



# 19- 20

## ANNUAL REPORT

Serving local governments  
to address community  
resilience needs



# LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Over the past 6 years, CivicSpark has grown in scale and breadth, expanding to address new issues such as water and housing, and serving a growing range of communities across California.

Our most recent Cohort's (2019-2020) successes are especially momentous given the context the Fellows faced. Displaced from their sites by COVID, reeling from racial equity upheavals affecting their communities and the country, Fellows and their Partners persevered and adapted to a continually changing landscape.

CivicSpark fellows' collective impact, highlighted in this report is both astounding and humbling. The results of this collective effort offers a chance to share accomplishments and lessons learned. But more than celebrating successes, we hope it offers inspiration to think more holistically, collaborate more fully, and build back more resilient and equitably.

The collective work of this past year would not have been possible without the support of many individuals and organizations including our State partners in California Volunteers and OPR, who have continued to demonstrate what innovation and partnership looks like even in the face of overwhelming challenges; our 60+ project partners, whose drive to find and deploy solutions is always inspiring; and most of all our Fellows whose work is contained in these pages - thank you for your service, your example, and your leadership.

Sincerely,



Kate Meis Wright, Executive Director, Local Government Commission



Kif Scheuer, Former National Service Director, Local Government Commission



Mackenzie Bolger, CivicSpark Senior Project Manager, Local Government Commission







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Program Design.....	01
Program Impacts.....	05
Statewide Service Activities.....	07
Service Day and Volunteer Engagement.....	15
Professional Development and Training.....	20
Alumni Board.....	21
Fellow Placements.....	23
Acknowledgment.....	24
How to Get Involved.....	25

"Our Fellow was an integral part of our team throughout their service year with the CivicSpark program. They've provided valuable insight, deliverables, and capacity for complex issues."

**Jenna Hahn, CivicSpark 19-20 Partner**

"Serving as a CivicSpark Climate Fellow has allowed me to gain invaluable experience in climate adaptation and resilience work, both at the State and local level. I've had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in conducting outreach and engaging with diverse stakeholders, while also further developing my public speaking, research, and writing skills--skills that I will take with me throughout my career."

**Annie Merritt, CivicSpark 19-20 Fellow**

"CivicSpark is such a unique experience that has positively changed the trajectory of my life. The program has offered me countless professional development opportunities, access to learning resources, and most importantly connected me to a network of passionate and brilliant individuals. I now have a newfound confidence in my field and although I am constantly learning in the program, I have developed skills and knowledge that allow me to build capacity at my project site. It's truly been a dream job!"

**Karina Takemoto, CivicSpark 19-20 Fellow**

# HISTORY

CivicSpark's inception started in 2012 when Local Government Commission's Executive Director, Kate Meis Wright, and California Governor's Office of Planning and Research's Senior Planning Advisor, Michael McCormick, led a series of listening sessions across California to better understand the capacity needs of local government agencies. What quickly became apparent was the need to address the lack of capacity at various government levels to tackle the immediate and near future impacts of climate change.

In the aftermath of the Great Recession in 2009, many local government agencies experienced reduced budgets and faced many difficult decisions that led to the eventual reduction of budding sustainability and climate change initiatives and staff to ensure the continuity of basic, essential government services. In the years since that economic disruption, local governments have had to work with reduced capacity while facing multiple challenges at once. With the support of then Governor Jerry Brown, CivicSpark was launched in 2014 as a Governor's Initiative Americorps program with 50 Fellows focused on building climate change resources, programs, and plans to address this crisis.

And in the years since the program's inception, the CivicSpark program has expanded to meet the needs of emerging issues that have impacted the ability of local governments to proactively serve the needs of their community members. In 2016, in the depths of the drought, California was experiencing record breaking levels of reduced rain and snow that were starting to impact multiple sectors which clearly outlined the need for systems and programs to better capture and manage water resources. In response to this growing need to address California's extreme drought and diminishing water reserves, CivicSpark added a new track of 20 Fellows specifically dedicated to solving the state's water issues through innovative and integrated approaches.

Similarly, the challenges to meet California's affordable housing needs, reduce the technological gap for rural communities that lack basic broadband access, and increase the mobility transportation options for low-income and underrepresented communities led to the addition of 20 Fellows in 2018 for the opportunity access track to address these growing inequities.

Finally, in 2020 with 83 Fellows, at the height of pandemic and racial unrest, CivicSpark combined the 3 original tracks of the program into the overarching and timely theme of resiliency. Each new emerging issue has demonstrated an underlying need to build greater resiliency in communities, to expand the capacity of government agencies and organizations to address these problems, and to develop the next generation of leaders to be equipped to face the diverse range of challenges to come.

**2012**  
Statewide  
Listening  
Sessions

**2014**  
Program  
Launch:  
Climate  
Track

**2016**  
Added  
Water Track

**2018**  
Added  
Opportunity  
Access Track

**2020**  
Combined  
Resiliency  
Program



# MISSION & VISION

At CivicSpark, we envision a California of resilient, equitable, and vibrant communities where our local governments and leaders are empowered and equipped to proactively serve the needs of all community members.

Our Mission is to:

- Build local public sector capacity to address entrenched and emerging issues;
- Serve as a social purpose career accelerator for future leaders; and
- Foster lasting, authentic community engagement.

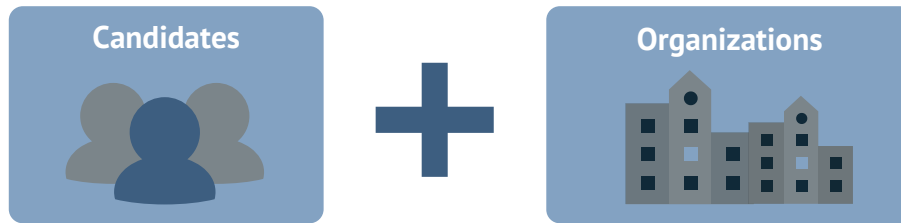
CivicSpark is a Governor's Initiative AmeriCorps program implemented by the Local Government Commission in partnership with the State of California through the Office of Planning and Research and California Volunteers, dedicated to building capacity for local public agencies to address community resilience issues such as climate change, water resource management, housing and mobility.



Each year, CivicSpark matches Fellows and partnering host organizations to support local government capacity efforts throughout the state for 11 months. During their service year, CivicSpark Fellows develop and implement community resilience projects, while also building long-term capacity to ensure the work is sustained after their service year is completed.

The program offers a unique opportunity for emerging professionals to gain experience in the sustainability field, gain professional and technical skills, have a strong statewide network of professionals, and all while having a lasting impact on local communities.

# THE PROGRAM MODEL



## Recruitment & Matching

Early professionals looking to transition into the resiliency space are matched with state and local government agencies and nonprofit organizations to work on local government capacity building projects

## Capacity Assessment & Gap Assessment Process

Fellows conduct gap assessments, with support from their supervisors, to develop overall project goals for the service year

### Capacity Building

Fellows build capacity for their host agencies working on project research, planning and implementation.

### Community Engagement

Fellows engage in community service and implement volunteer engagement projects.

### Professional Development

Fellows develop professionally through their service project, mentorship, and trainings

## Transition of Knowledge

Fellows develop a transition report summarizing the project timeline, resources, and deliverables and sharing important project knowledge with stakeholders through meetings and presentations

### Fellows

By the end of the program, Fellows are equipped with experience and project implementation skills, a network of emerging and established professionals, and greater sector knowledge and expertise.

### Project Partners

By the program's end, Project Partners have newly developed resources and programs, an increased understanding of sector topics, and stronger relationships with stakeholders and community members.



# THEORY OF CHANGE

The well-being of California's communities relies on their resiliency – the ability of their institutions, infrastructure, and environment to withstand stresses and shocks. Currently, California is facing a higher number of major stresses than ever from emerging environmental and socioeconomic threats, and a failure in resiliency could affect the wellbeing of individuals and their environments for many years to come.

While the state has recognized that communities are facing significant resiliency challenges in these areas and has set ambitious goals to tackle them, the achievement of these goals depends profoundly on local government planning and implementation. However, local governments are struggling to keep up with the increasing pace and complexity of the challenges they are facing.

Local government resources are often limited—maintaining the status quo can take up the majority of resources, leaving little capacity or resources to diagnose or respond to emerging opportunities and challenges. These threats are also unprecedented in scale and complexity, which means addressing them requires new knowledge, innovative policy approaches, and more dynamic and responsive solutions. Such complex problems are best addressed through integrated approaches that require strong internal coordination and deep community engagement that is challenging for under resourced local governments. For all these reasons, persistent capacity gaps among local governments remain a significant factor in the perpetuation—or even exacerbation—of these resilience challenges across Californian communities.

CivicSpark AmeriCorps Fellows offer a unique way to accelerate local government climate, water, broadband, and housing efforts through targeted research, planning, or implementation projects. In the longer-term, CivicSpark Fellow service will support local adoption of policies and programs that reduce environmental risks or address critical socio-economic threats, thereby improving resilience for the community and State as a whole.

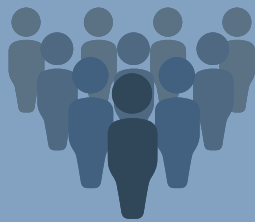


# PROGRAM IMPACTS

Throughout the year, Fellows work towards a quantitative impact, specifically relating to plans, programs, or community groups engaged. While this is nowhere near the extensive list of what Fellows have been able to accomplish, this provides a glimpse into what service our cohort has provided to communities across California during the 2019-2020 service year.

**16,471**

Community  
members  
engaged



**3,956**

Community  
groups  
engaged



**423**

Community  
engagement  
activities  
completed

**13**

Programs  
created



**51**

Community  
engagement  
plans created

**51**

Comprehensive  
plans  
completed

**174**

Model policies,  
ordinances,  
or program  
guidelines  
created

**95**

Assessments  
completed





Fellows serve 11 months of implementing projects across California on a wide range of topics, including: water resources and policy, climate adaptation and mitigation, affordable housing, alternative transportation, and rural broadband. Fellows gain valuable experience in the sustainability field, build professional skills, and develop a strong network while having a lasting impact in local communities.

## Pivoting through COVID-19



The Local Government Commission and the CivicSpark Fellowship were, like the rest of the world, impacted by COVID-19. After an abbreviated Mid-Year Gathering, LGC quickly modified its internal procedures to support all Fellows in moving to remote work.

Along with global fears of health and safety, Fellows faced uncertainty in their projects, and many impactful events Fellows spent time creating, were canceled. However, Fellows showed incredible resilience and flexibility, pivoting and adapting their work, some even taking on alternative service projects to assist COVID-19 relief efforts.

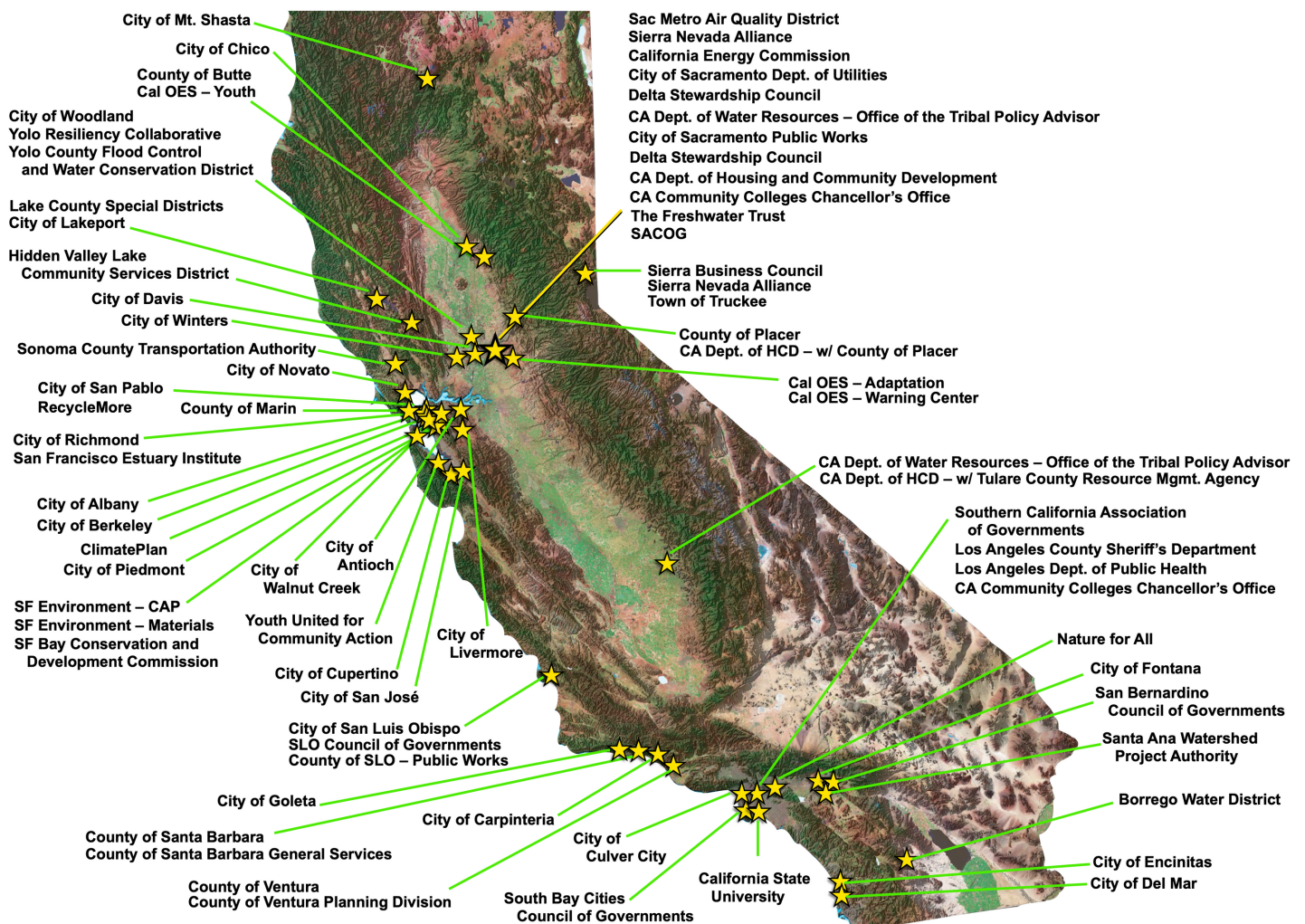
Throughout the remainder of the service year, LGC facilitated professional development opportunities virtually, while Fellows continued to collaborate and serve their beneficiaries. The pandemic has taught both LGC and CivicSpark Fellows many valuable lessons about resilience. These important learnings will be built upon as we all continue to work to create healthy communities in the face of both our health and climate crises.

# PLACEMENT SITES

CivicSpark Fellows are placed throughout California, spanning more densely populated urban centers such as Los Angeles and San Francisco to pockets of rural sites such as Mt Shasta, South Lake Tahoe, and Tulare County. Fellows are placed within specific regions such as the Central Coast and Sacramento, where they have the support and guidance of Regional Coordinators who act as liaisons and program coordinators for Fellows within their region. Through collaborative efforts in their service projects, volunteer engagement projects, and service days, Fellows are able to create a greater collective impact for their beneficiaries and community members.

Since the inception of the program, Fellows have served across a variety of state government agencies, local governments, and non-profits. Each region and site had unique characteristics of the challenges the community faced. From wildfires on the wildland urban interface as well as the impacts of urban heat islands. Fellows persevered through the ups and the downs of the unique landscapes to push forward resilience in the communities they served.

## 2019 - 2020 Placement Site Map



*\*Due to personal circumstances, some Fellows were unable to complete their full term of service*



# CAPACITY BUILDING

CivicSpark Fellows support capacity building efforts for local governments in 3 main sector topics: **climate change and adaptation**, **healthy community design**, and **water**. Fellows spend over 75% of their time on their service projects which help build local government capacity through researching new strategies and approaches, creating reports and databases, developing action plans and roadmaps, conducting outreach and stakeholder engagement, and implementing various strategies and pilot programs.

Through a collaborative and comprehensive strategic planning process in the summer of 2018, LGC staff developed 3 main strategic priorities that align the emerging needs and impacts in the climate change and community planning space with the capacity and goals of the overall organization and diverse programmatic teams for 2019 to 2021. The 3 strategic priorities encompass the external focus areas that LGC is engaging in. The following project highlights demonstrate projects that support and align with LGC's strategic priorities.

# 1

## DECARBONIZATION

decarbonize the mobility and transportation sector and support embodied decarbonization of buildings and development

# 2

## CLIMATE SMART HOUSING

align land use, development and planning decisions to minimize climate risks and reduce barriers to transit-oriented development

# 3

## WILDLAND & WATERSHED

improve forest and watershed management and resiliency



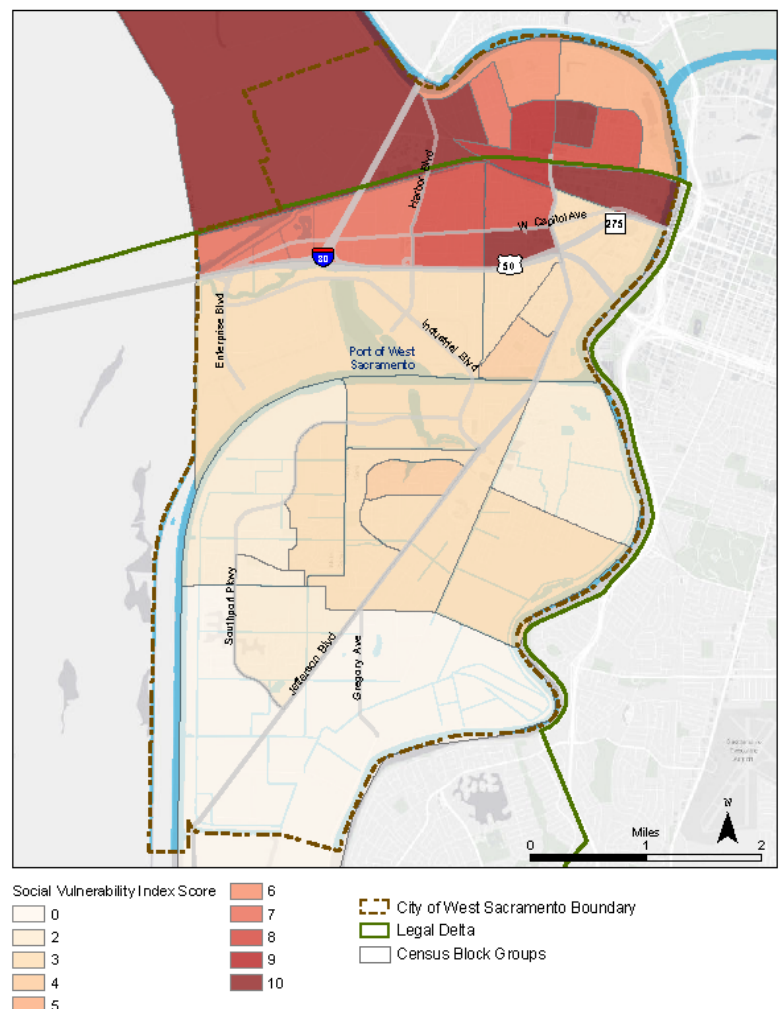
# CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION

The Climate and Adaptation network group focuses on climate adaptation and mitigation priorities, including waste reduction, renewable energy, energy efficiency, climate resilience, and carbon sequestration. This year, Fellows served their project partners to build out climate action and adaptation plans, work on policies to minimize disposable materials sent to landfill, and work on a wide range of energy efficiency programs

## Applying a Regional Climate Vulnerability Assessment at the Local Scale

The Delta Stewardship Council's (Council) ongoing Delta Adapts: Creating a Climate Resilient Future initiative includes a climate change vulnerability assessment (CCVA) for the Delta and Suisun Marsh. To aid the City of West Sacramento in its own climate initiatives, CivicSpark Climate Fellow Annie Merritt synthesized results from the Council's Delta-wide CCVA to produce specific vulnerability information for the City of West Sacramento (City), with a focus on disadvantaged communities, or the most vulnerable populations.

To better understand the specific vulnerabilities faced by these communities, the Fellow conducted outreach with community organizations that serve vulnerable populations in the Delta. Lessons learned from this outreach were incorporated into both Delta Adapts and the City-specific vulnerability information in order to ensure a focus on vulnerable populations in the City and throughout the Delta.



Annie Merritt's social vulnerability index results for the City of West Sacramento. A higher score indicates higher social vulnerability to the climate hazards of flooding, extreme heat, and wildfire smoke. Indicator data sources: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2017), CalEPA and OEHHA (2017) CalEnviroScreen 3.0, USDA Food Access Research Atlas (2017).

# South Lake Decarbonization

Meredith Anderson and Sam Ruderman have served at the Sierra Nevada Alliance and the City of South Lake Tahoe for two terms. After completing greenhouse gas inventories during their first service year, they were able to identify the relative contribution of all emissions sources within the City. This enabled the Fellows to develop the City’s first climate action plan during their second term.

Through hosting a community workshop, recruiting the consultant firm Ascent Environmental to provide technical support, and conducting a public survey to replace in-person engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City is well positioned to begin the road towards decarbonization.



4

Greenhouse  
Gas  
Inventories

120

Community  
Workshop  
Attendees

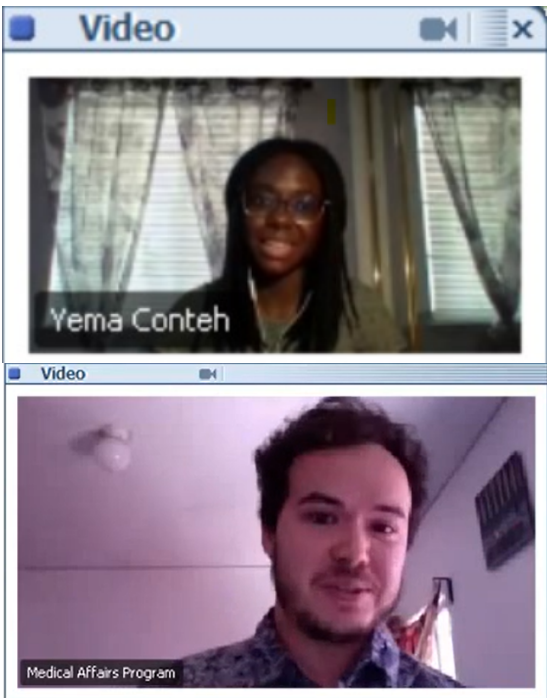
200+

Survey  
Responses

1

Draft  
Climate  
Action Plan

## LACDPH Stakeholder Engagement



Fellows Yema Conteh and Michael Jimenez co-led stakeholder engagement while serving the LACDPH Climate Change and Sustainability Program. Using best practices gained from researching local outreach initiatives, they invited over 200 representatives from community-based organizations, academic institutions, and local government agencies to attend two online listening sessions hosted in June.

Although virtual engagement presented roadblocks, they were able to hear community perspectives on climate and health. These insights will help inform revisions to Climate Change and Health Equity: Strategies for Action, a draft framework for LACDPH to build partnerships that achieve health equity and climate resilience in LA County’s most climate-affected communities.



# HEALTHY COMMUNITY DESIGN

The Healthy Community Design network group encompasses a wide range of topic areas that focus on housing, transportation and other community infrastructures and systems such as waste, energy, and buildings that are necessary to contribute to a healthy and thriving community. The Fellows worked to expand affordable housing supply and develop materials that informed local governments on specific housing topics such as additional dwelling units (ADUs) and student housing. Fellows also worked to reduce the barriers to bicycle/pedestrian access and planning, alternative vehicle deployment and infrastructure, vehicle electrification, and shared mobility.

## Carbon Reductions in the Building Industry

Tessa Grezdo served with the San Francisco Department of the Environment and worked on embodied carbon and building material management. San Francisco Department of the Environment (SFE) is working to help reduce emissions that are generated from the building sector.

The Fellow was tasked with researching embodied carbon policies, programs, tools, and publications. Embodied carbon in buildings can be reduced by incorporating low-carbon materials into the building design.



While most existing policies are focused on addressing operational carbon of buildings, reducing embodied carbon within buildings has been gaining momentum. Tessa created an embodied carbon research matrix as well as an embodied carbon handout. She also helped to plan and implement the first San Francisco Energy Fair which had over 300 attendees, 6 educational sessions, 20 speakers and 27 exhibitors.

**350**

Community  
members  
engaged

**300**

Energy Fair  
Attendees

**2**

Programs  
established

**47**

Speakers &  
Exhibitors  
Recruited

# Incorporating Equity into Bikeshare Outreach

Kiara Ryan served with the Sonoma County Transportation Authority and Regional Climate Protection Agency and conducted research on inequities within current Bike Share programs and outlined required goals for pre-launch outreach for the Marin Sonoma Bikeshare program.

She put together a Bike Share Equity toolkit which included a Metric Recording Document to track and record metrics as they relate to the equity goals. The toolkit is intended to ease the facilitation of the bike share pilot program pre launch outreach. The toolkit is a set of resources that include; a goal tracking sheet, a breakdown of the goals and requirements and a contact list for organizations operating within areas of concern.



Kiara created a targeted contact list with The Metropolitan Transportation Commission. The goal of the project was to have 20% of the service be within ¼ mile of a Community of Concern. She also used the MTC Community of Concern for map locations to determine which organizations were located within these areas. The next steps include utilizing the recorded metrics as a baseline to compare future outreach efforts.

## Expanding Housing at Community Colleges

Rosa Maldonado and Gabriela Elliott served with the Compton Community College District and Sierra College District through the California Community College Chancellor's Office. The Chancellor's Office sponsored Fellows to serve two different community colleges as case studies for expanding student housing.

Rosa Maldonado focused on the Compton College 2024 Comprehensive Plan that was approved in June 2019. Rosa facilitated an Implementation Workgroup that met throughout her Fellowship. The Workgroup collaborated in transforming the concept into its statewide Student Housing project model. She also assisted the President/CEO of Compton College and Chief Facilities Officer in capacity-building efforts to implement the historic Student Housing Project. Rosa helped gain strategic community outreach and support through two successful community forums. She also put together a California College community Survey Report.

Gabriela Elliott served with Sierra College. Sierra College was chosen as one of the colleges in part because it already had experience with student housing and it was on track to build more housing. Gabriela researched and wrote three white papers on financing and design to promote the understanding of options a community college may have when developing student housing. One paper focused on the project delivery methods and compared costs for the Sierra College housing project. Gabriela also completed a stakeholder engagement chart to highlight who to include in the next discussions. She also created a dorm expenses chart for an affordability task force presentation.

# WATER

The water network group focuses on water related issues while building capacity for local government. Water is a valuable resource that touches all our lives. Water concerns range from shortages, drinking quality, and infrastructure inequalities. The group this year, composed of 21 Fellows, worked on a variety of stormwater assessments, sustainable groundwater planning, creek revitalization and flood hazard mitigation plans to name a few. Fellows served their project partners at various sites aiming to increase resiliency and take on the challenging water problems that California faces today.

## Groundwater Sustainability Plan and Education

Meet Panchal served with Borrego Water District and helped to build capacity by integrating water into their existing land-use and climate adaptation plans. Borrego Springs is an isolated community located in San Diego County with limited resources and uses the Borrego sub-basin which is a high priority and critically overdrafted basin. The Fellow drafted an Action Plan for the Borrego Valley Stewardship Council that was adopted.



Meet also generated an Equitable Engagement Guidelines as a statewide recommendation for Community

Foundation Water Initiative (CFWI) to advance sustainable water management solutions. Project outcomes also led to the implementation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). Engagement included 3 educational outreach workshops to inform the community about the implementation of SGMA and how it would impact them. This led to the community being more aware of groundwater issues.

## Conservation and Hazard Mitigation Plan

Zach Gianotti and Hannah Davidson served with Hidden Valley Lake Community Service District located 2 hours north of the Bay area. The Fellows assisted with the formation of a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan with contractors to address the District's vulnerabilities. The LHMP is a document that both identifies hazards and vulnerabilities that threaten the District and lists actions that must be taken to mitigate them.

The Fellows also worked on reduction of I&I (infiltration and inflow) which is caused by aging infrastructure and storm events. Hannah and Zach located areas with I&I by installing flow monitors in areas with high flood rates to track the flow of stormwater and groundwater into the wastewater system. They utilized geolocating software to map all of the fire hydrants throughout their community and digitize water infrastructure and developed internal documents to improve administrative tasks.



# Serving the Water Needs of Tribes and Disadvantaged Communities

Rebecca Berg and Emily Ontiveros were both placed with the CA Department of Water Resources in the Sacramento and Tulare where they served tribes and disadvantaged communities through integrated engagement and coordination projects.

## Disadvantaged Communities Involvement Program

Rebecca Berg served in Tulare County and worked on improving the Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Involvement Program and community engagement and working with them to advance the efforts of the DAC Education and Engagement Program. The DACIP is part of the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program that helps to advance water management and fund projects at the regional level and the goal is to increase engagement of underrepresented communities in regional water management. Rebecca worked on completing the Needs Assessment by doing extensive research on water issues, attending community meetings to hear from community members and the challenges they face, and also looked at previous disadvantaged community water studies.

## Tribal Engagement in Integrated Regional Water Management

Emily Ontiveros worked on a Tribal Regional Water Management Webinar series with tribal and regional partners interested in strengthening Tribal engagement in regional water management. This was implemented as part of the Integrated Regional water management program and aligned with the goals of the Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement program to ensure the involvement of underrepresented communities.



**155**

Members  
engaged  
through Tribal  
RWM Webinar  
Series

**70**

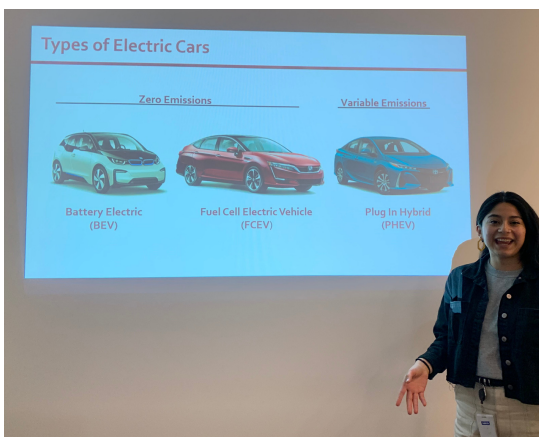
Groups  
engaged  
through Tribal  
RWM Webinar  
Series

The project was to provide information on the current state of Tribal engagement in IRWM to provide resources for those looking to increase engagement. The webinar series was three parts, each occurring a week apart. The series produced information and recommendations for Tribes, Regional Water Management Groups, and the State. Tribal representatives were highly involved from the onset of planning and did the majority of presenting during the event.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Despite the diversity of service projects across sectors and regions in California, community engagement is a thread that connects all CivicSpark experiences. Through leading presentations, meetings, or other outreach strategies, Fellows build capacity to meaningfully engage with community stakeholders, especially those representing vulnerable or disadvantaged constituencies. By mobilizing volunteers to support ongoing local efforts, Fellows also provide long-term support for their beneficiaries sustained beyond their service term. Finally, Fellows have the opportunity to serve together as a regional or even statewide team through volunteering with local organizations. Through these experiences, Fellows demonstrate a commitment to building relationships and engaging deeply with the communities they serve.



## Electric Vehicle Outreach

Serving with the City of Berkeley, Yeymi Rivas has broadened awareness of electric vehicles (EVs) and sustainable transportation solutions in her community. Through demystifying common concerns and providing resources on rebates and incentives at community workshops and events, Yeymi has made EV adoption easier and more accessible for over 170 community members. Striving towards equitable outreach, she has led presentations in English and Spanish and even conducted a virtual workshop in response to COVID-19. Reflecting on her service project, Yeymi offers the following insight: “I learned community engagement is harder than it seems. You can’t just go into the community and expect them to be excited about the resources you’re offering- even if they are free, you have to develop trust, put in the time, and even then it is still not a guaranteed partnership. I’m glad I learned how to start a dialogue with the community and hope to use this knowledge in a future job.”





# SERVICE DAYS

During the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, CivicSpark Fellows across the state helped restore community gardens in San Luis Obispo, Chico, and Los Angeles, sort food for low-income residents in Sacramento and Sierra Nevada, and remove trash and other pollutants from the bay shoreline in Oakland.

In March, Fellows provided over 600 hours of service during the first ever Statewide Service Day in honor of Americorps Week which happened during the same week as Mid-Year Gathering. Fellows had the opportunity to come together to support school beautification, garden and farm maintenance, and invasive species removal in San Mateo County.





# VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



## Earth Day Live Sacramento

Sacramento Fellows Emma Diamond, Erika Trinidad, and Hannah Schanzer coordinated a 12-hour livestream to celebrate Earth Day, attracting over 2300 views during the event. Although they initially planned to support the City of Sacramento's in-person events during Earth Month, the team adapted quickly to develop a virtual gathering in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Engaging with over 30 local organizations, the Fellows coordinated a diverse lineup of advocates, musicians, and public officials to elevate awareness of climate justice and creatively engage their community.



## Statewide Blood Drive

In March, more than 5,000 American Red Cross blood drives were canceled across the United States when shelter in place orders went into effect. Since in-person blood drives at schools, workplaces, and places of worship account for 50-80% of all blood donations, this resulted in a shortage.

In response, Fellows Ayelet Zamek, Meredith Anderson, Casandra Cortez, Laima Díaz Vepstas, Tatiana Garcia, Sam Ruderman and Lauren Sugay set off to provide aid during this crisis by creating the Give 1, Save 3 virtual Blood Drive, a new volunteer engagement project that would, in a comparatively small but direct way, provide aid during this crisis. Fellows received 27 pledges through their SleevesUp website from volunteers in eleven U.S. cities, three States and Hong Kong.

# SUPPORTING LOCAL COVID RESPONSE

Even as the sudden shifts and changes in society in response to the COVID-19 pandemic impacted many projects, Fellows were still able to help make communities safer, smarter, and healthier and get things done. While Fellows switched to serving remotely and continued with their service projects, many also had the opportunity to do more direct service to benefit the local community.



**381**

Hours  
Served

**17**

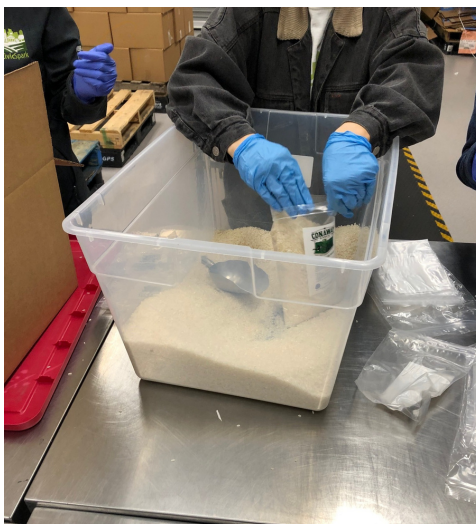
Fellow  
Volunteers

**5,087**

Individuals  
Served

**11,842**

Meals  
Provided

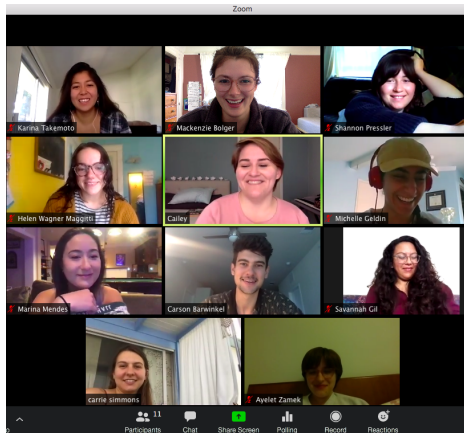


CivicSpark Fellows leveraged their service to directly benefit communities impacted by COVID-19 and as many Fellow's volunteer engagement projects had to be cancelled or postponed, some Fellows were also to contribute some of the time dedicated to those projects to directly serve their community by helping at food banks, donating blood, researching and supporting data entry for their jurisdiction's COVID-19 response, and creating resources and outreach material for local community based organizations. In total 17 Fellows were able to volunteer to address some of the urgent and immediate needs brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the service year, Fellows actively participate in professional development opportunities; whether it is at their project service sites, statewide and national conferences, and CivicSpark regional or statewide training. CivicSpark training provides Fellows continuous networking opportunities from CivicSpark's growing alumni that value the importance of mentorship and Fellow success.



Fellows continuously work to improve their performance and agency capacity, which creates competitive and sustainable workforce applicants at the end of their service year. CivicSpark supports Fellows in building the necessary skills to successfully support the strategic goals and objectives of their service sites. Fellows got the opportunity to hear from various guest speakers share their expertise and experience and also contributed their knowledge and problem solving skills to help one another in finding new ways to approach project and professional challenges.





# OTHER CONFERENCES

## VERGE Conference



Fellows are extended various opportunities to attend statewide and national conferences that aim to empower the next generation of sustainable and resilient leaders. In October 2019, CivicSpark partnered the GreenBiz Group to create opportunities for 10 CivicSpark Fellows and Alumni to attend VERGE 2019, to amplify diverse voices in the sustainability field. Fellows participated and engaged in critical conversations with diverse groups of people and organizations across all sectors who are also passionate about cultivating and improving community resilience for livable communities.

## Planning and Conservation League Assembly

Joined by dozens of CivicSpark Fellows that congregated in Sacramento to participate in the symposium, Alexandra Lehman, Kiara Ryan and Laura Emmons were invited to speak on a panel where they discussed their views on a more sustainable future. Touching on topics as wide ranging as transportation, environmental and economic inequality and personal resilience strategies like improv dancing, they made for an incisive and exciting Emerging Leader Panel at the 2020 edition of the Planning and Conservation League 's California Environmental Assembly.

The California Environmental Assembly addresses the state's most important environmental policy issues. The 2020 edition was held on January 25th, and focused on fostering the multi-stakeholder collaboration needed to fight climate change and build community resilience. Expert panelists from local and State agencies, community based organizations, companies, and law firms joined in to pitch their big ideas on how to solve the most pressing issues of our time.





# REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE TRAININGS

CivicSpark produces a series of Statewide and Regional Trainings in hopes of connecting current Fellows with its nexus of established alumni and partner organizations. Regional Trainings are designed for Fellows to meet for a full day at a specific location convenient for Fellows in their respective regions to continuously enhance leadership skills as well as grow their network. CivicSpark Staff attempt to make these connections meaningful by tailoring monthly Trainings to specific topics, as well as facilitating panel discussions with invited panelists eager to share their experiences with Fellows.



Fellows also participate in a series of Network Calls that focus on an array of topics such as climate adaptation, energy efficiency, water management, affordable housing, and mobility. These calls serve as an additional resource for Fellows to discuss various complex topics in a moderated setting with CivicSpark Staff. To wrap up the end of the service year, Fellows participated in a series of online poster presentations, where they were able to share the outcomes of their projects to the rest of the CivicSpark cohort, their supervisors and colleagues, CivicSpark alumni, LGC staff, and other interested parties as well.



# ALUMNI BOARD

The CivicSpark Alumni Board consists of 19 members from our previous Fellow cohorts. The Board serves to advise the program in its future pursuits and help shape its current efforts, assist in the development of programs that support Fellows and strengthen the Alumni network, as well as taking on leadership roles and grow professionally through participation with the Board and with other Alumni.

## 2019-2020 Alumni Board Members

**Ciaran Gallagher** - Board Co-Chair

**Drew Harrington** - Co-Chair

**Tinuviel Carlson** - Bay Area Point of Contact

**Simone Cordery Cotter** - Sacramento-Sierra Region Point of Contact

**Marina Deligiannis** - Sacramento-Sierra Region Point of Contact

**Angela Kim** - Greater Los Angeles Point of Contact

**Delaney King** - Bay Area Regional Point of Contact

**Marisa Perez Reyes** - Sacramento-Sierra Region Point of Contact

**Ernesto Ruvalcalba** - Greater Los Angeles Point of Contact

**Edgar Barraza** - Committee Member

**Lizzie Carrade** - Committee Member

**Kendyl Churchman** - Committee Member

**Aaron Dickenson** - Board Member at Large

**Bryan Iwamoto** - Board Member at Large

**Skylar Johnson** - Board Member at Large

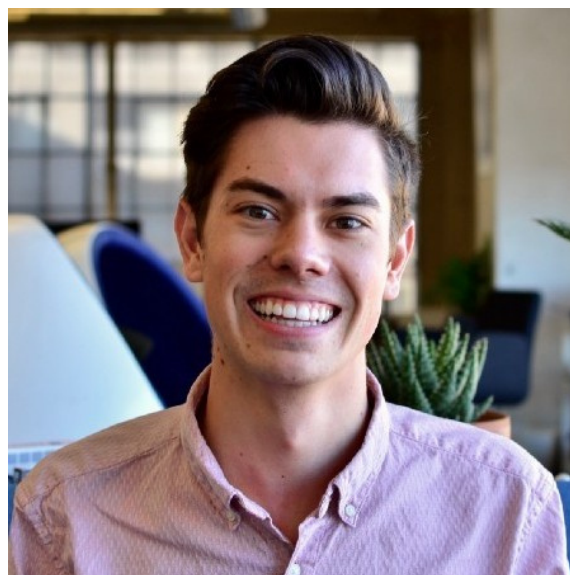
**Christopher Luu** - Board Member at Large

**Adam Murphey** - Board Member at Large

**Lynna Ohanian** - Board Member at Large



**Ciaran Gallagher**  
2019-2020 Board Co-Chair



**Drew Harrington**  
2019-2020 Co-Chair

40

Informational  
Interview  
Volunteers

2

Job Prep  
Webinars

1

Mentorship  
Program  
Launched



# FELLOW PLACEMENTS

## Northern California/Sacramento

**Colin Cross** - California Department of Housing and Community Development (Sacramento)  
**Hannah Davidson** - Hidden Valley Lake Community Services District  
**Jacqueline Garcia** - The Freshwater Trust  
**Tatiana Garcia** - City of Mount Shasta  
**Zachary Gianotti** - Hidden Valley Lake Community Services District  
**Evelyn Hall** - California Offices of Emergency Services  
**Kaila Korosec** - City of Lakeport  
**Alexandra Lehman** - Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality District  
**Frank Lyles** - City of Mount Shasta  
**Annie Merritt** - Delta Stewardship Council  
**Alfonso Ramirez** - Lake County Special District  
**Margaret Scarpa** - City of Chico  
**Hannah Schanzer** - California Energy Commission  
**Trinity Smyth** - City of Sacramento Public Works  
**Lauren Sugay** - Butte County  
**David Vigil** - Sacramento Area Council of Governments

## San Diego

**Dominique Dashwood** - City of Encinitas  
**Meet Panchal** - Borrego Water District  
**Serena Pelka** - City of Del Mar

## Central Valley

**Arlin Benavides** - CA Department of Housing and Community Development (Tulare)  
**Rebecca Berg** - CA Department of Water Resources

## Sacramento/Sierra

**Meredith Anderson** - Sierra Nevada Alliance  
**Carissa Bradley** - Sierra Business Council  
**Julia Cohen** - Yolo Resiliency Collaborative  
**Emma Diamond** - City of Sacramento Utilities  
**Gabriela Elliott** - Community Colleges Chancellor - Sierra College District  
**Brooke Ely** - Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District  
**Christopher Flores** - City of Winters  
**Miles Gordon** - California Office of Emergency Services  
**Gianna Meschi** - County of Placer  
**Jianelli Morones** - City of Woodland  
**Emily Ontiveros** - California Department of Water Resources - Office of the Tribal Policy Advisor  
**Rebecca Pope** - California Department of Housing and Community Development (Placer)  
**Erin Ronald** - Town of Truckee  
**Samuel Ruderman** - Sierra Nevada Alliance  
**Emily Severeid** - City of Davis  
**Erika Trinidad** - City of Sacramento Utilities

## Central Coast

**Carson Barwinkel** - County of Ventura  
**Jerel Francisco** - County of Santa Barbara  
**Michelle Geldin** - County of Santa Barbara  
**Savannah Gil** - San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
**Marina Mendes** - City of San Luis Obispo  
**Shannon Pressler** - City of San Luis Obispo  
**Carrie Simmons** - County of Ventura  
**Karina Takemoto** - City of Goleta  
**Itzel Torres** - County of Ventura (3CREN)  
**Helen Wagner Maggitti** - City of Carpinteria  
**Ayelet Zamek** - County of San Luis Obispo Public Works

# FELLOW PLACEMENTS

## Bay Area

**Cassandra Abruzzo** - SF Department of the Environment

**Samuel Bowman** - City of Walnut Creek

**Shannon Casey** - RecycleMore

**Nicole Cheng** - ClimatePlan

**Amanda Cobb** - City of San José

**Laima Diaz Vepstas** - City of Novato

**Laura Emmons** - City of Livermore

**Shivali Gowda** - City of Richmond

**Tessa Grezdo** - SF Department of the Environment

**Rebecca Haworth** - City of San Pablo

**Alexandra Hoff** - County of Marin

**Bianca Hutner** - City of Albany

**Jaron Kaplan** - San Francisco Estuary Institute

**Amber Leavitt** - Bay Conservation and Development Commission

**Caitlin Macomber** - Youth United for Community Action

**Yeymi Rivas** - City of Berkeley

**Kiara Ryan** - Sonoma County Transportation Authority

**Vanessa Shin** - City of Cupertino

**Lorenzo Siemann** - City of Antioch

**Justin Szasz** - City of Piedmont

**Megan Verner-Crist** - City of Livermore

## Greater Los Angeles

**Naomi Albert** - South Bay Cities Council of Governments

**Natalie Arreaga** - Southern California Association of Governments

**Dario Bobeda-Padilla** - City of Fontana

**Amanda Caswell** - Southern California Association of Governments

**Yema Conteh** - Los Angeles Department of Public Health

**Cassandra Cortez** - City of Culver City

**Michael Jimenez** - Los Angeles Department of Public Health

**Bailey Lai** - Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority

**Rosa Maldonado** - Community Colleges Chancellor (LA)

**Aman Patheja** - San Bernardino Council of Governments

**Vannesa Reyes Salazar** - Southern California Association of Governments

**Nasreen Sayed** - Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

**Tim Williams** - California State University

**Yun Zhao** - City of Culver City



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As we reflect on 2020, we'd like to use this platform to convey our heartfelt gratitude to all our **allies**, our **Fellows, Alumni, Partners, and Sponsors** for their commitment and overwhelming support to keep things going throughout these unprecedented and turbulent times.

It has been a year of change, growth, and resilience. Last winter brought even more changes to the program as Kif Scheuer, our former National Service Director, moved on from the Local Government Commission to lead the California Climate Action Corps at California Volunteers. We would like to take this moment to thank Kif for his six years of leading the National Service team. His dedication to the program and passion for resilience work throughout the state has led our staff and Fellows through many seasons. We are grateful for his contributions that will be felt for years to come. Thank you Kif!

Please join us in welcoming Shauna Goodman into her new role as National Service Director. In her role, Shauna will oversee the direction of LGC's National Service team to lead CivicSpark and the implementation of the newly launched California Climate Action Corps. Shauna brings 13+ years of experience in community-benefit organizations and higher education and has a proven record of relationship building with volunteers, donors, clients, and across organizations and teams. Thank you, Shauna, we look forward to operating our programs under your leadership.

Finally, we must also recognize the support of LGC leadership. Thank you!

Sincerely,  
National Service Staff

## SPECIAL THANKS TO: PROJECT SPONSORS



## PATHWAY PARTNERS



## CONTRIBUTORS

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Shannon Casey  
Richard Balli

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Francisco Parés Olguín  
Savannah Rose  
Magda Rojas Valdez



# HOW TO GET INVOLVED!

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