

DOCUMENT RESUME

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[Record Storage for the Veterans Administration Records Processing Center, St. Louis, Missouri]. LCD-78-128-I; B-146743. October 13, 1978. 3 pp.

Report to Joel W. Solomon, Administrator, General Services Administration; by Richard W. Gutmann, Director, Logistics and Communications Div.

Issue Area: Federal Information: Management Attention to Records Practices (1405).

Contact: Logistics and Communications Div.

Budget Function: Veterans Benefits and Services (700); General Government: General Property and Records Management (804).

Organization Concerned: Veterans Administration: Records Processing Center, Saint Louis, MO.

Authority: 44 U.S.C. 2901. 44 U.S.C. 3103.

The General Services Administration (GSA) advised the Veterans Administration (VA) that substantial cost savings could be realized if GSA assumed responsibility for storing and servicing the records now at the VA Records Processing Center in St. Louis, Missouri. VA subsequently determined that its records processing center is an integral part of its agency operation and is not a records center. Since GAO considers the St. Louis facility to be a records center, the VA requires GSA approval to store and maintain its records. GSA should evaluate the VA study and determine whether the VA should be granted approval to continue to operate the center and should instruct the Public Buildings Service to delay any further action on modifications or repairs which would be unique to the VA records center. (SC)

8069



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

HUMAN RESOURCES
DIVISION

IN REPLY
REFER TO:

B-146743

OCTOBER 13, 1978

The Honorable Max Cleland
Administrator of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Administration

Dear Mr. Cleland:

Enclosed is a copy of a report by our Logistics and Communications Division to the Administrator of General Services presenting our findings and recommendations on the potential savings by transferring the records processing operation from the Veterans Administration (VA) Records Processing Center in St. Louis, Missouri, to a General Services Administration (GSA) Federal records center. We advised you and the Administrator of General Services of this matter in May 1977. We withheld any action pending the completion of both GSA and VA studies of this center.

On October 7, 1977, the Administrator of General Services told you that space and equipment costs of \$3.5 to \$12 million and administrative costs of \$2 million could be saved over a 10-year period if GSA stored and processed the records in a Federal records center. On August 11, 1978, you advised the Administrator of General Services of the results of a VA study of the center and your plans to continue to operate the center. The VA study did not show that the VA records can be stored and processed more economically and efficiently in the VA center than in a GSA records center.

Since the Administrator of General Services has the responsibility under 44 U.S.C. 3103 to determine whether agencies should operate their own records centers, we have recommended that he evaluate the VA study and determine whether VA should be granted approval to continue to operate the VA center or whether the records should be transferred to a GSA-operated records center. Pending his decision on the VA center, we have also recommended to the Administrator that he delay any action to modify and repair the facility housing the VA center, to the extent that such changes are unique to the VA operation. The estimated cost of the planned modifications and repairs for fiscal year 1979 are \$3.5 million.

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Should the Administrator of General Services not approve the VA Records Processing Center, we do not believe VA would have the legal authority for its continued operation. Thus, we recommend that you take whatever steps are necessary to assure an orderly transfer of the St. Louis Records Processing Center functions to GSA if the VA center is not approved.

As you know, Section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs and the House Committee on Government Operations not later than 60 days after the date of the report and to the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; the House Committee on Government Operations; the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations; the Senate and House Committees on Veterans Affairs; the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works; the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; and the Administrator of General Services.

Representatives of our Logistics and Communications Division will be pleased to discuss with you or your staff any matters in this report. Arrangements for any such discussion should be made by contacting Robert M. Gilroy, Assistant Director on 275-6531.

Sincerely yours,


Gregory J. Ahart
Director

Enclosure