



## Participation

### A. Youth Participation Options

1. Youth may participate in Wisconsin 4-H in the Institute for Positive Youth Development through:
  - a. Membership in a 4-H club
  - b. Participation in a special interest/activity/group/program sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension
2. Additional participation options may be offered at county discretion:
  - a. Affiliation with an organized 4-H project
  - b. School enrichment

### B. Adult Participation Options

1. Adult volunteers serve in a variety of educational and leadership roles that provide quality positive 4-H youth development programs for youth such as:
  - Supporting 4-H educational youth programs, activities and experiences
  - Leadership roles for club, county or state level groups
  - Voting members of county/state level groups
  - Chaperones for 4-H youth development experiences
2. 4-H volunteers, including chaperones must complete the Youth Protection Process and be actively enrolled.
3. Volunteers serve at the request of UW-Madison, Extension and that request can be withdrawn at any time.
4. Parent/guardian(s) are encouraged to actively participate in 4-H youth development activities and experiences in supportive roles with their children. Parent/guardian(s) must complete the Youth Protection Process and be actively enrolled to serve as a 4-H volunteer.

## Membership

### A. Enrollment Policies

1. The Wisconsin 4-H membership year is October 1 – September 30.
2. 4-H has open enrollment. Youth may enroll at any time of the year. Counties may establish enrollment and reenrollment deadlines for participation in programs when those deadlines are needed to ensure educational integrity and/or safety. This includes participation in county fairs and/or animal projects.
3. 4-H membership is open to all youth beginning in 5K (five-year-old Kindergarten) through one year beyond high school graduation and not to extend beyond the age of 19 as of December 31 of the enrollment year.

Examples:

- Emma is a high school senior and will turn 20 in April. Can she reenroll in 4-H next fall?  
*No, she will be 20 years old on December 31 of the enrollment year. Though Emma meets the grade criterion, she does not meet the age criterion for reenrolling.*

- Sophia graduates from high school at age 17. She goes on to college and turns 18 on December 31. Can she enroll in 4-H the enrollment year following her graduation from high school?  
*Yes. Sophia is able to join one year following high school. This will be her last year she is eligible to be in 4-H. She will not be able to enroll next year when she is 19. She will not meet the grade criterion.*
- Noah graduated from high school this year. His 20th birthday is January 15. Can he enroll in 4-H in the fall following his high school graduation?  
*Yes. Noah meets both the age and grade criteria.*

Cloverbud Project – Youth in 5K – 2nd grade participate in the Cloverbud project which is designed to meet the developmental needs of this age group. This does not include pre-kindergarten or four-year-old kindergarten youth. Cloverbud project members are not allowed to exhibit animals at public events nor participate in shooting sports activities.

Home Schooling - Children who are home schooled will participate in 4-H in their declared grade.

Graduation - Counties are encouraged to recognize full graduation for those who wish to cease 4-H membership upon graduation from high school. High School seniors, and those participating as members in the year following high school graduation, will be eligible to participate through the entire 4-H year.

Regional & State Events - Participation in regional and state 4-H events and recognition programs will be based upon the 4-H member's grade.

National Events - Participation in national 4-H events will be based upon the age established for the event.

## **B. Membership and Participation**

1. Youth must annually sign the WI 4-H Code of Conduct. Consequences for violating any part of this Code of Conduct may include, but are not limited to:
  - Removal from participation in the event in which the Code of Conduct has been violated (at the individual's expense)
  - Suspension of membership
  - Sanctions on participation in future 4-H events
  - Forfeiture or repayment of financial support for the event
  - Loss of status as a "member" in good standing.
2. "Member in good standing" is a youth who abides by the Code of Conduct and meets group or educational project participation requirements and deadlines.
3. Youth may hold 4-H membership in no more than one county or state at the same time.

This statement does not limit multiple county memberships in a given year, but it does require that those memberships be consecutive rather than concurrent. Youth moving from one county to another, for whatever reason, can belong to 4-H in the second county, but it requires transferring their membership from the first county. This also does not limit someone from belonging to 4-H in a county or state that is different from their county or state of residence, neither does it prohibit a 4-Her from participating in educational programs in other states or counties.

4. Youth must qualify for participation in regional, state, or national 4-H competitions through their county of membership.
  - This statement does not prohibit a county from using an event in another county as the place where their members qualify for a regional or state competition. It does mean that members must be

selected as representatives of only their county of membership, regardless of the location of the qualifying experience.

- Youth must be enrolled in 4-H at the time the event/program occurs.
- Participation is limited to those members who are in “good standing” with their local 4-H club and county.

## Requirements for a 4-H Club

1. The University of Wisconsin-Extension grants 4-H Club Charters, which formally recognize a Club's affiliation with 4-H, and grant that club the permission to use the 4-H Name and Emblem. 4-H Charter and Charter renewals provide documentation that a 4-H Club complies with state and federal laws and federal, university and state 4-H policies and guidelines. 4-H Charters must be renewed annually. All 4-H Clubs must be chartered. To be a 4-H Club in Wisconsin, the following requirements must be met and maintained:
  - a. Club name
  - b. Five or more youth from at least three families
  - c. Adult leadership that has been approved through the Youth Protection process
  - d. Youth involvement in leadership and decision-making
  - e. Meet on a continuing basis
  - f. Educational plan which meets the purposes of the 4-H program
  - g. Have written operating guidelines, bylaws or constitution approved by the members to govern the club
  - h. Open to any youth eligible for 4-H membership, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ancestry, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental status.
2. Failure of a 4-H Club to meet these requirements may result in the loss of the 4-H Charter and the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem. Annual 4-H Charter renewal packets are due to the local Extension Office no later than November 1. Individual Counties may have an earlier deadline.
3. Leadership for 4-H Clubs is primarily provided by volunteers. A 4-H Club may have paid leadership when the individual provides leadership for the club as a function of their employment for another organization. Teen leadership does not meet the adult leadership requirement.
4. 4-H Clubs must have an educational mission. Evidence can be provided in different ways. The preferred method is for clubs to develop a program plan with their members, and provide a written copy of that plan to the members and the county Extension office through the annual 4-H Charter renewal process.

“Youth involvement in leadership and decision making” emphasizes that 4-H Clubs belong to the membership and the youth members should make the decisions. Adult leaders should not be making the decisions for the members. Many Clubs operate with officers, however they are not required.

“Continuing basis” means that a 4-H Club intends to carry on as a functioning unit indefinitely. The Club may determine for itself the frequency and timing of its meetings. Clubs that don't meet in the summer, or November – February are acceptable if they continue as a 4-H Club the next year. They don't completely disband at the beginning of the summer. Rather they continue to exist with leadership and an identity and program again in the fall. Likewise, a school 4-H Club that meets every school year as the 5th grade class Club would also be acceptable, even though all the members change each year.

5. 4-H Club written operating guidelines or by-laws need to include at minimum the following: the group's purpose/mission; a statement of compliance with state and national 4-H policies and laws; the approved civil rights statements; information on how the group is organized and makes

decisions; the required dissolution clause; and procedures of how finances are handled and audited.

6. All 4-H Clubs/Units/Groups must comply with federal and state nondiscrimination laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Requirements for a 4-H Unit/Group/Committee Charter

1. The University of Wisconsin-Extension grants 4-H Charters to units/groups/committees (Group), which formally recognize a Group's affiliation with 4-H, and grant that Group the permission to use the 4-H Name and Emblem. 4-H Charter and Charter renewals provide documentation that a 4-H Group complies with state and federal laws and federal, university and state 4-H policies and guidelines. All Groups that handle finances and have a checkbook must be chartered. To be a chartered 4-H Group in Wisconsin, the Group must complete the Charter Application. 4-H Charters must be renewed annually. The following requirements must be met and maintained:
  - a. Unit/Group/Committee name
  - b. Adult leadership that has been approved through the Youth Protection process
  - c. Educational plan which meets the purposes of the 4-H program
  - d. Youth involvement in leadership and decision-making
  - e. Meet on a continuing basis
  - f. Have written operating guidelines, bylaws or constitution approved by the members to govern the unit/group/committee
  - g. Open to any youth eligible for 4-H membership, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ancestry, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental status.
2. Failure of a 4-H Group to meet these requirements may result in the loss of the 4-H Charter and the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem. Annual 4-H Charter renewal packets are due to the local Extension Office no later than November 1. Individual Counties may have an earlier deadline.
3. 4-H Group written operating guidelines or by-laws need to include at minimum the following: the Group's purpose/mission; a statement of compliance with state and national 4-H policies and laws; the approved civil rights statements; information on how the group is organized and makes decisions; the required dissolution clause; and procedures of how finances are handled and audited.

## Youth Protection

1. 4-H programs and activities must be supervised by an adult, 18 years of age or older, who has completed the Youth Protection program and is currently an enrolled 4-H volunteer leader. Adults who are chaperoning overnight experiences must be 21.
2. In order to initially be recognized as a 4-H volunteer leader in the Wisconsin 4-H program, all adults age 18 years and over must participate in the Youth Protection Program. The Wisconsin 4-H Youth Protection process includes **completed:**
  - **Volunteer Application Form which includes Signed Volunteer Behavior Expectation Form and Assumption of Risk.**
  - Online Mandatory Report Training for Volunteers
  - **Extension Volunteer in Preparation (VIP) Training**
  - **Successful Background Check** for arrest and conviction records through the approved channel.

4-H members who serve as youth leaders do not need to complete the Youth Protection program process. If they enroll as an adult volunteer leader instead of serving as a youth leader, they need to complete the Youth Protection program process.

3. Volunteers must annually complete the following to maintain their volunteer status.
  - Volunteer Behavior Expectations **and Assumption of Risk on the 4-H Enrollment Form**

Note: A background records check for arrest and conviction records will be completed every four years for continuing 4-H volunteer leaders. Youth that are over 18 years of age and are still active 4-H members do not require background checks. These youth are expected to participate as members and not in a chaperone or adult volunteer leader role.

4. Background checks and attendance at volunteer orientation are required for all host parents/guardians who aren't currently recognized 4-H volunteers.
  - Background checks are required for all other adults 18 years of age and older, living in host families who are not currently enrolled as 4-H members.
5. Returning volunteers who have been absent one to four years need the background records check and signed Volunteer Behavior Expectation and Assumption of Risk Form, but are not required to attend the orientation to be reinstated as a volunteer. Returning volunteers who have been absent five or more years need to repeat the entire Youth Protection process.
6. 4-H volunteers who have already had background checks and child abuse training as part of their employment or other volunteer experience will still need to complete the 4-H process.
7. A guest speaker or guest presenter doesn't need to complete the process if working under the visual supervision of an enrolled volunteer or Extension staff member.
8. A record causes concern when there is evidence of a conviction related to safety or fiduciary responsibilities. If the background check causes question with an individual, that individual will be contacted for additional information before a decision on volunteer status is made. To enhance statewide uniformity of implementation, decisions on questionable backgrounds may involve additional information review with both state and county staff.
9. The driving record for applicants reporting loss or suspension of a driver's license will be checked using UW-Fleet policies. In the event driving restrictions are placed on the volunteer regarding transportation of youth or their animals, the individual will be contacted regarding the driving record to verify the accuracy of the record. Restriction of volunteer driving privileges will be communicated in writing by either state or county staff.
10. Volunteer applicants may have references checked.
11. Parents and guardians are expected to behave in ways that promote positive role modeling for all youth. If Positive Youth Development (PYD) staff have reason to believe a youth or a parent/guardian has engaged in reckless or disruptive behavior at a 4-H meeting or event sponsored by Extension or engaged in behavior at any time that constitutes criminal child abuse or neglect, that educator will inform that youth or parent/guardian of his/her reasons for that belief and direct that individual not to attend 4-H meetings or events sponsored by Extension. Such a youth or a parent/guardian may not attend 4-H meetings or events sponsored by Extension until such time as the youth or parent/guardian provides reliable evidence that he/she did not engage in such conduct.
12. Overnight Chaperone Requirements:
  - Adults who are chaperoning overnight experiences must be 21.

- A ratio of 1 adult volunteer for every 10 youth is required for overnight events.

## Safety

### A. Program Safety Regulations

1. Adults and youth participating in all high-risk programs, including horses, ATV, bicycle, rock climbing/rappelling, rollerblading, and ropes adventure courses must wear protective clothing, head and foot gear. Minimum requirements for these programs:
  - a. Protective head gear (SEI approved for the specific activity) which properly fits the participant.
  - b. Shoes or boots which provide protection from the hazards of said program.
  - c. Clothing appropriate for the activity which will protect the participants from the elements surrounding the event.

The policy means that all 4-H members and leaders (adult or youth) participating in the mentioned projects and/or activities need to use protective or safety equipment while participating. Approved safety helmets need to be worn while mounted or driving a horse, operating a bicycle or ATV, on roller blades, rock climbing or doing a challenge course.

2. If a 4-H club is listed as a sponsor or co-sponsor of an activity which includes the above listed projects, grade exhibit policies (youth must be in 3rd grade) and the helmet and safety equipment requirements apply for all participants. This includes adults as they need to be positive role models.

The goal of this policy is educational. We need to work for a safe environment for our youth. In the volunteer orientation program, the need for a safe environment is discussed. Therefore, if safety equipment which significantly reduces serious injuries is available, why would we not use it?

These standards apply to all 4-H activities, regardless of location. Meeting these standards may require the selection of an alternative site, or requiring the use of additional safety equipment, even though it is not standard practice for the facility where the 4-H activity is to occur. If these safety requirements are not followed, then the particular event is not eligible to use the 4-H Name and Emblem, nor will it be recognized as an Extension program.

Should people decide not to comply, they need to be disqualified from the competition or asked to at least dismount, if during a non-competitive activity. When adults are serving in a leadership role, they are expected to meet the same safety requirements as the youth. If leaders fail to comply with the safety policy and individuals are participating without proper safety equipment and an injury occurs, the leader may be found negligent and application of liability insurance coverage would be questionable. This is a consequence which needs serious consideration.

Any classes which require 4-H membership to enter, or serves as a qualifying event for regional or state competition must adhere to these safety policies.

It is strongly encouraged that 4-H groups set an example of using proper safety equipment and maintaining the highest standards of injury prevention.

3. Water Safety:
  - Lifeguards are required when youth are swimming or participating in water-related activities, including canoeing, kayaking and boating. This includes at camp, club program, or hotel.
  - Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) are required to be worn for all canoeing, kayaking and boating
4. Fishing Safety:

- Youth are required to wear PFD for following:
    - i. when on a boat
    - ii. when wading in water
    - iii. when fishing at sites with swift current, steep banks, other hazardous conditions
5. Transportation:
    - Drivers must be at least 21 years of age and comply with all state laws
    - Use of 12/15 passenger vans is prohibited
  6. Pointing any type of firearm including air guns, paintball guns, laser guns or laser sighting devices at any person or any humanoid or tombstone target is inappropriate and dangerous. This includes both shooting sports programs and any type of 4-H activity.
  7. To exhibit animals at any public event as a 4-H member, youth must be in at least 3rd grade during the current 4-H year.

This policy is for the safety of the 4-H member and the public at the public exhibition. The developmental ability and maturity level of the exhibitor and the unpredictable behavior of animals should be considered prior to involving a 4-H member in the exhibition of animals.

8. Requirements for all 4-H sponsored or co-sponsored horse activities and events:
  - a. A saddle (mounted) and bridle (mounted/cart) are required when riding or driving a horse.
  - b. No intact male horses can be shown.

## **B. Wisconsin 4-H Shooting Sports Policy**

1. 4-H Shooting Sports programs are available to youth from 3rd grade and eight years old through the year following high school. Shooting Sports projects include archery, air pistol, .22 pistol, muzzleloading, air rifle (.177 pellet, .177 BB), .22 rifle, .22 pistol and shotgun. 4-H youth must be 12 years of age to operate any powder-burning firearm. This includes .22 handgun or rifle, muzzleloading handgun or rifle, or shotgun.
2. Youth may participate in an organized 4-H Shooting Sports activity only if a certified 4-H Shooting Sports volunteer leader is present and providing direct supervision. The 4-H Shooting Sports certified volunteer leader must have certification in the shooting discipline in which the youth is participating.
3. 4-H Shooting Sports certified volunteer leaders must be at least 21 years old and must have successfully completed at least one 12-hour state-level 4-H leader training Shooting Sports certification workshop. 4-H Shooting Sports leaders must be certified in the discipline in which they are providing supervision. If an adult volunteer leader is not certified, he/she cannot provide hands-on or safety instruction without a certified volunteer leader present. A volunteer leader may obtain certification in an additional discipline (archery, air pistol [air and .22], coordinator, hunting/wildlife ecology, muzzleloading, rifle [.177 pellet, .177 BB, and .22], and shotgun) by completing a state certification workshop provided by 4-H certified state training team members. 4-H volunteer leaders are encouraged to upgrade skills via training with such organizations as the NRA, USA Archery, NASP and DNR. All leaders should incorporate Wildlife Ecology/Conservation into their projects via the shooting sports program. Wisconsin 4-H adult certifications follow the National 4-H Shooting Sports requirements.
4. 4-H Shooting Sports certified leaders acquiring an additional certification may be eligible to add a discipline through an eight-hour certification option. If three years have not elapsed since attending a state-level 4-H certification workshop, volunteer shooting sports leaders are eligible for the eight-hour option.
5. 4-H adult assistant volunteer leaders do not need to be 4-H Shooting Sports certified, but they must be in the presence of a 4-H Shooting Sports certified volunteer leader who has certification in the shooting discipline in which the youth is participating.

6. Youth assistants do not need to be 4-H Shooting Sports certified, but must be in the presence and under the supervision of a 4-H Shooting Sports certified volunteer leader who has certification in the shooting discipline in which the youth is participating.
7. 4-H volunteer leaders must be currently enrolled as a 4-H volunteer in a county. Completion of the Wisconsin 4-H Youth Protection program is required for all 4-H Shooting Sports volunteer leaders. 4-H volunteer leader and member participation will be consistent with state and county guidelines.
8. If a 4-H volunteer leader is acting in an unsafe manner or is in noncompliance with 4-H volunteer leader standards, he or she is subject to removal.
9. Regarding UW System firearms and weapons policy changes, the following authorization on February 9, 2012, allows staff and 4-H Shooting Sports volunteer leaders to conduct 4-H Shooting Sports programming:

“As authorized by the Dean of Extension, the carrying of firearms, air guns, bows and arrows is allowed by University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension Employees and 4-H Shooting Sports Volunteers while acting in the scope of their duties and Wisconsin 4-H Policy. We expect all guns for 4-H Shooting Sports to be carried openly in designated areas.”

10. Paintball Policy -- 9/28/10

“The purpose of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program is to promote youth development through the safe and responsible use of archery equipment and firearms. Pointing any type of firearm including air guns, paintball guns, laser guns or laser sighting devices at any person or any humanoid or tombstone target is inappropriate and dangerous. Therefore, the Wisconsin 4-H Shooting Sports Committee is unequivocally opposed to such use in the 4-H Shooting Sports program”.

## **Financial**

### **A. Financial**

1. Regardless of the source, all 4-H funds must be used for 4-H educational programs. All 4-H funds are public funds and must be publicly accountable. Federal regulations governing the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem require annual financial reporting/accountability of all organized 4-H clubs/units/groups. Failure to annually submit the financial report could result in loss of the 4-H club/unit/group charter.
2. The Wisconsin 4-H fiscal year is defined as July 1 – June 30.
3. For the purposes of this policy, “excess 4-H funds” are assets in excess of a chartered 4-H Club/Unit/Group’s projected expenditures for two years, or \$1,000, whichever is greater. Chartered 4-H Clubs/Units/Groups shall hold no excess 4-H funds, unless that money is being saved for a specific programmatic objective that must be accomplished within five years and has been approved by the PYD staff person.
4. As with all public funds, there are specific rules and regulations that must be followed to ensure proper use and minimal risk. With the oversight from the 4-H Youth Development Educator, 4-H Clubs/Units/Groups have the following options for depositing or investing funds. These are listed in the order of preference.

Option A: FDIC or NCUA Institution: Funds may be deposited or invested in a FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) or NCUA (National Credit Union Administration) insured institution. This option includes the use of savings accounts, checking accounts, money market accounts, and certificates of deposit.



Option B: The *Wisconsin 4-H Foundation*: Funds may be invested in an endowment fund made available according to the *Wisconsin 4-H Foundation* policies to produce long-term stable support for a 4-H group, club or program.

Option C: County Extension Account: Funds may be deposited in an authorized county Extension account. This must be done pursuant to a written agreement with county government and with written approval from Extension. These funds may eventually be transferred to a *4-H Foundation* fund, pursuant to a written agreement with county government and with written approval from Extension. Extension approval comes from the 4-H Program Manager and Extension Director of Budget and Fiscal Operations.

Option D: State Extension Account: Funds may be deposited in an authorized state Extension account. At no point in the future can these funds be deposited to a 4-H foundation fund.

Option E: Other 4-H foundation or endowment fund: Under the circumstances described below, chartered 4-H Clubs and Groups may place excess 4-H funds, as defined in section A.3 of this policy, in an approved 4-H foundation or endowment fund other than the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation. To exercise this option, 4-H Clubs/Units/Groups must do all of the following:

1. Demonstrate that there are serious obstacles and concerns with creating:
    - a. A plan to spend excess 4-H funds in five years AND
    - b. An endowment managed by the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation,
  2. Demonstrate that the proposed 4-H foundation or endowment fund will be able to meet any fiduciary responsibilities and tax obligations for such a fund, AND
  3. Receive written approval from:
    - a. The 4-H Program Manager AND
    - b. The Extension Director of Budget and Fiscal Operations.
5. Any non-chartered organization that raises and/or manages funds under the 4-H Name or Emblem, must have a written MOU in place with Extension which will be regularly reviewed to ensure that 4-H funds raised are being spent on 4-H activities and that the outside organization is capable of meeting any fiduciary responsibilities and tax obligations.

## **B. 4-H Clubs/Unit/Groups**

1. Reporting Requirement: All 4-H Clubs/units/groups are required to submit a financial record and audit report to the County Extension Office once each year. This report is included in the annual charter renewal documents. Additional reports required by law must also be submitted to the respective agencies with a copy or verification of submission filed with the 4-H staff.
2. Dissolution Clause: 4-H Clubs/units/groups must include a statement of dissolution in their written operating guidelines or by-laws similar to the following: Upon dissolution of the 4-H Club, any assets must be turned over to a recognized 4-H club/unit/group, such as the county 4-H Leaders Association, with the approval of county 4-H staff.

## **C. County 4-H Leaders Associations and County 4-H Committees**

1. Reporting Requirement: The county 4-H Leaders Association and county 4-H committees/units/groups must be chartered and are required to submit a financial record and an audit of this record to the County Extension Office once each year. Additional reports required by law must also be submitted to the respective agencies with a copy or verification of submission filed with the 4-H staff.
2. Dissolution Clause: The county 4-H Leaders Association must include a statement of dissolution in its bylaws similar to the following: Upon dissolution of the association, any assets remaining shall be conveyed to a 4-H program or 4-H Foundation as selected by the affirmative vote of the majority of association members entitled to vote.

3. County 4-H Units/Groups or Committees that have a check book or assets must be chartered and must include a statement of dissolution in their written operating guidelines and bylaws similar to the following: Upon dissolution of the committee, any assets remaining shall be conveyed to the county 4-H Leaders Association if one exists. If one does not exist, any remaining assets shall be conveyed to a 4-H program or Wisconsin 4-H Foundation as selected by the affirmative vote of the majority of committee members entitled to vote.

#### **D. Multi-County, Regional and State Committees and Councils**

1. Reporting Requirement: All multi-county, regional and state committees and councils are required to be chartered and to submit a financial record and an audit of the record to the advising PYD staff or State Extension Specialist once each year. Additional reports required by law must be submitted to the respective agencies and a copy filed with the advising PYD staff or State Extension Specialist.

2. Dissolution Clause: Multi-county, regional and state committees, councils, and unit/groups must include a statement of dissolution in their written operating guidelines or bylaws similar to the following: Upon dissolution of the committee or council, any assets remaining shall be conveyed to a 4-H Youth Development program or 4-H Youth Development Foundation as selected by the affirmative vote of the majority of committee or council members entitled to vote.



**Extension**

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