The USAID Notice Process: Creating, Clearing, and Sending Agency Notices

A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 504

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I. The Notice Database on the USAID Intranet

Effective Date: 06/02/2008

USAID/Washington (USAID/W) and Mission employees with access to the intranet can read and download Notices and attachments. If you have access to the USAID intranet, go to **http://inside.usaid.gov/ [Note: This is an internal USAID page and is only available on the USAID Intranet.]** and click on the link to Agency Notices under "**Notices and News**". Agency Notices from 2000 through the current year are housed on this site. (When the intranet site is full, the Bureau for Management, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Knowledge Management, Web Services (M/CIO/KM/WS) will remove the oldest Notices.)

Only the Bureau for Management, Office of Management Policy, Budget, and Performance, Division of Policy (M/MPBP/POL) has the authority to add, delete, or change Notices that appear on this system. (See **Section VI.b** of this document for information on submitting a Notice for posting.) M/MPBP/POL posts new Agency Notices to this database at the end of every business day. If you encounter technical problems accessing the Notice database, contact the CIO Help Desk for USAID/W, or, if you are at a Mission, contact your Mission systems administrator.

This database is a text (.txt) database. Therefore, all Notices must be submitted to M/MPBP/POL as text files; attachments, however, may be in almost any format but must be **Section 508** compliant. (See **Section III.a** of this document for more information.) Please contact M/MPBP/POL for guidance on Section 508 compliance.

Notice Sender (M.MPBP.POL) mailbox

The Notice Sender mailbox only distributes email. It is not configured to receive email. Do not send email to this mailbox.

Questions regarding Notices must be sent to **Notice Mailbox (M.MPBP.POL)**. The email address is nmailbox@usaid.gov**.**

*II. How to Create an Agency Notice

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There are two ways to create an Agency Notice. The author of the Notice creates an Agency Notice either by using the **Notice Generator [Note: This application is only available on the USAID intranet.]** or by creating it themselves in Microsoft (MS) Word. (If your Notice requires special formatting, see the **Special Formatting text box** that describes how to create a cover Notice.)

II.A Option 1 – Using the USAID Notice Generator

The Agency Notice Generator is available as a link on the USAID intranet Web site under Agency Notices, or directly at **http://iapp1.usaid.gov/noticeform/** once you are within the Agency's intranet.

To create a Notice using the Notice Generator complete the following steps:

1. M/MPBP/POL strongly suggests that you write your Notice in MS Word, and save your work. The Notice Generator does **not** save your work automatically, so saving your Word file will prevent you from losing your draft.

2. Open the Notice Generator.

3. Select the Notice Category from the "Notice Category" drop down menu.

4. Select the Notice Distribution List from the "Distribution List" drop down menu.

5. Enter the Office Symbol in the "Office Symbol" field.

6. Copy and Paste the Notice Subject from the Word document you have created into the "Notice Subject" field.

7. Copy and Paste the body of the Notice from the Word document you have created into the "Notice Body" field.

8. Enter the name, office symbol, email, and phone number for your point of contact in the appropriate fields.

9. Click the "Preview Notice" button. A preview of your Notice will appear. (If there are errors, a message will appear in red and you will need to correct the errors before proceeding. Click the "Make Changes" button to go back to the Notice Form. Make your changes and click the "Preview Notice" button again.)

10. Review your Notice one last time..

11. Click the "Submit Notice" button. The Notice Generator will create an email with a link to your Notice. Enter your email address in the "From:" field and click "Send" to email your Notice to the Notice Mailbox.

You can send the Notice to your Authorized Notice Sender by typing his or her email address in the "Send" field of the email created by the Notice Generator. If you are not an Authorized Notice Sender, and you send your Notice to the Notice Mailbox, it will be returned, and you will be asked to seek approval from your Authorized Notice Sender.

Only with approval from your Authorized Notice Sender can your Notice be posted with the daily Notices. A list of Authorized Notice Senders can be found here:

http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/500/504maa.pdf

II.B Option 2 – Creating the Notice Yourself

You may create a Notice with MS Word. In this case, you must use Verdana, 10 pt. font, the Agency's official, mandatory font. You must save the Notice as a text file and adhere to the formatting requirements as described in the next section.

(See **Instructions for Creating a Notice Without Using the Notice Generator** when creating Notices without the Notice Generator.)

III. Required Notice Format

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When creating a Notice, the author of the Notice must adhere to the format described in this section. The Notice format is presented graphically in **Sample Agency Notice.**

a. Format

Once you have typed your Notice using MS Word and Verdana font, size 10 point. set your margins at one inch, top and bottom, and .92 for the left margin and1.92 for the right margin.

Special Formatting
If you need to include special formatting features in your Notice, you must create a cover Notice, following the format rules, and your document becomes an attachment to your cover Notice. If your Notice is longer than five pages, M/MPBP/POL encourages you to create a cover Notice. See **Section III.b** of this reference for more information.

Unacceptable Formatting Features for a Notice
Save your Notice as a Plain text (.txt) document. Saving it as a .txt file will strip the document of most formatting features. **All unacceptable formatting will be stripped from your document.**

The following table lists all unacceptable formatting features for text Notices.

UNACCEPTABLE FORMATTING FEATURES FOR TEXT NOTICES		
Indents	Bold, underlining, and italics	Bullets and special characters
Tab sets	Center, right, or full justification	Automatic numbering and lettering
Tables, columns, charts, and graphics	Page numbers	Font changes and special font attributes
Hard returns at the end of each line within a paragraph	Footnotes and endnotes	Headers and footers
Animation	Color	

(Note: You may use these formatting features only when creating ATTACHMENTS for Notices.)

Attachments must be compliant with the accessibility requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. If your Notice attachment has a graph or chart in it, you must include a text description of the graph or chart. If your attachment is a PowerPoint presentation, you must send the text of your presentation to M/MPBP/POL so that M/MPBP/POL's Web editor can review it for Section 508 compliance. (See **36 CFR 1194** and **USAID-Federal Regulations for Web Accessibility**.) Please contact M/MPBP/POL for guidance.

The attachment may be the following kinds of files:

Word (.doc)
rich text format (.rtf)
Portable Document Format (.pdf)
Excel (.xls)
text (.txt)
WordPerfect (.wp6 or .wpd)
PowerPoint (.ppt/.pps)
zipped (.zip)
Hypertext mark-up language (.html or .htm)

b. Cover Notices

Specially formatted Notices and lengthy Notices must be saved as attachments, and a text cover Notice must be created. Your specially formatted Notice becomes your attachment. The text file, with the attachment attached, will be posted to the Notices database system.

See **Sample Agency Notice** for an example of a correctly formatted Notice.

c. Audience

Place the **audience** (USAID/W or USAID/General) on the top line in the far right corner of the page. (See **504.3.1.1** for information on the different audiences.)

d. Category

In all capital letters, include one of the 11 Notice **categories** on the second line, in the center of the page. (See **Notice Categories, Attachment A**, at the end of this document, for information on categories.) These are the 11 Notice categories:

- ADMINISTRATOR
- POLICY
- POLICY-REMINDER
- EXECUTIVE MESSAGE
- SECURITY AND SAFETY
- INFORMATION
- GENERAL PERSONNEL
- JOB OPPORTUNITY
- TRAINING
- UNION-AFGE
- UNION-AFSA

Mark Notices from either union (American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) or American Foreign Service Association (AFSA)) with the union name next to the category, Information. For example, a Notice from AFSA would be “UNION – AFSA.”

e. Office Symbol

Every Notice must state from which Bureau/Independent Office/Mission the Notice originates by including the office symbol. Insert the Bureau/Independent Office/Mission symbol on the second line in the far right corner of the page (right below the audience line).

f. Date

On the third line, place the **date** underneath the office symbol. Indicate the month and day with two digits and the year with four digits (dd/mm/yyyy), that is, 04/20/2011, not 4/20/11.

g. Subject

Place the **subject** of the Notice on the fifth line. We recommend that the subject be no more than two lines. **Please add any important dates, such as deadlines/due dates, or action required by, to the subject line of the Notice.**

Additionally, when issuing a Policy Notice or Policy-Reminder General Notice, cite the appropriate ADS Chapter number(s) or mandatory reference title(s)

- Where the policy directives/required procedures are referenced, or

- Where the ADS author will incorporate the new or revised material.

h. Body

Begin the **body** of the Notice two lines below the subject line.

i. Point-of-Contact

Every Notice must list a point-of-contact. The point-of-contact section must include a name, Bureau/Independent Office (B/IO) symbol, and phone number or e-mail address. Always include the area code with phone numbers, for example, (202) 712-1234. Do not use references to internal shortcuts, such as, 2-xxxx, to indicate phone numbers.

j. Notice Length

M/MPBP/POL recommends that Notices not exceed five pages. If you have more than five pages of information, we encourage you to make your lengthy Notice an attachment. Then create a brief cover notice for your attachment and then send both files to your Authorized Notice Sender.

k. Section 508

Notices and attachments must be compliant with the accessibility requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. If they are not, M/MPBP/POL will return them to the Authorized Notice Sender for correction. Please contact M/MPBP/POL's ADS Directives and Notices Team for guidance regarding Section 508 compliance. See

- **The ADS Process – Part 1 C.2**,
- **Section 508 Format Requirements**,
- **36 CFR 1194**, and
- **USAID-Federal Regulations for Web Accessibility**.

l. Tables

In accordance with Section 508 accessibility requirements, do not use a "tab table" to present information. Use MS Word's table format to create a table, and include it as an attachment to the Notice. (See **36 CFR 1194** and **USAID Federal Regulations for Web Accessibility**.)

m. Web and Email Addresses

- You can use hyperlinks in the body of the Notice. Please make sure that the hyperlink(s) works and links to the correct document or Web site before you send the Notice to your Authorized Notice Sender.

- For text (.txt) files, do not enclose Web addresses or email addresses in "greater than" and "less than" signs (< and >). If you do, the system will delete the Web address from the document.

- If you are providing Web addresses in the Notice, type the complete Web or email address in the Notice so that readers can click on the link to access the Web site. When including hyperlinks in the attachment, type the complete Web or email address in the document. For example, **http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads** or **ads@usaid.gov**. This allows readers of the document to hyperlink to the Web site.

- USAID intranet Web addresses must include the following disclaimer statement: "Only Agency employees with intranet access may view this Web site."

n. Converting Cables

Create a cover Notice for your cable, and convert the text of the cable to sentence capitalization and put it in Notice format. If you are issuing a cable as a Notice, the cable must be converted before you send it to your Authorized Notice Sender or Notice Mailbox. M/MPBP/POL will return the cable to you for processing if it contains all capital letters. (See **ADS 549** for more information)

IV. Obtaining Required Clearances

Effective Date: 04/08/2011

Once you have completed the text for your Notice, you must obtain any required clearances for the Notice before sending it to your Authorized Notice Sender. Observe the following requirements:

- **All Notices** must be approved through established internal procedures specific to each Bureau/Independent Office/Mission. Bureaus/Independent Offices/Missions establish their own internal office policy and procedures for clearing Notices. To learn more about your Bureau/Independent Office/Mission's internal Notice procedures, contact your Authorized Notice Sender. (M/MPBP/POL maintains a list of Authorized Notice Senders – see **Authorized Notice Senders for Agency Notices**.)

- Before submitting a **Policy Notice** to your Authorized Notice Sender, contact M/MPBP/POL by sending an email to **ads@usaid.gov**. All policy must be incorporated into the ADS. Therefore, the ADS clearance and issuance process must be adhered to when you wish to issue a Policy Notice.

  (See **ADS 501.3.4** and **ADS 501.3.5** for information on the ADS clearance and issuance processes.)

- **<u>All Operating Expense (OE)-funded, internationally recruited U.S. Personal Service Contractor (USPSC) announcements</u>** must include a copy of OHR's approval to advertise with their submission of the Notice to M/MPBP/POL as evidence of OHR's prior approval. M/MPBP/POL will not distribute the announcements without this evidence. (The appropriate geographic Bureau/Independent Office/Mission may forward, via their Authorized Notice Sender, program-funded USPSC announcements to Notice Mailbox for distribution.)

- **<u>Death Announcements</u>** are limited to Agency employees and their spouses, children, and parents.

  Please note that, in order to be in compliance with the **Privacy Act (Public Law 93-579 (5 U.S.C. Section 552a))**, whenever the Authorized Notice Sender wants to include any personal information (address, phone number, or email address of surviving relative) in the death notice, M/MPBP/POL must receive written authorization from the issuing Bureau/Independent Office in the form of this short note:

  > "I have spoken to (employee name) and she/he has authorized us to publish his/her (address, phone number, or email address) in the Agency notice being issued regarding the death of (name of employee's dead relative)."

  There are no exceptions to this rule.

V. Sending the Notice to Your Authorized Notice Sender

Effective Date: 06/02/2008

Once you have obtained authorization for your completed Notice, send it to the Authorized Notice Sender for your Bureau/Independent Office. The list of Authorized Notice Senders is included in **Authorized Notice Senders for Agency Notices**. M/MPBP/POL will only publish Notices sent to **nmailbox@usaid.gov** by the Authorized Notice Senders.

VI. What Does the Authorized Notice Sender Do?

Effective Date: 04/08/2011

a. Format, Authorization, and Content Review

When Authorized Notice Senders receive a Notice from an employee in their Bureau/Independent Office/Mission, they first must review the Notice for proper format, clearance, and content. If M/MPBP/POL receives a Notice in improper format, M/MPBP/POL will **return the Notice** to the Authorized Notice Sender **for correction**.

M/MPBP/POL cannot stress enough to Authorized Notice Senders to read the Notice for content and format before you put it in the Notice Generator. As an Authorized Notice Sender, you must review the Notice to ensure that it is in the proper format.

Check for the following items to make sure you are on the right path with Notices:

- Descriptive subject
- Font size
- Correct margins
- Point-of-Contact
- Correct audience
- Notice type
- Bureau/Independent Office symbol
- Correct date
- Completed Notice Generator document
- Cables in initial capitals only
- A completed 3-252 if it is a Policy Notice

- **Authorization.** As an Authorized Notice Sender, you must make sure the Notice has received the appropriate internal authorizations, if applicable, and adheres to the ADS process (if it is a Policy Notice).

- **Content.** As an Authorized Notice Sender, you must read the Notice to check for spelling errors, grammatical mistakes, incomplete information, incorrect dates, and other errors.

b. Use the Notice Generator to Send the Notice to Notice Mailbox (nmailbox@usaid.gov)

The Notice Generator application will bring up an email window so that you can send your Notice to Notice Mailbox (**nmailbox@usaid.gov**.)

The Notice Sender mailbox only distributes email. It is not configured to receive email. Do not send email to this mailbox. Send questions about Notices to **Notice Mailbox (M.MPBP.POL)**. The email address is **nmailbox@usaid.gov**.

c. Out-of-Office Assistance Feature

M/MPBP/POL encourages all Authorized Notice Senders to use Outlook's Out-of-Office Assistant feature when they will be out of the office. This Outlook feature will let people know that you are out of the office and direct them to other Bureau/Independent Office Authorized Notice Senders. This action will prevent Notices from waiting in your inbox until you return to the office. The Notice author can then send his or her Notice to another Authorized Notice Sender in that Bureau/Independent Office.

Designating Authorized Notice Senders

Each Bureau/Independent Office must designate at least two people to be Authorized Notice Senders.

- M/MPBP/POL encourages Bureaus/Independent Offices to limit the number of Authorized Notice Senders to five.
- The Bureau Assistant Administrator, the Office Director, or Division Chief must let M/MPBP/POL know when a new person is delegated as an Authorized Sender for their Bureau/Independent Office or when to remove Authorized Notice Senders from the list.

Send your email to nmailbox@usaid.gov.

VII. Issuing Notices

Effective date: 06/02/2008

a. Deadlines

Notices received in Notice Mailbox by 3:00 p.m. will be processed, issued, and posted the same business day. Notices received after 3:00 p.m. will be processed, issued, and posted the following evening.

b. Time-sensitive Notices

If you need additional time to send a Notice to the ADS Directives and Notice Team, you must call 202-355-7450 and let the Notice staff know you need additional time. This additional time is **only for time-sensitive Notices. All other Notices received after 3:00 p.m. will be released the next evening.**

VIII. Executive Messages

Effective Date: 04/08/2011

Executive Messages are extremely time-sensitive Notices of great importance. They relay critical Agency information that must be received by Notice recipients in less than 24 hours and, therefore, cannot wait for the daily e-mail distribution and posting to the intranet.

ONLY designated Authorized Notice Senders from **AA/M, M/MS/HMD, LPA, ES, SEC**, or **M/MPBP/POL** may distribute Executive Messages.

If you have a message that you think should be distributed as an Executive Message, contact the USAID ADS and Notices Team at (202) 355-7450 or contact Albert Moesle, ADS COTR for M/MPBP/POL, at (202) 712-0648.

Executive Messages are sent from a mailbox called *Executive Message*. The e-mails are distributed to the same addresses as Agency Notices. Use Verdana 10 pt. font when creating Executive Messages.

* If you request that M/MPBP/POL send out an Executive Message, then the Executive Message will be issued once it is reviewed and approved by M/MPBP/POL senior management.

Note: The Executive Message mailbox only distributes e-mail. It does not receive e-mail. Do not send e-mail to this mailbox. Send your e-mails to **nmailbox@usaid.gov**.

M/MPBP/POL also posts Executive Messages to the Notices database on the intranet that evening, with a note about their prior distribution. Additionally, M/MPBP/POL attaches the Executive Message to the nightly e-mail from Notice Sender that is sent to the Missions.

ATTACHMENT A

NOTICE CATEGORIES

Revised 04/08/2011

You must identify all USAID/W and USAID/General Notices as one of the following categories:

1. ADMINISTRATOR. Information to the Agency from the Administrator's Office.

Only A/AID or the Office of the Executive Secretariat (ES) may send this type of Notice to M/MPBP/POL for distribution or issue it themselves as an Executive Message.

2. POLICY. New, revised, or cancelled Agency policy directives and required procedures. Policy Notices are always distributed as USAID/General Notices. All Policy Notices and Policy Cables must adhere to the following policy directives and required procedures:

- Before submitting a policy Notice to your Authorized Notice Sender, contact M/MPBP/POL by sending an email to **ADS@USAID.gov**. All policy must be incorporated into the ADS. Therefore, the ADS clearance and issuance process must be adhered to when you wish to issue policy via a Policy Notice. M/MPBP/POL **must receive a completed** USAID Directives Issuance Request Form **AID 3-252 and supporting documentation from the author** before a Policy Notice is issued. (See **ADS 501.3.4** and **501.3.5**)
- You must state (in the subject line or immediately below the subject line, as the first item in the body of the Notice) which ADS chapter the policy will become part of, if applicable, **or provide an effective date or an expiration date.**

> **Note regarding Cables and Telegrams**
> The USAID Policy Cable must receive ADS clearance before being issued. (See **ADS 549.5.2** and **501.3.3**) Additionally, policy issued via telegram must be issued by a USAID/General Policy Notice.

- Policy Notices must be codified in the ADS if they are not already in an ADS chapter or reference format. If you issue a Policy Notice, you must either incorporate the material into an ADS chapter or reference, or have it expire on a specified date. One of these options should occur by the next annual ADS certification (an internal audit) or within **one year** after the Policy Notice is first issued. (See **The ADS Process, Part III, Section 6**)

Interim Updates (IU) are Policy Notices of short duration that are formatted as IUs and placed on the ADS Web site. Each year, management officials must certify that their Interim Updates (IUs) are still valid (see **501.3.6**, Annual ADS Certification). Please email the ADS Directives and Notice Team at **ADS@USAID.gov** if you have questions regarding policy.

M/MPBP/POL encourages you to send your draft Policy Notices to the ADS Directives and Notice Team for review.

3. POLICY- REMINDER. Reminder of existing policy directives and required procedures. ADS clearance is not required. You must state in the first line of the Notice where in the ADS the reader can find the policy (cite chapter number or reference title).

4. EXECUTIVE MESSAGE. A time-sensitive, critical Notice of great importance that relays critical Agency information and must be issued immediately. (See **504.3.1.3** for information on Executive Messages.)

5. SECURITY AND SAFETY. This Notice category may only be used by M/AA, M/MS/HMD, SEC, and M/MPBP/POL.

6. INFORMATION. Internal USAID information that is of general employee-relations interest, such as brown bag lunches, film presentations, awards and ceremonies, Combined Federal Campaign, death of an Agency employee or immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent)).

Information Notices exclude non-USAID-sponsored or -endorsed activities. There is one exception: the occasional Department of State Information Notice, which must have a USAID point of contact and must be sent to the M/MPBP/POL ADS Directives and Notice Team by a USAID Authorized Notice Sender. The following are additional mandatory rules for Information Notices. Please note the new procedures for Items 1 and 2, which took effect November 14, 2005:

1) **Out-of-Office/Leave-of-Absence Notices.** These are limited to the Administrator (A/AID), Deputy Administrator (DA/AID), Assistant Administrators (AAs), Chief Acquisition Officer/Procurement Executive (CAO/PE), Chief Financial Office (CFO), Chief Information Offices (CIO), and the Director of Human Resources (D/OHR) only. Information Notices may no longer be used to announce when a DAA, Director, or Division Chief are out of the office.

2) **Office Designation Notices.** This category is limited. It is used only to announce appointments of Division Chiefs and higher to the appropriate Bureau/Independent Office. Office Designation Notices may also be used to announce the appointments of Mission Directors.

   As of November 14, 2005, the announcement of Division Chiefs and Directors on TDY or leave is prohibited. The Notice System will no longer process these types of Notices. Please send them to your Administrative Management Staff (AMS) Officer for internal distribution.

3) **Death Announcements.** These are limited to Agency employees and their spouses, children, and parents.

   Please note that, in order to be in compliance with the **Privacy Act (Public Law 93-579 (5 U.S.C. Section 552a))**, whenever the Authorized Notice Sender wants to include any personal information (address, phone number, or email address of surviving relative) in the death notice, M/MPBP/POL must receive written authorization from the issuing Bureau/Independent Office in the form of this short note: “I have spoken to (employee name) and she/he has authorized us to publish his/her (address, phone number, or email address) in the Agency notice being issued regarding the death of (name of employee’s dead relative).” There are no exceptions to this rule.

4) **Reminder Notices.** When possible, state just the facts and do not repeat the original Notice. Keep reminder Notices brief and whenever possible, only state pertinent information.

5) **Retirement Notices and Farewell Parties.** Only the Administrator may issue these. You may distribute other retirement and farewell announcements through your Bureau/Independent Office Administrative Management Staff (AMS).

Do not use the category “Information” to distribute policy directives or required procedures.

7. GENERAL PERSONNEL. The Office of Human Resources (OHR) generates Notices that concern personnel issues (for example, assignment review boards, Foreign Service assignments, holidays, and donating leave). **Do not use the category "General Personnel" to distribute policy directives or required procedures.**
8. JOB OPPORTUNITY. A category of Notice that consists of Job Opportunity Announcements (JOAs), Personal Service Contractor (PSC) solicitations, and other USAID vacancy announcements. **U.S. Personal Service Contractor (USPSC) Notices** OHR must review all Operating Expense (OE)-funded, internationally recruited USPSC announcements. You must include a copy of OHR's approval to advertise with the submission of the Notice to M/MPBP/POL as evidence of OHR's prior approval.
9. TRAINING. Training offered by or to the Agency (for example, ADS Training, COTR/AOTR Certification, etc.)
10. UNION – AFGE. These Civil Service union Notices must be marked with the Union acronym, AFGE, next to the category and sent to the Notice Mailbox from the AFGE Authorized Notice Sender.
11. UNION – AFSA. These Foreign Service union Notices must be marked with the Union acronym, AFSA, next to the category and sent to the Notice Mailbox from the AFSA Authorized Notice Sender.

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