



# **CITY OF SYRACUSE HOME-ARP ALLOCATION PLAN**

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## Introduction

As part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP), the City of Syracuse (the “City”) has been allocated \$5,132,982 in HOME Investment Partnership American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) funds to assist individuals or households who are homeless, at risk of homelessness and other vulnerable populations (“Qualifying Populations”). The purpose of HOME-ARP funds is to reduce homelessness and increase housing stability. The funds may be purposed for housing development, tenant based rental assistance (TBRA), supportive services, and non-congregate shelters. To receive the HOME-ARP allocation, the City of Syracuse must develop and submit a HOME-ARP Allocation Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This allocation plan is subject to a 15-day public review period prior to submission to HUD.

## Background

HUD mandates that each HOME-ARP Participating Jurisdiction (PJ) consults with agencies and service providers whose clientele includes the HOME-ARP qualifying population. Agencies that must, at a minimum be consulted include the Continuum of Care that serves the geographic area, homeless and domestic violence service providers, veterans’ groups, public housing agencies (PHA), public agencies that address the needs of qualifying populations, and public or private organizations that address fair housing, civil rights, and the needs of persons with disabilities. PJs are not required to consult with all Continuums of Care affiliates or PHA’s in their jurisdiction. HUD also requires that each PJ provide opportunities for the public to comment on the proposed Allocation Plan, including the amount of HOME-ARP funds that will be received and the range of activities that the PJ may undertake.

## Consultation

The City of Syracuse Department of Neighborhood and Business Development (NBD) and Onondaga County Community Development (“the County”) collaborated to consult with various stakeholders in the participating jurisdiction for the purpose of getting their perspective on the current state of housing in the area. NBD and the County conferred with the Continuum of Care, the Syracuse Housing Authority and as many agencies as possible that are vested in the protection of the residents in the qualifying populations.

## Summary of the Consultation Process

NBD conducted two rounds of a survey and held two meetings to consult with community stakeholders. The first survey was sent to community partner organizations for feedback regarding the community need and service gaps. The City of Syracuse and Onondaga County partnered in outreach relative to HOME-ARP funding. The initial round of the survey was sent to a targeted list of service providers that work with qualifying populations to be served with these grant funds. The survey was sent out on March 18<sup>th</sup> with a response due date of April 1<sup>st</sup>. City and County staff met on April 6<sup>th</sup> to review the feedback and data from the survey.

The survey was sent again in a second round to all participants on the Continuum of Care email list, with a response date of May 1<sup>st</sup>. The City of Syracuse and County of Onondaga staff then met again on May 3<sup>rd</sup> to review the collected data and feedback and prepare for presentation and discussion of the survey results at an upcoming public meeting. A table with a summary of the feedback received from this survey is provided on page four of this document.

NBD and the County held the first public community outreach meeting on June 7, 2022 to present the survey results. Approximately 20 people attended. Participants were asked to provide commentary on the survey

results, feedback on proposed HOME-ARP funding allocations and share their opinions on the needs and service gaps for the qualifying populations. Participants could also complete the survey if they had not yet done so.

A second public meeting was held via virtual conference on June 21, 2022, at 5:30pm; there were five (5) attendees. Feedback from community stakeholder consultations is compiled in the table below:

## List of Organizations Consulted and Summary of Feedback

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method Of Consultation	Feedback
Home HeadQuarters	Housing Services	Survey	Would like focus on affordable rental rehabilitation
Rescue Mission	Emergency Shelter/ Homeless Services	Public meeting	Only had questions on process of funding & any Leveraging requirements.
Onondaga County Dept. Of Social Services	Homeless, at risk of Homelessness, persons Fleeing domestic violence	Survey & Public meeting	More affordable Housing/
Chadwick Residence	Homeless/at risk of Homelessness, persons Fleeing domestic violence, Those with housing instability	Survey	Affordable, quality housing that is safe and secure. Improve housing conditions as well as expanding Affordable options, which could include new Construction or restored apartment communities.
A Tiny Home For Good	Homeless, at risk of Homelessness, housing vulnerable	Public Meeting	Construction of affordable housing, tiny homes
YMCA of Central New York	Homeless/at risk of Homelessness, persons Fleeing domestic violence, Those with housing instability	Survey & Public meeting	All needs equally necessary, supportive services, Non-congregate shelter, TBRA, rehab & new construction.
The Salvation Army	Homeless/at risk of Homelessness, veterans, persons Fleeing domestic violence, Those with housing instability	Survey & Public meeting	Affordable, quality housing that is safe and secure. Improve housing conditions as well as expanding Affordable options through new construction or rehabilitation
Catholic Charities of Onondaga County	Homeless/at risk of Homelessness, persons Fleeing domestic violence, Those with housing instability	Public Meeting	Affordable housing
Arise	Homeless/at risk of Homelessness, veterans, Disabled persons, elderly and those fleeing domestic violence, those with housing instability	Survey	Lack of accessibility of apartments such as stairs and not enough complexes on fixed bus routes. Lack of affordable units for SSI level income. Lack of financial help with moving, deposits, storage and relocation. A robust wheelchair ramp program must be created where the lowest income tenants and homeowner will be able to get help with ramp construction or metal ramp installation. No program exists within City and there is a huge demand. Lack of this type of program leads to unnecessary institutionalization of seniors.
Allyn Foundation	At risk of homelessness, those With housing instability	Survey	Physically accessible units, units with right composition of bedrooms for family size (e.g. not enough larger units for larger families). Reduce barriers to use of/access to home improvement subsidies to bring as many existing units online and affordable. Support for tenants with poor rental histories and lack of ability to pay market rate and/or affordable rents. Increase access to programs like Section 8 or TBRA to help bridge the gap. Create incentives for landlords to take advantage of existing and/or new funding programs.
Syracuse Housing Authority	Public Housing Authority	Survey & Public Meeting	More affordable housing, rehab of existing units to make them safe and affordable. New construction of single-family homes for all family sizes.

Agency/Org Consulted	Type of Agency/Org	Method Of Consultation	Feedback
Vera House, Inc.	Persons fleeing domestic violence	Survey	More safe, affordable apartments.
Homeless & Housing Coalition	Continuum of Care	Survey & Public Meetings	Need to increase affordable housing through rehabbing units, as there is trouble finding quality, affordable housing to move people out of shelter.
Greater Syracuse Tenants Network	At risk of homelessness and those with housing instability.	Survey	Housing
Frank H. Hiscock Legal Aid Society	Homeless, at risk of homelessness, Veterans, persons fleeing domestic Violence, those with housing instability	Survey	The current rental market is increasingly more challenging to find quality affordable units. The do not recommend putting too much money into TBRA as there has been strategic investment in rapid rehousing. Identification of units is the biggest challenge. Expanding affordable housing options is necessary as homelessness increases in our community.
Nehda, Inc.	Homeless/at risk of Homelessness, veterans, persons Fleeing domestic violence, Those with housing instability	Survey	More affordable housing, more emergency shelters for families in crisis, financial assistance for relocation and homelessness prevention.
Onondaga County Dept. of Child and Family Services	Homeless, at risk of homelessness, Veterans, persons fleeing domestic Violence, those with housing instability	Survey	Really need more housing stock for all low income, those disabled, entry level staff, the working poor; also incentives for landlords to take a chance on high risk tenants.
Onondaga County Mental Health Services - OnCare – Transition Age Youth (TAY)	Homeless, at risk of homelessness, Veterans, persons fleeing domestic Violence, those with housing instability, Transition age youth	Survey	Subsidized Housing
Coordinated Care Services, Inc., Syracuse	Homeless, at risk of homelessness, Veterans, persons fleeing domestic Violence, those with housing instability, Those with substance abuse issues	Survey	More housing appropriate for issues. Affordable with real services and safety Not a room in a boarding house with no supports.
Onondaga County Dept. of Social Services	Homeless, at risk of homelessness, Veterans, persons fleeing domestic Violence, those with housing instability	Survey & Public Meeting	Affordable housing
Onondaga County Dept. of Child and Family Services -Adult Mental Health Division	Homeless, at risk of homelessness, Veterans, persons fleeing domestic Violence, those with housing instability	Survey	Affordable Housing for at risk individuals and families coming from transitional program, housing for TAY and ELL.

### **Summary of Survey Results:**

The survey was sent out to the entire Continuum of Care email list and approximately 40 individuals and agencies. The City and County received 27 individual responses to the survey from 17 agencies. In the survey, respondents were asked to rate areas of community need and gaps in services using a rating scale from 1 to 5, where “1” represented a response of least concern or severity and “5” represented the greatest concern or severity.

Gaps in Services: Respondents were asked to rate each of the identified gaps in services on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being not very challenging and 5 being extremely challenging.

Below are the identified gaps in service and the percentage of respondents who perceived each gap as “extremely challenging”:

- 89% - Lack of Quality Affordable Units
- 78% - Rent Affordability
- 11% - Housing Discrimination
- 33% - Lack of Supportive Resources such as staffing for case management programs
- 27% - Transportation

Challenges that disrupt services: Respondents were asked to rate how frequently they encountered identified challenges that disrupt services using a scale of 1 to 5, where “1” is less frequently encountered and “5” is most frequently encountered.

Below are the identified challenges that disrupt services and the percentage of respondents who perceived each challenge as “most frequently encountered”:

- 12% - Operational Costs
- 46% - Capacity Limitations
- 39% - Adequate Staffing
- 82% - Lack of Housing Options

Obstacles to Housing Homeless Persons: Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of issues Syracuse is facing for housing homeless, low income and disabled citizens on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “less important” and 5 being “very important”.

Below are the percentages of respondents who indicated this issue was “very important” to them:

- 93% Lack of Affordable Housing
- 48% Code Compliance Issue in Available Units
- 26% Limited Case Management Support Services

Using the same 1 to 5 scale from “less important” to “very important”, respondents were asked to rate qualified activities based on the current client need and the gaps in available programming

Below are the percentages of responses listing activities as “very important”.

- 44% Supportive Services
- 26% Non-Congregate Emergency Shelter
- 65% Tenant Based Rental Assistance
- 56% Rental Housing Rehabilitation
- 52% Rental Housing New Construction

## Public Participation

To increase public participation, the City actively maintains communication with local non-profits and housing developers as well as the CoC and the County of Onondaga.

Beginning September 16, 2022, the draft HOME-ARP Allocation Plan is available to view or download from the City of Syracuse website. A hardcopy of the Plan may also be obtained by visiting the Department of Neighborhood and Business Development. The public comment period will begin on September 19<sup>th</sup> and end on October 11, 2022. A public hearing will be held at 5:30 pm on September 28<sup>th</sup>. The City of Syracuse Common Council will conduct their meeting on October 11, 2022. A notice of public comment period and public hearing

was published on September 18<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the notice was displayed on the City’s website and distributed via email to the City’s list of community stakeholders.

***Summary of comments and recommendation received through the public participation process.***

Comments and recommendations received included many of the needs highlighted during the needs assessment and included lack of affordable housing, limited stock of available housing, need of more funding for supportive services and case management. The limited availability of handicapped accessible low-income units and a need for better transportation access were also comments received. All comments received in writing are attached as Appendix “A”.

***Summary of any comments or recommendations not accepted:***

All comment were accepted

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## Needs Assessment and Gaps Analysis

Homeless													
	Current Inventory					Homeless Population				Gap Analysis			
	Family		Adults Only		Vets	Family HH (at least 1 child)	Adult HH (w/o child)	Vets	Victims of DV	Family		Adults Only	
	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds					# of Beds	# of Units	# of Beds	# of Units
Emergency Shelter	105	32	329	329	0								
Transitional Housing	22	11	96	96	24								
Permanent Supportive Housing	221	84	652	652	167								
Other Permanent Housing	79	38	215	215	5								
Sheltered Homeless						29	225	10	44				
Unsheltered Homeless						0	9	0	0				
<b>Current Gap</b>										#	#	#	#

Source: Continuum of Care NY-505

### Size and demographic composition of the Qualifying Populations:

According to the 2022 Point in Time (PIT) count for CoC NY-505 for Onondaga County/Syracuse there were 749 overall homeless people. 325 sheltered homeless in emergency shelter, 92 homeless in transitional housing and 9 unsheltered homeless. Of these 749 individuals, there were 169 females, 255 males, 1 transgender, and 1 A gender other than singularly female or male (e.g., non-binary, genderfluid, agender, culturally specific gender).

Onondaga County 2022 PIT count identified that 23 people experiencing homelessness are chronically homeless. The PIT also shows that there are 34 Veterans experiencing homelessness and 3 unaccompanied youth.

The PIT also identified other homeless subpopulations. 124 adults reported that they had a serious mental illness, 91 adults reported substance abuse disorder, 12 adults had HIV/AIDS, there were 57 Victims of Domestic Violence.

According to the PIT County/Syracuse data, there are 78 beds locally for transitional housing for women and families fleeing domestic violence. In 2020 the Office of Criminal Justice for Onondaga County reported a total of 4640 calls for emergency service for domestic violence.

In Onondaga County/Syracuse the greatest risk of homelessness is from rental evictions. ESG, CDBG and ARPA COVID-19 funds have prevented 1,272 evictions through financial assistance in the past 20 months.



According to the HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) 2015-2019 data there are approximately 27,140 households with at least 1 of 4 severe housing problems including incomes at or below 30% AMI that are at risk of homelessness in Onondaga County. The data also shows that there are 27,845 households in Onondaga County that have incomes at or below 30% AMI, and 50,275 households have at least 1 of 4 identified housing problems. The four most severe housing problems are: incomplete kitchen facilities, incomplete plumbing facilities, more than 1.5 persons per room, and a cost burden greater than 50%. This cost burden of greater than 50% is the most significant housing problem providing risk for homelessness among renters.

The 2020-2025 Syracuse Consolidated Plan expresses its commitment to improving the quality of rental apartments while ensuring the availability of affordable units for those who cannot afford to buy a home. This goal is advanced through CDBG and HOME funded programs and will be with the HOME ARPA funding.

Individuals and families at risk of homelessness may need a variety of housing services such as case management, eviction prevention, diversion assistance, direct financial assistance to include rent and utilities as well as mental health, substance use, medical care, and other support services. Households who need assistance with maintaining housing or attaining housing to prevent homelessness will benefit from case management or diversion services which target high risk populations in high-risk areas to ensure that those most at risk are served first. Those families who have been previously homeless would also benefit from these services along with direct financial assistance to include short term assistance as well as the use of housing vouchers.

***Unmet housing and service needs of qualifying populations:***

Based on consultation with service providers and an analysis of survey responses, the greatest unmet service needs of qualifying populations, including sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations, currently housed populations at risk of homelessness, other families requiring services or assistance to prevent homelessness, and those at greatest risk of housing instability or in unstable housing situations are:

- Lack of Quality Affordable Units
- Rent Affordability
- Lack of Supportive Resources such as staffing for case management programs
- Transportation

Many of these unmet housing and service needs overlap with each other and are not linked to a particular population. For the homeless population there is a need for stable affordable housing where shelter staff can rapidly rehouse individuals from shelter at a faster pace into permanent housing. Currently there are 328 households in emergency shelter waiting for permanent housing placements.

There are common needs for these qualifying populations such as transportation to meet basic needs such as food, healthcare, attaining mental health, substance use or other support services. Other ongoing assistance needed to achieve housing affordability is direct financial assistance. There are families/individuals who suffer a temporary loss or reduction in income that place them at-risk of homelessness as well as those who simply do not have the income to pay rent on a regular basis. This was most devastating during COVID when unemployment increased. For those qualifying for unemployment, they had to wait sometimes up to 8 weeks to get much less income than they were making while employed. Rents could not be paid, thus putting persons in a position of being evicted.

There is a significant gap in affordable housing units for low-income individuals and families. Currently there are 269 households in Onondaga County waiting to be matched with housing projects and/or searching for housing on the Continuum of Care's (CoC) Coordinated Entry list. The lack of affordable housing is consistently the number one unmet need in recent planning studies, needs assessments and surveys. Also, shelter occupancy

and HMIS data shows that there is a marked increase in the number of families and single persons needing lower cost housing.

***Identify any gaps within the current shelter and housing inventory as well as the service delivery system:***

The HHC/CoC is anticipating increases in people experiencing homelessness because of the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been substantial investment in homelessness prevention and rent relief services, which have helped hundreds of people avoid eviction. Nevertheless, over 300 people became homeless for the first time in the city of Syracuse between June and September of 2021 alone. In addition, the length of time households stay in emergency shelter has increased by an average of 7 days from 2019 to 2020, which we believe can be attributed to a lack of available affordable units along with a lack of long-term assistance with housing costs for households with very low income.

Housing projects dedicated to serving literally homeless people had enough turnover to serve 500 out of the 1,849 people that were in shelter in 2020, leaving a shortfall of 1,349 subsidies for people experiencing homelessness. This is a conservative estimate, given that the number of people in shelters was low in 2020.

All shelter beds in Onondaga County are in congregate shelters and non-congregate sheltering has been implemented on an as-needed basis. Non-congregate shelter options (hotel stays) should be expanded because of the health risks involved in congregate shelter.

Additional tenant-based rental assistance, supportive housing, and non-congregate shelter programs will alleviate the gap in subsidized housing available for literally homeless households and mitigate the health risks of congregate shelter.

***Under Section IV.4.2.ii.G of the HOME-ARP Notice, the City of Syracuse may provide additional characteristics associated with instability and increased risk of homelessness in their HOME-ARP allocation plan. These characteristics will further refine the definition of “other populations” that are “At Greatest Risk of Housing Instability,” as established in the HOME-ARP Notice. If including these characteristics, identify them here:***

***Priority needs for qualifying populations:***

Quality affordable housing is the greatest identified need for qualifying populations, particularly, people experiencing literal homelessness, those at risk of homelessness, veterans and people fleeing domestic violence.

Affordable housing constructed with HOME-ARP funds, will be paired with supportive services, including transportation, to meet basic needs such as food, healthcare, and other individual needs whenever possible.

***Determining the level of need and gaps in the City's inventory and service delivery:***

The level of need and gaps were determined by HMIS data collected by the Continuum of Care and Homeless Housing Coalition in addition to consultation with the area Continuum of Care and local agencies that provide services to the qualified populations.

## HOME-ARP Activities

### **City of Syracuse’s methodology for accepting applications and awarding funds:**

The City of Syracuse will send an announcement to housing partners, real estate developers and local non-profits and community stakeholders that we are accepting applications from those interested in the development and new construction of rental units and/or the rehabilitation of existing housing units to serve the qualifying population in and effort to increase the availability of quality, affordable housing. The City has already received inquiries from developers interested in developing affordable housing for qualified populations. The City has also reached out to affordable housing developers who are intending to begin projects, to discuss incorporating affordable housing for qualified populations.

The City of Syracuse will seek qualified developers that successfully demonstrate the ability to provide newly constructed homes, newly developed rental units and or rehabilitation of existing housing unit to address the lack of quality affordable housing identified in the outreach for this grant. Qualified developers will have knowledge of affordable housing development and are experienced with various public and private funding sources. Those developers with experience developing affordable housing and/or working with the qualifying populations will be prioritized over other applicants.

The City of Syracuse will administer the HOME-ARP funding and manage the application and construction process as well as monitor the property to ensure compliance with the HOME-ARP guidelines. The City will ensure that the developer accepts only those tenants that are members of a qualifying population and will use the Continuum of Care (CoC) to assist in identifying those most in need of housing.

The City of Syracuse has not allocated any funds to a subrecipient or contractor.

### **Use of HOME-ARP Funding:**

<b>Funded Activities for HOME-ARP</b>	<b>Draft Budget Amount</b>	<b>% of Allocation</b>
Supportive Services	\$ 0	0.0%
Non-Profit Capacity Building* (5% Max.) <sup>±</sup>	256,649	5.0%
Acquisition & Development of Non-Congregate Shelters	0	0.0%
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	0	
Development of Affordable Rental Housing	4,106,386	80.0%
Non-Profit Operating	0	0.0%
HOME Administration (15% Max.) <sup>±</sup>	769,947	15.0%
<b>TOTAL HOME-ARP FUND ALLOCATION FROM HUD</b>	<b>\$ 5,132,982</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>TOTAL ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$ 5,132,982</b>	

\* Reserve to assist small developers, as needed.      <sup>±</sup> Mandated by HOME regulations.

### **Distributing HOME-ARP funds according to priority needs:**

Funds will be used for affordable housing construction and preservation. A lack of quality, affordable housing was identified in our outreach for the HOME-ARP grant as a top priority by all respondents.

The HOME-ARP grant allows a maximum of 5% of the allocation to be set aside or Non-profit capacity building. We have allocated \$256,649 toward capacity building in anticipation of smaller developers and not-for-profit housing agencies being interested in assisting with affordable housing construction and preservation. This

reserve will be available, if necessary, to these small developers to assist them in building capacity for larger scale develop projects. Due to our increased need in the availability of quality, affordable housing, every effort must be taken to ensure we get more units available to qualifying populations as quickly as possible. This funding may assist the City of Syracuse in helping to establish more affordable housing developers in the area.

***Rationale for funding eligible activities:***

Due to the current aging and dilapidated housing stock in the City of Syracuse and a lack of quality, affordable housing, it is imperative that the City concentrates its focus on rental housing new construction and rehabilitation to create quality, affordable and safe housing for the qualifying population. The need for quality affordable units was identified by all the community partners and stakeholders who contributed to our HOME-ARP outreach.

The City of Syracuse is committed to accommodating those currently housed yet facing housing instability. To that end the City has invested CDBG-CV, ESG-CV and ARPA funds totaling \$4,399,324 for eviction prevention direct financial assistance. 1,595 households facing eviction have been stabilized with these funds to date.

## HOME-ARP PRODUCTION HOUSING GOALS

***Estimate of the number of affordable rental housing units for qualifying populations that the City of Syracuse will produce or support with its HOME-ARP allocation:***

The City of Syracuse expects that the HOME-ARP funding will produce approximately 75 quality, affordable rental units available to qualifying populations.

***Specific affordable rental housing production goal that the City of Syracuse hopes to achieve and how the production goal will address the priority needs identified in City of Syracuse:***

The goal of this project is neighborhood revitalization and stabilization with a focus on development of mixed-income housing that expands new housing options for the qualifying populations identified in the HOME-ARP guidelines. The City anticipates working in partnership with several developers to support redevelopment of the housing in areas identified as high need. In addition to the HOME-ARP investment, HOME Investment Partnership Funds, Community Development Block Grant funds and the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation funds will be used to invest in the new construction of several single-family homes that will be sold with incentives to first time homebuyers. These homes will be built on lots in proximity to the new rental units funded with HOME-ARP, with the goal of developing a balanced mixed-income neighborhood with significant investment in new construction.

## Preferences

***Identify whether the City of Syracuse intends to give preference to one or more qualifying populations or a subpopulation within one or more qualifying populations for any eligible activity or project:***

- ***Preferences cannot violate any applicable fair housing, civil rights, and nondiscrimination requirements, including but not limited to those requirements listed in 24 CFR 5.105(a).***
- ***The City of Syracuse is not required to describe specific project s to which the preferences will apply.***

To provide maximum program flexibility and opportunities to all City of Syracuse residents experiencing homelessness or risk of homelessness, the City has elected to not apply preferences among the qualifying populations when choosing eligible activities for this grant.

***If a preference was identified, explain how the use of a preference or method of prioritization will address the unmet need or gap in benefits and services received by individuals and families in the qualifying population or category of qualifying populations, consistent with the City of Syracuse needs assessment and gap analysis:***

Not applicable

***If a preference was identified, describe how the City of Syracuse will use HOME-ARP funds to address the unmet needs or gaps in benefits and services of the other qualifying populations that are not included in the preference:***

Not applicable

## HOME-ARP Refinancing Guidelines

***If the City of Syracuse intends to use HOME-ARP funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily rental housing that is being rehabilitated with HOME-ARP funds, the City must state its HOME-ARP refinancing guidelines in accordance with 24 CFR 92.206(b).***

The City of Syracuse does not intend to refinance existing debt with HOME-ARP funds.

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