



Workforce Management Software Buyer's Guide for Government Agencies

Your guide to making the best WFM
choice for your agency



Introduction

Workforce management (WFM) is an organizational method and approach that helps government agencies maintain a productive workforce. WFM is an essential practice for agencies with specific, complex and unique challenges faced by each department.

Genuine workforce management happens when government agencies are able to integrate key activities into one platform. Regardless of the size of your agency or department, chances are you're looking for information about how to choose the right workforce management (WFM) software because your:



- Existing systems aren't meeting your need to offer multiple methods for employees to punch in (e.g., touchless clocks or mobile devices)
- Processes make it difficult to mitigate unnecessary waste like overtime or inaccurate hours tracking, which puts public funding in jeopardy
- Tech stack (ERP, HCM, payroll) lacks efficient and effective integration, which leaves you concerned about data reliability and accuracy

Introduction cont'd

With WFM, government agencies and departments can make decisions based on labor tracking and job costing, and leverage document management capabilities to mitigate risk. In addition, tools for supervising mobile and remote staff members make it easy to capture all the necessary data, regardless of an employee's location.

Whatever brought you to this search for a WFM solution, you're in good company. Many government agencies are realizing a need to elevate their workforce management approach.



Use Systems to Empower Workforce Management

Given recent global challenges, agile workforce management systems have become more critical than ever

“In a remote and hybrid work setting, technology continues to have even more of a direct impact on the day-to-day work of employees and how they collaborate with each other,” states [an analyst from Gartner](#). “Yet it is becoming increasingly important for HR leaders to plan for their technology investments with more caution than in years past.”



Gartner notes five key trends that are crucial for HR leaders to address today's workforce challenges:

Ensuring solutions that enhance and uphold privacy.

Using "anywhere operations" that employees can access regardless of location.

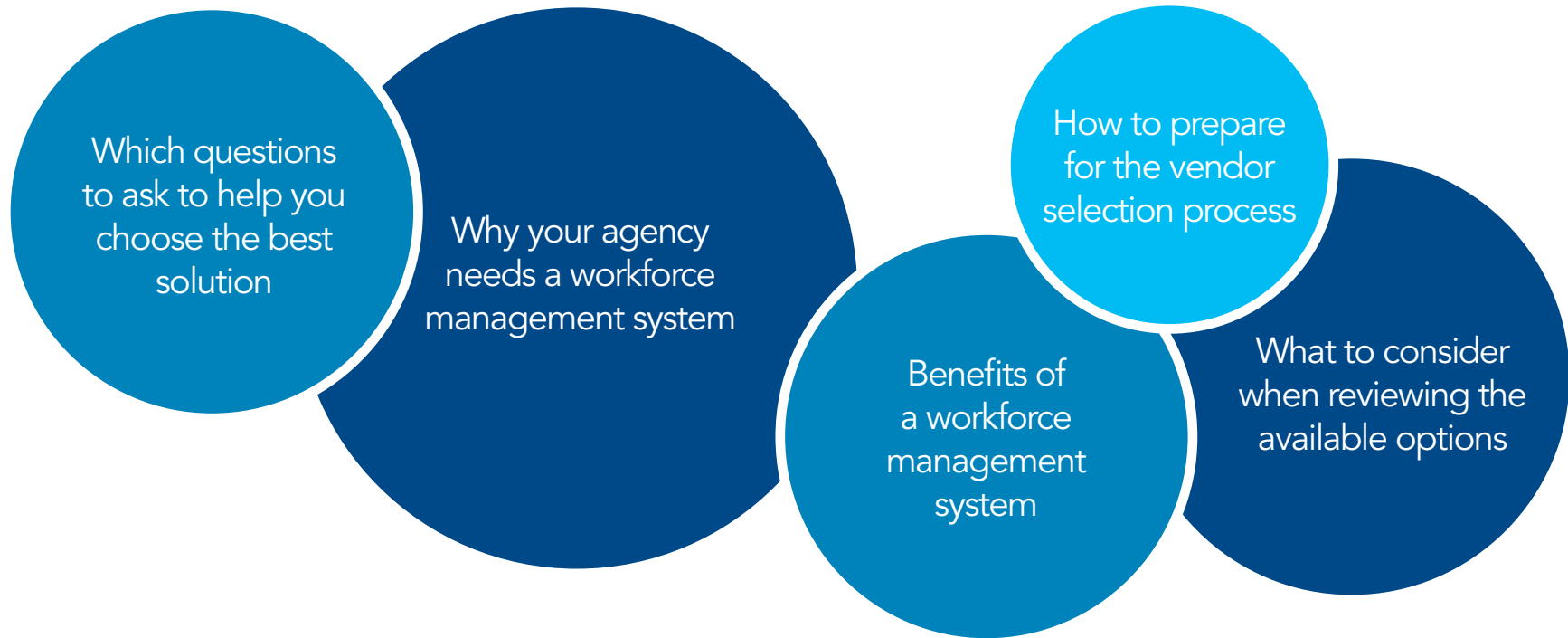
Deploying software that works across various devices.

Establishing cybersecurity and secure digital access.

Integrating technologies to enable automation.

You may know your agency has outgrown the current approach but updating your systems or implementing workforce management software can feel overwhelming for the first time. You're also likely feeling the stress of needing to choose the right solution that will meet existing and future needs. The bottom line: it's tough to know where to start. That's where this guide comes in.

This buyer's guide will help you understand:



We'll guide you through key steps to help identify what you need to consider and who needs to be involved. Selecting a workforce management solution may seem like an ominous task, but with this guide, you have what you need to ensure you will be prepared for a successful journey.

Benefits of Better Workforce Management cont'd

You don't need convincing that there's a better way. But here are some examples of the benefits your agency will experience with more effective, efficient workforce management systems:

Supervisors and administrators can use the WFM platform to easily create, share and update schedules.

Shift hierarchies of qualifications and certifications are part of the scheduling framework, making it easy to ensure necessary coverage to meet public safety requirements.

Fast, efficient and integrated data transfer allows you to ensure information is accurate and available to those who need it.

Data for seasonal employees with multiple jobs and job locations can easily be managed within one system.

Mobile, touchless and web time-tracking options help you manage labor compliance and overtime, regardless of employee location.

With these benefits in mind, it's time to take the steps that will help you analyze and review the impact a workforce management solution will have on your agency.

Why Your Institution Needs a WFM System

Within governmental agencies, effective workforce management is an essential organizational approach that simplifies crucial activities and allows workers to meet constituent needs. Now more than ever, supervisors and agency leaders want to maintain productivity, effectively manage mobile or remote workers, promptly schedule shifts and efficiently manage documents.

If workforce management is an entirely new undertaking for your institution, our eBook [“Everything You Need to Know About Workforce Management”](#) will help educate you on the terms and definitions involved with workforce management solutions, as well as the challenges WFM will help you solve. Immediate benefits of implementing WFM software include improved productivity, staff empowerment and efficient, automated processes.



Improved productivity

In the simplest terms – productivity requires that you’re effectively managing your workforce. For government agency employees to be successful, managers and supervisors need technology that assists with productivity. Unfortunately, according to research, a significant amount of time is wasted in the workplace. [Finances Online](#) reports that:

60%



of employees’ tasks include work to organize files and communicate about tasks

49%



of American employees openly admit to time theft, which can cost as much as 7% of gross annual payroll

Employees spend up to

four hours a week

on unproductive tasks



These issues and others have a significant impact not only by creating unnecessary costs but also by decreasing employee satisfaction. If workforce management software doesn't engage your workers, your chances for success are severely limited. According to [technology marketplace advisor G2](#), employee engagement with software has a significant impact on its organizational longevity and success:

24.06%



of employees have considered leaving their job because they didn't have the right software

51.95%



of employees are unhappy at work because of the software they're using

With the right tools, your leaders, administrators and supervisors have access to the information they need to handle scheduling and labor tracking from one system. Ideally, they can also use the WFM system to manage employee leaves and retain important documents.

Fully integrated workforce management enables your agency to manage time and attendance for every full time and part time employee on staff, build accurate and effective schedules and ensure that you have a clear perspective on the resources required to handle every shift.

Empowered staff

Workforce management software not only helps streamline management activities in a way that enables you to achieve agency goals, but the right system also helps your supervisors and employees focus on what's happening on the job. WFM systems improve transparency and efficiency by giving employees access to view the hours they've worked, their schedules, leave accruals and other personal information.

Not only does employee self-service in WFM software reduce the need for manager or HR assistance, but it also empowers workers to review data prior to approval to ensure it's accurate. When exceptions occur, notifications can be set up to ensure that managers are aware that an employee is at risk of an overage of hours worked.

Configurable rules and reports can help managers to keep an eye on the labor budget and hours worked. With this data, they are empowered to make more informed scheduling decisions. This level of automation is what top talent expects from an employer.



Efficient automated processes

Manual processes are prone to errors. These errors take time to fix. If they aren't caught in time, they can even cost significant amounts of money to resolve – either through backpay, lawsuits or regulatory fines.

When you put automated WFM processes to work, efficiency can skyrocket. Thanks to the power of WFM technology, it's possible to track hours across multiple job locations and even automate labor calculations. The ability to automate calculations dramatically decreases the time required for payroll processing, while also increasing accuracy.

The ability to collect and manage employee time and attendance data at any location ensures you have what you need to run your business efficiently. Government IDs can be used for the daily operations like clocking in and out, as well as securing and monitoring access to facilities. Integrations to payroll and ERP ensure time collected becomes actionable and your business processes run smoothly and efficiently.

With the understanding that your agency needs a workforce management solution that can improve productivity and increase employee empowerment, you're ready to start talking to companies that provide WFM solutions.



Request and Review RFPs from WFM Providers

To choose the right workforce management solution, you need to align on “must-have” and “nice to have” capabilities and establish comparison criteria to ensure all systems are reviewed fairly.

Before you post a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify possible solutions and meet with vendors, define these essential parameters:

- Articulate your goals and the issues you want the system to solve.
- Draft a list of system requirements; prioritize each item based on necessity.
- Review your timeline to establish ideal dates for system implementation and go-live.
- Identify who should be involved in the system review and selection process as well as who contributes to the final decision. Note: if your agency has “represented workers,” such as those from a union, make sure they have representation during the system selection process.

It's essential to identify these parameters before you start requesting system information from vendors. Gather the necessary input and information so that you can explain and inform vendors what you need.

In addition to identifying your parameters, there are questions you must ask to gather the information you need – from your internal stakeholders, as well as your vendors.

Questions to Ask Stakeholders

#1 Does our WFM system need to integrate with other systems, such as payroll, enterprise resource planning (ERP) or human capital management (HCM)?

#2 Will this system support our needs for full-time, part-time and seasonal workers?

#3 What system capabilities do we require beyond basic time tracking (e.g., labor tracking, job costing, leave management, document management)?

#4 How do we want workers to access the system (e.g., via wall-mounted clocks, web-based access or mobile options)?

#5 How do we anticipate staff will react to this change?

#6 What change management and communication resources do we have to help ensure successful implementation and user adoption?

Questions to Ask Vendors

#1 How long will implementation take for an institution of our size and needs?

#2 What level of customer service does your company provide after implementation?

#3 If we provide remote access to staff members, can we control or limit their access?

#4 What tracking features exist for mobile-enabled functionality in the system?

#5 Was your system designed as an all-in-one offering or has it evolved?

#6 What system integrations do you currently offer?



Asking these questions and doing your homework is essential to find the right solution and avoid wasting valuable funds.

Consider Important Workforce Management Factors

Successful agencies implement processes that increase data accuracy as well as support productivity. Your staff depends on leaders to select the systems that will support and enhance their work.

As you look for the right system to enhance workforce management at your agency, keep these factors and considerations in mind.



Factors <hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: 0;"/>	Considerations <hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: 0;"/>
End User	<p>Think about the people who will use the WFM system –administrators, supervisors and workers all have different system needs. You need to understand them and identify how the new system specifically meets their needs.</p> <p>Consider creating focus groups with end-users to gather their input and to their needs. This is the first step in an effective change management process.</p>
System levels	<p>Today's systems are highly configurable. Make sure you're considering what level of sophistication you require in your WFM system.</p> <p>For example, do you need basic time tracking or do you need a system that will allow you to add job and cost codes? What type of approvals and visibility do you require for scheduling?</p> <p>Make sure your future needs are part of the consideration – as your agency evolves, you want your WFM system to grow with you.</p>

Factors	Considerations
Integration options	<p>There are wide-reaching WFM systems that cover many functions but don't excel in all of them. Not all systems are created equal, and not every agency has the same needs and strategies. At the same time, patching together a system built on the best tool for every function can create an IT stack that is very difficult to manage.</p> <p>As you look at your options, use a "best-of-breed strategy" in which an ERP, accounting/payroll system or HCM, is at the center and can be supported by integrations that will extend the functionality.</p>
Cloud vs. on-premises solutions	<p>Depending on your agency's operational needs, you may benefit from workforce management software that is cloud-enabled, or you may require an on-premises solution.</p> <p>If supervisors require access to critical business systems while working remotely, a cloud solution is likely the best option. An on-premises or blended solution may be a better option for employees who don't work remotely, such as security staff or onsite recreation employees.</p> <p>Make this decision based on your current and possible operational needs which could arise in the future.</p>

Factors	Considerations
<p>Budget considerations</p>	<p>If you haven't had a WFM system in place, it's understandable if you're concerned about adding a new expense to your budget. Keep in mind that when you're leveling up your systems there are long-term benefits for both workers and the agency.</p> <p>As you look at the options, consider up-front costs, individual license costs, and additional training or customer service costs. Not every vendor has the same cost model, so make sure you evaluate each offering accordingly.</p> <p>Also, be sure to calculate how your WFM solution will save you money. Whether it's fewer payroll errors, improved job cost reporting, more efficient document management or faster schedule creation, you'll potentially reduce costs with a better WFM system in place.</p> <p>Worried about getting the boss on board? Read our blog, "Building a Business Case for Time & Attendance Software" for some tips to help you calculate savings.</p>

Not sure where to start?

Download our Scope of Work comparison tool to easily compare WFM solutions and their capabilities.

➔ [Check it Out](#)



Gather Input from Trusted Sources

As the saying goes, you don't know what you don't know. That's why it's essential to gather input from a variety of trusted sources as you consider various WFM system options. Once you have a list of your top choices, it's time to ask for feedback regarding your top vendors.

At a minimum, make sure you cover your bases with these sources:



Talk to your peers:



- Current and former colleagues
- Fellow members in professional organizations
- Industry groups on LinkedIn

Attend industry conference sessions:



- [HR Technology Conference & Exposition](#): Meet vendors and gain insights needed to make critical HR system decisions.
- [American Correctional Association \(ACA\) Conference](#): Interact with thousands of corrections professionals in workshops, meetings and events, while educating yourself and expanding your network.
- [Gartner ReimagineHR Conference](#): Connect with a community of thought leaders and industry experts pushing the bounds of human resources.
- [Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\) Annual Conference](#): Get updates about the latest HR strategies and ensure you're ready for what's next at this conference dedicated to supporting human resources professionals.
- [American Payroll Association \(APA\) Congress Annual Conference](#): Workshops and general sessions are presented by subject matter experts from payroll operations, payroll service providers, government agencies, and consultants who share their knowledge and experience.

Refer to software review sites:



- [G2](#): Discover and compare software options.
- [Capterra](#): Find software, compare options and read reviews.
- [Software Advice](#): Get one-on-one help and personalized recommendations about your software options.

Stay on top of trends:

As of 2021, many experts have cited the following workplace predictions that could influence your decisions about which WFM system is right for you:

- Health screenings are now required at many work locations.
- The need for mobile and remote access will continue to increase.
- Desire for demand-based scheduling is paramount for part-time employees.
- Leave and absence management systems must be flexible enough to adapt to the most complex policies and requirements.

In the final stages of your decision-making, these trusted sources can provide objective insights from others who understand the unique needs of each government agency or department. Based on the experience of actual users, you can get the answers you need to make a well-informed choice.

Conclusion

Regarding WFM, there are multiple technology trends to consider and numerous system options available. Like other leaders within other government agencies, you're dedicating valuable time and resources to assess and plan for the introduction of new technologies that will assist with crucial workforce processes.

State and local governments face complex challenges within each department. WFM solutions can meet the needs of public safety with scheduling tools and overtime calculations designed specifically for them. Modern, mobile technology can make it easy for employees that work in multiple or remote locations, such as Public Works or Parks and Rec, to login and clock their hours. For your in-house workforce, touchless clocks and proven time and attendance tools can help streamline day-to-day workflows.

As you weigh WFM options and make decisions, stay focused on your agency's unique technology needs and capabilities. Find a system that makes it easy for users with a modern, well-designed user interface. Involve a cross-functional team to assist with this decision and ensure it will benefit the entire agency.

Together agency leaders and administrators can unite to improve employee experiences, increase productivity and reduce compliance risks by maximizing all that a workforce management system has to offer.

