



# CLIENT STORY

## Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice

### FIMS Empowers Donors and Enlightens Accountants at The Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice

#### Background

The program areas at the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice, a community foundation serving the Venice, Florida area, span from health and human services to arts and culture. With over \$150 million in assets, they are one of the largest community foundations in Florida. Venice makes it easy for donors to establish their own charitable fund, and is a leader for foundations looking for new ways to give their donors more control over giving.

#### Fund accounting made simple through FIMS

Because the foundation manages 69 funds, accounting is a big job. Calculating all the gains and losses for each fund and producing the donor statements was a lot of work.

"It all used to be done by hand. FIMS saves us about two weeks of work every quarter, so it's been very helpful that way," says Wendy Deming, Venice's Chief of Staff.

Before FIMS, the Venice Foundation was using Blackbaud Software's General Ledger, Accounts Payable and Raiser's Edge. But those didn't quite fit their needs because none of it was made specifically for community foundations, Deming says. Much of the accounting was done by hand and required moving information from the general ledger to Excel spreadsheets, matching it back up again, then finally creating the donor statements in Excel. "It was a very long and tedious process," reports Deming. FIMS now handles all these steps, consolidating systems and streamlining workflow.

#### Service-oriented software

In addition to saving them work with the accounting, donors now have better access to information. Deming says communication within the organization has improved.

"If for some reason somebody picks up a call from a donor, they can look up their historical gifts, whereas before only the people in donor services would've had that information. It helps put all those pieces together for everybody."

"Having all grant and accounting information in one database is an incredible time-saver."

-Wendy Deming,  
Chief of Staff

Venice also was using MicroEdge's GIFTS grant management system, but found FIMS to be a better all-around fit for their particular needs. "Having all grant and accounting information in one database is an incredible time-saver," Deming says

Venice is in the process of implementing the FIMS module; DonorCentral (formerly known as Advisor Xpress), which allows donors to log onto a private area on the Venice Foundation website and view their fund activity, from how investments are doing to what grants have come out of it. In a time of shrinking investments and cautious donors, DonorCentral is a ground-breaking new way of giving donors a better feeling of control while also easing the burden of taking the time to walk donors through the intricacies of their funds.

#### Easy to implement

Because FIMS has a Windows-based graphical user interface (GUI), even non-technical people find it familiar and easy to take to. And the training?

"The training was excellent. MicroEdge trainer Terry McAloon came down for a week & gave the entire staff training, which was very helpful."

"We like it more every day," says Deming. "You see the things that are possible now where we used to have to run reports to get certain information. Now that is available online automatically. It's very nice and it's a big time-saver."

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**FIMS benefits:**

- ◆ Big time saver
- ◆ Simplifies fund accounting
- ◆ Improves donor relations
- ◆ Makes internal systems easy to learn for new staff
- ◆ Improves internal communication

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