United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of
Procurement and Property
Management

DR 1620-2

USDA SPACE MANAGEMENT POLICY

USDA Space Management Policy

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		Number: 1620-002
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1 PURPOSE

This regulation establishes USDA policy for the acquisition, management and disposition of office and related space (USDA-owned, -leased, and GSA-controlled). This policy includes guidance on: collocation; utilization rates and space standards; resource sharing; lease provisions; and mechanisms for controlling Rent charges and charges to agency space budgets. It also assigns responsibilities for implementation of this policy.

2 SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/CANCELLATION

a This regulation is effective upon issuance and shall be implemented pursuant to 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71.

b This regulation supersedes DR 1620-2, USDA Space Management Policy, dated July 28, 1997.

c This regulation supersedes all Space Allocation Standards currently in place for USDA agencies.

d USDA agencies will ensure compliance with the Rural Development Act of 1972 (86 Stat. 674), when making location decisions. See the USDA Leasing Handbook, Chapter II – Acquisition Plan, for specific requirements.

3 ABBREVIATIONS

ANSI/
BOMA - American National Standards Institute/Building Owners and Managers Association
ASA - Assistant Secretary for Administration
ASD - Administrative (and Management) Services Division, or equivalent organizational unit
DA - Departmental Administration
DR - Departmental Regulation
FPMR - Federal Property Management Regulations
FS - Forest Service
FSA - Farm Service Agency
GSA - General Services Administration
LFAC - Local Food and Agriculture Council

NCR	- National Capital Region
NFAC	- National Food and Agriculture Council
NRCS	- Natural Resources Conservation Service
OCFO	- Office of the Chief Financial Officer
OO	- Office of Operations
OPPM	- Office of Procurement and Property Management
RD	- Rural Development
SFAC	- State Food and Agriculture Council
SSP	- Strategic Space Plan
UR	- Utilization Rate
USDA	- United States Department of Agriculture

4 BACKGROUND

The Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (the Act), Public Law 103-354, as amended, provides authority to the Secretary of Agriculture to streamline and reorganize USDA to achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness and economies in the organization and management of the programs and activities carried out by the Department. The Act directs the Secretary, where practicable and to the extent consistent with efficient, effective, and improved service, to combine field offices of agencies within USDA to reduce personnel and duplicative overhead expenses by the joint use of resources and offices.

As the Government continues to operate in a period of reduced budgets, the amount of funds available for USDA overhead and administrative costs, including Rent and rental payments, must be controlled in order to provide as much money as possible for USDA programs.

As USDA makes budget, staffing, and organizational adjustments to meet program requirements, it is USDA's desire to maintain productive and valuable partnerships with non-federal partners.

5 POLICY

It is the policy of USDA to efficiently and effectively manage USDA-occupied space in order to achieve the most customer friendly facilities, while ensuring effective and efficient coordination of effort and sharing of resources with non-federal partners. In order to accomplish this, USDA is committed to greater management control and accountability at all levels for real property assets.

When planning a space action, first consideration will be given to USDA-owned facilities and leased space under the control of USDA agencies in the area that meet program requirements. Next consideration will be given to other federally-controlled space that meets program requirements.

It is USDA's policy to house operations in facilities that fully comply with all applicable rules and regulations pertaining to accessibility for the disabled.

USDA policy is to be implemented whenever entering into a new or expanded GSA assignment, new or superseding USDA lease, space reduction action, or other space action resulting in significant space changes in owned or leased space as follows:

a When two or more field office agency locations are in the same community or geographical area, collocation will occur whenever practical. Agencies will take advantage of all space actions to increase participation in collocations. A request for an exception to the collocation policy will be signed by all agencies involved, forwarded through the lead agency's Director, ASD, who coordinates with the affected agencies' Directors, ASD, prior to submitting the request to OPPM for a decision (see appendix A, section 3).

  Requests for decollocation, containing a joint recommendation by the SFAC, will also be forwarded through the initiating agency's Director, ASD, to OPPM for coordination and submission to the NFAC for approval. Requests for decollocation actions that will impact the central Rent account will contain a recommendation by the Director, OPPM (see appendix A, section 4).

b When USDA agencies acquire leased space, careful consideration will be given to the following factors when determining if a termination clause in-whole and, when possible, in-part, can practically be included: market conditions; whether new construction or extensive build-out is anticipated; and the organizational stability of the occupying agencies. These factors will assist the agencies in determining the proper course of action in order to get the best deal for the Government while maximizing the amount of flexibility in lease terms (see appendix A, section 2).

c USDA agencies planning to exercise USDA's delegated leasing authority to acquire space in major urban centers shall request prior approval from the Director, OPPM. Requests must include a copy of GSA's notification to the agency that no federally controlled space is available that will meet the space requirement. This does not apply to space actions already exempted in FPMR 101-18.104-3 (or its successor) and the blanket delegation of lease acquisition authority from GSA dated October 21, 1993. See Agriculture Property Management Regulation 104-18.5100 for a listing of major urban centers as defined under USDA's Delegated Leasing Authority.

d USDA agencies will comply with the following:

(1) Agencies will avoid space build-out that exceeds the GSA tenant improvement allowance. Exceptions require the approval of the lead agency's Director, ASD**,** who will coordinate with the affected agencies' Directors, ASD. All charges exceeding the GSA tenant improvement allowance must be funded by the requesting agency. In no case will these charges be amortized in Rent**;**

(2) The standard UR for USDA office space will be 150 square feet per person average (see appendix A, section 6). Exceptions for space outside NCR require the written approval of the lead agency's Director, ASD**,** who coordinates with the affected agencies' Directors, ASD. Exceptions for space in NCR require the written approval of the Director, OO. A copy of the approval is placed in the acquisition file;

(3) USDA agencies will release unused and unneeded space at the earliest opportunity; and

(4) General employee parking will not be paid from the Rent appropriation unless supplied as part of a lease (i.e., where the lessor offers parking at no cost as part of the deal, not in response to a requirement in the solicitation for offers that results in a specifically stated charge for parking spaces).

e When two or more USDA agencies share a common field office, the agencies will jointly use office space, equipment, personnel, office supplies and other resources associated with that field office, in accordance with the Act (see appendix A, section 5, for a checklist of shared items). This checklist will be utilized for developing space requirements for all space acquisitions and a signed copy attesting to compliance with the checklist becomes part of the acquisition file for each site. Additionally, as authorized by law and using a flexible and common-sense approach, sharing of staff and resources with non-federal partners is encouraged when they are collocated with USDA agencies in field offices.

f USDA agencies will develop and maintain a Master Space Plan/Strategy to ensure space reductions/changes correspond over time with staffing reductions/changes, the 150 square foot UR, and adherence to policy stipulations outlined in this regulation. This requirement will be in place by January 1, 2003**,** and a report will be due annually beginning March 1, 2003, from the Directors, ASD (see section 7a). The agencies will, in concert with OPPM, pay particular attention to all GSA-controlled space assignments containing 5,000 square feet or more to identify space which is, or will be, excess to their needs due to personnel reductions or to a UR that exceeds the 150 square foot standard.

g USDA Service Center locations will be coordinated by the cognizant SFAC. Agencies not commonly housed in USDA Service Centers are strongly encouraged to coordinate all space actions through the cognizant SFAC to ensure collocation opportunities are maximized and provisions of the Act followed.

h All USDA agencies' space actions that impact the central Rent account require notification of OPPM**,** through their respective Directors, ASD, 180 days before the action. USDA agencies relocating from USDA-leased space into GSA-controlled space will reimburse the central Rent account for the amount budgeted for the space being vacated or the cost of the GSA-controlled space, whichever is less (see the portion of the annual appropriations act for the Department that discusses the Agriculture Buildings and Facilities and Rental Payments Account). The OCFO is responsible for determining if special circumstances warrant an exception to this policy. The FS is exempt from this requirement.

i USDA agencies planning to acquire a new or increased GSA space assignment of 5,000 square feet or more are required to receive prior approval from OPPM. Requests should include square footage to be acquired, estimated cost, occupancy date, number of people to be housed and any other pertinent information and be processed through their respective Directors, ASD. Agencies in NCR planning a new or increased GSA space assignment of 5,000 square feet or more are required to supply the same information to OO. In each case, this information will be forwarded to OPPM <u>prior</u> to notifying GSA. OPPM will approve/disapprove requests within 30 days of receipt. Appeals of the OPPM decision may be submitted to the ASA for a final determination**.** The FS is exempt from this requirement for field offices. Also exempt for field offices are agencies that reimburse the central Rent account from user fees. However, an agency that reimburses the account for less than 100 percent of space costs must still receive approval for the portion that will be paid from the central Rent account appropriation.

j USDA agencies requiring or occupying space in the NCR will strictly adhere to the objectives of the SSP. The objectives of the SSP are to consolidate USDA Headquarters into two government-owned locations, to house employees in modern and safe facilities, to enhance USDA operations and to reduce facility costs. In accordance with this policy and the SSP, space requirements should be reviewed annually by each agency and excess space relinquished to USDA. In particular, agencies shall reduce space holdings as reductions in personnel and/or special requirements occur. Additionally, all space actions (space acquisition, renewal or release) within NCR must be approved by OO. A notification to OO must be in writing and be received a minimum of 150 days prior to releasing GSA-controlled space. All space actions in the NCR will adhere to the 150 square foot average UR, along with the other provisions of this policy. Space design should utilize an open space concept, minimizing private offices, and employ modular or systems furniture to accommodate workflow and employee privacy.

k The Director, OPPM, will establish and maintain for each USDA agency, a baseline for total square footage as well as for space costs paid from the central Rent account as of March 31, 2003 (see section 7b). Agencies will (consistent with their Exhibit 54 submissions) reduce square footage in proportion to personnel reductions, when applicable, at the earliest opportunity or whenever a major space action occurs (usually within a 5-year cycle). When a sound program or policy rationale exists for maintaining current levels or requesting an increase in their square footage or space cost allowance, the agency will provide OPPM with supporting justification for use in preparing the annual budget request to Congress for the central Rent account appropriation. All requests for increases must adhere to the 150 square foot per person UR.

l Realizing the uncertainty and potential legal questions associated with remaining in a leased location upon lease expiration (see, for example, provisions of the Competition in Contracting Act, Public Law 98-369, as amended), USDA agencies will monitor lease expiration dates for their offices in GSA-leased space. Agency budget officers will plan and budget for telecommunications expenses, move costs and required buildout that exceeds the GSA tenant improvement allowance, should relocation become necessary at lease expiration for field offices and space assignments in NCR.

m USDA agency budget officers for agencies that receive funding from non-appropriated sources will verify their distribution of space costs as determined by the percentage of funding received from non-appropriated sources (e.g., reimbursables, trusts, working capital fund, etc.). This information is due annually by May 1 to the Director, OPPM (see section 7c).

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

a The ASA is responsible for policy, oversight and coordination for space management in USDA and management of the Departmental central Rent account. The ASA makes a final determination on appeals for approval for new or increased GSA space assignments of 5,000 square feet or more.

b The Director, OPPM, is responsible for providing assistance to the agencies for monitoring the implementation of the space management program for the Office of the Secretary. The Director, OPPM, approves exceptions to the collocation policy, coordinates decollocation requests and submits them to the NFAC, and makes a recommendation to the NFAC when a decollocation action will impact the central Rent account. OPPM maintains a baseline of total square footage and space costs for each USDA agency paid from the central Rent account and prepares the Annual Baseline Report. OPPM also approves field office and NCR requests for new or increased GSA space assignments of 5,000 square feet or more. The Director, OPPM, approves requests to exercise USDA's leasing authority in major urban centers and is responsible for receiving agency verification of their percentage of funding received from non-appropriated sources.

c The Director, OO, is responsible for implementing and maintaining the SSP for all USDA agencies in NCR, coordinating all space actions in NCR**,** and granting exceptions to adherence with the 150 square foot average UR in NCR. The Director, OO, approves space actions for new or expanded leased space in NCR under 5,000 square feet and forwards requests for 5,000 square feet or more to OPPM for approval.

d The OCFO is responsible for processing funds transfers to and from the central Rent account when agencies move to and from GSA-controlled space. The OCFO also has responsibility for determining if special circumstances warrant an exception to an agency reimbursing the central Rent account when moving from USDA space into GSA-controlled space.

e Each USDA agency is responsible for implementing this policy. Each agency will develop a Master Space Plan/Strategy, which will show planned staffing and space reductions/changes. The agencies will, in concert with OPPM, pay particular attention to all GSA-controlled space assignments containing 5,000 square feet or more to identify space which is, or will be, excess to their needs due to personnel reductions or to a UR which exceeds the 150 square foot standard. Agencies will be required to justify to the ASA exceptions to reducing space as staffing numbers are reduced. Agencies are responsible for funding all charges exceeding the GSA tenant improvement allowance.

f Agency budget officers are responsible for budgeting funds that may be needed to pay for telecommunications costs, moving expenses and required buildout that exceeds the GSA tenant improvement allowance, for possible relocation at lease expiration for field offices and space assignments in NCR. Additionally, funds required for office closures due to changing program requirements or reorganization decisions should be included in budget projections. Budget officers in agencies that receive a portion of funding from non-appropriated sources are required to verify that percentage to the Director, OPPM (see section 7c).

g The Directors, ASD, are responsible for approving all charges exceeding the GSA tenant improvement allowance and exceptions to adhering to the 150 square foot average UR outside NCR. The ASD’s will coordinate and submit information to OPPM for processing/approval on the following: requests for space actions for field offices planning to acquire a new or increased GSA space assignment of 5,000 square feet or more; notification of space actions that impact the central Rent account; exceptions to collocation; and decollocation requests. The ASD's will also notify OPPM when the agency relocates to or from central Rent account space. They are responsible for the annual submission of the Master Space Plan/Strategy to OPPM. These responsibilities cannot be re-delegated without prior approval of OPPM.

h The NFAC has responsibility to resolve interagency space issues that cannot be resolved at lower levels. The NFAC approves decollocation requests processed through OPPM.

i The SFAC's are responsible for providing the leadership for implementation of this policy within their respective States. The SFAC's resolve interagency space differences that cannot be resolved at the local level. Decollocation requests must contain a joint recommendation by the SFAC before submitting them to the initiating agency's Director, ASD.

j The LFAC's are responsible for implementing the policy by providing technical and administrative direction necessary to assure the most efficient and effective operation of collocated offices.

7 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

a Master Space Plan/Strategy. Directors, ASD, will submit an annual report outlining the amount of square footage and number of personnel housed in: USDA-owned and -leased space; GSA-controlled space; and the UR's for each of these space categories. The submission will outline plans for reducing space (when applicable) to bring the agency's total square footage in line with staffing and the 150 square foot UR. The report will also ask for a list of exceptions requested and granted for exceeding the UR during the past calendar year and exceptions requested and granted for sites to exceed the GSA tenant improvement allowance. OPPM will send a reporting format to Directors, ASD, beginning in January 2003, with the first annual report due on March 1, 2003.

b Annual Baseline Report. OPPM, in conjunction with the Directors, ASD, will calculate the baseline of total square footage and space costs paid for each USDA agency from the central Rent account.

c Verification of Distribution of Space Costs. Agency budget officers for agencies that receive funding from non-appropriated sources will submit to the Director, OPPM, a verification of the percentage of total funding received from non-appropriated sources. This report is due annually on May 1.

-END-

APPENDIX A

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

1 DEFINITIONS

a <u>Agency Location</u>. This is an established physical office setting where a unit of a USDA agency performs specific services or functions. USDA employees may perform functions at work sites that are not in office settings and that are not agency locations. These work sites specifically include local Soil and Water Conservation District offices, private residences, site inspection facilities at privately owned processing plants, and temporary or transient work sites such as inspection or investigative circuits. In all cases, employees working at these sites report to a specific supervisory agency location that differs from their work site.

b <u>Central Rent Account</u>. An annual appropriation by Congress to the Department to reimburse GSA for space costs and services provided to USDA agencies, excluding FS.

c <u>Collocated Office</u>. A USDA office housing two or more USDA agencies (see section 3 of this appendix).

d <u>Collocation</u>. The process of establishing or retaining the housing of two or more USDA agencies in a collocated configuration (see section 3 of this appendix).

e <u>Consolidation</u>. Combining two or more agency locations of a single USDA agency into one USDA office.

f <u>Decollocation</u>. The process of separating agencies from a collocated arrangement (see section 4 of this appendix).

g <u>Exhibit 54</u>. This refers to Section 54, “Space Budget Justification”, of Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11.

h <u>Field Office</u>. All offices other than headquarters offices. Included are regional, State, area, district and local offices (including USDA Service Centers), whether their function is program delivery, administrative or special purpose, e.g., technical support or research.

i <u>GSA tenant improvement allowance</u>. The amount of money that GSA determines is needed to take space from a “warm lit shell” state to a finished, usable product, customized for a particular occupant. It is comprised of the tenant general component and the tenant customization component (when applicable) and is the maximum amount allowed to be amortized in the Rent (this is the same as the previous "initial space alterations" or "standard alterations"). Charges exceeding this amount are considered above standard build-out and funded by the requesting agency. (NOTE: The general component is set nationally, adjusted annually, and indexed to local construction costs by GSA. This information is available from the GSA Regional Offices).

j <u>Local Food and Agriculture Council</u>. The LFAC is comprised of designated representatives of each participating USDA agency at the site.

k <u>Master Space Plan/Strategy</u>. A plan developed by each agency that sets forth goals for reducing space (when applicable) nationwide, and time-frames for achieving results. This is submitted annually to OPPM.

l <u>National Capital Region</u>. This is comprised of the District of Columbia; Montgomery and Prince Georges counties, Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church, Virginia; and Fairfax, Arlington, Loudoun, and Prince William counties, Virginia.

m <u>National Food and Agriculture Council</u>. The NFAC is comprised of the Administrators of all USDA agencies with field structures.

n <u>Non-Federal Partners</u>. Non-federal partners are specific groups (e.g., soil and water conservation districts, individual county committees of FSA, etc.) that have a formal established relationship with a USDA agency with written agreements covering shared programs/resources.

o <u>Partner Agencies</u>. These are: the FSA, NRCS and agencies of RD, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and FS.

p <u>Shared Office</u>. A collocated office at which two or more USDA agencies share one or more common resources, e.g., conference room, lunchroom, mailroom, office equipment, and/or personnel, etc.

q <u>State Food and Agriculture Council</u>. The SFAC is comprised of the senior official of each USDA agency that has a presence in the State.

r <u>Strategic Space Plan</u>. This plan controls current and future space plans for all space housing USDA operations in the NCR.

s Termination Clause. A clause included in a lease that allows the Government to release all (in-whole) or part (in-part) of the space with a set amount of notification to the lessor.

t USDA Office. A physical site where one or more USDA agencies maintain an agency location. Agency locations within a USDA office may be located in adjacent space, space on different floors in the same building, space in adjacent buildings, or space in different buildings that are part of a single complex or campus.

u USDA Service Center. A USDA office designated by USDA and occupied by one or more partner agencies.

v Utilization Rate. The average amount of space per person housed in a space assignment, not counting special use space. It includes employee workstations, circulation (including reception), file space, consultation rooms and all private offices.

2 LEASE PROVISIONS

Termination Clauses (in-whole and in-part).

When determining whether to include a termination clause in a lease, an agency must consider market conditions, whether new construction or extensive build-out is anticipated, and the organizational stability of the occupying agencies during the lease term. Every effort should be made to give USDA a maximum amount of flexibility while realistically considering market conditions.

Interagency agreements binding occupying agencies should mirror the terms and conditions of the lease.

In order to be prepared for changing USDA mission requirements, including location changes, a termination clause (in-whole) should be included in all new USDA leases whenever possible. The termination clause will limit the Government's liability should all agencies in a USDA office require relocation/closure.

If possible, a termination clause (in-part) should also be included in all new USDA leases. This is most helpful when at least one (but fewer than all) agency locations must relocate/close their portion of a USDA office. Partial termination will allow part of the leased space to be vacated without having to consider relocating all agencies to keep from paying for unneeded space. In cases where partial termination takes place, the agencies agree to the following:

- The vacating agency(ies) will notify the lead agency at least 180 days prior to vacating the space. Space charges will continue until the end of the 180 day period or the space is vacated (whichever is later) or charges for the space are discontinued.

- Upon learning that space will be vacated, the lead agency will make every effort to find other uses for the space such as expansion needs of other occupants or adding an agency not currently housed in the collocation. If no other USDA/Government group has need for the space, the lead agency will work diligently with the lessor to release the space in a timely manner in order to minimize the cost to the Government.

If a termination clause (in-whole or in-part) is not included in the lease, the following will apply:

- The vacating agency will notify the lead agency at least 180 days prior to vacating or as soon as plans are known of intent to vacate space (whichever is earlier).

- The lead agency will work diligently to find other uses for the space or to release it to the lessor.

- In the event that no other tenant is found for the space and the lessor refuses to accept a buy out, the vacating agency will continue to pay up to the maximum amount due in the firm term of the lease.

3 COLLOCATION

Where practicable and to the extent consistent with efficient, effective, and improved service, field offices of agencies within USDA will be combined to reduce personnel and duplicative overhead expenses. When two or more USDA agencies share a common field office, the agencies will jointly use office space, equipment, office supplies, and personnel associated with that field office. This is consistent with the Act, which directs the Secretary to save money through sharing resources and personnel. See Public Law 103-354, § 215, which appears in the United States Code as 7 U.S.C. § 6915. Participants most commonly are the partner agencies (see Definitions) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Food and Nutrition Service, the Agricultural Research Service, and the Agricultural Marketing Service, as well as county employees of FSA, non-federal partners of NRCS and local cooperators of RD. Collocation is the primary vehicle to facilitate the sharing of resources as well as enabling clients to conduct business with several agencies in one stop, thus saving time and resources. A review and determination of the feasibility of collocating USDA agencies will be made whenever any agency location will be established or relocated. First consideration will be given to USDA-owned facilities and leased space under the control of USDA agencies in the area that meets program requirements. Next consideration will be given to other federally-controlled space that meets program requirements in accordance with the FPMR or its successor.

Collocation is accomplished when two or more USDA agencies are located in any of the following configurations:

a Contiguous space on the same floor in the same building;
b Noncontiguous space on the same floor or on different floors in the same or adjacent buildings; or
c Space in different buildings that are part of a single complex or campus.

Configuration (a) is the required collocation alternative for the partner agencies in a USDA Service Center in order to facilitate maximum sharing of the items shown in the Checklist in section 5 of this appendix. Where programmatic or budget justification exists that causes a USDA Service Center to choose an alternate configuration, the permanent acquisition file for the site shall be properly documented with reasons. Other agencies are encouraged to join in these USDA Service Centers, wherever practical.

When a space action is planned, coordination should take place through the SFAC. A request for an exception to the collocation policy will be signed by all agencies involved, forwarded through the lead agency's Director, ASD, who coordinates with the affected agencies' Directors, ASD, prior to submitting the request to OPPM for a decision.

4 DECOLLOCATION

Decollocation is to be used only when all other alternatives are considered to be unworkable in order to maintain adequate accommodations to meet program needs. Since decollocation is contrary to the Secretary of Agriculture's initiative to collocate all field offices wherever possible, maximum effort will be exerted toward retaining collocation through creative space management and cooperation by all agencies. Decollocation requests often occur when an agency determines a need for additional space. Creative space and lease management begins at the local level. Decollocation must be approved by the NFAC.

Before elevating a decollocation request to the SFAC, the LFAC will address and document the following issues:

Location (city, county, state);

Agencies in the collocation;

State whether the decollocation will be permanent or temporary. If temporary, indicate whether short-term additional space is available;

State the possibilities of the following:

- Redesigning existing space;
- Relocating to a nearby building in the same complex or campus;
- Relocating all presently collocated agency locations; and
- Housing the decollocated agency with another USDA agency in the same community;

NOTE: When considering the options contained in these bullets, USDA Service Centers should keep in mind that they must meet the collocation configuration stated in appendix A, section 3-a.

List the following information for each agency:

- Current assignment of space (square footage of general, warehouse and unique space);
- Peak number of employees requiring space;
- Current rental costs;
- Future or estimated rental costs;
- Floor plans of existing spaces;
- Name of lead agency;
- Space assignment status (USDA-leased or -owned or GSA-controlled) and lease expiration dates;
- Estimated relocation costs for eligible employees; and
- Other relevant information.

When the SFAC believes that it is not possible for agencies to remain collocated, the above information, along with their recommendation, will be submitted to the NFAC (through the initiating agency's ASD to OPPM for coordination).

5 CHECKLIST FOR JOINT USE OF RESOURCES AND OFFICE SPACE

The NFAC Subcommittee on USDA Service Centers issued "USDA Service Center Space and Equipment Guidance" in response to provisions in the Act. This guidance applies to all USDA field offices and requires the following when reconfiguring existing space or acquiring new space:

- Primary customer access is through a common entrance for all agencies into a common reception area. There is a single contact point where clients can acquire information and/or forms regarding the services of all collocated agencies;
- Shared space for supplies, storage, mailroom, printing, conference room, common computer facilities, shared equipment, and other uses;
- Shared common office equipment (e.g., copier, fax, telephone system, mail meter); duplicate equipment should be disposed of, if no longer

- serviceable, to obtain single pieces of equipment that can be shared by all;
- Space accommodations for non-federal partners (as authorized by law), local cooperators, and county employees;
- Open space with minimal architectural barriers between agencies to enhance communication flow and allow flexibility and ease of installing and modifying wiring for telecommunications/data systems;
- Privacy for supervisory and confidential client information discussions;
- Flexible floor plan with consistency across all agencies;
- A common telecommunications system for voice, local area network, and wide area network. Wiring can be included in the lease and amortized over the life of the lease;
- Outdoor and indoor signs identifying the location as a USDA Service Center with identification for individual agencies and partner organizations as appropriate; and
- Agencies will adhere to all applicable rules and regulations pertaining to accessibility for the disabled.

Other areas for consideration:

- Lease Administration - One agency acts as the lead in leasing space and administering the lease for all agencies.

- Aerial Photographs - One agency acquires, maintains and distributes aerial photographs to other agencies, as needed.

- Emergency Disaster Assistance - Emergency Assistance Plans are developed, reviewed and approved by all agencies. All cooperate in FLASH situations and Damage Assessment reports.
- Conservation Compliance - Agencies coordinate information to ensure that a producer has a Conservation Plan in place and is in compliance with it before any USDA benefits are paid.

- Scheduling - Producer/client/community meetings are scheduled jointly among the agencies to minimize the number of visits.

- Supplies - Agencies cooperate in acquiring and distributing supplies.

- Newsletters - Publications include information about all agencies using common mailing lists and economies of postage.

- Vehicles - Official vehicles are acquired by the agency with the greatest need and shared with the other agencies.

- Data - Crop acreage data, crop production, soil maps, etc., are shared with all agencies.

- Offsets - Agencies coordinate information to ensure that no USDA payments are made to a producer who has an overdue USDA indebtedness.

- Personnel - During fluctuations in workload of each agency, interchanges of personnel are made to achieve the most efficient service to clients.

NOTE: A copy of this checklist is to be signed by all senior site officials attesting to items that will be shared and, when applicable, briefly explaining why any item is not. The checklist becomes part of the permanent acquisition file for the site. Interagency agreements for reimbursement should be in place prior to occupancy and should address all shared items for which funds will be transferred or like-kind services rendered.

6 PLANNING SPACE FOR FIELD OFFICES

NOTE: A field office is defined as all offices other than headquarters offices. All applicable rules and regulations pertaining to accessibility for the disabled will be followed.

The following guidance will be used in planning space for a USDA field office to assure economy and consistency for all personnel in all field offices. The UR will be based on the total number of employees in each field office location regardless of how many or which agencies are present. Additionally, each agency is responsible for their individual UR. Alternate work arrangements (e.g., flexi-place, etc.) should be considered when calculating the total amount of space needed, with corresponding square footage reductions. The UR is computed using usable square feet as defined by ANSI/BOMA (for a copy of the BOMA publication Standard Method for Measuring Floor Area in Office Buildings, contact BOMA on the Internet at www.boma.org).

The UR for USDA field offices will not exceed 150 square feet per person average including USDA employees and county employees of FSA, non-federal partners of NRCS and local cooperators of Rural Development. Individual agencies have discretion in determining which employees require larger or smaller workstations within their area as long as the overall UR is maintained. Agencies should coordinate these decisions to ensure that consistency is achieved across agency lines for like-grades and/or positions. NOTE: when determining the total amount of space for an office, keep in mind that square footages for other than full-time personnel (e.g., part-time, temporary, seasonal, stay-in-school, volunteers, etc.) should not be calculated at 150 square feet per person.

The UR of 150 square feet includes employee workstations, circulation (including reception), file space, consultation rooms and all private offices. Generally, this will include all space finished as standard office space. Those items that constitute special space such as a laboratory, conference space, light industrial, and storage are not included in the UR. However, an agency demonstrating a need for an exceptional amount of file space (usually for historic files), established and agreed to in writing by that agency's Director, ASD, may create a dedicated file area which is excluded from the UR calculation.

NOTE: The amount of space for a dedicated file area is determined by the number of files, allowing 3 square feet for each letter file, 4.5 square feet for each lateral file and 15.75 square feet for each map file. Reasonable circulation can be added to arrive at the total square footage for this area.

All field offices with more than one USDA agency presence will share those areas they have in common. These will include, but are not limited to: reception area, ADP room, mail/storage room, copier space (and equipment), conference room, and client/break room. An agency possessing any of these types of areas as dedicated space (i.e., not shared by all agencies) is contrary to Congressional intent as stated in the Act and is not acceptable. The facility should present a seamless USDA environment. Shared space is apportioned to the occupying agencies with reception and any shared office space included in each agency's total space for UR calculation.

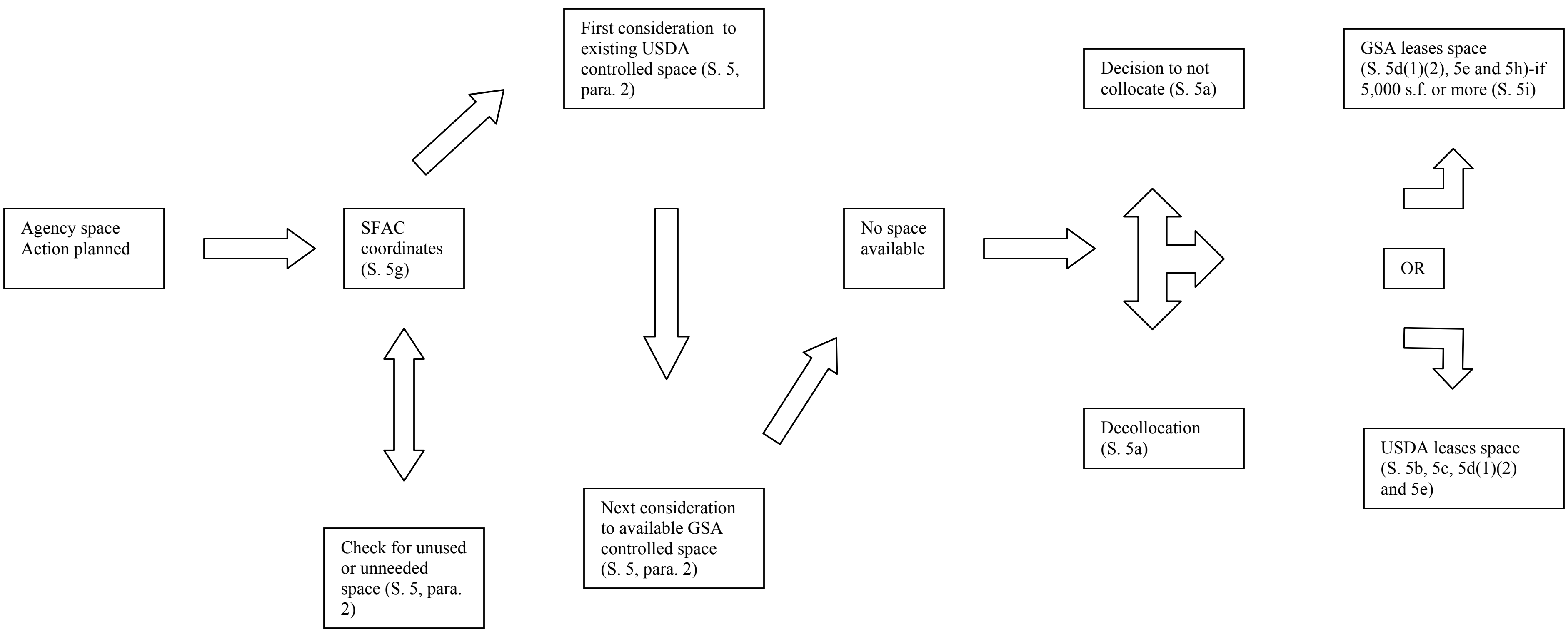
Field offices will be designed utilizing an open space concept with minimal architectural barriers between agencies. Private offices should be kept to a minimum. To the greatest extent possible, modular or systems furniture should be used to accommodate workflow and employee privacy. Locations requiring client consultation space may have shared consultation rooms for meetings with customers. These can also be used for employee consultation, reducing the need for private offices. Note: consultation room space is calculated in the UR.

Exceptions to the UR require approval from the lead agency's Director, ASD or the Director of OO for NCR space.

USDA SPACE MANAGEMENT POLICY – DR 1620-2

FLOWCHART OF STEPS FOR A SPACE ACTION

FIELD SPACE



“S” indicates the section of the DR to reference