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Shapiro Administration Opens Newly Renovated Flexible Workspace at Forum Place as Part of Commonwealth's Workspace Modernization Project

The 2025-26 state budget includes the first dedicated statewide funding for the Space Optimization & Utilization Project (SOUP), enabling the Commonwealth to modernize facilities, reduce its footprint, and deliver tens of millions in taxpayer savings

Harrisburg, PA – The **Shapiro Administration** today marked a major step in its statewide workspace modernization strategy, opening the newly modernized Office of the Budget workspaces at Forum Place. **Budget Secretary Uri Monson** was joined by **Department of General Services (DGS) Executive Deputy Secretary Sandra Aguilera** and **Deputy for Administration and Real Estate Services Cathy Califano**.

The ribbon-cutting marks a major milestone in the Commonwealth's real-estate modernization initiative. The 2025-26 budget invests more than **\$15 million** in the [Space Optimization & Utilization Project \(SOUP\)](#), a statewide effort to reduce leased space, improve workplace quality, and deliver significant long-term savings.

"This budget gives us the tools to modernize state government at scale," said **Budget Secretary Uri Monson**. "With dedicated SOUP funding, we can accelerate projects like this one at Forum Place, replacing outdated and inefficient space with modern workplaces that support flexibility, collaboration, and provide better service to Pennsylvanians."

The Forum Place modernization — one of the largest SOUP undertakings to date — covers approximately 150,000 square feet across 12 agencies. The project shows how SOUP funding is enabling faster timelines, consistent design standards, and better use of public assets statewide.

The transformation at Forum Place includes:

- A 60 percent improvement in the average square footage per seat from 315 to 195, resulting in higher building occupancy rates.
- Standardized finish selections, accelerating design decisions by 75 percent and decreasing project timelines and cost.

- Modern meeting and collaboration rooms are equipped with improved technology standards to streamline scheduling and hybrid participation.
- Concierge-style relocation support, enabling agencies to transition faster and with minimal disruption.
- A 14-month delivery timeline, beating industry estimates for projects of this scope.

“Our flagship renovation at the [503 North Office Building](#) set the standard for what modern, efficient state office space can look like, and it has become the model that other agencies are now following,” said **DGS Secretary Reggie McNeil**. “Today’s transformation at Forum Place builds directly on that success—showing how consistent design, smarter use of space, and agency partnership can deliver real value for taxpayers while creating the contemporary workplaces our employees deserve.”

In FY Commonwealth’s footprint by more than 103,000 square feet and **delivered over \$3.5 million in lease savings**. This year, the agency is on track to save more than **\$6. 2024-25** alone, **DGS completed 23 optimization projects** that reduced the **1 million**, nearly double its original goal.

The **Office of Administration**, which partnered closely with DGS throughout the Forum Place redesign, emphasized the importance of modernized workplaces in supporting the Commonwealth’s talent strategy.

“Modern, flexible offices like this one send a clear message that Pennsylvania state government is investing in its people and workplaces to deliver results for Pennsylvania,” said **Secretary of Administration Neil Weaver**. “We are adapting our technology to the way teams work with tools to foster innovation and creativity across departments and enable secure work-from-anywhere productivity.”

New workforce data shows the impact of these modernization and space optimization efforts. In 2025, the number of employees working in Dauphin County who spend three or more days per week in the office has increased by 56 percent. Statewide, approximately 63 percent of Commonwealth employees under the Governor’s jurisdiction report to a worksite full-time and do not telework. Fewer than 1.5 percent work remotely full-time, a decrease from 9 percent at the start of the Shapiro Administration.

The Shapiro Administration remains focused on using data to guide real-estate decisions, reduce reliance on leased facilities, and deliver an estimated **\$180 million in projected lease savings over the next 10 years**. The Forum Place renovation is expected to serve as a model for future statewide SOUP projects now made possible through the new budget appropriation.

For more information about the Space Optimization & Utilization Project, visit the SOUP [webpage](#).

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