

the Ebola outbreak: how aid cuts make it harder to prevent the next pandemic



22%

decrease in development assistance for health between 2024 and 2025, with further cuts expected in 2026

40%

projected decrease in funding for infectious disease control between 2024 and 2026

90%

reduction in US funding to the DRC between 2024 to 2026

A crucial part of global health funding is to prevent and prepare for the next pandemic. But this life-saving work has become far more difficult in the wake of recent widespread international aid cuts.

The current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) makes the devastating impact of aid cuts worryingly clear. The United States has historically been a global leader in combating infectious diseases like Ebola, but the shutdown of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2025 has diminished this important work.

- the US dramatically reduced its funding to the DRC by 90%, from **US\$1.4 billion** in 2024 to just US\$146 million in 2026.
- many experts say **the devastating aid cuts slowed the identification of the Ebola outbreak** and the virus could have been spreading for weeks before the outbreak was declared.
- USAID cut funding that previously supported labs and local health workers to recognize signs of Ebola, both of which help identify and contain outbreaks.

Aid cuts have also made the actual response to the outbreak more challenging.

- the US withdrew all its funding from the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2025, which undermines the whole global health system

and the WHO's ability to coordinate a response to outbreaks.

- the lack of funding has made contact tracing more difficult and teams on the ground are facing delays getting personal protective equipment.
- the emergency funding the US has sent the DRC since the outbreak does not make up for their lack of investment in pandemic preparedness, which saves more lives.

By dismantling the very systems that keep us safe and healthy, aid cuts cause more deaths.

And it's not just the US. Canada has contributed to this dangerous landscape by targeting global health in its own international aid cuts in budget 2025.

This deadly Ebola outbreak is a reminder that cutting funding to global health is dangerous for everyone, including Canadians. Diseases do not respect borders and Canada must sustain investments in global health to help prevent the next pandemic in Budget 2026.