



GCD ACCESS NEWS



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ABOUT GCD

The New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD) is committed to improving the quality of life of all New Mexicans with disabilities by addressing social integration, economic self-sufficiency, political resolve, physical and program accessibility, and full participation in the benefits of life and rights of all individuals.

GCD addresses physical, sensory, programmatic, and attitudinal barriers to forward its mission. Such barriers may keep a person with a disability from enjoying the full aspects of community living.

GCD works to improve the quality of life of New Mexicans with disabilities through progressive systems advocacy.

GCD promotes community living and access to: employment opportunities; universal access to information; appropriate and available assistive technology; accessible education; accessible, affordable, universally designed housing; accessible and available transportation (rural and urban); available home and community-based services; and access to social and recreational settings.

GCD serves as liaison and advisor to the Governor and Legislature on disability issues. GCD programs include:
Disability Awareness and Advocacy Program
Physical Accessibility Unit
New Mexico Technology Assistance Program
Brain Injury Advisory Council



PROGRAM UPDATES

AWARENESS & ADVOCACY

The Quality of Life Grants for fiscal year 2024 have been announced. Five programs have been funded this year, and all have submitted impressive proposals for exiting projects. If you know of any New Mexico nonprofit organizations please encourage them to apply for next year's QOL grant, which will open in April of 2024.

Healing America's Heroes received a grant to expand their veterans' therapeutic recreation programs. HAH holds one session for men and one for women and Cis expanding the number of participant spots and also expanding the program to include first responders in addition to the veterans that have been supported thus far.

Collins Lake Autism Center is expanding their Sensory Integration Therapy program by adding new equipment to their existing playground.

The Ability Center is expanding their ENABLE program. They will distribute 20 window air conditioners and 60 smoke/carbon monoxide detectors to people with disabilities in the Las Cruces area. They will also develop and implement basic

computer literacy classes and resources and provide weekly opportunities for social interaction through virtual meet-ups.

Explora is expanding access to its exhibits by undertaking the "Improving Explora Field Trips for Visually Impaired Students" program. Among other inclusive efforts, they will improve accessibility of exhibits to blind and low-vision audiences using industry standards for accessible exhibits and graphics.

Velo Cruces is expanding their program to distribute at least 5 adaptive bicycles to disabled residents of Dona Ana County, host a Bike Safety Rodeo, and host a Reduce the Carbon Footprint Ride and parade to include adaptive cycle recipients and the entire community.

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PROGRAM UPDATES



PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY UNIT

Currently GCD is moving forward with our Residential Accessibility Modification Program (RAMP) with new staff members Nadine Flores, RAMP Program Manager, and Annette Apodaca, Disability Specialist/Project Manager. Nadine and Annette handle calls from consumers, inform and assist with applications from potential consumers and prepare for the latter phases of the RAMP process. Some of the phases of RAMP projects include application approvals, approved consumer home site visits, individual project design solutions, drawings and contract documents, consumer approvals, bidding with contractors, writing memorandums, awarding projects, applying for Purchase Orders, Notice to Proceed, pre-construction meetings, project final inspections, invoicing and payment to contractors, follow up warranty inspections, etc. A few physical accessibility inspections have been conducted including a Conservation Trust Homestead Accessible Trail project near Lamy which will provide not just a wheelchair accessible trail but a better experience for everyone inclusive of diverse users. GCD will be conducting an accessibility inspection at offices for Public Education, and recently inspected the Folk Art Museum.

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PROGRAM UPDATES

BRAIN INJURY ADVISORY COUNCIL (BIAC)

The Brain Injury Advisory Council (BIAC) Program has experienced a transition this past spring. Monica Montoya has stepped down from her role as the BIAC coordinator. A position that she held for the last 7 years. We want to thank her for the tremendous work that she has done for the Brain Injury Community. She was instrumental in producing collaboration with several school systems throughout the state, presenting information on prevention of brain injuries to children in all grades from pre-school to seniors in high school.

The helmet distribution program has a wide distribution list, thanks to Monica, to several schools and partners in the field of brain injuries. This will increase the prevention of brain injuries on growing brains of the children who use bicycles, scooters, skateboards, rollerblades and more. In addition, Monica has created opportunities for expansion within the Brain Injury Community by collaborating with the Brain Injury Alliance of NM and the University of New Mexico. This expansion of videos regarding strokes, TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury), events like bike rodeos, materials on Brain Injuries in general were developed and trainings to educators, health workers and domestic violence support workers.

Finally, I want to mention the work of collaborating with the Museum of Natural History on an exhibit on the brain. Monica was instrumental in making this exhibit be as comprehensive, inclusive, informative, engaging, and exciting for the public to obtain awareness on all things related to the brain, including what happens to your brain if you have a brain injury. I believe this exhibit has reached a segment of our society that has not received information related to the work of the BIAC program, and Monica raised that awareness in a more visible way.

We have a new BIAC coordinator, Emily Stern, and she will start on July 24th. I want to welcome Emily to her new position with us here at the NM Governor's Commission on Disability. She comes from the Santa Fe Community College as a professor of English and is a person with a brain injury which she experienced in a bicycle accident. I look forward to the work ahead to continue to have the BIAC program be as engaging, informative and collaborative with our partners statewide on prevention of brain injuries and to expand services that will support individuals with brain injuries of all ages, statewide.

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PROGRAM UPDATES

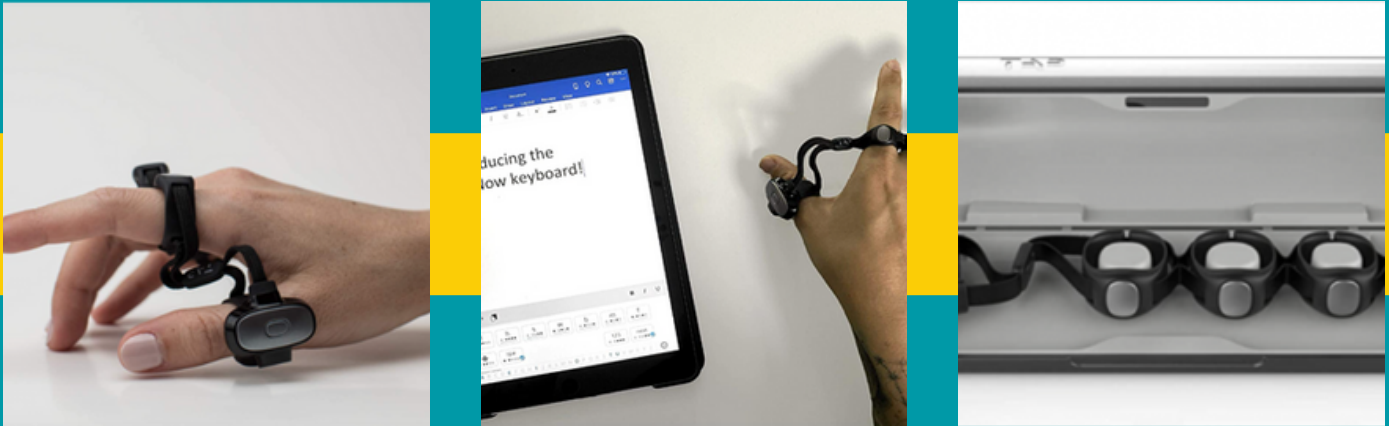
NM TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NMTAP)

- Assistive Technology Conference (ATC23) The NM Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP) will be hosting their annual Assistive Technology Conference (ATC23) on September 11 & 12, 2023. It will be held at the Berna Facio Professional Development Center on the corner of Louisiana and Comanche in Albuquerque. There will be AT-related educational sessions associated to school, employment, and community engagement. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), service animals, mobility switches, and how to access online platforms are a few of the options for all professionals to benefit from. Continuing Educational Units (CEUs) in many disciplines are in the process of approval and we often hear from many professionals that our ATC has excellent practical value. Registration is now open - please check our website for more details to join us for learning and networking!
[NMTAP ATC23 Registration](#)
- NMTAP is hiring a Digital Divide Coordinator, an independent contractor, to increase awareness and provide training on disability accessible digital platforms and websites, accessible websites, service documents, access to broadband, Assistive Technology (AT) options, community services available, and computer, smartphone, and tablet built-in accessibility. This is one-time funding for a contracted position starting August 1, 2023, and ending August 31, 2024, for a maximum of \$59,800, including salary, Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) and Travel. The specific deliverables can be found on our website: [NM Technology Assistance Program | \(state.nm.us\)](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR THE NMTAP WEBSITE](#)

NEXT PAGE: TECH CORNER

TECH CORNER



TAP Wearable Keyboard

The Tap Strap 2 is a single handed all-in-one wearable keyboard and mouse that allows the user to type by simply tapping their fingers on any surface. It can be used on either the right or left hand, is Bluetooth capable, and can be used on your phone, tablets, or computers that have Bluetooth turned on. The device can be used for up to 10 hours on a full charge and comes with a charging case for convenient charging on-the-go. Users can download companion apps to help with learning to type letters, numbers, and symbols with the Tap Strap 2. The apps are free and available on both the App Store and the Google Play Store. The Tap Strap 2 is capable of more advanced features including AirMouse Mode, Controller Mode, and Custom Mode. In AirMouse Mode users can use "AirGestures" with their hand to control their tablet, phone, or computer's mouse functions.

In Controller Mode, users can turn complex commands into simple finger taps. In Custom Mode users customize the Tap Strap to fit their needs.

This one-handed keyboard and mouse can be good for individuals who may have limited motor control in one hand or for anyone who needs an alternative keyboard for typing on-the-go, alternative controls for gaming, or to create custom controls for your device.

If you would like to try these devices or check out other devices like them, you can call NMTAP at 505-841-4464, send us a message on Facebook, or view them on our online database at <https://bit.ly/ATDatabase>

**NEXT PAGE: DISABILITY
EMPLOYMENT CORNER**

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT CORNER

Right now, America's workforce is facing a challenge. Over 23% of the current skilled professionals are at or near retirement age. But our country's workforce isn't prepared to fill the positions our retiring workers are creating.

A PROSPEROUS WORKFORCE DEPENDS ON YOU.

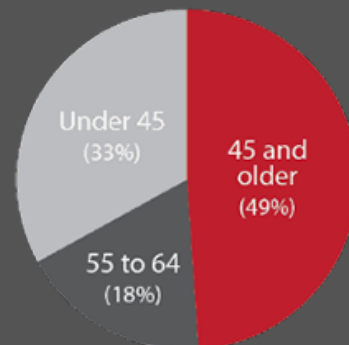
Now is the time to act. By changing how Americans think about the job opportunities provided by skilled professions, we can inspire today's youth and lead them, and our country, down the path to prosperity. Click the link to learn more https://youtu.be/m_275ulkb94

BE PRO BE PROUD

THE SKILLS GAP



MORE THAN 82% OF
MANUFACTURERS REPORT A
MODERATE OR SERIOUS
SHORTAGE IN SKILLED
PRODUCTION WORKERS



SKILLED TRADE WORKERS
ARE AGING FAST THE GAP
IS WIDENING

Click here to learn more about
Be Pro, Be Proud

NEXT PAGE: PERSONAL
STORIES

PERSONAL STORIES

In April 2023, the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP) received a call from one of our former NMTAP Council members requesting that we offer our services to a friend who was struggling to communicate due to a recent surgery that left him 100% vocally impaired. With the friend's permission, NMTAP contacted him and asked him if he'd like to come in to look at some Assistive Technology (AT) tools that could allow him to speak with the help of text-to-speech software. Thankfully, this gentleman took NMTAP up on the offer and now, three months later, much progress has been made. To date, our new consumer has successfully found AT to help him communicate, and that AT consists of an iPad with a keyboard and case, and the application Proloquo4text.



With Proloquo4text, this man can quickly type out messages in the App, and then those words are spoken aloud. This has helped him not only in social situations, but also in working toward his new goals, which include finding employment with the help of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR.) In addition to discussing NMDVR with our consumer, we also connected him with the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing's Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program and with Adelante's DiverselT program, which provides computers for people with disabilities, often free of charge.

While more progress is to be made, the experience between NMTAP and this consumer has been monumental! Not only has this consumer found AT for his needs, but this process also highlights a great cross-collaboration between disability service providers whose goal is to help folks not only in their daily lives, but in employment and education. Please remember NMTAP's services the next time you or a loved one is feeling like there must be a tool or resource available to help with a disability. It is truly our pleasure to help New Mexicans!

AGENCY NEWS



Introducing New Staff

The Brain Injury Advisory Council (BIAC) Program has experienced a transition this past spring. Monica Montoya has stepped down from her role as the BIAC coordinator that she held for the last 7 years. We want to thank her for the tremendous work that she has done for the Brain Injury Community. We have a new BIAC coordinator, Emily Stern, and she will start on July 24th.

I am a teacher, writer, visual and performing artist, and equity and leadership consultant, originally from the Southside of Chicago. I have over 30 years of coordinating and managing programs and people and designing, implementing, and teaching justice-centered curricula. I've lived in Santa Fe since 2008. My professional path began in 1993 at Purdue University when I first used storytelling and an intersectional analysis for AIDS education & prevention workshops after my mother's death from complications of AIDS that same year. As a brain injury survivor and person with a disability, I bring additional passion and

experience to BIAC. Working specifically on disability justice and brain injury prevention, advocacy, and support will allow me to blend my lived experiences with my vocational training, academic studies, and work experiences. I'm a survivor of multiple brain injuries, all of which occurred in New Mexico. The first was a 2009 hit-and-run at St. Francis and Cerrillos while riding my bicycle. Thankfully, I was wearing a helmet. For this reason, coordinating and supporting widespread helmet use for New Mexicans is a personal and profound honor.

I founded [Intersectional Consulting](#), where I've worked with municipal leaders and entities, institutions, organizations, and businesses to embody a justice-centered and informed intersectional lens. The last 13 years, I've spent most of my time at The Santa Fe



EMILY STERN

AGENCY NEWS

Community College (SFCC). I have woven my active commitment to students, advocacy, policy reform, universal design, and antiracist, trauma-informed teaching and learning into all areas of my work, including spearheading the creation and coordination of The Center for Diversity and Integrated Learning, its Advisory Council, and professional development program The Culture, Justice, and Learning Institute. I was a contributing faculty member and equity consultant at The Institute of American Indian Arts for ten years.

I was honored to create the art for the letter “U” in Bay area Disability Justice performance project Sins Invalid’s Disability Justice from A to Z Coloring Book. I have an M.F.A from Vermont’s Goddard College in Creative Nonfiction with a critical emphasis on women and AIDS in literature, and a BA from the Evergreen State College in Washington State. In my spare time, I like to hang with my daughter, cats, friends; and show and sell art at the Santa Fe Railyard Artisan’s Market. I look forward to the work ahead to continue to have the BIAC program be as engaging, informative and collaborative with our partners statewide on prevention of brain injuries and to expand services that will support individuals with brain injuries of all ages, statewide.

In addition to Emily Stern in BIAC, staff is extending with Nadine Flores. Nadine Flores is the acting RAMP Program Manager.



Since I was a child, I always knew that I wanted a job in where I could help others. That deep passion is what led me into the field of Social Work, in which I obtained a master’s degree with a concentration in Bilingual-Bi-Cultural Studies. Throughout my career, I have worked with children, teenagers, families, the elderly, veterans, and disabled populations. There is no greater reward than being able to do your part in making someone’s life better. I recently began working at the Governor’s Commission on Disability (GCD) and have been in awe of all the work that is being done for our New

AGENCY NEWS

Mexican constituents on a daily basis. I look forward to my journey at GCD in working alongside my colleagues to fulfill the mission, "Equal Access. Removing Barriers. Improving Quality of Life."

... When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends and my 3 dogs, fostering 8 goats, drives to the mountains, listening to music and on occasion picking up a guitar in where I am trying to teach myself how to play. I also enjoy advocating for others and am currently involved in volunteer work regarding a topic that is close to my heart, Domestic Violence.

ANNETTE APODACA

Annette Apodaca is a passionate Disabilities Specialist hailing from Santa Fe, the City Different. With a diverse skill set and a wealth of experience, Annette is dedicated to making a positive impact in the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Annette's journey in the field of disabilities began after obtaining her associates of applied science in media arts. Combining her creative background with her desire to help others, she found a calling as a Disabilities Specialist. Her expertise lies in project management, where she has honed her skills over seven years, ensuring successful implementation of various initiatives.

Annette's vibrant personality and exceptional interpersonal skills make her a true asset in her field. She is adept at building strong relationships with clients, colleagues, and stakeholders, always striving to foster an inclusive and supportive environment. Her commitment to customer engagement is evident in her extensive work history, spanning over 20 years in customer service and administrative roles.

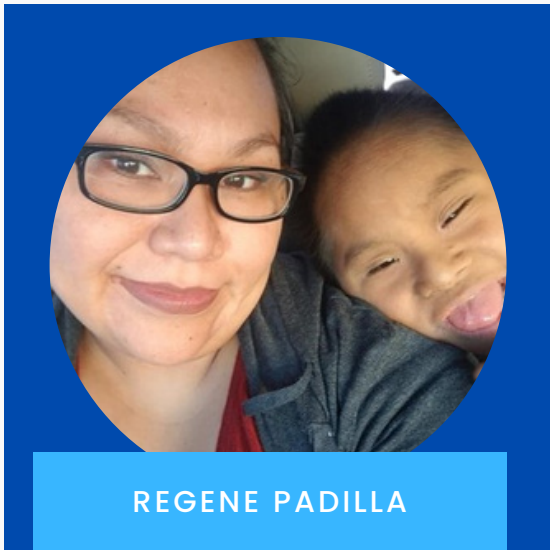
Beyond her professional endeavors, Annette's passions extend to the realm of creativity. She finds solace and inspiration in mixed media collage, allowing her to express her unique perspective on life. When she's not immersed in her artistic pursuits, Annette can be found indulging in her love for cooking, baking, sewing as well as exploring various forms journaling, and arts and crafts projects.

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Above all, Annette cherishes the time spent with her family. Family values are at the core of her being, and she cherishes every moment creating memories with her loved ones. She believes in the power of unity and togetherness and finds joy in sharing laughter and special moments with those closest to her.

Annette Apodaca is a dedicated Disabilities Specialist with a deep passion for creativity, a talent for project management, and a heart for making a difference. Her unwavering commitment to her profession, coupled with her love for art and family, sets her apart as a remarkable individual. Whether she's advocating for inclusivity or bringing her artistic vision to life, Annette continues to inspire and uplift those around her.



REGENE PADILLA

My name is Regene Padilla, I am the Business Operations Specialist for The New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability. Prior to joining the GCD team I worked as a Caseworker for the New Mexico Human Services Department. I have earned a certificate in general business as well as an associate degree in integrated studies from Central New Mexico Community College. I am currently pursuing my second associate degree in accounting with the goal of transferring to The University of New Mexico to attain a bachelor's degree in accounting. As a mom of a child with special needs, being

afforded the opportunity to work for an agency that helps individuals with disabilities in New Mexico was such an honor. I have learned so much about Disability Rights and Advocacy since coming to GCD and I look forward to continuing to learn more and bring a positive impact to lives of New Mexicans with disabilities.

**NEXT PAGE: EMERGENCY
RESOURCES**

EMERGENCY RESOURCES

Samantha Clements is a disabled emergency manager in Brooklyn, New York. She has worked in emergency management for over seven years - switching back and forth between practitioner and advocate / academic. Her interest in disasters peaked when Superstorm Sandy hit New York City two months after starting her Master of Arts in International Affairs at The New School. Her master's thesis examined recovery efforts across the five boroughs and how to balance community needs and resources that may already exist and plan for both short and long-term recovery.



SAMANTHA CLEMENTS

Sami recently served as the Disability, Access, and Functional Needs Logistics Program Manager with New York City Emergency Management. There she was responsible for overseeing the DAFN emergency cache, managing the Video Remote Interpretation program, and assisting the agency with planning for vulnerable persons and marginalized communities. She previously served with AmeriCorps VISTA as the Community Resilience Assistant Coordinator at the Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management.

As the Disability, Access, and Functional Needs (DAFN) Coordinator for New Mexico's Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Sami will work with the agency to incorporate principles of access and inclusivity throughout all phases and programs. She believes that every EM should be capable of recognizing and identifying gaps in our responses. While at the agency, she will focus on creating a strong foundation for inclusive Emergency Management in New Mexico, including building community relationships, training staff, and working as a liaison during emergency responses.

NEXT PAGE: TRAININGS

TRAININGS

Ongoing

- ADA Coordinator Certificate Program: Empowering Accessibility (nm.gov) <https://www.gcd.nm.gov/programs/ada-coordinator-certificate/>
- Training | Rocky Mountain ADA <https://rockymountainada.org/services/training>
- Trainings - Mid-Atlantic ADA Center <https://www.adainfo.org/trainings/>
- Self-paced Webinars <https://www.accessibilityonline.org/continuing-education/SelfPacedWebinars.aspx>
- Accessibility Online <https://www.accessibilityonline.org/ao>
- Conferences and Online Training - ADA Coordinator Training Certification Program (ACTCP) - Great Plains ADA Center <https://www.adacoordinator.org/page/Training>

July/August

- **Tuesday, July 18, 2023** 508 Best Practices Webinar: [A Tale of Three Agencies: The Section 508 Playbook](#)
- **Wednesday, July 19, 2023** ADA Audio Conference Series: [LIVE! Show your ADA and History Knowledge](#)
- **Thursday, July 20, 2023** Accessible Technology Webinar Series: [AT-on-Demand: Your Assistive Technology Instantly on Any Computer](#)
- **Tuesday, July 25, 2023** ADA Audio Conference Series: [ADA Anniversary Update](#)
- **Thursday, August 3, 2023** Accessibility Online Webinar Series: [Designing for Children](#)
- **Thursday, August 10, 2023** Arts-N-Rec: [Building an Inclusive Museum From the Ground Up](#)

JOBS ADS



NMTAP
New Mexico
Technology Assistance Program

Apply Now

Digital Divide Coordinator

This is one-time funding for a contracted position starting **August 1, 2023, and ending August 31, 2024**, for a maximum of \$59,800, including salary, Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) and Travel. Coordinate statewide services to reduce gaps and disparities among groups of individuals with disabilities who experience a digital divide in their communities through lack of awareness or resources. The contractor will work with individuals with disabilities or age-related challenges as well as providers of services to understand and to increase opportunities for access to AT devices and services, broadband services, and accessibility requirements to increase opportunities for employment, healthcare, community living, and education. We are accepting proposals until filled. The specific deliverables can be found on our website: [NM Technology Assistance Program | \(state.nm.us\)](https://state.nm.us)

There is still time to send your proposals for a contract –we are seeking applications until position is filled.

Send your proposal to Lisa McNiven (lisa.mcniven@gcd.nm.gov) and Tracy Agiovlasis (tracy.agiovlasis@gcd.nm.gov). Contact Tracy Agiovlasis for more information or questions via email or 505-469-1489.

USEFUL LINKS

Links

NM Governor's Commission on Disability: <https://gcd.state.nm.us/>

ADA National Network: <https://adata.org/>

NMTAP: <https://www.tap.gcd.state.nm.us/>

CDC on Corona virus : https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/needs-extra-precautions/FS_COVID_Plan_FINAL.pdf

Americans with Disabilities Act: <https://www.ada.gov/>

ADA Coordinator Certificate Program and Related Training:

<https://gcd.state.nm.us/ada-coordinator-certificate/>

Social

New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability:

<https://www.facebook.com/NewMexicoGCD>

New Mexico Technology Assistance Program:

<https://www.facebook.com/NewMexicoTAP>

New Mexico Brain Injury Advisory Council

<https://www.facebook.com/NMBIAC/>

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