

Audit of PBS's Approval Process for Minor Repair and Alteration Projects - GSA Office of Inspector General

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Why We Performed This Audit

This audit was included in our *Fiscal Year 2019 Audit Plan*. GSA Public Buildings Service's (PBS's) minor repair and alteration projects are designed to keep federal buildings in serviceable condition, preventing small projects from becoming larger and more costly. Since Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, Congress has authorized GSA to spend an average of \$346.5 million each year to fund these projects. In recent years, PBS has asserted that the repair and alteration needs of its aging building inventory are far outpacing available funding. Accordingly, PBS must carefully manage its minor repair and alteration projects to allocate funds to its most critical needs.

The objective of the audit was to determine whether PBS's minor repair and alteration project prioritization process ensures that the most critical projects are funded.

What We Found

In FY 2015, the PBS Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement's Capital Assessment and Allocation Division (Portfolio Management) established a centralized process to review and approve minor repair and alteration project requests submitted by PBS's 11 regional offices. Portfolio Management's approval process was intended to prioritize the minor repair and alteration projects based on Decision Lens, a software tool that scores projects nationwide using a common set of objective criteria. However, we found that Portfolio Management's review and approval process had no discernible effect on which projects were actually performed in FY 2019 and FY 2020. Rather, Portfolio Management approved projects based almost exclusively on project rankings submitted by the regions and, in cases where regions could not perform an approved project, the regions were able to redirect funding to other projects without Portfolio Management's approval.

PBS should determine if a centralized approval process is the most effective way to ensure that its limited funding is directed to the most critical needs of its buildings. If so, PBS should improve how it uses its project prioritization software, Decision Lens, to enhance the centralized approval process.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the PBS Commissioner:

1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment to determine if a centralized approval process is the most effective way for the Agency to ensure its limited funding is directed to the most critical needs of its buildings.
2. Improve PBS's use of its Decision Lens software if the assessment shows that a centralized approval process is most effective. Improvements should include:
 1. Providing guidance for selecting program areas;
 2. Assessing whether to incorporate additional criteria; and
 3. Ensuring all changes to Decision Lens criteria and weights are documented.

The PBS Commissioner agreed with our finding and recommendations. PBS's written comments are included as **Appendix C**.

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Business Line

Public Buildings Service

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