



GSA PBS NATIONAL CUSTOMER FORUM

Session Summary & Key Takeaways | July 24 & 25, 2023

On July 24 & 25, 2023, the General Services Administration (GSA) Public Buildings Service (PBS) gathered federal real property personnel from across the government to network, learn about current PBS initiatives and resources, and discuss the future of federal work.

EXECUTIVE WELCOME

Nina Albert
Commissioner
GSA Public Buildings Service

GSA PBS works with its federal clients to adopt real estate strategies that enable them to deliver their mission at the highest level while still making responsible use of taxpayer dollars. Over the past decade, the federal government has diligently worked to reduce its footprint by 45 million square feet. As GSA plans for the next decade of workplace changes, the goal is now to transform the footprint, not just slimming out inventory. Agencies should focus on maintaining **fewer but better buildings**.

We are committed to providing better quality space to recruit and retain employees. The federal government has to compete with the private sector, which has been doubling down on amenities offered and quality of space. Today's most attractive workplaces need to provide high-quality, accessible, and seamless technology with net-zero carbon emissions. The future federal footprint is **flexible, sustainable, human-centered, and technology-enabled**.

To reach the workplace of the future, it is important to start putting new conversations on the table. That is the intent of this forum. We may know what we want to do and that there is an opportunity for modernization, but we need to talk about how to support agencies in moving faster.

When GSA launched Workplace 2030, the goal was to make hybrid work effective and create savings for our customers. Multiple tools now help federal agencies to engage with leadership and planning teams.

- **Workplace Innovation Lab:** Showcase for furniture, technology, and federal coworking, where different agencies can reserve space in the same location
- **Workplace Engagement Services:** Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) with workplace specialists that can work for federal clients
- **Workplace Strategy Team:** GSA's internal team for workplace transformation
- **Workplace Investment and Feasibility Model:** Resource that creates an estimate of your space needs and types based on how mobile your workplace is
- **Federal Coworking Spaces:** Spaces that agencies could use full time, as swing space, or in an emergency
- **Fast Track Space:** Tool that allows customers to choose one of several pre-tested layouts and "drag and drop" design elements for their space
- **Inventory of Owned and Leased Properties (IOLP):** Up-to-date online application that shows where expiring leases or vacancies are coming up that can allow for backfilling federal spaces

Examination of the important role and interconnectivity between Real Estate, Human Capital, and Information Technology as foundations of an agency's overall portfolio modernization effort and organizational health

Katy Kale | Deputy Administrator, GSA

Dr. Janice Underwood | Chief, Diversity Officers
Executive Council / OPM

Allen Samuel | Director of Modernization and
Innovation, GSA

Bob Stafford | Chief Administrative Services
Officer, GSA

Charles Hardy | Chief Workplace Officer, GSA



Key Takeaways

Federal space is a three-legged stool:

- **People:** Supporting the people who do the work to ensure that the public is served in the way they should be
- **Place:** Experimenting with the way we use space, such as consolidating GSA locations into Headquarters with a hotelling model
- **Technology:** Making sure that people have the technology that they need to work wherever they are.

IT has to be present when spaces are first conceived. They can provide many solutions, but they need to be able to do the necessary work to ensure that they can address each customer's needs.

To continue to improve organizational health, we need to ask how we can do just as well, if not better, in five to ten years from today. One of the ways we work to improve is through the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS).

- OPM has used a new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) index to measure federal agencies and found that 69% of employees provided a positive response to DEIA questions.

People do not mind change; they just do not want to change. Everybody wants to be first, but they do not want to be the first.

- If you do not need certain spaces for regular use, why pay a year's worth of rent if there is somewhere else you can find the space within the government?
- The past ways of working required a more generic use of space, whereas now we design space to focus on what people do in the office: collaboration.

DEIA is a throughway to modernization, the future of work, and organizational health. By working to make changes that serve one part of the population, we frequently end up serving a much larger slice of the population.

Less than seven percent of the federal workforce is under the age of 30. If we want to attract a new generation, we need to meet their needs.

GSA was able to accelerate their adoption of remote work during the pandemic, and facilitate a return to in-office work, because they already had a good infrastructure in place for remote work. People used the existing tools that they have, including leveraging the relationships they had with coworkers and peers.

SPACE UTILIZATION AND OVERVIEW OF WORKPLACE OFFERINGS

Overview of current GSA workplace offerings, including commercial coworking, federal coworking, workplace engagements, WIFM, and more

Charles Hardy

Chief Workplace Officer, GSA

Ryan Doerfler

Senior Workplace Strategist, Office of Workplace Strategy / GSA PBS



Key Takeaways

The Workplace Investment & Feasibility Modeling Tool (WIFM) is meant to be a starting place for a workplace conversation that is built for customization.

- The goal is to add greater functionality over time, such as a carbon dioxide equivalence calculator associated with different degrees of telework.
- The easiest way to find WIFM is to go to GSA.gov/workplace or email workplace@gsa.gov.
- To learn more about this tool, register for the [WIFM? A Whole Lot More With V3.0!](#) session of the Client Enrichment Series.

GSA has been offering Workplace Engagements since 2006. In these engagements, GSA works with agencies to talk through what they are trying to achieve.

- The program is customized for the customer agency based on their needs and includes offerings such as leadership visioning sessions, focus groups with management and employees, and “keep, toss, create” sessions.
- These workplace engagements can focus on a specific location or on an entire agency to gather information about what informs their workplace decisions.
- Often, agencies reveal that they are providing spaces staff do not want or use but are missing other spaces that are desired.
- Visit the [Workplace Engagement Services](#) page to learn more about these offerings and sign up.

As agencies explore new ways to access space, they are now able to utilize Commercial and Federal Coworking.

- Commercial coworking has been available for around two years, and it offers agencies access to turnkey space on a temporary basis. GSA can help direct agencies to these spaces through the RWA process.
- Federal coworking is currently in its prototype phase, and there are [six very different locations to choose from](#). If an agency wants to reduce its footprint and is located near one of these coworking spaces, GSA highly recommends trying it out and providing feedback about how the space worked.

The Fast Track Space tool helps agencies meet the needs of their knowledge workers without a great deal of design work, leading up to a Design Intent Drawings (DID) set and eventually a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) Tenant Improvement Estimate.

These plans will be updated over time, ensuring they remain simple so that they can be easily mapped onto a space.

The GSA Office of Workplace Strategy offers a variety of tools that take a holistic look at an agency's workplace needs. They are essentially minimum viable products, and GSA wants your feedback in order to advance them. All offerings can be customized to meet customer needs.

To learn more about our Workplace Offerings, attend our upcoming Client Enrichment Series session, [New Tools for the New Workplace](#), on 10/26/23 2pm-3:30pm eastern.

PORTFOLIO PLANNING AND INVESTMENT

Discussion of a variety of topics relating to portfolio planning and investment, including space optimization, portfolio repositioning, occupancy agreements, and more

Chad Gilchrist | Acting Assistant Commissioner,
Office of Portfolio Management and Customer
Engagement / GSA PBS

Crofton Whitfield | Assistant Commissioner,
Office of Leasing / GSA PBS

Brian Kee | Chief of Staff, Office of Real Property
Disposition / GSA PBS

Melanie Gilbert | Regional Commissioner, National
Capital Region (Region 11) / GSA PBS

Joanna Rosato | Regional Commissioner, Mid
Atlantic Region (Region 3) / GSA PBS



Key Takeaways

GSA's current inventory is on average 50 years old with 750 total leases that have historically ranged from 17 to 22 years. This portfolio is too costly to maintain and too big. GSA's focus is now to create a flexible, responsible, and responsive use of space to meet the needs of today's hybrid reality. This will create fewer, better buildings for the next century of work.

When reevaluating leases, GSA has been able to shift from 20-year terms to 10-year terms while retaining the original lessor rates despite the change in lease term.

A recent [Government Accountability Office \(GAO\) report](#) collected occupancy data across federal buildings that revealed that 71% of the spaces were occupied at less than a quarter of the design capacity. The other 29% were at most 50% occupied with

GSA has no plans to set space reduction targets, but they may come from Office of Management and Budget (OMB) or Congress as every dollar saved in rent is a dollar that can be spent on the mission.

Agencies are encouraged to mind the inventory they already have. Costs associated with maintenance, especially emergency, can make up a large portion of costs associated with workplaces. Congress continues to fund these minor repairs and alterations, but GSA would like to work to shorten the amount of time required to take these actions.

When reevaluating space needs, agencies do not need to wait for their leases to end. They can renegotiate, manage, and reconfigure throughout their lease's lifecycle, and GSA is willing to help.

Agencies are encouraged to communicate any reduction in space that they can see an opportunity for. Eliminating 10% of the current inventory could produce savings of one billion dollars annually.



Information on PBS's transition from its current Occupancy Agreement tool (OATool/eOA) to a new OA application: the Occupancy Agreement and Space Inventory System (OASIS)

Chris Giavis | Pricing Policy and Tools Division Director, Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement / GSA PBS



Key Takeaways

OASIS is PBS's new [Occupancy Agreement and Space Inventory System](#), and it will go live on **August 7**.

This new application moves Occupancy Agreement (OA) review and approval into an electronic system and provides access to Agency OA and Rent data.

All OAs will now go directly to individuals with the authority to approve them as identified by the agency, and agencies will have access to all their occupancy and rent data on demand.

Most projects will only require one OA approval and will only be revised if a mid-project space or TI change order occurs.

Once final offers are received, OAs will automatically be created which will decrease volume and allow for more thorough review. Approval will occur only when the agency is financially committed to using actual, not estimated, terms and financial amounts.

Self-guided training will be released at the end of July in short, video-based modules. Live Help Sessions will be available throughout Fall 2023, but prior Virtual Live Training Sessions are available online at GSA's [Client Enrichment Series](#) website. An upcoming session is tentatively scheduled for November to address common OASIS situations and questions.

Discussion of how to make your workplace a magnet for staff and a tool to attract and retain talent

Dr. Zina Sutch | Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights / SBA

Michelle Amante | Vice President, Federal Workforce Programs / The Partnership for Public Service

Jason Barke | Deputy Associate Director, Strategic Workforce Planning / OPM

Matt Hoffman | Special Advisor for Workplace Initiatives, GSA PBS



Key Takeaways

A “magnet workplace” for talent within the federal government means attracting top, new talent. Knowledge sharing and meaningful in-person collaboration are prioritized. These are places where talent can grow, are cared for, and feel valued.

Getting people to not only choose to work for the federal government but also stay there is its own challenge. The agencies that are able to tie agency to the people make their employees want to stay and be part of the agency, making the mission real every day.

Aside from facilities being clean, modern, and functional, technology has great importance. High-speed wifi throughout the building is important to allow staff to be mobile. Hybrid set-ups are now the norm, and creating equity between remote and in-office staff is important.

More collaboration spaces are necessary because staff want to have the opportunity to see and interact with other people when in the office. Other isolated spaces allow for staff to retain privacy and security when needed.

To attract this talent and make sure they are aware of the opportunities, agencies must get creative on how they tell their story. They can use social media, start ambassador programs to raise awareness at key alma maters, and look for capstone projects and internship programs.

The application process can be intimidating for applicants, but agencies can work with their HR specialists to make sure job postings reflect what they are looking for.

The most important takeaway is to be human-centered. Understanding the employee experience by having and using metrics, surveys, and connection points allows for ideal feedback loops. Be flexible and agile in how to respond to this feedback.

Conversation with GSA subject matter experts on all things sustainability, including electric vehicles and infrastructure and green leases

Ken Sandler | Sustainability and Green Building Advisor, GSA OGP

Chris Towery | Acquisition Branch Supervisor, Center for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure / GSA PBS

Courtney Springer | Acting Assistant Commissioner, Office of Facilities Management / GSA PBS

Alexandra Kosmides | Management and Program Analyst, Office of Leasing / GSA PBS

Susannah Gilmore | Leasing Analyst, Office of Leasing / GSA PBS

Stephanie Gresalfi | Team Lead, Zero Emission Vehicles Fleet Management / GSA FAS



Key Takeaways

GSA has a wide array of sustainable offerings that clients can explore, including an electric vehicle fleet, green lease requirements, and new building features.

Electric Vehicle Fleets

- Electric Vehicle IDIQs are really flexible, and covered businesses are mostly small, which can help support agencies' goals.
- When considering adding new electric vehicles (EVs) to a fleet, there are a few challenges that may arise that GSA can help an agency work through:
 - Vehicle and electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) costs
 - Supply chain impacts leftover from the pandemic along with increased demand across the board that affects vehicle availability
 - Time left in the space to make sure the investment is worthwhile
 - Parking structure durability to allow for increased vehicle weight
- Check out the following resources for more information on EVSEs:
 - [GSA EVSE BPA](#)
 - [GSA EVSE D/B Construction IDIQs](#)
 - [DOE Utility Finder Tool](#)
 - [2023 GSA Virtual EVSE Showcase](#)
 - [GSA EVSE Home](#)
 - [DOE ZEV Ready Center](#)
- There will also be a virtual EVSE showcase in August with sessions from DOE, GSA, and the White House on how to accelerate deployment, which you can register for [here](#).

Lease Provisions

- For leased spaces, GSA's Office of Leasing continues to update lease and RLP templates each year along with lease provisions and requirements.
 - There are now up to 65 green provisions that a landlord would need to follow, which is an increase from 43 previously.
 - Changes are based on feedback from agencies, regions, and industries.
- In markets where there are few options that can meet all provisions, there is flexibility and room for negotiations to adjust the provisions as needed. However, GSA will push to include as many provisions as possible.
- By the end of the year, the Office of Leasing plans to publish a Leasing Alert that will include resources such as how to add ESPCs (energy savings performance contracts) to a lease, a leasing amendment template, and a sample scope of work for a site assessment.
- For leasing-specific resources, look over the following:
 - [LDG Alterations Chapter](#) and [SME2U Training](#)
 - [LDG Parking Acquisition](#)
- An EVSE Leasing Alert, Site Assessment SOW, and Lease Amendment Template are coming soon.

High Performance Buildings

- There is uncertainty with how agencies and their buildings can reach Net Zero and Carbon Free goals, though that is improving as energy sources continue to electrify.
- ESPCs, sensors, and smarter building facilities are all resources that GSA is using to try and create higher-performing buildings. Meters can track issues as they arise.
- Technology should reduce energy requirements but also improve the employee and user experience.
- A key tool to help agencies review their facilities for sustainability and make data-driven decisions in a leased setting is the RLP and lease document itself. Contracting officers also have a host of calculators and checklists to compare and help to determine whether it makes more sense to stay put or move on to a more efficient space.



Discussion about technology trends for private and federal industry, exploring topics about collaboration tools that eliminate barriers, enhance productivity, and make connections between remote, hybrid, and in-person work

Erika Dinnie

Associate CIO for Digital Infrastructure
Technologies, GSA

Jeff Schultz

Vice President, Chief Strategy Officer,
Security & Collaboration / Cisco

Melvin Brown

Deputy Chief Information Officer, OPM

Marlon Attiken

Partner, IBM Consulting



Key Takeaways

The integration of collaborative meeting tools and smart building technologies enhance the overall office experience for employees, visitors, and customers by building connections.

There are many choices offered as to what technology is best suited for differing needs, creating a chance to build what is best for each case.

There are many ways to track how well collaboration tools work for the agencies that use them.

- More quantitative data can be gathered using net promoter scores, annual and transaction surveys, and usage rates.
- Qualitative data captured in real-time feedback can offer deeper insights.

To best make technology work for different agencies and teams, they should be encouraged to establish norms (e.g., when to have meetings, how often, whether or not cameras should be used). Focus more on the culture and not the technology itself. The one constant agencies have is their people and their mission.

There is a great need for significant innovation in the security space. Previously, security at a building was limited to its perimeter. Now, there are many different applications, and there is a huge burden on the user on how to figure out how to keep everything secure.



BUILDING THE TABLE – A DEIA PANEL

Panel discussion to explore the role of private and federal collaboration in advancing equity for underserved communities and the opportunity to maximize impacts through once-in-a-generation Executive actions and federal investments.

Loaela Hammons | DEIA Program Coordinator, Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement / GSA PBS

Kimberly Dowdell | Director of Strategic Relationships, American Institute of Architects

Jason Pugh | Global Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Gensler

David Anthone | Supervisory Historic Preservation Officer, GSA PBS Northeast and Caribbean Region (R2)

Damon Sheppard | Regional Leader Science + Technology and ACE Mentor, HOK

Donna Laquidara-Carr | Industry Insights Research Director, Dodge Data & Analytics



Key Takeaways

The federal government is at a cultural inflection point. Society is confronting issues with minority groups being able to have their own voice and be represented in an equitable way. At the same time, there is great economic need due to factors such as labor shortages that offer an opportunity for the country to reevaluate where the human capital can come from. This is the time to choose where to find common ground to have these tough conversations.

Dodge Data and Analytics surveyed design and construction firms around their past, current, and future DEIA efforts. While most reported engagement at some level, that engagement is very shallow.

- The survey found that 22% of architects and 9% of contractors were very engaged with their communities.
- Architect responses were more aspirational (wanting to see more leadership engagement) while contractors were more practical, keeping an eye towards looking at a workforce crisis.
- The design and construction industries' different responses to DEIA can be attributed in part to the different entry points for each industry. Design requires degrees, and there is a greater applicant pool for construction.

Current design students and young professionals experience a big drop-off and fallout. They often struggle to see the value in staying in design, especially due to wage concerns.

Professionals in the industry who practice but do not have a license often have many years of experience but just never completed the exam. To combat this, design teams worked with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) to ensure their policies do not discourage existing designers from pursuing their license.

ACE Mentoring works to address this issue early by encouraging the field in middle and high school students. They offer a variety of support and resources to young students considering a career in design, including partnering with different firms within the industry to offer mentoring and internships to program alumni to help bridge the gap between high school and the career. In college, the support continues to try and counteract where students may want to drop out of their course.

Asking questions in the RFP process (like asking about the diversity of the firm or partnership with less-represented communities) can help hold people accountable and move these initiatives forward.

It is important for teams to be diverse to capture the unique needs that the public and future generations will have. It is easier to engage a community if they recognize someone on the other side of the table.

Intentionally investing in smaller firms and bringing ones from different communities to the table allows for real collaboration and mutual mentorship to better both firms in continual partnerships.



WORKPLACE OFFERING – FAST TRACK SPACE

How to take advantage of GSA's workplace expertise and occupy space months ahead of a typical schedule using an innovative solution that relies on pre-designed office space plans

Ryan Doerfler

Senior Workplace Strategist, Office of
Workplace Strategy / GSA PBS

Tasneem Bhabhrawala

Director, Customer Programs Division and Office of Portfolio
Management and Customer Engagement / GSA PBS



Key Takeaways

There are three constraints common in space changes: scope, cost / budget, and time / schedule. By minimizing scope (the ability to customize all aspects of the workplace, including furniture and finishes), participants are able to occupy their new workplace as soon as possible while lessening overall project costs.

GSA accomplishes this by using standardized requirements and design approaches that are completed during the planning phase, which utilizes fast track modular designs to meet agency requirements.

Benefits of this choice include accelerated schedule, a market-friendly approach, less effort with more value, and designs for hybrid work.

Agencies should consider using Fast Track if they are only designing office space with no additional special spaces (e.g., mission space) and if they are able to work with more limited customization options. However, GSA can accommodate whatever approach an agency would like to use, Fast Track or not.

Once an agency has decided to use Fast Track, they will use the following process:

1. **Identify Potential Model Plan(s):**
 - Choose from model office floor plans that offer various size, style and layout options that have the potential to be modified to meet mission needs
2. **Firm Up Model(s) with Calculator**
 - Use Fast Track Space Calculator to understand cost implications and occupancy data for the selected model(s)
3. **Customize Plans to Meet Agency Preferences**
 - Adjust individual workspaces and support spaces within overall space types
4. **Finalize Requirements Package**
 - Receive model plans in AutoCAD that can be adjusted once the final location floor plate configuration is known along with cost estimates for TI and furniture

All agencies should go through a workplace engagement when starting their projects, and they should ideally happen early and often. The goal of the Fast Track tool is to be fast and cost efficient, but GSA continues to ask for feedback on how this new offering is working for clients.

Resources for You!

[Fast Track Space Offering](#)

[Workplace Homepage](#)



TECH TALK! - SMART BUILDINGS

Discussion about Smart Building technology trends for private and federal industry, exploring topics about energy management, occupancy data, and building automation security

Sandy Shadchehr | Director, Buildings Technology Services, GSA IT

Courtney Springer | Acting Assistant Commissioner, Office of Facility Management / GSA PBS

Jeremy Witikko | Director, Hybrid Work GTM with Sustainable Real Estate, Cisco

Theresa Fung | Senior Real Property Asset Management Spec., Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement / GSA PBS

Ana Rawson | Director for the Facility Technology and Innovation Division, Office of Facilities Management / GSA PBS



Key Takeaways

Even before increased remote work, there was a great need for smart technology in our workplace. As individuals do or do not come in, smart technology can tell building operations what the needs of the space are.

GSA has piloted leveraging the existing badging technology that provides an essential need (keeping staff safe) to identify where we can optimize the space based on usage. The next step is to have technology talk to each other to make it more efficient and frictionless.

GSA's smart technology journey started with smart meters, but it goes beyond that to boilers, chillers, and more to ensure the optimal performance and preventative maintenance of that equipment.

Knowing more information (e.g., the exact number of people in a room, not just that people are in the room) helps to create a room environment with sufficient light, air flow, etc., for the number in there. Three people have different needs than 20 people.

Potential impediments include security (Cloud solutions have to be FedRamp-approved), upgrading the confines of an existing space, and people needing to learn how to analyze the data and respond to it.

GSA is currently piloting technology in the Workplace Innovation Lab (WIL) by measuring the energy efficiency when moving lighting from AC to DC and using films that harvest energy and UV from outside so that other resources sustain less damage or wear from heat and rays and also create energy.

There can be up to a 30% reduction in energy needs when you have the data points to adjust the space.

Staff may be skeptical about new technology that tracks people throughout a building, but plans never go fully in any direction without testing first to see where to make adjustments. Data is kept anonymous wherever possible, and no reports include PII (e.g., from badging systems).

Learn more about GSA's Occupancy Data program at https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/real-estate-services/for-federal-customers/occupancy-data?_gl=1*faqavu*_ga*MTM5MDQwOTA2LjE2NzEoNTg1ODY.*_ga_