

Kansas Department of Commerce
Available Assistance



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DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

As the state's lead economic development agency, the Kansas Department of Commerce strives to empower individuals, businesses and communities to achieve prosperity in Kansas. To this end, the Department comprises a variety of programs and services that create jobs, attract new investment, provide workforce training, encourage community development and promote the state as a great place to live and work. These programs are managed by a dynamic staff that is dedicated to improving the quality of life of all Kansans.

The Department delivers its programs through two divisions: Business and Community Development and Workforce Services.

The Department oversees two commissions, both of which were created by the Kansas Legislature and assigned to Commerce. The Kansas Athletic Commission joined Commerce in 2005, followed by the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission in 2012.

The Department also works with a number of private, governmental and quasi-governmental partners, including the Kansas Business Center, Team Kansas, the Kansas Economic Development Alliance, the Kansas Small Business Development Center and NetWork Kansas.

For more information, visit us at KansasCommerce.com or contact us at admin@kansascommerce.com or (785) 296-3481.

BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Business and Community Development Division strives to improve the Kansas economy through the creation and retention of jobs and capital investment, as well as improving the quality of life in our state's communities, particularly in rural areas of Kansas.

The Division's programs and services are grouped in the following categories: Business and Community Development Assistance; Business and Community Finance and Incentives; Business Recruitment and Relocation; and Rural Opportunity Zones.

Business and Community Development Assistance

Business and Community Development Assistance programs can help take your Kansas business to the next level or assist your community with a redevelopment or revitalization project. Staff can assist clients in identifying programs and incentives for business expansion, meeting licensing requirements and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a local community. Staff can also help rural communities seek assistance in developing community driven strategic plans to attract businesses, workers and investment.

Regional Project Managers based throughout the state are available to ensure your business or community is prepared to achieve its goals. Managers will assist in identifying incentives and assistance available to help grow your business; can provide training, strategic planning facilitation and identification of community development assistance programs; and will serve as liaisons to other state and federal agencies.

Business and Community Finance and Incentives

The Department offers a diverse portfolio of financial incentives for rural communities and businesses that are looking to locate or expand in Kansas. Programs include retention of withholding taxes, investment tax credits, sales tax project exemptions and revolving loan funds for local infrastructure projects, as well as loans and/or grants to assist rural communities in improving infrastructure, housing and urgent needs to maintain and grow.

Business Recruitment and Relocation

Business recruitment assistance is provided to out-of-state and international companies that are considering Kansas for new manufacturing, distribution or office facilities. Assistance includes making location recommendations, developing incentive proposals, coordinating in-state site visits, serving as a liaison with other state agencies and serving as the primary Kansas contact to enhance project customer service and confidentiality.

Rural Opportunity Zones (ROZ) Program

The Rural Opportunity Zones (ROZ) program provides incentives to help recruit people to rural Kansas. The law designates 77 counties in Kansas as ROZ and provides two incentives: a total state income exemption for five years for individuals who relocate to those counties from out of state, and a state-matching program with counties to repay student loans up to \$15,000 for qualifying individuals.

Business Programs

Certified Development Companies (CDC)

This program assists businesses by developing loan packages that meet the financial needs of a project. These packages often contain multiple sources of project funding, thus providing the small business customer with the best combination of rates and terms possible. Each CDC has an area of operation in which it focuses its efforts on serving the small-business community. The state provides financial support to augment these efforts.

Economic Development Grants

This program provides loans to cities or counties for gap financing for private businesses that create or retain permanent jobs. Eligible activities include infrastructure, land acquisition, fixed assets and working capital. At least 51 percent of the jobs created or retained by the for-profit entity must meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's low- and moderate-income standard.

Some repayment is required for all economic development categories. Grants are made to cities and counties, which then loan funds to developing businesses. Repaid funds are returned to the state revolving loan fund. Funds may also be used for infrastructure on a loan/grant basis. The funding ceiling is \$35,000 per job created or retained with a maximum of \$750,000. Matching funds are required.

Energy Incentives

The State of Kansas offers a diverse portfolio of financial incentives to Kansas businesses and producers engaged in conventional and renewable energy production:

Traditional Energy

- Crude Oil or Natural Gas Pipeline Tax Credit
- Refinery Tax Credit

Renewable Energy

- Biodiesel Fuel Producer Incentive
- Carbon Dioxide Capture/Sequestration Incentive

- Ethyl Alcohol Production Incentive
- Kansas Retail Dealers Incentive
- Waste Heat Utilization System Incentive

Tax Credits

- Alternative-Fuel Fueling Station Tax Credit
- Alternative-Fueled Motor Vehicle Tax Credit

Expensing Tax Deduction

Kansas introduced a new expensing deduction that can be used by companies to purchase business equipment and machinery (including software) that is available to all businesses, regardless of size.

Export Assistance

Assistance is provided to Kansas companies that want to begin or expand their international marketing efforts. Department staff members counsel individual Kansas firms, provide export data and foreign market research, coordinate with domestic and foreign agencies in marketing promotions, conduct export seminars, recruit and assist company participation in international trade shows, host foreign delegations, distribute foreign trade leads to appropriate Kansas companies and assist in locating export financing packages.

High Performance Incentive Program (HPIP)

This program provides a 10 percent income tax credit for eligible capital investment that exceeds \$50,000 (\$1 million in Shawnee, Douglas, Wyandotte, Johnson and Sedgwick counties) at a company's facility, with a carry forward that can be used in any of the next 15 years in which the facility re-qualifies for HPIP. This program also features a sales tax exemption to use in conjunction with the company's eligible capital investment at its qualified facility; a training tax credit up to \$50,000; and priority consideration for access to other business assistance programs.

Individual Development Account (IDA) Tax Credit Program

IDA is an asset-building strategy established to promote self-sufficiency through asset-development for low-income Kansans in a matched-savings program. The tax credits will be used to leverage donations that will serve as a match for individual savings in a development account. Savings accrued in IDAs will be used for home ownership, residence repairs, business capitalization and post-secondary education.

Innovation Growth Program

Formerly Kansas Technology Enterprise Corp. (KTEC)

This program assists Kansas entrepreneurs and technology companies by providing intellectual property, technical expertise, research and other services designed to help new and existing technology companies grow and succeed. The program was created on July 1, 2011, as a partnership between the Kansas Department of Commerce and the statewide network of organizations that were part of the network formerly operated by KTEC. While the program exists to help entrepreneurs and companies, its ultimate goal is to bring new technology jobs to Kansas.

International Representation

Representatives are located strategically in key international markets that help keep Kansas globally connected. Services and assistance available from in-country representatives include researching local regulations, performing local market research, identifying distributors and arranging a business schedule for Kansas executives visiting the country of interest.

Kansas International Trade Show Assistance Program (KITSAP)

The Kansas International Trade Show Assistance Program (KITSAP) assists Kansas producers who want to exhibit at international trade shows. The program can help reimburse successful applicants for up to half of their direct exhibition-related expenses, not to exceed \$3,500 per international show.

Kansas Partnership Fund

The Kansas Partnership Fund is a program to provide low-interest state funds to cities and counties for infrastructure improvements that support Kansas basic enterprises. Partnership Fund loans are designed to assist city and county governments in their efforts to attract new businesses and expand existing businesses. Eligible projects may include the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, alteration, expansion or improvement of public facilities including, but not limited to roads, streets, highways, storm drains, water supply and treatment facilities, water distribution lines, waste water collection lines and any related improvements. These improvements must directly lead to the creation of new jobs in Kansas basic enterprises.

Minority and Women Business Development

This office in the Department of Commerce promotes business development with a focus on minority- and women-owned businesses. Information and referrals are provided in the areas of procurement, contracting and subcontracting, financing and business management. The office also partners with other business advocates to sponsor business education

workshops and seminars. A statewide directory of minority- and women-owned businesses is published by Commerce to assist those searching for businesses, products and services. This office also administers the Kansas Statewide Certification Program, where women and minority businesses can be certified as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Women Business Enterprise (WBE).

Private Activity Bonds (PABs)

These are federally tax-exempt bonds. Under the federal volume cap, Kansas has a total 2012 bond allocation of \$284.6 million for this purpose. The types of bonds qualifying for such tax-exempt status are exempt facility bonds and qualified mortgage bonds, veterans' mortgage bonds, small issue bonds (or industrial revenue bonds), student loan bonds, redevelopment bonds and 501(c)(3) bonds.

Promoting Employment Across Kansas (PEAK)

This program allows companies to retain 95 percent of their payroll withholding tax for PEAK-eligible employees/jobs that pay at or above the county median wage where the jobs will be located. The Secretary of Commerce can approve benefit periods up to 10 years.

PEAK requires companies to create five new jobs in non-metropolitan counties or 10 new jobs in Shawnee, Douglas, Wyandotte, Johnson, Leavenworth and Sedgwick counties over a two-year period. The qualified company must also pay wages for the PEAK jobs that, when aggregated, meet or exceed the county median wage or North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) average wage for their industry. Companies must make available to its full-time employees adequate health insurance coverage and pay at least 50 percent of the premium.

Property Tax Abatement Assistance

The Court of Tax Appeals (COTA) Liaison provides instruction and technical assistance to parties interested in property tax abatement. The liaison works with the Court of Tax Appeals to facilitate tax exemptions in accordance with the state law and:

- Reviews applications and related documents submitted for tax abatement.
- Explains policy and procedures.
- Makes recommendations.
- Assists in certification completion.

Sales Tax Revenue (STAR) Bonds

STAR Bonds provide Kansas municipalities the opportunity to issue bonds to finance the development of major commercial, entertainment and tourism areas and use the sales tax revenue generated by the development to pay off the bonds

Small Communities Improvement Program (SCIP)

SCIP provides assistance for small communities that are undertaking improvement projects through sweat equity and volunteerism. The program is designed to assist communities with populations of 5,000 or less that are not eligible for other Department of Commerce assistance and might not have the capacity to provide matching funds. Self-help requires communities to determine which parts of the project they can complete on their own. The community acts as the general contractor, organizing local labor and equipment and coordinating work that needs to be done by a subcontractor. The SCIP provides direction, technical assistance, guidance and the support to make it happen.

State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI)

The Kansas Capital Multiplier Loan and Venture Funds are programs that provide matching funds through a partner network to eligible businesses in communities across Kansas. Funding is provided through the United States Treasury via the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI).

Under the Kansas Capital Multiplier Loan Fund, businesses can apply for matching loans up to 9 percent of the private capital invested, including funds invested by private equity firms and angel investors. Businesses eligible include technology and biosciences companies, and rural businesses or businesses in distressed areas of urban communities that meet critical community needs.

Community Programs

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

CDBG allows the Department of Commerce to distribute federal funds to Kansas cities and counties looking to improve their community. To receive funds, a project must meet at least one of the following federally mandated criteria:

- The project benefits low- and moderate-income individuals.
- The project removes or prevents slum or blight condition.
- The project eliminates an urgent need created by a disaster when local funds are unavailable.

Housing

These rehabilitation funds are awarded to local units of government for activities including home owner and rental rehabilitation. A Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) must be completed by the unit of government prior to submitting an application.

Community Facility

These funds are awarded to cities and counties for eligible activities such as water, sewer, streets, ADA, fire stations, fire trucks, community centers and many other activities. These applications are due in the fall of each year.

Kansas Small Towns Environment Program (KAN STEP)

KAN STEP is an ongoing, competitive self-help program for communities to address water, sewer and public building needs through greater initiative and with fewer dollars. Communities must demonstrate readiness (perception of the problem and willingness to take action to solve it), capacity (human resources to solve the problem) and documented cost savings. These grants require the use of volunteers to match Community Development Block Grant funds. A 40 percent savings must be demonstrated to be eligible. The maximum amount awarded for this grant is \$300,000, with a funding ceiling of \$2,000 per beneficiary. The funding is awarded in a biannual competition. Funding is targeted to professional services and materials.

Urgent Need Grants

Urgent Need Grants address an immediate threat to health or safety resulting from a sudden and severe emergency. These awards assist in meeting community needs created by a severe natural or other disaster. The need must be certified by the state agency that has regulatory oversight. Applications are reviewed on an as-needed basis throughout the year. The maximum amount awarded is \$400,000 per grant. Applications must be received within six months of the occurrence.

Community Service Program (CSP) Tax Credit

The CSP program has given nonprofit organizations a way to improve their ability to undertake major capital fund-raising drives for various projects. Projects eligible for tax credit awards include community service, crime prevention and health care. Tax credit awards are distributed through a competitive application process. Based on the scope and cost of the proposed project, applicants may request up to \$250,000 in tax credits. Applicant organizations in rural areas (less than 15,000 population) are eligible for a 70 percent credit. Applicant organizations in non-rural areas are eligible for a 50 percent credit.

Kansas PRIDE

This is a community-initiated effort that helps local leaders prepare for and manage change through a hands-on approach to community self-improvement. The program addresses such areas as planning, community services and community enrichment. The Department of Commerce and Kansas State University Research and Extension co-administer PRIDE, providing technical assistance and training opportunities for the local programs.

For more information about programs and assistance available through the Business and Community Development Division, contact buscomdev@kansascommerce.com or (785) 296-5298.

WORKFORCE SERVICES

The Kansas Department of Commerce administers the **KANSASWORKS** workforce system, which links businesses, job seekers, educational institutions and training providers to ensure the state's workforce is equipped to meet industry needs. The system includes workforce centers located throughout the state to connect Kansas businesses with job seekers in their area. Commerce is also committed to providing reasonable accommodations pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to individuals with disabilities who access our workforce services such as Assistive Technology, adaptive software, interpreters and other reasonable accommodations.

Federal Bonding Program

The Federal Bonding Program provides individual fidelity bonds to employers for persons who have been (or may be) denied coverage because of a record of arrest, conviction or imprisonment; history of alcohol or drug abuse; poor credit history; lack of employment history; or dishonorable discharge. This allows employers to hire skilled job seekers who might not otherwise qualify due to their ineligibility for bond coverage.

Foreign Labor Certification

The purpose of the program is to process employers requests for H-2A temporary agricultural certifications and H-2B temporary non-agricultural certifications. Prevailing wage determinations are provided in accordance with the Prevailing Wage Determination Policy Guidance for Nonagricultural Immigration Programs. Employers must demonstrate they have made good faith efforts to recruit U.S. workers for the job opportunity for which the labor certification is requested and hiring a foreign worker will not adversely affect similarly employed U.S. workers.

H-1B Technical Skills Training Grant

This \$5 million, four-year grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor is for on-the-job training to support the hiring of new engineers. Individuals eligible for training funded by the grant can be recent engineering graduates not currently employed in the field, other unemployed/underemployed engineers or laid off engineers who meet educational prerequisites but may lack the specialized skills and experience necessary for a particular engineering job opportunity. Employers can receive up to \$25,000 per individual to reduce the costs of training an engineer to fill a particular position. Use of this funding is intended to reduce the number of H-1B visa hires and to create greater opportunities for Kansans and other eligible participants. Fees charged to employers hiring foreign workers under the federal H-1B visa program serve as the basis of this grant's funding.

Incumbent Worker Training Program

The Incumbent Worker Training Program is funded by the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and administered by the Workforce Services Division within the Kansas Department of Commerce and the Local Workforce Investment Boards. The purpose of the program is to provide grants to employers to assist with certain expenses associated with skills upgrade training for full-time employees of the company. The grant amount is subject to availability of funds. Training must be for the purpose of averting layoffs, but should also be for the purpose of improving employee retention, increasing employee earning potential through the upgrade of skills and to assist in staying competitive.

Kansas Industrial Retraining (KIR)

This program is a job retention tool that helps employees of restructuring companies who are likely to be displaced because of obsolete or inadequate job skills and knowledge. Eligible industries include basic enterprises that are restructuring operations through incorporation of new technology, diversification of production or the development and implementation of new production activities. At least one current employee must be trained to qualify for assistance.

Kansas Industrial Training (KIT)

The KIT program may be used to assist firms who are creating at least one new job. The training can involve both classroom and on-the-job instruction. Trainees may receive instruction on various training activities related to their new employment.

Kansas Health Profession Opportunity Project (KHPOP) Grant

The Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) program is a demonstration project funded by the Federal government. The primary goal of the project is to provide training and support to help people improve their skills and find better jobs. In order to learn what works, the Federal government is conducting a study requiring every person eligible for HPOG to be selected through a lottery system. Those not selected through the lottery will not be able to participate in HPOG, but will be able to enroll in any other services or programs for which they are eligible.

Kansas Workforce Centers

Workforce Centers are located throughout Kansas to help connect employers with qualified job seekers. Employee recruitment services offered at the centers include assessment, testing, screening, job development and job

placement. Workforce Centers are a result of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) which provides the framework for a national workforce preparation and employment system designed to meet the needs of business and job candidates wishing to further their careers. The most important aspect of the law is its focus on providing easy access, information and services through a “One-Stop” system that will empower customers to obtain training, education and employment services at a single neighborhood location. This program is federally funded and is designed to serve targeted populations. WIA services continue to improve the skills of Kansas workers.

Kansas WORKReady! Certification

This certification is based on the nationally recognized certification process from ACT WorkKeys that shows workers have learned skills in three areas – reading, locating information and mathematics. The certification comes in a platinum, gold, silver or bronze level.

Older Kansas Employment Program (OKEP)

OKEP is designed to provide Kansans 55 and over with employment placement services with emphasis on employment in the private sector. Priority is given to unemployed older Kansans who are most in need. OKEP provides skills assessment, resume preparation, counseling, job-seeking skills training, limited classroom training, job clubs, referrals, job development services and mentoring services.

Rapid Response Program

Rapid Response is designed to help businesses when they find themselves in a position where they need to eliminate existing jobs or close their facility. It is in everyone’s best interest to provide as much notice as possible to those employees as well as to the state Rapid Response representative. A Rapid Response representative works with the company to determine the best time, location, delivery method and services most appropriate for the company and employees. Services could include a Rapid Response meeting(s) where employees will learn about re-employment services, community services, supportive services, unemployment insurance, training services and other available resources to assist them with this transition. Additional services could include resume writing workshops, career fairs and assessments. The Rapid Response program is available to assist the business regardless of the size or number of employees affected by the layoff or plant closing.

Registered Apprenticeship Program

Registered Apprenticeship is a structured system of training that combines actual work experience with related technical instruction and produces a worker skilled in an occupation. It is paid, full-time employment that is supervised by the employer’s skilled workers/mentors. More than 1,000

occupations are recognized as apprenticeable in industries that include health care, utilities, advanced manufacturing, construction, aviation, transportation and energy. The content of the training is defined by the industry and the employer, which results in workers with training that meets industry standards and employers with a competitive edge. This program may be linked to an approved School-to-Registered Apprenticeship program in grades 11-12.

Second Chance Act Grant

This grant funds an Offender Workforce Development Specialist position that brokers relationships across state agencies to increase engagement with the offender population regarding employment. The specialist identifies market relevant training opportunities for offenders to obtain industry recognized credentials which can assist in the development of meaningful portfolios for job interviews.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

The federal Senior Community Service Employment Program provides skill training through subsidized part-time employment to Kansans age 60 and older who live at or below the poverty level. SCSEP served approximately 145 participants, placing them in community organizations for training. Commerce paid more than \$1.1 million in federal aid payments contributing to wages and benefits while the participants completed on-the-job training.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Program

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) help workers who have lost their jobs as a result of U.S. foreign trade. The TAA Program offers a variety of benefits and services to eligible workers to include job training, income support, job search and relocation allowances; a tax credit to help pay the costs of health insurance; and a wage supplement to eligible reemployed workers 50 years of age and older (RTAA). Eligibility requirements for TAA benefits are based, in part, upon certified petitions filed with the U.S. Department of Labor for workers adversely affected by foreign trade.

Veterans Program

The Veterans Program offers employment and training services to eligible military veterans. Skill assessment, job preparation and job placement assistance are provided by Disabled Veteran Outreach Program and Local Veterans Employment Representative staff. In addition, staff reaches out to the business community to further develop job opportunities for veterans.

Veterans' Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) Grant

The Veterans' Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) Grant supports green energy jobs by providing employers with assistance when hiring veterans into green positions for on-the-job training and apprenticeships. The Kansas program will expedite the reintegration of 150 recently separated or disabled veterans into the civilian workforce. This project will benefit Kansas employers by providing trained and competent workers to fill jobs in green industries and will benefit eligible veterans by accelerating their reintegration into jobs offering good pay and benefits.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

This program helps people move from welfare to work and gain on-the-job experience by encouraging employers to hire within one of several targeted groups of job candidates who traditionally face significant barriers to employment, reducing employers' federal income tax liability by as much as \$2,400 per qualified new worker in the first year of employment. The targeted candidates include cash assistance recipients, veterans receiving food stamps, disabled veterans, unemployed veterans, residents living in a rural renewal county, ex-felons and SSI recipients, among others. The unemployed disabled veteran target group can save employers up to \$9,600 in the first year of employment, and the long-term cash assistance recipient can save the employer up to \$9,000 over a two-year period. Each target group is subject to annual reauthorization.

For more information about programs and assistance available through the Workforce Services Division, contact workforcesvcs@kansascommerce.com or (785) 296-0607.

COMMISSIONS

The Kansas Department of Commerce oversees the following two commissions: the Kansas Athletic Commission and the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission.

Kansas Athletic Commission

The Kansas Athletic Commission administers laws and regulations governing regulated sports and wrestling within the State. The Commission continually strives to provide authorized control and official direction for professional boxing, kickboxing, mixed martial arts and wrestling while encouraging the promotion of such sporting events in the State of Kansas. The regulatory process continues to facilitate the health and safety of contestants and fair and competitive bouts, in addition to protecting the general public. Visit KansasCommerce.com/AthleticCommission or call (785) 296-6321 for more information.

Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission

The Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission is focused on the creative industries sector of the Kansas economy. The advisory board is dedicated to measuring, promoting, supporting and expanding the creative industries to grow the state's economy and create creative industry-related jobs. Visit KansasCommerce.com/CreativeArtsIndustries or call (785) 296-2178 for more information.

PARTNERS

Kansas Business Center

The Kansas Business Center is a one-stop-shop for the information and resources you'll need in order to do business in Kansas. The site will help you look at your financing, licensing, permitting and legal options. Once your business is up and running, the Kansas Business Center will provide you with resources to help you monitor the annual requirements that ensure your business has the opportunity to thrive. Visit kansas.gov/businesscenter for more information.

Team Kansas

Team Kansas, formerly known as the Kansas Cavalry, is a group of business leaders and economic development specialists who help new and existing businesses grow in Kansas. The organization's mission is to foster and safeguard the appropriate development of Kansas by lending a professional touch to hosting business prospects. Visit kansascavalry.org for more information.

Kansas Economic Development Alliance (KEDA)

The Kansas Economic Development Alliance is an organization of professionals and volunteers involved in the business of economic development. KEDA provides members with access to information, tools and networks that enhance their capacity to meet their communities' needs. Visit kansaseda.com for more information.

Kansas Small Business Development Center (KSBDC)

The Kansas Small Business Development Center, administered by Fort Hays State University in Hays, works with small businesses, start-ups and entrepreneurs to help them compete in today's highly competitive global economy. Eight Regional KSBDC Centers and nine Outreach Centers combine the resources of a professional staff, the state's best educational institutions, the private sector and government at all levels. For more information visit fhsu.edu/ksbdc.

NetWork Kansas

NetWork Kansas was established as a component of the Kansas Economic Growth Act of 2004 to further entrepreneurship and small business growth as a priority for economic and community development in the State of Kansas. Backed by more than 480 partners statewide, the NetWork Kansas service promotes an entrepreneurial environment by connecting entrepreneurs and small business owners with the expertise, education and economic resources they need in order to succeed. Visit networkkansas.com for more information.



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