

**Memorandum of Understanding  
Field Office Relocation, Renovation and Redesign  
Atlanta Region**

This document represents the joint efforts of the Atlanta Region and Atlanta Region AFGE Council 220 to establish a set of general standardized rules/procedures to utilize when an Atlanta Region field office or Teleservice Center is considering relocation or implementing major renovation or redesign, including the installation of systems furniture. The process was established using the principles of interest-based bargaining and is based on the principle of making decisions with the fullest input of all parties involved – management, the union and bargaining unit employees working in the affected offices.

It is expressly understood that no rights of any bargaining unit employee or the union or management have been waived, either explicitly or implicitly, by this agreement. This agreement shall be subject to all provisions of 5 USC 71 and the National Agreement. All prior policies, practices, procedures, agreements, and MOUs in existence prior to the effective date of this agreement will not be changed except in accordance with 5 USC 71. Issues related to the office relocation, renovation, or redesign not specifically addressed in this agreement will be subject to negotiation in accordance with Article 4 of the National Agreement.

1. When an office undergoes relocation, renovation, or redesign, the parties agree that it is very important to provide sufficient and timely information about the process to all parties involved: management, the union and employees. To help achieve this interest the parties agree that:
  - A. Approximately 12 to 18 months before a field office lease is scheduled to expire or when the need for relocation, renovation or redesign of an office is determined, the Field Services Section (FSS) in the Regional Office will issue a memo to notify the appropriate Area Director or the Assistant Regional Commissioner for Program Center Operations or his/her designee. Simultaneously, the FSS will send a copy of the same notice to the AFGE Local-President or his/her designee. In addition, when the local manager receives the information package, he/she will provide a copy of the package to the designated local union representative.
  - B. Discussions between the local manager and designated local union representative should take place as soon as possible. The input of the employees in the affected office is important. To facilitate this input, the local manager and the union representative will conduct a joint staff meeting where the leasing process is fully explained and staff input obtained. If the union representative cannot attend this meeting because of travel cost, alternative arrangements for the meeting will be developed

by the local manager and union representative. At this meeting, a union survey, developed for the purpose of soliciting employee input, will be distributed to all employees. The employees will be instructed to return the completed survey to the union representative. The union will share the survey results with the local manager.

- C. It is important that management and the union come to an agreement on the general design issues that are critical to the Solicitation for Offers (SFO) at this stage of the process. The results of the union/management discussions or agreement will be used to respond to FSS's memorandum. This response will be made within 45 days of issuance of the original Field Services' memorandum.
  - D. At each stage of the process, all information will be shared with all parties involved, subject to procurement integrity regulations.
  - E. When the SF-81 package is received, the local manager will provide a copy to the designated local union representative.
2. The parties agree that it is very important to provide for a healthy and safe work environment during and as a result of relocation, renovation or redesign of an office. To help achieve this interest the parties agree that:
- A. In the event of major renovations of the reception counter area, and in all instances of office relocations and systems furniture installations, the design of the reception area will provide for near eye-level contact between the interviewer and the public. Valid consideration will be given to all possible options, including platform arrangements, to meet the operational-needs of the specific office and the needs of employees. The specific design of the reception counter area will be locally negotiated.
  - B. When reception counters are being renovated, or when construction plans are being developed for field office moves or redesigns, solid core pocket doors will be used for the reception windows where architecturally feasible, unless the local parties agree on an alternate design.
  - C. The agency will follow OSHA regulations regarding Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). If any employee becomes ill as a result of exposure to substances used during construction and/or renovation, the employer will make every reasonable effort to quickly obtain and provide to the employee and the union any and all MSDSs needed for diagnosis or treatment. If an employee notifies the employer that exposure to specific substances used in construction poses a personal health risk, the employer will make every reasonable effort to determine if those substances will be used, and if so, when and where they will be used and advise the employee and the union so that exposure can be avoided.

- D. To reduce glare in areas where VDT's are in use, the agency will request parabolic lighting in all new SFOs.
- E. The designated local union representative will be notified in advance of any and all official inspections to which the agency is invited concerning new space, including but not limited to the final inspection prior to taking possession. The union representative will be accorded an opportunity to accompany the employer on all such inspections. Within 10-30 days after the renovation, redesign, or relocation, a joint Health and Safety Inspection will be conducted, using the form SSA-5510.
- F. Where reception areas are changed by renovation, relocation, or redesign, an easily and independently adjustable monitor lift stand will be provided for each workstation where employees share terminals.
- G. In office relocations to sites where there is a risk of vehicles driving into office space, the agency will request bollards or other similar barriers to minimize the safety risk to personnel.
- H. If there are changes in the floorplan, a basic evacuation plan/diagram should be developed and communicated to the staff prior to or on the first day of occupancy. A general discussion of the plan should be held with the staff within 15 days, and a final written plan should be prepared within 30 days of occupancy.
- I. Upon request from the local manager or union representative, duress/panic alarms will be provided to alert management of a security problem.
- J. To minimize risk to employees, every reasonable effort should be made to complete construction before occupancy.
- K. Floor to ceiling barrier walls will be used to separate the public reception area from the general office area.
- L. The employee entrance door will be equipped with push-button combination-type locks capable of being opened with one hand for ingress.
- M. At a minimum, the multipurpose room will include a stainless steel sink with hot and cold running water mounted in a 60" or 72" long cabinet base with matching overhead cabinets, a garbage disposal, a paper towel dispenser, and a soap dispenser.
- N. Employees will have access during all working hours to a separate employee entrance.

- O. Employees will not be expected to move furniture or other heavy objects. Employees will be given the opportunity to move their personal belongings.
- P. If an employee is adversely affected by air flow, the agency will provide air deflectors, otherwise correct the problem, or allow employees to exchange desks by mutual consent.

3. Office Design Process

- A. Once the space action is approved for relocation, renovation, or redesign, FSS will prepare a preliminary plan of the office design which shows the enclosed offices and rooms in the correct dimensions and shows the furniture and equipment based on the space request. Copies of the preliminary plan and a shell drawing will be sent to the local manager who will provide a copy to the designated local union representative.
- B. The local manager and designated local union representative will review the plan and discuss alternatives incorporating employee input. In consideration of timeframes established by GSA and to minimize cost whenever feasible, it is important that use of all means of communication be considered, including telephone, FAX, e-mail, and express mail. The process of reviewing plans and proposing alternatives by the manager, the union, the employees and the FSS will continue until a suitable final plan is arrived at. The parties are committed to complete the process within 30 days.
- C. Upon agreement, the FSS will prepare a complete scaled drawing and mail it to the local office manager for final concurrence and sign-off by the local manager and the designated local union representative. It is understood that, barring any unforeseen circumstances, this will be the final plan and these issues will not be subject to further bargaining.
- D. If GSA requires revisions of the final plans to meet local codes or building requirements, FSS will notify the local manager of the required changes. At this time, the manager will inform the designated local union-representative of the required changes and they should resolve the issues related to the changes as soon as possible.
- E. The parties agree that all other issues related to relocation, renovation or redesign should be dealt with in accordance with Article 4 of the National Agreement. To ensure a timely and efficient transition, the parties are committed to resolving these issues approximately 60 days prior to the transition.

F. For systems furniture installation, when the local manager is notified regarding the date of the design visit, he/she will notify the designated local union representative. The union will be given an opportunity to participate in the design visit. The parties will resolve any necessary changes in the design during the design visit.

4. Regional Guide:

A. To facilitate full exchange of information, a Regional Guide will be developed that explains how the relocation, renovation and redesign process works. The parties agree to develop a draft guide by October 30, 1995. Copies will be distributed to the chief negotiators for both management and the union for comment and approval. The chief negotiators will work to make necessary revisions with the intent of completing the guide by November 30, 1995. Once completed, a copy of the guide will be distributed to all AFGE Local Presidents in the Atlanta Region.

B. The Guide will also be provided to the local manager and the designated local union representative as soon as it becomes evident that an office will be experiencing a lease expiration, renovation, or redesign.

5. Distribution:

The local manager will provide a copy of this agreement to all office employees as soon as it becomes evident that the office will be experiencing a lease expiration, renovation, or redesign.

6. Effective Date:

Subject to union ratification and agency head review, this agreement will become effective with all office relocations and space redesign activities initiated on or after January 1, 1996.

For the Agency:

*Milt Beever*  
Milt Beever, District Manager  
Date: 9/15/95

*Paul D Bushler*  
Paul Bushler, District Manager  
Date: 9/15/95

*Mark Hoptroff*  
Mark Hoptroff, Field Services  
Date: 9/15/95

*Brenda Stewart*  
Brenda Stewart, District Manager  
Date: 9/15/95

For the Union:

*Sharon DeLong*  
Sharon DeLong, AFGE Local 3509  
Date: 9/15/95

*Gary Sanders*  
Gary Sanders, AFGE Local 2014  
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*Delphine Smith*  
Delphine Smith, AFGE Local 3438  
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