

## PBS Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



**Topic: ABC's of GSA's Public Buildings Service (PBS)**

**Dates of Presentation: October 21, 2021**

**Link to Client Enrichment Series Information: [www.gsa.gov/ces](http://www.gsa.gov/ces)**

### **Additional ABC's of GSA's PBS Information**

- [Session Presentation](#)
- [Session Recording](#) and Passcode: **81EJ&npU**
- [National Customer Account Team Contacts](#)

**1) Question: Is the use of the SF-81 form still being used, or is the information captured in the eRETA system? Going forward, please advise how this information should be collected.**

**Answer -** The SF-81 is still a required form. While some of the information is captured in eRETA, it is completed at a different time for a different purpose - just as the RWA Form 2957 and the SF-81 were both required. The SF 81 is still accepted, GSA will take information any way an agency would like to provide their requirements information.

With that said, we may have follow up questions to better facilitate the discussion and that is what the Client Project Agreement helps to facilitate.

The SF81 by itself does not cover the full discussion that GSA would like to have to better understand the need and finalize what we call the strategic requirements. The CPA is our formal way of acknowledging the need and space strategy with you as our customer, brings both parties to agreement and sets expectations.

**2) Question: I'm interested in GSA's emergency response for when we have a Hurricane destroy our local office. Do you have a written response procedure? Is there a specific office, procedure or person I can include in our Climate Action Plan?**

**Answer -** Please see the table below with the contact information for our GSA Central Office Emergency Coordinators:



## PBS Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



Contact	Office	Cell	Email
David Roach	202-969-7254	202-969-7254	david.roach@gsa.gov
Lashelle Chaffins - Alt.	202-230-9732	202-230-9732	Lashelle.chaffins@gsa.gov

**3) Question: We have tenants in the Federal CourtHouse in Phoenix, AZ. They just convened a multi-agency security board and voted unanimously to implement a full array security system. How do we as the client go about paying for our portion of the project?**

**Answer -** See 3.10. Pricing Standards – Security of the GSA [Pricing Desk Guide](#). It depends on how the project is being paid for. It can be funded by DHS, GSA and billed back through rent as a BSAC line item, or it can be paid by customers via RWA. Charges would be based on the customers' pro-rata share based on the agency's square footage in the building.

**4) Question: What is the best way to get the occupancy process started? Is this an eRETA work request?**

**Answer -** If you want to begin occupancy discussions, you should contact your Regional Planning Manager. If you are not sure who that person is in your servicing GSA Region - refer to the [National Customer Lead](#) for your organization. They will walk you through the process of [Occupancy Planning and Requirements Development](#). The link to those resources and personnel are on the site links shared in the deck. Note: eRETA is only for RWA work.

**5) Question: Will we need to re-sign existing OA's or will they be replaced over time?**

**Answer -** Refer to section 2.1.3. Signature Page for leases and 3.1.3. Signature Page for federally owned of the GSA [Pricing Desk Guide](#)

## PBS Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



**6) Question: Would it be possible for agencies to obtain the exact location including suite numbers listed in the OA, as well as a stacking plan, so that we can manage our spaces easier? Currently, the OAs only have the address. Agencies often have multiple components under the same OA and so a breakdown would be very helpful.**

**Answer -** The current billing application does not have the ability to list suite numbers on the OA. However, with the implementation of the new billing system projected for Fall 2022, the Federal OA will be tied to the SDM drawings so customers can see their location in the building.

**7) Question: Once you put up a wall with a door in the open space of a leased space, does that mean it is no longer part of the shell?**

**Answer -** Specific elements of build-out do not switch between Shell and TI. The Shell provides certain improvements which are detailed in the PBS [Pricing Desk Guide](#) and reflected in our lease contracts. The Lessor provides the shell improvements as part of their shell rent. Interior improvements above the warm, lit shell are generally T.I. items.

**8) Question: Is there a difference in TI cost requirements in the case of a forced move? Seems wrong to force an agency to move, then make them pay for paint, carpet, and installation of data cabling, etc.**

**Answer-** See section 4.4. Funding Responsibilities of a Forcing Agency in the [Pricing Desk Guide](#). The underlying issue with TI payment by the forcing agency is due to appropriations law. The forcing agency isn't appropriated to pay for another agency's build out.

**9) Question: Does GSA charge commission for the real estate tax pass throughs in all cases?**

**Answer -** GSA does not charge "commission" for real estate taxes.

**10) Question: How does GSA establish the dollar amount for the rental rate search prior to conducting the market survey?**

**Answer -** The Leasing Specialist assigned to the project obtains information from all available sources to find the high and low range for the market - considering the type of space

## PBS Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



desired. This involves internet searches on sites like LoopNet.com, use of research firm info such as CoStar, and recent deals done in that market.

**11) Question: Can agencies view the actual signed OA on the OA website?**

**Answer -** The current eOA tool does not show OA signatures. An agency must request this directly from the Real Estate specialist within the region.

**12) Question: Where can agencies find the links on the Pricing For Your Space class?**

**Answer -** You can view the recording of our CES class on "[Space Pricing Basics](#)", one of more than 40 YouTube class videos on our [Client Enrichment Series playlist](#). You can also download the [Questions and Answers](#) [PDF - 149 KB] and view the slide [Presentation](#) [PDF - 3 MB]. All past CES session resources are available on [www.gsa.gov/ces](http://www.gsa.gov/ces)

**13) Question: Is there a TI in the Federal building ?**

**Answer -** See 3.6.3. Tenant Improvement Allowance of the [Pricing Desk Guide](#). If the space is already built out (2nd generation), TI's can be provided subject to PBS's availability to fund. If space is not to shell (1st generation) PBS is required to provide the general TI allowance at a minimum and PBS must be given time to budget.

**14) Question: If you are in a GSA owned space, and have an indoor air quality issue, would services to identify/resolve the issue be included in the shell rent?**

**Answer -** After a staff industrial hygienists' review, a determination on who is responsible for any remediation of space can be determined. It may be a GSA or customer cost.

**15) Question: What if the existing lease includes lessor requirements, such as wall backing required for wall-mounted equipment or other similar lease-driven requirements. If not a new partition, is this considered TI? If so, can GSA offset this cost by increasing TI allowance?**

**Answer -** The items covered by the shell are laid out in the lease and are in conformance with PBS Pricing Policy. Any additions to the space beyond the shell are generally

## PBS Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



considered TI costs. Lessor building standards and/or design guides do not determine whether items are shell or TI. Please refer to the [Pricing Desk Guide](#), Section 2.5.1 TI Definitions and Section 2.5.3 Tenant Improvement Allowance for more details on what is included in TI and how the allowance is set. TIs above the allowance are paid via RWA.

### **16) Question: How can I register for the Leasing Process Class?**

**Answer -** You can view a recording of the [Leasing 101](#) class, held back in July, on our [Client Enrichment Series playlist](#). You can also download the [Questions and Answers](#) [PDF - 225 KB] and view the slide [Presentation](#) [PDF - 1 MB] | All past CES session resources are available on [www.gsa.gov/ces](http://www.gsa.gov/ces)

### **17) Question: What is the timeline from start to the end of step #4 (lease award)?**

**Answer -** The time required to complete leasing actions can vary greatly depending on the size, scope, and complexity of the leasing action. When you begin working with your Project Manager, it is important to establish a schedule which will reflect the specifics of your project.

### **18) Question: Does GSA require Agencies to sign non-disclosure agreements to attend market surveys?**

**Answer -** Participants on market surveys should sign a “Procurement Integrity Form” that discusses the need for confidentiality concerning procurement sensitive information. This form provides guidance on not disclosing information that could comprise the procurement action.

### **19) Question: For Prospectus Projects, does using the Lowest Price Technically Acceptable source selection method bias site selection away from space located close to more external amenities (mass transit, employee amenities and services, etc.)? With employee attraction and retention being more important than cost for many agencies, does using the Best Value Trade-off source selection method better serve clients with employee attraction and retention as one of their most critical requirements?**

**Answer -** GSA’s standard RLP contains language that speaks to the requirement to have employee amenities nearby. This language can be used with Lowest Price Technically Acceptable (LPTA) or Best Value Trade-Off (BVTO). Agencies should discuss the acquisition

## **PBS Client Enrichment Series – Q & A**



method with their GSA Project Manager and collaborate on the best selection method for each project.

### **20) Question: Can a Lease and an RWA be combined together to satisfy customers' requirements?**

**Answer -** The lease is between GSA and the Lessor. Under the terms of your Occupancy Agreement, GSA charges your agency Rent which is a passthrough of the lease costs. Your agency can then use a combination of both the Tenant Improvement Allowance and RWAs to pay Rent to GSA, who then pays the lessor.

### **21) Question: What is the expected amount of time to fully complete the Leasing process -- rough duration of each step (Req Devt., Pre-Solicitation thru Negotiations)?**

**Answer -** The amount of time required to complete the leasing process can vary greatly depending on the size, scope, and complexity of the project. It is important to work with your GSA Project Manager to establish a schedule at the beginning of the project which will reflect the specifics of your project.

### **22) Question: Does the RSAP apply for a SLAT lease?**

**Answer -** RSAP can be used with leases above and below the Simplified Lease Acquisition Threshold (SLAT). RSAP is not used with AAAP, which has its own online bid process similar to RSAP.

### **23) Question: When using a delegated authority from GSA - can agencies use the AAAP portal for electronic offers?**

**Answer -** Agencies wishing to complete acquisitions through a delegation of leasing authority do not have access to offers in the AAAP platform. Agencies wishing to take advantage of the speed and ease of the AAAP program should request space from GSA as a traditional client through an OA rather than requesting a delegation of leasing authority.

### **24) Question: Is GSA looking at different space procurement options to meet changing customer demands?**

## PBS Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



**Answer -** GSA has multiple methods of procuring space depending on the size and scope of the agency's requirements. The process outlined in this presentation, known as the "global" or "traditional" process. This process can be used to obtain all types and sizes of space, including large prospectus leases and complex specialized space such as laboratories.

The leasing program has other acquisition methods noted in the presentation, such as the Automated Advanced Acquisition Program (AAP) and the Simplified Lease Acquisition Threshold (SLAT) model which can complete acquisitions significantly faster than the "global process." You can learn more about the AAP model and its features and benefits by viewing our CES session recording - [GSA PBS Boosts Procurement Efficiency With Lease Offer Platform](#), the session slide deck [Presentation \[PDF - 2 MB\]](#), and the class Q&A [Questions and Answers \[PDF - 121 KB\]](#)

**25) Question: Ideally when in their process does the Lease Team look for initial requirements information from the Workplace Team? Before or simultaneous to considering specific market offerings?**

**Answer -** The goal is to have that Workplace Team integrated into the discussions prior to a Client Project Agreement (CPA) part 1 -based on internal analysis. If they are not tagged then, they would be brought in during the identification phase. The goal is to have those solutions or ideas and resources available early to set the tone for the occupancy footprint and meet the customer operational needs in the most modernized and efficient manner. To learn more about the CPA you can view [CPA Part 1 \[PDF - 146 KB\]](#) and [CPA Part 2 \[PDF - 167 KB\]](#).

**26) Question: When requesting an RWA before Construction Drawings (CDs) are complete, what is that number based on and what happens when the Tenant Agency disagrees with the proposed RWA amount for TI?**

**Answer -** As a part of the A/E (Architect/Engineer) Scope for CD's, cost estimates are provided by the A/E at certain design phases (i.e. 50%, 95% CD's). GSA's cost estimators will also verify the A/E cost estimates. These are an estimate and after validation, if the cost estimate is still too high, PBS and the customer will work together with the A/E to descope before finalizing the CD's.

**27) Question: Are emergency lights a shell or TI item?**

## PBS Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



**Answer -** Paragraph 3.43 of the Global Lease outlines the lighting that is required for our standard shell definition. Emergency lighting is further described in sub-paragraph B:

“Emergency egress lighting levels shall be provided in accordance with the local applicable building codes (but not less than 1 foot-candle) by either an onsite emergency generator or fixture mounted battery packs.”

**28) Question: Are IGEs negotiable if they come in higher than independent market research? Can GSA share the estimates?**

**Answer -** The Independent Government Estimate (IGE) reflects the government’s best estimate of the cost of a particular scope of work. The IGE will incorporate multiple aspects of research in reaching an estimate.

**29) Question: Where is the information about the week-long GSA leasing class?**

**Answer -** Lease Acquisition Training (LAT) is a week-long class that covers all aspects of the leasing process. Check the GSA schedule for class availability. Our full complement of lease classes can be viewed on our [Real Property Leasing Certification Program](#) gsa.gov site.

**30) Question: The hardest part about RWA's is getting into eRETA. Is there any way to access this program without having to input my credentials at least 10-30 times?**

**Answer -** eRETA systems issues like access challenges can be addressed by emailing [eRETA@gsa.gov](mailto:eRETA@gsa.gov), where our SMEs can review and address your issues.

**31) Question: Must RWA estimates match RWA amounts to within +/- 1 cents?**

**Answer -** GSA has actually raised the threshold to within +/- \$1 to avoid rounding issues, but yes, the estimate and the RWA should match.

**32) Question: I have created a Max Account and have access. How do I get access to the PBS Customer Dashboard? Is there a tutorial on how to use the tool?**



## PBS Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



**Answer -** Contact the customer dashboard helpdesk for assistance at [PBS.Dashboard@gsa.gov](mailto:PBS.Dashboard@gsa.gov). Additional resources and support can be found on the [PBS Customer Dashboard Webpage](#)

**33) Question:** Can a recording of this webinar be shared with participants?

**Answer -** You can view the recording to this class via this [Zoom link](#) and Passcode - 81EJ&npU

**34) Question:** Do you really think that 36 months is adequate time to identify requirements, look for a potential building, secure funding, build necessary spaces and get ready for occupancy?

**Answer -** The idea is the timeline is a base line; we will engage earlier when projects are more complex. The timeline in the presentation is NLT dates....GSA evaluates 60 months prior to an expiration to determine what the engagement timeline needs to be, with 36 months for non-prospectus projects as the minimum.

**35) Question:** Is PIV Card credentialing included in the pricing as a service GSA is supposed to provide?

**Answer -** Customer HSPD-12 Requirements are paid by RWA. Please contact your customer service representative for help with credentialing.

**36) Question:** When a GSA Building, that a federal tenant occupies, requires some change (fencing around parking space, reconfiguration to meet some new req't - maybe security, etc.), does the tenant agency have to contribute to those costs in proportion to their proportionate space usage in the building? Operational changes that might be needed would seem to be appropriate to pass along to tenant agencies, but are those other buildings/grounds expenses GSA's responsibility alone or shared with tenants and why?

## PBS Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



**Answer -** See 3.10.2. Building-Specific Security section B. Building-Specific Amortized Capital Charge - PBS in the [PBS Pricing Desk Guide](#) for more information on what security items costs.

**37) Question: Where do you get the links for electronic OA?**

**Answer -** This link can be found on gsa.gov site at this [eOA Tool](#) link. This link is also found on the homepage of the [PBS Customer Dashboard](#).