

Essential COVID-19 Real Estate tips for Associations

By Aaron Pomerantz

Like you, I've been grappling with a host of difficult work issues since the advent of COVID-19 on top of managing my ongoing concerns about the health of my family, friends and colleagues. In this stressful, worrisome environment, I have been thankful for the array of practical tips and tactics that have been shared by various experts, and I want to pay it forward.

The top five COVID-19 countdown – essential real estate tips for association tenants.

Here is my countdown list of top real estate tips for you based on what I'm hearing from my association clients and seeing in the market.

#5 – Tap into business interruption or other insurance if you can. It's essential that you take time to identify and understand the insurance you have that may apply in the current situation. Trends are showing that coverage may not be available due to policy exclusions, but it's worth pursuing as every policy is unique.

#4 – Find ways to reduce costs. For example, if you pay for parking, seek a waiver on parking fees without triggering a "use it or Lose it" provision. Also, be sure that your landlord is seeking reductions in costs given facilities are being operated with extremely reduced utility usage.

#3 – Explore rent relief. Rent relief can take many forms from rent abatement, to deferral, to security deposit burndown in lieu of rent payment. Listen carefully to the options your landlord presents and don't commit to any particular direction right away. Your short-term decisions might leave you with longer-term financial obligations, so seek counsel to make the best choice for your situation.

#2 – Communication early, communicate often with your landlord. Now is the time to bring concerns and challenges you're facing to your landlord's attention, but how you handle the discussion matters. Prepare by prioritizing your concerns and related asks. During each conversation, be specific about your issues and be prepared to share detailed financial information to support your requests. Once your landlord has provided you with information, take time to review the options on the table to be sure that you craft a solution that truly works for your organization.

#1 – Make sure you have professional real estate advice. This is an unprecedented, evolving situation that requires quick decision-making, a process that can lead to unintended consequences. That's why my number one tip is to connect with a real estate professional who can help you successfully navigate the crucial conversations with your landlord and ensure you

Finally, I know that the spotlight is also on "return to work" best practices. For more on that important topic, check out the "return to work" resources available through [our COVID-19 Real Estate Help Center](https://www.asaebusinesssolutions.org/our-covid-19-real-estate-help-center) on [asaebusinesssolutions.org](https://www.asaebusinesssolutions.org).

Thanks for reading. If you're an association tenant or property owner in DC, Maryland, or Virginia and would like to chat with me, feel free to contact me anytime at 202.276.1784 or aaron.pomerantz@cushwake.com. For those outside the DMV, please contact my colleague Peter Brohoski at 703.770.3430 or peter.brohoski@cushwake.com

We can't promise all the answers, but we are working on these issues for other organizations – both tenants and property owners – and we welcome the opportunity to share what we're learning.

Stay well.

About the Author

Aaron Pomerantz co-leads Cushman & Wakefield's Non-profit and Association Industry Practice Group for the DC area and has more than 23 years of corporate real estate experience.