

eBook

Configurable Solutions to Federal HR Challenges



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Overview

Administrative processes can be time consuming in federal human resources (HR) departments. HR specialists still complete many high-volume processes manually and use legacy systems that are unable to accommodate new requirements being implemented. Many of them lack the tools and resources needed to keep up with their daily workload and high-level strategic planning at the same time.

Technology offers a solution – providing tools that can handle collective bargaining, discipline, harassment, performance management, training, retirement calculations and applications, and much more. And while there are several options available out of the box, not all of them offer the flexibility and federal-focus needed to ensure they match the specific needs of individual agencies.

Here we take a closer look at what a flexible and configurable federal HR system should look like, how to ensure a good match for your agency, and how EconSys is working with agencies to implement highly configured modules that fit their needs.

Thought Leadership Based on a Wealth of Experience

In working with more than 100 agencies in the Federal Government, EconSys has established core competencies in federal performance management, retirement processing, reporting, and employee and labor relations requirements. Learn more at econsys.com.

The Unique Challenges of HR in a Federal Agency

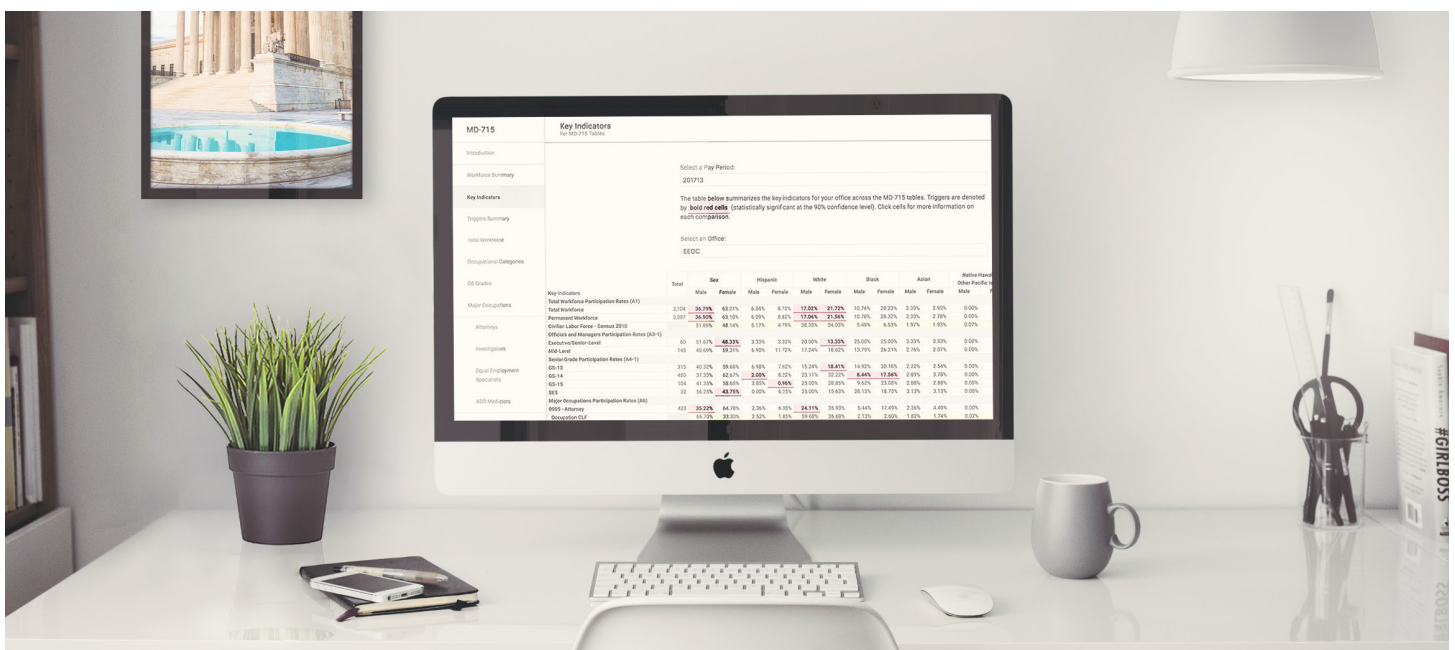
Within a federal agency, there are dozens of specific requirements that relate to particular platforms such as performance management.

HR Software platforms developed by private-sector software vendors often fail to fully account for these unique challenges and specific feature requirements. As a result, agencies often lack sufficient tools to perform their daily tasks efficiently.

At a high level, federal HR software must be:

- Browser agnostic and able to work within a range of work environments across a vast organization
- Compliant with FedRAMP requirements for the specific agency in which it will be used, with flexibility for configuration
- Section 508 compliant to meet the current accessibility requirements for government use
- Able to connect and sync data from financial centers for up to date records, when necessary

For these reasons, it is important to work with a vendor that has a history of servicing the Federal Government, [is FedRAMP authorized](#), and offers highly configurable solutions for individual cases in different agencies.



Line of Business and Agency Requirements

In addition to the above minimum requirements, there are also line of business requirements detailed by the [Office of Personnel Management \(OPM\)](#) for certain HR processes. As an example: For Performance Management, OPM specifies 72 unique requirements that must be present for federal use.

Further, each agency has specific needs. Other considerations might include:

- Agency specific requirements for each module type
- Software configuration to address planned use
- Agency headcount and workforce structure
- Unique bargaining agreements between agencies and their employees
- Congressional and executive requirements

To provide HR software solutions to a federal agency, the CSP must not only meet OPM requirements, but also the specific needs of the agency and the employees who work there. This makes it difficult for most off the shelf software without extensive (and often very expensive) customization.



Benefits of a Flexible Federal HR System

Each agency has an internal review and approval process unique to their organization. Workflows must have steps and alerts that are configurable to match this process. This ensures cases are reviewed on time and by the required authorities at the agency.

By selecting a configurable federal HR application, agencies can create workflows that align to their unique procedures. They can adjust paperwork needs, implement communications systems and reporting, and utilize workflows that fit their organizational structure. Forms can be created and attached to workflow steps to capture data elements for reporting and metrics.

Modern Technology and Methodologies

Many federal agencies still use legacy systems that lack the flexibility to match frequent changes to core OPM requirements. Others are still partially paper-based. The result is greater inefficiency in almost all agency HR processes.

As an example:

Employee and labor relations software is widely available from many private-sector vendors. However, these tools are largely built for other private-sector organizations and lack core functionality configured for federal use. The following are common features not always built natively into workflows designed for individual agencies:

- **Collective bargaining**
- **Discipline**
- **Harassment**
- **Performance**
- **Training**
- **Reasonable accommodations**
- **Overtime policy**
- **SPS officers (special case)**
- **OSHA provisions**

The above example only scratches the surface of what most federal HR specialists need in an HR software platform. The technology you choose should accommodate both these needs and those that vary by agency, including low volume and special cases.

Every agency's unique needs should to be met with a concerted effort by the vendor you select. Workforce business processes may include different approval paths, alerts, and deadlines.

By selecting a vendor that offers a fully configurable system that can accommodate all requests, you guarantee a system that can evolve to match future requirements. Only a dedicated federal HR solution can offer this.

What a Solution Configured for Federal HR Looks Like

EconSys has been a trusted partner in configuring workflow requirements for federal agencies since 1990 and has extensive experience in meeting these needs. Where other private-sector vendors attempt to force-fit federal processes to their platform, EconSys is able to configure an already federal-focused solution to match agency-specific workflows and processes.

In working with more than 100 agencies in the Federal Government, EconSys has established core competencies in federal performance management, retirement processing, reporting, and employee and labor relations requirements.

EconSys was contracted to build a configurable Employee Labor Relations solution for the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC)

During the requirements gathering, EconSys learned that PBGC required a more complex and customized Employee Labor Relation solution than the standard implementation. To accommodate these needs, EconSys configured the module according to PBGC's workflow.

EconSys configured forms to track their specific workflows, some of which were mandated by union bargaining agreements. Forms to assist with auditing and tracking were also provided.

Due to EconSys' understanding of agency specific software needs, the process of securing approval at internal agency (SDLC) software development reviews was easier for PBGC HR management.

EconSys was contracted to provide a configurable Performance Management solution for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

EconSys met with FEMA to understand the workflows of their performance processes, including the employee types and schedules and produced high-level design requirements. Once these requirements were confirmed by the authorized FEMA Points of Contact, the EconSys development team implemented the configurations and customizations. This allowed FEMA to align goals based on their unique organizational structure.

As a result of this partnership, FEMA has reduced the time spent by HR, management, and employees to create performance plans each year. The ability to align employees to cascading goals based on the internal organization structure ensures each employee can work towards both the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA's strategic objectives more easily.

EconSys was contracted to implement a configured reporting module for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Each year, DHS components offer internships to students and citizens across the United States. In previous years, complex spreadsheets were used to track applicant and position data. Generating the required management and organization reports required hours of labor and may not have fully captured all the diligent work that was put into the projects.

EconSys was able to capture DHS's requirements, provide feedback and insight into the current process, and develop a custom dashboard and report generator for the client.

The new reporting capabilities generate concise reporting metrics for DHS. Built with interactive dashboards, DHS users can quickly drill down to smaller subsets of data, as needed. Partnering with EconSys allowed DHS to focus on the organizational mission over Excel spreadsheets.





Advantages of a Flexible Federal HR System

A configurable system allows agencies to add or remove steps from the process with ease, adjusting to shifting requirements and workflow conditions within an agency. Whether providing greater transparency for DHS, reducing the time required to complete performance plans at FEMA, or accommodating custom workflows at PBGC, a flexible federal HR system can better match agency requirements. Additional benefits include:

- **Easier and Faster Compliance Reporting** – When all information is recorded into a shared system, reports can be run in significantly less time. Required reporting, such as the number of cases handled or case outcome tracking can be done quickly from a single interface.
- **Integration with Existing Federal Systems** – A flexible platform designed for federal HR integrates natively with existing federal systems. The software chosen should bolt on to those systems as an additional resource, not as a new tool requiring further upkeep.

- **Federal Security Compliance** – By working with a FedRAMP approved solution, agencies can ensure the software selected meets all federal security guidelines and compliance regulations.
- **Accessibility to Reports and Data** – Agencies using paper files may have data distributed across multiple offices. It can take hours to collect and review paperwork for a specific case, especially if those documents are distributed in filing cabinets across a 100-mile radius. With a flexible HR software system, it takes only minutes to pull the data and run a report.
- **Dashboard Views for Specialists and Management** – HR Specialists can view their current caseload, upcoming tasks, and workflow reminders. With their own higher-level dashboard, management can see the current status of each specialist.

A flexible federal HR system should be portable and configurable, connect to your existing HR system and work in tandem with your current processes. It will help eliminate the need for paper records, supporting electronic signatures or the attachment of wet signature records for future reference.

Why EconSys?

Our History

EconSys has worked with Federal Government agencies for more than 25 years and understands their HR systems. This provides the insight and experience needed to configure and implement systems quickly that match your unique needs, while considering the security and compliance requirements of a federal system. FedHR Navigator provides an enterprise “Hire-to-Retire” HR platform designed exclusively for federal agencies.

FedHR Navigator’s built-in flexibility helps us to better understand and meet the needs of our customers that may not be addressed by a core module. This includes the implementation of features such as reasonable accommodations, separations management, cyber security incentive pay, and harassment claims. We have expanded the solutions offered through the FedHR Navigator platform while ensuring the overall flexibility of the system to meet future requirements in the same way.

Our goal is to help federal HR offices better leverage technology to improve the quality of service delivered to its agency employees. Contact us today to discuss the configurable solutions EconSys offers to meet federal HR challenges and what the next steps are to evaluate potential options for your agency.



Contact Us

3120 Fairview Park Drive
Suite 500
Falls Church, Virginia 22042

P: 703.642.5225
Email: info@econsys.com

 EconSys.com

