



Food Rescue Start Up Guide



Acknowledgements

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Thank you to all our member organisations that provided feedback and advice, and gave insights from their experience to help others.

Becoming a member of AFRA

The Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance supports food rescue organisations through **best practice, collaboration, capacity building** and **advocacy**.

To become a member you need to be: registered as a charitable trust, incorporated society or other legal non-profit structure; have a mandate committed to issues of food insecurity and food waste; be actively involved in rescuing surplus food, with formal agreements in place; have relationships with other community groups; have effective organisational governance; be compliant with food safety practices; and have a willingness to engage with the alliance and to share data and resources.

Here are the benefits of being an AFRA member:



Engagement with other food rescues.



Better purchasing power and procurement options



Channel for advocacy to government



Research, data & regular workshops



Policy and best practice guidelines and other resources



Communications & media assistance

Find out more about AFRA at www.afra.org.nz

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The basics

A third of the food produced globally is wasted from farm to fork.

In Aotearoa New Zealand the average household spends over \$650 on wasted food each year.

One in nine people globally are undernourished.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, one in five children face food insecurity.

Setting up and running a food rescue service can be incredibly rewarding, but when you're starting out it can be hard to know where to begin and what will be involved.

We've put together this guide to help you work through the various aspects of starting a food rescue service in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Think of this as a starting point rather than a blueprint for your own service. Each community has its own way of working, and what works for some may be completely different to what works in your community.

What is food rescue?

At its heart, a 'food rescue' organisation prevents food from being wasted by collecting and redistributing food to people in need. Although every food rescue organisation has its own way of doing things, most have this process in common:

1. Collect

Through partnerships with food donors, food rescues collect surplus good food, often directly from the donor (e.g. supermarkets, cafes).

2. Sort

It's important to check the quality of the food before it goes out to recipients, and make sure food is kept in safe and hygienic conditions throughout the process.

3. Distribute

There are different ways of passing the food on to end recipients, which depends on what kind of food rescue operation you would like to run.



What kind of food rescue do you want to be?

There are a variety of operating models that fall under 'food rescue'. Here are the three most common, and you could be a combination of these too:

Community hub food rescues

These organisations often have other groups or agencies as recipients, who will then pass the food on to those who need or want it.

Freestore

Freestores distribute rescued food directly to the recipient. Many have an open door policy that allows anyone to come and collect food if they want it.

Mixed model

Some food rescue organisations are part of a larger operation, for example, a social or environmental hub.

Key support in the food rescue sector

Food rescues are important collaborators in their communities - you will have a unique relationship to donors, recipients, funding partners and support partners all depending on where and how you operate. Alongside **AFRA** here are a few key agencies you will want to keep on your radar as you are getting set up.

The Ministry of Social Development could be an important source of support and funding. In particular, check out MSD's **Food Secure Communities** programme.



Kore Hiakai is a collective of frontline community food organisations that also champions addressing the underlying causes of food poverty in Aotearoa. You can find out more about them at www.zerohunger.org.nz

Since the Covid pandemic The New Zealand Food Network (**NZFN**) has had an important role in providing bulk surplus and donated food to food hubs - many of whom are AFRA members.



Charities Services provides a wealth of information, support and resources. Keep up to date with legislative change and news on their **newsletter** and access their extensive **Resources/He Rauemi**.

Before you start your journey, here are some key questions you'll want to ask about setting up a food rescue organisation in your community.

First things to consider

- What is the food waste situation like in your area? Who could you rescue food from, and who will want to take it? Are any restaurants or food wholesalers or supermarkets or other food establishments willing to sign on at the beginning? Are they willing to let you use their name to try to bring in other food donors?
- Is anyone else doing this, or something like it? If so, could you help them instead of starting a new operation? If you do, are you going to compete for support and funds? Or can you find a mutually-beneficial way of working alongside each other without stepping on anyone's toes?
- Who are you going to bring on to support you? You will need help identifying potential food donors, handling telephone calls, arranging the schedules for pick-up and delivery of food donations.
- Where are you going to get your funding, and is it sustainable long-term?



Whanganui Kai Hub produced a [feasibility study](#) that articulated their initial investigations, goals, vision and how they want to get there.

Producing a document like this could be beneficial when you approach potential funders and supporters, as it illustrates you have researched, analysed and connected to key people in your community.

Food insecurity & food sovereignty.

While there could always be a place for food rescue in a sustainable circular society, it is true that many food rescues would prefer their services were not needed and they didn't have to exist. Food insecurity is a massive problem in Aotearoa New Zealand and while the solutions are complex and challenging many people in the food rescue sector believe that the answer has to lie in the concept of food sovereignty.

We encourage you to think about your organisation and its response to food insecurity in your community, and seek to find more voices to enrich your understanding of food sovereignty. AFRA is looking ahead to developing more resources on these topics, and if you have something to share, please [get in touch](#).

Food sovereignty is “empowering people, as individuals and as groups, to make their own choices about the food they eat, where it comes from, how it is produced and their relationship to its production.” [Kore Hiakai](#)

Decide what food you will take

Setting guidelines around what types of food you'll rescue helps to make sure that your food rescue service supports services that are already established in your area – for example, food banks that focus on non-perishable foods. Restaurant/catered food can be more complex to rescue, as food handling, safety and storage need to be more carefully managed.

Perishable food

- Will you be able to pass it on before it's no longer good to eat?
- Are there certain types of high-risk foods you'd like to avoid? e.g. shellfish, chicken.

Non-perishable food

- Are there already organisations in your area dealing with these kinds of food?
- Is there a need for another provider of non-perishable food?

Restaurant/catered food

- Has the food been prepared in a commercial kitchen?
- Has the food been handled safely up until it was donated?
- Will the food donor supply containers for the food that don't need to be returned? If not, what will you store the food in?
- How will you provide the food to community groups?
- Will community groups be able to keep the containers that you give them the food in? If not, will they wash containers out and return them? Who will monitor this, and how much time will this take up?

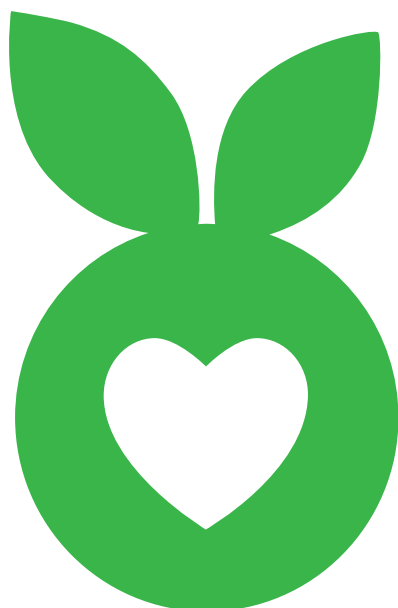
Things to consider

- What geographic area will you serve? Can that expand over time, or will it be limited?
- Decide how much food you can handle the first six months, first year, second year, etc. How fast do you want to grow? Where would you like to be in five years?
- Do you want to incorporate or not? Do you want to have non-profit status? Is there a volunteer lawyer in your community willing to help you do this work?
- Do you want to be an all-volunteer programme, have a small staff with mostly volunteers, or have an entirely paid staff? How will you develop along those lines? How will you train volunteers and / or staff? How will you raise funds? Who will run the operations, do the fundraising, and perform other tasks?
- How do you want to run the organisation? Do you want a small governing board, an advisory council, an administrator, or some combination of these? How will you make sure the community supports this program? In what ways can the community get involved?
- In what ways will you keep food donors involved and feeling "ownership" of the program?
- Where can you raise funds to support the program? Are there any prominent people in the community who will sign on as advisors or governing board members and take key responsibility for raising money?
- Is anyone in your community willing to provide you with free advertising space and advertising designs?

2. Food Donors

Before setting up your food rescue service, do some research about which businesses in your area are willing to donate food, and what types of food they can supply.

It's important to keep your relationships with food donors professional, so make sure you're well-prepared before you approach them.



If a businesses you plan to approach already an existing relationship with local community groups avoid approaching them unless you can complement the arrangement they already have.

For example, they may donate their non-perishable items to a food bank that's unable to accept perishable items. By offering a service for perishable items, you're adding value for the food donor and the community while also avoiding stepping on anyone's toes.

Things to consider

- Who's going to donate food to you?
- How are you going to approach them?
- Do they want assurances about food safety? If so, what assurances can you give them?
- Do the businesses you plan to approach already have relationships with local community groups? If so, avoid approaching them unless you can complement the arrangement they already have. For example, they may donate their non-perishable items to a food bank that's unable to accept perishable items. By offering a service for perishable items, you're adding value for the food donor and the community while also avoiding stepping on anyone's toes.
- There's nothing wrong with starting slowly. It's better to work well with one or two food donors than to have too many and be struggling to cope. Make sure you have all your processes, procedures and resources in place and running smoothly before bringing on more food donors.
- Once you've committed to making food pick-ups at a specific time, it's vital that you meet these expectations. Being late for pick-ups or missing them altogether may put businesses off working with your service in future and cause reputational damage which can be difficult to recover from.

Partnering with Countdown stores

Countdown have partnered with food rescue organisations since 2011, which includes providing more than \$1.7million worth of funding to help increase the capability and capacity of their food rescue partners. If you are an AFRA member you can find full information about Countdown's goals for partnering with food rescues and a comprehensive outline of finding application process in the AFRA Resource Hub.

Countdown Food Rescue Funding Options

Countdown's food rescue investment funds are open to organisations that can redistribute rescued food from Countdown either directly to those in need, or to other organisations who offer this service. Below is an overview of the available funds for food rescue. For more information or to get in touch to start the application process, contact monique.vallom@countdown.co.nz

Food Rescue Quick Fire Fund	Food Rescue Development Fund	Food Rescue New Venture Fund
<i>Up to \$10,000</i>	<i>Up to \$35,000</i>	<i>\$35,000 +</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate alignment to Countdown's food waste goal• Accountability and reporting to match level of investment in terms of complexity• Submit at least two months before you require the investment• A robust application that demonstrates alignment to Countdown's food waste goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation, accountability and reporting must demonstrate the progress this• investment will make towards this goal• Regular reporting after approval• Submit three to six months before you require the investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports new projects or investment opportunities that align with Countdown food rescue priorities• Applications begin with an initial discussion with Countdown followed by an expression of interest (EOI), a shortlisting process and finally a business case application• Greater consideration is given to projects that deliver to multiple priorities, align to our vision and have significant socio-economic and environmental benefits.



Partnering with Foodstuffs stores

Foodstuffs is a NZ co-operative, meaning each New World, Pak'nSave and Four Square are owned and operated by kiwis. With these stores, the relationship will typically be with the **store owners**, whereas relationships with Gilmours, Trents and Raeward Fresh will typically be with the **Store Manager** as these operate on a different ownership model.



Whilst Foodstuffs have supported food rescues for a long time, Foodstuffs are currently strengthening their processes around partnering stores with food hubs - they have recently conducted a mapping process which will occur annually to identify where a partnership is needed and will either communicate directly with the local food hub and/ or AFRA in order to brokerage the relationship.

If a new owner has taken over a store and you wish to engage with them, either contact Foodstuffs at wasteminimisation@foodstuffs.co.nz or try and set up a meeting with the Owner, Store Manager and/or Compliance Manager.

A key challenge that stores have faced when partnering with food hubs is around regular collections. It is recommended from the start of the partnership that you arrange collection days and times with the store to ensure a successful relationship and ongoing collections.

Foodstuffs requirements around food rescue

Historically Foodstuffs stores were more focused on donating "safe goods" such as bread and ambient goods, however they have recently launched their own set of donation guidelines that align and reference [AFRA's Food Safety Guide](#).

The PAK'nSAVE food bank appeal



During the campaign, every PAK'nSAVE store partners with a local community organisation to collect customer donations and distribute them to those in need.

Get in touch with your local PAK'nSAVE to build the relationship and ask to be considered as their partner for this campaign.

New World's Family2Family food bank campaigns



This campaign sees our stores distribute customer donations of food bank friendly items to a local partner. Stores in the Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland region partner with their respective City Missions.

If you are located outside Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland, get in touch with your local New World to start building your relationship and be considered as their partner for this campaign.



3.

Logistics

A. Transport

It's important to have a reliable form of transport for food pick-ups, as well as people who are committed to making sure all pick-ups happen at the scheduled time.

Without these things in place, it's more likely that you'll either be late for pick-ups or miss them altogether - which can put a food donor off working with your service in the future.

Things to consider

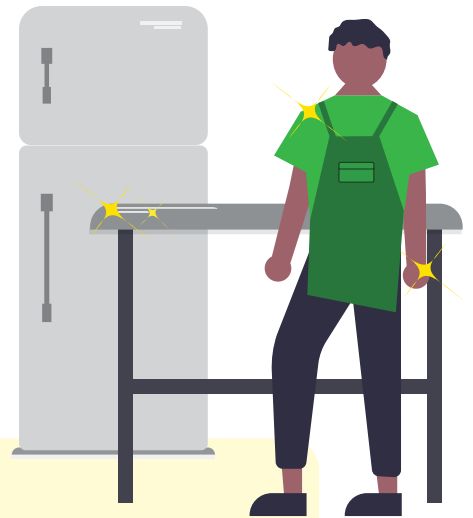
- Who's going to collect the food?
- Whose vehicle will they use? Will they be covered by their insurance or by your insurance?
- If they're using their own vehicle, will they be reimbursed for petrol costs?
- Will doing the food collections fit into their schedule? Consider both weekdays and weekends.
- Can they be on time, all the time?
- What's your back-up plan if the person who was meant to collect the food can't make it?
- What's the traffic like, peak and off-peak?

Photo credit: Sunday Blessings



B. Premises

You may need premises to bring the food back to for sorting and storage. If you plan on having community groups pick up food (rather than it being delivered to them) you'll need to make sure that your premises are suitable for collections from an accessibility and security point of view.



Things to consider

Interior space

- Is it large enough to accommodate all your equipment, with enough space left to allow for safe working?
- Chillers, fridges, freezers
- Shelving for dry food
- Storage space (e.g. for boxes in which to pack food)
- Food sorting tables
- Office desks and chairs.

Facilities

- Kitchenette with running hot water
- Toilets
- Suitable car parking for staff, volunteers and community groups collecting food.

General

- Budget – how much can you spend on renting premises? Is buying premises an option?
- Are the other tenants happy to have a food rescue service in their building? Make sure they understand that there'll often be volunteers and community group representatives coming in and out of the premises, and they won't usually be accompanied by a staff member.

Location and access

- Direct / flat street access for deliveries
- Easy and safe after-hours access for volunteers
- Ability to install own locks and security keypad if required
- Centrally located and close to public transport (this is particularly important for volunteers).

Electrical layout

- Are there enough power points for your equipment?
- Will the circuits handle all your equipment running at the same time?
- Can you change circuits and create new ones if necessary?

C. Food safety

Food safety is a huge topic and it should be top of your priorities from well before you start operating.

AFRA has created a [Food Safety Guide](#) which gives you comprehensive information on all areas of food safety for food rescue organisations.

The Food Safety Guide provides advice about collecting, sorting and transporting food, and includes information for food donors about what kind of food is appropriate for donation and the Good Samaritan clause.

AFRA also has a guide available specifically for [food recipients](#) about food safety.



These resources are free for everyone on www.afra.org.nz/food-safety-guide

Use-by vs best-before dates

There is a difference between **use-by** (do not distribute) and **best-before** (can still distribute and may be safe to eat)- this distinction is very important.

When looking at use-by dates, remember that the recipient community organisation will take a day or two to distribute food to whānau, so this time difference should be taken into account.

Use-by Date <i>Food Safety</i> Do not distribute food after this date.	Best-before Date <i>Quality</i> You can eat food after this date, but it may not be at its best.
<p>A use-by date means there is a potential health risk if consumed after midnight of that date.</p> <p>Under no circumstances are products past their use-by date to be consumed unless they have been frozen prior to that date.</p>	<p>A best-before date indicates the period for when the product is at its optimal quality.</p> <p>Products with a best-before date are safe to consume after that date although the quality will deteriorate. If deterioration or spoilage becomes noticeable, it is then a health/ safety risk. If it looks ok and smells ok, you can generally eat it.</p>
<p>Do not distribute food that has past its use-by date.</p>	<p>Food can be donated after the best-before date provided it is fit to eat.</p>

Best-Before Guidelines

	Food type	Don't give out if....
 DAIRY	Fresh milk	3 days or more after 'best-before date'
	Yogurt, sour cream, cottage cheese, cream	2 weeks or more after 'best-before date'
	Eggs	2 weeks or more after 'best-before date'
	Soft cheese: brie, camembert	2 weeks or more after 'best-before date'
	Mayonnaise, hollandaise and taretare sauce	1 month or more after 'best-before date'
 MEAT	Fresh meat - not chicken or shellfish	After 'best-before' date. Only give on 'best-before date' if meat is to be consumed on that day.
	Fresh meat - chicken or shellfish	We recommend you DISCARD IMMEDIATELY
	Cured meat - bacon, salami etc.	After 'best-before' date. Only give on 'best-before date' if meat is to be consumed on that day.
 BREAD	Fresh bread	2 or more days after 'best-before' date
	Packaged breads	10 days or more after 'best-before' date
 DRINKS	Smoothies	2 days or more after 'best-before' date
	Juices	1 week or more after 'best-before' date
	Fizzy drinks	6 months or more after 'best-before' date
 READY MEALS	Salads (bags and pottles)	Don't distribute after 'best-before' date
	Single serve microwave meals/bulk prepared meals	On or after 'best-before' date
	Fresh pies, pizzas and quiches	3 days after 'best-before' date
	Fresh soups (plastic pouches)	2 weeks or more after 'best-before' date
 OTHER	Tofu	1 week or more after 'best-before' date
	Dips (including hummus)	1 week on or more after 'best-before' date
	Packaged chips, biscuits and crackers	1 month or after 'best-before' date
	Chocolate and sweets	2 months or more after 'best-before' date
	Dried nuts and fruits	3 months or more after 'best-before' date
	Packaged cereals and muesli bar	6 months or more after 'best-before' date
	Spreads and chutneys	6 months or more after 'best-before' date
	Canned goods	1 year or more after 'best-before' date
	Dried bulk goods (flour, sugar, oats etc.)	1 year or more after 'best-before' date

These are **guidelines only** as referenced by international website www.eatbydate.com and in consultation with AFRA members and MPI. **You should always question any food past its best-before date before re-distributing back out into the community.**

No food rescue is an island - and you will need lots of support to run the organisation *and* operations.

3.

People

A. Volunteers

Ideally, you'll be able to run your food rescue service with a combination of paid staff and volunteers, but to begin with it's likely that much of the work will be done on an unpaid basis.

Things to consider

- What will your volunteer roles be?
- What time commitment will volunteers need to make?
- Will they be supervised by staff or self-managed?
- What training will you provide?
- How will you recruit volunteers?
- How will you communicate with volunteers?
- Who will manage the volunteers and be their point of contact within the organisation?
- What will your volunteer application process be like?

"For the volunteers who help us it's always meeting some needs that they have. For me it's meeting my need that my job does not fulfil, my leadership giftings, or my sustainability and environmental passions and my social justice ... side of things. The people I work with are great and that's basically what keeps me there ... I love the people I work with. It has fulfilled a need in me that wasn't being filled."

Volunteer, Satisfy Food Rescue.

B. Staff

Having paid staff will allow you to grow your food rescue service in a sustainable way. It will likely happen gradually as your funding allows, and is a worthwhile investment in the future success of your organisation.

Things to consider

- Can you hire staff? If you're not able to hire staff yet, at what point in your organisation's development will you be in a position to do so?
- How will you fund their salaries?
- Will you be able to offer staff permanent contracts or will you employ them on a fixed-term basis?
- Can you find staff who are committed to the cause and willing to work hard for a modest salary?



Photo credit: Justin Zilich

4.

Operations

While the obligations under the Food Act to ensure food is safe and suitable to eat apply to food businesses only, all parties within the donation chain have a duty of care to ensure food is safe and suitable. For example, once food is with a recipient organisation they have a similar duty of care to the end consumer of keeping food safe and suitable.

A: Provisioning food

As obvious as it sounds, it's important to make sure that you have organisations ready, willing and able to take the food that's being rescued. This means checking what types of food the organisations in your area are in need of and making sure that you can match the supply to the demand.

It's a good idea to decide from the outset what kinds of organisations you want to support. Being clear about this makes it easier to determine if a given organisation meets your criteria, and allows you to politely and respectfully turn down a request for food if they don't.

Things to consider

- Which types of organisation do you want to support?
- What criteria will you use to determine if an organisation is within your remit?
- Which organisations will you approach?
- How will you approach them? Who will take responsibility for this? How will you document the process?
- What kind of food do they need? How much food do they need? How often do they need it?
- What are their opening days and times?
- What services do they provide and how will this affect the types of food they need? Examples include:
 - » Soup kitchens needing food that can be cooked into meals
 - » Food banks needing food that can be easily packed up and given out
 - » Drop-in centres needing food that can be eaten as is e.g. sandwiches, fruit, muffins.
 - » Do they have adequate storage facilities for the types of food you will be supplying them with?
- Can they use the food before it's no longer good for use?
 - » From a food safety point of view
 - » So that it is not wasted.
- How will food be transported to the community groups?
- Can they come and collect it? When? How often?
- If they can't collect it, can you drop it off to them?



Photo credit: Food Rescue Nelson

B: Finances

Running a food rescue service costs money, so before you get started you'll need to realistically consider where your funding will come from.

Things to consider

- Do you have time to search for and apply for grants?
- Do you have time to seek out sponsors?
- How can you fundraise? Do you have anyone to help organise fundraising? How will you establish a consistent approach and/or a fundraising plan?
- Who will manage your accounts?
- Who will track grants being spent appropriately?

In-kind support

In-kind support (where businesses donate their services) can be a huge help to your organisation, not only in the value of the services provided but also in the sense of community that's fostered by working together with businesses in your area.

Here are some ideas for operational tasks that you could find in-kind support for:



Cleaning



Printing



Food safety certification



Legal support



Security



Website and tech support

Grant applications can be very time-consuming, so it's important to be realistic about this.

Grants are mostly tagged funding, which means that they'll come with a specification of what they can be spent on.

Things to consider

- What services will you need that could be supplied in-kind?
- Which local businesses do you already have relationships with?
- How will you approach local businesses?
- How will they benefit from providing you with in-kind support?

B. Marketing and communications

Throughout the development and running of your food rescue service, you'll need to consider how you talk to the public about your work. Over the last few years food rescue has become a more familiar concept, and in our experience people are very supportive and interested in how it works and what they can do to help.

Gaining the support of your community will help to make your service more robust and sustainable – so it's worth investing time and funds into engaging people with your work.

Things to consider

- Do you have contacts that you can approach for in-kind support? Services to consider are marketing, public relations, graphic design, printing and web design.
- How will you design and produce your organisation's branding and promotional material?
- Can you find volunteers with marketing, design or public relations experience who'd be willing to contribute their skills?
- Will you create a marketing plan to help you determine a consistent approach to your marketing? How will you do this?



C. Policies

All organisations should have policies which help make sure staff & volunteers know how you operate, and what the procedure is if something goes wrong.

It is a good idea to develop policies as soon as possible and process them through your organisational structure as necessary (if you have a Board, they will need to adopt the policy before it can be implemented by the operations manager).

Some key policies which we recommend you consider having as a 'starter pack' are:



Staff recruitment & remuneration



Financial management & control



Code of conduct & sexual harassment



Vehicle & safe driving



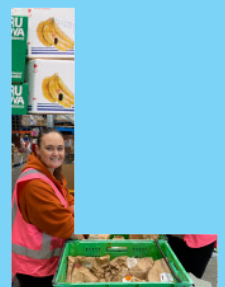
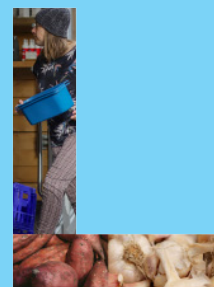
Health & safety
(include incident reporting)



Media & communications

Alongside your policies, we recommend you create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for food donors, and a terms & conditions agreement with food recipient organisations, if you plan to work with other agencies.

You are an AFRA member you can access example templates which you can use to adapt to your organisations at www.afra.org.nz/resource-hub.



The Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance proudly works with



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