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Ivanka Trump Used USAID Money for Events, Records Show

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Ivanka Trump used money from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for recording equipment for a White House event, USAID documents show.

Newsweek has contacted representatives of [Ivanka Trump](#) for comment via email.

Why It Matters

The revelation that Ivanka Trump's initiatives used USAID funds for events comes at a time when the agency itself is facing increased scrutiny. With discussions underway about potentially shutting down USAID or significantly restructuring its budget, how the agency allocated its funds—especially during the Trump administration—is under the microscope.

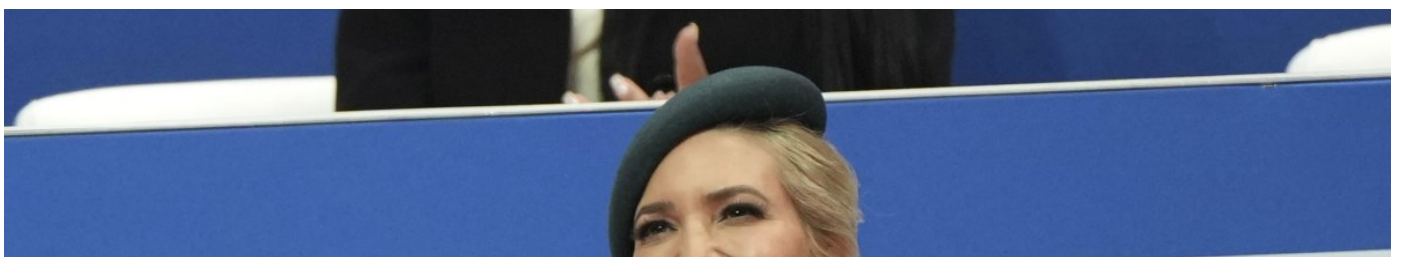
It comes amid the Trump administration's drive to end all diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) initiatives across the federal government, with Trump issuing an executive order on his first day in office ordering a [sweeping dismantling](#) of the federal government's diversity and inclusion programs. [Republicans](#) have claimed that money allocated towards DEI by USAID is wasteful.

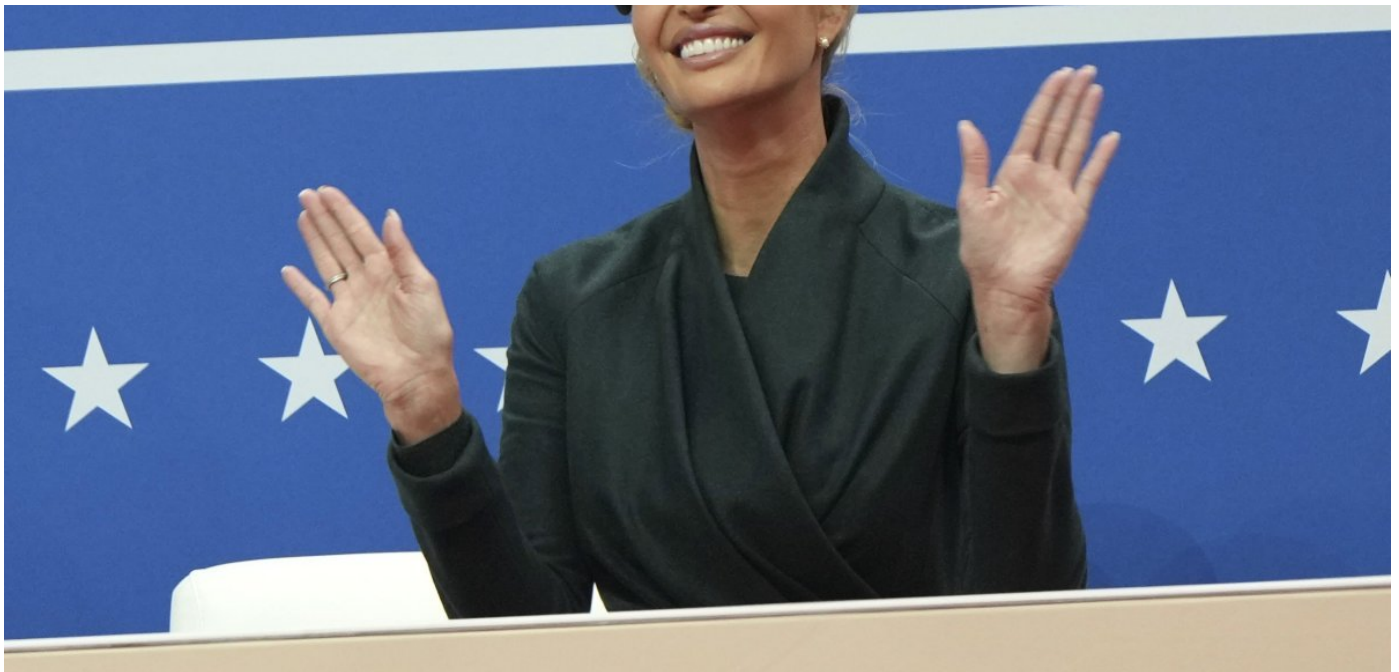
What To Know

According to USAID documents, Ivanka Trump used over \$11,000 from the department in 2019 to buy video recording and reproducing equipment for a White House event.

The documents show \$11,539 was to be used by Trump in November 2019 to purchase software, CDs, tapes and records.

The purchase was approved by Jenifer Healy, who was serving as USAID deputy chief of staff at the time, and the Administrator's Office. It is not clear which White House event the equipment was used for.





Ivanka Trump arrives at an indoor Presidential Inauguration parade event in Washington, Monday, Jan. 20, 2025. **MATT ROURKE/AP**

It comes at a time when the Trump administration is making plans to dismantle the agency. The Trump administration announced on Tuesday that nearly all USAID workers would be [withdrawn from the field amid](#) the efforts.

The following day, the [White House released a list of foreign aid programs](#) the administration views as wasteful that are likely to be cut. They include \$20 million for a "new *Sesame Street* show in Iraq," as well as \$1.5 million and \$5.5 million to promote LGBTQ+ advocacy in Jamaica and Uganda, two countries where members of the LGBTQ+ community have few legal rights. Uganda has [one of the world's strictest antigay laws](#), including the death penalty.

The administration also pointed to programs to fund \$6 million for tourists in Egypt, more than \$19 million to promote "inclusion" in Vietnam and \$5 million to EcoHealthAlliance, described as "one of the key NGOs funding bat virus research at the Wuhan lab."

"For decades, USAID bureaucrats believed they were accountable to no one—but that era is over," the White House wrote. "President Trump is STOPPING the waste, fraud, and abuse."

On Tuesday, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt criticized USAID for sending \$1.5 million to advance DEI in Serbia workplaces, \$70,000 for a "DEI musical" in Ireland and \$32,000 for a "transgender comic book in Peru." She also claimed that USAID spent \$47,000 on a "transgender opera in Colombia." Leavitt was referring to the 2022 production of *As One*, a chamber opera by Laura Kaminsky about the personal journey of a transgender woman, Hannah, from her childhood in a small town. Some \$25,000 was used for the opera from a State Department program aimed at strengthening U.S. relations globally. The remaining \$22,000 came from other sources, not federal funding, according to NOTUS, a publication of the Allbritton Journalism Institute.

While Republicans see such programs as wasteful, they make up a small portion of federal spending. In fiscal year 2023, [Congress](#) allocated \$43.4 billion to USAID, which is just 0.7 percent of the total \$6.134 trillion federal budget, according to reports from the Congressional Research Service and former Treasury Secretary [Janet Yellen](#).

Much of USAID funding goes toward agencies like the World Food Program, UNICEF and nongovernmental

much of USAID funding goes toward agencies like the World Food Program, UNICEF and nongovernmental agencies like Save the Children, not towards advancing diversity programs.

Meanwhile, [Elon Musk](#) said during an X Spaces stream on Monday that Trump "agreed" with him that the agency should be shut down.

"I actually checked with him a few times. Said 'Are you sure?' Yes, so we're shutting it down," Musk said. [Democrats](#) have said it would be "illegal" to shut down USAID.

What People Are Saying

Donald Trump told reporters on Sunday: "USAID has been run by a bunch of radical lunatics and we're getting them out and then we'll make a decision."

Elon Musk said during the X Spaces stream: "As we dug into USAID, it became apparent that what we have here is not an apple with a worm in it but that we have actually just a ball of worms."

He continued: "USAID is a ball of worms, there is no apple. And when there is no apple... you've just got to basically get rid of the whole thing. That is why it's got to go. It's beyond repair."

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters: "I don't know about you. But as an American taxpayer, I don't want my dollars going toward this crap. And I know the American people don't either. And that's exactly what Elon Musk has been tasked by President Trump to do. To get the fraud, waste and abuse out of the federal government."

Senator Cory Booker, a Democrat from New Jersey, wrote on X: "Trump and Musk are recklessly and illegally dismantling USAID, an essential national security agency that saves lives, advances U.S. interests, and promotes peace. Their malicious actions are putting the health of people, especially children, at grave risk, and will surely lead to future public health and migration crises in the U.S.—let alone suffering around the globe."

Senator Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, wrote on X on Saturday that Trump "cannot unilaterally close a federal agency."

He added: "It's not only a gift to our adversaries... it is plain illegal."

What Happens Next

Decisions about which programs are being cut are expected to be made within 90 days of January 20. Reimbursement for approved programs will resume at the end of the review period, but many programs are expected to be halted.

It is not yet clear if USAID will be shut down altogether.



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Martha McHardy is a U.S. News reporter based in London, U.K. Her focus is on U.S. politics and polling. She ... [read more](#)

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