

CUSTOMER STORY:

North Georgia Community Foundation



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— Lisa Warwick
Vice President of Finance
North Georgia Community Foundation

The North Georgia Community Foundation is dedicated to enhancing the spirit of community and quality of life in the greater North Georgia region by building, preserving and distributing philanthropic assets.

The Foundation envisions a community with sufficient philanthropic resources that, when invested and utilized effectively, will produce an extraordinary quality of life in the region.

Challenge

In 1998, the North Georgia Community Foundation had approximately \$2 million in funds. Two years later, that number increased to \$10 million. Now, the Foundation has approximately \$35 million spread across approximately 300 accounts.

Ten years ago, the organization was quickly expanding and adding funds. The financial processes and systems in place at the time could not meet the Foundation’s growing needs. Because the Foundation is responsible for the proper handling and allocation of millions of dollars, it needed a financial tool that would enable it to accurately manage various funds and effectively track the money in its care. Beyond this, it also needed a system that would grow as the organization grew. It needed something that could handle \$10 million and effectively and efficiently manage \$50 million or more.

North Georgia Community Foundation is powered by:

- ▶ Financial Edge™
- ▶ Raiser’s Edge™
- ▶ Blackbaud NetCommunity™
- ▶ Blackbaud Merchant Services™
- ▶ Blackbaud Application Hosting™

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Solution

North Georgia Community Foundation purchased Blackbaud's **Financial Edge™**. Financial Edge included an allocation module, which was essential for the organization. Additionally, Blackbaud's entire suite of products, although the organization may not have been ready to use all the products, was appealing to the organization and considered when making its selection. Because Blackbaud offers a number of technology tools that interact with one another, the Foundation was confident it was selecting a partner that will expand and grow with the organization.

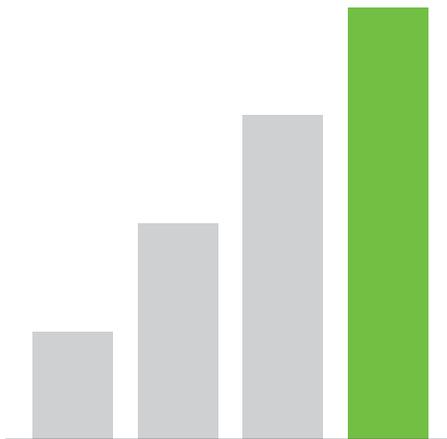
Since its purchase of Financial Edge, the Foundation has added a number of modules to address its growing needs. It has added budgeting, bank reconciliation, and accounts payable, for example.

In the decade since it first began using Financial Edge, the Foundation has added other Blackbaud products and services including **Raiser's Edge™**, **Blackbaud NetCommunity™**, **Blackbaud Merchant Services™**, and **Blackbaud Application Hosting™**.

For more than 20 years, Raiser's Edge has been one of the world's most popular and trusted fundraising solutions. It provides the tools needed to consistently manage constituent relationships and fundraising processes across the organization. Its reputation and integration with Financial Edge made it the best choice for North Georgia Community Foundation.



Financial Edge helps us save both time and money.



Financial Edge has allowed us to shift our time from managing allocations to managing and growing our endowment.

The Foundation then added Blackbaud NetCommunity to its product suite. With NetCommunity, the Foundation is able to provide secure, online access of funds to its constituents. Constituents are able to login and view their account, allocate funds and check balances from the convenience of their computer. The integration of Financial Edge and Raiser's Edge with NetCommunity has made it possible for the Foundation to offer this level of convenience to its customers. In fact, the Foundation frequently uses this functionality as a selling point when soliciting donors.

Approximately four years ago, the organization moved its applications to Blackbaud Application Hosting. With application hosting, Foundation staff can log in from anywhere and work, updates and upgrades are the responsibility of Blackbaud not North Georgia Community Foundation, and data backups are handled with ease and no longer the hassle of Foundation staff.

Recently, the Foundation switched its online payment processing to **Blackbaud Merchant Services™**. Blackbaud Merchant Services' OneRATE means that the organization can save money on its online transactions. Additionally, the flat rate fee offered by Blackbaud Merchant Services is lower than the combined fees of many other offerings, according to Lisa Warwick, vice president of finance at North Georgia Community Foundation.



Results

For the North Georgia Community Foundation, the benefits it has experienced with Blackbaud products span across the board.

With Financial Edge, Warwick has been able to save both time and money. She can print checks directly from Financial Edge.

This saves time, decreases the cost of checks, and pleases the auditors. The auditors like the security that comes with having checks stored electronically and in the system. Warwick likes the convenience.

As Vice President of Finance, Warwick sings the praises of Financial Edge. “Financial Edge has allowed us to do our jobs,” she said. “The allocations piece is especially important because of the type of work that we do. It has allowed us to shift our time from managing allocations to managing and growing our endowment.”

It is the connection and convenience at which the products interact that has also been a substantial benefit to North Georgia Community Foundation. It is the suite of products that has enabled the Foundation to provide the functionality needed to ensure that it stays competitive and addresses the needs of its constituents without causing pain or an administrative nightmare.



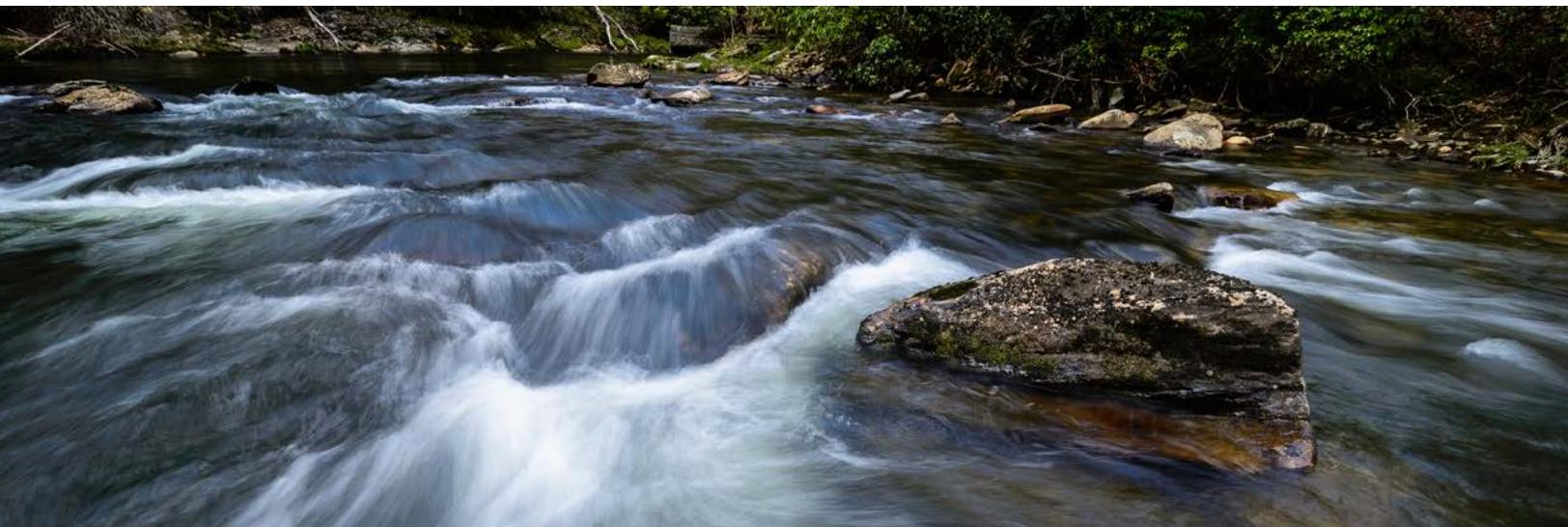
Financial Edge not only makes life easier, it makes our data accurate and easy to reconcile.



With Blackbaud Application Hosting, the Foundation doesn't have to worry about back-ups, updates, upgrades, or security.

“I love how the various products talk to each other,” Warwick emphasized. “It is a great time-saver for me. When a gift comes in online, I just have to go and accept it and it creates the constituent record in Raiser's Edge if one didn't already exist, and then it creates a batch that I just click and send to Financial Edge. Not only does it make my life easier, it makes our data accurate and easy to reconcile.”

In recent years, the Foundation has also seen an increase in its online fundraising. The use of NetCommunity has helped make this possible. For example, the Foundation has used the Memorial/Tribute functionality in NetCommunity to give people the option to donate in memory of a loved one. This ability was recently utilized when a local attorney lost his son in a car crash. The announcement sent people to North Georgia Community Foundation's website and gave a fund code to have people donate. It was easy for the family to set up, made giving easy to those that wanted to give, and made donation processing quick and easy for the Foundation.



Another example is a recent constituent-led campaign to purchase cans of shaving cream to send to troops in Afghanistan. The idea came after a local father learned from his son that the cans were used to mark bombs in the region. With help from the Internet, the word spread. It was mentioned in blogs and passed along to friends. It required nothing from the Foundation other than to provide the ability of people from all over the country to donate online. In about six months, the fund was \$20,000 strong.

With all the features and benefits the Foundation provides its constituents, it needed a more cost-effective and secure means to manage its applications. With Blackbaud Application Hosting, the Foundation doesn't have to worry about back-ups, updates, upgrades, or security. It is saving the \$95 per hour charge that it was costing to have a local IT person conduct updates and upgrades on its software. Now, those are handled by Blackbaud. Plus, Warwick doesn't have to remember to pick up and transfer the back-up tape each night. Blackbaud is taking care of it. The responsibility of security is on Blackbaud, and the Foundation can rest assured that their information is available, backed-up, secure and accessible in the case of disaster or damage to its facility.



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Blackbaud's convenient online Knowledgebase makes it easy to find solutions and answers.

For Warwick, even with all the benefits she has experienced with the software, there is more. The experience she has had with the company for the past 12 years has been phenomenal, she said.

"We've always had a good experience and interaction with Blackbaud," she said. "I don't think I ever had a negative experience. Oh, and I love the Knowledgebase."

For Warwick, Blackbaud's convenient online knowledgebase makes it easy for her to find solutions and answers to her questions. She has also done some free training online offered by Blackbaud.

"They have been really useful and I like how they are delivered," she concluded. "From my experience with Blackbaud and hearing what other people have said, I think Blackbaud is the best," Warwick concluded.

