employees 2019: 211,027 hours

SL used by Agency Employees 2020: 147,979 hours

SL used by Agency Employees 2021: 164,483 hours

SL used by Agency Employees 2022: 231,848 hours

5. *Describe any adverse impacts expanded telework and remote work have had on any aspect of agency performance.*

Response: The Agency does not have evidence of any adverse impacts on Agency performance caused by expanded telework and remote work. However, in FY 2021 USAID launched an Organizational Health Index (OHI) as a management tool for continuous improvement. The OHI brings together 50 different data sources that position USAID to monitor and address any operational or programmatic weaknesses. We note that employee engagement and customer service scores did not change during the pandemic. We are building in additional indicators to enable us to further monitor organizational health as we increase our in-person presence in Washington, DC.

USAID's updated posture of three in-person days per week provides the Agency additional opportunities to build social capital and increase trust, psychological safety and collaboration, and provides avenues for further professional development to our workforce. These were identified as areas for improvement in USAID's various employee surveys and listening sessions focused on gauging morale.

6. *Describe how your agency is enforcing regulations to ensure workers are*

⁷ USAID is currently reviewing and analyzing this data to determine trends over time.

reporting to their worksite at least twice per pay period, as required by OMB Memorandum M-21- 25.

Response: Upon reentry in May 2022, USAID published guidance detailing how employees are to accurately record on their timesheets their in-person presence and their telework status. USAID continues to send reminders and guidance to employees on an as-needed basis. The Agency also continues to offer training sessions for supervisors and employees on time and attendance procedures to ensure we are able to accurately account for our personnel's presence in the workplace. Supervisors certify timesheets on a bi-weekly basis to verify for accuracy.

7. *Describe how your agency is ensuring employees working under a remote work agreement are paid based on the appropriate locality rate. How many of your agency's employees are paid based on a locality rate that is higher than the locality rate of their duty station?*

Response: Upon submission of a remote-work agreement, employees indicate the duty station for their alternate work location. Upon approval of the remote-work agreement, an SF-52 is automatically generated for a change in duty location and submitted to Human Resources for processing. This ensures the employees receive the accurate locality pay.

None of the Agency's employees are paid on a locality rate that is different from the duty station on their approved remote work agreement.

8. *Describe whether teleworking employees possess secure network capacity, communications tools, necessary and secure access to appropriate agency data assets and federal records, and equipment sufficient to enable each such employee to be fully productive.*

Response: USAID employees who engage in telework possess secure communications tools necessary to manage Agency data and federal records appropriately. Many USAID staff have been securely teleworking since long before March 2020, when the Agency adopted a maximum telework posture in response to the COVID-19 pandemic declaration. Online collaboration, appropriate management of Agency data, and access to information where and when staff need it have been a part of the Agency's information technology strategy for the Agency for many years.

To support our global workforce and the Agency's international development and humanitarian assistance mission, USAID moved to a secure government cloud environment more than a decade ago. As a direct result of these investments, in March 2020, USAID successfully pivoted the entire enterprise to a secure, safe and productive telework environment. Additionally, to address the increase in telework, the Agency rapidly implemented increased IT security and

monitoring efforts to ensure all systems and equipment had the highest level of protections; fully educated and made staff aware of increased cyber threats; and ensured Agency leadership had full visibility into IT operations. These efforts have continued and matured over time so that the current hybrid work environment is more stable and more secure while providing a platform for full staff productivity.

In addition, the Agency provides each employee with the required equipment to be fully productive, including a government-issued laptop (with charger and headset), a Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card, and, where management deems appropriate, an Agency-managed mobile device. Per the Agency Telework Policy, ADS 405, each teleworking employee is responsible for their own home office equipment.

9. *Have any collective bargaining agreements impacted or overridden agency processes or missions due to telework or remote work provisions? Please describe and provide copies of any collective bargaining agreements that include provisions related to telework and remote work.*

Response: No. The Agency's telework and remote-work provisions are addressed in Agency policy. The Agency recently negotiated Agency-proposed revisions to our telework and remote-work policy and ensured, prior to implementation, that we satisfied our labor obligations in accordance with law and Executive Orders. The agreements that resulted from those negotiations retained for the Agency the flexibility to adjust our workplace posture based on operational need.