

**BACK  
LOOKING**

**MOVING  
FORWARD**

2008-2018

# GRANTEE PARTNERS

Accelerate Arkansas  
ACHANGE  
AETN  
AR Kids Read  
Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science  
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families  
Arkansas Baptist College  
Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading  
Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese  
Arkansas Community Colleges  
Arkansas Community Foundation  
Arkansas Community Institute  
Arkansas Foodbank  
Arkansas Housing and Community Development Corporation  
Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance  
Arkansas Nonprofit Alliance  
Arkansas Public Policy Panel  
Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub  
Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund  
Arkansas State University—Jonesboro  
Arkansas State University—Mid-South  
Arkansas State University—Mountain Home  
Arkansas United Community Coalition  
Associated Industries of Arkansas Foundation  
Attendance Works  
Auburn Theological Seminary  
Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arkansas  
Boys and Girls Club of Benton County  
Boys, Girls, Adults Community Development Center  
Catholic Charities Immigration Services—Little Rock  
Catholic Diocese of Little Rock  
Center for Arkansas Legal Services  
Central Arkansas Development Council  
City Connections  
Communities Unlimited  
Credit Counseling of Arkansas  
Delta Technology Education Center  
EAST Initiative  
El Centro Hispano  
El Zócalo Immigrant Resource Center  
Executives' Alliance for Boys and Men of Color  
FORGE  
FowARd Arkansas  
Giving Net  
Healthy Connections  
Henderson State University  
Hispanic Womens Organization of Arkansas  
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) USA  
Hope Enterprise Corporation  
Interfaith Worker Justice  
Just Communities of Arkansas  
Let Our Violence End  
Life Skills for Youth  
Literacy Action of Central Arkansas  
Little Rock School District—Baseline Academy  
Logan Square Neighborhood Association  
Lucie's Place  
Lyon College  
Marvell School District  
McGehee Desha Alumni Community Center Inc  
MDC  
Migration Policy Institute  
Mississippi County, Arkansas, Economic Opportunity Commission  
New Futures for Youth  
Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center  
OneCommunity  
Our House  
Philander Smith College  
Phoenix Youth and Family Services  
Pulaski Technical College Foundation  
Rural Community Alliance  
Rural LISC  
Salvation Army  
Samasource  
Second Baptist Church  
Shorter College  
Southern Bancorp Community Partners  
STAND Foundation  
Teach For America  
The Schott Foundation for Public Education  
The Urban League of the State of Arkansas  
United Way of Central Arkansas  
United Way of Northeast Arkansas  
United Way of Northwest Arkansas  
University of Arkansas at Fayetteville  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock  
University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service  
University of Central Arkansas  
Whole Youth Services  
Young Nonprofit Professionals Network—Little Rock

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*We invite you to join us as we reflect on our impact, influence, and leverage to make progress toward our founder's vision of a thriving and prosperous Arkansas that benefits all Arkansans.*



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# A Decade of Difference in Arkansas



**SHERECE Y. WEST-SCANTLEBURY, Ph.D.**  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*  
The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

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MOVING THE NEEDLE WAS THE CATALYST FOR A DECADE OF DIFFERENCE IN ARKANSAS.

**N**early 70 years ago, a curious and fortuitous thing happened to the state of Arkansas. A son of one of the world's wealthiest families moved to one of the nation's poorest states. Winthrop Rockefeller could not resist the draw of the Natural State's beauty. He used his time, talent, and treasure to build a thriving and prosperous Arkansas that benefits all Arkansans.

Two generations later, Governor Rockefeller's vision continued through the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation's (WRF) Moving the Needle Strategic Plan. Developed in 2007, the plan was based on close to a hundred conversations with policymakers, community and business leaders, youth, and national experts on community change. Those conversations, combined with our research on best practices in education, economic development, and social justice, formed the framework that guided WRF's investments and actions for 10 years.

## **WRF's courage**

"No more low expectations" has been our clarion call. We have had the courage to tackle inequity head on and work with our partners to build a stronger, more inclusive, and more prosperous Arkansas.

## **WRF's collaboration**

We have collaborated to unlock the full potential of all Arkansans. We have set out to increase the number of residents prepared to work, attend college, start businesses, and take care of their families and communities.

## **WRF's commitment**

We committed to move the needle on the circumstances of people and communities in every corner of the state. WRF has gone the extra mile to support the state's nonprofits and reaffirm that strong communities are the foundation of a prosperous state.

We have seen some successes. Grade-level reading is now a statewide priority. Low-wealth families have greater access to volunteer income tax assistance providers. A network of advocates informed and ultimately changed legislation to eradicate many companies that used predatory financial practices. Dozens more communities have organized themselves to make progress. Residents across the state have built power to challenge the status quo.

But we still have a ways to go. The vast majority of jobs in our state pay below a living wage. Nearly 70 percent of our third graders cannot read on grade level by the end of third grade. Several critical nonprofit partners have closed their doors.

Along the way, we have learned. In 2018, we will conclude the Moving the Needle plan. In the following pages, we look back at the last decade to prepare ourselves to move forward. We invite you to join us as we reflect on our triumphs, examine our failures, and prepare for another decade of making a difference in Arkansas.

# Theory of Change



**VISION:** A THRIVING AND PROSPEROUS ARKANSAS THAT BENEFITS ALL RESIDENTS



**MISSION:** TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF ALL ARKANSANS IN THREE INTERRELATED AREAS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, AND RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE



**FOUR BOLD GOALS:** WHAT ISSUES IMPACT THE ABILITY TO ACHIEVE OUR GOAL

## Increase prosperity

Arkansas families are financially secure and expect more for their future



## Increase educational attainment

Students graduate from high school ready to start careers or continue their education to become high-skilled workers



## Strengthen communities

Arkansas communities take action to increase educational attainment and economic mobility



## Build the nonprofit infrastructure

Nonprofits, institutions, and leaders are able to achieve the goals of Moving the Needle and their missions



**STRATEGIES:** HOW WE MOVE THE NEEDLE TOWARD PROSPERITY IN ARKANSAS

## Invest in innovation

Catalyze positive local and statewide change

## Recruit ambassadors, advocates, and activists

Form partnerships to advance progress toward Moving the Needle goals

## Fund research, policy, and advocacy

Find out how to move the needle to prosperity and call out what does not work

## Amplify hope

Share how Arkansans create a brighter future for themselves and their communities



**OUTCOMES:** WHAT WE ACHIEVE BECAUSE OF OUR STRATEGIES

- Arkansas acts to increase prosperity
- Select communities serve as models for what it takes to increase educational and economic opportunity
- Arkansas is a national leader in education and closes its achievement gap within a generation
- The state's education and workforce training systems produce a high-skilled workforce
- Nonprofits with missions aligned with Moving the Needle goals have effective leaders and are financially secure

# 4 BOLD GOALS FOR ARKANSAS

## Increase Prosperity

Arkansas families are financially secure and expect more for their future

## Increase Educational Attainment

Students graduate from high school ready to start careers or continue their education to become high-skilled workers

## Strengthen Communities

Arkansas communities take action to increase educational attainment and economic mobility

## Build the Nonprofit Infrastructure

Nonprofits, institutions, and leaders are able to achieve the goals of Moving the Needle and their missions



### Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

All students read on grade level by the end of third grade



### ForwARd Arkansas

Every student graduates prepared for success in college and the workplace



### Expect More

All Arkansans have the skills and education to support a vibrant economy and earn wages that support families

# 3 STATEWIDE INITIATIVES DRIVE CHANGE

# 2 Transformational Strategic Plans

guide the Foundation's grantmaking and leadership over 10 years

# MOVING THE NEEDLE: 4, 3, 2, 1



### When Arkansas cuts its poverty rate in half,

Arkansas will rank in the top 10 states with the lowest poverty rates.



### When Arkansas doubles its college graduates,

more than half of working age Arkansans will hold a degree or post-secondary certificate.



### When communities and nonprofits have the resources they need,

all Arkansans—and particularly those with the least wealth and opportunity—will be able to shape the future of their communities and their families.

# VISION OF SUCCESS FOR ARKANSAS

## No Place for Poverty

# Impact

**MORE THAN**  
**\$53**  
**MILLION**

**REFUNDED TO  
LOW-INCOME TAX-  
PAYING FAMILIES  
THROUGH FREE  
TAX-PREPARATION  
SERVICES**

**NEARLY**  
**\$5** **MILLION**

**provided to strengthen  
nonprofits whose  
missions align with the  
Moving the Needle goals**

**\$1.1** **million**

**INVESTED TO CREATE NEW PARENT  
AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
MODELS FOR EARLY LITERACY IN  
FIVE COMMUNITIES**

**40,000** **IMMIGRANTS**

**IN THE STATE ENGAGED THROUGH  
OUTREACH ABOUT PATHWAYS TO  
RESIDENCY AND CITIZENSHIP**

**8,500+**

**Arkansas residents engaged through *ForwARd  
Arkansas* to create a unified vision to  
transform the state's public education system**

# Influence

- **Research on the demographic trends and economic impact of immigrant communities in Arkansas** shifted conversations in favor of immigrant integration
- Adoption of *ForwARd Arkansas's 95 recommendations* encouraged state leaders to take action to dramatically improve public education and close the achievement gap within a generation
- Research and advocacy through the *Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading* motivated policymakers, business leaders, and communities to make **third-grade reading proficiency a statewide priority**
- Leadership in the creation of the **Legislative Task Force on Poverty** made it possible for the state to set goals and policy recommendations to increase prosperity
- Assessment and scaling **what works to ensure all students succeed**—especially students of color—helped families and educators support aspiring graduates at nearly all the state's two- and four-year colleges
- Research on the **jobs/skills gap catalyzed action to increase the number of high-skill, high-wage jobs** in Arkansas

# Leverage

**ATTRACTED MORE THAN \$75 MILLION** of public and private dollars to the state through the **Why Arkansas?** campaign to transform the quality of life for all Arkansans

Advocacy to increase state investment to

**\$114 MILLION**

in the Arkansas Better Chance pre-K program—the first permanent funding increase in nearly a decade

**MORE THAN \$50 MILLION** in low-cost loans to build small businesses, community infrastructure, and affordable housing

**\$1.1 million** FOR NONPROFITS SERVING IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

**\$5 MILLION** IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF *FORWARD ARKANSAS*

# Increase PROSPERITY



## GOAL

Arkansas families are financially secure and expect more for their future



## KEY OUTCOMES

More than **\$51 million** invested to increase access to financial services and newly created jobs through program- and mission-related investments

**39,000 people** provided free tax-preparation services, valued at **\$5 million**

**\$53 million** refunded to taxpayers, including **\$21 million** in the Earned Income Tax Credit, the single most effective federal antipoverty program

Engaged **15+ communities** through *Expect More Arkansas* to learn how residents are increasing the number of Arkansans with degrees and certificates

**\$1.1 million** granted/leveraged for organizations that serve immigrants with **40,000 people** engaged through outreach

Released the three-volume ***A Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas***, which revealed **every \$1 invested in immigrant integration resulted in a \$7 gain** to Arkansas's economy.

Invested in research and relationship-building to achieve legislative victories to **end predatory financial services** targeted at low-wealth families

Created targets for poverty reduction in the state through the **Legislative Task Force on Reducing Poverty and Increasing Economic Opportunity**

*Many in our immigrant communities have gone through hard times, transitioning to life in this country, and we don't want others to experience the same thing.*

**Gina Gomez**, Executive Director, El Centro Hispano

*We credit WRF in having faith in us in getting our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program going.*

**Neil Sealy**, Executive Director, Arkansas Community Institute



## WRF LEADERSHIP

### COMMITTED TO:

- Research, policy, and advocacy
- Initiatives to support small business and build families' available assets
- Accessible banking services that are proven to be effective
- Activism to end predatory financial services that were not working

### COLLABORATED WITH:

- Educators
- Community leaders
- Nonprofit Leaders
- Business leaders
- Policymakers
- Other funders



## COURAGEOUS VISION FOR ARKANSAS

- Arkansas makes increasing prosperity a priority
- The state implements policies that support poverty reduction
- Arkansans accumulate resources that move them out of poverty
- Arkansans and businesses have access to capital to create and sustain jobs
- Arkansas develops a comprehensive career education strategy that closes the jobs-skills gap

# Increase EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



## GOAL

Students graduate from high school ready to start careers or continue their education to become high-skilled workers



## KEY OUTCOMES

Invested in College Count\$ research that revealed Career Pathways Initiative participants in Arkansas are **6 times** more likely to earn associate's degrees and **3 times** more likely to earn technical certificates than the national average

Partnered with state leaders to adopt *ForwARd Arkansas's* **95 recommendations** that will dramatically improve public education and close the achievement gap within a generation

**45+ schools** developed plans to reduce chronic absence through the AR-GLR Make Every Day Count initiative

**8,500+** Arkansas residents engaged through *ForwARd Arkansas* to create a unified vision to **transform the state's public education system**

**\$1.1 million** invested through AR-GLR to create new parent and community engagement models for early literacy in five Arkansas communities

Supported advocacy to increase state investment to **\$114 million** in the Arkansas Better Chance pre-K program—the first permanent funding increase in nearly a decade

Founding funder for the **Center for Student Success** at Arkansas Community Colleges, **Arkansas Teacher Corps** at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and the **Arkansas Opportunity to Learn Campaign**

**Made third-grade reading proficiency a state priority** among policymakers, business leaders, and communities through the *Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (AR-GLR)*

Assessed and scaled **what works to ensure all students succeed**—especially students of color—to support aspiring graduates at nearly all the state’s two- and four-year colleges



### WRF LEADERSHIP

- Committed to invest in campaigns to scale what works in education and make it the norm
- Committed to advance state policies to increase the number of students that graduate high school ready to succeed in college and the workplace
- Collaborated with state leaders to adopt goals and take action to close gaps in educational achievement
- Collaborated with postsecondary educators to adopt proven policies and practices and form partnerships to increase the number of high-skilled workers in Arkansas



### COURAGEOUS VISION FOR ARKANSAS

- Schools, communities, and families collaborate effectively to ensure that students meet the critical benchmark of third-grade reading
- Arkansas has a comprehensive strategic plan for public education to prepare Arkansas graduates to compete in the 21st century economy

*As we move forward, we know that we must double down on our efforts. We must find ways to align and aggregate the many successful initiatives in our state so we can reach the goal of every student reading proficiently by the end of third grade.*

*Angela Duran, Campaign Director, Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (AR-GLR)*

*Residents in Crossett have the right to be heard and have the opportunity to live productive, prosperous lives.*

*Toyce Newton, President and CEO, Phoenix Youth and Family Services*

# Strengthen COMMUNITIES



## GOAL

Arkansas communities take action to increase educational attainment and economic mobility



## KEY OUTCOMES

Invested in community organizations that engaged residents to **cast bold visions for the future**, develop and implement plans to realize those visions, and leverage public dollars to build and improve infrastructure in communities

Nearly **\$13 million** invested to build infrastructure, increase economic opportunity, and increase access to affordable housing through program- and mission-related investments

More than **75 communities** across Arkansas engaged and mobilized by community-based organizations

More than **\$1.7 million** invested in statewide community-organizing partners, such as the Arkansas Public Policy Panel, Arkansas United Community Coalition, and Rural Community Alliance

Funded research that revealed every philanthropic dollar invested in advocacy and organizing resulted in a **\$114 return** for Southern communities and states

**11 communities** engaged through WRF's initiatives to craft solutions to education challenges and serve as models for change

Brought together **more than 20 youth-serving organizations**, colleges, and universities in Central Arkansas to create the *Boys and Men Opportunity Success Team (BMOST)* as an **advocacy platform for boys and men of color**



## WRF LEADERSHIP

- Committed to mobilize Arkansas residents to ensure every student has access to a high-quality education that leads to a high-skilled career
- Committed to provide grants and assistance for resident engagement, advocacy, and community organizing
- Collaborated with Arkansans to increase willingness to support, contribute to, and demand better outcomes for children and families

***With all that knowledge around the table, you could reach out to someone if you have a need. That's the beauty of BMOST, when I asked, partners jumped right on it.***

**Kent Broughton**, *Former Organizer, Boys and Men Opportunity Success Team (BMOST)*

***Our partnerships are working. We have streamlined processes so families get the support and services they need.***

**Dr. Blanche Hunt**, *Associate Vice President of Community Relations and Administration, Arkansas Northeastern College*



## COURAGEOUS VISION FOR ARKANSAS

- Sustainable community change must engage diverse stakeholders, especially residents
- Community-based organizations and nonprofits that organize communities play a vital role in mobilizing residents and stakeholders

# Build the NONPROFIT INFRASTRUCTURE



## GOAL

Nonprofits, institutions, and leaders are able to achieve the goals of Moving the Needle and their missions



## KEY OUTCOMES

Attracted more than **\$75 million** of public and private dollars to the state through the *Why Arkansas?* campaign

Provided more than **40 grants** to strengthen organizational effectiveness and nonprofit leadership totaling nearly **half a million dollars**

Invested more than **\$1 million** in expert coaching for grantee partners to build the nonprofit infrastructure

**Nearly \$5 million** provided to accelerate nonprofit partners' progress toward achieving Moving the Needle goals

Created a space for local, regional, and national foundations to collaborate and co-invest through **Arkansas Impact Philanthropy**

Recognized the importance of nonprofit leadership in Arkansas by identifying **40 leaders** in honor of the Foundation's 40th anniversary

Provided flexible funding to mission-critical partners, made investments to bring innovative ideas to Arkansas, and **served as the first funder for organizations and initiatives** that have continued to transform Arkansas:

- ForwARd Arkansas
- Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
- Expect More Arkansas
- Arkansas Opportunity to Learn Campaign
- Boys and Men Opportunity Success Team
- Rural Community Alliance
- Arkansas Teacher Corps
- Arkansas United Community Coalition
- Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science
- OneCommunity
- AR Kids Read
- Philander Smith College Social Justice Institute
- Young Nonprofit Professionals Network—Little Rock
- Accelerate Arkansas
- McGehee Desha Alumni Community Center



## WRF LEADERSHIP

- Committed to increase the ability of grantee partners to operate effectively through technical assistance and general operating support
- Committed to promote leadership effectiveness
- Committed to support learning networks, staff development, outcomes assessment
- Collaborated to foster peer-to-peer interaction
- Collaborated with one-on-one assistance providers and the organizations they serve
- Collaborated with organizations to build the nonprofit infrastructure in Arkansas



## COURAGEOUS VISION FOR ARKANSAS

ARKANSAS NONPROFITS HAVE:

- Access to adequate funding
- Sustainable funding sources
- Effective leadership
- Organizations and consultants necessary to achieve their goals and coordinate with each other to be more effective

***We're here because the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation believed in a vision and believed that immigrants could serve themselves.***

**Mireya Reith**, Executive Director, Arkansas United Community Coalition

***When I started at Just Communities of Arkansas, we were working through a capacity-building grant to help our board and staff figure out what our community needed. I needed that support when I started.***

**Donald Wood**, Executive Director, Just Communities of Arkansas

# What We Learned

LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD





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## **BELIEVE IN ARKANSAS AND ITS COMMUNITIES**

Push Arkansas toward a new vision and be specific and compelling enough to drive transformation

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## **TELL STORIES**

Use the Foundation's voice effectively to shape the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of the many audiences we need to reach, especially state and local leaders, to ensure they see, celebrate, and do their part to scale what works to transform the state and communities

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## **SUPPORT THE SECTOR**

Invest in advocates, activists, and ambassadors for policies that increase prosperity, educational attainment, and justice for working families and their children in Arkansas and build relationships with unlikely partners or create new initiatives and organizations to drive change

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## **MEASURE IMPACT TO LEARN**

Learn with partners and acknowledge that voices from partners and the communities they serve help the Foundation track progress to change lives and the state

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## **BE CURIOUS WHEN FACED WITH THE UNEXPECTED**

Change is not a linear path, and some of the greatest lessons arise from unintended outcomes that result from investing in transforming systems

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## **INVEST IN OPERATIONS AND INNOVATION RATHER THAN PROGRAMS**

Provide organizational and back-office support so partners sustain impact, develop innovative approaches, and learn because programs are not enough to positively transform systems

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## **BE COMPREHENSIVE AND READY TO PLAY THE LONG GAME**

Build all-encompassing, long-term campaigns with Arkansans to drive an agenda through public will-building, policy change, and partnership with community and be prepared to invest over the course of a generation

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## **ATTRACT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The Foundation leverages relationships with funders across the US to build a thriving and prosperous state that benefits all Arkansans



# Where Do from Here?

**EQUITY**



*MOVEMENT*

LEADERSHIP

HOPE

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# We Go

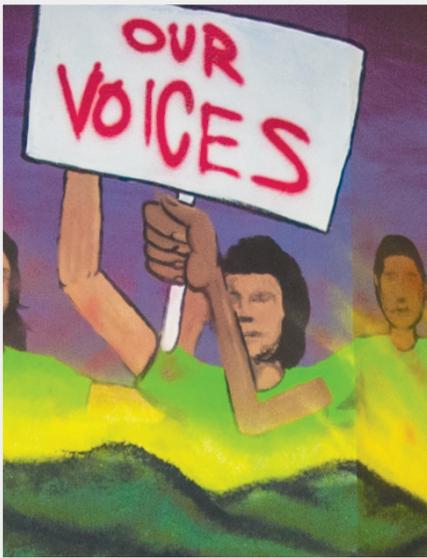
*A broad approach to improving our economic and education systems is essential to expand prosperity statewide.*

**O**ur strategy over the last 10 years has made one thing very clear: A broad approach to improving our economic and education systems is essential to create the conditions to expand prosperity statewide. Further, systems change must be informed by the experiences and ideas of diverse communities from across the state.

However, we have become convinced that broad systems change is not sufficient to quickly close the educational and economic gaps based on place, race and ethnicity, and economic status. With that in mind, the next iteration of our leadership will center on strategies that dismantle ineffective systems

and configure new systems that lead to equity in outcomes across the most important indicators of success. This makes room for an exciting cadre of new leaders willing to be at the forefront of a movement for equity in our state.

We will not do this alone. Many of our long-term partners will be critical to creating fundamental change in our state. We will also work with new partners, new organizations yet to be created, and new ideas yet to be articulated—all of which will form the core of our future investments. As we look back, we see success to build on. As we move forward, we anticipate even more positive impact.



2008–2018

# WRF BOARD MEMBERS

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