Blackbaud, Inc. — The Financial Edge

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From the June 2013 review of non-profit accounting systems.

Best Fit: The Financial Edge from Blackbaud is ideally suited for mid-sized to large nonprofit organizations, and government entities that have complex management and reporting needs, as well as the need for comprehensive donor and grant management capability.

Strengths

- Excellent budget management tools
- Long list of add-on and complementary modules
- Easily created custom dashboards
- Solid integration with The Raiser's Edge and The Education Edge
- Customizable by Focus, Solution, or Goal
- Flexible, scalable product is suitable for just about any nonprofit organization

Potential Limitations

- System setup can be time consuming
- Learning curve can be steep for some users

The Financial Edge from Blackbaud is part of Blackbaud's wide selection software designed for nonprofit organizations, educational facilities, and government entities. The Financial Edge is both powerful and easy to use; an unusual combination.

The Organize Favorites option offers easy customization capability, allowing users to choose the features they want to display on their user interface. Users can also set up Quick Access links to system functions and reports can be saved under the Favorites menu. Clicking on a system module will display the related workflow area. Data entry screens are easily navigated and contain the necessary lookup options as well as various function tabs providing easy access to additional system features. The Financial Edge uses a batch system to process system transactions, and all data entry screens contain a 'Find' function, which serves as a search function within each module.

The Financial Edge offers a total of 28 system modules including GL, AP, AR, Accounting Forms, Accounting Queue, Advanced Budget Management, Advanced Security, Allocation Management, Cash Management, Cash Receipts, Consolidation Management, CounterPoint, Web Purchasing, Web Invoicing, Fixed Assets, Paper Save, Payroll, Point of Sale, Project, Grant & Endowment Management, Purchase Orders, Visual Basic for Applications, Application Programming Interface, Student Billing, School Store Manager, Electronic Funds Transfer, and F9 Financial Reporter. The Financial Edge also integrates with The Raiser's Edge, a top of the line fundraising and donor management software. The Financial Edge is extremely scalable; with users able to purchase the modules they need immediately, and add the others as needed.

Core NFP/Fund Accounting Capabilities: 5 Stars

The Financial Edge offers a flexible account structure, with users able to utilize up to 30 characters and up 10 segments for each account. The new account screen offers various function tabs where users can choose account attributes, activity, budget, related notes, default transaction attributes, and change history. The Financial Edge easily handles multiple transaction types including general journal entries, recurring and reversing journal entries, account allocations, as well as standard accounting

transactions such as cash receipts, vendor invoice entry and bill payment, and

management capability, and is one of the best donor management software products available today.

Donor detail is easily tracked, with users able to manage both current and potential donor detail. Easy integration with the GL module tracks all donations. Blackbaud's Project, Grant, & Endowment Management module allows users to easily manage separate projects and grant monies, recording activity, income, and expenses for each individual project or grant. The automatic fund-balancing feature keeps all funds in balance, at both project and segment level. Users can leave an unlimited number of fiscal years open, and can institute a 'soft close' where no transactions can be posted to that fiscal year. The Financial Edge offers excellent audit trail functionality, with all system transactions recorded and easily accessible at any time.

The Accounts Payable for Bill Paying Automation provides users with the ability to pay bills via EFT, as well as using traditional means. Users can also email statements or invoices to recipients. The Financial Edge offers hosted solutions, so users can easily access the software from any location with an Internet location.

Management Features: 5 Stars

Users can easily create custom dashboards in The Financial Edge by choosing from the numerous panels available. All dashboards offer drill-down capability, and easy customization capability. By using budget scenarios in the Budget Management module, users can forecast multiple budgets for every account, using a variety of what-if situations. System users can be given Supervisor Rights or Selected Group Rights, with specific criteria defined for each level. Employees can also be given system access at various levels including project, function, and module.

System users are provided with a warning if a transaction will place totals over budget, and users can easily track delinquent past due accounts. The Raiser's Edge

provides complete donor management functionality, from initial donor contact to

will display the available reports within that category. Grant and project reporting options are excellent, with users able to choose a report by grant or project filter. Nonprofit specific reports such as FASB 117 and GASB 34 are easily processed in The Financial Edge, and all system reports can be easily exported to a wide variety of formats which include CSV, Excel, FoxPro, Microsoft Word, Rich Text, Text, or HTML

Integration & Import/Export: 5 Stars

Users can export various data types, including grants, accounts, projects, and transactions. The Export function guides users through the export process using a variety of formats including CSV, Fox Pro, Microsoft Access, Lotus 123, Microsoft Word, Rich Text, and Text. All Blackbaud products are designed for complete integration, creating a powerful system that is truly designed to work together. Accountants can gain access to system data with a user login and password.

Help/Support: 5 Stars

The Financial Edge contains excellent Help functionality, including a comprehensive system overview, access to whitepapers, the Blackbaud knowledgebase, and various How-To documentation available for all modules. Users can also simply press F1 during system navigation to display extensive help options. Blackbaud offers users various training and product support options, and all system updates and enhancements can be downloaded from the website when available.

Read about how a nonprofit is using Financial Edge to achieve success.

Summary & Pricing

On-Site licensing of The Financial Edge starts at $2,995.00 for a 3-user system. Subscription pricing begins at $299.00 per month for a single user. The Financial Edge remains one of most comprehensive nonprofit software products available on

the market today, and with a long list of system add-ons, is a scalable system that

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