

Case Study: Modernizing Acquisition for the Department of Defense – WHS

Client

Washington Headquarters Services (WHS), Department of Defense

Challenge

The WHS Acquisition Directorate (AD) relied on fragmented and outdated processes—SharePoint repositories, shared drives, and paper-based workflows—to manage the full acquisition lifecycle. These tools limited visibility, efficiency, and scalability across its mission-critical operations supporting over 3,000 personnel and multiple DoD components.

Solution

PHASE LLC—a Joint Venture between PACE LLC and Horizon Industries, Limited—partnered with WHS to modernize and streamline the agency’s acquisition processes through the implementation and customization of Appian’s Requirements Management (RM) solution.

PHASE delivered full lifecycle services, including agile development, enhancement, and operations & maintenance of the RM application within a DoD IL5 environment. The solution achieved Authority to Operate (ATO) and integrates seamlessly with internal and external acquisition systems.

Key capabilities delivered:

- **Requirements Development Module:** Customized Appian RM interfaces, roles, and workflows to align with WHS needs, leveraging stakeholder feedback throughout iterative agile sprints.
- **Development Modernization & Enhancements (DME):** Designed and implemented new, custom-coded modules to extend beyond Appian’s out-of-the-box features—addressing gaps in acquisition lifecycle functionality.
- **Testing & Quality Assurance:** Embedded test protocols in each sprint cycle—unit tests, code reviews, and user acceptance testing (UAT)—ensured delivery of error-free software.

- **Defect Resolution:** Allocated sprint capacity for real-time issue remediation, allowing the team to rapidly address user-reported errors without disrupting end users.
- **User Training & Support Tools:** Developed embedded user support features, including “How-To” cards and video tutorials. Conducted Train-the-Trainer sessions pre-launch to ensure effective adoption across all branches.

Impact

- **Process Modernization:** Transformed WHS’s acquisition lifecycle into a digitized, streamlined process supporting requirements development through contract administration.
- **Increased Efficiency:** Reduced manual workload and administrative overhead through automation and centralized access to acquisition data.
- **User Empowerment:** Improved training and usability led to faster adoption and reduced dependency on support staff.
- **Secure, Scalable Platform:** Achieved ATO within DoD’s IL5 environment, ensuring compliance with federal security mandates.

Technologies Used

- **Platform:** Appian (Government Acquisition Management Solution)
- **Environment:** DoD IL5
- **Methods:** Agile development, iterative configuration, sprint-based enhancements

Project Value

Ongoing multi-year support engagement

Outcome

PHASE delivered a secure, agile, and modern acquisition platform that enables WHS to effectively manage and scale its contracting activities. By replacing legacy tools with an integrated, Appian-based solution, WHS is now equipped to support mission-critical acquisition operations with greater speed, accuracy, and transparency.