



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of Inspector General

# USDA Space Utilization

February 23, 2026

Report 25-025





# OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Agriculture



**DATE:** February 23, 2026

**TO:** Deedra Fogle  
Acting Chief Human Capital Officer  
Office of Human Resources Management

**FROM:** Craig M. Goscha  
Acting Assistant Inspector General  
Office of Analytics and Innovation

**SUBJECT:** USDA Space Utilization

On January 20, 2025, President Donald J. Trump issued the Presidential Memorandum (PM) *Return to In-Person Work*, instructing Executive department and agency heads to, “as soon as practicable, take all necessary steps to terminate remote work arrangements and require employees to return to work in-person at their respective duty stations on a full-time basis, provided that the department and agency heads shall make exemptions they deem necessary.”<sup>1</sup> Further, the Utilizing Space Efficiently and Improving Technologies (USE IT) Act of 2023 instructs Federal agencies to work with the Administrator of the General Services Administration (GSA) to identify the utilization rate of certain public buildings and Federally leased space.<sup>2</sup>

On February 27, 2025, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) initiated an engagement across select USDA facilities<sup>3</sup> to determine how much USDA space was being used by employees and contractors reporting to work in-person. We analyzed data collected from USDA employees and contractors who use their Personal Identity Verification (PIV) badge to access the select USDA facilities. We also analyzed data on the design capacity of the select USDA facilities, which measures the maximum number of USDA employees and contractors who can occupy a given facility.

Across the selected facilities, average daily occupancy rose from 1,537 before the Return to the Office (RTO) on February 28, 2025, to 3,745 after the RTO. Additionally, USDA used 15 percent of the design capacity of the selected spaces pre-RTO and 36 percent post-RTO. OIG used February 28, 2025, as the beginning date for RTO because USDA’s January 24, 2025, policy, which required all telework eligible employees to return to in-person work at their designated USDA facility, established the expectation “that the Department will be fully compliant with [the] new policy by Friday, February 28, 2025.”<sup>4</sup>

We worked with USDA’s Office of Safety, Security and Protection (OSSP) and Office of Property and Environmental Management (OPEM) to obtain and understand PIV badge swipe and design capacity data. We appreciate the consistent courtesy and assistance provided by USDA staff throughout this project.

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<sup>1</sup> [90 Fed. Reg. 8251 \(Jan. 28, 2025\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024, Pub. L. No. 118-272, div. B, tit. III, § 2302, 138 Stat. 2992, 3218 (Jan. 4, 2025); *see also* 40 U.S.C. § 584 note.

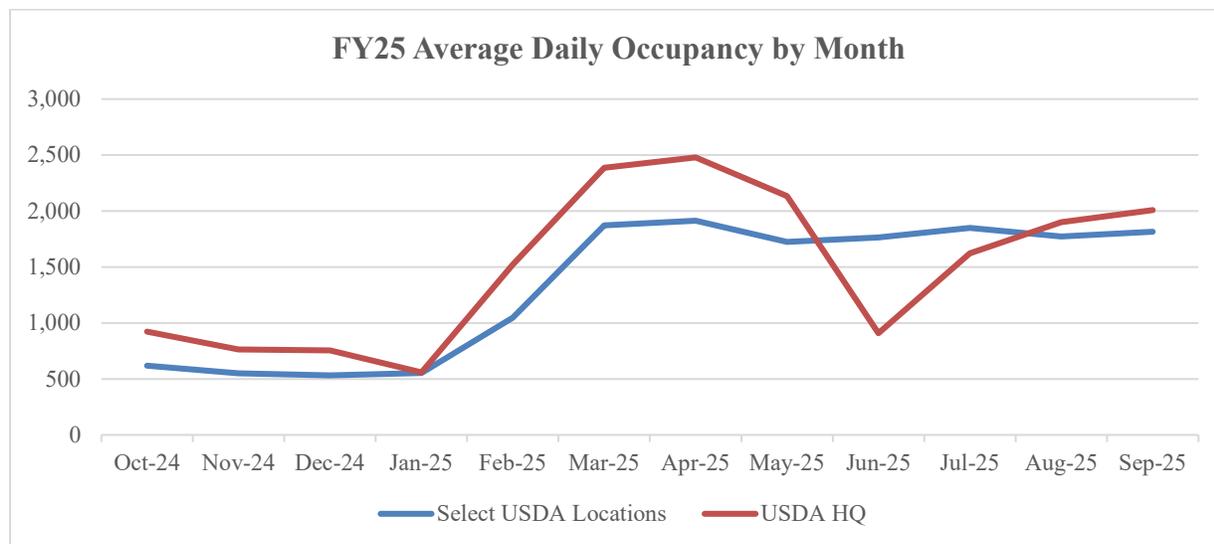
<sup>3</sup> USDA facilities include GSA-assigned and USDA-owned spaces.

<sup>4</sup> USDA, *Return to the Office Policy*, Acting Secretary Memorandum (Jan. 24, 2025).

## Results

To conduct our analysis, we obtained badge swipe data from 15 facilities and calculated (1) daily occupancy based on unique badge swipes, and (2) space utilization based on the daily occupancy divided by the location’s design capacity.

Across facilities, average daily occupancy went from 1,537 before the RTO on February 28, 2025, to 3,745 after the RTO. This was a 143 percent increase across the period. Similarly, USDA Headquarters (HQ)<sup>5</sup> in Washington, D.C. went from an average daily occupancy of 920 before the RTO to 1,927 after, a 109 percent increase. Chart 1 summarizes fiscal year (FY) 2025 average daily occupancy by month.<sup>6</sup> Table 1 provides the details for each facility.



**Chart 1. FY 2025 Average Daily Occupancy by Month: This chart summarizes FY 2025 average daily occupancy by month. Data is summarized as USDA HQ and Non-USDA HQ locations.**

USDA Location	Design Capacity	Average Daily Occupancy Pre-RTO	Average Daily Occupancy Post-RTO	Difference Pre- and Post-RTO (#)	Difference Pre- and Post-RTO (%)
AMS National Grain Center	112	44	73	30	69%
ARS Main Office	62	26	24	-2	-6%
1701 Centre Avenue	47	4	4	-1	-13%
Forest Service Building-Sycamore Street	90	37	47	10	28%
Sidney R. Yates Building	827	93	237	144	155%
2150 Centre Avenue	618	107	272	166	155%
APHIS Centre Tech	16	6	9	3	48%

<sup>5</sup> USDA HQ represents the space that comprises both the South Building (1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20250) and Whitten Building (1200 Jefferson Drive SW, Washington, DC 20250).

<sup>6</sup> The decrease in average daily occupancy starting in April 2025 is associated with employees who took the Deferred Resignation Program transitioning to administrative leave followed by low occupancy in June 2025 as USDA created space to house thousands of military members participating in the 250th Birthday of the U.S. Army Grand Military Parade and Celebration in Washington, D.C. In addition, pervasive HVAC challenges and failures at the GSA Heating Operation and Transmission District plant at the hottest points of the summer further impacted the USDA HQs occupancy return to the higher level until August 2025 as employees were authorized alternative worksite arrangements for health and safety purposes.

<b>USDA Location</b>	<b>Design Capacity</b>	<b>Average Daily Occupancy Pre-RTO</b>	<b>Average Daily Occupancy Post-RTO</b>	<b>Difference Pre- and Post-RTO (#)</b>	<b>Difference Pre- and Post-RTO (%)</b>
FPAC E Bannister Road	14	7	13	6	83%
FS Fort Collins HQ	123	38	83	45	117%
APHIS Laporte Avenue	138	83	98	15	18%
George Washington Carver Center	1900	110	654	544	497%
ARS Pennsylvania Avenue	398	30	203	173	569%
Ward Parkway	172	28	88	59	211%
USDA HQ	5766	920	1927	1007	109%
Sixth Avenue Central	36	4	12	9	241%

**Table 1. Average Daily Occupancy by Location: This table summarizes the average daily occupancy measured in USDA employees and contractors during pre-RTO and post-RTO periods.**

Across facilities, average daily utilization rose from 15 percent before the RTO on February 28, 2025, to 36 percent after the RTO. This was a 21 percent increase across those periods. Similarly, USDA HQ in Washington, D.C. went from an average daily utilization of 16 percent before the RTO to 33 percent after. Table 2 provides the details for each facility.

<b>USDA Address/Location</b>	<b>Average Utilization Rate Pre-RTO</b>	<b>Average Utilization Rate Post-RTO</b>	<b>Difference</b>
AMS National Grain Center	39%	66%	27%
ARS Main Office	41%	39%	-3%
1701 Centre Avenue	9%	8%	-1%
Forest Service Building- Sycamore Street	41%	53%	11%
Sidney R. Yates Building	11%	29%	17%
2150 Centre Avenue	27%	70%	42%
APHIS Centre Tech	39%	57%	19%
FPAC E Bannister Road	51%	93%	42%
FS Fort Collins HQ	31%	68%	36%
APHIS Laporte Avenue	60%	71%	11%
George Washington Carver Center	6%	34%	29%
ARS Pennsylvania Avenue	10%	65%	55%
Ward Parkway	16%	51%	35%
USDA HQ	16%	33%	17%
Sixth Avenue Central	10%	34%	24%

**Table 2. Average Utilization by Location: This table summarizes the average utilization rate of the 15 USDA locations in scope of this engagement. Utilization is calculated by dividing daily occupancy by design capacity.<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>7</sup> We measured the average utilization pre-RTO and post-RTO against the design capacity for each facility as of December 2025.

## **Objective, Scope, and Methodology:**

The objective of this engagement was to determine how much USDA office space is being used by USDA employees and contractors reporting to work in-person. The scope of our review was October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2025 (i.e., FY 2024 through FY 2025). We considered October 1, 2023–February 27, 2025, the pre-RTO period, and February 28, 2025–September 30, 2025, the post-RTO period, to show the difference in building utilization between the period prior to and following the issuance of the PM on return to in-person work.

To calculate daily occupancy, we obtained USDA PIV badge swipe data from OSSP’s Enterprise Physical Access Control System (ePACS). We counted each unique individual that swiped an ePACS reader at a given facility each day. One limitation of this analysis is that swipes are not a perfect proxy for occupancy. Staff may “piggy-back”—when one employee follows another into the facility without badging in—or, under certain circumstances, access the facility without a badge.

To calculate utilization, we obtained certified FY 2025 design capacities for each facility from OPEM. For each facility, we divided the daily occupancy by the design capacity.

USDA OIG applied the established Office of Analytics and Innovation quality assurance standards to ensure the information presented in this product is adequately supported.<sup>8</sup>

## **Attachment**

### **CC:**

Chad E. Carroll  
Chief Security Director  
OSSP

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<sup>8</sup> USDA OIG Directive IG-5006, *The Quality Control Process* (Dec. 2017).

## Appendix A: Agency Real Property Address

Agency/Staff Office	USDA Address/Location	Street Address	City	State	Zip Code
AMS	AMS National Grain Center	10383 N AMBASSADOR DRIVE	Kansas City	MO	64153
ARS	ARS Main Office	1111 S MASON STREET	Fort Collins	CO	80521
ARS	1701 Centre Avenue	1701 CENTRE AVENUE	Fort Collins	CO	80526
DA	Forest Service Building-Sycamore Street	200 SYCAMORE STREET	Elkins	WV	26241
Multiple	Sidney R. Yates Building	201 14TH STREET SW	Washington	DC	20227
APHIS, ARS, OCIO	2150 Centre Avenue	2150 CENTRE AVENUE	Fort Collins	CO	80526
APHIS	APHIS Centre Tech	2301 RESEARCH BOULEVARD	Fort Collins	CO	80526
FPAC/FSA	FPAC E Bannister Road	2312 E BANNISTER ROAD	Kansas City	MO	64131
FS	FS Fort Collins HQ	240 W PROSPECT ROAD	Fort Collins	CO	80526
APHIS	APHIS Laporte Avenue	4101 LAPORTE AVENUE	Fort Collins	CO	80521
DA	George Washington Carver Center	5601 SUNNYSIDE AVENUE	Beltsville	MD	20705
ARS	ARS Pennsylvania Avenue	805 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE	Kansas City	MO	64105
OCIO, OIG	Ward Parkway	8930 WARD PARKWAY	Kansas City	MO	64114
Multiple	USDA HQ	USDA HQ	Washington	DC	20250
NASS	Sixth Avenue Central	W 6TH AVENUE AND KIPLING STREET	Lakewood	CO	80225

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