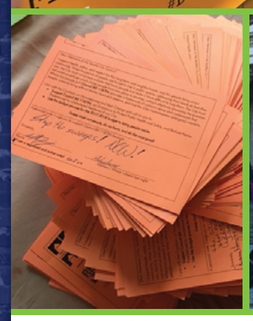
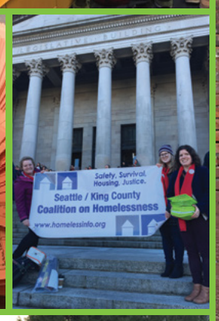
Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness
HOMELESSINFO.ORG

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

SEATTLE/KING COUNTY COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

ONE NIGHT COUNT • PROJECT COOL • VOTER REGISTRATION • EDUCATION & ADVOCACY





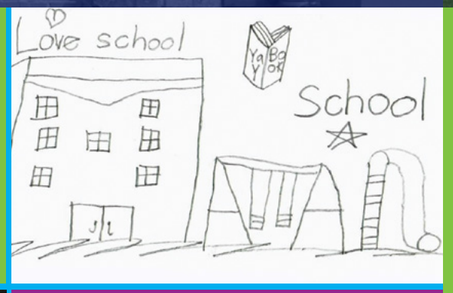
Photos (above): Coalition on Homelessness

Image credit: No Touching Ground

Project Cool students told us what they were looking forward to about starting school:

"I'm excited to meet all the new teachers. I am also excited to upgrade to middle school."

- Sixth grader



"My favorite subject is art because the creativity runs wild."

- Fifth grader

"My favorite subject is math because I like multiplying decimals. I'm excited to meet new friends and for basketball."

- Sixth grader

1417 Students +
185 Awesome Volunteers +
12,145 yellow pencils +
4,026 new toothbrushes +
842 boxes of colorful crayons
= Project Cool 2016!

Photos: Coalition on Homelessness

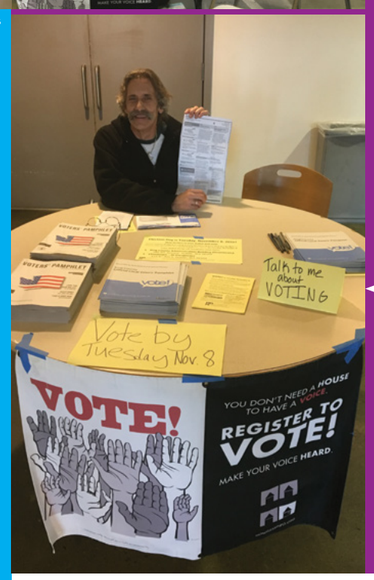
HELPING HOMELESS STUDENTS SUCCEED

This year community members joined with Project Cool for Back-to-School to support 1,417 students experiencing homelessness, by collecting and purchasing quality items to fill colorful backpacks. Through Coalition member agencies, we are able to reach out to and connect with hundreds of families. We sent 255 pre-K students, 617 girls and boys from kindergarten through 5th grade, and 575 middle and high schoolers off for their first days of school with the supplies they needed to fit in and learn.

Students who are living in shelters, doubled up with relatives, or sleeping in cars feel both excited and nervousness about starting school. They deserve and need access to quality school supplies and supports that will help them succeed.

Through Project Cool we connect hands-on helping and volunteering with education and advocacy. We encourage volunteers to learn about homelessness and share simple ways they can speak up for the 7,260 public school students who were homeless in King County during the 2014-15 school year. Thanks to everyone who hosted a supply drive (40 this year!), donated to Project Cool, and asked dentists to help keep students' smiles bright and clean.

The Coalition updates our ***Guide to Understanding Educational Rights for Homeless and Unstably Housed Students*** each year to ensure that parents, teachers, social workers, librarians, and others know what rights students who are experiencing homelessness are guaranteed. This guide also helps community members and families understand the broad definition of homelessness for school aged children, which includes, but is not limited to, students who are doubled up or couchsurfing due to economic hardship, staying in motels, living in shelter or transitional housing, staying in cars, or staying outside. We would be happy to share this resource with you! Email requests@homelessinfo.org



Photos: Coalition on Homelessness

YOU DON'T NEED A HOUSE TO VOTE!

Coalition staff, volunteers, and members helped more than 403 people register to vote between April and October! Registering and voting are simple enough if you have a place to live, a way to receive your mail, and access to a computer, printer, and phone. But for people who don't have a traditional or fixed address, or who think that a previous conviction means that they have lost their voting rights forever, the simple becomes hard or seems impossible. We train our volunteers to help people who are homeless get accurate information and complete forms correctly.

In June we held an extra Voter Registration Drive so that we could educate voters about the importance of voting YES to Renew Seattle's Housing Levy (which passed with over 70% of the vote!) during the August primary. This fall, in addition to helping voters register in time for the Presidential election, we told eligible voters about how Sound Transit 3 would expand mass transit as well as create affordable housing at light rail stations.

We work to make sure that every eligible voter can exercise this fundamental right, regardless of where she sleeps at night or how he gets his mail.

Dennis B. voted for the first time this year at age 63. He volunteered with us as a Voter Registrar this year, and sent this note about his emotions after dropping his ballot in the King County Elections ballot drop box:

"I felt like I was a part of society. That my vote does count, and I do have a right to vote. My self-esteem shot straight up, I felt like I had meaning and my opinion did matter. It is hard to explain because I have never felt like I was a member of society, I was always an outcast. ***I did not expect these feelings. I thought I would vote and no big deal. Boy was I wrong. It is a privilege and responsibility to vote in our country."***

Formerly homeless, Dennis is one of 25 people we trained to help people who are homeless or unstably housed register to vote.

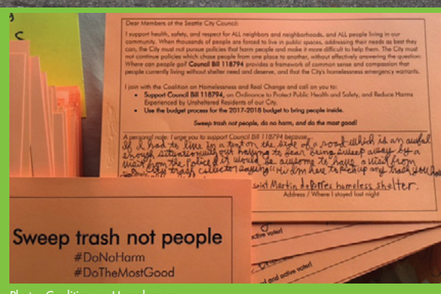


Photo: Coalition on Homelessness

A place inside for every person outside: People who are homeless need housing – but the scale of our current crisis also demands more safe indoor places for people to be both overnight and during the day. The Coalition has organized people to support new and expanded programs in **White Center, Bellevue, North Bend, and Seattle** this year. It is crucial for people in neighborhoods and cities across King County to welcome safe indoor shelter, low income housing, and needed services. Talk with your neighbors and elected officials, and partner with us for education and advocacy.

THANK YOU!

Thanks to all who fuel our advocacy, education, and organizing work year-round – you keep our independent voice well-informed and strong! Our collective work happens because Coalition members and supporters take action all year: speaking up in Olympia and at city halls across King County; filling backpacks for homeless students; housing, sheltering, and supporting people while they are homeless; and helping people register, vote, and have a say about public policies and budgets that affect their lives. We are deeply grateful to the following foundations, businesses, and organizations for their support of our effective work. Names of individual donors, volunteers, and in-kind contributors are listed with heartfelt appreciation in the enclosed insert.

2016 ONE NIGHT COUNT SPONSORS

ALL HOME – Making Homelessness in King County Rare, Brief and One Time
Wyncote Foundation Northwest
CAMPION FOUNDATION
The CoHo Team Of Windermere Agents
Enterprise · Bellwether Enterprise
DESC
OPEIU8
Plymouth Housing Group
SMR Architects
Neighborhood Cooking Foundation

2016 PROJECT COOL SPONSORS

The Seattle Times | FUND FOR THE NEEDY
United Way of King County
Alliance to the Washington State Dental Association
CARNEY BADLEY SPELLMAN
Windermere Foundation
NATIONAL RESEARCH Corporation
KING COUNTY NURSES ASSOCIATION

2016 PROJECT COOL STUDENTS

225 PRE-K
617 GRADES K-5
575 GRADES 6-12
TOTAL **1417**

7,260 STUDENTS in King County public schools experienced homelessness during the 2014-2015 school year.

HOMELESS STUDENTS IDENTIFIED IN EACH KING COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, 2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR.

HOMELESS STUDENTS REPORTED BY EACH DISTRICT FOR 2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR

Auburn	260	Kent	501	Seattle	2944	Tukwila	330
Bellevue	220	Lake WA	296	Shoreline	349	Vashon Island	11
Enumclaw	81	Mercer Island	11	Skykomish	0		
Federal Way	236	Northshore	203	Snoqualmie Valley	87		
Highline	1027	Renton	479	Tahoma	57		
Issaquah	109	Riverview	59				

Source: Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

Photo: Coalition on Homelessness

The father of a kindergartner wrote to thank Project Cool supporters for the school supplies:

"This will really make my child feel important, and he will enjoy it all very much. Thank you."

"I am excited to see my friends and excited to learn more stuff so I can be smart."

- Third grader

2016 ONE NIGHT COUNT

OF PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS IN KING COUNTY, WA

PEOPLE OUTSIDE

Table 1: Summary of January 29, 2016 One Night Count of people homeless outside in King County

	SEATTLE*	KENT	NORTH END**	EAST SIDE**	SW KING CO.**	FEDERAL WAY	RENTON	NIGHT OWL BUSES	AUBURN	VASHON ISLAND	TOTAL
Men	827	21	55	55	65	25	46	109	13	9	**1,225**
Women	153	7	12	34	21	7	14	19	3	1	**271**
Gender Unknown	1,951	136	64	150	226	231	100	0	94	28	**2,980**
Minor (under 18)	11	1	4	6	3	0	0	4	0	0	**29**
TOTAL	**2,942**	**165**	**135**	**245**	**315**	**263**	**160**	**132**	**110**	**38**	**4,505**
Benches	46	2	2	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	**57**
Parking Garages	26	2	0	25	0	0	1	0	0	0	**54**
Cars/Trucks	914	42	53	85	161	199	75	0	48	31	**1,608**
Structures	533	4	4	27	55	2	18	0	3	7	**653**
Under Roadways	257	2	2	8	4	1	14	0	2	0	**290**
Doorways	271	1	2	3	10	3	7	0	0	0	**297**
City Parks	24	0	3	0	0	0	9	0	30	0	**66**
Bushes/ Undergrowth	37	60	3	9	2	30	12	0	0	0	**153**
Bus Stops	29	21	5	0	0	8	1	0	0	0	**64**
Alleys	32	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**41**
Walking Around	494	14	10	15	13	13	16	0	4	0	**579**
Other	279	8	51	72	65	6	7	132	23	0	**643**
TOTAL	**2,942**	**165**	**135**	**245**	**315**	**263**	**160**	**132**	**110**	**38**	**4,505**

* Following recommendations from the Seattle Police Department in the wake of a Tuesday, January 26 shooting in a greenbelt near I-5 in Seattle, organizers adjusted six Seattle count areas to exclude places under the freeway and in adjacent greenbelts where teams usually count.

** North End includes select areas of Bothell, Kenmore, Shoreline, and Woodinville; East Side includes select areas of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, and Redmond; SW King County includes select areas of Burien, Des Moines, SeaTac, Skyway, Tukwila, and White Center.

Gender and Age Unknown: To protect against the elements, most people outside in January are bundled up. That paired with the dark hours of the Count makes it hard to discern gender or age.

19%
INCREASE

Some survival strategies do not fit into the historical categories that we continue for consistency. "Other" includes people in organized Tent Cities and Safe Parking programs, those who participate in our Youth Overnight Count, and those in emergency departments, or whose survival strategies are very unusual (e.g., seeking shelter in a dumpster or boat).

4,505
PEOPLE OUTSIDE

75%
of the total increase reflects people found in areas we have historically counted.

19%	**increase**
2016	**4,505 people outside**
2015	3,772 people outside

Source: Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness

Photo: S. Chris Brown for the Coalition on Homelessness

PEOPLE INSIDE

Overnight Shelter: Shelters are full every night. Some use lotteries to manage the fact that more people want shelter than there is space, or prioritize certain people (men over 55, families with children, people who are especially vulnerable). Shelters are often in spaces not designed for the purpose – a church basement, an old warehouse, a city-owned building, or motel. People lucky enough to get in will likely sleep on the floor and have to return to the street with all their belongings before 7.00 a.m..

Transitional Housing: These programs offer time-limited housing and services to help people address things that make it hard to secure, afford, or maintain stable housing: medical or behavioral health problems, poor credit history, limited education, un- or underemployment.

Permanent Housing: Permanent housing is your own place with a door and a key, a home you can stay in as long as you want.

Photo: DESC for the Coalition on Homelessness

Table 3: Composition of households served by program type

	OVERNIGHT SHELTER	TRANSITIONAL HOUSING	COMBINED TOTAL
Single male	1,783	585	**2,373***
Single female	621	215	**845***
Single adult transgender people	4*	10*	
Unaccompanied minors (under 18)	14	13	**27**
Couples without children	0	5	**5**
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT CHILDREN	**2,422**	**828**	**3,250**
Couples with children	47	198	**245**
One adult (HH headed by a female)	186	443	**629**
One adult (HH headed by a male)	11	17	**28**
One minor (HH headed by female under 18)	0	2	**2**
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN	**244**	**660**	**904**
TOTAL	**2,666**	**1,488**	**4,154**

*14 single transgender people are included in the total number of households in shelter and transitional housing.
Source: King County Department of Community and Human Services

Table 4: Individuals by household type and type of program

	OVERNIGHT SHELTER	TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
Families with children	778	2,148
Single adult men	1,783	585
Single adult women	621	215
Single adult transgender people	4	10
Unaccompanied minors	14	15
Couples without children	0	10
SUBTOTAL	**3,200**	**2,983**
TOTAL	**6,183**	

Source: King County Department of Community and Human Services

Table 5: Ages of individuals by program type

	OVERNIGHT SHELTER	TRANSITIONAL HOUSING	COMBINED TOTAL
Birth to 5 years	196	503	**699**
6-12 years	194	467	**661**
13-17 years	84	228	**312**
UNDER 18 YEARS (COMBINED)	**474**	**1,198**	**1,672**
18-25 years	229	404	**633**
26-54 years	1,755	1,094	**2,849**
55-64 years	590	243	**833**
65 years and older	152	44	**196**
TOTAL	**3,200**	**2,983**	**6,183**

Source: King County Department of Community and Human Services

Table 6: Number of individuals with known disabilities and selected health conditions by program type on the night of the Count.

	OVERNIGHT SHELTER	TRANSITIONAL HOUSING	COMBINED TOTAL
Mental illness	543	542	**1,085**
(serious mental illness: a subset of above)	(382)	(223)	**(605)**
Alcohol or substance abuse	407	410	**817**
(chronic substance abuse: a subset of above)	(209)	(215)	**(424)**
Physical disability	308	380	**688**

Source: King County Department of Community and Human Services

EVERYONE COUNTS: COMPLEMENTARY SOURCES OF INFORMATION

COUNTING YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

We documented 68 homeless youth and young adults who were without shelter during the 2016 Count through a combination of approaches. Thirty-one were minors (under 18), and 37 were between 18 and 24. The Youth Overnight Count is one way we include young people as we document the unmet need for shelter. Several agencies hosted three special events and welcomed 39 people under age 25 who would otherwise have slept outside. More information about unstably housed or homeless young people can be found in the report of 2016 *Count Us In* (a complementary survey conducted the day before the One Night Count).

COUNTING PEOPLE WHO ARE CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

Three hundred and fifty-eight people who were chronically homeless (mostly men), were without shelter during the 2016 One Night Count. This is nearly a 30% decrease compared to 2014. Overall, there has been a 20% decrease since 2014 of people who are chronically homeless in King County. Being homeless for a long time takes a severe toll on people's mental and physical well-being. People with complex needs may have difficulty securing and keeping housing, and may need specialized outreach and care. With continued focus, we can interrupt this brutal and costly cycle, and sustain positive results for people who have been ignored for too long.

COUNTING VETERANS

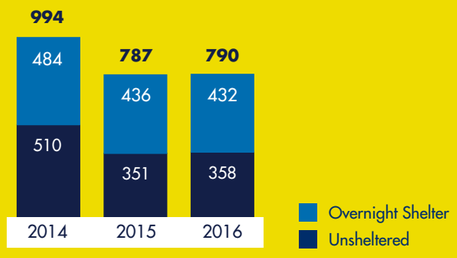
We were able to document 120 homeless veterans as being unsheltered, this year. This is a 6% decrease since 2014. While we saw more veterans unsheltered this year than in 2015, overall the number of homeless veterans (sheltered and not) is decreasing in King County and nationally. These drops reflect targeted efforts and investments in housing and services for veterans by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington State, King County, and Seattle.

GATHERING COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

To complement the street count, we carry out special projects designed to gather detailed information without disturbing people's sleep. These methods allow us to collect and report personal information anonymously, and to meet federal data requirements.

- **Everyone Counts Survey:** Beginning at 5.00 a.m. (right after the street count), we sent trained volunteers to speak with people at 36 community sites all across King County. They asked brief questions, including where people spent the previous night. Five hundred and sixty-nine of the 1402 people who took part in the survey (just over 40%) said they had been outdoors the night before.
- **Provider Survey:** We surveyed social workers, outreach workers, and clinicians who specialize in working with people who have serious and persistent mental illness, serious health problems, or behavioral health disorders. These staff know individual people well enough to say where they were on the night of the Count. In this way, we can add to our understanding of who in our community lacks a safe place to be.

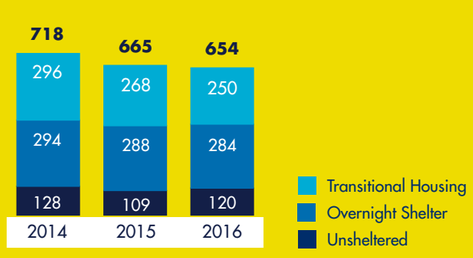
Table 7: People counted as Chronically Homeless during 2014-2016 ONC



Source: Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness

A person who is chronically homeless is defined by HUD as an unaccompanied person who is disabled and has been either homeless continuously for a year or more, or through at least 4 episodes of homelessness during the last 3 years.

Table 8: People counted as Veterans during 2014- 2016 ONC



Source: Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness

A Veteran is someone who has served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, or was "activated into active duty" as a member of the National Guard or a Reservist. We considered someone a veteran regardless of discharge status.

A SAFE, RESPECTFUL, AND ACCURATE COUNT: A NOTE ABOUT OUR METHODS AND OUR VOLUNTEERS

The One Night Count is a unique community organizing project grounded in the daily and nightly work of our members. We draw on the knowledge of service providers, people who live and work in the communities where they count, and people who have been or are homeless to plan and carry out the Count. Volunteers start from one of 12 headquarters, and are organized into more than 130 teams, which go to pre-determined and publicly accessible areas where people who are homeless are known to seek shelter. By limiting the Count to between 2 and 5 a.m., we avoid most duplication. Our dedicated volunteers include a core of experienced Team Captains who lead teams year after year. Captains receive training, and preview their assigned areas in daylight before the count. All Count volunteers agree to our Code of Conduct, designed to protect safety, privacy, and confidentiality, and gather good information as unobtrusively as possible. Thousands of people have volunteered since 1979 to make the One Night Count happen.

10,688
PEOPLE HOMELESS
IN KING COUNTY FROM 2-5AM ON JANUARY 29, 2016

2,983 IN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
3,200 IN SHELTERS
4,505 ON THE STREET

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BASICS OF THE ONE NIGHT COUNT

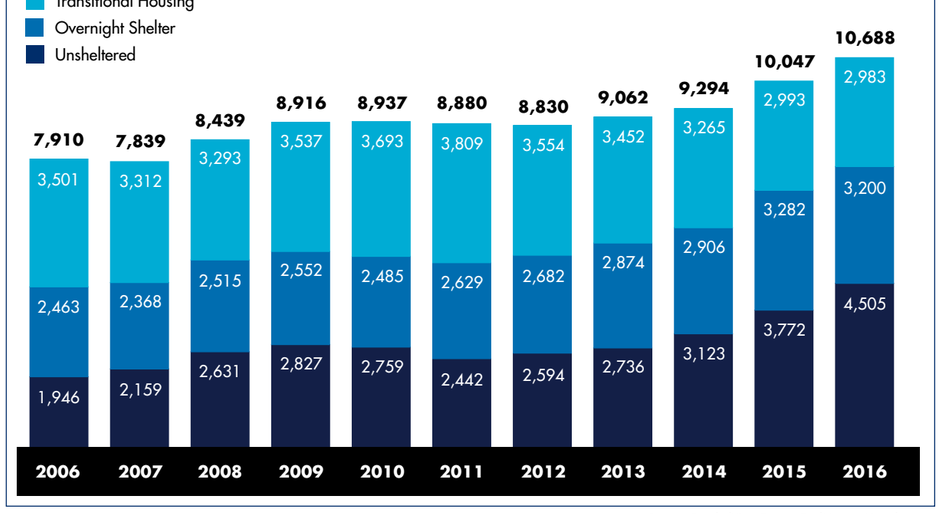
Who counts as homeless? People who are in a shelter or transitional living situation designed to be temporary; or who are in a public or private place not meant to be a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. Because people outside are counted only in select areas in King County, and because people who feel vulnerable may go to great lengths not to be visible, not everyone is included. The total count is thus a bare minimum.

Who is NOT counted as homeless? People in one of the following circumstances: doubled up or couch surfing; in a motel; people in the hospital; people in jail; children in foster care; others whose living arrangements may be very unstable but who on that night are not homeless.

The total number of people who are homeless on this one night comes from these sources:

1. **A count of people who are homeless and inside (in shelter or transitional housing).** Information about people who have shelter or transitional housing is compiled by staff in King County Department of Community and Human Services through a combination of provider surveys and the Homeless Management Information System (Safe Harbors). The results are shown in Tables 3-6 at left.
2. **A count of people who are homeless and outside (without shelter or in a place not fit or meant for people to live).**

Table 2: One Night Count results, 2006-2016



Source: Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness

KEY FINDINGS: WHAT DID WE LEARN THIS YEAR?

- The most striking finding is that for the third year in a row, our community documented hundreds more people without basic overnight shelter. Modest variations up or down could reflect changes in the weather, or other circumstantial factors, but year over year increases of 14%, 21% and 19% clearly show that we are in a growing crisis that available housing and shelter are not meeting. Though we expanded the Count geography to include new communities in 2016, this does not explain the increase. Teams saw more people in places where they have historically counted: 75% of the increase (553 of 733 people) was in areas where we already conducted the Count.
- **The increase in people who lack basic safety and protection is real.** During our Everyone Counts Survey, just over 40% of the people we spoke with said they had lacked shelter the night before. By comparison, in 2014, 32% of those we surveyed were unsheltered the night of the Count.
- **The number of people served in overnight shelters and transitional housing programs reflects the capacity that exists in the system we have built; the numbers of people we see outside tells us about the unmet need for shelter and housing.** More transitional housing and shelter is available for families with children than for single men, the group whose needs are most mis-matched with what is currently available. Similarly, few couples without children or unaccompanied minors are recorded, not because they do not need help, but because there are relatively few beds or programs designated for them.
- **When we invest in housing and supporting people, we get powerful results.** Our community has made a determined effort to end homelessness for veterans, and for people who have been homeless a long time, and are disabled. We have made it a priority to create permanent homes, with supports when needed, for people in these groups. If we bring supportive housing programs to scale, we will have fewer people who are chronically homeless as our neighbors. If we tackle housing affordability seriously, we will bring more people inside, and fewer people will ever become homeless. If we do not take these steps, we will continue to see increasing numbers of people without homes.

Photo: S. Chris Brown for the Coalition on Homelessness

SUPPORT OUR WORK:
Donate securely at **www.homelessinfo.org**,
or mail donations to:
SEATTLE/KING COUNTY COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS
77 S. WASHINGTON STREET
SEATTLE WA 98104

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