

Attract and Retain Federal Tenants

By Alyssa Quarforth

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A WAY to differentiate your property to federal tenants in these tough economic times? Whether you have federal tenants now or plan to attract them in the future, enhance your leasing strategy to include compliance with the requirements of Executive Order (EO) 13514. The EO raises the bar for federal leadership and performance in energy-efficient and sustainable buildings, and, at the same time, raises expectations of the building owners and operators who lease space to federal agencies.

Capitalizing on the Executive Order

The federal government is the largest tenant in the United States. In addition to owning more than three billion square feet of floor space, it also leases an additional 374 million square feet.

Agencies spend more than \$10 billion annually on energy, and about a third of the money paid to utility companies could be reduced by implementing more energy-efficient practices and technologies. In an effort to capitalize on this opportunity to better direct federal funds and, more broadly, to reduce the environmental impact of federal facilities, the EO requires at least 15 percent of an agency's existing building stock to meet a set of guidelines, *Guiding Principles for Federal Leadership in High Performance and Sustainable Buildings*, by 2015.

At the 2010 BOMA International Conference and *The Every Building Show*®, representatives from the General Services Administration (GSA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided attendees with details on how

BOMA members can help tenants track progress and report accomplishments toward meeting the Guiding Principles. Commercial buildings that already operate in concert with the Guiding Principles will undoubtedly be more attractive to federal agencies looking to lease space or renew their leases. Helping an existing or prospective agency tenant understand how your space or building complies with many of the Guiding Principles will make their jobs easier.

Using Portfolio Manager to Comply with the Guiding Principles

EPA's ENERGY STAR® program, in concert with the U.S. Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) and the General Services Administration, has incorporated the *Federal High Performance Sustainable Buildings Checklist* (known as the "Guiding Principles Checklist") into ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, the EPA's energy and water benchmarking tool. Federal agencies can use the Guiding Principles Checklist to assess

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whether their buildings meet the goals set by the EO, and for reporting on the sustainability data element of the Federal Real Property Profile (FRPP).

Meanwhile, building owners and operators can provide a value-added service by assisting their federal tenants in using the Checklist. Your tenants might use the Guiding Principles Checklist to facilitate building walk-through assessments, track and easily view progress on each Principle, upload compliance documents to the repository for recordkeeping and create a portfolio-wide federal building sustainability report. Like the thousands of other organizations partnering with ENERGY STAR and benchmarking their buildings in Portfolio Manager, they can also use it to monitor up-to-date energy and water metrics. The Checklist automatically populates with the necessary energy and water metrics from Portfolio Manager. These metrics are dynamic, updating automatically as new data is added.

To access the Guiding Principles

Overview of Guiding Principles for Existing Buildings

- Benchmark building energy use with ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager.
- Occupy ENERGY STAR-labeled buildings.
- Reduce energy and water use.
- Perform recommissioning.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy used to operate buildings.
- Purchase ENERGY STAR- and WaterSense-labeled products.
- Enhance indoor environmental quality.
- Use environmentally friendly materials.
- Reduce non-recycled waste.

Checklist, buildings must first be benchmarked within Portfolio Manager, and designated as “federal” when doing so (or afterwards). The Checklist shows summary information at the top of the page, including a pie chart representing the building’s progress toward the Guiding Principles. Below, there are tabs for

the sections of the Principles, showing the required actions for each and providing the options to demonstrate compliance. Users can also enter comments or notes, and view links to references and resources that FEMP has suggested to support the Guiding Principles.

“Within a multi-tenant building, the agency’s focus is on its own space, but, in many cases, demonstrating compliance with the Guiding Principles will require broader implementation of policies and procedures across the building as a whole,” says Lance Davis, sustainability expert with GSA’s Office of Design and Construction. “So, implementation of sustainable practices in an office building can give a landlord a marketing advantage and entice prospective and current federal government tenants.”

For more information, see www.energystar.gov/federal and www.wbdg.org/references/thpsb.php.

About the Author: Alyssa Quarforth is the ENERGY STAR Program Manager for Commercial Properties with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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