



Incorporating Sustainability into Lease and Build Agreements

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is committed to being a leader in sustainability. By adhering to sustainable principles and implementing sustainable practices throughout DHS, we create a distinct advantage in protecting our homeland when energy savings and energy efficient technologies are used to enhance operational effectiveness. Incorporating sustainability into a green lease presents an opportunity not only to help meet or exceed regulatory requirements, but to protect both our environment and our country. With some helpful guidance, the green-lease agreement can offer substantial benefits to both owners and tenants.

Green Lease Planning

The path to greening a building can be incremental – the important thing is to begin and to commit to the plan.

The first step is to seek out developers and/or lessors who are truly interested in implementing sustainable measures into their buildings. Consider incorporating sustainable designs and operations upfront in the request for lease proposal. This tends to attract a certain level of lessor that is more environmentally friendly and interested in the LEED process.

Next, conduct an in-depth sustainability site assessment. Walk through the interior and around the exterior of the property making notes where efficiency improvements can be made.



The DHS St. Elizabeths Campus project is utilizing multiple sustainable measures to reduce environmental impacts and long term operating costs. These measures meet or exceed government mandates on building operation and LEED energy requirements. *Photo courtesy of Clark Construction.*

What is a Request for Lease Proposal?

The *request for lease proposal* (RLP) is one of a two-pronged strategy in a green leasing program. The green lease model separates the solicitation into an RLP and a lease. The RLP provides solicitation and how-to-offer information while the lease provides all contractual and enforceable aspects of the contract.

Though there is no separate “green lease” for special leases, there are additional requirements built into the RLP and lease for sustainability in lease construction and obtaining Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

Benefits of Green Leasing

For the Landlord:

Sought out for expertise in complying with local “green” or “sustainable” policy.

As the building becomes more energy efficient, landlord will benefit from savings.

For the Tenant:

Reduction in operating expenses.

Healthier environment; more productive staff.

Helps meet federal mandates and fund mission.

For Employees:

Daylighting, better controls on HVAC systems, and lines of sight to the outside make for a healthier working environment, happier employees, and increased efficiency and production.¹

Green Lease Considerations

There are a number of options that can be captured in a green-lease agreement for all types of DHS site scenarios, including new builds, new builds with shared occupancy, and new build-outs.

Alternative Transportation. Provide shuttle buses to the nearest commuter rail or bus line, secure bicycle racks, and preferred parking for alternative fuel vehicles or hybrids. Coordinate carpooling programs for tenants, including preferred parking for carpooling vehicles.

Indoor Air Quality. Cite standards for the building’s HVAC systems and require the use of low volatile organic compound paints and adhesives to ensure the highest possible indoor air quality.

Building Commission. Assure that all building systems are performing within specifications. Lease terms can require commissioning within a particular time frame to help assure that building systems perform as intended.

Green Cleaning. Green cleaning can include a number of variables, such as cleaning products that cause less toxic pollution and waste while conserving resources; training of cleaning personnel in the proper use of cleaning products; and mandatory walk-off mats at building entrances to reduce contaminants in the building. Also, using cleaning crews during the workday rather than during nighttime hours that require light can significantly reduce a building’s energy consumption. Require the use of biobased cleaning products.

Water Efficiency. Upgrading water fixtures, such as low-flow toilets and faucet aerators, can provide long-term savings and a quick payback in many cases. Using a baseline potable water flow target, a lease can require the building to meet or exceed this baseline target within a specified period of time with such actions as replacing fixtures with compliant fixtures, limiting the use of potable water for water-efficient landscaping, and capturing and re-using rain or greywater. Look for products with the WaterSense label.

Recycling Programs. Provide collection receptacles or areas for paper, aluminum, plastics, and other recyclables; separate waste pick-up by building cleaning staff; and separate recycling waste disposal by the building’s waste hauler. At a minimum, incorporate the local recycling laws into the lease.

Lighting. Consider requiring the use of motion sensors, daylighting sensors, timers, and energy-efficient light bulbs. Install a lighting system with automated occupancy controls that turn lights off when a space is unoccupied. Put lighting on a timer system when applicable.

Other potential cost effective energy efficiency, renewable energy, and conservation improvements for leased buildings include the following.

Building Envelope Modifications

- Insulation installation
- Weatherization
- Window replacement
- Reflective solar window tinting

Renewable Energy Systems

- Photovoltaic system installation
- Solar hot water system installation
- Wind energy system installation
- Passive solar heating installation

Electrical Peak Shaving/Load Shifting

- Thermal energy storage
- Gas cooling

Appliance/Plug-load Reductions

- Replace air-cooled ice/refrigeration equipment
- De-lamp vending machines
- Plug timers
- ENERGY STAR® products

Engage the Experts

To maximize your results, consider engaging a trusted independent advisor with expertise in both leased commercial real estate and implementing cost-saving sustainability across a large organization. The U.S. General Services Administration is available help federal agencies meet their green leasing requirements by assisting with incorporating green leasing elements into a lease. The agency can also provide standard templates for RLPs and other lease documents.

¹ United States. General Services Administration. Office of Governmentwide Policy. Innovative Workplaces: Benefits And Best. Practices. Washington, D.C.: GSA Office of Governmentwide Policy, 2006.

Collaboration Works: USCIS and GSA

The Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) consists of approximately 19,000 federal employees and contractors working at 137 offices around the world. USCIS was an early adopter of the green leasing program and since 2005 has worked in collaboration with the GSA to incorporate green leasing components into their leases. The partnership has worked well, according to Chris Weishaar, section chief of the USCIS Field Lease Administration, and both agencies benefited. Not only did USCIS gain information and advice, but GSA took the opportunity to use suggestions from USCIS that were based on their experiences. "[GSA] incorporated our suggestions as boilerplate in their standard templates," said Weishaar.

Case Study of the DHS USCIS Office of Administration, Philadelphia, PA

This five-story, 94,350 square foot facility houses USCIS's Philadelphia District Office and was the first platinum pre-certified building in Philadelphia. USCIS occupies the first three levels of the building, providing the District Office with 55,200 rentable square feet. The GSA is the lease holder.

Recycling. USCIS implements a comprehensive waste management program each day. Paper, cardboard, glass, plastic, and metal are collected and recycled through single-stream recycling and food-based waste is collected for composting.

Alternative Transportation. The project site is located in a high-density, urban location that has excellent accessibility to alternative modes of transportation. The site is equipped with bicycle racks to encourage bicycling to work.

Water efficiency. The USCIS fit-out includes low-flow plumbing fixtures to reduce potable water use. In total, the fit-out anticipates 40% less water use in restroom when compared to a typical office suite.

Energy Efficiency. The USCIS fit-out is equipped with a state-of-the-art energy-efficient chilled beam heating, cooling, and ventilation system. The system is connected to a 100% outside air ventilation unit that balances energy efficiency with improved thermal comfort and indoor air quality. Government specifications for computer equipment and appliances are utilized and require that all eligible items are ENERGY STAR labeled or EPEAT registered.

Indoor Air Quality. The USCIS fit-out utilizes a green housekeeping program. Cleaning materials were selected for reduced volatile organic compound (VOC) content. Microfiber cleaning products reduce particulates and provide improved ergonomic comfort for cleaning personnel. Also, special emphasis was placed on selecting building materials that release little or no VOCs to provide a safer and healthier environment for building occupants.

Lighting. The USCIS fit-out is equipped with LED lighting throughout, which is significantly more energy efficient than conventional lighting technologies like incandescent and fluorescent. LED lighting utilizes less electricity while providing superior lighting levels for building occupants. In total, the fit-out utilizes 38% less electricity in lighting than a typical office suite.

2.0 University Place was the first Platinum Pre-Certified building in Philadelphia.



Greening the Workplace: Get Started!

Even if the timing is not right for negotiating a new green lease, opportunities to increase energy efficiency and site sustainability exist in your building.

- Verify with the lessor that the building HVAC and electrical schedules are current.
- Utilize natural lighting whenever possible.
- Implement a recycling program.
- Reduce the number of copiers/printers.
- Set “double-sided” as the default print setting.
- Have an energy audit conducted in your building and implement cost-effective measures.
- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use.
- Move copiers and servers away from thermostats.
- Use timers or photocells for outdoor security and parking area lighting.
- Implement an idle reduction policy in the parking lot and at delivery ramps.
- Make it a policy to buy ENERGY STAR-rated lightbulbs and fixtures.
- Turn off computers—and the power strips they are plugged into—at the end of the work day.
- Invest in EPEAT registered computers, monitors, printers, copiers, and TVs and reuse or recycle old equipment.
- Purchase office supplies and furniture made from recycled materials.
- Use nontoxic cleaning products.
- Brighten up the office with plants that absorb indoor pollution.
- Buy furniture, carpeting, and paint that are free of volatile organic compounds.

Use a Checklist for Success

There are many issues to consider when drafting and negotiating a green lease program. One way to keep track is to generate a checklist to ensure all issues are covered and cost-effective improvements don't get lost in bigger discussion over incentives and penalty clauses. Use a checklist as a guideline to assure maximum effectiveness, sustainable success, and optimal savings.



**Homeland
Security**

For more information

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