



Office of the Chief
Records Officer for the
U.S. Government

Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.

March 14, 2025

Christopher Colbow
Agency Records Officer
United States Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Suite 2.07-70
Washington, DC 20523

Dear Mr. Colbow,

On March 11, 2025, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) was made aware of an allegation of unauthorized disposition of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) records from various sources. It was alleged that officials at USAID had begun large-scale destruction of classified documents at the Washington, DC headquarters in the Ronald Reagan Building.

Various sources reported that according to an internal USAID email, staff were instructed on procedures for clearing "classified safes and personnel documents" through shredding and the use of "burn bags" marked "SECRET." The email directed employees to "[s]hred as many documents first, and reserve the burn bags for when the shredder becomes unavailable or needs a break" while providing instructions on properly sealing and labeling these burn bags.

Per 36 CFR § 1230.16(a), NARA promptly contacted you by phone, on March 11, 2025, about this allegation. You acknowledged the media reports and stated the reasons why you believed that all actions were taken in accordance with federal laws and regulations governing the disposal of records and handling of classified information.

In accordance with 36 CFR § 1230, NARA requests that USAID respond within 30 calendar days to the date of this letter regarding this allegation. The response should include the following information:

- A complete description of the records with volume and dates if known;
- The office maintaining the records;
- A statement of the exact circumstances surrounding the removal, defacing, alteration, or

destruction of records;

- A statement of the safeguards established to prevent further loss of documentation; and
- Details of the actions taken to salvage, retrieve, or reconstruct the records.

If no records were improperly destroyed, please provide sufficient documentation to support that finding. I appreciate your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please contact the Records Management Oversight and Reporting Program by email at UnauthorizedDisposition@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Fischer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "William" on the first line and "Fischer" on the second line.

WILLIAM FISCHER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government (Acting)

Enclosures (1)
2025-03-11_UD20250047_RUD-att.pdf