



Doing Business in Tulsa

Welcome from the Mayor's Office of Economic Development

The Mayor's Office of Economic Development welcomes you to the Guide to Doing Business in the City of Tulsa. The following general information guide has been created to connect potential business owners or existing ones to essential documents and resources that the city offers. If after reading this guide you have questions about what to do next with the City of Tulsa, please reach out to us for specific guidance on your issue.

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Legal Requirements

Licensing

Process

Business License Forms

Most licensing forms can be accessed through the City of Tulsa's website. These should be filled out, printed, and mailed to the City. See table below for example businesses and required forms. Other licenses and more information can be found through the City of Tulsa's Business Licensing Department website: https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/finance/business-licensing/

Trade Licensing and Trade Contractor Registration

The State of Oklahoma licenses trade contractors (electrical, fire, mechanical, and plumbing) who must then register with the City of Tulsa. Stationary Engineers are tested locally and issued a license once Certificate of Competency has been received. Upon receipt of the renewal application, the license will be renewed by the City unless the license has lapsed more than a year. It is important to note that the City no longer registers journeymen, apprentice, or sign/electrical sign contractors. Forms for registration for contractors and stationary engineers can be found on the permitting website. Contractors can also register or renew online on the Self Service Portal at https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/development-services/permitting/

For more information, please call the Development Services Department at 918-596-9456 or visit us online at https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/development-services/permitting/permit-center/

State Requirements

In Oklahoma there is no general license required to start or own a business or to operate as a general contractor. However, for specific types of businesses and occupations there are licenses, permits, or special registrations and filings that may be required before opening or operating. More information regarding the State of Oklahoma's requirements for certain businesses can be found on the Oklahoma Department of Commerce website: https://okcommerce.gov/business/licensing/

Licensing Types

If you are starting a(n)	You need
Animal Rescue Business	Animal Hobbyist Exemption https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1371/animals- hobbyistexemptionpermitapplication.pdf
Taxi or Paratransit Business	Taxi or Paratransit Service <u>https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1393/taxiparatransitserviceapplication.pdf</u>
Coin-Operated Device Business	Coin-Operated Device Application https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1376/coin-opdecalapp8-19-14.doc
Food and Alcohol Sales Business	Food and Alcohol Occupational License Checklist https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1379/fbo-newchecklist2015.pdf
Hotel	Hotel License https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1381/hotel-license-application1.pdf

Mobile or Outdoor Business	Mobile or Outdoor Vendor License https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1384/mobilevendoroutdoorapp5-2015.pdf
Loading Zone	Loading Zone License https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1383/loadingzoneapplication-2015.doc
Pawn Shop	Pawn Broker License https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1385/pawnbrokerapplication2015.doc
Sexually Oriented Business	Sexually Oriented Business License https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1388/sexuallyorientedbusinessapplication.doc

Note: This may not be a comprehensive list of required permits or licenses to operate your business. If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact us via our website at https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/development-services/permitting/.

Permitting

Process

The City of Tulsa Development Services Permit Center permits all development within the city and registers the licenses of trade contractors. The Permit Center is located on the 4th Floor of City Hall. Public hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Several of the forms required for doing business with Development Services are available online. These include Permit Applications, Permit Request forms, Contractor Registration and Account forms, Appeal forms, and Commercial and Residential Permit Procedure booklets. Information on the Professional Residential Builders Program and Residential Fast Track Procedures are available as well.

Although a few of the forms can be found online for paper submittals, it is preferable to access and submit permits by using the online self-service portal. This new tool makes developing in Tulsa simple by allowing the applicant to register once and then have access to fill out the application questions and upload plans online. The self-service portal helps users submit, track and pay online. Permits requiring a contractor's license must be applied for by the contractor, using the contractor's login. This is a security feature that ensures that only licensed contractors can apply for permits that require licenses. Other contacts (homeowners, office administrators, etc.) may be added to the permit to allow others to track permit status, pay fees, schedule inspections, etc.

Development Services Website: https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/development-services/permitting/

Self-Service Portal: https://tulsaok.tylertech.com/EnerGov4934/SelfService#/home

Development Services Pre-Meetings

Development Services offers pre-submittal and pre-construction meetings for all development and building projects (these meetings are most commonly referred to as a Pre-Development Meeting).

These meetings serve as an opportunity for the City's review staff and inspectors to meet with engineers, architects, contractors, and owners to coordinate efforts and resolve issues and tripwires ahead of time, helping to manage review time and construction problems. Additionally, representatives of INCOG, the Fire Department, Traffic Engineering, Urban Development and Right-of-Way Permitting may be in attendance. These meetings also provide our customers an opportunity to discuss the design code concepts and develop guidelines for the project.

The following meetings are available through the City of Tulsa's Development Services Department:

Infrastructure Development Process (IDP), Pre-Development Meeting - Held with the Infrastructure Development staff for the review of public infrastructure developments and improvements. There is a \$350 fee to hold a predevelopment meeting. Upon submittal of the first set of plans, fees will be credited toward the plan review fee. To schedule an IDP Pre-Development Meeting, please submit a completed IDP Pre-Development Application to the IDP Coordinator at 175 E. 2nd Street, 4th Floor. Ashley Chaney, IDP Process Coordinator, (918) 596-2514 or achaney@cityoftulsa.org

Code Compliance Process, Code Compliance Development Meeting - Held with the Building Plans Review staff for the review of building/construction permits. There is a \$350 fee associated with the CCP. When a building permit is issued, this fee will be credited toward the permit fee. To Schedule a Code Compliance Meeting, please submit the completed CCP Application, along with the \$350 fee, to the Permit Center at 175 E. 2nd Street, 4th Floor. Adam Murray, professional code official, (918) 596-7639 or <u>amurray@cityoftulsa.org</u>

Pre-Construction Meeting - Held with Inspection Services Staff prior to the start of construction related to Building Permits. To schedule a pre-construction meeting, contact Phil Bradley, Inspection Services Manager, at (918) 596-1612 or pbradley@cityoftulsa.org

Building Permits

Residential Building Permit Process

Specific information regarding the development of residential properties can be found in the Residential Building Permit Process Handbook. <u>https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1259/res_09102014.pdf</u>

Commercial Building Permit Process

Information regarding the creation and development of commercial sites in the City of Tulsa can be found in the Commercial Building Permit Process Handbook.

https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1260/comm_090914.pdf

Infrastructure Development

The City of Tulsa's Infrastructure Development Process is designed to facilitate privately-funded projects that become part of the public infrastructure. IDP projects include those with water and sanitary mains, streets and storm water facilities (pipes, channels, detention ponds.) Many large projects begin with the Infrastructure Development Process. https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/development-services/permitting/infrastructure-development/

Certificate of Occupancy

A Certificate of Use and Occupancy is required prior to occupancy for buildings or structures erected, enlarged, remodeled, or altered to change from one use to another (e.g. from an office to a shoe store). The form is designed to obtain enough information to determine the use group, type of construction, and any special stipulations that should be imposed.

When the applicant starts with a building permit and a Certificate of Occupancy (COO) is required, the COO is automatically attached to the permit process and will be issued once all work has been completed, stipulations have been met (i.e. right of way, floodplain, infrastructure development, etc..), structure has passed all trade inspections and all fees have been paid.

If the applicant is applying for a Stand Alone COO (used for change of use only), a building permit is not required. However, an in person application is required for this process. To complete a Stand Alone COO, one set of site plans and a floor plan is needed. From there, building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and fire marshal checks must be completed. Once passed and all applicable fees have been paid, a Certificate of Occupancy will be issued.

Other

Food Related Businesses

The City of Tulsa requires all businesses pertaining to food and beverage service to complete the following process to begin a food and/or beverage related business: https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1379/fbo-newchecklist2015.pdf

The City Permit office no longer accepts Health Department plans for food related projects or projects on a septic system. Applicants will be required to submit plans directly to the Health Department located at 5051 S 129 E Ave. Debbie Watts, 918-595-4305.

All local food service employees must have an original, valid Foodhandler Permit from Tulsa Health Department (THD) in their possession while at work. To receive a permit, you must successfully complete a THD Food Safety Class or pass the THD Waiver Test.

http://www.tulsa-health.org/food-safety/food-classes-permits

Sidewalk Cafés, Tables, & Chairs

The City of Tulsa encourages the formation and use of Sidewalk Cafés and Tables & Chairs to stimulate the pedestrian realm with activity. In addition, the street vitality is increased by encouraging walking and further promoting the local economy. To access information on establishing a Sidewalk Café or providing tables and chairs at a business within the public right of way, please visit our website.

https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/planning/current-projects/zoning-and-regulations/sidewalk-caf%C3%A9s/

Okie 811

Before starting on projects, make sure to contact Okie Dig to ensure that no utilities or underground private lines are disrupted during a renovation or excavation project. This organization strives to ensure that citizens, residents, and businesses are kept safe while excavation or renovation processes are occurring by providing the maps which show where underground lines are. http://www.okie811.org/

ABLE & Alcoholic Beverage Licensing

The Alcoholic Beverage Laws Enforcement (ABLE) Commission works to enforce laws pertaining to alcoholic beverages, charity games, and youth access to tobacco across the state of Oklahoma. https://www.ok.gov/able/

General Information

Planning

Tulsa Planning Office

The Tulsa Planning Office at INCOG leads both the long-range and current planning efforts for the City of Tulsa. Their work helps guide future development and public investments for the city with a focus on improving the quality of life for Tulsa's residents and includes the continued development of the City's comprehensive plan; small area planning to assist neighborhoods with more specific, contextual strategies; the implementation of the City's plans; the Destination District program, focused on revitalizing commercial districts and creating vibrant destinations throughout Tulsa; and administration of historic preservation, zoning and other supporting programs.

Zoning Process

Requests for zoning and land division changes for Tulsa and unincorporated areas of Tulsa County are handled by the Land Development Services Division of the Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG). The staff reviews zoning requests for compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan, the City of Tulsa Zoning Code, the Tulsa County Zoning Code, development guidelines, and physical characteristics of the surrounding area. The staff makes recommendations to the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (TMAPC), a recommending board to the Tulsa City Council and Tulsa County Board of County Commissioners.

https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/planning/

City Zoning Code

The City of Tulsa Zoning Code applies to all public and private use and development of properties within the corporate limits of the City of Tulsa, except as provided by state or federal law or as otherwise expressly stated in this zoning code. <u>http://www.incog.org/Land_Development/Documents/Tulsa%20Zoning%20Code%206.30.17%20Updates%20with%20bookm</u> <u>arks.pdf</u>

County Zoning Code

The Tulsa County Zoning Code applies to all unincorporated areas of Tulsa County, excluding those subject to the zoning powers of any incorporated municipality.

http://www.incog.org/Land_Development/Documents/Tulsa%20County%20Zoning%20Code%20May%202018.pdf

Taxation

Local Taxes

City

Inside the City limits of Tulsa, the Sales tax and Use tax is allocated between three taxing jurisdictions: **State of Oklahoma** - 4.5% **Tulsa County** - 0.367% **City** - 3.65% **Total:** 8.517% Sales and Use Tax inside portion of the City Limits of Tulsa that is within Tulsa County. https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/finance/sales-tax-in-tulsa/

County

Ad Valorem property taxes are based on the current value of real estate or property that a business owns and is set by the County Assessor and the County Excise Board. Like income tax, property tax is calculated and paid on an annual basis. Property taxes are determined by establishing a millage levy, or tax rate, against the net assessed value of the county based on the amount of money needed. These millages are set in collaboration with the six taxing entities who make up the ad valorem tax – the City, County, affected K-12 school district, Tulsa Technology Center, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa City-County Library Commission, and the Tulsa City-County Health Department. The Tulsa County Excise Board sets the millage rate each October while the County Assessor's Office determines the net assessed value of each property in the county. The areas of Tulsa within Rogers and Osage county do the same for their respective counties.

More information on Ad Valorem taxes in Tulsa County as well as a guide to calculating them can be found here: <u>http://www.assessor.tulsacounty.org/PDFs/AdValoremPropertyTaxGuide.pdf</u>

State Taxes

The State of Oklahoma requires certain taxes from specific businesses, as well as overarching sales tax policies.

More information about State taxes can be found here: https://www.ok.gov/tax/Businesses/index.html

Utilities

Water and Sewer

The City of Tulsa provides water and sewer utilities to its residents and customers. Tulsa's drinking water comes from two sources: Lakes Spavinaw and Eucha on Spavinaw Creek and Lake Oologah on the Verdigris River. There are two treatment plants for water, and four for collected wastewater. https://www.cityoftulsa.org/utilities

Electric

The Public Service Company of Oklahoma is the utility service that provides residents of the City of Tulsa with electricity. https://www.psoklahoma.com/

Gas

Oklahoma Natural Gas provides natural gas to City of Tulsa customers. <u>https://www.oklahomanaturalgas.com/</u>

Steam

Veolia serves about 30 customers in Downtown Tulsa with centrally-produced steam and chilled water. https://www.veolianorthamerica.com/en/locations/tulsa-ok

Business and Development Incentives

Incentives

Tax Incentive Districts

Tax Incentive Districts provide a five- to six-year abatement on local property taxes for specific development projects. Developers may apply to the City of Tulsa for tax abatement on projects constructed or rehabilitated within a designated Tax Incentive District. At this time, the City has one Tax Incentive District, covering some property within the Inner Dispersal Loop (the interstate highways surrounding downtown). Tax abatements from the Incentive District cannot be stacked with Tax Incerement Financing Districts.

https://www.cityoftulsa.org/economic-development/opportunities-and-incentives/tax-incentive-districts/

Tax Increment Financing Districts

The Oklahoma Local Development Act (1992) allows local governments to establish Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts. TIF districts are a development tool that can be used to help make a project that otherwise would not occur happen. It is based on the assessed improvement of the taxable value of a property and can be used to fund some project-specific needs. https://www.cityoftulsa.org/economic-development/opportunities-and-incentives/tax-increment-districts/

Brownfield Program Revolving Loan Fund

The City of Tulsa's Brownfields Program provides funds to assist with the assessment and cleanup of environmental contamination at abandoned, idle or underused industrial or commercial facilities or sites. This program helps convert contaminated sites into productive properties that are attractive and ready for redevelopment.

Completing a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment before purchasing a property generally protects a future landowner from liability for contamination already on the property. The City of Tulsa provides no-cost Environmental Site Assessments to support reuse and redevelopment. Any entity may be eligible for an assessment including:

- Nonprofit organizations
- Local government
- Quasi-governmental agencies and authorities
- Redevelopment agencies
- Profit-making redevelopments that provide a community benefit

If cleanup is necessary, Tulsa's Brownfields Program maintains a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) with low-interest, flexible financing for environmental clean-up. These funds can be applied to preparation of a Remedial Action Plan as well as cleanup activities.

https://www.cityoftulsa.org/economic-development/opportunities-and-incentives/brownfields/revolving-loan-fund/

Downtown Development Fund

The Downtown Development and Redevelopment Fund, which was part of the 2013 Improve Our Tulsa funding package, is intended to promote high quality development in downtown Tulsa, including mixed-use and/or preservation-based projects. The projects will be evaluated for the potential they have to retain and promote new development downtown, and support infrastructure for private development. Applicants must demonstrate financial health and capacity and show that the funding would be used to develop or redevelop physical property located within the Inner Dispersal Loop (IDL) in downtown Tulsa. The loans are not intended to be used for land acquisition, only for new construction on existing land or redevelopment of an existing structure. The design criteria also place emphasis on capitalizing on the community's assets and creating a sense of place and belonging and character; street and neighborhood connections; fountains, green space, pathways and streetscaping; public art; lighting; creation of gateways into downtown and outdoor dining. Typically, the loans are at 0% interest for a 6-year term. For more information, visit http://staging.cityoftulsa.org/economic-development/opportunities-and-incentives/downtown-development-and-redevelopment-fund/

Economic Development Public Infrastructure Fund

Included in the Improve Our Tulsa package (2013), this fund was developed to assist, in a timely manner, with valid public infrastructure needs related to business retention, expansion and attraction. The voters approved \$6 million over the term of

the program towards these efforts based on an annual allocation approved by the Tulsa City Council as part of the City budgeting process.

The criteria/objectives to be under consideration for this fund include:

• Provide assistance with public infrastructure needs in those unique instances when this is the most appropriate program or resource.

• Assist in with the retention and expansion of jobs in manufacturing and office business sectors.

• It is not the intent of the policy to fund land acquisition.

• Where applicable cost sharing and potentially claw-back provisions will be negotiated. This fund is also referred to as Annual Economic Development Priority Opportunities Fund.

Retail Incentive

The City of Tulsa recognizes that the most effective incentive for economic development is being a livable and vibrant community. It is recognized that Tulsa, like all cities in Oklahoma, is heavily reliant on sales tax revenues to support the City's General Fund. In order to provide the levels of programs and services necessary to remain a vibrant and livable community, the sales tax base must continue to grow. The goal of this policy is to ensure Tulsa continues to be a great place to live and that continuing to be a regional retail center is supportive of that effort. This policy is intended to support commercial retail businesses.

Minimum requirements for applicants:

• Stand-alone retail: Retailer must have projected annual gross retail sales of \$20 Million by the third year of operation.

• At time of application, Retailer has no existing presence in MSA, or new development that is part of a regional retail project of at least 100,000 square feet.

• Multi business development: If the application is for a development with multiple businesses the project must contain at least 100,000 square feet.

• Underserved or distressed area: Location is within an enterprise zone, designated USDA food desert, adopted City of Tulsa Sector Plan or adopted City of Tulsa Small Area Plan.

Fire Suppression Grant

A City grant of up to \$8,000 is available for sprinkler connections and accessories located in the public right-of-way. An application is available at Development Services. For more information, please contact Yuen Ho, Director of Development Services, at <u>yuenho@cityoftulsa.org</u> or at 918-596-1865.

Improvement District

The City may create special assessment districts for the purpose of making or causing to be made any improvement or combination of improvements that confer special benefit upon property within the district. 11 OS § 39.101. Currently there are two Improvement Districts within the City: Tulsa Stadium Improvement District No. 1 and Whittier Square Improvement District No. 2. For more information, please see Binu Abraham, Finance Department, 918-596-7644, babraham@cityoftulsa.org or Brian Kurtz, Downtown Coordinating Council, 918-576-5095, <u>bkurtz@cityoftulsa.org</u>.

Community Development Block Grants and HOME Funds

Tulsa is an entitlement community receiving approximately \$3 million annually in HUD grants for eligible projects. Application process required each year in May. For more information contact: Gary Hamer, Phone: (918) 576-7573, ghamer@cityoftulsa.org

State Resources

The State of Oklahoma provides many resources for both new businesses and those moving to the region. More information about these programs can be found on the Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce Website. <u>https://okcommerce.gov/business/</u> and <u>https://okcommerce.gov/wp-</u> <u>content/uploads/2015/06/Oklahoma Business Incentives and Tax Guide.pdf</u>

Development Assistance

City Authorities that Assist with Development

Tulsa Development Authority (TDA)

The mission of the TDA is to improve Tulsa through programs and projects designed to utilize private and public resources that advance the physical, social, and economic wellbeing of citizens and neighborhoods throughout the city. The primary objectives of the Tulsa Development Authority are to revitalize declining and underdeveloped areas, to encourage private investment and economic development, and improve the tax base through removal of slum and blight by redevelopment and rehabilitation. For more information contact OC Walker, Executive Director, at ocwalker@tulsadevelopmentauthority.org or 918.592.4944

http://www.tulsadevelopmentauthority.org.

Tulsa Industrial Authority (TIA)

The Tulsa Industrial Authority (TIA) serves two primary roles in assisting the City of Tulsa. First, as a conduit in the issuance of 501 (c)(3) bonds and secondly as the administrator of several Tax Increment Financing Districts including those found downtown. For more information please contact Jim Coles, Executive Director, at jcoles@cityoftulsa.org.

Tulsa Preservation Commission (TPC)

The City of Tulsa's Planning Department maintains a database of properties eligible for historic preservation incentives. Preservation Staff is happy to assist property owners with questions about historic status and National Register listing, historic preservation tax credits, and the International Existing Building Code's provisions for historic properties. Please contact Jed Porter at jporter@cityoftulsa.org.

http://www.tulsapreservation.org.

Downtown Coordinating Council (DCC)

The DCC provides support and makes recommendations to the city regarding the coordination, planning and management of improvement efforts in Downtown Tulsa. The DCC is also the entity which oversees funds from the Stadium Improvement District relating to the provision of clean and safe services, as well as marketing efforts for Downtown Tulsa. For more information, contact Brian Kurtz, Executive Director at bkurtz@cityoftulsa.org. https://downtowntulsaok.com

Tulsa Economic Development Corporation (TEDC)

This non-profit Community Development Financial Institution was formed in 1979 as a catalyst for economic development. TEDC drives small business success through non-traditional lending programs and development services that help entrepreneurs start to expand a company. Branded as Creative Capital, TEDC uses public and private funds to make direct loans and participates with other institutions on projects that lack sufficient equity. Special considerations are given to companies that create and retain jobs. Rose Washington Rentie, 918-585-8332 https://www.tedc.com.

Non-City Entities that Assist with Development

Tulsa Regional Chamber

The Tulsa Regional Chamber is a membership-based organization that works to support and create economic activity across the Metro area. TRC works on business retention and expansion, new business attraction, community development, workforce development, regional tourism, and legislative advocacy for the Tulsa area. <u>www.growmetrotulsa.com</u>

The Forge

Tulsa's basecamp for entrepreneurs, providing coworking space, offices, meeting spaces, workshops, mentorship, and community networking opportunities. Many successful Tulsa companies came out of 36° North, and their contribution to the city's positive business climate is significant. https://www.36degreesnorth.co

Tulsa Small Business Connection

A program of the Tulsa Regional Chamber that serves as the voice of small businesses in the Tulsa region. They provide entrepreneurial education and support, management training and resources, and growth assistance and strategy, all while providing a community of likeminded and similar organizations to work with. https://www.tulsasbc.com

Workforce Tulsa

Workforce Tulsa fuels economic development by creating relationships that benefit employers and job seekers by placing talent today, while preparing individuals for the jobs of tomorrow. They provide job training and employer matching programs. http://www.workforcetulsa.com

Tulsa Community WorkAdvance

A sector-focused workforce development initiative that is helping hundreds of Tulsa-area residents build stable and productive lives. TCW's innovative approach works to understand employer's skill gap needs and connect individuals to free technical training, full-time job placement and career advancement coaching. http://www.workadvance.org/

l2e

A non-profit investment capital organization that manages almost \$60 million. They provide funding and support services to entrepreneurs across Oklahoma, acting as venture capital for firms that promise to grow Oklahoma's economy. <u>https://i2e.org</u>

Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST)

OCAST is a governmental center devoted to increasing research activity and public/private collaborations by offering funding, STEM education, and support services to entrepreneurs and the public. They have an incredible return on investment and are recognized as one of the best science investment organizations in the nation. https://www.ok.gov/ocast/

Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance

A non-profit statewide network of manufacturing extension agents and applications engineers that serves as the primary source, advocate, and voice for manufacturing in Oklahoma. They assess needs and provide solutions for manufacturing problems across the state through public and private resources. https://www.okalliance.com/

SCORE

SCORE is a nationwide volunteer organization dedicated to helping individuals intending to start a small business and those already in business desiring advice. The Tulsa chapter has branches in Downtown Tulsa, Bartlesville, and Broken Arrow, with 30 active members.

http://tulsa.score.org/

See an organization missing from this list? Please contact anongard @cityoftulsa.org to suggest additions.

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