CPA
Practice Advisor

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Lawndale Christian Health Center is a Federally Qualified Health Center and has its roots in the Lawndale Community Church, which in 1984 spearheaded an effort to address the lack of affordable, quality health care services for its low-income community members. Since its founding, Lawndale has grown rapidly – over 164,800 medical visits are now completed each year. Services include laboratory, radiology, pharmacy, dentistry, optometry, behavioral health, and health support services for targeted low-income populations in the Chicago area.

Chris Dons was introduced to Blackbaud when he joined the staff at Lawndale years ago as the accounting supervisor. Early on, Chris was a heavy Financial Edge user who became adept in working with its powerful features throughself-study and online training. Now, as the CFO and power-user, Chris deeply appreciates how the solution benefits his financial staff and the organization as a whole. When Blackbaud released Blackbaud Financial Edge NXT, Lawndale adopted the cloud solution and has seen increased productivity as a result.

Prior to using Blackbaud, the organization struggled to manage the myriad of reports required by its diverse stakeholders, as is typical in FQHCs. Lawndale's regular reporting requirements include: internal decision making, Uniform Data System, 990

filings, Medicare and Medicaid cost reports, and unique reports for over two dozen

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Nonprofit-Centric Design Improves Reporting & Operation

Chris and his team ascribe productivity gains to Blackbaud Financial Edge NXT's capabilities for analysis, Accounts Payable (A/P), and cloud deployment—but as an FQHC, it all starts with reporting. Blackbaud Financial Edge NXT simplifies the reporting process thanks to its unique General Ledger (GL) design. Using standard data elements like Projects, Grants, and Transaction Codes, the solution allows Lawndale to report on key business components such as: programs, capital projects, and delivery sites–all while maintaining a streamlined chart of accounts. In addition, the team can easily adapt financial statements using the template designer, allowing them to respond to ever-changing funder requirements with agility.

"The structure is clear and consistent whether you are working in A/P, GL, or Fixed Assets. Anyone who is used to working in one module could easily get up to speed working in another module," shared Chris. This design is what drew the organization to Blackbaud years ago, and they are glad that Blackbaud Financial Edge NXT reflects the same consistency.

Navigating through Blackbaud Financial Edge NXT is intuitive, which provides a quality experience for an organization like Lawndale that regularly analyzes its transactional data. Chris's team uses dynamic search and queries to drill into reports and create subsets of data, giving them confidence in the integrity of their output across business processes.

Lawndale manages its budgeting through Advanced Budget Management, which allows its team to complete the first draft of their operating budget in three days thanks to distributed budgeting and a tight process. Finally, Chris believes the A/P functionality contributes to the team's efficiency managing expenses. Blackbaud Financial Edge NXT allows them to capture granular detail while enabling other

departments to manage payments within their approval thresholds. This, combined

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managed by Blackbaud. The time and frustration saved by his department is tremendous, while saving about 40 hours a year for the IT staff.

With a pure browser-based solution, the staff can now securely share live, online reports for non-financial users and department heads through view-only licenses. "There is substantial value in the ability to push information out without having to manually send reports," Chris adds.

The simplicity of the migration process from Financial Edge 7 was essential for Lawndale's decision to move forward with Blackbaud Financial Edge NXT. Lawndale did not want to lose access to its existing solution and was concerned about having to train employees. Blackbaud's design approach alleviated those concerns by allowing the organization to adopt a modern web solution with no impact to the existing functionality of Financial Edge 7.

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