



**FEDERAL BUILDING  
UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE**

Youngstown, Ohio

The Federal Building United States Courthouse in Youngstown, Ohio, was designed and constructed under the U.S. General Services Administration's Design Excellence Program, an initiative to create and preserve a legacy of outstanding public buildings that will be used and enjoyed now and by future generations of Americans.

Special thanks to the Honorable William T. Bodoh, Chief Bankruptcy Judge, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, for his commitment and dedication to a building of outstanding quality that is a tribute to the role of the judiciary in our democratic society and worthy of the American people.

October 2002

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**The curved facade gives civic stature to a comparatively small building occupying a large site in a prominent location. We capitalized on the steep slope of the site to create an interesting urbanscape that serves as a forecourt not only for the court building but also for the First Presbyterian Church up the hill.**

Robert A. M. Stern  
Architect, Robert A. M. Stern Architects

## A CIVIC GATEWAY

Modest in scale and simple in demeanor, the Federal Building United States Courthouse in Youngstown, Ohio, is a gentle giant that quietly fulfills important civic functions in the city. The four-story brick and glass structure occupies a highly visible three-acre site at the edge of the historic center of the city. This is no accident. It is part of a long tradition of locating Federal buildings on prominent sites to establish a presence, celebrate our democratic form of government, and help stimulate economic growth in the surrounding area.

The historic center of Youngstown consists of three distinct but interdependent parts. On the south, along the Mahoning River, are the sprawling remains of 19th century steelworks. On the north, sited on the heights overlooking the river, are various educational and cultural institutions. These include Youngstown State University, the Arms Family Museum of Local History, the McDonough Museum of Art, and the Butler Institute of American Art. The Butler museum is significant because it is the first in the United States dedicated to works by American artists and because

its grand 1917 neoclassical marble structure was designed by McKim, Mead & White. Many of the city's churches and assembly halls are also located in this area, including the monumental Stambaugh Auditorium completed in 1926 and now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In the valley between the river and the heights is the business and civic core. Several commercial offices are located in mini-skyscrapers from the 1920s, and government buildings are grouped around Federal Plaza East and West. Between the commercial core and the heights is a narrow strip of land—formerly a railroad bed—that divided the city. The new Federal Building United States Courthouse fills in part of this strip at the intersection of Wick Avenue and East Commerce Street, creating an edge to the Central Business District and a gateway to the cultural precinct. Utilizing this once-neglected parcel is also a catalyst for additional economic development in downtown Youngstown.

The building acknowledges its context and responds to the unique features of the site.



It respects the street grid. It anchors Wick Avenue and East Commerce Street with brick and stone corner pavilions and connects these with a curved facade that is dominated by a dramatic two-story glazed colonnaded porch above the ground floor. A terraced, tree-lined walkway along Wick Avenue and down East Commerce Street widens at the corner of the two streets to form a plaza in front of the building, a civic space that faces Central Square and downtown Youngstown. The walkway provides a 50-foot security setback and permits an unobstructed view up Wick Avenue to the heights and prominent clock and bell tower of the First Presbyterian Church.

The main entrance to the building is located off center in the curved façade and faces Wick Avenue. This location enabled the architect to create a long interior vestibule so visitors can queue up inside the building to go through security rather than stand outside on the plaza. The entrance is marked by a canopy made of steel I-beams and is embellished at the plaza entry with two soaring metal light

cylinders that recall the stacks of the steel mills that were such a prominent part of the city's silhouette.

The principal materials of the building are buff-colored brick, cast stone trim, gunmetal colored metal columns and windows, and a projecting metal standing-seam roof carried on metal brackets. These materials reflect the duality of Youngstown's architectural heritage—its blend of the classical and the industrial. The result is an imagery that embodies history at the same time that it conveys the dignity and strength, solemnity and permanence that we desire and expect from our government institutions.





**I like to think of the building as a fragment of a larger building to come. The organization of the plan allows the building to be extended to the north and to the east in the future should that become desirable, but it is a fragment that stands on its own, that is compositionally resolved.**

Robert A. M. Stern  
Architect, Robert A. M. Stern Architects







## THE PATH TO JUSTICE

The heart of the Federal Building United States Courthouse is the U.S. Bankruptcy courtroom located on the third floor. While the location, volume, and profile of the building create a strategic civic gateway for the community on the outside, on the inside, the central focus is on creating a stately path to the doors of justice. This is achieved through a skillful layout and spatial hierarchy that create a processional sequence that starts at the main entrance on the ground floor and ends in the courtroom on the third floor. This procession is composed of a circulation route that weaves diagonally back and forth along the curved facade of the building.

Upon entering the building, visitors must make a 90-degree turn to the right and walk down a long, narrow vestibule along the curved front façade. At the end of the vestibule, visitors reach the security checkpoint. After passing through security, they make a 90-degree turn to the left and enter a wedge-shaped lobby that is perpendicular to the entry vestibule. The lobby is dominated by a ceremonial staircase that rises to the second and third floors along the glass curved wall.

Ascending the staircase to the second floor, visitors reach a light-filled gallery that parallels the glass façade and offers panoramic views of downtown Youngstown. At the ends of the gallery, tall glass doors lead to the colonnaded porch where people can look across the entrance plaza.

Taking the stairs to the third floor, there is a similar gallery. The middle, however, widens into a spacious foyer/lobby for the courtroom. Double doors in the center lead down a narrow hall to another set of double doors that opens into the courtroom. Straight ahead is a raised judge's bench, culminating the sequence from outside to inside.

This carefully choreographed procession to the courtroom recalls—in this 52,000-square-foot contemporary building—the personal experience of climbing the steps and entering the traditional one-room courthouse. During the day, natural light brilliantly illuminates the path and the city is constantly in view as visitors ascend the stairs to the courtroom. Symbolically, this conveys the notion of the judiciary as an integral part of the community.



Yet, with each step, visitors become increasingly aware that they are entering a special place apart from the hubbub of the everyday world, a place that stands at the very heart of the American democratic system—the independent judiciary where every citizen has equal access to the law and a guarantee of due process.

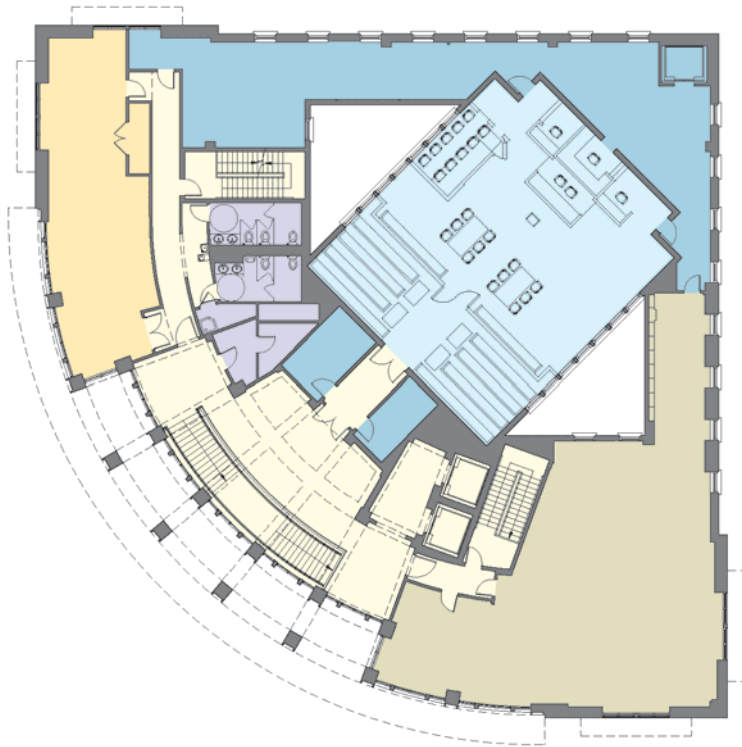
The courtroom is almost a square—46 feet by 48 feet—and is set on a diagonal within the wedge-shaped floor plate to acknowledge its hierarchical importance to the composition of the building and to allow natural light into the space from clerestory windows along the two sidewalls. The details of the layout are traditional. Opposite the entrance is the tiered bench area for the judge, court staff, and witness. Attorneys occupy the broad well space in front of the bench. The jury box is on the left side, and visitor and witness seating

is behind a railing near the entrance.

The décor is simple and reserved—red oak paneling, dark blue carpet with gold accents, oak furniture, and large pendant lights with recessed lighting fixtures in the 16-foot-high ceiling.

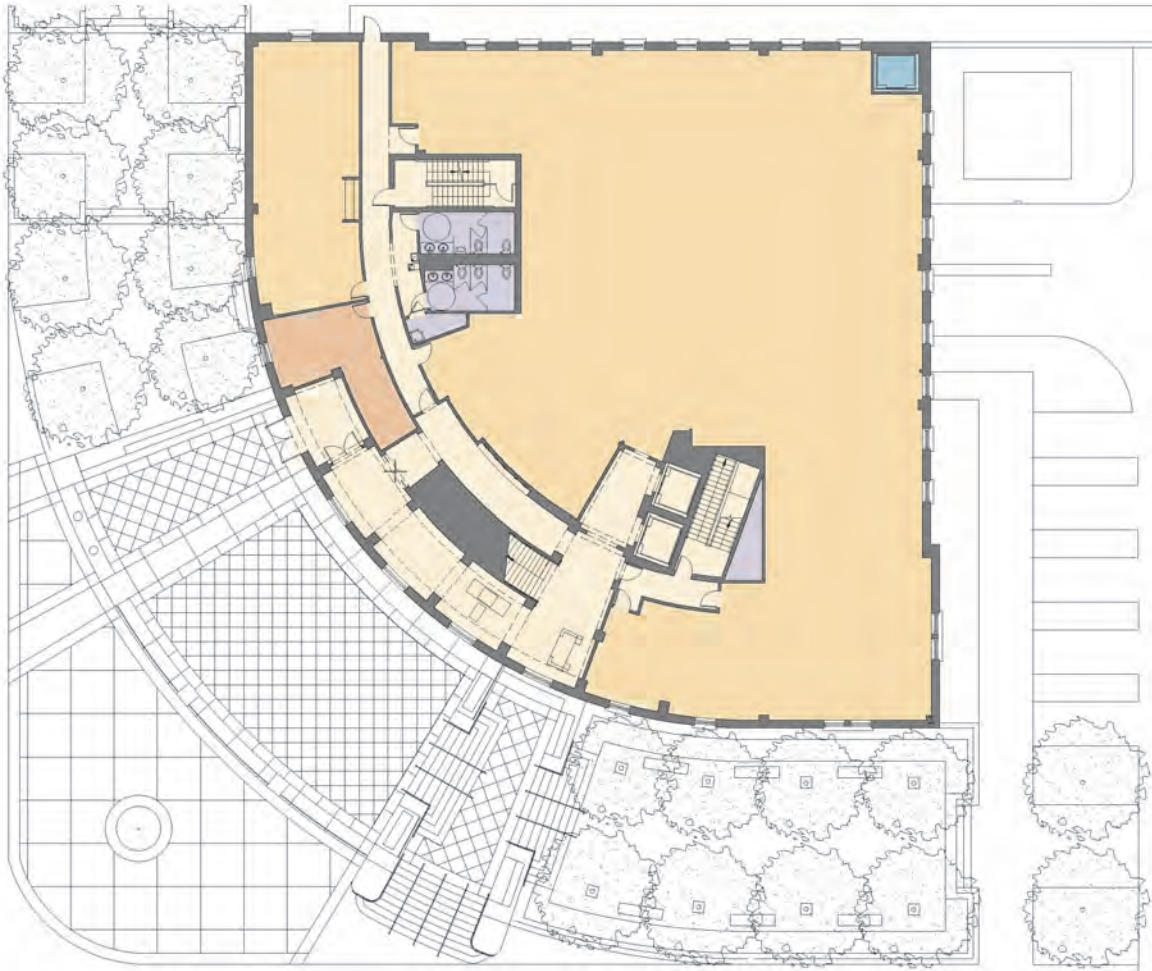
Overall, the Federal Building United States Courthouse in Youngstown affirms the valuable role of civic institutions in daily life and places Federal offices and the courts in the heart of the community where they are easily accessible and, through good design, open and welcoming to everyone.





**Third Floor Plan**





**Ground Floor Plan**





## ART IN ARCHITECTURE

Art has always been an important feature of great architecture. For the Federal Building United States Courthouse in Youngstown, Ohio, Andrew Leicester created a pair of metal column sculptures to mark the main entrance.

### **Phantom Furnace Columns**

*Plaza entrance on Wick Avenue*

Andrew Leicester

Andrew Leicester's twin, painted steel sculptures are functional and symbolic—a combination that invites the senses to understand them both as utilitarian objects and as an expression of layered meanings. In this context, they are a testament to Leicester's vision for a wholly integrated work of art. Nearly 20 feet high, the sculptures mark the building's entryway. Their appearance, however, transcends this function as they relate to the surrounding architecture and reflect historical, civic, and local themes.

*Phantom Furnace Columns* connotes a rich array of historical associations. Leicester chose to work with columns partly for their explicit association with Federal architecture.

The tops of his Youngstown columns are perforated and unevenly stacked to appear as if they have deteriorated like picturesque temple ruins from classical antiquity. Through this fragmentation, Leicester plays with the well-known concept of transformation. For centuries, the image of the broken column has been used to symbolize the constant transformation of civilization and to commemorate the glories of previous eras. The work also synthesizes elements of several other historical precedents, including utopian architecture of eighteenth-century France, nineteenth-century neo-classical garden pavilions of Leicester's native England, and defunct industrial structures of the twentieth-century.

As the expression of local identity, *Phantom Furnace Columns* evokes the proud history of industrial Youngstown. At night, the towering stanchions undergo a splendid transformation into radiant lanterns. Made almost immaterial by the dramatic, orange-yellow glow that emanates from within, the columns are meant to resemble steel furnaces. The warm light is designed to beckon

passersby and to mark an important civic space of the city.

Finally, Leicester's work responds to the surrounding architecture. The form echoes the vertical rhythms of the courthouse façade and repeats the soaring reach of the neighboring church steeple and the small colonnades that ring its base.

#### **Art in Architecture Program**

GSA's Art in Architecture Program commissions artists, working in close consultation with project design teams, to create artwork that is appropriate to the diverse uses and architectural vocabularies of new Federal buildings. These permanent installations of contemporary art for the nation's civic buildings afford unique opportunities for exploring the integration of art and architecture, and facilitate a meaningful cultural dialogue between the American people and their government. A panel that includes the project architect, art professionals, the Federal client, and representatives of the community advises GSA in selecting the most suitable artist for each Art in Architecture commission.



**The materials—beige brick, painted metal, standing seam roofing—were selected with an eye to creating a monumental effect while respecting local traditions. Our courthouse relates to other public buildings in town, to the local tradition of expressed metal construction, and, indeed, to the manufacture of steel that is at the heart of Youngstown's history.**

Robert A. M. Stern  
Architect, Robert A. M. Stern Architects



## GENERAL FACTS ABOUT THE COURTHOUSE

The Federal Building United States Courthouse in Youngstown, Ohio, is located on a prominent 3.09-acre site in the Central Business District at the intersection of Wick Avenue on the west and East Commerce Street on the south. It is bounded by East Wood Street on the north and North Walnut Street on the east. The front of the building faces Central Square and downtown Youngstown. The main entrance on Wick Avenue.

The building is wedge-shaped with a curved front. It rises 55 feet high with three stories above grade and one story partially below grade on the west and north sides. The principal occupants of the building are the United States Internal Revenue Service and the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Ohio. The Internal Revenue Service space is designed primarily with open offices for maximum flexibility. The Bankruptcy Court has one courtroom on the third floor in addition to chambers for the chief judge and administrative offices for the judicial staff. The size and layout of the courtroom were designed to convert it into a District Court if necessary

to meet the ten-year expansion requirements of the courts. The building also contains a suite of offices for the U.S. Congressional Representative on the second floor and offices for the General Services Administration.

The exterior of the building is composed of buff-colored brick with a cast stone base and stringcourses. The front facade is distinguished by a curved metal and glass curtain wall above the ground floor that is dominated by a two-story porch articulated with a colonnade of metal columns. The porch and curtain wall are covered with a projecting metal standing-seam roof carried on metal brackets. The windows frames are also metal. All the metal components are painted a gunmetal color. These materials are meant to echo the spare classical-style 1920s era stone buildings in the downtown area and the metal aesthetic in Youngstown's industrial center.

The interior of the building is dominated by a two-story ceremonial staircase along the glazed curved wall that rises from the ground floor to the courtroom on the third floor. The interior finishes used in the



building are very modest: painted gypsum board, acoustical tile ceilings, recessed fluorescent and incandescent lighting accented with pendant light fixtures, terrazzo or ceramic tile floors in the corridors, and carpet in the offices. The courtroom, which has a traditional layout, has red oak paneling, doors, and furniture; dark blue carpet with gold accents; and recessed fluorescent and incandescent lighting with pendant light fixtures designed by the architect.







**Location**

A 3.09-acre parcel located in downtown Youngstown, bounded by Wick Avenue, East Commerce Street, East Wood Street, and North Walnut Street.

**Size:**

52,240 Gross Square Feet  
44,476 Usable Square Feet  
55 Feet High  
Three Stories Above Grade  
One Story Partially Below Grade

**Time Frame**

Design Started: March 2000  
Construction Started: April 2001  
Completed: September 2002  
Dedication: October 9, 2002

**Major Building Components**

U.S. Courts: 14,642 Square Feet  
Tenant Office Space: 15,185 Square Feet  
GSA/Joint Use: 2,497 Square Feet

**Parking**

Interior: 5 Spaces  
Exterior: 72 Spaces  
Service: One Loading Dock

**Structure**

Steel frame construction with brick and cast stone cladding. Glass and aluminum curtain wall system.

**Foundation**

Steel piles driven to bedrock with concrete pile caps and grade beams.

### **Mechanical and Electrical Systems**

Purchased steam to air handling units with some fin tube radiators at larger glass openings. On-site water chiller.

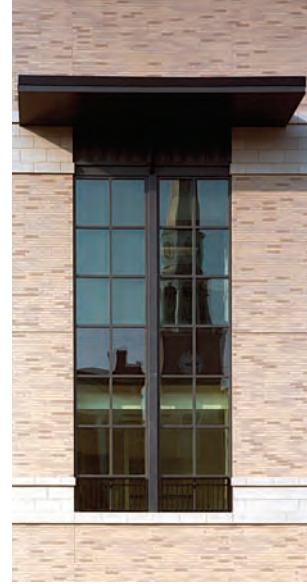
### **Exterior Walls**

Buff-colored brick and cast stone masonry units with concrete masonry units back-up on lower floors and metal stud back-up on upper floors. Limestone trim, metal columns and windows, and a projecting metal standing-seam roof carried on metal brackets.

### **Interior Finishes**

**Courtroom:** Walls with red oak paneling; painted gypsum board; hung acoustical tile ceilings with lay-in fluorescent fixtures, incandescent down lights, and brass pendant light fixtures; broadloom carpet on floors.

**Public areas:** Painted gypsum board; hung acoustical tile ceilings with lay-in fluorescent fixtures, incandescent down lights, and brass pendant light fixtures; terrazzo and ceramic tile floors.



## BIOGRAPHIES: THE ARCHITECT AND THE ARTIST

**Robert A. M. Stern** is the founder and Senior Partner of Robert A. M. Stern Architects in New York City and Dean of the Yale School of Architecture. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and received the Medal of Honor from its New York Chapter in 1984 and the Chapter's President's Award in 2001. Stern directs the design of each of the firm's projects, which range from residential and commercial to institutional and government facilities. Commissions are located throughout the United States and in Europe and Asia. His projects include the Feature Animation Building for The Walt Disney Company, Burbank, California; Brooklyn Law School Tower, Brooklyn, New York; the William Gates Computer Science Building, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California; the Nashville Public Library, Nashville, Tennessee; and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Atlanta, Georgia.

Stern was previously a Professor of Architecture and Director of the Historic Preservation Program at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia University and from 1984 to 1988 was the first director

of Columbia's Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture. He is the author of several books, including *New Directions in American Architecture* (Braziller, 1969; revised edition, 1977); *George Howe: Toward Modern American Architecture* (Yale University Press, 1975); and *Modern Classicism* (London: Thames & Hudson, New York: Rizzoli, 1988). Stern has a special interest in New York City's architecture and urban design and is the co-author of *New York 1900* (Rizzoli, 1983), *New York 1930* (Rizzoli, 1987, which was nominated for a National Book Award), *New York 1960* (Monacelli, 1995), and *New York 1880* (Monacelli, 1999).

Ten books on Stern's work have been published, including *Robert A. M. Stern Buildings* (Monacelli, 1996); *Robert A. M. Stern: Houses* (Monacelli, 1997), and *Robert A. M. Stern: Buildings and Projects 1993-1998* (Monacelli, 1998).

Stern received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Columbia University and a Master of Architecture degree from Yale University.

**Andrew Leicester** has dedicated his career as an artist to public engagement. His numerous projects in the United States and abroad demonstrate expertise in a diverse array of materials and forms, yet are united by some common interests. Principal among these is Leicester's ability to give shape to the unseen or half-forgotten histories of a place. For example, *Ghost Series*—a 1994 group of bas-reliefs and an enamel mural for the contemporary concourses of Pennsylvania Station in New York City—recreates full-scale, Beaux-Arts architectural details of the original McKim, Mead & White building that was torn down in a misguided campaign of urban renewal in 1963.

Leicester's many other public artworks include *Platonic Figure* (2001) for the University of Minnesota's Department of Mechanical Engineering in Minneapolis, Minnesota; *Castle of Perseverance* (1993) for the Fine Arts and Theater Building at the University of Nebraska in Omaha, Nebraska; *Zanja Madre* (1992), a water garden and arcade in downtown Los Angeles, California; and *Cincinnati*

*Gateway* (1988), the entrance to Bicentennial Park in Cincinnati, Ohio. Leicester's projects are discussed in important anthologies on public art, such as *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs: Public Art and Cultural Democracy in American Communities* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995) by Erika Doss and *Contemporary Public Sculpture: Tradition, Transformation & Controversy* (Oxford University Press, 1992) by Harriet Senie.



**It's wonderful to have the opportunity to design a one-room courthouse so that the courtroom can be the focal point of the plan. The slope of the site enables everyone, disabled and able alike, to arrive at one point, and then for those who take the stairs to move diagonally up and up and up to the courtroom. This journey will enhance the dignity of the court as something that's part of the city but apart from it.**

Robert A. M. Stern  
Architect, Robert A. M. Stern Architects





## THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TEAM

### **Owner**

U.S. General Services Administration  
Regional Office: Chicago, IL

### **Design Architect**

Robert A. M. Stern Architects  
New York, NY

**Associate Architect,  
Structural Engineer, Mechanical  
and Electrical Engineer, Civil Engineer**  
URS Group, Inc.  
Cleveland, OH

### **Artist**

Andrew Leicester  
Minneapolis, MN

### **Design Excellence National Peers**

Mary Oehrlein  
Oehrlein & Associates Architects  
Washington, DC

Henry N. Cobb  
Pei Cobb Freed & Partners  
New York, NY

Elizabeth Ericson  
Shepley Bulfinch  
Richardson and Abbott  
Boston, MA

### **General Contractor and Construction Manager**

Dick Corporation  
Youngstown, OH

### **Courts Consultant**

Ricci Associates  
New York, NY

### **Audio/Visual**

Spectrum Professional Services, Inc.  
Salt Lake City, UT

### **Cost Consultant**

Federman Project  
Management Consultants  
New York, NY





**U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
AND THE DESIGN EXCELLENCE PROGRAM**

*Public buildings are part of a nation's legacy. They are symbolic of what Government is about, not just places where public business is conducted.*

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is responsible for providing work environments and all the products and services necessary to make these environments healthy and productive for Federal employees and cost-effective for the American taxpayers. As builder for the Federal civilian Government and steward of many of our nation's most valued architectural treasures that house Federal employees, GSA is committed to preserving and adding to America's architectural and artistic legacy.

GSA established the Design Excellence Program in 1994 to change the course of public architecture in the Federal Government. Under this program, administered by the Office of the Chief Architect, GSA has engaged many of the finest architects, designers, engineers, and artists working in America today to design the future landmarks of our nation. Through collaborative partnerships, GSA is implementing the goals of the 1962

Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture: (1) producing facilities that reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of the Federal Government, emphasizing designs that embody the finest contemporary architectural thought; (2) avoiding an official style; and (3) incorporating the work of living American artists in public buildings. In this effort, each building is to be both an individual expression of design excellence and part of a larger body of work representing the best that America's designers and artists can leave to later generations.

To find the best, most creative talent, the Design Excellence Program has simplified the way GSA selects architects and engineers for construction and major renovation projects and opened up opportunities for emerging talent, small, small disadvantaged, and women-owned businesses. The Program recognizes and celebrates the creativity and diversity of the American people.

The Federal Building United States Courthouse in Youngstown, Ohio, was designed and constructed under the GSA Design Excellence Program.





**U.S. General Services Administration**

Public Buildings Service

Office of the Chief Architect

Center for Design Excellence and the Arts

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202-501-1888



**U.S. General Services Administration**