

Highlights of [GAO-12-645](#), a report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Service, and International Security, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate

## Why GAO Did This Study

The federal government has made some progress addressing previously identified issues with managing federal real property. This includes establishing FRPC—chaired by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)—which created the FRPP database managed by GSA. GAO was asked to determine the extent to which (1) the FRPP database accurately describes the nature, use, and extent of excess and underutilized federal real property, and (2) progress is being made toward more effective management of these properties. GAO analyzed the data collection process and agency data, visited 26 sites containing excess and underutilized buildings from five civilian federal real property holding agencies with significant portfolios, and interviewed officials from these five agencies and OMB staff about how they collect FRPP data and manage excess and underutilized properties.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that, in consultation with FRPC, GSA develop a plan to improve the FRPP and that OMB develop a national strategy for managing federal excess and underutilized real property. GSA agreed with GAO's recommendation and agreed with the report's findings, in part. OMB agreed that real property challenges remain but raised concerns about how GAO characterized its findings on FRPP accuracy and other statements. GAO believes its findings are properly presented. The details of agencies' comments and GAO's response are addressed more fully within the report.

View [GAO-12-645](#). For more information, contact David Wise at (202) 512-5731 or at [wised@gao.gov](mailto:wised@gao.gov).

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## FEDERAL REAL PROPERTY

### National Strategy and Better Data Needed to Improve Management of Excess and Underutilized Property

## What GAO Found

The Federal Real Property Council (FRPC) has not followed sound data collection practices in designing and maintaining the Federal Real Property Profile (FRPP) database, raising concern that the database is not a useful tool for describing the nature, use, and extent of excess and underutilized federal real property. For example, FRPC has not ensured that key data elements—including buildings' utilization, condition, annual operating costs, mission dependency, and value—are defined and reported consistently and accurately. GAO identified inconsistencies and inaccuracies at 23 of the 26 locations visited related to these data elements (see the fig. for an example). As a result, FRPC cannot ensure that FRPP data are sufficiently reliable to support sound management and decision making about excess and underutilized property.

The federal government has undertaken efforts to achieve cost savings associated with better management of excess and underutilized properties. However, some of these efforts have been discontinued and potential savings for others are unclear. For example, in response to requirements set forth in a June 2010 presidential memorandum for agencies to achieve \$3 billion in savings by the end of fiscal year 2012, the General Services Administration (GSA) reported approximately \$118 million in lease cost savings resulting from four new construction projects. However, GSA has yet to occupy any of these buildings and the agency's cost savings analysis projected these savings would occur over a 30-year period—far beyond the time frame of the memorandum. The five federal agencies that GAO reviewed have taken some actions to dispose of and better manage excess and underutilized property, including using these properties to meet space needs by consolidating offices and reducing employee work space to use space more efficiently. However, they still face long-standing challenges to managing these properties, including the high cost of property disposal, legal requirements prior to disposal, stakeholder resistance, and remote property locations. A comprehensive, long-term national strategy would support better management of excess and underutilized property by, among other things, defining the scope of the problem; clearly addressing achievement goals; addressing costs, resources, and investments needed; and clearly outlining roles and coordination mechanisms across agencies.

#### Building Incorrectly Reported in the FRPP Database



Source: GAO analysis of agency information.

Note: Data for this dilapidated U.S. Department of Agriculture building indicated that it was in near perfect condition and fully utilized even though it was vacant at the time GAO visited the site and it had multiple safety and health issues including rat and beehive infestations. The building has since been demolished.