Altieri

THE OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

ARCHITECT
Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects | Partners

LOCATION
Chicago, Illinois

SIZE
500,000 SF

COMPLETED
2026

"The Obama Presidential Center represents a historic opportunity to build a world-class museum and public gathering space that celebrates our nation's first African American President and First Lady, steps away from where he began his career, where she was raised, and where—together—they made their home." (www.obama.org) Located in the historic Frederick Law Olmsted-designed Jackson Park, the new landmark is presented as a campus - a collection of three buildings, visible at grade, comprising the Museum tower to the north, the Forum in the center and the Library to the south - all gathered around a public plaza. These three volumes are connected and form one building below grade. Park space extends over the roofs of Forum and Library buildings, allowing the buildings and landscape (designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates) to be fully integrated. The project also includes a two-story underground garage structure to the south of the Library.

The project was designed to achieve LEED Platinum, SITES Silver, and International Living Future Institute (ILFI) Zero Energy certifications for all buildings and facilities. A key component of meeting these goals is the use of an all-electric Geothermal Heat Pump System with energy sourced entirely from off-site photovoltaic panels that generate electricity without burning fossil fuels. The project includes an on-site central heating and cooling plant utilizing ground-source water-to-water heat pumps to produce chilled water and heating hot water which are available year-round with independent piping distribution systems. Ventilation air is handled by dedicated outdoor air processing (DOAP) systems to decouple the conditioning requirements of outdoor air. Provision of ventilation air is controlled in response to occupancy through the monitoring of space carbon dioxide levels and through make-up air to compensate for varying exhaust rates. The building is fully climate controlled, with year-round temperature and humidity control for all areas of the building. Building spaces have been classified into "collections" and "non-collections" categories and are served by dedicated air handling systems that maintain appropriate space environmental conditions. Humidification is provided within each air handling system via adiabatic humidifiers with low-pressure nozzle technology that directly injects a fine water mist. Energy modeling demonstrated there would be an 80% reduction in humidification energy consumption when using adiabatic humidifiers instead of electric steam humidifiers.

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