



2025

Impact
Report

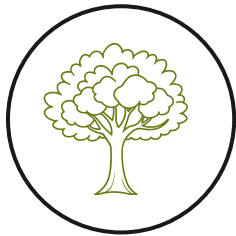






OUR MISSION

The Stop strives to increase access to healthy food in a manner that maintains dignity, builds health and community, and champions equity.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Stop is located on the territory of the Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Haudenosaunee, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Given the historic context of the land on which The Stop resides, it's imperative that we draw attention to the devastating impacts that decades of colonization have imposed upon Indigenous peoples. We stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and other racialized communities that are seeking to reclaim their identities, health, land, and community resources.

Letter from Our Executive Director



Meeting the Moment Together Happens Every Day

When Toronto City Council declared food insecurity an emergency in January, it came as no surprise to us at The Stop, or to any emergency food organization. Year after year, our community members have turned to us for support, and time and again, we've risen to meet the moment, together.

Over the past year, we've strengthened partnerships that have expanded our reach, enhanced our programs, and boosted funding for our work across Toronto's west end and beyond.

At the program level, we've remained committed to inclusion, making community-informed adjustments where needed. We expanded our Community Gardens Program and collaborated with new service providers to support community health and well-being.

We also continue to celebrate our long-standing programs that make a daily difference. Our choice-based food bank model provides dignity and agency for those who rely on it, and our tax clinic completed more than 180 returns this spring, bringing over \$200,000 in refunds and benefits back to community members.

Advocating for systemic change remains central to our mission. Through roundtables, committees, presentations, and educational partnerships, The Stop is helping shape food policy and strengthen the systems that support our communities.

This past year also brought challenges. From July 2024 to April 2025, we temporarily relocated our drop-in meal service during Toronto Community Housing's renovation of our Davenport site. Despite the disruption, our staff and volunteers ensured healthy meals were available both at our temporary location and as take-away options for those who couldn't travel. Programs like Healthy Beginnings and Community Kitchens adapted with smaller groups and flexible schedules, always keeping community at the heart of every decision.

Now, back in our newly renovated space, we've been thrilled to welcome new faces who learned about our programs during the relocation.

The progress we've made would not be possible without our remarkable team, Board of Directors, community members, and volunteers who bring care, dedication, and resourcefulness to our mission every day. And to our generous donors and funders, thank you. You're not just filling plates; you're fuelling brighter futures.

As we look ahead, we are expecting broader economic challenges to remain. But The Stop will continue to be here for the community, as we have for the past 42 years, always meeting the moment as it comes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Shae London'.

Shae London
Executive Director

OUR ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Highlights of our work to drive systemic change alongside sector colleagues, researchers, and students



01

Janis Rotman Roundtable on Food Insecurity (University of Toronto's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work)

We met with sector colleagues and researchers to discuss the state of food insecurity, the principle of food security as a human right, and strategies for collaboration and mobilizing the public.

02

University of Toronto's Sandbox Experiential Learning Program

We're working with faculty to provide meaningful, hands-on opportunities for students. Projects underway include translating complex policy into accessible tools for community members, developing standardized kitchen procedures, and creating an ethical storytelling toolkit.

03

Sustainable Transformation Pathways (STP) Initiative

We have been invited to participate in this national research project led by Ivey Business School with the purpose of developing pathways toward regenerative and inclusive food systems. We will contribute community food justice perspectives and host a collaborative session.

04

City of Toronto ON A.I.R. Webinar

A presentation was given to over 200 frontline social service providers, raising awareness of our programs, improving referral connections, and building relationships that support lasting change.

EMERGENCY FOOD ACCESS

The Stop's emergency food access connects people to good food through our Drop-In Meal Program and our Food Bank.

Providing Support Through Good Meals

Last winter, a single mother of four turned to The Stop for the first time. Like many of the community members who joined us for the **77,396 drop-in meals** served last year, she was struggling to put food on the table as the cost of living rose.

"In the couple of months, during a time of increased need, the mother came in for nine meals a week. For a family of five, that has a huge impact," says Community Services Manager Neye Osakwe.

Sometimes, all five family members would sit down together for a warm meal in our dining area. Other times, she'd bring take-away containers so there would be enough for everyone at home. Knowing nearly half their meals each week were covered at The Stop brought immense relief. She was always so grateful for the service.

Each week, our inclusive, dignified drop-in meal program nourishes low-income families, seniors on fixed incomes, newcomers unable to work, and people without housing or cooking facilities. In a city of rising costs, scarce housing, and limited supports, these meals are a lifeline for our neighbours.



Ana Paredes, Community Chef

Community members can join us for up to 11 meals every week

- Breakfast and lunch on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 1884 Davenport Rd.
- Breakfast and lunch on Wednesdays and dinner on Thursdays at 729 St. Clair Ave. West



“It’s not just about the meal. The Stop builds community around food. People feel they matter here, that they have a seat at the table and are recognized,” Neye shares.

One community member shared that he continues to travel from the east end to attend meals at The Stop because it supports his mental health. He said before he came here, he didn’t really have a lot of friends, or a place he felt safe going to. But at The Stop, everyone treats him with respect. He can come to a nice place, have a good meal, and connect with other people.

While connections happen organically, we also bring people together through activities such as karaoke and domino tournaments — a big draw with our Caribbean and Latin community members. Last fall, we also began Stitchin’ by the Kitchen, an hour for folks to work on embroidery, knitting, and other fabric crafts on Tuesdays between breakfast and lunch services.

Our team continually finds ways to connect people with support beyond food — including referrals to our tax clinic, our advocacy office for housing and tenant issues, and other resources or programs across the city.

Even when our Davenport meal service relocated to St. Matthew’s United Church on St. Clair West, our commitment to serving our community remained steadfast.

We kept providing exceptional, dignified service, ensuring everyone who came received a meal. Take-away options also remained available at 1884 Davenport Rd. for those who couldn’t travel the distance.

The move also opened the door to new connections. We’re now welcoming many people who hadn’t known about the Davenport location before, giving us the chance to support even more neighbours every week.

“

Food is the gateway — it’s the first way people connect to The Stop. As folks come in, they start to ask questions about other services we provide, such as support for a pregnant newcomer neighbour, and so on.



— Neye Osakwe,
Community Services Manager

59,101

meals shared at
1884 Davenport*

**Includes meals served at temporary location that would have normally been shared at Davenport*

18,295

meals shared at
Wychwood Open Door



Our Food Bank Is There for the Community

“I still have some of that at home — save that for someone else.” Shaynara Katwaroo hears these sentiments often at The Stop. As the Food Bank Service Coordinator, she sees how our focus on community and dignity makes a world of difference for the folks who rely on our emergency food services.



The Stop has stayed committed to supporting Canada's food economy. Overall, 60% of ingredients in our drop-in meals come from Canadian producers, and this rises to 75% in the summer when fresh produce is abundant.

“People really value the choice model,” Shaynara explains. “It’s the reason community members come and line up so early — hours before we’re open — so they can choose exactly what they want for their family.”

This year, The Stop's food bank supported **5,712 individuals**. The demand for food assistance has reached record levels, so much so that Toronto City Council declared food insecurity an emergency in January 2025. About **one in ten Torontonians** now relies on food banks each month as incomes fail to cover basic living expenses.

But The Stop is meeting this moment head on, ensuring our shelves are stocked with healthy and nutritious options for community members, thanks to support from partner agencies, funders, community groups, and our generous donors.

To supplement the deliveries we receive from the Daily Bread Food Bank, we primarily focus on sourcing culturally meaningful food from local and Canadian producers.

“During the summer, we really get to bump up the produce that we provide, and people get to try things like cherries and grapes that are so expensive in grocery stores.”

“

The Stop is the best community emergency food program I've come across. At the food bank, you receive high-quality items, and they are generous with the quantities — far more so than many other food banks in the city. What truly sets The Stop apart is the staff. They are consistently polite, respectful, and genuinely caring.

— Community Member

This year, we also partnered with students from **Toronto Metropolitan University's Masters of Health Science program** to offer recipes and nutritional information for some of the least-picked produce at the food bank. The aim was to increase enjoyment of unfamiliar foods, reduce waste, and increase nutrition literacy.

To highlight zucchini, the students made muffins, which we offered to community members along with the recipe. Folks not familiar with zucchini were delighted by how tasty the summer squash could be.

Another important aspect of the food bank is the entry point it provides for building connections. A great example of this is when parents come with their kids who quickly make friends with other kids, opening the door for deeper conversations.

"Kids will run around, bringing a lot of joy. For community members who are feeling isolated, kids can be an ice breaker," says Shaynara. This gives the staff the opportunity to get to know community members, so we can provide deeper support.

"Our advocacy program is open at the same time as the food bank, so we can address some of those other challenges and circumstances that people are in," Shaynara says, noting that this can include referrals for housing support, employment services, clothing banks, and other supports.

The food bank desk also provides information on other food banks, for between visits to The Stop. "The environment we create here is just incredibly welcoming."

5,712

people supported by
The Stop Food Bank

1,422

new community
members welcomed

10,881

food bank
hampers provided

2,916

for seniors
14% increase
from last year

6,513

for households
with children

“

There are a lot of people with young families in our community who are working, but their wages just aren't covering their costs.



— Shaynara Katwaroo,
Food Bank Service
Coordinator

Toronto Food Insecurity Snapshot

(Source: Daily Bread Who's Hungry Report 2025)

In 2024 in Toronto:

4.1 M food bank visits



340% increase in
food bank visits across
Toronto since 2019

URBAN AGRICULTURE

Our Urban Agriculture programs bring communities together through growing and sharing food.

Providing Sustainable Income for Local Farmers

Joe Thomas is at **The Stop's Farmers' Market** at 601 Christie St. every Saturday, selling his organic produce and some prepared foods alongside about 35 other local farmers and food vendors.

Joe launched Atiba Farm, a for-profit social enterprise of Black Vegans of Toronto, to support his personal mission to improve the health of Black people in Toronto. He chooses crops for their nutritional value, cultural popularity, and compatibility with the growing conditions on the farm.

"I tell people I grow greens, beans, and some in-betweens," Joe says. Some of those in-betweens include garlic, peppers, beets, tomatoes, carrots, celery, herbs, and two culturally significant greens: Jamaican callaloo, a leafy green variety of amaranth that's commonly referred to by the dish it's used in; and efo shoko, another leafy green, also known as Nigerian spinach.

Joe enjoys introducing cultural staples to customers at the farmers' market. "When I started selling callaloo, I would get questions about it. I'd explain what it is and tell them how to cook it. And now, two or three years later, they come asking for it."



The Stop runs the farmers' market to support local producers like Joe, because they're vital to building a more sustainable, equitable food system. The benefits flow both ways.

Whenever possible, we purchase produce directly from our vendors for our **Good Food Market**, where we price foods at cost or lower to improve access to local and affordable food for low-income families. Farmers also donate excess produce regularly for our community meal programs.

Equally important, the farmers' market sustains smaller-scale growers and producers, so they can continue producing local food for our communities.



Healthy Food at Affordable Prices

Every Tuesday from noon to 2 p.m., The Stop transforms its food bank program space at 1884 Davenport Rd. into our Good Food Market — a shop that provides sustainable access to high-quality, healthy foods at affordable prices. Stocked with fresh produce (much of it local), it brings good food closer to home for our community members.

Originally a seasonal vendor, Joe expanded his offerings last fall to stay at the market year round. “I started to develop added-value products,” he shares. “My garlic was very popular, so I began making garlic powder to sell through the fall and winter. I also make beet powder, garlic butter, and some nutritional drinks.”

He's since brought his partner, a vegan chef, into the venture. “The winter is when more of the focus is on the foods she prepares — stews, soups, nice winter stuff.”

Joe calls the farmers' market “extremely crucial” for Atiba Farm. “It’s a reliable space where I can sell to customers and earn an income. I can estimate what I’ll make every Saturday, at a relatively reasonable cost.”

Other sales channels, he says, are far less predictable. “Some of us can sell our surplus to restaurants or small shops, but that’s not reliable — they might not want what you have that day. The farmers' market offers consistency and reliability for both farmers and customers.”

126,003

farmers'
market visits

68

vendors at the
farmers' market in
the past year

23

BIPOC
vendors
(34% of total)

12

new
vendors

Cultivating Connections in a New Community Garden Project

Every day, James waters and tends the edible plants that are flourishing in the raised bed rooftop terrace garden at **Pacewood Shelter**, a residence for 2SLGBTQ+ newcomers from around the world.

A newcomer from Kenya, James and his family grew food on their land, and this community garden project that The Stop helped build has reignited his passion for agriculture.

When **The 519** and **Homes First** — the organizations behind Pacewood — reached out about breathing life into the rooftop lounge space with a garden, our Urban Agriculture team dug in, creating a plan and advising on construction.

In mid-June, The Stop's Community Garden Coordinator, Rob MacEwen, began filling the beds with seedlings carefully selected for cultural significance.

"Whenever we're planting in areas we're stewarding, we want to make sure some of those crops are relevant to the people who will be taking part in those programs," Rob explains.

We planted callaloo, a leafy green common in Caribbean dishes, the South American herb rue, and zaatar, a Middle Eastern wild thyme (used in a spice blend of the same name), plus siling labuyo, a very rare Philippine chili pepper, in honour of Pacewood's Filipino chef.

The garden was rounded out with herbs like basil, parsley, cilantro, dill, and pollinator-friendly medicinal plants, such as echinacea, bee balm, and globe thistle.

"The Pacewood project was **one of 60 gardens** to receive plants from our Seedling Giveaway Program, which operates from our **Green Barn**. We use sustainable growing methods to support plant and soil health," says Lisa Fiorino, Green Barn Manager.

"We use organic inputs like beneficial insects to control pests and address plant health concerns, and we're taking a low-energy approach to the greenhouse as well, working with what grows well in that space."



“

We've been able to harvest every two weeks or so, to provide herbs to integrate into meals for the residents at Pacewood. It's beautiful to be able to feed people with food that they were involved in growing themselves.

— Rob MacEwen,
Community Garden
Coordinator



While Rob is at Pacewood weekly to help manage the garden and lead community-focused discussions on topics like queer ecology and ancestral foodways, Pacewood residents handle daily care — and James is a dedicated volunteer.

“He took it upon himself to make sure that the plants were being tended to,” Rob shares. “He’s been pruning, and we’ve been doing some pest management with biodegradable soaps to manage aphids.”

While not all residents have green thumbs like James — who’s interested in pursuing commercial growing — everyone at Pacewood benefits from a beautified space with edible landscaping, Rob notes.

“It’s really nice to see it flourishing and participants harvesting food for the chef who’s preparing their meals.”

6
social
housing
gardens

38
community
gardens

5
school
gardens

11
other
gardens

**Did you
know?**

2,016
seedlings
were
cultivated for
partner
community
gardens

**Seedlings were
distributed to 60
gardens this year**



**Did you
know?**

The
community
gardens we
partnered
with cover
57 sq. km of
land in the
city

COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Stop builds community through peer support, parenting programs, and mental health and wellness services.

Fostering Healthy Beginnings with New Moms and Babies

When Tania Borja first came to our Healthy Beginnings program, she was pregnant with her second child. “It was such a lifesaver for me,” she shares. “I met with other moms and got some food to take home. It was a beautiful experience.”

Healthy Beginnings is one of The Stop’s longest-running programs and is available to new and expectant parents on a low income who may be experiencing challenges, such as single parenting, housing, mental health issues, marginalization, recent immigration, and language barriers.

Twelve years after her first visit, Tania is now the program’s Senior Coordinator and has seen it evolve and grow to meet the moment as community needs have changed. Today, through expert-led workshops and access to nourishing foods, participants grow in confidence, strengthen relationships, and access the supports that help them thrive.

111 expectant and new mothers supported by the program

974 food hampers distributed to Healthy Beginnings participants

\$27,900 in grocery store gift cards provided

The Stop also provides funding to support an additional 150 families who participate in Great Start Together, a similar prenatal program offered online through Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre.

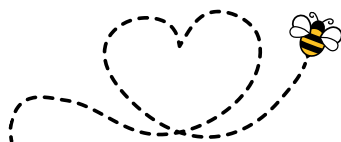


Healthy Beginnings offers weekly workshops for up to **35 pregnant and postnatal participants**.

The workshops are led by early childhood specialists, dietitians, midwives, doulas, lactation consultants, and other experts, in partnership with **Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre, Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, TNG Community Services, and FoodShare.**

This year, we launched a workshop pairing a nutritionist or dietitian with a physiotherapist. “Moms learn about their nutritional needs and how to ease common discomforts in the final months of pregnancy, from maintaining good posture to relieving aches”, Tania says.

Beyond Health & Nutrition



Support for Newcomers

Many Healthy Beginnings participants are newcomers, so we prioritize resources to help them settle in, including access to a settlement support team, live translation during workshops, and one-on-one support in their preferred language.

Before each session, participants use vouchers to choose items from our **Good Food Market** in a dignified, store-like setting. Families also receive a dry hamper of staples such as milk, eggs, yogurt, protein, pasta, rice, and beans, with a grocery gift card. Each workshop ends with a communal lunch featuring culturally meaningful and diverse meals prepared by our chefs.

“It’s a dignified environment,” Tania explains. “We ensure we have a variety of fruits and vegetables for mothers, as well as babies who are already being introduced to solids.”

The impact this well-rounded program has for expecting and new parents is profound. “Healthy Beginnings has made a tremendous difference in my life,” says a recent participant. “With no family and very little connection here [in Toronto], this program has given me a community and support system that I never thought possible.”

Cross-Pollination Project

In partnership with our Urban Agriculture Program, this initiative invites moms, babies, and kids to our community garden during the summer to connect, socialize, and learn about plants, flowers, and growing food.

Family Support Work & Referrals

We want to ensure expectant and new moms have the support they need, so our team provides referrals to health care providers, mental health care programs and providers, and other services to meet their needs.

VOLUNTEERS AT THE STOP

Together, 180 active volunteers at The Stop have dedicated more than 22,300 hours to supporting our community and improving food security!



“

Volunteering at The Stop is a pleasure that I look forward to every week. I really enjoy being part of such a community-oriented organization where what I do has such a tangible impact on people.

— Joanne, Volunteer



“

I love being part of the volunteer team. Everyone serves with their heart and we all support each other. I continue to be moved by how a small act of kindness can have such a huge impact.

— Lilla, Volunteer



6 Ways You Can Support The Stop

Visit thestop.org for more information



Get your team involved



Fundraise for The Stop



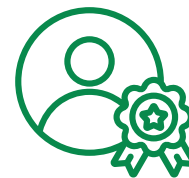
Host a food drive



Volunteer



Join the Good Food Circle



Make a legacy gift

CHANGE GROWS FROM STEADY SUPPORT

Monthly donations ensure that The Stop can serve our community through every season. With your ongoing gift, neighbours can get the support they need at any time of the year. **Join the *Good Food Circle* today.**

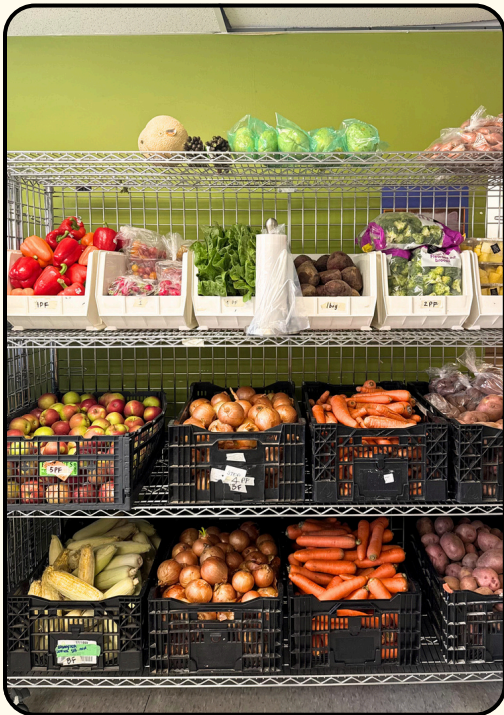


**Scan to join the
*Good Food Circle***

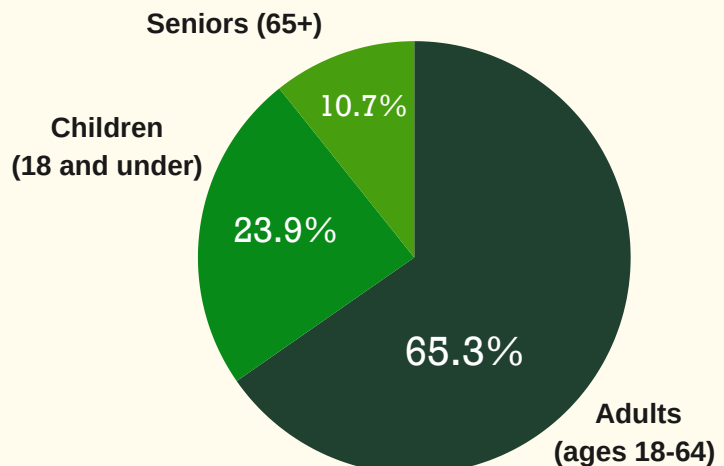
BY THE NUMBERS

Emergency Food Access

80,076 meals served in
our drop-ins and programs



Our food bank provides community members access to fresh, nourishing food. Every week we serve:



27,165

community members reached in our food bank

4,141

visits to our Good Food Market



1,066

emergency food hampers served



+2% increase

\$82

cost of food in a food hamper for one person

39%

of food in our hampers is local

Urban Agriculture



522 kg of food grown across our Green Barn, Earls court Garden, 10 Metre Greens, Global Roots, and Dig In programs

126,003

farmers' market visitors



+6% increase

69

varieties of seedlings grown for our Seedling Giveaway Program



Mashkikii;aki'ing Garden

A partnership with Native Men's Residence (Na-Me-Res), an organization serving unhoused Indigenous men, to deliver programming in their Mashkikii;aki'ing (Medicine Wheel) garden

36

participants

88

knowledge-sharing workshops

734

meals shared on site

56 kg

fresh, organic produce grown and harvested for participants

Community Building



Healthy Beginnings

48 workshops

for our 108 pregnant and post-partum participants

1,133 meals

shared on site and via take-away meals provided during renovation

\$8,910

in food vouchers provided



Community Kitchens

Cooking lessons for participants with limited or no access to prepare meals

3 programs

Men's Cooking Group, Sabor Latino, and Cozy Kitchens

80

participants

28

sessions

604

meals shared



Community Advocacy Program

1,119 visits

to our office

261 referrals

to community services for support with housing, employment, immigration, and more



Emotional Wellness

Support and activities that provide a break from difficult or traumatic circumstances

62 sessions

peer engagement and art tables sessions

55 referrals

to community programming such as our food bank, drop-in, or volunteer program



Tax Return Assistance

181

tax returns filed

\$33,231

in tax refunds secured

\$249,907

in tax benefits delivered

Vision for Tomorrow



The incredible support of funders, community groups, volunteers, and donors has allowed The Stop to expand access to fresh, healthy food and respond to Toronto's food insecurity emergency.

Looking ahead, we will continue strengthening our organization, deepening connections with communities and partners, and increasing our capacity so programs reach more people and have an even greater impact.

In late 2026, we will come together with community members, partners, and stakeholders to set bold goals for the next three to five years, guided by the voices of those we serve, to build healthier, more resilient communities.

In the meantime, we remain committed to providing excellent service through our programs, increasing access to nutritious food, and advocating for lasting systemic change, so the residents of our great city and province can live and thrive, independently!

A key part of our service ethos is sourcing food locally and from Canadian producers to support sustainable food systems and the domestic economy. We will continue to stay nimble and resilient, responding efficiently to changing circumstances.

We know there are challenging economic times ahead. Food, goods, and services are growing more and more expensive, which could drive the already high levels of food insecurity even higher. It is vital that our partners rally with us and behind us, so we can continue to meet the moment, together.

Our donors, funders, community members, volunteers, and staff are essential to The Stop's work. We do this together — and your support is needed now more than ever. Every contribution helps ease hunger and creates ripple effects that strengthen our whole community.

Please join us in ensuring everyone in our communities has access to fresh, nourishing food.





The Stop Community Food Centre
P.O. Box 69, Stn. E
Toronto, ON M6H 4E1

Locations:

1884 Davenport Road
601 Christie Street
729 St. Clair West

Website: thestop.org
Email: general@thestop.org
Phone: 416-652-7867



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