

Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service

Four Year Strategic Plan 2022-2026

**Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
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1 Acting Director's Message

The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS, or Agency) has seen many dramatic changes in the national labor relations environment and its internal operations since publishing its last strategic plan in 2018. First and foremost, the COVID-19 pandemic had wide-ranging effects on the national economy, FMCS' services, and its clients. Secondly, the continuing evolution of government towards mandatory programs and consolidation of services has transformed the job descriptions and nature of support staff positions. Thirdly, the continued erosion of the FMCS appropriation in real terms, due in part to increases in mandated employee benefit costs from 33 percent to almost 37 percent of payroll, has reduced the number of mediators that FMCS can deploy in pursuit of its mission.

FMCS has undertaken several initiatives in response to these challenges. Firstly, FMCS has solidified its role as the most authoritative provider of alternative dispute resolution services to government. In 2018, for example, FMCS assumed administrative responsibility for the ADR.gov website and the Shared Neutrals program. The Shared Neutrals program provides more than 50 participating federal agencies in the Washington, D.C. area access to a pool of trained, collateral-duty federal employees. These employees provide mediation services to agencies other than their own in exchange for like services to the program from the recipient agency.

In addition, FMCS has actively increased its work in other high-value areas, such as regulatory negotiations. This work saves the federal government millions of dollars and avoids years of delay in the rulemaking process. In the regulatory negotiation process, FMCS serves as a neutral third party to facilitate discussion and assist the negotiating working group in identifying and overcoming barriers that arise in multi-party negotiations. By convening and facilitating a series of stakeholder meetings, FMCS establishes an environment in which negotiated rulemaking working groups can use the expertise of all involved stakeholders to reach a proposed rule by consensus, thereby reducing or eliminating litigation.

Internally, FMCS has overhauled how it delivers its services. In 2019, FMCS closed more than 20 field offices and assigned the affected staff to home offices in response to dramatic increases in physical security costs at these offices. This move, although initially made for financial reasons, turned out to be fortuitous. When travel stopped in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FMCS was already well-positioned to seamlessly transition to remote work and provide its services using virtual platforms. FMCS leveraged telecommunications and online mediation software that it had already put in place to continue its work remotely. With no pause, FMCS continued throughout the pandemic to provide its clients with high-quality services. This was particularly important as employers, and their unionized workforces, struggled to adapt to new working conditions during the pandemic. FMCS is now continuing to use the latest online tools and virtual platforms for hybrid and in-person work.

Finally, with more than 90 percent of the private sector workforce now employed in non-unionized jobs, FMCS can no longer ignore disruptions to our economy from the increased job actions from workers who are not represented by traditional representational models. FMCS has existing authority in labor disruptions to our economy and collective action. Further, collective action is protected activity under the NLRA, regardless of representation status. FMCS mediators can add just as much value in resolving these work stoppages as in those undertaken in the context of traditional collective bargaining relationships.

2 FMCS Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission Statement

FMCS works to build better, more effective workplace relationships and mitigate the damage from inevitable conflict through preventive dialogue, honest communication, and responsive strategies.

The Agency achieves its mission through a number of activities, including:

- Preventing and minimizing the impact of work stoppages by assisting parties to settle their disputes through mediation in a timely manner;
- Preserving and promoting labor peace through the development of sound and stable labor-management relationships and practices;
- Fostering the establishment and maintenance of joint processes to improve labor-management relationships, employment security, and organizational effectiveness;
- Advocating for collective bargaining, mediation, and voluntary arbitration as the preferred processes for resolving disputes between employers and employee representatives;
- Assisting parties in dispute by providing a full spectrum of high-quality conflict management and prevention services, including mediation, dispute systems design, strategic planning, facilitation, and coaching;
- Mediating negotiated rulemaking and public policy negotiations with expert facilitation and process guidance;
- Offering practical, skills-based education and training courses to interested parties;
- Maintaining a roster of qualified arbitration service providers; and
- Collaborating with colleagues, universities, professional organizations, and other groups to further develop the art, science, and practice of conflict management and prevention.

The Agency leverages decades of experience throughout each of these activities to support its clients—workplaces, government agencies, tribal groups, and other institutions—in strengthening their individual and organizational capacity to manage and become resilient to conflict. In parallel, this improves their ability to successfully communicate, problem-solve, and create value for their respective organizations, as well as the nation.

Vision Statement

Demonstrate with every client interaction that FMCS is the nation's preeminent provider of full-spectrum conflict management and prevention services.

We strongly believe that high-quality conflict management and prevention is integral to the long-term success of workplaces, organizations, institutions, regions, and tribal communities, as well as our nation, to address:

- Demands on the critical infrastructure, business sectors, and essential services that support our national and global economy;
- Continually changing environments that present organizational and other challenges;
- The need for efficient and productive government operations and services;
- High stakes public policy negotiations that impact citizens, communities, and environment;
- Emerging technologies that influence our day-to-day work and lives; and
- Conflict of all kinds, whether at the scale of individuals, organizations, industries, or communities.

Values Statement

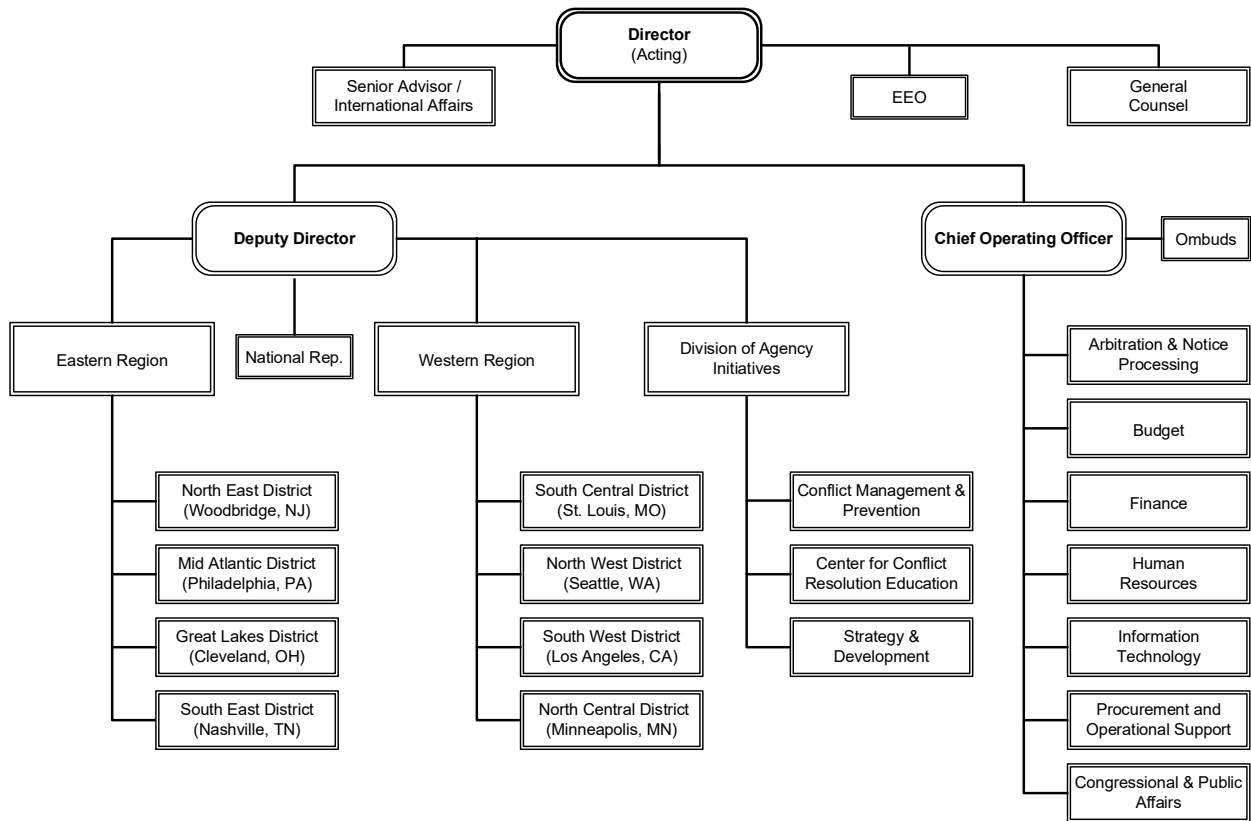
In accordance with its mission and vision as outlined above, FMCS is committed to adhering to the following core principles in both its internal operations and external service delivery:

- **Accountability:** Foster a culture of respectful accountability by clearly communicating standards of conduct and expectations within the Agency, and then holding ourselves and one another accountable to those standards while still allowing room for grace, growth, and development;
- **Adherence to Professional Standards:** Assure that mediators maintain absolute neutrality, confidentiality, and acceptability in their client interactions, and that staff bring respect, professionalism, and competency to their areas of expertise;
- **Quality and Responsiveness:** Produce high-quality work that displays content and process expertise, provides a high degree of responsiveness to client needs, and adds value across all aspects of service delivery and support services;
- **Craft Mastery:** Emphasize lifelong learning and work towards craft mastery through the ongoing development of relevant skills, techniques, processes, and practices at both an individual and organizational level, recognizing that the abilities of our employees are key to the Agency's efficacy and excellence;
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Create and maintain a workplace environment that includes and accepts diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and working styles; and ensures that opportunities are provided equitably;
- **Collegiality and Collaboration:** Remain open to the sharing of tools, information, and resources across the Agency and breaking down silos to promote nationwide unity and innovation in ways that best serve clients and advance our mission;
- **Creativity and Adaptability:** Seek creative, collaborative approaches to problem-solving and remain adaptive and nimble in response to change and conflict; and
- **Open Communication:** Honor colleagues, clients, and staff with open communication that allows all parties to respectfully seek, provide, and receive constructive feedback, while appropriately maintaining client confidentiality.

3 Operational Structure

FMCS fulfills its national program from its Washington, D.C. headquarters, 19 field offices distributed nationally, and numerous home offices across the country. FMCS field staff are organized into eight districts and two regions, as shown below. The headquarters operation provides centralized procurement, budgeting, information technology (IT), human resources (HR), legal, equal employment opportunity (EEO), public affairs, and training functions. The eight district offices, each staffed with a manager and an administrative assistant, provide localized managerial support services. The chart below depicts FMCS’ operational structure:

Figure 1: FMCS Organizational Chart



As of February 2022

4 Cross-Agency Priority Goals

As a small, non-CFO Act Executive Agency, FMCS is not directly responsible for any Cross-Agency Priority Goals. However, FMCS supports and actively contributes to the following:

- **The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA):** Historically, and to the present day, FMCS has a strong record of voluntary disclosure and compliance with FOIA. As part of its commitment to FOIA, in 2016, FMCS undertook a major initiative to update its record retention policies with the National Archives and Records Administration and increase the number of records it stores electronically. The Agency is currently implementing a plan to meet all Controlled Unclassified Information requirements in 2022.
- **Cybersecurity:** FMCS is actively working to implement all requirements contained in the Federal Information Security Management Act. The Agency places a particular emphasis on meeting requirements related to information security, access management, mobile device management, and malware defense. In 2022 and beyond, FMCS will increase its capacity to not only prevent cybersecurity incidents but minimize any damage to its operations in the event an incident occurs.
- **Client Service:** FMCS strives to continuously improve the quality of its client service, whether the client is a party to a mediation or training, a vendor, a member of the general public, or another federal agency. In 2022, FMCS will initiate a new phase in a multi-year effort to require electronic submission of all notices and service requests.
- **Smarter IT Delivery:** FMCS will continue an effort to modernize its databases and reporting platforms, as well as to move high-availability systems to hosted (e.g., “cloud”) solutions. Accomplishments to date include moving the Agency intranet site and email systems to cloud solutions and transitioning more than 90 percent of the Agency’s internal server capacity to virtual networks.
- **People and Culture:** In the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), FMCS employees have consistently ranked the agency as one of the best places to work in the federal government. FMCS seeks to not only maintain its FEVS scores but to continually improve upon them. Over the past few years, FMCS has incorporated feedback from the survey in efforts to standardize its employee performance evaluation process, update position descriptions and performance work plans (PWPs), and review employee job functions. FMCS is also placing greater emphasis on the adoption of and adherence to values that promote an inclusive, productive, and professional culture.

5 Statutory and Other Legal Authority

Title II of the Labor-Management Relations Act (Taft-Hartley Act) established FMCS in 1947 as an independent agency of the federal government. This authority established the Agency's primary mission to prevent and minimize labor-management disputes affecting interstate commerce by providing mediation, conciliation, and voluntary arbitration services. At that time, all mediation and conciliation functions of the Secretary of Labor and the United States Conciliation Service were transferred to FMCS. FMCS was given responsibility to assist any industrial dispute that threatens interstate commerce, with the exception of the railroad and airline industries, which fall within the purview of the Railway Labor Act administered by the National Mediation Board.

In 1978, The Civil Service Reform Act authorized FMCS to assist with dispute resolution in federal sector labor disputes. Later that same year, the Labor-Management Cooperation Act amended the Taft-Hartley Act and directed FMCS to encourage cooperative activities between labor and management. It also authorized FMCS to issue grants in support of joint labor-management activities conducted by plant, area, public sector, and industry-wide committees.

The Administrative Dispute Resolution Act (ADRA) of 1990 and the Negotiated Rulemaking Act authorized FMCS to assist other federal agencies in resolving disputes related to contracts, grants, licenses, or other agency administrative actions, and to assist in the process of negotiated rulemaking, respectively. Later, the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act of 1996 amended and permanently enacted these 1990 Acts.

Over the years, Congress and the Executive Branch have authorized FMCS to perform a variety of dispute resolution functions, as well as to assist in the improvement of labor-management relationships. Specific statutory and other authorizations are described below:

- I. The Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947 (Public Law 80-101, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 158(d), 173 et. seq.) directs FMCS to prevent or minimize interruptions to the free flow of commerce stemming from labor disputes by helping the parties settle such disputes through mediation. Parties are required to notify FMCS 30 days prior to a contract termination or modification date so that mediation services may be proffered.

The Act establishes a special procedure for threatened or actual strikes, which, in the opinion of the President, imperil national health or safety. In such cases, the President may appoint a board of inquiry to ascertain the facts with respect to the dispute. After receipt of a report, the President may seek to enjoin the strike, and a court may do so if it finds that the threatened or actual strike or lockout affects a substantial part or all of an industry and would imperil national health or safety.

- II. Presidential Statement, March 24, 1953. In March 1953, the Atomic Energy Labor-Management Relations Panel was established within FMCS by President Eisenhower, in order to ensure the uninterrupted functioning of the atomic energy program without strikes or lockouts due to labor-management disputes. This Panel was moved to the Atomic Energy Commission in March 1956 but was returned to FMCS under an inter-agency agreement with the Department of Energy in April 1980 and renamed the Energy Labor Management Relations Panel (ELMRP).
- III. Executive Order 11374, October 11, 1967 transferred the responsibilities of the Missile Sites Labor Commission (established by Executive Order 10946) to provide priority resolution of labor disputes at missile sites to FMCS.
- IV. The Health Care Amendments of 1974 (Public Law 93-360, 29 U.S.C. 158(d) (4), (4)(A), (4)(B)) (amending the National Labor Relations Act) include special provisions intended to prevent or minimize work stoppages in the health care industry. In these such cases, FMCS must be notified 60 days before the contract termination date. A 30-day notice is required in initial bargaining situations. If, in the opinion of the Director, a strike is threatened that would interrupt the delivery of health care in a locality, the Director may appoint a board of inquiry. *29 U.S.C. 183.* The board has 15 days within which to investigate and file its report and recommendations; parties must maintain the status quo for 15 days thereafter while further negotiations and mediation take place. The parties are required to cooperate in any mediation efforts by FMCS.
- V. The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act of 1978, (Public Law 95-396, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 136a(c)(1)(F)(iii)) requires FMCS to provide for the appointment of arbitrators to arbitrate disputes concerning compensation for the use or development of pesticide registration data.
- VI. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-454, 5 U.S.C. 7119(a)) directs FMCS to provide mediation assistance in disputes arising from negotiations between federal agencies and the representatives of their employees.
- VII. The Labor Management Cooperation Act of 1978 (Public Law 101-552, as amended by Public Law 95-524, 29 U.S.C. 175a, 186(c)(9)) added Sections 205A and 302(c)(9) to the Labor-Management Relations Act and authorizes and directs FMCS to encourage and support joint labor-management activities conducted by plant, area, and industry-wide committees designed to improve labor-management relationships, employment security, and organizational effectiveness. The Act authorizes FMCS to provide grant funds to assist in the establishment and operation of labor-management committees.

- VIII. An Act to Establish Dispute Resolution Procedures to Settle Disputes Between Supervisors and the United States Postal Service, 1980 (Public Law 96-326, as amended, 39 U.S.C. 1004) directs FMCS, upon the request of either the Postal Service or an organization representing its supervisors, to convene fact-finding panels to recommend supervisory pay and fringe benefit policies and to create panels to review the effectiveness of these procedures and other employment policies.
- IX. The Negotiated Rulemaking Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-648) names FMCS as the preferred provider of “convenors, facilitators, and training in negotiated rulemaking.” This Act formalized a series of regulatory negotiation “experiments” that agencies had conducted prior to 1990, in which they invited stakeholders potentially impacted by a proposed rule to participate in its drafting, thereby reducing post-issuance challenges and increasing the long-term acceptability of implementation efforts.
- X. The Federal Aviation Reauthorization Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-264, as amended, by Public Law 106-181, 49 U.S.C. 40122(a)) directs FMCS to mediate disputes between the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration and its employee representatives concerning changes to that Agency’s personnel management system.
- XI. The Administrative Dispute Resolution Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-320) authorizes and encourages agencies to use various alternative means of dispute resolution in the federal administrative process in order to avoid the time and expense of litigation. The ADRA was amended, permanently enacted, and incorporated into the Administrative Procedure Act, the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act provisions (5 U.S.C. 571 *et. seq.*) and the Negotiated Rulemaking Act provisions (5 U.S.C. 561, *et. seq.*) of 1990 legislation. These acts, and their predecessors, suggest that the ADRA and regulatory negotiation “experiments” have become well-accepted processes of federal agencies.

Under the ADRA, coverage has been expanded to include additional dispute resolution techniques, such as “ombudsmen,” and the use of alternative dispute resolution in some workplace conflicts, including Hatch Act violations, retirement, insurance, and certain suspensions, removals, examinations, and appointments. The ADRA encourages the development of guidelines to expedite the selection of neutrals and to facilitate the use of alternative dispute resolution in the federal government.

This legislation also amends the Taft-Hartley Act by permanently adding Section 173 (f) of Title 29 of the United States Code (29 U.S.C. 173(f)) so that FMCS may provide all forms of alternative dispute resolution assistance to federal agencies. Under this legislation, FMCS continues to assist agencies in negotiated rulemaking processes, as well as in other dispute resolution procedures by providing training, facilitation, mediation, and shared neutrals courses.

- XII. The Veterans Health Care Capital Asset and Business Improvement Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-170, 38 U.S.C. 7403 (h)(4)(C)) gives the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or the exclusive representative of the affected employees, the option of using FMCS services to assist the parties in reaching an agreement regarding disputes with respect to any system of promotion and advancement proposed by the Secretary.
- XIII. The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-435, as amended, 39 U.S.C. 1207) requires FMCS to provide mediation services and assist in the establishment of arbitration boards in collective bargaining disputes between the Postal Service and the exclusive representatives of its employees.
- XIV. The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 90.43(c)(3), issued by the Department of Health and Human Services, implements its authority under the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, 42 U.S.C. 6101 *et seq.* and authorizes FMCS to provide mediation services for the resolution of age-discrimination charges.
- XV. The Transportation Security Administration Determination, “Transportation Security Officers and Collective Bargaining,” February 4, 2011, requires FMCS, or another agreed-upon entity, to facilitate collective bargaining negotiations. It also requires the Transportation Security Administration and the unions subject to bargaining to attend training in interest-based negotiations conducted by FMCS.

6 Contributing Program Areas

In addition to collective bargaining mediation, FMCS offers a variety of facilitation, training, and other services to labor-management groups of all sectors to help strengthen relationships and build constructive problem-solving and negotiation skills. FMCS also maintains and provides a roster of private, non-federal arbitrators available for parties seeking arbitration of grievance disputes concerning the meaning, interpretation, and enforcement of provisions in existing collective bargaining agreements.

Collective Bargaining Mediation

FMCS helps prevent work stoppages and minimize their cost to the economy. FMCS mediates collective bargaining negotiations for initial contract negotiations—which take place between an employer and a newly certified or recognized group—and for renewal and successor collective bargaining agreements. FMCS provides mediation services to the private and the public sectors, including federal agencies, and state and local governments.

Throughout the mediation process, the mediator helps the parties identify alternative solutions and potential compromises, encourages settlement where appropriate, controls the timing of offers, and persuades the parties to honestly discuss their differences.

Early Intervention

Once a union is certified or recognized, federal law requires both parties to negotiate in good faith. However, newly organized or recognized groups often struggle to understand their new roles, responsibilities, and process. It is common for the contentious relationship from lengthy organizing/recognition battles to carry over to the new collective bargaining process, resulting in long delays, litigation, and or disruptions to the economy. Parties need assistance at this key moment of their newly established working relationship. FMCS is uniquely positioned to assist parties with collective bargaining and their legal obligation to negotiate in good faith based on its deep and long-standing relationship with both labor and management groups.

Collective Actions

FMCS has 75 years of experience working to resolve disputes between employers and their union-represented workforces. Throughout this period, a trend has emerged of workers acting in concert to address workplace issues outside of the traditional unionized environment. Congress' original mandate for FMCS authorized it to “proffer its services in any labor dispute in any industry affecting commerce, either upon its own motion or upon the request of one or more of the parties to the dispute, whenever in its judgment such dispute threatens to cause a substantial interruption of commerce.”

Over the past decade in particular, non-certified worker associations, worker centers, social justice movements, and other groups have supported concerted worker activity that has at times resulted in job actions that impacted the economy. It is this impact on commerce resulting from a workplace disruption that prompts FMCS involvement. When collective actions impact commerce, FMCS has a role, and in fact, a responsibility, to become involved, as the Agency was specifically created to minimize the number and duration of such actions.

Relationship Development and Training

FMCS also works to prevent conflict that may arise during the term of a collective bargaining agreement. To that end, the Agency has designed its relationship development and training (RDT) programs to improve labor-management relationships by helping parties build collaborative problem-solving approaches. Active participation in these programs better enables the parties to jointly respond to rapidly changing business and economic conditions during the term of the contract and makes any future mediation efforts more effective.

FMCS offers the following, non-exhaustive list of RDT programs:

- **Relationship by Objective:** Improves the parties' working relationship, particularly in situations where the relationship has worsened after a contentious representation election, initial contract negotiation, or strike.
- **Committee Effectiveness Training:** Assists the parties in developing joint labor-management committees designed to bring the parties into regular communication.
- **Partners in Change:** Explores the organization's culture, identifies perceptions within the organization, creates a vision for the future, and designs systems that effect change.
- **Labor-Management Work-Site Committee Training:** Supports labor-management committees in extending to the work-site level, forming committees, promoting group interactions, and learning techniques to manage change.
- **Contract Administration and Steward-Supervisor Training:** Trains shop stewards and front-line supervisors on their roles and responsibilities in contract administration, grievance processing, arbitration procedures, and interpersonal communication that supports positive working relationships.
- **Cultural Awareness Skills Training for Labor and Management:** Trains the parties to function and work effectively in a multicultural work setting, including skills for the resolution of cross-cultural conflicts in a workplace.
- **Collective Bargaining and Mediation Training:** Trains the parties on effective negotiation and communication skills.
- **Collaborative Negotiation and Problem-Solving Training:** Trains the parties in joint non-adversarial decision-making approaches.

Grievance Mediation

Grievance mediation involves the use of a neutral party to mediate disputes that may arise over the terms and conditions of a collective bargaining agreement. Mediators provide this service when unresolved grievances threaten the stability of the labor-management relationship.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Services to Government

The federal government has long recognized that ADR provides a much less expensive and time-consuming alternative to litigation. FMCS provides ADR services to federal agencies on a cost-reimbursable basis to reduce litigation costs and promote better government decision-making. Services offered by FMCS include the following:

- **Workplace and Employment Disputes:** FMCS mediates workplace and employment disputes for federal agencies. The majority of these disputes are related to claims of employment discrimination, other types of personnel issues, and workplace conflicts. FMCS mediates individual and multi-party conflicts for line of service provision.
- **Administrative Program Disputes:** FMCS also mediates disputes between federal agencies and their “regulated public,” including whistleblower complaints and disputes involving contracts, grants, licenses, enforcement, and administrative programs.
- **Training in ADR Skills and Processes:** FMCS provides training in conflict resolution skills to aid in the effective use of ADR in the federal government. To that end, FMCS offers live and web-based training on a variety of topics related to conflict dynamics, management, and prevention.
- **Facilitation During Decision-Making:** FMCS offers facilitation services, particularly in times of budgetary constraint, to help agencies achieve cost-savings when decision-making is delegated to a committee, task force, or other such group. FMCS facilitation services also include consultation, convening, and training, as needed, to ensure that groups accomplish their tasks within specified time frames.
- **Agency Cooperation and Collaboration:** FMCS facilitates intra-agency or multiple agency groups tasked with developing a strategic plan or identified objective involving complex matters. Interest-based problem-solving and collaboration skills are essential to achieving successful outcomes in these instances.
- **Public Policy Dialogues:** FMCS also facilitates public policy dialogues that involve federal agencies and public-private stakeholders, such as those conducted under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. These multi-party stakeholder conversations benefit from the assistance of a skilled and neutral facilitator who has experience synthesizing discussion points and interests, as well as establishing and managing meeting structures and processes. Training and coaching are also available for participants.

- **Negotiated Rulemaking:** FMCS facilitates negotiated rulemaking processes, in which a government agency invites individuals and groups potentially impacted by a proposed rule to participate in its drafting. Interested parties who might otherwise challenge or oppose the rule are given an opportunity to participate in its formulation, thus reducing post-issuance challenges.

Systemic Interventions

FMCS also supports agencies or groups in attaining more comprehensive solutions through an extensive range of conflict management and prevention services that utilize a full-spectrum, systemic approach, including:

- **Climate Assessment:** FMCS convenes and facilitates focus groups and individual meetings to assess and define the scope of workplace conflict. This enables FMCS conflict management professionals to better understand the structures, relationships, values, interests, and interpersonal conflicts that may be impacting the workplace and make more effective recommendations and approaches.
- **Leadership Alignment and Development:** FMCS provides leadership development training and 360-degree assessments to ensure that leaders are working optimally, both individually and as a team. Individually, when leaders do not understand their impact on the workforce, significant interpersonal conflicts can arise within an organization. When leaders operate out of alignment with each other, they often send conflicting messages across the organization, which can lead to systemwide conflict.
- **Conflict Coaching:** FMCS provides leadership, conflict, individual, peer, and cohort coaching to reduce the negative impacts of workplace conflict and enhance positive and resilient workplace culture/environments.
- **Systems Engagement and Large-Group Facilitations:** FMCS engages workplaces as a system and involves full teams and groups; this increases the sustainability of the intervention and ensures that the group reaches a long-term, systemic solution, rather than focusing on “band-aid fixes,” individual conflicts, and transactional outcomes.
- **Culture Change and Change Management Initiatives:** FMCS focuses on promoting healthy, resilient, and inclusive work environments that lead to productive and highly engaged teams. This supports agencies with low engagement scores where employees may feel distanced or disconnected with each other, clients, and leadership.
- **Dispute Systems Design:** FMCS offers a broad array of services that focus on the design of comprehensive systems for dispute resolution that are specifically tailored to the needs of the organization and parties, as well as the nature of the conflict.

Arbitration Services

National labor policy favors arbitration as a means of settling contract-based disputes. The FMCS Office of Arbitration Services maintains a roster of about 1,000 independent non-federal arbitrators who are qualified to hear and decide disputes over the interpretation or application of collective bargaining agreements. Upon request from the parties and the payment of a nominal fee, FMCS provides a list of qualified names from which the parties may choose an arbitrator to hear their case and render a decision.

FMCS Institute for Conflict Management

The FMCS Institute for Conflict Management delivers practical, experience-based conflict skills training for individuals and small groups of employees and managers. The training is specifically designed to meet the challenges of labor-management relations and organizational change in specific groups, as well as the ever-changing world of work. The Institute's training programs provide participants the opportunity to interact with and learn from experienced practitioners in the field, primarily FMCS federal mediators and private-sector arbitrators. Courses offered in a typical year include, but are not limited to, Mediation Skills for the Workplace, Labor-Management Negotiation Skills, Evidence and Witness Examination in Arbitration, Arbitration for Federal Advocates, The Art and Science of Inquiry, and Becoming a Labor Arbitrator. Collectively, these courses serve as a tool to address a declining trend in available qualified labor arbitrators and to expand access to conflict skills, as well as the field of labor dispute resolution more broadly, to individuals and groups from underrepresented or traditionally underserved communities. The Institute runs as a reimbursable program and is funded by fees received from training participants.

International Training and Exchange

FMCS also plays an important role in promoting collective bargaining and strengthening conflict management and prevention around the world. Emerging market economies often struggle to compete effectively in a globally integrated marketplace. FMCS helps establish the labor relations institutions that are essential to the functioning of free market economies. These programs are also a knowledge-sharing experience: FMCS mediators gain familiarity with complex issues affecting the global economy and, as a result, are more effective in resolving domestic labor-management disputes with multi-national corporations that have global impact.

FMCS delivers its international training and systems design programs on a cost-reimbursable basis through interagency agreements (IAAs) with other government agencies, such as the Department of Labor, the Department of State, and USAID.

Labor-Management Committee Grants

The 1978 Labor-Management Cooperation Act authorizes and directs FMCS to encourage and support joint labor-management committees “established for the purpose of improving labor-management relationships, job security and organizational effectiveness, enhancing economic development, or involving workers in decisions affecting their jobs, including improving communication with respect to subjects of mutual interest and concern.” Congress has the ability to fund this initiative through FMCS’ annual appropriation, and grants are distributed to encourage such committees to develop innovative joint approaches to workplace problems.

7 Administration Policy Priorities

As an Executive Branch agency, FMCS plans to significantly contribute to the policy priorities of the Administration, as outlined in M-21-22, by:

- Meeting the health, welfare, and economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Advancing equity; and
- Addressing climate change.
- FMCS commits to the following actions in support of the Administration’s policy priorities:

A1: Meet the health, welfare, and economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic

Actions:

- Provide conflict management and prevention services, as well as expanded outreach, to health care organizations, critical infrastructure, and essential workers in industries significantly impacted by COVID-19, such as food service, transportation, and ports.
- Promote the practice of virtual service delivery to minimize employee and public exposure to and spread of the COVID-19 virus.
- Continue to prioritize potential or active disruptions to critical healthcare infrastructure in case assignment and management.

A2: Advance equity

Actions:

- Pursue a comprehensive approach to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) policymaking that: (a) leverages internal Agency resources (i.e. the Offices of EEO, HR, and General Counsel); (b) implements an evidence-based, data-driven approach; and (c) actively includes FMCS employees, values, culture, and mission.
- Review all internal and external directives, policies, procedures, programs, existing workforce data—including Management Directive 715—and other reports, to ensure the comprehensive incorporation of DEIA principles and use of inclusive language and practices (i.e. gender-neutral pronouns, Section 508 compliance, etc.).
- Develop evaluation and monitoring tools to ensure that external program resources comprehensively incorporate and further DEIA principles.
- Assess the current state of DEIA in the FMCS workforce and identify barriers to employment and advancement faced by potential, current, and past employees who are members of underrepresented communities.
- Update and adjust employment-related policies and practices to address identified barriers and ensure equal opportunities for success and leadership within FMCS.

- Ensure compliance and consistency with EEO principles in all activities.
- Leverage virtual service provision and technology solutions to reach and provide service to traditionally underserved communities and industries.
- Update and expand internal DEIA-related trainings to support employees in building skillsets that foster a respectful and inclusive workplace.
- Build the roster of arbitrators to expand opportunity for underrepresented groups.
- Ensure equal access to vendors from underrepresented groups and/or who are certified as Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses.

A3: Address climate change

Actions:

- Build on the success of virtual service provision during the COVID-19 pandemic and expand the use and variety of technology solutions across all lines of service.
- Maximize remote and telework opportunities for employees to minimize carbon emissions related to commuting.
- Promote the continuation of virtual service delivery to reduce carbon emissions related to service delivery travel.
- Ensure that mediators are geographically located in areas of concentrated potential work, as indicated by client relationships, contract expiration notices, and other data, to minimize daily travel associated with case coverage.
- Ensure equal access to vendors that have public climate statements and/or utilize “green” manufacturing practices.
- Remain apprised of climate-related emergencies (i.e., hurricanes, tornadoes, severe weather events, extreme flooding, etc.) and provide support to FMCS employees as appropriate, in accordance with the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

8 FMCS Strategic Goals and Objectives

In support of its statutory role and missions outlined in Section 2, FMCS commits to working towards the following four strategic goals:

Strategic Goal #1: Efficiently provide top-tier conflict management and prevention services

FMCS was established as a non-regulatory, non-adjudicative agency; this limits its ability to require parties to participate in the mediation process. Consequently, the Agency relies on its reputation for delivering high-value services to fulfill its statutory role and mission. With this context in mind, Strategic Goal #1 represents the Agency's first and most expansive strategic goal. It places emphasis on FMCS' ability to consistently leverage decades of experience and expertise to provide high-quality, professional conflict management and prevention services that support client needs and add value. In the coming years, the Agency intends to build upon its reputation, streamline and improve upon its processes, and expand the use of and access to its services, using the strategies and actions outlined below.

Objectives:

- Provide a full spectrum of high-quality conflict management and prevention services that effectively meet client needs.
- Expand utilization of and access to FMCS services.

Strategies:

- Prioritize efficient resource distribution across traditional boundaries.
- Implement a collaborative teaming approach at all levels of the organization.
- Exercise professional judgement regarding effective and efficient mode of service delivery across all activities.
- Maximize opportunities to develop mediator subject matter expertise, as well as breadth and depth of experiences.
- Increase engagement with newly represented groups to support them in attaining initial contracts.
- Transition from transactional engagements to full spectrum, client-driven conflict management, prevention, and resolution services.
- Increase cooperation between FMCS and other agencies.

Actions:

- Grow network of federal sector connections to increase awareness of FMCS and expand access to FMCS services.
- Share knowledge and techniques across the Agency through mentoring, shadowing, coaching, and other collaborative learning opportunities.

- Prioritize client needs in the assignment of mediators based on style, skills, knowledge, and acceptability, among other factors, and above geography.
- Survey clients regarding their satisfaction with FMCS services.
- Create finer distinctions in tracking of RDT work to capture a more complete spectrum of services, including activities such as coaching, facilitation, assessments, trainings, professional development, dispute systems design, negotiated rulemaking, and/or complex multi-party negotiations.
- Monitor any disruptions to commerce and identify strategies to assist.
- Increase exposure of all mediators to advanced cases, tools, and techniques.
- Create promotional materials to educate newly organized groups about FMCS services, including training and collective bargaining mediation.
- Identify and conduct outreach to low-utilization industries, bargaining groups, and geographic areas.

Expected Outputs:

- Greater utilization of FMCS services in private and federal sector cases with potential for impact on interstate commerce.
- Increased involvement and acceptability in cases of note (i.e. national level, high-profile, significant impact on interstate commerce, etc.).
- Better understanding of client satisfaction with FMCS services.
- Reduced litigation and improved organizational effectiveness on the part of clients.
- Comprehensive tracking of engagements with newly represented groups and correlation to success in attaining initial contracts.
- Expanded FMCS involvement in historically underserved industries and areas.
- Greater number of concluded and implemented IAAs that involve full-spectrum service provision.

Strategic Goal #2: Increase agencywide application and effectiveness of evidence-based decision-making

FMCS has prioritized Strategic Goal #2 in accordance with the Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 and subsequent presidential actions, including President Biden’s Memorandum on Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policymaking (January 27, 2021). The Agency seeks to consistently improve its internal collection, use, and management of data; its effective use of data tools in allocating resources; and its participation in interagency information sharing that supports an informed, whole-of-government approach to decision-making. The following efforts reflect an agencywide commitment to pursuing data collection and management practices that incorporate government-wide best practices.

Objectives:

- Broadly improve collection and application of data.
- Leverage available data and data management tools in resource allocation and programmatic decisions.
- Support a whole-of-government approach to data-based decision-making.

Strategies:

- Improve systems for data collection, standardization, and analysis.
- Maximize mediator placement in areas with greater concentrations of work, as evidenced by contract expiration notices and active cases.
- Prioritize electronic collection of information and data analysis.
- Partner with other labor-related agencies, including the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the National Mediation Board (NMB), the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA), and the Department of Labor (DOL), to share data.

Actions:

- Evaluate and implement a client relationship management system.
- Survey clients regarding their satisfaction with FMCS services.
- Actively monitor case assignments and workload distribution to ensure balance.
- Identify geographic concentrations of potential work, with a focus on underserved areas, for effective resource placement and management.
- Standardize and validate data inputs to ensure consistency and accuracy.
- Coordinate efforts and activities with the NLRB, FLRA, NMB, and DOL, as appropriate.

Expected Outputs:

- Maintenance of more accurate datasets.
- Effective prioritization of resources on a regional and national scale.
- Optimized distribution of cases, personnel, and resources.
- Better understanding of client satisfaction with FMCS services.
- Improved data-sharing, more efficient federal resource allocation, and minimized duplication of efforts across agencies.

Strategic Goal #3: Improve communication both internal and external to FMCS

FMCS firmly believes that effective communication is central to the efficiency of its internal operations and the quality of its external service delivery. As such, Strategic Goal #3 contains two sub-priorities: (1) communication within FMCS, and (2) communication between FMCS and its clients, other agencies, and the general public. In both areas, FMCS seeks to emphasize engagement, expand access, and increase coordination efforts—whether between departments, internal program areas, or with other agencies. The strategies and actions outlined below intend to support the Agency in prioritizing this effort through 2026 and beyond.

Objectives:

- Streamline vertical communication between senior leadership, management, and employees, as well as lateral communication between departments.
- Increase coordination between departments and activities within FMCS.
- Increase outreach to and engagement of external stakeholders.

Strategies:

- Implement a collaborative teaming approach at all levels of the organization.
- Cascade information in a centralized, consistent, and easily accessible manner.
- Solicit and provide input and feedback whenever possible.

Actions:

- Centralize internal communications into as few platforms as possible.
- Collect success stories from across FMCS.
- Communicate regularly and consistently to interested external stakeholders regarding notable activities, program offerings, and promotional information.
- Regularly update the public-facing website and social media platforms.

Expected Outputs:

- Better coordination and utilization of resources with minimal duplication of efforts.
- Informed and engaged workforce.
- Information sharing between departments and across the federal government.
- Broadly improved morale.
- Greater compliance with federal and FMCS requirements.

Strategic Goal #4: Prioritize lifelong learning in support of agency mission and individual professional development

Over the past 75 years, FMCS has traditionally played a variety of roles in the national labor relations community—as a neutral mediator, facilitator, trainer, convener, conflict management professional, and more. These roles, and the responsibilities implied therein, apply equally to employees. A key throughline consistent in this set of roles is the principle of lifelong learning. As neutrals, and in fact, across all areas of the agency, it is important to remain open to and actively seek out new theories, methods, processes, dynamics, and practices. As such, FMCS seeks to establish structures and practices that (a) encourage its employees to pursue individual craft mastery and ongoing professional development, and (b) support the Agency more broadly in adapting to changes in the field and/or in the federal government.

Objectives:

- Enhance reputation of FMCS as a leader in advanced, current conflict management and prevention techniques and service delivery methods.
- Encourage mediators to pursue craft mastery and ongoing professional development.

Strategies:

- Hold all employees to a high standard of subject matter expertise and professionalism.
- Stay current in the fields of industrial relations, conflict management and prevention, and ADR regarding innovative service delivery methods and techniques.
- Promote a culture of giving and receiving constructive criticism and feedback.
- Establish structures to promote and incentivize the pursuit of craft mastery.

Actions:

- Provide ongoing incumbent professional development opportunities.
- Encourage coaching of mediators by managers, in addition to peer mentoring.
- Regularly update core professional development training modules and activities that ensure mediators deliver consistent, value-add content that supports client needs.
- Expand outreach and coordination efforts in the federal ADR community.

Expected Outputs:

- Greater awareness and use of FMCS services within federal sector.
- Increased engagement in job actions affecting commerce in non-traditional areas and industries of labor relations.

9 FMCS Stewardship Goals

FMCS relies on its operational and support staff to effectively manage internal processes and activities in support of the Agency's statutory mission. The overall quality of mission-driven conflict management and prevention services provided by the Agency is determined in part by the efficiency of its operational and administrative functions. These functions are managed by a relatively small number of Headquarters and field administrative staff that collectively have an outsized impact on the overall success of the Agency. Further, FMCS seeks to prioritize engagement, compliance, and respectful accountability in its operational components.

To ensure the efficient and effective management of agencywide operations in support of its broader mission, FMCS commits to working towards the following five strategic goals:

Stewardship Goal #1: Effectively manage human capital

FMCS believes that its employees are its greatest asset. The Agency's mission and activities are inherently people-focused; as such, FMCS relies on the skills, professional judgement, and expertise of its employees, whether in conflict management or in operations, to meet its goals. Stewardship Goal #1 prioritizes a strong human capital program that maximizes employee engagement, performance, and opportunities, thus allowing FMCS to deliver its high-quality mission-driven services. To that end, the Agency commits to the following activities:

Objectives:

- Establish a diverse, highly qualified, and skilled workforce.
- Encourage employees to be highly motivated, high-performing, and engaged.
- Develop a shared sense of responsibility amongst all employees for fostering an inclusive, welcoming workplace.
- Provide employees with a flexible working environment that maximizes remote/telework opportunities as permitted by duties.

Strategies:

- Foster an engaged workforce that is aligned with Administration and organizational goals, initiatives, directives, and values.
- Prioritize DEIA principles and FMCS values, outlined in Section 2, across activities.
- Strengthen the performance management process.
- Establish opportunities for professional development and collaboration with team members, coworkers, and clients in the virtual workplace.

Actions:

- Empower supervisors to engage employees, recognize performance, foster high morale, and strengthen accountability measures.
- Modify PWPs to prioritize DEIA principles and FMCS values outlined in Section 2.
- Modify PWPs to include proficiency with technology and remote meeting platforms.
- Enhance training and development opportunities for all employees.
- Use recruitment flexibilities to ensure that FMCS is attracting a diverse and qualified workforce that reflects historically underrepresented identities and backgrounds.
- Ensure that all employee PWPs cascade critical elements from the Agency mission and strategic plan.
- Tie employee FEVS feedback to management decision-making.
- Remain apprised of and implement current U.S. Office of Personnel Management guidelines on effective human resource management practices.
- Remain apprised of all relevant laws, regulations, and Executive Orders and cascade action items to staff as appropriate.
- Provide robust, cloud-based tools and trainings that are secure, and fully functional in an in-person or virtual setting.

Expected Outputs:

- Increased employee participation in the FEVS and improved Agency rating therein.
- Greater alignment between performance objectives and measurable criteria.
- 100 percent employee participation in mandatory training requirements.
- Broader array of trainings, coaching, and mentoring offerings and programs that further incumbent professional development and lifelong learning.

Stewardship Goal #2: Ensure responsible financial management

Stewardship Goal #2 is a foundational goal in successfully meeting the FMCS' obligation for taxpayer resources to be allocated wisely and efficiently. Strong, modern financial systems and practices, coupled with targeted investments, work to improve reporting, decision-making, and accountability, which can lead to cost savings and further efficiencies in how FMCS manages its public funds in support of its mission. FMCS will adhere to relevant policies, guidance, and regulation to manage appropriated dollars in an efficient manner and ensure compliance.

Objectives:

- Compile financial statements that accurately reflect the Agency's financial position.
- Ensure broad operational efficiency and effectiveness at all levels.
- Remain compliant with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Ensure an annual budget execution rate of over 99 percent.

Strategies:

- Coordinate with internal program areas to identify and plan appropriately for resources needed in current and future years.
- Provide timely and regular financial and budget feedback.
- Review high risk areas of operations to ensure the implementation of comprehensive policies and procedures.
- Ensure that managers consider resource management in all decision-making.

Actions:

- Create and monitor monthly report of subscription lists and sets of standard reports and reporting deadlines.
- Design and apply internal controls frameworks to specific areas of highest risk.
- Promote employee and manager accountability for efficient modes of service delivery; namely, in person or virtual.
- Analyze geographic placement of all staff, in both Headquarters and Field Operations, to maximize efficiency of operations.

Expected Outputs:

- Timely submission of reports to intended audience(s).
- Establishment of internal control reference guides for high-risk program areas.
- Completion of monthly budget reports for program areas and offices.
- Completion of monthly financial statements of position reports for senior leadership.
- Clear delegations of authority for managers and employees.
- Overall cost savings in travel as a result of virtual service provision.

Stewardship Goal #3: Optimize information technology investments to improve process efficiency and foster innovation in support of program mission goals

Technological advancements and current events present a near-constant change to government operations and the world of work more broadly. This impacts the expectations that Congress, the Administration, clients, and the general public have for how FMCS manages its operations and delivers its services. When targeted to specific activities, the right technology investments can make vast improvements in process and cost-efficiency, as well as the adaptability and responsiveness of the Agency. FMCS seeks to explore innovative technology solutions, while maximizing the use and life of its current platforms and tools, in support of its mission.

Objectives:

- Provide high-quality information technology support to enhance FMCS activities.
- Ensure that technology selected maximizes access to FMCS services and ensures smooth delivery of those services by FMCS employees to the American public.
- Establish secure digital networks free from unwanted intrusion or misuse.
- Maximize use of current assets to further Agency mission.

Strategies:

- Maintain a regular technology computer hardware and software refresh cycle that incorporates prevailing cybersecurity tools and methods.
- Research and assess new technology opportunities as they arise to further enhance FMCS service delivery, case management, and data analysis.

Actions:

- Maintain a highly functional, under-warranty environment for hardware and software.
- Ensure that all Agency-issued hardware and software have the most current updates, patches, and cyber protections available.
- Transition to all-electronic filing of F7 notices that flows into internal case assignment and management processes.
- Remain apprised of developments in the field through research, conferences, vendor demonstrations, and other means.

Expected Outputs:

- Maintenance of technology solutions that are effective, yet unobtrusive, and that maximize network and information security.
- Implementation of technology solutions that enhance service delivery and monitoring.
- 100 percent compliance with information technology security updates and patches.

Stewardship Goal #4: Protect the safety and integrity of our human, physical, and digital assets

Ensuring safety across all aspects of internal and external operations remains a top priority for the Agency and is therefore reflected in Stewardship Goal #4. Herein, FMCS seeks to prioritize the continuity and health of its daily operations, facilities, digital assets, and employees. This includes digital security countermeasures and prevention of data breaches, emergency response preparedness, flexible workplace opportunities, and other actions. Notably, FMCS also builds on prior strategic plans by placing emphasis on not only the physical health, but the mental health and wellbeing of its employees. The Agency monitors and updates its technology related to safety and integrity to ensure that it remains current and compliant with regulation.

Objectives:

- Safeguard confidential employee and business information.
- Ensure the physical safety of FMCS employees, resources, and physical assets.
- Minimize data breaches and disclosure of personally identifiable information.

Strategies:

- Assess FMCS operations and facilities to ensure compliance with federal regulations.
- Continue to improve relationships with the General Services Administration, Federal Protective Services, and lessors.
- Provide employees with seamless security systems and measures.
- Promote the mental and physical health of all employees.
- Enable security countermeasures that automatically detect threats.

Actions:

- Assess the adequacy of physical security plans, policies, and procedures for FMCS Field Offices.
- Require multi-factor authentication at initial computer login.
- Promote asynchronous work environments where possible to minimize burnout.
- Use Geographic Information Systems to visualize employee locations and respond to all safety needs (i.e., severe weather or other emergency event) in a timely fashion, in accordance with Agency COOP planning.
- Perform gap analysis to ensure alignment with minimum cybersecurity standards, in accordance with the Interagency Security Committee and relevant guidance from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.
- Implement agencywide Controlled Unclassified Information program and provide training to all employees.
- Provide greater flexibility around working hours and collaboration time, as well as respect for non-work time of employees.

- Provide training to maximize emergency readiness and awareness such that employees can effectively prevent and/or respond to cyber threats.
- Manage software and hardware inventories through use of agents to monitor current status of applications and programs that are running and installed on each system.

Expected Outputs:

- Mitigated risk of physical or digital asset theft, terrorism, fire, other physical harm, and/or compromise to sensitive information.
- Efficient and timely response to ensure safety of personnel and physical assets in response to weather or other emergency events.
- Respect for physical and mental health of employees.

Stewardship Goal #5: Maximize available resources through effective procurement management and inventory control

Stewardship Goal #5 reflects FMCS' commitment to meeting the highest levels of procurement integrity in accordance with federal regulations. Adherence to procurement laws, policies, and related Executive Orders allows FMCS to maximize the value of taxpayer dollars and maintain public trust in government. FMCS remains mindful that among these policies are Executive Order 13985 "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government" (January 20, 2021) and its associated OMB guidance (December 2, 2021), which seek to increase equity in procurement solutions. The Agency seeks to regularly review and update its procurement activities and inventory controls to ensure that they remain up-to-date, accurate, and compliant with industry and government-wide best practices.

Objectives:

- Ensure compliance with all procurement and purchasing laws and requirements, while ensuring equity in procurement solutions.
- Prioritize accurate inventory control.

Strategies:

- Use acquisition planning in procurement activities to ensure that Agency needs are met in the most effective, efficient, ethical, and timely manner.
- Maximize use of current supply and equipment inventory.
- Use Hardware Asset Management and Software Asset Management inventory agents to monitor current state, as well as level of readiness and compliance.

Actions:

- Review and update procurement policies and directives, in accordance with relevant Executive Orders and other Administration guidelines.
- Develop procurement-related training for program staff.
- Increase use of government-wide acquisition and best in class solutions.
- Use an all-inclusive approach to acquisition planning.
- Actively maintain inventories of network connected assets and their software to optimize licensing, warranties, and future procurement needs.

Expected Outputs:

- Mitigation of wasteful spending for services, supplies, and equipment.
- Enhanced procurement regulations, policies, and procedures knowledge.
- Reduced risk of procurement fraud and conflicts of interest.
- Use of up-to-date computer hardware and software.
- Smaller inventories of equipment and licensing.

10 Conclusion

Over the last 10-15 years, American workplaces have experienced an increasing rate of change. Further, over the past two years in particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the rate of change even more dramatically. While these changes present great opportunities, they also feature increased workplace conflict as workers and employers engage with changes to technology, automation, competition, skillsets, and cost-management principles. Workplace disputes are arising in traditional labor-management collective bargaining settings, as well as in new industries and environments, due to high-profile social media and community-based campaigns for improved wages and working conditions.

FMCS is intimately aware of these transformations, given that our staff have been supporting clients to address them for years. We intend to continue to build on our proud record of success—developed over 75 years—helping parties resolve disputes, learn joint problem-solving skills, and create successful, collaborative problem-solving relationships. As the nature, complexity, and range of the issues confronting managers and employees in business and government have evolved, so too has FMCS; the Agency constantly seeks new, innovative methods to prevent disruptions to the national economy, to reduce costs to taxpayers, and, most importantly, to help managers and workers together overcome the challenges of the changing economy in business and government workplaces.