

Major Functional Series 500: MANAGEMENT SERVICES
ADS Chapter 553 - CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES

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553.1 Authority

1. [Foreign Assistance Act of 1961](#), as amended
2. International Security Assistance Act of 1978

553.2 Objective

To respond promptly and thoroughly to all inquiries from Members of Congress or their staff and to provide clear, concise, and uniform information to Congress regarding the activities of USAID.

553.3 Responsibility

1. The Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) is responsible for responding to inquiries from Congress regarding the activities of USAID.
2. The Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs (AA/LPA) is responsible for overseeing the processing of [congressional inquiries](#) and approving all correspondence with Members of Congress or congressional staff, and for designating LPA staff to attend conversations and or sit-in on meetings between Members of Congress and other USAID personnel.
3. The Executive Secretariat (ES) is responsible for assigning action on all congressional communications received by USAID personnel.
4. USAID offices/bureaus and officers are responsible for informing LPA of all congressional inquiries and the Executive Secretariat (ES) of all [congressional correspondence](#) they receive.

553.4 Definitions (See [ADS GLOSSARY](#))

CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE
CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES

553.5 POLICY

The following are the official Agency policies and corresponding essential procedures:

553.5.1 CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES

It is the policy of USAID to make information concerning its objectives and operations freely available to Members of Congress and their staff. Because

congressional understanding of development assistance programs is dependent upon the availability of this information and prompt and reliable response to inquiries, the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) shall respond promptly to all requests for information from Congress.

Although the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs is the focal point for the preparation and release of information, there must be a continuing, comprehensive, Agency-wide concern for producing and disseminating timely, accurate information. LPA shall stimulate, program, and coordinate these efforts, but must rely on the active participation of all major offices and officers in USAID in responding to the need for an accurately informed Congress.

All USAID offices/bureaus and officers shall adhere to the essential procedure prescribed in E553.5.1 when answering congressional telephone inquiries.

E553.5.1 Congressional Inquiries

Telephone Inquiries: The following procedures apply in those cases in which a USAID office or bureau other than LPA receives a telephone inquiry directly from a Member of Congress or the Member's staff:

* a) If the USAID officer contacted by the Member of Congress or congressional staff considers it appropriate during the conversation, the officer shall designate LPA as the proper place to call for information pertaining to USAID and, in all cases, the caller must be given that telephone number **(202-712-4340)** for future reference.

b) If the USAID officer does not consider directing the Member of Congress or congressional staff to LPA appropriate during the conversation, the USAID officer shall report the conversation to LPA after its conclusion in the following manner:

1. Telephone the congressional liaison officer in LPA immediately to report the inquiry.

2. If requested by the congressional liaison officer, the officer contacted by the Member of Congress or congressional staff shall submit to LPA via e-mail the following information:

- a. Name of congressional office (member or committee);
- b. Name of congressional staffer making call;
- c. Brief description of inquiry;
- d. USAID official who is taking action or name of USAID official to whom inquiry is referred;

- e. Report of reply and whether reply is oral or written.

c) If the USAID officer contacted by the Member of Congress or congressional staff believes that the congressional inquiry requires a written reply or materials, or if such a reply or materials are requested by the Member of Congress or congressional staff, the officer shall prepare the reply or materials and shall forward them to LPA with an unsealed, addressed envelope for forwarding to the Member of Congress or congressional staff upon approval of the Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs (AA/LPA).

553.5.2 CONVERSATIONS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS OR STAFF

In addition to telephone inquiries, all other conversations or meetings between USAID officials and Members of the Congress or members of their staff concerning matters of interest to USAID shall be reported by memorandum, telephone, or e-mail, in advance of the event when possible, to the Office of the Assistant Administrator for LPA (AA/LPA). If deemed appropriate by the AA/LPA, a designated LPA representative shall accompany the USAID official to the meeting or event.

E553.5.2 Conversations with Members of Congress or Staff - N/A

553.5.3 WRITTEN MATERIALS FURNISHED TO CONGRESS

LPA shall transmit to Congress the USAID Congressional Presentation, periodic reports required by law, special reports requested by the Congress or offered by USAID, and correspondence with committee members and their staff.

E553.5.3 Written Materials Furnished to Congress

When an office receives a direct congressional request for publications, documents, or other USAID printed materials, the office shall forward the requested materials to LPA in an unsealed envelope addressed to the Member of Congress or the Member's staff that LPA shall then forward upon approval of the AA/LPA.

553.5.4 CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

All congressional correspondence received directly by USAID officials must be forwarded to the Executive Secretariat (ES) for appropriate action assignment.

E553.5.4 Congressional Correspondence

Response Deadline: Action on congressional mail is assigned by the Office of the Executive Secretary (ES) and must be responded to within five working days. If this time limit cannot be met, an interim reply to the Member of Congress must be prepared immediately and forwarded to LPA (**See E553.5.3**).

Signatures on Congressional Correspondence: All correspondence with Members of Congress or their staffs on USAID matters shall be prepared either for the signature of the Administrator or the Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs (AA/LPA), or other designated individuals. All letters to Members of Congress or congressional staff in response to telephone inquiries must be prepared for the signature of the Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs.

Clearance of Congressional Correspondence: All correspondence with Members of Congress or their staffs on USAID matters signed by the Administrator or other designated individual must be cleared, in final, by LPA. LPA delivers to the Member of Congress or their staff, correspondence signed by the AA/LPA or designated individual and sends a copy to ES. Correspondence signed by the Administrator or Deputy is returned to ES.

553.6 Supplementary Reference - N/A

553.7 Mandatory Reference - N/A

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