By-laws of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board

Revised: March 2026

Adopted by Membership: March 2026

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization shall be the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board.

ARTICLE II

Mission and Vision

Section 1. Mission

The Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board is dedicated to eliminating homelessness and ensuring that a comprehensive system of care and services is in place to respond to the needs of homeless individuals and those at risk of homelessness in Schenectady County.

Section 2. Vision

Every person in our community has safe, affordable, stable, and appropriate housing.

Section 3. CoC Equity Statement

The mission of the CoC is to make homelessness in the region rare, brief, and non-recurring. To accomplish this mission, the CoC is adopting a set of values that will guide its actions and will orient the CoC in specific ways toward its mission. The CoC (through the Board and its committees) will endeavor to make funding, program, and policy actions that are aligned with its stated values. These values will guide the actions of all CoC bodies established under this Charter:

1) Recommendations and decisions will reflect the population of people experiencing homelessness.

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2) The CoC will promote equity for communities of color disproportionally affected by homelessness.

3) Decisions and recommendations made by the Board and committees will reflect a cross-sectional and regional approach.

4) The CoC will operate with transparency and inclusiveness.

5) Members of the Coalition take shared responsibility and accountability for addressing unconscious biases in decision-making.

6) CoC leadership will establish clearly defined roles and responsibilities and communicate decisions openly.

ARTICLE III

Purpose

The purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board is to

1. serve as the Continuum of Care for Schenectady County as described in the HEARTH Act and its implementing regulations.
2. operate the Continuum of Care in compliance with HUD regulations.
3. promote inter-agency coordination and collaboration.
4. maintain a knowledge base of the current system and its efforts to reduce homelessness in Schenectady County.
5. identify unmet needs and gaps in services.
6. develop and implement a short- and long-term plan to address the identified unmet needs and gaps in services.
7. coordinate, review, and approve applications for HUD funding.
8. establish and evaluate targeted goals for system improvement on an annual basis.

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9. increase community awareness of the causes of homelessness, the needs of people experiencing homelessness, and ways to end homelessness.

10. maintain the HMIS database and oversee the Coordinated Entry process.

11. serve in an advisory capacity to local governmental units in Schenectady County.

Written Standards & Policies and Procedures

The HSPB will review on an as-needed basis both the *Written Standards* and the *Policies and Procedures* for funded programs in compliance with HUD regulations. The HSPB Board will be responsible for ensuring the *Written Standards* as well as the *Policies and Procedures* including the following:

1. Policies and procedures for evaluating individuals' and families' eligibility for assistance;
2. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive transitional housing assistance;
3. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive rapid rehousing assistance;
4. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive permanent supportive housing assistance;
5. There will be an annual review of policies and procedures to guide the operation of the coordinated entry system to comply with any requirements established by HUD by Notice;
6. An Emergency Transfer Plan* for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking;
7. Standards that determine what percentage or amount of rent each program participant must pay while receiving assistance;
8. Standards will be reviewed in consultation with Emergency Solutions Grants program funds within the geographic area;

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9. If the HSPB is designated a high-performing community, written standards as well as policies and procedures will be developed in accordance with HUD regulations.

**HSPB's Emergency Transfer Plan is clearly outlined in the CoC's Written Standards and meets the requirements under 24 CFR 578.99(j)(8). (24 CFR 578.7(d)).*

Coordinated Entry System

The HSPB will operate a coordinated entry system that will provide a comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services. It is designed to be easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, is well-advertised, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool. The system is designed to coordinate program participation intake, assessment, and provision of referrals. The HSPB Board will oversee the implementation of the coordinated entry system. The funded Coordinated Entry agencies will report on the implementation of the Coordinated Entry system at each meeting of the Board of Directors and the membership.

Article IV

General Structure

The Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board consists of

1. A broad-based membership of individuals and others committed to the mission and purpose as set forth in Article II.
2. A Board of Directors as set forth in Article VI elected by the membership and charged with the overall direction, management, and implementation of the purposes, goals, objectives, and business of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board,
3. Officers, as set forth in Article VII, selected by the Board of Directors and;
4. Standing committees (Governance, Data, Continuum of Care, and Persons with Lived Experience) and ad hoc committees as set forth in Article VIII established to assist the Board of Directors in carrying out its work.

ARTICLE V

MEMBERS

Section 1. Membership

Membership in the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board is open to individuals and representatives of relevant public and private organizations committed to the mission and purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board. Relevant individuals and public and private organizations shall include but not be limited to nonprofit at-risk and homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, legal services providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, nonprofit affordable housing developers, law enforcement, veteran service organizations, the Department of Social Services, Emergency Solutions Grant Program providers, and homeless and formerly homeless individuals.

Section 2. Public Invitation

At least annually, the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board will issue a public invitation for new members.

Section 3. Application/Renewal Process

Members must apply for or renew their membership annually by submitting an application. Applications are reviewed by the Governance Committee.

In the application, a member and designated alternate representatives shall state her support for the mission and purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board and indicate knowledge of and willingness to comply with the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board Code of Conduct, including the disclosure of any conflict of interest.

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The applicant must also state whether she is acting in an individual or representative capacity. If the applicant is acting in a representative capacity, she must state the name of the organization she is representing and confirm that she is authorized to represent that organization. An organization may designate one alternate to appear as a voting representative of that organization.

The Governance Committee shall determine whether applications for membership have been received from organizations that are in essence part of the same organization as demonstrated by corporate structure, mission and purpose, services provided, separate and independent Boards of Directors, organizational leadership and control, and fiscal policymaking independence. Such organizations may be members, but only one of such organizations, as determined by the Governance Committee, shall be permitted to vote and run for the Board of Directors.

Applications/Renewals of membership will be reviewed and approved by the Governance Committee. Copies of Applicants and Renewals will also be held by the Collaborative Applicant.

In addition to the annual membership application, all members are encouraged to complete the Membership Assessment Tool as a part of their onboarding. All members are encouraged to retake the Membership Assessment Tool annually on a date of the Board's choosing.

Section 4 Dues and Fees

Annual dues and other fees may be established by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer, in writing, shall notify any member two months in arrears that failure to pay arrears within one month of the date of notification will result in removal from membership. Removal or resignation shall not relieve a member from liability for dues and fees incurred prior to resignation or removal. Payment of outstanding dues and fees shall be required for reinstatement to membership.

Homeless or formerly homeless individual members shall not be required to pay dues or other fees.

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Section 5. Removal of Members

Members shall be removed for failure to pay dues and fees after notification by the Treasurer as required in Section 4.

Members also may be removed by the Board of Directors for acting contrary to the mission and purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board, violating the Code of Conduct, failing to disclose a conflict of interest or for other good cause after written notice and an opportunity to be heard before the Board of Directors.

The Secretary shall notify members in writing of their removal and any action necessary for reinstatement, as determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 6. Voting

Members are entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting for the Board of Directors. Members are also entitled to vote on amendments to these bylaws.

Each member shall have one vote.

Representatives of organizations shall have one vote to be cast by the person or the alternate designated in the organization's application unless the organization has been determined by the Governance Committee to be ineligible to vote because it is a part of the same organization as another voting member.

Members who fail to attend 2 consecutive membership meetings without excuse or who are in arrears in dues and fees shall not be permitted to vote.

Section 7. Resignation

Resignations shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary.

ARTICLE VI

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

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Section 1. Regular Meetings

The regular meetings of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board will be held semiannually in November and March. A more frequent regular meeting schedule may be established by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Annual Meeting

The regular meeting held in November shall be known as the annual meeting and shall be for the purpose of electing the Board of Directors, receiving reports from the Board of Directors, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and all committees, the annual review of these by-laws and other policies and procedures as required by HUD and for any other business that may arise.

Section 3. Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Co-Chairs of the Board of Directors, or a majority of the Board of Directors, or on written request by ten members of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board. The purpose of the meeting shall be specified in the call for the meeting, which shall be sent to all members at least three days before the meeting.

Section 4. Quorum

Fifty-one percent of the members of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5. Agendas/Minutes

Agendas and draft minutes shall be distributed electronically at least one week in advance.

Section 6. Attendance

Attendance is required. Excuses for nonattendance shall be given to the Secretary prior to the meeting. Member agency staff may attend but not vote unless authorized pursuant to the application approval process set forth in Article III.

ARTICLE VII

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Purpose and Powers of Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall conduct any and all business necessary to facilitate the implementation of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board mission, vision, and purpose, including setting goals, objectives and plans for the achievement of the purpose and mission, implementing HUD Continuum of Care requirements, including the development and operation of the Coordinated Entry system, designing and implementing a collaborative process for the development, submission and approval of the annual application for HUD funding, determining the applicants, the collaborative applicant or unified funding agency and approving the HUD Continuum of Care funding application, designating the HMIS lead, and ensuring that planning, systems development and implementation and program performance reviews occur in a collaborative and constructive manner.

The Board of Directors shall have overall responsibility for the operation of the Schenectady County Continuum of Care.

The Board of Directors shall determine annual dues and fees as may be required to accomplish the mission and purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board.

The Board of Directors shall report to the membership at the annual membership meeting, or more frequently as determined by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors may appoint special, ad hoc committees composed of members and nonmembers of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board.

The Board of Directors may appoint its own members to participate in standing and regional committees such as the Regional Advisory Board on Youth Homelessness (RABYH), the Regional Domestic Violence Expectations Committee, and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Advisory Committee.

Section 2. Board of Directors Composition

The Board of Directors shall be composed of an odd number of nine to twenty-one members elected by a majority vote of the members at the Annual Meeting.

A majority of the Board of Directors shall be composed of member representatives of organizations funded in any one of the last two years of Continuum of Care funding or organizations whose mission, purpose, and work are to provide housing and/or services to at-risk or homeless households.

The Board of Directors shall also be representative of relevant organizations and of projects serving homeless subpopulations in Schenectady County, such as persons with substance abuse, persons with HIV/AIDS, veterans, the chronically homeless, families with children, unaccompanied youth, the seriously mentally ill, and victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and shall include one homeless or formerly homeless person.

Per the CoC Interim Rule, a CoC Board shall be (1) representative of the relevant organizations and of projects serving homeless subpopulations; and (2) Include at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual. The Board of Directors shall also include three elected officials, one representative of the business community, and two members of law enforcement or their designated representatives. The Board will also include an individual 16 to 24 years old with lived experience of homelessness.

The Board will work to ensure that its membership maintains a level of representation that is proportional to the population it serves. The completion of a Board Matrix is done annually. The Board Matrix will be used to guide Board recruitment and development of the Board slate. The Board Matrix is a strategic tool designed to document the demographics, knowledge, skills, and abilities of current Board members. All personal information collected through the Board Matrix will be kept confidential.

If the Governance Committee has determined that two or more organizations have applied for membership which are in essence part of the same organization as demonstrated by corporate structure, mission and purpose, services provided, separate and independent Boards of Directors, organizational leadership and control, and fiscal policymaking

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independence, only one representative of such organizations, as determined by the Governance Committee, shall be permitted to run for and serve on the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors takes office at the close of the Annual Meeting.

Section 3. Terms of Office

Members of the Board of Directors serve two-year staggered terms of office. In the first two years following the adoption of these bylaws, four and up to six members shall serve a one-year term, and five and up to seven members shall serve a two-year term.

Section 4. Board of Director Meetings

The Board of Directors shall meet and conduct the business of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board at least four times per year.

Section 5. Special Meetings of the Board of Directors

Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by any four members of the Board. The purpose of the meeting shall be specified in the call for the meeting, which shall be sent to all Board members in writing at least three days before the meeting.

Section 6. Quorum

A third of the Board of Directors members who are present shall constitute a quorum. Attendance and voting by a designated alternate representative, named by the Board member in their membership application, is permitted.

Section 7. Attendance

Board members or their designated alternate representative may attend Board of Directors meetings in person or telephonically. The Board of Directors or their designated alternate may vote electronically by email. To remain in good standing as a board member, board members or their designated alternate representative are expected to attend scheduled Board meetings and give notice for any meetings that they are unable to attend.

Section 8. Vacancies and Removal

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Any Board member who wishes to resign shall submit her resignation to the Recording Secretary who shall present it to the Board.

A Board member may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Board for acting contrary to the mission and purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board, violating the Code of Conduct, failing to disclose a conflict of interest or for other good cause, after notice and an opportunity to be heard.

A Board Member shall be automatically removed for missing 3 meetings of the Board of Directors without excuse in any 12-month period.

At the meeting following a resignation or removal of a Board member, a majority of the Board shall appoint a member of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board to complete the remainder of the Board of Directors member's term, following the requirements of the Board of Directors membership set forth in Section 2 of this Article.

All Members sign a Code of Ethics annually.

Section 9. BOD Conflict of Interest Statement

HSPB is committed to maintaining the highest standard of conduct in carrying out its fiduciary duties of care, obedience, and loyalty in pursuit of HSPB's mission. The Board of Directors must be aware of and fully abide by the bylaws and policies of the HSPB. The purpose of this conflict-of-interest policy is to protect HSPB's interests whenever contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interests of a board Member/Member Agency that might result in a possible excess benefit transaction.

HSPB board members must disclose all interest(s) that may result in a conflict. Full disclosure of any situation in doubt should be made so as to permit an impartial and objective determination. Every board member with the authority to vote must, on an annual basis, file in writing a conflict-of-interest statement with the collaborative applicant (CARES of NY, Inc.).

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For any transaction in which a board member or agency member has a financial or personal interest, the conflicted member shall recuse and abstain from participating in the board's discussion and vote on the issue.

The minutes of meetings at which such votes are taken shall record such disclosure, abstention, and rationale for approval.

Board members and their designated alternate representatives shall annually sign a Conflict-of-Interest form.

ARTICLE VIII

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers and Duties

The officers of the Board of Directors of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board shall be two Co-Chairpersons, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

Section 2. Selection Process

At the Board meeting following the Annual Meeting, four members of the Board shall be selected by majority vote to serve as Co-chairs of the Board of Directors, the Secretary, and the Treasurer.

Section 3. Terms of Office

Officers shall serve two-year staggered terms with the exception of the first two years following the adoption of these By-Laws. In the first two years following the adoption of these By-Laws, one of the Co-Chairpersons and the Treasurer shall serve one-year terms.

If an Officer resigns or is removed pursuant to Article VII, Section 8, the Board of Directors shall appoint a member of the Board to fill the unexpired term.

Section 4. Officer Responsibilities

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The Co-Chairpersons shall set the agenda for and preside over membership and board meetings and ensure that the board and the standing and other committees are pursuing the mission and purpose and fulfilling their responsibilities.

The Treasurer shall collect dues and fees and shall act as a fiduciary with respect to such funds to be placed in a bank account opened by a willing member agency, requiring two signatures for disbursement of said funds, in amounts and for purposes to be established by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall make a full financial report to the membership at the Annual Meeting and to the Board of Directors at every meeting of the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall also report immediately to the Board if a member is more than two months in arrears on any dues and fees.

The Secretary, in coordination with the Collaborative Applicant, shall serve as the custodian of the records of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board including all agendas, minutes, and reports of all committee and Board meetings and activities, keep the membership roll, take minutes of Board and membership meetings, keep records of committee and Board membership and activities, maintain mailing/contact lists and ensure timely and proper agenda distribution. The Secretary shall also maintain up-to-date membership records available at all times to members. The Secretary shall serve on the Governance Committee.

ARTICLE IX

COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing/Special Committees

There will be 4 Standing Committees as set forth in this Article and other special, ad hoc, committees as may be established by the Board of Directors pursuant to Article VII Section 1. All such Committees shall follow the directives of and report to the Board of Directors and also report to the members at the Annual Meeting of the membership unless directed to report otherwise by the Board of Directors. All Committees shall review and report to the Board of Directors on all matters assigned to them by these by-laws and the Board of Directors.

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Section 2. Governance Committee

A Governance Committee comprised of the Secretary and 3 other members appointed by and of the Board of Directors shall develop and present a slate of candidates, including designated alternate representatives, for election to the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting, shall conduct reviews of and recommend, as needed, actions to be taken with respect to these bylaws and governance charter related issues, shall ensure compliance with HUD requirements regarding membership and Board of Directors composition, and oversee the membership application and renewal process.

The Governance Committee shall conduct a nominations and election process that ensures that the Board of Directors is composed of representatives as set forth in Article VII Section 2.

Section 3. Data Committee

A Data Committee shall review and prepare plans and recommendations for review and approval by the Board of Directors and carry out action plans approved by the Board of Directors with respect to community-wide data including but not limited to HMIS, PIT, YWCA, school districts, City Mission and DSS data to identify needs, trends, gaps, and emerging issues, the designation of the HMIS and oversight of the operation of the HMIS.

Section 4. Continuum of Care Committee

A Continuum of Care Committee shall review and prepare plans and recommendations for review and approval by the Board of Directors and carry out action plans approved by the Board of Directors with respect to HUD-related tasks, including those related to funded agencies and the funding application, including the PIT count, performance of funded agencies, review of aggregate data of funded agencies with respect to performance targets and the funding application.

Section 5. Persons With Lived Experience Committee.

The Persons with Lived Experience committee is composed of at least 3 community members who have experienced homelessness. This committee is responsible for

reviewing CoC processes and guiding documents from the lens of a person who has experienced homelessness and collecting feedback on gaps in the homelessness response system through committee meetings, focus groups, surveys, and other methods to gather the feedback of those experiencing homelessness in Schenectady County. This committee will consult with the CoC Board to provide system-wide feedback from the perspective of those experiencing homelessness, with the goal to provide insights on eliminating homelessness and ensuring that a comprehensive system of care and services is in place. This committee reports its findings to the Governance Committee, who brings recommendations to the Board.

Section 6. Coordinated Entry (CE) Advisory Committee.

The Coordinated Entry (CE) Advisory Committee is a group of funded and non-funded partners that work collaboratively to support the development and success of the larger Coordinated Entry system. The CE Advisory Committee is responsible for updating policy and procedures, ensuring compliance, and supporting the overall structure of the full Coordinated Entry Committee for Schenectady County.

Section 9. Committee Membership.

The Board of Directors shall appoint members and nonmembers of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board as needed to serve on all standing and special, ad hoc committees in such number and for appropriate terms as necessary to fulfill the purposes of the Committees. The Board may remove or add committee members as it sees fit.

ARTICLE X

The Homeless Services Planning Board (HSPB) may provide letters of support to agencies or projects that align with its mission and strategic goals. Requests must be submitted to the CoC Chairs or Collaborative Applicant and include the draft letter.

ARTICLE XI

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board in all cases to which

they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these by-laws and any special rules of order the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board may adopt.

ARTICLE XII

AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

The Bylaws may be amended by the HSPB membership by a two-thirds vote at any meeting of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board Membership.

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Continuum of Care Representatives Conflict of Interest Statement

Representatives from relevant organizations within a geographic area shall establish a Continuum of Care for the geographic area to carry out the duties of this part. Relevant organizations include nonprofit homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, and organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals.

The Continuum of Care must establish a Board to act on behalf of the Continuum using the process established as a requirement by§ 578.7(a)(3) and must comply with the Conflict-of-Interest requirements at §578.95(b). Board members will be required to sign the following Conflict of Interest statement on an annual basis, and/or at the start of their next term.

Conflicts of Interest:

(a) Procurement. For the procurement of property (goods, supplies, or equipment) and services, the recipient and its subrecipients must comply with the standards of conduct and conflict-of-interest requirements under 2 CFR 200.317 and 200.318.

(b) Continuum of Care board members. No Continuum of Care board member may participate in decision-making concerning direct financial benefits to the organization that the member represents, or any personal benefits that financial decisions made by the CoC board may yield. Board members shall identify potential conflicts of interest that may arise at the start of each term year.

Please describe any potential conflicts of interest you anticipate in your role as a board member of the Homeless Services Planning Board (HSPB) in the space below:

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Conflict of Interest Statement

Check one in this section

☐ I am not a recipient/subrecipient of CoC Funding. I will not influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning other financial benefits to the organization I represent.*

☐ I am a recipient/sub recipient of CoC Funding. I will not influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning the award of a grant or other financial benefits to the organization I represent.*

Check this box if you agree to the following statement

☐ I will recuse myself from voting on matters that may be deemed as conflicts of interest for myself or my organization. *

**Board members can participate in discussion and vote on issues related to CoC funding, including Ranking & Tiering, the Rank & Review process, and other funding decisions related to the CoC. Board members should recuse themselves from votes that pertain directly and/or solely to the organization they represent. If a board member is unsure whether to recuse themselves from a vote, they should consult with the rest of the board before voting.*

Name Organization

Signature Date

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