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# PART I

## Introduction

### Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

On November 15th, the President signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The bill allocates some \$1 trillion to help bolster infrastructure nationwide, about [\\$550 billion](#) of which is new spending. While there is significant room for concern about the [equity implications](#) of these dollars, there is also reason for optimism. Historically, infrastructure projects have often [disadvantaged already marginalized communities](#), whether through disinvestment or outright destruction of Black and brown communities. It is vital that any new projects be designed not only to avoid furthering these harms, but also to proactively remedy them.

### Infrastructure grants have significant potential to improve community safety and well-being, especially in our most underinvested areas.

As we will discuss in Section III of this report, there is now a wealth of empirical evidence showing that the built environment has a large impact on our physical safety, including the prevalence of violence and harm in our communities. But for too long, policymakers have failed to harness this potential and creatively explore how infrastructure projects—from streetlights, sidewalks, and road design to green space, alternative traffic enforcement, and safe passage to school—can make communities safer and more equitable.

With this current funding opportunity, lawmakers have the opportunity to change course. Now is the time to harness the available evidence—and the new federal funding streams available—to make much-needed infrastructure investments that will make our states, cities, towns, territories, and tribal nations healthier and safer. This policy guide provides a roadmap for explaining exactly how policymakers can begin down this path

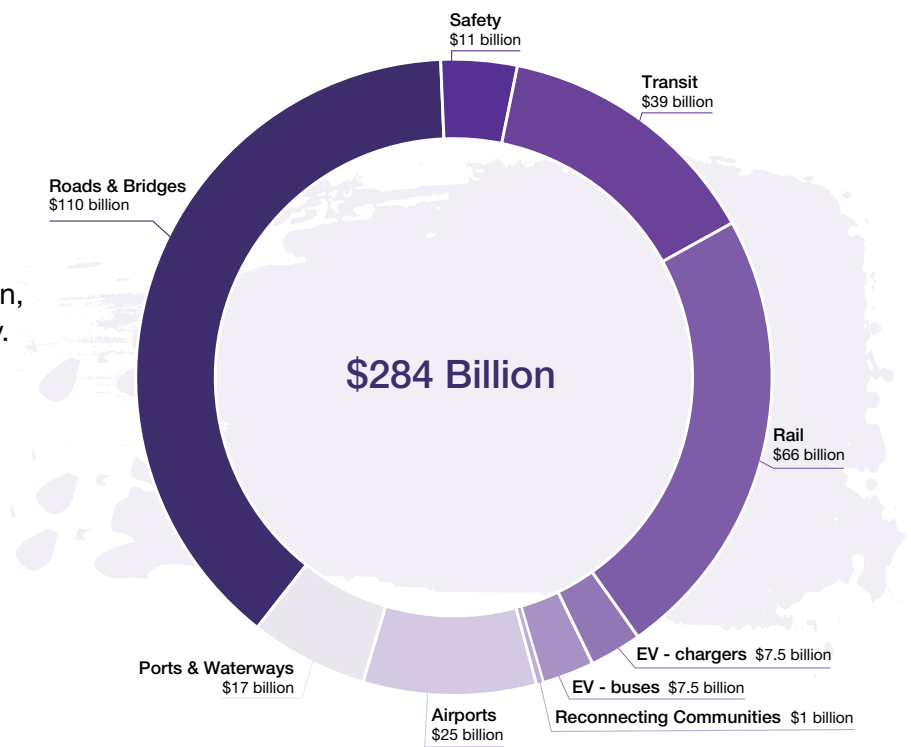
# PART II

## Overview

### Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Spending

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) directs **\$284 billion** in new spending to the Department of Transportation, with the remaining **\$550 billion** in new spending divided between water, broadband, energy and power, environmental remediation, western water storage, and resiliency. Much of the funding to DOT will eventually flow to states, cities, tribal nations, and ideally, counties and towns.

These funds will be distributed over the course of the next five years, and many will fund projects that extend beyond 2026. While the majority of the grants are based on a set formula, some of the most promising grants for promoting community safety are competitive, meaning that potential grantees will need to apply to access a limited pool of funds. Deadlines and requirements for individual grants vary, but details can be found on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).



**Figure A** shows a breakdown of new transportation spending, courtesy of the National Association of Counties.

## PART III

# Using Infrastructure Grants to Fund Community Safety

Increasing safety is currently a priority for nearly all policymakers—whether the focus is on health safety, workplace safety, educational safety, safety from gun violence, safety from police violence, or any other issue affecting the wellbeing of our communities. And as lawmakers look to bolster safety, the infrastructure bill provides a critical window of opportunity: given the extensive evidence on how infrastructure investments can improve these health and wellbeing outcomes, leveraging infrastructure grants should be a key tool deployed by every policymaker.

Below is a list of investments that evidence has shown can increase community safety, followed by IIJA grants that can be used to fund these projects. The following list is not exhaustive. Policymakers should be creative when envisioning the safety-focused investments that can be made through infrastructure grants, as well as how these grants can be woven with other funding streams so as to have greater effect.



## Safety Investments

### **Streetlights:**

In New York City, [research demonstrates](#) that streetlights can reduce “index crimes”—including murder, robbery, aggravated assault, and some property crimes—by more than a third.

### **Bike Lanes:**

On top of making roads safer for cyclists, [research has found](#) that protected bike lanes may contribute positively to all residents’ sense of safety from crime.

### **Reducing overall traffic congestion:**

Road congestion has such an impact on the commuter’s stress and aggression that [research has found](#) a correlation between traffic conditions and rates of domestic violence in cities.

### **Public transportation:**

Increasing [public transportation options](#) for residents has been shown to reduce certain types of crime.

### **Civilian traffic enforcement:**

Over [24 million Americans](#), disproportionately Brown and Black, come into contact with the police every year through traffic stops. These stops can often be dangerous, with [11 percent](#) of all fatal shootings by police in 2015 occurring during traffic stops. Having unarmed civilians enforce traffic laws, [as several cities are piloting](#), has the potential to greatly reduce the violence caused by these interactions.

**Afterschool health programs:**

High-quality afterschool programs—which can be funded through the grants that promote street safety and safe passage to school—have broadly positive impacts on children’s health and education. By providing a safe space that promotes students’ health and development, these programs can [reduce drug use and decrease arrests](#) and other forms of criminal-legal involvement among children.

**Economic development through the creation of new modes of transport:**

Having reliable transportation is a major factor in accessing jobs, education, and other means of economic development. In fact, of the five factors studied by Raj Chetty’s Opportunity Insights team, [shorter commute times](#) in a given neighborhood were found to be the strongest predictor of upward mobility. Consequently, public transportation investments have [been shown](#) to reduce local inequality—which evidence shows to be a driver of property and violent crime. Looking at neighborhoods within major American cities, property crimes are much more common in areas that have [higher median income gaps](#) between adjacent areas. The researchers suggest that reducing localized inequality would reduce the incentive for property crime. Meanwhile, [other researchers](#) have found that income inequality within a census tract—in essence, inequality between neighbors—was associated with higher Uniform Crime Reports of violent and property crime.

**Stormwater maintenance:**

A green stormwater maintenance program in [Philadelphia](#) was shown to reduce crime, reinforcing a well-established finding in the literature that many types of crime—including both property and violent crime—are responsive to investments in greenery and other local maintenance projects.

**Climate cooling technology:**

[A decade-long study](#) of temperatures in Philadelphia found that unseasonably warm temperatures during any season led to an increase of violent crime in the city.

**Tree planting:**

Recent studies in multiple jurisdictions, including [Philadelphia](#), [Baltimore](#), and [Youngstown](#), have found that maintaining green space reduces certain types of crime.

**Reducing air pollution:**

Evidence shows that [improving air quality](#) may be a cost-effective way to reduce crime. Prior research has found that common air pollutants can increase stress hormone levels, which the researchers hypothesize may be responsible for the crime-reducing effects.

**Lead remediation:**

Targeted [interventions for children who have suffered from lead poisoning](#)—including lead abatement, medical care, and public assistance—have long-term positive impacts on their physical, emotional, and behavioral health and safety.

**Climate change mitigation:**

A Harvard University study found a strong positive correlation between [temperature and rates of violent crime](#), estimating that the effects of climate change will lead to hundreds of thousands of additional murders across the US over the century if current trends continue.

For further research on how changes to the built environment can have positive effects on violence and crime, see [Reducing Violence Without Police: A Review of Research Evidence](#).

## Potential Grant Avenues

This section explores grant programs included in the IIJA that could fund the investments listed above, as well as some general information on each grant. For bill text and a short summary of each grant, see our Appendix. Unless otherwise noted, all grants listed below are administered by the Department of Transportation; for further information and application details, please see the [Department website](#).

Grant	New Funding	Potential Investments	Details
<i>Sec. 11105 National Highway Performance Program</i>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change mitigation</li> <li>• Reducing air pollution</li> <li>• Bike lanes</li> <li>• Reducing overall traffic congestion</li> <li>• Tree planting</li> <li>• Economic development through the creation of new modes of transport</li> <li>• Climate cooling technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large block grant</li> <li>• Expands use of existing funds</li> <li>• This is an amendment to an existing grant; information on the program can be found <a href="#">here</a> and <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
<i>Sec. 11109 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program</i>	\$72 billion over 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change mitigation</li> <li>• Reducing air pollution</li> <li>• Bike lanes</li> <li>• Reducing overall traffic congestion</li> <li>• Tree planting</li> <li>• Economic development through the creation of new modes of transport</li> <li>• Climate cooling technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large block grant</li> <li>• Expands use of existing funds and adds additional funds.</li> <li>• This is an amendment to an existing grant; information on the program can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
<i>Sec. 11115 Congestion Mitigation And Air Quality Improvement Program</i>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change mitigation</li> <li>• Reducing air pollution</li> <li>• Bike lanes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formula grant to states; all projects must be deemed eligible.</li> <li>• This is an amendment to an existing grant; information on the program can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>

Grant	New Funding	Potential Investments	Details
<p><i>Sec. 11119 Safe Routes to School</i></p>	<p><i>Minimum apportionment to states: \$1 million each</i></p> <p><i>For more info on total funding, <a href="#">see here.</a></i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streetlights</li> <li>• Bike Lanes</li> <li>• Reducing overall traffic congestion</li> <li>• Tree planting</li> <li>• After school health programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formula grant for states based on student enrollment; intended to be regranted to local governments and nonprofits.</li> <li>• This is an amendment to an existing grant; information on the program can be found <a href="#">here.</a></li> </ul>
<p><i>Sec. 11132 Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program</i></p>	<p><i>\$2 billion over 5 years</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development through the creation of new modes of transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A competitive grant that can go to a state; a regional transportation planning organization; a unit of local government; a Tribal government or a consortium of Tribal governments; and a multijurisdictional group of entities.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Sec. 11403 Carbon Reduction Program</i></p>	<p><i>\$6.4 Billion over 5 years</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change mitigation</li> <li>• Public transportation</li> <li>• Reducing air pollution</li> <li>• Streetlights</li> <li>• Bike lanes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program adds new eligible projects to an existing formula grant.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Here</a> is a summary of several transportation driven programs that have focused on carbon reduction and climate change mitigation.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Sec. 11406 Healthy Streets Program</i></p>	<p><i>\$500 million over 5 years</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate cooling technology</li> <li>• Tree planting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A competitive grant that can go to a state; a metropolitan planning organization; a unit of local government; a Tribal government; and a nonprofit organization working in coordination with any of the aforementioned entities.</li> </ul>

Grant	New Funding	Potential Investments	Details
<p><i>Sec. 11509 Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program</i></p>	<p><i>\$500 million over 5 years</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change mitigation</li> <li>• Economic development through the creation of new modes of transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A competitive grant that can go to a state; a unit of local government; a Tribal government; a metropolitan planning organization; and a nonprofit organization.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Here</a> is an explanation of the goals of the program by the Senator who introduced the original legislation.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Sec. 24112 Safe Streets and Roads For All Grant Program</i></p>	<p><i>\$1 billion over 5 years</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civilian traffic enforcement</li> <li>• Bike lanes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A competitive grant that can go to a metropolitan planning organization; a political subdivision of a State; a federally recognized Tribal government; and a multijurisdictional group of these entities.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Here</a> is an explainer by DOT highlighting how this grant can be used to improve tribal roads and transit.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Sec. 21202 Local And Regional Project Assistance</i></p>	<p><i>\$7.5 billion over 5 years</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transportation</li> <li>• Bike lanes</li> <li>• Stormwater maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A competitive grant that can go to a State; the District of Columbia; any territory or possession of the United States; a unit of local government; a public agency or publicly chartered authority established by 1 or more States; a special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function, including a port authority; a federally recognized Indian Tribe or a consortium of such Indian Tribes; a transit agency; and a multi-State or multijurisdictional group of aforementioned entities.</li> <li>• Cost-sharing requirements are reduced for rural areas, historically disadvantaged</li> </ul>

Grant	New Funding	Potential Investments	Details
			<p>areas, or areas of persistent poverty.</p>
<p><i>Sec. 40541 Grants For Energy Efficiency Improvements and Renewable Energy Improvements at Public School Facilities</i></p>	<p><i>\$500 million over 5 years</i></p>	<p><i>Climate change mitigation Reducing air pollution</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A competitive grant that can go to one local educational agency; and one or more— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• schools;</li> <li>• nonprofit organizations that have the knowledge and capacity to partner and assist with energy improvements;</li> <li>• for-profit organizations that have the knowledge and capacity to partner and assist with energy improvements; or</li> <li>• community partners that have the knowledge and capacity to partner and assist with energy improvements.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Administered by the Department of Energy, not the Department of Transportation. <a href="#">Here</a> is a resource on accessing DOE grants.</li> </ul>

## PART IV

# Other Funding Sources

Of course, many projects worth funding to promote community safety will not be infrastructure-related or will otherwise fall outside of these grants.

Luckily, there are several other federal funding sources that can be used alongside or in conjunction with infrastructure grants to promote safe, healthy communities.

The American Rescue Plan, particularly the large and flexible Fiscal Recovery Fund, provides money for states and localities to fund a wide range of safety investments from affordable housing to violence interrupters; a guide to using ARPA funds for community safety is available [here](#). ARPA's [Medicaid expansions](#), as well as funding for K-12 education, will also prove valuable for investments in behavioral healthcare and school safety improvements. It is also worthwhile to look at [pre-existing funding streams](#), many of which can be used for community-led safety investments.



## PART V

# Process Recommendations

## Local Jurisdiction

Every local jurisdiction has very different safety and infrastructure needs as well as different political opportunities, meaning that no policy can work for every community. To manage non-carceral safety investments, grantees should consider standing up either Community Safety Agencies (local) or Divisions of Community Safety (state) whose purpose would be to fund, subsidize research on, and coordinate interdepartmental work on non-carceral safety approaches. To understand these models, please see [Roadmap to Community Safety: A Guide for Local Lawmakers](#) and [Roadmap to Community Safety: A Guide for State Lawmakers](#).

Most importantly, though, policymakers should ensure that their non-carceral safety investments would center the multidisciplinary needs and desires of residents, especially those from marginalized communities. Black and brown communities have borne the brunt of our country's most destructive infrastructure investments and economically debilitating disinvestment. Robust, coordinated investments must be made to begin the work of rectifying these injustices—with affected communities at the center of decision-making.

For too long, many community members have had little say in how public safety is approached; any policy proposals must address this issue by creating mechanisms that ensure community control—not just in a voluntary or advisory capacity, but through language that enshrines robust oversight and directorial powers. The following section provides a survey of a few approaches that jurisdictions might build from when making these grant decisions.

### Hypothetical #1: Safety-Focused Participatory Budgeting for Infrastructure

PB County, USA has decided to spend some budgetary resources funding infrastructure investments, so as to best leverage the IJJA infrastructure grants. In this county, the air quality is dangerously poor in many areas, pedestrian deaths are up, and residents are perceiving higher rates of violence. To address these safety concerns, county officials convene listening sessions and examine data to determine which neighborhoods are being most negatively impacted. Next, they establish participatory budgeting processes in these priority neighborhoods, allowing residents to determine what infrastructure investments are most needed.

County officials provide technical assistance while residents craft, discuss, and vote on funding proposals, but act in a consultative capacity only. Once voting is complete, residents and county officials form implementation committees to oversee the infrastructure projects that get approved.

## Hypothetical #2: Safety Needs Assessments for Infrastructure & Beyond

SNA City is eligible for several grants, both in the IIJA and the American Rescue Plan, and wants to harness them so that they maximally address local safety-related concerns. To understand how they should spend these grant resources, they partner with local SNA State University to conduct a citywide Safety Needs Assessment, assessing the key barriers to community safety. They break these needs into five categories: infrastructure, social supports, housing and economic security, civic life, and the environment.

While conducting this survey, SNA State University and the city partners with community-led organizations, making sure that survey answers are collected from marginalized communities citywide—including from undocumented, unhoused, disabled, low-income, queer, and Black and brown residents of all ages. City officials review the results of the survey, working alongside the community-led organizations and other residents, then use this information to design a Safety Action Plan that leverages local spending to address these systemic issues. Based on this Plan, city officials next identify grant streams in IIJA, ARPA, and other grants that can be woven together with existing city resources to fully address the identified safety-related needs.

For more information on needs assessments and Safety Action Plans, please see the [Roadmap to Community Safety: A Guide for Local Lawmakers](#).



## REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

While we provide the models above to represent high-level best practices and potential models, we also want to note that several jurisdictions are doing this work currently. These real-world examples can provide inspiration for creating similar programs—or, at least, related programs—in your community.

### Phoenix Union School District:

In 2020, the [Phoenix Union High School District](#) ended its contract with the Phoenix Police Department for school resources officers, and is using the \$1.2 million in savings to invest in other forms of school safety. To ensure that a diversity of perspectives are represented, there are three separate processes to develop, propose, and then vote for specific investments. Students and staff each control \$500,000 in spending and parents control \$200,000.

### Oakland's Community Development Block Grant:

The city of Oakland recognized that federal grants are often ideal candidates for participatory budgeting. [Oakland residents](#) of City Council Districts 1 and 2 have the power to set priorities for how federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds should be spent to improve low-to-moderate income communities in their districts. The [projects](#) that receive the most votes up to the maximum dollar amount will become the CDBG priorities for the district.

### **Toronto's Public Housing:**

Since 2001, Toronto Community Housing [tenants](#) have had the opportunity to decide how to spend funds to improve their buildings, developments, and communities. Not only has this effort been sustained and strengthened over 15 years, the annual process ensures residents are included from idea inception to execution and assessment. Since beginning this process, residents have allocated between [\\$5 and \\$9 million](#) annually.

### **Reimagining Public Safety Collaborative:**

The Reimagining Public Safety Collaborative in Ithaca, New York [created a](#) [countywide coalition](#) of municipalities that united under a shared vision of community safety outside of policing. The Collaborative has built out a [mechanism](#) for residents to submit ideas on policy design and implementation, as well as engage in open dialogue around the proposals—which are then reviewed by the Collaborative and issue-area experts they enlist.

## PART VI

# Conclusion

By passing the IIJA, the American Rescue Plan, and potentially more landmark bills to come, Congress has opened a window of opportunity that state and local policymakers can use to drive a much-needed paradigm shift.

These federal dollars have the potential to fuel non-carceral investments that make Americans truly safe—including investments in clean air, safe streets and well-maintained public spaces. It is now time that state and local lawmakers harness these funds in ways that move us forward, not back, and that create the holistic, life-affirming safety that all people deserve.



## PART VII

# Additional Resources

The National Association of County Officials' summary of IIJA provisions provided incredibly valuable background on many of the grant programs uplifted in this document. To view their [summary](#) and other NACO products related to federal funding, visit [NACO.Org](https://www.naco.org).

## Understanding IIJA & Federal Grant Making

[Federal Highway Administration: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#)

(note: this website has a variety of resources including fact sheets, state by state information, and resources on getting technical assistance)

[Congressional bill text](#)

[National Association of Regional Councils' IIJA Analysis](#)

[Transportation for America: Federal transportation funding opportunities 101](#)

[Senator Cantwell's summary of investments and pay-fors](#)

[Fact Sheet: The Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal](#)

[Safe Routes to School: In Law, but No Dedicated Money. What Does it Mean?](#)

[NYT: Racial Equity in Infrastructure, a U.S. Goal, Is Left to States](#)

[Congressional Research Service: Federal Grants to State and Local Governments: A Historical Perspective on Contemporary Issues](#)

## Holistic Public Safety

[The BREATHE Act](#)

[Community Safety & The American Rescue Plan: A Guide to Using Fiscal Recovery Grants to Advance Holistic Safety](#)

Roadmap to Community Safety: A Guide for [Local](#) | [State](#) Lawmakers

[John Jay College of Criminal Justice: Future of Public Safety](#)

[Center for American Progress: The Community Responder Model](#)

[The Urban Institute: Public Investment in Community-Driven Safety Initiatives](#)

[35 States Reform Criminal Justice Policies Through Justice Reinvestment](#)

[Council of State Governments: Justice Reinvestment](#)

[Pricing Public Programs Calculator](#)

[How to Take Back the Budget: A Guide to Reviewing and Changing the Police Budget in Your Community](#)

[A Guide to Alternative Mental Health Crisis Responses](#)

## Additional Resources

Join our [Community Safety Mailing List](#) to receive regular updates regarding community safety, new resources, event announcements, and action opportunities.

The Biden Administration's [Guidebook To The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law For State, Local, Tribal, And Territorial Governments, And Other Partners](#)

The White House IIJA Webinar Series [Schedule](#)

The Brookings [Interactive Federal Infrastructure Hub](#)

National Governors Association's [IIJA Infrastructure Implementation Resources](#)

Join the [Community Infrastructure Center](#), a collaborative hub to share case studies, resources, and upcoming events geared toward helping local leaders navigate federal funding opportunities for infrastructure, community, and economic development.

## PART VIII

# Technical Assistance & Contact Information

### About the Authors

This policy guide was prepared by; Thea Sebastian, Policy Director at Civil Rights Corps; and Sam Washington, Policy Associate at Civil Rights Corps. Special acknowledgement to Lily Bou, Policy Associate at Civil Rights Corps, for research that made this report possible.

### CRC

Civil Rights Corps is a non-profit organization dedicated to challenging systemic injustice within the United States' legal system—a system that is built on white supremacy and economic inequality.

The organization uses impact litigation, policy, and strategic communications to dismantle criminal-legal injustice, create new paradigms for keeping people safe, and shift power to community-led movements, particularly those led by Black, brown, and poor people who are most affected by this legal system.

### Technical Assistance

For technical assistance when drafting and advancing your local policy, please contact:

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