

**UNIFORM APPRAISAL STANDARDS
FOR
FEDERAL LAND ACQUISITIONS**

1. Purpose. These standards have been prepared to promote uniformity in the appraisal of real property among the various agencies acquiring property on behalf of the United States. It should make no difference to the landowner whose property is being acquired which agency is acquiring his land.

Uniformity and fairness in the treatment of property owners is the goal as well of the **Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970**, P.L. 91-646, as amended, 42 U.S.C. {4601, *et seq.* Portions of this Act deal with the appraisal of real property and are cited and discussed herein in the appropriate sections. These standards presume full compliance with the provisions of the Act.

The appraisal of property for purposes of direct purchase or eminent domain by the United States presents unique problems not ordinarily encountered in appraising for sales, mortgage, ratemaking, insurance, and other purposes. This results naturally from the fact that the method of appraisal, the elements and factors to be considered and the weight given them, and the standards of valuation are determined to a great extent by law. Therefore, the judgment or opinion of the individual appraiser should be governed by proper legal standards. The justification of the appraisal before a jury, under vigorous cross-examination and in the face of contradictory appraisals, requires the utmost accuracy and thoroughness, and the valuation of the property by appropriate methods.

The purpose of these standards is to set forth generally the principles applicable to the appraisal of property for Federal land acquisitions by both direct purchase and condemnation. The rules herein stated are subject, of course, to modification under the varying circumstances of particular cases. It is in the application of general rules that wide differences of opinion occur, many of which must be resolved in court. Whenever the property to be appraised may be involved in an eminent domain proceeding, appraisers are cautioned to confer with counsel for the acquiring agency on legal questions affecting the valuation and, if condemnation is instituted or appears necessary, with the representatives of the Department of Justice who will be charged with the responsibility of preparing the condemnation case for trial. In this manner, specific legal instructions can be given when there is doubt as to the proper method of valuation or the application of particular rules to specific states of fact.

2. Scope. These standards will cover basically the following areas:

- A. Standards for approaching the solution to certain recurring appraisal problems.
- B. Data documentation and appraisal reporting standards for Federal acquisitions.
- C. General standards of a miscellaneous nature.

While these standards are to encourage uniform approaches to appraisal problems and to prescribe requirements for adequate supporting data and other factual information used to develop market value estimates, the materials are not in any degree presented for the purpose of limiting the scope of appraisal investigations nor to bias the independent judgment or value estimates of appraisers employed by Federal agencies. Also, to insure maximum flexibility to agencies in accomplishing their program goals, provisions have been made, under certain circumstances, for the modification of the Section B "Data Documentation and Appraisal Reporting Standards." (See Section B, Introduction, pp. 63-64, infra.)

3. Policy. In acquiring real property, or any interest therein, it is the policy of the United States impartially to protect the interests of all concerned. The Constitution of the United States of America provides among other cherished safeguards " * * * nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." (Fifth Amendment.) Since public funds are involved, it is incumbent upon all who are employed to represent the public interest, and citizens generally, constantly to bear in mind that " * * * it is the duty of the State, in the conduct of the inquest by which compensation is ascertained, to see that it is just, not merely to the individual whose property is taken, but to the public which is to pay for it."¹

¹ Searl v. School District, Lake County, 133 U.S. 553, 562 (1890); Bauman v. Ross, 167 U.S. 548, 574 (1897).