# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **LEADERSHIP LETTERS** .......................................................................................................................... 03
- **2021-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN** ............................................................................................................... 04
- **EVENTS** .................................................................................................................................................. 05
- **CONSUMER PROMOTIONS** .................................................................................................................... 06
  - Grab a Boost of Blue and Power Periods.................................................................................................. 06
  - Digital Advertising, Media Relations, Social Media and Influencers....................................................... 07
  - Retail....................................................................................................................................................... 08
  - Health Professionals ............................................................................................................................. 09
- **HEALTH RESEARCH** .............................................................................................................................. 10
- **FOODSERVICE** ..................................................................................................................................... 12
- **INDUSTRY RELATIONS** .......................................................................................................................... 13
- **EXPORT** ................................................................................................................................................ 14
- **WHO WE ARE** ...................................................................................................................................... 15
  - Board & Staff......................................................................................................................................... 15
  - Committees.......................................................................................................................................... 16
- **ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW** .......................................................................................................... 17
If I had to pick a key word to describe 2021, it would be “momentum.” After all, that’s certainly what we saw at USHBC as we put a laser-like focus on our vision to make blueberries the world’s favorite fruit and continued our demand-driving work through dozens of initiatives.

From an aspirational strategic plan, to a referendum supporting our work, to hundreds of consumer and foodservice activations, we were certainly on a roll!

That’s why I’m excited to share with you what our 2021 efforts looked like, and how incredibly successful the USHBC was in uniting the industry and growing demand for blueberries.

I hope you’ll spend some time with this report that’s sure to make you proud – and motivate you to keep the momentum going. After all, the possibilities for blueberries abound!

Sincerely,

Shelly Hartmann
USHBC Chair

When I reflect on USHBC’s efforts in 2021, I can’t help but feel proud of the way the blueberry industry united to make truly incredible progress – all made possible thanks to the thought leadership of so many dedicated visionaries in our industry.

In 2021, we introduced Grab a Boost of Blue, our inspirational consumer call to action, and watched as it took root with consumers, retailers and a growing group of industry licensees. Data and insights took center stage in 2021, with a suite of resources made available at USHBC.org/data.

We reconnected in person again at our fall Innovate 2021 conference in Oregon. And the industry recommitted to the USHBC with the passage of the referendum that enjoyed record-breaking participation.

Big moves all the way around! And big possibilities continue to unfold for the blueberry industry thanks to the demand-driving focus of our new strategic plan and vision for blueberries.

We hope you’ll spend some time with this report that captures our myriad accomplishments in 2021. Then, we encourage you to continue to contribute to and support our work as – together – we make blueberries the world’s favorite fruit!

Sincerely,

Kasey Cronquist
USHBC President
USHBC approved its 2021-2025 strategic plan that charts an ambitious course to exponentially grow the volume and value of blueberries domestically and across the globe. The comprehensive plan explains how USHBC will lead demand-driving programs based on shared resources, research and insights that inspire possibilities, and sustain the profitable growth of the blueberry industry – ultimately uniting industry stakeholders to work together toward making blueberries the world’s favorite fruit.

The plan includes expanded, measurable programmatic goals and tactics for five strategic pillars: integrated marketing communications, health and nutrition, industry services, global business development, and innovation and technology.

USHBC embarked on this comprehensive strategic planning process in partnership with Rockland Dutton Research & Consulting. The work was the most robust planning process in USHBC’s history, with significant internal and external input, including nearly 50 interviews of board members and industry leaders, a survey of 193 industry stakeholders, and discussions with USHBC staff and all partner agencies.

**REFERENDUM PASSED**

In November 2021, a majority of eligible producers and importers of record voted in favor of continuing USHBC’s demand-driving work as part of a referendum vote. In fact, 84% of producers and importers voting in the referendum, who also represent 93% of the volume of participating in the vote, were in favor of continuing the program. This represents a 10% increase in support from producers and importers (and 13% more support by volume) voting in favor of USHBC as compared to the 2016 referendum. In fact, a record-breaking 523 million pounds participated in the 2021 referendum.

USHBC is using this new mandate of support to power the growth of the blueberry industry!
EVENTS

NABC/USHBC SPRING CONFERENCE + MEETINGS
In March 2021, the blueberry industry once again gathered online for a virtual conference as the pandemic continued to limit in-person events.

During the NABC/USHBC Spring Conference & Meetings, participants heard from inspiring keynotes, participated in professional learning sessions and tackled the latest council and committee business as part of virtual meetings.

USHBC + NABC TECH SYMPOSIUM AND FALL MEETINGS
By fall 2021, the industry was able to gather in person in Salem, Oregon, for a Tech Symposium, tour of regional blueberry operations, networking events, and committee and council meetings. By providing a hybrid format, those who chose to attend virtually were able to participate in presentations and meetings online.

Attendees were thrilled to reconnect as they focused on the latest technologies impacting the industry, heard from informative keynotes and visited area blueberry farms to see some of the latest ag tech in action.
In 2021, the total blueberry category and fresh segment volumes grew at a modest rate relative to strong sales in 2020.

- Retail volume was up only +1.3% in 2021 relative to a surge of +27.8% in 2020.
- Higher retail pricing in 2021 drove strong retail dollar sales growth for fresh blueberries, +7.3%.
- Though down vs. 2020, frozen blueberry retail volume and dollar sales saw double-digit increases vs. pre-pandemic levels, indicating a fundamental change in consumers’ behaviors.

The strategic positioning and consumer call to action “Grab a Boost of Blue” and its corresponding logo were used cohesively in advertising, at point of sale, in social media channels and on packaging to remind consumers of the healthy boost they get from a handful of blueberries.

USHBC attempted to beat the GUINNESS WORLD RECORD™ title for the tallest stack of pancakes ABC’s “Good Morning America.” Despite losing out on a record, blueberries gained top-tier exposure on one of the most popular morning shows in the U.S., garnering millions of views.
DIGITAL ADVERTISING, MEDIA RELATIONS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND INFLUENCERS

An elevated paid search campaign, along with Grab a Boost of Blue digital ads, drove inspiration and purchase intent, while e-commerce partners Instacart and ShopKick drove sales. As a result, the USHBC saw $2,065,184 in attributed sales of blueberries – double what was moved in 2020 – while the blueberry.org saw higher engagement and click-through rates.

**Almost 400,000**
units of blueberries moved through shopping apps (Shopkick, Instacart) – double what was moved in 2020!

**7.75x** return on ad spending

**Nearly 6 million**
video ad completions

**Over 360,000**
clicks to the site

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THE MEDIA RELATIONS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND INFLUENCER PROGRAMMING DROVE:

**1.59 billion**
impressions (voice) in media coverage

**25+ million**
engagements

**18% growth**
in Instagram followers (20.7k)

**Increased engagement**
with Instagram Stories

**A new presence on video platforms**
TikTok and Instagram Reels
RETAIL

USHBC launched several test-and-learn opportunities to explore new ways of supporting retailers to drive blueberry demand, increasing household penetration and prioritizing the value of blueberries. The addition of the Retail Hub and toolkits on the USHBC website provides relevant content and compelling blueberry sales data for produce buyers, retail marketers and supermarket registered dietitians (RDs). In 2021, USHBC toolkits were downloaded more than 1,800 times.

In 2021, the distribution list for the USHBC’s retail newsletter, Boosting Demand with Blues, increased over 240% in subscriptions and audience reach.

2021 RETAIL PARTNERSHIPS

USHBC and CA Walnut Board cross-promotion in celebration of Brain Health Month in June included several grocery stores:

**GIANT EAGLE**
Total blueberries sales equaled over $540K+.
+23% dollar sales of blueberry vs. prior year.

**WEIS MARKET**
Sales totaled $1.2M+ for conventional and organic blueberries.
+36.5% increase in sales.
Facebook Live reached 6.2K+.
TV segments reached 1.8M+ both live and online.

**ROUSES MARKETS**
$231K+ and 86K+ units moved.
36% growth in sales and a 57% increase in units compared to June 2020.
Feature in the Registered Dietitian newsletter reached 7K+.
TV segments reached 1.6M+ both live and online.
Facebook Live reached 5.9K+.
65 in-store displays.

Check out all of USHBC’s blueberry retail sales data here.

Second Quarter Retail Report Now Available
USHBC has released a retail report covering the second quarter of 2021, inclusive of both fresh and frozen blueberries. The second quarter of 2021
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Blue Crew Ambassadors and media registered dietitians far surpassed the voice, reach and engagement goals set in 2021 – by as much as 369%. The work of the USHBC health professionals increased recommendations to eat more blueberries, while bolstering trust in blueberry nutrition benefits as well as interest in incorporating blueberries into easy meals and snacks.

The Blue Crew activations encouraged consumers to include blueberries in their eating patterns and provided education on blueberries’ nutrition and health benefits. Media RD partnerships built positive buzz for blueberries by using credentialed experts that encouraged increased consumption, while generating opportunities to secure research coverage in top-tier media outlets like VeryWell Health and Today.com, which alone generated over 5 million views.

A Produce for Better Health (PBH) Partnership provided a platform to amplify blueberry nutrition and health benefits messaging to consumers and health professionals, while leaning on PBH’s Have A Plant® Ambassador Network for third-party credibility.
HEALTH RESEARCH

By educating and motivating health professionals to recommend blueberries, USHBC’s health professional communication programs build credibility for and maintain high awareness of blueberries’ health benefits.

The research highlight in 2021 was the publication of a new research study in Clinical Nutrition (December 2021), which found that the equivalent of one cup of fresh blueberries, consumed as 26 g of freeze-dried blueberries, may reduce the acute cardiometabolic burden of energy-dense meals. Adding anthocyanin-rich blueberries (364 mg anthocyanin and 879 mg phenolics) to a high calorie, high-fat/high-sugar meal (969 kcal, 64.5g fat, 84 g carbohydrate) resulted in reduced insulin and glucose levels, lower total cholesterol, and improved good cholesterol (HDL-C) and its related lipoproteins (fractions of HDL-P and Apo-A1) in the 24 hours following the meal. Promotional efforts included proactive and reactive media outreach that generated a steady drumbeat of articles reaching consumers and health professionals with the blueberry message.

In 2021, 293 media placements referenced USHBC-funded emerging blueberry health research.

An exciting evolution of the USHBC health research program was the October 2021 appointment of Leslie Wada, Ph.D., RD, a longtime research consultant for the council, as senior director of nutrition and health research. In this newly created role, Wada represents USHBC and NABC as an official spokesperson for both organizations, as well as the blueberry industry at large.

HEALTH RESEARCH SNAPSHOT SINCE 2000

- **54** scientific publications
- **$11 million** invested in USHBC-supported research
- **$41 million** invested in support of blueberry research
- **44** collaborations with academic institutions in the U.S. and internationally
HEALTH RESEARCH (cont.)

Additionally, four new human clinical studies were funded to expand knowledge on the effect of blueberry intake across the lifespan:

   – In-Young Choi, Ph.D., University of Kansas Medical Center

2. “Pilot Study: Blueberry supplementation effects in subjects at risk for Alzheimer’s disease”
   – Murali Doraiswamy, MBBS, FRCP, Duke University School of Medicine

3. “The effects of blueberry intake on cerebrovascular and cognitive responses to exercise in low and high-fit young adults”
   – Catarina Rendeiro, Ph.D., University of Birmingham

4. “Immune benefits of blueberry consumption and response to influenza vaccination in overweight older men and postmenopausal women”
   – Joan Sabate, M.D., Dr.PH., Loma Linda University

USHBC’s comprehensive health research library can be found at USHBC.org/Health.

GRAB A BOOST OF BLUE

An easy way and nutritious solution to eating well – just grab a handful, rinse and enjoy!

BOOST YOUR DAILY RECOMMENDED SERVINGS OF FRUIT.

Blueberries contribute phytonutrients called polyphenols. This group includes anthocyanins (163.3 mg/100 g), plant compounds that give blueberries their beautiful blue color.

GET 4 ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS.

1. Fiber
   Heart health, feeling full, staying regular, keeping cholesterol in check

2. Vitamin C
   A healthy immune system

3. Vitamin K
   Bone metabolism, regulating blood clotting

4. Manganese
   Converting protein, carbs and fats into energy, bone development

KNOW WE’RE ALWAYS LEARNING MORE.

Blueberries may promote good health in additional ways. Areas of research:

Cardiovascular Health  Brain Health  Exercise  Insulin Response  Gut Health

HEALTH RESEARCH (cont.)

Additionally, four new human clinical studies were funded to expand knowledge on the effect of blueberry intake across the lifespan:

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FRESH OR FROZEN BLUEBERRIES ARE INFINITELY SNACKABLE.

Whether you’re just grabbing a handful on the go or sprinkling them into your favorite recipes for a healthful boost, you’ll love how versatile your blueberry stash can be!

HEALTH RESEARCH (cont.)

Additionally, four new human clinical studies were funded to expand knowledge on the effect of blueberry intake across the lifespan:

   – In-Young Choi, Ph.D., University of Kansas Medical Center

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USHBC’s comprehensive health research library can be found at USHBC.org/Health.
FOODSERVICE

The 2021 foodservice program focused on continuing efforts to build connections, momentum and volume-driving menu placements. Our efforts included:

HOSTING FOUR VIRTUAL CHEF ROUNDTABLES
- Topics included savory center-of-plate blueberry applications, easy solutions using frozen blueberries and a deep dive into our patron research.
- Yielded 14 new high-volume operator leads.

PILOTING A PROGRAM TO REACH OVER 700 K-12 SCHOOL DISTRICTS
- Blueberry orders up 10% year over year.
- Up to 400% increase in blueberry items menued.
- Increase in orders of blueberry packaged items (frozen waffles/pancakes, cereal bars, etc.).

SPECIFIC PROMOTIONAL EFFORT ON FROZEN BLUEBERRIES
- Yielded 30 leads and several immediate menu placements.

CUSTOM MENU INNOVATION SUPPORT FOR VIP CHEF PARTNERS
- Supported eight high-volume operators, leading to at least 11 new menu placements, which resulted in moving an incremental ~500K lbs. of blueberries.

FIELDED A PATRON STUDY THAT GATHERED INSIGHTS FROM OVER 1,000 CONSUMERS ON WHEN, HOW AND WHY THEY’D LIKE TO SEE BLUEBERRIES MENUED

- 73% said blueberries add to the appeal of a dish.
- 72% said blueberries make a dish healthier.
- 70% will pay more for a dish that includes blueberries.
- 59% wish there were more exciting and adventurous applications for blueberries.
- 56% wish blueberries were offered on more lunch and dinner menus.

The results of this study make a powerful case for foodservice operators to include more blueberries on menus. After all, consumers are clamoring for them!
INDUSTRY RELATIONS

USHBC’s Industry Relations (IR) program engaged blueberry growers and industry stakeholders, and provided valuable content across a variety of communications channels. In 2021, the IR program:

- Secured consistent earned trade media coverage across initiatives at a steady increase compared to previous years, totaling 130 placements and 4.2M impressions.
- Launched the new industry site, ushbc.blueberry.org, as the premier online hub for free marketing resources, industry education and data and insights. The site garnered 15,500+ visitors, with an average of 3.99 pageviews per visitor and average engagement time of nearly 3 minutes.
- Hosted 12 virtual town halls for every major blueberry growing region domestically and internationally to foster collaboration across the industry and hear directly from growers. USHBC President Kasey Cronquist also visited Georgia, California, Washington, Michigan and Mexico to meet with growers in person.
- Secured consistent earned trade media coverage across initiatives at a steady increase compared to previous years, totaling 130 placements and 4.2M impressions.

Sent 48 issues of the Behind the Blue newsletter and improved the open rate to an average of 28.5%, up from 26.3% in August 2020.

Promoted industry adoption of the Grab a Boost of Blue call to action, with blueberry brands leveraging resources on social media, using it in retail packaging and billboards!

Launches the new industry site, ushbc.blueberry.org, as the premier online hub for free marketing resources, industry education and data and insights. The site garnered 15,500+ visitors, with an average of 3.99 pageviews per visitor and average engagement time of nearly 3 minutes.

Steadily grew “The Business of Blueberries” podcast, which garnered 21,000 downloads in 2021 to push the podcast to over 30,000 total lifetime downloads. The most popular of the 54 total episodes were on topics related to mechanical harvesting and blueberry genetics. 70% of respondents in a listener survey say that the podcast has helped their business/operation.
**EXPORT**

The USHBC export program made great strides on behalf of the industry by opening new international markets for U.S. highbush blueberries and increasing consumer demand overseas.

In 2021, the council’s export efforts achieved the following on behalf of the industry:

- **Launched the USA Blueberries program**, with corresponding promotional content, to present a unified brand that better identifies and exemplifies the quality retailers and consumers can expect from U.S. blueberries.
- **Initiated China Foreign NGO on behalf of the industry** and established in-country representation to increase awareness of the availability and profitability of USA Blueberries.
- **Undertook a global program evaluation** to gather data on consumers in key markets to inform strategic decision-making and serve as a benchmark for measuring the growth and success of future programming.

**Global USA Blueberry Exports vs. Domestic Production (Excludes Canada)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dried (Lbs.)</th>
<th>Fresh (Lbs.)</th>
<th>Frozen (Lbs.)</th>
<th>Domestic Production (Lbs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
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<td>4.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GLOBAL FOOD MANUFACTURING**

The global food manufacturing program focused its efforts on reaching R&D product developers to educate and inspire them on the possibilities for using blueberry ingredients. The program accomplished the following in 2021:

**Product Innovation**

Developed 15 inspirational new food products to illustrate the versatility of blueberries across both sweet and savory applications, and in categories including dairy, beverage, bakery, meats, sauces and snacks.

**New Marketing Materials**

Highlighted new product innovations and data to support consumer demand for products featuring blueberries.

Established the USHBC R&D Advisory Board, comprised of 12 R&D product developers and industry leaders in the ingredient space to serve as program advisers and on-call experts to think creatively about development challenges to help drive big volume opportunities.

**Provided Customized R&D Support**

Supported individual product developers to increase their likelihood of blueberry use and speed the process of bringing a new product to market.

**Launched The Blueberry Bootcamp**

In partnership with Culinex, USHBC launched an annual educational program for product developers to immerse in the functionality of different blueberry ingredients and get bespoke support in developing new products featuring blueberries.
BOARD & STAFF

STATES
California: Bill Steed, Secretary
Florida: Bill Braswell
(alternate: Brittany Lee)
Georgia: John Bennett
(alternate: Michael Railey)
Michigan: George Fritz Jr., Treasurer
(alternate: Bob Carini)
New Jersey: Paul Macrie III
(alternate: Matthew Macrie)
North Carolina: Neil Moore
Oregon: Doug Krahmer
Washington: Bryan Sakuma, Vice Chair
(alternate: Brenton Roy)

REGIONS
Western: Verne Gingerich
(alternate: Ellie Norris)
Midwest: Shelly Hartmann, Chair
(alternate: Patricia Goin)
Northeast: Dave Arena
(alternate: Art Galletta, Past Chair)
South: Ryan Atwood
(alternate: Stacy Spivey)

HANDLER, IMPORTERS, EXPORTERS & PUBLIC MEMBERS
Handler: Risa Bakker
Importer #1: John Johnston
(alternate: Bonnie Lundblad)
Importer #2: JC Clinard Jr.
(alternate: Guy Cotton)
Importer #3: Janice Honigberg
(alternate: Ryan Lockman)
Importer #4: Tom Bodtke
Exporter #1, Chile: Jorge Andrés Varela
(alternate: Carlos Abuja tum)
Exporter #2, Canada: Ray Biln
(alternate: Jesse Brar)
Public Member: Amy Howell
(alternate: Bill Cline)

USHBC STAFF
President:
Kasey Cronquist
Vice President of Global Business Development:
Alicia Adler
Vice President of Engagement and Education:
Amanda Griffin
Global Business Manager:
Renata Dalton
Vice President of Marketing and Communications:
Jennifer Sparks
Senior Director of Nutrition and Health Research:
Leslie Wada, Ph.D.
Director of Operations:
Julie Fogarty
Executive Liaison:
Andrea Walters
Financial Controller:
Adam Winland
Meetings & Events Coordinator:
Mandy Boarman
Who We Are

COMMITTEES

EXECUTIVE
Chair: Shelly Hartmann
Vice Chair: Bryan Sakuma
Treasurer: George Fritz Jr.
Secretary: Bill Steed
Past Chair: Art Galletta

FINANCE
Chair: George Fritz Jr.
Art Galletta
John Bennett
Mark Hurst
Doug Krahmer
Neil Moore
Brenton Roy
Bill Steed

GOOD PRACTICES
Chair: Pat Goin
Bryan Sakuma
Carlos Abujatum
Cecilia Allende
Cort Brazelton
Christy Butler
Bill Cline
Denny Doyle
Verne Gingerich
Brittany Lee
Matt Macrie
Jason Smith

HEALTH RESEARCH
Chair: Dave Brazelton
Mark Sweeney
Amy Howell
Mike Mainland
Dave Trinka

USHBC BLUEBERRY INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY
Chair: Paul Macrie III
Andrés Armstrong
Christy Butler
Chad Hansen
Mark Hurst
Mike Mainland
Noel Sakuma
Rex Schultz

INDUSTRY RELATIONS
Chair: Bo Slack
Ryan Atwood
Risa Bakker
Tom Bodtke
Jesse Brar
Guy Cotton
Jerod Gross
Ryan Lockman
Andrew Maiman
Michael Railey
Jorge Andrés Varela

PROMOTION
Chair: Jeff Malensky
Brian Bocock
CarrieAnn Arias
Andrés Armstrong
Ray Biln
Bill Braswell
Bob Carini
JC Clinard Jr.
Denny Doyle
Janice Honigberg
John Johnston
Bonnie Lundblad
Ken Patterson
Nathan Sakuma
John Sheldof
Amanda Steele

EXPORT
Chair: Dave Arena
Mario Flores
Bob Carini
Elizabeth Carranza
Ryan Gentel
Jeff Malensky
Ellie Norris
Nathan Sakuma
Stacy Spivey
Don Van de Werken
ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Established in 2000, The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) is a federal agriculture research and promotion program with independent oversight from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). USHBC represents blueberry growers and packers in North and South America who market their blueberries in the United States and overseas, and works to promote the growth and well-being of the entire blueberry industry. USHBC was established by blueberry growers and currently has 2,500 growers, packers and importers. USHBC is committed to providing blueberries that are grown, harvested, packed and shipped in clean, safe environments.

VISION: USHBC empowers the industry to make blueberries the world’s favorite fruit.

MISSION: To grow consumer demand for blueberries by uniting industry stakeholders through research, promotions and resources that strengthen their ability to compete in the global marketplace.

REVENUE

$11,928,683

EXPENSES

$11,669,202

REVENUE SOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Domestic Crop</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Crop</td>
<td>$6,157,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Revenue</td>
<td>$826,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$52,433</td>
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