



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

Office of Civic
Engagement

ENGAGING FOR GREATER IMPACT

FISCAL YEAR 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Partners,

For many of us and our neighbors here on the South Side and across the city of Chicago, the past year has been



DEREK R.B. DOUGLAS

shaped by lingering uncertainty and ongoing health, social, and economic challenges. But, in many ways, it has also been a year of great innovation, resilience, and impact. Our work in the Office of Civic Engagement at the University of Chicago aims to enable and grow that impact. Reflecting back on the past twelve months, I'm proud of our continued efforts to strengthen and scale our distinct areas of work. We're

proud to share that progress—guided by our unique approach to civic engagement and our new strategic framework—in this inaugural annual report.

At the University of Chicago, civic engagement is an institution-wide commitment that draws on our strength as an economic anchor, and on the power of education, research, and innovation to help our city thrive. Our approach is grounded in our belief that universities can and should play a significant role in improving the quality of life in their broader communities.

As the largest institution and employer on the South Side, we have a lot to contribute, but we don't have all the answers. The residents, school principals, local government officials, small business owners, and nonprofit leaders OCE works with daily help inform our priorities, shape our

actions, and ensure that our work together addresses the issues that matter most to the South Side and the city.

In July 2020, OCE developed a strategic framework to guide the office's work in the three years that followed and reinforce the integral role civic engagement plays at the University of Chicago.

This annual report, which covers the period from July 2020 to June 2021, highlights a few of the ways OCE advanced these priorities alongside campus, community, and philanthropic partners and introduces some of the local students, teachers, parents, and community leaders who have benefitted from our programs in that time. This work helped to address some of the critical challenges facing the South Side, many of which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, as former University president and longtime champion of civic engagement Robert Zimmer has moved into his new role as chancellor and President Paul Alivisatos has started his own promising tenure with a pledge to focus additional University resources outward, we look forward to identifying even more opportunities to deepen our engagement with community partners in the months and years ahead—investing in our city, our neighboring communities on the South Side, and our shared prosperity and future.

Sincerely,

Derek R.B. Douglas
Vice President for Civic Engagement and External Affairs



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OFFICE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

OUR MISSION

The Office of Civic Engagement's mission is to strengthen the University's impact on the lives of people living in Chicago and demonstrate the transformative civic role leading urban research institutions can have in cities around the world.

OUR PURPOSE

The Office of Civic Engagement serves a dual purpose for the University. First, we steward the University's commitment to the city, supporting other academic and administrative units as they develop and advance their distinct civic priorities. We also lead areas of strategic work that extend the University's reach and impact citywide and on the South Side.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FY21 TO FY23

SUPPORT ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Promote the capacity of local small businesses, nonprofits, and South Side residents to participate in and benefit from the anchor functions and educational mission of the University.

EXTEND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Connect Chicago Public School students to University resources that provide Pre-K-12 classroom enrichment and increase STEM preparedness, arts education, and college readiness and access.



INCREASE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Increase faculty, student, staff, and alumni engagement with local schools and organizations, while also expanding civic leadership education and networks.

ADVANCE CIVIC AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Foster relationships with civic and community leaders, and build support for the University's activities and priorities with public officials and policymakers.

OUR AREAS OF WORK

- Economic Inclusion
- Nonprofit Capacity Building
- Student Civic Engagement
- College Readiness and Access
- Civic Leadership
- Civic Relations
- Academic Partnerships

Throughout FY 21, during the COVID-19 pandemic, all OCE Areas of Work continued to adapt and deliver in-person programming and activities remotely.

NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS ACCELERATOR

The Community Programs Accelerator helps equip nonprofits that serve the South Side with tools and resources to fulfill their unique missions.

FY21 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

43 South Side nonprofits served in the Accelerator

23 UChicago students recruited and engaged

6,030 UChicago student hours directed to nonprofits

119 representatives from 101 organizations attended 14 workshops & trainings



JENNIFER MADDOX COMMUNITY PROGRAMS ACCELERATOR

Six years ago, when Chicago police officer Jennifer Maddox first connected with UChicago's Community Programs Accelerator, Future Ties—the nonprofit she founded to provide a safe after-school and summer space for youth in the Parkway Gardens housing complex—only had a name and a mission. “I didn’t have a logo, I didn’t have a strategic plan, I didn’t have my board up, I didn’t have anything,” Maddox said.

Now, after years of support from the Accelerator and a recently-announced million-dollar grant, Maddox is planning to relocate her organization to a larger space where she can serve more young people and their families. “I wouldn’t even exist if it wasn’t for the Accelerator. They called me all the time, they kept me going when I felt like it was just a no-win situation. They kept pushing me.”

The Accelerator supported Future Ties in everything from strategic planning and curriculum development to grant funding, all of which helped Future Ties raise the funds needed to grow its annual budget six-fold. Plans for the new center feature a gym for young people to play sports in without concerns of neighborhood violence and mental health resources to help families cope with trauma and manage stress.

“I’ve been to so many different funerals of our young people who didn’t have anywhere else safe to go or any type of a resource that would keep them busy and occupied so I’ve been really working at this for a long time,” Maddox said.

Read the story [here](#).

NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING

CERTIFICATE IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A joint initiative of the Community Programs Accelerator and the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice, the Certificate in Nonprofit Management program equips early- to mid-stage nonprofit professionals working on Chicago's South Side to create, grow, and operate sustainable, effective community-based organizations.

FY21 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

18 new applicants accepted into Certificate in Nonprofit Management program

14 Certificate in Nonprofit Management program participants granted certificates

JESSICA DAVENPORT-WILLIAMS CERTIFICATE IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

Nonprofit advocacy group Black Girls Break Bread (BGBB) aims to elevate Black women and girls' voices, address community needs, and promote social and emotional wellness. In an effort to better position the organization for the future, co-founder and South Shore native Jessica Davenport-Williams applied to UChicago's Certificate in Nonprofit Management program and, in March 2021, was among the first 14 graduates.

Davenport-Williams credits the Certificate program with helping BGBB navigate pandemic challenges, broadening her local professional network, and creating a strong sense of community among cohort members.

"Being able to be among other nonprofit leaders to learn what other organizations are doing ... and to see how these same skill sets were transferable and translatable to each of our organizations was rewarding for me, even on Zoom," she said. "What was eye-opening was that we were all learning to pivot at the same time."

Read the story [here](#).



ECONOMIC INCLUSION

UCHICAGO LOCAL

UChicago Local is an economic inclusion initiative, led by the Office of Civic Engagement, that leverages the University's role as the largest private employer and purchaser of goods and services on the South Side to create economic opportunities for local businesses and residents. The initiative supports growth for small businesses, career pathways for residents, and community-focused economic development in the University's nine-neighborhood focus area on the South Side.

FY21 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

400+ South Side vendors doing business with the University community¹

4,300+ local residents employed by the University of Chicago, 31.4% of employees

\$10.93M channeled to local South Side businesses¹

55 local stakeholders participate in OCE's Community Development Working Group

MICHELLE KING WOODLAWN RESIDENTIAL COMMONS

When UChicago's Woodlawn Residential and Dining Commons welcomed its first residents in October 2020, Woodlawn-native Michelle King and other local, women, and minority workers and contractors' work was on display in everything from the building's electrical systems to its freshly-painted dorm room walls.

"That's my community, so it's really good to be able to work within your own community," King, who served as electrical foreman on the project and lives in Washington Park, said.

The Woodlawn Commons project demonstrates the University's commitment to creating opportunities for local workers and minority- and women-owned firms through campus construction and renovation projects.

According to contractor data, a total of 68 workers from the zip codes that represent the University's nine-neighborhood South Side focus area were hired for the project and 64% of total laborer hours were completed by minority laborers. Of the total investment in contractors, 36% went to minority-owned firms and 12% went to women-owned firms.²

Read the story [here](#).



JENNIFER TOLIVER NEW COURSE FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS

Feeling drained after a tough year, Woodlawn resident Jennifer Toliver wanted something that would help energize her, mentally and professionally. She found it in Who I Am, Who We Are, a humanities and professional skills-building course for community residents — with priority given to individuals with criminal records or involvement in the justice system — developed and led by the Office of Civic Engagement and Graham School of Continuing Liberal and Professional Studies. The free, 10-week course is part of a broader University effort to remove barriers to employment and provide resources for justice-involved individuals. Students talked about works by 20th century Black writers and compared those to



ancient writings by Plato and others and participated in a four-week professional skills-building workshop.

"It's definitely just helping me get that energy back to continue and try to knock out goals," Toliver, an audio engineer, said. "Taking the course has helped me get back to really focusing on my business and really making it flourish as I want it to."

Read the story [here](#).

¹ Local spending in zip codes 60609, 60615, 60616, 60619, 60621, 60637, 60649, and 60653

² Data includes full cost of material supplies purchased by subcontractors and project overhead costs.

ECONOMIC INCLUSION

POLSKY CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP

As part of the University's UChicago Local commitment, the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation provides intensive support for local entrepreneurs through the Small Business Growth Program, and more broad support for South Side small business owners in the form of free workshops and mentoring from industry experts.

FY21 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

58 unique women-, minority-, or veteran-owned **businesses supported**

15 **small businesses** participated in the Financial Fundamentals pilot program

9,280 **student consulting hours** directed to local entrepreneurs and businesses

715+ **student consulting hours** directed to Financial Fundamentals businesses

70 **students** served as small business consultants

745+ **entrepreneurs** attended 14 Small Business Essentials workshops

SHAKA MITCHELL POLSKY SMALL BUSINESS FINANCIAL FUNDAMENTALS PILOT

A few months into the pandemic, revenue at Anthos Training Clubs in Hyde Park, which provides personal training services, was down 87 percent. "It was very scary," said Shaka Mitchell, co-owner and company director.

Recognizing minority business owners' systemic lack of access to capital and resources, UChicago's Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and the UChicago Local economic inclusion initiative teamed with Chicago Community Loan Fund, GN Bank, and Seaway Bank, a South Side division of Self-Help Federal Credit Union, to develop a course to help position business owners for success and growth.

Participants in the Polsky Small Business Financial Fundamentals pilot emerged with a solid grounding in when and how to apply for capital, and how to talk confidently about their business models and finances. Mitchell welcomed the opportunity to revisit his business plan and connect with bankers. He and his business partner are using Small Business Fundamentals tools to track finances and plot Anthos' next steps. "I've now talked to multiple people in the banking industry, and we're looking at different opportunities that weren't on my radar before," he said.

Read the story [here](#).



STUDENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Neighborhood Schools Program (NSP) has been providing direct education and enrichment to pre-K to 12th grade students in their local schools and in their communities since 1976. University students add critical capacity to local schools and community sites, working in a variety of classroom and administrative support roles. They also offer one-on-one, individualized tutoring and support preschool students and teachers by leading language, literacy, and social-emotional programming. Throughout FY21, NSP programming was delivered virtually.

FY21 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

105 UChicago students supported local schools through NSP

177 UChicago Maroon Tutor Match student tutors

4,150 hours of UChicago support delivered to NSP partners

4,125 tutoring hours delivered to 227 families, 129 on the South Side

YVETTE JONES NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Woodlawn preschool teacher Yvette Jones really had to get creative to keep her 3- and 4-year-old students engaged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Every few weeks, for instance, Jones dropped off unconventional supplies at students' homes. She also relied on support from UChicago's Jumpstart program, a partner of the national nonprofit of the same name.

Jones, who teaches at Emmett Till Academy, says having UChicago students around to help keep the children interested in a challenging year makes her life easier.

"Some of the kids need that one-on-one support and they get that, so it does help," Jones says. "Jumpstart helps them with their self-confidence. It also helps the students that need that extra push academically or socially and emotionally."

Read the story [here](#).



DAVID AND DYLAN ALDRIDGE MAROON TUTOR MATCH

UChicago student Joseph Pinto had been tutoring Kenika Aldridge's two sons through the University's Maroon Tutor Match program for a few months when Aldridge heard something surprising: her 10-year-old, Dylan, answering a question during his virtual math class.

"You could hear the teacher say 'Yes! Dylan!'" Aldridge, recalls. "If the teacher had called on him before, he wasn't confident enough to be the one to answer a question. Now, with Joseph always asking him questions, Dylan was able to understand it. A smile came on his face when he got that 'Yes! Dylan!' and I had to hurry up and text Joseph 'Thank you so much!'"

David and Dylan now each work with Pinto for an hour every Saturday. Since he started working with Pinto, David has brought his D in math up to a high C.

Read the story [here](#).



STUDENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER

The University Community Service Center (UCSC) connects students to civic engagement opportunities, on and off campus, that complement the University's rigorous academic experience. UCSC provides a range of resources that contribute to student civic learning and impact across Chicago, helping students make meaningful connections with the city's diverse communities and preparing them to become leaders in their civic, academic, and professional lives.

FY21 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

1,900 students connected with 70+ community leaders during the Engage Chicago orientation event

9,500+ hours of student community service, engagement, and community capacity building delivered

830+ students engaged with UCSC programming

485+ advising sessions provided to student participants

ESI KOOMSON SEEDS OF JUSTICE

As a high school student living in Bronzeville, Esi Koomson had worked with nonprofits across the city's South Side. So, when Koomson started at the University of Chicago this year, she gravitated toward the University Community Service Center where she found a meaningful way to stay connected to her community, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll on the area.

Through her involvement with UCSC's Seeds of Justice program, Koomson was assigned to support Chicago Scholars, getting a behind-the-scenes look at an organization that helped her with her college search two years ago.

"Just being able to give back and form those relationships with people and learning from each other is what motivates me," Koomson said.

Read the story [here](#).



NAOMI KEBEDE SUMMER LINKS

Naomi Kebede has always imagined working for a big international development organization, but after interning for The Black Star Project, a Chicago educational and economic empowerment nonprofit, this summer, Kebede has a newfound passion for local advocacy work.

Kebede, a rising third-year UChicago student, was assigned to work with the Douglas-neighborhood-based Black Star Project through the University's Summer Links program, which pairs undergraduate students with internships at local community-based organizations. In addition to offering support to their partner organizations, Summer Links interns also discuss social issues and learn about Chicago's cultures, history, and social justice concerns.

"I didn't know much about Chicago," Kebede said. "Summer Links did a lot to help me understand the history of the South Side, the current situation politically, and the different kinds of organizations that are working on important issues. I really appreciated the opportunity to learn about it. It's important to know why the problems you're trying to fix exist in the first place."

Read the story [here](#).



COLLEGE READINESS AND ACCESS

The Office of Civic Engagement's (OCE) college readiness and access programs help prepare Chicago high school students to gain admission to, pay for, and thrive in college. They provide Chicago Public Schools students with a broad range of academic advising, college preparation, career exploration, leadership development, and cultural enrichment over the course of several years in the programs.

FY21 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

285 Chicago Public Schools students enrolled in OCE college readiness and access programs in FY21

71.6% of OCE college readiness and access programs participants in FY21 are **from low-income households**

100% of **77 Chicago Public Schools seniors** in OCE college readiness and access programs graduated high school and were admitted to colleges and universities

67.7% of OCE college readiness and access program participants will be the **first in their family to attend college**

KAYLEE FLOWERS **UCHICAGO STEM INITIATIVE**

With support from the free, multi-year science enrichment program UChicago STEM Initiative (UCSI), Lindblom Math and Science Academy senior Kaylee Flowers was accepted at seven universities including leading STEM schools such as Washington University in St. Louis, where she plans to study biomedical engineering starting this fall. She also earned a total of nearly \$1 million in scholarships and financial aid. UCSI gives CPS students like Flowers, who lives in Bronzeville, the opportunity to interact with University faculty, staff, students, and labs; engage with college-level math and science course work; and take part in industry and lab tours.

"What really stood out about this program was the number of opportunities—not just to learn more as far as STEM activities but also the college readiness aspect," Flowers says. "They have a whole bunch of resources to really help students with the college process and to help students get to whatever goal that they have."

Read the story [here](#).



COLLEGE READINESS AND ACCESS

FY21 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

\$13.26M in financial aid awarded to graduates of OCE college readiness and access programs in FY 21

610+ college applications submitted by seniors in OCE college readiness and access programs

54% admitted to highly selective colleges and universities

380 admissions offers from colleges and universities received by graduating seniors



MARCUS RUSSELL COLLEGIATE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

As a participant in the Collegiate Scholars Program, Jones College Prep High School senior Marcus Russell, a first-generation college student, found an outlet to fuel his passions, build his confidence, and set him up for success as he prepares for his next chapter.

“It’s really empowering being [on UChicago’s campus through CSP] and taking these classes, putting in the effort and doing well and seeing you’re capable of learning this,” Russell says. “It’s a really big confidence boost, like yeah, I can handle this.”

Established in 2003 after the UChicago Consortium on School Research found that highly qualified CPS students were underreaching in their college applications, CSP supports high-potential, underrepresented students through enrichment activities and on-campus summer programs.

A CSP participant since 2018, Russell was accepted at UChicago and Cal Tech, in addition to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he’ll study mathematics in the fall. Even as the COVID-19 pandemic kept them apart physically, Russell and the diverse network of peers he met through CSP made a point to support one another in recent months, setting up their own extra study sessions over Zoom to ensure everybody could keep up in such a challenging year.

“We each have our own different strengths, so we decided, okay, we should help each other,” Russell, who lives in Edgewater, says.

Read the story [here](#).

CIVIC LEADERSHIP

OCE's Civic Leadership Initiatives team stewards the University of Chicago's commitment to the scholarship, teaching, and practice of civic leadership, helping to cultivate civic leaders who think critically, imagine new systems, and build resilient communities. OCE leads programs that help strengthen the ability of emerging and experienced civic leaders on the South Side and throughout Chicago to become more effective leaders and better serve their communities.

FY21 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

43 civic leadership programs represented in the Chicago Leadership Development Exchange, a network organized and convened by OCE and scaled in partnership with the Rustandy Center for Social Sector Innovation

20 representatives from 17 unique organizations/institutions participated in the second cohort of the Civic Actor Studio, a leadership retreat for civic leaders led in partnership with the Court Theatre



CIVIC ACTOR STUDIO

Civic action doesn't come with a script but as the 20 community leaders the University of Chicago brought together recently learned, civic leadership is its own kind of theatrical performance. Led by the University's Office of Civic Engagement and the Court Theatre, the Civic Actor Studio is a unique four-day leadership retreat that invites established and emerging civic leaders to examine the various leadership roles they play. Participants discussed themes of justice and leadership and took part in theater-based exercises, creating scenes onstage at the Stony Island Arts Bank.

"Oftentimes, I'm engaging with different community members and sometimes your voice gets lost in those conversations," program participant and Chief Equity Officer at Thrive Chicago Christopher Goins said. "The Civic Actor Studio helped me to rediscover my voice and stand firm in the spotlight where I'm most comfortable and where my superpowers shine through."

This year's programming was facilitated in part by six past participants. New participants represented sectors including education, finance, healthcare, journalism, and the arts.

Read the story [here](#).

CIVIC RELATIONS

The Office of Civic Engagement makes connections, builds relationships, engages diverse stakeholders, and listens to our neighbors to understand their priorities. We ensure these relationships inform the University's civic engagement work and lead to the identification of shared interests and the creation of sustainable partnerships.

FY21 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

60 community stakeholders engaged in 19 meetings by OCE, University of Chicago Police Department (UCPD), and the Department of Safety and Security regarding their experiences with UCPD and how the University's public safety functions can improve

40,000+ meals provided to South Side residents facing food insecurity in July and August 2020 through the University's COVID-19 Community Support Initiative

13 presentations given by OCE staff, reaching 508 community residents, on topics ranging from campus development projects to community programs led by OCE

RENEE BRADFORD COMMUNITY SUPPORT INITIATIVE

In the final months of UChicago's COVID-19 Community Support Initiative, the University partnered with minority- and women-owned South Side catering businesses to prepare and distribute more than 40,000 meals to South Side residents facing food insecurity. The effort was the second phase of the initiative, which ultimately provided more than 300,000 meals along with other assistance.

In addition to feeding the community, the partnerships created opportunities for caterers who had seen a dramatic pandemic-related decrease in business.

"It's really like a lifeline for us because all of our business was cancelled," Renee Bradford, of Bronzeville's C'est Si Bon catering, said. "We did festivals in the summer; we did weddings and meetings and none of that's happening. We're very appreciative of the University for reaching out to small businesses like mine because it's going to be a big help for us in trying to refocus and get back online as the economy opens."

Read the story [here](#).



ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

The Office of Civic Engagement supports academic units as they develop and advance their distinct civic priorities. Whether connecting University researchers to community-based organizations to strengthen the broader impacts of University scholarship or partnering with faculty members to enhance our community-facing programs, OCE's broad spectrum of engagement with UChicago's faculty and academic appointees strengthens the impact we can have together at the University and in our neighboring communities.

FY21 REACH AND IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

124 UChicago faculty and 42 academic appointees engaged by OCE, including 76 new connections in FY21

12 divisions and professional schools and the College, plus 35 academic centers and institutes engaged by OCE

TIAN ZHONG COLLEGE READINESS AND ACCESS AND QUANTUM COMMUNITY IMPACT STEERING COMMITTEE

When the Office of Civic Engagement's College Readiness and Access team sought to offer an artificial intelligence workshop series to the local high school students they serve, Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering (PME) Assistant

Professor Tian Zhong, an expert on the emerging field of quantum science, was a natural fit as an instructor.

"The students raised a lot of excellent questions and showed overwhelming enthusiasm," Zhong said.

Zhong also participated in the OCE-led Quantum Community Impact (QCI) Steering Committee, which brought together more than 40 faculty, staff, and senior leaders across more than 12 University units to develop recommendations for how to advance inclusive innovation in the sciences on the South Side.

"These partnerships between the University and the local community are central to our mission of educating and equipping our next generation to be a powerful workforce for the future while enriching their lives," he says. "On a personal level, this connection constantly reminds me, as an educator, why we do what we do."



NICOLE BURGoyNE NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Nicole Burgoyne, an assistant professor in the University's Department of Germanic Studies, first worked with Bret Harte Elementary School more than 15 years ago as a UChicago undergraduate student participating in OCE's Neighborhood Schools Program (NSP).

In 2019, NSP again helped connect her with the Hyde Park public school—this time to offer its students small group German language and culture lessons—and when the pandemic turned classrooms virtual, NSP supported Burgoyne in expanding into three additional South Side high schools.

"It's so heartening to see that my students are not only interested in their studies but also in other kinds of applications of what we do at a university," Burgoyne says. "A lot of them have an interest in that role of being a mentor so this is a vehicle."



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Partnerships and collaborations are central to our approach and are critical to helping us make a positive impact on the South Side and across the city. The Office of Civic Engagement extends our appreciation and thanks to our community partners and generous donors for supporting advancement of our shared work to increase civic participation, expand educational access, and create economic and social opportunity throughout FY21.



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