

space in federally owned buildings, it has disagreed in the past with the Department's requests for office space in several such buildings. Some of these disagreements had not been resolved at the time of our review.

In commenting on our findings, the Postmaster General advised us that the Department proposed to adopt new administrative office space standards more in line with current needs and the General Services Administration's allowances.

While the adoption by the Department of new standards for administrative office space should result in improvement of the conditions found in our review, we believe it to be desirable to have a consistent Government-wide policy with respect to administrative office space, and we found in our review no sound reasons for exempting the Post Office Department from the general policy of having the General Services Administration responsible for establishing or approving office space standards for Government agencies. We also believe it to be desirable to remove the uncertainty which now exists as to which agency has the responsibility for determining the amounts of office space to be provided to the Department in federally owned buildings.

We are recommending that the Congress give consideration to enacting legislation which would make the General Services Administration responsible for either establishing or approving the standards to be used in planning space for the Post Office Department's administrative activities in both leased facilities and federally owned buildings.

The Department usually plans the administrative office space for major lease-construction projects on the basis of estimates of the requirements 20 years in the future, with the result that most new facilities contain substantial amounts of unneeded office space during the first few years after the facilities are constructed. We believe that, with adequate advance planning, much of the excess office space in new leased facilities could be consolidated in one area so as to facilitate subleasing until the space is needed, which would result in savings to the Government. In view of the Post Office Department's continuing program for constructing new facilities to meet its expanding needs, we believe that the savings resulting from subleasing could be substantial.

We estimated that, for 8 of the 10 leased postal facilities involved in our review, the Government could realize annual savings in rental costs of about \$147,500 by subleasing the planned excess office space to other Government agencies which lease office space from private lessors. A portion of these savings would be offset by moving and partitioning costs that would not otherwise be incurred. In cases where excess office space could not be subleased to other Government agencies, the Department could sublease to non-Government users.

The Department concurred with our proposal that office space in postal facilities be subleased to the maximum extent practicable and stated that it would establish appropriate procedures to implement this policy.