

Checklist

Choosing Your Nonprofit Financial Management System: A Buyer's Checklist



Sage

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The #1 choice for nonprofits

The right financial system to support your mission

The choice of a modern accounting system to support the delivery of your nonprofit mission is a big one. It can make or break your nonprofit's ability to respond strategically to challenges.

In addition to meeting fund-accounting standards, there are a number of minimum requirements that your financial management system must meet if you're to really maximize your impact. Core functions such as accounts receivable, accounts payable, and financial close, are essential. But even with the ability to calculate and track the basic financial functions, many systems still require manual input, which can put pressure on nonprofits already struggling with limited staff, and steal time from the delivery of more meaningful work.

It's a challenge exacerbated by nonprofits' need for specialized functionality—reporting, planning, revenue recognition and fund-accounting are all unique within nonprofits, creating further challenges that basic accounting software struggles to address.

Nonprofit CFOs are the strategic leads within your organization, and so you understand that you need a system that leverages the latest technology advancements, one which can fuel the delivery of your mission, and support your staff to streamline core functions. But how can you go about selecting the best system that goes beyond the basics to meet your organization's needs, and supports your growth at the same time?



This buyer's checklist ensures you have all the information you need to make a direct comparison between the vendors on the market, and find the software best suited for you. This list is non-exhaustive and does not cover every basic accounting functionality you'll need (for example, any accounting system should be able to generate a Purchase Order and associate it with an invoice)—but rather focuses on the must-have differentiating features to pay attention to as you look for the best financial management system for your nonprofit.

Sage Intacct for nonprofits

While traditional accounting software can be retrofitted to suit some of your nonprofit organization's needs—they're far from ideal.

Sage Intacct is a built-for-purpose solution specifically catered to address nonprofit needs. From grant tracking to outcome metrics, it can help you to manage your entire nonprofit financial lifecycle—building trust with stakeholders, taking the manual workload away from staff, and making it easier for you to win further funds with improved storytelling. Thousands of nonprofits are making a bigger mission impact with Sage Intacct high-performance finance software.

How to use the buyer's checklist

Our buyer's checklist has been pre-populated with the details of Sage Intacct. Further columns have been included to help you to make a head-to-head comparison. Simply fill the blank columns with the accounting features offered by other vendors to easily compare the offerings across multiple areas:



Nonprofit and fund accounting



Integration with critical systems



Financial insight



Cloud architecture and AI capabilities



Automated, flexible financial processes



Vendor experience

Nonprofit and fund accounting

Nonprofits typically receive funding from multiple sources. Good stewardship of funds and increased compliance regulations call for transparency and accountability, creating a need for system-wide tracking and visibility across a variety of key segments or identifiers. These requirements are best met through a nonprofit or fund accounting system that provides complete fund tracking, efficient operational processing, timely reporting, and a comprehensive audit trail. Below are the key things you should look for in this system:

Build efficiency and accountability with a fund accounting framework	Sage Intacct	Software A	Software B
Work within a system that's natively compliant with FAS 958 without the need for manual workarounds or system customization.	✓	☐	☐
Simplify setup, transactions, and reporting through a single, non-profit-ready chart of accounts.	✓	☐	☐
Define, track, and report on every key organizational focus area through unique, defined dimensions (e.g. grants, funds, programs, locations, etc.).	✓	☐	☐
Access over 150 out-of-the-box reports for easy and timely reporting for funders, board members, and executive team members in a manner compliant with FASB or GASB requirements, including: Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities, and Statement of Functional Expenses.	✓	☐	☐
Efficiently manage fund, grant, and donor requirements			
Track and report on funding restrictions, program outcomes, and budget to actual results.	✓	☐	☐
Gain instant visibility for your team through role-based and customizable dashboards to help track, manage, and send reports to donors, grantors, volunteers, and board members.	✓	☐	☐
Automatically schedule reports for timely, proactive monitoring of fund administration and spending to ensure stronger funder relationships.	✓	☐	☐
Securely share key reports and insights with board members or external stakeholders, accessible on any device.	✓	☐	☐
Combine various dimensions (e.g., grant, program, location, etc.) with statistical tracking and reporting to provide a holistic view of performance and outcomes to funders.	✓	☐	☐



Streamline grant tracking and billing

	Sage Intacct	Software A	Software B
Calculate indirect cost allocations across a variety of dimensions such as grant, fund, or program.	✓	☐	☐
Report across different grant periods outside of your organization's fiscal year within a single, standard report.	✓	☐	☐
Automate the management and release of funder restrictions as certain criteria are met.	✓	☐	☐
Easily administer reimbursable grants through integrated billing.	✓	☐	☐
Track and approve employee effort per grant through integrated timekeeping data.	✓	☐	☐
Automate backup documentation directly to grant record in one place for reporting to funders.	✓	☐	☐

Automate revenue management

Decouple your fund invoicing schedule from revenue recognition, enabling you to efficiently and accurately manage even the most complex schedules.	✓	☐	☐
Easily manage funding across accounting periods and in compliance with FASB and IASB standards.	✓	☐	☐
Streamline ASU 2018-08 and ASC 606 compliance with features to manage conditional contributions and event-based recognition.	✓	☐	☐
Select the appropriate revenue recognition for different revenue streams to enable consistent treatment and classification of revenue.	✓	☐	☐

Financial insight

A modern accounting system provides in-depth, real-time insight into the organization, allowing you to capitalize on new opportunities or quickly recognize the need for corrective action. You benefit from having a thorough picture of the financial performance of your organization, from high-level summaries down to the underlying transactions—leaving you more time to make the strategic decisions which can maximize the impact of your mission.

This can only be enabled with a modern general ledger and dimensional chart-of-accounts (COA), which work together to let you manage, analyze, and present your financial information the way you want, without adding complexity to your COA or using external reporting tools. Your accounting system should adapt to your optimal organizational structure and workflows rather than limit your operational flexibility or force you to re-implement software or re-write custom code. To gain greater financial and operational insight while eliminating manual reporting, your system should deliver:

Multi-dimensional visibility and chart-of-accounts	Sage Intacct	Software A	Software B
Flexible chart-of-accounts that allows for categorization of each transaction by donor, program, grant, location, and more without creating multiple separate GL accounts for each location, program, fund, etc.	✓	☐	☐
Standardized functionality that allows for tracking all the critical elements or dimensions of your organization (e.g., location, fund, program, department, grant, etc.) throughout the system from transaction record to reporting across all ledgers.	✓	☐	☐
Ability to setup controls and automation rules for tasks such as journal entry or invoice creation that allow for specific conditions based on dimension.	✓	☐	☐
Control to slice-and-dice your financial and operational data the way you want without having to use external reporting tools or modify your chart of accounts.	✓	☐	☐
A statistical book of measures, such as impact, funding, constituents, locations not captured in a standard ledger, in order to provide greater insight into success metrics directly within your accounting system.	✓	☐	☐
Powerful reporting and dashboards			
Report quickly and easily on your dimension attributes (e.g., location, fund, program, etc.).	✓	☐	☐
Flexible and configurable reporting tools that allow your finance team to quickly and easily manage changing compliance requirements without IT or vendor assistance.	✓	☐	☐
Use account groupings to allow for one-click expand/collapse into detailed account line items directly within financial reports.	✓	☐	☐
Instantly customizable dashboards that give you real-time operational and financial visibility by fund.	✓	☐	☐
Reports and dashboards that automatically combine operating dimensions with financial data, so you can analyze results for each operating unit, location, project, funder, and more.	✓	☐	☐
Self-service reports and custom dashboards to reduce ad-hoc stakeholder reporting, while delivering real-time updates and drill down capabilities for visibility and insight into the numbers.	✓	☐	☐



Integrated budgeting and planning

	Sage Intacct	Software A	Software B
By including your planning tool into core financials, data is automatically synced across your existing dimensions and COA.	✓	☐	☐
Analyze the impact of decisions using driver-based modeling, what-if scenarios, and rolling forecast.	✓	☐	☐
Easy-to-use interface allows your planning tool to be leveraged in full by existing staff (not dedicated FP&A power-users).	✓	☐	☐
Budget by project or grant and incorporate your budget into existing expense controls in core financials.	✓	☐	☐

Automated, flexible financial processes

Implementing financial process automation is the fastest way for CFOs and finance teams to become more strategic. Nonprofits specifically have a wide range of operational tasks that are still being done manually due to the limitations of their software. To ensure you're minimizing the burden of manual tasks on your team, look for systems that have incorporated workflow and flexible configuration into major nonprofit processes such as AP, month-end close, and multi-entity management. With Sage, you can enhance visibility, automate manual tasks, and focus on what really matters:



Process automation foundations	Sage Intacct	Software A	Software B
Commitment, vision, and dedicated investment for incorporating AI into key workflows for accelerated automation.	✓	☐	☐
In-system collaboration tools that allow for two-way communication tied to specific items, records, and transactions in the system for increased efficiency and enhanced audit trail.	✓	☐	☐
Custom workflows and approval rules that can map to your organization's unique operational processes.	✓	☐	☐
Configurable controls and user access to maintain separation of duties and securely share data with non-finance or external stakeholders.	✓	☐	☐
Attach supporting documents to any transaction for backup and audit.	✓	☐	☐
Allow read-only access for auditors to specific information such as specific financial statements with the ability to drill down into ledgers, reconciliations, and transactions without aid from your team.	✓	☐	☐
Close sub-ledgers before closing general ledger to allow auditors for more time on sensitive areas such as payables and receivables.	✓	☐	☐

Multiple entities	Sage Intacct	Software A	Software B
Choose consistent or different workflows, charts of accounts, period definitions, and lists across your multiple entities.	✓	☐	☐
Drill down into detailed consolidating entries.	✓	☐	☐
Create multiple levels in your organizational hierarchy and various stakeholder structures.	✓	☐	☐
Real-time GAAP, IFRS, FASB, regulatory, and compliance reports with over 150 included templates that give you the capability to drill down to the transaction level.	✓	☐	☐
Multiple ledgers (e.g., AR, AP, order management, and cash management ledgers) that can process transactions independently without degrading GL performance, and reduce the time it takes to close your books and report on financial results and outcome measures.	✓	☐	☐
Manage multiple books, such as simultaneously keeping books on an accrual and a cash basis, to allow you to easily report business results to multiple stakeholders based on their needs and report preferences.	✓	☐	☐
Utilize with spend management to ensure commented expenses are captured in budget/expense comparisons.	✓	☐	☐

Accounts payable (AP) and expense management

Machine learning embedded into AP to reduce the need for manual data entry, identify duplicate invoices, and automatically classify data.	✓	☐	☐
Automatically extract data from vendor invoices using Optical Character Recognition to pre-populate AP entries.	✓	☐	☐
Purchase orders automatically matched to incoming invoices.	✓	☐	☐
Workflow approval rules that can be configured based on different criteria such as value, approver, or project to trigger different approval paths.	✓	☐	☐
Connect directly to your bank for automated transaction matching and bank reconciliation, providing timely cash flow visibility.	✓	☐	☐
Allow employees to enter time and expense from any device that can be tracked to specific projects, grants, or programs.	✓	☐	☐
Spend management: balance cash inflows and outflows to avoid overspending and ensure budgets are followed.	✓	☐	☐

Fixed assets and allocations

Allocate assets, expenses, and revenue across products, projects, departments, grants, and other critical business dimensions.	✓	☐	☐
Flexible true-up options for allocations that remove the need for manual post-period adjustments.	✓	☐	☐
Streamline audits with snapshot views of allocation logic and calculation parameters automatically attached to each journal entry.	✓	☐	☐
Automatically track asset depreciation and link related costs such as maintenance, repairs, and replacements to each asset.	✓	☐	☐
Track asset costs across locations, departments, and projects for comprehensive analysis with dimensional tagging.	✓	☐	☐
Streamline financial and tax depreciation with automatic multi-book depreciation postings in a centralized hub based on a variety of methods.	✓	☐	☐

Integration with critical systems

Perhaps one of the most clear signals of a technology vendor's commitment to nonprofits is the availability of high-quality, prebuilt integrations into popular nonprofit software for processes such as fundraising, case management, or grantmaking. The specific and varying nature of operating systems used by nonprofits today means that no single vendor can provide a complete set of systems to manage every

aspect of your organization while also providing the best functionality available for each of your functions. Seamless integration with mission-critical systems should be any vendor's priority—with a clear commitment to prioritizing your current and future software needs:

Convenient “point-and-click” integrations to support key nonprofit functions	Sage Intacct	Software A	Software B
Open, flexible, modern Application Programming Interface (API) that can connect to any modern software.	✓	☐	☐
Robust catalog of existing integrations into proven solutions, easily available via online marketplace.	✓	☐	☐
High quality integration into CRM and donor management systems such as Salesforce, that allows for configuration of incoming transaction data to match your business processes.	✓	☐	☐
Existing integration options for: CRM and donor management, human resources and payroll, inventory and fixed assets, project management, payment processes, financial planning, case management, employee expense management, and more.	✓	☐	☐
Deep integrations for fundraising and payroll			
Pre-built reports and dashboards to monitor fundraising efficiency and easily make smart decisions for your mission.	✓	☐	☐
Monitor donations by giving level, campaign type, or any criteria you set.	✓	☐	☐
Streamline posting and reporting for payroll entries through automated integration between GL and payroll.	✓	☐	☐
Track staff time by grant automatically using dimensions.	✓	☐	☐

Cloud architecture

A modern accounting system should be cloud-based, so you can lower IT costs, reduce technology risks, and improve productivity and future scalability. Using the cloud also gives you the flexibility to choose best-in-class solutions that focus on ease of integration with other leading software solutions—meeting your needs in each focus area, versus using a suite, which makes external integrations difficult. Put your finance team back in control with the most intuitive and flexible solution:

Best-in-class cloud accounting	Sage Intacct	Software A	Software B
On-demand scalability and performance in the cloud that eliminates hardware and internal IT costs and reduces the burden of maintenance, upgrades, and support.	✓	☐	☐
Clear service-level-agreements related to software performance including uptime, data redundancy, and response times.	✓	☐	☐
Compliance with industry-standard security protocols and well-known frameworks such as AICPA SOC2.	✓	☐	☐
Productivity resulting from anytime, anywhere access on any device and operating system.	✓	☐	☐
Quarterly, automatic software updates that keep you current with the latest accounting standards and software features.	✓	☐	☐
Take advantage of 24/7 availability from any mobile device for instant visibility and control.	✓	☐	☐
Simplified subscription bundle offerings that simplify the software decision by including recommended best-practice capabilities and removing ala-carte complexity.	✓	☐	☐

AI capabilities

A modern accounting system shouldn't just deliver cutting-edge solutions in the short-term, it should also prepare your organization to remain competitive and effective into the future. Integrating AI tools and capabilities throughout the accounting lifecycle of your nonprofit ensures you benefit from new ways of streamlining, and keeps your financials running smoothly. Of course, it matters what kind of AI capabilities are being offered—nonprofits need to rely on systems which provide tools valuable to their unique positions, backed-up by knowledge of how AI can solve the sector's accounting challenges:



Then, you can look to access tools such as:

	Sage Intacct	Software A	Software B
Advanced generative AI capabilities that help to quickly navigate the system and identify challenges using natural language.	✓	☐	☐
State of the art AP automation machine learning to reduce the need for manual data entry, save 100s of hours, and automatically classify data.	✓	☐	☐
GL outlier detection which automatically flags unusual transactions based on historical data, supporting staff to protect and manage data integrity.	✓	☐	☐
Intelligent time to automatically complete and process staff timesheets.	✓	☐	☐
Automated variance analysis and proactive notifications of variances throughout the month to prevent errors and overspend.	✓	☐	☐

Vendor experience

Be sure to work with an organization that is committed to providing you with a world-class accounting system, not just a suite of software and services that you may not need.

Your modern accounting system should come from a company that meets the following criteria:	Sage Intacct	Software A	Software B
System and services heavily focused on the nonprofit sector, with hundreds or more customers.	✓	☐	☐
Heritage and exclusive focus on finance and accounting systems.	✓	☐	☐
Proven longevity, sustained growth, and financial strength.	✓	☐	☐
Financial and organizational commitment to continued investment and support of both the system and nonprofit customers.	✓	☐	☐
Recognized for excellence by leading industry associations, such as the AICPA.	✓	☐	☐
Top ratings and reviews by customers from trusted and independent third-party sources like G2 Crowd and TrustRadius.	✓	☐	☐

Achieving more with less

In the [2025 Nonprofit Technology Impact Report](#), the survey revealed that only 9% of nonprofits consider themselves highly data-driven, despite 85% of them recognizing the important role metrics will play in the continuing success of their organization.

Similarly, in the [Secrets of Successful CFOs](#) report, 78% of very successful finance leaders identified 'keeping up with new tech' as crucial to their success over the next three years.

It's clear that nonprofit finance leaders understand the potential impact of their choice of accounting system. This understanding and excitement become even more evident where AI tools are concerned.

“We’re most excited to gain the ability to remove entry-level tasks and allow our staff to focus on more high-level, strategic items.”

Faith-based nonprofit

“We’ll be focused on the potential for deeper data analysis and projections on a real-time basis.”

Education nonprofit

“We’re hoping to gain clarity on how funds are spent and allocated, as well as get AI recommendations on efficiency.”

Government/Quasi-government nonprofit

With AI capabilities on hand, nonprofits gain the ability to do more with less. That means addressing staffing concerns, cutting down on manual tasks, producing better outcome metrics and storytelling, benefitting funding applications, and so much more. All without having to fund an increase in headcount or source extra man-hours.

By automating your finances, you maximize your impact. Whether in the board room, or amongst your service users.

In short—the right accounting system, with the right tools to support your organization, can drive your mission success.

Sage Intacct offers AI-optimized features to streamline your workflows and automate repetitive financial tasks. Sage has over eight years of experience delivering AI solutions, and a proven history of saving customers 100s of hours annually. So, while only 4% of nonprofit organizations feel confident their software can leverage AI, those with Sage Intacct are already reaping the benefits.



Sage Intacct in numbers



150 hours of quick implementation.



50% reduction in partial exemption paperwork.



250% return on investment.



<6 months payback.



65% productivity improvement.



#1 in customer satisfaction.



#1 choice for nonprofits.

The benefits of Sage Intacct

With Sage Intacct, you'll join thousands of other nonprofit organizations leveraging it to empower their missions, and gain access to a solution that does more than calculate your monthly financial close.

Nonprofit cloud financial management	Sage Intacct	Vendor A	Vendor B
Boost efficiency across the organization and address nonprofit staffing challenges.	✓	☐	☐
Easily create and customize reports that empower your storytelling and boost funding bids.	✓	☐	☐
Seamlessly integrate with your existing operational software.	✓	☐	☐
Trusted by thousands of Nonprofits with 98% retention rate or higher.	✓	☐	☐
Cloud native solution designed for scale and ongoing innovation.	✓	☐	☐
Multi-dimensional, multi-entity architecture that provides unlimited visibility out-of-the-box.	✓	☐	☐
Natively FAS 958 compliant.	✓	☐	☐
Automated grant tracking and billing including reporting across different reporting periods and automating cost allocations.	✓	☐	☐
Modern, pre-built integrations into common nonprofit systems such as Salesforce, ADP, and more.	✓	☐	☐
Flexibility to connect to other critical systems via open API.	✓	☐	☐
AI-ready, with incorporation of generative AI and machine learning into system.	✓	☐	☐
Implemented by highly experienced Nonprofit experts and accountants.	✓	☐	☐
Easy to grow and scale as you add entities and reporting complexities.	✓	☐	☐

“It used to take me 16 hours every quarter to do our partial exemption VAT return. Using Intacct, it now only takes me 8 hours once a quarter. It has halved the time.”

Karyn Hood

Management Accountant and Company Secretary,
East Malling Trust

“With Sage Intacct, we’re able to look at various scenarios and know what the impact of certain decisions would be.”

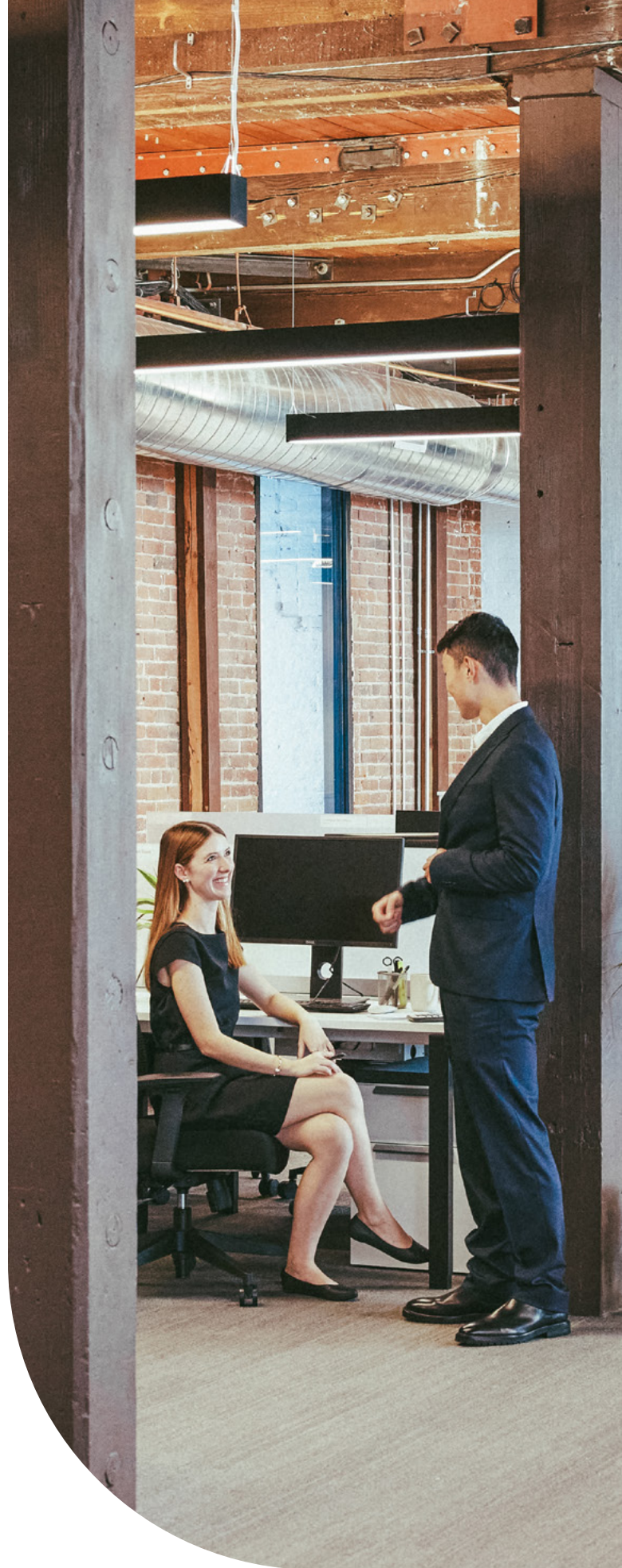
Glenn Wood

Pastor, Seacoast Church

“Sage Intacct helps us tell our story to long-term funders in a way that’s meaningful and backed up with data.”

Curtis Ruder

CFO, St. PJs Children’s Home





The #1 choice for nonprofits

Sage delivers market-leading cloud financial management software that helps nonprofits knock down barriers and expand their impact. Trusted by thousands of nonprofits and recognized by the AICPA as the preferred financial application, Sage Intacct streamlines fund, grant, and project accounting while delivering real-time visibility into the metrics that matter. Customers are able to leverage its modern integration tools and visual insights to connect their systems, make better decisions, and automate routine tasks. At Sage, we understand the unique needs of nonprofits to help them grow, which is why we're #1 in customer satisfaction on G2.

No matter your mission—health, human services, education, religion, community development, grantmaking, or membership—nonprofits choose Sage Intacct to enhance visibility, enable more strategic leadership, and maximize the impact of their mission.

**[Take an interactive tour
of Sage Intacct →](#)**





High-Performance
Finance Software

POWERED BY 



For Additional Information Please Contact:

Blytheco

solutions@blytheco.com

530 Technology Dr, Suite 100, Irvine, CA,
92618

[sage.com/nonprofit](https://www.sage.com/nonprofit)

877-437-7765



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