

60709

DECISION



**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548**

FILE: B-186009

DATE: October 12, 1976

MATTER OF: Jay D. Fitch - Sale or Purchase of Residence

DIGEST: Transferred employee may not be reimbursed for cost of second appraisal since only cost of one appraisal may be reimbursed. Also, since necessity for reappraisal arose due to failure to sell residence within 6 months of original appraisal date, claim falls within purview of FTR paras. 2-6.2b and 2-6.2e which prohibit reimbursement.

This action is in response to a request dated February 25, 1976, from Ms. Orris C. Huet, Authorized Certifying Officer, United States Department of Agriculture, for a decision on the propriety of certifying for payment a voucher submitted by Mr. Jay D. Fitch, for reimbursement of an appraisal fee paid in connection with the sale of his former residence, incident to his change of official station.

Mr. Fitch has been reimbursed for the cost of an initial appraisal of his former residence. However, his claim for reimbursement of the cost of a second appraisal was administratively disallowed based on decisions of our Office that the cost of only one appraisal may be reimbursed. 47 Comp. Gen. 306 (1967); B-179054, September 14, 1973; B-174011, November 15, 1971. Ms. Huet questions the disallowance of this claim "since Mr. Fitch did not obtain a second appraisal merely to facilitate the sale of his house, but did so due to regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development * * *."


The necessity for the second appraisal arose because the residence was not sold within 6 months of the date of the original appraisal. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Handbook No. 4160.1 (March 1975). The Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR 101-7) para. 2-6.2e (May 1973), provide that "[l]osses due to failure to sell a residence at the old official station * * * at its current appraisal value * * * and any similar losses, are not reimbursable." (Emphasis supplied.) Although the amount claimed here is technically not a "loss," it is an expense that ordinarily results from prices or market

B-186009

conditions, and as such could be said to be within the purview of FTR para. 2-6.2e, prohibiting reimbursement. In any event, para. 2-6.2b specifically limits reimbursement to "the customary cost of an appraisal." We construe that provision as permitting reimbursement for a single appraisal.

Accordingly, the second appraisal fee is not reimbursable and the voucher, returned herewith, may not be certified for payment.

Deputy


Comptroller General
of the United States