

FOOD POLICY COUNCILS: FOOD ACCESS AND HUNGER ALLEVIATION

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Presentation overview

- Introduce Food Policy Councils
- Describe study of council members' self-reported community impact
 - Focus on healthy food access results
- Share insights from case study
 - How a council addresses hunger in their community
- Questions and discussion

Food Policy Councils (FPCs)

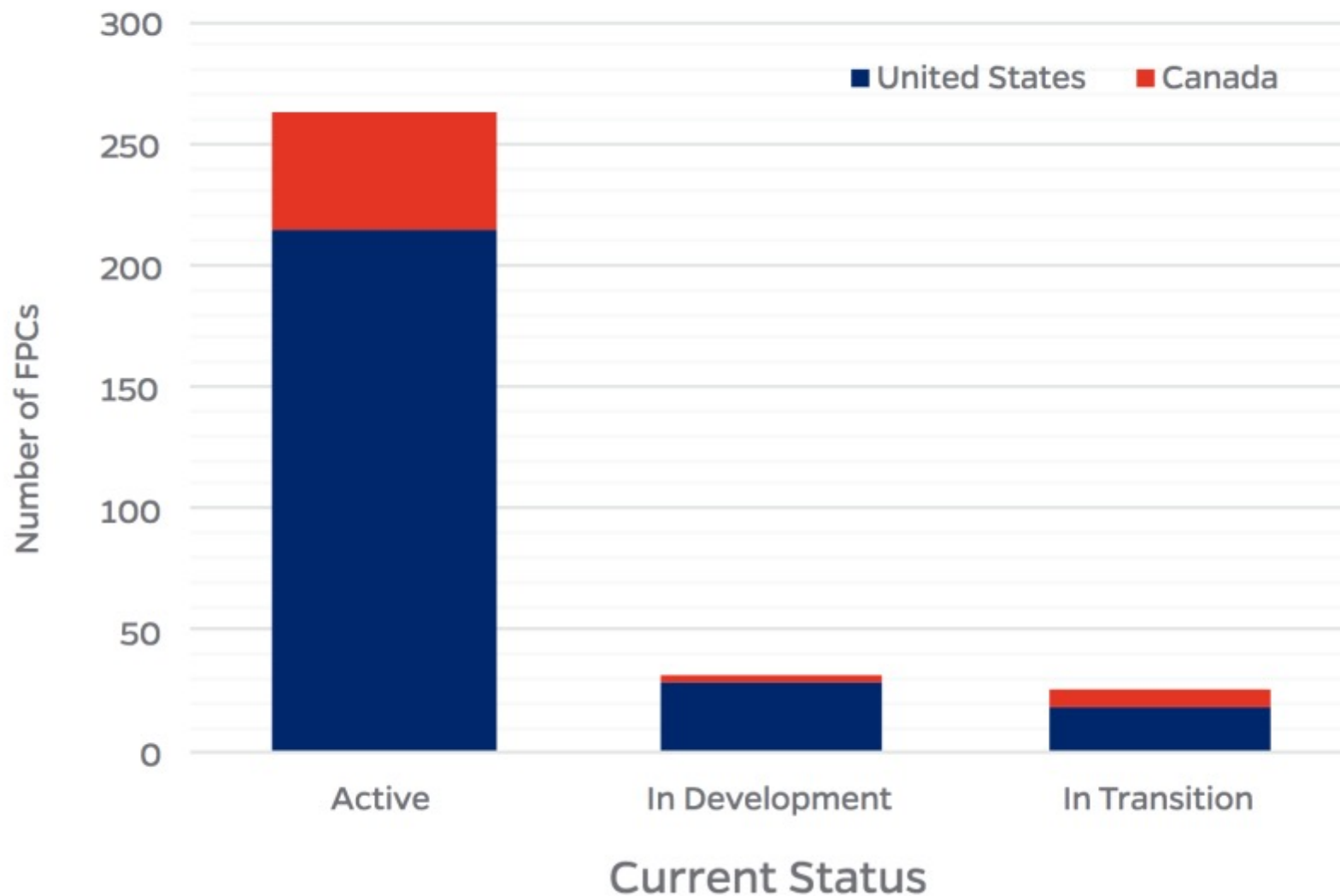
Food Policy Councils (FPCs) are organizations that bring together representatives from across the food system to:

- Identify issues and opportunities within the food system
 - e.g., Conduct a food system assessment
- Coordinate food-related programs
 - e.g., Organizing cooking demonstrations
- Advise on food policy
 - e.g., Recommend new zoning policy

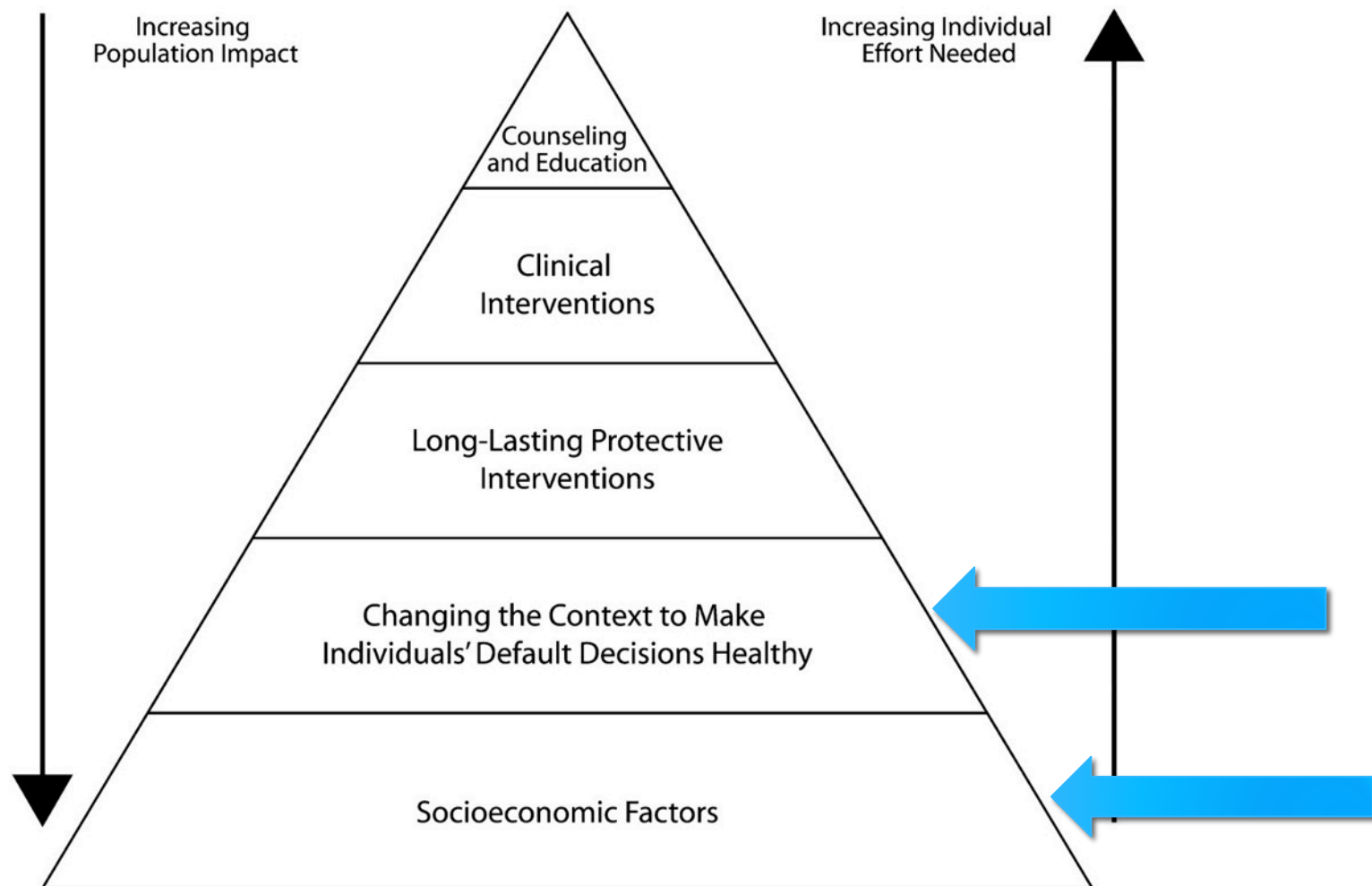


Active FPCs

n=324



FPCs – Potential Public Health Impact



The gap: What impact do FPCs have in their communities?

- Challenging to determine community-level impact
 - “Because much of our work is indirect, facilitative, and collaborative, it’s difficult to isolate the impacts of our specific efforts”
 - MacRae, 1994, p.17
- Current state of research
 - Ask councils what their impact is
- Future research
 - Evaluate impact of specific FPC initiatives (programs and policies)
 - Community-level comparisons between areas with and without FPCs

Our study - Analyzed self-reported impacts

- 2015 – Invited all 278 FPCs listed on the Food Policy Network's FPC Directory to participate in a survey
 - General information about the council
 - Internal capacity – e.g., leadership, member empowerment, synergy
 - Policy, systems and environmental-level (PSE) changes
 - “Please list and describe changes in: policy e.g., bee keeping ordinance, zoning for community gardens; systems e.g., connected food-related organizations; environments e.g., influenced menus in hospital cafeterias; and/or organizational practices e.g., use of local foods in schools; that your council helped facilitate over the last 12 months”
 - Open-text box where participants wrote responses
 - Specifically analyzed these results in forth-coming manuscript

Methods

- Qualitative content analysis
- Iterative coding process
 - Started with public health frameworks
 - Lots of discussion – strength of NOPREN network is diversity of perspectives
- Final codebook - Impact domains
 - Modification of Healthy Food Policy Project framework
 - Public Health Law Center, the University of Connecticut's Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, and the Vermont Law School's Center for Agriculture and Food Systems
 - Codes were not mutually exclusive
 - Double-coded, partners reconciled codes
- One author reviewed all codes
 - Grouped responses into initiative topics
- Code counts, crosswalked initiatives with impact codes, and synthesis

Methods – Impact domains

Coding discussions resulted in six impact domain codes:

1. Supporting resilient food systems
2. Increasing access to healthy foods
3. Supporting economic development
4. Promoting equity in the food system
5. Promoting environmental sustainability
6. Increasing knowledge of or demand for healthy foods

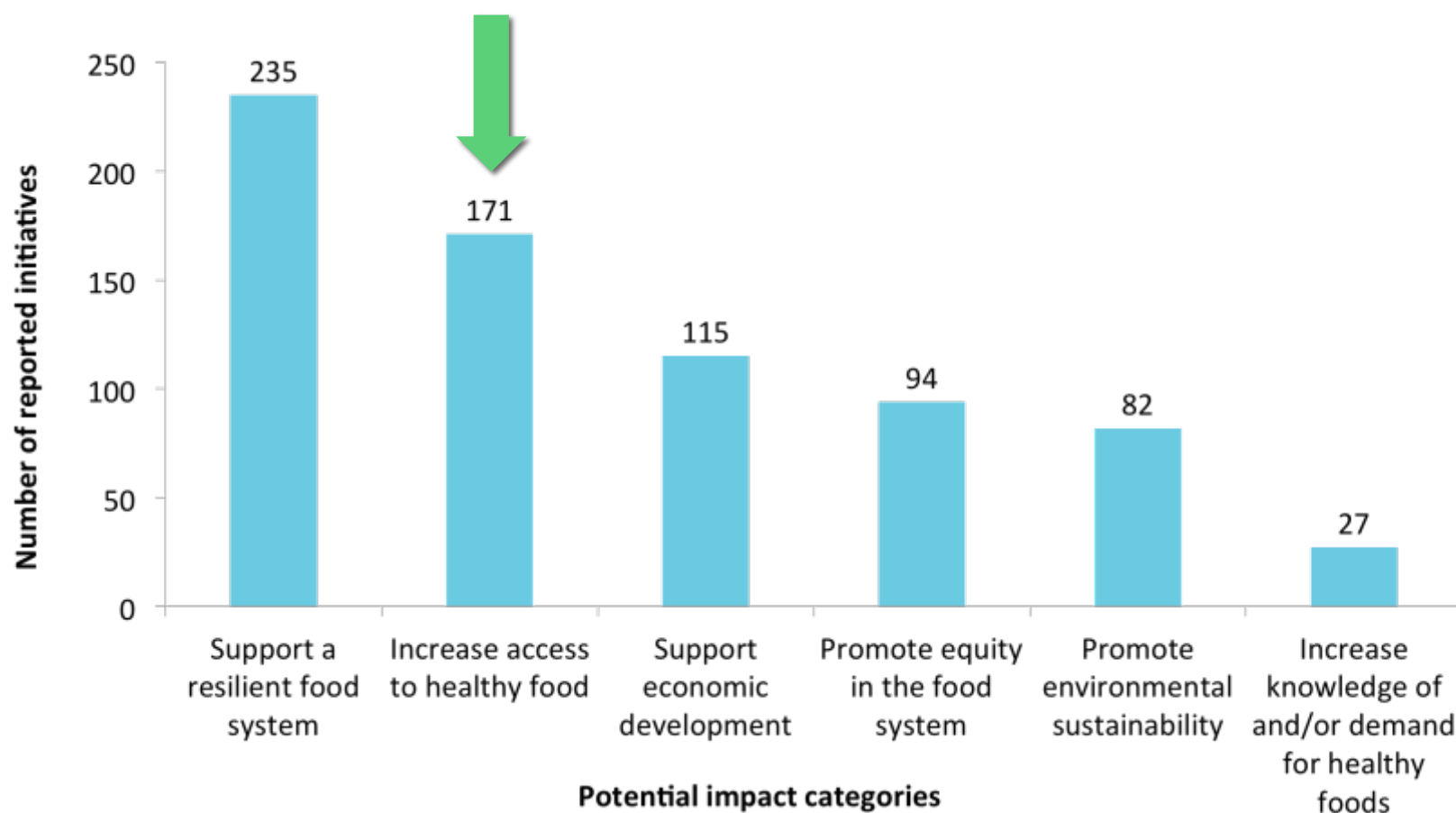
Results – FPC Participants and Initiatives

- 317 PSE initiatives reported
- Participants from 66 FPCs responded
 - If more than one participant from a council responded, we condensed related responses

Country and Region	FPCs reporting initiatives in this study n (%)	FPCs listed in the 2016 Food Policy Network Directory n (%)
United States		
West	18 (27)	68 (22)
Midwest	11 (17)	69 (24)
South	15 (23)	65 (21)
Northeast	10 (15)	40 (13)
Tribal Nations (US)	2 (3)	4 (1)
Canada		
West	1 (2)	21 (7)
Prairies	0	7 (2)
Central	7 (11)	39 (12)
Atlantic	0	3 (1)
Unknown	2 (3)	0
TOTAL	66	316

Results – Impact domains

Potential impacts of policy, systems, and environment initiatives (N=317) reported by food policy council members (N=66) in 2015



Results – Increasing access to healthy food

Examples of initiatives reported by participants:

1. “Updated school wellness policy with expanded focus on healthy foods”
 - Community Food Council Del Norte & Adjacent Tribal Lands (CA)
2. “Increase the number of days a week that a community member can sell produce from a produce stand on private property to 7 days a week”
 - Asheville Buncombe Food Policy Council (NC)

Results – Increasing access to healthy food

Examples of topics we organized initiatives into:

- Building connections between organizations or supported another organization, or activities related to how the council functions (structure, governance, etc.)
- Urban agriculture
- Supporting farmers' markets
- Promoting local food procurement in schools
- Supporting community gardens
- Increasing access to free or low cost foods through programs and SNAP use
- Influencing institutional purchasing
- Increasing the number of healthy food outlets

Results – Increasing access to healthy food

Sectors we grouped initiatives into:

- Schools
- Residential areas
- Retail food (stores)
- Restaurants/mobile vending
- Farmers' markets
- Food banks, pantries, and charitable food distribution
- Local government
- Parks/public land
- Agriculture
- Food assistance programs

Results – Increasing access to healthy food

Example initiatives in emergency food sector:

1. “We are completing an assessment to recommend food banks and food pantries adopt nutritional standards”
 - Southwest New Mexico Food Policy Council (NM)
2. “The connection of food pantries”
 - Suffolk County Food Policy Council (NY)
3. “Food drive for the local Salvation Army's food pantry”
 - Lassen County Food Council (CA)

Results – Increasing access to healthy food

Example initiatives in food assistance programs sector:

1. “Increase SNAP usage and access”
 - Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council (CO)
2. “Raised funds for SNAP match; Implemented a SNAP match program”
 - Wallowa County Food System Council (OR)
3. “Created a pilot program for enrolling individuals in Medi-Cal and CalFresh (food stamps) at the same time (One Stop Enrollment)”
 - Orange County Food Access Coalition (CA)

Results – Increasing access to healthy food

Example topics of policy, systems and environmental (PSE) initiatives by potential impact; n=66 food policy councils; Heat Map

Topic of PSE change	Increase access to healthy food
Urban agriculture	37
Supporting farmers' markets	25
Promoting local food procurement in schools	21
Supporting community gardens	21
Increasing access to free or low cost foods through programs and SNAP use	14
Improving school food	11
Building connections between organizations or supported another organization, or activities related to how the council functions (structure, governance, etc)	10

Conclusion

- FPCs reported initiatives that are likely to increase access to healthy foods in their communities
 - Still needed - Measuring community impact
- Initiatives that increase access to healthy foods can have other important benefits too
 - Examples:
 - Urban agriculture can improve access to healthy foods, economic development, and environmental sustainability
 - Strengthening school meals programs can increase access to healthy foods and promote health equity
- Impact domains can help inform community-level impact assessment of FPCs
 - Modified the FPC Self Assessment Tool to ask about these domains

FPC Case study – Adams County, PA

- Adams County, PA
 - 101,482 in 2012
 - About 91% of residents were White, 2% Black, 6% Hispanic, and 1% identify as another race
 - 9.5% of the population was food insecure
 - One-half of the land in the county was devoted to agriculture
 - Median household income was \$60,356 in 2012



FPC Case study – Adams County, PA

- Adams County Food Policy Council (ACFPC)
- Established in 2009
 - Mission: “In the interest of health and sustainability, the ACFPC promotes the integration of the individual, community, the economy, and the environment. We engage with businesses, institutions, social service agencies, community members, the agricultural sector, and government to develop food policy and take action.”
- Identified the Food Gap as a big issue
- ACFPC members
 - Researchers, agricultural extension, healthcare, poverty alleviation non-profit

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NEWS & UPDATES

2018 HEALTHY OPTIONS FUNDRAISING HAS BEGUN!

Local farms and businesses have generously donated goods. Check out your options and buy something! All proceeds support Healthy Options.



2017-2018 LOCAL FOODS RESOURCE GUIDE



NEW 2017-2018 Adams County Local Foods Resource Guide - PDF

[Interactive Map](#)

[If you or your business/office](#)

FPC Case study – Programs

1. Healthy Options

- Pilot tested in 2011, continues today
- Provides low-income residents with vouchers to use at Adams County Farmers' Market Association markets
- ACFPC organizes program
 - Fundraising
 - Facilitated policy change at markets – Accept EBT at markets
- Program benefits
 - Increases # of market customers
 - “It generates income and [farmers' market] vendors appreciate it” – ACFPC member
 - Increases diversity among market customers through outreach
 - “Prior to [program implementation year] those families just did not shop in the [farmers'] market at all. They didn't feel comfortable going or that it was accessible to them. Now they feel pretty comfortable going and the demographics shifted at our farmers' market” – ACFPC member
 - Community resource to address food insecurity
 - Council members refer patients to the program

FPC Case study – Programs

2. Gleaning efforts in Adams County

- 2 volunteers used to run gleaning efforts in the county
 - They retired
- Council emphasized need for a gleaning coordinator to county government
- County hired gleaning coordinator (now a member of the council)
- 1,000s of pounds of produce are gleaned from farms each year
 - Brought to food pantries in the area
 - “The food pantry clients come on a regular basis looking for those fresh fruits and vegetables” – ACFPC member

FPC Case study – Programs

3. Healthy backpack program

- Community member learned about hunger issues at his daughter's school and about a healthy backpack program in neighboring county
- Reached out to council to see if a program was possible in Adams County schools
- Community member lead program
 - Council advised program
 - Connected to network of faith organizations for fundraising and volunteers
- Council seen as a credible organization that can initiate and support food system programs

Final thoughts

- FPCs can help design, implement, support, and evaluate policy, systems and environmental (PSE) initiatives to improve access to healthy foods in their communities
- Consider joining or working with an FPC in your area
 - Win-win: Councils benefit from members' expertise and members benefit from council's network
- Variation in FPC focus
 - Hunger is central for some, less so for others
- How can we measure the impact FPCs have on healthy food access in their communities?

Thank you! Questions?

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Acknowledgements

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Resources

Calancie, L., Stritzinger, N., Koch, J., Horton, C., Allen, N.E., Weiner, B.J., Ng, S.W., Ammerman, A. (2017). Food Policy Council Case Study Describing Cross-sector Collaboration for Food System Change in a Rural Setting. *Progress in Community Health Partnerships*. 11(4), 441-447.

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