PROJECT BUDGETING For Grants TOOLKIT
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CRAFTING AN EFFECTIVE BUDGET

"Just like a 60-second elevator pitch or a 500-word narrative, a project budget is a tool for communication. It is an incredibly useful tool for helping individual artists conduct their practices within financial limits. Project budgets are also a way to share information with a grant review panel, potential donors, and other team members. Creating a strong project budget simply requires artists to present the hard work they are already doing in a new format."

— From our friends at NYFA

Your project budget should give a clear and specific projection of your revenues and expenses related to the grant proposal. It will include funds from the grant* you are applying for but have not yet received (fingers crossed) as well as funding from other sources (sponsors, crowdfunding, other grants, etc.) and future earned revenue (ticket sales, etc.).

*Note: this toolkit was created to help artists with creating budgets for projects seeking grant funding, but much of this information can be applied to other project proposals for exhibitions, commissions, awards, etc.
Step 1: Research, Research, Research

As with writing your project narrative, the first step to crafting an effective budget is:

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE FUNDING GUIDELINES.

Research is essential to composing the most accurate budget possible for your project and projecting how likely it is that you will receive funding from a particular source. Start with the granting institution to whom you will apply.

1. What portions of my project expenses will this grant fund?
2. What portions of my project expenses will the grant not cover?
3. What other funding sources or opportunities exist to cover the remaining expenses?

Some awards are relatively unrestrictive while others may have very specific guidelines for use of funds. For example, the funder may stipulate that money may not be used for travel or the purchase of equipment. Some grants require matching funds from other sources, which means they will not fund the entire budget for the project and want you to list your other funding sources (both pending and secured). Other grants require applicants to have non-profit status or to be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) public organization.
**MAKE SURE YOU'RE CLEAR ON THE FUNDER'S EXPECTATIONS BEFORE YOU BEGIN CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS.**

Consider the following questions as you do your funding research:

1. Do they award set amounts, or do grants occur within a wide range?
2. How many projects did they fund in the last cycle and how much was each project awarded? Read about these other projects.
3. Does your project have a similar scope and budget as the ones this organization has funded in the past?

**Research Your Project Expenses**

Next, spend some time researching all of your expenses. Your budget won’t be set in stone – grant administrators know that unexpected changes may come up during the course of the grant period – but they do want to know that you are both professional enough to accurately estimate costs and responsible enough to spend the money wisely.

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**TIP:** The grant application may include specific budget categories that they would like to see identified. Some applications include a sample budget or a budget template that the funding institution prefers that you use.

Here are some common project expenses to consider:

- **Documentation** – photo, video, and/or sound recording of your final event, exhibition, or performance, for your own portfolio and possibly for the granting agency.
- **Fabrication** – Do you need to have something constructed, programmed, or composed? Get a quote and add it to the budget.
- **Insurance**
- **Marketing** – project website fees, paid ads, printed matter, postcard postage, etc.
- **Materials/Supplies**
- **Rental Fees** – Are you renting a performance venue or exhibition space? Renting a lift or other equipment?
- **Shipping** – transport costs for your art, musical instruments, etc.
- **Professional Services or Fees** – Are you using a Fiscal Sponsor? Will you incur fees for permits? Include those fees in your budget.
- **Travel and/or meals** – for you and your collaborators
- **Your artist fee** – Don’t forget to pay yourself for all of your time and hard work!
- **Your Project Collaborators** – Does your project include other artists? Others should be paid for their labor, too.
- **Discretionary/Contingency spending**

* – More information about calculating these fees in continuing sections.
Step 2: BRAINSTORM PROJECT EXPENSES

Spend some time brainstorming your project expenses. Begin by considering everything about the project that costs money. Start with the main expenses and list any associated items. Don’t worry about the costs at this point, just focus on thinking through the expense list.

- Are you documenting your work? Having photos, video, and/or sound recording of your final event, exhibition, or performance for your own portfolio and possibly for the granting agency?
- Do you need to have something constructed, programmed, composed, or designed?
- Will you need special insurance or permits?
- How do you plan to market your completed project? Printing postcards or flyers? Will you have a website for the project (web hosting fees)?
- What Materials/Supplies will you need?
- Are you renting a performance venue, workspace or exhibition space? Renting a lift or other equipment? Need lighting or sound equipment?
- Will you need to have art work or instruments shipped or professionally moved?
STEP 2: BRAINSTORM PROJECT EXPENSES CONTINUED

- Are you using a Fiscal Sponsor? Include applicable fees in your budget.
- Will you project require travel and/or meals, for you and your collaborators?
- Are you participating in the project as a project lead, curator, or as an artist creating new work?
- Don’t forget to pay yourself for your time and hard work!
- Does your project include other artists? Others should be paid for their labor, too.*

*More on this in a continuing section

Cost Out Your Expenses

Next, research the estimated costs associated with each item you listed. Don’t know how much something costs? A quick Google search might help otherwise call for quotes or ask another artist who has done similar projects.

Tip: Your budget won’t be set in stone – grant administrators know that unexpected changes may come up during the course of the grant period – but they do want to know that you are both professional enough to accurately estimate costs and responsible enough to spend the money wisely.

Here are a few sources to get your started. Don’t be afraid to shop around for the best price and quality for your project needs.

PRINTING
- Copydotcom is a huge supporter of the arts and a great local source for printing flyers and postcards with a short turn-around time. Show them your profile of Fresh Arts Artist Registry for a 10% discount.
- GotPrint has low pricing for printed items of all kinds (banners, postcards, stickers, etc.) just make sure you include an extra week for shipping time.

MATERIALS/SUPPLIES
- Jerry’s Artarama for art supplies at often discounted prices.
- JS Canvas Makers for custom panels, stretchers and pedestals.
- Houston Toolbank*, tool and equipment lending.
- Reuse Warehouse* *Must be affiliated with a nonprofit to use their materials/services

GRAPHIC DESIGN/PUBLISHING TOOLS
- PicMonkey, Free.
- Canva, Free

Have other recommendations you’d like us to share? Let us know! Email reyes@fresharts.org
How to Pay Yourself

Artists should always find a way to pay themselves and their collaborators for their time and efforts. Some common ways to calculate your artist fee include: basing it on a percentage of a reasonable yearly salary, using an hourly rate, or making the fee a percentage of the total project budget. For example:

**Based on a percentage of salary** *(helpful if the project will be a major source of income)*
For a solid six months of full-time work on a project: \(50\% \text{ of } $35,000/\text{year} = $17,500\)

**Based on an hourly rate** *(helpful if you have a consistent “day job” or several projects)*
For eight months of work, 20 hours per month (or 5 hours/week):
8 months x 20 hours @ $25/hour = $4000

**Based on a percentage of the total budget** *(using the fee as “administration and overhead”)*
20% of $40,000 project = $8000

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**TAX TIP:** Keep in mind that grant awards to individual artists are taxed as income, but the granting institution will not take the taxes out for you the way an employer would. Your artist fee should be thought of as pre-tax income, not net income, and be adjusted according to your needs.

It is also important to ask for and keep receipts and invoices related to your project for income tax purposes.

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*Fresh Arts hosts a FREE Artist Tax Workshop every February. Sign up for the Resource Newsletter to stay-up-to-date with all of our workshops.*

How to Pay Your Contributors

Make sure that you are fairly compensating your collaborators as well as yourself. Start with getting a quote from the people you want to work with. If your collaborators are also artists, they may tend to undervalue their labor, which is no good for anyone involved. The sites below are helpful guides to fair pay for artists (including yourself!) in many different disciplines:

Visual artists/performers: wageforwork.com
Dancers and actors: theworkingdancer.com
Musicians (example from a musician’s union in the Dallas/Fort Worth area): musiciansdfw.org
Step 3: ORGANIZE EXPENSES INTO CATEGORIES

Group similar types of expenses together to create line items on your budget. For example, plaster, burlap, and buckets could be grouped under a ‘Materials’ category. Depending on your budget template, all of the details and subcategories you captured through brainstorming can be listed in a corresponding ‘Notes’ section, or broken down into separate line items.

HERE ARE SOME COMMON PROJECT EXPENSE CATEGORIES:

- Artist Fee*
- Discretionary/Contingency spending
- Documentation
- Fabrication
- In-Kind*
- Insurance
- Marketing/Promotion
- Materials/Supplies
- Permits or Fees
- Project Collaborators
- Rentals
- Shipping
- Professional Services
- Travel and/or meals

* – More information about calculating these fees in continuing sections.
Contingency/Discretionary Spending

YOUR BUDGET SHOULD ALWAYS INCLUDE A LINE ITEM FOR CONTINGENCIES AND DISCRETIONARY SPENDING, EQUAL TO 5-10% OF THE TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET.

This allocation includes unexpected spending due to shifts in the project, equipment repairs (like when your hard drive crashes in the middle of a project period), or the need to hire an extra helper. You may not know exactly when you’ll spend this money, but you will inevitably need a small cushion of funds during the life of the project, and funders will appreciate your forethought.

TIP: The grant application may include specific budget categories that they would like to see identified. Some applications include a sample budget or a budget template that the funding institution prefers that you use.
Step 4:
ASSESS SOURCES OF INCOME

The income portion of the budget is easy for small projects that require only one source of funding, but larger projects that need multiple forms of support will have to document all of these contributions, including seeking funding from other grants.

Income for a project can be categorized into earned income, unearned income, and in-kind support.

**EARNED INCOME**
Merchandise or art sales, revenue from expected tickets sales, etc.

**CONTRIBUTED INCOME**
Funds from project grants, fellowships, cash prizes, etc. This can also include individual contributions through a crowdfunding campaign.

**IN-KIND SUPPORT**
Goods and services that are not monetary, such as donations of materials. (More on this in an upcoming section).
STEP 4: ASSESS SOURCES OF INCOME CONTINUED

You may include both confirmed, pending, and anticipated/projected funds from any potential income source.

If you've secured other grant funding or plan to apply for more, then these sources should be documented in the budget as well.

Add the word “pending” to funding that has not yet been confirmed and later use the budget narrative to explain your plan (and backup plan) for covering this portion of the money. More on budget narratives in a later section.

In-kind Donations

In-kind donations are goods or services that you receive for free in support of your project, like food from a caterer to serve at your fund-raiser, a free rental of sound equipment, or volunteer labor. In-kind donations are documented by listing them both as income and expenses so that they balance out to net zero dollars.

For example: Free food worth $500 from your friend who owns a restaurant would be listed as $500 of in-kind income and listed again as an expense of $500 for food, because that's what you would have spent had you paid for it.
Step 5: DRAFT YOUR FINAL BUDGET

Your final budget should be created in a table format and be as simple, clean, and easy to read as possible. Use a spreadsheet in Excel or Google Sheets to organize information and build formulas within the document.

THIS DOCUMENT IS ABOUT NUMBERS, NOT A LOT OF TEXT.

Save any explanation for the budget narrative. Add expenses according to the categories you defined (refer to page #) and make a total for each category before you reach the grand total.

- Clearly lay out all of your calculations.
- Triple check your math.
- Make sure your budget is balanced. Your grand total of expenses should match the grand total of income.

A SIMPLE BUDGET FOR A ONE-NIGHT DANCE PERFORMANCE MIGHT LOOK LIKE THIS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performers</td>
<td>3 dancers</td>
<td>$250/performance x 3</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 cellist</td>
<td>$250/performance x 3</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Rental</td>
<td>3 nights</td>
<td>$200/hr x 4 hours</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costumes</td>
<td></td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>$450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist Project Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket Sales</td>
<td>$10/ticket</td>
<td>$10 x 75 attendees</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please see the end of the toolkit for project budget examples.
HOW TO WRITE A BUDGET NARRATIVE

Also known as a budget summary, budget detail, budget description, or budget justification, the budget narrative is a paragraph that explains what the numbers in the budget table or spreadsheet represent and how you arrived at them.

Not all grant applications require a budget narrative. The benefit of preparing a budget narrative is that it requires you to get down to your project’s nitty-gritty details by laying out who will accomplish what and when, as well as how you arrived at costs.

Along with the budget, the budget narrative tells a funder exactly how a nonprofit will spend its investment, item by item. From a funder’s perspective, the budget narrative ensures:

1. You did your research and that your project costs are reasonable and well thought out.
2. Your project is within the funder’s giving range and/or it includes a plan to seek additional funding.

This is a great place to get feedback from a friend who is reading your proposal for the first time and, for example, doesn’t understand why you need to buy 40 pounds of glitter. Their question is your cue to write about why the glitter is essential to the project and where you got the quote for purchasing it. You can also justify your artist fee by talking about the amount of time you expect to spend on the project, detail the rental fees of your rehearsal space, and explain the avenues you’ve chosen to market the work. The granting institution may also provide specific questions for you to address in this section.
EXAMPLE BUDGET NARRATIVE EXCERPT:

"The funding I seek from this grant will be used primarily for artistic costs associated with hiring three local dancers and a cellist for the one-night showcase. Participating artists are paid according to industry pay standards. The confirmed venue and its rental cost for 4 hours includes performance space, lighting, sound, and seating with no other anticipated rental expenses. Additional expenses include custom costumes for each dancer. In addition to grant funds, I am offsetting costs through ticket sales which are intentionally priced at just ten dollars to reach a wide public audience with a conservative goal of 75 patrons." (100 word count.)

Before You Submit Your Grant

1. Go back and reread the grant guidelines to ensure that your project expenses are in line with their funding guidelines.
2. Triple check your budget numbers to confirm your budget is balanced.
3. Have a friend* review your grant to ensure that your project narrative and budget are in alignment.

*Fresh Arts also offers grant peer review sessions as part of their new PeerLab program. Sign-up for our Resource Newsletter or check out our Workshop schedule.
## Sample Budget For Literary Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASH</th>
<th>IN-KIND</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist Fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributors</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$200 x 10 Contributors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Lead</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$20/hr x 50 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials/Supplies</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Paper and Binding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>Chapbook printing/Photo Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARKETING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fliers</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web/Media</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stickers</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$5,900</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Grants</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>City Arts Grant (Pending)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Kind</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>Original Cover Art/Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise Sales</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sales of Chapbook and Stickers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$5,900</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Income should equal Total Expenses
**Sample Visual Arts Project Budget**

### EXPENSES

**Artist Fee**
- Salary for Spring Semester Leave: $25000**

**Materials:**
- Production materials: $5500

**Work Space**
- Studio rent: $3000 ($500 x 6 months)
- Studio assistant: $2400 ($12 x 200 hours)
- Internet, phone service: $60 ($100 x 6 months x 10%)**

**Research Travel**
- Seattle to Kansas City plane ticket: $500
- Car rental: $525 ($35 x 15 days)
- Lodging & Meals: $2250 ($150 x 15 days)

**Promotion & Publicity**
- Web Designer & Launch: $1000
- Documentation of work: $400

**In-Kind:**
- Use of University carpentry shop: $100 ($50 x 2 days)

**Contingency**
- ~5% of total budget: $2000

**Total Expenses:** $42,735

### INCOME

- State Art Council grant confirmed: $7500
- Foundation confirmed: $10000
- Private donors projected: $10000
- Sale of work projected: $20000
- In-kind donation: $100

**Total Income:** $47,600

**Projected Profit:** $4,865

**this line item assumes there are no collaborators on the project**
### Sample Film, Video, or Moving Image Project Budget

#### EXPENSES

**Development & Pre-production**
- Transportation and meals (airfares, car rental, lodging, meals, per diems) $3600
- Materials $900
- Personnel (director, producer, writer, researcher) $20000
- Administration (phone, postage, copies, internet, fiscal agent fees) $1700

**Production**
- Transportation and meals (airfares, car rental, lodging, meals, per diems) $15000
- Materials $3200
- Personnel (director, producer, production crew) $42000
- Actors $50000
- Administration (phone, postage, copies, internet, fiscal agent fees) $2000
- Production equipment and facilities rental $9500

**Post-production**
- Transportation and meals (airfares, car rental, lodging, meals, per diems) $6000
- Materials $2640
- Personnel (director, producer, editor, sound engineers, etc) $42000
- Administration (phone, postage, copies, internet, fiscal agent fees) $4600
- Lab fees and post-production facilities (dubs, editing, subtitles, mix) $16000

**Distribution Launch**
- Transportation and meals (airfares, car rental, lodging, meals, per diems) $8000
- Personnel (director, producer, production crew, publicist) $5000
- Mastering & production $5000
- Administration (phone, postage, copies, internet, fiscal agent fees) $1000

**Contingency**
- ~5% of total budget $12000

**Total Expenses:** $250,140

#### INCOME

**Confirmed**
- Foundation $10000
- State Art Commission $8000
- Kickstarter Campaign $10140

**Pending**
- Paul Robeson Foundation $10000
- Private Donors $60000

**Projected**
- Direct online sales ($20 x 1000 units) $20000
- Cable TV rights $50000
- Foreign rights $20000

**To Be Raised** $5200

**Total Income** $250,140

---

*From Creative Capital*
Example of an Interdisciplinary Project Budget

EXPENSES

Artist’s Fee
Salary for Spring Semester Leave $29000

Materials:
Production materials $5500
Equipment $8700
Software $3300
Fabrication $10000
   Sub-total: $27500

Work Space
Studio rent & utilities $4000 ($500 x 8 months)
Studio assistant $2250 ($15 x 150 hours)
   Sub-total: $6250

Research Travel
2 plane tickets: Minneapolis to New Orleans $800
Car rental $525 ($35 x 15 days)
Lodging & Meals $2250 ($150 x 15 days)
   Sub-total: $3575

Promotion & Publicity
Web Designer $1400
Marketing consultant $500
Documentation of work $500
   Sub-total: $2400

In-Kind:
Use of University Lab $1500 ($50 x 30 days)

Total Expenses: $70,225

INCOME

Faculty grant $2500
Foundation Grant $10000
Sale of work (estimate) $8000
In-kind donation $1500
To be raised $48225

Total Income: $70,225

From Creative Capital
### Example of a Literary Project Budget

#### EXPENSES

**Writer’s Fee & Advance**

- Writer’s Fee: $30000
- Publisher’s Advance: $5000

*Sub-total*: $35000

**Materials:**

- New Laptop computer: $2000
- Ink cartridges: $500
- Office supplies: $200

*Sub-total*: $2700

**Work Space**

- Writer’s Room: $4500 ($250 x 18 months)
- Intern: $1200 ($12 x 100 hours)
- Telephone, fax, internet: $450 ($100 x 18 months x 25%)

*Sub-total*: $6150

**Research & Travel**

- Travel to Artist Residency: $750
- Lodging & Meals: $1500

*Sub-total*: $2250

**Book Production**

- Reproduction & Permission fees: $750
- Photographer for Author photo: $350

*Sub-total*: $1100

**Promotion & Publicity**

- Agent’s fee (15% of advance and rights income): $1800
- Freelance Publicist: $1200
- Northeast mini-book tour: $2100

*Sub-total*: $5100

*Total Expenses*: $52,300

#### INCOME

- Foundation grant: $5000
- Grant (pending): $7500
- First serial excerpts: $750
- Royalties (2,500 copies x $2.50): $6250
- Foreign publication rights: $5000
- To be raised: $27,800

*Total Income*: $52,300

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*From Creative Capital*
Example of a Performing Arts Project Budget

EXPENSES

Artists’ Fees:
Artistic Director $35000
Performers $39000
Costume Designer $2500
Composer $6000
Videographer $2000
Sub-total: $84500

Production Costs:
Rehearsal Space $5000
Costumes $1500
Set Design $1200
Lighting & Sound $3000
Equipment Rental $1800
Sub-total: $12500

Research & Travel:
Travel to Tallahassee, FL $1000
Car rental $500
Food & Lodging $1500
Sub-total: $3000

Marketing & Promotion:
Blu-ray/DVD production & duplication $1000
Photography $1000
Printing materials $750
Press Kit assembly & postage $1500
Website design $1500
Sub-total: $5750

Administrative Costs:
Office materials $250
Utilities $1000
Assistant $3000
Sub-total: $4250

Total Expenses: $110,000

INCOME
Commissioning Fee $15000
State Arts Council $10000
To be raised $85000

Total Income: $110,000
LOOKING FOR MORE RESOURCES TO HELP SUPPORT YOUR ART CAREER?

Checkout Fresh Arts Artist Resource Library, an online curated selection of dozens of artist business resources, including career-focused articles, templates, and tool kits on topics such as marketing, finances and fundraising, legal issues, health and self-care, and other artist business essentials. New Resource Toolkits will be launched throughout the year so check back often or sign-up for our newsletters.

Support for Fresh Arts Resource Toolkits and Artist Resource Library was provided by a grant from Houston Endowment and the National Endowment for the Arts. Fresh Arts is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance, the Texas Commission on the Arts, the Brown Foundation, Inc.

ABOUT FRESH ARTS

Fresh Arts is a 501c3 nonprofit that champions local artists and creative entrepreneurs to succeed in the business of art. Our programs help advance the careers of local artists and creative entrepreneurs through resource sharing, skill building initiatives and through our artist-centered community-building initiatives.

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