

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

# The West End Home Foundation



West End Home  
FOUNDATION

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—Dianne Oliver, Executive Director

From a home for Civil War widows to a grantmaking organization, The West End Home Foundation adapts and evolves to best serve its community. Looking toward its next chapter, the grantmaking foundation needed the right solution to streamline processes, track outcomes, and measure impact.

## The West End Home Foundation evolves its grantmaking operations to drive the greatest impact.

The West End Home Foundation began in the wake of the Civil War as a residence where aging widows could find community, security, and dignity. For well over a century, the Nashville “Old Woman’s Home” adapted and expanded—moving into new buildings, accepting couples and men, and eventually acknowledging that it could better use its resources in another way.

With more seniors living independently and more women entering old age with financial independence, the foundation could benefit its Tennessee community more broadly by funding organizations that serve elderly residents. In 2002 the foundation stopped accepting applications for its home, although staff cared for remaining residents until the last woman died in 2013.

**The West End Home Foundation is powered by:**  
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The West End Home Foundation made its first grant in 2002. Since that time, the foundation has distributed nearly \$15 million to dozens of organizations that serve older adults, ranging from housing and healthcare to transportation and social activities. After 15 years of funding, the foundation was ready for its next transition—into digital operations.

“We were doing everything manually—reviewing grants, monitoring grants,” said executive director Dianne Oliver. “We were giving out a fairly substantial amount of money every year and needed better systems in place to track what we were doing—and to receive and administer grants more efficiently.”

## Streamlining Processes

The West End Home Foundation’s 16-member board reviews all applications and makes strategic decisions on how to allocate funds for about 60 agencies every year. When the foundation decided to partner with Blackbaud for a grantmaking solution that would streamline operations, Oliver called that move “a turning point.”

The reviewer feature in Blackbaud Grantmaking assigns applications to board members and tracks their feedback with deadlines in mind, saving an estimated 20 days of administrative staff time per grant cycle. “Prior to using Blackbaud Grantmaking, we had to print every application for every board member and had massive notebooks with all supplemental materials of 50 to 60 pages per grant,” Oliver said. “Now that’s all just online. There’s so much paper that’s been eliminated.”



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Oliver said the board most appreciates the solution’s versatility. Members can download applications and access them while traveling or on vacation to keep the process moving, no matter their locations or connectivity.

One of Oliver’s colleagues tracks the application process in real time, notes where applicants stall along the way, and follows up with assistance. “Having an online grant application process has been a real help to our agencies,” Oliver said. “For receiving and processing applications, it has really streamlined the effort.”

## Becoming Transformational

The West End Home Foundation aims to serve as a voice for vulnerable older adults, a demographic growing at 10,000 people per day nationally. “For us, the trends are an exploding aging population and how much longer people are living,” Oliver said. “We want to know how we can invest in more innovative approaches to helping older people remain engaged in communities and remain in their homes.”



**20 Days**  
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Strategic data use plays a key role in that solution. Oliver said the foundation recognizes that remaining an effective grantmaker means measuring and investing in high-impact programs. “We want to be more effective as a foundation, to do more than just grantmaking—to be a voice and an advocate in our community,” she said. “The biggest challenge is how to go from just being transactional in making grants to being transformational.”

The foundation’s next steps include surveying geographic data, examining where the foundation spends money, and assessing long-term trends. “We’re still just scratching the surface on all the reporting we can do with the data in our database now,” Oliver said. “We’ve got to use technology to help us get a better understanding of the impact agencies are having and, in turn, the impact of the foundation.”

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“I have key data points in front of me. That has improved our accountability.”

—Dianne Oliver,  
Executive Director

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#### About Blackbaud

Leading uniquely at the intersection point of technology and social good, Blackbaud connects and empowers organizations to increase their impact through cloud software, services, expertise, and data intelligence. We serve the entire social good community, which includes nonprofits, foundations, companies, education institutions, healthcare organizations, and the individual change agents who support them.