

APHIS Central Rent Account Management – Beginning in FY 2015, APHIS will be responsible for paying all of the costs associated with GSA leased space used by the Agency. Previously, payments for the 237 GSA leases used by APHIS were made through the USDA Central Rent Account. To address this new financial responsibility, APHIS anticipates an increase of the Agency’s budget by about \$42.6 million, which is roughly the amount of its annual GSA lease costs. The Department initiated this change to APHIS’ and other USDA Agency budgets as a way to increase Agency accountability and increase the means for Agencies to meet new USDA space reduction goals.

These funding changes will likely result in several financial and accountability adjustments for APHIS programs, including:

- The implementation of new lease verification and payment processes
- The need to account for lease costs in fee setting and reimbursable agreement practices
- Increased reporting requirements related to space management and utilization rates
- Closer adherence to Departmental Guidance on space utilization
- Additional fund management responsibility.

In the short term, APHIS is working to ensure a smooth transition of these responsibilities. This includes having programs validate their current lease portfolios; working with GSA to determine how the billing process will work; and establishing Agency policies, practices, and priorities. In the long term, APHIS has an opportunity to redirect some of these funds towards other priorities as space reduction is attained.