

SERENIC SOFTWARE CASE STUDY

SERENIC NAVIGATOR GIVES ARC OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY FLEXIBILITY FOR CONTINUED GROWTH

Customer Profile

The Arc of Middlesex County, N.J., provides more than 400 people with developmental and other disabilities and their families with support and a range of services that encourage personal growth and quality of life through empowerment and choice.

Business Situation

The Arc was using an obsolete system for its accounting. As a contractor for the State of New Jersey, it needed to update its financial management capabilities with a system that met its specific tracking requirements.

Solution

The Arc of Middlesex County implemented Serenic Navigator for Microsoft Dynamics NAV in 2006.

Benefits

- Serenic Navigator gives The Arc's 20 users more control with improved access to information and reports in a more usable format.
- The system has enabled paperless accounting, while offering multiple choices and flexibility for customization, such as setting month-by-month variables in budgets.
- Information is centralized and accessible from remote locations.
- Microsoft integration provides peace of mind.

"We can view fundraising and grants separately and track our service vehicles to a level that lets us know what each one is costing us in gas and maintenance. Overall, Serenic Navigator has improved our organization's financial management and made reporting to my board much more accurate." – RICHARD SHERIDAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ARC OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY

The Arc of Middlesex County is one of 20 chapters that make up the Arc of New Jersey – a statewide, private, nonprofit advocacy organization incorporated in 1949 by a group of parents who had a vision of building a better quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

The North Brunswick, N.J.-based Arc of Middlesex County is one of the oldest and most respected organizations working on behalf of people with disabilities. Its mission is to provide support and services which encourage personal growth and quality of life through empowerment and choice. The organization's vision is that by 2012, it will be the agency of choice – providing comprehensive quality of life support and services for a culturally diverse population of people with developmental and other disabilities and their families.

The majority of the Arc's funding for its \$9.5 million annual budget comes from the state under a contractual agreement for the services it provides. With 230 employees, the Arc has maintained a stable funding and administrative structure that has allowed the agency to grow and meet the changing needs of individuals and their families through these services:

- **Residential Services** – housing for individuals in its 13 group homes and supervised apartments
- **Family Support Services** – a network of programs that includes respite, advocacy, outreach and recreation
- **Vocational Services** – seven career centers provide training and job opportunities
- **Quality and Integrity** – individual case management
- **Family Outreach** – knowledge sharing with families and professionals



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RICHARD SHERIDAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SCENARIO

Among its core values, the Arc lists ensuring business is conducted with integrity and accountability and that its organization reflects quality and excellence in all of its work. Monitored by its board of directors, the state and the families it serves, the Arc depends heavily on its accounting systems to provide an accurate, day-to-day picture of its financial status.

For more than 20 years the Arc operated on an AIM financial system that was customized for its needs. In 2006, after the manufacturer discontinued the product, the Arc evaluated three alternative systems, including Serenic Navigator, Sage MIP Fund Accounting and Kintera FundWare.

“Our old system became obsolete, so there was no support and it was time to update our capabilities,” said Richard Sheridan, executive director, Arc of Middlesex County, who chose Serenic Navigator to handle its critical business issues: financial reporting, budgeting and expense/approval processing. Sheridan and other Arc leaders felt Serenic Navigator had the greatest potential to grow as the organization developed.

“Serenic Navigator has wonderful backing, so we knew it would give us the flexibility to grow,” Sheridan said. “Since it’s based on Microsoft technology, we have confidence it will be around for the next 20 years as we continue to build our organization.”

BENEFITS

Since going live with Serenic Navigator, the Arc has seen improvement in the delivery of its numerous services thanks to the software system’s support. “Personally, I love it,” Sheridan said, listing these positive results:

- **Financial Reporting.** The Arc’s previous system allowed only a general ledger schema to accomplish reporting. Serenic Navigator uses funds and dimensions to establish reporting structures that enable Arc to greatly improve reporting capabilities as seen on the following tables:

Fund No.	Name	Fund Class Code
01	General Fund	UNRESTR
02	DDD Fund	UNRESTR
03	Pilot Program / Trust	TEMP



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Dimension Code	Description
PROGRAM	Used as a department/business unit code
GRANT	Identifies the contract associated with the revenue or expense
VEHICLE	Identifies the vehicle number when appropriate
FUNDRAISING	Identifies the fundraising campaign when appropriate
COST OF CARE	Identifies the client/consumer when appropriate

“I love having Navigator’s dimension structure, which gives us the ability to track 27 different cost structures, as well as the individuals we serve and the money that they receive,” Sheridan said. “We can view fundraising and grants separately and track our service vehicles to a level that lets us know what each one is costing us in gas and maintenance. Overall, Serenic Navigator has improved our organization’s financial management and made reporting to my board much more accurate.”

- **Budgeting.** The Arc’s previous system had very limited budgeting capability. Because each program’s expenditures are estimated and then become contracted with the State of New Jersey, budgeting, modification and forecasting are critical to the Arc. Serenic implemented the ability to budget by program, allow for periodic modification and vastly improved the ability to forecast actual-to-budget variances. These changes have greatly improved the Arc’s ability to forecast period end performance and to adjust expenditure practices in areas that provide advantages to the organization.
- **Expense/Approval Processing.** Workflow with approvals automated a previously manual process and changed the way the Arc thinks about expenditures. Workflow requires the approval of an expenditure prior to the expense being incurred. This allows Arc’s managers and directors real-time veto capability over expenses. Additionally, the finance department simply processes approved expenditures instead of seeking authorization (the old way) on expenditures after the expense was incurred. “It’s extremely helpful that I can track a question straight back to the invoice and see who approved the expense right from my desktop,” Sheridan said. “Information is centralized, but users can access it remotely.”
- **Flexibility for the Future.** “There is so much potential, and we’ve only begun to scratch the surface in terms of what Serenic Navigator can do,” Sheridan said. “As we phase-in features, we’d like to go paperless in human resources like we’ve done in accounts payable and receivable – giving top management the ability to obtain information quickly.” The Arc also plans to complete its implementation of Serenic DonorVision to integrate fundraising management, and it hopes to be able to install Serenic CommunityCare in the near future as a quality assurance tool to help track services provided against each individual’s funding source approvals and allocations.

For more information

For more information about Serenic Software products and services, call 877-737-3642, or visit the Web site at: www.serenic.com.

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