

## **Notice of Request for Proposals**

### **Public Library Community Survey**

Notice is hereby given that the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Inc. (hereinafter called SMRLA) is requesting proposals for qualified consultants to design, implement and report on a survey to assess community needs and perceptions related to the public libraries of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties in Maryland.

Respondents should not construe from this legal notice that the libraries intend to enter into a contract with the Respondent unless, in the opinion of the libraries, it is in the best interest of the libraries to do so. SMRLA reserves the right to negotiate final contractual terms with the successful Respondent.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) documents are available at <https://smrla.org/rfp/>

To request the RFP documents by e-mail, postal mail, or fax, please contact  
Mark Volland  
E-mail: [rfp@smrla.org](mailto:rfp@smrla.org)  
Postal Mail: P.O. Box 459, Charlotte Hall, MD 20622  
Fax: 301-884-0438

SMRLA will record and provide answers to any questions or requests for clarifying information about the RFP during the question-and-answer period (May 27 – July 20, 2026). As questions are received, the answers will be posted at <https://smrla.org/rfp/>. On July 13, 2026, a pre-bid conference will be held with the RFP Committee via Microsoft Teams and the log-in information will be posted at <https://smrla.org/rfp/>.

Respondents must submit two copies of their written proposals in a sealed package labeled  
Southern Maryland Regional Library Association Community Survey  
Addressed to SMRLA at  
P.O. Box 459  
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622  
Attn: CEO Ashley Teagle

SMRLA will accept all proposals received on or before Tuesday, August 18, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. SMRLA will not accept proposals that are received after the deadline. SMRLA will open proposals at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, August 19, 2026 via Teams. Please check our website on Friday, August 14 for the Teams link.

SMRLA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, and to waive any errors or corrections in a proposal or in the proposal process. SMRLA will award the contract based on a review and analysis of the proposals that determines which proposal best meets its needs.



**SMRLA**  
**SOUTHERN MARYLAND**  
**REGIONAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

Southern Maryland Regional Library Association  
Public Library Community Survey

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## **Introduction/Purpose/Statement of Work of Solicitation**

### **I. Introduction**

Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA) shall conduct all procurement transactions in a manner that provides maximum open and free competition. SMRLA must share with every Respondent all information necessary for submitting a competitive proposal.

Competitive Bidding Basic Standards:

- The purpose of soliciting competitive proposals is to secure objectives in the most effective manner and avoid the possibilities of graft, fraud, collusion, etc.
- SMRLA released this RFP to benefit SMRLA and not the Respondents.
- Fulfillment of RFP specifications is based on full and fair competition and acceptance by SMRLA of the most responsive and responsible Respondent to the association's requirements, as determined by SMRLA when evaluating proposals based on the criteria contained in the RFP. As a state-funded entity, SMRLA will give preference to Maryland businesses provided they meet the specifications of the RFP.
- The RFP must provide a basis for full and fair competition among Respondents to a common standard, free of restrictions that tend to stifle competition.

To respond to this RFP, interested Respondents must present evidence of experience, ability, and financial standing necessary to meet the requirements stated in this RFP. SMRLA will measure this evidence by scoring the proposals, using a point system that will rank each proposal from highest to lowest, to determine which proposals they will consider for the award of a contract.

To be competitive in this solicitation, the Respondent must:

- Carefully read the entire RFP, attachments, exhibits, addenda, and responses to questions before submitting a proposal
- Ask appropriate questions or request clarification before the deadline in the RFP
- Submit all required responses by the required deadlines
- Follow all instructions and requirements of the RFP thoroughly and appropriately

If a Respondent discovers any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other errors in this RFP, the Respondent shall immediately notify SMRLA of the error in writing and request clarification or a modification of the RFP. If the Respondent fails to notify SMRLA of the error prior to the submission date of proposals and is awarded the contract, the Respondent shall not be entitled to additional compensation or time due to the error or its later correction.

### **II. Purpose and background**

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals for a qualified consultant to design, implement and report on a survey to assess community needs and perceptions related to the public libraries of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties in Maryland. The successful Respondent will provide services to SMRLA as described in the Statement of Work.

SMRLA's goal is to acquire a detailed report that will inform strategic planning. The report will be presented to the SMRLA Board of Trustees and the directors and trustees boards of the three county library systems.

SMRLA is a regional resource center for the public libraries in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties. It was formed in 1959 to provide additional services to Southern Maryland citizens through their local county libraries. In part, SMRLA provides the three library systems with marketing and outreach support to raise awareness and help promote library programs and services. While each county public library conducts its own community outreach to meet its individual needs, SMRLA coordinates region-wide campaigns promoting programs, services and events common to all three.

SMRLA adopted a FY2026-2030 strategic plan that includes several initiatives to support its partner libraries. The initiatives include community education about public libraries, coordination of community networking and stakeholder outreach, and coordinated library marketing. The community survey results will inform SMRLA's strategic plan initiatives.

The combined service area of the three public libraries has a population of 373,177, with the following demographic breakdown: 56.4% White; 29.59% African American; 6.01% Hispanic; 2.85% Asian; 0.09% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; 0.53% American Indian or Alaskan Native; 2.44% are of some other race; and 8.09% are of two or more races.

The region is increasingly diversifying. Between 2010 and 2020, the White population decreased by 7.91% while the African American population increased by 26.94%, the Asian population increased by 29.52% and the Hispanic population increased by 77.01%. The majority of residents are of working age (between 18 and 64 years old), making up 61.44% of the population. While over 37% of the population has an annual income of \$150,000 or more, 8% of the population has an annual income of less than \$25,000.

### III. **Statement of work**

SMRLA is seeking a consultant to solicit, compile and analyze feedback from the Southern Maryland community regarding the region's public libraries. This data will be used to gauge community awareness and identify opportunities for effective outreach and program development. It will help SMRLA and its partner libraries gain a deeper understanding of the Southern Maryland community's opinions and behaviors related to library service.

The consultant will design a community survey in multiple formats for maximum accessibility. The survey should reach a representative cross section of residents across all demographics in the targeted community, including adults, seniors, students, parents and caregivers of young children, and other community stakeholders. The consultant will conduct promotion of engagement opportunities, utilizing best practices for marketing and outreach to maximize community engagement. Engagement should include both current library customers as well as individuals who currently do not use the public library.

Data gathering efforts should include, but are not limited to, community focus groups, interviews with key stakeholders, and online and in-person surveys. Please include in the proposal your recommended methodology for data collection, research and community engagement.

#### IV. **Project deliverables**

- A meeting with SMRLA's project coordinators within one week of the contract award
- A written plan of operation, including methods and timelines
- A draft of the survey instrument(s) and final survey instrument(s) as agreed upon in the plan of operation
- Regular meetings with SMRLA's project coordinators to ensure alignment with desired outcomes
- Regular written updates about the progress of the project to SMRLA's project coordinators
- A report on the raw results as agreed upon in the plan of operation
- A final draft of the community survey results presented to SMRLA's project coordinators, its CEO, and the directors of SMRLA's partner libraries
- Presentation of the final report to SMRLA's Board of Trustees and the Boards of Trustees for its three partner libraries

## **RFP Timeline/Schedule of Events**

Board Meeting – RFP Notice	Tuesday, May 26, 2026
Release of RFP	Wednesday, May 27, 2026
First Public Notice	Wednesday, May 27, 2026
Second Public Notice	Wednesday, May 27, 2026
Pre-Bid Conference	Monday, July 13, 2026
Respondent Question Submission Deadline	Monday, July 20, 2026
SMRLA Provides Answers	Wednesday, July 29, 2026
Deadline for Submission of Proposal	Tuesday, August 18, 2026
Proposals Opened	Wednesday, August 19, 2026
Proposals Evaluation Period	Monday, August 24 through Tuesday, September 8, 2026
Anticipated Contract Award Date	Monday, September 21, 2026

SMRLA will make every effort to adhere to the schedule. However, SMRLA reserves the right to amend the schedule, as necessary, and will post a notice of any amendments at <https://smrla.org/rfp/>.

## General Instructions for Respondents

1. Prepare proposals simply and economically. Provide a straightforward, concise description of the Respondent's capability to satisfy SMRLA's requirements. Emphasis should be placed on completeness and clarity of content.
2. Submit proposals for the performance of all the services described within this RFP. SMRLA will not consider any deviation from these specifications and will reject such proposals.
3. SMRLA may reject a proposal if the proposal is conditional or incomplete, deemed nonresponsive, or if it contains any alterations of form or other irregularities of any kind. SMRLA may reject any or all proposals or waive any immaterial deviation in a proposal. SMRLA's waiver of an immaterial deviation shall in no way modify the RFP document or excuse the Respondent from full compliance with all other requirements if awarded the contract.
4. Respondents are responsible for the costs of developing proposals and shall not charge SMRLA for any preparation costs.
5. Respondents may modify their proposal after submission by withdrawing the original proposal and resubmitting a new proposal prior to the submission deadline. SMRLA will not consider proposal modifications offered in any other manner, either oral or written.
6. Respondents may withdraw their proposal by submitting a written withdrawal request to SMRLA, signed by the Respondent or their authorized agent, through the contact person named in the contact information provided on page 1 of this RFP. Thereafter, a Respondent may submit a new proposal prior to the proposal submission deadline. Respondents may not withdraw their proposal without the approval of SMRLA after the proposal submission deadline.
7. SMRLA may modify the RFP prior to the date given for submission of proposals by posting an addendum on <https://smrla.org/rfp/>. SMRLA will notify Respondents so they can obtain any addenda from SMRLA's website, or request it by email, postal mail, or fax.
8. SMRLA reserves the right to reject all proposals for reasonable cause. If the costs of all proposals are excessive, SMRLA is not required to award a contract.
9. SMRLA will not consider more than one proposal from an individual, firm, partnership, corporation, or association under the same or different names. Reasonable grounds for believing that any Respondent has submitted more than one proposal for work contemplated herein will cause SMRLA to reject all proposals submitted by the Respondent. If there is reason to believe that collusion exists among the Respondents, SMRLA will not consider any of the participants of such collusion in this or future solicitations.
10. SMRLA will consider a joint proposal submitted by two or more entities provided the proposal is clearly identified and includes a single lead entity for interaction with SMRLA.

11. Additional charges for regular or express delivery, drayage, parcel post, packing, cartage, insurance, license fees, permits, or for any other purpose shall be included (and separately identified) in the proposal.
12. All proposals shall include the forms provided as attachments to this RFP. Respondents may copy these forms. A proposal is considered responsive if it follows the required format, includes all attachments, and meets all deadlines and other requirements outlined in this RFP.
13. SMRLA shall not accept proposals after the submission deadline specified in the RFP and shall return the unopened proposals to the respective Respondents. SMRLA will not consider late proposals under any circumstances.
14. Respondents are responsible for examining the entire RFP package, seeking clarification for any item or requirement that may not be clear to them, and checking all responses in their proposal for accuracy before submitting it.
15. Respondents may submit their questions regarding the information presented in this RFP to Mark Volland in writing by postal mail at P.O. Box 459, Charlotte Hall, MD 20622, email at [rfp@smrla.org](mailto:rfp@smrla.org), or fax at 301-884-0438, no later than Monday, May 18, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. SMRLA will answer all questions received by the deadline in writing without exposing the query source. This will be the sole process for asking and answering questions regarding this RFP. Respondents may not contact SMRLA employees directly to ask questions.
16. SMRLA representatives reserve the right to inspect a Respondent's other operations prior to any award of a contract.
17. SMRLA reserves the right to negotiate the final terms and conditions of the contract, which may differ from those contained in the proposal, provided SMRLA considers such negotiation to be in its best interest. Any change in the terms and conditions must not create a material change, which is any alteration or modification to the original terms stated in the RFP that would have resulted in different proposals from all respondents. A material change will require SMRLA to rebid the contract.
18. Respondents shall submit two printed hard copies.
  - a. The Respondent must ensure the printed copies are complete and inclusive of all materials including any required signatures.

## Proposal Requirements

To be eligible for evaluation, a proposal must adhere strictly to the format set forth below; failure to do so may result in disqualification. Respondents must complete, label, and separate each section, and number all pages. The content and sequence of the proposal will be as follows:

<u>Section</u>	<u>Title</u>
A.	Cover Letter
B.	Table of Contents
C.	Attachments Checklist
D.	Minimum Qualifications
E.	Proposal Questionnaire
F.	Respondent References
G.	Authorization Agreement
H.	Fee Proposal
I.	Certification of Independent Price Determination

### A. Cover Letter

Only the individual(s) authorized to bind the Respondent contractually may sign the cover letter, which shall be a part of the proposal package. If the cover letter is unsigned, SMRLA will reject the proposal. SMRLA may reject the proposal if the Respondent fails to include the following required information:

- Name and address of responding company
- Organizational structure of the responding company (e.g., corporation, partnership, etc.)
- Respondent's Federal Employee Identification Number and Corporate Identification Number, if applicable
- Name, title, phone number and email address of the representative who will be designated as the primary liaison to SMRLA
- Name, title, phone number, and email address of the representative(s) authorized to bind the Respondent in a contract if different from the primary liaison
- A statement expressing the Respondent's willingness to perform the services described in this RFP
- A statement expressing the Respondent's ability to perform the services required in the Statement of Work, including availability of staff and other required resources to meet all deliverables as described in this RFP
- A statement regarding the Respondent's proprietary information; if applicable, the Respondent must clearly mark in the upper right-hand corner those pages to be considered proprietary. (**Note:** The Respondent cannot consider the entire proposal to be proprietary.)
- The following certification:  
*By signing this cover letter, I (we) certify that the information contained in this proposal is accurate and that all attachments required to be submitted as part of the proposal are certified to be true and binding upon our company.*

### B. Table of Contents

Immediately following the cover letter, include a comprehensive Table of Contents that lists all submitted proposal sections, subsections, attachments, and materials.

### **C. Attachments Checklist**

The Respondent shall include all documents identified in the Attachments Checklist (Attachment A). SMRLA may reject proposals that do not include the proper required attachments.

### **D. Minimum Qualifications**

SMRLA will only consider Respondents that **meet all minimum qualifications** (as listed on Attachment B).

### **E. Proposal Questionnaire**

The Proposal Questionnaire (Attachment C) is intended to provide SMRLA with specific information concerning the Respondent's capability to provide services as described in this RFP. Respondents should limit their responses to the number of pages noted in the questionnaire and answer each question in the same order.

### **F. Respondent References**

Respondents must provide three references on the Respondent References form (Attachment D). SMRLA reserves the right to contact any of the references listed and retains the right to conduct reference checks with individuals and entities beyond those listed.

### **G. Authorization Agreement**

The Respondent or their authorized representative must sign the Authorization Agreement (Attachment E) and return it with the proposal package.

### **H. Fee Proposal**

The Respondent must complete the Fee Proposal (Attachment F) and return it with the proposal package.

### **I. Certification of Independent Price Determination**

The Respondent must complete the certification (Attachment G) and return it with the proposal package.

## **Evaluation of Proposals**

Proposals will be opened on or after the date and time specified in the Schedule of Events. During the evaluation process, SMRLA may ask Respondents to clarify information in the proposals, but Respondents may not change their proposals.

An error in the proposal may cause SMRLA to reject that proposal; however, SMRLA may, at its sole discretion, retain the proposal and make certain corrections. When determining if a correction will be made, SMRLA will consider the conformance of the proposal to the format and content required by the RFP and that the Respondent's intent is clearly established based on review of the whole proposal. Based on that established intent, SMRLA may choose to correct errors such as obvious grammatical or punctuation errors and arithmetic errors. The Master Copy of the proposal shall have priority over additional proposal copies.

SMRLA will open proposals to determine if they contain all the required information in accordance with this RFP. SMRLA will evaluate qualifying proposals using the following criteria:

CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS
Experience with conducting community surveys that engage a variety of stakeholders, performing data analysis and presenting actionable reports	40
Administrative Requirements: Did the Respondent include all required information in accordance with the General Instructions and Proposal Requirements?	10
Based on the Proposal Questionnaire responses and the Cover Letter, the Respondent demonstrates a complete understanding of community survey and engagement processes, as described in the RFP and the Statement of Work. The RFP Committee will use a technical evaluation scheme to rate the proposals using the criteria outlined in this document.	25
The financial stability of the Respondent	10
Corporate capability and experience as measured by performance record, years in the industry, relevant experience, client retention and satisfaction, and references	10
Experience working with nonprofits, libraries, and/or consortiums	10
Cost	10
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>115</b>

SMRLA will score and rank selected proposals by assigning a score between zero and the maximum score to each proposal criterion. SMRLA will recommend awarding the contract to the most responsive and responsible Respondent with the highest total proposal score. As a state funded entity, SMRLA reserves the right to award the contract to a responsive, responsible Maryland-based firm that does not attain the highest proposal score, provided the vendor meets the criteria outlined in the RFP. A Maryland-based firm is defined as a company that is headquartered in Maryland.

## Attachments

Attachment A

### Attachments Checklist

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Respondent Company Name

Please complete this checklist to confirm that the following items have been included in your proposal. Place a checkmark or "x" next to each item submitted to SMRLA. For your proposal to be considered, all required attachments must be returned, including this checklist. Submit two copies of your proposal in a sealed package.

Attachment	Attachment Name
_____ 1	Cover Letter
_____ 2	Table of Contents
_____ 3	Attachments Checklist
_____ 4	Minimum Qualifications
_____ 5	Proposal Questionnaire
_____ 6	Respondent References
_____ 7	Authorization Agreement
_____ 8	Fee Proposal
_____ 9	Certificate of Independent Price Determination

Attachment B

**Minimum Qualifications**

A Respondent must meet all of the following minimum qualifications to SMRLA's satisfaction to be given further consideration. Failure to satisfy any of the minimum qualifications may result in the immediate rejection of the proposal.

As of January 1, 2026, both the Respondent's company and its key personnel meet all of the following minimum qualifications:

1. The Respondent has at least five years' experience conducting community surveys.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. The Respondent has the resources and ability to provide actionable analysis and follow-up of survey findings.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

3. The Respondent has professional references that demonstrate and evidence the ability to perform the required services.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

4. The Respondent is licensed to do business in the state of Maryland.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. The Respondent has three to five years' experience developing final reports and providing presentations tailored to a specific audience.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. The Respondent has the ability to conduct qualitative and quantitative research.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment C

### Proposal Questionnaire

This proposal questionnaire is intended to provide SMRLA with specific information concerning the Respondent's capability to provide services as described in the RFP. Please be as concise as possible and limit your responses **to no more than two pages per question, unless instructed otherwise. Type each question in the same order as listed in the questionnaire.**

1. Provide a general description of your company's qualifications and experience relevant to the minimum qualifications in Attachment B, along with any necessary substantiating information. Limit your responses to information about your company's capabilities.
2. Provide a statement indicating the year your company was founded; what the primary business(es) of the company is(are); the length of time the company has been conducting community surveys as described in this RFP.
3. Provide a general description of how your company will be able to provide the experience, ability, and financial standing necessary to meet the requirements set forth in this RFP.
4. Provide a complete list of customers that have discontinued or terminated your company's services in the last five years and the reason(s) why.
5. Provide an organization chart for your company, a description of the lines of communication, and the responsibilities at each corporate level.
6. Provide a complete balance sheet or annual report (verified by a certified public accountant) for the last three years of operation.
7. Provide a recommended plan that describes the steps the Respondent will take to begin providing the services described in this RFP.

## Attachment D

### Respondent References

List three references to which the Respondent has provided a facility master plan within the past five year(s). Failure to complete and return this attachment will cause your proposal to be rejected.

Reference 1		
Name of Reference		
Street Address		
City	State	Zip Code
Contact Person	Contact Title	Contact Phone Number
Email Address		
Brief Description of Services Provided		
Dates of Service		
Reference 2		
Name of Reference		
Street Address		
City	State	Zip Code
Contact Person	Contact Title	Contact Phone Number
Email Address		
Brief Description of Services Provided		
Dates of Service		
Reference 3		
Name of Reference		
Street Address		
City	State	Zip Code
Contact Person	Contact Title	Contact Phone Number
Email Address		
Brief Description of Services Provided		
Dates of Service		

Attachment E

**Authorization Agreement**

Request for Proposal for Southern Maryland Regional Library Association  
Public Library Community Survey

We, *[Enter Name]*, by our signature on this document certify the following:

1. That we will operate in accordance with all applicable Maryland state and federal laws, regulations, and statutes.
2. That the terms, conditions, warranties, and representations made within this RFP and our proposal shall be binding upon us and shall be considered a part of the contract as if incorporated therein.
3. That the proposal submitted is a firm and irrevocable offer good for one year.
4. That we have made examinations and verifications, and are fully conversant with all conditions under which services are to be performed for Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Inc.
5. That negligence in the preparation or presentation of, errors in, or omissions from proposals shall not relieve us from fulfilling all obligations and requirements in the resulting contract.

Respondent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Website Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Authorized Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Authorized Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Representative

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment F

Fee Proposal

**COST BREAKDOWN**

**Respondent Instructions**

⇒ Provide a breakdown of all costs included in the fixed price, including personnel costs.

⇒ **Clearly identify all costs**

Item #	Description, One-Time Costs <i>(Include all materials, goods, services, labor, fees, etc. in detail)</i>	Total Cost
1.		\$
2.		\$
3.		\$
4.		\$
<b>One-Time Costs Sub Total</b>		\$
	Description, Recurring Costs <i>(Specify the time period – hourly, monthly, annually – and whether costs are required or optional)</i>	Total Cost
5.		\$
6.		\$
7.		\$
8.		
<b>Recurring Costs Sub Total</b>		\$
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		\$

Attachment G

Certificate of Independent Price Determination

Both SMRLA and the Respondent shall execute this Certificate of Independent Price Determination.

Name of Respondent

Name of SMRLA

- A. By submission of this offer, the respondent certifies and, in the case of a joint offer, each party thereto certifies as to its own organization that in connection with this procurement:
1. The prices in this offer have been arrived at independently...
2. Unless otherwise required by law, the prices which have been quoted in this offer have not been knowingly disclosed...
3. No attempt has been made or will be made by the offeror to induce any person or firm to submit, or not to submit, an offer for the purpose of restricting competition.
B. Each person signing this offer on behalf of the offeror certifies that:
1. He or she is the person in the respondent's organization responsible within the organization for the decision as to the prices being offered herein...
2. He or she is not the person in the respondent's organization responsible within the organization for the decision as to the prices being offered herein, but that he or she has been authorized in writing to act as agent for the persons responsible for such decision...

To the best of my knowledge, this vendor and its affiliates, subsidiaries, officers, directors, and employees are not currently under investigation by any governmental agency and have not in the last three years been convicted or found liable for any act prohibited by state or federal law in any jurisdiction, involving conspiracy or collusion with respect to bidding on any public contract, except as follows (provide detail):

Two horizontal lines for providing details of any exceptions to the investigation statement.

Signature of respondent's Authorized Representative Title Date

In accepting this offer, SMRLA certifies that no representative of SMRLA has taken any action that may have jeopardized the independence of the offer referred to above.

Signature of SMRLA's Authorized Representative Title Date

Note: Accepting a Respondent's offer does not constitute award of the contract

END

Attachments  
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