

## Fairmont State University Relies On Blackbaud's Data Enrichment Services to Improve Communication and Fundraising Efforts

Fairmont State University was founded in 1865 as a private school for teachers. With a main campus in Fairmont, WV, the university today boasts an enrollment approaching 8,000 students and offers 90 baccalaureate majors, as well as graduate programs. Pierpont Community & Technical College of FSU offers 50 associate degrees, certificates, and skill-set certificates. The mission of the Fairmont State Foundation, Inc., is to support, through ethical stewardship, the missions of Fairmont State University and Pierpont Community & Technical College. The Foundation identifies, establishes, and cultivates meaningful relationships with Fairmont State alumni and potential and existing funders to meet contributor needs while also securing funds and supporters for priority objectives as identified by its board of governors. In acknowledgement of the direct link between "friend-raising" and fundraising, and to encourage efficient use of limited resources at a growing institution, the alumni relations, institutional advancement, and foundation offices are currently combined.



### scenario

Relying heavily on private gifts to fund its programs, Fairmont State University needed to connect with relocated and "lost" alumni to achieve a better response rate to fundraising appeals and increase gift revenue.

Blackbaud software and services used by Fairmont State University:

- ◆ **The Raiser's Edge®**
- ◆ **AddressFinder™**
- ◆ **PeopleFinder™**
- ◆ **PhoneFinder™**
- ◆ **CountyFinder™**

the challenge: update missing or outdated constituent address information to improve communications and fundraising efforts

In an atmosphere of diminishing state and federal resources, Fairmont State depends on private philanthropic gifts from individuals, foundations, and corporations to fulfill its educational mission. Building relationships with alumni and other constituent groups using accurate records is vital to the success of the University's fundraising efforts.

"Our dual office for alumni relations and the Fairmont State Foundation recognizes the importance of staying connected to our alumni and other benefactors," said Sean Riley, manager of alumni and development records.

"We track all of our donors in **The Raiser's Edge®**, but we face the constant challenge of frequent alumni moves, resulting in outdated address and phone information. Without current contact information, Fairmont State cannot reach important supporters and is potentially missing out on vital funding opportunities and partnerships."

the solution: use Blackbaud's Data Enrichment Services to find "lost" alumni and ensure complete, current contact information for all constituents

Recently, Fairmont State strategically implemented technology in its fundraising efforts. After receiving positive feedback from other foundations, Fairmont State began using Blackbaud's **PeopleFinder™** and **PhoneFinder™** services.



Hardway Hall, Fairmont State University  
photo by John Piscitelli

*“A mailing we did that produced many outdated addresses made us realize the importance of cleaning up our Raiser’s Edge data. When we learned about Blackbaud’s Data Enrichment Services, we knew we had discovered the solution.”*

“**The Raiser’s Edge**® isn’t just for printing labels,” Mr. Riley said. “There’s so much more we can do, but everything starts with clean data. A mailing we did that produced many outdated addresses made us realize the importance of cleaning up our Raiser’s Edge data. When we learned about Blackbaud’s **Data Enrichment Services**™, we knew we had discovered the solution.”

results: better contact information, regionally segmented event mailings, increased cost-benefit ratio on direct mail, and increased gift revenue

Blackbaud’s **Data Enrichment Services** found new or updated addresses for 50 percent of lost constituents and found phone numbers for more than 5,000 records, enabling Fairmont State to reconnect with the large group of supporters who were previously considered unreachable.

Following a **Data Enrichment Services** cleanup, Fairmont State sent a direct mail piece to 22,000 people with postal return service requested so it could test the success of the cleanup. Fewer than 1,200 pieces were returned as undeliverable. Fairmont State decreased a 40 percent direct mail return rate to an approximately 5 percent return rate. Additionally, a recent calling campaign for the University tripled the record of gifts committed.

“Keeping our data clean is a constant challenge,” Mr. Riley said. “Although we have a long way to go, we have realized incredible results which bring us closer to our consistent base. We look forward to advancing programs and increasing affinity fundraising ability through the full integration of Blackbaud’s **Data Enrichment Services**.”



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## about Blackbaud

Blackbaud is the leading global provider of software and related services designed specifically for nonprofit organizations. More than 15,000 organizations — including the American Red Cross, Bowdoin College, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation of America, the Detroit Zoological Society, Episcopal High School, Help the Aged, the New York Philharmonic, and United Way of America — use Blackbaud products and consulting services for fundraising, financial management, business intelligence, Web site management, school administration, and ticketing. Blackbaud’s solutions include **The Raiser’s Edge**®, **The Financial Edge**™, **The Education Edge**™, **The Patron Edge**®, **Blackbaud**® **NetCommunity**™, **The Information Edge**™, **The Researcher’s Edge**™, **WealthPoint**™, and **ProspectPoint**™, as well as a wide range of consulting and educational services. Founded in 1981, Blackbaud is headquartered in Charleston, South Carolina, and has operations in Toronto, Ontario; Glasgow, Scotland; and Sydney, Australia.

For more information about Blackbaud solutions, contact a Blackbaud account representative. In the United States and Canada, call toll-free 800.443.9441. In Europe, call +44 (0) 141 575 0000. Visit us on the Web at [www.blackbaud.com](http://www.blackbaud.com).