



Universal Acceptance

Action Plan for Universal Acceptance of Domain Names and Email Addresses

FY24: July 2023 - June 2024

Universal Acceptance Steering Group
24 July 2023

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1 Introduction

Universal Acceptance (UA) is when all domain names and all email addresses work in all software applications. The Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) was formed in 2015 to advocate and enthuse the relevant stakeholders to make their applications UA ready.

UASG will continue to:

1. Raise awareness of the issue among the relevant stakeholders
2. Help technology and email providers make their tools, systems and services UA ready by providing documentation and training
3. Encourage businesses and governments to ask their developers and suppliers to provide UA ready solutions for the benefit of end users
4. Measure progress on UA readiness

This document provides the operating plan for the UASG from July 2023 till June 2024 (FY24).

2 Overview

The vision of the UASG is:

All domain names and all email addresses work in all software applications

The mission of the UASG is:

To mobilize the software application developers to get their products UA ready by providing encouragement, documentation, case studies, tools and measures to deliver the right user experience to the end user

2.1 Geographic Scope

Work on UA requires both working with global and local stakeholders. Beyond reaching out to the global stakeholders, for FY24, UASG intends to continue to support the local stakeholders through existing initiatives in China, Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern Europe (CIS-EE: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Serbia), India, Sri Lanka and Thailand. ICANN has

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started a UA Project with Association of African Universities (AAU) as part of its Coalition of Digital Africa initiative. UASG aims to expand its local initiative program to other geographies where there is keen local interest or where there is need to engage further. These include Europe and Latin America and Caribbean (LAC).

2.1.1 Measures of Success

UASG will keep developing the two separate measures of success:

- Global indicators, and
- Progress with the stakeholders.

UASG will continue to measure and publish UA readiness annually.

2.1.2 Global Indicators

The current tentative list of indicators includes the following:

1. UA readiness of technology, including Social Media, Content Management Systems, Programming Languages, etc.
2. Top websites globally accepting a wide range of email addresses.
3. Email software and services supporting internationalized email addresses.
4. Email deployments supporting internationalized email addresses.

2.1.3 Progress with Stakeholders

The progress with stakeholders can be measured against the progress markers in Section 3.

2.2 Working Groups and Stakeholders

UASG has organized itself in working groups focused on different aspects of the work identified and addressing the various stakeholders in the community. The stakeholders and UASG working groups are identified here and discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.



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2.2.1 Stakeholders

The UASG working groups will be working to reach out to a number of stakeholders (external to the UASG) to promote UA readiness. These stakeholders will include the following:

1. **Technology Enablers** - Organizations producing relevant standards and best current practices and providers of software programming languages, tools and frameworks.
2. **Technology Developers** – Organizations, (open source) communities and individuals developing and deploying online applications and services using the programming languages, tools and frameworks.
3. **Email Software and Service Providers**
 - a. **Email Software Providers** - Organizations and individuals providing the different applications, tools and utilities for the email ecosystem.
 - b. **Email Service Providers** - Organizations and individuals providing services for the email ecosystem.
4. **Email (and System) Administrators** - Organizations and individuals deploying and administering email related software and services.
5. **Top-Level Domain Registries and Registrars**: Country code top-level domain managers (ccTLDs) and generic TLDs (gTLDs) operators, especially internationalized domain name (IDN) TLDs, as well as registrars.
6. **Academia**: Faculty and students of technical programs at universities.
7. **Government Policy Makers** - Government officials generating demand for UA ready products and services by updating accessibility standards and procurement processes. Officials overseeing planning and deployment of e-government services for citizens.

The following section identifies UASG stakeholders, expected outcomes from UASG efforts with those stakeholders and measures to assess progress and achievement.

2.2.2 Working Groups

The UASG will continue to be organized into the following working groups (WGs). The global groups will work closely with the geographically focused groups for local awareness and delivery.

2.2.2.1 Global Working Groups

A. UA Technology WG

B. UA Email Address Internationalization (EAI) WG

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- C. UA Measurements WG**
- D. UA Communications WG**
- E. UA Day WG (Planned to be chartered in FY24)**

2.2.2.2 Geographically Focused Working Groups

- F. UA Local Initiatives WG**
- G. UA Ambassadors WG**

The geographically focused local initiatives and ambassadors will be supported in close collaboration with local resources.

The working groups will have an explicit set of activities that they will address as part of their [charters](#). The accomplishment of these groups will be one of the measures of the success of this program. These groups will comprise of volunteers from the community, with oversight from the UASG leadership team, comprising of UASG elected chair and vice chairs, as per the [UASG charter](#).

3 Stakeholders

This section provides details of the stakeholders, the outcome aimed for them, and a sequence of how UASG would like to see progress and measures for success. Kindly note that the outcome and progress markers depict longer term-goals and how stakeholders may progress to achieve these goals. It is expected that the stakeholders will make progress on these during the current financial year.

3.1 Technology Enablers

Technical community members from standards bodies (e.g., IETF, W3C, Unicode Consortium, etc.) as well as those who provide programming languages, tools and frameworks (open source or proprietary).

This stakeholder will be managed by the *Measurement Working Group (WG)* and the *Technology WG*. The measurement is done largely by the Measurement WG, whereas the Technology WG will focus on remediating the issues identified as well as developing technical training for deploying UA-ready solutions. In some cases,

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where technology developers are local, e.g. in China, the relevant *UA Local Initiatives* will also get involved.

3.1.1 Outcomes

1. Relevant technology standards support all domain names and all email addresses.
2. Programming languages, tools and frameworks providers provide proper support to accept, validate, store, process and display domain names and email addresses.

3.1.2 Progress Markers (progress by Stakeholders)

1. Becoming familiar with UA issues and limitations in their own standards and technology.
2. Identifying areas that need to be reviewed for their standards and platforms and prioritizing them for remediation (gap analysis).
3. Reviewing and remediating their standards and platforms.
4. Publishing updated standards and libraries for use.
5. Presenting their work on UA readiness at relevant fora.

3.1.3 Measures

1. Technical Standards
 - a. Technical standards and relevant gaps identified.
 - b. Remediation mechanism for addressing these gaps developed.
 - c. Engagement undertaken to address these gaps.
2. Frameworks, Libraries and Tools
 - a. Leading development technologies (Open Source and Proprietary) identified and prioritized for gap analysis to support UA.
 - b. Gap for UA readiness for these technologies published.
 - c. Engagement undertaken for remediation of these technologies.
 - d. Technologies and frameworks remediated to support UA.

3.2 Technology Developers

Those involved in developing software products and services, and their management, including local, regional and global organizations which provide software applications and services.



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The *Local Initiatives Working Group* and *UA Ambassadors* will reach out to this stakeholder with training and materials developed by the *Technology Working Group*. In addition, this stakeholder is also managed by the *Technology Working Group* for more global outreach.

3.2.1 Outcomes

1. Application developers know about UA and its benefits for end users.
2. They are actively developing software which is UA ready and integrated UA support in their software development practice.
3. They are also engaged in training peers on how to program for UA readiness.

3.2.2 Progress Markers (progress by Stakeholders)

1. Becoming aware of UA issues and UA documentation on how to address it.
2. Taking stock of existing inventory of applications for UA remediation.
3. Piloting UA readiness upgrades.
4. Including UA readiness in procurement processes.
5. Updating methodology for technology development for UA readiness.
6. Designing, developing and testing application for UA readiness.
7. Publishing and presenting UA ready development and testing practices at relevant fora.

3.2.3 Measures

1. Training development and dissemination to technology developers (in conjunction with UA Ambassadors and UA Local Initiatives).
2. Actual deployed technology which is UA-ready, e.g. websites, applications, etc.

3.3 Email Software and Service Providers

Providers of open-source and proprietary email applications, tools and services, including ancillary tools and services e.g., for spam.

The *UA Local Initiatives Working Group* and *UA Ambassadors* will reach out to this stakeholder with training and materials developed by the *EAI Working Group*. In



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In addition, this stakeholder is also managed by the *EAI Working Group* at the global level.

3.3.1 Outcomes

1. Email and related software and services are able to send to and receive from all email addresses including EAI (Level 1).
2. Email and related software and services are able to host such email addresses, as needed (Level 2).
3. Email and related tools and services are accepting, validating, storing, processing and displaying internationalized email addresses.

3.3.2 Progress Markers (progress by Stakeholders)

1. Becoming aware of motivation, issues and documentation for addressing EAI.
2. Finding peers for interoperability testing.
3. Upgrading their email systems and services to be EAI Ready.
4. Publishing EAI ready practices at relevant fora.

3.3.3 Measures

1. EAI-readiness of email related software and tools.
2. EAI-readiness of email related services.

3.4 Email (and System) Administrators

Those involved in deploying, configuring and administering email related software and services in organizations.

This stakeholder is managed by the *UA Ambassadors* and *UA Local Initiatives Working Group* with input from the *EAI Working Group*.

3.4.1 Outcomes

1. Email deployments are updated and configured to send and receive all email addresses including those in local languages and scripts (Level 1 support).
2. Email deployments are also supporting creation of email addresses in local languages, as needed (Level 2 support).



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3.4.2 Progress Markers (progress by Stakeholders)

1. Becoming aware of motivation, issues and documentation for UA.
2. Participating in training to understand the issues and solutions for EAI.
3. Finding peers for interoperability testing.
4. Upgrading email deployments to be EAI Ready.
5. Presenting EAI deployment practices at relevant fora.

3.4.3 Measures

1. Training development and dissemination to email administrators (in conjunction with UA Ambassadors and UA Local Initiatives).
2. Number of email servers on the Internet announcing EAI support.
3. Estimation of EAI addresses in use (measure to be investigated).

3.5 Top-Level Domain Registries and Registrars

Country code top-level domain managers (ccTLDs) and generic TLDs (gTLDs) operators, especially internationalized domain name (IDN) TLDs, as well as registrars.

UASG will reach out to the stakeholder through *UASG Leadership, UA Local Initiatives* and *UA Ambassadors*.

3.5.1 Outcomes

1. The TLD operators and registrars are leading by example by making their own systems UA ready, supporting domain names and email addresses in the languages and scripts used by their respective communities.
2. The TLD operators and registrars are encouraging the organizations they work with, e.g., registrars, resellers and service providers, to be UA ready.
3. The TLD operators and registrars are engaging with their stakeholder community to encourage UA adoption.

3.5.2 Progress Markers (progress by Stakeholders)

1. Becoming aware of motivation, issues and documentation for supporting UA.
2. Identifying and prioritizing their internal systems to update to support IDNs and EAI in the local languages and scripts used by their communities.
3. Conducting UA training of their staff and organizations in domain services.
4. Upgrading their systems and services to be UA ready.

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5. Encouraging their registrars, resellers and service providers to support UA.
6. Developing outreach materials on the needs and benefits of UA.
7. Engaging with the community and the public sector to encourage UA adoption.

3.5.3 Measures

3. UA readiness of TLD registries.
4. UA readiness of the TLD registrars, resellers and service providers.

3.6 Academia

Faculty and students of technical programs at universities.

The *UA Local Initiatives Working Group* and *UA Ambassadors* will reach out to this stakeholder with training and materials developed by the *Technology Working Group* and *EAI Working Group*. It also aims to update the curricula for technology programs for a sustainable change.

3.6.1 Outcomes

1. Technical faculty is aware of need to support UA and understand the technical solution.
2. Technical faculty has included UA as part of the curriculum and teaching its regularly to its students.

3.6.2 Progress Markers (progress by Stakeholders)

1. Becoming aware of motivation, and issues related to UA.
2. Getting faculty trained on technical solutions for UA.
3. Including UA related training in the coursework.
4. Upgrading their curriculum to include UA related items.
5. Requiring UA readiness in student related projects and assessments.

3.6.3 Measures

1. Outreach to academia to inform about UA.
2. Technical training of faculty on UA.
3. Incorporation of UA in technical courses for students.

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3.7 Government Policy Makers

Government officials in technology related ministries or departments, responsible for government technology procurement and e-government services development.

This stakeholder group is managed by the *UA Local initiatives* to interact with their local governments. UASG will also interact with Government Advisory Committee (GAC) IDN and UA WG to support the outreach more broadly and help with measurements.

3.7.1 Outcomes

1. Policy makers understand the issues and need of UA and include these in relevant standards and government's procurement criteria.
2. They are requiring their e-government systems and services to be UA ready.

3.7.2 Progress Markers (progress by Stakeholders)

1. Becoming aware of UA Issues, its need and relevant UA documentation, including procurement guidelines.
2. Assessing UA-readiness of existing policies and procedures.
3. Updating relevant policies and procedures to include UA readiness.
4. Assessing UA-readiness of e-Government systems and services.
5. Asking for UA support in the procurement of systems and services.
6. Developing and upgrading e-Government systems and services to be UA-ready.

3.7.3 Measures

1. Number of governments engaged.
2. Number of geographies using UA in their procurement processes.

4 UASG Organization and Operations

UASG's working groups are comprised of volunteers from the community. They work towards determining scope and priority of work to address UA. This section provides the details of the working groups, what they are planning to do in FY23 and the expected budget for their work items in case where the work needs to be contracted based on the statements of work defined by the working groups. If the budget for a

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work item is not specified, it implies that either the explicit budget support is not needed to undertake the work item, or its budget is already covered in another work item.

The budget allocation is presented as a guideline, with all figures in US dollars. UASG leadership team, in consultation with the WG chairs, will continue to review it quarterly based on the progress of the work by the WGs during the year and may re-allocate funds as needed.

4.1 Technology Working Group

The Technology working group will focus on remediation of standards and technology and developing technical training for this purpose. They focus on Technology Enablers and Technology Developers as the stakeholders.

4.1.1 Tentative Budget

#	Task	Description	Budget
T1	Identify technology stacks for UA testing – Phase 2	Research, identify and prioritize technology stacks for UA testing	30,000
T2	Contribute improvements to Dovecot code to correct EAI support problems		-
T3	Test for bugs in email software when email addresses contain non-ASCII text in the human-readable parts of the address syntax.		12,000
T4	Identify the big picture UA challenges in 2023 through surveys of targeted stakeholders and provide recommendations to the UASG	Identify the big picture UA challenges in 2022-23 through surveys of targeted stakeholders and provide recommendations to the UASG	30,000
T5	Step by step instructions to configure CMS	CMS: Content Management System	15,000
T6	Update standards and develop best practices	Work on the action items recommended in the Standards and Best Practices UASG040 report	-

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4.2 EAI Working Group

This EAI working group will focus on identification of relevant technology and its gap in supporting EAI, remediation of the technology and providing training materials for email software and service providers to promote EAI support and deployment.

4.2.1 Tentative Budget

#	Task	Description	Budget
E1	Complete EAI Self-Certification Guide version 1.0	Must ensure that the terminology of support levels is identical to E3 and useful for both suppliers and user/buyers	
E1.1	Build self-certification tool to generate scores to determine Levels a) Initially a spreadsheet to generate scores to determine Levels b) Online complete tool to generate scores to determine Levels	Develop an online tool for tool and service providers to assess their own tools and services based on the self-certification guide for EAI	15,000
E2.1	Make it easier to experiment with a self-hosted working EAI systems	Provide system admins/mail providers with technical working EAI setup(s), configuration(s) and test(s) for self-hosting. This may include but is not limited to scripts and instructions for locating and/or downloading resources	15,000
E2.2	Placeholder for Training videos: - EAI Self certification guide videos - How to use the self-certification guide in procurement requirements - Step by step instructional videos to explain how to create email servers, websites, apps, etc.		10,000
E3.1	Identify reference customers to showcase adoption of globally inclusive email and document the experience	Ask mail service providers to suggest reference customers. Identify reference customers to	3,000



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		showcase adoption of globally inclusive email and document the experience. Work with UA-Comms WG to develop and publish the customer stories	
E3.2	Identify reference mail service providers to showcase for adoption of globally inclusive email and document the experience	Work with the service providers of the customers. Work with UA-Comms WG to develop and publish the provider stories	3,000
E4	Support self-certification for EAI	Help reference providers perform self-certification using the guide from E1	25,000
E5	Placeholder for Technical community questions from Stackoverflow, UASG blog for answers (in HTML)	In a different way compared to UASG044 . Answers to FAQs will be compiled in HTML format on UASG.tech	
E6.1	Improve support of globally inclusive email addresses by engaging market share leaders (not limited to email service providers)		
E6.2	As ICANN has succeeded in scheduling meetings with the market leaders, prepare for and hold those meetings. Do follow-up actions and report on the results		

4.3 Measurement Working Group

This working group will plan, oversee and direct the gap analysis efforts of the UASG for various frameworks and technologies and report on progress on UA readiness.

4.3.1 Tentative Budget

#	Task	Description	Budget
M1	Prepare and publish UA Readiness Annual Report		
M2	Update IT-related curricula to include IDNs and UA	Academia outreach	30,000
M3	Whitepaper advocating IDNA2008 for software developers	Write-up on the opportunities in using	-

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		IDNA2008 and on the shortcomings of IDNA 2003	
M4	Characterize how much Android platform limits acceptance of IDNs in web browsing	Identify the UA related constraints on applications running on Android platform	6,000
M5	Analyze impact of the use of HTML5 email field	Collect data and identify how to address HTML5 email field for accepting globally inclusive email addresses as identifiers	6,000
M6	Market research to identify growing email or social media products which compete on UA support	Identification of smaller but competitive and growing email service providers, social networks, etc. who are doing better in UA readiness than the leading ones so that we can highlight the upstart providers to put pressure on the leading companies	6,000
M7	Rating email software using EAI Self-Certification Guide (phase 1)	Select 1-3 leading email packages or services. Rate their EAI support using the EAI Self-Certification Guide. Report on ratings, and also identify problems with the guide	10,000
M8	Update to '2017 \$9.8 billion opportunity' study to showcase the UA implementation's benefits for businesses	Revisit the 2017 study and add explicit details based on the tools, such as web hosting tools' benefits, etc.	TBC
M9	Gap analysis of e-commerce platforms and more Content Management Systems (Phase 2)	Conduct second phase of analysis of more content management systems	35,000

4.4 Communications Working Group

The Communications Working Group will develop communication strategy for the UASG and oversee its execution, in collaboration with other WGs.

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4.4.1 Tentative Budget

#	Task	Description	Budget
C1	Content for communications channels: Explainer videos	Three explainer videos (e.g., animated format), ~3-5 mins explaining UA/EAI issues and based on training materials, in English with subtitles in the 6 UN official languages	15,000
C2	Engage with a strategic comms writing partner	Engaging with the comms partner on UASG communications/content development and production (7-10 Blogs, 3-4 Case studies, etc.) and Ad-hoc support (incl. organizing SMM)	25,000
C3	Review UA/EAI content and its dissemination channels	Review of UASG/UA WGs activities and projects content, its appropriate format and dissemination channels for relevant stakeholders (e.g., via website, SMM, UA community and other channels). Including consideration of possibilities to make regular Newsletters	
C4	Update UASG.tech website	Coordinate the reviews and upgrades on UASG.tech website with other WGs	-
C5	Reach-out to the UASG/UA community to present in the national, regional international forums/events		
C6	Promote and support annual UA Day for 2024	Participation in preparation of UASG Annual UA Day and organizing its promotion	
C7	Identify the case studies on EAI/UA implementations	Identify case studies on UA adoption from around the world	
C8	Placeholder to support step by step instructional videos that are planned by the other working groups (EAI/Tech)		
C9	Planning and publishing the UASG Newsletter		

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4.5 Local Initiatives Working Group

A local initiative will focus on a particular geography. The Local Initiatives Working Group will consist of chairs or each local initiative and their nominees.

4.5.1 Tentative Budget

#	Task	Description	Budget
L1	Set up UA Local Initiatives	Support the four existing local initiatives and set up 2-3 new local initiatives. The budget will be distributed across the local initiatives based on the proposals received using the UASG LI charter	100,000

4.6 UA Day Working Group

The UA Day Working Group was formed in the first half of FY23 to launch UA Day. This working group aims to strategize, plan and conduct annual UA Day events in collaboration with ICANN org and key stakeholders. The UA Day WG structure will be further formed based on a charter to be created in FY24.

4.6.1 Tentative Budget

#	Task	Description	Budget
U1	UA Day 2024 Events	Rally local, regional, and global communities and organizations around the world to spread general UA awareness and to encourage UA adoption with key stakeholders	100,000

4.7 UASG Governance

The UASG Leadership team consists of an elected Chair and the three Vice-Chairs (as per the [charter](#)). The UASG Leadership team is responsible for the overall management of the UASG. It provides guidance, oversight and connections and will be supported by the UASG secretariat, with staff from ICANN org, for operations of the initiative. The UASG Coordination Working Group consists of the UASG Chair

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and Vice-Chairs, and Chairs of each Working Group and Local Initiatives. It will also be supported by ICANN org. The UASG Coordination Working Group looks at the different cross-WG coordination matters and makes appropriate recommendations for the consideration of the UA Leadership team.

UASG leadership has based the budget on input from the working groups and estimates on how much funds such work may need. The leadership team has also assumed that the post-COVID situation may show an increase in face-to-face interactions. The leadership team realizes that the estimates may change and plans to review and re-align the budget accordingly based on quarterly reviews.

UASG is planning an annual UA Day in March 2024, where it plans to coordinate and hold global, regional and local activities across the globe to raise awareness for UA adoption. UASG is still planning the activity but has budgeted for these global, regional and local activities.

UASG leadership has also recommended practicing the following Conflict of Interest (COI) statement for all the Statements of Work (SOW) issued by UASG:

To help avoid any perceived or actual conflict of interest (COI), UASG leaders, UASG Ambassadors, members holding working group's leadership positions in the UASG, and any organization(s) affiliated with individuals in these UASG roles, are prohibited from participating in the SOW. In addition, ICANN org COI applies.

UASG is supported by ICANN org and many of its staff members. For example, the IDN and UA Programs team of ICANN org provides operational support to UASG. For the local and regional outreach, the UA Ambassadors and UA Local Initiatives work in close collaboration with ICANN's Global Stakeholder Engagement team. In addition, UASG communications are supported by the ICANN communications team and some of the UA training is conducted by ICANN's Technical Engagement team.

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4.7.1 Specific Budget for UASG Operations

#	Task	Description	Budget
A1	Registration of domain names for testing	Support registration of domain names for uasg.tech and UASG004	2,000
A2	Host UASG.tech website	Hosting, maintenance, upgrading performance, and redesign of UASG.tech website	10,000
A3	Communications materials	Design and print comms materials	6,000
A4	Travel support for engagement for global and regional IGFs, ICANN meetings for UASG leadership team	Travel support for speakers for UA engagements at international and regional events and ICANN meetings	20,000
A5	UASG Leadership Team Meeting	Annual planning and assessment meeting of UASG leadership team	20,000
A6	Support UA Ambassador Outreach	Support local travel for UA Ambassadors	30,000

4.8 Financial Summary

(All figures in US dollars)

Technology	\$87,000
EAI	\$71,000
Measurement	\$93,000
Communications	\$40,000
Local Initiatives	\$100,000
UA Day	\$100,000
Administration	\$88,000
Total	\$579,000

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