

# Honest Feedback from Real Users of Not-for-Profit Software



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## Top 6 Not-for-Profit Software Have a Wide Variety of Differences From “For-Profit” Accounting Software Packages



*NFP organizations also have their own particular audit and accounting requirements.*

By Bruce Andersen, CPA, MBA, MS (Tax)

**N**ot-for-Profit (NFP) software is a special niche area. There are a variety of traditional accounting software packages that attempt to do NFP, but these contained here-in are the “real deals.”

NFP has a wide variety of differences from “for-profit” accounting software packages. This starts with the setup of the chart and continues throughout the processing. The chart must accommodate current standards for nonprofits.

Nonprofits don’t have customers or clients, but donors, members and patrons. Although they are still “people” or “entities,” their relationship to the organization requires special handling. For example, nonprofits receive donations – not the same kind of transaction as payments for goods and services in a for-profit business.

NFP software packages were built from the ground up on the basis of managing these types of entities. However, keep in mind that not all nonprofits have the same mission. For example, I just picked up a new nonprofit client that does not advertise, solicit donations or have a website. What they do have is their own membership. That is a whole different ballgame than an organization in “competition” for donations from large national charities.

NFP organizations also have their own particular audit and accounting requirements. According to the AICPA, they need guidance in planning and performing audits under the new Risk Assessment Statements on Auditing Standards (SAS 104-111), and are concerned with FASB Statements 157 and 159, both concerning Fair Value. They also must adhere to the provisions of FASB Interpretation No. 48, Accounting for Uncertainty in Income Taxes—an interpretation of FASB Statement No. 109, and understand how internal control deficiencies have been re-defined by SAS 112.

The packages reviewed in this issue help address these concerns – all because they are totally dedicated to the NFP entity.

## One-Time Data Input Reduces Time and Errors

*Advanced modules include Electronic Requisitions with multi-stage approval processes.*

The AccuFund Accounting Suite is a complete, integrated accounting system for nonprofit and government entities. The Financial Report Writer meets various requirements for reporting, including those for FASB/GASB, internal management, single audit and grants.

### Benefits and Features

- AccuFund is designed specifically for the requirements of nonprofits and government organizations.
- The program is available for onsite implementation or as an AccuFund hosted solution.

#### What Users Say

“Before purchasing AccuFund, we looked at other products that were more costly, and when I went through the tutorials, there were a lot of things a not-for-profit probably did not need,” says **Jerome Pecoraro**, business manager of the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, Conn. “We had been using a 27-year-old DOS-based program, and I have to say that the switchover from DOS to Windows with AccuFund was pretty smooth. I used to have to send enormous printouts to different departments reflecting their general ledger; now, they can see them because I post them throughout the month.”

**Melinda Callahan** is an accountant for the Music Center Foundation in Los Angeles, Calif. “We had used a combination of QuickBooks and [Microsoft] Excel, and our accounting was outsourced.” Now, Callahan uses AccuFund to keep track of hundreds of donors who divide up their contributions across several different organizations within the Foundation. “We have 8,000 account numbers. We track the original contribution, distributions and market value, as well as keep track of all of our investments. I can’t imagine allocating all the income and expenses to each donor on a spreadsheet. That would just be a nightmare.”

### Summary

AccuFund eliminates the need to re-key activity into spreadsheets, thereby reducing time and errors.

**AccuFund**  
accufund.com  
877-872-2228



## Updated Accounting System Designed for Nonprofit Orgs

*FastFund Raising is a complete donor, campaign management system that helps organizations build long-term relationships with donors.*

FastFund Accounting 2.5 is a fully integrated fund accounting system designed for nonprofit organizations. Modules include Accounting, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Cost Allocations, Payroll and Fundraising.

The system automatically generates separate year-end closing entries for each fund and a detailed due to/from other funds audit trail. Standard features include automatic self-balancing funds, cross fiscal-year budgeting, detailed audit trails, point of entry and indirect cost allocations, bank reconciliation, and check printing.

### Benefits and Features

- Araize reports that FastFund is the only application designed and supported by accountants who have extensive experience in the nonprofit sector.
- The program includes accounting, fundraising and payroll components, with one free year of support.
- FastFund Raising is a complete donor, campaign management system that maximizes fundraising efforts helping organizations build long-term relationships with donors.

#### What Users Say

After he retired, **William Lutrell** started his own business, Valley Financial Services in Southwest Va. “As a small operator, FastFund had the best price for me. It does more of what I need and was easier to use than more expensive programs. FastFund has everything I need for my growth. As we expand, I’ll use other modules.”

“For me, FastFund was a savior,” says **Bill Seybold**, CFO for the South Bend Regional Museum of Art in South Bend, Ind. “We finally got something that was suited for what I needed to do.” Seybold describes FastFund as a very fine system, tremendous and even terrific. “They have updated their Accounting system; I’m looking forward to setting it up.”

### Summary

FastFund is a true fund accounting application that handles the complex accounting requirements of multi-funded organizations. Reporting capabilities produce custom reports to meet fiscal needs including multi-year reports, budgets, and FASB 116 and 117 compliant reports.

**Araize**  
www.araiize.com  
800-745-4037



## Full Integration Capabilities Helps Accounting Processes

*An extra level of tracking enables an organization to separate processes and report on reimbursable grants and contracts.*

The most current release of The Financial Edge, v.7.7, includes new security features, as well as functionality in its Projects, Grants, and Endowments module.

### Benefits and Features

- Powerful, flexible reporting right out of the box allows users to produce timely, accurate reports on the organization, programs and initiatives.
- Extra levels of tracking enable an organization to separate and report on reimbursable grants and contracts, endowments, projects, special events, exhibitions, scholarships, investments, and other entities without cluttering the chart of accounts.

#### What Users Say

"I've been using the software for nine years at Detroit's zoo and now here," says **Brian Goldman**, director of Finance and Administration at Fresno's Chaffee Zoo Corporation. "The first, huge advantage is that The Financial Edge is geared to nonprofits. It has flexibility. You can create reports based on the attributes you want to report on, whether you're reporting to a board or a department, or preparing for an audit." Goldman also uses several other Blackbaud products, including The Raiser's Edge for fundraising, and likes the company's customer support. "They are constantly improving. Blackbaud is definitely the leader."

"The Financial Edge makes sense for us because it helps us gain the integration we need," says **Charlie Zaugg**, associate vice president of Finance at the Minnesota Medical Foundation. He comments that the organization previously used a general ledger package for accounting. Dealing with thousands of transactions on a monthly basis, manager of Financial Reporting Jill Schwimmer adds, "With a little tweaking, integration makes it really easy to get accurate financial statements."

### Summary

The Financial Edge is designed to integrate with other Blackbaud nonprofit solutions, including The Raiser's Edge fundraising system, The Education Edge system for independent schools and The Information Edge system for executive data analysis.

#### Blackbaud

blackbaud.com  
800-443-9441



## Integrated System Prevents Time Lags

*A three-year fiscal calendar tracks vendors, contributors and donations with different fiscal years or a standard calendar year.*

Not only does Cougar Mountain Software's FUND Suite balance multiple ledgers, it is also set up to manage payroll or track vendors.

### Benefits and Features

- Users can balance multiple fund ledgers automatically with every contribution (or sale if the organization also operates a retail component).
- A three-year fiscal calendar tracks vendors, contributors and donations with different fiscal years or a standard calendar year.

#### What Users Say

"Durango West Metro is a Title 32 Special District servicing only 200 houses," says **Janet Anderson** of the Colorado community she serves. "It's hard for them to comply with all of the state standards when you don't have staff, and governmental accounting programs are very expensive." She feels, for the money, Cougar Mountain is a good option for small governments. "It does a good job in a lot of areas, but I do think the software is lacking in easily manipulating reports."

**Patti Eliot** of Alabama's Montgomery Community Action Agency does quite a bit of reporting for federal, state and locally funded programs. One thing she appreciates is Cougar's flexibility in the chart of accounts. "We're doing full-blown cost center accounting for our Headstart program." Eliot says she can pull out education or nutrition costs across the agency's 24 locations, or look at costs of running one center. "It is the best bang for the buck. Even though Cougar has a mid-range level of service, the software is very well priced for what you get."

### Summary

Unlike many other fund accounting packages, Cougar Mountain's FUND Suite is truly integrated: a change in one module is instantly recorded and reflected in any associated modules. There is no lag time or "syncing" required to keep information current.

#### Cougar Mountain Software

www.cougarmtn.com  
800-388-3038



## Combined Chart of Accounts Renders Financial Statements

*All data is readily viewable as lists with a consistent user interface.*

With FUND E-Z, users can track restricted and unrestricted funds, and budget each program, project, grant, government contract, site or department. Users can combine chart of accounts levels into columns and rows to easily create financial statements for internal and external reporting.

### Benefits and Features

- Audit amounts on reports by double-clicking to drill through layers of detail.
- All data is readily viewable as lists with a consistent user interface for add, edit and delete functionality across all lists.
- Import commonly used data files with easy field mapping and communicative error check reports.

#### What Users Say

“For the money, FUND E-Z is an amazing value,” says **Bill Sammis**, deputy executive director of Administrative Services at Crystal Run Village. “It has been easy for me to adapt the software to the changing needs of our agency; we use it for our entire general ledger package.” From offices in Middletown, N.Y., the agency’s 800 employees serve the developmentally-disabled at 53 locations. “FUND E-Z is aggressive about listening to its customers; any flaws I’ve uncovered they’ve always addressed.”

“The custom-made monthly reports are quite sophisticated,” says **Aurel Feldman**, comptroller for the American Jewish Committee, a human rights organization with offices in New York, Washington, D.C. and overseas. “Everyone in the financial accounting department learned to use it.”

“I would encourage anyone who is considering software to put FUND E-Z in the mix of products they are considering,” says **Jerry Peterson**, finance director of St. Francis Center, serving the homeless in Denver. “I’ve been in business a long, long time, and frankly, FUND E-Z is one of the best vendors I’ve dealt with.”

### Summary

FUND E-Z funnels costs through a unique chart of accounts for proper nonprofit reporting.

#### FUND E-Z

[www.fundez.com](http://www.fundez.com)  
877-696-0900



## Table-Driven Chart of Accounts Helps Track Programs and Funds

*The Drill-down Analyzer reviews individual transactions that make up the balances on reports.*

Sage MIP Fund Accounting, v. 9.0, delivers customer-driven features to help solve organizational business problems and enhance usability. Improved navigation tools allow users to reduce data entry and increase efficiency. Payroll compliance is enhanced by the program’s ability to print more than 200 federal and state payroll tax forms on plain paper.

### Benefits and Features

- Cut time from the reporting cycle by creating only the necessary reports within the system. The system provides default reports, can be easily customized, to address most situations.
- Customize the chart of accounts to access data quickly and easily.
- Automate transaction entry with a variety of tools, including memorized transactions, preset distributions and entry defaults.
- The Drill-down Analyzer reviews individual transactions that make up the balances on reports.
- Auditors are able to verify financial statement accuracy by maintaining a clear audit trail.

#### What Users Say

“**Beth Smith** is vice president of Finance and Facilities at Crider Health Center in Wentzville, Mo. “The reporting with Sage MIP Fund Accounting is so flexible. We have a number of grantors with different reporting periods, and one thing I absolutely love is the year-end reports. We can pull out the trial balance, and export our financial statements and other reports out of the program right into Excel.”

“I really like Sage MIP Fund Accounting’s chart of accounts,” says **Shirley Merrick**, assistant director of accounting at Capital Area Agency on Aging, Inc., an organization serving 17,000 seniors across 13 Parishes in Louisiana. “I can track by program, service, or restricted/unrestricted funds. I also appreciate the ability to look at multi-budget years.”

### Summary

Sage MIP Fund Accounting helps organizations track and report on multiple funds across multiple budget periods, meet reporting requirements, and demonstrate accountability to constituents.

#### Sage Software

[sagenonprofit.com](http://sagenonprofit.com)  
800-811-0961

