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Dec. 22, 2008

*From the [Jan. 2009 Review](#)  
of Not-for-Profit Accounting Programs*

GMS Accounting software was built specifically for not-for-profit organizations with a specific focus on activity-based costing. Rather than re-making ABC, job cost or commercial accounting software, it was designed for nonprofits as a grant and contract accounting system. Since 1980, the vendor has produced a well-rounded solution that meets the accounting and reporting needs of grant-focused organizations.

#### **EASE OF USE/FLEXIBILITY – 4.5 Stars**

The interface of GMS is direct. By offering menu-driven tasks, it is clear where to begin. The left navigation keys offer the same choices, eliminating the guesswork found in some other systems. The Processing Checklist tool is a nice touch for analyzing tasks for AP, Payroll and monthly closing.

By using a simpler chart of accounts (five-digit), the feel of the transaction is lighter than traditional solutions in the mid market. Program elements (activities or components of grants) are pre-linked to automate posting, limiting errors in posting and controlling allowable costs and budget compliance.

Most setup screens and transactions offer drop-down list access, helping users to navigate the screens with guidance if needed, while not forcing them to memorize internal codes. Reports, while grouped with their corresponding functions, were not easily identified. No Report menu or navigation key is available to help the user see the various choices available.

## **MODULES/SCALABILITY – 4 Stars**

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with federal and state funded loans or with multiple loan sources, this is an essential tool. For the operation that focuses only on managing loans, a cut down GL package is available to serve RLSS users at discounted pricing.

As other products in this segment choose to expand their lines of service, GMS is truly dedicated to its core competency. But as not-for-profits expand into new revenue opportunities, the options are currently limited for expansion and integration. The vendor noted that it has several modules available for importing into the GMS system from other software applications and is continuing to add more import options.

## **FEATURES/FUNCTIONALITY – 4.5 Stars**

Allowing for YTD analysis to compute indirect cost rates gives options of using actual rather than just provisional rates. The Cost Allocation features provide for a great deal of automation of this task. The system provides for analysis of Leave Rate and Fringe Benefit Rates, allowing compliance for all major OMB Circulars.

GMS Payroll is timesheet-generated to provide the cost allocation and direct capture of program and grant expenditures. This is a deft system that allows for user-defined deductions and calculations aside from the compliance tables provided with maintenance.

Budgeting is available for Programs, Indirect Costs, Fringe Benefits, YTD Time-sheet and an Agency-wide Budget. This allows for great flexibility including cross-ing fiscal years and with various funding sources. Without the AR module, revenue tracking is limited, but this is the intent. Revenues are directly assignable to programs and activities as they are received. However, I was disappointed that GMS makes no provision for tracking restrictions, inter-fund transfers

or matching grant funds, part of our expectation of managing grants. The vendor

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Dozens of supplemental pre-written reports are also available from GMS, including Payables by Program and a series of Board of Directors Reports.

#### **SUPPORT/HELP – 4 Stars**

Support is provided by GMS-qualified staff. Telephone support and online chat are available during extended EST business hours. Twelve months of support and a training package are required with purchase. In-product Help's search index is stilted, and is therefore a little time-consuming to use. More web-based support and Help offerings would be useful, such as a knowledgebase, FAQs, etc.

#### **RELATIVE VALUE – 4 Stars**

GMS is available for one to two users as a Microsoft Access-based package, starting at \$7,200 or as a SQL Server package at \$9,200. Additional user packages are also available. Additional modules range from \$800 to \$2,000 for one to two users. GMS does not include Access or SQL Server. As an employee-owned company, dedication to its mission and customer satisfaction is evident. While the feature set is limited due to the focus on grant and contract-based organizations, it does manage this area very well. For the right organization, this could be the exact solution they need without paying for overkill.

### **2009 OVERALL RATING:**

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