

MARCH-APRIL 2022

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



LA COUNTY WORKERS READY TO FIGHT

SEIU 721 LA County BPC Chair Dr. Ileana Meza, President David Green, Vice President Simboa Wright, Treasurer Adolfo Granados and Secretary Lillian Cabral lead thousands of SEIU 721 LA County members and supporters on a March through Downtown LA to highlight the impact of inflation and short-staffing on frontline workers.

Who's got the power? We've got the power: Union power. If you were among the thousands of SEIU 721 members and Labor supporters who joined our Fight for the Frontline action on March 31, you know exactly what I'm talking about. My voice is gone from chanting, but I am intensely proud of our union's massive show of force last week for LA County's frontline workers.

SEIU 721 members have kept LA County and other cities and counties across Southern California running during the COVID-19 pandemic, often at enormous cost to their themselves and their families. I'm tired of public officials calling us heroes at press conferences only to turn around and insult us at the bargaining table. For too long, quarantines, lockdowns and social distancing have robbed us of our most powerful resource: Our collective power and our union voice. On March 31, we got our voice back.

Our purple wave swept through DTLA, joined by a coalition of Labor and community supporters and most of the leading candidates for public office in the region. We won cheers from office workers on lunchtime breaks and drew nearly every news camera in LA and big stories from the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times*. We let the politicians, the press and the public know that frontline workers are getting hammered by inflation and short-staffing and we won't tolerate an insulting 2% COLA and the privatization and outsourcing of our jobs to

private contractors that cut corners on pay, benefits and workplace protections.

What makes our union strong is that no fight is too big and no fight is too small. While big actions in LA — the media capital of the West — draw lots of attention, we're taking the fight for the frontline everywhere because workers in Riverside, Ventura and other counties, cities and special districts across SoCal face exactly the same problems. But as proud as I am of the heat we can put on the street, I'm prouder still of the work SEIU 721 does when the news cameras go home.

Our union just won a 12-year pay equity fight for three transportation workers at the LA County Department of Children and Family Services. Jerome Thomas, one of the workers wrote me and said: "I really appreciate the union's commitment to advocate for all of us, no matter how big or small. There are only three of us, but you advocated as if there were 3,000."

Brothers and sisters, that is the meaning of union power.

David Green, President

David Green



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FIGHT FOR THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Thousands of LA County SEIU 721 Members Pack DTLA Streets to 'Fight for the Frontline' and Kick-Start Strike Vote Countdown

Thousands of SEIU 721 union members and Labor supporters descended on downtown Los Angeles for the "Fight for the Frontline" march and rally on March 31 — the eve of the expiration of their contract — to decry the impact of inflation and short-staffing on frontline workers and to demonstrate their willingness to strike.

Participants met up near at Grand Park directly outside City Hall and packed Spring Street for a massive rally, where speakers fired up the crowd as an airplane circled overhead with the words: "LA COUNTY: RESPECT US! PAY US! PROTECT US!"

Members of AFSCME 685, the United Farm Workers and a host of other LA area unions joined the march. SEIU International Vice President Heather Conroy helped kick off the march and attendees were treated to a special video message from SEIU International President Mary Kay Henry.

"This is shaping up to be one of the biggest contract fights in LA County history," said David Green, President of SEIU 721. "We don't want to strike, but if we have to, we will!"

The crowd of thousands of union strong marchers could be heard even before it

could be seen, as their chants reverberated against downtown LA's skyscrapers. Office workers and residents in buildings along the route could be seen cheering us on — some even posting images, videos and messages of support on social media.

The Fight for the Frontline event marked the start of the countdown to a County-wide strike vote over four main issues:

- **Spiraling Inflation** — We need a COLA that helps them keep pace with skyrocket inflation — prices rose by 7.9% in February alone — and the county is offering a laughable 2% increase.
- **Short-staffing and Privatization** — Members at worksites all over our union are complaining that departments are short-staffed — leading to heavy workloads. But instead of staffing up, the County is privatizing our work turning over our work to private corporations, who cut corners by paying less, cutting benefits and eliminating workplace protections.
- **Rising Healthcare Costs** — SEIU 721 members are fighting to protect full employer-paid healthcare.
- **Dependent Care** — Workers need assistance caring for children and elders if they are going to continue to staff the frontlines.

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THE FRONTLINE ACTIVITY • MARCH 31, 2022



"We don't want to strike, but we will." SEIU 721 President David Green

Dr. Ileana Meza, Chair of the Bargaining Policy Committee, said the rally was critical to raising awareness about how inflation and short-staffing are hammering LA County's frontline workers and to pressuring County negotiators to reach a fair deal.

"I've been at the bargaining sessions and the latest offer...was a slap in the face!" Dr. Meza said.

Simboa Wright, SEIU 721 Vice President and a City of Los Angeles employee agreed: "You cannot call frontline workers "heroes" one day and try to contract out our jobs to corporations the next."

Los Angeles Times

CALIFORNIA

L.A. County workers rally for higher wages and less outsourcing, with contract expiring at midnight



SEIU Local 721 President David Green, second from left in blazer, leads L.A. County workers who rallied downtown Thursday as their union contract was set to expire. (Carolyn Cole / Los Angeles Times)

BY ANDREW J. CAMPA | STAFF WRITER

MARCH 31, 2022 5:09 PM PT

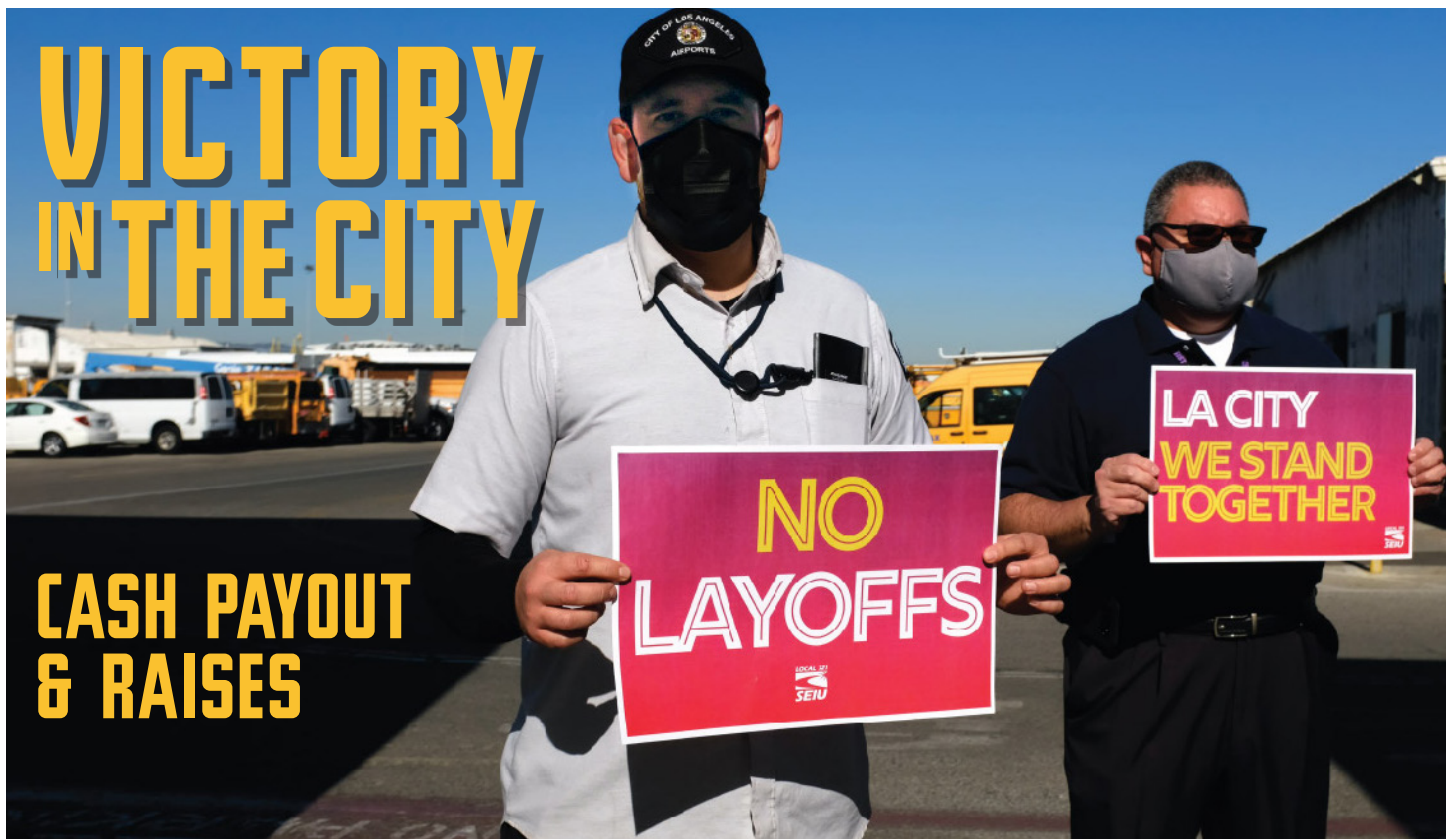








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VICTORY IN THE CITY

CASH PAYOUT & RAISES

SEIU 721 CITY OF LA MEMBERS REACH AGREEMENT ON SALARY REOPENER

Here's What the Reopener Deal Includes:

- Recovery of the cash we gave up when we agreed to delay our 2% raises from 2021 to 2022.
- Members will receive payments equivalent to the money we agreed to give up as part of our previous agreement — cash equivalent to 4.77% of our salaries
- We now are scheduled to receive two raises totalling 4.4% during the life of the agreement, with the first beginning in the June 19, 2022 pay period

Over a year ago, SEIU 721 members voted overwhelmingly to delay our raises to stop the City from unilaterally imposing layoffs and furloughs. We voted to extend our MOU until the end of 2022, on the condition we could revisit salary discussions and attempt to compensate members for their sacrifices through a Salary Reopener in January 2022. This proved to be a very smart move, as it allowed us to avoid job losses and furloughs and provided members with an opportunity to recover everything we sacrificed.



When We FIGHT We Win!

“SEIU 721 City of LA members proved once again they can fight hard and bargain smart. Last year, we made a deal that saved jobs and avoided furloughs. This year, our reopener recovers the money we put on hold and gets it back into members’ pockets.”

Simboa Wright
Vice President
SEIU Local 721

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SEIU 721 SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY MEMBERS WIN RAISE AND BONUSES

Here's What the Side Letter Deal Includes:

- 1% across the board increase effective July 30, 2022
- Additional bonuses of up to \$2,000 per employee paid in four installments — over the next year (Check reporting requirements for your worksite)
- Vaccine Incentive of 32 hours additional leave time for unvaccinated employees who agree to complete vaccination
- A new paid Juneteenth (June 19th) holiday
- Elimination of "40 hours+1" requirement for employer health benefits as long as an employee is in active "paid status"

SEIU Local 721 San Bernardino County members are proud to announce we have reached an agreement with San Bernardino County that rewards members for their hard work and perseverance through the pandemic.

In addition to the 3% percent we already are scheduled to receive on March 26 as part of our existing contract, members also will receive as part of our new side-letter agreement an additional 1% increase, additional bonuses, a vaccine incentive, a new paid holiday and elimination of minimum hours requirements for paid health care.



Standing UNION STRONG

“Congratulations to San Bernardino County members for standing union strong and holding out for a side letter agreement that recognizes the sacrifices and contributions of frontline workers!”

**Adolfo Granados
Treasurer
SEIU Local 721**

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MWA Gig Workers Rally as Gas Prices Soar

GIG DRIVERS CALL ON TECH-GIANTS TO INCREASE PER-MILE PAY RATES TO COVER SPIRALING FUEL COSTS

As gas prices soar across the Los Angeles area, drivers with Mobile Workers Alliance joined Amazon Flex delivery workers at a rally in Redondo Beach outside an Amazon warehouse and Uber Greenlight Hub where they demanded higher pay rates from the tech companies during an unprecedented fuel-cost surge.

The average price of gas in Los Angeles and Long Beach rose to \$5.84 this month, up 22% from a month ago and nearly 50% from a year ago, cutting deeply into the already low earnings of Uber and Amazon Flex drivers. Because they are misclassified as “independent contractors” by the companies they work for, these drivers largely cover the cost of fuel on their own with little support from the tech giants.

At the rally, drivers with Amazon Flex and Uber called for the huge tech companies that control the app-based gig economy to increase per-mile pay rates during the unprecedented fuel price spike.

“Amazon and gig companies like Uber, Lyft, and DoorDash must support drivers to cover the cost of gas!” said MWA member Richard Meza, who drives for DoorDash.

“It’s outrageous that companies that have billions of dollars won’t support their workers. Other than greed, there’s no reason to leave drivers fending for themselves as gas prices soar.”



“It’s outrageous that companies that have billions of dollars won’t support their workers. Other than greed, there’s no reason to leave drivers fending for themselves as gas prices soar.”

**Richard Meza
MWA Member
DoorDash Driver**

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SEIU 721 VENTURA COUNTY WORKERS GET READY TO TAKE A STAND FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS

SEIU 721 Ventura County members are fired up and ready to win a strong new contract. In just the first weeks of the campaign, the campaign already has recruited 177 Contract Action Team (CAT) members and collected 550 bargaining surveys and we're on pace to collect 1,000 more.

SEIU 721 County of Ventura workers have gone to heroic lengths to protect Ventura County communities and keep services running during one of the worst crises in modern history. Many put their health and the health of their families on the line. None has received any additional compensation, despite crushing inflation and rising costs.

It's time to take a stand for our County of Ventura frontline workers.

We've been going to worksites across the county and members are ready to fight for a strong contract. Our newest members, who joined during our successful effort to organize county clinics under the county umbrella, are energized — many of them

have signed up to be CATs.

We're building a countywide team that will stand up for frontline workers and fight for a fair contract. Soon, we'll be starting the nomination process for the bargaining team. All we need is you!

Ventura County Workers:
Use your Smartphone to Scan Here Now!



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SEIU 721 CELEBRATES SOCIAL WORKERS' MONTH BY GEARING UP TO WIN A STRONG CONTRACT

SEIU 721 CLINICS WORKERS ARE BUILDING POWER AND FIGHTING FOR GOOD CONTRACTS



Veronica Rosales



Gloria Bridget



Helen Thomas

March is Social Workers Month. As we focus our union's energies on bargaining for the best possible contracts, it is vital to place the needs of our union's social workers at the forefront.

As social workers, we want to do our best. But we need the resources and flexibility necessary to do our jobs properly.

Social work can be very rewarding. But it also can be difficult, demanding, and dangerous — and even more so during the pandemic.

Despite unprecedented challenges — and all too often, at personal risk — we did our jobs.

As contract bargaining heats up, we must remind ourselves that social workers always rise to the challenge.

Now, it's time to remind our employers — and win the strong contracts we deserve.



New Stewards at HealthRIGHT 360

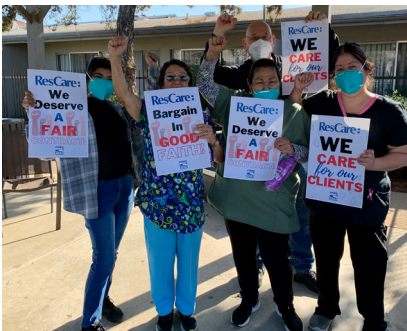
SEIU 721 has new stewards to celebrate at HealthRIGHT 360! Veronica Rosales and Gloria Bridget are both SUD Counselor III's at the Residential Woman's Program in Pomona. Helen Thomas is a Care Coordinator II at Los Angeles Outpatient Services. Congratulations to these new stewards!

ResCare Members are Standing Strong & United

ResCare members are continuing to stand strong and united despite a laughable one-cent raise proposal. We're letting management know it's time to start bargaining with us in good faith.

NEVHC Workers Launch Contract Campaign

Northeast Valley Healthcare Corp. members are gearing up to win a strong contract, completing their bargaining surveys, and preparing for the next step: nominating and electing their bargaining team.



ResCare workers



NEVHC workers

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SEIU 721 and AG Teaming up to Fight AAPI Hate



SEIU 721 PRESIDENT DAVID GREEN AND AAPI CAUCUS MEET WITH CA ATTORNEY GENERAL ROB BONTA TO FIGHT HATE

SEIU 721 President David Green and Political Director Pamm Fair met recently with California Attorney General Rob Bonta to discuss how to team up to combat a disturbing rise in hate crimes against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

Hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have sky-rocketed in the COVID-19 era. Inflammatory rhetoric by then-President Donald Trump, who repeatedly used the term "China virus," helped fuel a rise in bias against the AAPI community.

A total of 10,905 hate incidents were reported between March 19, 2020, and the end of December 2021, according to a recent report by Stop AAPI Hate. The groups says 40% more incidents occurred in 2021 than in 2020.

"SEIU 721 and our union's AAPI caucus is proud to join with California Attorney General Bonta to fight the disturbing trend of AAPI hate in our communities," said Kelly Zhou, a Nurse Anesthetist II at LAC+USC and a member of the LA County Bargaining Team.

Our union will work with Bonta on a Southern California town hall meeting to build support for solutions, including legislation and a public awareness campaign aimed at fighting prejudice and ending violence.



“SEIU 721 and our union’s AAPI caucus is proud to join with California Attorney General Rob Bonta to fight the disturbing trend of AAPI hate in our communities.”

**Kelly Zhou
Nurse Anesthetist II, LAC+USC
SEIU 721 LA County Bargaining Team**



Stewards: Prepare to Win!

A Five-Step Plan to Help SEIU 721 Stewards Win for Members

As an SEIU 721 Steward, you have been selected by your coworkers as their representative in the workplace. The job of a Steward is to find ways to resolve the issues members encounter everyday at work, ranging from unreasonable demands by managers that fall outside the contract to disputes between coworkers and direct threats to members' jobs. In this Month's Steward's Corner, we'll show you a five-step method to find a solution to almost any problem you'll face.

Step One: Gather the Information

Before you try to address an issue, make sure that you have the information that you need. Use the guide for investigation that we teach stewards, the five Ws: What, who, when, where and why. What happened? Who is involved? Where did it happen? When did it happen? Why did the people involved do what they did? Review the facts as presented and figure out the answer to two key questions: One, do we have proof to document the five Ws; and two, who has the power to resolve the issue? Write down the answers to these questions so you can prepare for the next step.

Step Two: Analyze and Identify the Options

Review the facts you've heard and the documentation you've gathered. Ask yourself: "What is the issue really about?" Think about the root causes of the issue and what is motivating everybody involved. Then try to imagine multiple ways to protect the member or members involved and write down three possible scenarios that would get achieve what they want.

Step Three: Make a Plan of Action

After you have your options, put together your plan. Review your scenarios with the member or members and make sure that they own the decision about how to proceed. Your plan of action may involve multiple steps. You might file a grievance while circulating a petition to engage more members to build leverage for a winning plan. Think how management will react to your plan and factor in their likely response. Set a timeline to set expectations with members.

Step Four: Execute Your Plan and Communicate

When you execute your plan, keep members informed about progress and setbacks, new information and changes in strategy. Be mindful of your timelines so you don't lose momentum.

Step Five: Evaluate and Learn for Next Time

Debriefing our actions is how we improve. Whether we win or lose, we learn valuable lessons. Ask yourself: Was the goal achieved and why or why not? Did you have all the information you needed to win? Would you change your plan if you could start over again? Did everyone execute the plan correctly? By using the steps in this method, Stewards can increase their effectiveness and win for members.

To register for Steward Trainings, visit www.seiu721.org and click on the Calendar to find a class and RSVP.

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SEIU 721 COPE salutes the LA elected officials and candidates who joined our fight for the Frontline March on 31: (Left to Right) **Katy Yaroslovsky**, SEIU-endorsed candidate for LA City Council (District 5); **California Assemblyman Adrin Nazarian** (District 46); **Cecil Rambo**, SEIU 721-endorsed candidate for LA County Sheriff; **Tina McKinnor**, SEIU-721-endorsed candidate for Assembly (District 62); **Pilar Schaivo**, SEIU-721-endorsed candidate for Assembly (District 40); **Tim McOsker**, SEIU 721-endorsed candidate for LA City Council (District 15); and (not pictured) **Lola Smallwood Cuevas**, SEIU 721-endorsed candidate for California State Senate (District 28). **Remember to stand by those who stand with you!**

STAND BY THOSE WHO STAND WITH YOU!

SEIU 721 COPE salutes the LA-area elected officials and candidates who publicly supported our Fight for the Frontlines action, including **California State Senator Henry Stern**, SEIU 721's endorsed candidate for LA County Board of Supervisors (District 3); **Congresswoman Karen Bass**, SEIU 721's endorsed candidate for Mayor of Los Angeles; and **California Assemblymember Miguel Santiago** (District 53). We especially want to thank the elected officials and candidates (listed above) who joined our march.

SEIU 721 COPE gives workers the opportunity to pool their resources to support elected officials and candidates who support working families and lead on vital issues, like our fight for economic and social justice and unions for all.

“SEIU 721 salutes the elected officials and candidates who joined our Fight for the Frontline action and support fairness for LA County workers.”



Lillian Cabral
Secretary
SEIU 721

Leading Anti-Privatization Expert Says It's Time to Fight in LA County

“At its core, privatization is an assault on democracy. It's an assault on workers. It's an assault on government. It's an assault on the all of the things that we we share together.”

Donald Cohen



SEIU 721 Strategist Bart Diener sits down with Donald Cohen, author of the “Privatization of Everything,” to talk about protecting good union jobs

Privatization is a major issue in SEIU 721's negotiations with LA County and other counties and cities around SoCal. I asked union strategist Bart Diener to learn more about the roots of privatization from author-activist Donald Cohen.

Bart Diener: Nice to meet you, Donald. Tell us about yourself and why you are ringing the alarm about privatization.

Donald Cohen: I run a public policy research center called **In the Public Interest** that helps local government deliver services more fairly and effectively. I wrote a book called *The Privatization of Everything*.

Diener: For people who aren't familiar, what is privatization?

Cohen: I think about privatization as taking public resources — physical infrastructure we all use, like roads, water and sewer systems and schools; and public services we all need, like healthcare, social services, job training and street cleaning — and handing over control to private companies or nonprofits that get to decide how and to whom to deliver public services with less democratic control and accountability.

Diener: Why are local governments privatizing services?

Cohen: Different reasons in different places. For conservatives, it's about smaller government. They don't believe government should be providing all the services it provides — particularly to the poor in urban areas. They argue that business can do a better job for less money — and without union workers. But many city and county managers get drawn into privatization because they've been sold on the idea by management consultants that they can save money and reduce their own workload.

Diener: From the taxpayers' perspective, what's wrong with saving money?

Cohen: Nothing, but as I explore in my book, privatization rarely saves money and often costs more. This is because government managers surrender the authority to run things to outside entities — often with insufficient oversight. Then they get hit with cost overruns and change orders, but by then it's too late. If you've ever remodeled a house or had your car repaired, you'll understand — they're holding you hostage.

Diener: You and other critics of privatization say that it is inherently racist — both in spirit and in result. What do you mean by this?

Cohen: Privatization was part of the Reagan Revolution to downsize government. One of Reagan's political advisors, Lee Atwater, got caught on tape saying “small government is simply code for ‘no more assistance to poor people, particularly poor people of color’ — unfortunately, that thinking is at the roots of the push to privatize public services in America.

Diener: Workers are getting hammered by inflation. Shouldn't we be focused on this at the bargaining table and fight privatization through different channels?

Cohen: We can do both at the same time. At this moment, governments are flush with stimulus money, and the public is very sympathetic to frontline workers and unions. But privatization is on the rise, and we need to fight back, right now. What good is a raise if your job is privatized out of existence?



Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

Gilda Valdez



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