

Youth Guidance – Taking the Mystery Out of Grants Management: *Developing New Procedures and Systems to Track Contracts*

Challenge

As nonprofit organizations work hard to meet their missions, those reliant on city, state or federal funds often face huge challenges to effectively manage and maximize their government grants. Youth Guidance, an 86-year-old Chicago nonprofit providing comprehensive out-of-school (OST) time services to at-risk youth, sought FMAs assistance to help them devise a system to better manage the \$4.8m revenue they receive from government. Representing two thirds of their total budget, Youth Guidance found themselves with systems that had the development, program and finance office staff working in silos and thus unable to make fully informed decisions.

Our Work

Fiscal Management Associates assessed Youth Guidance’s grants management systems and processes. As a result of the assessment staff roles and responsibilities were redefined based upon best practices. To break down silos FMA carried out cross-training for program, development and finance staff to create a common language for managing grant revenues while implementing a new central contract tracking system. Now, all grants are housed in one place, where management can easily identify contract name, funding source, as well as reporting dates. Youth Guidance staff now effectively monitor the timely invoicing and status of payments, and are able to pro-actively manage their resources and both internal and external grant communications.

“FMA helped transform a grants management function from a black box to a transparent store of resources for our organization. We were at a critical juncture, and this has helped reposition the agency.”

– Michelle Adler
Morrison, Chief
Executive Officer,
Youth Guidance

Results

Through FMA’s work with Youth Guidance, a greater understanding of grants management now exists between departments and has led to the organization’s ability to maximize their government resources. Program managers now have greater understanding of the development of financial plans, and there is regularly scheduled communication between program, development and finance department staff. This new culture has created an organizational understanding of how government revenue fits into the agency’s overall financial picture. All told, Youth Guidance is much better prepared to respond to, manage and report on their government funding in a way that allows them to more confidently serve their stakeholders and constituents.

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