

## NCOMMUNITY CASE STUDY

### \$16 Billion-Asset First Financial Bank Relieves the Burden of CRA Data Analytics with Ncommunity

#### **First Financial Bank**

**Size:** \$16 billion

**Location:** Cincinnati, OH

**Customer Since:** 2013

**Primary Examiner:** Federal Reserve

#### **Challenges:**

- Understanding CRA implications of new markets
- Navigating regulatory change

#### **Results:**

- Save time and energy
- Improved data quality
- Easier CRA exams
- Deeper understanding of assessment areas
- More insight into merger activity
- New ways to identify marketing and sales opportunities

#### **The Challenge**

First Financial Bank is a growing community bank—one that has doubled in size over the past few years to \$16 billion in assets. As the bank expands into new geographic markets, Community Development Analyst Heather Montgomery and Community Development Coordinator Gina Balzer are tasked with analyzing demographic and census information and learning about the new communities the bank serves and how adding them to the marketplace impacts the bank's overall Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) performance. They need to see how First Financial's performance compares to peers, if it's serving all assessment areas, and if staffing is adequate for the needs of their community.

It's a heavy lift for a large institution, with over 150 branches and 2,000 employees. Data comes from many different lines of business at the bank, including mortgage, commercial, consumer, agriculture, and real estate lending, and it must all be reviewed.

First Financial is also navigating a changing regulatory environment with new requirements and expectations.

#### **The Solution**

First Financial wanted a solution that would help it review information from across its large footprint, delivering data-driven insights that reveal how well the bank is serving its Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) assessment areas—including low- to moderate-income census tracts—while uncovering new opportunities.

The bank found what it needed in Ncommunity, a secure, web-based analytics software that enables banks to measure and manage CRA performance to ensure CRA compliance.

From determining reinvestment ratios and their significance for exam-readiness to staying current with the changing demographics of its assessment area, Ncommunity helps First Financial monitor CRA compliance, assist with exam preparation, reduce the reporting burden, and gain insights about marketing and sales opportunities. More than 10 different users are aligned through their work on the platform.

After modeling the bank's board-approved assessment area, Ncontracts reviews the data for quality, imports it into the Ncommunity platform, and ensures that everything is ready for analysis. Ncommunity then crunches the numbers, and a compliance analyst reviews the geocoded maps and analysis reports to get a sense for the story the data tells and performs a final round of quality checks.

Based on the analysis, First Financial works with Ncontracts to identify areas of focus for the future. The team can create assessment areas, understand lending data in low- to moderate-income and majority-minority census tracts, dive into small business and small farm lending, and geocode loans and deposits on interactive maps.



Ncommunity is absolutely time-saving! There's no way that a team of people could go through and review all the data that needs to be looked at without it.

**- Heather Montgomery, First Financial Bank Community Development Analyst**

## The Results

**Save time and energy.** "Ncommunity is absolutely time-saving! There's no way that a team of people could go through and review all the data that needs to be looked at without it."

**Improved data quality.** "It reduced the potential for errors. With spreadsheets and Excel, formulas can get mixed up. That doesn't happen with Ncommunity analytics software."

**Easier CRA exams.** First Financial uses Ncommunity during CRA exams to explain the story their data tells, answer regulator questions, and explore risk. "When the Federal Reserve raised questions in our CRA exam, we used Ncommunity to validate our CRA data and activities."

**Deeper insight into assessment areas.** First Financial has the ability to dive deep into its data and identify risks across a large market area. "We use Ncommunity to determine how well we are serving all of our assessment areas."

**More insight into merger activity.** First Financial relied on Ncommunity when finalizing a merger, using the software to analyze each institution's data for risks both individually and in aggregate. "It was awesome to put both data sets into Ncommunity to get the combined view during the merger!"

**Generate new marketing and sales opportunities.** The analysis provided by Ncommunity helps uncover opportunities and competitive advantages versus peers.