

Success Story

Growing nonprofit requires powerful managerial reporting

PAWS Chicago

“Gaining both efficiency and real-time, trusted financial visibility through Sage Intacct has been an eyeopening experience for our team. We’re all now able to focus on more value-added projects vs. just churning through month-end and tedious payables. And since we know what’s behind our numbers, we can offer more hands-on financial guidance to individual programs and better demonstrate the value we’re delivering to the broader community.”

Alisa Brill
CFO, PAWS Chicago



Company overview

Founded in 1997, PAWS Chicago is a nonprofit with a mission of building “no kill” communities – starting with Chicago – that respect and value the life of every cat and dog. The organization is working to set higher standards in the way animals are treated, and end the overpopulation of homeless animals through solutions, practices and education.

Executive summary

Previous software:

- QuickBooks

Results with Sage Intacct

- Improved decision-making through program and departmental-level visibility.
- Increased financial process efficiency upwards of 40%.
- Software paid for itself in <3 months.

Sage

Company
PAWS Chicago

Location
Illinois, US

Industry
Nonprofit

Sage Products
Sage Intacct

PAWS[®]
CHICAGO
PETS ARE WORTH SAVING



PAWS Chicago streamlined workflows within Sage Intacct.

Growing nonprofit requires powerful managerial reporting

PAWS Chicago is a 20-year-old nonprofit focused on making Chicago a “no kill” community for dogs and cats. In support of this mission, the organization adopts out over 5,000 animals annually, but is much more than a rescue shelter. Its community outreach and prevention programs include a mobile spay and neuter clinic, a door-to-door outreach team, pet food bank and cat colony caretakers to keep animals from entering the pound. PAWS Chicago performs over 17,000 spay and neuter surgeries each year, which it subsidizes in low income areas with limited veterinary access. As the \$11 million organization has grown, its management team needed a better way to track separate financials for all of these programs, while still producing the standard nonprofit tax reports.

“We reached a point as an organization where our chart of accounts was getting overly complex, and it was nearly impossible to prepare our Form 990 efficiently, let alone any type of managerial reporting,” said Alisa Brill, CFO at PAWS Chicago. “We knew we were too big to still be on QuickBooks and were drawn to Sage Intacct by its approach to capturing a variety of operational dimensions that would allow us to slice and dice data at the specific program, department, or vendor-level. We chose Sage Intacct over NetSuite because it perfectly fit the way we wanted to manage our organization,” said Alisa.

Streamlined payables improves efficiency by 40%

Working with consulting partner Porte Brown, PAWS Chicago eliminated separate purchasing, bill pay, and time and expense systems, and streamlined these workflows within Sage Intacct. By using the robust modules in the cloud-based financial management solution, the team avoids double-entry between systems and enjoys improved financial controls. The PAWS Chicago finance team saves around two full days in the monthly close process and another day on cash reconciliations because all of their workflows are efficient and data can be uploaded directly into Sage Intacct.

“Our lean three and a half person team has greatly increased overall productivity with Sage Intacct, and we’ll be able to scale easily without adding more headcount. In particular, our payables process is at least 40% more efficient now that we’ve integrated everything in one central financial management hub,” shared Alisa. “The team at Porte Brown has been amazing. They understand our needs, help adapt Sage Intacct to our organization, and always find a way to figure out anything we need to know,” said Alisa.

Porte Brown also helped PAWS Chicago restructure its complex chart of accounts to fully leverage Sage Intacct’s multi-dimensional general ledger. The team now tags individual transactions with specific programs, departments, employees, vendors, or locations. By capturing this organizational context, PAWS Chicago can analyze real-time performance by various drivers and filter, group, and organize financial data without having to manipulate data in Excel



Deep financial insight advances “no kill” mission

The Porte Brown team helped PAWS Chicago build custom reports and dashboards, including a CEO dashboard with revenue by source, expenses by department, outstanding POs for approval, and more. With Sage Intacct, the organization can now report by department, by program, and by fund type (e.g. restricted grants) to see where money is going and showcase the achievements PAWS Chicago has made towards its mission. With such clear reporting, monthly board meetings have gotten much shorter, because there are fewer questions and the board’s confidence has increased.

PAWS Chicago uses Sage Intacct to track both financial and operational metrics related to various programs – including key performance indicators like the number of spay and neuter surgeries performed each month, expenses for its medical facility expansion project, pet food bank distributions, outside medical services, headcount, and the total number of cats and dogs serviced. “This new insight means that we can effortlessly report more detailed, accurate information back to our donors,” noted Alisa. “And with greater transparency into things like accurate surgical costs and specific financial statements for self-funded programs, we can finally apply for more outside grants to support these efforts,” said Alisa.

Financial visibility improves day-to-day operations as well, helping managers make more informed decisions about when to bring on more headcount, or compare medical and lab vendor costs and explore alternatives when needed. Alisa concluded, “Before, everyone was in the dark, but with Sage Intacct it’s a whole new world – department managers can see precisely how they are doing with the click of a button and make adjustments before it’s too late. As a result, people are controlling their costs proactively, the organization’s overall expenses are down, we’re sticking to our budget, and our spend is under control.”

