

Public Library Writes a New Chapter in its HR Story with Paylocity

90
existing
employees re-
hired at high
speed

78%
increase in
workforce within
one year

1
integrated
platform for all
HR and payroll
tasks

BOULDER PUBLIC LIBRARY

www.boulderlibrary.org

Public Sector/Non-profit/Government

160 employees

5 locations in Boulder, Colorado

Boulder Public Library is much more than just a place to pick up a great read. Rather, it's a vital civic space that connects people, ideas, and information, as well as strengthening community ties. Locals can head to one of five library locations to access books, audiobooks, journals, and historical documents; use study spaces and IT services; attend learning programs; and more.

Recent years have seen major developments in Boulder. In November 2022, citizens voted to create Boulder Public Library District, an independent entity separated from the City of Boulder and funded through a property tax levy. The move aims to generate additional revenue to invest in improvements to the library system, with longer opening hours, enhanced services, and modernized buildings.

The change — which came into effect in January 2024 — created a mass of HR and administrative challenges for the new Boulder Public Library District. Initially, the new entity considered using the Workday platform favored by the City of Boulder to manage onboarding and payroll tasks. But poor feedback from employees led the library district to search for an alternative.

Jennifer Phares, Director of Business Administration at Boulder Public Library District, explains: "When we knew we were splitting from the City of Boulder, we started to explore new systems. We created a team of six evaluators from all levels of the organization to ensure we captured a range of user perspectives. In the end, it was a unanimous decision: Paylocity was the best option."

"I was expecting that switching our HR system would be difficult and stressful for our employees. But it's been awesome, and that's a testament to how easy the Paylocity platform is to use."

Jennifer Phares, Director of Business Administration, Boulder Public Library District

The Challenge

New Chapter, New Challenges

With the formation of Boulder Public Library District, Jennifer faced a daunting to-do list, including onboarding employees, setting up and running the first payroll, and creating a new HR function.

Onboarding the Whole Team in One

One of the first things on the agenda for Jennifer was re-hiring 90 staff members as employees of the new Boulder Public Library District. In the past, both the front- and back-office library teams had been employees of the City of Boulder. Moving everyone across to the new entity was a potentially laborious and admin-heavy process with the previous provider, involving multiple forms and eligibility verifications.

Building a HR Team From Scratch

The separation from the City of Boulder also meant that Jennifer and her team were taking control of core HR tasks such as payroll for the first time. She notes: “In the past, we didn’t have a dedicated in-house HR function at the library. Instead, the City of Boulder delivered HR support and managed employee records. So, we were effectively setting things up from scratch.”

Switching Out Complex Systems

Having an intuitive HR platform in place to keep things as simple as possible was therefore vital. But the Workday system that the library had used while part of the City of Boulder fell short on multiple counts. For example, employees found it complex to navigate and complete tasks such as filling in timesheets. The complexity discouraged employees from using the system beyond the minimum of what they needed to use it for.

Pulling data on headcount and expenses was tricky, too, forcing Jennifer to cobble together information from other systems. The library district felt it would prove challenging for its lean IT team to support due to Workday’s lack of integrations with multiple other systems.

Switching to a different platform seemed the smartest approach. However, there was a final complication, as Jennifer was simultaneously selecting and implementing a new finance system: Sage Intacct. The new HR solution would have to integrate seamlessly with the Sage platform.

“One of the best things about Paylocity is the data analysis portal. I love the flexibility — I can build my own reports and get anything out of the system that I want. It’s awesome, and it’s easy to do. I’ve had no formal training on how to run reports, but I picked up the process really quickly.”

Jennifer Phares, Director of Business Administration



The Solution

Turning the Page

After a recommendation from the HR association Employers Council, Boulder Public Library District chose Paylocity to streamline recruitment and reporting, plus enhance the employee experience.

When Boulder Public Library District checked out Paylocity, they loved what they saw, as Jennifer notes: “The look and feel of Paylocity was way superior to other HCM solutions, and we really liked the range of features available, such as the self-service portal and reporting tools.”

Intuitive Onboarding Minimizes Admin Hassle

The library district’s first move was to deploy Paylocity’s [Recruiting](#) and [Onboarding](#) modules to manage the re-hiring process. Using the system, existing employees re-applied for roles and completed all the administrative steps, such as I-9 Forms, quickly and efficiently. The modules will make future recruitment easy, too. Jennifer notes: “We can post roles to lots of different job boards via Paylocity, without having to create and manage accounts in multiple systems.”

Paylocity’s [Learning Management System](#) (LMS) was invaluable for guiding employees through the new system, and will form an essential part of ongoing training. “We can load training videos into the LMS, then track who completes the sessions – a very neat feature,” says Jennifer.

Automating Payroll Keeps Things Simple

Despite starting from scratch, Jennifer quickly mastered Paylocity’s [Payroll](#) module. “I thought payroll would be complicated, but the Paylocity team helped me figure out the basics fast. What’s useful is that Paylocity helps you keep track of payroll compliance requirements,” adds Jennifer. And using [Integrations](#), the library district is connecting Paylocity with Sage Intacct, which will enable the team to automatically move payroll data into the new finance system.

Flexible Tools Ensure a Frictionless Experience

Many staff have enthusiastically embraced Paylocity’s [Employee Self-Service](#) and [Mobile App](#) to access HR information, fill out timesheets, make PTO requests, and download pay stubs. The library district is also using Paylocity’s [Community](#) social collaboration tool to make announcements on HR matters and distribute the corporate handbook among employees. Meanwhile, some staff are harnessing Paylocity’s [Recognition & Rewards](#) module to share virtual kudos with colleagues.



Recruiting and Onboarding streamline the re-hiring of 90 employees.



Learning helps employees get up to speed with the new HR tools.



Payroll makes managing pay easy and ensures compliance with tax rules.



Integrations enables seamless data exchange between systems.



Employee Self-Service and Paylocity Mobile App offer a modern employee experience.



Community and Recognition & Rewards help build bonds among employees.



Insights & Recommendations provides insights into staffing needs and DEI&A goals.



The Results

Planning the Next Installment

Switching from Workday to Paylocity has proved a great decision. Boulder Public Library District is using Paylocity to build a skilled, productive HR team and a diverse workforce.

Creating Streamlined, Efficient HR Workflows

The HR team at Boulder Public Library District is now taking shape, with Paylocity underpinning its day-to-day work. “We’ll have a lean team: three HR and two finance specialists,” adds Jennifer. “That makes the automated workflows in Paylocity so important, eliminating time-consuming data entry and helping us work productively.” The comprehensive functionality of Paylocity also means the team won’t lose time switching between systems. For example, the library district is using the [Employee Voice](#) tool to run pulse and onboarding surveys, which previously involved a separate application.

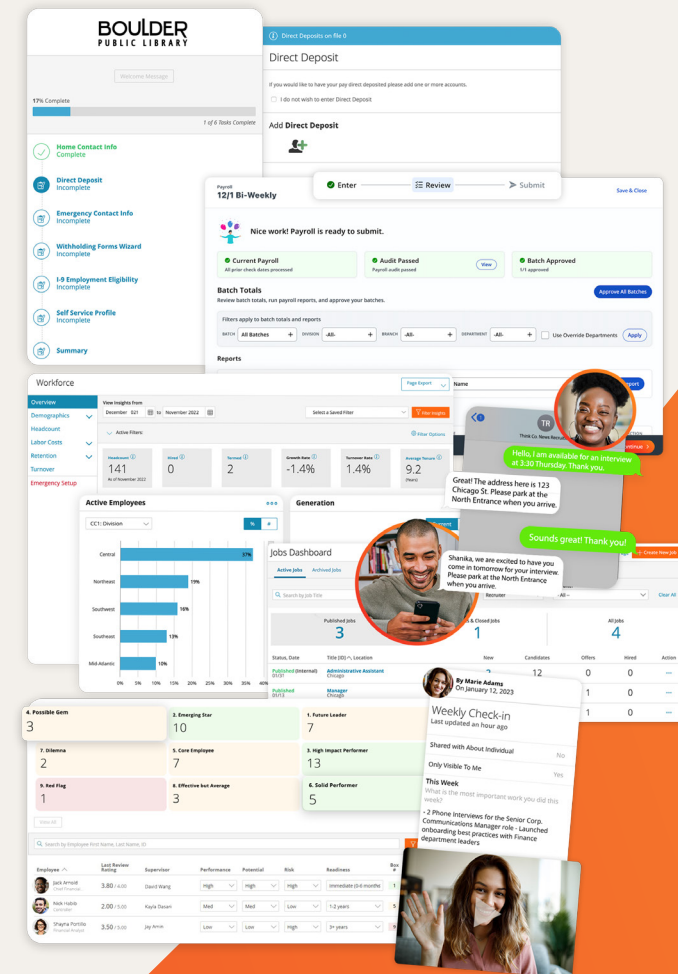
Recruiting New Talent to Deliver Stronger Services

The Paylocity platform also enabled a smooth transition as the library district brought existing employees over to the new entity and is now supporting ongoing growth. Jennifer explains: “It was amazing how seamless it was to re-hire and onboard 90 employees, especially as we were still learning the Paylocity system and spending half our time implementing Sage.” During 2024, the library district is using the recruitment tools to increase headcount to around 160 – a 78 percent rise that will enable the delivery of enhanced services to the people of Boulder.

Harnessing Data to Drive Diversity and Inclusion

Jennifer is also excited about using Paylocity’s [Insights & Recommendations](#) to support data-driven decision making. For example, the library district intends to track how often it brings in temporary staff to cover vacation and sick leave, and will then decide whether additional permanent employees would be a more cost-effective option. As the workforce grows, Jennifer will use the reporting tools to monitor and ensure the library district is hitting its diversity and inclusion targets.

In addition, the library district is planning to roll out Paylocity’s [Performance](#) module to support employee development, and the [Market Pay](#) tool for planning salary rates that will help to attract talent. “Market Pay will ensure we are offering pay at market value. Typically, you’d have to engage a consultant for that, so it will be another valuable time- and cost-saving opportunity,” concludes Jennifer.



“All employee records are in one place in Paylocity. Everything is integrated. You don’t have to dig through paper files or different platforms to find things. That will save us time and make life easy for our supervisors when they need specific information on team-members.”

Jennifer Phares, Director of Business Administration