



IMMIGRATION
PARTNERSHIP
Settle. Work. Belong.



2018/2019 Progress Report

Immigration Matters

10+ years making Waterloo Region a place to settle, work and belong

Waterloo Region has a long history of welcoming immigrants and refugees. Our community benefits from the important role that immigrants and refugees play in growing the community's diversity, economy and social landscape. Among the many contributions of immigrants and refugees to Waterloo Region are diverse skills, experiences and a drive to get ahead. Being responsive and ready to welcome immigrants and refugees is crucial to their success and for the community to thrive.



Definitely, many things have changed for all [since the Immigration Partnership started in 2009]. For immigrants and refugees, there are better services in the areas of housing, employment, learning language, accessing health care, interpretation, etc., which drastically helped immigrants and refugees settle, work and belong.

*2018 Partner Survey,
Respondent*



2019 marks a big milestone for the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership: 10+ years of working together to make Waterloo Region a community where immigrants and refugees successfully settle, work and belong. Waterloo Region's immigrant population grows and changes every year; this is changing the face of Waterloo Region. So does the importance of creating better services, programs and policies to empower immigrants and refugees to overcome hurdles that prevent them from reaching their potential and contributing fully in the community. When immigrants and refugees succeed, communities thrive.

The Immigration Partnership focuses on immigrants and refugees living in Waterloo Region, including people who are Canadian citizens, permanent residents, temporary residents or foreign nationals. Our work is grounded in principles focused on delivering community-driven impact by being responsive, collaborative and results-oriented.

The Immigration Partnership continues to connect community and act as a catalyst for collaborative action. Around 110 partners from over 60 settlement and other community services, municipal, post-secondary, business and employer partners and community members form the Immigration Partnership to facilitate the successful settlement and community integration of immigrants and refugees. This report provides a snapshot of the current state of immigration in Waterloo Region and of this community's progress over the past year in implementing its Community Action Plan for the mutual benefit of immigrants and the wider community.



Immigration Partnership has made visible the gaps in the programs that served immigrants, and [since 2009] it started a process to improve the coordination and collaboration between agencies.

*2018 Partner Survey,
Respondent*



The focus of the Immigration Partnership is on welcoming newcomers and refugees. We stand firmly against racism and discrimination as we strive towards building a community where everyone is valued and supported as a member of our community.

As the Immigration Partnership marks 10+ years, there are so many people, changes, accomplishments, milestones to celebrate. As we were preparing for this evening and looking back over 10+ years of partner lists, work, progress reports and photos, we have been struck by the depth of engagement of this community in supporting immigrants and refugees to successfully settle, work and belong in Waterloo Region. Hundreds of people from almost 100 organizations and employers and dozens of individual residents have prioritized being engaged in our collective work over the years.

The story of the Immigration Partnership is not neat or linear. It is the story of a growing and evolving community, and a maturing of relationships. It is a demonstration that immigrant and refugee settlement is everyone's responsibility, regardless of which sector you work in or which community you are a part of. It shows the strength of collective action, shifting mindset, changing ways of working and the realization of some impressive accomplishments in a relatively short period of time.



– Karen Spencer

Immigration Partnership Council Chair

Opening remarks at Immigration Partnership's 10+ Anniversary Celebration, February 13, 2019



Immigrants make up **22.6 per cent** of the population, more than the City of Waterloo (not including temporary residents). *

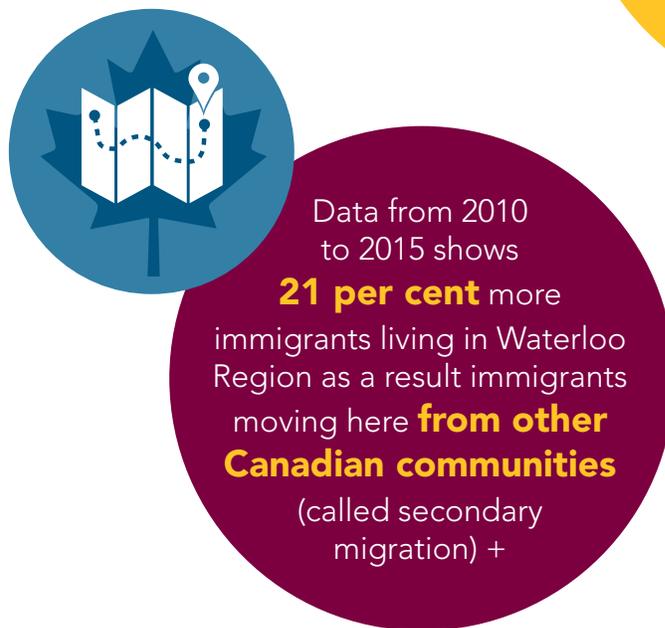


Between 2011 and 2016, **14,045 recent immigrants** arrived. *



97 per cent of all recent immigrants live in Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo. *

Waterloo Region Immigration Facts





“ Immigration Partnership has enhanced dialogue and information sharing to better integrate newcomer needs into the process of community planning. ”

“ The agencies are doing their usual great work to support newcomers and immigrants with housing, but the market has made finding affordable and adequate housing a real challenge. ”

2018 Partner Survey Respondents

Settle

Priority actions:

1. Educate service providers to effectively support immigrants and refugees.
2. Collaborate and coordinate with relevant sectors to ensure that systems, policies and programs meet the needs of immigrants and refugees.

Steering group partners:

Eliseo Martell (Chair), Community Member; Laura Stoutenburg (Vice-Chair) and Crystal Brown, Conestoga College; Jennifer Ardon, Canadian Lutheran World Relief; Stacey Robertson, Big Brothers Big Sisters Waterloo Region; Kristine Marchetti, Sue Black and Jennifer Staples, Region of Waterloo Public Health; Margaret Brockett and Afnan Naeem, Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre; Shelley Campagnola, Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support; Rachael Lake and Shannon Down, Waterloo Region Community Legal Services; Debbie Engel, Carizon Family and Community Services; Gael Gilbert, Supportive Housing of Waterloo; Lynne Griffiths-Fulton and Fran Olmstead, Reception House Waterloo Region; Lynn Macaulay, Lutherwood; Erica Dudszus, Kitchener Public Library; Ed Kaut, Region of Waterloo Employment and Income Support; Sakina Kirefu-Khan, Grand River Hospital; Ana Luz Martinez, Brittney Emslie and Ohayla Al-Khatib, KW Multicultural Centre; Priscilla Muzira, AIDS Committee of Cambridge Kitchener-Waterloo and Area; Nermin Ozdemir, House of Friendship; Kaylee Perez and Stephanie Schreuders, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario; Sharon Schmidt, Welcome Home Refugee House; Anna Schwarz and Marian Rozman, YMCA Immigrant Services; Janet Waito and Pauleen Payne, St Louis Adult Education Centre; Sherry White, Region of Waterloo Housing Services; Siba Al-Khadour, Levant; Sarah Harjee, Centre for Family Medicine; Hoda Ghonim, SHORE Centre; Sanjay Govindaraj, Region of Waterloo Citizen's Service; Diane McGregor, KW Counselling; Jenny Flagler George, Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network; Farida Allie and Liliana Araujo, Community Members.

2018/19 alumni:

Jessica Bigelow, Big Brothers Big Sisters Waterloo Region; Shelley Bolden, Region of Waterloo Public Health; Jon Carney, Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support; Christine Gilles, CMHA Waterloo Wellington; Kristin Johnson-Perlock, Kitchener Public Library; Janice Tuling and Mary Pam Vincer, YMCA Immigrant Services; and Leslie Josling, KW Counselling.

Staff support:

Dan Vandebelt

Outcomes at a glance

Strengthened community-wide language learning and interpretation supports. Immigrants and refugees report that learning English, accessing services and getting into work is a major hurdle for non-English speakers in Waterloo Region. The Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network and the KW Multicultural Centre launched a professional interpretation initiative which was supported and promoted widely by the Partnership. It will prevent language from being a barrier to equitable health care. With language learning partners we mapped all formal and informal English learning programs and opportunities, developed a simple user-guide and promoted it widely to make it easier for more immigrants to access appropriate language learning programs.

Engaged landlords to provide housing for immigrants and refugees. Accessing housing is a growing challenge for immigrants and refugees due to lack of affordable options, lack of space for larger families, discrimination and more. Partners developed relationships with landlords and Waterloo Region Apartment Management Association members and promoted renting housing to immigrants and refugees. We recognized landlords who go above and beyond to provide affordable, appropriate housing to immigrants and refugees with the 2018 Newcomer Landlord Award at the National Housing Day celebration in November. We also worked with Reception House Waterloo Region, Welcome Home Refugee House and other partners to create ways of sharing information about landlords that rent to immigrants and refugees.

Strengthened information sharing, connections and collaboration. Knowing where to go and how to do things is a recurring challenge for immigrants and refugees. Community partners struggle to understand what programs are available and how to collaborate. Last year we launched an Immigration Weekly update which kept over 260 people from over 65 local organizations informed about 800 programs, events and other resources. We initiated connection with new groups like the International Student Spouses Support Committee and shared information about community supports and partnership opportunities. We supported stronger collaboration within the local settlement sector and facilitated planning of an integrated service hub.

Broadening our Impact. We participated in community initiatives like Wellbeing Waterloo Region, the Refugee Mental Health Working Group and the Waterloo Region Oral Health Coalition to share information and empower those groups to effectively support and advocate for immigrant and refugee housing, mental health and oral health.



Hello
Bonjour



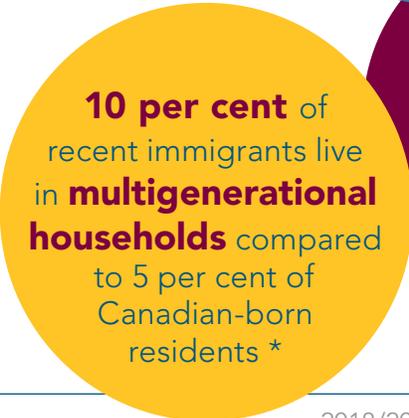
9,300 people in Waterloo Region can not speak **English** or **French** *



English or French is not the first language of over **120,000** residents *



Top three non-English languages spoken at home by recent immigrants are **Arabic, Mandarin** and **Spanish** *



10 per cent of recent immigrants live in **multigenerational households** compared to 5 per cent of Canadian-born residents *



Many recent immigrants live in **unsuitable (31 per cent)** or **unaffordable (40 per cent)** housing *



Steering group partners:

Ian McLean (Chair), Greater KW Chamber of Commerce; Sheila McIntosh (Vice-Chair), Region of Waterloo Human Resources and Citizen Service; Carol Simpson, Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin; Chris Farrell, Waterloo Region Small Business Centre; John Rose, Resourceful; Elizabeth Arcilla, Orange Sky Enterprises; Eltag Elkhalfi, KW Multicultural Centre; Janice Tuling, YMCAs of Cambridge & Kitchener-Waterloo; Isabel Vankuik, Scotiabank; Julie Newman, Carizon Family and Community Services; Michelle Jutzi and Ela Cekanovic, Wilfrid Laurier University; Tim Callan, Agile; Tina Allishaw, Conestoga College; Janet Lehman, JW Sweid Foods; Marilena Benak, The Literacy Group; Sue Benoit, Teledyne Dalsa; Valarie Bradford, City of Kitchener and Roberto Villamar, Community Member.

2018/19 alumni:

Eva Wassef, YMCAs of Cambridge & Kitchener-Waterloo

Staff support:

Nora Whittington



The region has benefited from having the talent of immigrants who contribute a lot to the workforce, which means a stronger economy for the region.

2018 Partner Survey Respondent



Work

Priority actions:

1. Develop tools that promote the hiring of immigrant and refugee talent to employers
2. Engage, educate and support employers to recruit, hire and retain immigrant and refugee talent



Continued workforce gaps – a disconnection between employers and accessing immigrant talent; ageing population affecting small business operation; more businesses will be closing due to a lack of succession planning.



I've also noticed that most immigrants are highly educated – many have advanced degrees – and many have high levels of proficiency in English. Even those who are struggling with the language seem eager to get involved through volunteering.



2018 Partner Survey Respondents

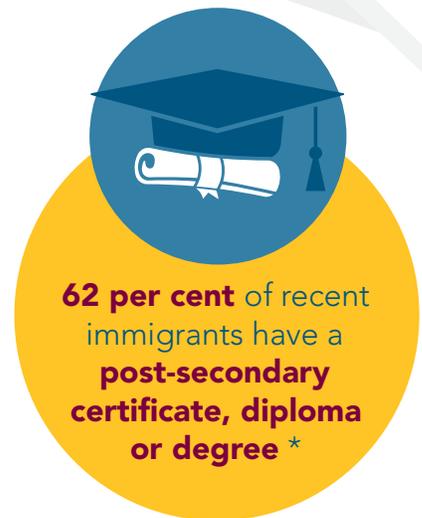
Outcomes at a glance

Employer became more aware and open to hiring immigrant and refugee talent. The recruiting paths of many employers have been unchanged for years and have not usually favoured immigrant and refugee applicants. The #HireImmigrantsWR campaign activated new employers to hire immigrants and refugees through television, radio, transit and newspaper ads and social media messaging. Through peer-to-peer educational events and employer outreach, we helped hundreds of employers understand how their business will benefit from immigrant employees. They were connected to the right partners to help them hire immigrants.

Employers connected with immigrant and refugee talent. In the 2018 EmployerOne Survey 78 per cent of employers listed word of mouth, personal contacts and referrals among top recruitment methods while many immigrants do not have extensive networks or the skills to effectively develop their networks. We therefore created opportunities for over 120 employers to connect and explore employment opportunities with over 400 immigrant and refugee job-seekers, many of whom were supported to strengthen their networking skills, and connected others to the right services to help them hire immigrants.

Employer-focused solution to hiring challenges conceptualized. Employers say the myriad of employment services can be confusing and may not help them find the talent they are looking for. In the last year employer partners began developing a concept and business plan for a one-stop immigrant talent hub that will focus squarely on providing the solution employers are seeking and ultimately help more immigrants and refugees get into employment.

Broadening our Impact. We participated in community initiatives like Community Employment Literacy Linkages Network and partnered with groups like Communitech, the Manufacturing Innovation Network and Manufacturing Day to share information and empower those groups to effectively support employers in hiring immigrants and refugees.



“ The Belong Steering Group defines belonging as “an essential human need to be accepted and valued by others in order to reach one’s full potential in connecting, participating, integrating and thriving in the community.”



Steering group partners:

Dianne Boston-Nyp (Chair) and **Ingrid Brand**, Volunteer Action Centre; **Elba Martell** (Vice-Chair), Community Member; **Minkyung Kim** (Vice-Chair), KW Multicultural Centre; **Aleksandra Petrovic**, Social Development Centre Kitchener-Waterloo; **Annabelle Girard**, KW Art Gallery; **Sarah Shafiq**, Interfaith Grand River; **Jessica Cave**, Bridges to Belonging; **Jim Bowman** and **Pamela Albrecht**, City of Waterloo; **Julie Sudds**, Waterloo Regional Police Service; **Kelly Kipfer**, Waterloo Public Library; **Kelly Steiss**, **Rebecca Florence** and **Marina Dotzert**, City of Kitchener; **Lee Ann Wetzel**, Region of Waterloo Planning, Development and Legislative Services; **Luke Moyer**, YMCAs of Cambridge & Kitchener-Waterloo; **Marika Galadza**, Reception House Waterloo Region; **Jonathan Moyer**, House of Friendship; **Kristen Bustamante**, Region of Waterloo Community Services; **Gabrielle Laurin**, Conseil Scolaire Viamonde; **Jessica Thier** and **Melissa Strachan**, Carizon Family and Community Services; **Shannon Markle**, Idea Exchange; **Vanessa Lopak** and **Sue Weare**, City of Cambridge; **Iman Arab**, **Faith Hussin**, **Hoda Ghonim**, **Jassy Narayan**, **Janet Howitt**, **Pamela Rojas**, **Anna Barth** and **Fabienne Prior**, Community Members

2018/19 alumni:

Brice Balmer (Interfaith Grand River); **Deb Bergey** and **Gina Hickman**, Region of Waterloo Human Resources and Citizen Service; **Hiren Rawal** and **Karun Karki**, Community Members

Staff support:

Diana Palmerin Velasco

Belong

Priority actions:

1. Promote awareness and networking of formal and informal organizations and groups addressing immigrant and refugee social isolation
2. Develop and implement public education initiatives that promote belonging of immigrants and refugees to the broader community
3. Support local municipalities to provide leadership in the welcoming and inclusion of immigrants and refugees



We did not think about the impact of racism on referrals even 5 years ago. We are much more open and willing to adapt our services to meet the needs of newcomers and refugees. Previously we expected them to fit into our system.



We would love to see all newcomers feel welcomed, connected, have affordable and safe housing and gain meaningful employment in the Region.



2018 Partner Survey Respondents

Outcomes at a glance

Engaged multicultural community leaders to increase social connectedness and address social isolation. Immigrants and refugees in Waterloo tell us that friends, family and social connections give them the greatest sense of settlement and belonging. For the last year, we have strengthened relationships with multicultural community leaders and are working together to deepen social connectedness across ethno-cultural communities in Waterloo Region.

Organized events and campaigns on belonging and inclusion to increase community awareness and engagement. Immigrants and refugees in Waterloo Region can feel isolated, like they don't belong and they can also experience discrimination. An informed, aware and open community plays a big role in helping newcomers have a sense of welcome, inclusion and belonging. We created opportunities for hundreds of community members to engage in a process of mutual learning to strengthen social inclusion and belonging through initiatives like: The 2018 Global Migration Film Festival, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21) #belongtogetherWR social media campaign and an Open Conversation co-hosted with the KW Art Gallery on the topic of hospitality.

Supported municipal partners to provide leadership in the welcoming and inclusion of immigrants and refugees. While immigration is a federal mandate, it is in local communities where the successes and challenges of immigration are experienced most acutely. Municipalities have a crucial role in welcoming and creating conditions in which newcomers can develop a sense of community belonging. We worked closely with partners from the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo on initiatives to celebrate newcomers and encourage their municipal engagement. We celebrated 36 new Canadian citizens at a Community Citizenship Ceremony co-hosted with the City of Kitchener and the Institute for Canadian Citizenship. We engaged over 80 recent immigrants and refugees in local government presentations where they learned about municipal services and ways of getting involved in their municipalities.

Broadening our Impact. We participated in community initiatives like Wellbeing Waterloo Region's Social Inclusion Catalyst Group and the Social Development Centre Kitchener-Waterloo's neighbourhood sparks initiative to share information, empower them to effectively address immigrant and refugee belonging and inclusion and connect with immigrants and refugees directly.

41 per cent of immigrants and refugees surveyed **did not feel a strong sense of community belonging** "



59 per cent of immigrants and refugees surveyed **felt isolated** "



45 per cent of survey respondents believe immigrants and refugees **need to do more to integrate into Canadian society** ~

“ Thanks to the array of campaigns and initiatives launched—such as Belong Together WR, Hire an Immigrant or the Global Migration Film Festival—the community is more aware of challenges faced by immigrants and refugees, more empathy has been fostered, and more community members are slowly beginning to shift paradigms.

2018 Partner Survey Respondent ”



Immigration Partnership Council:

Karen Spencer (Chair), Family and Children Services of Waterloo Region; **Pari Karem** (Vice Chair), YMCA Immigrant Services; **Peter Donahue** (Past Chair), Wilfrid Laurier University; **Eliseo Martell** (SSG Chair), Community Member; **Ian McLean** (WSG Chair), Greater KW Chamber of Commerce; **Dianne Boston-Nyp** (BSG Chair), Volunteer Action Centre Waterloo Region; **Linda Terry**, Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries; **Lucia Harrison**, KW Multicultural Centre; **Jennifer Roggemann**, Jennifer Roggemann Immigration Law; **Kelly McManus**, University of Waterloo; **Tracy Hare Connell**, The Coaching Co.; **Jenny Flagler George**, Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network; **Nancy Bird**, United Way Waterloo Region Communities; **Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders**, Region of Waterloo Community Services; **Ernest Osei**, **Yasir Dildar**, Community Members; **Sonja Erstic**, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; and **Conal Vaughan**, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (ex officio)

Staff support:

Tara Bedard, Pauline Peng, Alejandra Amezcua Gutierrez

Partnership-wide

Priority actions:

1. Advise all levels of government and systems leaders about desired changes and resource needs in Waterloo Region
2. Implement communication strategies to educate the general public about immigration matters
3. Cultivate opportunities for collaborative learning and development

Outcomes at a glance

Government and systems leaders informed and engaged in immigrant and refugee settlement. For immigrants and refugees, many barriers to successful settlement and integration stem from the way policies and systems are designed and implemented. In the last year we engaged in public policy processes to help them be more informed and responsive to newcomer needs. We surveyed municipal election candidates on immigration topics and shared the responses widely. We shared community priorities and concerns with federal and provincial elected officials, and participated in federal and provincial budget consultations to bring focus to community needs. We convened a regional consultation on behalf of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada where partners helped shape national settlement priorities.

Helped increase public awareness about immigration matters.

National surveys go back and forth in painting positive and negative pictures of public perceptions toward immigration in Canada. We sought data on local perceptions on immigration to inform our future work. We focused efforts making information publicly available regularly showing the positive contributions of immigration to Waterloo Region. We expanded social media engagement on Twitter and Facebook with significant increases in audience and reach. We provoked thought and discussion with three issues of the Immigration Partnership Newsletter on listening to newcomer voices, language learning and racism and discrimination. We involved municipal and other community leaders in immigration discussions and planning at our community forums. We engaged with local media on a range of issues and shared experiences and information in public forums and events.

Strengthened focus on collaborative learning and development. Immigration Partnership is premised on the notion everyone has a role in making immigration successful and that by working and learning together we will be stronger. We established common measures of collective success, implemented evaluation strategies to measure results, shared findings widely and facilitated partner reflection on what to do next. We brought together local organizations seeking settlement funding to collaboratively plan proposals to address gaps and maximize partnership opportunities. We collaborated with academic and other research partners to develop and share research and knowledge on local immigration experiences, and we gathered and told the story of the Immigration Partnership's journey and impact over 10+ years.

Broadening our Impact. We partnered with the International Migration Research Centre and the Centre for Community Based Research to promote immigration research and policy improvement. We collaborated with initiatives like Wellbeing Waterloo Region and the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council to build safer and more prosperous communities. We engaged and collaborated with Local Immigration Partnerships across Southwestern Ontario and Canada to share information and influence national settlement policy development based on experience in Waterloo Region.



66 per cent of respondents believe immigration has a positive impact on their city or township ~

92 per cent of partners had acquired **stronger abilities and tools for welcoming** and responding to newcomer needs because of their involvement with the Immigration Partnership >



98 per cent of partners aligned their **vision/activities** and **89 per cent** aligned **internal policies** with those of the Immigration Partnership >



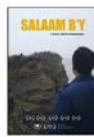
Join us

Immigration benefits the whole community, and everyone has a role in making immigration successful. Get in touch to explore ways the Immigration Partnership can support you and how you can contribute to achieving the goals in our Community Action Plan.



28.11.2018—18.12.2018
www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/wrmigfest
 #WRMigFest

GLOBAL MIGRATION FILM FESTIVAL



Help newcomers succeed and the community thrive

When immigrants and refugees succeed, the whole community thrives. The **Immigration Partnership Fund for Immigrant and Refugee Initiatives** was established at the Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation to support local programs that empower immigrants and refugees to successfully settle, work and belong. Visit kwcf.ca and choose this fund to donate today.

Immigration Waterloo Region

immigrationwaterlooregion.ca

is multilingual portal that helps immigrants, refugees and other newcomers get to know the community and connect to local services. Browse for information and subscribe to the community calendar to find about upcoming programs and events.

Data Sources

* Statistics Canada, Census 2016

^ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Temporary Residents Cube

+ Statistics Canada, Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB)

~ Waterloo Region Matters Survey 2019

" Immigration Partnership 2017 Community Survey

> Immigration Partnership 2018 Partner Survey

< Statistics Canada, other reports



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