

BUSINESS FORMATION STATISTICS, DECEMBER 2025

Release Number: CB26-11

Notice: Due to a scheduled outage of the Internal Revenue Service's online Employer Identification Number (EIN) Assistant from December 30, 2025 until January 5, 2026, applicants were unable to apply for an EIN through the web application. As a result, the Business Formation Statistics Monthly data for December 2025 and Weekly data for Week 53, 2025 are impacted.

Notice: The annual update publication is delayed and will be applied during the January 2026 monthly release, scheduled for February 11, 2026. The annual update was originally scheduled to be released December 12, 2025. During the annual update, the Formation series are updated annually to revise information on business formations (firm births) from the Business Dynamic Statistics (BDS) program. Also, seasonal factors are recomputed and applied during the annual update, resulting in revisions to our seasonally adjusted series.

During the annual update underlying NAICS codes are typically revised each year for the previous five years when more accurate and detailed NAICS codes may be available from administrative sources. Due to significant differences between 2017 NAICS and 2022 NAICS vintages, the entire time series will be restated to 2022 NAICS during this annual update. The January 2026 monthly data publication will be the first release using 2022 NAICS.

Notice: Beginning with the January 2026 monthly release, applications associated with internet sales will be excluded from the high-propensity (HBA) and corporation (CBA) application series. This methodology change was originally scheduled to occur during the November 2025 monthly release. The HBA and CBA definitions will be updated for the entire time series. This update is associated with the periodic evaluation of the characteristics associated with high-propensity applications and their likelihood to turn into a business formation.

Data Inquiries

Economic Indicators Division, Business Formation Statistics
301-763-2000
eid.bfs@census.gov

Media Inquiries

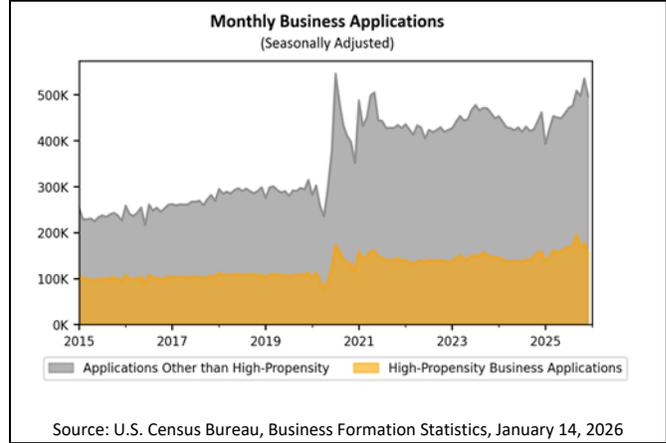
Public Information Office
301-763-3030
pio@census.gov



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January 14, 2026 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following seasonally adjusted business application and formation statistics for December 2025. The Business Application Series describe the business applications for tax IDs as indicated by applications for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) through filings of the IRS Form SS-4. The Business Formation Series describe employer business formations as indicated by the first instance of payroll tax liabilities for the corresponding business applications.

BUSINESS APPLICATIONS		
U.S. Business Applications:	DEC 2025	DEC 2025 / NOV 2025
Total	497,046	-7.3%
High-Propensity	154,338	-13.8%
With Planned Wages	36,806	-3.7%
From Corporations	62,750	-22.3%
Next release: February 11, 2026		
(*) Statistical significance is not applicable or not measurable.		
Data adjusted for seasonality.		
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Business Formation Statistics, January 14, 2026		



Business Applications - At a Glance

		US	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Total	DEC 2025	497,046	70,229	84,612	222,924	119,281
	DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	-7.3%	-2.0%	-15.3%	-7.5%	-3.3%
High-Propensity	DEC 2025	154,338	22,942	26,187	65,715	39,494
	DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	-13.8%	-11.2%	-17.6%	-18.3%	-3.5%
With Planned Wages	DEC 2025	36,806	5,401	6,450	15,310	9,645
	DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	-3.7%	-1.2%	-3.7%	-5.4%	-2.2%
From Corporations	DEC 2025	62,750	10,621	9,791	24,303	18,035
	DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	-22.3%	-19.9%	-32.1%	-27.6%	-7.4%

Details may not equal totals due to rounding. Regions defined by Census Bureau Geography Program. Statistical significance is not applicable or not measurable. Data adjusted for seasonality. **Green** Percentage changes are greater than zero (+). **Red** Percentage changes are less than zero (-). Z = absolute value < 0.05.

Business Applications

Business Applications for December 2025, adjusted for seasonal variation, were 497,046, a decrease of 7.3 percent compared to November 2025.

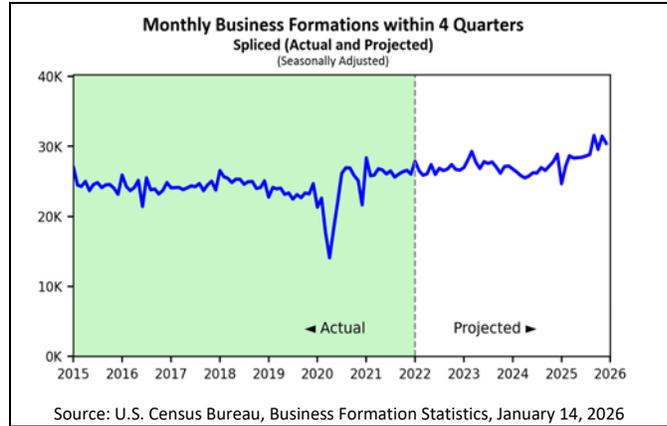
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 301-763-2000
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BUSINESS FORMATIONS		
U.S. Total Projected Business Formations:	DEC 2025	DEC 2025 / NOV 2025
Within 4 Quarters	30,438	-3.3%°
Within 8 Quarters	40,826	-3.8%°
Next release: February 11, 2026		
(*) Statistical significance is not applicable or not measurable.		
Spliced - Data adjusted for seasonality.		
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Business Formation Statistics, January 14, 2026		



Projected Business Formations - At a Glance

		 US	 Northeast	 Midwest	 South	 West
Within 4 Quarters	DEC 2025	30,438	4,641	4,668	12,354	8,775
	DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	-3.3%	-3.1%	-9.7%	-5.0%	+3.2%
Within 8 Quarters	DEC 2025	40,826	6,268	6,273	16,734	11,551
	DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	-3.8%	-3.3%	-9.0%	-5.7%	+2.2%

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Business Formations

Projected Business Formations (within 4 quarters) for December 2025, adjusted for seasonal variation, were 30,438, a decrease of 3.3 percent compared to November 2025. The projected business formations are forward looking, providing an estimate of the number of new business startups that will appear from the cohort of business applications in a given month. It does not provide an estimate of the total number of business startups that appeared within a specific month. In other words, the Census Bureau is projecting that 30,438 new business startups with payroll tax liabilities will form within 4 quarters of application from all the business applications filed during December 2025. The 3.3 percent decrease indicates that for December 2025 there will be 3.3 percent fewer businesses projected to form within 4 quarters of application, compared to the analogous projections for November 2025.

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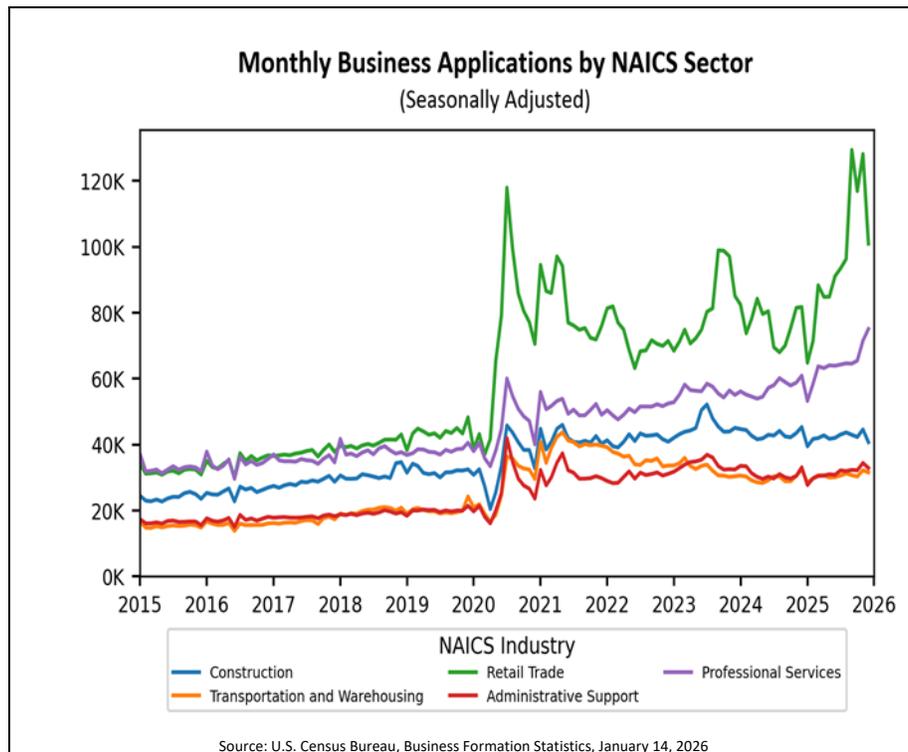
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Statistics on actual business formations are available up to the latest quarter for which administrative data identifies employer business startup activity based on first payroll observation, currently the fourth quarter of 2022. Given the forward-looking nature of business formations, the Census Bureau can only state actual business formations within 4 quarters up to December 2021, and business formations within 8 quarters up to December 2020. Projected business formations within 4 quarters start in January 2022 and projected business formations within 8 quarters start in January 2021 and both end in December 2025. The most recent quarter for which administrative data on payroll is available is typically updated annually in the twelfth month based on new data on actual business formations.

For more information, see the explanatory notes later in this release or visit <https://www.census.gov/econ/bfs/technicaldocumentation/methodology.html>.



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Business Applications by Industry - At a Glance



US

11: Agriculture	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	3,472 -0.2%
21: Mining	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	449 -13.2%
22: Utilities	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	545 -13.8%
23: Construction	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	40,710 -8.7%
31-33: Manufacturing	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	7,058 -3.7%
42: Wholesale Trade	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	10,505 +9.2%
44-45: Retail Trade	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	100,951 -21.2%
48-49: Transportation and Warehousing	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	31,523 -2.1%
51: Information	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	10,240 -1.5%
52: Finance and Insurance	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	18,526 -5.6%
53: Real Estate	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	24,065 -7.2%
54: Professional Services	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	75,062 +5.0%
55: Management of Companies	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	5,679 -7.4%
56: Administrative and Support	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	32,873 -4.4%
61: Educational Services	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	7,533 -3.3%
62: Health Care and Social Assistance	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	31,217 -5.6%
71: Arts and Entertainment	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	14,824 -3.8%
72: Accommodation and Food Services	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	25,088 -6.2%
81: Other Services	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	40,875 -5.5%
Unclassified	DEC 2025 DEC 2025 / NOV 2025	15,852 +4.3%

Details may not equal totals due to rounding. Statistical significance is not applicable or not measurable. Data adjusted for seasonality, except for Utilities (22).

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Business Applications by Industry

The Census Bureau classifies BFS data by industry using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). NAICS codes are assigned using a variety of sources. A Census Bureau-developed automated industry-coding program first attempts to assign NAICS codes to all new EIN applications received from the IRS. The automated industry-coding program is based on established patterns in the business name and descriptions provided on the EIN applications. This auto-coding process assigned NAICS codes to over 80% of all incoming EIN applications in 2020. For applications that did not receive a NAICS code during the auto-coding process, BFS staff use a Census-developed machine learning algorithm to assign NAICS codes where possible. NAICS codes are revised each year for the previous five years as part of the BFS annual update process when more accurate and detailed NAICS codes may be available from the Social Security Administration, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Census Bureau's Business Register. There are a small number of EIN applications where there is not enough information available to assign a NAICS code through any source.

For more information on the Census Bureau automated industry-coding program, please visit https://www.census.gov/econ/bfs/pdf/naics_improvement.pdf. For more information on the machine learning algorithm, please visit <https://www.census.gov/econ/bfs/pdf/beacon.pdf>.

GENERAL INFORMATION

On May 13, 2019, the IRS implemented a change in Form SS-4 requiring a social security number (SSN) or an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN) for the responsible party indicated in the EIN application. The change will prevent entities using their existing EINs to apply for additional EINs. For more information on the requirement change, please visit <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-revises-ein-application-process-seeks-to-enhance-security>. The form field that the change applies to is not one that the Census Bureau receives and it is not used in the analysis. As a result, we cannot necessarily draw any conclusions on the impact of this change on BFS.

Release Schedule

The January 2026 Business Formation Statistics Report is scheduled for release on February 11, 2026. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: <https://www.census.gov/economic-indicators/>. Further information on BFS, including additional series and the full time span of the series listed above, can be found at <https://www.census.gov/econ/bfs>.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

Business Formation Statistics (BFS) are a standard data product of the U.S. Census Bureau developed in research collaboration with economists affiliated with Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, University of Maryland, and University of Notre Dame.

Business Formation Statistics (BFS) provide timely and high-frequency data on business applications and employer business formations. BFS measure business initiation activity (Business Application Series) as indicated by applications for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) on the IRS Form SS-4. BFS also provide information on actual and projected employer business formations (Business Formation Series) that originate from these applications, based on the record of first payroll tax liability for an EIN. In addition, BFS contain measures of delay in business starts as indicated by the average duration between the application for an EIN and the transition to an employer business.

BFS currently cover the period starting from July 2004 onwards at a monthly frequency. The data are available nationally, regionally, and by individual states.

Business Application Series

These series describe the business applications for tax IDs as indicated by applications for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) through filings of IRS Form SS-4. Business applications are presented in four different series reflecting different subsets of the applications for an EIN. All business applications series cover the period from July 2004 onwards.

- **Business Applications (BA):** The core business applications series that correspond to a subset of all applications for an EIN. This series includes all applications for an EIN, except for applications for tax liens, estates, and trusts, applications outside of the 50 states and the District of Columbia or those with no state-county geocodes, applications with certain NAICS codes in sector 11 (agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting) or 92 (public administration) that have low transition rates, and applications in certain industries (i.e. private households, certain financial services, civic and social organizations).
- **High-Propensity Business Applications (HBA):** Business Applications (BA) that have a high-propensity of turning into businesses with payroll. The identification of high-propensity applications is based on the characteristics of applications revealed on the IRS Form SS-4 that are associated with a high rate of business formation. High-propensity applications include applications: (a) from a corporate entity, (b) that indicate they are hiring employees, (c) that provide a first wages-paid date (planned wages); or (d) that have a NAICS industry code in

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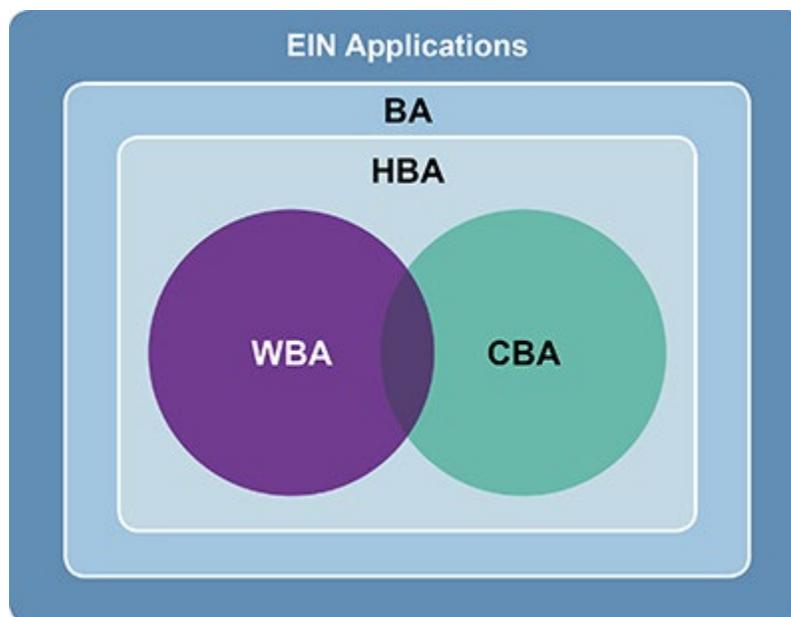


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accommodation and food services (72) or in portions of construction (237, 238), manufacturing (312, 321, 322, 332), retail (44, 452), professional, scientific, and technical services (5411, 5413), educational services (6111), and health care (621, 623).

- **Business Applications with Planned Wages (WBA):** High-Propensity Business Applications (HBA) that indicate a first wages-paid date on the IRS Form SS-4. The indication of a wages-paid date is associated with a high likelihood of transitioning into a business with payroll.
- **Business Applications from Corporations (CBA):** High-Propensity Business Applications (HBA) from a corporation or personal service corporation, based on the legal form of organization stated in the IRS Form SS-4. Similar to the WBA series, this series is important primarily because it consists of a set of applications that have a high rate of transitioning into businesses with payroll.

The following is a graphical representation (Venn diagram) of the relationship between the four business applications series (BA, HBA, WBA, CBA) and EIN applications. This graph does not represent the actual relative sizes of different groups.



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Public Information Office
301-763-3030
pio@census.gov

Business Formation Series

These series describe employer business formations as indicated by the first instance of payroll tax liabilities for the corresponding business applications. The business formation series are forward-looking in the sense that they measure new business formations from the month of business application in any given quarter. Two series are provided: the first describes transitions within the next four quarters (12 months), and the second within the next eight quarters (24 months). Payroll information is only available on a quarterly basis so it is only possible to look ahead in terms of quarters. All business formation series start in July 2004, the earliest month for which the data on business applications are available.

- **Business Formations within 4 Quarters (BF4Q):** This series provides the number of employer businesses that originate from Business Applications (BA) within four quarters from the month of application. By definition, the end-point of this series is determined by the most recent quarter for which the administrative data identifies employer business startup activity based on first payroll observation.
- **Projected Business Formations within 4 Quarters (PBF4Q):** The projected number of employer businesses that originate from Business Applications (BA) within four quarters from the month of application. The projections are based on an econometric model that generates estimates of the likelihood that a business application turns into an employer business. For the details of the model, see the working paper <https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/2018/adrm/bfs_FEB2018.html>. The projected business formation series cover the period for which the actual number of business formations within 4 quarters is not yet available. Combining the projected series with the actual business formations (the BF4Q series) results in an up-to-date, forward-looking business formation series.
- **Spliced Business Formations within 4 Quarters (SBF4Q):** This series combines (splices) BF4Q and PBF4Q to provide the entire time series for the actual and projected business formations within 4 quarters.
- **Business Formations within 8 Quarters (BF8Q):** The number of employer businesses that originate from Business Applications (BA) within eight quarters from the month of application, similar to the BF4Q series. Again, the end-point of this series is determined by the most recent quarter for which the administrative data identifies employer business startup activity based on first payroll observation.
- **Projected Business Formations within 8 Quarters (PBF8Q):** The projected number of employer

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businesses that originate from Business Applications (BA) within eight quarters from the month of application, similar to the PBF4Q series. The projected business formation series cover the period for which the actual business formations within 8 quarters are not yet available.

- **Spliced Business Formations within 8 Quarters (SBF8Q):** This series combines (splices) BF8Q and PBF8Q to provide the entire time series for the actual and projected business formations within 8 quarters.
- **Average Duration (in Quarters) from Business Application to Formation within 4 Quarters (DUR4Q):** A measure of delay between business application and formation, measured as the average duration (in quarters) between the quarter in which the month of business application falls and the quarter of business formation, conditional on business formation within four quarters. These series span the same period as BF4Q.
- **Average Duration (in Quarters) from Business Application to Formation within 8 Quarters (DUR8Q):** A measure of delay between business application and formation, similar to the DUR4Q series. The difference is that the window for business formation is eight quarters, rather than four. The series span the same period as BF8Q.

Description of Seasonal Adjustment

Because of strong seasonality detected in most of the business application and formation series, all series are provided with and without seasonal adjustment. In the case of the duration series (DUR4Q and DUR8Q), seasonality is not significant in general. Therefore, no seasonally adjusted duration series are provided. All data, with the exception of the industry data, is seasonally adjusted at the state level and summed to create seasonally adjusted United States total and regional data. Industry data, except for Utilities (22), is seasonally adjusted at the national level to create adjusted United States total data. Seasonal adjustment is performed using the X-13ARIMA-SEATS seasonal adjustment program of the US Census Bureau. Users can implement their own seasonal adjustment methods using the unadjusted data.

Reliability of Estimates

The statistics presented in this release are based on administrative data and therefore are not subject to sampling error. There is also projection error associated with the projected business formation series. The statistics may also be subject to non-sampling error. Non-sampling error occurs because accurate information cannot always be obtained. There are many potential contributors to nonsampling error – misreporting, mistakes in recording and coding responses, misinterpretation of questions, and other errors

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of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Though nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

Notes

Technical documentation for these statistics and specific recommendations for interpreting these statistics are described on the product's webpage <<https://www.census.gov/econ/bfs>>.

The Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data (Project No. P-7515311, Disclosure Review Board (DRB) approval number: CBDRB-FY25-0219).

RESOURCES

API

The Census Bureau's application programming interface lets developers create custom apps to reach new users and makes key demographic, socio-economic and housing statistics more accessible than ever before.

<<https://www.census.gov/data/developers.html>>

FRED Mobile App



Receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators by downloading the FRED App <<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/fred-mobile/>> for both Apple and Android devices. FRED, the signature database of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, now incorporates the Census Bureau's 13 economic indicators.

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