



DEPARTMENT of
REHABILITATION

Employment, Independence & Equality



Consumer Information Handbook

Dates to Remember

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Important Contacts

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Mission

California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) works in partnership with consumers and other stakeholders to provide services and advocacy resulting in employment, independent living, and equality for individuals with disabilities.

Core Values

The values under which we operate all of our programs and services.

Quality

Strive to meet stakeholders' needs through continuous improvement, competence, creativity, and teamwork.

Respect

Be sensitive to the diverse needs of others, both internal and external stakeholders, by being courteous, compassionate, responsive, and professional.

Integrity

In all endeavors, act in an ethical, honest, and professional manner.

Openness

Be willing to listen to and share information with others. Be flexible, inclusive, trusting, and receptive to new ideas.

Accountability

Take ownership and responsibility for actions and their results.

Our Guiding Principles

The principles that guide us in our daily work.

1. Delivering effective vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, and other programs and services in an efficient, caring, professional, and prompt manner.
2. Attracting, developing, and retaining a competent, creative, and highly motivated workforce.
3. Maintaining public trust by being fiscally responsible and ensuring quality programs and services.

4. Sustaining our role as a respected leader in the disability community; inspiring hope in those we serve.

Introduction

If you have a disability and need VR services, DOR may be able to help you find work and become independent. This handbook will be your guide to the DOR's services.

As a DOR consumer, you and your VR counselor will develop your VR program, which includes your employment goal and the services you will need to reach your goal. You are the most important person in this process.

If you cannot find answers to your questions in this handbook, please contact the local DOR office in your area. The phone numbers and addresses of the DOR district offices are located on pages 21–22.

Purpose

DOR's vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs, projects, and activities shall be carried out in a manner consistent with the following principles: respect for individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and pursuit of independent living and meaningful careers, based on informed choice of individuals with disabilities. (California Welfare and Institutions Code, section 19000(e) (1).)

Informed choice means the provision of activities whereby individuals with disabilities served by projects have the opportunity to be active, full partners in the rehabilitation process, making meaningful and informed choices as follows:

1. During assessments of eligibility and VR needs.
2. In the selection of employment outcomes, services needed to achieve the outcomes,

entities providing these services, and the methods used to secure these services. (34 Code of Federal Regulations, part 361.52; see also 29 United States Code, section 722(b) (2)(B).)

Who Should Apply?

- ❑ Do you have a disability?
- ❑ Do you want to work?
- ❑ Are you having trouble getting or keeping a job because of your disability?
- ❑ Do you believe VR services, such as job placement, training, or other job preparation, would help you get or keep a job?

If you answered "yes" to all these questions, you may qualify for DOR services. To learn more, contact your local DOR office.

Referral to Other Agencies

DOR also provides information and referral services to persons who do not wish to apply for services but request or need referral to another agency or program such as:

1. Schedule A: This form of federal assistance is available to persons with

disabilities applying for federal jobs. Schedule A requires a certification letter from a DOR VR counselor.

2. Limited Examination and Appointment Program (LEAP): The LEAP helps recruit and hire persons with disabilities into State service in specific State job classifications. Persons who qualify for the LEAP can apply for any LEAP-specified examination if minimum qualifications are met. The LEAP eligibility and participation require disability certification from a DOR VR counselor.

To learn more about Schedule A, LEAP, and referrals to another agency or program call your local DOR office.

How to Apply

There are **three** requirements that comprise the application process.

1. Request VR services in one of the following ways:
 - a. Contact the local DOR office in your area. Complete and sign form DR 222—Vocational Rehabilitation Services Application.
 - b. Apply for Services online at the DOR website: www.dor.ca.gov or print an application from the DOR website and mail the completed form DR 222—Vocational Rehabilitation Services Application to your local DOR office.
 - c. Visit a One-Stop Center. Complete an intake application form requesting VR services.
2. Provide DOR with information necessary to begin an assessment to determine eligibility and priority for services.

3. Be available to complete the assessment process. This includes activities such as attending the initial interview, watching an orientation video, participating in the evaluation of your skills and capabilities, and completing your part of any actions you and your VR counselor agree upon.

To determine eligibility within the time required by law, **the date of application is the date when all three of the above requirements are met.**

After you have submitted an application or have requested services and provided basic information to the DOR, an interview appointment will be scheduled with you to begin the assessment process.

Assessment Process

The purpose of the assessment process is to allow you and your VR counselor to discuss:

- Your disability and how it affects your ability to work.
- The types of DOR services you may need to become employed.

Eligibility—You and your VR counselor will:

- Obtain and review medical and other information to determine how your disability affects your ability to work.
- Determine how DOR services can help you get or keep a job.

After obtaining enough information, your VR counselor will determine your eligibility for DOR services.

Priority for Services Determination—You and your VR counselor will:

- Review and discuss information obtained from you and other sources about your disability.
- Agree on how your disability limits you in six general areas of functioning: communication, mobility, interpersonal skills, self-care, work tolerance, and work skills.
- Determine your disability priority category based on the assessment that represents the significance of your work-related limitations.

VR Needs Assessment—You and your VR counselor will discuss:

- Your abilities and capabilities.
- Relevant assessments, to the extent necessary, to determine the services and assistance you will need to get or keep a job.

You and your VR counselor will be partners in making informed choices throughout your VR program. At your request, the DOR will

communicate with you in your primary language and appropriate mode of communication so that you can fully understand the process.

Actively participate: Your VR program moves more quickly if you stay actively involved with your VR Service Delivery team and provide information requested as soon as you can.

You will be assigned a service delivery team to work closely with you. Your team will ensure consistent contact and support towards reaching an appropriate employment outcome. Your VR counselor determines your eligibility and priority for services, approves your Individualized Plan for Employment (I P E) and I P E amendments, and records your achievements of an employment outcome and/or case closure. All other team members are available to help you with questions, provide guidance, and monitor your services and case status.

How can you help with the assessment process?

1. Bring complete information to your first meeting, including:
 - Any documents you have about your disability.
 - Recent records and benefit letters such as those from the Social Security Administration or your “Ticket” from the federal Ticket to Work Program.
 - A list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of doctors, professionals, and organizations you have consulted about your disability.
2. Learn about and understand the VR process.
 - Read the information we provided you about the program.
 - If you don't understand something you read or something described, ask a member of your team to explain it.

3. Keep your appointments and be on time.
 - Call your VR counselor's office if you cannot keep an appointment.
 - Tell your VR counselor or a member of your team if you move or change your phone number.
4. Follow through and complete your part of any actions you and your VR counselor agree upon.

It's Up To You!

Eligibility

If DOR receives complete information about your disability, your VR counselor will notify you in writing of your eligibility within 60 days of meeting the three requirements of application. If information about your disability is incomplete or delayed, you and your VR counselor will agree on a specific extension date to determine your eligibility.

To be eligible for services, an individual must:

- Have a physical or mental impairment that substantially impedes his or her ability to secure employment and VR services are required to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment consistent with the applicant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.
- Be able to benefit from DOR services in terms of an employment outcome in an integrated setting.

If you are receiving Social Security Administration benefits or if you have a valid "Ticket to Work," you are presumed eligible for DOR services.

**Ticket to Work Hotline: 1-866-449-2730 Voice
1-866-359-7705 Telecommunications Device
for the Deaf (TTY/TDD)**

If your disability is significant enough that you might not be able to benefit from DOR services, the DOR can arrange a Trial Work Experience or in certain circumstances, an Extended Evaluation. This is an opportunity to work in a realistic work setting to demonstrate if you can benefit from DOR services.

Receiving Services

Order of Selection: When DOR does not have enough funding to serve all applicants who are eligible for DOR services, the law requires DOR to use an “Order of Selection” process to make sure those persons with the most significant disabilities are served first.

Once you are deemed eligible by DOR, you will be given a priority category, called a Priority for Services Determination. Your priority category will be used in the “Order of Selection” process to determine when services begin. Placing applicants into priority categories is a fair method of serving all applicants in the order required by law.

There are **three priority categories**:

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities (priority category 1).
- Individuals with significant disabilities (priority category 2).
- All other eligible individuals determined to have a disability (priority category 3).

Within each disability priority category, consumers will be served according to their date of application.

Waiting List: If DOR does not have enough funding to serve eligible individuals in your disability priority category, you will be placed on a waiting list.

DOR will also:

- Notify you as to which category is being served.
- Notify you as soon as funds are available, and when you will be served based on your application date.

You may contact DOR at any time regarding your desire to remain or be removed from the waiting list.

While you are on the waiting list, DOR will provide you with information and referrals to other services that may help you reach your employment goal until you receive DOR services.

Individualized Plan for Employment

You and your VR counselor will jointly develop your I P E, if you:

- Have applied for services.
- Completed the assessment process.
- Are found eligible for services.
- Are placed in a disability priority category being served.

The I P E is your written plan listing your job objective and the DOR services you will receive to reach your employment goal. You and your VR counselor will discuss your unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice as you develop your I P E.

- You and your VR counselor will work in partnership in developing your I P E.
- You and your VR counselor will determine your employment goals.

- You will have the opportunity, within the DOR's regulations, to discuss and choose the specific VR services, providers, and settings you need to reach your employment goals.
- You and your VR counselor will discuss the process to obtain needed services.

Individualized Plan for Employment Development

Your I P E will include the following:

- Description of your employment goal.
- Timeline to reach your employment goal.
- Description of the services and service providers you will need.
- Timelines for providing each of the included services.
- Description of the process to get services.
- Description of the criteria to measure your progress.
- Responsibilities of your VR counselor, you, and others involved with your I P E.
- Information about your participation in paying for part of the I P E, if applicable.
- Identification of comparable services and benefits.

Options for developing your I P E include:

- Developing your I P E with your VR counselor.

- Receiving assistance from outside resources.
- Developing your own I P E.

A member of your team will:

- Explain the I P E components and DOR guidelines.
- Explain whether you may need to pay for a portion of your services (financial participation).
- Explain your need to use services available from other sources (comparable services and benefits) and other related information.
- Help you complete DOR forms.
- Explain the Ticket to Work program.

Your VR counselor will review a draft of your I P E to ensure that your goals and necessary VR services meet DOR guidelines.

Identify Your Goals

Employment Services

DOR will provide the range and duration of services necessary to assist you to secure, retain, or regain employment.

Your I P E must be completed and signed by you, and then approved in writing by your VR counselor and/or Team Manager before you can begin receiving services included in your I P E.

Not all available services are needed by all consumers. DOR's services include, but are not limited to:

- Counseling and guidance.
- Referrals and assistance to get services from other agencies.
- Job search and placement assistance.
- Vocational and other training services.
- Evaluation of physical and mental impairments.
- On-the-job or personal assistance services.

- Interpreter services.
- Rehabilitation and orientation/mobility services for individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing and/or blind/low vision.
- Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks, and supplies.
- Technical assistance for self-employment.
- Rehabilitation assistive technology services and devices.
- Supported employment services.
- Services to the family.
- Transportation as required, such as travel and related expenses, necessary to enable you to participate in a VR service.
- Transition services for students.
- Expansion of employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, which include, but are not limited to, professional employment and self-employment.
- Post-employment services.

Your Individualized Plan for Employment Responsibilities

After your I P E has been developed, it is your responsibility to:

- Maintain contact with your VR counselor and keep all appointments.
- Talk with a member of your team if you are having a problem that affects your plan (such as changes in your address, medical, or financial status).
- Discuss any changes that might be needed in your plan.
- Apply for and secure available comparable services and benefits (such as financial aid, grants, or services through non-DOR agencies).
- Participate financially in your plan, if necessary.
- Attend and fully participate in training programs and classes.
- Provide regular progress updates and academic grades.

- Attend annual review meetings as required.
- Participate fully in your job search and job placement activities.
- Obtain prior approval from your VR counselor or Team Manager before you purchase any goods and services related to your I P E. A written authorization is required before any services can be provided.
- Reach an agreement with your counselor and sign a written I P E amendment if making a significant change in your plan.
- Communicate and interact with courtesy, consideration, and respect.

You have the right to be treated with respect for individual dignity, personal responsibility, and self-determination. You have the responsibility of fully participating and cooperating with the VR process.

Failure to cooperate, failure to make reasonable effort, or failure to maintain ongoing communication or scheduled

appointments could result in loss of further services and closure of your case file.

Employment Outcome Maximization

In developing an I P E, the consumer and the DOR will determine the employment outcome desired that is consistent with the consumer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities.

The State VR services program is not intended solely to place individuals with disabilities in entry-level jobs but is intended to enable individuals to pursue meaningful careers by securing employment commensurate with their abilities and capabilities. (California Welfare & Institutions Code section 19000(a)(6).)

Future Goals:

Employment, Independence & Equality

Department of Rehabilitation Responsibilities

It is your VR counselor's and VRSD team's responsibility to:

- Assist you in exercising informed choice.
- Provide counseling and guidance.
- Keep information confidential, except where the law requires the VR counselor to share information.
- Inform you of available resources and referrals, as appropriate.
- Advise you of your rights and remedies, including review of DOR decisions.
- Explain how to request Mediation, Fair Hearing, or file a discrimination complaint.
- Inform you about the Client Assistance Program.
- Assist in coordinating services for your plan.

- Monitor your progress periodically and complete an Annual Plan Review to continue timely service delivery.
- Reach an agreement with you and provide a written amendment for your signature if there are major changes in your I P E.
- Keep you fully informed throughout your plan, including a full consultation before closing your record of services (case file).
- Communicate and interact with courtesy, consideration, and respect.

Together We Can Make Great Things Happen!

Case Closure

Your record of services (case file) may be closed for various reasons.

The best reason is you have been employed successfully for 90 days. At that time, your record of services can be successfully closed.

Other reasons for closing your record of services include:

- You are determined to be ineligible for services.
- You are not available to complete a needed assessment to determine your eligibility or priority for services.
- You cease contact with DOR, and you cannot be located or contacted.

- You decline to accept, participate in, or use DOR services.
- You fail to cooperate in assessments or your I P E.
- You engage in any criminal activity, including fraud, when applying for or receiving VR services.

You may appeal any of DOR's actions or decisions, including actions to close your record of services.

Client Assistance Program

If you encounter problems with the services provided by DOR, you may request assistance from the Client Assistance Program (CAP). You are encouraged to try to resolve problems first with your VR counselor or his or her Team Manager.

A CAP advocate may provide you with information, advice and representation, including assistance in pursuing legal, administrative or other appropriate remedies to ensure the protection of your rights and to help you access appropriate services.

You may have assistance from the CAP at any point from the time you apply for services, until after you stop receiving services.

It is always your right to bring a family member, a representative, or a CAP advocate to meet with DOR staff. The CAP advocates are independent advocates and not employees of the DOR.

If you cannot achieve resolution of your concerns at the local level, a CAP advocate may also help you request, prepare for, represent and/or advise you about the Administrative Review, Mediation or Fair Hearing processes.

You can find your local CAP Advocate at:
Disability Rights California
<http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/>

Client Assistance Program
Statewide referrals
1-800-776-5746
1-800-719-5798 TTY/TDD

Review of Decisions

Administrative Review

- When your concerns are not resolved after meeting with your VR counselor and/or Team Manager, you may request an Administrative Review by the District Administrator.
- This written decision will be rendered within 15 calendar days of the date of the request, unless you agree to a later date.

Mediation

- Mediation is another free service for resolving disputes with DOR. Mediation is a voluntary, confidential, and a problem-solving process, assisted by qualified, impartial mediators from outside the DOR.
- The objective of mediation is to reach an agreement acceptable to all parties.
- If both parties agree to mediate, a conference will be held within 25 calendar days of the receipt of the request unless both parties agree to a later date.

Fair Hearing

- If you are dissatisfied with any action or decision of DOR related to your application or

to your services, you may request a Fair Hearing within one year of the DOR action or decision or within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the written decision of your Administrative Review.

- You may also request an Administrative Review and Fair Hearing concurrently.
- The hearing will be held within 60 calendar days of the receipt of the request unless you agree to a later date. If you are not satisfied with the Fair Hearing decision, you may file a writ of mandate with the California Superior Court within six months of the decision.

Many problems can be resolved locally, informally, and more quickly than a formal Fair Hearing process. It may be to your benefit to work through the Administrative Review first, before requesting Mediation and/or a formal Fair Hearing. **Again, you are welcome to bring a representative for support and assistance.**

To request Mediation and/or a Fair Hearing, complete form DR 107—Request for Mediation and/or Fair Hearing or other written request and

send the form to the: Mediation and Fair Hearings Office, c/o DOR Legal Affairs. The form is available at the DOR website at: www.dor.ca.gov.

Confidentiality

DOR is committed to keeping any information you provide confidential.

The Information Practices Act of 1977, California Civil Code, section, 1798 et seq., guarantees you certain rights:

- Right to Privacy:

Only information about you that is relevant and necessary to carry out the purpose of DOR's program will be collected. The information will be used only in processing your program of services, including resolving consumer complaints or appeals. Some personal information may be shared with the Social Security Administration to verify that you are eligible for services.

- Right to Access:

You may request access to any of your records the DOR maintains. DOR shall

promptly let you or your chosen representative inspect or shall provide you copies of any document or item of information in the record of services (case file).

- Right to Request a Record of Services (case file) Amendment:

You may seek correction of any misinformation in your record of services by making a request to your VR counselor or a Team Manager. The request should be in writing and as specific as possible. If the Team Manager does not agree with your amendment to the record, you may request an Administrative Review, Mediation and/or Fair Hearing (see page 17). If the results of the review or hearing do not agree with your amendment to your record, you may submit a written statement of reasonable length with your views of the disputed information. This statement will be placed in your record of services.

Disclosure

Generally, DOR cannot release applicant or consumer information without receiving authorization from you, the consumer. An applicant or consumer must sign an appropriate release form before DOR can release information to anyone, including information to a family member, unless there is a court order or a law that requires us to disclose. Under special circumstances there are disclosures without written consent as described in the California Code of Regulations, title 9 section 7143.

All persons allowed access to your records are prohibited from redisclosing this information to anyone else without your specific, informed, written consent.

Discrimination

It is DOR's policy to serve all qualified persons with a disability without discrimination based on their protected status, including: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual

orientation, marital status, medical condition, genetic information, physical or mental disability, sex, or age. Sometimes a requested service is denied based on the DOR's regulations or policies. You may disagree with your VR counselor's interpretation of these regulations or policies, but this is not discrimination. Discrimination occurs if the reason your VR counselor disagrees with you or denies your request is based on your race, age, disability, or another protected status noted above.

You have a right to have disagreements with your VR counselor settled by someone other than your VR counselor. You have a right to call a Client Assistance Program advocate to help you settle the disagreement (see page 16). You also have the right to ask for an Administrative Review, Mediation, and/or Fair Hearing to settle the disagreement (see page 17). These processes can settle most disagreements.

If you have information that the disagreement was because of your race, age, disability, or another protected status, you have a right to file a discrimination complaint to settle the problem within 180 days from the date of the discriminatory action.

There are three ways to file a discrimination complaint:

1. Contact the District Administrator and ask for an Administrative Review related to discrimination. Explain why you think the disagreement or denial is based on discrimination. **Because the District Administrator is located closest to your service delivery, she or he may be able to settle your complaint directly and more quickly than other complaint methods.** Your District Administrator can be reached by using the contact information on pages 21–22.

2. Contact DOR's Office of Civil Rights if you believe that actions taken and/or decisions made were because of unlawful discrimination (i.e., related to a protected status: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, medical condition, genetic information, physical or mental disability, sex, or age) rather than DOR's policies or regulations. DOR Office of Civil Rights will send you a discrimination complaint filing form and provide detailed information that you should include within your complaint. Upon receiving and reviewing your complaint, if appropriate, DOR's Office of Civil Rights will conduct an investigation and let you know the outcome.

Department of Rehabilitation
Office of Civil Rights
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 558-5850 Phone
(844) 729-2800 TTY/TDD

3. Contact the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Explain your

disagreement or denial and provide information supporting why you think it is based on discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights may investigate your complaint and work with the DOR to resolve as appropriate.

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
50 Beale Street, Ste. 7200
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 486-5555 Phone
(877) 521-2172 TTY/TDD

DOR District Offices

Where to Find Information:

DOR website: www.dor.ca.gov

Social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#),
[and YouTube](#)

Northern/Central California

Greater East Bay

1485 Enea Court, Suite 1100

Concord, CA 94520-5228

(925) 602-3953 Phone

(925) 689-1798 Fax

Northern Sierra

721 Capitol Mall, Suite 110

Sacramento, CA 95814-4702

(916) 558-5300 Phone

(916) 558-5303 Fax

Redwood Empire

50 D Street, Suite 425

Santa Rosa, CA 95404-4764

(707) 576-2233 Phone

(707) 576-2239 Fax

San Francisco

301 Howard Street, Suite 700
San Francisco, CA 94105-6604
(415) 904-7100 Phone
(415) 904-5996 Fax

San Joaquin Valley

2550 Mariposa Mall, Rm. 2000 P.O. Box 24001
Fresno, CA 93721-2270
(559) 445-6011 Phone
(559) 445-6528 Fax

San Jose

100 Paseo de San Antonio
Rm. 324
San Jose, CA 95113-1479
(408) 277-1355 Phone
(408) 277-1270 Fax

Santa Barbara

509 E. Montecito Street, Suite 101
Santa Barbara, CA 93103-3216
(805) 560-8130 Phone
(805) 560-8162 Fax

DOR District Offices

Southern California

Greater Los Angeles

3333 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 200
Los Angeles, CA 90010-4101
(213) 736-3904 Phone
(213) 736-3949 Fax

Los Angeles South Bay

4300 Long Beach Blvd, Suite 200
Long Beach, CA 90807-2008
(562) 422-8325 Phone
(562) 864-2776 Fax

Orange/San Gabriel

222 S. Harbor Blvd, Suite 300
Anaheim, CA 92805-3701
(714) 991-0800 Phone
(714) 991-0843 Fax

Inland Empire

3130 Chicago Avenue, Suite 5
Riverside, CA 92507-3445
(951) 782-6650 Phone
(951) 782-6676 Fax

San Diego

7575 Metropolitan Drive, Suite 107
San Diego, CA 92108-4402
(619) 767-2100 Phone
(619) 767-2156 Fax

Van Nuys/Foothill

5900 Sepulveda Blvd, Suite 240
Van Nuys, CA 91411-2511
(818) 901-5024 Phone
(818) 901-4316 Fax

TTY/TDD users may call the toll-free TTY/TDD number 844-729-2800 or use the relay service of choice to call the direct DOR number you want to reach.

State of California
Health and Human
Services Agency

Department of
Rehabilitation



NOTICE TO NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you are an applicant, a consumer, or a person seeking information from DOR, you have the right to communicate with DOR staff in your primary language.

Please tell us if it is difficult for you to understand or to speak English, and we will get help to communicate in your language.

If you want to report or complain about a language barrier with DOR staff, please ask to speak with the Team Manager in your local office to resolve the language barrier.

The DOR Is an Equal Opportunity Employer / Program



DEPARTMENT of
REHABILITATION

Employment, Independence & Equality



Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor
State of California

Diana S. Dooley
Secretary
California Health and Human Services Agency

Joe Xavier
Director
Department of Rehabilitation

This publication can be made available in Braille, large print, and computer disk. Requests should be made to:

Department of Rehabilitation
Office of Legislative & External Affairs
(916) 558-5874 Phone
(844) 729-2800 TTY/TDD
externalaffairs@dor.ca.gov
www.dor.ca.gov

Feel free to take notes in this book and store any useful information that will help you attain your goals.

[illegible]

Make the Commitment, Show Up, Communicate, and Follow Through

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