

PART 2021 - SPACE

Subpart A - Space Policies and Procedures

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PART 2021 - SPACE

Subpart A - Space Policies and Procedures

§ 2021.1 Scope.

This Instruction prescribes the policies pertaining to the acquisition and management of field office space of the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS), the Rural Housing Service (RHS), and the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), hereinafter referred to as "Agency."

§ 2021.2 Responsibilities.

- (a) The National Food and Agriculture Council (NFAC):
 - (1) Approves requests to establish, close, or relocate State Offices as described in § 2021.15 of this Instruction.
 - (2) Approves requests to establish, close, reclassify, or relocate Area, Local, or Satellite Offices as described in § 2021.20 of this Instruction.
- (b) Director, Property and Supply Management Division (PSMD):
 - (1) Approves nominations and appoints trained individuals as Real Property Leasing Officers (RPLO's).
 - (2) Manages the oversight responsibilities of the Agency's leasing program.
 - (3) Acquires and manages space for all State Offices.
- (c) State Directors may authorize relocation of Area, Local, and Satellite Offices within the same town as described in § 2021.20(a) of this Instruction. State Directors are responsible for ensuring space acquisitions are within the guidelines established in the Departmental Regulations 1620-2.

§§ 2021.3 - 2021.4 [Reserved]

§ 2021.5 Definitions.

For the purpose of this Instruction, the following definitions apply:

DISTRIBUTION: WSAL Administrative Services Space

Area Office. The organizational level below the State Office. The Area Manager is located at this office.

Assistant Administrator for Procurement and Administrative Support (AAPAS). Refers to the National Office.

Collocated office. An U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) office housing two or more agencies.

Consolidation. The combining of two or more agency locations of a single USDA agency into one USDA office.

Local Food and Agriculture Council (LFAC). The LFAC is comprised of designated representative of each participating USDA agency at the site.

Local Office. The organization two levels below the State Office. The Local Management is located at this office.

Model 1 (Two-Tier). State and Area Office.

Model 2 (Three-Tier). State, Area, and Local Offices.

National Food and Agriculture Council (NFAC). The NFAC is comprised of the Administrators of all USDA agencies with field structure.

Property and Supply Management Staff (PSMD). Hereafter, refers to the Space Management Branch (SMB), St. Louis, Missouri.

Real Property Leasing Officer (RPLO). A Rural Development employee who conducts leasing activities on behalf of the Government. RPLOs are warranted to conduct these activities based upon their level of training as outlined in Departmental Regulation 5100-2. The general operational responsibilities are outlined in the Leasing Manual located on the St. Louis publication page website:
<http://teamrd.usda.gov/rdstlouis/manuals.htm>.

Satellite Locations. Locations that are occupied on a temporary or part-time basis where limited services are provided on behalf of an Area or Local Office. It may serve as a duty station, and it does not perform administrative functions.

Shared office. A collocated office at which two or more agencies share one or more common resource, e.g., conference room, lunchroom, mailroom, and/or office equipment, and/or personnel, etc.

§ 2021.5 (Con.)

State Food and Agriculture Council (SFAC). The SFAC is comprised of the senior officials of each USDA agency that has a presence in the state.

State Office. The headquarters for the supervision and administration of Agency programs within a state or several states.

USDA Service Center. A USDA office designated by USDA and occupied by one or more partner agencies. The partner agencies are the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), RHS, RBS, RUS, Cooperative State Research, Education Extension Service, and other USDA agencies in the community that may also participate in the USDA Service Center.

§§ 2021.6 - 2021.9 [Reserved]

§ 2021.10 Policy.

It is USDA's policy to provide adequate space to ensure effective operations while conducting Agency business, and provide for the health, safety, and comfort of Agency employees, clients, and neighbors.

(a) Offices. An office will consist of no less than three (3) employees.

(b) Establishment or termination of field offices. USDA establishes and/or closes field offices based upon Agency mission requirements. State Directors assess the need for field offices as conditions in the State change.

(c) Location of field offices. The following factors should be considered when establishing or relocating field offices:

- (1) Potential for collocation with other USDA agencies.
- (2) The availability of USDA-owned facilities and lease space under control of USDA agencies which meet program requirements.
- (3) The availability of Federally-controlled space that accommodates the Agency's programmatic needs and provides easy accessibility for the Agency's clientele.
- (4) Geographic distribution of caseload and loan making activity.
- (5) Accessibility to service areas.

- (6) Proximity to trade areas frequented by Agency borrowers.
 - (7) District Offices are to be located in the central business area.
 - (8) First priority should be given to locate field offices in rural areas.
 - (9) The need for economic development and redevelopment of areas consistent with state, county, and local programs and the impact the office's location will have on improving social and economic conditions in the area.
 - (10) Availability of low and moderate income housing for employees.
- (d) Collocation of field offices. Departmental Regulation 1620-2 contains the USDA policy regarding collocation. A request for an exception to the collocation policy will be signed by all agencies involved, forwarded through the lead agency's Director, Administrative Services Division (ASD), who coordinates with the affected agencies' Directors, ASD, prior to submitting the request to the Office of Procurement and Property Management (OPPM) for a decision. A copy is to be furnished to the PSMD/SMB.
- (e) Decollocation of field offices. When the SFAC believes that decollocation of a field office is necessary, the request and supporting data as specified in Departmental Regulation 1620-2, will be submitted to the NFAC (through the initiating agency's ASD to OPPM for coordination.) A copy is to be furnished to PSMD/SMB.
- (f) Long-term leasing. The USDA has been delegated firm term leasing authority by the General Services Administration (GSA) for up to 5 years. However, the Agency obtains, where appropriate and feasible, leases of up to 5 years, with a 120-day termination clause, for Area and Local Offices.
- (g) Delegation of authority. Delegated leasing authority is offered to all State Offices. This authority is granted, by warrant to named individuals, upon completion of appropriate training. At least two individuals from each state shall be warranted.
- (h) Space standards and allowances. See Departmental Regulation 1620-2. Requests for office space should be developed to achieve the 150 square foot per person utilization rate.

§ 2021.10 (Con.)

(i) Accessibility and environmental. It is required by law that all leases and lease renewals be subject to the standard specifications for making buildings and facilities accessible to and useable by people with disabilities, Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS), August 1984, and Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), 1990, and free from Radon (Section 309 of the Indoor Radon Abatement Act of 1988). Disability waivers are to be submitted to the PSMD/SMB for review and forwarding to OPPM.

(j) Acceptance of offers. Awards are made to the offeror proposing the most advantageous space to the Government, cost and other factors considered.

§§ 2021.11 - 2021.14 [Reserved]

§ 2021.15 Authority to establish, close, or relocate State Offices.

All requests to establish or relocate a State Office must be approved by the NFAC. Before submitting requests to the National Office, requests should include the approval of the SFAC. Requests for office changes should be sent to the National Office, Human Resources, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Stop 0730, Washington, DC 20250, with a copy to PSMD/SMB. Requests should include:

- (a) The location of the state headquarters of other Federal and state Agricultural agencies or establishments having a direct relationship to the programs of Rural Development.
- (b) Accessibility to those Rural Development field offices within the jurisdiction of the State Office.
- (c) Availability of adequate and appropriate space.
- (d) Availability of adequate airline and public transportation services.
- (e) Suitable housing and community facilities for employees.
- (f) Justification for relocation.
- (g) Congressional contacts, including names, titles, telephone numbers, Congressional District, and if concurrence was received.
- (h) Current and proposed staffing, including full-time, part-time, temporary positions and whether this proposal will involve a reduction-in-force (RIF).

(i) Estimated relocation costs, including availability from current funds or if additional funds are being requested.

§§ 2021.16 - 2021.19 [Reserved]

§ 2021.20 Authority to establish, close, reclassify, and relocate Area, Local, and Satellite Offices.

(a) State Directors are authorized to relocate offices within the same town provided that collocated offices will not be decollocated. However, prior approval from the NFAC is required to establish more than one field office within the same county.

(b) All requests to establish, close, or reclassify an office must be approved by the SFAC and NFAC. Requests for office changes should be sent to the National Office, Human Resources, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Stop 0730, Washington, DC 20250, with a copy to PSMD/SMB.

(c) Proposals should include:

(1) Congressional contacts, including names, titles, date and telephone numbers of State Office and Congressional staff involved in contact and if concurrence was received. If concurrence was not received, indicate what the concerns are of the Congressional Office.

(2) A statement signed by the State Director verifying that employees of the affected offices and the Area Manager or Local Manager of the affected Area or Local Offices were informed of the tentative plans. The statement should also indicate that the employees were informed that these tentative plans are pending NFAC review and approval.

(3) Description of the proposed change(s).

(4) The reason for the change(s).

(5) The distance(s) between affected offices (driving miles and driving time).

(6) The loan, grant, and servicing caseload (itemized by program) of the office(s) or area(s) involved.

(7) The current and proposed staffing of the office(s) involved.

§ 2021.20(c) (Con.)

(8) A letter-sized map showing the area involved. Show current and proposed location of affected offices with present and proposed Area or Local Office boundaries.

(9) The collocation status of the office(s) involved and documentation of the efforts to collocate.

(10) A RIF plan must be provided if RIF actions are required to make the change.

(11) An estimate of employee relocation costs, if any.

(12) An estimate of office relocation or startup costs and an estimate of savings, if any, including availability of current funds or if additional funds are being requested.

(d) An RPLO shall conduct all leasing related activities for USDA and/or should be notified if another agency is acting as lead agency for a lease or contract action in which a USDA office will be involved.

(e) A State Director may decide not to implement an approved change in field office status or location if he/she becomes aware of additional information that substantially affects the rationale for the change. The RPLO must be notified by telephone as soon as possible subsequent to this decision so that space negotiations may be terminated.

§§ 2021.21 - 2021.24 [Reserved]

§ 2021.25 Realignment of counties and districts.

(a) Prior approval of the National Office is not required for the transfer of a county or counties from the jurisdiction of one Area or Local Office to another unless the transfer will require the use of RIF procedures. Congressional notification is required if a realignment will affect Congressional representation.

(b) The Program Management Division, Program Reporting Branch (PMD/PRB), St. Louis, must be notified by submission of Form RD 2021-6, "State/Area/Local Information Record," or substitute form, in order to facilitate mail service and/or proper alignment of reports.

§ 2021.26 Field office updates.

The PSMD/SMB will issue, upon request, an office listing of State, Area, and Local Office to all State Offices. The listing will include the name of the State Director, Area Manager, and Local Manager, office hours, office address (name of building or street and number, and post office box), the ZIP code and telephone number including area code.

§§ 2021.27 - 2021.34 [Reserved]

§ 2021.35 Responsibilities.

(a) PSMD/SMB. The PSMD/SMB develops and provides real property policy guidance and provides assistance and training to those states with delegated leasing authority, including the Budget personnel directly engaged in functions of the USDA accounting system as it relates to space management. PSMD/SMB also provides acquisition and management support for all State Office space. PSMD/SMB personnel perform program management reviews and functional assistance visits to those states with leasing authority and participates with the National Office in conducting Management Control Reviews. PSMD/SMB also maintains the Foundation Information for Real Property Management (FIRM) system, which is used to provide information, data, and reports to the National Office, OPPM, and GSA and will be the focal point for the field office personnel list. PSMD compiles information, coordinates, and finalizes all reports for real property.

(b) State Offices. State Directors shall ensure that Area and Local Offices are properly located and classified in accordance with the criteria prescribed in this Instruction. State Directors will participate in the SFAC for each state within their jurisdictions. State Offices must update the FIRM system within 5 working days after a change has occurred. State Directors or his/her delegate shall notify PMD/PRB of all mail changes by submitting Form RD 2021-6 or substitute form.

(1) State Directors shall ensure that employees of offices which are scheduled to undergo a major change are informed of the tentative plans, as soon as practical, after appropriate Congressional contacts have been made. As appropriate, any information provided to employees must state that such tentative office changes are subject to National Office review and approval, and employees will be afforded all appropriate rights, benefits, and considerations due under Office of Personnel Management regulations, if the change is approved.

§ 2021.35(b) (Con.)

- (2) State Directors shall ensure that space standards as prescribed in Departmental Regulation 1620-2 are adhered to. State Directors shall ensure that all space requisitions and related services remain within the leasing budget that has been appropriated.
- (3) State Directors are also authorized to:
- (i) Execute memorandums of agreement for reimbursement for office space and related services when another USDA agency is providing the space or services.
 - (ii) Sign GSA Form 2957, "Reimbursable Work Authorization (RWA)," for minor repairs and alterations in State Offices within an annual allowance of \$5,000. A copy of all RWAs shall be furnished to PSMD/SMB.
- (c) Area Offices. As the need arises, Area Managers will review the offices in their jurisdiction to determine that they are properly located and classified and will make recommendations to the State Director for changes which will improve the delivery of Agency services and optimize the use of Government resources.
- (d) Local Offices. Local Managers will coordinate with their counterparts in other local USDA agencies and shall make recommendations to the State Director to assure efficient and effective operation of Agency programs. In noncollocated facilities, the Local Manager should recommend potential collocation opportunities as they become available.
- (e) All offices. It is the responsibility of all field offices to see that the office space occupied is in accordance with all applicable policies, procedures, and standards. The following areas are part of this responsibility:
- (1) Reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent accidents and fires. Office premises must be kept clean and in good repair. Periodic inspections will be made with particular attention to the placement of furniture and equipment, including electrical cords, to ensure unobstructed access to all portions of the office without electrical hazard. Electrical appliances such as coffee pots, heaters, etc., must be properly installed to eliminate fire hazard. Such appliances will not be installed in Federal buildings unless approved by the GSA buildings manager or, in leased space, unless approved by the lessor. The procedures for reporting accidents resulting in personal injury or property damage arising from Rural Development operations are prescribed in RD Instruction 2042-B.

- (2) Fires and other disasters should be handled as follows:
 - (i) Fire extinguishers. The lessor should meet all applicable local fire ordinances.
 - (ii) Reporting fires. Each employee should be familiar with the proper method for reporting a fire in the building in which the office is located. A fire should be immediately reported to the fire department upon discovery. A call should then be made to the building custodian or manager. The telephone number of the fire department and/or building custodian should be posted on the telephones.
 - (iii) Report of damage from fires or other disasters. If a fire, flood, storm, or other disaster damages USDA records or equipment, or necessitates relocation of an office, the office supervisor should promptly report the matter by telephone to the State Office with an explanation as to the extent of the damages and the action needed to continue office operations.
- (3) The Area or Local Manager will confirm the report to the State Office in memorandum form, providing the following information:
 - (i) Date fire or disaster occurred;
 - (ii) Building or property involved;
 - (iii) Approximate damage to building or property;
 - (iv) If the damage is caused by fire, point of origin and probable cause, and description of the fire safety equipment on premises must be provided;
 - (v) Other pertinent facts; and
 - (vi) An explanation of the extent of damages to official records.
- (4) The State Director will provide a copy of the report to PSMD/SMB.
- (5) Thefts, unauthorized entry, and other unlawful acts on Government-owned or occupied premises must be reported using the following procedures:

§ 2021.35(e) (5) (Con.)

(i) The office supervisor will report promptly to the appropriate authorities as listed in this section, violations of Federal or local law involving thefts or willful damage to Government or private property, assaults, etc.

(A) Offenses occurring in buildings (or on grounds) operated by the GSA will be reported to the GSA guard or to the building manager if there is no guard assigned to the premises. Required forms may be obtained from the GSA guard or building manager, as appropriate. If GSA personnel are not available and the offense requires immediate investigation, the local police will be notified and GSA personnel will be advised when available.

(B) Offenses occurring in buildings (or on grounds) not operated by GSA will be reported as outlined in this paragraph:

(1) Theft of, or willful damage to Government property will be reported promptly to the nearest Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) office and the local police.

(2) Offenses which do not involve Government property will be reported promptly to the local police.

(3) Incidents involving both Government property and other property or offenses will be reported promptly to both the FBI and the local police.

(ii) When offenses are reported by Area or Local Office personnel to either the FBI or local police, a telephone report will be made to the State Office followed by written confirmation. The State Office shall report such offenses by telephone followed by written confirmation to the Regional Office of the Office of Inspector General (OIG). Reports to the OIG are not required unless the property (Government or private) stolen or unwillingly damaged, exceeds \$100 in value or unless the incident appears to indicate a pattern of continuing thefts.

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(iii) The office supervisor shall provide a copy of the report to the State Office and a copy to PSMD/SMB. This report shall state the date, time, and manner of the unauthorized entry, whether Rural Development records are missing, and any loss or damage to Rural Development equipment (see RD Instruction 2024-H, § 2024.360). The report will include verification by the office supervisor regarding whether any funds, unused receipts, or borrower's case files are missing.

§§ 2021.36 - 2021.39 [Reserved]

§ 2021.40 Announcements.

The State Director shall contact appropriate local and/ or other interested parties in order to explain any major changes in programs or coverage when changes to open, close, reclassify, or relocate offices from one town to another has been approved.

§§2021.41 - 2021.50 [Reserved]

Attachment: Exhibit A.

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SPACE STANDARDS - STATE, LOCAL, AND AREA OFFICES

The Agency shall maintain a utilization rate (UR) of 150 square feet per person. The UR of 150 square feet includes employee workstations, circulation, reception, individual file space, and all private offices in accordance with Departmental Regulation 1620-2. Those items which constitute special space, such as a laboratory, light industrial, storage, conference room and large common file areas, are not included in the UR.

I. State Offices

A. Private Offices and Other Ceiling-High Partitioned Areas: The State Director will determine who is entitled to private offices within their own office space. Where a conference/training room is included in the USDA space assignment, that area will usually require ceiling-high partitions and will be shared with all USDA agencies. Ceiling-high partitions may also be included to provide sound and visual barriers for duplicating and supply storage areas.

B. Office Excellence:

1. The office excellence space design concept will be implemented in State Offices whenever feasible and practical. Generally, this concept will be followed when an office is relocated to new space or where major realignment of present space requires relocation of ceiling-high partitions.

2. Under office excellence, emphasis is given to open planning through use of free-standing screens in lieu of fixed partitions, a less formalized arrangement of furniture and increased attention to color schemes. The use of carpeting and drapes is authorized to complete the color treatment and to obtain desired acoustical qualities.

C. Remodeling and Alterations in Existing Space: Whenever realignment of State Office space requires relocation of ceiling-high partitions in program and administrative areas, other than conference/training, duplicating, and supply storage rooms, the changes will be considered as major alterations. In such cases, proposals shall be submitted to Property and Supply Management Division (PSMD), Space Management Branch (SMB) for review and determination of feasibility for office excellence.

D. Carpeting: All floors in office space should be covered with a suitable flame-retardant anti-static carpeting with the possible exception of the mail, duplicating, and supply storage rooms. Application of carpeting in General Services Administration (GSA) controlled space is subject to GSA guidelines.

E. Staffing: USDA policy is to provide workstation space only for present on-board personnel and budgeted vacancies. When Rural Development is the lead Agency, USDA employees and county employees of Farm Service Agency (FSA), non-Federal partners of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and local cooperators of Rural Development are provided workstations.

To comply with State Office policy, the following information must be provided to the PSMD/SMB for use in preparing space request submissions to GSA:

1. Name, title, and grade of all personnel housed in the State Offices;
2. Title and grade of vacant, previously established positions;
3. Title and grade of newly established positions for which recruitment has been initiated and it is anticipated that new personnel will be on board within 90 days; and
4. Title and grade of other planned positions and schedule for filling.

II. Parking

A. Parking spaces are provided for Government-owned or leased vehicles.

B. Parking spaces are provided for privately-owned vehicles when the employee uses the vehicle for official business 12 or more working days a month. This does not mean daily driving to and from work.