

Fire and Emergency Dispatch Agency Takes Control of Accounting with Microsoft Dynamics GP

Case Study



Challenge

Customer Profile

The Sacramento Regional Fire/EMS Communications Center (SRFECC) is a 9-1-1 secondary PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point) receiving more than 300,000 calls per year and dispatching more than 160,000 fire and medical emergency incidents. The SRFECC provides fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) dispatching for nearly all of Sacramento County and part of Placer County, California, serving more than 1.4 million people every day. Establishing its own accounting function using Microsoft Dynamics GP enabled the agency to gain greater flexibility, control, and efficiency.

Software & Services

- Microsoft Dynamics GP
- Armanino

Benefits

- Enabled more efficient, flexible business processes
- Gained greater control and visibility into financial information
- Reduced invoice turnaround from six weeks to four days or less

Modules

- N/A

The Sacramento Regional Fire/EMS Communications Center (SRFECC) provides fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) dispatching for nearly all of Sacramento County and part of Placer County, California, covering more than 1,000 square miles and serving more than 1.4 million people every day.

Previously, accounting functions for the SRFECC were handled by Sacramento County's department of finance, which limited the dispatch agency's control and flexibility. "We lacked real-time visibility into our finances, relying instead on monthly printed reports," says Lorinda Odell, Accounting Manager at the SRFECC. "We also had no control over when a check would be cut, which meant that our employees waited as long as six weeks to be reimbursed for expenses."

After presenting a compelling business case to the SRFECC board, Odell got the okay to take the accounting function in-house, effectively enabling the SRFECC to operate as a standalone business. To make the new accounting function successful and achieve the agency's business goals, Odell knew the SRFECC would need a robust business accounting solution that could support the agency's growing needs over time.

Solution

The SRFECC chose Microsoft Dynamics GP for its new accounting system. "The scalability, the integration with other Microsoft products, the Business Portal, the out-of-the-box functionality and the pricing structure of Dynamics GP make it a great choice for government agencies," says Odell.

The next step was to select a partner to help the agency speed deployment, avoid pitfalls, and design and optimize efficient business processes. The SRFECC turned to Armanino. "Adapting Dynamics GP for a public safety organization that dispatches fire and medical services for eight different fire departments, including all of Sacramento County, was no easy task," says Odell. "We had many antiquated business processes that needed to be re-engineered to be current with best practices and function with our new accounting system. Armanino was great in learning our current processes and then helping us discover new, more efficient ways of doing business."

"I've implemented SAP and Dynamics at various governmental agencies, some as small as 25 employees, and others larger than 1,000 employees," says Odell. "I've seen multimillion-dollar implementations fall apart due to the breakdown of the relationship between the consulting firm and the agency, but our experience with Armanino has been great. We always feel like we are important to Armanino, our emails are responded to very quickly, and additional resources are added whenever we need the extra help."

After helping the SRFECC install Dynamics GP, Armanino consultants worked closely with SRFECC staff to assist the agency in configuring the system and learning to use it effectively. Armanino provided in-depth, customized training that enabled the agency to quickly become self-sufficient with its new accounting system.

"We had many antiquated business processes that needed to be re-engineered to be current with best practices and function with our new accounting system. Armanino was great in learning our current processes and then helping us discover new, more efficient ways of doing business."

-Lorinda Odell
Accounting Manager
SRFECC

Results

After a successful implementation of Dynamics GP, the SRFECC officially separated from Sacramento County's department of finance and began operating for the first time as a standalone business. Now, the SRFECC handles its own human resources, accounts payables, accounts receivables, budgeting, accounting, payroll and other functions. Thanks to the power and ease of use of Dynamics GP, the agency can support its \$8.5 million in yearly transactions with a small staff of three.

Instead of the six-week turnaround for processing invoices, the SRFECC now handles them in four days or less. When needed, the agency can cut a check on the same day for contractors or employees, providing greater flexibility to take advantage of rebates and other discounts for early payments. With full control of its accounting functions, the agency also has immediate access to its financial information and the ability to create ad hoc reports.

"Agencies like ours can easily adapt Dynamics GP for use in government finance," says Odell. "For instance, electronic work flows for purchase requests and the employee self-service portal help make government business processes leaner and more efficient."

Next Steps

Despite a successful transition to a standalone accounting function, Odell and her staff aren't content with resting on their laurels. With a multimillion dollar new construction project on the horizon, the SRFECC accounting team is preparing to use the project accounting functionality within Dynamics GP to properly track and manage the financial aspects of the project.

In fact, there are a number of capabilities within Dynamics GP that the SRFECC is planning to start using in the near future, including: implementing online timecards in the Business Portal, adding a vendor portal, integrating the Business Portal with the agency's bank for public safety payroll requirements, and using the grant management capability. "We will continue to partner with Armanino as we showcase all of the amazing things Dynamics GP can do," Says Odell.

For More Information

For more information about Armanino products and services, call 925 790 2600 or visit the Web site at armanino.com/microsoft-dynamics

About Armanino

Armanino (www.armanino.com) is the largest independent accounting and business consulting firm in California and the 29th largest firm in the U.S. Armanino provides an integrated set of audit, tax, consulting, and technology solutions to companies in the U.S. and globally. The firm helps clients adapt and change in every stage of business from start-up through rapid growth to the sale of a company. Armanino emphasizes smart technology, leading a cloud revolution of financial, operational, sales and compliance tools that are transforming the way companies do business. Armanino extends its global services to more than 100 countries through its membership in Moore Stephens International Limited—one of the world's major accounting and consulting membership organizations. In addition to its core consulting and accounting practices, Armanino operates two other divisions—AMF Media Group (www.amfmediagroup.com) and Financial Horizons (www.fhllc.com).

"Armanino" is the brand name under which Armanino LLP, Armanino CPA LLP, and Armanino Advisory LLC, independently owned entities, provide professional services in an alternative practice structure in accordance with law, regulations, and professional standards. Armanino LLP and Armanino CPA LLP are licensed independent CPA firms that provide attest services, and Armanino Advisory LLC and its subsidiary entities provide tax, advisory, and business consulting services. Armanino Advisory LLC and its subsidiary entities are not licensed CPA firms.