

THE ARKANSAS SECTOR PARTNERSHIP NATIONAL EMERGENCY GRANT

Arkansas has experienced over 9,600 reported lay-offs in the past two years. (Arkansas Department of Workforce Services Labor Market Information/Occupational Career Information) The number of lay-offs is likely higher as not all lay-off events are reported. Also, 18,000 Arkansans are considered long-term unemployed. (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey) To meet the needs of dislocated workers and the long-term unemployed, the Arkansas Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (ASP) is responding by providing employer-driven workforce training in the high-growth industry sectors of Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care, Information Technology, and the skilled Construction Trades. An overarching statewide economic development goal is to increase Arkansans' incomes at a pace greater than the national average. Therefore, it is increasingly important for workforce development programs to target industry sectors that offer solid growth opportunities with accompanying high wages for potential employees. Arkansas trails the U.S. per capita median household income by 23%--\$40,768 compared to the U.S. per capita median household income of \$53,046 (U.S. Census Bureau). Workforce development efforts need to be focused on closing this income gap.

A significant factor in determining training programs for ASP is locations of recently dislocated workers. For instance, Tenaris Hickman and Atlas Tubes are laying off hundreds of employees from their facilities located in Blytheville. Those dislocated workers have skill sets that may translate to Big River Steel which is currently constructing a facility in Osceola, a short drive away. Arkansas Northeastern College (ANC) and East Arkansas Community College (EACC) will provide training to dislocated workers in collaboration with Big River Steel. In another example, ConAgra Foods in Batesville announced the closure of a plant eliminating 272 jobs. White River Health System has a need for 50 Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA). To

meet that employer-driven need, University of Arkansas Community College-Batesville (UACCB) has joined with the hospital to provide CNA training to some dislocated workers affected by the plant closure.

The collaborative partnership of ASP is focused on providing targeted credit and non-credit pre-employment and occupational specific training to meet employer needs leading to viable employment opportunities for dislocated workers, long-term unemployed individuals, and eligible underserved populations. ASP will engage project stakeholders in ongoing regional planning efforts across the state to assess workforce development needs and job demand.

During the past five years, the ADWS Discretionary Grants team has successfully partnered with Community Colleges, Apprenticeship Programs, and Winrock International to offer employer driven trainings which have resulted in the placement of over 5,000 Arkansans. This team has administered over \$24 million in DOL-funded, multi-partner projects and is currently overseeing five other similar training programs.

PARTNERSHIPS. ADWS leads the ASP collaborative partnership to provide services to over 1,700 Arkansans and train over 1,500 of those to meet the needs of 41 employers. These 41 employers have committed to hiring ASP participants. ADWS is the state agency responsible for administering WIA Title I activities. The ASP includes training providers, six Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and their representatives, employers, and Winrock who is an enhanced services provider. ADWS has developed a proven partnership through other DOL-funded grants with the Arkansas Community Colleges (ACC), the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition (AAC), Winrock, and local employers to provide work readiness/pre-employment and targeted occupational training based on employer needs. ASP is focused on providing a partnership framework that facilitates the delivery of sector-based trainings and employer

engagement activities to meet both the workforce development needs of industry and the employment needs of dislocated workers.

The ADWS Discretionary Grants Team will provide services and serve as the grants administrator. ADWS will identify eligible dislocated workers and long-term unemployed participants through unemployment data (UI) and conduct appropriate outreach and referral to the grant partners. ADWS will share this data with the LWDBs to assist in their outreach. ADWS Reemployment Specialists and internal veterans' staff will refer participants. ADWS will utilize the Arkansas Job Link (AJL) for participants to search for job openings and submit applications and resumes. This use of AJL will leverage its funding stream, which includes Job Service, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). ADWS will also conduct employer satisfaction surveys, focus groups, and other employer evaluations. ADWS will evaluate overall grant performance, coordinate with the partners, and provide financial management services for the grant. ADWS will also coordinate the regional and sector planning and strategies.

The ASP will also target 250 eligible underserved population members such as minorities, women, veterans, and recipients of SNAP. Partners that will refer members of targeted populations include the LWDB's, Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS), Goodwill Industries, Central Arkansas Re-entry Coalition, Lewis-Burnett Employment Finders, and Center for Women in Transition. DHS will refer SNAP recipients. ADWS internal veterans' staff will refer veterans and re-employment specialists will refer dislocated workers at risk of long-term unemployment. LWDB's will refer members of targeted populations. The last three partners listed will refer persons transitioning from incarceration into the workforce.

The ACC is a non-profit representing all 22 public Community Colleges. ACC will serve in an oversight and recruiting capacity for the Community Colleges. Twelve Community Colleges will work with employers and provide training of over 1,500 Arkansans that align with employer needs. Colleges will also offer enhanced services for dislocated workers through pre-employment training and other services. The AAC is a non-profit comprised of 6 organizations administering DOL-registered apprenticeship programs. The AAC has 75 apprenticeship locations and a network of 2,000 employers. AAC is responsible for pre-employment and occupation-based training for Software Architects and the skilled Construction Trades.

Wraparound case management and supportive services will be provided by Winrock, a community and economic development non-profit. Winrock will provide specialized enhanced services to a minimum of 250 participants through wraparound case management. Winrock will also provide supportive services payments to at least 500 participants. Winrock will provide intensive one-on-one coaching in job searches, financial management, job interview assistance, and resume writing as well as individualized matching services to programs available for the long-term unemployed. Individuals will receive assistance in accessing various programs available through the LWDBs, workforce intermediaries, community-based organizations, non-profits, school counseling, mental health counseling, and financial support services.

The partner LWDBs and their representatives are White River Planning and Development District Incorporated, the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District Incorporated, Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board, Southwest Arkansas Planning and Development District, West Central Arkansas Career Development Center System, INC, and Central Arkansas Planning and Development District. These LWDB's and other LWDB's who may join the partnership will conduct an initial screening and assessment of participants. In

addition, they will refer other UI recipients and job seekers to the program as well as offer job search services, industry contacts, and job placement services.

ASP has 41 employers committed to partner with Community Colleges on these training efforts. Example of employers that have agreed to partner with ASP include Lockheed Martin, Big River Steel, L'Oreal, Kimberly-Clark, RockTenn, Molex, White River Health Systems, Welspun, Defiance Metal Products, Wonder State Box Company, and Cooling and Applied Technology. Many are located in areas that have suffered layoff events creating a high demand for delivery of enhanced and intensive dislocated worker services. ASP will reach out to additional employers over the life of the grant. ASP is requesting \$6,362,485 to implement and complete this project. (Please see Attached Letters of Commitment from Employers, Service Providers, LWDB Representatives, Targeted Population Organizations)

IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS. Projected growth occupations through year 2022 within targeted industry sectors of IT, Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Construction include a range of middle-skill jobs (i.e., requiring more than a high school education but less than a bachelor's degree) that offer career building entry points for many dislocated workers including underserved populations. Employers within these growth industries have identified both pre-employment and targeted occupational-based workforce skills gaps that will be addressed with the sector strategies trainings. Pre-Employment training and enhanced services activities will provide participants with job-readiness skills and real-life experience as preparation for success to continue occupational-based training.

As the result of statewide planning, the State of Arkansas Integrated Workforce Plan targets these aforementioned sectors targeted by ASP as business and employment growth opportunities statewide as well. (State of Arkansas Integrated Workforce Plan, July 1, 2012 –

In a recent Arkansas State Chamber survey of employers, which included representation from manufacturing, construction, transportation, and healthcare, over 80% of respondents cited a need for occupational skills training to fill jobs that span employment opportunities in their respective fields. The most frequently cited reasons for rejecting applicants as unqualified were “Lack of relevant work experience” and “Lack of technical skills.” The proposed trainings respond to the current education and skill levels of Arkansans and upskills workers to meet the needs of employers who currently or are likely to call Arkansas home.

According to LMI data, projected growth occupations through year 2022 within ASP targeted industry sectors include a range of middle-skill occupations that offer immediate employment opportunities as well as credential attainment and career advancement potential. LMI employment projections through 2022 indicate IT job growth will expand by 9%, while Advanced Manufacturing jobs will expand by 5.5%, Construction by 8.98%, and Healthcare jobs will expand by 18%. ASP training programs in these targeted sectors include Software Architect, LPN, CNA, EMT, Industrial Electrical Systems, Welding, Entry-Level Production, Industrial Pre-Employment Training, and Multi-Skills Program and others. If other job-driven training needs are identified during the project, ASP will offer additional trainings.

The following are examples of how the proposed training meets employer-driven demand and sector strategies. Within the IT sector, Software Architect (SA) Apprenticeship training will provide skills in entry level software development. Within the Advanced Manufacturing sector, welding and industrial electrical systems will meet the needs of collaborating employers (e.g. Big River Steel, Pocahontas Aluminum Company). Within the Healthcare sector, CNA and LPN

training will meet employer-driven need (e.g., White River Health System, Unity Health) to serve hospital and medical clinics with in-demand occupational training.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND STRATEGIES. ASP will engage project stakeholders in ongoing regional planning efforts across the state to assess workforce development needs and job demand. Input obtained from regional planning efforts will be used to adjust training (on an as needed basis) to meet employer needs. ASP will utilize a regional planning sector framework that focuses on critical factors that include: 1) existing labor market information and other workforce related data; 2) regional input from community stakeholders; 3) industry sector/employer input; 4) aligned education and training activities to meet employer needs; 5) aligning business services/workforce services/case management services to serve workforce customers (both employers and dislocated workers); and 6) continuous improvement and sustainability after the life of the grant.

ASP will engage in regional planning activities, structured around WIOA regions, including assessing the workforce development and economic landscape to identify employer training needs, industry trends, and areas of job growth. The resulting information, data, and analysis will serve as a basis for serving dislocated workers and employers under ASP as well as serve as the cornerstone of WIOA regional and statewide planning activities.

Both geographic and industry-based sector strategies are proven to be effective methods for aligning workforce service providers and community partners to address the occupational based training needs of employers. ASP regional planning process will also assess existing workforce services and community resources infrastructure to support workforce development efforts. ASP will engage in the following activities to ensure the development of a comprehensive regional and sector plan: partnership and program development with

stakeholders, employers, and training programs; acquisition, analysis, and utilization of LMI and workforce information to identify regional trends; asset mapping and other analysis, such as SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats); developing regional plans; training for staff in State and local areas necessary to facilitate regional planning and implement regional strategies; establishing social and/or peer learning networks among regions using sector strategies; identifying and mapping the necessary skills and competencies for in-demand jobs; assessing how well those skills and competencies are reflected in existing training programs and curricula; identifying aligned industry credentials for those skills and competencies needed.

This structure will also ensure that employers and regional industry representatives are actively engaged in designing and implementing strategies in five key areas: 1) serving on the project's leadership team; 2) helping implement program strategies and goals; 3) identifying and mapping the necessary skills and competencies for the programs; 4) assisting with curriculum development and designing the program; 5) and assisting with the design of an assessment and/or credential that will address industry skill needs. ASP plans to contract with an external experienced strategic planning organization to work with project staff to facilitate the regional planning process. Each of the ten LWDB will have the opportunity to play a key planning role in its region. The ASP is requesting \$300,000 for Regional Planning which is 4.7% of the overall grant funding request.

PROGRAM SERVICES. Enhanced Services-- Assessment, Pre-Employment Training, Wraparound Case Management, Supportive Services.

ASP will offer enhanced career services to dislocated workers, training and work-based training. The colleges and partnering employers will offer pre-employment skills training, workplace readiness, occupational based training and Workforce Orientation and Retraining

Keys (WORK) to participants. Training providers will also offer a model of training and work-based training that incorporates classroom learning, work based training and training alongside industry professionals. Partners may utilize pre and post-test assessment exams to gauge the program and determine a participant as a successful completer. Through the assessment process, ASP will determine which candidates need enhanced and supportive services. Of the total 1700 participants, over 1200 will receive enhanced services of some kind.

ASP will also emphasize participant recruitment of targeted populations that include: minorities, veterans, women, recipients of SNAP and TANF, individuals with disabilities, and persons transitioning from incarceration. ASP strengthens the pipeline for underserved populations to receive training, enter Apprenticeships, and receive enhanced career services through partnerships with DHS, ADWS TANF program, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders that reach underserved groups as well as dislocated workers.

To train dislocated workers in the skills needed to fill jobs, participants will be assessed, then receive classroom and work-based training and if needed, intensive job coaching and supportive services. Upon entry into the program, participants may be assessed through the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), by completing the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) or participating in an online skills assessment, the Transferable Occupation Relationship Quotient (TORQ). TABE determines basic education levels. CRC is a work credential that promotes skills and career development for individuals and verifies to employers that an individual possesses basic workplace skills and employability skills. CRC is a portable credential that is recognized by more than 2,000 Arkansas employers. TORQ identifies the participant's knowledge, skills and abilities based on previous education or certifications held and work experience. The results of the skills assessment are used to identify alternate occupations the

participant is qualified for as well as real time job referrals. CRC and TORQ will assist in matching the existing skill and educational level with existing jobs and the appropriate training. Pre-employment training activities will provide participants with job-readiness skills such as resume writing, interview skills, job search techniques, conflict resolution, and real-life experience as preparation for success to continue occupational-based training. Seven colleges are offering the enhanced service of pre-employment training. AAC will also offer pre-employment training for 250 participants at other colleges, thus leveraging the use of an already existing proven DOL recognized curriculum. The partner LWDB's, Colleges and AAC will offer in-depth assessment, pre-employment training and other enhanced services.

WRAPAROUND CASE MANAGEMENT. Winrock will provide wraparound case management as discussed in the "Partners" section to at least 250 participants. This includes intensive one-on-one coaching in job searches, financial management, job interview assistance, and resume writing as well as individualized matching services to programs available for the long-term unemployed. ASP will provide Supportive Services payments to eligible individuals of up to \$750 per eligible participant for a minimum of 500 participants. This effort will support qualifying individuals with transportation, child care, housing, and other allowable supportive services. ASP is requesting \$1,437,838 or 22.5% of the grant funds for all enhanced services, including pre-employment training, wraparound case management, intensive job services and supportive services. Colleges will offer an additional \$159,255 in enhanced services using non-ASP funds such as Career Pathways funding and Career Readiness Certificate funding.

TRAINING AND WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS. ASP addresses a primary economic development strategy for the state by providing employer-driven workforce development training within targeted industry growth sectors laid out in the Arkansas State

Integrated Workforce Plan and confirmed by LMI data and employer requests. The Community College and Apprenticeship training providers have strong responsive relationships with business, and the ability to quickly adapt to provide the workforce skills needed for high-growth, in-demand fields. The ASP Enhanced Services, Training Programs and Employer Partners Table on pages 14 and 15 details the services, training, credentials, and employer partners of each training provider. ASP will also create a strong pipeline for underserved populations to enter career services, training, re-employment services and work based training through a targeted participant referral strategy involving a network of partner organizations. For example, the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) will refer work-ready low income and/or low skilled recipients into training in high demand fields. The ASP is requesting \$3,636,158 which is 57.14% of the total budget for Training and Work-Based Training Models.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES. ASP has 12 Community Colleges committed to participate, with 41 partner employers that will train over 1,500 participants during the life of the grant. The targeted industry sectors will be Advanced Manufacturing, Construction, and Healthcare. Each Community College has an Employer Advisory Board and these Boards were consulted in determining the trainings needed to most likely result in employment. Targeted occupations include: construction technology, welding, industrial electrical systems, multi-skills programs in Advanced Manufacturing, LPN, EMT, CNA, and Microsoft Office Specialist. Community Colleges will offer 24 courses with college credit, 9 courses with industry recognized credentials and 12 courses that will offer both college credit and an industry based credential. Two colleges will train 100 incumbent workers for \$71,489.75 which is 1% of the total ASP budget.

APPRENTICESHIP. Governor Asa Hutchinson, alongside the Arkansas General Assembly have made increased IT education a priority by requiring computer science courses be taught in all

high schools. The Software Architect Apprenticeship (SAA) training builds on this requirement by offering a post-secondary path for students to pursue IT opportunities. SAA will recruit and employ approximately 30 apprentices over the grant period. While initial recruiting efforts will focus on qualified dislocated workers, this Apprenticeship creates a sustainable program that a high school student can enter upon graduation. Apprentices will be able to earn a living in a burgeoning profession. The workplace training consists of structured growth alongside developers in job functions such as Information Security Analysts, Web Developers, Systems Engineers and database administrators. The program can be easily adapted for both traditional and nontraditional students. Apprenticeship training also has a skilled construction trade component that will enroll 75 Registered Apprentices from ASP participants.

ASP's continuing mission in all WIOA activities and this project is to serve a wide range of dislocated workers. ASP will build its service delivery model based on comprehensive, frontline assessment of individuals skills needed for employment. ASP also addresses a transition to competency based training and education that result in stackable, industry-recognized credentials. ASP training programs offer access to 24 college credit courses, over 21 industry recognized credentials and 105 Registered Apprenticeships. ASP will build a customized plan for participants, using re-employment services, short term and work based learning, and accelerated skills training, utilizing all the partners and resources with the goal of ensuring that participants receive the necessary customized employment assistance, counseling and training to succeed in the labor market as quickly as possible.

ALIGNMENT AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER RESOURCES. ASP will align with and utilize multiple funding sources to aid in the successful implementation of the grant. The Arkansas State Integrated Workforce Plan activities currently support and incorporate the

principles of ASP of unifying economic development, education, and the state workforce system in a coordinated effort leading to increased employment opportunities of the hardest hit dislocated workers. ASP will receive participant referrals using UI data, ADWS Veterans Resources, ADWS Reemployment Services, and SNAP and TANF programs. The project will also utilize existing WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The Community Colleges that have engaged in this partnership offer career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. Economic development agencies and organizations from every region and sector are providing critical information and data which is used in identifying and meeting the needs of the employers. The LWDBs will conduct an initial screening of participants for referral to the program. In addition to those participants, they will refer other UI recipients and job seekers to the program as well as offer job search services, industry contacts, and job placement services. Other aspects of the ASP's coordination and alignment have been detailed in the previous sections of the grant.

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS. The total grant funding request is \$6,362,485 of which \$449,996 or 7% for administrative costs. ADWS administrative cost is \$131,651 for their oversight of the program. ACC will receive \$9,400 for their administrative costs. The 12 Community Colleges will receive a total of \$258,661 for their administrative costs. Winrock will receive \$50,284.00 for its administrative costs.

EVALUATION. ASP acknowledges and understands that ETA may conduct an independent evaluation of the outcomes and benefits of this NEG, and by accepting a SP NEG award, agree to participate in such an evaluation.

Arkansas Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (ASP-NEG)

ENHANCED SERVICES, TRAINING PROGRAMS, & EMPLOYER PARTNERS

Service Providers	Proposed Participants Served	Industry Sector	Training Programs	Stackable Credentials Earned	Work-Based Training Model	Participating Employers
ANC	150	Adv. Mfg. & Construction	Enhanced Career Services & Pre-Employment training (Workforce Orientation & Retraining Keys); Occupational Based training in the following fields: Construction Technology, Welding, & Industrial Electrical Systems	CP Construction Technology; CP Industrial Electrical Systems; CP Welding, TC Welding, NCCER Levels 1 & 2 Certification; W.O.R.K Certificate - college credit if participant enrolls in college program, CRC		Big River Steel, Jefferson Iron & Metal, Mid-River Terminal, SMS Millcraft, & TMW
ASUB - Searcy	100	Adv. Mfg.	Multi-Skills Program (General Technical Skills incorporating Electronics, Drafting & Reading Prints, Quality Control Measurements, Hand Tool Identification, Hydraulics/Pneumatics, Mechanical Power, Welding, etc.)	Multi Skills - CP, TC, AAS, NCCER Core, Forklift Certification		St. Jeans Industries, Inc., Defiance Metal Products, Remington Arms, & Bryce Industries
ASUN	40	Mfg. & Healthcare	Welders (30) & LPN's (10)	Welding - CP, TC, AAS Welding, AWS Certification & NCCER Certification; Nursing - TC Practical Nursing	Welding - 90 day internship with credit hours toward next degree level	TrinityRail Maintenance Services & Unity Health
BRTC	55	Mfg.	Enhanced Services & Industrial Pre-Employment Training			MacLean-Fogg Component Solutions, Pocahontas Aluminum Company, & Pinnacle Frames
EACC	84	Adv. Mfg. & Construction	Enhanced Career Services & Pre-Employment Training (Workforce Orientation & Retraining Keys). Partnering with ANC to provide Pre-Employment/Work Readiness Training	W.O.R.K Certificate - can be applied as college credit if participant enrolls in college program		Big River Steel & Boar's Head
NWACC	292 (50 of which will be Incumbent Workers receiving Leadership Development Training)	Mfg.	Entry-Level Production			LA-Z-Boy, Inc.
PTC	90 (Minimum)	Adv. Mfg.	Enhanced Career Services & Pre-Employment; Introduction to Adv. Mfg. (Entry-Level Manufacturing/Machine Operator jobs)			Molex, L'Oreal, & Welspun

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Arkansas Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (ASP-NEG)

ENHANCED SERVICES, TRAINING PROGRAMS, & EMPLOYER PARTNERS						
Service Providers	Proposed Participants Served	Industry Sector	Training Programs	Stackable Credentials Earned	Work-Based Training Model	Participating Employers
SAUT	80	Adv. Mfg. & Aerospace	Enhanced Career Services & Pre-Employment Skills Program			Lockheed Martin
SEARK	228	Adv. Mfg., IT, & Healthcare	Enhanced Career Services, WAGE Certificate & Career Readiness Certificate for all participants, Welders (60), Microsoft Office Specialist (60), Emergency Medical Technician (60), CNA (48)	Welding - CP; Nursing Assistant - CP; EMT - CP; MOS		City of Pine Bluff Fire & Rescue, Evergreen Packaging, & Condray Signs
SouthArk	160	Adv. Mfg.	Enhanced Career Services - Career Counselor, Basic Operator's Orientation Training (100 participants non-credit) Process Technology, Welding, Industrial Equipment Maintenance, & Mechatronics (the remaining trainings include 30 participants per year credit)	Industrial Technology - CP, TC, AAS; Process Technology TC, AAS; Welding - 5 CPs, TC		Tetra Technologies, El Dorado Chemical, Martin Resources, Therna-Flite, Great Lakes Solutions, Lion Oil Company, Entrgra, Clean Harbors
UACCB	50 (Incumbent Workers will receive Certified Nursing Assistant Training)	Healthcare	Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	Nursing - CNA - will count toward LPN & RN		White River Health System
UACCM	294 (Maximum includes 180 from Multi-Craft & 114 from Welding)	Adv. Mfg.	Enhanced Career Services & Pre-Employment Training, Supportive Services, Multi-Craft Basic Workforce Training (180), & Welding Training Program (114)	Multi-Craft - NC3 - National Coalition of Certification Centers (NC3) - stackable, industry recognized credentials; Welding - option for a TC & NCCER Certification Levels 1 & 2		Wonder State Box Company, Kimberly-Clark Corporation, RockTenn, Browning Welding, Green Steel Fabrication, Prospect Steel, Russellville Steel, & Cooling & Applied Technology
Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition	105 Registered Apprenticeship 250 Pre-Employment	IT & Construction	Enhanced Career Services & Pre-Employment, Software Architect, & Construction Skilled Trades	Enhanced Career Services & Pre-Employment, Software Architect Registered Apprenticeship, Construction Registered Apprenticeship	30 Software Architect Apprentices & 75 Construction Skilled Trades Apprentices	BBA Solutions who belongs to a consortium of 7 software companies including BizUnwired & NATF Employers (See NATF Employer Listing)
Local Workforce Development Boards	500		Enhanced Career Services			

Table 1
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