

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-15-346](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

GAO has designated DOD's Support Infrastructure Management as a high-risk area in part due to challenges in reducing excess infrastructure. DOD installations can establish agreements to allow entities such as non-DOD federal agencies and private entities to use property on DOD installations that are unutilized or underutilized. DOD reports that, as of the end of fiscal year 2013, its real property portfolio consisted of more than 562,000 facilities with an estimated value of \$850 billion.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 included a provision that GAO review the potential for relocating federal government tenants onto military installations. This report identifies (1) available options for DOD to allow non-DOD entities to use unutilized and underutilized space on military installations, and what factors DOD considers for each option; (2) any limitations and benefits of bringing non-DOD federal tenants onto military installations, and (3) the extent to which DOD and other federal agencies coordinate to do so. GAO evaluated DOD and military service guidance; visited selected installations having non-DOD tenants, including two that support the Arctic mission; and interviewed cognizant officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD and GSA collaborate to enhance routine information sharing concerning non-DOD federal agencies seeking workspace at military installations. DOD and GSA concurred and agreed to take action to help ensure that government-owned assets are used to capacity.

View [GAO-15-346](#). For more information, contact Brian J. Lepore at (202) 512-4523 or [leporeb@gao.gov](mailto:leporeb@gao.gov).

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## UNDERUTILIZED FACILITIES

### DOD and GSA Information Sharing May Enhance Opportunities to Use Space at Military Installations

## What GAO Found

Department of Defense (DOD) guidance outlines options for granting the use of unutilized (vacant) and underutilized (partially vacant) space on military installations to non-DOD entities, such as other federal agencies, and installations consider several factors when contemplating such grants. For example, DOD and military department guidance identifies the real estate instruments, such as leases and licenses that are to be used to issue grants to non-DOD entities. All seven of the installations that GAO visited reported using this guidance to select the appropriate instrument based on the type of non-DOD entity, type of facility, and proposed use of the asset. For example, installations selected permits as the appropriate real estate instrument when issuing grants to a non-DOD federal agency as outlined in DOD and military department guidance. Prior to granting the use of space to a non-DOD entity, officials at installations reported considering several factors, including the availability of space, effect on the mission, and factors unique to the installation. In instances where there are competing interests for space, officials reported considering priorities set forth in DOD guidance for assigning available space on the installation. Officials also reported considering whether the tenant could potentially have a negative effect on the installation's ability to comply with any regulations, such as preserving protected habitats.

DOD faces both limitations and benefits from moving non-DOD agencies onto installations. Limitations such as the availability of suitable space affect DOD's ability to bring non-DOD federal agencies onto military installations. For example, officials at all seven of the installations GAO visited reported a lack of vacant space or vacant space that is usable, which limited their ability to accommodate space requests. However, when a match can be made between an installation's available space and a potential tenant agency's needs, both parties can benefit. For example, installations can potentially benefit through the avoidance of direct and indirect costs, such as the cost for utilities and maintenance incurred for unused or underutilized space. Non-DOD federal agencies can save costs on commercial leases because DOD charges for use of space by other federal entities on a cost-recovery basis.

Despite the potential benefits, routine information sharing does not occur between DOD and the General Services Administration (GSA) concerning opportunities to move non-DOD federal agencies onto military installations. Specifically, when GSA is working to satisfy the space needs of its clients, it does not routinely contact DOD installations to inquire whether space might be available. DOD, on the other hand, waits for non-DOD federal agencies to inquire whether space is available and does not generally reach out to GSA or agencies that may be interested in space. Without taking actions to share information, GSA offices working with non-DOD federal agencies to find them space may risk missing opportunities for their clients to reduce or avoid costs. In addition, both GSA and DOD may miss opportunities to leverage resources and enhance utilization of federal real property.