

# State of Tennessee Executive Branch Workspace Standards



Department of General Services  
Real Estate Asset Management  
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TN

## Overview

In 2012, the State of Tennessee began a real estate initiative to create efficient and effective office space in both owned and leased assets. This initiative, Transforming Tennessee for Tomorrow (T3), sought to enhance and standardize the building blocks and working environments that state employees utilize to serve citizens. T3 created standard floor plan designs, typical room and furniture sizes, and standard space attributes for Executive Branch departments. This initiative substantially reduced the state's real estate footprint, modernized the look and feel of state spaces, and created continuity for future planning, design, and real estate implementation. Additionally, T3 laid the groundwork for a new way of considering how and where State of Tennessee staff perform their work – a strategy later defined as Alternative Workplace Solutions (AWS).

Beginning in 2015, AWS built on the efficient standardization that T3 initiated, while also identifying and creating opportunities for work flexibility. Staff were grouped into the categories of Work from Home, Mobile Work, Assigned, and Free Address, and workspaces were designed to align with these designations. Departments that implemented AWS took advantage of the new Free Address work environments that added flexibility to choose the type of workstation that best aligned with the tasks of the day. The AWS program also provided tools for staff who are inherently mobile in their work (TN Dept. of Financial Institutions bank examiners, for example) that reduced the state's real estate footprint beyond those established during T3, and opened the door to a robust work-from-home option.

Alternative Workplace Solutions has been a key element in the continuity of services that State of Tennessee employees have been able to provide throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It is likely that working from home during the pandemic accelerated comprehensive AWS implementation – a “how we work” program that is operationally integrated into all state departments. Each department has a unique mission and vision, and leaders and staff can tailor AWS to align with their needs and their workplace culture.

The State of Tennessee Real Estate and Asset Management (STREAM) division of the Department of General Services has worked to analyze global projections, identify departmental culture, and design post-pandemic AWS space across the state. STREAM has collaborated with Executive Branch departments in both field office and central office strategies to identify future space needs, and most recently in Project Tetris (AWS office space consolidation in downtown Nashville).

Though each department has its own AWS implementation path and timeline for a final, post-pandemic work model, STREAM has seen many common threads between each group, particularly in the types of spaces needed by department staff. Illustrated in Appendix A, these needs build upon the original building standards, but also address the flexible workstyles that AWS creates. STREAM has documented the workspace building standards outlined in the following sections to guide the efficient and effective design collaboration with the Executive Branch departments.

## Guiding Design Principles

These principles are recognized globally by commercial designers and nationally through the General Services Administration space standards, but they are also tailored to the unique needs of state government office space. Examples and applications reflective of these guiding design principles are illustrated in Appendix B.

- **Consistency** - This applies to individual workspaces and floor plans, buildings, and state building campuses. It also applies to allocation of space for each position title and is applicable in the Facilities Revolving Fund (FRF) owned and leased spaces.
  - *Circulation + Consistency = Wayfinding*
- **Flexibility** - If state employees are identified as free address staff, they can select the type of workstation that best aligns with the tasks of the day when they are in the office. STREAM designs and provides a variety of types of workspaces for this to occur, including collaborative areas and stations for focused work. STREAM is committed to designing space that considers growth and evolution and allows for change with minimal interruption and cost.
- **Access to daylight and views** - This is achieved through strategic placement of hard-wall offices and enclaves on selected exterior perimeter walls, while maintaining daylight and views on primary exterior walls for open office furniture. When possible, furniture spines (typically the highest furniture panels) run perpendicular to window walls. Glare is minimized through desk orientation and maintaining appropriate distance from exterior windows. Additional hard-wall support spaces are located on building cores.
- **Space and culture alignment** - Effective and efficient government operations align with effective and efficient space design. Workspaces have inherent attributes, such as being collaborative or promoting focused work, and these attributes align with the desired culture of a department or a team. Providing a variety of types of workstations and using free address as a workplace strategy allows staff to connect culturally with others in their department while also selecting the spot that will help them do their work best. Workspaces shall support staff as they serve the citizens of our state.
- **Accessibility** - Universal design that promotes inclusivity is a primary objective on all design projects.

## Guidelines for Allocation and Use of Standard Spaces

The below is applicable in FRF owned and leased properties, represents a comprehensive and sustainable path forward, and reflects the trends and projections of many departments currently working on a real estate project. The below does not represent a sharp turn from the previous standards but instead reflects the evolution of both the AWS program and departmental space-culture alignment.

### Free Address Space

Positions chosen for a free address or unassigned designation (by participating departmental leadership) can select the workspace or arrangement that is best suited to support the task for the day or for a particular duration of time. Positions identified for free address can spend all five workdays in state space or can work remotely for a specified number of days each week. Staff who work from home (WFH) or are mobile in their job use free address stations when reporting to the physical office. Job duties do not require a fixed workspace location. Free address or unassigned seating is recommended whenever possible. This designation creates

space efficiencies and provides the greatest opportunity for the office space to support the work to be completed. Free address provides employees a variety of heads down, private spaces or collaborative, teaming spaces.

### **Assigned Office**

Executive Leadership or equivalent (including Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, CFO/COO, and Executive Director with statewide responsibilities) are to receive an assigned hard-walled office. In addition to the above titles, due to the varied responsibilities of the Director title, Director-level or equivalent with state-wide responsibilities may be considered for an assigned office, but under special circumstances only. Departmental leadership can consider the following to determine assigned office eligibility.

- If Director-level or equivalent is in the office four or more days a week, that individual may receive an assigned office.
- Director-level or equivalent with specific needs relating to the American Disabilities Act may receive an assigned office.
- Director-level or equivalent who is in the office 37.5 hours per week, and the job function requires auditory privacy (including from peers in similar role) by law or mandate for the majority of business hours, may receive an assigned office.
- Regional and Field State Office leadership may receive an assigned office, should job functions align with that of an executive director or director-level exception stated above. For example, a Regional Administrator who oversees several field offices may receive an assigned office but only at his or her primary office location. The office designation for Regional and Field Offices shall be applied consistently across the state.

### **Assigned Workstation/Cubicle**

These spaces are allocated for staff whose primary job function requires tasks to be performed at a fixed location in the same office building five days per week. An employee who requires an assigned seat will likely receive a standard 6' x 8.5' or 7' x 7' workstation, which provides both a moderate level of privacy and opportunity for collaboration. Examples of positions to receive assigned workstations are the following:

- A position that provides security measures (such as operating an electronic door release button).
- A position that provides specific support duties or operates specialty equipment at a single, static location (such as an executive assistant, receptionist, or mail processor).
- An individual with specific needs relating to the American Disabilities Act.

### **Additional Considerations for Allocation and Space Utilization**

1. Requests that do not follow the standards above require justification, which are provided by the participating department and reviewed by STREAM.
2. When a department requests a space renovation, a current organization chart and floor plan will be reviewed to ensure space guideline alignment.
3. When a department adds to its workforce, the associated budget request for space renovation/addition should be included. If the staff member is to receive a hard-wall office per the above guidelines, the

4. budget request should include the funds needed to construct a hard-wall office. Enclaves are not to be converted to hard-wall offices unless reviewed and approved by STREAM.
5. The required number of enclaves in an agency's space is derived from the ratio of open office workstations to hard-wall offices on a given floor. The exact number required will be determined by the STREAM design team. When a floor or space reaches the minimum number of enclaves allowable, no further enclave-to-office conversions will be acceptable.

## Standard Spaces

These reflect the primary needs of State of Tennessee departments.

### Types of Standard Spaces

- **Commissioner Office:** between 144 square feet and 250 square feet with solid door and full height glass sidelight.
- **Hard-wall Office:** 120 square feet with solid door and full height glass sidelight; can be for an individual or shared.



Figure 1: Hard-wall Office



Figure 2: Commissioner Office

- **Open Office Workstations:** between 25 square feet and 49 square feet; can be assigned or free address; the Free Address workstations can be designed as focused private workstations or open and collaborative workstations, to support and align with the work being performed. The images below (figures 3-7) show a range of workstations (not all) found in a typical state office building. Typical workstations comprise similar components, and can vary in height, panel material, etc.



Figure 3: Free Address Focused



Figure 4: Free Address Focused



Figure 5: Assigned Workstation



Figure 6: Free Address Collaborative Seating



Figure 7: Collaborative Seating

## Meeting Spaces

- **Reservable Meeting Spaces:** conference rooms, learning and training rooms, hearing and board rooms; typically reserved and can often accommodate between six and 50 people.



Figure 8: Conference Room



Figure 9: Training Room



Figure 10: Conference Room

- **Impromptu Meeting Spaces:** multipurpose rooms, open collaborative areas, and enclaves. Enclaves are 120 square feet with a solid door and glass sidelight. They provide a place for private meetings, impromptu work sessions, private phone calls, and focused work. These are an important feature, particularly for staff who sit in workstations in the open office. Privacy film can be added to the sidelight so the enclave can also function as a mother's room. The required number of enclaves per floor is derived from the ratio of open office workstations to hard-wall offices.



Figure 11: Open Impromptu Meeting Space



Figure 12: Enclave

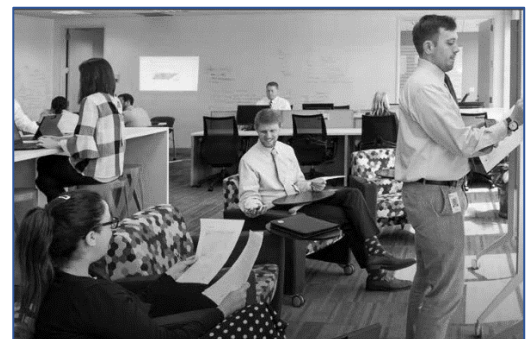


Figure 13: Open Impromptu Meeting Space

## Appendix A

Below are examples of current plans and historic data for departmental AWS implementation. These examples and associated data points aided in the development of the Executive Branch Workspace Standards.

### Overall Reduction Summary

Average percentage of hard-wall office reduction for AWS agencies: **50%**

Average percentage of reduction of assigned hard-wall offices in an AWS agency: **63%**

Average square footage reduction that an AWS project realizes: **30-40%**

The reductions noted above were achieved while maintaining private spaces for sensitive work. Examples of concepts and approaches employed to achieve this are the following:

- Appeals and Hearings – Work from home several days a week; when in office, have access to a group of free address offices that are for Appeals and Hearings staff only
- Attorneys – WFH several days a week; when in office, have access to workstations adjacent to enclaves
- Commissioner Support – WFH during some of each week; when in the office, co-assigned to hard-wall offices
- Large amount of free address workstations for a high percentage of a department, with access to several free address offices and enclaves for opportunities to ‘step away’ from open office space. “Me Space” becomes “We Space”

### Example agencies and associated AWS information

Some departments have/are implementing AWS more aggressively than others. The most common and ‘median-level’ adoption strategy, relative to assigned offices, is the following:

All Executive Directors and above to receive hard-wall offices. Some Directors to receive hard-wall offices if their function requires both visual and auditory privacy, and they are in the office for most of the week.

#### 1. Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- Participated in the T3 initiative and occupied two floors in the Citizens Plaza Building
- Participated in the AWS initiative and moved to one floor in the UBS building (23% square footage reduction)
- T3 hard-wall office count: 55
- AWS office count: 19 (reduced total number of assigned hard-wall offices by 65%)
- Through analysis of job function it was determined that a high number of staff could efficiently and effectively do their work from home - particularly focused work that requires auditory privacy
- Some staff who were in a T3 office were allocated a glass-front cube for days in the office
- They are located on a secure floor in a secure building

#### 2. Department of Health

- Participated in T3 initiative and occupied eight floors of the Andrew Johnson Building
- Participating in the AWS initiative and is slated to occupy six floors of the Andrew Johnson Building

- T3 hard-wall office count: 99 assigned offices
- AWS office count: 68 (57 assigned, 11 free address) (reduced assigned office count by 42%)
- General AWS 2.0 approach, regarding assigned offices: Primarily, Executive Directors and above will receive hard-wall offices; a few Director-level staff are also to receive hard-wall offices, based on job function

### **3. TennCare**

- Through AWS implementation, TennCare has consolidated their Metro Center offices from two buildings to one building – 310 Great Circle
- Before this consolidation, TennCare had 170 assigned offices
- After this consolidation, TennCare has 60 assigned offices and 32 free address offices (reduced assigned office count by 65%)
- General AWS 2.0 approach, regarding assigned offices: Director and above to receive assigned hard-wall offices, though Directors who are working from home most of the week will not receive assigned hard-wall offices
- Job function drives assigned vs. free address designation
- 36% of Directors do not have an assigned office, either because of amount of time spent in the office (two or fewer days in the office per week) or because of job function

### **4. Department of Commerce and Insurance**

- Partially participated in T3 initiative and occupied nine floors of the Davy Crockett Building
- Participating in the AWS initiative and is slated to occupy three floors of the Davy Crockett Building
- Pre-AWS office count: 95 assigned offices
- AWS office count: 50 (25 assigned, 25 free address) (reduced assigned office count by 74%)
- General AWS 2.0 approach, regarding assigned offices: Assistant Commissioner and above to received assigned offices

### **5. Finance and Administration**

- Participated in T3 initiative and occupied six floors of the Tennessee Tower Building
- Participating in the AWS initiative and is slated to occupy 3.25 floors of the Tennessee Tower Building
- T3 hard-wall office count: 82 assigned offices
- AWS office count: 40 (32 assigned, eight free address) (reduced assigned office count by 61%)
- General AWS 2.0 approach, regarding assigned offices: Director-level staff and above to received assigned offices, per specific statewide responsibilities and job function requirements

### **6. Department of Human Resources**

- Participating in the AWS initiative and is slated to occupy one floor of the Tennessee Tower Building
- Pre-AWS hard-wall office count: 41
- Final AWS office count: 11 (reduced assigned office county by 73%)
- General AWS 2.0 approach regarding assigned offices: Executive Director-level staff and above to received assigned offices



**7. Department of Human Services**

- Participated in T3 initiative and occupied 10.5 floors of the Citizens Plaza Building
- T3 assigned hard-wall office count: 114
- Final projected AWS assigned office count: 21 (reduced by 82%)
- General AWS 2.0 approach, regarding assigned offices: Executive Director-level and above to receive assigned office

**8. Department of Environment and Conservation**

- Participated in T3 initiative and occupied seven floors of the Tennessee Tower Building
- T3 assigned hard-wall office count: 96
- Final projected AWS assigned office count: 89 (59 assigned, 30 free address)
- General AWS 2.0 approach, regarding assigned offices: Executive Director and above to receive assigned office; Directors (if in office three days or more a week) to receive assigned office. Attorneys have shared assigned offices. Some Directors in two to three days a week in assigned offices or assigned stations depending on job function

**9. Department of General Services (CPO, STREAM, Commissioner Support)**

- Participated in T3 initiative and occupied three floors of the Tennessee Tower Building
- T3 assigned hard-wall office count: 40
- Final projected AWS assigned office count: 26
- General AWS 2.0 approach, regarding assigned offices: Executive Director and above to receive assigned office

**10. Department of Financial Institutions**

- Participated in T3 initiative and occupied 1.5 floors of the Citizens Plaza Building
- T3 assigned hard-wall office count: 40
- Final projected AWS assigned office count: one
- General AWS 2.0 approach, regarding assigned offices: Commissioner has assigned office; relying on touchdown space for remainder of workstations and offices for staff

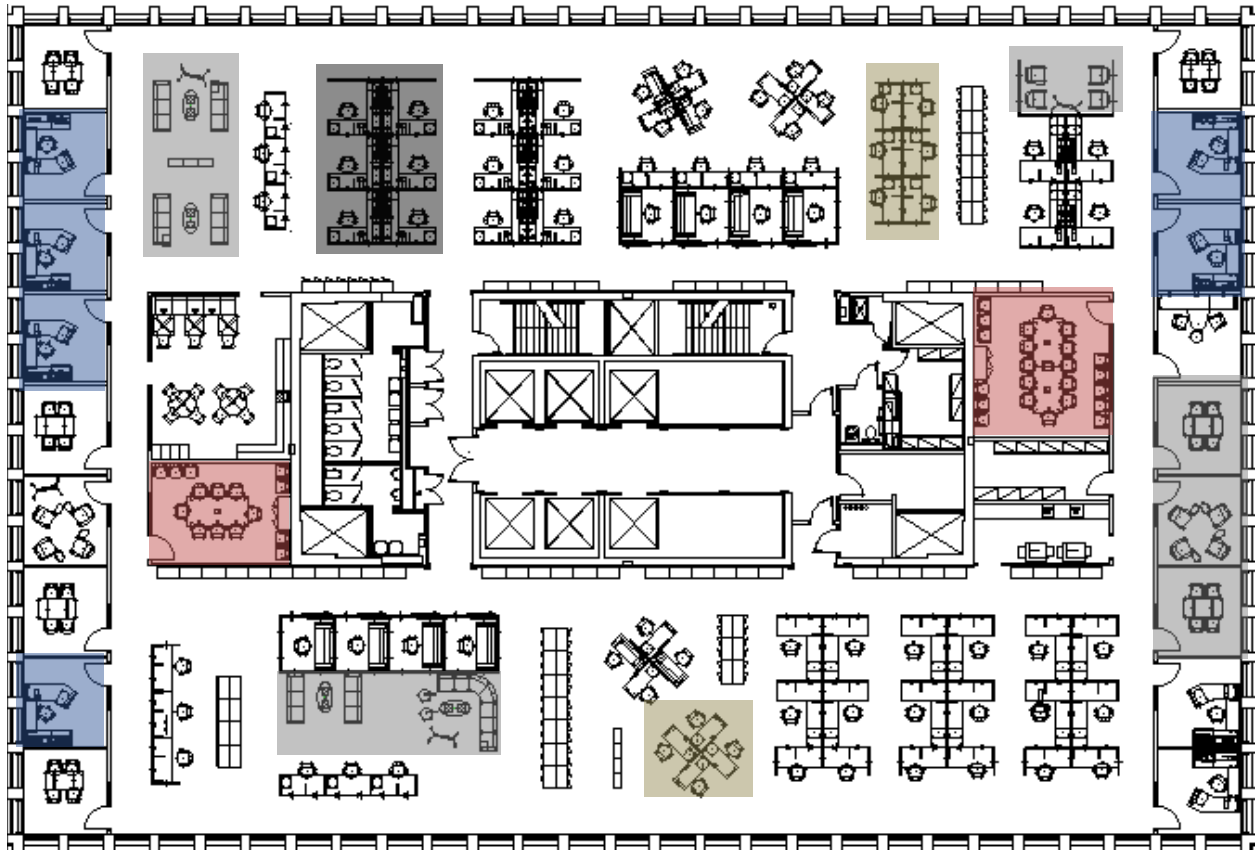
**11. Economic and Community Development**

- Participated in T3 initiative and occupied two floors of the Tennessee Tower Building
- T3 assigned hard-wall office count: 49
- Current AWS hard-wall office count: 14

**12. Department of Revenue**

- General AWS 2.0 approach, regarding assigned offices: Executive Director and above to receive assigned office; Director and above, in office three days a week or more to receive assigned office or glass cube (current project does not include Legal or OGC)
- Current AWS project creates enough vacancy in the Andrew Jackson Building to incorporate staff from 44 Vantage Way without building additional assigned offices or taking over additional space in the building

## Appendix B



*State of Tennessee Office Prototypical Layout*

■ **Formal Meeting Spaces:** found in the building core or on public facing floors; typically accommodate 6-50 attendees

■ **Informal Meeting Spaces:** located within a dedicated hard-wall space or out in the open office; enclaves are 120sf in size; the required number of enclaves per floor is derived from the ratio of open office workstations to hard-wall offices

■ **Private Hard-wall Office:** located on selected perimeter wall when feasible; assigned to Executive Directors and above with state-wide responsibilities; 120sf in size; for more information refer to Guidelines for Allocation and Use of Standard Spaces

■ **Assigned Workstation:** utilized in the open office environment for staff who require a static location; typically 49sf per station; for more information refer to Guidelines for Allocation and Use of Standard Spaces

■ **Free Address Workstation:** utilized in the open office environment; can be focused or collaborative; range in size from 25sf per person to 49sf per person