

Empowering Park Districts with Finance Integration

"It absolutely has helped the staff understand their budgets, they know how it's put together now. It's really come full circle. Now they can develop their own plans. Directors can run monthly variance analyses and make plans from there. The staff has really responded well and the business as a whole has had more success. It's decentralized a lot of the myth surrounding accounting. Our staff is engaged in budget meetings and involved in problem solving."

— Ken Eppelheimer
Superintendent of Finance
and Personnel
Wilmette Park District, IL

Introduction

Parks and recreation administrators have enough on their plates without having to worry about siloed databases, manual processes and communication breakdowns between departments.

Fortunately, recent technology allows park districts to increase connectivity between finance, administration and registration functions to communicate more effectively and operate more efficiently. The key is to implement software solutions that are specifically designed to bridge the gap between the two departments.

Here are three ways your park district can benefit from integrating with your finance department:

Benefit #1: Data Sharing

One of the biggest benefits of software integration is also one of the most obvious. Data sharing provides instant access to important information, regardless of which department it belongs to. Park districts don't have to manually compile financial reports to send over to accounting – that data is already available to the finance department. Requests for information become a thing of the past, as each department's information is available in real-time to either side.

Take, for instance, the process of registering an adult softball team. When park districts and finance departments house siloed databases, park employees are forced to manually compile and send all fees and payments to accounting.

With integrated software, that's no longer necessary. Fees are collected and sent over to the finance department, while registration information is delivered directly into the park district's own software data. Finance departments can handle payments and fees to run updated budgets, while park districts receive the registration information they need build rosters, schedules and more.

Benefit #2: Increased Insight into Budgeting

When park districts use software that's integrated with their finance department, employees have more insight into budgets and thus a deeper understanding of their district's overall financial situation.

Ken Eppelheimer, the superintendent of finance and personnel for Wilmette Park District, Illinois, claims that by providing his park district employees with access to financial information, they have more ownership in the entire budgeting process.



"It absolutely has helped the staff understand their budgets, they know how it's put together now. It's really come full circle. Now they can develop their own plans," he said. "Directors can run monthly variance analyses and make plans from there. The staff has really responded well and the business as a whole has had more success. It's decentralized a lot of the myth surrounding accounting. Our staff is engaged in budget meetings and involved in problem solving."

Integrated software helps recreation managers understand roster levels and how much money they're bringing in. By having access to real-time data, they can see the financial activity in their programs each and every day, which allows them to make better, more informed decisions.

Benefit #3: Streamlined Workflow

Even a modest-sized park district can face hundreds of thousands of transactions, registrations, facility rentals and more each year. The challenge is made even greater when the district has a limited number of staff to tackle the avalanche of work. But if park districts leverage their software, they can reach a whole new level of efficiency.

Our friends at Wilmette can attest to the positive impact software can have on a park district's daily operations.

"We have about 70 employees, and with our old software, they weren't involved with the financial reporting at all. But now all of our staff are doing their own budgets," Eppelheimer said. "They have the tools they need to pay invoices and make sure things go to the right accounts. It used to take a week to get all of our financials over to accounting, but that task has gone from taking one week to just half a day, with fewer errors."

In fact, Wilmette Park District's software allowed them to eliminate two full-time positions, saving the park district approximately \$80,000 to \$100,000 a year.



Conclusion

Limited staff, siloed databases and separate departments are all obstacles that can be overcome when the right software is in place. Software solutions designed to integrate with one another can help manage the daily operations and finances for park districts while providing administrators with the tools they need to manage details and operate more efficiently.

Want to learn more about how your park district can operate more efficiently? Visit us at: www.tylertech.com/smartparkdistricts or give us a call at 800.646.2633.