

Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. works with Sage MIP Fund Accounting to accomplish its goals

The purpose of the Girl Scouts of the USA is to “build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.” As a national organization, it’s a challenge to maintain both consistency and momentum in serving this purpose across multiple locations. The Girl Scouts of the USA has answered its challenges by initiating a project to realign Girl Scout councils. By consolidating 310 councils into 109 regionalized councils, the organization will build a stronger focus in each region of the United States, to the benefit of its girls and volunteers.

Realignment to Strengthen the Mission

The Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. is currently undertaking this massive realignment to combine the Deep South Council, the South Central Alabama Council, and several surrounding counties. The struggle with realignment is that the financial records of each council reside in separate systems. To display fiscal responsibility in the new council, a compromise must be made to use the same fund accounting solution across the 30 counties comprising the Southern Alabama Council. The Deep South Council has been using Sage MIP Fund Accounting for seven years, and the additional counties are using other fund accounting solutions.

Karen Milton has been with the Deep South Council for five years, and as the chief financial officer, she will implement all realignment requirements related to the accounting departments.

Experience Plants the Seed

The Deep South Council is having great success using Sage MIP Fund Accounting for reporting and tracking. For instance, using built-in reporting, Milton is able to produce reports in various formats based on her audience.

“The report writer in every way, shape, and form makes Sage MIP Fund Accounting an outstanding program,” says Milton. “It’s not just one aspect of the software’s reporting capabilities—it’s being able to customize reports, headers, and which general ledger codes go into which categories. Sage MIP Fund Accounting really helps me to give people the numbers they need to see in an understandable light,” Milton said.



CUSTOMER

Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc.

INDUSTRY

Social Services Nonprofit

LOCATION

Mobile, Alabama

Number of Locations: 2

SYSTEM

Sage MIP Fund Accounting

MODULES

- Accounts Payable
- Bank Reconciliation
- Budget
- Data Import and Export
- Forms Designer
- General Ledger
- Grant Administration

Challenge

The Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. is charged with the financial administration and organizational realignment of multiple councils spread across 30 different counties.

Solution

Sage MIP Fund Accounting provides the flexibility and insight needed to effectively manage the books of such a large organization.

Results

The council now exhibits a streamlined financial operation that provides rich reports detailing the activities on each county as a separate entity or the entire organization as a whole.

The software's robust tracking functionality makes the council successful by providing space for the details needed to stay organized.

"Because Sage MIP Fund Accounting allows me to enter so much detail, I can track expenditures and income," adds Milton. "I can add specifics to the line descriptions to see who paid what, and on what day, without having to go to another report. And, I do this on-the-fly as I enter the cash receipts."

Bringing Others On Board

To realign the Girl Scout councils of Southern Alabama, the resulting body had to choose one fund accounting solution to apply to every county involved. This process takes into consideration the needs of each county and the goals of the new council as a whole.

Milton knew from experience that she wanted Sage MIP Fund Accounting for the Southern Alabama Council. Her task, then, was to convince the CEO, the board, and the IT staff.

With help from Sage, she created a slideshow presentation that detailed the benefits of using Sage MIP Fund Accounting and showcased the solution and actual reports that she uses for her team. Using examples of real reports for the board, a linear report for the CEO, and departmental reports to show accountability, Milton presented her recommendation to the Finance and IT Realignment Committees—they voted unanimously to use Sage MIP Fund Accounting.

"We are a service provider to the youths. And as such, we have to be financially responsible in order for us to continue our mission. Sage MIP Fund Accounting helps us be just that," Milton said. "I'm passionate about this software, so it was an easy sell for me."

Adapt to the Change

The council has used a single seat user up to this time, and as the new counties swap out their old fund accounting solutions, the staff will be trained to use Sage MIP Fund Accounting. Milton says the staff is also adjusting to the solution's table system for the chart of accounts, since the table design is a new concept for the counties that have been using a linear chart of accounts.

In Sage MIP Fund Accounting, critical reporting dimensions are created in separate tables or buckets, making it quick and easy to add new codes. This flexible structure provides robust reporting capabilities that allow users to slice and dice data by fund, program, activity, location, or any other fields in the database. Milton says this

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—Karen Milton
Chief Financial Officer
Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc.

makes a huge difference in how they look at the budget.

Milton is also using her experience to help others learn the program and smooth the transition to a larger accounting staff. The system is designed for natural workflows, but Milton's staff will be using the Sage training option to increase effectiveness and get rolling with the new system quickly.

A Model for Success

The Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. is serving as a model for other councils across the nation. As they work hard to ensure the realignment is a success for all the individual counties, Sage MIP Fund Accounting is making it possible for the consolidated organization to demonstrate accountability right from the start.

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