



Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General

REPORT ON THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO GIVE FIRST PRIORITY TO THE LOCATION OF NEW OFFICES AND OTHER FACILITIES IN RURAL AREAS

The Department of Veterans Affairs does not have written policies and procedures addressing the issue of giving first priority to locating new offices and other facilities in rural areas.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Office of Inspector General
Washington DC 20420

**Report on the Department of Veterans Affairs
Policies and Procedures to Give First Priority to the Location of
New Offices and Other Facilities in Rural Areas (Report No. 03-02718-160)**

1. Purpose

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General conducted a review to determine what VA policies and procedures were in place to give first priority to locating new offices and other facilities in rural areas.

2. Background

Section 647 of Public Law 107-67, requires, in part, that "...the Inspector General of each applicable department or agency shall submit to the (House of Representatives) Committee on Appropriations, a report detailing what policies and procedures are in place for each department or agency to give first priority to the location of new offices and other facilities in rural areas, as directed by the Rural Development Act of 1972." This requirement was continued with Section 638 of Public Law 108-7, the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003.

3. Scope And Methodology

We made inquiries of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Management, Capital Asset Policy Planning and Strategy Service and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Facilities Management in VA headquarters. We also reviewed published VA policies and procedures addressing property acquisitions and leases.

4. Results

VA does not have policies or procedures addressing the issue of giving first priority to locating new offices and other facilities in rural areas. However, departmental management reported that in locating new VHA medical care facilities, primarily community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), priority is given to locating these facilities near where veterans live, which is frequently in rural areas. In regards to locating Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) facilities,

we were informed that the first priority in moving VBA facilities out of General Services Administration leases/assignments is to collocate on VA medical center grounds.

5. Conclusion

VA does not have written policies or procedures addressing the issue of giving first priority to locating new offices and other facilities in rural areas. The VHA Office of Facilities Management staff has indicated that priority is given to locating CBOCs near where veterans live, which is frequently in rural areas. We are making no recommendations in this report.

(original signed by:)
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Committee on Veterans' Affairs, United States House of Representatives

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