

Public Comment for Board Meeting, March 26, 2020 - Agenda Item #4 Career Services RFP Recommendation

Tammy Aguilera <TAguilera@eckerd.org>

Wed 3/25/2020 2:10 PM

To: Thoo, Lawrence <Lawrence.Thoo@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

Good Afternoon Mr. Thoo:

Eckerd Connects appreciates the opportunity to provide public comment regarding the selection process and recommendation for the Career Services RFP.

We have reviewed the scoring sheets which were made available in the Board packet, and have the following comments:

1. Given that Eckerd Connects scored higher (81.5) than ResCare (77.75) in the youth evaluation, we respectfully request reconsideration of the recommendation made to award ResCare the youth services in the San Jose' Area. Based on the scoring sheets provided, Eckerd Connects scored higher in the key areas of Staffing Plan, Employer Linkages and Youth Service Delivery Strategy.
2. Given that Eckerd Connects scored higher (81.5) than ResCare (78.25) in the Adult/DW evaluation, we respectfully request reconsideration of the recommendation made to award ResCare the Adult/DW services in the San Jose' Area. Based on the scoring sheets provided, Eckerd Connects scored higher in the key areas of Staffing Plan, Employer Linkages and Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Delivery Strategy.
3. As noted in the evaluation packet, "Eckerd Connects is the current provider of both Adult/Dislocated Worker and Youth in both service areas. Eckerd came on board to serve Adults/Dislocated Workers in both service areas and Youth in San Jose' area in July of 2019 and showed **great capability** of ramping up their program in a very short time." We have demonstrated experience in the area which has been validated based on performance whereas ResCare has a proposed plan but no demonstrated performance in the area.
4. We believe that a transition during this time of a Pandemic will be a disservice to the staff and clients. Clients have already demonstrated an increased need to connect with their career advisors, employers and training providers. Eckerd has demonstrated experience in North County and also achieved the highest score in both proposals for employer linkages and service delivery strategy.

Eckerd Connects is an established, incumbent provider delivering impactful services in the San Jose Region with a trained, professional staff team in place. Should the board choose to contract with multiple providers, we are requesting clarification, based on the proposal scoring, why the San Jose service area would be recommended for award to an organization that is not established in the community. We request that these important factors are considered during your review and decision-making process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tammy Aguilera

Senior Operations Director



A proud partner of the America's **Job Center** network
of California™

ECKERD CONNECTS | Workforce Development

P: (805) 305-5425

E: taguilera@eckerd.org

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Letter of Support

Yvette Avila <yavila@cetweb.edu>

Wed 3/25/2020 4:43 PM

To: Thoo, Lawrence <Lawrence.Thoo@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]



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Center for Employment Training

San Jose Main Campus

701 Vine Street San Jose, CA 95110 Phone (408) 534-5360 Fax (408) 534-5314

March 25, 2020

Dear Work2Future Board,

I am writing this letter in support of the current service provider, Eckerd Connects. In my position, as the Interim Center Director of the Center of Employment Training (CET), I have had the pleasure of working closely with Eckerd Connects staff and programs out of the San Jose and Gilroy offices. CET has appreciated the value that Eckerd Connects has placed on the need for quality vocational training in the community.

In my opinion, Eckerd Connects has shown a lot of compassion to the community it serves. I have been able to witness this first hand in our recent collaboration to address homelessness with Destination Home. Eckerd Connects staff has provided excellent case management services to Rapid Rehousing clients co-enrolled in CET and in Work2Future adult and youth programs. The service provided to clients is efficient and done with care. Staff consistently tracks progress and provides supportive services when needed. A change of service providers at this point would not only negatively impact current clients who

have built a rapport with current Eckerd staff but the agency partners with whom Eckerd currently partners with.

CET is excitedly currently partnering with Eckerd staff to develop a program to address employer partner needs for Certified Electronic Technicians in the community. This new partnership between CET and Eckerd staff to develop this training program is proof that there is mutual respect and trust that these service providers have for one another to see a need in the community and work together to address it. It is our hope to provide services to individuals in the community needing and wanting a viable marketable skill that will provide a living wage and address local employer's needs to hire a trained and skilled workforce. I fear a change of service provider would interrupt the work that is being done to provide this new training program to the community, thus impacting future employer partnerships.

In order to avoid negative impact to the community, I am in strong support that Eckerd Connects be allowed to continue to provide the outstanding service that they have been providing to its current clients, agency and employers partners.

Sincerely,

Yvette Avila
Interim Center Director
Center for Employment Training
701 Vine St.
San Jose, CA 95110
PH: (408) 534-5202
www.cetweb.edu

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Agenda Item 4. Career Services RFP Recommendation (Action)

Lori Blamer <llblamer@yahoo.com>

Thu 3/26/2020 7:39 AM

To: Thoo, Lawrence <Lawrence.Thoo@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

Mr Lawrence Thoo,

I am currently a student at the Work 2 Future Foundation, Kirk location.
I enrolled in the Fall of 2018.
I completed classes and earned certificates in MS Word and MS Excel.

In January 2019, I was given the opportunity to interview for the W2FF work experience program.
I interviewed and was offered at part time seasonal contract position at Seeba & Associates, Inc., Certified Public Accountants.

In January 2020, the Seeba & Associates, Inc. office manager contacted.
I interviewed and was offered a new position.
I began work on January 17, 2020.

I'm grateful to Madelyn Crawford, my Career Advisor and Virginia Meraza, the Business Development Specialist.
Work 2 Future Foundation gave me the skills to return to the work force as an older adult.

I'm concerned about the impact of a change in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult/Dislocated Worker and Youth contract with Eckerd Connects.
Madelyn and Virginia are working with me to find my next job.
My current seasonal contract position ends on April 17, 2020.
I want to continue to take classes at W2FF to increase my job skills.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lori Blamer
llblamer@yahoo.com

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RE: W2F Board Meeting

Bunnett, Dana <DBunnett@kidsincommon.org>

Thu 3/26/2020 7:09 AM

To: Thoo, Lawrence <Lawrence.Thoo@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

In case there are technical issues, here are my comments in writing. Please share these with the board:

Thank you for this time to speak to you. My name is Dana Bunnett and I am the director of Kids in Common, a program of Planned Parenthood Mar Monte. Since 2013, we have provided the backbone support to the Opportunity Youth Partnership, a collective impact initiative focused on changing the trajectory of the lives of opportunity youth – youth ages 16 – 24 who are not working and not in school. We were among more than 20 communities funded across the nation by the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions.

As part of this network, we have seen and have been envious of how WIOA dollars were being leveraged in other communities such as Boston, Austin and Seattle to make a difference in the lives of young people. These dollars were used to reach the youth facing the greatest challenges in a systemic manner – not just a collection of services, but a continuum of opportunities and supports to ensure youth received the education and work opportunities to develop the skills they need to be self-sufficient and thrive.

I am disappointed in both the RFP process and recommendations for funding that came out of this process and I am asking the Board to pause this process and go back and ask the applicants three questions:

1. How will you utilize this funding, to not only deliver services to youth, but to also build a system that has clear on-ramps and builds on partnership with youth-serving organizations throughout the community. Please share how you have done this in your work in this region or other regions.
2. What steps will you take to ensure the largest proportion of the youth served by these funds are youth who have experienced time in the foster care system, the juvenile justice system or homelessness? Please share your previous experience reaching these youth with the highest needs.
3. How will you meaningfully partner with other organizations in the community in order to build upon work that is already happening with our youth with the greatest needs and utilize these partners expertise to create a system that ensures their success? Please share your experience doing this in your work in this or other communities.

After asking these questions and scoring the applicants on their responses, then make the recommendations. I believe you have the authority to do this. But if you don't feel you do, then please direct the staff to build these things into the contract negotiations: create a system, have targets that include youth who have experienced homelessness or the foster and justice systems and true partnership with at least 8 community organizations.

This is an opportunity to change the current landscape of education and career supports for our most vulnerable youth. I have been disappointed in work2future's lack of innovation and commitment to collaboration and vision. These dollars are too important to our community to squander on continuing the status quo. Each year 2200 students leave high school without graduating. About 50% of our youth who have been involved in foster care graduate. Through local research, we found that only 43% of the youth who have spent ANY time in Juvenile Hall or the Ranch graduate. These young people need more from us if they are going to be successful. Without wise guidance over this investment we fail them.

Dana Bunnett

Director of Kids in Common



She, Her, and Hers

Office: 1-408-795-3772

1605 The Alameda | San Jose, CA 95126

From: Bunnett, Dana

Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2020 6:39 AM

To: 'Lawrence.Thoo@sanjoseca.gov' <Lawrence.Thoo@sanjoseca.gov>

Subject: W2F Board Meeting

Dear Mr. Thoo,

I am planning on attending the Board meeting this morning by Zoom and would like to make public comment on item #4 4. Career Services RFP Recommendation (specifically the youth allocation.)

Thank you!

Dana Bunnett

Director, Kids in Common, a program of Planned Parenthood Mar Monte

Dana Bunnett

Director of Kids in Common



She, Her, and Hers

Office: 1-408-795-3772

1605 The Alameda | San Jose, CA 95126

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Public Comment for Board Meeting, March 26, 2020 - Agenda Item #4 Career Services RFP Recommendation

Sean Guess <SGuess@eckerd.org>

Wed 3/25/2020 2:58 PM

To: Thoo, Lawrence <Lawrence.Thoo@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

Good afternoon Lawrence,

My public comment to the board regarding agenda item 4 is as follow:

Upon review of the scoring for the RFP proposals submitted, I am unclear as to how the review committee recommends ResCare to provide youth, adult and dislocated worker services for San Jose despite having a lower overall score than the current service provider Eckerd Connects.

I understand that the board would like to have two service providers for San Jose and South County. However, I do not believe that this recommendation is best way to achieve this goal. There will have to be a complete transition of operations, i.e., all of staff computers and software will need to be changed over to the new service provider. All staff emails will need to be changed over to the new service provider. Employers, clients and agency partners will have to be reacclimated to new policies and procedures the new service provider will have in place. And there is the possibility of new staff being brought in and clients, employers and agency partners will have to establish new relationships.

We do not know what the lasting effects the COVID-19 situation will have on the community, but what I do know, is that unnecessary changes are not what the community needs right now in regards to workforce development when you have a service provider already in place, with structure and policies. The last transition of services was difficult and having another at this time will be even more difficult.

I just ask the board to carefully consider the impact a change of this nature, at this moment would have on the community as a whole. We who have been on the ground working with clients, employers and partner agencies, worked hard to develop these relationships, and the possibility

of these going away is not in the best interests of the community. Many people have been displaced from their jobs because of COVID-19 and they are going to need assistance for a long time coming. Eckerd Connects is in place now and is helping people now. We are working with clients virtually to provide them with assistance and are expanding services to include virtual workshops for clients to access.

I hope the board to make an informed decision that is best for work2future clients, employers, agency partners and the community as a whole.

Sean Guess | Area Manager

1601 Foxworthy Avenue

San Jose, CA 95118

Office: 408-794-1226

www.work2future.org

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Joe Herrity
Director, Opportunity Youth Partnership
Santa Clara County Office of Education
1290 Ridder Park Dr.
San Jose, CA 95131

March 16, 2020

Work2future Workforce Development Board
5730 Chambertin Drive
San José, CA 951

Dear work2future Board Members:

I write to express my concerns regarding the staff recommendations for vendors in the current RFP process, and to lift up a hope that this Board begin to explore different ways of thinking about the use of our region's public youth workforce resources.

As director of the Opportunity Youth Partnership (OYP), I have watched with frustration as WIOA Youth Services dollars have not been leveraged over the past several years to address the needs of young people in a comprehensive manner that meets the challenges of disconnected youth and young adults growing up in the Silicon Valley economy. (OYP is a seven-year-old cross-sector partnership committed to forging an *Opportunity Ecosystem* for Opportunity Youth in Santa Clara County – Opportunity Youth are 16-24-year-olds disconnected from, or insufficiently connected to, school and work). OYP exists to respond to the imperative that *in Santa Clara County, anything less than a meaningful postsecondary credential is an economic death sentence*. WIOA Youth Services resources are too essential and valuable to allow them to be spent ineffectively and without addressing needs of students with greatest barriers.

This RFP process provides an opportunity to address the needs of our most disadvantaged young people. In communities such as Austin, Boston, and Seattle, WIOA dollars have been leveraged to reach many more youth than we reach in San Jose, and have been used to drive far more innovation that we see. For example:

- Austin's WDB contracts out \$1.4M in WIOA Youth services dollars each year, reaching 350 youth through an innovative partnership with four organizations led by a lead contractor. Whereas, we will contract out approximately the same amount and reach 200 youth.
- Boston cut the dropout rate in half over the past decade and routed hundreds of youth to postsecondary through unique partnerships with several organizations spearheaded by the Private Industry Council.

- Seattle embedded WIOA case managers on site at a variety reengagement high schools across the city and King County to ensure student going back to high school could access critical survival employment, internships, and work based learning opportunities.

This Board *should not accept* the recommendation for Youth Services vendors provided by City staff and must commit to activating reserves or other resources to support a reasonable transition to a new provider. That is the starting point, this Board should also engage in a much deeper and highly collaborative process to develop meaningful and impactful youth strategies that allow our precious federal youth workforce resources to be leveraged and braided with other resources to respond to our economic reality.

For the sake of further clarity, while these comments are my own, the Opportunity Youth Partnership stands firmly in support of JobTrain's proposal; a work group of seven from the OYP Steering Committee engaged with JobTrain over several meetings to invite them to apply in a collaborative approach and to support the development of their proposal.

JobTrain is already on the ground providing services in San Jose and Santa Clara County through their partnership with Destination: Home, which is focused on serving those experiencing homelessness. JobTrain has as 50-year history of successfully providing workforce services, including WIOA Youth Services, to the Silicon Valley community and has a sterling reputation in the region. With the support of the OYP and Destination: Home networks, JobTrain has dozens of organizations standing in support of their current and future work in Santa Clara County.

There are three particular concerns with the list of recommended vendors, and the process used to arrive at those vendors:

1. Choosing a provider lacking community credibility and lacking community relationships
2. The expectation that a new provider will be able to navigate a transition without investment of resources from the Board
3. The RFP process was not transparent nor designed to bring innovation and collaboration to the forefront; it was designed to deliver more of the same despite an environment that shifted long ago.

1. Choosing a provider lacking community credibility, and lacking community relationships

Neither of the two recommended vendors has strong community relationships, and neither has a history of broadly serving Silicon Valley. Further, neither of the recommended vendors has steady service in the heart of the Silicon Valley (San Jose and northward) with the industries that power the Silicon Valley economy.

- One of the recommended organization, Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc (Eckerd), has served Santa Clara County's south county region for four years. In July 2019 Eckerd took over serving San Jose as an emergency stop gap measure for this fiscal year after the abrupt collapse of the work2future Foundation. In the immediate aftermath of the collapse, Eckerd hired all work2future Foundation staff to continue the same work, in the same building, using the same strategies and tactics.
- The San Jose portion of the contract is being recommended to Arbor E&T, LLC – ResCare (ResCare), an organization that has never operated in this County or the Bay Area, and has no community connections and relationships.

Additionally, as the Board surely knows, the Silicon Valley economy is unique; our local economy is literally unlike most places in the Country aside from a few other high tech hubs like Austin, Boston, and Seattle. A quick review of Eckerd and ResCare's websites reveal that neither organization serves in those three communities. Ushering in a new organization with no community knowledge and no relationships seems a difficult strategy to implement in the best of conditions. It seems likely to be further complicated by selecting an organization that lacks experience serving high tech hubs with skyrocketing costs of living and a knowledge economy that prioritizes bachelor degrees and invests heavily in foreign workers. It is difficult to imagine that ResCare could quickly enter and ramp up its knowledge base and hire a full team, while also doing the hard work of trying to build relationships from scratch with providers, employers, and the broader community.

2. The expectation that a new provider will be able to navigate a transition without additional resources from the Board

It appears a key criteria for selecting a vendor was a commitment to continuity of service. Yet the RFP does not discuss providing ramp up resources to the selected provider. The memo provided in the packet to this Board does not address this either. The way this process is unfolding makes it hard to see how continuity could be meaningfully achieved. Continuity is a wonderful intention, and one that clients deserve. However, aside from Eckerd continuing in South County it is unclear how this would actually be implemented. No money was specified in the RFP to support the entry of a new provider nor the duplication of staffing required to execute and manage a functional transfer of service and a client-centered handoff. The hiring and training of staff alone will take months, and as of the Board meeting on 3/26/20, at which a decision is expected, we are just three months from the initiation of new services.

3. The RFP process was not transparent nor designed to bring innovation and collaboration to the forefront; it was designed to deliver more of the same despite an environment that shifted long ago.

In many ways, the RFP process has been hurried and opaque, and it reflects the lack of an overarching strategy and a commitment to partnership. Here are some examples of this:

- a. The RFP community engagement meeting was held on 1/14/20 with just two days notice, and at that meeting it was stated by City staff that this was “just a technical requirement”
- b. The RFP was released the next day on 1/15/20 with no observable changes as a results of the community engagement meeting
- c. The RFP did not ask for proof of relationships with Silicon Valley employers or community organizations; the scoring rubric did not provide a scoring opportunity that valued community partnerships.
- d. The RFP recommendations were presented to the Executive Committee by the staff without any scoring detail or substantive justification for the recommendations

This has been an uncollaborative process that occurred with little sunlight, thereby contributing to a currently disconnected workforce system and an unproductive environment. In many ways, this process seemed to be designed to maintain the status quo we know isn't working, as evidenced by many years of corrective action for the Youth Services vendor. As a result of this process, two organizations have been put forward – one that has not been able to correct course in San Jose, and the other new to the community with no relationships nor proof of success in a community like the Silicon Valley.

A note on strategy

Lastly, with regard to the overarching strategy, it feels like the wrong medicine for a problem that was ultimately misdiagnosed. The City staff recommendations cement a pattern of vendors unable to succeed:

- The work2future Foundation was created by this Board to offload services from the City of San Jose and to raise private dollars to support the workforce efforts in this county. It never managed to raise substantial philanthropic support, was subject to frequent corrective action, and collapsed very suddenly with just a few weeks notice in June 2019.
- In July 2019, Eckerd was brought in to pick it the contract and hasn't been able to right the ship, and remained in corrective action.
- Now, a new provider is being brought in with no community presence, no history serving high tech hubs, little ramp up time, no defined financial resources to support ramp up, and no shift in overarching strategy.

What will be different? How does this set up vendors, City staff, this Board, and youth up to succeed?

I do not think that the people employed by the above Eckerd (and previously by work2future Foundation) are rotten apples, lazy, or otherwise incompetent. But by pivoting to a new provider, the implication is

that they haven't delivered, and the record of continuous corrective action testify to that. The only thing changing is the vendor, thus the implication is the vendor bears sole responsibility for poor performance. From my vantage point, this is the result of a failed strategy (or total lack thereof) confounded by very real contract management constraints that prevent well intentioned folks from succeeding. From the outside, the low performance level of the current vendor appears to be more the result of a City staff approach that eschews deep partnerships and lacks strategic vision, and which does not acknowledge the imperative of binding together education with developmental employment and other supportive resources into a single system designed to offer our least-resourced, highest-barrier youth and young adults a real shot at working toward self-sufficiency. Now, that may be the result of a lack of policy vision and guidance, or a lack of tactical support and political cover necessary to rework strategies and reimagine approaches. Either way, the RFP process and the recommended vendors reflect a strategy adrift. But more importantly, it creates an opportunity for the Board, City staff, and many community partners with a stake in the result to collectively rethink and reset as a community. We don't just need a vendor, we need a partner.

I respectfully request that members of this Board very carefully consider the recommendations provided by City staff. There is an opportunity for many parties to put our heads together and consider how we might work together differently as a community to find win-win opportunities that increase community buy-in and ensure our WIOA Youth Services resources deliver a coherent youth and young adult workforce system capable of reliably and repeatedly delivering long-term results for our least-connected and least-resourced youth and young adults.

In community spirit,



Joe Herrity

Director, Opportunity Youth Partnership

Joseph_Herrity@sccoe.org

Agenda Item 4. Career Services RFP Recommendation {Action}

Jeff Martin <jmartin332@gmail.com>

Wed 3/25/2020 4:07 PM

To: Thoo, Lawrence <Lawrence.Thoo@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

Dear Mr. Thoo,

This email regards the Agenda Item 4, Career Services RFP Recommendation, to be reviewed during a meeting on Thursday, March 26, 2020.

As a work2future client, the possibility of a change in the current service provider for work2future worries me greatly, especially because of the uncertainty and social distancing related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The support and services that I continue to receive from the staff at work2future have been my lifeline while I continue searching for a permanent job and during this time when a lot people like myself have been instructed to stay home.

I hope you will consider keeping Eckerd Connects as the service provider for work2future so the staff can continue to provide the same vital services and support to members of our community.

Regards,
Jeff Martin,
work2future client

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Eckerd staff have provided me with so much help and care

Kim Nguyen <kim.ng.107@gmail.com>

Wed 3/25/2020 3:56 PM

To: Thoo, Lawrence <Lawrence.Thoo@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: Kim Nguyen <kim.ng.107@gmail.com>

[External Email]

Dear Lawrence Thoo,

My name is Kim Loan Nguyen - currently a client of Eckerd W2F - specifically Enrique Robles is the Training Team Specialist who has helped me so much in getting training and getting me back into the work force via training.

Needless to say, Eckerd W2F is the best provider whose staff are all professionals and they are caring and helpful with every customer. The way Eckerd W2F staff work with clients and others give me so much hope for a future-to-be when people who are out of job like me have felt forgotten by many other providers. Eckerd W2F is the only provider that clients have trusted so much with their services and thorough work in how to help people like me to get back to work.

I heard that the City Board considers to award the contract to another provider. I myself feel very worried for the invested work and time that we clients have thus far put in with and gotten help from Eckerd professionals. I think it is not too late to email you and let you hear my voice - a direct client from Eckerd W2F - of how I feel should we lose Eckerd W2F as the current and trusted provider. Eckerd W2F services are the best in this area and Eckerd staff are very good in keeping tapped with clients for job searches, job openings, training, etc. I cannot express how much of appreciation I have with Eckerd W2F.

Please help us clients to be continuing to get help with Eckerd W2F.
Thank you so much.

Very truly yours,
Kim Loan Nguyen

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WORK2FUTURE services

msilva <margarida3@gmail.com>

Wed 3/25/2020 3:35 PM

To: Thoo, Lawrence <Lawrence.Thoo@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

To the Board of Work2Future,

By this e-mail I'm requesting the board to consider Eckerd Connects the current service provider to continue to provide services to the community as a service provider.

The reason for my request is my the overwhelming satisfaction and support from Work2Future/Eckerd Connects from all the help they provided me especial Mr. Russel Halliday and Mr. Enrique Robles, that from the beginning with a professional attitude were able to support me explaining the process and always being there to help me with any steps needed.

Mr. Russel and Mr Enrique have always returned my calls, always be there for a in-person meeting and go over any questions or concerns regarding the process.

Both have made a difference on me because during difficult times is so nice to feel a sense of support and feeling that there is light in the end of the universe.

I have had services from Work2Future before and I appreciated the benefit of such an organization to help me and others under the same circumstances getting help to get more skills needed to go back to the work force.

I hope that in the future persons in such need like myself will continue to have the support and services provided by Work2Future/Eckerd Connects .

If you have any questions or concerns please let me know.

Thank you so much in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Margarida Silva

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