

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-106388](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Coast Guard has over 41,000 active-duty military personnel stationed across the U.S. and its territories. Coast Guard units are often situated along major waterways and coastlines in remote areas or areas where most of the available housing is seasonal.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 includes provisions for GAO to review the Coast Guard's housing program. This report addresses (1) how the Coast Guard manages its housing program, (2) the extent to which the Coast Guard collected and used service member feedback and other quality information to manage the program, and (3) the extent to which the Coast Guard has considered potentially beneficial DOD housing authorities.

GAO analyzed Coast Guard policies, program documentation, and Coast Guard and DOD statutory housing authorities. GAO used Coast Guard and other data to determine the proportion of Coast Guard units located in remote areas, in areas with a high density of vacation rental properties, or both. GAO interviewed Coast Guard officials, toured housing at a non-generalizable sample of three bases, and met with base officials and housing residents, including spouses in Alameda, CA; Cape Cod, MA; and Kodiak, AK.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making three recommendations, including that the Coast Guard collect and use service-wide housing feedback and assess 10 DOD housing authorities for potential benefits. The Coast Guard agreed.

View [GAO-24-106388](#). For more information, contact Heather MacLeod at (202) 512-8777 or MacLeodH@gao.gov.

February 2024

COAST GUARD

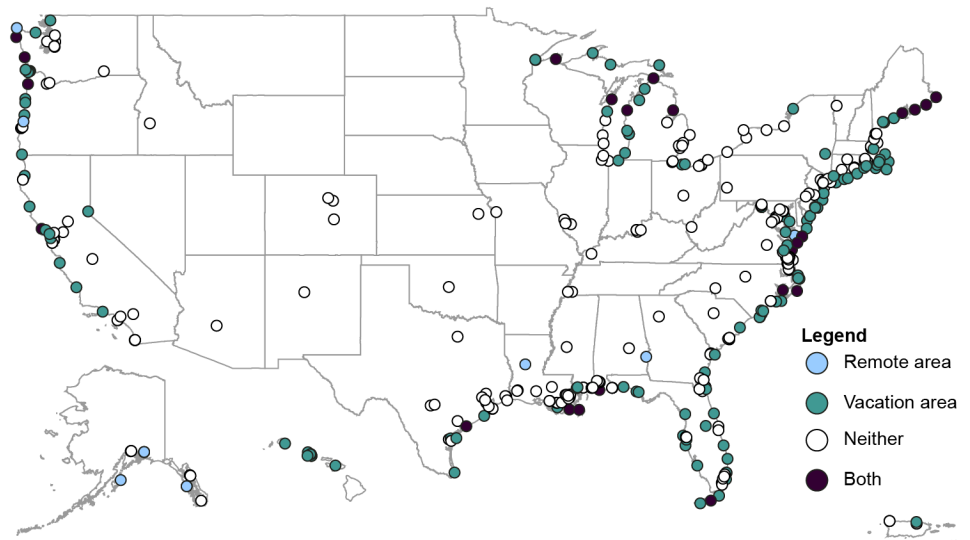
Better Feedback Collection and Information Could Enhance Housing Program

What GAO Found

Around 41 percent of U.S. Coast Guard units are located in remote areas or high vacation rental areas, or both (see figure below), and military personnel generally rotate every 3 to 4 years. While most Coast Guard service members receive a private sector housing allowance, the service manages its housing program—including more than 2,500 government-owned housing units throughout the U.S. and its territories—using various policies and procedures. Coast Guard service members and spouses told GAO that certain areas can create challenges related to the affordability and availability of private sector housing, which the Coast Guard relies upon for most members.

The Coast Guard has not conducted a service-wide survey of service members on their housing experiences and challenges since 2012. Establishing a process to routinely collect and use such feedback from service members and their spouses would better position the Coast Guard to manage its housing program to meet service member needs.

Coast Guard Units Located in Areas that are Either Remote, Contain Majority High Vacation Rentals, or Both, as of 2023



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Coast Guard and federal data; GAO (map). | GAO-24-106388

GAO identified 10 Department of Defense (DOD) statutory housing authorities that Coast Guard officials stated could potentially benefit the service. For example, DOD has the authority to enter into utility service contracts for periods up to 10 years, as well as to enter into multiyear energy or fuel contracts for military installations. Coast Guard officials told GAO that having similar statutory authorities could be beneficial and may result in cost savings to the service. Assessing the extent of benefits from the 10 DOD authorities and developing a legislative proposal to obtain certain statutory authorities, as appropriate, could better position the Coast Guard to manage its housing program, as well as support its service members and dependents.