

Metta Fund™

2021: Year In Review

Annual Report

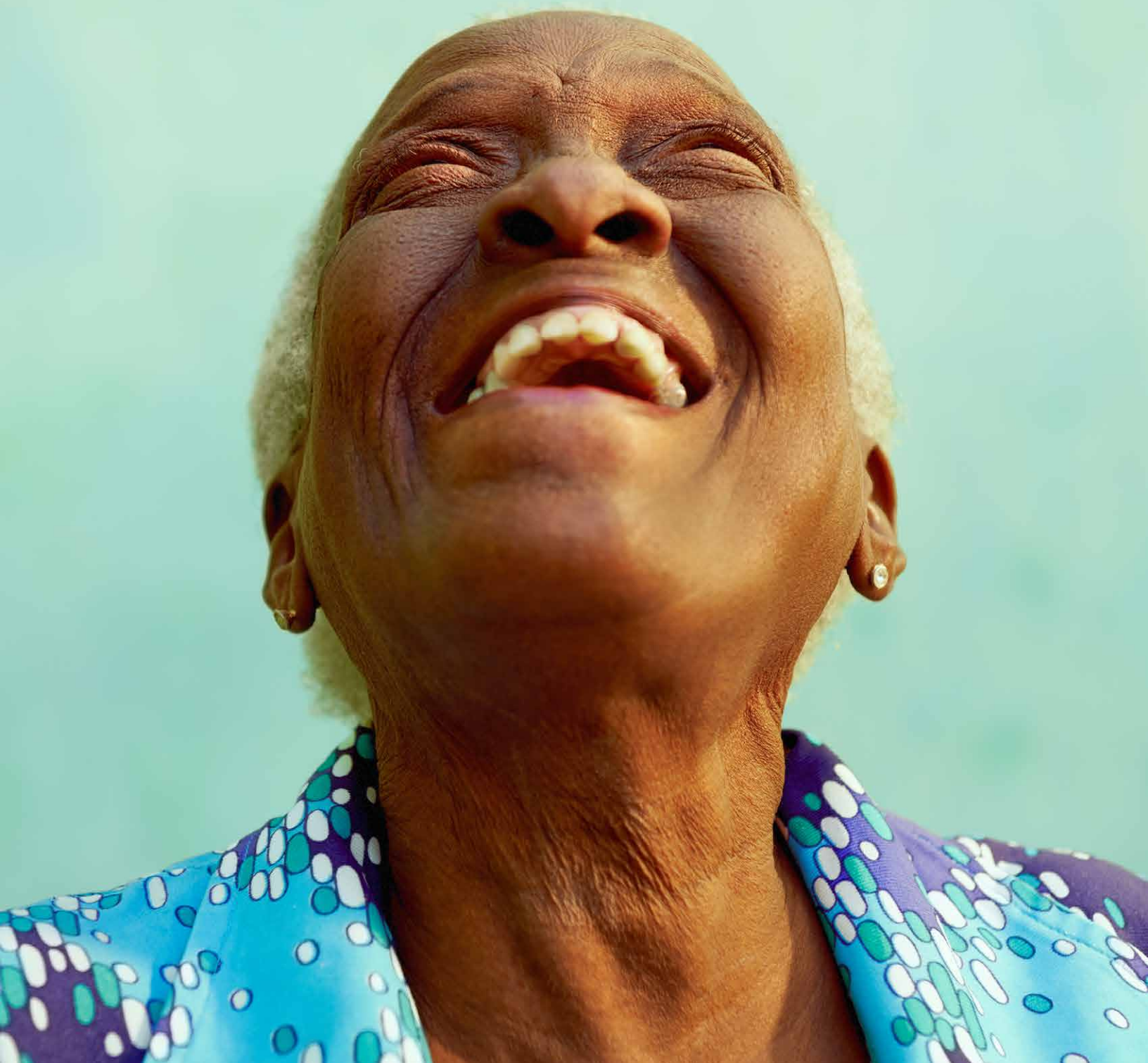


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Looking Forward with Hope

On behalf of Metta Fund, we are honored to share the 2021 annual report with you.



As I reflect on 2021, I'd like to start off by expressing gratitude to all our grantees, community partners, thought partners, and fellow instigators. Together, we can build a more just world – where everyone can thrive and age with dignity and joy.

Without a doubt, 2021 was another difficult year; perhaps even more of a rollercoaster ride than 2020. Elders and their families faced disparities and barriers in access when it came to everything from vaccinations to Wi-Fi, housing, food, and care. Yet despite it all, communities endured. Our partners continued to meet the evolving needs of older adults in the face of persistent challenges and isolation. Their commitment and resilience helped communities stay healthy, connected, and cared for.

And as we continue to face uncertain times, we honor the legacy of those we have lost and the many others who are experiencing trauma or isolation.

This moment in time has proven that when we work together, we are able to make a difference. Moving forward, we remain committed to jointly building on these efforts to equitably advance the health and wellness of older adults. So that we may all enjoy sunnier days ahead.

In this report, I invite you to learn more about Metta Fund's 2021 grantmaking, our partnerships, and our updated strategy and commitment to racial equity. There is much to learn and still much to do. As I look to the opportunities and challenges ahead, we are ready to roll up our sleeves in partnership with you.

We look forward with hope and imagination for a better tomorrow.

In Partnership,
Janet Y. Spears
Chief Executive Officer

New Mission, Vision, and Values



Late last year, Metta Fund's staff and Board of Directors finalized an update to our Mission, Vision, and Values statements, as well as a formal Racial Equity Commitment, which will guide the continued development of our organizational culture and strategy.

Vision:

We envision inclusive and healthy communities where all can thrive and age with dignity and joy.

Mission:

Through grantmaking and community partnerships, Metta Fund works to advance the health and wellbeing of older San Franciscans.

Values:

- **Community Leadership** - we seek out leaders who are deeply connected to their communities and who use that wisdom to elevate their community's needs and to disrupt the status quo.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** - we hold at our core the commitment to fostering justice, challenging racist systems, and centering equity in all aspects of our work. We are compelled to confront injustice and seek to address structural racism, inequity, and power imbalances.
- **Partnership** - we closely collaborate with nonprofits, philanthropic organizations, government, and community leaders to advance equity in aging. We build trusting relationships through shared values, mutual commitments, and continuous dialogue.
- **Respect** - we respect the intrinsic value and dignity of every person, honor differences, and seek to bring cultural humility to all we do.
- **Responsive Learning** - we endeavor to listen and learn and to model openness and transparency. We recognize that we must adapt and respond to the emerging needs of communities.
- **Voice** - we speak up and stand alongside our partners to advocate for change. We strive to be allies and to use our voices in spaces of power to center the lived experiences of those who have often been left out. We push back against narratives that undermine equity.

Racial Equity Commitment



Metta Fund seeks to improve the health and wellness of San Francisco's growing older adult population. **Yet, we are continually reminded that racism is a formidable barrier to that mission.** To make meaningful impact and advance equity in aging, we believe that we must be both explicit and

unequivocal in our long-term commitment to advancing racial equity – and being antiracist – in all that we do. This statement serves to articulate how Metta Fund will apply a racial equity lens to shift its internal and external practices, policies, and grantmaking investments.

We recognize that our society is challenged to overcome its complex, interconnected web of inequities – racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, xenophobia, ageism, and ableism among them. Each of these forms of oppression is a powerful driver of inequitable access to opportunity and resources. However, we also know that individuals whose multiple, social identities intersect experience compounded discrimination, amplified by race.

Racism continues to pose barriers to fulfilling human potential and creates vast inequities– from education to housing and lending to hiring. These affronts to our humanity are a direct result of our nation's original sins. We also recognize that many of today's healthcare disparities are attributed to exploitative, structural policies targeting people of color, especially the Black community.

Racial equity and justice are essential to achieving equity in health outcomes. Ultimately, the elimination of race as a predictor of life outcomes will have a significantly positive impact on other injustices.

The following reflects the core of our commitment to racial equity:

- Understanding and naming root causes of racial inequities
- Acknowledging historical traumas stemming from systemic racism and grounding our work in that history so that we better understand how past social policies have led to current conditions affecting communities of color
- Committing to disaggregating data by race and place to identify groups and places where an intervention is most likely to create the biggest impact
- Partnering with community and ensuring that those directly affected by structural racism are centered in decision-making
- Using a racial equity lens across governance, financial investments, and organizational administration
- Regularly promoting the contributions of communities of color, and promoting racial equity, in our communications platforms
- Providing regular learning and training for Metta Fund board and staff, including explicit training on structural and historic racism and its impact on systems, policies, and outcomes

It is a Journey

The path towards racial equity is long-term and continuous, and we recognize that we are on an on-going journey. Our commitment requires that we listen deeply, that we validate others' experiences, and that we bring deep humility to our continued learning. This is a work in progress—we invite you to join us on this journey.

[Read the full statement here](#)





Grantmaking

Advancing Health & Equity in Aging

\$2.5M Granted

PURPOSE	AMOUNT	# OF GRANTS
Social Isolation and Loneliness	\$969,000	19 grants
Caregiving	\$600,000	10 grants
Vaccine Rollout	\$475,000	5 grants
Racial Equity	\$257,500	8 grants
Healthy Equity/ Master Plan for Aging	\$198,500	26 grants

Equitable Vaccine Access



Early in the spring of 2021, just as vaccines were beginning to roll out, equitable vaccine distribution was a challenge throughout our country.

Reflecting a national trend, communities of color across San Francisco were – and continue to be – disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, yet barriers to

vaccination remained. In April of last year, we were pleased to fund \$475,000 in grants to ensure equitable access to Covid-19 vaccinations. In partnership with local nonprofit organizations, Metta Fund’s equity-centered approach focused on community-led programs to expand vaccine access, outreach, and information dissemination.

“By working directly with the people who know their communities best, we more equitably increased vaccine access and confidence.”

– Kimberly Brandon, Metta Fund Board Chair

This grant program funded organizations closest to elders and families most affected, helping the City respond on a hyper-local, community-based level.

Following the successful vaccination efforts, we shared two [grantee profiles](#) that chronicled how two trusted community organizations – [San Francisco Latino Task Force](#) and [Booker T. Washington Community Service Center](#) – worked steadfastly to expand vaccine access and information during a most critical time in the fight against the coronavirus.

These stories highlight the importance of community vaccination efforts while also revealing the continued need for equitable outreach. We find inspiration in how organizations across the region continue to work tirelessly to uplift community by providing services for elders and their families.



Spotlight: Senior and Disability Action

Mobilizing older adults and people with disabilities to fight for justice

San Francisco Senior and Disability Action (SDA) organizes older adults and people with disabilities to take action on justice matters such as healthcare, housing, pedestrian safety, Wi-Fi, and a variety of other issues that affect our communities.

Early in the pandemic, the digital divide emerged as a growing social justice and public health issue. In San Francisco, thousands of elders and people with disabilities found themselves completely shut off from the rest of the world due to lack of access, or even affordable access to the internet. Without broadband, they could not maintain social connections or even get in touch with their doctors.

In response, SDA organized a collective action effort for free, accessible, and reliable internet access. The Free Wi-Fi campaign was launched with videos, a major [rally at a San Francisco AT&T store](#) – among weekly days of action – and a petition signed by hundreds of people. Late last year, the campaign gained traction and just recently AT&T announced a major increase in speeds for its low-cost program as well as new, targeted enrollment support efforts in partnership with local community organizations.

Senior and Disability Action's work, in partnership with community members, is a testament to the power of organizing and advocacy to drive more equitable outcomes for all.



Photo by Brooke Anderson

Spotlight: Well Connected Español

Creating connections as we age

Social connections are essential for health and wellbeing at all ages, and especially important in later life. As our aging communities become more diverse, who is at risk of missing out on social connections, and what can we do about it?

While Latinx elders are more likely to live with friends and family, **research shows** that they can be reticent to engage in community events and activities. Understanding the reasons – which may include smaller social networks away from home, fear of discrimination, or language barriers – is the first step to alleviating social isolation in Latinx communities. Latinx culture and traditions can be used to improve health outcomes among Latinx elders.

Well Connected Español (WCE) is a phone and online program that offers activities, education, conversation, and a variety of classes and support groups for Spanish-speaking elders. Formed out of a recognition that culturally relevant connection is much needed in the Latinx elder community, the program addresses the issue of loneliness through the mutual support and reciprocal relationships provided by participants, many of whom have also become group facilitators. It is a unique model of giving and receiving that has been especially effective since the onset of the pandemic, when the need for social connection programs has risen significantly. In 2021 alone WCE experienced 42% participant growth, expanding its impact and fostering meaningful human connections.



Photo by Lizette Suarez

Celia:

“Well Connected Español me ha cambiado la vida... Me he gozado porque me han sido de mucha bendición para mí y he aprendido bastante. He conocido gente maravillosa que ahora son mis amigos. Me siento como si tengo una familia.”

Translation:

“Well Connected Español has changed my life... I have enjoyed myself because they have been a great blessing to me, and I have learned a lot. I have met wonderful people who are now my friends. I feel like I have a family.”

– Celia, Well Connected Español client



Photo by Jesse Baldrige

Spotlight: Kimochi, Inc.

Providing culturally relevant support for elders and caregivers



Research in caregiving shows that beliefs and practices around caring for elders are different in the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community compared to the general population. Families strive to honor the longstanding tradition of caring for older generations in the home with a network of support, but as successive generations become more acculturated and geographically dispersed, the ability to provide support to their elders becomes increasingly complicated.

Kimochi Inc. aims to bridge the gap between cultural ideals and the reality of caregiving. Founded in 1971, Kimochi is a community-based senior service agency that offers a continuum of culturally sensitive programs and services to elders and their families – preserving their dignity and independence – with a focus on the Japanese American and Japanese speaking community. Each year, Kimochi provides services to 3,000 Bay Area elders and their families.

In addition to services such as residential care, transportation, and home delivered meals, Kimochi offers various education and assistance programs for family caregivers, who often navigate a myriad of complexities. In partnership with Metta Fund, the newly created Kimochi Caregiver Project now extends that same support to paid caregivers, providing safe spaces and much needed culturally and linguistically relevant services, ultimately improving the health and wellness of older adults.



“When we need help with care or have any questions, we know that Kimochi can help us, and we really appreciate it.”

- T.W., Caregiver

What Does it Mean to Belong?

Danny Glover

Actor & Activist
San Francisco Native



In an era of rapid community change, what does it mean to belong – and to age in place?

In 2021, we explored the notion of belonging as it relates to aging, community, race, and well-being. For years, cities across the U.S. have been gentrifying, changing demographics and impacting Black communities' ability to live and grow old in the neighborhoods that they have long called home. Yet, little attention has been paid to the impact on aging community members.

In conversation with actor and activist **Danny Glover, Fred Blackwell, Kevin Prindiville, Janet Y. Spears,** and others,

we had the opportunity to explore what it takes to age with equity, and to shine a light on the innovative **Dr. George W. Davis Senior Center** – an “aging campus” in San Francisco’s historically Black Bayview–Hunters Point neighborhood that serves as a hub of community services – in addition to providing housing.

The Center is a place that allows elders, regardless of income, to age with grace and dignity. It is the realization of a multi-decade dream and retains the values of a community village that elders from historical Southern Black communities brought to San Francisco generations ago.



Mr. Ira Watkins, artist, and resident of Dr. George W. Davis Senior Center; photo by Sahara Marina Borja

Inaugural Metta Fund Leadership Award



In October 2021, we announced civic leader Shireen McSpadden as the first-ever recipient of our newly created Metta Fund Leadership Award.

McSpadden received the award for her decades-long advocacy and work in support of older adults at the leadership award reception on October 28th, 2021, which took place in the gardens of the historic San Francisco Bayview Opera House.

The Metta Fund leadership award program was launched in 2021 to recognize the work of community leaders who have made outstanding contributions to improving the quality of life for older adults in San Francisco and beyond. The award exemplifies one of the many ways Metta Fund is committed to elevating the public dialogue around aging and equity.

“Shireen is a champion for equity and has been a primary force behind some of the most successful efforts and transformative solutions impacting older adults; she has left an indelible mark.”

– Janet Y. Spears, Metta Fund Chief Executive Officer



Photos from the 2021 Metta Fund Leadership Award celebration, courtesy of Hasain Rasheed, can be found [here](#).

One Year into the California Master Plan for Aging

California's Master Plan for Aging (MPA) serves as a roadmap for creating equitable and transformative systems of care for our aging population, and recently celebrated its first anniversary of unprecedented investments in aging and disability across housing, healthcare, transportation, long-term services and supports, workforce, family caregiving, and more.

Many agencies, stakeholders, local leaders, and legislators began digging into implementation in 2021. Actionable goals are being set in 2-year increments and agencies across the administration committed to 123 action-ready initiatives. Visit the [MPA website](#) to view each of these initiatives; the [Data Dashboard for Aging](#), which is tracking the MPA's progress over ten years; and a [Local Playbook](#) to drive local age—and disability-friendly planning and action.

Local partnerships strengthened in 2021 as cities, counties, and regions have begun the work of building their own communities for all ages and abilities. Philanthropies that supported the MPA development, including Metta Fund, are now expanding their partnerships to both support specific MPA initiatives and to engage more funders in their respective foundation priorities' intersection with aging and equity.

Still, there is significant need to continue expanding support for aging communities. We invite you to join us.

“Housing, healthcare, social supports, and financial security should be a reality for Californians of ALL ages and abilities. The Master Plan for Aging, with its focus on coordination across state and local agencies, partners, and networks, provides a catalyst for reinventing outdated systems, ensuring that they are integrated, person-centered, and rooted in principles of equity and inclusion.”

- Kevin Prindiville, Executive Director, Justice in Aging



Grant Partners

We gratefully acknowledge the following 2021 grant partners

Bayview Hunters Point Multipurpose Senior Services
Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center
Booker T. Washington Community Service Center
CARA Education Fund
Caring Across Generations*
Catholic Charities
Centro Latino de San Francisco
Community Initiatives (The Cornerstone Campaign)
Community Living Campaign
Community Music Center
Community Tech Network
Covia Foundation
Diverse Elders Coalition*
Felton Institute
Five Keys Schools and Programs
Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network*
Homebridge
Japanese Community Youth Council
Jewish Home and Senior Living Foundation
Justice in Aging
Kimochi, Inc.
Latino Task Force*
Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly
MegaBlack SF*
Mission Neighborhood Centers
Mujeres Unidas y Activas
On Lok Day Services
Openhouse
PRC* (Black Leadership Council)
Regents of the University of California, Los Angeles
San Francisco Foundation
San Francisco Interfaith Council
San Francisco Neighborhood Centers Together
San Francisco Senior and Disability Action
San Francisco State University Foundation
San Francisco Women's Cancer Network
Self-Help for the Elderly
Shanti Project
Silicon Valley Community Foundation (California Black Freedom Fund)
The SCAN Foundation (Master Plan for Aging)
Walk San Francisco Foundation
Women's Employment Rights Clinic *
YMCA of San Francisco

**Fiscally sponsored*

Board of Directors

Metta Fund is governed by a board of directors, chaired by civic leader Kimberly Brandon

Kimberly K. Brandon
Roma Guy
Joseph Hafey
James Loyce

Sonia Melara
John Woodward
Jarmin Yeh
[See the full profile of each board member](#)

Staff

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Catherine Collen, Senior Program and Grants Officer
Renée Espinoza, Director of Program Strategy
Brigitte Garcia, Director of Administration
Helen Huynh, Controller
Anna Karrer Manley, Director of Communications
Mimi Kelly, Program and Grants Associate



*Together, we
can advance
equity in aging.*

Onward. 

Acknowledgments

PHOTOGRAPHY

Jean Melesaine

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Brooke Anderson (Senior and Disability Action)

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Morphos

VIDEO DIRECTION

Eric Wong

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU to all the people who shared their stories and posed for our cameras. All photography was captured with a focus on the health, safety, and dignity of our subjects.

SPECIAL THANKS TO Mr. Danny Glover; Ms. Cathy Davis; Dr. George W. Davis Senior Center; Mr. Ira Watkins; Ms. Donna Webb; Fred Blackwell; Kevin Prindiville; Justice in Aging; San Francisco Latino Task Force; Booker T. Washington Community Service Center; Lizette Suarez; Well Connected Español; Sarah Jarmon; Senior and Disability Action; Shawne O'Connell; Kimochi Inc.

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