Pre-Lease Guide

Leasing energy-efficient space can benefit employee productivity, retention, and sales through improved thermal comfort, natural daylight, and residing in a healthy building. Choosing the right building is the critical first step for any tenant looking to unlock these benefits. Before signing a lease, consider these best practices as you search for a space to increase the likelihood of success and foster a sustainable relationship with potential landlords.

Build a Team with Expertise

Select a leasing broker who understands the value of leasing energy efficient space and is knowledgeable about the market for high-performance buildings. As the primary intermediary during lease negotiations, commercial brokers are in a unique position to align the corporate sustainability goals of tenants and landlords.

Request energy performance information

Request energy performance information such as a building’s ENERGY STAR® score from a potential landlord to understand potential energy costs during occupancy and determine if the site will assist or hinder corporate sustainability goals. The Institute for Market Transformation (IMT) and the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) created a questionnaire for commercial tenants to assess and compare different sustainable features of commercial spaces.

Communicate efficiency requirements in RFP

After narrowing down the initial options, the site selection team will need to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP). The RFP is submitted to the property manager or landlord through a broker. Sustainability priorities and energy efficiency goals should be embedded in the RFP to communicate an organization’s goals and needs clearly to potential landlords.

Letter of Intent

The Letter of Intent (LOI) is often a precursor to a signed lease so work with the landlord to ensure that the LOI covers your sustainability and energy efficiency goals in addition to initial lease terms and other typical lease features.

Resources

- NRDC CMI Fact Sheet: Selecting High-Performance Tenant Space: A Pre-Lease Guide
- A Better City: Sustainable Tenant Fit-Out and Improvement Guide
- New York City Emerging 2030 District: NYC Green Leasing & Smart Submetering
- U.S. Department of Energy: 10 Green Leasing Tips for Building Owners
- IMT and RMI: Green Leasing Questionnaire