



# 2024-2025 Stronger Connections Grant

Competitive Grant Application: Due 11:59 p.m. CT, July 18, 2023

NOGA ID 

Application stamp-in date and time

TEA will only accept grant application documents by **email**, including competitive grant applications and amendments. Submit grant applications and amendments as follows:

Competitive grant applications and amendments to [competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov](mailto:competitivegrants@tea.texas.gov).

The application **MUST** bear the signature of a person authorized to bind the applicant to a contractual agreement

**Authorizing legislation:**

**Grant period:**

**Pre-award costs:**

**Required attachments:**

## Amendment Number

Amendment number (For amendments only; enter N/A when completing this form to apply for grant funds):

## 1. Applicant Information

Name of organization

Campus name  CDN  Vendor ID  ESC  UEI

Address  City  ZIP  Phone

Primary Contact  Email  Phone

Secondary Contact  Email  Phone

## 2. Certification and Incorporation

I understand that this application constitutes an offer and, if accepted by TEA or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and that the organization named above has authorized me as its representative to obligate this organization in a legally binding contractual agreement. I certify that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance and compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

I further certify my acceptance of the requirements conveyed in the following portions of the grant application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the grant application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

- Grant application, guidelines, and instructions       Debarment and Suspension Certification  
 General Provisions and Assurances       Lobbying Certification  
 Application-Specific Provisions and Assurances       ESSA Provisions and Assurances requirements

Authorized Official Name  Title  Email

Phone  Signature  Date

Grant Writer Name  Signature  Date

Grant writer is an employee of the applicant organization.       Grant writer is **not** an employee of the applicant organization.

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RFA/SAS # 

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Vendor ID 76-0615245

Amendment # N/A

**3. Shared Services Arrangements**Shared services arrangements (SSAs) **are not** permitted for this grant.**4. Identify/Address Needs**

List up to three quantifiable needs, as identified in your needs assessment, that these program funds will address. Describe your plan for addressing each need.

Quantifiable Need	Plan for Addressing Need
Harmony - West Texas (HWT) recorded 71 bullying/cyberbullying instances in the 22-23 school year, risking students' physical, emotional safety, and potentially hindering their academic and social success. (22-23 Bullvina/Cyberbullvina Report)	In an effort to reduce the amount of bullying/cyberbullying, Harmony - West Texas (HWT) will hire 3 Emotional Well-being Counselors and utilize software that will offer alerts of self-harm and inappropriate or unsafe behavior on school-issued devices, providing teachers with a valuable tool to attack bullvina/cyberbullvina.
74.4% of students that attend HWT are classified as economically disadvantaged (ED). This percentage qualifies our school for 3 priority points. (Source: TEA PEIMS DATA 2022-2023)	HWT plans to purchase software and technology for ED students, providing them with essential social-emotional skills and remote healthcare access. A District Student Culture Coordinator will be hired to identify in-need students. This initiative aims to reduce education and healthcare disparities due to economic differences.
The charter has had several disciplinary incidents related to arson, terroristic threat, and criminal mischief. The close proximity to the Mexico border leaves HWT in a direct pathway of exposure to various criminal offenses. (Source: PEIMS Report 2021-2022)	Funding will provide our Safety and Supportive Team with training designed to create a secure and safe environment for all students and staff. This specialized training will equip our personnel with the necessary knowledge and skills to adeptly manage and respond to a range of disciplinary incidents.

**5. SMART Goal**

Describe the summative SMART goal you have identified for this program (a goal that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely), either related to student outcome or consistent with the purpose of the grant.

Harmony - West Texas - Will combat bullying/violence, and promote mental health, through our SMART Goal:  
**SPECIFIC:** Working with ESC (region 19) and TEA providers, we aim to cut student disciplinary incidents by 5% and identify more students needing mental health support.

**MEASURABLE:** Progress will be tracked through K-12 Insight surveys and PEIMS data.

**ACHIEVABLE:** Achievable through partnerships with TEA providers, local ESC(s), our Safety and Supportive Team, and Professional Development (PD) training.

**RELEVANT:** Our goal is to ensure a secure environment for academic success and student well-being.

**TIMELY:** The improvements are targeted for September 30, 2025.

**6. Measurable Progress**

Identify the benchmarks that you will use at the end of the first three grant quarters to measure progress toward meeting the process and implementation goals defined for the grant.

**First-Quarter Benchmark**

Q1 Benchmarks:

- Advertise grant-funded positions.
- Recruit and train grant personnel (i.e. District Student Culture Coordinator and Emotional Well-being Counselors).
- Synchronize student support with the Safety and Supportive Team.
- Engage parents, students, and staff in forming a Student Support Program at three campuses.
- Secure supplies and curriculum for Social Emotional Learning (SEL).
- Collaborate with TEA to select an ESC partner for professional development.

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**6. Measurable Progress (Cont.)**

**Second-Quarter Benchmark**

Q2 Benchmarks:

- We'll work with the Texas Center to align trainings to campus, teacher, and student needs.
- Then we will identify stakeholders, including grant staff and community members, to serve and assist on the Advisory Committees.
- We will utilize a data management system and student information system to aid the student support team structure.
- Finally, we will ally with the Texas Center for Student Supports to develop ways our campuses can meet the needs of our students. This includes training on how to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for the well-being of our students.

**Third-Quarter Benchmark**

Q3 Benchmarks:

- Collaborate with organizations to identify any other avenues for funding, or sources of funding, to warrant that our activities can be maintained after grant funding ends.
- Respond punctually to TEA's requests for program development, implementation, performance, and evaluation data.
- Collect and analyze data for monitoring the effectiveness of the Student Support Program being implemented.
- Our Safety and Supportive Team will meet at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year to discuss the program's plan, progress, and success.

**7. Project Evaluation and Modification**

Describe how you will use project evaluation data to determine when and how to modify your program. If your benchmarks or summative SMART goals do not show progress, describe how you will use evaluation data to modify your program for sustainability.

[Empty text box for project evaluation and modification details]

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**8. Statutory/Program Assurances**

The following assurances apply to this grant program. In order to meet the requirements of the grant, the grantee must comply with these assurances.

Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

1. The applicant provides assurance that program funds will supplement (increase the level of service), and not supplant (replace) state mandates, State Board of Education rules, and activities previously conducted with state or local funds. The applicant provides assurance that state or local funds may not be decreased or diverted for other purposes merely because of the availability of these funds. The applicant provides assurance that program services and activities to be funded from this grant will be supplementary to existing services and activities and will not be used for any services or activities required by state law, State Board of Education rules, or local policy.
2. The applicant provides assurance that the application does not contain any information that would be protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) from general release to the public.
3. The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all Statutory Requirements, TEA Program Requirements, and Performance Measures, as noted in the 2024–2025 Stronger Connections Grant Program Guidelines, and shall provide the Texas Education Agency, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the grant program.
4. The applicant will formally establish a Student Support Program at three district campuses (one elementary, one intermediate/middle school, one high school) to address school climate and establish a student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports and the regional ESC. If the applicant has few than three campuses or does not have three of the listed types of campuses, the applicant will establish the Student Support Program and the student support team structure at all campuses, up to three, served in the district.
5. The applicant will allocate 6% of awarded funds for contracted services for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
6. The applicant will allocate 10% of awarded funds for professional and contracted services with a partner approved by the Texas Center for Student Support and TEA. Complete the transaction with the regional ESC in a timely manner. Time is of the essence in completing the transaction to ensure that the program is implemented efficiently and effectively to successfully achieve the goals of the program.
7. The applicant will use the family engagement playbook developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to partner and build support with parents and families prior to a student support team assessment, and during the student support implementation process to facilitate a student support partnership with families.
8. The applicant will establish a parent, student, and staff advisory committee to provide input on the establishment of the Student Support Program.
9. The applicant will engage in Student Support Program planning activities from the beginning of the grant program through implementation at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.
10. The applicant will establish and implement at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, the Student Support Program aligned to the content and training provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
11. The applicant will incorporate a case management system into the student support team structure aligned to the training and support provided by the Texas Center for Student Supports.
12. The applicant will align the student support team structure with behavioral threat assessment team operation and outcomes to ensure that students are well supported and that the effectiveness of interventions are monitored.
13. The applicant will implement the data collection and reporting system developed by the Texas Center for Student Supports to gather and analyze data to monitor efficacy of the implementation of the Student Support Program, including student support team structure, quality of support leading to positive outcomes, and data related to increases in desired outcomes (e.g. increase in student support team referrals for nonacademic needs, increase in effective supports received by students, reduction in disciplinary incidents, reduction in bullying and harassment, increase in referrals for mental health services, reduction in removals from class, etc.).
14. The applicant will provide timely response to requests from TEA for information and data regarding program development, implementation, and performance and evaluation measures.

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## 9. Statutory/ TEA Program Requirements

1. Describe how the LEA will identify the campuses that will participate in the establishment of the Student Support Program described in the program description? Include the criteria or considerations that will influence the determination by the LEA.

Harmony – West Texas will use various criteria to determine which campuses will participate in the student support program in association with the Texas Center for Student Supports (TCSS). Criteria that will be used can be seen below:

- Schools catering to underprivileged populations (i.e., economically disadvantaged, bullying/cyberbullying, and high rate of disciplinary incidents) will be prioritized.
- Factors such as the infrastructure, staff prowess, current support services, and partnerships with external organizations.
- Academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs of students across various campuses (PEIMS reports will be reviewed to assess this data).
- Student achievement scores, attendance rates, disciplinary occurrences, and demographic data. Derived from the data, campuses facing distinct challenges or disparities will be prioritized.
- Feedback from school administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and community members will be used to attain insight into which campuses would merit the most from the Student Support Program.
- Our Safety and Supportive Team and counselors will review each school's improvement plan that detail goals and strategies for improving student performance. Campuses that can benefit from the program's goals with the extra assistance will be chosen.

In summary, Harmony-West Texas will evaluate student needs, all data gathered, campus improvement goals and strategies, and partnership suggestions identifying which campuses will take part in the development of the Student Support Program.

2. Describe how the LEA will ensure that campus leaders and staff are committed to the success of the Student Support Program.

To secure the commitment of campus leaders and staff to the success of the student support program (SSP), Harmony – West Texas will carry out the following measures:

- Sufficient resources, such as funding, hiring staff, and support services, to help the fulfillment of the Student Support Program will be provided. This will support our campus leaders and staff to uphold the grants expectations confidently. Additionally, the charter will contract services with outside organizations for data collection and data analysis, to support the work of the program's implementation.
- Campus administrators and staff will receive direct instruction and training regarding the program's goals, objectives, and activities. This will help them better understand the importance of the program's implementation; thereby, promoting commitment.
- To foster collaboration and engagement, we will ensure a collaborative environment is cultivated, actively involving campus leaders and staff in the development and implementation of the Student Support Program. Open dialogue, feedback mechanisms, and involvement in decision-making processes will encourage commitment to the program.

Through these strategies, we will ensure the full commitment of campus leaders and staff in the SSP. By doing so, the program will effectively address issues like bullying, violence, and acts of hate, while creating a supportive and safe learning environment for our students.

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**9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

3. Describe how the LEA will engage parents and families to solicit support for the program.

To solicit parent and family support for the program, we will employ various engagement strategies, including:

- Participation in our Parent Academy will provide a platform for parents and families to contribute opinions, suggestions, and concerns regarding the Student Support Program (SSP). Workshops and events will be held to promote dialogue and active involvement in achieving the grant's goals. Their valuable input will influence program planning and implementation.
- Broadcasting the program's purpose and benefits on various media outlets to unite parents and families early on and throughout the student support process to build relationships and promote understanding.
- Offering informative sessions and carrying out parent-teacher home visits to educate parents about the program's objectives, strategies, and outcomes. Emphasis will be placed on addressing bullying, violence, and promoting student well-being.
- Collecting parents and families input through surveys and feedback mechanisms. Regular assessments will gauge satisfaction levels, gather suggestions for improvement, and measure the program's impact on students and the community; and
- Leveraging the family engagement services provided by TCSS to cultivate support with parents and families.

Overall, we will implement various strategies to engage parents and families and garner support for the program. This will result in increased active participation and support from parents and families.

4. Describe how the LEA will ensure that there is adequate staff to support the establishment and implementation of the Student Support Program.

To guarantee adequate staffing for the establishment and implementation of the student support program (SSP), we will implement the following strategies:

- Comprehensive Staffing Assessment: Evaluate staffing needs based on participating campuses, student population, and required services.
- Resource Allocation and Hiring: Allocate additional resources to hire a District Student Culture Coordinator and three (3) Emotional Well-being Counselors with grant funds.
- Professional Development: Provide sufficient, year-round training and development opportunities to enhance the skills of existing and new staff. These enhanced skills will aid in building student-teacher relationships and trust among peers.
- Partnerships with External Organizations: Expand our collaboration with external organizations, such as the TCSS, to provide additional external mentors or support staff (Note: all mentors/staff will undergo the required background checks).

Harmony – West Texas will ensure adequate staff through comprehensive assessments, resource allocation, professional development, and partnerships. The SSP will maximize the impact of student success, well-being, and overall academic growth.

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**9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

5. Describe how each of the campuses will be supported by the grant program, if awarded, currently conduct behavioral threat assessments and how the campus will incorporate current systems into the student support team structure.

If awarded the Stronger Connections Grant Program, each of the three supported campuses (Harmony School of Excellence-El Paso, Harmony Science Academy- Lubbock, and Harmony School of Innovation-El Paso) will integrate their safety and supportive team processes into the student support team structure. To ensure alignment, we will take the following steps:

- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of each campus's existing behavioral threat assessment procedures. This includes reviewing documentation, protocols, and guidelines currently in place.
- Look at gaps and analyze the current practices to identify the strengths and the areas that require improvement. Valuable insights into each campus will allow us to implement tier 1 universal instruction and supports.
- Implement a student support team structure that will incorporate and enhance the existing behavioral threat assessment systems. This integration will ensure a seamless transition, promote continuity in addressing potential threats, and develop referral pathways to students with identified needs through tier support.
- Establish partnerships with organizations to offer training and collaboration with experts. Comprehensive training sessions will be provided to familiarize them with the current behavioral threat assessment procedures and emphasize the importance of collaboration among team members.
- Continuous improvements will be made by conducting on-going evaluation and feedback methods to monitor the effectiveness of the integrated systems. This feedback will help us make necessary adjustments and improvements to ensure the student support team structure remains aligned with the campus's behavioral threat assessment practices.

By aligning the current behavioral threat assessment systems with the student support team structure. Harmony –

6. Describe how the LEA currently identifies student support needs and how it identifies and establishes partnerships with external mental health and behavioral health providers to meet student needs.

By taking a proactive and comprehensive approach we identify student support needs and cultivate partnerships with external mental health and behavioral health providers.

How Harmony - West Texas currently identifies student support needs:

- Student support needs are identified by our counselors, teachers, and staff through implemented assessments and screenings that encompass overall mental health and student well-being aspects. However, we will conduct meetings with our teachers, students, administrators, and parents to assess student mental health. Taking this thorough approach will allow us to gain a better understanding of our students' mental and behavioral health needs.

How Harmony - West Texas currently identifies and establishes partnerships:

- We will consider factors such as qualifications, experience, expertise, and available services when identifying external providers. If the providers meet our standards and align with our goals and values, we will formalize contracts between our charter and the vendor.
- When the partnership is created, we will communicate regularly with our external mental health and behavioral health partners to ensure collaboration and effective service delivery. This includes monitoring service quality, collecting feedback, and addressing any issues or concerns.

In conclusion, Harmony - West Texas will adopt a proactive and comprehensive approach to identify student support needs and build partnerships with external mental health and behavioral health providers.

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**9. Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)**

7. Describe how the LEA currently partners with the regional ESC to support improvement in student mental health, behavioral and emotional health, physical health and wellbeing, and improving academic outcomes for students.

Harmony - West Texas currently partners with the local Region 19 ESC to support and improve student well-being and academic outcomes. This collaboration includes:

1. Mental Health: We collaborate with the local ESC to receive evidence-based professional development training that covers mental health. Things discussed include ways to address and identify students exhibiting signs of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.
2. Behavioral and Emotional Health: We collaborate with the Region 19 ESC to establish early identification and intervention systems for students suffering from substance abuse and having disciplinary issues. We attended the School Health and Safety training.
3. Physical Health and Well-being: To promote physical health and well-being, our charter attended the Self-Care Summit at our local ESC to better support our students.
4. Academic Outcomes: Professional development opportunities are provided to our teachers on campus and at our local ESC. The partnership also supports curriculum development, assessment design, and the implementation of interventions for our students who are struggling academically. We attended the PBIS Conference.
5. University Partners/Third Party Vendors: We partner with Texas Tech University at El Paso for psychology purposes and K12 Insight surveys to provide us summaries on our campus climates.

In summary, Harmony - West Texas's partnerships are instrumental in supporting and improving student mental health, behavioral and emotional well-being, physical health, and academic outcomes.

8. Describe how the LEA will use this grant program to supplement current work to improve services and supports for the mental health, behavioral and emotional health, and physical health and wellness of students.

Harmony - West Texas will make great use of the grant program to support and enhance our current services and support for student mental health, behavioral and emotional health, and physical health and wellness. The ways we will supplement current offerings can be seen below:

- For mental health, we will allocate funds to increase evidence-based programs, including additional counseling services, specialized training for teachers and staff, and resources for accessing mental health support through Region 19 ESC. (i.e., Mental Health First Aid)
- For behavioral and emotional health, the grant program will help us support the expansion of early identification and intervention systems through collaboration with specialists from the local ESC and local partners. (i.e., Breaking The Behavior Code: Understanding the Disruptive Student, psychology evaluations)
- For physical health and wellness, the grant funds will be utilized to improve wellness programs, promote healthy habits, and purchase the supplies and materials needed to increase the number of physical fitness activities offered (i.e., volleyball, basketball, etc.)

Through the grant program, Harmony - West Texas aims to expand services to promote student well-being. This includes providing students with safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments. This comprehensive approach will be designed to improve student sense of belonging, trust, and feelings of safety.

9. Enter the LEA Total Enrollment:

4967

10. Enter the Regional Educational Service Center that serves the LEA:

19

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**10. Equitable Access and Participation**

Check the appropriate box below to indicate whether any barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups that receive services funded by this grant.

- The applicant assures that no barriers exist to equitable access and participation for any groups receiving services funded by this grant.
- Barriers exist to equitable access and participation for the following groups receiving services funded by this grant, as described below.

Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>
Group	<input type="text"/>	Barrier	<input type="text"/>

**11. PNP Equitable Services**

Are any private nonprofit schools located within the applicant's boundaries?

- Yes
- No

*If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.*

Are any private nonprofit schools participating in the grant?

- Yes
- No

*If you answered "No" to the preceding question, stop here. You have completed the section. Proceed to the next page.*

**Assurances**

- The LEA assures that it discussed all consultation requirements as listed in Section 1117(b)(1) and/or Section 8501(c)(1), as applicable, with all eligible private nonprofit schools located within the LEA's boundaries.
- The LEA assures the appropriate Affirmations of Consultation will be provided to TEA's PNP Ombudsman in the manner and time requested.

**Equitable Services Calculation**

1. LEA's student enrollment	<input type="text"/>
2. Enrollment of all participating private schools	<input type="text"/>
3. Total enrollment of LEA and all participating PNPs (line 1 plus line 2)	<input type="text"/>
4. Total current-year grant allocation	<input type="text"/>
5. LEA reservation for direct administrative costs, not to exceed the grant's defined limit	<input type="text"/>
6. Total LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 4 minus line 5)	<input type="text"/>
7. Per-pupil LEA amount for provision of ESSA PNP equitable services (line 6 divided by line 3)	<input type="text"/>
<b>LEA's total required ESSA PNP equitable services reservation (line 7 times line 2)</b>	<input type="text"/>

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Amendment # N/A

**12. Request for Grant Funds**

List all of the allowable grant-related activities for which you are requesting grant funds. Include the amounts budgeted for each activity. Group similar activities and costs together under the appropriate heading. During negotiation, you will be required to budget your planned expenditures on a separate attachment provided by TEA.

**Payroll Costs**

1.	3 Emotional Wellbeing Counselors help students in stressful situations. (22 months)	\$357,501
2.	District Student Culture Coordinator will oversee the program/ensure goals are met. (22 mo)	\$155,833
3.	Salaries referenced include the following fringe benefits calculated at 18%.	\$92,400
4.		
5.		

**Professional and Contracted Services**

6.	Required 6% of funds for technical assistance provided by the regional ESC	\$60,000
7.	Required 10% of funds to the Texas Center for Student Supports	\$100,000
8.		
9.		
10.		

**Supplies and Materials**

11.	Software to detect any self-harm, threats and cyberbullying behavior.	\$79,000
12.	Software w/modules to analyze students social emotional health.	\$40246
13.		

**Other Operating Costs**

15.	Travel Costs for Conferences/Registration Fees for Threat Assessment Team (5 employees).	\$30,000
16.	Travel Costs for training with Texas Student Support Center and Region ESC (5 employees).	\$15,370
17.		

**Debt Services**

18.		
19.		

**Capital Outlay**

20.		
	Direct administrative costs:	\$20,000
	Indirect administrative costs:	\$49,650
	<b>TOTAL GRANT AWARD REQUESTED:</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>

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**Appendix I: Negotiation and Amendments**

Leave this section blank when completing the initial application for funding.

An amendment must be submitted when the program plan or budget is altered for the reasons described in the "When to Amend the Application" document posted on the Administering a Grant page of the TEA website and may be mailed OR faxed (not both). **To fax:** one copy of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to either (512) 463-9811 or (512) 463-9564. **To mail:** three copies of all sections pertinent to the amendment (including budget attachments), along with a completed and signed page 1, to the address on page 1. More detailed amendment instructions can be found on the last page of the budget template.

***You may duplicate this page.***

For amendments, choose the section you wish to amend from the drop down menu on the left. In the text box on the right, describe the changes you are making and the reason for them.

Always work with the most recent negotiated or amended application. If you are requesting a revised budget, please include the budget attachments with your amendment.

Section Being Negotiated or Amended	Negotiated Change or Amendment

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