



UNDER ONE ROOF

Bringing the City of Pittsburgh's
departments together
in style

Case Study | City of Pittsburgh



PROJECT SPECS:

Location: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Space: 157,300 sq. ft.

Stories: 9

Floors affected: 5 (including basement)

To improve collaboration and efficiencies across departments, the City of Pittsburgh purchased a space for many of its public agencies to relocate to and collectively call “home.” The location? The former Art Institute of Pittsburgh. ODP Business Solutions Workspace Interiors® helped the City furnish the space for comfort, collaboration, and contemporary style, so the City could make some new history of its own.

What’s old is new again — and again and again

Located on the southern edge of Pittsburgh’s central business district, the historic building was originally designed in 1927 by Joseph Kuntz and has become known for its late Gothic Revival design. Before it became the new central hub for the City of Pittsburgh’s departments, it served as the headquarters for the W.J. Gilmore Drug Company and Equitable Gas — and was then purchased by the Art Institute of Pittsburgh.¹



SOURCE: <https://nextpittsburgh.com/city-design/its-a-go-the-former-arts-institute-building-will-be-the-home-of-one-stop-shopping-for-city-services/>



Making room to make an impact

Prior to the move, several of Pittsburgh's public agencies had been siloed, operating out of multiple locations throughout the city, including the aging John P. Robin Civic Building — a location with outdated floor plates, elevator issues, and additional challenges.²

To help improve collaboration between the public agencies and provide enhanced services to the public and taxpayers, the plan was to relocate to a space where the first floor could serve as a public-facing, customer-friendly “one-stop shop” that would enable city permitting activities and Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) public-facing resident services.³

A makeover made monumental

Before new furniture could be installed in the space, the building's safety, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems needed to be improved and brought up to code. In addition, bathrooms were renovated, the ground floor lobby was given new finishes, and a partial lower-level build-out was completed that included a kitchenette, a large conference room, storage space, and more.³

The more, the merrier

Once these renovations and refinements were completed, the original plan was to use the building to house three of the city's public agencies.

The plan changed to house eight agencies:

- The City of Pittsburgh
- Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP)
- Invest PGH
- Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation
- Pittsburgh Economic and Industrial Development Corporation
- Pittsburgh Land Bank
- Pittsburgh Urban Initiatives LLC
- Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA)





Reputation sparks collaboration

So, where does Workspace Interiors come in? With renovations complete, the City of Pittsburgh now needed to furnish five floors of this location (including the basement). The City had a history of working with ODP Business Solutions as a vendor for office supplies and facilities solutions, but not in the capacity needed for this new initiative. An RFP was created, and Workspace Interiors was invited to participate in the bidding process — alongside other furniture vendors.

Turning experience into action

Over the next 3–4 weeks, Workspace Interiors gained a true understanding of what the City of Pittsburgh was looking for in this new space. After submitting a detailed response that provided information on Workspace Interiors' in-depth experience, team members, and capabilities — coupled with case studies on projects in the same sector — the City of Pittsburgh felt confident in moving forward with Workspace Interiors as its furniture vendor.



One of the most influential points in the selection process? Workspace Interiors' ability to provide competitive pricing through its cooperative contract with OMNIA Partners. The City of Pittsburgh required a cooperative contract to complete the project, and Workspace Interiors was able to leverage its relationship with OMNIA Partners to help the city achieve compliance and cost savings.





Planning the work, working the plan

Next, it was time to finalize time frames and formulate a plan for furniture purchases, delivery, storage, and installation. Workspace Interiors held weekly meetings with the City of Pittsburgh to optimize communication. At first, these meetings were held for planning purposes, but they soon evolved into check-ins and updates throughout the project's duration.

Speaking of weeks, the City of Pittsburgh was looking for everything to be completed in just six weeks — and to have its departments move in while the process was ongoing. Time was of the essence, so Workspace Interiors leveraged relationships with key manufacturers to move up lead times and coordinate logistics with absolute precision. To help expedite things further, Workspace Interiors came up with a plan: furnish the building in phases.

Built from the ground up

The furnishing and installation process began in the building's basement and first floor to accommodate larger groups and agency meetings/training sessions. This also allowed the city to achieve its vision of creating a customer-friendly space on the first floor and making it accessible to the public as quickly as possible.

Once completed, work would be performed on the remaining floors that would house the office areas and workstations for each department.





Honoring the past while furnishing for the future

Due to the unique architecture and historical significance of the location, the City of Pittsburgh wanted every piece of furniture on the building's floors to appeal to modern tenants while still paying homage to the location's authentic style and 1920s heritage.

Whether it was furnishings for conference rooms, training spaces, soft seating areas, or offices, Workspace Interiors focused on sourcing compliant options that combined innovation with tradition to optimize the space, honor its lineage, and help the overall location shine.

Flexible selections meet powerful connections

One of the key pieces selected for the building was Staks workstations by OFS. Best of all, Staks workstations are able to scale to individual needs, giving the City of Pittsburgh flexibility for the future.

Since these workstations didn't have typical cubicle attributes, providing power to them in a discreet manner proved to be anything but traditional. Workspace Interiors collaborated with other trades involved in the building's makeover so that the workstations could be installed as planned without the clutter of wires. The solution: Power was run from walls through the backs of pedestals and then connected through a channel and hardwired for each workstation cluster. When all was said and done, the electrical components were discreetly concealed, and Workspace Interiors was able to deliver the clean look the city was looking for.





Outstanding outcomes

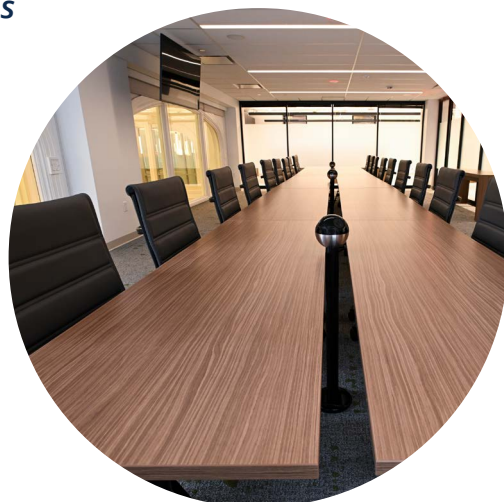
The building's final result was made possible through collaboration and efficiency — two of the benefits the City of Pittsburgh was striving for with this new location.

All of the agencies' floors were fully furnished, and several departments were successfully brought together under one roof. The City of Pittsburgh was pleased with not only the form and function of the space but also the many benefits it was able to provide. These included improved workflow, efficiency, collaboration, and communication — all of which aligned with the City's original objectives.

The project also led to new collaborative opportunities with Workspace Interiors, including additional orders for departments in the building and a new signage proposal.

"Collaboration was key for a project of this size and magnitude. Every member of the Workspace Interiors team had a specific role, but by the project's end, they all knew each other's jobs as if they were their own. Collaboration was instrumental not only for us but also for the city and future work."

**BRIAN SHANAHAN, SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE,
WORKSPACE INTERIORS**





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Our professional office furniture team has years of experience working with the public sector, so we understand the needs of government agencies and can work within their budget constraints. Count on us to work with you to implement a program of quality products and services that fits within your budget and meets your agency's specific needs.

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¹ https://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/redtail/images/18261_412_Blvd_of_the_Allies_Historic_Nomination.pdf

² <https://www.ura.org/news/leading-the-way-to-a-friendlier-home>

³ <https://www.ura.org/media/W1siZiIsIjIwMTg0MDcvMTk0NnZ4N3JjYzNqcf80MjBfQm9BX1VSQV9PZmZpY2VzX0Rlc2lnbi9SRlBfN18xOF8yMDE4LnBkZjZjXQ/420%20BoA%20URA%20Offices%20Design%20RFP%20-%20-%207-18-2018.pdf>