



Customer Guide to Real Property

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Welcome

When you need real estate services, we want you to choose the General Services Administration (GSA). Our goal is to ensure that our services and practices meet or exceed any you find in the private sector. Acquiring and managing space and related services that meets your requirements is a collaborative process between you and GSA. An important part of this effort is informing you of our practices and programs.

Introduction

To serve you better, GSA is developing guides for our customers making it easier and quicker to do business with us. These guides explain our broad range of services and offer guidance for using them.

GSA is improving its regulatory system by establishing the Federal Management Regulation (FMR) as the successor regulation to the Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR). The FMR will provide Federal managers with regulatory materials they need to efficiently manage real property. The interim rule "Federal Management Regulation (FMR)" published in the Federal Register on July 21, 1999, explains the new system. The FMR contains statutorily prescribed requirements and policies on managing property and administrative services. Customer guides will provide the non-regulatory materials, such as guidance, procedures, information and standards now in the FPMR. Various parts of the FPMRs are still in effect until superceded by the FMR.

The Customer Guide to New Pricing explains the system for pricing our real estate services and the workspaces occupied by our client agencies. This Customer Guide to Real Property explains how to request, use and service space, and the programs associated with this.

This guide provides general information. Service may vary because of geographic location, local service customs and practices, unique building operations, temporary workload imbalances, and temporary budget constraints. Our regional and field officials can tell you more about these variables. As always, we strive to provide you quality service.

How to Use this Guide

The chapters that follow are organized to make it easy to find answers to your questions. They cover the following topics:

Chapter 1: Assignment and Use of Space

Requesting and developing space requirements are the initial step in meeting your space needs. This chapter explains how we work with you to locate and develop initial, expanding or reducing space requirements. It explains the use of existing Federal and leased space inventories, and consolidating, altering and building space.

Chapter 2: Occupancy Services

We have mutual responsibilities in servicing and using space. This chapter describes the responsibilities, general service levels and occupancy services. We arrange for support services for you and your employees, including food facilities, dry cleaning, pay telephones, and health units. We also provide guidance for parking management.

Chapter 3: Operating and Managing Buildings

This chapter defines the management services for cleaning, maintenance and utilities, as they relate to GSA and agency program equipment. It also addresses safety and handling occupancy emergencies. It references resource, energy, and utility contracting programs, and explains smoking guidance in public buildings.

Chapter 4: Security and Law Enforcement Services

We are dedicated to providing the highest level of security necessary to protect Federal government workers, the public, and buildings. With everyone's continued awareness, commitment, and cooperation, today's security measures help build a safer tomorrow. This chapter explains types and standards of security, and your role in security and law enforcement.

Chapter 5: Reimbursable Services

In addition to providing standard services, we can provide or arrange for additional services for a fee. By using GSA you get quick, high-quality services at a reasonable price. This chapter describes the additional services, how to order and pay for them, and the various methods we use to provide timely service.

Chapter 6: Programs

Our expertise in providing you space extends to child care, historic preservation, and art-in-architecture. You benefit from our established relationships with other agencies, utility providers, and our knowledge of child care practices, Federal procurement, historic preservation and art-in-architecture program. Our years of experience and use of best practices gives us the advantage in delivering these programs. This chapter explains these programs and where to get additional information.

Chapter 7: Environmental Management

Your health is important to us. Our goal is to provide environmentally safe space. In an ongoing effort to ensure this, we provide management for asbestos, radon, lead in water, lead-based paint, indoor air quality, hazardous waste, and underground storage tanks.

Chapter 8: Delegations of Authority for Real Property

GSA does provide delegations of authority to agencies for specific services. This chapter outlines authorities you obtain from us or consult with us on, and ones already granted.

Glossary

This is a glossary of commonly-used words and terms.

Appendix A

This is a listing of website addresses where you can obtain more information on the subject.

Plain Language Style

This guide is written in plain language style, which uses a question and answer format. It also includes pronouns that represent the following people or agencies, unless we state otherwise:

"We", "Us", and "Our" refers to the General Services Administration's Public Buildings Service.

"You" and "Your" refers to a Federal agency for which we provide a service. The definition includes an agency's senior executive and financial officers, managers and employees. In questions, "I", "Me" or "My" also references you because we assume you are asking the questions.

Customers...

GSA employees have the experience, knowledge, and creative expertise to meet customers' needs in ways that are responsive to all, yet appropriate to each. Whether providing office space, knowing how to obtain the best available products and services, or creating policy, GSA is a trusted resource customers can count on for making smart choices. GSA identifies, adapts, and champions best business practices and is a leader in shaping the work environment of the future. Responding every day to the demands of a dynamic democracy, GSA never forgets its role in serving the needs of all Americans.

We include security floodlighting in designing some new public buildings. We design floodlighting to consume minimum energy and reflect and enhance the building's architectural aesthetics.

Does GSA help me match designs to my programs?

Yes. First, we ensure your agency space requests meet

- Nationally recognized building and performance codes, standards, and specifications.
- Objectives for security.
- Objectives for safety and health.
- Special features of local codes whenever appropriate.

Then, we ask you about your staffing and program activities, including major changes projected for the next five years, so we can match designs to your needs. Upon receiving our request for information, you'll also be asked to

- State how much net space you occupy in the community for which we're planning the project.
- Itemize the square footage needed for each agency function.
- Detail any special structural or mechanical facilities you may need, such as built-in and fixed equipment for laboratory, clinical, or other special uses.
- Include the locations where you need to retain space.

What does GSA consider in selecting a building site?

In selecting a building site, we try to meet your needs. The sites also foster the Federal government's programs and policies, and consider the impact on the communities in which we're located. Our priorities are to

- First consider rural areas unless you designate an urban need.
- Consider sites in historic districts and central business areas (CBAs).
- Use government-owned land as much as possible whenever it's adequate, economically adaptable to your requirements, and properly located.
- Focus on land near a Federal building that is well located and retained for long-term occupancy.
- Consider other suitable sites in established civic or redevelopment areas that are well planned and properly financed, under development, and insured.
- Support local community efforts to revitalize CBAs and neighborhoods by working with community officials to identify suitable sites.

We also consider the availability of housing for employees with low to moderate incomes. This housing must not discriminate because of race, color, religion, or national origin. Our agreement with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development requires them to report on the availability of this housing near buildings we may construct or lease, whenever our actions may significantly affect a community's social structure or economy.

Requests for Special Kinds of Space

Do I need to contact GSA about short-term conference or parking needs?

We encourage you to ask us about the availability of space in our inventory for short-term conferences and meetings. We may be able to help you find space. You don't need to send us your requests for short-term parking. Usually, we can negotiate parking rates that are more economical than you can get directly, and parking rentals aren't part of a typical office lease.

What if I need space in a building owned by the United States Postal Service?

We have a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the United States Postal Service (USPS) and can arrange for your space needs, pending availability of suitable space.

What is GSA's process for setting up a physical fitness center?

We work with you to establish the center in a single or multiple-tenant building. In a multi-tenant building, we identify a lead agency (often, the major tenant) to coordinate the request for a fitness center. We help you in developing the space requirements. All tenants can use the physical fitness center. This is joint use space and Rent is assessed among the tenants.

What is GSA's process for establishing a child care center?

You may allot space in Federal buildings for child care services to Federal employees. We provide the typical features and furnishings for child care centers. To develop a center, we need your request and commitment to pay Rent for it. We also must complete an assessment to make sure the center is feasible and has enough employee interest. (For more information, see the section on child care centers in Chapter 6.)

Chapter 2: Occupancy Services

Responsibility and Levels of Services

How does GSA support my occupancy of buildings or space?

We provide, or arrange for, services in Federally controlled space. These services are explained throughout this guide.

What are my responsibilities during my occupancy?

You help manage buildings by

- Using utilities economically.
- Following facility procedures and regulations.
- Keeping your space neat and clean.
- Taking reasonable precautions to avoid accidents and fires.
- Documenting and reporting hazardous or unhealthy conditions.
- Documenting and reporting the use and storage of hazardous materials.
- Promptly reporting crimes and suspicious circumstances to law enforcement.

What level of services does GSA provide?

We provide services equal to commercial standards. You can request and may receive services below or above these standards.

What services and standards does GSA provide in Federally owned buildings?

We provide

- Safe assigned space, absent unnecessary risks to your employees and visitors.
- Cleaning and maintenance at service levels equal to those for similar space in commercially leased buildings.
- Repairs and replacements of building equipment and structure.
- Protection to ensure the physical security of occupants and visitors, safeguard the government's property interests, and maintain order.
- Ready access for persons with disabilities to your assigned space. We provide building standards, and prescribe and enforce guidelines under certain statutes, regulations, and executive orders.
- Parking spaces.
- Extra services and space alterations with reimbursement from you.

The funding and costs of these are defined within your Occupancy Agreement. By mutual agreement, we may delegate authority to you to operate, maintain, or repair parts of your assigned space. This delegation may include services that if performed by GSA they would be reimbursable, such as space alterations.

Does GSA consider energy management in providing services?

Yes. We manage energy to reduce consumption and costs in Federally owned facilities. We efficiently operate and maintain space, make cost-effective repairs and alterations, incorporate design features to reduce each building's life-cycle cost, and ensure continuity of services through contingency planning.

Does GSA follow national standards for space and equipment?

We follow national standards whenever possible but may adopt other standards for space and systems in Federally controlled facilities to comply with statutes, reduce costs, or better meet government objectives.

What services and standards does GSA offer in leased buildings?

Standards for space and services in Federally leased buildings are equal to those for Federally owned space. We alter, improve, and repair leased buildings according to our responsibility under the lease.

We may authorize you to acquire services or alterations as provided in the chapter on Reimbursable Services.

When does GSA inform me of space alterations and building repairs or changes to standard levels?

We consult with your space and facilities representatives whenever we propose substantial alterations or repairs, or whenever we significantly change level of standard services. We consider your comments before we make final decisions and ask your representatives to join us in planning alterations, repairs, and changes in services.

Contract Food Services

How does this program work?

We may contract with commercial companies and corporations to offer you a choice of high quality, food services. Our contracting methods, facilities, and innovative market approaches give you quality and very competitive services.

What services does GSA offer?

To help you get quality food services, we

- Plan food-service concepts and designs.
- Operate services based on the market environment, building populations, and your mission needs.
- Run completely furnished facilities.

