



Office of Governmentwide Policy • Office of Travel, Transportation and Asset Management

# Employee Relocation Policy Program

[www.gsa.gov/relocationpolicy](http://www.gsa.gov/relocationpolicy)

**Overview.** GSA recently collected new data from the agencies on their employee relocation programs. Overall, the data show that the Federal Government relocated 32,321 civilian employees at a cost of \$1.198 Billion.

- The Governmentwide Relocation Advisory Board (GRAB) report includes over 150 recommendations. Many of the GRAB recommendations highlight the points where Federal rules differ markedly from private sector best practices. Some of the GRAB recommendations require legislative changes, which OGP has requested, and the remaining recommendations require regulatory changes, which OGP is close to implementing.
- One of the most important GRAB recommendations concerns governmentwide collection of employee relocation data. OGP is currently developing a proposed change to the Federal Management Regulation that will address this recommendation.
- Another major GRAB change will simplify the relocation tax payment process for government agencies.

### Mission

The Relocation Policy staff writes policy that guides Federal agencies in relocating Federal employees. The staff advocates for and implements changes that result in an improved relocation process and better relocation data. This includes bringing private sector best practices to the Federal government, when appropriate.

### Authority

The Office of Governmentwide Policy's authority to regulate governmentwide civilian relocation comes from 5 U.S.C., Chapter 57. The provisions of the statute are incorporated in the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), Parts 301 and 302.

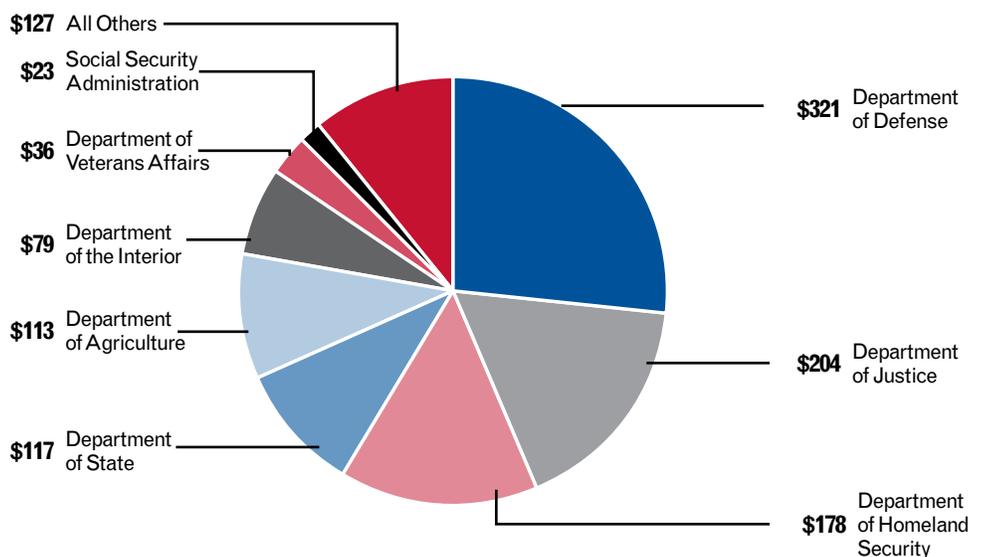
### Program Strategy

OGP is committed to ensuring that government relocation policy reflects innovations and market-driven changes in private industry to the maximum extent possible, while scrupulously following all relevant laws. OGP meets regularly with agency representatives to gain critical input for creating better policy. The Office of Travel, Transportation and Asset Management also collaborates with the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) to ensure that the policy framework allows for contractual innovation.

In 2004, OGP established the Governmentwide Relocation Advisory Board (GRAB), with members from the relocation industry, major companies that relocate employees frequently, and Federal agencies. The GRAB delivered its report on September 15, 2005, and OGP is still working diligently to implement the GRAB's recommendations.

### Statistics, Ratios, and Trends

#### Civilian Relocation Activity (\$ Million)



## Need To Know

- A federal agency is required, by statute, to relocate an employee only “at the convenience of the Government;” that is, not at the convenience of the employee.
- Unlike private sector organizations, Federal agencies are prohibited by statute, in almost all instances, from buying a home directly from a relocating employee. Instead, Federal agencies contract with relocation service companies to purchase homes from employees who have not been able to find a buyer within a reasonable period of time.
- Relocation benefits for new Federal employees, regardless of position, are limited to household goods shipment and storage, travel expenses for the employee and family, and per diem for the employee.
- In late 2009, Congress made GSA’s authority to approve relocation test programs permanent. GSA’s Administrator has approved extensions under this new authority for six test programs managed by five agencies. The results of these test programs will be used to identify possible improvements in the relocation statutes and regulations.

## Key Business Drivers

Most leading private sector companies have centralized the management of relocation into a single, enterprise-wide service center. OGP’s long-term goal, based in GRAB recommendations, is to move Federal agencies in the same direction. This will require significant cultural changes and may take a decade or more.

The recent collapse of the domestic housing market has made it very difficult to relocate some Federal employees for three reasons: (1) many employees are unable to find buyers for their old homes at reasonable prices; (2) some employees owe more on their old homes than any buyer would now be willing to pay; and/or (3) relocation service companies are unwilling to buy many of the houses, under agencies’ guaranteed buy-out programs, that federal employees need to sell. OGP has worked closely with FAS to help restructure FAS contracts and to identify and promote best practices among the agencies. The crisis will continue to affect many Federal transferees through 2010, and in some parts of the country it may still be a problem in 2012 and beyond.

## Collaboration

OGP sponsors the Executive Relocation Steering Committee (ERSC), an interagency group of relocation experts. The ERSC meets bi-monthly and includes members from 15 agencies. The ERSC reviews policy proposals and identifies and promotes best practices in federal relocation.

OGP routinely participates in meetings organized by GSA/FAS with Federal agencies and relocation industry providers.

OGP also participates in, and sometimes presents at, relocation industry meetings, including the Worldwide ERC and the American Moving and Storage Association conventions.

## Associations/Training

GSA/State/DoD Travel Regulations Working Group  
American Moving and Storage Association (AMSA)  
Worldwide ERC  
Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command