

# CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



Alternative Community Training

## Alternative Community Training, Inc. (ACT)



INDUSTRY  
Health care



LOCATION  
Columbia, Missouri



FEATURED SOLUTION  
Abila MIP Fund Accounting™

### CHALLENGE

After a complete financial staff turnover, knowledge of the legacy accounting system was lost. The new staff learned that the existing accounting software simply didn't support the organization's needs.

### SOLUTION

Abila Business Partner, 1st Choice Advisors, helped ACT implement MIP Fund Accounting™ to establish sound financial control.

### BENEFITS

Abila MIP™ has enabled the financial staff of ACT to effectively and efficiently manage its financial data. The integrated system delivers reports at the touch of a button, providing management with key decision-making information.

## ACT Acts on Data with Abila MIP Fund Accounting™

Alternative Community Training, Inc. (ACT) provides an array of programs and services throughout Mid-Missouri to approximately 400 individuals with disabilities annually, in the areas of employment, residential services, day programs and in-home services. Founded in 1975, ACT has evolved over the years as an established, nationally-accredited organization effectively meeting the needs of persons with disabilities and their families. With approximately 285 employees, ACT's mission is to provide opportunities to individuals with disabilities as participating members of the community.

ACT provides both in-home and community-based living assistance designed to help guide individuals in acquiring life skills necessary for independent living and achieving maximum independence. ACT also offers a Day Program, providing daily activities to address individual goals in areas such as socialization, safety, communication, recreation and leisure skills, self-help, personal hygiene, and fitness. And lastly, ACT Career Services works with jobseekers to achieve their employment goals, while assisting a large array of local employers with their recruitment and retention needs.

Funding for the various programs offered by ACT comes from government entities, donations, as well as grants. Strict guidelines ensue with Medicaid funds, adding a layer of complexity to their already complicated nonprofit financial tracking and reporting process.

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BUSINESS PARTNER  
SELECT ADVISOR

## Staff Turnover Sends ACT Looking for Alternatives

During early 2015, ACT lost its Director of Financial Operations, who had been in the role for ten years. The replacement turned out to be interim, spending only six months at ACT before leaving. During that same time period, ACT lost the other financial staff members. Melody Troesser stepped in as the Director of Financial Operations in December of 2015 and began to sort through the financial disarray.

"It was the perfect storm," states Troesser. "There was minimal in-house knowledge of the existing accounting system. The legacy software was designed for a \$1 million organization, yet ACT had grown to a \$7 million budget. At the same time, ACT had a for-profit recycling program that was in the midst of closing down. The financials were more than four months behind. We had no solid financial data to develop a budget for the coming year. Essentially, we were flying blind."

New financial team members were learning the software and discovering that it wasn't working to meet the needs of the organization. Manual Excel spreadsheets were extensively used and multiple software programs were used to support the accounting records. Software coding tables had been changed with no audit trail as to when or why they changed. "We were on the phone with customer support all the time and getting no help," says Troesser. "Those were some painful days! Staff time out for training wasn't even an option, since we'd be even further behind. The lack of controls in the legacy software was scary." Finally, an end-of-year audit cited a number of issues that had to be addressed and recommended changes to the Board of Directors.



**"My staff members tell me, 'I love MIP!'"**

**- Melody Troesser  
Director of Financial Operations**

ACT began searching for a nonprofit accounting solution, and soon thereafter interviewed 1st Choice Advisors, which offered the Abila MIP Fund Accounting™ solution. Troesser had experience working with 1st Choice Advisors in a prior position and was impressed with Abila MIP™, which could be implemented quickly. "Our board approved the purchase in April 2016, and we immediately began implementation. Joe Wallach of 1st Choice Advisors managed the implementation. He was very patient and had a keen ability to access each user's abilities and suggest when more training was needed," explains Troesser. "We were up and running by July 1, 2016."

## Building on Success

"In our type of business, it is the monitoring and tracking that is so crucial. MIP has that capability built in. We can easily receive, track, and release funds for constituent services, since all data is integrated into the system. More importantly, internal controls can be set up to help prevent fraudulent activity – this capability did not exist with our previous system. We expect the Board members and auditors will commend our progress after our first fiscal year using MIP."

"We're able to provide financial information so much faster for our program directors. I can take my laptop into meetings and answer financial questions on the spot," continues Troesser. "With the old system, monthly financial reporting covered data that was four months old. Now we have up-to-date financials completed by the 18th day of the following month – this is an 85 percent improvement on our delivery time! Reports are generated at the touch of a button, and supporting documents are quick to find. If we have a question about how to do something in MIP, the CHAT feature provides instant answers. My staff members tell me, 'I love MIP!'"

ACT has plans for additional Accounts Receivable training scheduled in the coming months. They are also considering further expansion of the system by automating Payroll and Human Resources. "We need to look into these modules now," concludes Troesser, "in case funding is possible in our next budget year."

## About 1st Choice Advisors

At 1st Choice Advisors, we're committed to helping you run your organization more efficiently so you can spend more time focusing on your mission. Your experience with our staff will be a pleasant change from other consulting engagements. We offer a range of nonprofit software solutions featuring Abila products and integrated third-party solutions. We also offer implementation, training, and consulting services for these products. Our team has extensive experience providing financial management tools to the nonprofit and government sectors, thus allowing our clients to meet accountability and regulatory standards while enhancing their operational efficiency. Your needs are our priority!

## About Abila

Abila is the leading provider of software and services to associations and nonprofit organizations that help them improve decision making, execute with greater precision, increase engagement, and generate more revenue. Abila combines decades of industry insight with technology know-how to serve nearly 8,000 clients across North America. For more information, please visit [abila.com](http://abila.com). To subscribe to our blog, visit Forward Together at [blog.abila.com](http://blog.abila.com).

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[www.1stchoiceadvisors.com](http://www.1stchoiceadvisors.com)  
[info@1stchoiceadvisors.com](mailto:info@1stchoiceadvisors.com)  
888-441-5830

Offices in Atlanta, Chicago, St. Louis, San Juan, Tampa Bay and Traverse City.

