



CASE STUDY: PEOPLE'S ACTION INSTITUTE

RSM has been wonderful and patient. I have experience with many other implementations, and we did not get anywhere close to the kind of support that we've gotten from this Workday Adaptive Planning implementation with RSM.

HAZZIE REAVES,
director of budgets and
grants administration,
People's Action Institute

WORKDAY ADAPTIVE PLANNING TRANSFORMS NONPROFIT'S BUDGETING AND FORECASTING

People's Action Institute gains insight and streamlines key finance processes

Nonprofit organizations have fundamentally different financial and budget information needs than their for-profit counterparts. But many nonprofits can struggle with developing and implementing processes to gather data and gain the necessary insights for effective budgeting, reporting and projections.

People's Action Institute is a nonprofit organization founded in 2016 with the merger of powerful national organizations. The organization focuses on creating positive change in society, supporting efforts ranging from finance reform to community reinvestment.

But in conjunction with hiring a new chief financial officer, People's Action conducted an infrastructure review that signaled the need for several modifications within the budgeting and financial reporting process. For example, the budget process was controlled by operations instead of finance. As in many nonprofit organizations, budgeting and forecasting were largely created and maintained manually within spreadsheets, limiting tracking capabilities and creating potential challenges with accuracy and visibility.

Further, People's Action is almost 100% grant funded, and grants were tracked from an actuals perspective, without an effective process for predicting grant revenue. In addition, the organization wanted to budget for detailed travel and meeting expenses as well as real-time actuals moving forward to have a better understanding of their financial position throughout the year.

Warren Corprew, People's Action's incoming chief financial officer, quickly recognized the need to revamp the existing financial reporting, budgeting and forecasting structure. "I knew there were some systemic changes that needed to be made," he says.

The finance function evolves

People's Action is a complex, multi-entire organization, with a 501(c)(3) organization, a 501(c)(4) organization and a political action committee. Corprew worked with RSM US LLP on a successful Workday Adaptive Planning implementation at a previous organization and knew that the enterprise performance management solution would be a good fit for People's Action's reporting, budgeting and forecasting needs.

From the start, RSM focused on an implementation that would serve the nonprofit's specific needs. With Workday Adaptive Planning, the RSM team established budgeting and forecasting processes with the required integration to move People's Action's costs between entities and view consolidated financials and other necessary data. Managers and designated budget managers can now own and input data and report on it themselves. People closest to the work can now confidently manage and share key data.

"We know that a new system alone will not solve all of our client's problems. However, with our industry perspective, we can use technology to drive new processes designed to deliver meaningful data to decision makers."

– Megan Riley,
RSM consulting director

When Corprew joined People's Action, he had a staff of three, but he has since reshaped the finance organization, adding a director of budgets and grants administration and introducing a new forecasting process, with the annual budget along with forecasts each quarter. The organization's business model is extremely variable, and previously when grant money came in, the decision about where to direct it was not always straightforward. With Workday Adaptive Planning, financial metrics are more detailed and key performance indicators are clearly defined.

"Now, with the new position and with Workday Adaptive Planning, we can not only collect all of the information we need but also plan before we budget," says Corprew. "For example, if we asked a funder for \$1 million and they gave us \$2 million, we know what that will look like in the arc of the plan and how we will move the organization forward across entities and across time in terms of accomplishing financial goals."

Ongoing support and optimization

Following the Workday Adaptive Planning implementation, RSM has continued to provide ongoing enhancements and support for the solution. Moving forward, Corprew has plans to enhance the functionality of Workday Adaptive Planning within the organization, including connecting Workday Adaptive Planning to other technology solutions, such as Salesforce and Intacct.

People's Action has a federated model, with a national organization and 40 affiliates in 20 different states. All of those affiliates are unique, with varying sizes and their own budgeting software. The future of connectivity with Workday Adaptive Planning and those affiliates will be a key focus moving forward.

"The biggest question for the organization is the network, and the role that Workday Adaptive Planning will play, which is evolving," says Corprew. "There is a value add in terms of education, supporting their development as organizations and having tighter integration. The budgeting and planning is one aspect, but obviously the platform has a lot of flexibility, so it can do many other things. For example, we may further lean into Workday Adaptive Planning to track programming and any programming metrics."

A clear path forward

With Workday Adaptive Planning, People's Action has an easier path to more effective budgeting, forecasting and financial reporting. The complex structure of entities and affiliates now has more clarity and integration, and the organization can now have shared financial conversations from multiple perspectives with a single source of truth. With a more efficient solution in place, People's Action can confidently direct funding and resources to continue their movement and develop leaders and organizers.

"People's Action, and particularly the finance team that we've been working with, feels very passionately about their mission and wants to continue to do their part to make the world a better place," says Kathleen Buel, an RSM consulting manager. "The funds and the grants that they receive go toward their mission, and having a tool like Workday Adaptive Planning really helps them identify and budget for costs, anticipate the revenue that they will bring in and increase transparency into their data. The platform allows them to focus on their mission versus having to do a lot of manual work in spreadsheets or not knowing the state of where things are."

"Where we are now is light-years from where we were just a few years ago," says Corprew. "That's clear as day to everyone in the organization."

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