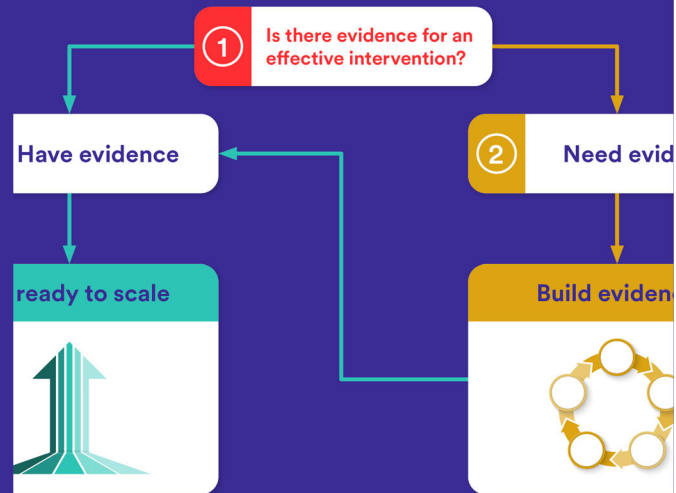


# Scaling Checklists: Assessing Your Level of Evidence and Readiness (SCALER)



## Step 1: Is there evidence your intervention is effective?



### SCALER Step 1: Results

**Evidence of your intervention’s effectiveness that aligns to your plans for scaling does not yet exist. Your organization will need to build such evidence.**

Before your organization invests its resources to scale an intervention, the intervention should first have demonstrated effectiveness. Such evidence should be based on rigorously conducted research that demonstrates that the intervention itself contributed to changes in participant outcomes. The evidence must also be relevant to the plans your organization has for scaling the intervention so your organization can expect the intervention will maintain its effectiveness when at scale. Because you were unable to identify any existing evidence that meets these standards, you will need to complete Step 2 of the SCALER to help build such evidence.

## What do your results mean? [Return to edit](#)

### RESEARCH RIGOR

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 **A third party conducted the research**

Using a third-party evaluator with no vested interest in the intervention to conduct the research study provides credibility and objectivity to the evaluation findings.

---

 **Research included a counterfactual**


Because the research design for the intervention included a comparison group, you can more confidently conclude that changes in outcomes among those who received the intervention are due to the people in the treatment group receiving the intervention.

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 **Research had no confounding factors**

If no confounding factors were present in the evaluation of the intervention, you can more confidently conclude that changes in participants' outcomes were due to the intervention and not to other factors.

---

 **Research did not have low attrition, reassignment was used, and baseline equivalence did not exist with the final sample**

The presence of these factors shows that the treatment and comparison groups used in the final sample were similar to each other before the treatment group participants received the intervention. If differences between the two groups exist, then such differences, and not the intervention itself, can affect study outcomes. If you seek to build evidence for the intervention in the future using a third-party evaluator, view the [SCALER Resources](#) for more information on these factors to understand how a study should be designed and implemented to isolate the impacts of your intervention.

### INTERVENTION EFFECTIVENESS

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 **The research showed evidence of effectiveness**

Having such research demonstrates the intervention you want to be scale is likely to produce desired outcomes and is therefore worthy of being scaled. When scaling, implement the intervention as it was implemented in the study that demonstrates evidence of effectiveness, otherwise you may run the risk of reducing the intervention's effectiveness.

### INTERVENTION RELEVANCE

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 **The research is not appropriate to the context or environment in which scaling is planned**

This means the intervention might not be as effective when used with populations or in locations that are different from what was included in research that showed the intervention's effectiveness. If this occurs, you may need to build evidence for the intervention using populations or locations that ultimately align with your plans to scale the intervention.

You have completed Step 1 of the SCALER. Based on your results, rigorous evidence that shows your intervention's effectiveness and is relevant to your plans to scale the intervention does not yet exist. Proceed to Step 2 of the SCALER, which aims to help your organization build evidence for your intervention.

BACK



PRINT STEP 1 RESULTS

CONTINUE TO STEP 2

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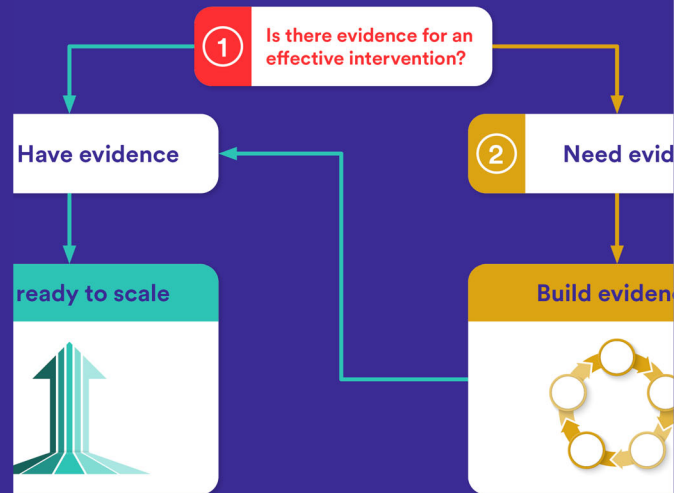
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[VIEW SCALER RESOURCES](#)

# Scaling Checklists: Assessing Your Level of Evidence and Readiness (SCALER)



## Step 2: Building evidence of effectiveness



### SCALER Step 2: Results

**You have built evidence of your intervention’s effectiveness that aligns to your plans for scaling. Your organization should now determine its readiness to scale the intervention.**

Before your organization invests resources to scale an intervention, the intervention should have demonstrated effectiveness. Such evidence should be based on rigorously conducted research that demonstrates the intervention itself led to changes in participant outcomes. The evidence must also be relevant to the plans your organization has for scaling the intervention so your organization can expect the intervention will maintain its effectiveness when scaled. Because your organization was able to build evidence that meets these standards, you can proceed to Step 3 of the SCALER to help determine your readiness to scale the intervention.

- ✔ Define intervention
- ✔ Lay evaluation groundwork
- ✔ Prepare for evaluation
- ✔ Conduct evaluation and assess effectiveness

Define Intervention ▼

What do your results mean? [Return to edit](#)

## DEFINE INTERVENTION

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### ✔ The intervention has a defined theory of change (TOC)

Use the TOC to guide how your organization implements the intervention by obtaining or providing the inputs and resources the intervention needs and delivering the core components and activities as defined in the TOC. When you work with a third-party evaluator to determine the impact of your intervention, the pathways connecting the elements of your TOC (which show how the intervention will create changes in outputs and outcomes) can serve as the basis for what the evaluation would ultimately assess.

### ✔ The intervention is mature and stable

Conducting an evaluation with an intervention that is mature and stable helps provide an accurate assessment of the intervention's potential to improve participant outcomes. Monitor the factors that can potentially disrupt the intervention's stability, such as the availability of skilled personnel implementing the intervention and the managerial and administrative support for the intervention.

### ✔ The intervention is implemented with fidelity as described in the TOC

Implementing an intervention with fidelity as described in the TOC is important because it can affect how well the intervention can succeed in improving participant outcomes. When working with a third-party evaluator to conduct an evaluation of your intervention's impact, your organization should continue to regularly monitor your intervention's implementation fidelity.

### ✔ The intervention, including any modifications, is informed by research

Your intervention and any modifications to it have been informed by prior evaluation studies. Once your evaluation is underway, your organization can assess whether the modifications were implemented as intended and whether they led to larger impacts on participant outcomes.

What do your results mean? [Return to edit](#)

## LAY EVALUATION GROUNDWORK

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### ✔ Your organization, partners, and funders agree on the need for evidence

Building research evidence and using it to improve an intervention requires a culture of measurement, learning, and evaluation. In such a culture, your stakeholders would have a common

understanding about the value of and need for research and evaluation in decision making. Look for ways to maintain or further strengthen this culture by continuing to use evidence in decision making.

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 **Your organization, partners, and funders agree on outcomes and measures**

It is important build consensus among key stakeholders on the outcomes your intervention is trying to influence and the goals for how much outcomes should be improved. After establishing agreement on the outcomes and measures, begin discussing and identifying any existing data sources that can help supply the information you need or whether third-party evaluators will collect such information during the study.

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 **Your organization, partners, and funders agree on evaluation goals**

Establishing evaluation goals will guide how the evaluation should be designed and carried out to help ensure it produces the relevant and meaningful information your organization and stakeholders need. Be mindful that organizational and stakeholders' needs can evolve over time, which can affect alignment of evaluation goals to stakeholders' interests. Before your evaluation gets underway, periodically check in with your stakeholders to remind them of the evaluation and what it aims to accomplish to determine if any adjustments are needed.

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 **Your organization, partners, and funders support the evaluation**

Stakeholder support is needed to carry out a successful evaluation because stakeholders often play an important role in how well the intervention or the evaluation is implemented. Before your evaluation gets underway, periodically check in with your stakeholders to learn about any new barriers that may limit your stakeholders' participation with intervention or evaluation-related activities. Once your evaluation has begun, solicit feedback from your stakeholders so they can share challenges that need to be addressed.

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## What do your results mean? [Return to edit](#)

### **PREPARE FOR EVALUATION**

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 **Financial resources are available**

Research and evaluation require financial resources, such as infrastructure expenses for systems to record data the evaluation will analyze, fees for experts in evaluation design and implementation, and personnel time to collect data for the evaluation. Developing evaluation budget estimates that align to your evaluation goals can help you allocate sufficient funding to implement an evaluation study that meets the standards of rigor for demonstrating that an intervention is effective. Plan for contingencies that may arise over the course of the evaluation and be prepared to revisit and adjust the budget as your evaluation gets underway.

---

 **Personnel are available to work with evaluators**

Personnel implementing the intervention—or managing those who are—play an important role in supporting an evaluation. They can provide third-party evaluators with information about the intervention, including important details on the background and context for the intervention's implementation. These personnel can also provide important insights on evaluation findings. As your evaluation gets underway, periodically check in with these personnel members to make sure they have adequate time to dedicate to the evaluation. Offer additional supports as needed so that personnel can continue to work effectively with the evaluators.

## CONDUCT EVALUATION AND ASSESS EFFECTIVENESS

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✔ **The research was conducted in a manner that meets standards for rigor**

Having a well-designed and implemented impact study carried out by a third-party evaluator provides greater confidence in understanding whether the assessed intervention, and not other factors, caused the beneficial outcomes that the intervention intended to improve. If your rigorously conducted evaluation found positive impacts on intervention participants, you can be confident in your decision to scale the intervention. If your rigorously conducted evaluation found no impacts on participant outcomes, your organization should assess whether adjustments are needed to the intervention model or how it is implemented.

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✔ **The research showed beneficial results for participants**

Having such research demonstrates that the intervention you want to scale is likely to produce desired outcomes and is therefore worthy of being scaled. When scaling, implement the intervention as it was implemented in the study that demonstrated evidence of effectiveness, otherwise, you may run the risk of reducing the intervention's effectiveness.

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✔ **The context or environment in which the research was conducted is generalizable to the organization's plans for scaling its intervention**

This means you can be confident that your intervention is likely to maintain its demonstrated effectiveness when you scale it because you are offering the intervention to the same population or in the same type of location that the intervention was designed for and shown to be effective.



### Congratulations for completing Step 2 of the SCALER!

You have completed Step 2 of the SCALER. Based on your results, your organization has built rigorous evidence that shows your intervention's effectiveness and is relevant to your plans to scale the intervention. Proceed to Step 3 of the SCALER to determine whether your intervention and organization are ready to scale.

BACK

PRINT STEP 2 RESULTS

CONTINUE TO STEP 3

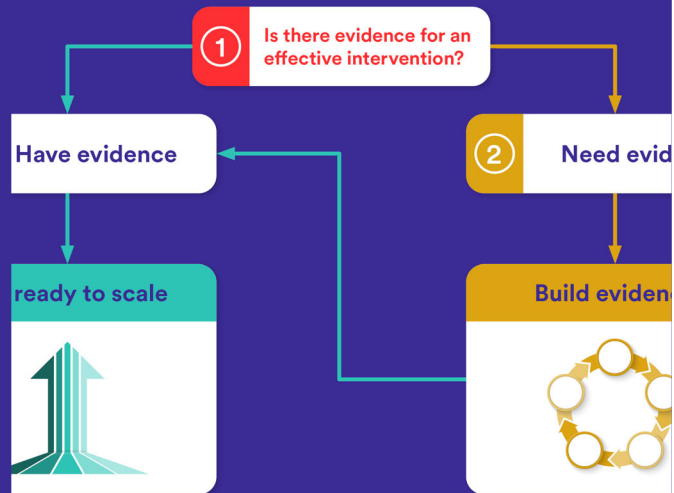
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# Scaling Checklists: Assessing Your Level of Evidence and Readiness (SCALER)



## Step 3: Determining readiness to scale



### SCALER Step 3: Results

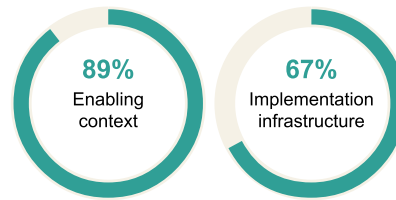
Click on the tabs below to see your results. For each of the five scaling readiness conditions, the closer your total score to the maximum, the more ready for scaling your intervention or organization appears to be. Use these scores to identify conditions that need further work for your intervention or organization to be ready to scale. Then, draw on the next steps and suggested resources to develop procedures or processes to build your capacity in these areas. For conditions where you have higher scores, we suggest areas to monitor once scaling is underway.



## Intervention readiness



## Organization readiness



Specifying the Intervention

## Specifying the Intervention

### You've begun to specify your intervention, but there's still work to do.

If you haven't already, make sure you've identified your intervention's core activities, meaning the specific services or curriculum that make up the intervention, as well as the delivery mode and intensity of those activities. Clearly define personnel roles and qualifications, the setting in which your intervention will be delivered, and criteria for participation and completion. All of these definitions should align to the research that showed evidence of the intervention's effectiveness and can help bolster your intervention's readiness for scaling. Changes in these components might not lead to the same beneficial outcomes during scaling. For more information, see "[How to Fully Describe an Intervention.](#)"

### Results

Return to edit

Component	Score*
Identifying core activities	9/9 points
Clearly defining personnel roles	7/9 points
Clearly defining the setting	5/6 points
Clearly defining participation and completion	0/6 points

\*Each checklist item was assigned a score from 0 to 3, with higher scores meaning the item was further along in being defined. Scores were then summed up for each component listed in the table.

### Next steps based on your scores

#### The intervention's identified core activities are defined

During scaling, seek to assess fidelity on an ongoing basis by comparing implementation of core activities against the definitions of those activities. Ensuring fidelity increases the likelihood that participants' outcomes will improve as expected (given research on the intervention's prior success).

#### Definitions for the intervention's personnel roles are in progress

Continue to define personnel roles for scaling your intervention. If you haven't already, be sure to:

- Identify how many personnel you will need to scale the intervention
- Define the titles and responsibilities that personnel will have in scaling the intervention
- Define the personnel qualifications, such as the required education, prior trainings, or experience levels, for the personnel delivering services for the scaled intervention

#### A definition for the intervention's setting is in progress

Keep working on defining the setting for your intervention. If you haven't already, you should:

- Identify the geographic location where the scaling will take place (for example, which geographic region in the United States) and whether the setting is rural and/or urban
- Define where the intervention takes place (such as at a school, community-based organization, or workforce center) and the number of these venues needed

## ⊗ Intervention participation and completion are not defined

As part of specifying your intervention, clearly define intervention participation and completion. You should define:

- Participation by the minimum amount of services a person needs to receive. For example, to be considered a “participant,” a person seeking work must attend at least one case manager meeting.
- Criteria for completion to indicate what participants must do to be considered “graduates” of the intervention. For example, to complete the intervention, participants must attend 10 case manager meetings.

## Defining the target population


### The target population for your intervention is completely defined.

While scaling your intervention, assess whether your organization is adhering to the definition for your target population, including any criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Serving a different target population might decrease the likelihood that participants’ outcomes will improve as expected. If you’d like more information on this topic, see [How to Fully Describe an Intervention](#).

#### Results

 [Return to edit](#)

Component	Score*
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Defining the target population	 9/9 points
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*\*Each checklist item was assigned a score from 0 to 3, with higher scores meaning the item was further along in being defined. Scores were then summed up for each component listed in the table.*

#### Next steps based on your scores

##### ✔ The intervention’s target population is defined

During scaling, regularly assess whether the target population remains aligned with how you defined it and whether participants are being included or excluded in the intervention according to the criteria you developed. Changes in the target population from the research that showed evidence of effectiveness might decrease the likelihood that participants’ outcomes will improve as expected.

## Establishing implementation supports

### You have some implementation supports in place and should continue setting up others.

Think about setting up your implementation monitoring team and performance benchmarks to help ensure fidelity and a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process to adjust your intervention as needed. Make sure personnel receive the training they need to deliver the intervention, both before and during intervention service delivery. You might also ensure your communication and data systems are set up to facilitate coordination of service delivery and support decision-making processes. All these supports can bolster your intervention’s readiness for scaling. For more information, see [How to Structure Implementation Supports](#).

#### Results

 [Return to edit](#)

Component	Score*
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Monitoring	 9/9 points
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#### Next steps based on your scores

##### ✔ An intervention monitoring team is in place

When scaling is underway, draw on your monitoring team’s assessments. Also ensure team members have enough time to monitor

Component	Score*
Establishing performance goals	 4/6 points
Engaging in continuous quality improvement (CQI)	 3/9 points
Engaging in training	 12/12 points
Establishing communication systems	 7/9 points
Establishing data systems	 9/12 points

*\*Each checklist item was assigned a score from 0 to 3, with higher scores meaning the item was further along in being set up. Scores were then summed up for each component listed in the table.*

implementation. Use the monitoring team's reports to improve implementation fidelity and address challenges as soon as possible after they arise.

#### **A plan for establishing performance goals is in progress**

Keep working on defining your performance benchmarks for assessing implementation fidelity, such as serving a certain number of participants per workforce member. Also make plans to monitor benchmarks for achievement. Such plans should include how benchmarks are measured and collected, who reviews progress toward benchmarks, and the frequency of performance monitoring.

#### **A plan for engaging in continuous quality improvement (CQI) is in progress**

As you begin to develop a CQI process to use while scaling your intervention, seek to integrate it into your organization's existing practices around improving implementation practice. CQI requires collecting data on performance benchmarks and using data to provide ongoing training for personnel and technical assistance to partners.

#### **Personnel training plans are in place**

Make sure all personnel receive training before scaling begins and during implementation.

- **Conducting preservice training:** Make sure all personnel receive preservice training in a timely manner before implementation begins. You can also conduct knowledge checks or observations to make sure training led to the intended implementation outcomes. Any gaps can inform in-service training.
- **Conducting in-service training:** During implementation, make sure all personnel receive in-service training in a timely manner. You may want to use performance benchmarks and your CQI process to identify any additional training that might be needed during implementation.

#### **A plan for establishing communication systems is in progress**

As you wrap up developing your communication system, make sure you have a process to resolve any communication challenges shortly after they occur. For example, the system might include regular check-ins with personnel to gather feedback on how easily they are able to get in contact with key intervention partners. Address any communication challenges personnel note as soon as possible.

#### **A plan for establishing data systems is in progress**

As you wrap up developing your data systems, make sure you have processes in place to ensure data collected are entered in a timely manner and are of high quality, are analyzed appropriately, and are used to support decision making at the organizational level. For more information, see [Making the Most of Data](#).

## Having an enabling context



### Your organization appears committed to innovation, learning, and improvement, but has some work to do before scaling.

To foster a context that enables scaling, ensure organizational leaders and other stakeholders are committed to and actively participating in scaling the intervention. Continue to find ways to improve or enhance the intervention model or your service offerings to better meet the needs of your target

population and to look for ways to innovate, learn, and improve during scaling. For more information, see [“Build Organizational Capacity to Implement an Intervention.”](#)

## Results

 [Return to edit](#)

Component	Score*
Supporting the intervention	 6/6 points
Engaging in innovation and learning	 10/12 points

*\*Each checklist item was assigned a score from 0 to 3, with higher scores meaning the item was further along in being set up. Scores were then summed up for each component listed in the table.*

## Next steps based on your scores

### **Your intervention has support from organizational leaders and key stakeholders**

Your organization has a good amount of support from your organizational leaders and key stakeholders. During scaling:

- Continue to enlist organizational leaders in scaling by, for example, asking them to take active roles on the team overseeing implementation.
- Work with key stakeholders, such as service delivery partners and referral sources, throughout implementation, to deliver intervention services and provide personnel as needed.

### **Your organization has made efforts to engage in innovation and learning**

Seek to bolster your organization’s commitment to innovation, learning, and improvement. That could mean encouraging personnel to identify, develop, and implement new ways of meeting participants’ needs. It might also involve continually seeking to advance the organization’s practices and enhance its service offerings. During scaling, personnel involved in the intervention’s implementation should also regularly discuss successes as well as challenges and ways to overcome those challenges.



## Establishing an implementation infrastructure

### **You have taken steps to make sure the necessary infrastructure is in place for scaling, but there’s still some work to do.**

Continue to put in place the appropriate financial, human, and physical resources to support intervention scaling. To effectively support the scaled intervention, your organization’s infrastructure must facilitate hiring the personnel necessary for scaling, support supervision and personnel development through a human resources management system, and provide funding and other resources for implementing the intervention (for example, materials and physical space). For more information, see [Build Organizational Capacity to Implement an Intervention](#).

## Results

 [Return to edit](#)

Component	Score*
Procuring financial and human resources	 5/9 points
Providing materials and physical space	 7/9 points


*\*Each checklist item was assigned a score from 0 to 3, with higher scores meaning the item was more descriptive of your organization. Scores were then summed up for each component listed in the table.*

## Next steps based on your scores

### **A plan for procuring financial and human resources is in progress**

Continue to develop or secure the financial and human resources necessary for scaling. If you haven’t already, be sure to:

- Identify funding to implement the intervention while scaling, including a plan to secure funding for future needs
- Put enough personnel in place to implement the intervention during scaling (as compared to the number of personnel the intervention model requires)
- Develop a human resource system to support scaling; such a system should be able to routinely and effectively hire appropriate personnel, support supervisory structures, and provide for professional development and training

 **A plan for providing materials and physical space is in progress**

You have some of your materials and physical space needs figured out, but not all. If you haven't already, be sure to:

- Develop a description of the materials and physical space needed for scaling
- Obtain the materials needed for scaling, such as workbooks, handouts, and culturally sensitive documents

You have completed Step 3 of the SCALER. Based on your results, your organization needs to continue its efforts to build a readiness to scale its intervention. Proceed to "Planning your next steps" for guidance on how your organization can use the SCALER results to identify next steps for strengthening your scaling readiness.

BACK

 PRINT STEP 3 RESULTS



CONTINUE TO PLANNING YOUR NEXT STEPS

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