Workday and Pierce County, Washington:
Achieving a Mission of Service

One Suite of Applications, Many Successes

As home to Mount Rainier and Puget Sound, Pierce County is an iconic location in Washington state encompassing 1,800 square miles, from the Cascade Range to the Pacific Ocean. Its natural beauty and humming economy inspire the passion of its county employees.

With several Fortune 100 companies, a major Northwest port, and the largest military base on the West Coast, Pierce County government delivers hundreds of essential services, ranging from county governance, public safety and justice, to economic development and parks. County employees are passionate about supporting the local community, promoting a strong economy, and preserving the region's natural beauty.

Pierce County's goal is to deliver customer-focused government technology services to enhance livability in their county. They have a mission of technology excellence, efficiency, and economy.

That's why Pierce County turned to Workday to streamline the way that payroll, benefits, and time-tracking services are delivered.

Taking the Long View

With more than 3,000 employees, Pierce County has many of the same needs and challenges as any large company. At the same time, the county's 27 departments all have very different business drivers and HR needs.

The county previously ran its HR system on a legacy mainframe paired with electronic spreadsheets and manual, paper record-keeping for time tracking. The old system was manually intensive and often led to redundant data entry and duplicated tracking. Managers and directors across the organization found it difficult to get real-time information.

The county conducted a business case analysis and determined that it made the most sense to replace the mainframe-based system. A project team documented requirements, initiated a request for proposal, and evaluated possible vendors. When evaluating replacement systems, the team looked for a system that would reduce costs, boost productivity, improve service delivery, and reduce power and paper consumption. In short, Pierce County needed a system that was built to last.

Organization at a Glance

3,150 employees

County seat: Tacoma

Workday Applications

Workday Human Capital Management
> Employee and Manager Self-Service

Workday Payroll

Workday Time Tracking

Workday Benefits

Workday Financial Management

Workday Expenses

Workday Grants Management

Workday Procurement

Summary of Business Benefits

Budget savings of at least $100,000 per year

Conversion of paper-based systems to automatic, self-service systems

Increased data accuracy

Unified system with streamlined processes and actionable analytics

Employees focused on public service vs. back-office administrative functions

Easier (and fewer) integrations to other systems

Employee and manager self-service through a modern interface

"We had an older system," says Larry Gezelius, IT software development manager. "We also had a history of keeping our systems around for a while. When looking for a replacement of our mainframe system, we knew we wanted a solution that we could use for another 15 to 20 years."

The team felt confident that it had such a solution in Workday's Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) system that would serve the county for many years. Workday offers a single, unified system for all HR, payroll, benefits, and time data entry. This approach enables the county to streamline its business practices, cut down on integrations, and offer employees and managers self-service tools. As a cloud-based service, Workday's cost of ownership was significantly lower than the legacy system. "Workday is at the beginning of a long technological trend," says Gezelius. "There are a lot of other systems that are at the end of their technical era, and we would just have had to switch again."

Saving Dollars, Boosting Productivity

Pierce County's previous processes were awash in paper, with redundant data entry and duplicate tracking systems. The unification of Workday Human Capital Management (HCM), Workday Payroll, and Workday Time Tracking gives manager and staff greater control and visibility into daily processes and enables Pierce County to replace paper time cards with employee self-service, saving time and paper.

Pierce County estimates that Workday will save the county at least $100,000 per year.

Not only does Workday significantly improve productivity, but the system also eliminates many costs typically associated with on-premise software, including upgrades, backups, and recovery support.
"With Workday, we didn't have to build out the infrastructure to run the system," explains Gezelius. "That would have taken roughly three months of effort just to assemble the environment prior to any training,

testing, or utilization."

The county was able to avoid expensive, time-consuming upgrades of the legacy system by choosing Workday. "We were impressed not only with the scheduled updates, but we also benefit from the experiences of other Workday customers on the same up-to-date version," says Gary Robinson, director of budget and finance.

Benefits of a Unified Solution

A unified Workday solution gives Pierce County flexibility and control over payroll and benefits. That's something the former payroll system could not deliver.

"We are continually impressed with Workday Payroll's modern architecture, elegant user interface, and easy-to-use employee self-service capabilities," says Robinson. "For example, Workday allows the county to offer employees self-service benefits enrollment and have those deductions reflected automatically in paychecks."

When the system was unveiled to the HR and finance employees who handle payroll and benefits, the group was impressed with how well Workday automates many administrative tasks and frees staff to focus on more important tasks, such as data analysis.

During the Workday Payroll demo, we had approximately 50 users in the room and the minute they saw the interface, everybody was excited about the change.

Pierce County is looking forward to taking advantage of the analytics capabilities of Workday. Reporting from its legacy solutions was not intuitive or integrated, so the power of actionable analytics within Workday was evident from the outset of our selection process. Users can't wait for drill-down reports that get to the heart of the matter quickly and painlessly.

No-Worries Security and Compliance

Although the Pierce County team was looking for a modern application, the team carefully scrutinized Workday's security and compliance capabilities. Local government has stringent security requirements, and managing public records can be a challenge. Workday had all the right answers.

"We had all the routine concerns regarding cloud vendors," Gezelius admits. "Are their solutions secure? Are they going to be highly available? Is the performance going to be there? Workday had great answers to all of those questions."

Better Public Service

Robinson believes that Workday offers the ideal mix of standardization and configurability that the county requires. "We wanted not only to meet our requirements, but we wanted to meet our requirements without customization," he says. "We really see Workday as adopting a new standard business process."

"We are moving toward greater standardization, but given the diversity of functions that we have within county government, we know that we have different practices than non-government organizations," says Robinson. "Workday has enabled us to have standardization but also the ability to configure it in ways that meet our individual needs."

The bottom line for Robinson? The public will see benefits immediately, because county employees will be freed to focus on key service rather than administrative tasks.

He anticipates that Pierce County will be much more responsive to constituents because, thanks to Workday, the staff now has additional capacity to devote to serving them.