

Best Software® Helps Government Agency Automate and Integrate Payroll and Fund Accounting Processes



Customer

The Workforce Center, a non-profit government agency that provides comprehensive employment services in southeastern Louisiana

Challenge

Automate and integrate payroll and fund accounting processes to automatically track and report on \$4 to \$5 million in yearly expenditures

Solution

Abra Payroll®

Best Enterprise Suite™

Abra Payroll BES Interface™

Results

- Reduced the time it takes to compile numbers for and prepare reports from two weeks to two days
- Automated the creation of general ledger codes and eliminated time-consuming manual processes
- Improved the accuracy of expense data as it relates to the Workforce Center's 10 cost centers

The Workforce Center, a non-profit government agency serving 10 parishes in the southeastern part of Louisiana, administers a \$5 million federal workforce program. The agency is a one-stop system that provides comprehensive employment services to jobseekers including job placement and training and can also offer testing, assessment and certification services to employers.

Operating under the Workforce Investment Act, the Workforce Center partners with other government agencies such as the Louisiana Department of Labor Job Service Centers, Senior Employment, Vocational Rehab and Adult Basic Education offered through local school systems. WIA Funds are used for a variety of expenses such as assisting job seekers with payments for childcare, transportation, education expense, salary subsidies for individuals placed through the agency and wages for Workforce Center staff.

In order to automate their manual fund accounting processes, the Workforce Center built a homegrown system to more easily keep track of expenditures. But in early 1999, the agency began searching for a more reliable solution that would meet Y2K standards and could be easily maintained by Workforce Finance Staff. After a 6-month vendor search and evaluation period, the Workforce Center selected Abra Payroll®, Best Enterprise Suite and the Abra Payroll Best Enterprise Suite (BES) Interface.

“What used to take us two weeks to calculate now takes just two days!”

Reengineering Inefficient, Time-Consuming Processes

Prior to implementing Abra Payroll and the Abra Payroll BES Interface, the Workforce Center kept an extra set of books by hand to back up their homegrown solution. “We simply were not confident in the accuracy of the numbers we were getting from our system,” said Yvonne Ricks, Contract Accountant for the Workforce Center. “And it became very cumbersome for us to keep up with fund expenses and manually charge against our 10 cost centers.”

When the Workforce Center implemented Abra Payroll, they quickly utilized the system's flexibility. “Abra Payroll came in handy when we needed to track money that we spent on jobseekers,” Ricks said. “For example, we have to track total dollars spent on upgrading jobseeker skills and limit the dollars paid per person. In order to do so, I would set up an earnings code that interfaces to our General Ledger and set an earnings goal at the jobseeker (employee) level that serves as a limit for the total dollars that can be paid to that individual.

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I would then enter an amount of \$500 that will be awarded to you as support for your training, which helps you build the skills necessary to find and land a job.”

In addition, the agency uses Abra Payroll's Labor Distribution codes to account for staff time by fund area. And with the Abra Payroll BES Interface, these codes automatically create all the necessary G/L codes in Best Enterprise Suite General Ledger. “We used to spend days making hundreds of manual G/L entries into BES, a tedious process that was necessary in order for us to eventually generate reports that help us keep up with yearly expenses on each fund. The flexibility of Abra Payroll and the Abra Payroll BES Interface has changed all that,” Ricks added.

Automating Government Reports

Like many non-profits and government agencies, the Workforce Center has to comply with complex reporting structures. The agency used the BES ToolKit to customize reports in their General Ledger system to look like the state expenditure report they are required to file each year.

“We run these reports so easily now. It's nice to know that with Abra Payroll and Best Enterprise Suite working together, we can eliminate the time-consuming manual data entry we used to do. A report that used to take us two weeks to calculate now takes just two days.”

In addition to keeping up with fund expenditures, the agency must run 941s to account for payroll tax liabilities. With Abra Payroll, the Workforce Center was able to produce these reports automatically for the first time in the agency's history.

Abra Support Provides Value-Added Services

When the Workforce Center needed extra help getting their system up and running, the Abra support department worked with Ricks to ensure that all of the agency's requirements were met.

"Once we made the decision to go with Abra Payroll, I was told that one of the things I would like most about Best Software is their quality support team. And I have to give Best's support department credit – they really kept us going when we needed them," stated Ricks.

Dependent On Abra Payroll and the Abra Payroll BES Interface

The integration between Abra Payroll and Acuity has saved the Workforce Center from days and weeks of time-consuming manual calculations and entries. The agency has even devised a way to reconcile Payroll with the BES Cash Management module. “Abra Payroll is a very flexible system,” Ricks said.

Ricks concluded, “Our Chief Accountant is dependent on Abra Payroll and the Abra Payroll BES Interface. She is so confident in the numbers she gets from the system that she has stopped keeping a backup set of books by hand. As a result, she has eliminated hours double-checking calculations and ledger entries. Abra Payroll and the Abra Payroll BES Interface have definitely served their purpose.”

The **ABRA** Suite® family includes:

- Abra HR®
- Abra Payroll®
- Abra Train®
- Abra Recruiting Solution™
- Abra Org Chart™
- Abra Attendance®
- Abra Alerts™
- Abra Employee Self-Service™



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