

Is it Time to Change to a Nonprofit Specific Fund Accounting Solution?

“I was so excited to get a true fund accounting solution that would allow us to balance by fund, and ensure our fund accounts were balancing correctly. Furthermore, access to an electronic timecard package, better integration and additional modules for HR and purchase order requisitions has given us the ability to manage our organization to the very best of our ability.”

Kathy Hayes
Controller
Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend Region



The Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend Region (ELC) is a contracted partner with the State of Florida’s Agency for Workforce Innovation – Office of Early Learning (AWI-OEL), and is responsible for the administration of the School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten programs. Their headquarters is located in Tallahassee, FL, and they also serve communities in Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor and Wakulla Counties.

The primary goals of the ELC include:

- Ensuring that children are ready for success when they enter school
- And giving families access to the quality child care services and assistance they need

Some of the services provided by the Early Learning Coalition include: school readiness tuition assistance; referrals and assistance in accessing additional community resources; hearing, vision and developmental screening; early literacy programs; on-site coaching and technical assistance and much more.

For some time, The Early Learning Coalition had been outsourcing their payment processing to a subcontractor using QuickBooks®. When their contract expired they decided it would be best to bring this in-house. They very quickly determined that QuickBooks wasn’t going to work for them because it couldn’t import files from the ESS – a statewide system that processes the attendance

rosters for their child care providers, creating a large amount of cumbersome data entry. Kathy Hayes, Controller for ELC explains, “Part of what we do is pay child care providers for children who have gone through our eligibility requirements and attend their centers. It’s kind of like subsidized child care. We pay a portion and the parents pay the rest. It makes child care affordable for parents who may otherwise not be able to afford it. And to properly process child attendance information we needed a more sophisticated fund accounting solution specifically designed for nonprofits that would allow us to streamline our process.”

In addition to the payment processing requirements, The Early Learning Coalition also needed an electronic timecard package, better integration, an HR Module and options for extra add-on modules such as purchase order requisitions in order to manage their organization to the best of their ability.

They did some research and narrowed their choices down ultimately choosing Sage MIP Fund Accounting. And the best part was, they didn’t have to look far to find a solution provider. ELC’s CFO already had a relationship with Nonprofit Technologies, Inc. (NPT), a nonprofit technology specialist who was the perfect fit for them.

“The implementation and conversion went very well,” recalls Kathy. “We didn’t incur any travel costs because NPT did

everything via conference and the web. The project manager they assigned to us was extremely knowledgeable about our business because she had previously worked for a Miami organization similar. It really couldn't have gone better."

The Early Learning Coalition hoped that NPT could help them resolve several accounting challenges they had been having. One of these was a program in which child care providers could elect a pre-payment option for children scheduled to attend the following month. Once the month was over, they would come back to The ELC and report the true attendance numbers. The ELC would then have to go through a true-up process using an extensive excel spreadsheet. They wanted to be able to enter this data directly into Sage MIP and asked NPT if it was possible. Kathy remembers, "Because of NPT's expertise, they immediately understood what we needed and worked very closely with us to help us customize our system appropriately." Another challenge was that they offered a co-op program in which participating child care providers pay \$10 per month to The ELC. On "market days" those providers can then pick up materials for their centers for a fraction of the cost. The Early Learning Coalition purchases these items in bulk and therefore receives discounted pricing options. They wanted to figure out the best way to collect the money from the participating providers without causing double work. NPT was able to come up

with a system in which they can use standard importing from excel that takes the money out of the provider's regular check, streamlining the system input. Each of the new processes has saved ELC a significant amount of time.

Furthermore, about a year after their initial implementation of Sage MIP, The ELC hired a full-time HR Director. Unfortunately they did not have a data system in place to assist her in doing her job. They contacted NPT who had an add-on module that would integrate seamlessly with Sage MIP. Kathy explains, "The new HR Module is great! It has given our HR Director access to the data she needs and has more features than we had dreamed of."

The Early Learning Coalition couldn't be happier with their new nonprofit fund accounting solution, and the assistance provided to them by NPT. "I was so excited to get a true fund accounting system that would allow us to balance by fund, and ensure our fund accounts were balancing correctly. But it's gone above and beyond in that we can also pull user friendly reports and schedules that are easily readable by non-financial people within our organization." And the best part is, The ELC was able bring their payment processing in-house, saving the outsourced costs, without adding any additional staff. That's a savings of an estimated \$40,000 a year!" Kathy concludes, "NPT and Sage have both been a fantastic support to us. They are always available and responsive to any needs we have, or technical questions we come up with. It's really great to know we have them in our court."

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NPT understands the unique needs of nonprofits and has dedicated its entire business to addressing those needs since 1996. We are a business and technology solutions provider with over 40 locations and nearly 700 nonprofit clients nationwide. We help federal, state, and local government agencies and nonprofit organizations, including schools, human and social service agencies, religious organizations, museums, and libraries achieve their missions.

NPT provides expert, certified implementation, customization, and integration of industry leading nonprofit accounting software - Sage MIP Fund Accounting and Sage Fundraising 50. Our expertise has been acknowledged through our selection to the Sage Chairman's Club, President's Circle, Million Dollar Club, and as a Sage Select Authorized Partner. NPT is also a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner as well as being the publisher of Gazelle, a complimentary product to Sage MIP fund accounting software specifically designed for Workforce Development Boards and Economic Development organizations.

We also offer a number of training and support services designed to maximize your knowledge of your software and empower you throughout the implementation of our solutions. At NPT, we strive to provide business solutions that exceed your expectations on-time, on budget, and with the functionality we've promised. If you are interested in learning more about NPT's solutions please contact Tammy Massey at 800.404.9758 ext. 123, at tammy@cpaz.com, or visit us on the web at www.cpaz.com



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