

# Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



## Topic: Introduction to Total Workplace

Date of Presentation: February 27, 2014

Link to Series Information: [CES Historical Topics](#)

1. How does an agency apply to participate in a Total Workplace project?

Each region has a workplace executive that can help guide you through the process of initiating a TWP project. Just ask your local GSA representative for more information on the program.

2. They must not be on the phone much or have clients visit in their space? How do we manage noise?

There are several ways to help mitigate distracting noise or create privacy for phone calls. Some solutions may include white noise, phone booths, noise canceling headphones or quiet areas. GSA has published [Sound Matters](#) (found on our website at [gsa.gov/totalworkplace](http://gsa.gov/totalworkplace)) which goes in to great details on acoustics in the office.

3. Before you leave noise and confidentiality is white sound typical in these installations?

Not always. Sound masking systems are one tool to help manage sound. As mentioned previously, [Sound Matters](#) (found on our website at [gsa.gov/totalworkplace](http://gsa.gov/totalworkplace)) will provide more information and recommendations around sound management.

4. Can people listen to music without affecting others?

Yes, typically employees will use headphones/headsets as a way to listen to music in an open environment.

5. Does GSA have a SF/person goal/mandate? If so, it is working for both HQ/DC & Field Offices? What's included in SF/P? Is it for the total space?

GSA's plan is to exceed the Office of Management and Budget's Freeze the Footprint policy requirements and establish a 5-year goal to reduce its total space allocation to no more than 150 Usable Square Feet (USF) per person.' In order to accomplish this goal, the regions should strive to achieve a maximum allocation of 136 USF/person on all new projects where GSA is the tenant, which was the benchmark set on GSA's Headquarters consolidation project.

USF/person is an all-in number that includes space classified as "Office" in the Federal Real Property Profile (FRPP) database. If the predominant use of the location is "Office" then any lab, data center, or warehouse space within that location is also classified as "Office" and included in the all-in number. The Personnel Count is the total number of on-board government full-time equivalent employees who are permanently assigned to that location (including on-site virtual staff) plus the total number of resident contractors. Seasonal hires (i.e., interns), other temporary staff (i.e., 3 month detailees), and remote employees (i.e., individuals who permanently work from home) are not counted. Individuals who telework up to 5 days a week but are permanently assigned to the location are counted.

6. Does an agency have to show a specific reduction in % of space they will save to participate?

There are several factors that determine the best candidates for the program (consolidation, reduction, leased to federally owned) however no specific requirements have been established at this time. A commitment and movement toward right-sizing their operation is essential.

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7. Is that mandate the same for other divisions (FAS), etc.?

Yes.

8. How do the space utilization requirements compare to private?

Private real estate is also trending down. Ten years ago, 250 square feet per office employee was the gold standard. Today, that average has dropped to approximately 195 square feet. However, the size of the federal government affords more opportunity to consolidate and share resources.

9. Has anyone quantified the amount of less collaboration of ideas and office camaraderie in the workplace?

There are several private studies that link collaboration to increase productivity. We are currently looking at ways to quantify productivity in our pilot projects. Remember, the workplace effort is not about pushing people out of the office, but giving them a reason to come to the office to an engaging workplace which should not only foster collaboration, but also promote the groups culture and increase esprit de corps.

10. How do you manage the mobile peds? Do you have storage areas when the staff is teleworking?

Mobile peds can either be assigned or used on a daily basis. Typically they are assigned. When employees are teleworking they have assigned storage drawers and kiosks to store the belongings they do not need to take from the office.

11. With low panels, how do you deal with privacy if you have a webcam? People will be able to see what/who is behind you.

Most of the open environments provide area where you are able to find some visual privacy. Additionally, protocols are changing and if you are doing a webinar the suggested practice is to go to a huddle room or team room where you can speak and hear.

12. I'm curious if anyone has considered peoples concern with anxiety (too many people in a limited space) issues or claustrophobia etc.?

The goal here is to provide choice to employees to find workplaces that fit their work style for each day. As such there are areas of higher and lower density as well as concentrative and interactive areas. The areas with lower panels and fewer walls tend to be more open visually, however there are people there. So far I have not heard of anxiety issues specific to crowds.

13. GSA owns the buildings? No lease is being paid, right? That is a big issue for other Agencies - paying the high lease costs and then trying to find funds to downsize as well as pay higher lease costs.

The FIT program was developed to help alleviate the up front financial burden acquired during downsizing. The goal is to offset the monthly furniture and IT costs with a reduction in real estate.

14. Have the savings paid for the renovation?

Not yet, but the savings are approximately \$31M per year (\$24M rent savings plus \$7M in leveraging shared services) at our HQ. Even with the project putting in place the main mechanical system for the entire building and the full modernization of a portion of the building, the payoff is well short of 10 years.

15. What % of GSA telework weekly? Is part of the success because people don't want to drive in DC area?

All of GSA has moved from 67% telework participation in 2009 to approximately 83% in 2013. GSA's success is attributed to the tools and training that GSA has provided their employees and the culture shift within GSA that work can happen in a multitude of venues. Whether it is DC, Chicago, Atlanta, NY, Denver or a small field office, employees see telework as a viable option on any given day which saves commute time and gas making it more sustainable, and saves personal time which is added value.

16. Why doesn't GSA (management) get with the Agency management and let them see this as mandatory. They are the ones that need to accept this new workplace.

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GSA's Workplace Strategists are working with customer agencies on both a HQ and local level to effect change. This is not a one-size fits all so it is important that the conversations are done smartly and transparently and that the solution implemented has the greatest chance of success.

17. Has OMB reduced GSA's budget due to the reduction in your rent estimates? (Exhibit 54)

Not this year. However, the savings that GSA has been able to achieve in space is one we are looking to leverage for capital improvements across our portfolio.

18. How do you determine a space utilization rate? What rooms do you subtract from the total sf to arrive at this rate? (e.g. conf room, idf rooms, storage rms, etc.)

There are several space calculation formulas.

All-in Utilization Rate (UR)

$(\text{Total Usable Square Feet (USF)}) / (\text{Total Personnel Count}) = \text{All-in UR}$

All-in Utilization Rate Example

$(20,000 \text{ USF}) / (100) = 200 \text{ USF All-in UR}$

Total Office Utilization Rate

$(\text{Total Office Area} - 22\%*) / (\text{Office Personnel Count}) = \text{Office UR}$

\*assumption of 22% deducted for support and circulation

Total Office Area Example

$(15,000 - 22\%) / (90) = 130 \text{ USF Office UR}$

19. What kind of feedback are you getting from employees?

The feedback has been positive. It is important however, to ensure you have a good feedback loop so you can incorporate betterments to the space as you move forward.

20. Why do most agencies prefer the 42" and not the 66" high panels?

Shorter panels improve daylighting, circulation, and create a visual sense of openness.

21. Please repeat the GSA space website

<http://www.gsa.gov/totalworkplace>

22. How do I get copies of these?

Copies of the presentation will be sent to everyone who registered.

23. Can we get local contacts for tours & info? Is it on website?

There are several pilots/labs around the country that are available for tours. Contact information is available on the website. There is a workplace executive in each region (See List below). Additionally, you can email [totalworkplace@gsa.gov](mailto:totalworkplace@gsa.gov) to request a tour. As noted we have many examples of differing solutions and we would like to pare and tailor tours to your specific situation.

R1: David Krasnoff ([david.krasnoff@gsa.gov](mailto:david.krasnoff@gsa.gov))

R2: Jean Keane ([jean.keane@gsa.gov](mailto:jean.keane@gsa.gov))

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HQ: Charles Hardy (charles.hardy@gsa.gov)

24. What does your 150 sq. ft. per person include? Does it include conference, IT Room, break room, or storage?

All-in allocation of space is calculated as follows:

- Total USF (Includes all assigned usable square footage (i.e., union offices, joint-use space) internal to GSA only. Joint-use space shared with outside agencies in a multi-tenant building is not included) divided by the sum of the total number of on-board government employees and the total number of resident contractors.

25. Does the IT portion include VOIP?

Yes.

26. Is this essentially GSA's fronting money like an RWA, but paid off like amortized costs in a rental agreement?

Yes.

27. Are you staffed to handle what could be a rush of requests for this type of assistance?

We are in the process of training existing GSA employees on how to incorporate this initiative into their current workload. GSA is comfortable in meeting the program demands and if necessary can leverage our national presence to address localized surges.

28. Is there program funding limitations? Project dollar cap? Do all projects get funded if the consolidating agency is willing?

There is no project dollar cap. If you meet the selection criteria of right-sizing and are aligned with the program, your project will be approved.

29. Is there a FY project submission cycle or can the agency use this solution for current year/emerging opportunities?

This program has been established as a running call to meet emerging opportunities and facilitate a deliberate and rigorous right-sizing of the federal footprint.

30. What is the proposed turnaround time from Agency submittal of Total Workplace Application and GSA's delivery of the Supplemental Occupancy Agreement?

GSA can turn around a Supplemental Occupancy Agreement within a week if necessary. As the program develops the target is to get the process even more automated.

31. What IT is covered? Distribution buses and workstation drops? Tech/tel closet relocations, etc?

Workplace items include:

- Tablets
- Laptops
- Notebooks
- Mobile Computing Devices
- Networking and Telecommunications Equipment
- Video Tele-Conferencing (VTCs) Equipment

The Total Workplace FIT Program does not include modifications to base building systems, including vertical wiring and associated design, install or test services related to such base building modifications, maintenance, help desk, replacements, etc. Horizontal wiring runs from program supplied devices to closets is included in the program.

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32. How large is the FAS fund now?

Currently GSA has in excess of \$200M set aside for this program. As demand increases, the number will be adjusted upward.

33. Will GSA be charging a fee for the furniture/IT payback. What is the percentage?

The standard GSA FAS fee that is charged for acquisition services is still charged under this program. Currently there is no program fee and no interest being charged.

34. Can I get a copy of the presentation?

Yes, it will be sent out to all attendees.

35. Who approves each project? What is the approval process?

The project requests are initiated in the regions where initial discussion and screening occurs. The requests are then forwarded to the HQ Total Workplace Program for final review and approval.

36. Can you speak more about the increased operational efficiency achieved through the GSA consolidation?

There are many efficiencies that have come out of our HQ consolidation. In shared services we have eliminated multiple leases which had security in place, deliveries and supplies, etc. By consolidating six leases into one building we were able to unify our needs and downsize our purchases. By having GSA, PBS, and FAS all in the same facility for the first time in our history we have not only increased efficiencies within each service (PBS and FAS) but we have increased the collaboration, effectiveness, and efficiency of GSA as a whole. The Total Workplace FIT Initiative is but one example where we have been able to leverage the collective knowledge and acquisition power of GSA to more effectively serve our customers.