

Lease/Renovations/Space Update – February 2008

General Updates on Recommendations:

The underlying theme for the Lease/Renovation/Space subcommittee recommendations was the need for better communication between the ICs and ORF. To improve communication, ORF created the IC Liaison positions within ORF. Each IC has an IC Liaison assigned, who can help with communication as needed. The Liaisons were introduced to the SDs and Executive Officers by Dan Wheeland this fall. A number of the ICs have mentioned that they have found this additional communication tool to be very helpful.

The AO training course being developed is also critical to that improved communication effort. With some ORF staff having left, who were working on the AO training, and with the establishment of the IC Liaison positions, ORF suggest that Jeff Fellows work with you on the AO training. Jeff is one of the new IC Liaisons; Conrad Farina would be Jeff's back up on your committee effort.

As a parallel to the IC AO training efforts, ORF is also endeavoring to provide better, more consistent services as they staff up for the roll out of the MEO. This includes training for Project Officers and implementation of a new Project Management Information System.

Specific Recommendation Updates:

- 1.1 The ICs should make sure they have a clear understanding and control of landlord renovation costs for off campus space. (3)

Recommendation: The AO community, facility offices and ORF should develop a written process for how to handle renovations and construction in leased facilities. This process should also be referenced in the AO Facility Course once it is finalized. This should include how information is communicated between the vendors, ORF, facility managers and facility owners; funds transferred should be part of this process including the appropriate forms to use and workflow processes.

Update: ORF has appointed IC Liaisons as members of the committee to develop the course.

- 1.2 A priority item is one of training AOs and new facility staff within the ICs on how to organize and manage renovations and construction within leased facilities and for on-campus space. Included in this training will be moves, funds tracking, and space as well as renovations and construction in all facilities. (3)

Recommendation: The subcommittee has begun such a course in collaboration with the AO/EO Competencies Committee and the NIH Training Office. A workgroup of AOs, ORF personnel and facility offices have reviewed the draft course. The course draft currently is with the NIH Training Office for review and assignment of a contractor to develop the course. Once the course has been developed the course will be posted on the Administrative Portal. An individual will be assigned to work with the contractor on a continual basis to update the course. All involved parties have been kept informed of its progress. The course costs will be rolled into the registration fee so there will be no "up-front" costs. Course draft is attached as Appendix A.

Update: ORF has appointed IC Liaisons as members of the committee to develop the course.

- 1.3 When deciding on whether or not leased space should be considered, ORF and the IC should communicate regarding the terms of the lease. (3)

Recommendation: A lease packet should be developed for each lease describing the terms of the lease including the maintenance costs and utility costs. The maintenance costs may be higher in one building than another and the ICs should be able to make informed decisions regarding on-going lease costs for budgeting purposes. A business case should be developed resulting from the SJD that clearly indicates all of these items, not just construction and rent charges. This process could also be referenced in the Facility Course.

Update: Working with the NIH Facility Working Group and Space Recommendation Board, NIH instituted development of a financial business case for each new lease action. That business case includes projections of the full costs to acquire and occupy new lease space. As part of the process, the IC Director must certify the IC's understanding and commitment to those costs. This financial understanding has helped ICs make informed decisions in deciding whether to proceed with lease acquisitions.

- 1.4 The functions of the project officer, IC representative and facility manager within leased space should be transparent. Good communication of these entities is essential to facilitate a renovation or occupancy within leased space. (3)

Recommendation: Create a list of responsibilities to distribute to the IC either at the beginning of occupancy or renovation. The responsibilities should be published to the ORF website so they can refer IC individuals to facilitate communication. The list of responsibilities should include who initiates the SLA; what forms and delegations are needed; specifics on the process of contracting such as whether it will be a purchase order or contract; how will the cost estimates be communicated; and who will explain the entire process. The ICs will also provide the same information on IC POC for both construction and funding.

Update: Documenting the various roles and responsibilities in the AO training will help with this understanding. As ORF staffs up, training will also assure an understanding within ORF of these related roles.

- 1.5 ORF develops a process to disseminate “how to request” renovations for campus and leased facilities. (3)

Recommendation: Guidelines should be developed and posted on the ORF website for on-campus and off-campus of all possible scenarios on requesting renovations. For example, the facilities in Baltimore may require a different process than facilities in Gaithersburg or Rockville. How is the facility manager involved; how is the funding processed, etc. This should also be included in the AO training.

Update: Documenting the various roles and responsibilities in the AO training will help with this understanding.

- 1.6 Equipment purchased should have building capability to support the utilities and actual space requirements of the equipment and maintenance agreement. (1)

Recommendation: On large equipment purchases or other utility-heavy equipment, purchasing agents and order approving officials should develop a process that works through the approval process for utilities. Current IC request systems may be programmed to include this process.

Update: A process to address this was discussed with the AOs, should be included in the AO training, and is being finalized to be sent electronically to the AOs and EOs.

1.7 Establish best practices for funds tracking. (1)

Recommendation: Collect spreadsheets and other reports used by IC AOs and/or IC facility offices to post on the Administrative Portal for use by all ICs as a best practice.

Update: *Include examples in the AO training will help develop best practices.*

1.8 Define and establish a “walk and talk” process for renovations or minor work within an IC building space. (1, 2)

Recommendation: Small renovations (shelving, painting, etc.) could be “packages” together if the IC walks through their space on a periodic timeframe with ORF or ORF contractors and talk through what needs to be done. The “project plan” would be written as they walk through the area and no further design would be needed. Establish a process in the ADB Work Request System that will facilitate this walk and talk process. Develop guidelines for ICs to understand what projects are appropriate for this method and post on both the ORF website and the Administrative Portal.

Update: *ORF is working to institute this concept.*

1.9 ICs need to understand implications for different contracting methods on on-campus work. (1)

Recommendation: Some ICs currently have contracts with design companies. Other ICs should assess if this would be reasonable and cost effective to do.

Update: *As ORF staffs up, it is looking at more effectively meeting these needs. For small ICs, their IC Liaison can help facilitate conceptual planning needs by identifying resources in ORF to accomplish the planning. .*

1.10 Develop a forum to achieve economies of scale by coordinating minor projects. (2,3)

Recommendation: ICs appoint a Point of Contact to work with facility managers to coordinate upcoming renovations within the building to coordinate work within the building. The contracting would then be cheaper by economy of scale.

Update: *ORF is implementing a new Project Management Information System, which will be able to facilitate such coordination efforts.*

1.11 Establish handyman services in each building. (3)

Recommendation: Re-create multi-craft type teams for renovation/maintenance issues within buildings.

Update: *ORF is working to institute this concept*

1.12 Establish consistency across ORF project managers’ knowledge base and train on all best practice alternatives and communicating with ICs. (3)

Recommendation: Develop project manager competencies and incorporate into PDs and performance contracts.

Update: *As ORF staffs up, it is establishing training to assure consistency of services.*

1.13 Compile a list of project managers ICs could hire to facilitate major construction projects. Look at best practices of larger ICs and IC facility offices to see if this option would be beneficial. (1)

Recommendation: Request referrals from ORF and large ICs. Identify method for publicizing the referrals.

Update: For small ICs, the IC Liaison can help them develop plans to meet this need. Also, as ORF staffs up, it is establishing training to assure consistency of project management services.

1.14 Recapture and reuse casework where practical. (2, 3)

Recommendation: Coordination/communication within a building through the facility manager or other mechanism could make reuse of casework possible. The Lab Managers Group felt this might not be cost-effective, but the committee felt that reuse within a building might be.

Update: More generally, ORF has an aggressive program to recycle materials when ever possible.

1.15 Establish criteria and effective process for use of shutdowns and other maintenance work. (1, 3)

Recommendation: Communication between ORF and ICs in building is necessary to establish a plan of action on timing of renovations and utility shutdowns as well as eliminating overtime costs. ORF began a plan in approximately May, 2006, and has realized significant savings. A plan for better communications of the plan needs to include input from all ICs in the area and ORF. There has been a request to NED staff to include capability of emailing people by building to alert people of shutdowns. This should be pursued.

Update: ORF has been trying various options to better inform occupants of shut downs through the facility managers. On the ORF web site NIH employee can sign up to be notified of shut downs in any building they specify.

1.16 Establish better communication between ORF and ICs for on-campus space and maintenance issues. (1, 3)

Recommendation: Currently the Occupancy Agreement (Agreement) is located within the Consolidated Services Statement (CSS). The CSS is used by ORS for charging rent to the ICs and other SSF charges. The Occupancy Agreement is currently a link within this website which is accessed primarily by budget offices. The Agreement should be moved to another location on the ORF website and used as a tool by the ICs. The Agreement (Appendix 2) states that buildings are surveyed on a periodic basis for maintenance issues and a report is generated for ORF to prioritize the work. It is recommended that the SDs decide on how to interact with ORF on this issue. These reports would be useful in planning hall painting, etc., if the ICs choose to do this on their own for any reason.

Update: As the MEO is implemented and fully staffed, the MEO will address preventative maintenance inspections. They will also be applying condition based maintenance to high risk areas.

1.17 The current website for facility maintenance should include off-campus instructions for ORF services. Time and effort (money) is wasted trying to find out how to do things in off-campus buildings. (3)

Recommendation: Increase information on the ORF website to include by asking IC occupants what they would like to be included on the website that will facilitate occupancy in off-campus space. Would a building occupancy guide help?

Update: The AO training should help ICs understand the differences on and off campus in requesting work.

- 1.18 Under current funding restrictions, ICs might first think in terms of space switching within the IC when new recruits come on board. Facility requirements may be met in one IC building, but not in another. (1)

Recommendation: ORF could develop a process of identifying any construction requirements for new recruits and how to best use R&I and IC funds. This process should be implemented with the IC once a candidate is identified. A business case could be developed with associated costs and requirements evaluated to make the decision of where to locate a recruit a more cost effective decision. This process would be used for both on- and off-campus space.

ORF Update: This planning service is critical to help ICs and ORF use the space assigned to them to the greatest effect for the least renovation cost and least impact on available facility resources, both in the IRP and non-IRP arena. The new IC Liaisons can provide a single point of contact to help the IC coordinate ORF space planning services to consider options across that IC's portfolio of space to identify the location which optimizes program adjacencies, facility capacities, and renovation costs and schedules.

- 1.19 Storage options at NIH are costly and in some cases inefficient. (3)

Recommendation: ORF is currently working on identifying intramural storage space contracts to evaluate the options for NIH contracts for off-campus storage of cell lines, tissue samples, equipment, etc. Results may be posted on the OIR and/or ORF website for dollar stretching as well as the ORF website.

Update: This is an important potential cost savings for the ICs in the IRP, and beyond in other IC program areas, but it is not clear that ORF is the correct source for this service to the ICs. It is not just a matter of providing space, but of managing access to and conditions for what is stored. Such storage services may more appropriately be provided either by a consolidated "best buy" contract service or by OD, Division of Logistics (DL). DL provides similar services to the IRP now and so it can best conduct the business case comparing contract with government provided services. ORF did conduct a survey of current storage contracts held by the IC IRPs. To facilitate coordination of services, that survey was provided to both DL and to the committee investigating bio-repository requirements.

- 1.20 Standardization of furniture types within an IC would help to defray project costs. (1)

Recommendation: By setting standards within an IC for furniture styles and manufacturers, components would be interchangeable and could be moved and re-assembled when a renovation is completed or if someone leaves or comes to the IC. For example, different levels of furniture such as wood for SD and branch chiefs, other types for PI, other types for fellows and support staff would save time and money when planning renovations and moves. Some ICs already have this standardization of furniture policy in effect.

- 1.21 Building signage should be standardized with signs that can be changed when occupants change similar to building 50. (1, 3)

Recommendation: Signage should be gradually moved to signage that names can be computer generated to keep signage costs down.

1.22 ICs should know how to turn back space in an efficient and cost-effective manner and how to verify space charges. (1)

Recommendation: Intramural offices should have access to the CSS to verify their space charges and understand how to make corrections as well as how to turn in space and verify that the space adjustment has been made. This is another training issue that is included in the AO course.

Update: To assure that IC had access, ORF recently updated with each EO the list of IC personnel who have access to NIH floor plans showing past space assignments and current floor plan assignment, for all NIH owned and leased facilities. Some future space planning documents, such as those for Bldg 10, are also available at the same site.