

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-15-274](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The 2005 BRAC round resulted in 125 closed bases with over 73,000 acres of surplus property available. The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act, as amended, requires DOD and HUD to assist communities in determining the best reuse of land and facilities, balancing needs of the local economy with those of homeless individuals and families.

GAO was mandated to review the extent to which DOD and HUD implemented the homeless assistance provisions while disposing of BRAC surplus property. This report addresses (1) the assistance provided as a result of BRAC 2005 and the extent to which DOD and HUD track its implementation and (2) any benefits and challenges encountered as DOD, HUD, and LRAs addressed homeless assistance provisions. GAO reviewed homeless assistance plans; interviewed DOD and HUD officials; and interviewed LRAs and homeless assistance providers from a nongeneralizable sample of 23 closed bases, selected based on size, geography, and types of assistance provided.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD and HUD track conveyance status and provide clear information on four steps of the homeless assistance process. HUD generally concurred, and DOD either partially concurred or did not concur with these recommendations, stating its existing guidance is sufficient. GAO believes these recommendations are still valid as discussed in the report. GAO also recommends that HUD address staff resources during a BRAC round, and HUD generally concurred.

View [GAO-15-274](#). For more information, contact Brian J. Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or leporeb@gao.gov.

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MILITARY BASE REALIGNMENTS AND CLOSURES

Process for Reusing Property for Homeless Assistance Needs Improvements

What GAO Found

A variety of homeless assistance was provided as a result of the 2005 round of base realignments and closures (BRAC), but the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) do not require homeless assistance conveyance data to be tracked. Of the 125 large and small bases closed with surplus property, local redevelopment authorities (LRA) at 39 bases agreed to provide homeless assistance to 75 providers. If implemented, these agreements would provide nearly 50 parcels of property and over \$29 million in total assistance. As of October 2014, GAO found that 27 of the 75 providers with agreements had received their property or monetary conveyances. However, DOD and HUD do not require tracking of the status of the homeless assistance conveyances. In contrast, the program administrator of the Title V homeless assistance program, which oversees conveyances for non-BRAC properties, developed policies to perform oversight in part because the government retains an interest in Title V properties. Without tracking the status of the conveyances, neither DOD nor HUD know the extent to which properties are actually being conveyed; the extent to which the providers are using the properties for their intended use; the extent to which LRAs are making sufficient efforts to find a replacement provider in the event of a provider dropping out; and ultimately the effectiveness of the homeless assistance program.

BRAC surplus property benefited homeless assistance efforts, but limited information and dedicated HUD resources contributed to challenges in the timeliness and feasibility of assistance provided. Homeless assistance providers GAO interviewed said that, among other things, the BRAC homeless assistance program provided the overall benefit of a no-cost property conveyance or financial assistance to support local homeless assistance efforts. However, LRAs and providers GAO interviewed also stated that they did not have sufficient and clear information from DOD and HUD regarding four steps of the homeless assistance process: (1) what information LRAs should give providers during property tours and workshops, (2) what information to include in providers' notices of interest about properties, (3) what information to include in developing legally binding agreements for conveying assistance, and (4) what alternatives are available to on-base property conveyances. For example, during required property tours and workshops, LRAs were unaware of what information to give and gave providers limited property condition information, which led to some providers withdrawing after they identified the cost of needed repairs. Without detailed information on these four steps, LRAs and providers may not have the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions. LRA officials also stated that they appreciated advice from HUD staff on the BRAC process. However, GAO found that HUD did not have enough resources dedicated to meet the 60-day review deadline in the BRAC statute for reviewing LRA redevelopment plans. According to HUD, two staff were assigned to review the plans, taking an average of 151 days longer than allowed to approve redevelopment plans with homeless assistance. However, HUD has not developed options to address reviewing the surge of plans in any future BRAC rounds. Without a means to ensure that needed staff resources are dedicated to HUD's review process, it will be difficult for HUD to provide reasonable assurance that the delays experienced during the BRAC 2005 round will not be repeated.