



National Forest Service Space Policy
Memorandum of Understanding
Between
US Forest Service and NFFE-FSC, IAMAW



This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) is between the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Management), and the National Federation of Federal Employees, Forest Service Council (Union), hereafter referred to collectively as, “the Parties.” This MOU is a Supplemental Agreement under Article 11 of the Parties’ Master Agreement, and it documents the Parties’ full and final agreement as it relates to the Agency’s National Space Policy.

The Parties agree:

1. With this MOU, Management has met all bargaining obligations related to the implementation of USDA DR 1630-003 (dated December 20, 2022) (Space Utilization). Where this MOU is silent on a matter covered by the USDA DR, the Parties will generally follow the DR except where parties have negotiated otherwise. The Parties agree to adhere to the terms of this MOU after formal review and approval process. This MOU does not preclude statutory requirements to meet local level bargaining obligations.
2. Pre-decisional Involvement and Timely Negotiations. To promote efficient, effective, and timely decision-making on the broadly negotiable topics associated with changes to employee offices and workspaces, it is critical that Union and Management at the appropriate level engage in pre-decisional involvement early and often when significant space changes are being contemplated (e.g., anticipated changes in owned or leased space or as part of strategic facilities planning). Management can avoid costly reversals in their decisions when the Union is meaningfully engaged at the appropriate level well in advance of making final contracting or other decisions associated with office space changes that may affect bargaining unit employee workspace.
 - a. The Union will be invited to be a member on any Space needs committee or teams at the appropriate level.
 - b. Prior to developing space needs as required by the USDA DR (e.g., at least 36 months prior to construction or modification of owned space, or the expiration of a current lease or occupancy agreement), Management will engage pre-decisionally or provide a notice and opportunity to bargain to the Union at the appropriate level. The development of any space needs where bargaining unit employees are impacted will be done according to this MOU and the USDA DR on Space Utilization.
3. Lease Expiration Letters. Management will provide union-engagement guidance, as outlined in paragraph 2 of this MOU, in Lease Expiration Notice Letters sent to local units.
4. Determination of Space Needs Units (SNU)
 - a. Management will update staffing plans based on proposed staffing changes and trends prior to determining space needs for future leases or owned buildings.

National Forest Service Space Policy

- b. In addition to the criteria listed in the DR, local parties should consider the telework trends for the location and/or types of positions when determining the Space Needs Unit (SNU) (e.g., for a vacant position consider if that position comes into the office more frequently than required under their telework eligibility).
 - c. Employees who telework more than 3 days a week on average (i.e., work in the agency location less than 3 days a week) will be assigned a SNU of 0.5. To determine the average telework of an employee over a year, telework agreements and paycheck reports may be utilized and cross-checked for the average of each employee. Parties at the appropriate level may mutually agree to a different method to determine this average of telework.
 - d. In determining the number of temporary seasonal employees, employed over three months, which will be counted as at least a 0.5 SNU, the parties should consider historical trends and out-year projections.
 - e. Hosted employees are not part of the required activity's staffing plan and will not appear in the signed, approved Organization chart. To include the hosted employee/s in the employee count, the employee's unit's signed/approved Organization chart will be provided and will show the position is located at a specific location. Hosted employees may remain at the location when space is available.
 - f. An example of a public facing office for purposes of SNU determination under the DR would be a Forest Service office where the public can get permits, tags, sales, maps, and visitor information.
5. Remote employees will follow local procedures for requesting use of local facilities and storage space.
6. For the purposes of this MOU, the term "Agency Location," "Official Duty Station," and "Official Worksite," are synonymous. The Agency Location is the management-approved location where employees regularly perform their official duties.
7. Space Request Surveys and Related Tools. Forms, surveys, and tools are provided to local units by the National Office to be used in the development of a unit's space needs. Management and the Union at the appropriate level will collaborate in utilizing these tools to meet the local parties' interests and overall space utilization rate requirements as outlined in the USDA DR.
8. There is an option to decrease or increase workstation size and/or panel heights depending on position function and equipment, agency mission need, and unique situations of the unit and its workforce. The local parties may approve variations to the standards.
- a. The Forest Service workstation wall panel standard is 50-60", including a 12" semitransparent panel.
 - b. The Forest Service workstation cubicle standard is 48-64 square feet for employees with an SNU of 1. Employees who were assigned a reduced SNU of 0.5 may share standard workspaces, have a reduced individual workspace (which has a standard of 24-36 square feet), or have another crew-type area.

National Forest Service Space Policy

9. Private Office Eligibility. Bargaining unit employees who regularly require privacy to conduct confidential activities are eligible for private offices. Units are encouraged to maximize use of consultation/huddle rooms, quiet room phone booths, and conference spaces to reduce the need for private office spaces which limit flexibilities and efficiencies of facilities.

a. Staff who telework more than 3 days a week on average will not be assigned an individual private office.

b. Offices and/or huddle rooms may be designed to include noise isolation factors above normal standards to protect sensitive, private discussions. Refer to GSA lease standards for acoustical guidelines.

c. The use of Union-shared offices and dedicated Union offices are locally negotiable.

10. This MOU becomes effective on the date of final approval by the Agency Head or that date on which the thirty-day time limit for Agency Head Review expires, whichever is earlier.

11. This MOU remains in effect, unless either Party requests to modify or terminate this agreement using the procedures in Article 11 of the Master Agreement.

For the Agency:

For the Union:

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