



Healthfirst's offices at 100 Church Street achieve LEED Gold; Designed by TPG

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According to TPG Architecture, its new design of the offices for Healthfirst, a not-for-profit health insurance company, has been awarded a LEED Gold rating by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The new offices occupy 172,000 s/f on four floors at 100 Church St. Healthfirst is now expanding to a fifth floor as well.

One of the primary reasons Healthfirst chose this space is for its air and light; there are windows on all four sides and much of the space is day-lit. It was also important to both Healthfirst and TPG to obtain LEED Gold certification; as a company invested in issues of both individual and public health, Healthfirst's commitment to environmentally responsible design and creating a healthy work environment was a priority.

Indoor air quality is important to Healthfirst; the designers specified - and received credit for using - low emitting paints and coatings, low-emitting flooring and low-emitting adhesives and sealants. Some other green aspects of the project include low flow water fixtures, high efficiency lighting, light occupancy sensors throughout the offices, high recycled content in furnishings, Energy-Star rated appliances, and, as noted, maximum use of daylight and window light. Over 90% of employees have access to daylight, even when seated, and most of the workplace walls are less than 42" high, so daylight blankets the interior. The rating also gave Healthfirst points for alternative transportation; the building, which is literally next to Ground Zero, is served by the A, C, E, 2, and 3 subway lines within a two block radius. Ten additional lines - the J, M, Z, A, C, E, 2, 3, 4 and 5 - will be readily accessible when the MTA's new Transit Hub on Fulton St. three blocks away is completed.

Another trend illustrated by Healthfirst is that the office is designed for employee flexibility and with sensitivity to a diverse population; the space includes several training rooms, a prayer room for employees who pray during the day, a wellness room for nursing mothers and others who need privacy, and several cafes and lounges. The majority of the Healthfirst employees are at Haworth work stations; the basic unit is a desk, table, task chair, upholstered bench and two guest chairs, all specified with low-emitting materials.

Both Healthfirst management and employees are ecstatic. Pat Wang, president and CEO of Healthfirst, said, "We could not be more pleased with the office that TPG designed for us. It is 180,000 s/f of science and art. Their science was to work collaboratively with our own excellent staff to meet our technical requirements regarding layout, IT, infrastructure and other business needs. This included achieving LEED Gold certification through an energy-efficient design. They created an environment that has energized our staff and is a real plus for recruitment and retention. Jim Phillips and his team were a pleasure to work with and I also appreciate their responsiveness to our budgetary, scheduling, and other needs."