SS&C Black Diamond WEALTH SOLUTIONS

CASE STUDY

ACCG Retirement Services

Modernizing a Critical Payment Process

For more than a century, ACCG has served Georgia's counties by providing advocacy and a growing portfolio of member services. Since 1968, its Retirement Services division has administered retirement plans for government employees across the state, overseeing more than $4 billion in assets across 110 pension plans and numerous defined contribution plans.

As the organization expanded, the technology supporting one of its most critical functions, retirement benefit payments, became increasingly difficult to maintain.

The existing payment processing system relied on aging technology written in dBase4 and operated on a virtual Windows XP environment. Reliance on a single employee to operate the system created operational risk and limited the firm's scalability as participant volumes increased.

"As leadership shifted and even simple updates became increasingly difficult, it was clear we needed a modern, reliable solution," said Kale Hodges, Director of Retirement Services.

Building the Right Solution

While implementing a new retirement administration system in 2017, ACCG began evaluating payment-processing solutions to support its long-term operational goals.

Throughout the evaluation, Hodges repeatedly heard the same recommendation from banks and trust companies across the industry.

"I kept calling banks and trust companies to ask what they used for payment processing, and the same name kept coming up," Hodges recalled. "That told me everything I needed to know before we even sat down for a demo."

After a collaborative planning and demonstration process, ACCG selected SS&C Black Diamond® Wealth Solutions and its Paying Agent Services to modernize the company's payment operations. The implementation team worked closely with ACCG to tailor the solution to its operational requirements and ensure a smooth transition.

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Profile

Client: ACCG Retirement Services

Location: Georgia

Description: Nonprofit administering retirement plans for Georgia's county and government employees

AUM: $4B+

Retirement Plans: 110 pension plans plus 401(k) and 457 plans

Implementation Year: 2018

Background

- Sought to replace a legacy payment system built on outdated technology and reliant on a single administrator.
- Prioritized a secure, scalable platform to support ongoing growth in retirement benefit payments.
- Planned to modernize operations and improve payment reliability, efficiency, and participant service.

Delivering Reliable Payments at Scale

The implementation was completed in approximately four months, and it transformed ACCG's retirement payment operations.

The organization transitioned from paper checks to 99.99% direct deposit, significantly improving payment reliability, and streamlining operations for staff and participants.

At implementation, ACCG processed approximately 8,000 to 9,000 monthly retirement payments. Today, it processes more than 14,000 monthly payments totaling more than $15 million, all while maintaining consistent performance as the retirement program continues to expand.

"We've grown pretty dramatically, and the system has never missed a beat," Hodges said. "That kind of consistency is everything when you're responsible for people's retirement income."

Beyond payment processing, ACCG credits Black Diamond with improving tax reporting, providing an intuitive user experience, and delivering responsive support throughout its partnership.

Years after implementation, ACCG also continues to hold regular touch-base meetings with the Black Diamond team. "Seven or eight years after go-live, we're still having monthly calls with the team," Hodges said. "That level of support isn't something you find with every vendor."

Foundation for Future Growth

Over the past seven years, ACCG has successfully expanded its retirement services, adding 15 new retirement plans and an additional ASO client without disrupting operations.

Participants receive timely retirement payments, staff benefit from an intuitive web portal, and technical questions are resolved quickly through the partnership with the Black Diamond team. "This system has been a game changer for our back office," Hodges said. "Our staff finds the portal intuitive, our participants get paid on time, and whenever something comes up, the response is fast."

What began as a necessary replacement for an aging, single-person-dependent payment system has evolved into a scalable operational foundation that supports ACCG's continued growth while helping ensure Georgia's public employees receive accurate retirement benefits each month.

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Benefits

- Replaced a legacy payment platform with a modern, scalable solution.
- Transitioned from paper checks to 99.99% direct deposit.
- Increased monthly payment volume from approximately 8,000–9,000 to 14,000+ payments.
- Added 15 new retirement plans while maintaining uninterrupted operations.
- Improved reporting, operational efficiency, and participant experience through an intuitive platform and ongoing partnership.

To learn more about ACCG Retirement Services, please visit their website at www.accgretirement.org.

Learn how SS&C Black Diamond Wealth Solutions can support your business.

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