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Dear Friend,

In our work as consultants and advisors to nonprofits we believe you must have the professional tools and resources you need to make the best possible decisions - especially while resources are continually threatened and demands for services increase.

Over the past few years, the FMA team, in response to the *great recession*, has worked closely with many nonprofits to provide the guidance and tools they need to soundly get through. Because we take our responsibility as a lead *financial management* provider very seriously, we have taken the time to analyze what has worked for our clients over these past three plus years.

For this and the next five issues of *Nonprofits Count!* we will be sharing what we have learned through the unveiling of the FMA **Six Building Blocks for Stronger Nonprofits™**. We believe, and our experience confirms, these six building blocks provide the fiscal infrastructure strength nonprofits need to stay relevant, engaged and ahead of the curve.

The first building block to be discussed this month is dashboards. An obvious effective communication tool of critical financial and programmatic data, the article below goes further in helping you think through what dashboards could mean to your organization. We hope it will inspire you to establish a dashboard you may need or modify one already in use.

In the months to come we will explore the other five building blocks, including: Budgeting for the New Era; Team Decision Making (TDM); Goal Setting in Today's World; Business Efficiencies; and Understanding and Funding Full Costs.

For the time being, however, we hope you find this issue of *Nonprofits Count!* helpful. As always, we are available to answer any questions and provide whatever support we can.

With warmest regards for a productive spring,

Hilda H. Polanco, CPA

Founder and Managing Director , Fiscal Management Associates, LLC

Feature Article

Dashboards Can Help You Find the Way

By Dipty Jain, Manager, Consulting Advisory Services, FMA

“Where are we going? When will we get there? Can we make it with what we’ve got?” No, this isn’t a family vacation. These are the sorts of questions all nonprofits should be asking themselves when considering the success of their organizations...along with this one: **“How do we know?”**

That’s where dashboards come in. Increasingly, fiscal dashboards are becoming a tool for executive staff and their boards to measure performance, relate activity to goals, and gauge the long-term impact of their initiatives. *Specifically, a dashboard is a visual representation of the financial, programmatic and fundraising reports that should accompany all board packages* – customized and formulated to inform strategic decisions, they make data more accessible and help facilitate board and staff engagement.

Good dashboards live up to their name: they provide a quick glimpse on what is happening. Hopefully, they are concise enough to provide needed information, yet comprehensive enough to tell you what’s really important. Given the copious amounts of data that most board members are expected to digest, a dashboard can help distill information so board members know what questions to ask. Simply put, a dashboard isn’t the end of a conversation; it is only the beginning.

For this reason, one of the primary uses of a dashboard is to facilitate board conversations. While a dashboard should never be a substitute for accurate board reporting, it can be used to facilitate conversations and ensure that board members feel comfortable addressing key financial metrics that determine an organization’s future.

Beyond the board, however, any dashboard that reflects accurate financial, operational and fundraising data can also be an effective staff management tool. Be it for programmatic, administrative or development purposes, if you can compile your data and share it with managers, you can use a dashboard to enhance internal decisions and

to catch problems before they rise to the need for board intervention.

For this reason, a dashboard should be compiled regularly, regardless of your board's meeting schedule, and should use the most accurate, recent data available. While there are a variety of online, cloud-based programs that can provide eye catching, splashy dashboards, a dashboard can be developed simply by combining financial reports and the basic spreadsheet charting functions found in any version of Microsoft Excel.

The first step in creating a dashboard is to talk to your board members and fiscal officers to see where the lines of communication have broken down in the past. Following that, using your current reporting systems, a template can be developed that provides consistent reports that are both accessible and simple to understand. Finally, as the dashboard is implemented, conversations between board, management and senior staff will help sharpen the dashboard.

In utilizing dashboards, success will always be difficult to define. If done properly, however, in combination with strong financial reporting, **a good dashboard won't leave your board asking the worst question of all: "Are we there yet?"**

Dipty Jain is FMA's Manager of Consulting Advisory Services. If you are interested in further discussing how to effectively use dashboards, please contact her at djain@fmaonline.net.

[To download a pdf copy of this article, please click here.](#)

http://fmaonline.net/media/NPCounts_Dashboards.pdf

[To view past articles, please click here.](#)

FMA Institute Member Spotlight

Every e-alert we spotlight one of the FMA Institute Members. If you'd like to be featured as the next spotlight, please contact us at fmainstitute@fmaonline.net



Four decades after its creation, the Guttmacher Institute continues to advance sexual and reproductive health in the United States and worldwide through an interrelated program of social science research, policy analysis and public education designed to generate new ideas, encourage enlightened public debate and promote sound policy and program development.

The Institute produces a wide range of resources on topics pertaining to sexual and reproductive health, including International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health (formerly International Family Planning Perspectives), the Guttmacher Policy Review and Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health. In 2009, Guttmacher was designated an official Collaborating Center for Reproductive Health by the World Health Organization and its regional office, the Pan American Health Organization. The Institute is the top ranked reproductive health, rights and justice nonprofit on Philanthropedia.

<http://www.myphilanthropedia.org/top-nonprofits/national/reproductive-health-rights-justice>.

To learn more about the Guttmacher Institute please visit them at www.guttmacher.org.

FMA Institute Upcoming Courses

Is your organization a member? Receive complimentary access to the nonprofit financial management courses with [FMA Institute membership](#) using your organization member code. If you are a member and need your code, please contact us at fmainstitute@fmaonline.net.

You may also take the courses individually without membership. Course fees are listed on the page.

Nonprofit Financial Management Courses

Upcoming in-person courses (NYC location) include:

[Financial Planning: Financial Management through the Strategic Lens on May 18th](#). During this session we will be discussing the specific financial planning challenges and opportunities for nonprofit organizations with budgets between \$1 – 5 Million.

Upcoming in-person courses (Chicago location) include:

[Finance for Program Managers on June 14](#). Designed with the

concerns of Program Managers in mind, this course will provide guidance on a variety of financial management topics, with a special focus on budget development and monitoring. This course is geared for organizations with a budget size of 3 million to \$10 million.

Upcoming on-line course include:

[Finance for Development Directors on May 10](#). This course equips fundraising professionals with the knowledge and language necessary to interact with CFOs and donors, understand the organization's bottom line, and contribute fully to the process of ensuring ongoing organizational sustainability. This course is geared for Development Directors with less than 5 years of experience.

[Interpreting Financial Statements 101 on May 24](#). This course will help those staff responsible for preparing financials and telling their organization's financial story to become confident in translating the numbers and reports. This course covers the basic fundamentals of financial statements.

[Getting to Know Nonprofit Reporting Requirements on May 25](#). This course will help participants learn the essential steps to ensure that they are in compliance with regulatory and funder requirements. This course is geared for organizations with budget sizes of over \$250k.

Certified Nonprofit Accounting Professional

[CNAP Online May Session](#) (use discount code **CNAP650May** for a \$100 discount)

[CNAP Online June Session](#) (use discount code **CNAP700June** for a \$50 discount)

[CNAP In-person](#) - Now offered in Chicago!

If you play a role in a nonprofit finance office, CNAP is for you. CNAP is the abbreviation for Certified Nonprofit Accounting Professional, a national program that offers nonprofit finance office staff professional certification. Initiated and developed through The National Association of Nonprofit Accountants & Consultants (NPAC) formerly known as the Not-for-Profit Services Association, it is quickly growing to become the gold standard basic training for nonprofit financial professionals.

FMA Institute members always get a 15% discount off of the CNAP program when they use the special CNAP code provided to them!

FMA Institute Membership Opportunities

The FMA Institute offers several types of membership opportunities for individual nonprofit organizations and foundations/associations. Membership fees for nonprofit organizations are based on budget size. Benefits include *unlimited professional development courses for your staff and board*, invites to an annual nonprofit seminar, discounts on the CNAP course, and frequent updates on the latest news in nonprofit financial management. **To learn more about membership please**

visit us at www.fmainstitute.net and click on membership.

FMA.Jobs

The www.fma.jobs site was established to help connect FMA's clients to job seekers who are committed to excellence in nonprofit financial management and is exclusively for job openings in the fiscal office with a starting salary of \$50,000 or more. We invite you to visit the site and invite you to post openings (free of charge for FMA clients, FMA Institute Members, and Friends of FMA).

[Click here to read more about the current open positions](#) that may include:

Accounting Manager
Director of Finance
Controller (2 openings)

Finance Director

Finance Manager

Staff Accountant

[Click here to read more about posting your open jobs.](#) Posting instructions are listed below. Please note jobs openings must be in the fiscal office with a starting salary of \$50,000 or more.

1. Go to www.fma.jobs
2. Click on the "Employers" tab on the left menu
3. Click on "Submit Job"
4. Use the login: **fmajobs** and password: **client**
5. Click on the "Submit Job" tab on the left menu

6. Enter Job Description, Qualifications, and How to Apply information, as well as Contact Information of the person to notify when the post expires, or in case we have questions.

Text space is limited. Please double check the text in the confirmation email that you receive. If you have any questions regarding posting or the site please email us at jobs@fmaonline.net.

What's New at FMA

Mr. Mayor: Don't Ignore the Crisis in Nonprofits

Hilda suggests how Mayor-Elect Emanuel can strengthen the Chicago Nonprofit Community.

Prior to becoming Chief of Staff for President Obama, Rahm Emanuel famously said: "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste." With acute financial problems affecting both the City of Chicago and its large nonprofit sector, Mayor-Elect Emanuel has an opportunity to reshape not just the City's budget, but also the way nonprofits conduct business. Let's hope that he doesn't let this crisis go to waste.

To read the complete Huffington Post article, [please click here](#).

FMA is now offering in-person trainings and software user groups in Chicago!

For over 10 years Fiscal Management Associates has been strengthening nonprofits by cultivating strong financial leaders and leading the best practices in fiscal management. The FMA Institute has brought these premier trainings to desktops across the country with online instruction. But we know that for some, there is nothing like the face-to-face. That's why we are proud to announce that we will now be offering live, in-person training and FUND E-Z and Financial Edge software user groups from our downtown Chicago office. The first in-person training, [Finance for Program Managers](#), will be held on June 14th.

Recent FMA Case Studies

Whether working with a small start-up nonprofit with two staff members or a multiservice organization with a budget of \$15 million or more, we tailor our services to the specific needs and circumstances of each client. To read a few of our recent case studies, [please visit us here](#).



The Double Bottom Line

President Signs Repeal of Expanded 1099 Requirements

Journal of Accountancy - April 14, 2011

President Barack Obama signed into law the Comprehensive 1099 Taxpayer Protection and Repayment of Exchange Subsidy Overpayments Act of 2011 (HR 4; 1099 Act), which repeals both the expanded Form 1099 information reporting requirements mandated by last year's health care legislation.

Read more: <http://www.journalofaccountancy.com/Web/20114071.htm>

Benchmarking and Analyzing Salaries: A Fast How-To By Jan Masaoka - April 3, 2011

Everyone's heard of benchmarking and salary analysis, but what are some easy tools to use?

Read more: <http://www.blueavocado.org/content/benchmarking-and-analyzing-salaries-fast-how>

Salvation Army Accuses Bank of Mismanaging Its Assets

By Stephanie Strom - April 1, 2011

The southern division of the Salvation Army filed suit against the Bank of New York Mellon.

Read More: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/02/business/02loan.html>

Budget Maneuvers Take Toll on Charter School Finances

By Kate Barr - April 20, 2011

Charter schools have become a robust – if somewhat controversial – mechanism for experimenting with new and promising approaches to K-12 education, strongly supported by the likes of Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

Read More:
http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11486:op-ed-budget-maneuvers-take-toll-on-charter-school-finances-&catid=153:features&Itemid=336

As Deficit Hawks Circle, Charities Brace for Capitol Hill Battles

By Suzanne Perry

As lawmakers and President Obama intensify their efforts to close the federal deficit, nearly every kind of nonprofit program financed by the government will have to fight to keep the budget scalpel at bay.

Read More: <http://philanthropy.com/article/Budget-Battles->

[Shift/127130/](#)
