2017 Impact Report
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION
SERVING LAKE & MCHenry COUNTIES
ILLINOIS Extension
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
A Note from the Director

Extension programs touch every county in Illinois with research-based education extending beyond the University of Illinois Champaign campus. As state and local funding continues to be a challenge to enhance our programs, successes remains relevant and current in areas where there is program funding support.

The annual impact report delivers an overview of some of the current impacts that reflect Extension programs in Lake and McHenry counties. Impact was made possible also because of our gallant 4-H and Master Gardener volunteer leaders’ assistance, who constantly execute key roles in our educational programs. Together, with the help of our local supporters such as the Unit 3 Extension Council, foundation boards, county boards, townships and villages, private donors, partners, and collaborators, we made substantial impacts.

New in 2018, University of Illinois Extension and the College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Science (ACES) are pleased to offer two scholarships for each unit for the 2018–2019 academic year. Two scholarships of $2,500 each will be award in Lake/McHenry County.

In the pages ahead, our unit staff share 2017’s achievements with you in their own words. We look forward to another outstanding year of extending knowledge and changing lives in 2018.

James E. Reaves
County Extension Director
Master Gardener Program
The mission of the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener program is "helping others learn to grow." Master Gardeners help people improve their quality of life by teaching sound management practices for home and urban natural resources, creating aesthetically pleasing environments, promoting well-being through people-plant interactions and horticultural therapy, and by contributing to a safe, abundant food supply through home fruit and vegetable production.

Serving Local Residents

- 253 Volunteers
- 18,0760 Volunteer Hours
- 4,469.5 Continuing Education Hours
- $486,822 Value to Communities

RACE OF VOLUNTEERS

- 98% White
- 1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 1% Asian

Gender

- 43 (17%) Male
- 210 (83%) Female

Grow, Eat, Be Happy!
Kim Isaacson and Lake County Master Gardeners worked in collaboration with Zion Park District Summer Day Camp and Zion New Tech High School “Green Bees” Environmental Club to educate 36 youth ages 5-13 on the benefits and methods for growing their own produce.

“Youth in this low-income area have few opportunities to learn how to grow their own food. The Zion Park District’s Summer Day Camp at both Hermon Park and Shiloh Park offered their campers time in the Helping Hand Community Garden located at Hermon Park. Gardening started with the assistance of the Zion New Tech High School “Green Bees” Environmental Club whose members grew seedlings for the garden.

This group of environmentally conscientious teens also prepared the garden beds, planted seeds and cool season vegetable transplants to get the garden up and running for the campers when they arrived in June. Campers had the opportunity to visit the garden three days a week and learn about soils, seeds, plants, insects, garden maintenance and the environment. Attendees were able to harvest the produce and use it to prepare recipes so they could sample the new vegetables.”

Garden Connect
Brenda Dahlfors and McHenry County Master Gardeners partnered with SNAP and McHenry County Health Department to pair 36 individuals and their families with volunteers, space to garden, and plants and tools to garden with.

“Garden Connect pairs food pantry patrons with volunteers to grow their own fresh vegetables at 5 garden sites across the county, using seeds, seedlings and tools provided through a grant started in 2016 by the Northern Illinois Food Bank, U of I Extension, and McHenry County Department of Health. The Harvest Wrap-Up celebration included awards for best gardens, most produce, and healthy lifestyle changes (based on pre and post health screenings).

According to one gardener, ‘It was a great experience for me and my family. We ate vegetables freshly picked and it was a good way to show our kids how to grow our own vegetables.’”
Kim Isaacson and Lake County Master Gardeners partnered with Subaru of America to install a raised bed vegetable garden at Lamb’s Farm, training their developmentally disabled residents and providing vegetables for the onsite, resident-run restaurant.

“Lamb’s Farm needed additional ways to engage their developmentally disabled residents with skill-building activities, so the Master Gardeners of Lake County are providing guidance for building, implementing, and ongoing management and care of the garden. The garden project is helping Lamb’s Farm reduce food cost, provide fresh produce to their kitchen, and build responsible residents with new gardening and caretaking skills.”

Master Gardeners at Lambs Farm

Crude oil is travelling in unprecedented quantities through our communities.

MARGARET SCHNEEMANN

The Sea Grant network is dedicated to an approach that uses research, education and outreach to promote the wise use of our nation’s coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes resources for a sustainable economy and environment.

Master Gardener Help Desk

Brenda Dahlfors trains Illinois Extension Master Gardeners in McHenry County, who are helping an “over 55 community” of over 5300 home, learn to garden thanks to help desk they staff April through August.

“Every week, three Extension Master Gardeners volunteer their time to talk to residents, one on one, about their gardening concerns. Answers pertaining to container gardening, disease, insects, plant ID, pruning and other maintenance issues are only as far away for these clients as their community clubhouse. Residents are taking advantage of this service in increasing numbers.”

Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant

Crude Oil Movement Symposium

Margaret Schneemann helped inform 130 stakeholders about oil spill prevention, preparedness, and response.

“Crude oil is travelling in unprecedented quantities through our communities. Impacts of these pipeline, rail and truck movements on residents need to be better understood, so that we can improve emergency response to spill events, as well as make decisions that balance economic development benefits with safety and environmental concerns. This summer, I worked with partners, including the Sea Grant Network, the Great Lakes Commission, and the International Joint Commission, to hold the first-of-its-kind crude oil movement symposium. Topics included regional transportation, economics, hazards and risk, emergency response, and lessons learned from previous oil spill response and recovery efforts. As a result, stakeholders have a better understanding of crude oil transportation issues and oil spill prevention, preparedness, and response.”

Master Gardeners work with residents in McHenry County to teach proper gardening techniques.
Mary Napolitano helped a busy mom save time with make ahead slow cooker recipes during an Eating Smart, Being Active program.

“While we discussed ways to address her challenges, I offered tastings of the Crock-Pot vegetable and lentil stew to her family. I explained the easy, make ahead directions for making the stew and she agreed to try more slow cooker recipes.”

“I met Amanda and her children again while staffing an activity station at the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. She said that her family was now eating more vegetables in soups and stews since they enjoyed the tasting of the stew I had prepared.”

“I mentioned that I was enrolling students for the Illinois Junior Chef class I was teaching in the food pantry kitchen, and her twelve-year-old son immediately said he was interested! I’m happy to say he was my most enthusiastic student. Amanda sent me a note following the program to say her son was actively helping prepare meals and always made a point to include vegetables.”

Mary Napolitano helped low-income seniors in her classes access Illinois Link benefits at the local farmers market.

“I shared news of the LINK benefits and invited seniors from my Eat Smart, Live Strong classes to visit my booth at an upcoming farmers market. Ruth, a very quiet and shy participant in my Eat Smart, Live Strong program, visited my booth. She had matched her LINK benefits and had already purchased several vegetables. After I discussed herbs and spices with her, I reminded her that she could use her LINK dollars to purchase food-producing plants. Ruth said that she always wanted a little herb garden, and because she had money left over from the dollar-matching program she could afford to purchase two small herb plants. Additionally, Ruth said she had so much fun just walking around the market and interacting with people she met that she would try to come out more often for the exercise and social benefit.”

**SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION (SNAP-Education)**

SNAP-Education works with limited-resource audiences to make healthier choices where they eat, shop, live, play and learn in their communities. Through classes and workshops, and by working towards policy, systems, and environmental changes, SNAP-Education positively impacts the nutrition and activity choices of people and communities we serve.

**Serving Local Residents**

- Total SNAP-Ed Participants: 6,713
- Adults: 2,115 (32%)  
  Youth: 4,598 (68%)
- Participants Who Identified as Hispanic: 3,823 (57%)

**RACE OF PARTICIPANTS**

- 76% White (5,110)
- 22% Black (1,490)
- 2% American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (113)

**Our Partners**

- K-12 Schools: 42
- Stores or Markets: 6
- Youth Centers: 13
- Community Centers: 32
- Early Childhood Centers: 7
- Food Pantries and Food Banks: 12
School Gardens
Dale Kehr helped teachers in Lake and McHenry counties learn how to implement school gardens in their community.

“In October, we started a second school garden workshop cohort set to finish in May. During the workshop series, participants learned how to implement school gardens in their school community. Participants included school food service directors, teachers, and vice principals, and the number of participants quadrupled from four in 2016–2017 to 16 this school year. We even created a partnership with local foundations to offer a monetary stipend for each site if the participants attend seven out of the nine workshops.”

OrganWise Guys
To help combat obesity in McHenry County, Mary Flores used the OrganWise Guys dolls and curriculum to teach youth what foods are healthy, resulting in healthier choices by students and teachers.

“At Crosby Elementary School, after a lesson on the importance of drinking water from the Kidney Brothers, a second grader came up to me and said ‘My alarm went off, Ms. Mary.’ I congratulated him for being responsible and getting an alarm clock allowing him to make it to school on time. He laughed and said, ‘No! My pee was very dark yellow, so I went and drank a whole bottle of water right away.’”

He said that he wanted to help encourage his friends to make healthier choices too, because they usually eat fast food.
MIGUEL PALACIOS

My Plate
To help combat obesity in Lake County, Miguel Palacios used activity stations to educate clients which foods are healthy, resulting in healthier choices by food pantry patrons.

“During a My Plate activity at Community Christ Church in Lake County, a local teen and his grandmother approached me. The teen was carrying a bottle of soda with him and I explained that a regular soda contains 64 grams of sugar and suggested that he substitute water instead. I also showed him how to read food labels of the products he is purchasing so he can make a more informed choice.

“A month later, the teen and his grandmother approached me again and he shared that he had stopped drinking soda. He was thankful for the information that I shared with him and he said that he wanted to help encourage his friends to make healthier choices too, because they usually eat fast food.”

OrganWise for Healthier Choices
Sandra Barba helped 650 low income individuals learn to prepare and budget for a healthier diet and lifestyle.

“While conducting an OrganWise Guys program in one classroom setting, a little girl asked to share her story about how she influenced her mother to make a healthier choice of drink for their family. The child told her mother that she learned that the juice has lots of sugar in it so she should buy something else, so the mother returned the gallon of fruit juice to the shelf and purchased a gallon of water for her family instead.”
Eating Smart, Being Active
Ofelia Delgado taught 50 low-income adults how to stretch their SNAP food dollars and make healthy choices in Waukegan Township through the Eating Smart, Being Active program.

“Aaron has been an Eating Smart, Being Active class participant for 15 months. At one class, he excitedly told me that he ate 100 percent whole grain spaghetti for dinner the night before.

“Even more excited, he shared, ‘Now, what I do like is brown rice. I never did like it. Daggone, brown rice,’ and he made a face. ‘Now I like it! I make steak and brown rice.’ Aaron enjoys everything that he likes, but he now makes healthier choices. He does not go out to eat as much. He admits he used to drink 40 or more cans of pop a day, but now he only drinks one, if he has any.

“Sugar was like my best friend. Now I drink more water. I also walk. I walk slowly. I put my headphones on. I measure it by my songs. If the song is four minutes, I walk four minutes, if the song is fast I walk fast. I have a favorite song that is ten minutes and I walk the full ten minutes. I pace myself.’

“Incorporating moderate exercises such as walking as well as swimming has helped Aaron keep losing weight and manage his new healthy lifestyle.”

Smarter Lunchroom
Lee Kouski collaborated with North Chicago School District #187 to bring the Smarter Lunchroom Initiative to their schools to help over 3,564 students learn how to make healthier lunchroom choices.

“The Smarter Lunchroom Initiative used by North Chicago School District encourages students to make healthier choices through no cost or low cost environmental changes. Some examples of these changes include colorful posters with healthy messages and using age appropriate fruit and vegetable naming cards to encourage the students to try the new options. Another effective environmental change was to move the white milk first in the student’s line of vision to encourage students to make healthier choices. The Smarter Lunchroom Initiative helps the students develop healthy habits that will stay with them the rest of their lives.”

Illinois Junior Chef in North Chicago
Amy Campos taught healthy habits to over 300 children, plus their parents, in North Chicago’s “food desert” to help them access nutritious food.

“Many children have enjoyed the hands-on approach of Illinois Junior Chef and as a result have tried foods that they have stated they do not normally eat at home. The veggie chow mein is the number one favorite, and there were a few that were very resistant in making the recipe, let alone tasting it. At the end, it changed their view on how to cook the vegetables in the recipe and have even made it at home for their families.”

“By providing classes for children and adults, we are able to reach the whole family. A parent shared that she had been using the information she learned in the My Plate for My Family classes for her picky eater. With the suggestions, ideas from other parents, and reaching her 4-year-old by using the Color Me Healthy program, her child was finally eating more vegetables by the time the last adult classes ended.”

Aaron’s positive attitude and willingness to participate in the nutrition classes has helped him to keep up with his new, healthy lifestyle.
School Wellness in Waukegan

Dale Kehr helped Waukegan School district implement their wellness policy through parent education.

“Washington Elementary School is one of 15 elementary schools in Waukegan School District #60 that is required to have a school wellness policy. All year, I have attended the Wellness Committee meetings with the Health Department’s intern and we have worked on making changes in the community around the school. The intern scheduled a parent night for us to deliver presentations about healthy snacks using vegetables, fruits, and yogurt as a way to feed students with good nutrition sources. Twelve families in our program agreed that Cheetos is not a nutritious snack for their children and decided to change the snack foods they give to their families.”

One Deerfield Place

Lee Kouski taught low-income seniors in Deerfield, IL how to cook with fresh fruits and vegetables, changing how they prepare daily meals.

“The Catholic Charities activity director was concerned that the clients located in One Deerfield Place, a public housing facility for low income seniors, were not eating any fruits or vegetables except for the canned ones they got at the food pantry. She contacted the Extension SNAP-Ed staff to provide a series of nutrition classes for the clients, so I led Eat Smart, Live Strong classes with a recipe demonstration in each of the sessions. The clients took the recipes home to prepare meals for their families, and reported that they started using more fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables. Overall, 80 percent of our participants reported that they used at least one fresh fruit and vegetable in preparing daily meals.”

OrganWise at Clark Elementary

To help combat obesity in Lake County, Miguel Palacios used the OrganWise Guys dolls and curriculum to teach youth what foods are healthy, resulting in healthier choices by students and teachers.

“In a kindergarten class at Clark Elementary School, the children mentioned that the teacher was drinking soda every day and always carried a diet soda. After two weeks, the teacher indicated that she was not drinking soda anymore. She expressed that the process has been very difficult, but now she is only drinking water. It is amazing how our programs at the schools can change not only the kids’ behavior but the adults’ behavior as well.”

Eat Smart in Waukegan

Ofelia Delgado taught 50 low-income adults how to stretch their SNAP food dollars and make healthy choices in Waukegan Township through the Eating Smart, Being Active program.

“One reluctant participant never had lentils and does not usually care for new ideas but is very respectful, listens and participates in the discussion with the other adults. She listened to the benefits of low fat proteins and the many bean, pea and legume options. When we were preparing the recipe, the smells were so tantalizing and enticed her enough that she had to try it. Our participants learned how to make life-long changes, improving their overall health.”
4-H Youth Development
Illinois 4-H prepares youth to solve Illinois’ problems by producing the leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, stewards, and builders we need. 4-H builds good leaders by giving them safe environments to practice all the skills needed to be successful leaders. Illinois 4-H knows that our very lives are inseparable from the health of our planet and work daily to save the world for this and future generations.

Serving Local Residents
- **Participants**
  - 6,434
- **Adults**
  - 269 (4%)
- **Youth**
  - 6,165 (96%)
- **Participants Who Identified as Hispanic**
  - 1,811 (28%)

**RACE OF PARTICIPANTS**
- **78%** White (5,028)
- **11%** More Than One Race (728)
- **6%** Black (364)
- **5%** Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Some Other Race, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (259)

**4-H Leaders**
Michelle Cox worked with 4-H Volunteer Leaders to create peer support resources, trainings and recognition.

“Recruiting, communicating, and maintaining quality 4-H volunteer leaders is critical to the overall success of University of Illinois Extension 4-H program. 4-H leaders continue to make a big difference in the lives of young people throughout Illinois. I hosted a leaders forum that was developed to give the 4-H volunteer leaders an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns as well as give insight on how 4-H could improve in areas such as communication, recognition, resources, and incentives.”

**JUNTOS**

“Harvard High School in McHenry County has a graduation rate of 86 percent with only 29 percent of the graduates ready to enter college. Harvard Jr. High has a school population of 570 students, is 62.8 percent Latino with a 13-point achievement gap compared to their white counterparts.

“Juntos Para Una Mejor Educación – Together for a Better Education’ (Juntos) is designed to help Latino youth and their parents gain the knowledge and skills needed to bridge the gap from high school to higher education. I presented Juntos in the fall of 2016 and spring 2017 to Harvard Jr. High with 46 parents and youth participating. Juntos has been presented to 56 families in Lake County in 2016-2017, and new programming is planned for 2017-2018 in the Mundelein, Waukegan, Gurnee, and Wauconda communities.”
Lake County 4-H at the State Fair
Lake County 4-H continues To Make the Best Better, bringing more innovative ways to enhance how we showcase 4-H! State fair participation for visual arts and general projects increased this year from 32 members in 2016 to 43 in 2017. Of the participants representing Lake County 4-H in Springfield, 19 won superior awards and 16 won awards of excellence.

Bilingual Outreach
Sandra Prez brings up-to-date information about programs offered by Extension in both Lake and McHenry counties as a frequent guest on the “Por Nuestros Hijos” (For Our Children) radio program on WKRS 1220 AM Radio in Waukegan.

“One recent show prompted Wauconda Area Public Library bilingual coordinator, Norma Hacke, to reach out to Prez to bring Spanish-language college preparedness programming (“Juntos”) to Latino parents and their middle school children at the Wauconda Area Library.”

“There was a decrease in Career Technology educational programs within the McHenry County school districts, and it was determined that the 4-H program should fill that gap. MICHÈLE AAVANG

4-H Trades Program
Michele Aavang secured grant funding and initiated a woodworking SPIN club at Woodstock High School, filling the gap in trade education.

“There was a decrease in career technology educational programs within the McHenry County school districts, and it was determined that the 4-H program should fill that gap through project participation in the trades related program areas such as woodworking, welding, small engines, electricity and tractors. Each of the woodworking SPIN club 4-H members completed multiple projects during their meetings while attaining valuable and applicable skills for their future.”

Youth Leadership at ZBTHS
Michelle Cox brought leadership development to 10 youth at Zion–Benton Township High School through the Junior Zion–Benton Leadership Academy (JZBLA).

“Zion–Benton Township High School has a graduation rate of 80 percent with only 32 percent of the graduates ready to enter college. Through conversations with the Zion–Benton Coalition for Health Communities, I helped plan and facilitate a 5-week, youth leadership development program. The objective of the Junior Zion–Benton Leadership Academy (JZBLA) leadership program was to instill the core values of leadership, character building and citizenship. Youth learned the characteristics of a leader, the benefits of mentoring and coaching, and how to lead with purpose.”

Wauconda Area Public Library ‘4-H Juntos’ with 4-H trained facilitator Michaela Ayala, middle school students and their parents learning how to prepare for high school and post-secondary education.
4-H Eagles Club Gives Back
The 4-H Eagles Club in McHenry County gives back to their community in a big way.

“Members of the McHenry County 4-H Eagles Club observed a need for a playground in their community years after the local park district was forced to tear down playground equipment due to safety concerns. As a result, the 4-H Club decided to hold a fundraiser to help the park raise funds for new playground equipment.

“The 4-H Eagles Club set an example in their community and rallied others to raise money or donate toward the cause. In the summer of 2017, volunteers helped with the construction of the NEW playground equipment that the park district purchased with the help of funds raised by the 4-H Eagles Club and other community groups. Since the club was unable to assist with the construction due to age restrictions, they donated and served lunch to the adult volunteers. Thanks to the hard work and inspiration of the 4-H Eagles Club, their community has a safe, new, handicap accessible playground within their park district.”

In an area where after-school programs are not as plentiful as they once were, we now have three SPIN clubs that provide programming on healthy lifestyles, food access, and educational success.

SABRINA HULEY

4-H and Minority Engagement
Sabrina Huley has helped expand after-school 4-H programs in minority communities.

“Currently, the Lake County 4-H program is serving less than 1 percent of the total minority population in Lake County, so we are striving to provide opportunities for minority youth that will allow them to engage in an empowering 4-H experience.

“Part of that initiative created an opportunity for 4-H SPIN clubs to develop at Lyon Magnet Elementary school in Waukegan, Illinois. In an area where after-school programs are not as plentiful as they once were, we now have three SPIN clubs that provide programming on healthy lifestyles, food access, and educational success. The leader of the program, who is also a teacher, stated that the students are excited to have 4-H in the school and that other teachers are showing interest.”
Home and Community Education

University of Illinois Extension has partnered with Lake and McHenry County Associations for Home and Community Education (HCE) for over 100 years, providing its membership research-based educational lessons. The mission of HCE is to enhance the lives of individuals and families through quality educational programs and experiences and to encourage responsible leadership and service to the community. HCE supports Extension in each county through annual financial donations that assist in the overall local budget. Members also serve as 4-H volunteers and on Extension boards.

Giving Back to the Community

HCE members also give back to their community through volunteering and donations to local community organizations. In the 2016–2017 year, HCE members made donations to the following organizations:
- Open Arms Mission Food Pantry
- Zion Grade School
- P.A.D.S
- Kid’s Korner
- The Anti–Ouch Pouch
- The Bra Recyclers LLC
- Summer Learn and Grow Youth Gardening Project

27,396
Volunteer Hours

$710,926.20
Value to Communities

HCE Programs
- Preserving Your Harvest
- Intro to Healing Herbs in Your Kitchen
- Environmental Issues and Education
- Financial Plans and Updates
- Flea Market Gardening
- Hummingbirds Our Flying Jewels

2017-2018 Officers

Lake County
- President: Angela Hicks
- Vice President: Betty Wertke
- Second Vice President: Carmella Marshall
- Secretary: Candace Keegan
- Treasurer: Sandy Henke
- Cultural Enrichment: Lauri Hargrove
- International: Margaret Hilliard
- Public Relations: Dianne Glozier

McHenry County
- President: Carol Giammattei
- Vice President: Karen Wootton
- Second Vice President: Jean Pieroni
- Secretary/4-H: Judy Corson
- Treasurer: Marian Lang
- Public Relations: Florence Spesard
- International: Geri Pondel
- Cultural Enrichment: Barbara Freeman
- Family & Community Outreach: Christel Mueller
Local Government Education
Each year, county, township, and municipal elected and appointed officials and administrators from across the state learn through the Local Government Education webinar series. Participants benefit from the advanced instruction and broad expertise that instructors bring to our programming, and from the question-and-answer session following each presentation. In 2017, 1,400 local government officials learned through the live webinars and program recordings on a variety of topics, including state and federal legislative updates, infrastructure for economic development, disaster recovery, rural youth retention strategies, and the opioid crisis in Illinois. For more information, visit go.illinois.edu/lge.

Financial Information
The financial crisis in the state of Illinois has proved to be a difficult obstacle for another year’s budget. Through fiscal conservation and careful planning, University of Illinois Extension has been able to stay afloat throughout the past few years. Looking forward, we will continue to make smart decisions in our program and organizational planning.

Extension Council
Members of the Extension council contribute immeasurably to the effectiveness of University of Illinois Extension by helping develop and implement local Extension programs and secure the needed resources. Council member input helps ensure that a planned sequence of educational experiences addresses local issues or problems.

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<tr>
<th>Council Member</th>
<th>County</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Boynton</td>
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<td>Vickie Brown</td>
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<td>Michael J. Evans</td>
<td>McHenry</td>
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<td>Shawna Huley</td>
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<th>Revenue</th>
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<td>21% Building</td>
<td>6% Equipment</td>
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