POSITION DESCRIPTION

**assistant secretary for african affairs, Department of state**

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Foreign Relations |
| Agency Mission | The Department of State is the lead institution for the conduct of American diplomacy and the secretary of state is the president’s principal foreign policy advisor.[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary of state for African affairs focuses on the development and management of U.S. policy concerning the African continent. There are four foundational pillars of U.S. policy toward Africa: strengthening democratic institutions, supporting African economic growth and development, advancing peace and security, and promoting opportunity and development.[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Position Reports to | Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The budget for the Bureau of African Affairs was $210.058 million in fiscal 2015. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Serves as a principal advisor to the secretary of state and the deputy secretaries
* Is responsible for the general conduct of the U.S. foreign policy and diplomatic relations with African states and for working with regional organizations
* Implements U.S. policy toward Africa as directed by the president and secretary of state
* Provides timely information and advice to the secretary on the overall direction, coordination and supervision of the interdepartmental activities of the U.S. government in Africa
* Testifies before congressional committees, appears in the media, manages the Bureau of African Affairs and provides guidance to U.S. diplomatic missions in the region
* Provides instructions to ambassadors, follows up on reporting and communicates with the Washington diplomatic corps
* Coordinates with the department’s global AIDS coordinator, policy planning staff, coordinator for reconstruction and stabilization, assistant secretary for intelligence and research, and coordinator for counterterrorism as well as with senior personnel at the White House and other departments and agencies
* Serves as a member of the board of directors of the African Development Foundation[[5]](#endnote-5)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Experience in the region, and broad familiarity with regional leaders
* Government experience
* Strong relationships and stature with stakeholders on Capitol Hill and other parts of government
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| Competencies | * Ability to work well with counterparts in foreign policy positions
* Excellent leadership skills
* Ability to think strategically yet also accomplish the department’s operational priorities
* Energy for frequent travel
* Strong communication and interpersonal skills
* Ability to work under high pressure
* Ability to handle sensitive matters
* Excellent negotiation skills
* Ability to work across partisan lines
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Linda Thomas Greenfield (2013 to 2017): Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources; U.S. Ambassador to Liberia; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Bureau of African Affairs[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| Johnnie Carson (2009 to 2013): National Intelligence Officer for Africa at the National Intelligence Council; Senior Vice President of the National Defense University; U.S. Ambassador to Kenya[[7]](#endnote-7) |
| Jendayi Elizabeth Frazer (2005 to 2009): Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to South Africa; Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs on the National Security Council; Assistant Professor for Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government[[8]](#endnote-8) |

1. Partnership for Public Service agency profile [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.state.gov/p/af/188266.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/99484.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. http://sharepoint/partnership/Shared%20Documents/Ready%20to%20Govern/Appointments/OPM%20PDs/STATE/Assistant%20Secretary%20of%20State%20African%20Affairs.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/189469.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.usip.org/experts/johnnie-carson [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jendayi\_Frazer#Background [↑](#endnote-ref-8)