The Financial Edge™

Installation Planning Guide

102313

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Welcome to the *Installation Planning Guide*. This guide was written to help users understand the preparation required for a successful installation of ***The Financial Edge*** and to familiarize you with the features available.

> **Warning:** Information in this guide is subject to change. Please visit our website to view the most current information before you begin planning your installation. To access our system requirements, select **System Requirements** from the **resources** menu on our website at www.blackbaud.com.

This guide provides information you should carefully read before you install ***The Financial Edge***, including the four keys to a successful installation, pre-installation and data considerations, and an overview of features. The information in this guide is organized into three chapters. The following list contains the title of each chapter and a summary of the information you can find in each.

Chapter 1: Welcome. This chapter contains introduction material discussing the importance of the pre-installation process. This chapter also includes a brief discussion of the four keys to a successful installation, a section detailing the various Blackbaud solutions we offer, and a list of frequently used accounting terms.

Chapter 2: The Financial Edge. This chapter provides information about ***The Financial Edge*** and covers the features available in ***General Ledger***, ***Accounts Payable***, ***Fixed Assets***, ***Accounts Receivable***, ***Cash Receipts***, and ***Student Billing***. This chapter also includes examples of ***Financial Edge*** functionality and how the functionality can benefit your organization.

Chapter 3: Pre-Installation Planning. This chapter emphasizes the four keys to a successful installation and goes into detail about each. Also included is an overview of the installation process, a section on what your organization should expect, and a detailed list of pre-installation considerations.

Installing ***The Financial Edge*** is an important decision for your organization. By carefully reading this guide and following the pre-installation suggestions we provide, you will be ready to successfully install ***The Financial Edge***.

Once you have thoroughly read each chapter in this guide and prepared for installation, you can move to the next step, which is reading the *Installation Guide*. The *Installation Guide* will arrive with your ***Financial Edge*** CD-ROM and provides step-by-step procedures for installing the program.

To download the most current system requirements, select **System Requirements** from the **resources** menu on our website at www.blackbaud.com.

Four Keys to a Successful Installation

> **Note:** For more information about the four keys to a successful installation, see the Pre-Installation Planning chapter.

To help your organization prepare, we have developed the four keys to a successful installation. Each key is a component we feel is extremely important to the success of your installation. We urge you to review the following four keys and make sure your organization considers each before beginning the installation process.

Time. Before you install ***The Financial Edge***, you need to consider the time required to complete the process. Although the installation process does not take long, the approximate time to run the installation can vary depending on your hardware.

Comprehensive Installation Plan. By carefully planning and preparing for installation, you create a strong foundation for your new program. For this reason, you need to take as much time as necessary to make sure your organization is ready to install ***The Financial Edge***.

Hardware. The hardware on which you are using ***The Financial Edge*** affects the performance your organization can achieve. If your hardware does not meet or exceed our requirements, you will not get the maximum benefit of using ***The Financial Edge***. Please review the current detailed system requirements for ***The Financial Edge*** with your IT staff or the person responsible for maintaining your hardware. To download the most current system requirements, select **System Requirements** from the **resources** menu on our website at www.blackbaud.com.

Services/Training. ***The Financial Edge*** includes many features and multiple ways to perform tasks. We offer consulting services to assist you with every aspect of your conversion and implementation, including remote installation. We also offer secure Hosting Services, which can free your organization from the cost and upkeep of hardware concerns. For more information, visit the Services section of our website.

We also recommend you receive training for the program to ensure you benefit from the program's full potential. Training helps employees experiencing anxiety about the change to feel more confident and capable. For information about the best training option for your organization, send an email to solutions@blackbaud.com or visit the Training section of our website.

Blackbaud Solutions and Services

For more than two decades, we have provided world-class technology solutions to the nonprofit community, helping organizations of all sizes and types.

Software plays an important role in the Blackbaud equation for success. Indeed, our products set the standards by which others are measured. However, there is another essential part of the Blackbaud solution — services. As the largest and most experienced provider of services to the nonprofit community, we understand the unique challenges nonprofits face and help them overcome those challenges. We focus our expertise on meeting your needs — so you can focus your resources on fulfilling your mission.

This section provides an overview of the services and training solutions we offer to help you successfully install, implement, and use ***The Financial Edge***.

Data Services

We offer a wide range of data services. From database conversion to database consolidation, our staff of programmers and analysts have the experience, technology, and expertise to meet your organization's needs.

Accounting System Consulting

Accounting System Consulting services help you get the most out of our ***Financial Edge*** software by aligning your organization's systems with its processes and objectives. We partner with you to learn about your organization, identify issues, and plan a solution that is tailored to your needs.

Our consultants offer a unique combination of accounting experience and in-depth knowledge of our software. Many of our consultants have gained experience by serving as controllers and technical specialists and have worked for Big Four firms, nonprofit organizations, and the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB). They can share insight garnered from their work with hundreds of nonprofit organizations. Our accounting consulting team knows the software inside and out and are available to help you make the most of your system.

To learn how your organization can benefit from our Accounting System Consulting services, call 800-443-9441 or send an email to solutions@blackbaud.com.

How We Can Help

- Evaluate and define historic data to convert to ***The Financial Edge***
- Import accounting information to ***General Ledger*** from non-Blackbaud products
- Assess your organization's unique reporting requirements
- Design your chart of accounts and account number structure
- Establish system security
- Determine the appropriate fund closing method based on your reporting needs
- Establish a start date for your new system, and determine what data to bring in from prior years' records

- Review your data entry methods and recommend ways to increase productivity in your business office
- Evaluate job responsibilities to ensure optimal workflow
- Establish an interface between ***The Raiser's Edge*** and ***General Ledger***
- Set up and maximize your use of optional modules, including *Projects and Grants*, *Budget Management*, and *Allocation Management*
- Create initial reports such as a balance sheet and income statements

Technical Consulting

Let our knowledgeable consultants bring their technical expertise to your site and manage the implementation of your ***Financial Edge*** products. By entrusting the nuts and bolts of implementation to one of our consultants, you ensure optimal setup of your system while keeping your time and energy focused on fostering your organization's mission.

Whether it is software installation or a detailed assessment of your current IT capabilities and needs, our team of *Microsoft*, *Cisco*, and *Oracle* certified engineers can help you meet your technical challenges head on.

If you would like to arrange for consulting services, call our Sales Department at 1-800-443-9441. Or send an email outlining your specific needs to sales@blackbaud.com.

To learn more about our technical consulting offerings, such as technology assessments, diagnostic services, and software installations, you can download the printer-friendly document "Technical Consulting Services" from our website.

Training Solutions

Because we understand how important training is, we offer a variety of options to meet your different needs. Training is a vital part of realizing the full potential of your software. It not only increases efficiency, accuracy, and saves time, but you'll also see a boost in your staff's job satisfaction as they become more confident and valuable in their roles.

For information about the best training option for your organization, check out our Training page on Blackbaud.com or call your account representative at 1-800-443-9441. You can also send an email to solutions@blackbaud.com.

Blackbaud Forms

Blackbaud Business Forms provides custom checks, student bills, statements, invoices, purchase orders, tax forms, envelopes, and other computer forms that are specifically designed for use with ***The Financial Edge***. Blackbaud forms are guaranteed to align correctly and can be customized to your organization's specifications, using your logo, special inks, and print styles. Pre-printed forms from other suppliers are not guaranteed to align properly.

For more information, you can visit the forms section of our website at http://forms.blackbaud.com or send an email with questions to forms@blackbaud.com. You can also call 866-4-BB-FORMS (866-422-3676).

Frequently Used Accounting Terms

Learning common accounting terms as they relate to your accounting program is another important step in the implementation process. Knowledge of the following terms will prove helpful as you read through this guide and prepare your conversion plan.

Account. Accounts are like containers for transactions. They show increases, decreases, and a balance, and they provide a means for sorting and categorizing transactions to create financial statements.

Account attribute. Account attributes are characteristics you use to categorize a group of accounts. You can filter reports using account attributes.

Account code. Account codes are required segments that categorize the account as an asset, liability, net asset, revenue, or expense. For example, you can use segment values 10000 to 19999 of your account code to represent assets.

Account segment. Account segments are sets of digits in an account number, such as the fund and account code segments, which categorize transactions for creating financial statements. For example, in account 01-11100-00-00, the first set of numbers in the series is usually the fund (01), followed by more segments such as the account code (11100), department (00), and location (00). The fund and account code segments are required.

Account structure. Account structure refers to the ordering of account number segments. The account structure has an impact on how you report, and it can be rearranged at any time.

Adjustment. An adjustment is an accounting entry you make to correct errors or to allocate items between accounting periods.

Asset. An asset is property (tangible or intangible) that has value.

Attribute. An attribute is a reporting tool that enables you to group information based on a common theme. Withattributes defined, you can filter information to your specifications. Examples of specific attributes in ***General Ledger 7*** include account attributes, project attributes, and transaction attributes.

Budget. A budget is anticipated activity, usually revenues and expenses, for accounts and projects.

Budget scenario. A budget scenario is a feature in which you can project your budget under various circumstances. For example, you can create a scenario of your original budget and also create scenarios for various revisions of that budget. You can create an unlimited number of scenarios for your budget when you install the optional module *Budget Management*.

Chart of accounts. A chart of accounts is a systematic numeric listing of all accounts used by an organization.

Chart template. A chart template is a visual representation in ***General Ledger*** of all or selected accounts from the chart of accounts that can be formatted to fit your preferences. In ***General Ledger***, you can create multiple chart templates for specialized reporting needs, and you can manipulate them in the *Visual Chart Organizer.*

Class. Class, or net asset class, is a subcategory you can use to define how funds from each transaction are designated for use. You can categorize class as unrestricted, restricted, or temporarily restricted for FAS 117 reporting, and you can prepare financial statements based on your classes.

Contra account. A contra account is any account that has a normal balance opposite to its associated account category. For example, contra asset accounts have normal credit balances. Typically, contra accounts are valuation accounts. You can use contra accounts to present negative balances as positive on financial statements.

Control account. A control account is a general ledger account that summarizes details from a subsidiary ledger.

Credit. A credit is an entry that decreases asset and expense accounts or increases liability, equity, and revenue accounts. Credits are recorded on the right side of a T-account.

Credit Memo. A credit memo is a document issued by a vendor to record an adjustment against an invoice to decrease the amount owed.

Debit. A debit is an entry that increases asset and expense accounts or decreases liability, equity, and revenue accounts. Debits are recorded on the left side of a T-account.

Encumbrance. A firm commitment or obligation placed against funds of a department in the form of purchase orders or agreements to cover a later expenditure required when goods are delivered or services are rendered.

Equity. Equity is the worth of an organization. Equity is calculated by subtracting liabilities from assets.

Expense. An expense is a decrease in net assets that results from any cost incurred in the production, selling, and distribution of goods and services. You deduct expenses from revenues on the income statement or statement of financial activities report to arrive at net surplus or deficit.

FAS 117. This acronym stands for Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 117, (I) Financial statements of Not-for-Profit Organizations. It is a standard for nonprofit fund accounting financial statements as published by the Financial Accounting Standards Board.

Fixed asset. A fixed asset is a permanent, long-life asset of an organization (for example, land, buildings, equipment, and vehicles).

Fund. A fund is a self-balancing set of accounts. Funds separate accounts into groups that are specific to certain activities, donor-imposed restrictions, or objectives. You must set up funds in ***General Ledger*** before you can enter accounts.

Gain. A gain in ***General Ledger*** is an infrequent source of revenue. An example is the revenue realized from the sale of a vehicle.

General ledger. General ledger is the primary ledger when used with subsidiary ledgers and contains all balance sheet and income statement accounts. You use the general ledger as a central reference or index for transaction posting.

Gift. A gift in ***General Ledger*** is revenue from donations.

Header/total lines. A header line, designated by an "H" at the end of the line, is similar to a title to introduce a particular report or chart template in ***General Ledger***. Conversely, a total line, designated by a "T", is used to show where particular items in a report or chart template are added for a sum. For example, when creating your chart of accounts in ***General Ledger***, you create a header line called "Investments" that precedes a list of investment accounts, which are then followed by a total line that adds the values of all of the investment accounts.

Interfund entry. An interfund entry is a balancing entry you make between funds.

Invoice. An invoice is a request for payment from a vendor for specific goods or services rendered.

Journal code. A journal code is a name added to each journal entry transaction to identify the source or reason for the transaction. You can establish journal codes on the Business Rules page of *Configuration* in ***General Ledger***.

Loss. A loss is an infrequent expense. An example is an unexpected vehicle repair.

Net asset. Net assets are residual interest in an entity's assets remaining after liabilities are deducted.

Post. Post is the process of updating general ledger accounts with transactions recorded in the general journal via the *Journal Entry* module.

Projects and Grants. *Projects and Grants* is an optional module used in conjunction with Blackbaud's ***General Ledger*** designed to track details of subsidiary funds.

Purchase Order. A purchase order is a formal request placed with a vendor authorizing it to provide specified items, materials, or services.

Project attribute. Project attributes are characteristics you use to categorize a group of projects for reporting purposes.

Transaction attribute. A transaction attribute is a characteristic you use to categorize a group of transactions. Unlike projects and transaction codes, transaction attributes cannot retain an equity balance from year to year.

Transaction code. A transaction code is an additional field on each transaction that helps you further categorize information in reporting and in closing fiscal years. Because it can retain equity, a transaction code acts like a project. Unlike a project, though, a transaction code does not offer budgets, media, or notes. Transaction codes are only available with the optional module *Projects and Grants*.

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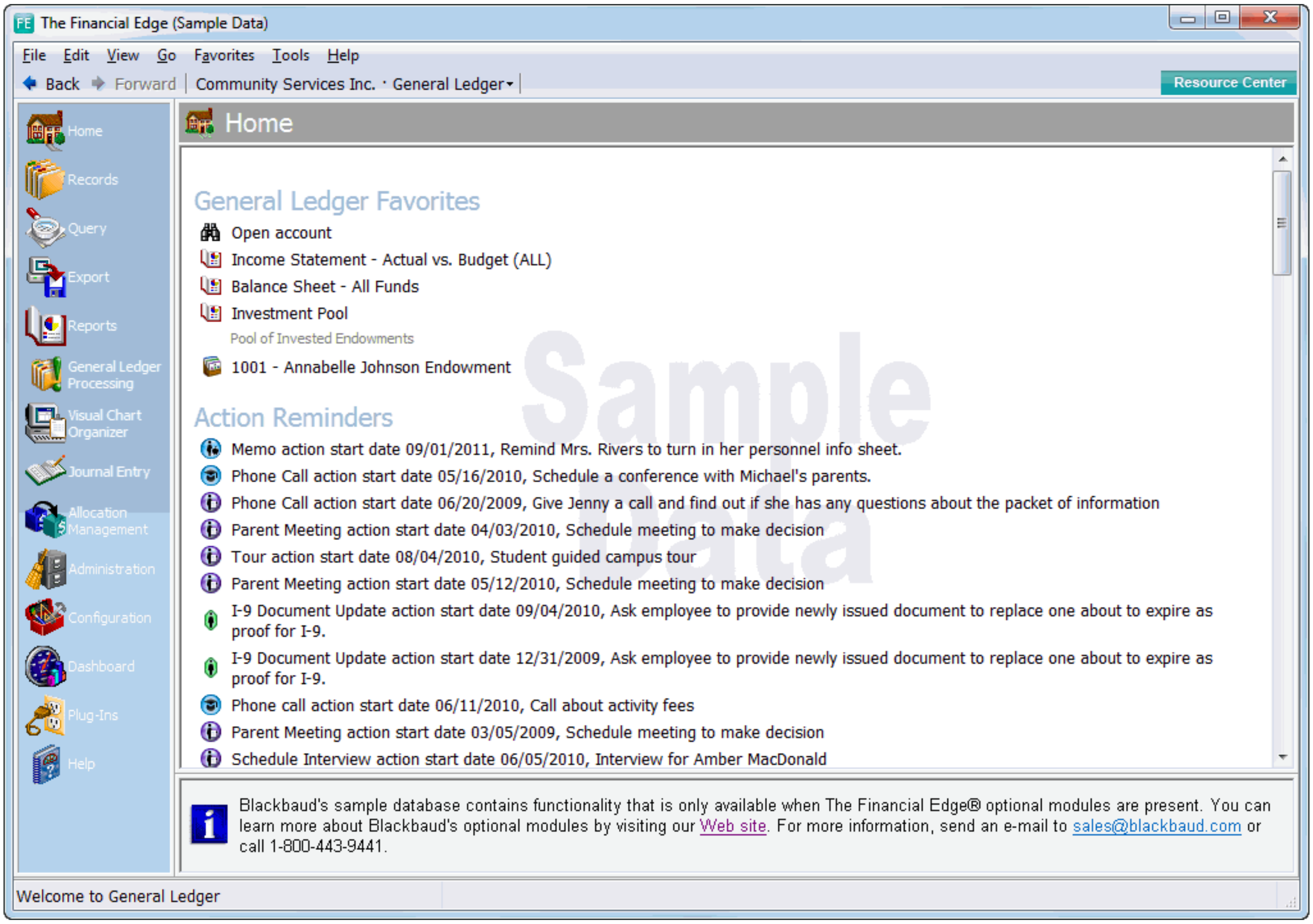
The Financial Edge is designed with the look and feel of a Web browser. With this design, you have the ability to move back and forward with a click of your mouse. Maneuvering between functions has never been simpler. We refer to this interface as the “shell”. The following screen is the Home page and shell for ***General Ledger***.


The Financial Edge (Sample Data)
File Edit View Go Favorites Tools Help
Back Forward
Community Services Inc. · General Ledger
Resource Center
Home
Records
Query
Export
Reports
General Ledger Processing
Visual Chart Organizer
Journal Entry
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Home
Sample Data

General Ledger Favorites

- Open account
- Income Statement - Actual vs. Budget (ALL)
- Balance Sheet - All Funds
- Investment Pool

Pool of Invested Endowments

- 1001 - Annabelle Johnson Endowment

Action Reminders

- Memo action start date 09/01/2011, Remind Mrs. Rivers to turn in her personnel info sheet.
- Phone Call action start date 05/16/2010, Schedule a conference with Michael's parents.
- Phone Call action start date 06/20/2009, Give Jenny a call and find out if she has any questions about the packet of information
- Parent Meeting action start date 04/03/2010, Schedule meeting to make decision
- Tour action start date 08/04/2010, Student guided campus tour
- Parent Meeting action start date 05/12/2010, Schedule meeting to make decision
- I-9 Document Update action start date 09/04/2010, Ask employee to provide newly issued document to replace one about to expire as proof for I-9.
- I-9 Document Update action start date 12/31/2009, Ask employee to provide newly issued document to replace one about to expire as proof for I-9.
- Phone call action start date 06/11/2010, Call about activity fees
- Parent Meeting action start date 03/05/2009, Schedule meeting to make decision
- Schedule Interview action start date 06/05/2010, Interview for Amber MacDonald

Blackbaud's sample database contains functionality that is only available when The Financial Edge® optional modules are present. You can learn more about Blackbaud's optional modules by visiting our Web site. For more information, send an e-mail to sales@blackbaud.com or call 1-800-443-9441.

Welcome to General Ledger

The shell provides a central area where you can enter all modules of a program. When you click a link for an area, it appears as a page in the shell. By default, the Home page opens to ***General Ledger***, but you can change to another ***Financial Edge*** program by clicking the program button on the toolbar.

Note: ***The Financial Edge*** provides you with user guides and help files, which you can easily access from the any program or the Blackbaud website.

If you have security rights to change user options, you can select to display specific information, or “favorites” on the Home page, including commonly used accounts, projects, or vendors. You can also select another page as the default that opens when you access the shell.

This chapter discusses the features and optional modules in ***Financial Edge*** programs.

Financial Edge Common Features

The Financial Edge includes ***General Ledger, Accounts Payable***, ***Fixed Assets***, ***Accounts Receivable***, ***Cash Receipts***, ***Student Billing***, and the associated optional modules. The following list shows the common functionality between the programs, features specific to each program, and optional modules available with the initial release of ***The Financial Edge***.

Home

With ***The Financial Edge***, you have a Home page for efficient access to your links and favorites. On the Home page, you can add and organize shortcuts to functions you use regularly, action reminders, and files recently accessed.

Favorites

You can use the **Favorites** menu to create links to items you use most often or want to access quickly. These links are called favorites. You can designate any saved record (including accounts, queries, imports, and reports) as a favorite. You can also create links to Web pages you access most frequently. You can place favorites on the **Favorites** menu, the Home page of a program, or the navigation bar. You can create folders of favorites and shortcut groups to group the records and pages you use for a particular task.

Query

As its name implies, *Query* provides a means for you to ask questions of your database. The purpose of a query is to create a list of records that meet or exceed a set of conditions you define. The resulting list of records can be used for numerous purposes. Using *Query*, you can create new queries, open existing queries, delete, print, run, sort, and export queries.

Reports

The Financial Edge contains many standard reports to help you produce and view information you need quickly and easily. Reports are valuable tools for evaluating your financial position, charting growth, and distributing information about progress.

For example, in ***General Ledger*** you can create balance sheets, income statements, trial balances, and GASB 34 reports.

The financial statement formats come from chart templates you create in *Visual Chart Organizer*. Additionally, you can modify the width and definition of rows and columns, and you can export financial statements with more than 20 columns. Reporting features include:

Note: The *Visual Chart Organizer* offers you more flexible formatting of financial statements, eliminating the need for consolidation accounts and consolidation charts of accounts.

- full account and project security with optional module *Advanced Security*
- enhanced filtering for all reports
- multiple levels of sorting and breaking for most reports
- options for number of decimal places for financial statement values
- “superheadings” (headings across multiple columns)
- numerous formatting options

Import

With import functionality, you can import new information from any Blackbaud or non-Blackbaud program, provided the data is properly formatted. You also have the option of exporting and updating current records, validating data, or creating an import file. With a step-by-step process, you can perform each of these functions from each program of ***The Financial Edge***. For example, you can import accounts, budgets, projects, and transactions into ***General Ledger***. You can import vendors, products, invoices, credit memos, recurring invoices, and purchase orders into ***Accounts Payable***.

Global Change

The **Globally change records** function in ***The Financial Edge*** enables you to change information in your database for a specified group of records. Using a global change, you can add, replace, partially replace, delete, increase/decrease, copy, swap, or move information, depending on which field you select to change. Once global change information is entered, you can save it in a parameter file. Later you can run the global change again as originally created or with modifications.

Warning: Visit our website at www.blackbaud.com for the latest documentation and information.

After globally changing information, you can view a control report detailing all the records in your database that were changed, or not changed, and why.

Configuration

Configuration is an important area in which you make decisions and define settings that affect the overall success of your ***Financial Edge*** programs.

Configuration contains utilities that your organization must address when implementing any ***Financial Edge*** program, as well as useful features enabling you to customize the program system-wide. Many of the tasks you need to accomplish in *Configuration* are handled during the initial setup of the program. Some of these tasks cannot be changed after data is entered, but others you can change at any time.

Business Rules

You can access business rules in *Configuration*. Business rules are ways for you to control functions and field options throughout the program. For example, in ***General Ledger***, the system administrator can outline custom settings for funds, accounts, projects, budget management, journal entry, transactions, *Visual Chart Organizer*, project duplicate searches, and allocation management.

Note: You can set business rules for all ***Financial Edge*** programs.

Likewise, in other ***Financial Edge*** programs such as ***Accounts Payable***, the administrator can establish settings for general, vendor, invoice, recurring invoice, credit memo, payment, Cash Management adjustments, purchase order, line item, receipt, and queue business rules. For example, the administrator can define business rules to indicate whether to apply open credit to new invoices automatically, to allow “Do Not Post” as post status, or to tell the program to alert you in advance of each invoice’s due date.

Administration

Database maintenance is an important part of keeping your accounting system functioning properly. *Administration* in ***The Financial Edge*** contains utilities and housekeeping tools you can use to set up your database, establish system security, import records, globally change records and post all or selected transactions to ***General Ledger***.

Administration also provides utilities you can use to save time when posting transactions and/or making changes to large numbers of records. For example, you can post multiple batches of transactions at one time instead of posting each batch one at a time as you do when posting from *Journal Entry*.

Each program within ***The Financial Edge*** contains an Administration page specific to the program in which you are working. For example, the Administration page in ***General Ledger*** contains end of year utilities you can use to summarize, close, and purge fiscal years.

Each ***Financial Edge*** program also contains a Set up page in *Administration.*The Set up page contains a list of links to areas you should customize before beginning daily operations in ***The Financial Edge***.

Dashboard

Dashboard provides a quick and efficient overview of information in your database in an organized presentation. On the Dashboard page you can view a real-time snapshot of your organization’s progress. A Dashboard page contains up to 255 panels of summaries, lists, and graphs that efficiently compare and analyze your data.

From most *Dashboard* summaries, you can open a record within ***The Financial Edge*** to view or modify data on the record. You can also edit a panel to view different information or refresh data at any time. You can print all panels and you can select to view a graph or table (or both). *Dashboard* is ideal for development directors, executives, or any user who needs to quickly access data.

Processing Pages

A Processing page link is located on the Navigation bar of each program in ***The Financial Edge.*** Each Processing page provides a task-based interface organized into a standard workflow. You can access each Processing page by clicking a link on the Navigation bar within each program.

FAST!

Fast! is available in ***Student Billing*** and ***Accounts Payable***. Using *Fast!*, you can quickly create a large volume of records at once. Instead of opening new records individually to add data, you record field information for multiple records in a customized grid format datasheet. You can create datasheets in ***Accounts Payable*** for invoice records and in ***Student Billing*** for charge and payment records.

Help

The Financial Edge provides you with user guides and help files, which you can easily access from any program or the Blackbaud website.

If you need information as you work in ***The Financial Edge***, you can use either the help file embedded in the program or our user guides in Portable Document Format (*.pdf) viewed with a pdf reader, such as *Acrobat*.

Both help files and user guides contain the same helpful procedures, explanations, and examples. The difference is that the help file is designed to help you find useful information quickly on your desktop, while the user guides are books that can be printed, complete with pictures and more detailed procedures.

Help File

The Financial Edge help file consists of several main parts, including a table of contents, index, and search tab. With these tabs, you can access procedures, reference information, and a glossary of frequently used terms.

To access the help file, from the menu bar, select the question mark or press **F1**.

User Guides

The user guides are Portable Document Format (*.pdf) files you can view and print using a pdf reader. If you do not have a pdf reader, you download Adobe's reader at no charge from the Adobe website at http://www.adobe.com.

To view the installation guides before you install ***The Financial Edge***, select **Read User Guides** from the Autoplay menu on the installation CD.

To view the user guides after you install ***The Financial Edge***, select **Help**, **User Guides** from the menu bar or the navigation bar.

General Ledger Features

General Ledger is an accounting information program that provides flexibility to meet your organization's individual needs and satisfies the unique accounting software requirements of nonprofit organizations. For example, you have flexible report perspectives on the same transactional data and complete audit trails so you can trace debits and credits between income statement and balance sheet accounts.

You also have less complicated annual audits with ready access to financial information (including history of changes) in account, fund, and project information. You can track and report on additional characteristics, such as transaction codes and attributes, at the transaction level.

Transaction-Level Identifiers

With ***General Ledger***, you have the tools to categorize transactions with a variety of identifiers, including accounts, projects, transaction codes, transaction attributes, and class.

Accounts

Accounts are used to group transactions for reporting purposes. Accounts are a visual part of your account structure. With accounts you can budget, track activity and notes, and view a history of changes. You can also configure the program to automatically generate accounts when entering transactions and the designated account number does not exist in the program.

Projects

Your organization may benefit from grouping transactions by project if you want to track transactions regardless of account, but still want to retain all the benefits of using accounts. You can also retain equity and use budgets when you use projects. Projects work "behind the scenes" and are not a visual part of the chart of accounts. To use projects, you must have the optional module *Projects and Grants*.

Grants

With the optional module *Projects and Grants*, you can create grant records to record and track money awarded to your organization by a government agency or private institution for a specific purpose. You can specify which projects are funded by the grant and assign a single transaction code to the grant to provide an additional level of detail for tracking how the grant is used. This enables you to run detailed reports and ensure that you are meeting grant restrictions.

If your organization receives reimbursable grant funding, you can report and keep track of the expenses that are reimbursable. On the Reimbursement tab of the grant record, you can set up and define the billing items and rates to use when creating charges in ***Accounts Receivable*** for grant expenses.

Account and Project Attributes

You can use account and project attributes for grouping accounts and projects, which greatly enhances your reporting flexibility. You can make attributes required and unique. Project attributes are available only with the optional module *Projects and Grants*.

Transaction Codes

Transaction codes provide a way to group transactions for reporting purposes. You can designate up to five transaction codes, which, once designated, become available throughout ***The Financial Edge***. The code name and description are added on the Define Transaction Codes page, and entries for these codes are made on the Tables page. Transaction codes are similar to projects, although you do not budget by them, and they are available only with the optional module *Projects and Grants*.

Transaction Attributes

You can group transactions for reporting purposes by using transaction attributes. You use attributes when you do not need to budget or retain equity.

Class

Class, also known as net asset classification, is one more way to group transactions. Class is an identifier you use for FAS 117 reporting. You can retain equity by class.

Control and Contra Accounts

With ***General Ledger***, you can define any account as a control or contra account. Control accounts display information summaries either when you display account activity and balances on reports or on the Account and Project Activity tabs. With this feature, you can post transactions and entries in detail. Examples of control accounts are Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable summary accounts.

Contra accounts possess the opposite normal balance of the accounts they represent. For example, a contra asset account, such as accumulated depreciation, has a normal credit balance whereas an asset has a normal debit balance.

Account and Project Security

In addition to general program security, you have the tools with ***General Ledger*** to set full security on accounts and projects as well as on reports and queries if you have the optional module *Advanced Security*. The system administrator, or someone with supervisor security rights, can give or deny users rights to accounts and projects you specify. You can use a query, a range, or selected accounts to choose accounts and projects on which you want to set up security. With both accounts and projects, you can use wildcards to mask one or more characters.

Visual Chart Organizer

The *Visual Chart Organizer* offers you flexible formatting of financial statements, eliminating the need for consolidation accounts and consolidation charts of accounts. Rather than creating a chart of accounts for each consolidation, you create templates from your general ledger that can be filtered and displayed in numerous formats. You can sort by many criteria, such as fund, project, and department. These formats result in flexible report formats. You can even access records directly from *Visual Chart Organizer*.

Chart of Accounts

Using the *Visual Chart Organizer* with ***General Ledger***, you have many options specific to the chart of accounts' functionality and appearance. You can easily develop and manipulate your chart of accounts using the chart templates. With this feature, you can also create custom charts of accounts and then use them for reporting purposes.

Additionally, the process of creating accounts is completely table-driven, which ensures consistency, flexibility, and speed of data entry and reporting. You can arrange segments in any order. Since each segment is a table, you define values for segments when you define potential accounts in the program. With this approach, you can create an account by simply activating an account number. You can even mark combinations of account segments as invalid, which prevents creating invalid accounts, and you can hide them from users without security rights. Finally, to create new accounts automatically during posting, you can set up security and business rules.

Journal Entry

To ensure accurate record-keeping with ***General Ledger***, you have the option of distributing by all the transaction-level identifiers. You can also drill down to view the source document that generates each transaction. For example, while reviewing an expense transaction in a journal entry batch, you can drill down to the accounts payable invoice that initiated the transaction. And a valuable security feature requires approval of each batch before it is posted.

Fund Closing

Because tracking ownership of equity is critical, you have powerful functionality and flexibility with the closing of funds. With ***General Ledger***, you can close different funds based on segment value, net asset classification, transaction code, and project. You can set up each fund to have its own closing method. For each closing characteristic, you can select to preserve details and require to balance on all or some accounts.

Post to General Ledger

Posting a batch adds transaction entries to ledger accounts and updates account balances. You can post batches from *Journal Entry* or *Administration* in ***General Ledger***, or *Administration* in ***Accounts Payable***, ***Accounts Receivable***, ***Cash Receipts***, or ***Fixed Assets***. You can also set up posting to create new accounts automatically.

Fiscal Year

You define fiscal years during the initial ***General Ledger*** setup process, but you can add unlimited fiscal years to the database provided you add the older years first. For example, you cannot add fiscal year 2003 and later add 2002. Your organization should consider this before adding the first fiscal year.

You can divide each fiscal year into a maximum of 13 periods. Each period acts as a container, which you use to track transactions. When you make a journal entry, the transaction appears in the period and fiscal year determined by the post date. Journal entries must balance by fiscal period. You can close, soft-close, summarize, and purge fiscal years.

Accounts Payable Features

Accounts Payable includes features for efficient and consistent data entry, record keeping, check writing, and flexible reporting for accounts payable activity.

By defining business rules, the administrators can control standard procedures and data entry. Additionally, the administrator can define multiple payables accounts in *Configuration* as a default value with the option of modifying each invoice.

With the optional module *Cash Management*, you have additional cash account, adjustment, and electronic reconciliation functionality in *Banks*. You can also define multiple electronic signatures based on the check amount. As a security measure, you can establish controls to ensure that only approved invoices are paid.

Vendors

On the vendor record, you can store information such as the vendor’s addresses, contact persons, Tax ID number, or credit limit, and track activity and 1099 information. You can also create regular invoices, recurring invoices, credit memos, product records, purchase orders, and receipts from a vendor record.

Invoices

The Invoices page of ***Accounts Payable*** is essential for paying bills and maintaining an accurate picture of your organization’s financial standing. Complete with a variety of options for tracking, paying, and recording distributions, the Invoices page gives you an easy way to monitor your bills and payments. With a new security feature, the system administrator can require approval before invoices are paid.

Recurring Invoices

Recurring Invoices are templates from which you can create regular invoices quickly and easily according to a schedule. They are extremely handy for reminding you to pay items such as utility bills, mortgages, and vehicle leases. They also provide basic information such as the vendor name, invoice amount, and payment method, so you do not have to enter the entire invoice from scratch. Although you can pay and post the invoices you create from a recurring invoice, the recurring invoices are never posted or included in any balance calculation. When it is time to generate invoices, ***Accounts Payable*** reminds you with a pop-up reminder or message on the ***Accounts Payable*** Home page.

Products

If you have the optional module *Purchase Orders*, you can create product records in ***Accounts Payable***. Using product records saves time when creating purchase orders because you can quickly select a product you previously created, instead of entering the information every time you create a purchase order for identical items.

Receipts

If you have the optional module *Purchase Orders*, you can create receipts. When you create a receipt for a purchase order, you automatically generate the entries required to reverse encumbrance transactions posted from a purchase order. A receipt also acts as a template you can use for creating invoices for items you have received.

Once an item on a purchase order is delivered to your organization, you can receipt the item. A receipt consists of two parts: the receipt record and individual line item receipts attached to the receipt record. On the receipt record, you enter the date the item was delivered, the name of the person who received the order, and a description of the receipt. From the receipt record, you add, edit, and delete individual line item receipts. You can manually create receipts for each line item or you can auto receive the purchase order.

Credit Memos

A credit memo is a document issued by the vendor to record an adjustment against an invoice. It is one of several record types created and maintained in ***Accounts Payable***. You can apply a credit memo to one or more invoices to decrease the amount that is owed. Credit memos can be created from the Activity tab of a vendor record and from the Credit Memo page of *Records.*

Banks

Accounts Payable uses *Banks* to help you maintain information about your bank accounts. From Banks you can print checks, make payments, record manual checks, use the bank register, and reconcile bank accounts. In *Banks* you can make payments for several invoices at one time. You can make all the payments for invoices associated with one bank or make payments, for example, for a selected due date or discount expiration date. You can make payments to just one vendor or all vendors. In *Banks* you can also maintain the bank account register, void and purge checks, and post adjustments to ***General Ledger***.

Mail

Mail is the central location for all mail tasks in ***Accounts Payable***. With *Mail* you can use the information stored in your ***Accounts Payable*** database to create labels, envelopes, and Rolodex/index cards. You can also create 1099 forms and purchase orders for printing or electronic transmission. Output from *Mail* is distinguished from *Reports* in that it is intended to be sent to parties outside of the organization.

Fixed Assets Features

Fixed Assets is an asset management program, providing everything your organization needs to manage its assets, including the ability to enter or import asset information, generate depreciation transactions, and account for and record the disposal of assets.

Fixed Assets integrates seamlessly with ***General Ledger*** and ***Accounts Payable***. For example, you can post depreciation and adjustment transactions directly to ***General Ledger*** and add new assets from the Purchase Order Receipt screen in *Purchase Orders*, an optional module in ***Accounts Payable***.

Assets

Assets are items an organization owns with a useful life greater than one fiscal year. In ***Fixed Assets***, you can create asset records containing information including the acquisition value, acquisition date, asset location, and depreciation method. Using the tabs provided on an asset record, you can view asset transaction activity and calculate projected depreciation. You can also create new transactions directly from the asset record and define transaction distributions using default accounts.

Using the Asset Wizard, you can create multiple asset records at one time. This is useful if you have purchased several items of the same type and need to enter them into the program.

Transactions

With transactions in ***Fixed Assets***, you can efficiently track and manage the value of your organization’s property, plant, and equipment. Transaction types, which include acquisition, depreciation, improvement, and disposal, provide flexibility and help you determine an asset’s value during various stages of its useful life. You can calculate depreciation of assets using standard IRS tables, depreciation methods, or on customized schedules you create.

Transactions also contain additional information that helps to trace and report on them. Transactions include source codes and journal references and may include project and transaction code distributions if you have the optional module *Projects and Grant*s.

When you post asset transactions to the general ledger, you can distribute the accounts to debit or credit. By effectively using transaction records, you can produce balance sheets that reflect the true value of your organization’s assets.

On the Transaction record, you can record the disposal of an asset. This transaction enters a credit to the asset account and a debit to the accumulated depreciation account to zero out the book value of the asset. Any remaining portion of the transaction posts to the disposal loss account.

Custom Depreciation Tables

You can save and use depreciation schedules for other assets. There are several types of depreciation schedules predefined in ***Fixed Assets***; however, your organization may choose to use another method to formulate depreciation. To do so, you must create a custom depreciation schedule. From the Custom Depreciation Schedules tab in *Configuration*, you can create, open, or delete a custom depreciation schedule.

Inventory Tracking

You can use the Asset Inventory utility in *Administration* to identify assets that have been moved or are missing by comparing assets in the system to an inventory file. Inventory files contain asset numbers (or asset IDs) and locations (or departments) for assets that have been inventoried either by scanning or manual counts. The scanning process produces an electronic file.

Accounts Receivable Features

This comprehensive billing and customer information program helps you manage your receivables and plan your cash flow. Along with customer account management, you can use the features of this program for billing and payment applications, creating invoices, statements, and correspondence, as well as producing reports as you need them.

Records

From the Records page of ***Accounts Receivable,*** you can create Products and Billing Items, Clients, Charges, Credits, Invoices, Recurring Invoices, Returns, Refunds, Deposits, and Payments.

Billing

Accounts Receivable offers a truly flexible billing solution that helps nonprofit organizations process payments in a variety of ways to improve the revenue collection and recognition process. Any payment, no matter who submits it, can be used to pay charges for any client or organization in the system. You can assign payment responsibility for individual charges, but even those charges can be paid by anyone.

Statements

To complement the flexible multi-party billing system in ***Accounts Receivable***, we have designed and implemented a flexible system for dispersing customized statements to all parties connected to a payment. Sending statements that are easy to understand and accurately communicate information to multiple payers is vital for collecting revenue, as well as promoting client satisfaction.

Cash Receipts Features

Use ***Cash Receipts*** to identify where small cash amounts originate and produce a detailed profile of each transaction. Transactions for ***Cash Receipts*** might include postage meter money, concession revenue, application fees, pay phone revenue, yearbook advertising, and vending machine revenue.

Payments

Use ***Cash Receipts*** to identify where small cash amounts originate and produce a detailed profile of each transaction. Transactions for ***Cash Receipts*** might include postage meter money, concession revenue, application fees, pay phone revenue, yearbook advertising, and vending machine revenue.

Because each payment is part of a deposit, when you create a new payment, you must first associate it with a deposit. The deposit records the amount of cash, checks, EFTs, or other payments you receive and deposit into your bank account. The payment record explains the source and reason for the payment. You can create payment records on the Payments page of *Records*, or directly from the deposit record in *Banks*. Because ***Cash Receipts*** and ***Accounts Receivable*** are linked, you can add accounts receivable payments to deposits made in either ***Cash Receipts*** or ***Accounts Receivable***.

Deposits

Use deposit records in ***Cash Receipts*** to record the amount of cash, checks, EFTs, or other payments you receive and deposit into your bank account. Once you create an open deposit, you can add an unlimited number of payment receipts to the deposit. Because ***Cash Receipts*** and ***Accounts Receivable*** are linked, you can add accounts receivable payments to deposits made in either ***Cash Receipts*** or ***Accounts Receivable***.

Student Billing Features

Student Billing is a specialized billing system developed for schools to help track all services and products they provide their students and parents. With ***Student Billing*** you can send detailed statements to parents and 3rd party payers, as well as track incoming payments.

Flexible Billing

Student Billing offers a truly flexible billing solution that helps schools efficiently process payments from a variety of sources. Any payment, no matter who submits it, can be used to pay charges for any student in the system. You can assign payment responsibility for individual charges, but even those charges can be paid by anyone.

With ***Student Billing***, you can assign payment responsibility for individual charges to multiple people or organizations. You can also apply one payment to multiple students, as well as apply payments automatically or manually. You are not limited to distributing responsibility for charges to records that have a direct relationship to a student.

Flexible Statements

To complement the flexible billing system in ***Student Billing***, we have designed and implemented a flexible system for dispersing customized statements to all parties connected to a payment. Sending statements that are easy to understand and accurately communicate information to multiple payers is vital for collecting payments, as well as promoting payer satisfaction.

With ***Student Billing***, we have simplified the statements process while also providing flexibility that makes printing and sending statements quick, accurate, and efficient. When generating statements, you can send all payers a statement customized for their specific payment responsibilities. For example, if a student has a parent and a grandparent who are responsible for various charges, you can send statements to both payers with only the amount each owes.

You also have the capability to print an “Amount Due” on each statement, which is based on a flat fee or a percentage of the statement balance. Additionally, you can filter transactions from statements based on billing items.

Individual and Organization Records

With ***Student Billing***, you can add specific records to the system that accommodate both individuals and organizations who interact with your school and have payment responsibility.

Individual Records. The individual record is designed for tracking information about an individual person involved in transactions with your school. You can use the individual record to store individual-specific information including, biographical data, posting information, payments and credits, distributions, attributes, and notes. Individual records have multiple uses, put are primarily used to document people, including parents, who are responsible for making payments.

Organization Records. The organization record is designed for tracking information about organizations, groups or companies involved in transactions with your organization. On the Organization record, you can store contact information, posting information, payments and credits, distributions, attributes, and notes.

Advance Deposits

Advance deposits enable your school to accept money in order to reserve a place for a student. In ***Student Billing***, advanced deposits can be charges in the system even before payments are submitted. After an advance deposit is paid in full, it can generate credits. These credits are then applied to the student’s account over time, based on the schedule defined.

Unfortunately, billing and accounting for advanced deposits is often a complicated task. However, with ***Student Billing***, we provide features to simplify the handling of advance deposits. For example, you can show advance deposits on statements as charges. Additionally, all or a portion of any payment or credit can be used toward paying for an advance deposit.

Products and Billing Items

Products and billing items in are the foundation for charges and credits. Products and billing items provide a more comprehensive solution than fees for tracking both products and services, as well as financial aid, tuition refund plans (TRPs), and advance deposits.

This functionality also provides automatic billing items, which you can use to establish automatic processing of grade-based billing with or without charge schedules.

Flat Rate Items. Flat rate items are helpful if you provide products or services that are always the same price and are not offered in a quantity. For example, standard lab fees or field trip charges could be set up as flat rate items.

Products. Products are helpful if you sell items that may be purchased in quantity. For example, your school may sell yearbooks or t-shirts. With Products you can also set up pricing schedules for seasonal price changes or other schedule price fluctuations.

Per Usage Items. Per usage items are helpful if you offer products or services that are billed incrementally. For example, a per usage item could be an hourly rate for tutoring services.

Refund Items. Refunds are a type of credit that is generally disbursed by printing a check payable to a parent, or by applying the refund to another active charge. By setting up Refund Items, you can make the refund process more efficient.

Finance Charge Items. If your organization assesses finance charges or late charges overdue balances, you can set up Finance Charge Items.

Sales Tax Items. If your organization collects sales tax on behalf of government bodies for items or services rendered, you can establish Sales Tax Billing Items. Once you establish Sales Tax Billing Items, you can associate them with subsequent billing item records.

Advance Deposit Items. If your school intends to accept advance deposits, we recommend setting up advance deposit items to streamline the process. These items are used to schedule credits to an account after the advance deposit amount is fully paid.

Financial Aid Items. Financial Aid items are used to schedule credits to an account as the financial aid becomes available and needs to be dispersed. For example, you can set up financial aid items for merit or need-based scholarships granted by your school.

Tuition Refund Plan (TRP) Items. TRPs are an option some payers may want to insure that tuition paid is not forfeit if a student moves or needs to leave school. Many schools out source TRPs, however, others maintain TRPs themselves. If your school maintains TRPs, you can set up TRP items to create charges that pay for the insurance plan.

Automatic Item: Vary Amount By Grade. This item is used for grade-based billing or tuition and can be associated with a bill code for automatic processing. Using this item, each grade level can have a separate charge providing easier set up than a billing item per grade. You can use automatic items to create charges directly or to create a billing schedule.

Automatic Item: Vary Amount and Schedule By Grade. This item is similar to the Vary Amount By Grade item but also allows each grade to have a different charge schedule in addition to a varying the amount.

Automatic Item: Single Amount and Schedule. This item is similar to the previous two automatic items, however, only one amount and schedule can be defined. Additionally, this billing item can be used with bill codes for individuals and organizations.

Multiple Receivable Accounts

We know all schools and organizations are different. Some need to track project balances and transaction codes on balance sheets while others do not. With ***Student Billing*** we have taken this into consideration and designed a system that can efficiently meet the needs of both types of organizations by making the unapplied payment account optional. This means that schools are no longer limited to a single receivable account.

Note: The General business rule for designating a single AR summary account versus multiple accounts is extremely important and will impact your organization’s success using ***Student Billing***.

If your organization’s accounting methodology requires tracking project balances and transaction codes, ***Student Billing*** enables you to do that with multiple AR accounts. On the other hand, if your organization does not need those features you can configure ***Student Billing*** to use a single AR summary account by enabling a business rule in *Configuration*. This business rule configures your system to use a single AR summary account while never posting applications. For more information, see the *Configuration Guide for Student Billing*.

Financial Edge Integration

Because ***Student Billing*** is fully integrated with ***The Financial Edge***, you have increased functionality. You can use projects and transaction codes in ***General Ledger*** to track billing and payment activity. You can also post directly from ***Student Billing*** to ***General Ledger*** and view student billing transactions from ***General Ledger***.

Another benefit of integration is that banks are now shared across the system and quickly accessed from within the shell along with other ***Student Billing*** modules.

Integration

Integrating ***Student Billing*** with ***Admissions Office*** and ***Registrar's Office*** means the admissions office, registrar's office, and billing office in your school share the same records in the same database. The result of this integration is a more efficient data entry process and reduced data entry errors.

Through integration, and ***Student Billing*** share student, parent, and organization data without duplicate data entry between the different offices. Because the records are shared, changes made in one program are reflected in the other. Addresses, relationships, biographical, and enrollment information are shared.

As a result of integration with , the financial aid process is streamlined across offices. You also have additional *Query* options for course fee billing based on class enrollment information provided directly from .

If your organization is planning to integrate ***Student Billing 7*** with ***Admissions Office 7*** and/or ***Registrar's Office 7***, you need to prepare for the implementation carefully. For more information about preparing for integration, see *Integrating Student Billing with* . This guide is available for download on our website at www.blackbaud.com.

Financial Aid Management

Student Billing provides features to help you effectively manage financial aid, which can be a complicated task that directly impacts your accounting system, as well as the quality of life for your students.

The financial aid application in ***Student Billing*** is maintained on the Financial Aid tab of student records. This is information required for a student to be eligible for aid.

If aid is granted, a schedule is required to coordinate dispersal. Financial aid schedules describe a single or series of credits awarded to the student to reduce the balance of their account. These schedules can be created from the main Records page or from the Activity tab of student, individual, or organization records.

To ensure confidentiality, we have added security options, which are set in *Administration*, to control the sharing of financial aid information.

Additionally, ***Student Billing*** provides a utility to automatically create financial aid credits from financial aid applications.

GL Distribution Options

GL distributions in ***Student Billing*** contain account distribution information such as credit and debit accounts, amounts to distribute, and whether to classify distributions using projects, classes, or transaction codes. By pre-defining distributions in *Configuration*, you can quickly and easily assign activity to accounts.

Automatically Generate Transactions

To increase efficiency and improve the process of creating charges and credits from schedules, ***Student Billing*** includes a utility for automatically generating transactions.

With this utility, you can create billing schedules from bill codes; generate charges and credits from billing schedules, financial aid schedules, and advance deposits; create TRP billing schedules; and generate TRP charges.

Student Billing Dashboard Panels

Dashboard organizes information in your database into a “snapshot” you can easily view with the click of a mouse. Quickly and effortlessly, *Dashboard* summarizes your organization’s most valuable information.

Student Billing panels can track aging information based on your organization’s aging periods, rank payers based on activity, and display analyses of revenue, collections, service, sales, and cash receipts.

For more information about using *Dashboard*, see the *Dashboard Guide*.

Optional Modules and Maintenance Options

Blackbaud offers optional modules and maintenance options that expand the capabilities of ***The Financial Edge***. With the optional modules and maintenance options available, you can perform specialized tasks that may benefit your organization and improve the efficiency of your business office.

Accounting Forms

With the optional module *Accounting Forms*, you can print forms such as checks and invoices with ***Financial Edge*** information already completed. Because it prints directly on blank paper, *Accounting Forms* eliminates alignment problems associated with pre-printed forms.

Accounting Queue

The optional module *Accounting Queue* provides the ability to schedule a sequence of tasks to run automatically and unattended. Because you can set up a queue to run overnight or while at lunch, you save time for other tasks. For example, you can schedule a queue to post selectively to ***General Ledger*** and to run financial reports and mailings. In addition, using *Accounting Queue* frees your critical resources — workstations and printers — for other tasks during normal working hours. Queues can be scheduled on demand or on a recurring hourly, weekly, monthly, or bimonthly schedule.

Advanced Budget Management

With the optional module *Advanced Budget Management*, you can budget payroll by salary and benefits on a per-employee basis allowing you to accomplish the following:

- Manage and maintain support data for payroll budget accounts
- Allocate employees to multiple departments or projects
- Support forecasted budgets with headcount details
- Map payroll periods to budget periods
- Support payroll computations like FICA
- Allow mass changes by job classification

Using *Advanced Budget Management*, you can perform statistical budgeting and driver-based planning using parameters and costs that “drive” your organization. You can also quickly and efficiently view line item budget details and notes for details of budget assumptions that make up the overall account budget.

With the new integrated budgeting functionality and tools available in *Advanced Budget Management*, you can speed and simplify budget entry while removing cumbersome spreadsheets and other third-party tools from your budgeting workflow.

Coordinating budgets across your organization is now more efficient because you can publish budget guidelines and assumptions to specific personnel with budget responsibility. You can also view budgets by department, cost center, program, project, and account.

Budget Management

With the optional module *Budget Management*, you can greatly enhance and expand your budget functions within ***General Ledger***. With advanced budgeting capabilities, you can develop, copy, forecast, and monitor multiple budget scenarios for your company throughout the current, past, and future fiscal years. Budget scenarios can be extremely beneficial to your organization; with them, you can explore and analyze different budget situations. You can create an unlimited number of budget scenarios, which means you can have a budget in place for just about any hypothetical situation.

And if you have the optional module *Budget Management* and ***Accounts Payable***, you can include unposted accounts payable activity when verifying account and project budgets directly from ***Accounts Payable***.

Advanced Security

With the optional module *Advanced Security*, you have additional security options for accounts, projects (if you have the optional module *Projects and Grants)*, reports, and queries. Using *Advanced Security* you can allow or restrict a user’s access to most areas of ***The Financial Edge***, including all or selected accounts, projects, reports, and business rules. When designating security rights for accounts or projects you can use a query, a range, or a specific selection. With both accounts and projects, you can use wildcards to mask one or more characters. You can also assign security rights for electronic signatures with *Advanced Security*.

Another benefit of *Advanced Security* is the ability to give users view-only rights throughout ***The Financial Edge***. To establish view-only rights, however, you must purchase view-only user licenses to use with *Advanced Security*. View-only user licenses give managers, and others within your organization, a way to view data without having rights to enter or edit data. The view-only user has view only rights to *Records*, *Banks*, *Visual Chart Organizer*, *Journal Entry*, but has full rights to *Dashboard*, *Plug-Ins*, *Reports*, and *Query*, so they can create and modify queries and reports. The view-only user does not have rights to *Administration* and *Configuration*.

Allocation Management

Allocation Management is an optional module that replaces the *Interest Income Allocation* module. *Allocation Management* retains all previous functionality available in *Interest Income Allocation*, while also adding new features to increase efficiency and flexibility when allocating amounts. You can still distribute earnings from pooled endowment funds, but now you can also allocate amounts directly and indirectly, as well as re-classify Net Assets when they are released from restriction. The expanded functionality of *Allocation Management* provides new options when allocating investment income and fees. Now you have the capability to create complex allocations that move funds from one set of accounts to another, based on the balances of a third set of accounts.

Creating and running allocations is an efficient process that uses allocation sets, allocation pools, and fee schedules. When defining accounts for an allocation, you use allocation pools to group accounts or characteristics of accounts. The allocation pools, which are created in *Configuration*, contain the account information used to calculate the amounts you are allocating. You then select the allocation pool you want to use when creating an allocation set.

Allocation Management also includes extensive reports, including the Fee Schedule Profile and the Pool Profile. These reports provide detailed information related to the allocations, including journal entries created by allocations.

Application Programming Interface (API) and the Plug-Ins Page

Using the optional module *Application Programming Interface* (*API*), experienced programmers can write fully functional “standalone” programs that have complete access to ***Financial Edge*** data and services. The *API* is the right solution if you want to write your own “front-end” to the system or create customizations that meld ***The Financial Edge*** with some other specialized functionality.

You can use the Plug-Ins page to run your customized *API* application directly from the shell. You can host HTML or *Active X* documents in a variety of formats to work in conjunction with ***The Financial Edge***. To learn more about plug-ins and the *API*, see the help file reference available once you install *API*.

Cash Management

You can use *Cash Management* to increase the efficiency of tasks related to payment adjustments, account activity, and bank reconciliation. With *Cash Management*, you can reconcile to bank statements and cash accounts, as well as transfer funds from one bank account to another using adjustments. Other features include electronic reconciliation and the ability to automatically add journal entries to the bank register. For more information, see the *Banks Guide*.

Consolidation Management

Consolidation Management is an optional module that enables consolidated reporting across multiple databases. *Consolidation Management* adapts the account structure of each subsidiary database into a common account structure used at a headquarters database. Information can be imported into the headquarters database at the transaction level, or summarized by periods. *Consolidation Management* also allows for currency translation at the statement level.

With *Consolidation Management* installed, you can add a separate ***General Ledger*** application and database to your system that stores a copy of all transaction activity for multiple subsidiary companies within one organization. This combined activity information can then be used to generate consolidated reports for all subsidiaries within an organization.

Using *Consolidation Management,* you can accomplish the following tasks:

- Consolidate multiple subsidiary organizations into a single general ledger
- Create a custom translation map to convert account and transaction information from each subsidiary into the consolidated general ledger
- Translate multiple currencies into the currency of the consolidated general ledger
- Use full ***General Ledger*** reporting capabilities to report on any time period in the consolidated ledger
- Create consolidated reports containing activity from multiple companies within one organization
- Report on international companies, regardless of currency and account structure
- View the entire big picture of a multi-company organization without jeopardizing tax exempt status.

For more information, see the *Consolidation Management Guide*.

Electronic Funds Transfer

With the optional module *Electronic Funds Transfer*, you have additional functionality on the EFT Bank Information tab that appears on the vendor record. In other words, you can establish the necessary banking information to perform electronic funds transfers with your vendors. You also have additional features in *Banks* if you have this optional module.

The Information Edge

The Information Edge is an optional business intelligence tool designed exclusively for nonprofit organizations. It is a SQL Server-based analytic application you can use to manage data across your entire organization. ***The Information Edge*** integrates your data and turns it into analytical information, so you can:

- Understand which activities engage the most donors
- Identify the characteristics of your best donors
- Leverage every aspect of your organization's relationships with your donor
- Target constituents with the most appropriate messages and vehicles
- Know who and when to target for annual upgrades and for major and planned gifts
- Forecast a donor’s lifetime value and plan activities to maximize that value

With ***The Information Edge***, you turn data into analytical information that can directly benefit your organization. You can extract, integrate, and organize disparate data into meaningful datamarts, which can then be used for aggregation, valuation, analysis and reporting. The datamarts you create contain multi-dimensional cubes of information that are optimized for speedy analysis and interactivity, including complex querying and reporting using Microsoft Analysis Services tools.

Using with The Raiser’s Edge and The Financial Edge

If you use ***The Information Edge*** in conjunction with both ***The Raiser’s Edge*** and ***The Financial Edge***, you have an integrated solution for creating reports that include elements of data from both systems. The benefits of using ***The Information Edge*** with both systems, include:

- Long term pledge valuation to account for large pledges paid over extended periods of time
- Unitization of pooled endowment funds to reduce the fees associated with investing and managing the pool
- Calculation of spending policy to better predict dollars available from an endowment to fund portions of programs or initiatives
- Stewardship reporting to provide more timely information to donors regarding how donations are being used to further your mission

Projects and Grants

General Ledger’s optional module *Projects and Grants* provides flexibility for you to manage your projects. You use projects and transaction codes to group transactions for reporting purposes. You can lock project budgets, assign multiple contacts for each project, and track actions, media, and notes for each project. You can also view a history of changes. Additionally, you can perform global changes and imports on projects and set project defaults.

Purchase Orders

With the ***Accounts Payable*** optional module *Purchase Orders*, you have a variety of options for recording purchases, tracking encumbrances, and generating invoices from receipts. Additionally, *Purchase Orders* gives you the capability of tracking supply and shipment needs as well as costs.

Read-Only Database Assistance

Read-Only Database Assistance is a maintenance option you can purchase to gain supported read-only access to your ***Financial Edge*** database. With *Read-Only Database Assistance*, you have full access to related support resources, as well as database access, which you can use to issue SQL statements, export data, create import files, and create custom reports without exporting a query. For more information about *Read-Only Database Assistance*, send an email with questions to maintenance@blackbaud.com.

School Store Manager

School Store Manager is an optional module for ***Student Billing*** that enables you to post school store charges directly to ***Student Billing*** when used in conjunction with *Store Operations*, the point-of-sale software produced by Microsoft's *Retail Management System*.

When *School Store Manager* uses *Store Operations*, you can produce a single statement with both school store and tuition charges, while reducing data entry time and errors. You can transfer customer information from ***Student Billing*** to *Store Operations* and set up multiple databases for multiple school stores. In addition, you can print customer ID cards with bar coding, which customers can then use as debit or credit cards.

With *Store Operations*, you can maintain multiple school store databases. You can transfer each school store's transactions in summary to ***Student Billing*** through *School Store Manager* and then post them to ***General Ledger***. You can also create a post file and import transactions directly into ***General Ledger***.

For more information, see the *School Store Manager Guide.*

WebPurchasing

The optional module *WebPurchasing* allows you to create and approve requisitions online. After you create the requisitions, you can view and update requisition records from the Records page of ***Accounts Payable***, and create purchase orders. To use *WebPurchasing*, you must have the optional module *Purchase Orders* and a Web server. For more information about *WebPurchasing*, see the *WebPurchasing Guide*.

WebInvoicing

The optional module *WebInvoicing* allows you to create invoice requests and get them approved online. When you create an invoice request, you select pre-defined expense categories, add GL distribution information, and attach supporting documentation such as receipts. The invoice request is then submitted for approval and an email notification can be sent to reviewers. For more information about *WebInvoicing*, see the *WebInvoicing User Guide*.

Vsual Basic for Applications (VBA)

Visual Basic for Applications (*VBA*) is an industry standard macro/scripting programming language widely used in software products, including all Microsoft *Office* applications, for rapidly customizing and integrating packaged applications. Using this optional module, you can customize ***The Financial Edge*** to interface more directly with other *Windows* applications. To learn more about *VBA*, see the help file reference available once you install *VBA*.

chapter 3

Pre-Installation Planning

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Properly installing ***The Financial Edge*** is not a difficult task if you take your time and follow all the recommended steps. This chapter details the initial steps needed to set up your system.

The Financial Edge includes Microsoft's SQL Express 2008 R2 SP2.

To download the most current system requirements, select **System Requirements** from the **resources** menu on our website at www.blackbaud.com.

Four Keys to a Successful Installation

In order to smooth the process of installing ***The Financial Edge***, we have established the following four key areas.

- ☐ Time
- ☐ Comprehensive installation plan
- ☐ Hardware
- ☐ Services/Training

Warning: Please visit our website to view the most current information before you begin planning your installation. To download the most current system requirements, select **System Requirements** from the **resources** menu on our website at www.blackbaud.com.

Your organization should review these keys to success and strive to obtain each. All four key areas are an essential part of your installation of ***The Financial Edge*** and prepare your organization for a successful installation.

Time

Before you install ***The Financial Edge***, you need to consider the time required to complete the process.

The approximate time to run the installation varies depending on your hardware and the size of your database. These are recommendations relating to the amount of time your organization should set aside for the pre-installation and installation process:

- Plan your installation when you and your staff can devote sufficient time to the installation process.
- Allow time for you and your staff to become acclimated to the new system. ***The Financial Edge*** is a dynamic product with many features.

Comprehensive Installation Plan

Before you install, take time to thoroughly research features and functionality available in ***The Financial Edge***. To help you, Blackbaud provides many resources such as online support, consulting services, and classes at Blackbaud University.

Please carefully read and follow the suggestions provided in the list below.

- Study this guide (the *Installation Planning Guide*).
- Understand the features and functionality available in ***The Financial Edge*** and how they may impact your organization.
- Involve and get a commitment from all appropriate personnel in your plan; create a cross-functional installation team (IT, end users, management, etc.) with a designated lead and an executive sponsor.

Hardware

The hardware you are using affects the performance of ***The Financial Edge***. If your hardware does not meet or exceed our requirements, you will not get the maximum benefit.

Please review the current detailed system requirements for ***The Financial Edge*** with your IT staff. You can view the most up-to-date system requirements for ***The Financial Edge*** by selecting **System Requirements** from the **resources** menu on our website at www.blackbaud.com.

Note: To download the most current system requirements, select **System Requirements** from the **resources** menu on our website at www.blackbaud.com.

When reviewing the detailed system requirements, be aware that program performance depends on many variables, including the number of users, network specifications, size of your database, and various other hardware and network considerations. Although our recommendations provide a generic guideline, you should examine your organization's unique situation to determine the correct hardware and network configuration you need to run ***The Financial Edge*** efficiently.

In many cases it is beneficial, or even necessary, to exceed the minimum system requirements. Exceeding hardware recommendations may be prudent for your organization's ability to accommodate future needs, such as an increased number of users or a larger database.

As you perform subsequent program updates and upgrades, we recommend you periodically check the current recommendations because enhancements to software often increase demands on hardware. You can obtain the most current hardware recommendations from the Blackbaud website.

Services/Training

The Financial Edge contains many features and functionality along with a variety of different ways to perform tasks. Even if you have experience with other accounting programs, we recommend you receive specific training on ***The Financial Edge***. Clients tell us that training was key to their success using ***The Financial Edge***. Training is also an important component for employee morale and development. It helps employees going through even mild change anxiety feel more confident and capable. Training is an important investment in every aspect of your organization, staff operations, and mission.

Because we understand how important training is, we offer a variety of training options to meet your different needs. We also offer several specialized classes on ***The Financial Edge*** at Blackbaud and in cities across North America.

As an alternative, you can arrange for a Blackbaud trainer to come to your organization to deliver classroom-style or individualized instruction. For information about the best training option for your organization, call your account representative at 1-800-443-9441 or send an email to solutions@blackbaud.com.

We also offer consulting services to assist you with every aspect of your conversion and implementation, including remote installation. We also offer secure Hosting Services, which can free your organization from the cost and upkeep of hardware concerns. For more information, visit the Services section of our website.

Business Office Considerations

You must examine and understand your organization's processes and reporting needs to effectively plan and install ***The Financial Edge***. You should begin by examining your organization's workflow, processes (such as budgeting, data entry, and creating payments), management practices, and reporting requirements.

Without first understanding the “business” of your organization, implementation is more difficult to accomplish and increasingly inefficient. By analyzing your business, you determine the best possible fit between the program and your organization, which increases your satisfaction, ensures long-term viability of the program, and decreases program maintenance requirements. During business analysis, you should address the organizational structure and reporting requirements of your organization.

Analyze Your Reporting Requirements

By analyzing and documenting your reporting needs, you will be better prepared to configure the system to meet your reporting requirements once you install ***The Financial Edge***. If you document your reporting needs, you can choose settings that reflect those needs during the implementation of the software.

It is important that you examine all reporting requirements prior to implementation, regardless of how basic or advanced those requirements may seem. Most reporting needs can be met if you know your requirements and configure the system accordingly.

Note: Projects and transaction codes are available only if you have the optional module *Projects and Grants*.

Your reporting requirements will greatly affect setup decisions you need to make, including the grouping tools available to you. For example, you must know whether your organization needs to run reports by attributes, projects, and transaction codes so you can enable those during setup.

When establishing your reporting requirements, you should carefully consider a number of issues:

- Should you present your income statement in a departmental or functional format?
- Do you need the optional module *Projects and Grants*? If so, do you need to print a balance sheet for each project?
- Do you need to retain equity for specific characteristics, such as project, department, or location?
- Do you need to use budgets?
- Do you need to sort your reports by categories, such as location or program?
- Do you produce any special board-required or regulatory reports?
- Do you produce FAS 117-compliant financial statements?
- Do you require the additional security features available in *Advanced Security*?

Analyze Your Organizational Structure

Examine your organization, considering the current overall organizational structure — departments and subdivisions as well as any unique activities, programs, or funding entities for which special reports may be required. At this point, plan which subdivisions to include in the new program as well as any subdivisions yet to be created.

The implementation of a new program often gives you the opportunity to change your business structure and practices to better accomplish your goals. Here are some examples:

- Should your organization increase efficiency by using ***The Raiser’s Edge*** in conjunction with ***General Ledger*** to eliminate double entry of gifts?
- Do you need to interface with ***The Raiser’s Edge***? If so, you must ensure the interface functions properly and accurately reflects the activity created from the fundraising transactions. The interface is a matter of selecting the appropriate account to debit and credit for each pledge type within each fund. If you have the optional module *Projects and Grants*, you can create a ***Raiser’s Edge*** fund for each project to which you want to post activity.
- Are there any processes, such as your budget process or invoice and payment approval, that you can refine to increase efficiency?
- Do your donors or funding sources require special reports?

- What reports could be useful tools for more effective management of your organization?

Configuring Historic Data

The Financial Edge is a very versatile package offering organizations great flexibility in establishing their accounting information system. Several questions may arise when deciding whether to convert historic data during implementation of your new accounting program.

- Will the data in your current program convert to the Blackbaud software?
- How much historic data should you convert?
- Should you convert all of your historic data or simply convert monthly activity for comparative reporting purposes?
- Should you choose a standard conversion or some form of customized conversion?

In this section, we discuss these issues so you can make an informed decision.

Determining Historic Information

For the purposes of this section, we use the Lowcountry Preservation Society as an example. The Lowcountry Preservation Society is converting from another accounting package. Its fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30, and the society has six fiscal years of data in its old program, from 1996 to 2002.

To gather the necessary information about the conversion process, consider these two questions:

1. Do we need detailed historic transaction information, or are monthly or yearly balances adequate to produce comparative reports?

   If you need to produce general ledger reports, batch detail reports, or transaction journals for your historic data? If so, you must convert every transaction in your program to the new program.

   However, if you do not require detailed transaction information, you can convert only monthly or annual net change from your previous program. By moving only the monthly or annual net change for each fiscal period, you can produce comparative financial statements and a trial balance in ***The Financial Edge***. However, to create detailed reports, you must rely on your previous program’s data or existing reports.

   Another option to consider if you do not need detailed historic information is to enter beginning balances for only the current year. In this case, you would enter balances according to your latest bank statements. Of course, if you use this method, you must rely on your previous program’s data or existing reports for comparative historic information.

   Example:

   Lowcountry Preservation Society has determined it will need access to all of its financial information, including detailed transactions. Therefore, it will convert all its transactions to the Blackbaud program.

2. How many fiscal years should we convert?

   Once you have decided exactly what to convert, the next step is to determine how many fiscal years to transfer from your current program. Many organizations convert every available fiscal year’s data into the new accounting software, but that is not necessary in many cases. Determine what is truly necessary information and what may be out of date. If you have the last seven years of financial information stored, consider the following questions before deciding how much of it to convert.

   - When preparing comparative financial information, how many years does your organization normally show?
   - Will having the information in the software greatly enhance efficiency, or do you refer to it so infrequently that printed reports in the files serve your purpose?
   - What is the cost versus the benefit of converting the information?
   - Are there any tax or audit implications to your historic information decision?

Note: Once fiscal years are established and activity is entered, you cannot add an earlier fiscal year into the program. However, you can always purge unnecessary fiscal years from your program, once they have been closed and summarized.

Another important factor to consider is the number of fiscal years you set up. Keep in mind, once fiscal years are established and activity is entered, you cannot add an earlier fiscal year into the program. However, you can always purge unnecessary fiscal years from your program, once they have been closed and summarized. For this reason, it is imperative you analyze your need for fiscal year data at this point and feel comfortable with your final decision.

Example:

The Lowcountry Preservation Society reviewed its situation and has come to three conclusions:

- It needs to see comparative financial statements only for 2003, 2002, and 2000.
- Having any earlier fiscal years in the program will not enhance efficiency because the society refers to these fiscal years infrequently.
- By converting only the three fiscal years, the time needed to review and test the converted data is reduced.

Based upon this analysis, the Lowcountry Preservation Society has decided to convert fiscal year data for 2003, 2002, and 2000 only.

Data Analysis

Warning: We strongly recommend you have completed some form of software training at this point so you have a thorough understanding of the decisions you make during this process and their long-term ramifications.

During the data analysis phase, you begin to review data and determine exactly how it will be converted to Blackbaud’s software. However, if you have any questions about the functionality of the software, installation issues, hardware requirements, or any software-specific questions, contact Customer Support.

The following is a list of questions you should answer before you begin the data analysis phase:

1. Does your old program require you to balance all journal entry transactions by fund? By journal code? By fiscal period? By fiscal year?

If not, be aware that the Blackbaud software does require all funds to balance in all categories before any journal entries can be validated. During the conversion, this can cause a series of unbalanced journal entries that must be balanced during post conversion cleanup. There is very little that can be done before the conversion to prevent this. You should understand that the potential for this issue exists and some post conversion cleanup may be necessary.

2. Is your current program configured with each fund as a self-balancing set of accounts (all your Balance Sheet and Income Statement accounts in one fund)?

If not, this will cause some issues in the Blackbaud software. You should contact Customer Support immediately.

3. In your current program can you delete accounts in the current year even though historic information for the account remains in the program?

If so, this may cause your beginning balances and some converted journal entries to be out of balance. You can either re-create those account numbers before converting or be prepared to add them during the post conversion cleanup. One way to test this is to produce a trial balance for every fiscal year you are planning to convert and make sure it balances.

4. Are you planning to use the optional module *Projects and Grants*? Does your current program support projects?

The closing method you choose for each fund can incorporate the optional module *Projects and Grants*. For now, you should understand that if you use a closing method that incorporates your projects, Blackbaud's software requires at least one project record on every Income Statement-related transaction (revenues, expenses, gifts, and transfers) in the program.

5. Will you require a balance sheet for projects, class, segments, or transaction codes?

This option is defined in the closing method for each fund. If you require this ability on a particular fund, all transactions within that fund will be required to balance by the filter you select in addition to fund, journal code, fiscal period, and fiscal year. If your current program does not require you to balance by project, class, segment, or transaction code, there may be a number of journal entries that will be out of balance after the conversion is complete. If not, you will be required to add these to the necessary transactions during the post conversion cleanup.

Post Conversion Cleanup

The final phase of the conversion process is to review the data and clean up any issues that may exist after the conversion is complete. As discussed earlier, the functionality of your previous program may not be completely compatible with our software. You may have certain issues to be corrected to ensure your new program is complete and ready to move forward.

Some examples of cleanup issues include journal entries that are out of balance, or invoices that were not converted because there was no link to an account distribution or check.

General Ledger Setup and Data Considerations

As with any financial accounting system, the implementation of ***The Financial Edge*** requires a great deal of forethought and consideration. In some cases, the decisions you make can have substantial and possibly irreversible consequences in the functionality and reporting abilities of the system.

This section covers the setup and data considerations you should make about reporting, funds, fund closing methods, fiscal years, transferring your data or starting with a new database, and setting up the program. Before installing, consider the following issues:

Account Structure

Before installing ***The Financial Edge***, you should understand the account structure and how it affects your accounting system.

First, all account segments are automatically defined as tables, which is why we refer to the chart of accounts as "parameter-driven". With this functionality, the system can quickly create accounts during the post process without intervention, assuming you enable the business rule to automatically create accounts. The table account segments also increase efficiency and consistency when users create accounts because the account and fund code default properties simplify the process.

We refer to the segment representing the account number as the "account code". The account code is required and defines each account as an asset, liability, net asset, revenue, expense, gift, transfer, gain, or loss. The gain and loss categories are not required. The categories must be in organized ranges and remain consistent across funds.

Fund Closing Method

In ***The Financial Edge***, each fund must close to a single net asset account, with the exception of funds that are defined to close by multiple accounts by segment. With this functionality, report and account activity filters are used to identify individual project, class, or transaction code fund balances. There is one single fund balance account in the fund, but the activity within the account can be filtered in a variety of ways.

In ***General Ledger***, you can set up each fund with its own closing method. You never need to close multiple accounts by project because you close to only one net asset account. You can close each fund by multiple characteristics, so you should consider whether it would benefit you to close by segment, class, project, and transaction code. Also consider if you want to require balancing when closing. Furthermore, you should consider whether you want these requirements on all accounts, income statement accounts, or none of your accounts.

Balances

Warning: Fund balancing by segment is not available in ***Accounting for Nonprofits***. You will not be able to use this functionality with the AFN 6.x subsidiary ledger ***Student Billing***. Once ***Student Billing*** is part of ***The Financial Edge*** you will be able to post and balance by account segment.

In ***General Ledger***, you can balance transactions by class, transaction codes, segments, and projects, if you have the optional module *Projects and Grants*. If you balance by any of these additional characters, you should ensure the accuracy of all balances before converting. For example, if you balance by project you should consider whether you need to track both balance sheet and income statement transactions by project. If you need to produce balance sheets by project, compare each project to each balance sheet account for accuracy and verify that each project is in balance by fund.

Reconciled Balances

Reconcile all subsidiary programs, such as ***Accounts Payable*** and ***Accounts Receivable***, to the appropriate accounts in ***General Ledger***. If you proceed to convert your data without ensuring that all balances in ***General Ledger*** are supported by the subsidiary programs, you may encounter inaccuracies and reconciliation problems. You should reconcile all cash and bank balances as well as liabilities and encumbrance balances to ensure they are accurate.

Transaction-Level Identifiers

In ***General Ledger***, you can group transactions by class, transaction code, and transaction attribute. You need to consider whether you want to group transactions and how you want to accomplish the grouping. You should also decide whether you need to budget and report on equity for those characteristics.

The following list provides a summary of each transaction-level identifier. We recommend taking some time to learn the unique characteristics of each identifier before implementing your plan.

Account Segment. Your organization may benefit from grouping transactions by segment if you want the grouping to be part of the account number and chart of accounts. You can also require balancing by segment, which is new to ***General Ledger***. A segment is a useful grouping tool if you need a visual, easily identifiable tag for grouping information such as a particular department or location. Segments combine to form accounts, which are part of the chart of accounts. With accounts, you can use budgets and retain equity, and you can track activity, media (such as scanned contracts), and notes.

Project. Your organization may benefit from grouping transactions by project if you want to track transactions regardless of account, but still want to retain all the benefits of using accounts. You can also retain equity and use budgets when you use projects. Projects work “behind the scenes” and are not a visual part of the chart of accounts. To use projects, you must have the optional module *Projects and Grants*.

Transaction Code. By using transaction codes, you can group transactions for reporting purposes and provide multiple perspectives on a single account. Transaction codes are available only if you have the optional module *Projects and Grants*.

Transaction codes are useful for grouping transactions if you want to retain equity but do not need to use budgets, and have no need for tracking activity, media, notes, or history of changes. With transaction codes, you can maintain net assets by and across fiscal years. You can also use transaction codes to track the finances of a special account over a long period of time.

For example, an organization has multiple purposes that need to be tracked and each purpose is funded by multiple federal and state grants. This organization could set up separate projects for each purpose and define a transaction code called “Grants”. They would also assign each grant a transaction code value. Because each project uses funds from various grants, the project transactions are attached to multiple grants. As transactions are entered, they can be distributed by purpose (Project) and grant (transaction code).

To use transaction codes, you must set them up initially by defining them in *Configuration* to be stored on transactions. You can select up to five transaction code types, enabling you to configure each fund for each transaction code. In each fund, you can set a transaction code as optional, required on income statement accounts, required on all accounts, required to balance, and whether to preserve details during closing. You can use the same transaction code for multiple funds.

Transaction Attribute. Your organization may benefit from using transaction attributes to group transactions if you do not need to use budgets, retain equity, or track media and notes. Attribute information does not close into fund balance accounts at year end.

Class. You can use class to group transactions for FAS 117 reporting. In ***General Ledger***, class is maintained on the transaction level and class descriptions are editable.

Beginning Balances

You have several options for the entry of a beginning account balance that depend on the type of reporting you need, the time in the fiscal year you are starting, and the amount of data entry you want to perform.

If you enter beginning balances, you can enter them one fund at a time. You can distribute beginning balances by class, transaction code, or project. Distributing balances by projects and transaction codes is available only if you have the optional module *Projects and Grants*. You can also enter beginning balances for balance sheet and income statement accounts. And you can create accounts “on the fly” as long as you have already defined each segment value for the accounts.

Once the validation process has been completed, ***General Ledger*** requires beginning balances be locked by fund before posting any transactions in the program. Please note that once beginning balances have been locked, there is no way to unlock them. For this reason, it is highly recommended you create a backup of the ***General Ledger*** database before locking beginning balances.

You have three options for entering beginning balances:

Enter current beginning balances. You can enter beginning balances for the current year. In this case, you would enter balances according to audited financial statements. Of course, if you use this method, you must rely on your previous program’s data or existing reports for comparative historic information.

Enter beginning balances from the past. A second option is to enter beginning balances in the program as of an audited balance sheet date and then post a journal entry for income statement activity for the appropriate fiscal years.

Post a journal entry for beginning balances in a prior fiscal year. In lieu of converting data or using the Create Beginning Balances facility, you can post a journal entry for beginning balances into ***The Financial Edge***. This process serves two purposes:

1. Locking beginning balances at zero allows posting of transactions to ***General Ledger***.
2. Entering historic data into the program for comparative reporting purposes.

Often organizations want comparative data by period but do not need detailed transactions from those periods. With this option you can lock beginning balances (as of the first day of the oldest fiscal year you want to maintain in the program) and post a journal entry for the period activity into the prior year or years for comparative purposes. This option requires the least amount of data entry.

Chart Templates

The chart of accounts is a fundamental part of your accounting system, providing stability, organization, and functionality. In *Visual Chart Organizer*, you create chart templates that determine the accounts to include in your financial statements and how the financial statements look. You can define an infinite number of templates in *Visual Chart Organizer*.

Visual Chart Organizer has two viewing modes: Design View and Account View. Use Design View to build your template and Account View to see what your report will look like using that template.

In Design View, header/total and detail lines define a chart of accounts. You determine the text, font format, and alignment for each header/total line. Use detail lines to include accounts under the header/total lines. You can define detail lines by account code ranges, account queries, or advanced filters.

Warning: We highly recommend you do not modify the default chart template. Leaving the default template as it is gives you an accurate balance sheet or income statement each time you use it.

In Account View, you can see the chart of accounts in the template as you designed. In *Reports*, the program uses this chart of accounts to construct financial statements. You can access account records from the Account View without closing the chart.

One default chart template is already created in *Visual Chart Organizer* so you can begin producing reports without having to create a template. The default template contains very little detail. Major category headers and totals sum all accounts within each category.

Trial Balances

Trial balances should be in balance by fund. In ***General Ledger***, all transactions are required to balance by fund, journal, fiscal year, and fiscal period.

For entries that require transactions in multiple funds, you are required to make some form of interfund entry. This entry may take the form of a transfer or a due to/due from account. The goal of these entries is to balance the entry in all of the funds in which transactions occur. You must understand how your current system and organization handle interfund entries and balancing of transactions between funds, so you can comply with this requirement.

Accounts Payable Setup and Data Considerations

Note: To help you to configure ***Accounts Payable*** for optimal performance, we have created a **Set up Accounts Payable** link in *Administration*. This link provides access to each step of the setup process and is visible only to users with Supervisor rights.

This section covers the ***Accounts Payable*** setup and data considerations you should make before using ***The Financial Edge***, including new cash account requirements and distribution functionality. Before installing, consider the following issues:

Bank Accounts

Before you can use an account in *Banks*, you must specify cash account information for the bank account. Cash accounts can be used in ***Accounts Payable***, ***Accounts Receivable***, ***Cash Manager***, ***Cash Receipts***, ***Student Billing***. When you set up the cash account, you specify that cash is recorded in a single fund or in multiple funds.

Define cash accounts in the grid on the Bank tab of an open bank account record. If you track cash in a single fund, cash is always recorded in the fund you select as the default cash account. If you track cash in multiple funds, cash account entries are determined by the funds in the distributions of the associated transactions.

When you add a bank account to the ***Accounts Payable*** database, you are creating a new bank account record. This record stores basic bank account information, ***Financial Edge*** programs using the account, and payment and adjustment information for a particular bank. Using information from the bank record, you can easily get a clear and accurate picture of a bank account without having to gather data from several programs or sources.

Cash Account Requirements

In ***The Financial Edge***, each cash account code can be used for only one bank. For example, if the cash account for Bank One is 01-10000, then no other bank can use account 10000 for the cash account.

Setting Up the Default Account Hierarchy in Configuration

With ***Accounts Payable***, you can define default accounts for your funds, which gives you flexibility in designating accounts for particular transactions. You set up the defaults on the Default Accounts page of *Configuration* once you install ***Accounts Payable***. You can set default accounts that automatically balance by fund and segment when you enter debit accounts, or you can specify an account hierarchy with a primary default account and several secondary default accounts to use in certain circumstances.

You can also establish default accounts payable and purchase order encumbrance accounts, accounts for applying discounts, and reclassification accounts for balancing by funds, classes, or projects. Used in conjunction with the security option to hide credit columns, the Default Accounts page gives administrators command and control of their bookkeeping system by specifying which accounts are used for specific transactions.

When you mark **Build the default Account by combining the Fund with these segment values** and enter an account number, ***Accounts Payable*** uses that account as the default for transactions in the same fund. For example, you designate account **-21000-00 as the default accounts payable summary account account, with ** representing any fund used in data entry and 00 representing the segment. You enter an invoice that debits account 01-52000-00. ***Accounts Payable*** inserts default credit account 01-21000-00 automatically. If you enter debit account 05-52000-30, then ***Accounts Payable*** inserts 05-21000-30 as the default credit account to ensure the transaction balances by fund and segment. The fund segment of the field automatically defaults to ** and cannot be edited.

When you mark **Unless a Fund has its own AP Summary Account defined in the table below, use this account as the default AP Summary Account, creating interfund entries as needed** and enter an account, that account becomes the default for all transactions unless you specify other default accounts to use when certain conditions are met. For example, you designate account 01-21000-00 as the default account, with 01 representing the fund and 00 representing the segment. In the grid, you enter secondary account 05-21000-50 to use with fund 05 transactions. If you enter an invoice that debits account 01-52000-00, the program inserts default credit account 01-21000-00 automatically. If you enter an invoice that debits account 03-52000-00, then ***Accounts Payable*** again enters default account 01-21000-00 and uses an interfund entry to balance the funds. However, if your invoice debits an account in fund 05, such as 05-52150-30, the program inserts the secondary account code, and the segment changes to balance the transaction. As a result, ***Accounts Payable*** inserts default credit account 05-21000-30.

With Reclassification accounts, you enter a single default account and the program uses it to ensure that debit and credit entries balance by fund, class, project, or transaction code. Reclassification accounts are used for credit memo applications.

Fixed Assets Setup and Data Considerations

Note: To help you to configure ***Fixed Assets*** for optimal performance, we have created a **Set up Fixed Assets** link in *Administration*. This link provides access to each step of the setup process and is visible only to users with Supervisor rights.

This section covers the ***Fixed Assets*** setup and data considerations you should make before using ***The Financial Edge***, including defining depreciation years, depreciation methods, and asset classes.

Depreciation Years

You should define past and present depreciation years during the initial ***Fixed Assets*** setup process, but you can also add unlimited depreciation years later, as long as you assign each depreciation year a unique name or ID. When you define a depreciation year, you can divide it into a maximum of 13 periods you use to track depreciation. When you create a fixed asset transaction, the transaction date determines the depreciation year in which the entry appears.

By defining future depreciation years, you can plan budgets and create projected financial reports. Using past depreciation years, you can enter historic information to include in reports that compare one year against another.

Depreciation Methods

When setting up ***Fixed Assets***, you should consider what depreciation methods to use when creating new asset records, transactions, and asset classes. When you select a depreciation method, the fields and possible field entries that appear vary depending on the method you select. The *Configuration Guide for Fixed Assets* contains an appendix with overviews of ***Fixed Assets*** depreciation methods and the available field entries for each. Using depreciation method business rules, the program administrator can hide a depreciation method to prevent its use.

If you plan to use IRS depreciation methods, you should refer to IRS Publication 946 – How to Depreciate Property, which is available online at www.IRS.gov, or seek advice from an accounting professional.

Asset Classes

You should consider setting up asset classes to make data entry easier. There are several predefined classes loaded in ***Fixed Assets*** with predefined recovery periods. When defining asset classes, you have the opportunity to define a default depreciation method, default accumulated depreciation account, and default depreciation expense distribution for the class. From the Asset Classes tab in *Configuration*, you can create, open, edit, or delete an asset class.

Accounts Receivable Setup and Data Considerations

Note: To help you to configure ***Accounts Receivable*** for optimal performance, we have created a **Set up Accounts Receivable** link in *Administration*. This link provides access to each step of the setup process and is visible only to users with Supervisor rights.

This section covers the ***Accounts Receivable*** setup and data considerations you should make before using ***The Financial Edge***.

Define Aging Information. You can define a minimum of one and a maximum of five sequential periods for aging transactions based on either the due date (date payment is due on the transaction) or the transaction date (date the transaction was added).

When outlining your periods, they must be consecutive with no gaps between dates. Aging periods must be sequential and they cannot overlap. The start value for period one is always zero. The system calculates the start values for sequential periods by adding one to the end value of the previous aging period. For example, if period one is 0 - 30 days, then period two automatically starts at day 31.

Accounts Receivable contains four default periods, but you can change these to suit your organization's needs. To change the start date of one period, you must first change the end date of the prior period. ***Accounts Receivable*** automatically starts the next period on the following day.

Define payment terms. You can define payment terms for invoices, so you can offer your clients discounts if they make early payments. For example, if you offer a 3/5 net 30 discount that gives clients a 3% discount if they pay within 5 days, you can easily track payments to ensure the client receives a discount.

Whether to use a suspense account? By setting ***Accounts Receivable*** business rules on the General page you can streamline the receivables process by designating a single AR summary account while never posting applications, which means a suspense account is not needed. You can also set a standard net asset class and automate new credit and payment applications.

We strongly recommend that you read the *Concepts Guide for Accounts Receivable* before installing. The *Concepts Guide for Accounts Receivable* provides detailed information about the program, including important concepts and setup considerations. By reading it before installing, you will gain a better understanding of the preparation requirements.

Cash Receipts Setup and Data Considerations

To help you to configure ***Cash Receipts*** for optimal performance, we have created a **Set up Cash Receipts** link in *Administration*. This link provides access to each step of the setup process and is visible only to users with Supervisor rights.

Student Billing Setup and Data Considerations

Once you have installed the program, you can access the **Set up Student Billing** link in *Administration* to help you to configure ***Student Billing***. This link provides access to each step of the setup process and is visible only to users with Supervisor rights.

School Store Manager Considerations

If you are currently on or upgrading to *SQL Server 2005*, you will need to activate ad hoc remote querying once you install *School Store Manager*. Your database administrator needs to activate ad hoc remote querying before you access *School Store Manager*. If you attempt to use *School Store Manager* before activating ad hoc remote querying, you will receive an error message. For more information about activating ad hoc remote querying, see the *Financial Edge Update Guide*.

Integrating with The Raiser’s Edge

To integrate ***The Financial Edge 7.86*** with ***The Raiser’s Edge***, you must be on ***Raiser’s Edge*** version 7.92 or higher. Please note you must also be on the latest ***Raiser’s Edge*** patch before integrating the systems.

To use integration, both programs must be installed on the same workstation so they can communicate in the background, but you do not have to be logged into both. We recommend you dedicate a workstation for the integration process of automatically synchronizing data. Visit www.blackbaud.com for the latest system requirements.

Requesting The Financial Edge

To request having the ***The Financial Edge*** shipped to you, complete the following steps:

- ☐ Prepare your installation plan based on the Four Essential Keys.
- ☐ Review the plan with your Blackbaud account representative.
- ☐ Complete the ***Financial Edge*** Software Request Form. You can receive this from your account representative or our website at www.blackbaud.com.
- ☐ Obtain signatures from your Director, primary user, and the IT person on the form. This signed form is required to generate the shipment.
- ☐ Fax the Software Request Form to your account representative at 1-843-216-6111.

With your shipment, you receive a printed copy of the *Installation Guide*.

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