



NLIP COMMUNITY PLAN

March 2026



NANAIMO
LOCAL IMMIGRATION
PARTNERSHIP/
PARTENARIAT LOCAL
POUR L'IMMIGRATION

Plan Development by CVIMS

March 2026

Coordinator: Sarah Haynes

Layout & Design: Astrid Feschuk

For questions, please contact CVIMS at:

community@cvims.org

(250) 753-6911

www.cvims.org

Acknowledgment of Funder

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We gratefully acknowledge this support, which has made it possible to develop and share the NLIP Community Plan.

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et Citoyenneté Canada



Central Vancouver Island
Multicultural Society

Land Acknowledgment

The Nanaimo Local Immigration Partnership (NLIP) respectfully acknowledges that CVIMS and its community partners serve newcomers on the unceded land of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. We are settlers on their land and receive the advantages and privileges of colonization.

Our Commitment to Reconciliation and Equity

We acknowledge that colonization established systems of hierarchy that did not affect all settlers equally. While many benefited from white settler privilege, racialized settler communities in particular were subjected to discriminatory laws and systemic barriers designed to exclude, control, and marginalize them.

We are committed to:

- Educating ourselves and newcomers about our colonial history and impact of colonization that continues to today.
- Challenging colonial structures and oppression, in alliance with Indigenous Peoples.

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MESSAGE FROM THE NLIP TEAM

The Nanaimo Local Immigration Partnership (NLIP) gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Through IRCC's investment in Local Immigration Partnerships across Canada, communities like Nanaimo are able to strengthen collaboration, improve coordination, and enhance settlement and integration outcomes for newcomers.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the NLIP Partnership Council for their leadership, guidance, and ongoing commitment to advancing inclusion in Nanaimo. Council members represent diverse sectors—including education, health, business, social services, public safety, arts, and community development—and generously contribute their expertise, time, and strategic insight to shape this Community Plan and its implementation.

We are deeply grateful to the members of the Newcomer Advisory Table (NAT) for sharing their lived experiences, perspectives, and ideas. Their voices ensure that this plan reflects the realities, strengths, and aspirations of newcomers themselves. The NAT's contributions have been essential in identifying barriers, highlighting community assets, and shaping meaningful priorities.

We also thank all community planning session participants, service providers, employers, and community partners who engaged in dialogue, visioning, and priority-setting throughout the development of this plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Nanaimo Local Immigration Partnership (NLIP) Community Plan 2025–2028 provides a community-driven roadmap to strengthen Nanaimo as a welcoming and inclusive city where newcomers feel safe, valued, and able to thrive. Developed through collaboration with the NLIP Partnership Council, Newcomer Advisory Table, and community partners, the plan outlines shared priorities and actions to advance belonging, equity, and inclusion over the next three years.

As Nanaimo grows and evolves, newcomers play a vital role in the community's social, cultural, and economic success. NLIP brings together partners from education, health, business, social services, and public institutions to strengthen collaboration, address systemic barriers, and align efforts toward shared outcomes.

While NLIP does not provide direct settlement services, it acts as a catalyst for community-wide action by fostering partnerships, amplifying newcomer voices, supporting research and knowledge-sharing, and promoting coordinated approaches to inclusion.

From 2025–2028, NLIP will focus on three strategic priorities:

- Strengthen Community Connections & Cultural Learning
- Advance Inclusive Systems & Anti-Racism
- Promote Economic & Civic Inclusion

Through these priorities, NLIP aims to increase newcomer belonging, improve access to services and opportunities, strengthen employer and community engagement, and support greater participation in civic life.

By 2028, NLIP envisions a Nanaimo where newcomers experience a strong sense of belonging, organizations work together to remove barriers, and diversity is recognized as a source of community strength. Through sustained collaboration and shared accountability, this plan provides a foundation for a more inclusive, equitable, and welcoming Nanaimo for all.

What are Local Immigration Partnerships?

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) are community-based collaborative tables funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Established nationally in 2008, LIPs operate across Canada to strengthen local capacity to welcome and integrate newcomers.

LIPs:

- Convene multi-sector partnerships
- Conduct and share local research
- Identify gaps and barriers in systems
- Develop coordinated Community Plans
- Amplify newcomer voices
- Support collaboration between settlement and non-settlement sectors

Importantly, LIPs play a coordinating, convening, and strategic planning role. By aligning organizations and sectors around shared priorities, LIPs help improve outcomes for newcomers and strengthen communities as a whole.

Why Does Nanaimo Need One?

Nanaimo continues to grow and diversify. Immigration plays an important role in supporting population growth, economic development, labour market sustainability, and cultural vibrancy. As a mid-sized island community, Nanaimo faces both unique strengths and challenges:

- Geographic isolation from larger metropolitan service hubs
- Transportation barriers within the region
- Limited availability of specialized settlement services
- Employment and credential recognition gaps
- Language and digital literacy barriers
- Social isolation among newcomers
- The need for greater anti-racism and inclusive systems work

At the same time, Nanaimo benefits from:

- Strong community organizations
- Engaged civic and volunteer sectors
- Educational institutions and employers seeking talent
- A growing recognition of the importance of belonging

The NLIP strengthens Nanaimo's collective response to newcomer integration by bringing together service providers, employers, public institutions, and community leaders to align efforts, reduce duplication, and address systemic barriers collaboratively.

Without coordinated planning and shared accountability, gaps remain fragmented. The NLIP ensures that integration is not left to individual organizations alone—but becomes a shared community responsibility.

Key Demographic Statistics for City of Nanaimo

Population & Growth

- Nanaimo had a population of 110,591 in 2024, up from 99,863 in 2021 — a growth of 10.7% in three years.

Immigrant Population

- In 2024, 16.6% of Nanaimo's population were immigrants (i.e., first-generation, foreign-born residents).
- In comparison, immigrants make up ~23% of Canada's population and ~29% of British Columbia's population in 2024 (unchanged since 2021).

Origins of Immigrant Population

- Top global birthplaces for immigrants in Nanaimo include Ukraine, India, China, Philippines, and Afghanistan.

Languages Spoken

- Among immigrants, commonly spoken non-official languages include Ukrainian, Arabic, Mandarin, and Tagalog.

These figures demonstrate that while Nanaimo's proportion of immigrants is somewhat lower than provincial and national averages, the absolute number is growing and the diversity of origins and languages highlights important settlement and inclusion needs.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions support clarity and shared understanding among members of the Nanaimo Local Immigration Partnership (Nanaimo LIP) and its community partners.

Anti-Racism

A proactive and intentional approach to identifying, challenging, and eliminating racism in all forms, including interpersonal, institutional, systemic, and internalized racism.

Community Plan

A multi-year, collaboratively developed plan that outlines priorities, goals, actions, and evaluation measures to enhance newcomer settlement and integration outcomes in the Nanaimo region.

Community of Practice (CoP)

A structured, collaborative forum that brings together organizations with a shared role or interest in the delivery, coordination, or improvement of settlement services. Within NLIP, the Community of Practice is primarily focused on Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services (NAARS) and supports knowledge-sharing, coordination, and alignment with IRCC program guidance. A CoP is advisory in nature and does not exercise decision-making authority.

Cultural Safety

An approach that addresses power imbalances and inequities, ensuring individuals feel respected, safe, and able to express their cultural identities without discrimination.

Equity

The practice of identifying and eliminating systemic barriers to ensure fair treatment, full participation, and equal access to opportunities for all community members.

Immigrant

An individual who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently, through economic, family, or humanitarian immigration pathways.

Inclusion

The creation of environments where all individuals feel valued, respected, supported, and able to participate fully, regardless of background or identity.

Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)

A community-based planning table funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) that supports multi-sector collaboration to improve newcomer settlement and integration outcomes.

Newcomer

An individual who is eligible for, or has accessed, settlement or resettlement services funded by IRCC, including immigrants and refugees. The term may also include individuals with lived experience of immigration where relevant to consultation, planning, or advisory activities.

Newcomer Advisory Table (NAT)

An advisory body composed of individuals with lived experience as newcomers that provides input and perspectives to inform NLIP planning, priorities, and activities. The NAT does not hold decision-making authority.

Refugee

An individual who has been determined to meet Canada's definition of a refugee under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) and who has been granted protection by Canada. This includes Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs), Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs), and Blended Visa Office–Referred (BVOR) refugees, as well as individuals recognized as Convention Refugees or persons in need of protection.

Secretariat

The organization responsible for the coordination and administrative support of NLIP, including meeting logistics, documentation, communications, and reporting to IRCC. For NLIP, this role is fulfilled by Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS).

Working Group

A group established by the Partnership Council to support the implementation of specific priorities or actions identified in the NLIP Community Plan. Working Groups operate within the scope and direction set by the Partnership Council and do not have independent decision-making authority.

Youth

Range varies by funder; however, this document defines youth as 16-30 years of age.

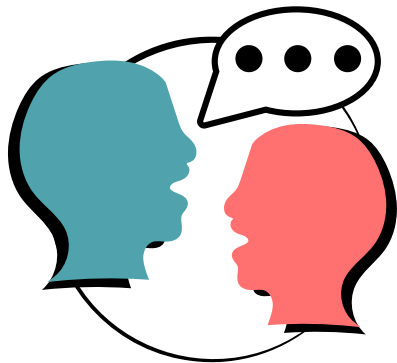
INTRODUCTION

The Nanaimo Local Immigration Partnership (NLIP) is a community-based collaboration dedicated to strengthening Nanaimo as a welcoming and inclusive city where newcomers can belong and thrive.

This Community Plan (2025–2028) reflects:

- Community partner dialogue
- Lived experience insights
- Shared visioning for Nanaimo in 2028

It outlines collective priorities, goals, and actions that will guide NLIP's work over the next three years.



NLIP COUNCIL MEMBERS

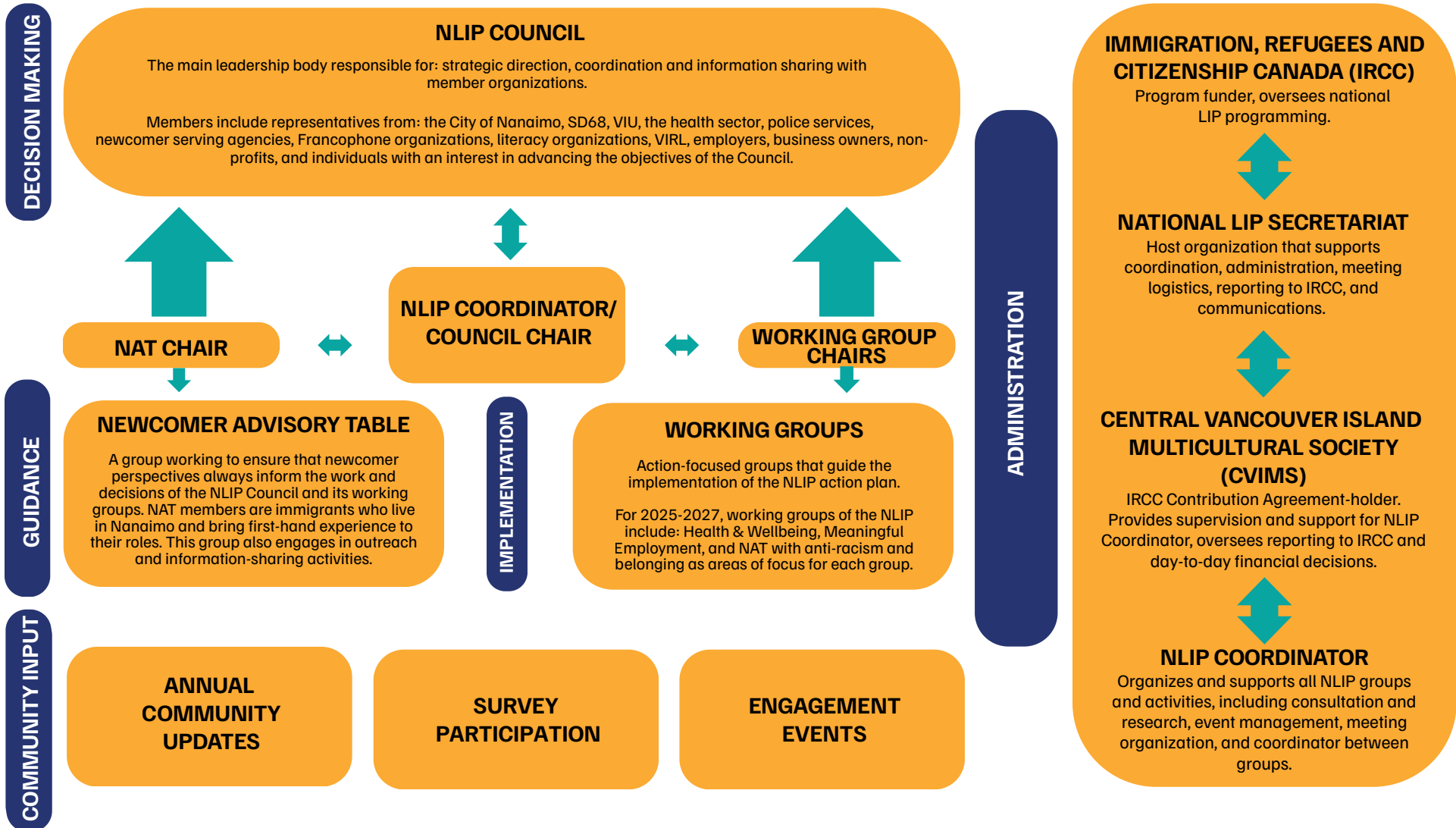


Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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GOVERNANCE MODEL



COMMUNITY PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Development of the Community Plan

The NLIP Community Plan 2025–2028 was developed through a structured and collaborative engagement process grounded in partnership, lived experience, and local research.

In January 2026, the NLIP Partnership Council and members of the Newcomer Advisory Table (NAT) participated in a dedicated Community Planning Session. This session included facilitated small-group discussions, a shared visioning exercise for Nanaimo in 2028, and a priority-setting process using dot-voting to identify areas of greatest collective impact. Participants examined both barriers faced by newcomers and strengths within the community that could be leveraged to enhance inclusion.

The development of this plan was further informed by the 2024 Newcomer Needs Assessment Report on Inclusion, finalized by Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS). The report provided data-driven insights into service access gaps, inclusion challenges, and emerging priorities identified by newcomers themselves.



Objectives

Following the planning session, draft priorities and strategic directions were refined through review by the Partnership Council. The Newcomer Advisory Table provided additional feedback to ensure that lived-experience perspectives were meaningfully reflected in the final framework.

The resulting Community Plan reflects:

- Cross-sector collaboration
- Evidence-informed analysis
- Community dialogue
- Lived-experience input
- Alignment with IRCC Local Immigration Partnership objectives

This plan is both aspirational and actionable. It balances long-term vision with measurable priorities and establishes a shared foundation for coordinated implementation over the next three years.

VISION & MISSION

Vision for Nanaimo in 2028

In 2028, Nanaimo is:

- A city where newcomers feel safe, respected, and welcome
- A community with strong in-person social connections that reduce isolation
- A place where cultural diversity is visible, valued, and celebrated
- A city known for celebrating diversity in ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and immigration status
- A community where language, navigation, and digital access barriers are reduced
- A place where employers value newcomer strengths and intercultural competency is the norm
- A community where newcomer youth are supported to thrive socially, culturally, and economically

Mission

The Nanaimo Local Immigration Partnership increases Nanaimo's capacity to welcome and integrate newcomers by:

- Convening cross-sector collaboration
- Advancing inclusive and anti-racist systems
- Reducing barriers to access and participation
- Amplifying newcomer voices
- Mobilizing research and shared action

Through coordinated leadership and collective accountability, NLIP works to ensure that newcomer integration strengthens the social, cultural, and economic vitality of Nanaimo.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

NLIP's work is guided by:

1

Values-Driven Approach

Belonging, openness, respect, empowerment, hospitality, confidence, joy of service and positivity

2

Cultural Awareness and Respect

Creating culturally safe, inclusive interactions

3

Island and Community Context

Recognizing Nanaimo's evolving island identity

4

Social Connection and Belonging

Strengthening awareness of community spaces and opportunities

5

Reconciliation and Collaboration

Working in partnership with Indigenous communities

6

Welcoming and Inclusive Systems

Commitment to reflection, openness, and collaborative system change



PILLAR 1

Strengthen Community Connections & Cultural Learning

Goal

Newcomers and long-term residents build meaningful relationships and shared understanding.

Objectives

1. Increase accessible, low-barrier community gathering spaces.
2. Expand intercultural learning opportunities.
3. Reduce newcomer social isolation.
4. Strengthen cross-sector partnerships.
5. Support youth-led and youth-inclusive community activities.

Priority Actions

- Host community networking forums.
- Support intercultural dialogue events.
- Develop a "Welcoming Spaces" map.
- Promote mentorship and peer programs.
- Facilitate annual community celebrations of diversity.
- Partner with schools and youth-serving organizations to support youth-led cultural initiatives and leadership opportunities.

PILLAR 2

Advance Inclusive Systems & Anti-Racism

Goal

Newcomers experience equitable access to services and freedom from discrimination.

Objectives

1. Improve service navigation pathways.
2. Strengthen anti-racism initiatives.
3. Reduce digital and language barriers.
4. Advocate for inclusive policies.
5. Promote culturally responsive supports for newcomer youth.

Priority Actions

- Explore newcomer navigator models.
- Support anti-racism education initiatives.
- Increase translation and plain-language materials.
- Partner to improve digital literacy access.
- Advocate for improved transportation access.
- Encourage organizations to adopt culturally responsive practices that support youth from newcomer families.
- Work with schools, youth-serving organizations, and community partners to strengthen culturally responsive and anti-racist practices that support newcomer youth well-being and inclusion.

PILLAR 3

Promote Economic & Civic Inclusion

Goal

Newcomers fully participate in Nanaimo's economic and civic life.

Objectives

1. Strengthen employer engagement.
2. Advocacy and support with credential recognition pathways.
3. Expand volunteer opportunities.
4. Support newcomer entrepreneurs and business owners
5. Support newcomer youth success in education and employment.

Priority Actions

- Employer roundtables and intercultural competency workshops.
- Networking events linking newcomers and employers.
- Volunteer pathway promotion campaigns.
- Partner with schools, post-secondary institutions, and youth-serving organizations to provide mentorship, career exposure opportunities, and leadership development programs for newcomer youth.

IMPACT

The Nanaimo Local Immigration Partnership Community Plan is designed to produce measurable, system-level impact over the next three years. While NLIP does not deliver direct settlement services, its role in convening partners, strengthening collaboration, and addressing systemic barriers contributes to meaningful improvements in newcomer experiences and community capacity.

Through implementation of the three strategic priorities, NLIP aims to achieve the following impacts by 2028:

1 Increased Newcomer Belonging & Social Connection

Newcomers report a stronger sense of belonging, safety, and inclusion within Nanaimo. Social isolation is reduced through increased access to welcoming spaces, intercultural events, mentorship opportunities, and community engagement pathways. Relationships between newcomers and long-term residents are strengthened, contributing to greater social cohesion across the city.

2 More Inclusive & Equitable Community Systems

Service pathways become clearer and easier to navigate. Organizations demonstrate increased cultural competency and anti-racism awareness. Language, digital, and information barriers are reduced through improved coordination and advocacy. Policies and practices increasingly reflect a commitment to equity, cultural safety, and inclusion.



3

Stronger Economic and Civic Participation

Employers demonstrate greater awareness of newcomer strengths and intercultural competency. Newcomers experience improved access to employment opportunities aligned with their skills and education. Volunteer and civic engagement pathways expand, increasing newcomer representation in community leadership and decision-making processes.

4

Enhanced Community Capacity & Collaboration

Cross-sector collaboration strengthens across education, health, employment, municipal, business, and community sectors. Organizations align efforts, reduce duplication, and collectively address emerging gaps. Newcomer voices continue to inform planning and evaluation through the Newcomer Advisory Table.

Long-Term Community Impact

Over time, these outcomes contribute to a Nanaimo that is:

- More resilient and economically sustainable
- More culturally vibrant and socially connected
- Better equipped to respond to demographic change
- Recognized as a welcoming and inclusive island community

By aligning partners around shared goals and measurable action, NLIP helps ensure that newcomer integration strengthens not only individual settlement outcomes, but the overall well-being and prosperity of Nanaimo as a whole.

HOW TO LEARN MORE ABOUT NLIP

If you are interested in the activities of the Nanaimo Local Immigration Partnership, please contact us at:

Email: community@cvims.org

Website: <https://cvims.org/nlip>

Footnotes:

1. 2025 State of the Economy Report. City of Nanaimo. Prepared by Amrit Manhas, Economic Development Officer, p. 8.
2. Statistics for the provincial and national averages are from the 2021 Census.
3. 2025 State of the Economy Report. City of Nanaimo. Prepared by Amrit Manhas, Economic Development Officer, p. 12.
4. 2025 State of the Economy Report. City of Nanaimo. Prepared by Amrit Manhas, Economic Development Officer, p. 12.



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