

Chief Executive Officer

Leadership Profile

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Executive Summary

The Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation seeks a strategic, relationship-driven, and mission-oriented executive to serve as its next Chief Executive Officer. This is a distinctive opportunity to lead a high-impact organization at the forefront of advancing research to address some of the most urgent public health challenges of our time, including obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer will serve as the primary leader and ambassador for the Foundation, guiding its strategic direction, strengthening its philanthropic enterprise, and positioning the organization for continued growth and influence. The Chief Executive Officer will work in close partnership with the Center's Executive Director and leadership team of LSU's Pennington Biomedical Research Center, ensuring strong alignment between philanthropic priorities and scientific advancement.

Pennington Biomedical Research Center is internationally recognized for its contributions to metabolic health and chronic disease research. The separate, independent Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation plays a critical role in accelerating this work by securing philanthropic support, fostering strategic partnerships, and enabling the Center to pursue innovative research that improves health outcomes across the lifespan. As the Center continues to expand its reach and impact, the Foundation is poised for a new phase of growth and increased visibility.

This role operates at the intersection of strategy, philanthropy, and scientific advancement. The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for strengthening relationships with the Board, major donors, and key stakeholders while building a high-performing team and cultivating a strong culture of philanthropy. The role requires a leader who is equally comfortable setting long-term vision, executing against near-term priorities, and serving as a visible external presence for the organization.

The ideal candidate will bring a proven track record of leadership, fundraising, and stakeholder engagement within a complex, mission-driven environment. They will be energized by the opportunity to advance cutting-edge research, build meaningful partnerships, and elevate the Foundation's role in supporting transformative scientific discovery.

As Pennington Biomedical continues to build on its legacy of innovation and impact, the Chief Executive Officer will play a central role in shaping the Foundation's future and advancing solutions that improve and extend lives.

This position is based on the Pennington Biomedical campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and requires a visible and engaged presence with Foundation leadership, the Research Center, and the broader community.

Individuals interested in this role, or in nominating qualified candidates, are encouraged to review the Procedure for Candidacy section at the conclusion of this leadership profile for additional information and application instructions.

Organization Overview

The Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation (Foundation) advances the mission of LSU's Pennington Biomedical Research Center (Center), one of the nation's premier research institutions dedicated to understanding, preventing, and treating chronic disease. Together, the Foundation and Center are addressing some of the most pressing public health challenges of our time, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and dementia.

Established in 1980 through a transformational \$125 million gift from C.B. "Doc" Pennington and Irene Wells Pennington, the Center was founded with a bold vision: to create the nation's leading nutrition and metabolic health research institution. Today, that vision has evolved into a globally recognized research enterprise that advances discoveries from the laboratory to real-world application.

Located on a 222-acre campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Pennington Biomedical Research Center is home to approximately 65 faculty members, more than 20 postdoctoral fellows, and nearly 700 employees conducting basic, clinical, and population-based research. With more than \$215 million in active research funding and a global network of collaborators, the Center is a recognized leader in advancing solutions to chronic disease.

FOUNDATION SNAPSHOT

- \$4.5M Annual Revenue
- \$30M Assets
- 12 Employees
- 9 Endowed Chairs
- 6 Professorships
- 2 Fellowships

The Center's impact is reflected in groundbreaking contributions to science and public health. Researchers helped develop the DASH Diet, played a key role in the landmark Diabetes Prevention Program, and have supported the health and readiness of U.S. military personnel and their families for more than three decades. Pennington Biomedical scientists have also contributed to the development of numerous obesity and diabetes therapies and continue to advance innovations that improve health and extend lives. For additional details about the Center, see the Appendix.

The Foundation serves as the philanthropic partner to this work, providing critical support that enables scientific innovation, attracts and retains world-class talent, strengthens research infrastructure, and accelerates the translation of discovery into meaningful health outcomes. Through strategic fundraising and stewardship, the Foundation helps position Pennington Biomedical for continued growth and impact.

A High-Impact Philanthropic Platform

The Foundation is a focused, high-impact organization that generates approximately \$4.5 million in annual revenue and manages nearly \$30 million in assets. With a lean team of 12 professionals, the Foundation delivers outsized impact by supporting one of the nation's leading biomedical research enterprises.

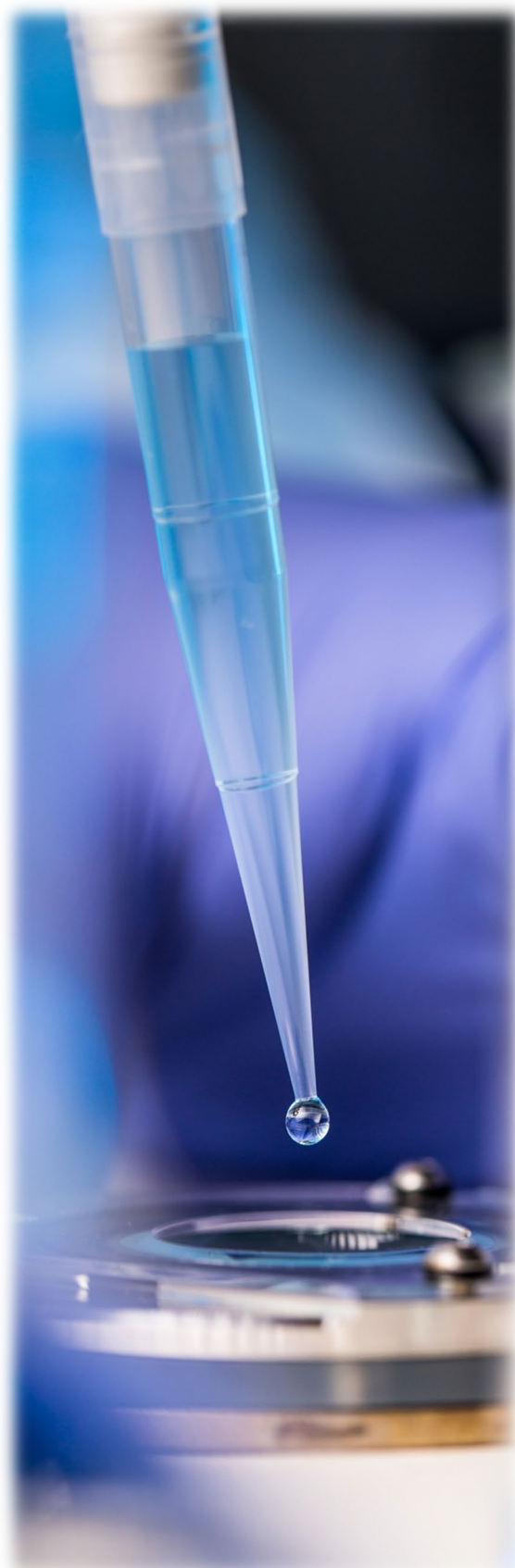
Together, the Foundation and Center operate in close alignment, with philanthropy playing a catalytic role in advancing scientific discovery, strengthening institutional capacity, and accelerating the translation of research into real-world health outcomes.

Foundation's Role and Impact

The Foundation plays a catalytic role by:

- Providing flexible funding beyond traditional grants
- Supporting early-stage and high-impact research
- Recruiting and retaining top scientific talent
- Strengthening competitiveness for federal funding
- Accelerating translation into real-world health outcomes

With more than \$215 million in active research funding and a global network of collaborators, Pennington Biomedical Center is a leader in advancing solutions to chronic disease, with the Foundation serving as a key partner in translating discovery into meaningful health outcomes.



Position Summary

The Chief Executive Officer of the Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation provides strategic and operational leadership to advance the Foundation's mission in support of LSU's Pennington Biomedical Research Center. This role represents a unique opportunity to lead a high-impact organization dedicated to accelerating research to address some of the most pressing health challenges of our time.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer serves as the primary leader and ambassador for the Foundation, guiding its long-term vision while overseeing daily operations. The Chief Executive Officer works in close partnership with the Executive Director and leadership team of Pennington Biomedical to ensure strong alignment between philanthropic strategy and institutional priorities.

This leader must operate effectively at both the strategic and execution levels, serving as a visible external presence while fostering a collaborative and high-performing internal culture. The Chief Executive Officer will play a central role in strengthening philanthropic support, building organizational capacity, and positioning the Foundation for sustained growth and impact.

Reporting Relationships

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer works closely with the Executive Director of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center and serves on the Center's management committee.

Direct reports include senior Foundation staff, including the Chief Development Officer.

Responsibilities

The successful CEO candidate will:

Board and Governance Partnership

- Partner closely with the Board of Directors, providing regular updates on strategy, operations, financial performance, and endowment management.
- Engage Board members in setting long-range goals, policies, and strategic priorities.
- Foster strong governance practices and ensure effective Board engagement.

Strategic Leadership

- Establish and guide the Foundation's long-term strategic direction in support of Pennington Biomedical.
- Align philanthropic priorities with the Center's scientific and institutional goals.
- Identify opportunities to expand the Foundation's impact and visibility.

Organizational Leadership and Operations

- Lead and manage day-to-day operations, including budgeting, resource allocation, and administrative functions.
- Build, develop, and inspire a high-performing team aligned with the Foundation's mission and goals.
- Foster a collaborative, transparent, and results-oriented organizational culture.

Philanthropy and Fundraising Leadership

- Partner with and oversee the Chief Development Officer to strengthen and grow a comprehensive philanthropic program.
- Advance a diversified fundraising strategy, including major and principal gifts, annual giving, planned giving, and institutional support.
- Ensure a strong culture of philanthropy across the Foundation and its stakeholders.

Partnership with Pennington Biomedical

- Work closely with Center leadership to understand and prioritize funding opportunities.
- Align philanthropic strategy with research priorities and emerging initiatives.
- Support the development of compelling cases for support and funding strategies.

External Relations and Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and strengthen relationships with donors, community leaders, and institutional partners.
- Serve as the primary external representative of the Foundation at events and engagements.
- Elevate the Foundation's visibility and reputation locally, nationally, and internationally.



Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been identified as priorities for this position:

Advance the Foundation's Strategic Vision

Establish and articulate a clear, forward-looking vision for the Foundation that positions it as a nationally recognized leader in advancing biomedical research through philanthropy. Shift the organization from a historically regional, caretaker model to a more proactive, growth-oriented enterprise aligned with the Center's future.

Strengthen the Partnership with Pennington Biomedical

Build a highly effective and collaborative relationship with the leadership of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center, ensuring strong alignment between scientific priorities and philanthropic strategy. Foster open communication, shared goals, and a unified approach to advancing the Center's mission.

Elevate Fundraising Performance and Reach

Expand and diversify the Foundation's fundraising efforts beyond its traditional regional base to a broader national and international audience. Strengthen the overall development program and increase philanthropic support across individual, corporate, and institutional sources.

Enhance Organizational Visibility and Brand Awareness

Serve as a visible and compelling ambassador for the Foundation, increasing awareness and understanding of its mission among donors, partners, and the broader public. Clearly communicate the impact of Pennington Biomedical's research and the critical role of philanthropy in advancing discovery.

Build and Develop a High-Performing Organization

Provide strong, hands-on leadership to the Foundation team, fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, and high performance. Ensure the organization has the structure, talent, and systems needed to support long-term growth.

Strengthen Board Engagement and Governance

Partner with the Board of Directors to enhance engagement, clarify roles and expectations, and strengthen governance practices. Support efforts to thoughtfully evolve board composition, including recruiting and onboarding new members with diverse expertise and perspectives.

Expand and Diversify the Donor Base

Build on a strong legacy of local philanthropic support while engaging new and emerging donor segments, including younger donors and supporters outside of Louisiana. Develop strategies to sustain long-term donor engagement and pipeline growth.

Cultivate Strategic Partnerships and Funding Opportunities

Identify and advance opportunities to engage corporate, foundation, government, and other strategic partners in support of the Center's work. Collaborate with Center leadership to align funding strategies with research priorities and emerging opportunities.

Enhance Operational and Business Acumen

Strengthen the Foundation's business practices, financial oversight, and operational effectiveness to support growth. Ensure clarity around priorities, resource allocation, and performance metrics.

Establish a Strong On-Site and External Presence

Maintain a consistent, engaged presence on campus and in the Baton Rouge community while representing the Foundation nationally and internationally. Balance internal leadership with external visibility and relationship building.



Candidate Qualifications

Education/Certification

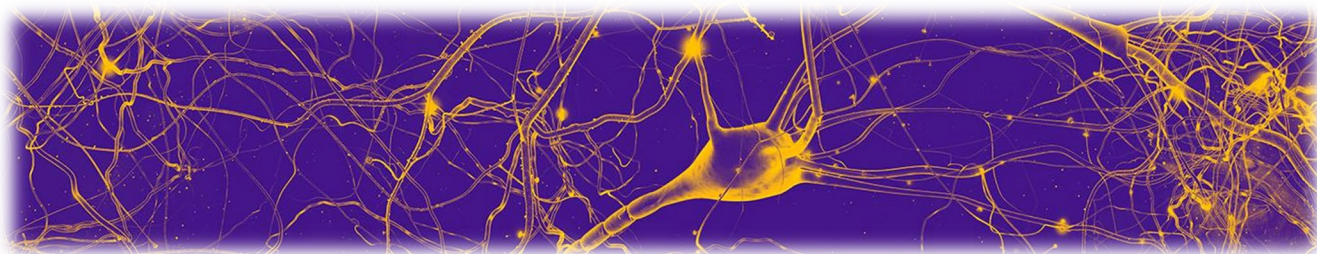
- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university required.
- Advanced degree in business, public administration, healthcare, or a related field preferred.

Knowledge and Work Experience

- Significant **senior leadership experience**, ideally at the CEO or executive level, with demonstrated success leading a mission-driven organization.
- Proven ability **to build, lead, and develop high-performing teams** aligned with organizational goals.
- Strong understanding of foundation operations, governance, and Board engagement.
- Demonstrated experience in **fundraising**, including major and principal gifts and campaign leadership.
- Experience working in **complex, matrixed environments**, with the ability to collaborate across organizational boundaries.
- Track record of building **relationships with diverse stakeholders**, including Board members, donors, institutional partners, and community leaders.
- Experience in a biomedical, academic, research, healthcare, or similarly complex environment preferred.

Leadership Skills and Competencies

- **Strategic Leadership:** Ability to set a clear vision and translate strategy into actionable plans that drive organizational growth and impact.
- **Relationship Building:** Demonstrated ability to engage and inspire donors, Board members, and institutional partners through trust and credibility.
- **Communication:** Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to convey complex ideas clearly and persuasively.
- **Collaboration and Influence:** Works effectively across stakeholders, fostering strong partnerships with scientific leadership and external partners.
- **Operational Excellence:** Balances strategic thinking with hands-on execution and day-to-day oversight.
- **Mission-Driven Leadership:** Deep commitment to advancing health and scientific discovery through philanthropy.
- **Integrity and Judgment:** Demonstrates the highest standards of ethics, professionalism, and sound decision-making.
- **Energy and Initiative:** Brings a proactive, results-oriented approach with a strong personal work ethic.



The Community

Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Baton Rouge, Louisiana, offers a welcoming and engaged community with a strong tradition of philanthropy and civic involvement. As the state capital and home to Louisiana State University, the city brings together leaders across business, higher education, healthcare, and government, creating a collaborative environment well-suited for nonprofit and foundation leadership.

The region benefits from a diverse economic base, including energy, healthcare, education, and emerging sectors, supporting a network of corporate and philanthropic partners. Baton Rouge has a long-standing culture of community giving, with active foundations, engaged volunteers, and donors committed to advancing health, education, and quality-of-life initiatives.

The city offers a high quality of life, with a range of residential options, strong schools, and a cost of living that is generally more accessible than in many major metropolitan areas. Residents enjoy a rich cultural environment shaped by Louisiana's traditions, including music, cuisine, and community events, as well as access to outdoor recreation along the Mississippi River and nearby natural areas.

For leaders of the Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation, Baton Rouge provides an opportunity to build meaningful relationships with donors, community stakeholders, and institutional partners while elevating the Foundation's visibility and impact both locally and nationally.

Procedure for Candidacy



All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a resume and a letter of interest.

Review of materials has begun and will continue until the position is filled. WittKieffer is assisting the Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation in this search. Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's candidate portal by [clicking here](#) or via the WittKieffer website at www.wittkieffer.com by selecting the "Become a Candidate" button.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to the WittKieffer consultants assisting with this search, Ashley Buderus, Bree Liddell, and Jeff Schroetlin, at bliddell@wittkieffer.com.

Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation adheres to LSU's Permanent Memorandum 55, which affirms a commitment to equal opportunity in all employment, education, and programming and prohibits discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics such as race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, and veteran status.

The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. This material has been copied, compiled, or quoted in part from Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation documents and personal interviews and is believed to be reliable. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and factual situations govern.

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Appendix A: Research Centers and Institutes

Advancing research that translates discovery from cellular science to population-level impact, improving health and extending lives.

The Pennington Biomedical Research Center is a world-class research institute within Louisiana State University, recognized for its leadership in nutrition, metabolic health, and chronic disease.

Established in the early 1980s through a \$125 million gift from C.B. “Doc” Pennington and Irene Wells Pennington, the Center was founded with a bold vision to create the nation’s leading nutrition research institution. Today, it stands as a nationally and internationally respected hub for scientific discovery.

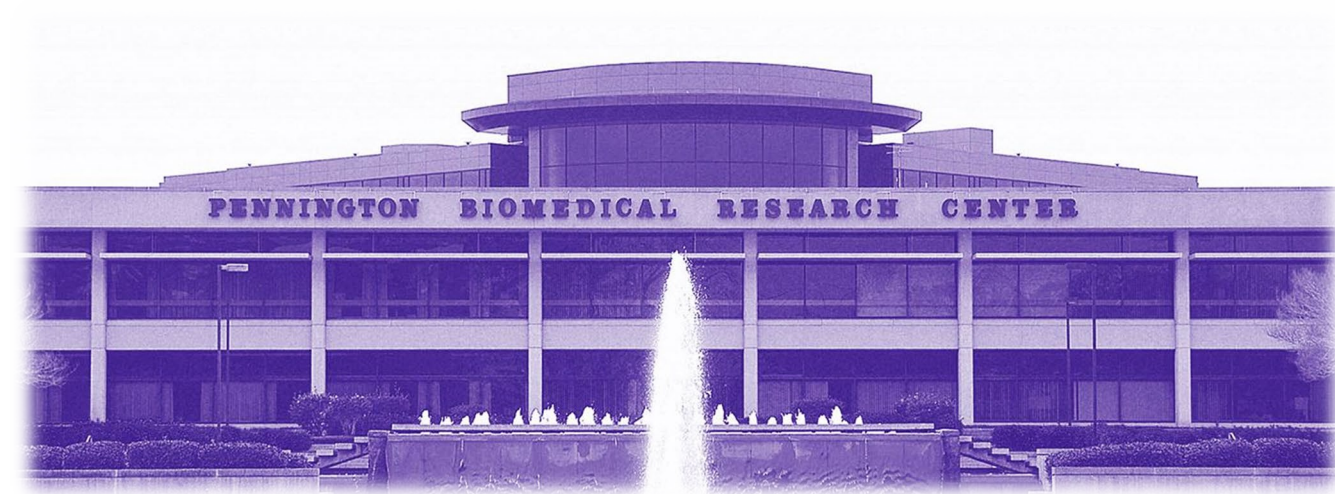
Pennington Biomedical is home to approximately 65 faculty members and more than 20 postdoctoral fellows working across 44 laboratories, supported by a multidisciplinary team of nearly 700 employees. Located on a 222-acre campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the Center conducts basic, clinical, and population research focused on the causes and prevention of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and dementia.

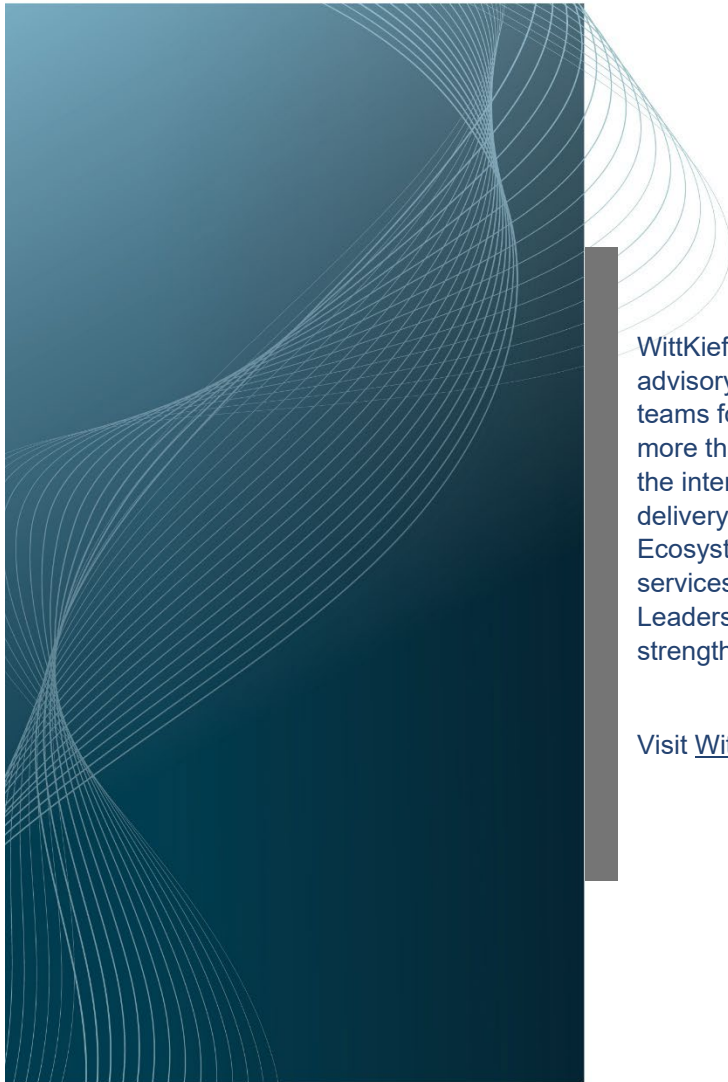
The Center’s work has had a meaningful impact both regionally and nationally. Researchers played a leadership role in developing the DASH Diet and have supported the health and readiness of U.S. military members and their families for more than 30 years. Pennington Biomedical was also an early participant in the landmark Diabetes Prevention Program.

Faculty are internationally recognized and actively collaborate with partners worldwide. Their work continues to attract significant research funding and contributes to advancements that shape both clinical practice and public health.

Pennington Biomedical’s research enterprise is supported by a robust infrastructure, including 16 specialized core facilities and six centers of excellence:

- [Nutrition Obesity Research Center](#) – advancing prevention and treatment of obesity
- [Institute for Dementia Research & Prevention](#) – promoting brain health and aging research
- [Louisiana Clinical & Translational Science Center](#) – accelerating clinical research and trials
- [Metabolic Basis of Disease Center](#) – uncovering biological drivers of disease
- [Center for Military Performance & Resilience](#) – enhancing health and readiness for service members
- [Metamor Institute](#) – driving innovation in metabolic health





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