	State of New Jersey **Department of Corrections** **Policy Statement**	**Policy Number** **ADM.001.007** **Page 1 of 13**

Policy Title:

New Jersey Department of Corrections
Departmental Research Review Board (DRRB)

Approved and Issued By Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq., Commissioner on October 1, 2025.

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Effective Date: November 1, 2004	**Revised:** July 25, 2025	**Enabling Authority:** N.J.S.A. 30:1B-6, ADM.001.000 **Related Authority:** N.J.A.C. 10A:1-10, N.J.A.C.;10A:16-2.20
Promulgating Office: Office of Compliance and Strategic Planning Office of the Chief of Staff		**Professional Association Standard cited:** N/A
Applicability: This policy applies to all NJDOC staff, units, contractors and non-NJDOC researchers utilizing NJDOC incarcerated persons and staff as human subjects or any and all NJDOC electronic and hard copy data for academic research.		
Supersedes: *ADM.001.007 dated September 2023.*		
Review Schedule: This document is scheduled for review on or before June 30, 2027 or as necessary.		

I. PURPOSE

To establish a policy that supports and encourages academic research with the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) and the use of a Departmental Research Review Board (DRRB).

II. DEFINITIONS

The following words and terms, when used in this policy, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

Academic Research means an undertaking of a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation which may include, but is not limited to, interviews, observation, review and evaluation of existing records and/or comparison of documents, designed to develop or contribute to a generalized body of knowledge.

Certification means the official notification by the organizational unit of the NJDOC to the supporting department or agency (the entity sponsoring the research, hereafter referred to as “researcher”) that a research project or activity has been reviewed by the DRRB in accordance with all related federal and state regulations and NJDOC Internal Management Procedures with final approval by the Commissioner of the NJDOC.

Commissioner means the Commissioner of the NJDOC, who is the Chief Executive Officer of the NJDOC.

Departmental Research Review Board (DRRB) or Board means the review panel established to ensure that all academic research protocols are reviewed and, if approved, shall be conducted within the constraints of all organizational unit, departmental, state and federal regulations, guidelines and requirements. At the completion of the DRRB review, the DRRB shall ensure that all recommendations to approve or disapprove academic research requests be presented to the Commissioner and other executive staff for final review and determination of approval or disapproval prior to official notification to the requester. The DRRB shall be composed of at least the following members:

- Chairperson appointed by the Commissioner from Central Office staff;
- Director, Office of Compliance & Strategic Planning or their designee;
- An Executive Director, Healthcare Compliance Unit;
- A member from the NJDOC executive staff who has expertise, experience or general knowledge relative to the area of general research and/or the subject being researched;
- Assistant Commissioner, Division of Operations;
- Assistant Commissioner, Division of Programs and Reintegration Services;
- The facility administrator or designee of the NJDOC facility housing the subject individual or population; and
- A Corrections Ombudsperson/advocate from the Office of the Governor or their designee.

Executive Staff means the Chief of Staff, Deputy Commissioner, Division Chiefs, Assistant Commissioners, and any other staff delegated by the Commissioner.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) means a board (usually at a University) that will review research protocols which involve human subjects. The principal researcher usually has an affiliation with the IRB as faculty, student, or employee. Through this association, the IRB will approve, modify or disapprove a potential research study.

New Jersey Department of Corrections means that department in the Executive Branch of the New Jersey State Government whose functions are to protect the public and provide for the custody, care, discipline, training and treatment of persons committed to state correctional facilities, contracted RCRP/Assessment Centers, or released on parole. In this document, this is also referred to as the NJDOC.

Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) means the office within the United States Department of Health and Human Services that provides clarification and guidance on 45 CFR 46, develops educational programs and material, maintains regulatory oversight, provides advice on ethical and regulatory issues in biomedical and behavior research, and administers assurance of compliance and IRB registration programs.

Organizational Unit means a division, correctional facility or other work unit within the NJDOC.

Quality Improvement (QI) means an undertaking of a systematic investigation, which may involve, observation, review and evaluation of existing records for the purpose of evaluating a current process, procedure or program and implementing improvements to the benefit of those currently undergoing the process, procedure or participating in the program.

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Quasi-research means a systematic investigation to obtain information that does not seek to prove or disprove a hypothesis.

Research Application Package means the collection of documents, including Form 980-I Application Form to Request Review of a Research Protocol (including Project Overview), required by ADM.001.RES.001 Research Request Application Process to be submitted to and reviewed by the DRRB by anyone seeking to conduct research with the NJDOC.

Research manuscript means any document prepared utilizing the data revealed as a result of research, including materials prepared for any presentations. For the purpose of this policy, the term "research manuscript" shall also apply to any document written to present quality improvement or quality assurance opinion. Quality improvement/assurance manuscripts, in any electronic or hardcopy format, must be submitted to the DRRB for review prior to being published or presented.

Residential Community Reintegration Program/Assessment Treatment Center (RCRP/ Assessment Treatment Center) means a contracted community corrections private facility who receives state funds to assist incarcerated persons as they transition from state prison back to the community.

III. POLICY

The New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) encourages academic research that is relevant to its goals, mission, operations, programs, and vision. All academic research conducted with the NJDOC must follow all policies, procedures, administrative rules, and directives as well as all state and federal guidelines related to research.

No research involving the use of incarcerated persons under the jurisdiction of the NJDOC for medical, pharmaceutical, or cosmetic experiments is permitted. However, this does not preclude individual treatment of an incarcerated person based on need for a specific medical procedure that is not generally available. (See N.J.A.C. § 10A: 1-10-1 General research and experimentation provisions).

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 10A:1-10, incarcerated persons shall not receive any compensation for participating in research

Research cannot interfere with the safe and secure operation of the Department's prisons or RCRPs/Assessment Treatment Centers.

The Departmental Research Review Board (DRRB) is tasked with reviewing all research protocols and providing a recommendation to the Commissioner. The DRRB will be, at minimum, comprised of:

- The DRRB Chairperson — a member of COHQ staff appointed by the Commissioner;
- Director, Office of Compliance & Strategic Planning, or their designee;
- An Executive Director, Healthcare Compliance Unit;
- A member from the NJDOC executive staff who has expertise, experience of general knowledge relative to the area of general research and/or the subject being researched;
- Assistant Commissioner, Division of Operations;
- Assistant Commissioner, Division of Programs and Reintegration Services (DPRS);

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- The facility administrator or designee of the NJDOC facility housing the subject of the research; and
- A Corrections Ombudsperson/advocate from the Office of the Governor, or their designee.

Additionally, the Chairperson shall appoint a DRRB Administrator that is responsible for the recordkeeping of all DRRB communications and research projects.

All protocols for academic research, by both internal and external research teams must be submitted to the DRRB. Projects that are consider quality improvement (QI) studies do not need to be submitted to the DRRB. QI projects should be submitted to the organization unit that is responsible for the subject's quality assurance, either the Office of Community Programs or the Healthcare Compliance Unit. However, if a QI project becomes research, the project will need to be submitted for DRRB.

The DRRB Administrator is to ensure all research protocols and their accompanying documents are physically stored solely at Central Office within the Office of Compliance & Strategic Planning. Principal researchers are responsible for following any record retention schedule that is required by their institution/agency/company. The principal researcher for a protocol that includes human subjects must be able to provide the DRRB with a copy of the human subjects' signed consent forms upon request up to five years after the conclusion of the study.

The DRRB will ensure that all research protocols, approved by the Commissioner, adhere to all NJDOC policies, procedures, administrative rules, and directives as well as all state and federal guidelines related to research.

All persons or agencies who complete a research project must, prior to submission for publication, presentation, or any dissemination, provide the research manuscript to the NJDOC DRRB for review, comment, and approval. Submissions must be provided to the DRRB at least 30 days prior to the intended dissemination/submission for publication.

The NJDOC DRRB must be registered with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). As such, the DRRB is obligated to report any of the following incidents to the OHRP (and the reviewing IRB if applicable):

1. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subject or others;
2. Any serious or continuing noncompliance with 45 CFR part 46;
3. Any serious or continuing noncompliance with determinations of the IRB; and
4. Any suspension or termination of IRB approval.

Note: The Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) Number for the DRRB is 00010871 (expires on 12/17/2029).

IV. PROCEDURE

A. DRRB Process

1. The DRRB Administrator performs an initial review of all submitted Research Application Packages to ensure they adhere to all the submission requirements outlined in the internal management procedure *ADM.001.RES.001 Research Request Application*.

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a. If a research protocol is proposing research that violates NJDOC policy the research protocol will be presented to the DRRB Chairperson to determine if a full DRRB review is appropriate.

b. If the research protocol includes NJDOC staff as participants, the Research Application Package will be sent to NJDOC Equal Employment/Ethics Division for review and approval prior to the Research Application Package undergoing any other review.

2. When a Research Application Package has passed the initial review, the DRRB Administrator will disseminate the Research Application Package to the Board for review. The Board members will have a minimum two weeks to review and provide their comments and recommendations. The initial DRRB review period should not exceed four weeks.
   a. Each member of the Board will recommend to either approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove the Research Application Package.
   b. If there is a recommendation to "approve with conditions" the Chair will determine if the Board will provide the principal researcher with the feedback and give them an opportunity to make the recommended changes.
      - The principal researcher will have three (3) business days from receipt of the feedback to the notify the DRRB if they will be making any changes to the protocol.
      - If the research team makes any changes, the research protocol will be recirculated to the DRRB for a new review.
      - If the research team abstains from making any changes, the Chair will note in the memorandum to executive staff and the Commissioner, that the research team was given an opportunity to make changes congruent with recommendations of the Board but declined to do so. The communication between the research team and the DRRB on this matter effect will also be attached to the Research Application Package.
3. The Research Application Package along with the comments and recommendations of the DRRB shall be provided to members of the Executive Staff designated by the Commissioner for review and recommendation.
4. The Commissioner will make a final determination on the research protocol after reviewing the Research Application Package and the comments and recommendations of the Board, and the designated Executive Staff members. The Commissioner will either approve, approve with conditions or deny.
5. The DRRB Chair will advise the principal researcher of the Commissioner's final determination via letter within four (4) business days of the decision.
   a. Denied Research Protocols: The determination letter will provide the research team with a brief explanation for the denial.
      - The principal researcher is welcome to revise and resubmit the Research Application Package, however a Research Application Package cannot be submitted more than three times in a calendar year.

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b. Approved with Conditions: The determination letter will provide the research team with the list of conditions that must be met before the Research Application Package can be reconsidered.

- The principal researcher will need to submit the amended proposal within ten (10) business days. If an extension is needed, it must be requested in writing at least three (3) days prior to the deadline.
- If the principal researcher is unwilling/unable to make changes to the research protocol, they must submit a letter to that effect within ten (10) business days.
    i. The DRRB Chair will provide the Commissioner with the letter and then provide the principal researcher with an updated determination letter.

c. Approved: In addition to the determination letter detailing the approval and research end date, the principal researcher will also receive:

- A Data Protection Plan, which must be signed by all members of the research team and returned prior to the start of any research activities.
- An Application for Clearance and Issuance of ID Cards, if the research protocol involves collecting confidential NJDOC data or visiting a NJDOC facility.
- A NJDOC Policy Packet containing the following:
    i. Policy Statement *ADM.001.007 Research and the Departmental Research Review Board*
    ii. Policy Statement *ADM.001.012 Incarcerated Person Abuse Reporting and Investigation*
    iii. Internal Management Procedure *ADM.011.LOS.001 Letters of Support for Grant Applications*
    iv. Policy Statement *PCS.001.008 Prevention, Detection and Response of Sexual Abuse and Harassment*.
    v. Research Policy Acknowledgement Form- all members of the research team must sign this form that acknowledges they have received and reviewed all the above policy documents.
    vi. Research teams going into a NJDOC facility will also receive Policy Statement *IMM.007.001 Visitors' Dress Code*

    Note: Additional policies and internal management procedures may be provided to the research team as necessary.
- If a member of the research team is a NJDOC employee and the research is being completed by a private entity, the employee must complete the Joint Venture Form and provide it to NJDOC's Equal Employment Division/Ethics Unit.

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i. The NJDOC Equal Employment Division/Ethics Unit will review the form and send it to the State Ethics Commission (SEC) for final approval.

B. Approved Research Studies

1. General

a. Any modifications to a research protocol must be approved by the DRRB. The principal researcher must submit the Research Extension/Addendum Form for the DRRB Chair to review and approve. The modifications must be approved by the DRRB Chair, and if applicable, the overseeing IRB prior to the research team enacting any changes. Approval will not be granted retroactively and failure to obtain approvals may result in the termination of the research protocol.

b. No research activities may continue after the research end date unless an extension has been granted. The principal researcher must submit a completed Research Extension/ Addendum Form one month prior to the research end date.

c. A status report must be submitted at the end of each phase of the protocol as well annually by the principal researcher. The annual report must include any continuing IRB approval/s, if applicable.

d. The principal researcher or anyone from the research team cannot transfer data, research methods, etc. to a third party without approval from the DRRB and the Commissioner.

2. **Research in NJDOC Facilities**

a. All researchers who will be entering a NJDOC facility during the course of their research will need to pass a background check in addition to providing proof they have passed a tuberculosis screening within the past year.

b. The use of computer and electronic equipment (e.g., laptop, recording device) by the research team must be approved by the DRRB Chair and the site prison administrator or their designee (for prison visits), or the Director of the Office of Community Program or Assistant Commissioner of DPRS or their designee (for visits to an RCRP/Assessment Treatment Center).

c. The DRRB Chair or Administrator will coordinate the visits with the site prison administrator or their designated liaison who may assist the research team while they are in the facility.

d. Visits to an RCRP/Assessment Treatment Center will be coordinated by either the Director of the Office of Community Programs or the Assistant Commissioner of DPRS, or a liaison designated by the aforementioned Director or Assistant Commissioner who may assist the research team while they are in the RCRP/Assessment Treatment Center.

e. The principal researcher must inform the DRRB Administrator when they have completed all data collection at NJDOC facilities. The DRRB Administrator will inform the relevant Prison Administrator (if research team was visiting a prison) or the designated DPRS senior staff member (if the research team was visiting an

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RCRP/Assessment Treatment Center), that the research team no longer requires access to the facility and confirm any ID cards issued have been collected.

3. **Human Subjects Research**

   a. An informed consent form that clearly explains to the potential participant, the details of the study, their rights as a human subject, that participation is completely voluntary and that they may choose to terminate their participation at any time without consequence, must be signed by each participant prior to data collection. A copy of the signed consent form should be given to the participant at the time of signing. It must be made available upon request by either the participant or the DRRB.

   b. Only instruments (surveys, questionnaires, etc.) approved by the DRRB can be used to collect data from the human subjects who voluntarily participate. This also includes the scripts for interviews that were previously approved.

   c. In interviews, while the majority of questions asked of a participant are confidential between the human subject and the researcher, there are certain circumstances (which should be detailed for the participant on the informed consent form) where the researcher will have to report an interaction to the DRRB and site prison administrator (if applicable):

      - If an incarcerated person discusses violence or escape plans at a prison facility or an RCRP.
      - If an incarcerated person discloses, they have been sexually assaulted or harassed by staff or another incarcerated person.
      - If an incarcerated person displays undue familiarity with a researcher or their team. The interview should be terminated immediately.
      - If the incarcerated person discloses that they intend to harm themselves.

      In the event that any NJDOC employee learns that one of the above incidences has occurred and no one from the research team has reported the incident, the research will be discontinued, and the research team's IRB(s) will be notified.

4. **Completion of Research**

   a. An initial summary must be submitted to the DRRB following the completion of data collection.

   b. Data collected during an approved NJDOC research protocol may only be used for that approved study. Researchers who wish to utilize data collected during a NJDOC approved research protocol for another study, or wish to share the data with other researchers to use in their own research protocol must submit the Research Data Request Form to the DRRB Chair who will determine the next course of action.

   c. Publication/Presentation of Research

      - All research manuscripts must be submitted to the DRRB for review thirty (30) days prior to the submission/presentation for NJDOC review and

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approval. The review is strictly limited to ensuring an accurate representation of NJDOC policies and procedures and adherence to NJ Rev Stat § 2C:20-31 (2024).

i. Members of the DRRB who reviewed the research protocol will be invited to review and comment on the research manuscript.

ii. The Chief of Staff will review and disseminate the research manuscript to all appropriate staff for additional review, comments and approval.

- All presentation materials and published manuscripts must contain a disclaimer that the research was conducted with the permission of the Department, but the Department's participation/approval of the research does not equate to an endorsement/approval of the results and researcher's interpretation of the results.
- The principal researcher must provide the DRRB with a copy of the published manuscript/final presentation which may be circulated to NJDOC staff.

d. If, for whatever reason the research does not culminate in a presentation or publication, the principal researcher must submit a memorandum to the DRRB, within six months of the final report being submitted to the DRRB, stating that research team has concluded the research protocol.

- All DRRB research protocols will be considered closed within a year of receiving the final report or last received progress report. Once a protocol has been closed a new DRRB Research Application Package will need to be submitted.
- This does not include DRRB research protocols in which a manuscript was approved for publication by the NJDOC and the manuscript has been accepted by a publication but has not been formally published.

e. The NJDOC website will list all internal and external research protocols that have an accompanying NJDOC approved published research manuscript.

5. **Suspension of Research**

a. Research may be suspended if:

- Directed by the Commissioner;
- An Administrator or Director, OCP or the Assistant Commissioner, DPRS reports that that research is affecting the operation of the facility or RCRP/Assessment Treatment Center; or
- The execution of the research project is no longer feasible due to operational changes and/or resources.

i. If the operational changes are temporary and anticipated to end within three months of the research protocol's end date, the research may be resumed. If applicable the principal researcher will need an approved Research Extension/Addendum Form.

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ii. The research team may submit a Research Extension/Addendum Form if they believe they can make reasonable modifications to the protocol that accommodates the operational change.

b. The principal researcher does not need to submit status reports or annual reports while the research has been suspended. However, prior to the resumption of the research protocol, they must provide the DRRB with the relevant updated IRB documentation.

6. **Termination of Research**

a. Research may be terminated if:

- Directed by the Commissioner;
- The research team began the study prior to receiving DRRB approval. Approval will not be granted retroactively;
- The research team received DRRB approval but did not complete steps required in under the “Approved Applications” section of this document prior to starting the research;
- It is brought to the DRRB’s attention that unexpected harm to the subjects has/is occurring as a result of the research;
- If the research is using more NJDOC resources than anticipated, causing a strain on NJDOC resources;
- The research team has made changes to the protocol without approval of the DRRB and/or IRB;
- The research end date has passed and the research has continued without DRRB approval; or
- Violations of any federal or state law; NJDOC policy, procedure, or directive; or breach of the Data Protection Plan by any member of the research team has occurred.

b. Depending on the cause of the termination, the NJDOC may:

- Contact the research team’s IRB (if applicable) to report the termination
- Contact the OHRP
- Contact the research team’s university, agency or company regarding the research team’s behavior
- Require the data collected be destroyed
- Not approve a research manuscript associated with the terminated research protocol.

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C. RECORDING KEEPING

1. There will be a physical file created for each submitted research protocol. The file will contain:
    a. The submitted research application package.
    b. The comments and recommendation from the DRRB and executive staff, as well as the Commissioner's final determination.
    c. The determination letter.
    d. If applicable:
        - Signed DPP
        - Signed Research Policy Acknowledgement Form
        - Extension/Addendum Form
        - Status Reports
        - Research manuscripts, as well as all comments and letters approving or disproving the manuscript and the final manuscript.
    e. The physical files will be secured in the Office of Compliance and Strategic Planning and maintained by the DRRB Administrator.
    f. Electronic files, which will mirror the physical ones, are also to be maintained by the DRRB Chair and Administrator and accessible to members of the DRRB.

D. MISCELLANEOUS

1. It may take between six (6) to eight (8) weeks, from the time a research request has been formally submitted (a research protocol is considered formally submitted when all components of the application as outlined in *ADM.001.RES.001 Research Request Application Process* have been received) to the Commissioner's review and determination, longer if modifications are requested/required. Potential researchers should keep this estimated timeframe in mind when submitting their applications as there is no expedited review process.
2. The Commissioner or any member of the executive staff may refer any requests that appear to be related to research for review to the DRRB. The DRRB Chair will review and determine if the request relates to academic research, quasi-research or QI.
    a. If the Chair determines the request is quasi-research, they alone will review and make their recommendation to the Commissioner and/or relevant executive staff member.
    b. If the Chair determines the request is QI, they will refer the request to either the Quality Assurance Coordinator in the Office of Programming and Supportive Services or the Continuous Quality Improvement Program in the Healthcare Compliance Unit.
    c. If the Chair determines this is academic research, they DRRB Administrator will provide the potential research team with Form 980-1 Application Form to Request Review of a Research Protocol and instructions for submitting a research request.
3. If there are any revisions to the policies or procedures distributed to the researchers conducting research in a NJDOC facility, the DRRB Administrator is to send the principal

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researcher the revised policies and receive written confirmation that they have been distributed to the research team.

4. Approval of research by the Commissioner or any member of the DRRB is not the equivalent of a formal Letter of Support. If a researcher needs a Letter of Support, or intends to apply for grant funding through another source, they should contact the DRRB about what options may be available. Formal Letters of Support must be secured from the Grants Management Unit (https://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pages/grants.html).
5. Data requests which do not meet the criteria for research will be referred to the respective office. This may include the Department's Public Information Office or the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) liaison who will handle the data request.
6. All inquiries, concerns, applications, forms, reports, proposed manuscripts and/or presentations should be sent to: doc_research@doc.nj.gov

V. INSTRUCTIONS

All affected organizational unit managers within the New Jersey Department of Corrections shall be responsible for following the procedures detailed herein, as well as all related applicable Internal Management Procedures consistent with this Policy as noted below.

Office of Compliance and Strategic Planning staff shall be responsible for reviewing and updating this document, as necessary.

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VI. CROSS REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

Document/ Policy Number	Title	Effective/ Revision Date
HSS Regulations at 45 CFR part 46	U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Services, Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) *Guidance on the Involvement of Prisoners in Research]*	May 2003
ADM.001.000	Mission and Values of the NJDOC	March 2023 revised (revision pending)
ADM.001.RES.001	Research Request Application Process	June 2025 revised
ADM.001.012	Incarcerated Person Abuse Reporting and Investigation	December 2024 revised
ADM.011.LOS.001	Letters of Support for Grant Applications	November 2021 revised
IMM.007.001	Visitors' Dress Code	November 2019
PCS.001.008	Prevention, Detection and Response of Sexual Abuse and Harassment	December 2024 revised
NJAC 10A:1-10.1-10.8	SUBCHAPTER 10. RESEARCH	

VII. APPLICABLE FORMS

Form Number	Form Title	Effective/ Revision Date
Form 980-I	Research Application	*Pending June 2025*
	NJDOC DRRB Request for Research Extension/Addendum Form	*Pending June 2025*
	NJDOC DRRB Data Protection Plan	*Pending June 2025*
	NJDOC DRRB Research Progress Report	*Pending June 2025*
	NJDOC DRRB Research Data Request Form	*Pending June 2025*
	Joint Venture Form	
	Application for Clearance and Issuance of ID Cards	

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