

ADS 557 - Public Information

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557.1 Authority

[Foreign Assistance Act of 1961](#), as amended

557.2 Objective

To provide the policy for Agency information distributed to the public and responding to requests for information about USAID's programs and activities from the public.

557.3 Responsibility

1. Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) is responsible for the following:
 - a. Responding and/or referring all inquiries and requests from the public for materials regarding the activities of USAID (except Freedom of Information Requests, which are handled by The Bureau for Management, Office of Administrative Services, Information and Records Division, [M/AS/IRD]), and when necessary, for contacting appropriate bureaus/offices to gather and interpret information or materials necessary to respond to the request for information;
 - b. The operations of the USAID Information Center, the purpose of which is to facilitate and expand access to USAID information by the general public; and
 - c. Review of Agency-produced or -funded materials available to the public on the World Wide Web.
2. Bureaus/Offices and Officers are responsible for the following:
 - a. Responding to requests from LPA for information or materials to respond to public inquiries;
 - b. When using Information Center facilities, coordinating its use with LPA; and
 - c. Submitting Agency-funded or -produced material to be posted on the World Wide Web (WWW) for review prior to posting.

557.4 Definitions (See [ADS Glossary](#)) - N/A

557.5 POLICY

The statements contained within the .5 section of these ADS chapter are the official Agency policies and corresponding essential procedures.

557.5.1 PUBLIC INFORMATION

It is the policy of USAID that information concerning its objectives and operations must be freely available to the public to the maximum extent practicable. Because public 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) must respond promptly to all requests for information from the public and perform other functions in order to educate the public on foreign assistance activities.

While the Information Center staff within LPA 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's Information Center staff must 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 public.

E557.5.1 Public Information

Response to requests: LPA must process all information requests (in whatever form received, except for Freedom of Information requests that are handled by M/AS/IRD) from the general public concerning foreign assistance programs of the United States and other related requests.

Requests for Information from Other Bureaus/Offices: Since some public information requests require LPA to contact another bureau/office to obtain information necessary to draft a response to the inquiry, bureaus/offices contacted must attempt to respond within two working days to such requests. If it is determined that the person seeking information must have direct contact with a source within the Agency, the individual in question must attempt to respond to the outside caller within one working day. (The telephone number for this service is 202-712-4810; the public e-mail address is pinquiries@usaid.gov.)

557.5.2 INFORMATION CENTER

The Information Center staff within LPA must direct the overall operations of the USAID Information Center. The Information Center staff must

explain the Agency's assistance programs to non-USAID audiences and house other major information resources of the Agency that are generally available to the public.

E557.5.2 Information Center

The operations of the Information Center require the close cooperation of various organizational units within the Agency. Other bureaus/offices located within the Information Center or using Information Center facilities must closely coordinate activities and seek guidance and direction from LPA.

557.5.3 INFORMATION POSTED TO THE WORLD WIDE WEB (WWW)

Information posted to the World Wide Web (WWW) is readily available to the general public. As part of the Information Center's responsibility, such materials must be reviewed by LPA prior to posting to the WWW.

E557.5.3 Information Posted to the World Wide Web (WWW)

Most materials posted to the WWW are available to the general public. Materials financed by the Agency must be reviewed by LPA prior to posting to the WWW. LPA must coordinate this review with the Bureau for Management, Office of Information Resources Management (M/IRM) and ensure that materials presented on the WWW are of consistent quality and accessibility; provide clear and accurate information to the general public; conform to overall design and navigation requirements; are consistent with stated agency public positions; contain the required privacy related statements and meet other requirements.

557.6 Supplementary Reference - N/A

***557.7 Mandatory Reference**

[*Series 500 Interim Update #34, Division of Responsibilities for USAID External Web Site](#)