



Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium

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"Individually and collectively we invest in realizing high quality, affordable, dependable health insurance."

AGENDA Operations Committee October 26, 2020 – 1:00 P.M.

Zoom

<https://tompkinscountyny-gov.zoom.us/j/93665810706?pwd=YzVqc1lwVGlkU2xMNXJKSUhwSWdGdz09>

Meeting ID: 936 6581 0706 Password: 602669
1(646)558-8656

1. Call to Order Holmes
2. Changes to the Agenda
3. Approval of September 28, 2020 Minutes
4. Executive Director Report Dowd
 - a. Benefit Clerk Meetings
 - b. MCA progress
 - c. Website Portals
5. Personnel Manual Update Drake
6. Executive Exchange Tompkins Commitment to Equity and Anti-Racism Dowd
7. Nominations Committee Update
 - a. Size of Committee
 - b. Chair
 - c. Seats not to be filled
8. Future Discussion Topics: (2:25)
 - a. Contract Renewals
9. Adjournment (2:30)

Next Meeting: November 30, 2020 – 1 p.m.

All meetings of the Consortium are open to the public. Members of Committees and the Board of Directors shall be provided with an option to call in to meetings when attendance in person is not possible; however, a member may not vote or be counted for purposes of quorum where participation is by phone. New York State Open Meetings Law permits attendance and participation by videoconferencing.

Executive Exchange Commitment to Equity and Anti-Racism

*“I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I
am changing the things I cannot accept.”*

– Angela Y. Davis

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**This document follows the [AP Style](#) for handling use and capitalization of Black, Indigenous, and white, which was updated during the drafting of the document (June 19, 2020). While the capitalization of Brown is not addressed by AP, the editor has elected to capitalize Brown in this document, recognizing this will likely be a point of ongoing discussion and evolution.*

Introduction

“My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.”

– Desmond Tutu

The Executive Exchange (EXEX), a consortium of undersigned executive directors representing more than 100 Tompkins County-based nonprofit agencies, puts forth the following statement in shared purpose and commitment.

Together, we:

Support the George Floyd Resolution as passed by the Tompkins County Legislature on 2 June 2020:

<http://tompkinscountyny.igmp2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=3361&Inline=True> .

Acknowledge that systemic racism and white supremacy is real, pervasive, and antithetical to our national ideals of freedom and justice for all, and oppositional to our local work to create a better world for all.

Acknowledge that every single Tompkins County nonprofit is impacted by white supremacy and systemic racism in some way - even those whose mission does not focus on race, justice, or civil rights. We are thus all responsible for its dismantling.

Acknowledge that addressing systemic racism is difficult, uncomfortable, even painful, and can bring lifelong identities and worldviews under scrutiny. We commit to do it anyway.

Recognize that the recent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many thousands of other Black and Brown individuals, as well as countless demonstrations of overt and covert racism, including those akin to the unprovoked assault of (Black) birder Christian Cooper by (White) Amy Cooper (no relation) in Central Park, are but a micro sample of the countless atrocities that are carried out daily. They happen nationwide, including Tompkins County, and have occurred for over 400 years. We attest that evidence of systemic racism is prolific, readily available, abundantly documented, and unequivocally unacceptable.

Understand that many groups are marginalized: Native Americans--the original inhabitants of North America-- women, children, people living with disabilities and mental health conditions, LGBTQ + communities, the rural poor, and many many more. We recognize our ardent support of Black lives does not minimize or undermine our commitment to work for equity and justice for all. Yet we must acknowledge anti-Black racism rooted in slavery as the great contradiction of a nation that professed the equality of all human beings at its origins. Slavery, in the words of John J. Chapman, was the “sleeping serpent” coiled under the table at the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

In 2020 it has risen from its slumber, as it has numerous times in the past, to call the nation to accountability. Anti-Black racism continues to perpetuate systematic devaluation, trivialization and death by policies, police and practices promulgated by attitudes and behaviors. The dismantlement of systemic racism warrants our collective advocacy, attention, and action.

Commit to continuous lifelong education on racial justice, White supremacy, White privilege, historic oppression and our intentional or unintentional role--personally, professionally, organizationally-- in perpetuating injustice in the nonprofit sector.

Commit to educate our communities in every sphere of our influence, including but not limited to friends, family, young people, employees, boards of directors, volunteers and committee members, constituents, collaborators, clients, funders, and colleagues.

Commit to seeking out and listening to Black voices, lifting up Black-led agencies, and supporting BIPOC in our community and beyond, including BIPOC voices in our respective fields that have been historically underrepresented.

Commit to collaborate in leveraging our respective agency resources to combat and dismantle white supremacy and systemic racism.

Commit to hold ourselves - and each other - accountable, acknowledging that a statement is just the beginning and the real work is what happens next.

Specific Actions EXEX commits to take as a start:

- 1. Share and discuss this statement with our spheres of influence*
- 2. Devote our 2020-2021 EXEX programming to educating ourselves and our communities about systemic racism*
- 3. Join or maintain membership in the Diversity Consortium of Tompkins County.*
- 4. Monthly check-ins at our EXEX meetings, to hold one another accountable to our actions*

To the People We Serve

To our clients, visitors, children, youth and young adults, guests, and patrons...

*When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision,
then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.*

– Audre Lord

If the COVID pandemic wasn't enough to challenge our hearts and souls, the actions of the police in Minnesota and the brutal reaction to protesters all around the country seem overwhelming. Yet there are moments in history that are catalysts for personal and global change. We believe we may be living in such a moment. Why? Because each of our organizations is centered around the people and the communities we serve and we aspire to anchor our work in the values of equity, justice, inclusion and respect.

On paper these values look good. In the services provided and organizations we run these lived values look even better. Hopefully, we live up to these values every day. But if these values are not manifest in outcomes for the broad communities we serve; reflected in the creation of diverse and inclusive environments in the places we work; or honored and respected in our community or country we must engage in institutional self-inventory so that our practices, policies and procedures more accurately correspond with our values. We need to explore how the implementation of our values can be a stronger countervailing force to the prevailing forces that militate against them. In so doing we seek to be, as Dr. King once said, thermostats that set the temperature of our communities and not mere thermometers that only register the temperature. We will be better equipped to serve you as our community partners.

We are grateful to you with whom we work because to this work you bring your hearts, hopes and humanity. We are cognizant in the current moment of racial reckoning of the extent to which systemic societal failures represent the complete opposite of what you bring to our collective work. This failure is especially evident in its negative impact on African Americans, not to speak of other underrepresented communities. When people of color remain targets of violence by law enforcement; when they can't go bird watching or jogging without fear of being shot or arrested; when they are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic because of co-morbidities reflective of a longstanding health care crisis in their communities; we know there is more work to do. Nonetheless we are confident that with you as partners, informing and influencing our collective work, we can face the challenges of our times and struggle together to create a more equitable and just community, one guided by the basic principles of human rights. Hope is found in struggle. We welcome your feedback in this struggle as our co-partners.

Specific Actions we invite our clients to take:

- 1. Ask your community organizations what we are doing to dismantle the current status quo. Ask us how we will be a catalyst for change, so we know you will keep us accountable.*
- 2. Tell us what you need, so we may recognize what's difficult to see depending upon our perspective.*
- 3. Join our boards, give input on decisions*

To our Boards, Committees, and Volunteers

To bless means to help. HELPED are those who are enemies of their own racism: they shall live in harmony with the citizens of this world, and not with those of the world of their ancestors, which has passed away, and which they shall never see again.

- Alice Walker, *The Gospel According to Shug*, *We Are The Ones We Have Been Waiting For*

To our Boards: We are deeply grateful for your willingness to serve our organizations – without you we would not exist as a legal entity. As you commit to our organizations, please scrutinize your Duties of Care, Loyalty and Obedience through a lens of Social Justice.

As Executive Directors, our responsibility and commitment to our Boards of Directors is to serve as a reminder of the demands of the Duty of Care. We will support and encourage you, so that you complete your activities with the same diligence and care that any “ordinary prudent individual would use under similar circumstances”, as is described in your Duty of Care. We will impress upon our Boards how important it is to embody this sentiment, and push beyond it!

We will work within our organizations to scrutinize our own perceptions of the “ordinary individual”. We will ask and answer important questions, such as “Do we need an alignment or a re-alignment?” “What will we do to be deliberate in adopting and rewriting policies for ALL populations?” “How will we ensure that our Care is applied equitably, with special attention given to Black and Brown members of the community?”

Our Duty of Loyalty mandates our allegiance to our institution, requiring us to act in good faith with the best interest of our organization in mind. Does the “best interest” consider the needs and interests of vulnerable populations? Have we sufficiently engaged and included vulnerable populations in our conversations? Have these voices been heard and their suggestions or demands acted upon? Have BIPOC community members been invited to the table to serve as Trustees?

As Trustees, you are responsible for furthering the institution’s goals and not your own personal or business interests. Racially unjust actions violate our Duty of Loyalty. Acts of self-dealing constitute a breach of fiduciary responsibility that could result in personal liability and removal from our boards. Increased awareness reveals that self-dealing includes acts informed by white privilege, reinforcing and furthering the interests of the empowered.

Our Duty of Obedience requires us to ensure that our institution's resources are dedicated to the fulfillment of our missions. As your Executive Directors, we will continue to ask if our institutions' missions & visions clearly articulate and reflect actionable possibilities for a more socially just community.

Each Trustee has a duty to ensure that our institution complies with all applicable laws and does not engage in any unauthorized activities. We will encourage and facilitate conversations that examine the laws by which we are abiding. Many laws are a product of centuries of systemic and intentional oppression and could, potentially, be unjust. These laws need similar scrutiny for elements of privilege and perpetuation of a system which continues to dominate underrepresented voices. To combat racism we will ask our Boards how the presiding systems disproportionately discriminate against BIPOC members of our community.

To our Committees: Your focused work wields incredible power for change. THANK YOU! Please ensure that your mandates include accountability and bridge building to Black & Brown populations within our organization and within the wider community. Is there a specific commitment to anti-racist work, language and actions within your mandates? Who is present at your table? How are you ensuring that a wider range of participants feel welcome? What steps are you taking to create a climate for retention and addition of members from underrepresented groups?

You have the specialized task of tending to a particular facet of the organization's growth. Please ensure that your work holds social justice at its core, without the scope of your mandate creeping into a wider sphere. Simultaneously, ensure that the organization's greater commitment to social justice is maintained and upheld. Systemic Racism is in fact the death of a thousand cuts. In a similar way, for organizations like ours to be antiracist we must ensure that each committee is upholding the mission of the whole.

To our Volunteers: Your tireless, selfless commitment to furthering the success of our organization cannot be sufficiently acknowledged. You are the heart and soul of our community; we are grateful for your work. Concurrently, we will hold you to the same expectations of our anti-racist commitment. Your donation of time reflects your passion for the organization. Please ensure it also makes space for those who may have less time to donate, but feel no less passionate about the healthy, just and respectful growth of the organization. As you volunteer are you able to make space for others not previously represented? Consider the events you coordinate and the tasks you complete: ensure you've created space for all voices! Through your volunteerism you accumulate social capital within the organization. With that capital comes responsibility to uphold these principles of equitability as well as to lead by example what antiracism in the volunteer-space looks like.

Specific Actions we ask our boards, committees, and volunteers to take:

- 1. Commit to increasing the diversity of the Board of Directors, in all areas, including Black and Brown people and other People of Color. Set objectives for achieving this goal and devise the strategy and tactics to implement it. Discuss with experts who have successfully overseen such efforts. This would also include inviting participants of our programs/past participants on to the BOD.*
- 2. Require at least one Diversity, Equity and Inclusion professional development opportunity (of the board member's choice) per year. Board members can self-select the program to accommodate the continuum of where people may exist related to this work.*
- 3. Hold conversation with BOD and staff jointly regarding systemic racism within the agency. Engage a trained facilitator to guide pre-work and the group conversation.*
- 4. Develop strategies to identify what practices/programs/policies will be put in place to identify inequity and institutional racism within our organization and programs? (include time period / examples of specific actions)*
- 5. Simultaneously pursue diversity and inclusion. Strive for both representation and retention. Diversity without inclusion and inclusion without diversity can amount to mere tokenism.*

To our Employees

*"In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings,
we pay ourselves the highest tribute."
—Thurgood Marshall*

Our missions, individually and collectively, commit us to working toward a better world for all of us. Our workplaces must be safe spaces for all workers as well as for the people we serve. Together, we must take a hard look at how we contribute to systems that have, historically and contemporarily, been systemically oppressive to people of color. Housing, employment, law enforcement, healthcare and incarceration are systems where there are clear inequities for people of color.

While we may serve many oppressed groups and identities, we must understand specifically how the treatment of a person, simply because of the color of their skin, has been such a destructive, oppressive, dangerous, and too often deadly force as in the cases of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Trayvon Martin and countless others. We must be sensitized to the testimony of Black and Brown people about the reality and risk they undertake every day they leave their homes. We need to be aware of the calculations they must make about the simplest decisions, things which their White counterparts will never need to consider, which are part of the "Black" or "Brown" Tax exacted from them on a daily basis.

We commit, as executive directors of our respective organizations, to lead processes where we can listen to the voices and stories of Black, Indigenous, and people of color and actively learn, to amplify the lessons from history, to build on the foundational work for justice by brave people and pioneers like Dorothy Cotton, Ida B. Wells, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Maya Angelou, Muhammad Ali, Marsha P. Johnson, Wangari Maathai, Rosa Parks, Arthur Ashe, Ella Baker (whose decentralized approach to social justice organizing inspired the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee--SNCC--of the 1960s and today's Black Lives Matter movement) and so many others who dedicated their lives to peaceful pathways for positive change. We commit to learn and share their stories, elevate and amplify their contributions, and work actively against racism in our organizations.

Now is the time to envision, implement and commit to real and lasting changes in our systems. This imperative will require all of us to participate. There will be difficult or uncomfortable conversations as we listen to the stories of Black people and begin to comprehend the pervasiveness and subtleties of racism in our communities, systems and institutions. As we begin to work together to dismantle racism we must first learn how to discern it, then how to constructively respond to it. We must be willing not to settle for first steps or symbolic gestures--however important symbols can be--but to take second and third steps and make substantive change that produces equitable outcomes.

As executive directors, we pledge to work to contribute to meaningful lasting change, working to eradicate racism, leading by example and continuing to educate ourselves and each other on how we can help lead the way to a world of equality and justice for all.

Specific Actions we ask our employees to take:

1. *Commit to increasing the diversity of the staff, in all areas, including Black and Brown people and other People of Color.*
2. *Include conversations around white supremacy/anti-racism as a part of ongoing professional development with staff. White supremacy/racism accentuates hostile work environments. It is important to engage in open and honest conversations about this reality to create/sustain safe spaces for our staff. Include increased education regarding systemic racism.*
3. *Commit to increasing the diversity of staff in all areas from underrepresented communities.*
4. *Add to staff performance dialogues --the requirement of at least one antiracist and equity professional development opportunity (of the staff person's choice) per year. Staff can self-select the program to accommodate the continuum of where people may exist related to this work and it should be approved by their supervisor as meeting the criteria of being an antiracist/equity professional development opportunity.*
5. *Build conversations about antiracism and equity into sessions with youth participants; address racism and allow youth to engage and talk-- allowing youth to gather in a safe place for conversations. Ask mentoring relationships to also include these kinds of conversations re: impact of these systems in the particular field of interest being examined/explored.*
6. *When recruiting mentors, prioritize antiracism/equity and develop written educational resources that support mentor education around systemic racism, and antiracism/equity.*
7. *Continue to develop partnerships with other agencies like GIAC, Southside, Human Rights Commission.*
8. *Provide and encourage opportunities and experiences that support professional development, leadership development and promotional opportunities within organizations to people of color.*
9. *Acknowledge that the learning is an ongoing process and commit to evaluating processes that are implemented.*

To Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), Brown and Asian/Asian American Communities

"I know we've come a long way baby, but it seems like we've hardly moved."

– Audrey Peterman

As leaders of organizations that serve our community, we are committed to seeking out and listening to Black and Brown employees and clients. We acknowledge your voices and leadership in our organizations and will work with you to create and maintain space to increase your visibility. We are committed to taking a hard look at how structural racism impacts the ways that we, our organizations, and our wider community make decisions that impact Black and Brown people. We commit to addressing White fragility where it exists within individuals and our organizations so that we can do the necessary work to dismantle structures and assumptions that drive the allocation of resources and development of culture. We commit to challenging cultural dynamics that make our organizations uncomfortable spaces.

We also commit to ensuring that underrepresented individuals and institutions are part of our community of accountability. Such accountability at times will necessitate sitting, so to speak, with uncomfortable realities for which there are not immediate or easy remedies. But the refusal to avoid the uncomfortable can eventually yield deeper understanding or create a capacity to live with the yet unanswerable.

Previously we highlighted the need to address America's original sin of anti-Black racism in light of this current moment of racial reckoning. In our contemporary context we are also fully aware of the racist scapegoating, harassment and physical violence targeting members of our Asian/Asian American communities in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic, even in our own County. We know these acts of bigotry against Asian-descended people are part of a history extending back to the 19th Century Chinese Exclusion Act. We denounce any and all forms of bigotry directed against any underrepresented community. We are willing to work with you to address these issues and to adhere to the wisdom and leadership of those at the vanguard of their respective communities working for transformative social change.

Specific Actions we ask BIPOC communities to take:

Hold organizations and leaders accountable to agendas, action plans, commitments to center racial and other forms of equity in the work of our nonprofit agencies.

To the Skeptics

"I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

To those still skeptical about the need for a group like this to take a stand like this --

As leaders of organizations in our community's non-profit sector, we are united in our shared charge of serving the common good. But when we don't think well about Black people, Indigenous people and other people of color then we are not serving the full common good --only a part of it. We can't fully do our jobs, and can't fully work to create the healthy, vibrant and safe community we all want to live in. This must change.

We who are White didn't create racism and White privilege but those of us who are White benefit from it, and we need to take responsibility for fixing it. We who are White are committed to learning about White privilege and systemic racism. We are all on the learning curve and invite you to join us, starting wherever you are. Check out this [Scaffolded List of Anti-Racism Resources](#) to get started.

If you have questions or would like to explore these issues with one of us, please reach out.

Specific actions we ask skeptics to take:

1. Take a risk and educate yourself about the advantages you as a white person enjoy due to your skin color. Be able to describe the advantages that you have.
2. Read from resources above [White Privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack by Peggy McIntosh](#).
3. Acknowledge that this work is hard and uncomfortable and a process.
4. Emphasize that practicing as an organization with explicit anti-racist strategies, programming and policies creates workplace conditions that foster productivity, collaboration and embracing difference.
5. Emphasize that practice as an organization with explicit anti-racist agendas is critically important to carrying out the organization's mission and the individuals that the organization serves. Inequity and racism directly contribute to barriers in programming and negative outcomes.
6. Reach out to the EXEX group and join one of us for coffee or a phone call to talk more about our commitments and your skepticism.

To our Funders

*“Without courage we cannot practice any other virtue
with consistency. We can’t be kind, true, merciful,
generous, or honest.”*
– Maya Angelou

Too often, nonprofit organizations must abandon a potentially transformative idea because it may not attract the necessary funding. This can mean someone goes hungry, doesn’t get the shelter they need or is unable to access mental health services at a critical juncture. In spite of being creative problem solvers, nonprofit directors and boards can fall into a trap of thinking in grant cycles and focusing our efforts where we know the money is, thus compromising the difference we could make for the community.

Together, recognize these ways of thinking are at best inadequate and at worst exclusionary to the communities that are already the most oppressed through hundreds of years of structural racism. Our thinking must extend beyond a grant cycle. Our actions must be bold.

To our essential donors and funders, we will actively encourage everyone affiliated with our organization to revisit the causes each supports and invests in with a lens of Social Justice.

We will undertake a process of exploring grant opportunities with a lens of Social Justice ourselves by asking our funders to give serious consideration to the following:

- How is the grant process (or your decision to give to a particular organization) developed?
- Is having Black voices at the table during grant development for your grant (or gift) a priority?
- How does your process inherently favor those with the most resources already - to solicit, execute, measure, and report on grants or gifts?
- How are you judging applicants and awarding funds?
- Are awards going to primarily white-led organizations because they’re familiar and they’ve been awarded before?
- Are your beneficiaries serving mostly white audiences?
- Are these recipients making real effort to serve and co-create WITH or BY Black and Brown agencies?
- Are funds being awarded to the agency because you have a personal relationship with someone who looks like you, talks like you, thinks like you?
- How does your funding strategy impact where the money goes and whose work moves forward?
- What languishes?

- What is ignored entirely?

As individuals who play an integral role in finding and applying for funding opportunities that serve our communities, it is important to us that, starting now, grantors assess their granting system and giving priorities. We believe it a priority to increase grant support for projects that engage the entire community in dismantling systemic racism. Through these commitments, we believe you can increase your funding of innovative, cross-sector strategies that may be complex, messy, and hard to measure, but very valuable in our mission to improve outcomes among disenfranchised populations.

As grantees, we're also committed to showing how our work is dismantling racism, and ask that our funders provide additional financial support so this may be accomplished in a meaningful way. Recognize that agencies led by BIPOC are working upstream in a tide that favors foundations, funders, and well established institutions. Recognize that much of the wealth you manage was built on the backs of Black and Brown people. You may not morally support racism, but your unexamined actions may be perpetuating it.

We collectively see a need for funders to release more wealth to make systemic change possible. To support not just scholarships –but to also support work that gets to the root causes that make scholarships necessary. Together, we can recognize that if families lack transportation, a camp scholarship will be meaningless to the children who need it most. Underwriting not only programs that deliver direct services, but programs that empower, and uplift voices that have been silenced for far too long provides great value and lasting change.

We acknowledge and are deeply grateful for the critical role that funders - government, foundations, families, and individuals - play in our work. Yet none of us can meet our mission when an entire group of people carries the weight of our many systems of injustice. As Executive Directors, we recognize that if we are not actively dismantling systems of injustice, we are contributing to them. We wish to partner with you, our funders, in our commitment to dismantling these systems. We need you. Will you join us?

Specific Actions we ask our funders to take:

1. *Continue to support/consider supporting agencies who serve to raise up/address the issues of youth of color and promote their success in this community/world.*
2. *Commit to increasing the diversity of your Boards, staff, and community allocations committees in all areas, including Black, Brown and other People of Color.*

In Shared Commitment

"It always seems impossible until it's done."

– Nelson Mandela

The entire Executive Exchange membership, a consortium of undersigned executive directors representing 117 Tompkins County-based nonprofit agencies, pledges to put these commitments into action. We know that this statement is only the beginning and that the real work will follow. As such we commit ourselves to the following actions beginning immediately:

Specific Actions EXEX commits to:

1. *Share and discuss this statement with our spheres of influence.*
2. *Devote our 2020-2021 EXEX programming to educating ourselves and our communities about systemic racism.*
3. *Join or maintain membership in the Diversity Consortium of Tompkins County.*
4. *Monthly check-ins at our EXEX meetings, to hold one another accountable to our actions.*

On behalf of the Executive Exchange of Tompkins County:

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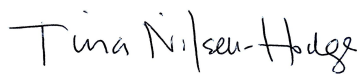
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Village at Ithaca



Steven Manley
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Initiative (IPEI)



Frank Towner
YMCA



Sue Dale-Hall
Child Development Council



Viki McDonald
McGraw House



Rick Manning
Friends of Stewart Park



Suzanne Smith Jablonski
Tompkins County Public
Library Foundation

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