

Lutheran Social Services places its trust in Abila MIP Fund Accounting

Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest (LSS-SW) operates across 10 counties in Arizona, providing vital services including home care and home delivered meals to seniors and individuals with disabilities; family resource centers serving families with children ages birth to 5; emergency shelter and case management services to homeless, single women; emergency food assistance to low-income individuals, families, and the elderly; and refugee resettlement and employment services. To effectively manage an annual budget of \$15 million, much of which comes from government agencies, LSS-SW requires an accounting and financial reporting solution that understands the needs of large nonprofits. For LSS-SW, that solution is Abila MIP Fund Accounting.

Built for nonprofits

"We implemented Abila MIP Fund Accounting in 2010," recalls Dominique Dancause, senior vice president of HR and CFO for LSS-SW. "Our old software was no longer supported, so we looked for a package specifically geared to nonprofits – one that could handle the complex accounting surrounding our various programs and fund accounts."

LSS-SW segregates its operations into more than 70 cost centers - departments and programs within the organization for which it must track detailed expenses. "We may receive funding that is specific to a particular service or location," explains Dancause. "So we need to be able to collect, track, and account for expenses and spending associated with those various cost centers."

Comprehensive grant management

LSS-SW makes extensive use of the Grant Administration module to track and manage the

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nearly 80 grants that are open and active at any one time. "It would be a tremendous burden to manage without this software," says Dancause. "There are so many details surrounding each grant and they may span fiscal years, which further complicates the accounting. Grant Administration keeps us organized and also helps us prepare the required Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards."

More than 90 percent of the organization's funding comes in the form of federal, state, and county grants or contracts. "Our grantors, our board, and our auditors all expect a thorough accounting of our grant monies, and we're able to deliver the reports they demand," says Dancause. "Because of the complexity of our grant programs, if we didn't have a specialized tool like Abila MIP Fund Accounting, we would have to set up separate companies in another software application or use multiple spreadsheets to manage each of our various funds."

Data accessibility

"We need the ability to slice and dice and analyze our organizational data in multiple ways," says Dancause. "We look at the data by program, by

department, by funder, by grant, by location, and in various combinations of those factors. Abila MIP Fund Accounting is designed to allow us to do that.”

Program directors at LSS-SW access financial data through the Executive View license, which provides inquiry and reporting tools, and budget collaboration capabilities.

“Our directors find the Executive View helpful as they can review current or past grants when preparing new grant proposals,” says Dancause. “They are also able to run a Revenue and Expense Statement for a particular grant they have an interest in.”

Secure and auditable

Security is a primary concern for LSS-SW, and the organization takes its responsibility to securely manage its data seriously. “We are able to precisely control who has access to what elements of the software and to which programs and specific grants,” notes Dancause.

“We have a very detailed, complex financial infrastructure,” she adds. “And as a nonprofit that infrastructure must be transparent and auditable. I cannot imagine trying to do what we do without Abila MIP Fund Accounting.”

Accurate budgeting

Accurate budgeting is a mandatory component of effective long term planning, and LSS-SW utilizes the powerful budgeting component of Abila MIP Fund Accounting to plan and monitor the expenditures and grants associated with each of its cost centers. Individual program administrators perform preliminary budgeting tasks in Excel® and that data is then imported into Abila MIP Fund Accounting. “We’re able to perform detailed financial projections and what-if scenarios,” explains Dancause. “It’s a very useful tool that we use and refer to all year long.”

Demonstrate stewardship

“Abila MIP Fund Accounting is a huge time saving for our organization,” concludes Dancause. “It’s fully integrated, secure, and easily reconcilable. We believe in transparency, and with Abila MIP Fund Accounting, we are able to demonstrate professional financial stewardship to our grantors, funders, and donors.”

About Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest

Since 1970, Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest (LSS-SW) has ministered to the urgent needs of people in communities throughout Arizona. A willing heart, a helping hand, and a sense of serving the community with joy are reflected in the quality human care services LSS-SW is proud to deliver. Learn more at lss-sw.org.

CHALLENGE

- Multiple funds require detailed tracking and management
- Complex reporting requirements
- Need for security and transparency

SOLUTION

Abila MIP Fund Accounting delivers a combination of comprehensive fund accounting functionality, user security, flexible data access, and grant management tools.

RESULTS

- Ability to track expenditures & funding by cost center
- Powerful grant tracking and reporting
- Secure access to the data users need