



# THE VANGUARD

## 2010 AFSA USAID Annual Survey

Every year we eagerly look forward to the results of the AFSA annual survey in order to feel the pulse of the membership. In this fifth year we can report a higher number of respondents than last year (581 versus 327). Our goal is to get answers to important questions. What are our members' main concerns and complaints? How is morale? How is the Agency performing? Which areas need attention and improvement? What does the Administrator need to know that he is not getting from other sources? How is AFSA performing? These are all important questions to ask. Given that the survey is anonymous and encourages straight honest feedback, AFSA believes it provides valuable information for all of us including USAID leadership. We want the information to be used to ultimately improve our agency and its mission.

In the following pages, you will find the responses in graphical presentations to make them more comprehensible, some analysis and sample comments which responders have made. The collected data is rich and additional analysis is possible to interpret the results further. We hope that this will stimulate discussion and move us towards meaningful course corrections.

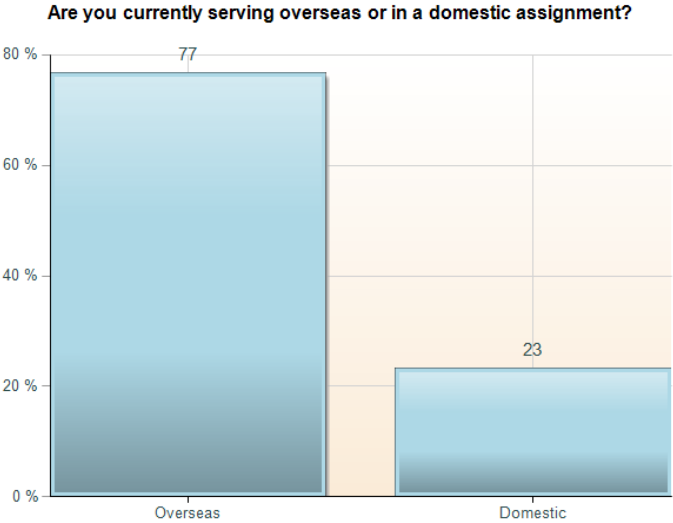
In general though, we see various areas which need attention—some more urgently than others. There are some major problems that need immediate action. For example, you will see that a major concern for FSOs is equitable treatment compared to State Department personnel. This is reflected in problems related to comparable salaries and other benefits. Also, there is still a lot of controversy regarding our relationship with the State Department and the moves to consolidate more of our operations. Finally, the situation regarding the performance of the Human Resources Office in supporting the needs of FSOs has continued to deteriorate year after year to a new low. All of these factors have resulted in an overall belief by the membership that conditions of work are worsening.

### Make Sure to Update Your Address!

Haven't heard from us for a while? Stopped receiving your Journal?  
It could be because we don't know where you are.  
Update your address at: <http://www.afsa.org/addressChange.cfm>.

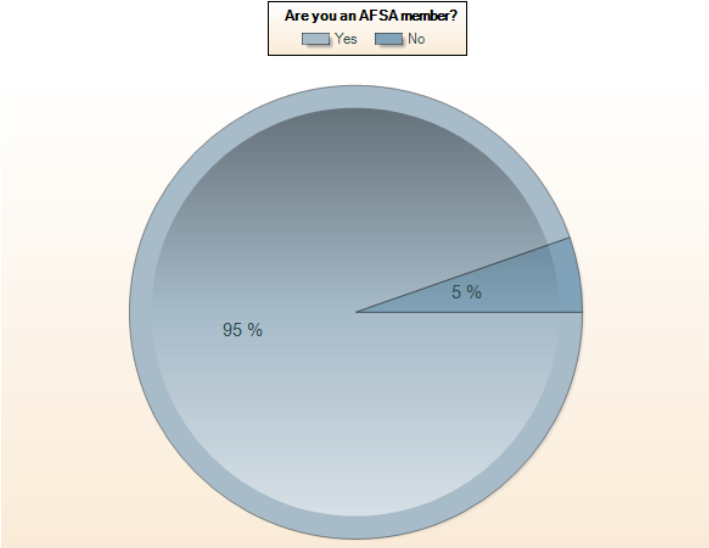
Thank you all who participated in the survey.

**Question 1**



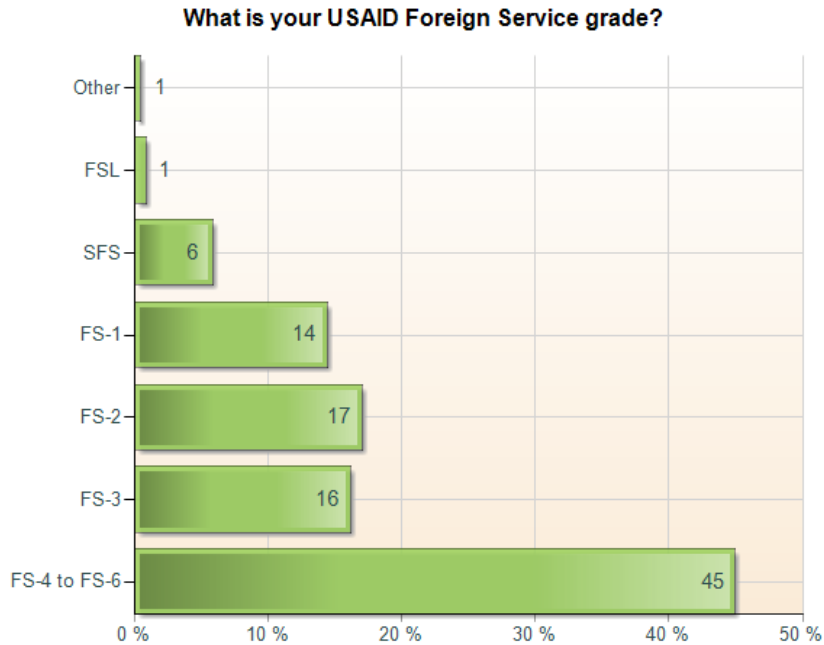
As you can see from the chart above, 77 percent of the respondents to this survey were located overseas. This is a good result because we especially need to hear from the field where approximately 75 percent of FSOs work.

**Question 2**



This is self-explanatory. An overwhelming majority of the respondents are AFSA members.

### Question 3



The majority (45 percent ) of respondents were Junior Foreign Service Officers in grades FS-4 to FS-6, reflecting the accelerated hiring at USAID under the Development Leadership Initiative (DLI). Since agency data shows that approximately 30 percent of our USAID Foreign Service cadre is at grades FS-4 and below, this result indicates that newer employees seem especially interested in letting us know their concerns through the AFSA survey. As additional employees enter through the DLI program and older FSOs retire or leave, the proportion of newer FSOs overall will continue to increase. Unfortunately, our institutional memory and experience base will decrease. For this and other reasons, some respondents mentioned the following changes to our retirement rules:

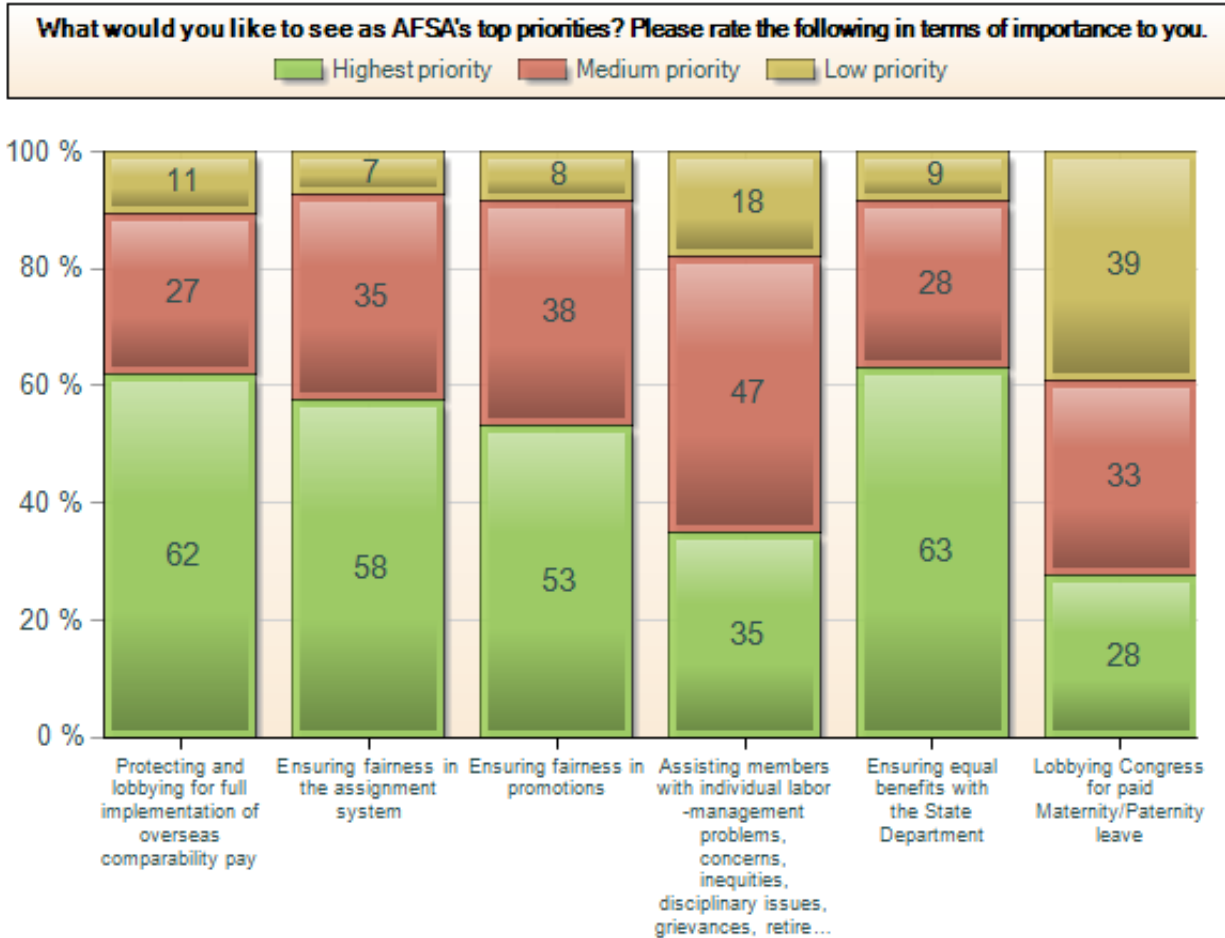
*“Raising the retirement age to 67 or 68 to accommodate those who joined the Agency as a mid-career officer to provide opportunities for full career service.”*

*“I think there needs to be more done to protect current employees and to modernize the retirement policy so people don't need to retire in their 50s while they are recruiting younger people. (Isn't that a kind of discrimination?)”*

*“Extension of mandatory retirement age for healthy and fit members who would like to continue to work longer. Why not an optional extension for such members?”*

Given the trends in our society of longer and healthier lives, it may be time to consider such changes in our policies. This will require congressional legislation, along with all the considerations that entails.

## Question 4



The chart above, while seemingly confusing, is actually very informative. It clearly illustrates the areas that our AFSA members would like us to prioritize higher.

### Equity

The top concern (63 percent) is “Ensuring equal benefits with the State Department”. This is a hot topic which AFSA has repeatedly raised to the Administration and Human Resources. Everything from entry-level salaries, per diems, overseas hardship differentials and even access to training and child care at the Foreign Service Institute are significantly different between the two agencies always to the disadvantage of USAID employees.

Not only the entry-level employees are being affected by the inequities between State and USAID compensation systems it also impacts other FSOs (see a more thorough analysis in Question 10 below),. USAID officers are told plainly by the Foreign Service Institute that State FSOs have top priority for child care services at the FSI Child Care facility. USAID FSOs are placed on a waiting list that never reaches them. Part of the reason for that is because the State Department financed the construction of the facility for day care. Another area is in overseas compensation. It is well known and a source of resentment that USAID FSOs in certain countries may be working shoulder to shoulder with State FSOs who are receiving “Difficult to Staff Incentive Differentials” (DSID) of up to 15 percent, extra pay not available to USAID FSOs. The explanation here is that State employees have many more non-hardship posts to bid on while USAID employees do not need to be incentivized to work in posts granting DSID.

Whatever the explanation for these inequities, it is a problem which USAID leaders have an obligation to resolve especially since the State Department has asserted more and more control of USAID administration, budget and programmatic direction. It is only logical that all FSOs be treated equitably with regards to salaries and benefits. So long as USAID Management continues to allow these differences, it is conveying the message that it considers its employees second class vis-à-vis State employees.

### **Overseas Comparability Pay**

The chart above also addresses that the issue of Overseas Comparability Pay (OCP) is still relevant to FSOs since only 2/3 of this salary correction which AFSA successfully lobbied for has so far been implemented. AFSA is committed to fighting for the remaining 1/3 of OCP in spite of the difficulties ahead regarding the federal budget. Eventually OCP needs to become permanent through congressional approval because it is a salary correction and not a salary bonus, as it has mistakenly been characterized by some.

### **Assignments and Promotions**

Other topics of high importance are requests to assure more fairness in the assignment system (58 percent) and in promotions (53 percent). The former was especially difficult given the Administration's surprise "freezing" of positions in Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) and Europe and Eurasia (E&E) in anticipation of moving more staff to Africa. While location of postings is a management prerogative, AFSA expressed its dissatisfaction with the way it was carried out at the last minute putting many bidders at a disadvantage. We understand that the decision came at the last moment from the Front Office and not HR. We hope to see better planning in the future. Numerous comments were received on this topic:

*"How is it that there is a freeze in LAC and E&E positions after we've already bid on them? For those of us that focused on those two regions, we now find ourselves without a post when we could have been concentrating our efforts elsewhere. Disappointing, especially for a first time bidder."*

*"The "freeze" on USAID LAC and E&E positions is/was ridiculous. Now that more USAID FSOs are filling positions (which they didn't necessarily want) in Africa, the LAC and E&E missions will simply hire PSCs to take their place. The USAID FSOs should be given first choice, then, if more bodies are still needed in Africa, PSCs should be hired to fill the gap."*

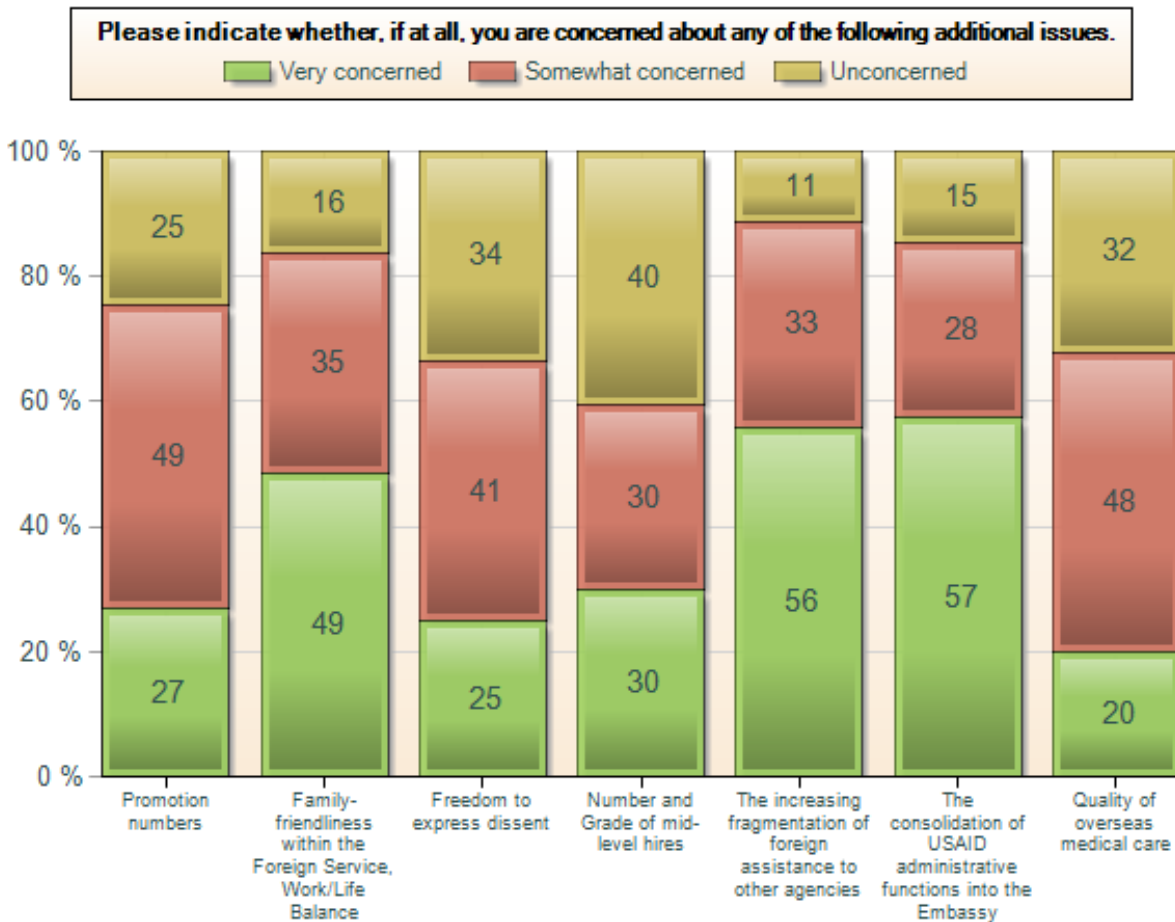
*"The problems and lack of transparency that USAID FSOs are having to getting assignments and out to the field. The freeze on LAC and E&E regions is having a negative impact on the whole system."*

**February 23, 2011 at 7 pm**

### **"Inside a U.S. Embassy" Author Talk**

On the occasion of the publication of the fourth edition of AFSA's bestselling book, *Inside a U.S. Embassy: Diplomacy at Work*, author Shawn Dorman appears at Arlington's Central Library to discuss the book. She will be accompanied by one or more of the contributors to the book. No RSVPs are necessary for this event. The Central Library branch is located at 1015 N Quincy St, Arlington, VA 22201.

## Question 5 & 6



As with the previous graph, the one for question five above shows some clear preferences and directions for AFSA action. The three areas of primary concern of our members are evident above. In question six we asked what additional concerns you believe that AFSA should be working on. Many of the answers we received include issues we are currently working on, some of which we mention in different parts of this summary.

### **Consolidation**

The first is the concern of consolidation of administrative functions into the Embassy (57 percent) a topic which was covered more thoroughly in the April 2010 issue of The Vanguard (<http://www.afsa.org/usaids/0410vanguard.pdf>). An AFSA survey of those persons directly affected by the consolidation moves showed great dissatisfaction with its implementation as well as a belief that there was a great waste of resources and rise in costs. What's more, there were also feelings of inequitable treatment of USAID personnel compared to State employees. As a direct result of that survey, two U.S. Senators called on the General Accountability Office (GAO) to investigate these matters more thoroughly. The GAO is currently visiting selected missions worldwide to collect hard data and to report to Congress later this year on whether or not consolidation of USAID administrative services into the Embassies is having the intended results of improved efficiency and cost savings or is actually flawed. The thinking of many USAID employees is that consolidation is a mistake as some of the following comments illustrate:

*“Conditions for USAID Foreign Service staff are worsening. Resources that are currently used to maintain conditions, benefits, and staff morale are being reduced in order to pay for the costs of*

*consolidation. This results in less resources to support and benefit staff, while increasing the workload on staff (as more money is needed to support existing staff rather than hire additional personnel). State Department (ICASS) staff are unconcerned with the opinions or needs of other agencies at Post, so USAID pays more money for worse service and poorer conditions with less (meaning no) ability to influence how ICASS/consolidated services are provided. ICASS is completely unaccountable to anyone.”*

*“With the onset of consolidation, USAID is paying more for fewer and worse services. This reform is a fait accompli, but it continues to drain FSO and FSN morale. ICASS should be audited on a regular basis. Most tax payers would not approve the status quo.”*

*“The State Department does not do an adequate job of treating AID employees on an equal footing with its employees. State FSOs get more perks (furnished housing when on training, longer vehicle import rights, etc.) I don't see that getting better if we were part of State or continued under the status quo. ICASS has not improved Agency efficiency. I would argue it costs the Agency more money and we get less support as a result.”*

### **Fragmentation of Foreign Assistance**

The number two concern from question five is the increasing fragmentation of foreign assistance to other agencies (56 percent). One FSO put it as follows: *“State micromanagement of development programs and directing is well beyond policy guidance. These issues are exacerbated by State's lack of knowledge of development and development issues”*

Another person commented on the *“impact of QDDR on day-to-day "on the ground" operations in field missions, with short-term political decisions trumping long-term developmentally sound recommendations.”*

There is a sense that USAID is losing control of its programs as other agencies such as State gain more authority over them.

### **Family Friendliness**

The third major area of concern is in the area of Family Friendliness and Work/Life Balance (49 percent). However, there were marked differences of opinion among FSOs with families and those who are single or without children. Here are some sample comments:

*“As a tandem same sex couple, I am very concerned at the efforts being done to ensure family friendly policies and practices in terms of assignments.”*

*“Eligible Family Member (EFM's) employment isn't good overseas and really affects worker morale and family/life issues. There are jobs that can be created in overseas missions for EFM's”*

*“Ensuring that the needs, rights and priorities of unmarried/single employees are given more priority and that "family friendly" is not just code (as it often is now) for systematic discrimination against unmarried employees in favor of marrieds w/children. For example: I would like to see more emphasis on benefits and work/life improvements that help all employees equitably rather than having the vast majority of employee "benefits" be freighted into things that assist families enormously and singles not at all.”*

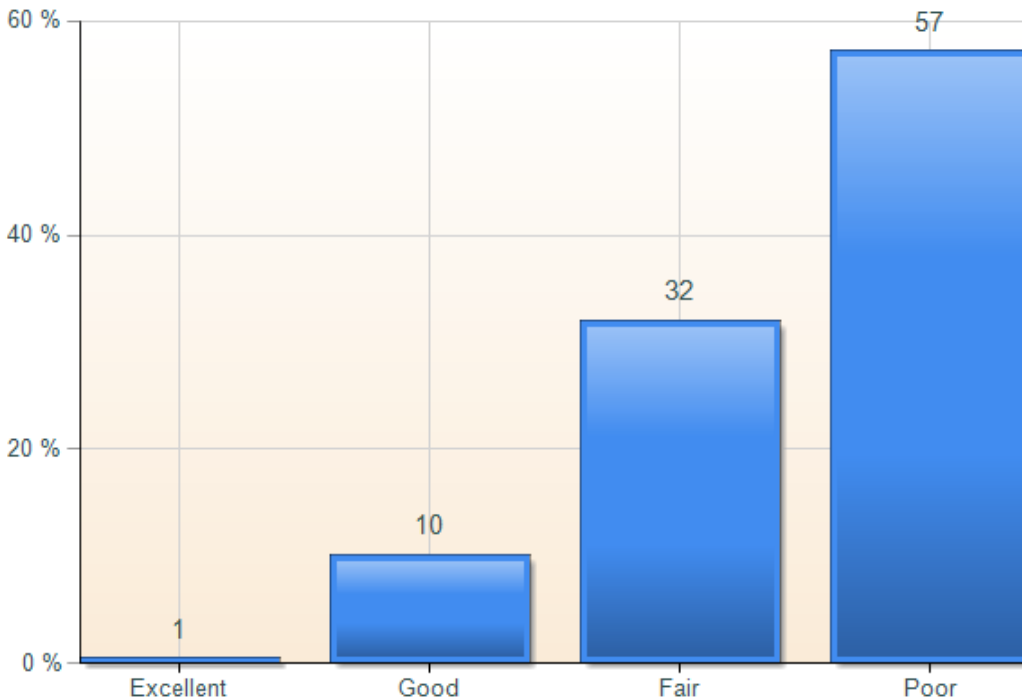
*“The main threat to my continuation in the foreign service are spousal employment/career development, maternity leave (since women in the foreign service face particular challenges*

given the 4-6 week window of time before and after delivery they must be absent from post), and family separation issues for those posted to CPCs.”

“Please work on the paid maternity/paternity leave issue. With the changing face of the workforce, there are more female-headed households. It is especially difficult for those households where the female FSO is the “bread-winner” to take the necessary and appropriate time off to spend with her child. Many other countries, as well as the private sector, have at least partially paid maternity leave. Why is the federal government so far behind? Thank you for addressing this issue for FSOs, but really this should be an issue addressed across the entire federal government as well.”

### Question 7

How would you rate the services provided by USAID’s Human Resources office?



More than half (57 percent) of the respondents judged Human Resources services as Poor. Compared to previous surveys (53 percent Poor, 2009 Survey; 33 percent Poor, 2008 Survey) this shows a precipitous increase in perceived dissatisfaction by the staff about an office that is critical to employees’ welfare. During the transition meetings last year with the incoming Administration team, AFSA voiced its concern that HR services needed upgrading. We recommended immediate attention to HR staffing problems and the need to modernize the systems for personnel services.

The problem is still with us and the agency continues to provide suboptimal personnel services. It is clear that dissatisfaction has only increased. In spite of good intentions, whatever the cause it is incumbent on the Administrator to turn things around. A thorough analysis of the shortcomings and suggested solutions of HR Office operations should be implemented by a

neutral professional Human Resources Management firm. Personnel services are a specialized discipline that must be operated by professionals trained specifically in that field.

The survey respondents contributed the following comments:

*“It is an extremely laborious process to get through the HR process to get out to post. Once at post, we are not getting our pay differentials because HR won't fill out the necessary paperwork. The HR process has impacted me and my family in a negative way while most other experiences have been positive while working for USAID.”*

*“Without a viable personnel system in place managed by competent, dedicated and trained staff, USAID cannot expect to move forward with many of the agenda items you have listed above.”*

*“Human Resource and Payroll department incompetence - too many errors due to HR specialists not completing paperwork and submitting standard forms. Response to inquiries and issues take too long. Lack of communication between payroll and HR in solving overlapping problems.”*

*“USAID's unresponsive, opaque, unhelpful, unfair, and unacceptable HR services. I am very concerned about the chaotic assignments process and HRs lack of transparency on most issues. The dynamic between HR and FSOs has become adversarial and HR practices seem to be vindictive. Tandem assignments is a MAJOR concern as is the general lack of family friendliness around assignments. We need creative solutions for CPCs and unaccompanied posts.”*

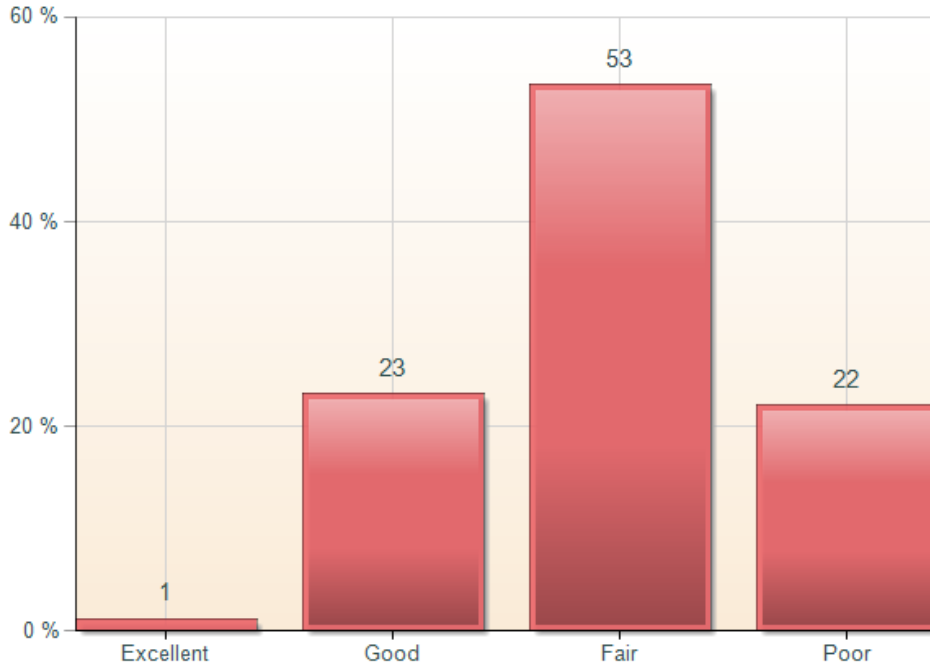
*“The HR department does not have the capacity to deal with the influx of new FSOs. There is no support, assistance with career advice or support for individual concerns or problems. Emails to HR are not answered or if they are the problem is always passed onto someone else and no one takes responsibility in helping to resolve issues.”*

*“I feel that USAID/HR services (or lack thereof) to FSOs needs to be immediately addressed. HR presents the illusion that they are open to hearing our concerns, but infrequently listen or act accordingly. The interaction HR staff in Washington have with many FSOs in the field creates the perception that HR/W is incompetent and often times vindictive....If HR continues to treat FSOs in this manner I am sure that attrition rates will increase and the goals of rebuilding a proud, knowledgeable, respected, and well-functioning development agency will crumble.”*

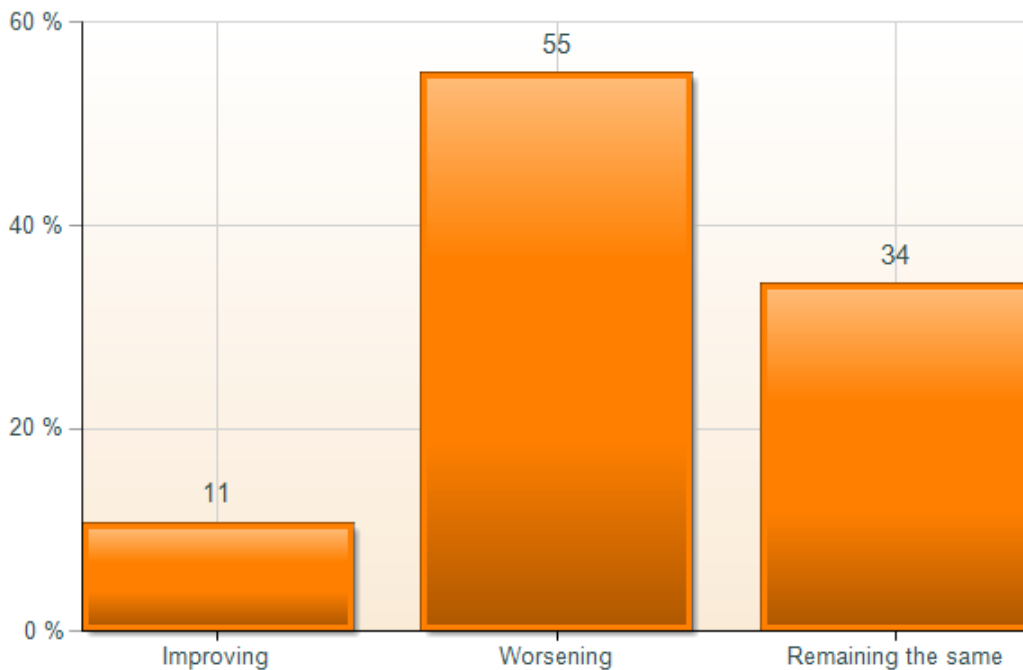
*“As a relatively new DLI, I feel welcome, valued, and well-taken care of. HR is still a mess (a disgrace in some areas or depending on who you ask) and needs to be staffed up to take care of us but overall we are well treated and feel very welcome and have a high morale. The trick is keeping that high morale and motivation through the first 2 or 3 assignments to tenure, this is the next challenge for the Agency (and for us). Bringing 1,300 people on board is one huge undertaking, keeping a high percentage of them in the foreign service is an equally huge task.”*

## Questions 8 & 15 & 16

How would you judge current Agency morale?



At the present time, do you believe that the overall conditions of work for the professional Foreign Service are improving, worsening, or remaining the same?



During the previous 2009 survey, 32 percent of the respondents judged morale to be poor. In this survey 22 percent judged morale to be poor. While this shows a definite improvement of 10 percentage points, it is nothing to cheer about because it shows that 1 in 5 FSOs are

disappointed with morale. It is also contradictory to the results of question #15 in which 55 percent of the respondents believe overall conditions of work are worsening. That is no better than last year's survey which showed that 54 percent believed conditions of work were worsening.

One way to interpret this information may be that FSOs like their jobs and what they do but are concerned about the future direction that USAID is going. In question #16 we asked to elaborate on question #15. Here are some of the comments:

*"USAID really ought to be independent and cabinet level. Our work is too unique and becoming more and more important to be represented by State alone. I haven't been with the agency for very long. I'm concerned that probable cuts in foreign aid will hurt the momentum and morale in the agency."*

*"Pay freeze and reduction in benefits are looming. Also directed assignments to CPCs are negatively affecting morale."*

*"Development cannot be subjected to the whims of political wind. We will never achieve visible and sustainable impact that way. However, Status Quo is the worst possible option. USAID is currently under the thumb of the Embassy in both technical and administrative discussions abroad, but there is no recognition of that fact in Washington."*

*"Ideally, the third pillar development would be on par with diplomacy and defense. This has not come close to becoming a reality and frankly, the QDDR process and outcome are both major disappointments. If independence is not in the cards, then we should merge with DOS - otherwise, we continue to be treated differently and unequally, which is the largest morale issue for USAID FSOs from my perspective"*

*"Right now there is no 3 Ds since development is used as nothing but a tool of diplomacy. So either make it independent so there is truly 3 Ds, or be honest to the current reality, and make us part of the State Department. The status quo is bad for morale, development, and US national security."*

*"Morale issues as we "merge" with State. State culture is not accepting of FSNs (important members of our staff). They view USAID officers as lesser officers. I've heard many times from State staff that USAID grades of the same rank are not equivalent to State grades. Lack of respect for USAID and USAID employees by many State staff is unacceptable. This tone is set by many Ambassadors. Support services under ICASS continues to worsen."*

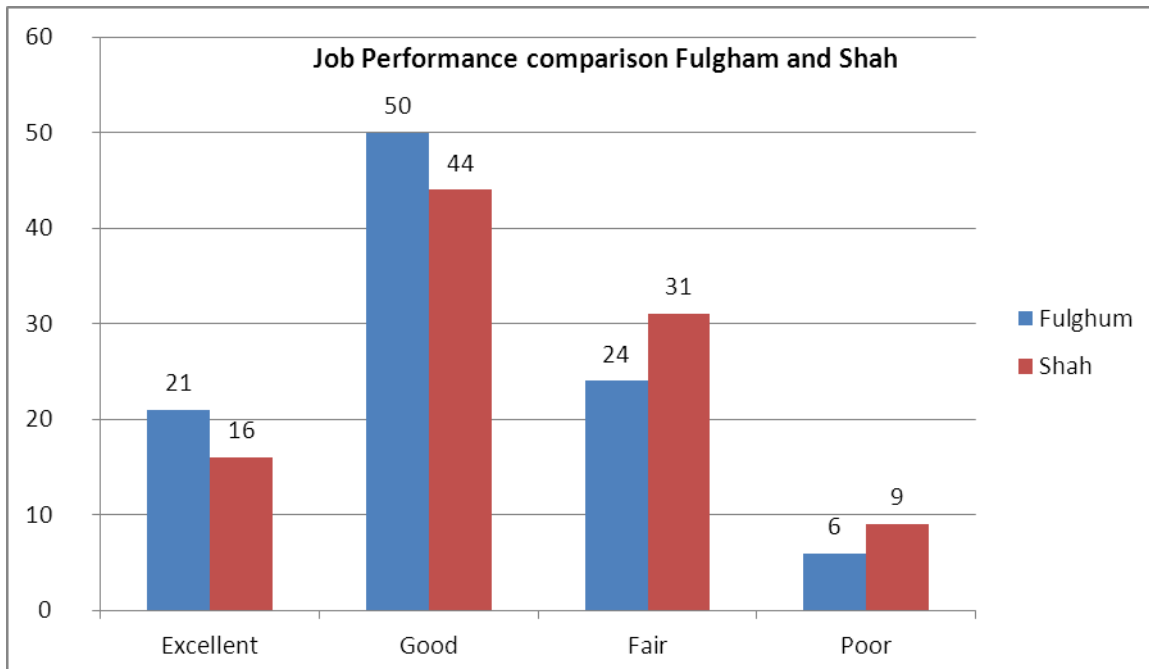
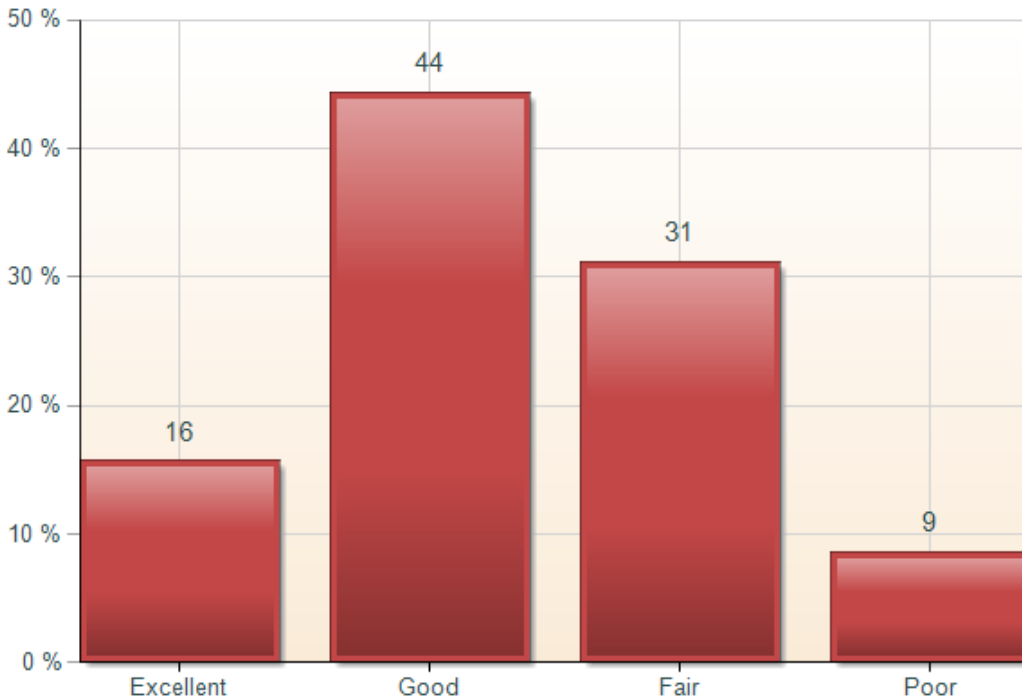
## **Know somebody outstanding?**

The deadline for nominations for AFSA's constructive dissent and performance awards is February 28, 2011. For more details please visit:

<http://www.afsa.org/awards/>

### Question 9

How would you rate the job performance of USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah?



One year into the job, Administrator Rajiv Shah garnered good scores although a little lower overall than the previous interim Administrator Alonzo Fulgham. The staff is appreciative that after a year's gap, it has a permanent Administrator and they seem willing to give Dr. Shah an opportunity to improve the agency. However, there were worries that the agency as a whole was going the wrong direction as evidence by the following sample comments:

*“USAID continues to be plagued by poor management. This, more than anything else, has hurt the Agency. We should give the new administrator a chance to turn things around, however.”*

*“As a relatively new employee, a merger with State doesn't seem so terrible. At least the management of the Agency might improve. I regard management of the bureaucracy our single biggest challenge. Administrator Shah seems like he is trying to improve things, but it's going slowly. There appears to be so little policy coordination. At least if we were a part of State, there might be better general coordination.”*

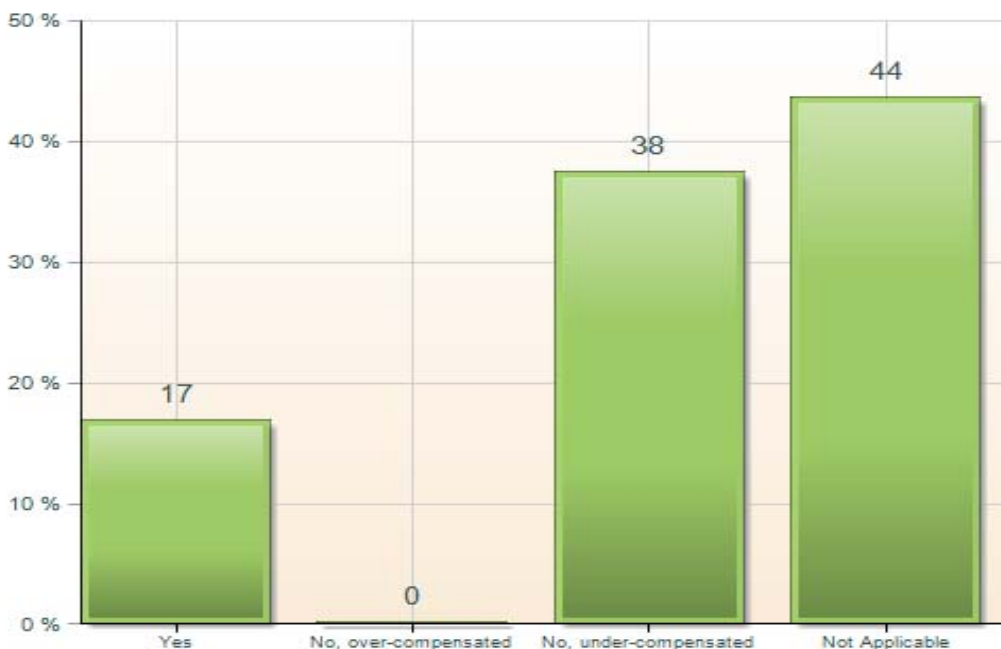
*“The very WRONG direction Administrator Shah and Secretary Clinton are taking the Agency. Agency core value at the senior level is now "getting along" at the expense of managing for results.!”*

*“Clearly, the political appointees and State Department are running the show. The Administrator's focus on Host Country Contracting and grants to local NGOs is ill-advised and ill-fated and reflects the poor development policy advice he received from Ambassador Holbrooke and others over the advice, which he does not appear to be seeking or simply doesn't value, of his committed staff of career development officers/specialist.”*

*“Despite the talk, USAID's status vis-a-vis State is at a nadir. We are perceived as their implementer. USAID doesn't recruit for sharp elbows and sharp tongues like State does, so we usually lose out in battles large and small. Our own Administrator insults our agency and its practices (and by implication, its staff). There is no strong defense of USAID, even if there might be a strong defense of aid. The problems with how USAID works are greatly exaggerated, as are the benefits from "reform".”*

### Question 10

**If you came in as a Development Leadership Initiative (DLI) class member, do you believe that your entry level compensation was appropriate?**



This question elicited very emotional responses from those affected. Entry level salaries at USAID start at tens of thousands of dollars less than those paid to State Department new hires for comparable education and experience. This is due to the methodological differences used by the agencies in establishing starting. The State Department considers an applicant's education AND experience which results in a higher grade and step, often making entry level FS 5 or even FS 4. In appropriate instances it also considers prior salary history in order that the new employee does not take a salary cut from accepting the job.

USAID requires a Master's Degree but only looks at immediate prior salary history. For those idealistic employees who joined the Peace Corps or a low-paying humanitarian Non-governmental Organization, USAID punishes them with a very low salary, normally at the lower FS-6 level Step 1. The gap can be as high as \$20,000 for the same skills, education and experience. In the Washington DC metropolitan area these salaries are barely sufficient for basic needs. The result is that many individuals with advanced degrees and frequently accompanying family cite extreme financial hardships while preparing to go to their first overseas posting.

In addition, State Department Junior Officers receive generous per diem differentials not given to entry level DLI officers by USAID. While it is true that some DLI officers get a "recruitment incentive" as well as Locality Pay, AFSA has calculated that overall, their total yearly compensation still puts them significantly behind their State counterparts. Junior DLI officers are also locked into salaries that will hurt them for the rest of their careers as well as have a negative effect on their retirement. It will take USAID new hires years to reach higher salary levels and make up for the extra expenses of being forced to work at substandard wages.

The bottom line is that USAID has arbitrarily, without any scientific basis or prevailing salary rates market analysis, established very low entry level salaries for DLI Junior Officers.

The situation is unjustifiable given that now more than ever, USAID and the State Department have virtually merged operations. This is an issue that needs immediate attention by our Administrator as well as the Secretary of State. AFSA believes that USAID should increase starting salaries as close as possible to those for the State Department new employees and also consider work experience as a qualifying factor instead of previous salary history.

The hardships are illustrated by the following survey comments:

*"I came in with a PhD and multiple years of experience but because I had been working as a graduate assistant and did not have a salary history to warrant the higher salary, I came in as an FS06-01. While in DC this was not enough to cover the basic expenses of my family and we had to dip into our savings every month we were there."*

*"The position advertisement on USAID's website stated that pay was based on three factors (including experience); however, in practice USAID only matches pay received within the past three years, severely disadvantaging those who have just finished a degree. In my case and that of a colleague, we had spent two years after graduate school working a fellowship where most of the pay was considered a stipend/allowance -- none of which was allowed by HR as salary. So, in spite of six years of relevant working experience, I entered at the lowest salary rung, which was a hardship for my family, particularly while living in DC."*

*"I do not think that the practice of basing salary step on prior salary is appropriate, especially for a development agency that is often recruiting low-paid NGO employees and/or Peace Corps"*

*Volunteers that do not have the salary history to come onboard with an adequate salary. I do believe the upper-tier steps, in combination with the comparability pay and pay differentials for overseas service, are adequate.”*

*“The method for determining entry-level pay is not logical. I say I received appropriate compensation because I was able to “work the system”. But many of my colleagues did not have the inside knowledge I did and were far under-compensated.”*

*“My class received NO “signing bonus” or compensation of any kind. I had to dip into my savings (retirement) money to pay for my apartment in DC due to the high cost and VERY low salary.”*

*“Severely under-compensated. I never should have taken the job.”*

*“Many colleagues took huge pay decreases for the chance to serve our nation overseas. State seems to have a more flexible pay determination system with more flexibility to negotiate upon being hired.”*

*“I am certainly grateful for my new career. However, my after-tax pay is simply not enough to support my wife and me in the DC/VA area. We just hope our credit cards get us through until we are sent to post.”*

*“No consideration was given to my years of professional experience. My compensation rate was based solely on my last position held, which happened to be a poorly paid job with a small NGO that I took while waiting for USAID acceptance and entry to go through. Also, there is a lack of logic to mid-level FSOs with qualifications being brought into the agency at a much higher pay grade, just after we had been brought in as JOs (with no other options).”*

*“Took a HUGE pay cut, was not paid what I am worth and it is very demoralizing...”*

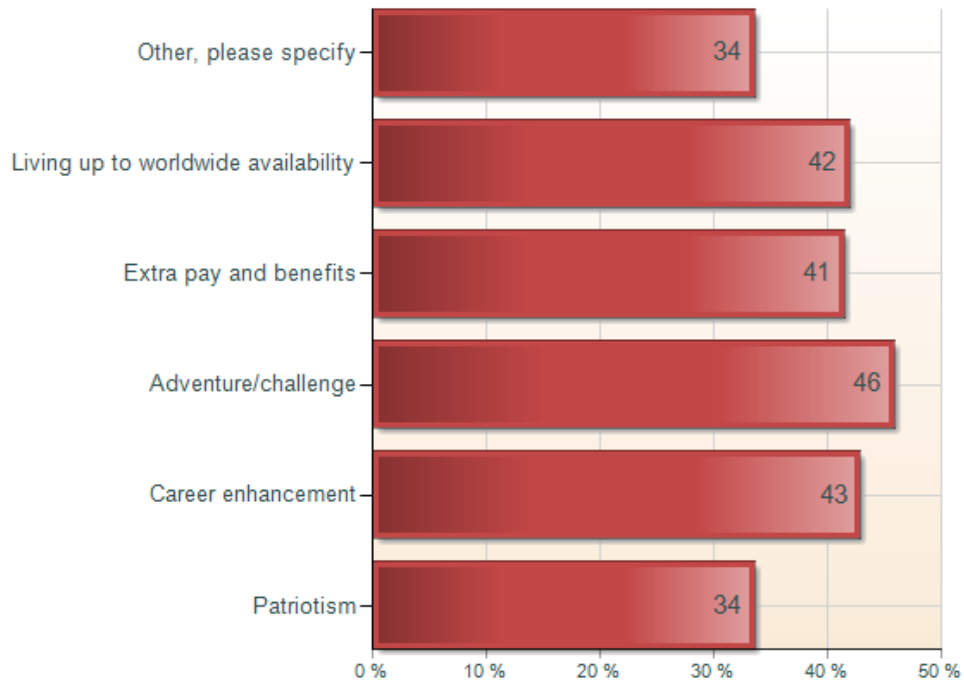
*“As state department FSO's have their housing paid during training, and live quite nicely I may add, I think the same should be done for DLI's. While we were paid a sum to offset our rental expenses, nearly half was lost to taxes. The total that I received was about enough to pay my first six months of rent. I was happy to receive this, but feel that the agency should take care of our rent during training. This would be good motivation for the agency to reduce the length of orientation and training which is needlessly long.”*

*“My entry level salary was entirely based on my last post minus danger pay and was not reflective of years of experience. When I tried to negotiate it was a “take it or leave it attitude by HR.”*

*“I understand that the US government could not match what I was making in the private sector, but I felt that salary limits were arbitrary when taking into consideration level of schooling, experience, etc.”*

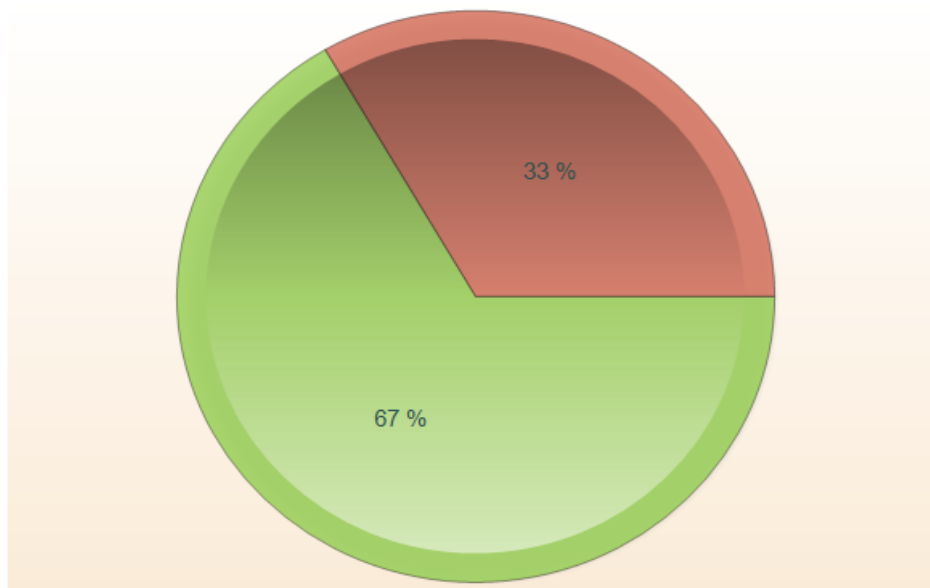
### Questions 11, 12, & 13

If you have already served in a Critical Priority Country, what factors motivated you? (Check all that apply.)

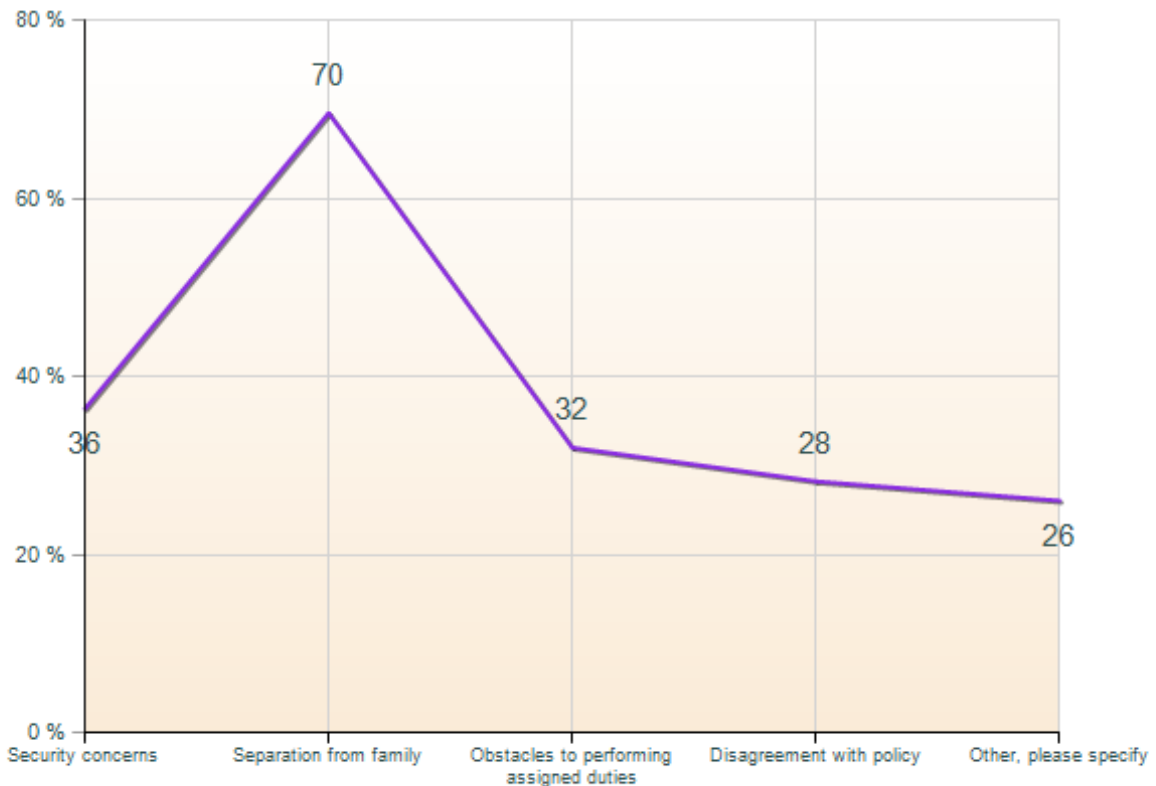


If you were directed to serve in a Critical Priority Country, would you accept the assignment?

Yes No



**What factors discourage you from wanting to serve in a Critical Priority Country? (Check all that apply.)**



The three graphics above relate to assignments at the four Critical Priority Countries (CPC); Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sudan.

**Motivation**

The first graphic shows the factors which motivated FSOs who have served in CPCs. One can see that although the Adventure/Challenge factor scored the highest at 46 percent, most other factors were in the same range. This information is important for the Agency because it indicates what motivates people to accept these difficult assignments. Career Enhancement, Living up to Worldwide Availability, and Extra Pay and Benefits also played important roles in the decision to go to CPCs.

**Willingness to Serve at CPCs**

The pie chart above shows that 67 percent of the respondents would accept a CPC assignment if asked while 33 percent would not. In the previous AFSA survey, 61 percent were willing to accept a CPC assignment and 39 percent would not. There is slightly less resistance to serving at a CPC since most FSOs understand the increased likelihood that they will serve at least once there. It is important to note that some who would turn down an offer to serve at a CPC may have already served at least once in those assignments and so don't expect to be asked again.

**CPC Concerns**

The line graph above indicates those factors that would discourage someone from serving in a CPC. Previous surveys consistently show that "Separation from Family" is by far the most important concern that FSOs have related to CPC service. In the current survey 70 percent had this as a major factor while in the previous survey it was 72 percent. Security concerns have grown from a figure of 25 percent in the previous survey to 36 percent currently. This may be

the result of the plan to draw down U.S. Military troops from Iraq and replacing them with contractors for security and protection of the staff.

Some comments:

*“The high percentage of USAID FSOs in CPC countries is not sustainable for a small agency like ours. AFSA should be pushing for a reasonable approach to these challenges instead of having such a high percentage of our FSOs in unaccompanied posts with predictable hardships for employees and family members.”*

*“The overemphasis of CPC. Too many USDHs are in too few countries with way too little to show for it. I think the forced CPC assignments are a huge concern. If USAID staff is serving mostly behind embassy walls, why should they be stationed in the country. Can't this be accomplished for another post with TDYs for monitoring. How much is really being accomplished there that can't be done from somewhere else.”*

*“There should be no forced placements in CPCs. Additional incentives fine, but no forced placements”*

*“I suggest that USAID could establish “host” missions where families can reside and CPC/unaccompanied positions would consist of virtual, off-site support and also include regular long-term TDYs allowing for face-to-face contact with the mission staff. This arrangement would allow an off-site officer to be assigned for two or more years, rather than the typical one year CPC assignment. This additional time working for a CPC/unaccompanied mission could help USAID focus on mid and long-term impacts, stabilize some CPC/unaccompanied staffing patterns and increase institutional memory within a mission. Clearly, anyone who chooses this way of serving in a CPC mission would not receive priority bidding status, as this would not be fair to the staff who sacrifice a full year to serve at these missions.”*

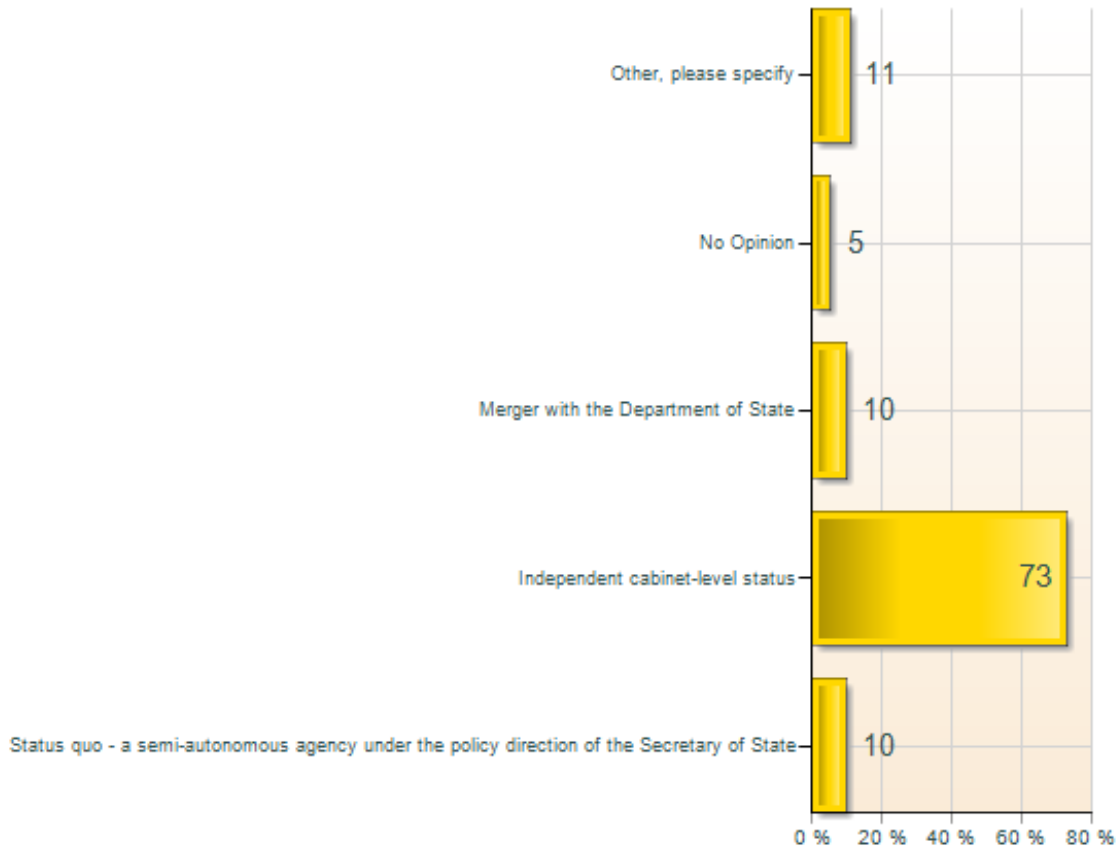
*“In relation to the assignment process and the agency's push for service in CPCs, it would greatly benefit USAID to begin thinking creatively about family friendly solutions to service in priority countries. It seems that the agency still does not understand that this new generation of FSOs are less worried about getting in their 20-30 years of service. While it is an honor to work for the agency, USAID should expect to see more and more attrition of new officers if family friendly policies are not given more than lip service by the agency.”*

### Hey, what's going on?

AFSA maintains a list on our website of various upcoming events, for upcoming events check out <http://www.afsa.org/events.cfm>.

## Question 14

### What would be your preferred option for the future status of USAID?



The response to this question has been consistent over the previous surveys. Again, the overwhelming majority still believe that the best status for USAID is as an independent cabinet level agency (73 percent). However, there were various opinions on the subject including the fact that it is not currently a realistic option.

*“Given that many Ambassadors do not understand USAID or development assistance, USAID is often “assigned” to be managed at post by someone in the Econ section of the Embassy. Worse, I’ve seen Ambassadors use USAID as their own slush funds for pet projects that they wish to fund for personal reasons or perhaps because they see USAID as the best way to leverage subsequent requests they plan to make of the host country government.”*

*“The goals and means of Diplomacy and Development are completely different. They counterbalance each other.”*

*“I don’t think it’s feasible for USAID to become a separate cabinet agency, so bringing it within the circle of power would elevate the status of development.”*

*“The status quo cannot continue - either it must be made independent or fully merged. In fully merging, USAID’s development vantage point would be more fully incorporated in our foreign policy. It would increase coordination and cooperation and help bridge an unhealthy cultural divide that exists now. But frankly, State is better managed in many respects. I would hope, for instance, it meant a discarding our broken human resources department and systems.”*

*"I am glad to see this question. I see the legitimate concerns about the different time horizon of development versus political agendas, but USAID is already subject to political influences. Assuming a cabinet-level agency is not a realistic option, I strongly think we should take the pragmatic approach of a fully integrated development cone (possibly with creative provisions for autonomy/internal audit). My hope is that a merge will end the agony and shift and increase accountability to the proper managerial level (where policy and budget decisions are made which is ultimately at the Sec State).*

*"I don't know if we need cabinet-level status, but we certainly need to be more autonomous and have development programs placed within and spearheaded by USAID, as opposed to other agencies. I am supportive of inter-agency collaboration, but not to the extent where foreign policy/defense objectives become the main arbiters in determining development. Development priorities should be determined in conjunction with the countries/stakeholders we are working with."*

*"While USAID's work is and always will be in support of the U.S. national interest, the nature of our work is the EXACT OPPOSITE of the nature of the State Department. Their aim is to improve national security by gathering information and conducting diplomacy. In other words, they are trying to TAKE as much as they can for the U.S. in terms of information and negotiating positions. The aim of USAID is to improve U.S. national security by GIVING as much as possible to improve the lives of our beneficiaries (be they governments or citizen groups). The underlying assumption is that by helping others to help themselves, they will be happier with the U.S. and their threat to us (and willingness to help us avert other threats) is greater. THE TWO OBJECTIVES CANNOT EXIST WITHIN THE SAME ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STILL EXIST AS SEPARATE AND DISTINCT FUNCTIONS. Ultimately, USAID's objectives are being increasingly compromised by the centralization towards the State Dept. Which objective is more important depends on the situation. If we were an equal member of the Cabinet, the President could decide whether the development or diplomatic objectives are more important in any given situation. Just as the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State hash these things out in the Cabinet, let USAID also be represented there to be able to present our OWN case rather than being spoken for systematically by the Secretary of State who does not necessarily have the same objectives that USAID does."*

### American Foreign Service Association

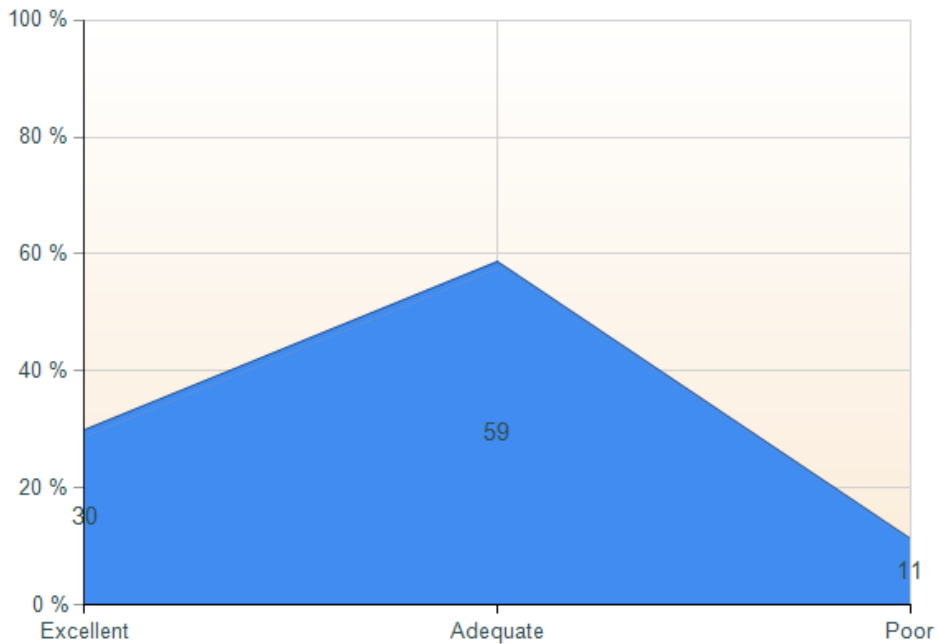
#### Recent Commemoration of the U.S. Hostages Release from Iran and Honoring the FS

Week of Jan. 13 - 28

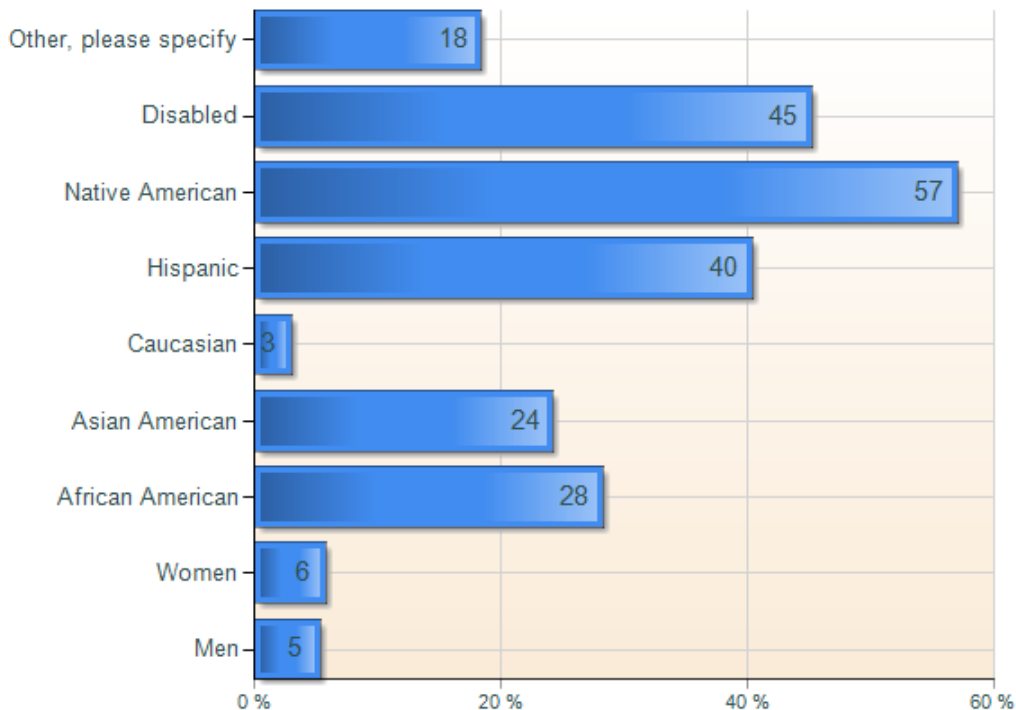
On Jan. 28, the American Foreign Service Association, AFSA, honored the 52 U.S. diplomats and foreign officials taken hostage in Iran 30 years ago. AFSA hosted a panel of previous U.S. hostages, moderated by Andrea Mitchell, at the Department of State. The panel revisited their experiences and the events that led to their captivity, along with discussing the current unrest in the Middle East. This was a Fund for American Diplomacy program that aims to raise public awareness regarding diplomacy and the U.S. Foreign Services. Watch the video of the panel online at <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/SHost> .

## Question 17 & 18

How would you rate the Agency in regard to U.S. direct-hire workforce diversity?



Which of the following groups do you believe are not adequately represented amongst USAID U.S. direct-hires? (Check all that apply.)



The results of this question on diversity are surprising. Most respondents believe that diversity of US Direct Hire employees at USAID is either excellent (30 percent) or adequate (59 percent) with only a small fraction citing it as poor (11 percent). In fact, the opposite is true and the conclusion is that our agency does not reflect the diversity of this country.

The reason for asking these survey questions was not necessarily to get hard figures--these are already produced quarterly by the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCRD). The purpose was to gauge the perception of the agency's FSOs as to whether or not diversity is adequately represented within our USDH workforce. The results show that there are incorrect assumptions on where USAID stands on the topic.

The official OCRD statistics are surprising. The biggest area of underrepresentation is in Hispanic Americans which account for only 3 percent of our staff versus the US National Civilian Labor Force (NCLF) level of 11 percent. Most respondents believe that Native Americans are the most underrepresented group when in fact due to their relatively small numbers in the US population their representation at USAID is basically on target (0.3 percent). Asian Americans, which respondents also identified as underrepresented, are actually twice the US National Civilian Labor Force at USAID (6.2 percent of employees versus 3.6 percent of NCLF). While African Americans are well represented at USAID ( 20.7 percent versus 10.5 of NCLF) they ,as well as Hispanic Americans, are not well distributed at the senior levels. Finally, the agency still has a way to go to better represent Disabled workers and Veterans.

As some respondents pointed out, it is, of course, important to get the best qualified person for the job regardless of diversity status. However, statistics can show us if there are potential problems in the recruitment, intake and advancement of employees in the agency. No one intends this data to be used for the purpose of establishing quotas (which are illegal) but it can alert us to the fact that barriers to equal opportunity exist.

We have to assume that there are qualified individuals of all ethnic backgrounds and sexes in the U.S. including disabled to fill the relatively small number of positions at USAID. If the data in the agency does not reflect the diversity of our country then it is legitimate to ask: why not? Perhaps, more targeted outreach is needed or even monitoring of the applicant interview process. We should strive to remove any barriers to the employment and advancement of all groups.

Many respondents were not aware of the enormous discrepancies in diversity composition of USAID and assumed that representation was adequate. This indicates that more education is necessary to update everyone about the true diversity picture of our agency. Better diversity at USAID will project our values to the world and make us more credible as we help other countries towards democratic principles.

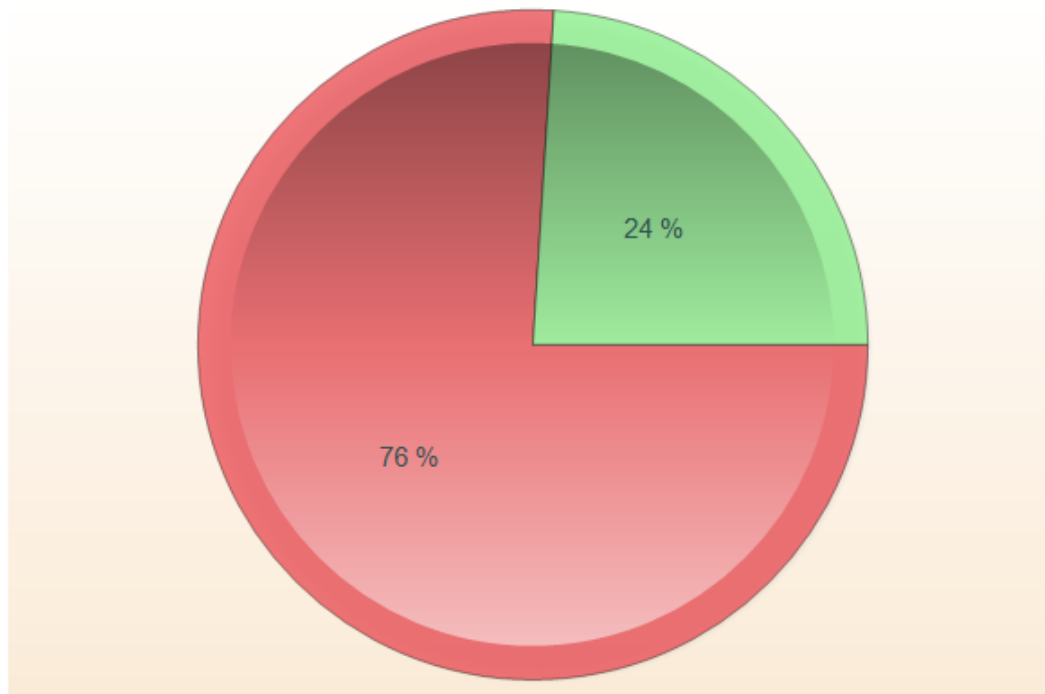
### **J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust**

AFSA is honored to bring this charitable fund which supports community service projects undertaken by Foreign Service members and their families around the world to your attention each year. The Trust will accept applications for 2011 grants through March 1.

For more details please go to [www.kirbysimontrust.org](http://www.kirbysimontrust.org) .

## Question 19 & 20

Are you satisfied with AFSA's work on behalf of its members?  
Yes No



Lastly, AFSA needs to hear from our members about our performance in serving you and the majority, 76 percent, were satisfied with our work on your behalf. However, we are also paying attention to the 24 percent of you who want us to improve.

### **Need for Information**

In general, the main area of concern is related to poor communication with the members about our work. While, we have an AFSANEWS Foreign Service Journal article published approximately every other month specifically regarding USAID issues and The Vanguard Newsletter as needed, we see the need to be more informative. AFSANETS from USAID have not been published with the frequency needed to keep members up to date. We will increase all notifications.

### **AFSA State/AFSA USAID**

Some respondents felt that AFSA as an organization was too State Department-centered. While it is true that State is the elephant in the room, given that they have 10 times more FSOs than USAID, it is understandable that this may be the perception. However, AFSA USAID representatives and the Vice President are involved to assure that USAID issues are fairly covered by AFSA. Apart from the Governing Board, the Vice President sits in several subcommittees to influence decision-making. These include the Executive Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee, and the Awards and Plaque Committee. The Vice President also participates in visits to the Hill to talk directly with lawmakers and their staffs about USAID issues. In addition, many of the issues (OCP, retirement benefits, foreign affairs funding, etc.) are of interest to all FSOs of the five foreign affairs agencies and much of the time is spent working as a team. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that we have not communicated this adequately to the members and will try harder.

Thank you again for participating in AFSA's annual USAID survey. I want to additionally thank you for reading through the above analysis. I hope you find it insightful and informative. It is by your feedback, suggestions, and ideas through which AFSA operates and can both serve and represent the Foreign Service. Please don't hesitate to contact our offices with your thoughts, suggestions, or any feedback you may have. We're here to serve you.

Thank You,

Francisco Zamora