

RBP Helps The Upper Skagit Indian Tribe Streamline their Accounting with AccuFund

SUCCESS STORY

The Challenge

The Upper Skagit Indian Tribe had been struggling with their old accounting software, a DOS-based system that made reporting difficult, and processes tedious.

The Solution

RBP implemented AccuFund, a fund accounting system allowing them to streamline operations and automate their processes, saving huge amounts of time.

The Result

Upper Skagit Tribe now has powerful reporting classifications providing easy GASB display, a flexible chart of accounts, and all around ease-of-use. Not to mention automatic allocations allowing them to book their indirect costs with the allocation module.



The descendants of the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe originate from ten separate villages on the Upper Skagit and Sauk Rivers in Washington State. Federally recognized in the 1970's, and with land put into trust in 1984, the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe operates medical clinics, a housing authority, gaming, family services, and a tribal government.

A tribal government operates similarly to any state or local government. However, with the use and allocation of government grants, tribes require the right accounting software in order to meet more complex reporting requirements. With tribal money coming from multiple sources, each with different specifications on how it can be used, a fund accounting program is ideal. Money from government grants must be used for certain purposes and tends to have more stringent guidelines, while other tribal funds can be used wherever they're needed. It was this issue and others that led Upper Skagit to begin a search for new software. Ken Gambill, Finance Director, recalls, "We had been using something called Open Systems which was a DOS-based accounting program that really didn't suit our needs. Reporting was difficult, and our processes were tedious at best – taking several days to process end of quarter, and having to pull data out of multiple sources in order to get a big picture view of our accounts." Since Open Systems was not a fund accounting program, they were forced to run each of their fund types—tribal funds; a childcare center;

gaming administration funds; and enterprise funds; all in separate companies within their software. This meant that they could never get a consolidated statement or wide lens view.

When the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe decided it was time to make a change, they checked with Open Systems to see if there would be any updates in the future that would enable it to meet their needs, and there weren't. They then turned to Kent Arnold, President of RBP Methods for help. He recalls, "What they really needed was a Fund Accounting program that would allow them to run each of their different sets of funds in one company. Additionally, they wanted to be able to create an individual budget for separate grants, do cross—fiscal year and GASB reporting, and create more streamlined processes for the repetitive tasks within the office that were taking up too much time."

With Kent's help, the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe was able to narrow down their fund accounting options to two choices, and ended up choosing AccuFund. Of their choice Ken explained, "AccuFund is really a great program because it can meet the reporting needs of smaller tribes, and it has the capability to provide any information needed. If we need a report – chances are there is a way to get it." With powerful reporting classifications that provide easy GASB display, a flexible chart of accounts allowing simplified segregation of funding sources and uses,

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METHODS

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Upper Skagit Indian Tribe



Organization Profile

Type of Business

Tribal Government

Headquarters

Sedro Woolley, WA

Other Information

80 Full Time Employees

10-15 Seasonal Employees

System Profile

AccuFund

General Ledger
Accounts Payable
Bank Module
Cash Receipts
Accounts Receivable
Allocations
Payroll
Electronic Time
Human Resources
Entry Purchase Orders
Electronic Requisitions
Fixed Assets

not to mention all around ease of use, AccuFund is something that most tribal employees and entities can use without needing too much outside intervention, making it extremely user friendly.

With a good deal of preparation RBP and Upper Skagit were able to work together to ensure a smooth and on-time conversion of the system. Ken recalled, “Going from the old system, which I knew very well, to AccuFund has been incredible. It is truly better for us in every single way. I haven’t once missed our old software.” With AccuFund the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe can now get all of their entity-wide reports, or individual fund reports out of the database easily, removing the need to keep supplemental spreadsheets.

Kent adds, “One of the best new features that this software provides them is a big-picture view of all of the history for any organization within one system. A unique capability of AccuFund is that instead of having separate files for vendors, customers and payroll employees – they can have one master file and any person or business can have many different roles. For example, a person can be an employee, as well as do ad hoc work as a vendor, and be a customer – let’s say living in a housing authority house on tribal lands, and all of their history is viewable in one place. This makes business so much easier for them because they can find the data they need quickly.”

For smaller tribes that are receiving several different grants, it is imperative that they have accounting software that allows them to meet the governments reporting requirements, showing where and how money is allocated, and AccuFund is the right program to help them meet these needs. Ken explains, “We have certain reporting requirements that we have to abide by, especially for our annual audit. Most tribes have lots of grants and contracts and each of them are treated as separate sets of funds. We have to be able to track each set according to either state or federal government regulations and have the means to provide documentation for them, and this solution has allowed us to do that.”

With repetitive tasks automated, and reporting under control, the day to day business of the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe is now much more streamlined and efficient. Ken concludes, “We couldn’t be happier with our new solution. RBP Methods and AccuFund have completely changed the effectiveness of our operations. RBP Methods really took the time to understand our needs, analyze our situation, gauge where we were at and configure the program accordingly. RBP stands for ‘Right Brained People’ and they really are right brained, and I am extremely left brained! Their team really helped me throughout the entire process and brought the integrity and experience that we needed in a solution provider. Thanks to their hard work I am confident that this system will last us far into the future.”

RBP Methods is a consulting company helping nonprofit and governmental agencies sort through complex technical decisions by providing quality services and products either directly or through our wide network of associated firms. We offer a variety of services for organizations facing technology changes.

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