

Henry Ford Learning Institute

Success Story

Henry Ford Learning Institute Grows with AccuFund Anywhere Online

Founded in 2003, Henry Ford Learning Institute (HFLI) models new ways of teaching and learning for ambitious student outcomes and positive social change and works in communities in the U.S. and beyond. This complex environment led the nonprofit organization to seek a flexible accounting solution that met their needs for customized reporting and online access.

In 2016, HFLI became the test location for a new, browser-based version of the popular AccuFund nonprofit accounting software – AccuFund Anywhere Online. The transition from site-based accounting software to the robust, flexible, and real-time AccuFund Anywhere Online enabled the organization to develop reports that met their unique needs.



Robust, Customizable Reports a Must-Have for HFLI

Sonya Nicks, Director of Finance and Administration for HFLI, came onboard just as the organization finished the transition from a common business accounting program to AccuFund

Anywhere Online.

“We were one of the first pilot programs for the new online software,” Sonya recalled. “My predecessor completed the transition, and we welcomed the new customized reports.”

Because HFLI manages several programs, some with multiple contracts that cross fiscal years, easy customized reporting is a must-have for the organization. AccuFund Anywhere Online met this need with ease.

“I love the reports because we have such a unique organization,” said Sonya. “We had to have reports set up differently to accommodate our different contracts, and AccuFund was able to meet our needs. This was one of the main things we wanted to do by switching to a new finance and accounting software – create better reporting systems.”

HFLI relies heavily on customized balance sheets and P & L statements for its divisions. Having the ability to customize both the reports and the time period for which each is run to a big help to Sonya.

“Some of our programs are on a calendar year, others cross fiscal year, so being able to customize their reports according to what’s needed is very important,” Sonya said. “There’s a lot of customization available in AccuFund that was not available in our previous accounting software. That’s one big reason we love the online platform.”

Online Access and Real-Time Data Paved the Way for Telecommuting

Like many other organizations, HFLI also faced challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The abrupt transition to working from home resulted in the adoption of new technology in the moment. may have disrupted the vital work that the organization does in the communities they serve. However, because they were already using AccuFund Anywhere Online, Sonya felt that the switch to telecommuting for the organization’s accounting team went smoothly and without interruption.

“I never really thought about that before, because we have always had the ability to work from home” she said when asked about the transition to telecommuting. “Having online access has really helped during COVID. It made it very simple to work from home. It was so simple that I never gave it much thought!”

AccuFund Anywhere Online offers real-time updates to the data in the system. Whether someone is at HFLI’s central office in Dearborn entering information in their system or working from home in one of Detroit’s many suburbs, AccuFund Anywhere Online updates the data so quickly that Sonya said, “Wherever you are, it’s current. When you make changes, the next person sees it.”

Thanks to AccuFund Anywhere Online, all of Sonya’s colleagues in accounting and finance were able to work safely from home without missing a beat.

“I can’t imagine what the consequences would have been if we didn’t have AccuFund Anywhere Online,” Sonya said.

Easy for Accountants to Learn

Not only is the system efficient, it’s also easy for accountants and finance professionals like Sonya to learn. “AccuFund was in place when I joined the organization, but it was a short learning curve. If you’ve used accounting software before, you’ll find AccuFund easy to use. It’s intuitive yet does a lot more than many on-premises software systems.”



Excellent Customer Service

Another benefit of using AccuFund is its excellent customer service. Sonya particularly loves the fact that no matter when or how she contacts AccuFund, she’s able to get someone to help her quickly and easily. “Not only can I connect with someone quickly, but I often get the same person each time who helps me. That matters a lot to me. When you’re in the middle of a project and facing a deadline and have a question, speaking with someone immediately, someone who knows your organization, is an enormous help.”

As an added benefit, Sonya shared that AccuFund's customer service center doesn't just fix problems, they teach her how to be her own report writer. "They empower you with better knowledge about how to use the system so that you don't need to rely on them all the time."

The Best of Both Worlds

"AccuFund is a nice blend of accounting software and a great planning system," Sonya said.

HFLI is not just AccuFund Anywhere Online's first user but one of its most loyal users. The nonprofit is currently exploring more options from AccuFund to enhance their existing system. "Because our information is already in the system, it makes sense to build out from what we already have," said Sonya.

When an organization operates on different calendars and provides myriad services, finding accounting software to keep track of its varied programs and activities can be challenging. Thanks to AccuFund Anywhere Online, HFLI can focus on what it does best – innovation in education – while allowing senior financial professionals such as Sonya to monitor, track, and measure their expenditures with ease.

"We are huge fans of AccuFund Anywhere Online," Sonya concluded. "It meets every need that we have."

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