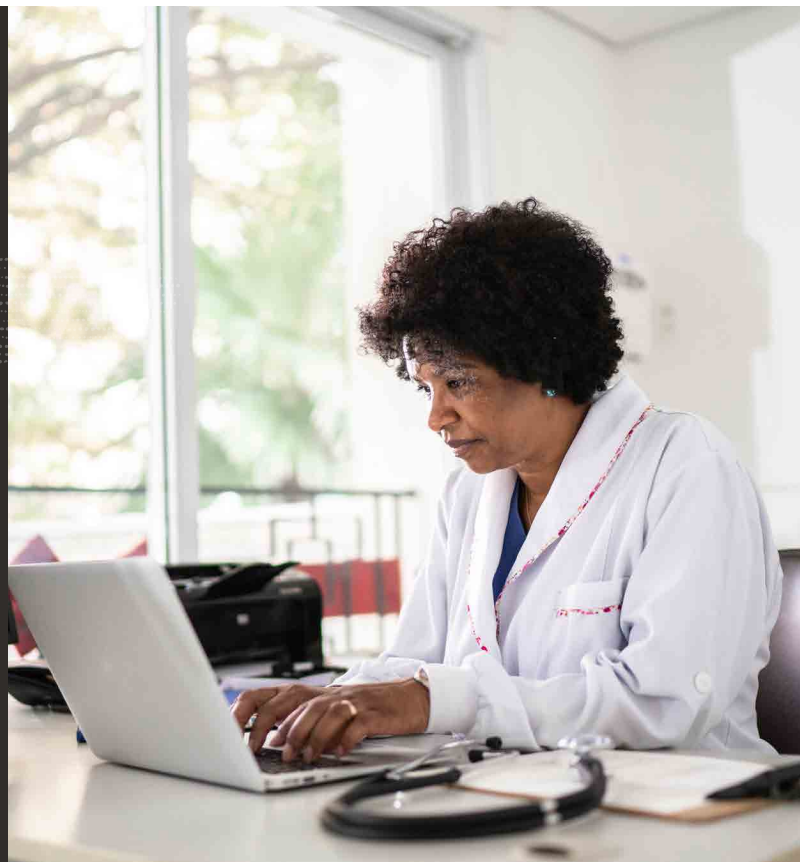




PyanGo & The Kessler Foundation

Kessler Foundation Simplifies Grants Accounting and Management With PyanGo



The Kessler Foundation is an American organization dedicated to creating positive change for people with disabilities. It does this in two ways. First, foundation scientists research ways to improve the quality of life for people with various disabilities and investigate issues related to disability and employment. Second, fund grants for other organizations and programs are dedicated to improving employment opportunities and quality of life for people with disabilities.

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Challenge

The Kessler Foundation’s nature—that it both receives and provides grants—means that its accounting needs are relatively complex. For the last twelve years, they’ve been using accounting software that can’t meet all their needs. Items like financial reports and bank records have to be dealt with outside the primary business software, making many processes more complicated than necessary.

Solution

Discovering NetSuite was the solution to many of their problems. Sharon Cross, Vice President of Finance at the Kessler Foundation, says that it was clear that it would be much easier to use than the system they were currently operating from the first NetSuite demos they saw. “It’s much easier to access information through NetSuite; it’s more transparent. We liked that we could do bank reconciliations right within the accounting software, as well as creating financial and other statements ad hoc.”

Matthew Hudson, a Senior Grants Accountant at the Kessler Foundation, was impressed with the user interface, “It’s very, very easy for even non-accountants to figure their way through this

software. That’s beneficial for us because we have a lot of folks at our institution that are not accountants, but we want them to have access to this information.”

So NetSuite was the perfect solution for many of their accounting needs. But as an institution that receives and funds grants, they needed a solution that offered grant accounting functionality beyond what NetSuite alone could provide. That’s when they discovered PyanGo.

“When we saw the capabilities of PyanGo, we jumped at the opportunity to make the switch,” says Cross. “We especially loved the grant opportunity module, as that’s something that we’ve been doing outside of our accounting software. We loved that functionality and the grant management module, and it processed some of the journal entries that we have to do regularly. PyanGo has made so much of our work an easy, automated process.”

So when the institution implemented NetSuite, it also chose to use the grant opportunity and grant management modules from PyanGo’s Built for NetSuite advanced financial management solution.

“Journal entries that could have taken me half a day to do—between exporting and reviewing data—now take as little as five or ten minutes. It’s a huge time saver.”

Matthew Hudson, Senior Grants Accountant, Kessler Foundation

Results

The financial and accounting personnel at the Kessler Foundation have quickly begun seeing results from their implementation of PyanGo. Much of the improvement they’ve seen has been in time spent doing financial and accounting tasks. Matthew Weiner, an Administrator at the Kessler Foundation, says, “PyanGo is making it so much easier to manage grants and opportunities; it’s a big time saver. It’s providing me the opportunity to manage things in a much more efficient way, which is very important for me.” This is important, he explains, because the Kessler Foundation is trying to fulfill its important mission with a small staff. “We don’t have a large staff,” he says. “We manage very well, but we don’t have a large staff. We’re busy, and anything that helps us be more efficient is going to be positive and beneficial.”

Grant Opportunities and Management

The grant opportunity and grant management modules of PyanGo have been very beneficial for the organization. Speaking of the grant opportunity functionality, Weiner explains, “In the past, we expected the scientists to inform our organization’s scientific leadership about grant opportunities. That process was kind of spotty, whether or not they’d inform us when they would do it. Even though the scientists were always

communicating with me about it, they always seemed to be delaying getting the scientific leadership’s approval at the initial stage.”

PyanGo helps streamline this process, “PyanGo gives me that information from the scientists rather quickly. It provides us the ability to record and easily access the submissions and opportunities coming through; we have a lot to do on an annual basis. I get the information from the scientists, and then I take care of the process from that point forward. The internal approval is electronic and very quick; this way, we’re not waiting around for an approval that we must have to start the process.”

And for the grants they’ve already received, PyanGo “will definitely help us going forward managing the grants,” says Cross. “Especially making sure that we’re staying within budget on a grant. The way that we’ve been doing it involves more looking at past data than looking at real-time data. Any time we had to make changes on a grant, we’d have to export information into Excel and then update the Excel report to see what changes have happened to the grant and the funding availability in those grants. Now with NetSuite and PyanGo, we’re able to go in and see, in real time, any changes and how they affect the grant.”

“All of the people that need access to the information can get to it easily. We also don’t have to worry about losing files or wondering where we put them. It’s one-stop shopping, so to speak.”

Matthew Weiner, Administrator, Kessler Foundation

And the milestones and reminders available in the PyanGo system will also be invaluable when it comes to the grants. Weiner explains, “When our scientists know they need to do something, they’re relatively quick, but as with all people, reminders are beneficial; people forget when things are due. If you don’t mark due dates on a calendar—especially if they’re far in the future—you forget about it. So I’m excited about that aspect of PyanGo, all of that information is in the system, so it reminds people—myself, finance, everyone involved who needs to know—about milestones and due dates. I think it will make us more efficient in the long haul.”

Hudson appreciates the time-saving abilities of PyanGo’s grant management tool, which has “an ability to select certain account codes to prevent generating subsequent transactions or unfavorable transactions. From my standpoint, I don’t need to go in after the fact to correct these. With PyanGo, I can be more proactive in our control environment, and stop mistakes from happening, which ultimately saves me time.”

He’s also seen time savings when it comes to calculating journal entries, “In our old system, every month I’d have to take data from our account software and put it into a spreadsheet. Since this process was done manually, there was always the possibility of making mistakes on

certain formulas and figures. Once done, the data would go back into the system as an imported journal entry, which I’d review for accuracy and completeness.”

“In the new process using PyanGo, I can set up criteria in grant records using PyanGo Grants Management. As long as I set up those criteria correctly, I simply run the process scripted for us by the PyanGo team, and it turns out completely accurate.”

Sector Reporting

The Kessler Foundation personnel are also very excited about the possibility of using PyanGo for sector reporting. “For a long time, we’ve desired an ability to report our research better in the organization,” says Weiner. “We have set centers that do specific research in certain areas. In those research centers, there’s a lot of detail. We have people doing various research that covers the gamut, for instance, spinal cord injuries. We want to capture all of these details of research—the finer points. There’s a spot in the opportunities receptor in PyanGo that’s perfect for all this very detailed information about what lines of research our scientists are pursuing and about getting awards. This means that when we are pursuing new awards, or we want to talk about a new direction, we can go in with our current research and confidently share that information.”

Before, Weiner says, it would have been complicated to pull out that information; now, they have a place to store and quickly access all of the research information in real time. “That’s an important step to show what we’re actually doing in the organization on a very detailed level.” Cross agrees, “That’s not something we were ever able to do with our legacy system. I’m looking forward to using that going forward.”

Information Access

The Kessler Foundation team agrees that easy access to critical information and easy generation of reports is one of the main benefits of using NetSuite and PyanGo. “One of my favorite parts of this new solution is the ability to have all of the granting information—and there is an immense amount of it—in one place,” says Weiner.

Cross also likes being able to access what our grant pipeline looks like more readily, as managing pipeline is one of the organization’s essential tasks. On the grant-making side, I appreciate the ease of generating budget-to-actual reports that provide transparency with real-time information to our scientists.”

This results in a lot of time savings for the organization. “I’m frequently asked questions about an account or a project,” says Weiner. “Trying to look up that information, now I can get to it easily... the PyanGo solution is a drastic time saver for what I have to do. It frees me up to do other things because I’m not wasting time looking for information. The system always allows me to find what I’m looking for easily.”



Company Snapshot

Company: Kessler Foundation
Location: East Hanover, New Jersey
Industry: Nonprofit



Partner Name: PyanGo
Location: Austin, Texas

