

DEADLY PAUSE

IMPACT OF THE PEPFAR STOP WORK ORDER

Data from 28 January - 31 January 2025

On 24 January 2025, the U.S. Department of State sent a cable to all U.S. Embassies ordering the immediate suspension of all foreign assistance, with narrow exceptions for food assistance, aid to Egypt and Israel, and, on a temporary basis, salaries. This came after the release of President Trump's Executive Order, which was issued on January 20, that required a pause on further obligations and disbursements of foreign assistance funds for 90 days. Following this order, agencies that implement PEPFAR programs issued stop work orders to their funding recipients during the 90 day period in which the U.S. Department of State will make decisions about which programs will be continued, modified, or terminated.

On January 28, Secretary of State Marco Rubio issued a waiver that reversed the stop work order for life saving humanitarian assistance programs, including “core life-saving medicine, medical services, food, shelter, and subsistence assistance,” as well as the associated supplies and administrative costs necessary to deliver these services. However, as of 31 January, there has been little clarity from PEPFAR missions as to if this waiver applies to PEPFAR programming, and, if so, to what extent program activities are covered. The waiver has had no impact.

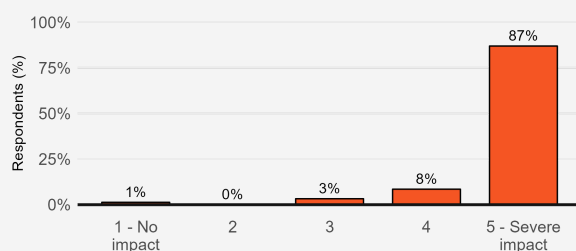
Between 28 January and 31 January 2025, advocates and researchers with the PEPFAR Watch consortium conducted an anonymous survey of PEPFAR funding recipients. To date, after deduplication, the survey includes 153 respondents, including 91 prime Implementing Partners (IPs) and 62

sub-recipients. The findings from this survey present an early look at the impact of the stop work order on clients and organizations worldwide.

Immediate, severe disruption to HIV service delivery

PEPFAR implementers reported the stop work order resulted in very high levels of disruption to their ability to deliver HIV-related services, with **87% describing the impact as “severe” (Fig. 1)**. The impact was high among all funding recipients, with 90% of IPs and 82% of sub-recipients describing the impact as severe. Similarly, both international organizations and locally-based organizations are deeply impacted, with 95% and 85% rating their impact as severe, respectively.

Fig. 1. PEPFAR funding freeze caused “severe” disruption to the delivery of HIV services.



“(On a scale of 1 to 5) How significantly has the stop work order affected your organization’s ability to deliver HIV-related services?”

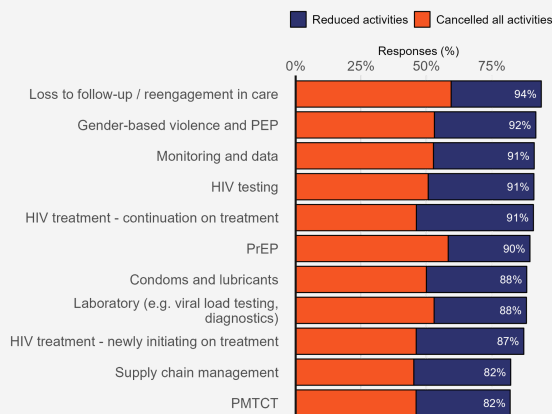
PEPFAR implementers described an **immediate and widespread disruption** to HIV services, with 71% of respondents having fully cancelled at least one category of

activities (Fig. 2). Overall, the greatest disruption was with reengagement in HIV care and loss to follow-up services, with 94% of respondents describing having either canceled or reduced these activities.

Other frequently disrupted activities were gender-based violence services and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), with 92% of respondents having cancelled or reduced activities. Monitoring and data collection (91%), HIV testing (91%), continuation of HIV treatment (91%), and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) services (90%) were also frequently disrupted. Additionally, over 80% of PEPFAR implementers reported they have stopped or reduced work on supply chain management and prevention of mother to child services (PMTCT). The health impacts of even brief disruptions to these vital services are immense for women, infants, and the broader population.

“We are really putting the lives of the people in danger. [E]ven those who are on PrEP, if the next time they'll be tested, after two months, and found positive, they can blame even the [PEPFAR] program itself.”

Fig. 2. Loss to follow-up services and reengagement in care, gender-based violence and PEP, and monitoring and data are most disrupted activities.

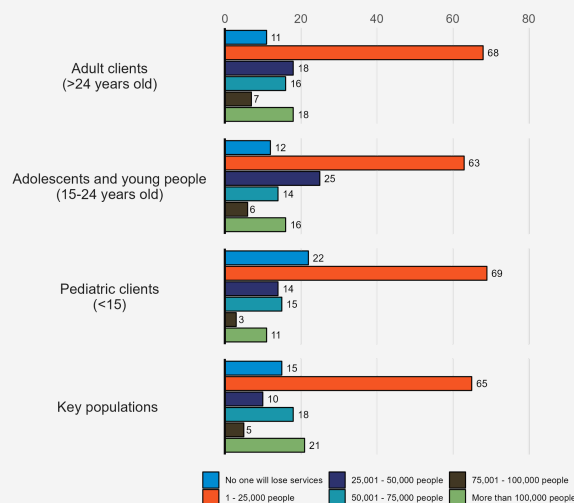


“Which of your organization's specific activities, if any, have been impacted by the stop work order?”

Reported disruption of HIV treatment provision was very high, with **86% of respondents reporting that their clients would lose HIV treatment services over the next month.** Most respondents reported between one and 25,000 clients losing care since the stop work order, and several respondents indicated that more than 100,000 adult (18 respondents), adolescent (16), pediatric (11), and key population (18) clients would lose HIV treatment in the coming month (Fig 3).

“Already from last year, we have a shortage of commodities like condoms [...] They are giving out one month [of ARVs] a period, not like the way we [used to] give three months. So it has given us a panic mode now, trying to think how we're going to survive what is happening [with only one month of ARVs on hand].”

Fig. 3. Nearly all respondents reported HIV clients will lose treatment in the next month.



“How many people that you serve will lose access to HIV treatment over the next month?”

Organizations in deep financial crisis

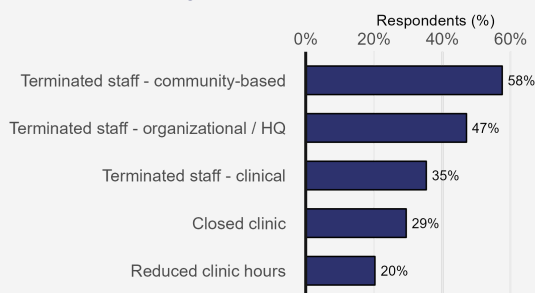
Organizations described significant shifts in their ability to operate as a result of the stop

work order. Two-thirds of respondents said that their organizations had terminated staff (Fig. 4). Organizations were most likely to have terminated their community-based staff (58% of respondents), while 47% had terminated organizational staff and 35% had terminated clinical staff.

“ Our whole organization’s IT department [is PEPFAR-funded] which handles EMR digitalization. In addition to our healthcare and loss of lives, patient data will be mismanaged.

Significant disruption to clinic operations was also described. **Nearly one-third of organizations reported having fully closed healthcare clinics**, and 20% had reduced clinic hours of operation.

Fig. 4. Two-thirds of respondent organizations had terminated any staff, mostly those working in the community.



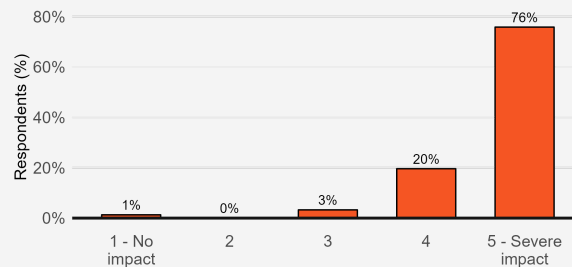
“Which actions, if any, has your organization taken in response to the stop work order?”

PEPFAR implementers described significant disruption to their organizational financial stability, with 76% describing the impact as severe (Fig. 5). This impact was felt by both international organizations, of which 90% described severe financial impact, and locally-based organizations (71%).

Overall, organizations were heavily reliant on PEPFAR funding. Nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated that 75% or more of their funding came from PEPFAR (57% of local organizations and 74% of international)

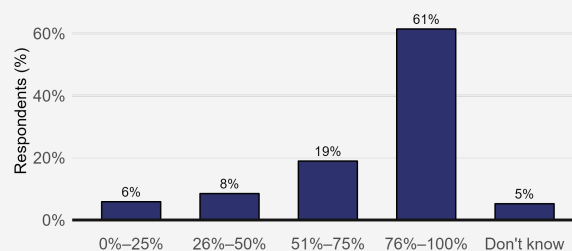
and another 19% of organizations reported being at least 50% PEPFAR-funded (Fig. 6).

Fig. 5. Severe disruption to organizational financial stability reported.



“How significantly has the stop work order affected your organization’s financial stability?”

Fig. 6. Most respondents say PEPFAR provides at least three-quarters of their organizational budgets.



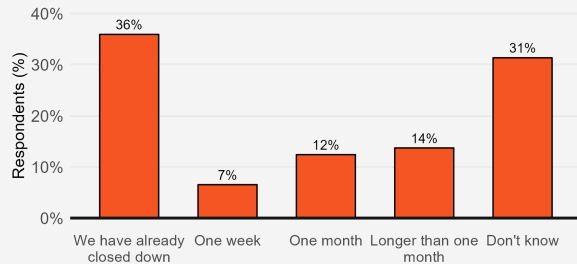
“What percent of your organization’s budget comes from the United States government (for example, PEPFAR, USAID, CDC)?”

PEPFAR implementers described an urgent need for additional support to stay in operation. Nearly one-third of surveyed respondents said that their organizations had already completely closed down, whether temporarily or permanently. Others described short periods of time before they would need funding to show up in order to avoid closure (7% within one week and 12% within one month). Only 14% of IPs reported that they would be able to operate more than one month without PEPFAR support.

“ We are extremely concerned that the community we serve will lose faith and

trust in us. We have worked in our community for 23 years.

Fig. 7. Many organizations have either shut down their organizations or can only last one more week without PEPFAR funding.



"How long can your organization continue to operate without receiving PEPFAR funding?"

Communication of the stop work order

The stop work order was communicated on Friday, 24 January, well into the evening for Africa- and Asia-based organizations. Nearly 30% of respondents described the communications they received from PEPFAR as being very unclear (**Fig. 8**).

" [The communication] was a confusion as a leader, because I'm the director of the organization, thinking about the lives that are in the office, thinking about the lives that we save. Thinking about the partners and the vendors that we have. My mind is spinning with all the communication in the letters.

An urgent call to action

The disruption caused by the PEPFAR stop work order has been immediate, severe, and widespread. The following is clear:

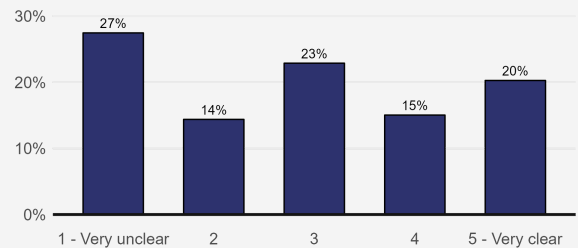
- Organizations are already closing and laying off staff; even if waivers are granted, there will be no easy way to

immediately restart lifesaving services.

- Organizations that have not yet closed have limited funding and commodities, with more closures imminent.
- The immense impacts of the funding freeze have been exacerbated by unclear and delayed communications from PEPFAR missions.

We urge the U.S. Government to immediately end the stop work order and resume all life-saving services. All communications, including about waivers, must be urgently and clearly communicated to all PEPFAR implementing partners and support partners.

Fig. 8. Communications received from PEPFAR were very unclear to 29% of respondents, while 20% found them very clear.



"(On a scale of 1 to 5) Was the guidance that you received about the stop work order clear and easy to understand?"

About these data

These data come from a web-based survey open to respondents from 28 to 31 January 2025. After deduplication of organizations, a total of 153 eligible respondents were included in this analysis. Respondents were primarily locally-based (67%) and international (19%) nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), with a smaller proportion representing local and international faith-based organizations (4%), host country government agencies (3%), and

other organizational types. Respondents were mostly prime IPs (59%).

Data were collected anonymously, but respondents were given the opportunity to supply their country and organization name,

which was used for deduplication. Respondents who wished to provide more information were also contacted for interviews, quotes from which are included in this report.

Contact information

This report was prepared by the PEPFAR Watch coalition. PEPFAR Watch is a network of civil society organizations, non- governmental organizations, activists, and data analysts working together to ensure greater accountability of PEPFAR to the communities it serves in more than 50 countries around the world.

For questions related to the report, survey, and data collection, please contact stopworkorder25@gmail.com. For questions about how to get involved and partner with PEPFAR Watch, please contact info@pepfarwatch.org.

