

2024 ANNUAL Report

FOR THE CLEVELAND OBSERVER

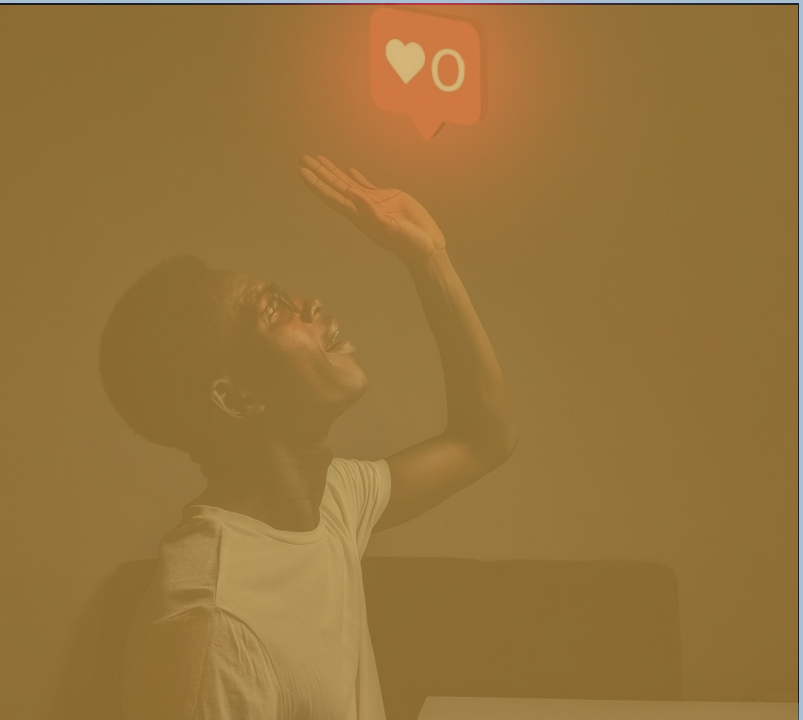
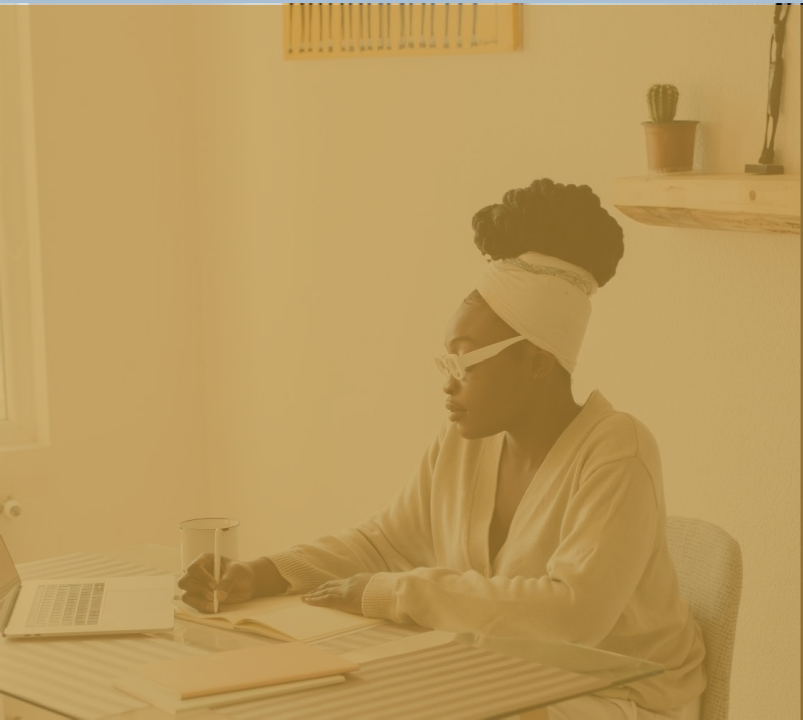


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2024 OUR TEAM



Imani Capri
Managing Editor



Rosie Palfy
Editor



Marva White
Editor



Tieran (TC) Lewis
Editor



Mark Silverberg
Photojournalist



Sharon Lewis
Journalist



Amanda Zmecek
Print Layout



Tiffany Walker
Graphics Designer



Sheila Ferguson
Journalist



Greg Moore
Journalist



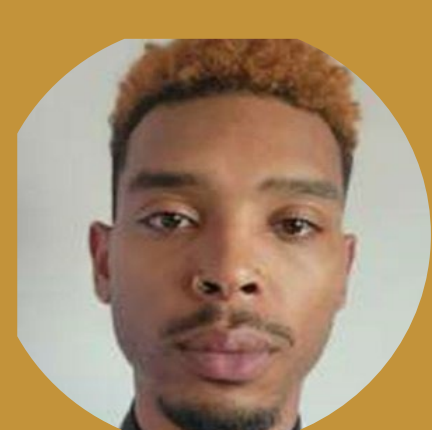
Larry Frazier
Journalist



Vince Robinson
Journalist



Ezra Bezaliel
Social Media



Dwight Newberry
Videographer



Lisa O'Brien
Journalist



Saria Murdock
Journalist



Unity Powell
Journalist



Marissa Valentine
Journalist

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Sheila Ferguson
Vice President



Devon Jones
Secretary



Mark Silverberg
Governance



Ron Harris
Treasurer



Sharon Lewis
Member



Vince Robinson
Member



Chen, Chia-Min
Member



Jean Van Atta
Member



Bonnie Paul
Member

LETTER FROM RON

Dear Readers, Supporters, and Partners,

As we reflect on the past year, The Cleveland Observer (TCO) has continued to uphold its mission of delivering impactful journalism to our community. Through innovation, collaboration, and a commitment to truth, we have expanded our reach, strengthened our reporting, and embraced new technologies to enhance local news coverage.

Thank you for your continued support as we grow and evolve. Together, we are shaping a more informed and engaged community. Sincerely,

**Ron Calhoun
Founder and Publisher,
The Cleveland Observer**

*Blessings,
The Calhoun's*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The Cleveland Observer's (TCO) mission is to serve as an information and resource hub that engages, educates, and empowers Cleveland's marginalized communities. Over the last 12 months, TCO has successfully fulfilled this mission through timely news updates, effective content communication, strategic partnerships, and efficient programming. Despite challenges, including the loss of key advertising revenue, TCO continued its vital work thanks to the generous \$75,000 contribution from The Cleveland Foundation's Black Futures Fund. This funding was instrumental in enabling us to maintain and expand our operations during a critical period.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



CAPACITY BUILDING

Team Growth: Expanded our team with 18 contract writers, 3 contract editors, 1 managing editor, 1 graphics designer, 1 marketing representative, 1 video editor/producer, 8 collegiate interns, and 2 high school interns.

CONTENT PRODUCTION

460 articles published ([Digital and Print](#))

16 videos produced in conjunction with articles ([YouTube](#))

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

[Instagram](#): 265 posts, 1,370 followers

[Facebook](#): 206 posts, 429 followers

[Twitter \(X\)](#): 126 posts, 942 followers

PRINT DISTRIBUTION

36,000 newspapers distributed over the past 12 months (3,000 copies monthly. ([Web link](#)))

Reaching Out!

DIGITAL ARCHIVES

PDF archives created to preserve content and enhance accessibility. ([Print Archive](#))

COMMUNITY JOURNALISM TRAINING

Hosted three 8-week training sessions, resulting in 22 individuals trained in community journalism, with articles published by trainees.

STUDENT NEWS DESK

Employed eight students on paid independent contracts, empowering youth voices in journalism.

AUDIENCE REACH

Achieved 13,500 total impressions per month across all platforms.

CAPACITY BUILDING

To continue making a significant impact, we seek to:

1. Hire full-time and part-time staff to expand operations.
2. Sponsor a multimedia institute to train future content providers.
3. Empower Cleveland's marginalized communities by amplifying their voices and stories.





MISSION & VISION

MISSION STATEMENT

VIDEO

To be an information and resource hub that engages, educates, and empowers Cleveland's marginalized communities by reporting on relevant topics through timely news updates, effective content communication, collaboration with partners, and efficient programming..

VISION

To provide critical information and resources that empower and motivate marginalized communities, thereby positively impacting civic engagement and fostering community-led change..





OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES



KEY PROGRAMS

We provide digital, written, and multimedia content that elevates community needs and assets. Our offerings include investigative journalism, community news, and youth engagement programs.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Our readership spans Boomers, Millennials, and an increasingly engaged Gen Z. We focus on Cleveland and its outer-ring suburbs, particularly addressing issues related to health, wealth, and education.

KEY PROGRAMS

[VIDEO](#)

We distribute 3,000 print editions monthly to over 20 locations throughout Cleveland.

IMPACT METRIC

TOTAL REACH

Number of Readers: 10,000 per month

Print	Digital
3,000	7,000

Distribution Areas: Urban Cleveland and
some inner-ring suburbs



CONTENT IMPACT

ARTICLES PUBLISHED

460 articles in the last 12 months.

Our Top 5 stories, totaling 28,595 views

22,207 Views

[Tax Relief for Cuyahoga County Residents](#)

2,489 Views

[Gun Violence Leading Cause of Death Among Cleveland Children](#)

1,570 Views

[Dining and Dashing: A Trendy Getaway?](#)

1,304 Views

[The Tik Tok ban: Will it happen?](#)

1,025 Views

[Is Social Media Bad For Teens?](#)

ADVOCACY AND CHANGE

Our reporting has led to increased community engagement on critical issues such as street cleaning, vacant lot maintenance, and city budget discussions, demonstrating the power of informed citizenry.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

HOSTED MULTIPLE EVENTS INCLUDING:

Funded By Solutions Journalism Network

1. Student News Desk program
2. Four Community Journalism Classes
3. On-the-job training (OJT) for college interns
4. "Our Mental Health In Focus" A prostate cancer awareness panel discussion at The Cleveland Foundation's NeighborUp facility. (Video link)
5. "Here Comes the Judge" – a community event to meet judicial candidates (Video link)

TESTIMONIALS AND SUCCESS STORIES

COMMUNITY TESTIMONIALS:

A reader shared how our four-part series "*Fibroids: The Silent Pandemic*" prompted her to get examined, leading to a diagnosis and surgery that may have saved her life.

CASE STUDIES:

Our coverage has led to heightened community awareness and action on various local issues, including infrastructure maintenance and budget transparency, highlighting our role in fostering civic participation.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

USE OF FUNDS

The \$75,000 contribution from The Cleveland Foundation's Black Futures Fund was pivotal in allowing us to hire contract professionals who significantly enhanced the quality and reach of The Cleveland Observer's content across all platforms. This support enabled us to not only sustain our operations but also to grow and innovate in response to the community's needs.

SUSTAINABILITY

We are transitioning towards a training model that emphasizes teaching journalism through multimedia platforms. Our goal is to establish a learning institute that ensures the sustainability and growth of our mission.



Gross Revenue: \$75,392

Net revenue: \$13,568

Total Expenditures: \$56,103

Net revenue: \$13,568

NET CASH FLOW 2

Last year ▾

Net cash flow

\$92,812.71



EXPENSES

Last year ▾

Spending for 2024

\$48,939 i 100%

↑ Up 175% from 2023



- Contract & professional fees
- Printing and Reproduction
- Office expenses
- Software Subscription
- Other

[View all spending](#)



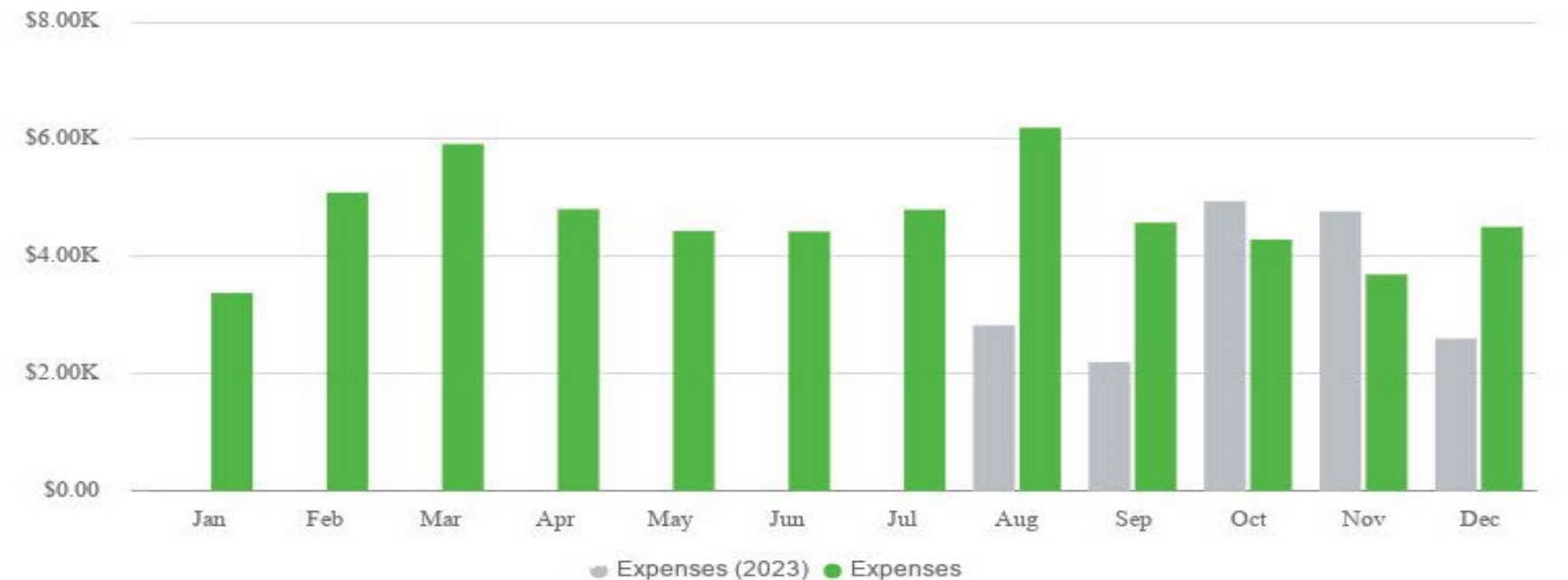
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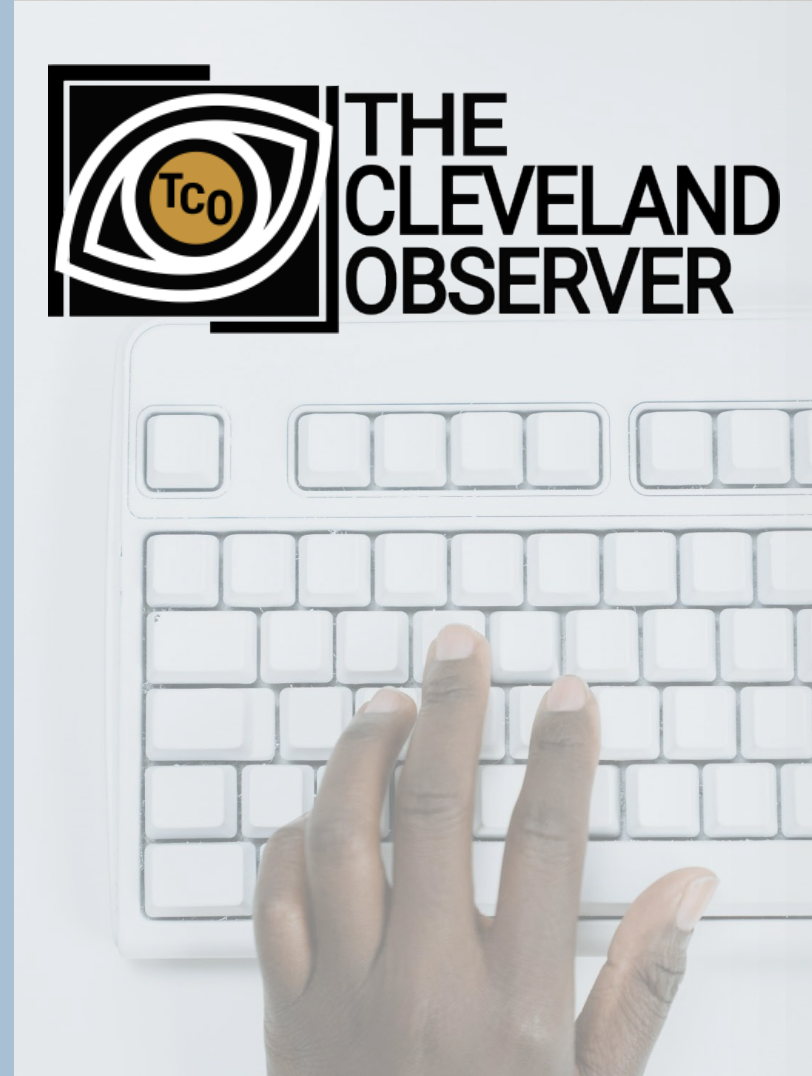
EXPENSES BY TIME

Last year

\$56,103.85

Total expenses





FUTURE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

EXPANSION PLANS

We plan to expand our coverage, hire additional staff, and increase our community engagement initiatives.

INNOVATION

We aim to implement innovative technologies and approaches to enhance our content delivery and community outreach.

FUNDING NEEDS

WE ARE SEEKING ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO:

1. Hire more staff members
2. Strengthen our editorial and content production capabilities.
3. More training for the next generation of journalists and content creators.

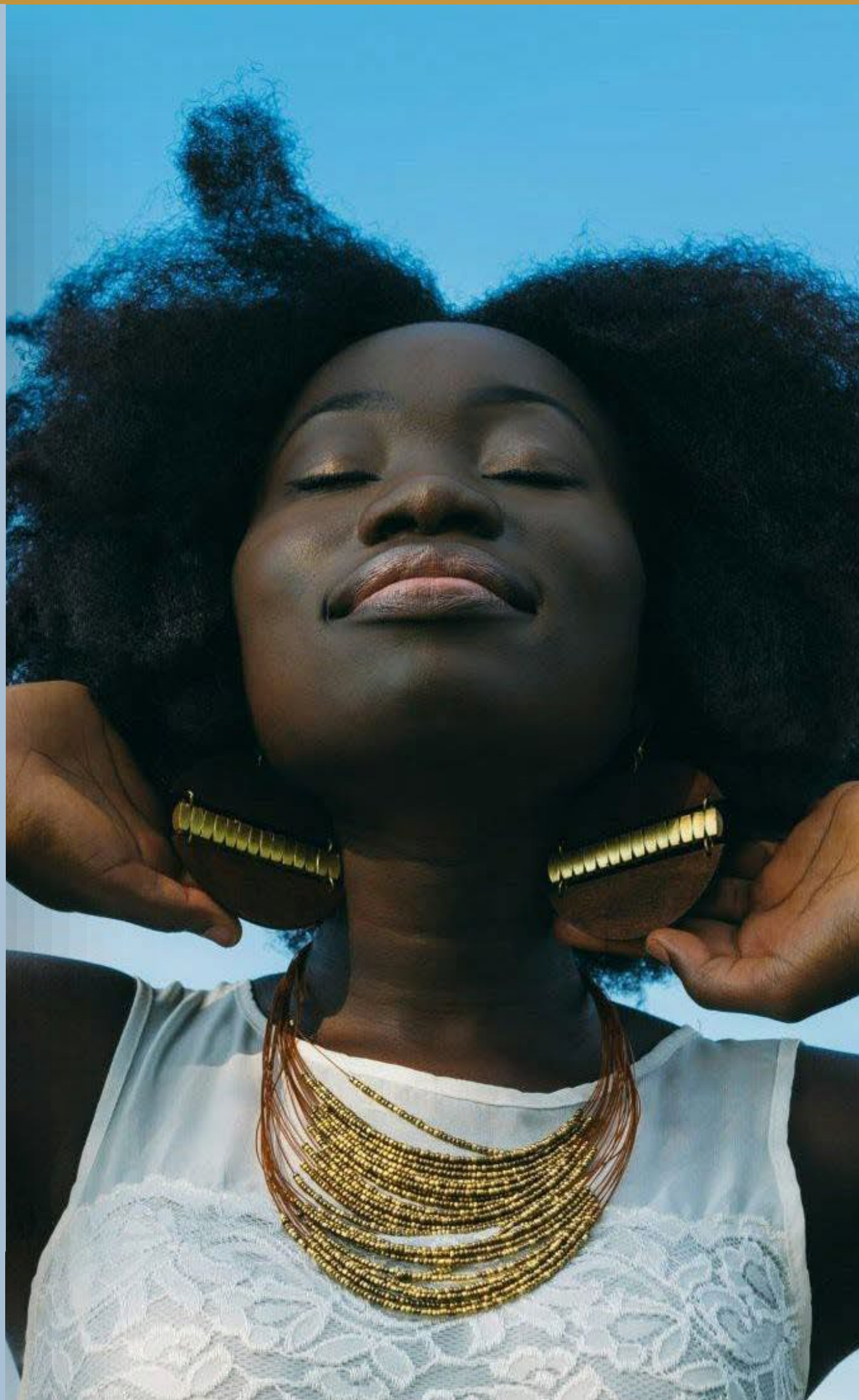




CONCLUSION

GRATITUDE

We are deeply grateful to Solutions Journalism Network HBCU Cohort \$7,500 and The Cleveland Foundation's Black Futures Fund for their generous \$75,000 contribution, which has been incredibly impactful in supporting our mission and operations.



REAFFIRMATION

The Cleveland Observer remains steadfast in our commitment to empowering Cleveland's marginalized communities through impactful journalism and community engagement.

CALL TO ACTION

We invite our funders to continue or increase their support, helping us to expand our reach and deepen our impact on the communities we serve.