



STUDENT HANDBOOK SY25-26

Arizona Goodwill Education Services
THE EXCEL CENTER

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EXCEL.



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Arizona Goodwill Education Services (AGES).
(602) 535-4401

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this book is to acquaint students, parents/guardians, and teachers with necessary information concerning the organization and administration of The Excel Center School District.

The handbook should be of special help to all students. In it, students will find the requirements for graduation, school regulations, absentees, tardiness, and other information. All students, teachers, and parents/guardians should carefully read the information provided herein, all contents printed in this book have been approved by The Excel Center School District and our Governing Board. We hope that the handbook may contribute to a better understanding and appreciation of our educational program.

THE EXCEL CENTER DISTRICT OFFICE – ARIZONA

2626 West Beryl Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85021
(602) 535-4112
www.excelcenteraz.org

THE EXCEL CENTER – PAPAGO DIRECTORY

602-535-4401
www.excelcenteraz.org

SCHOOL HOURS

Monday – Thursday
8:30 a.m. to 3:35 p.m.

Friday
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday
8:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Students should not arrive earlier than 8:00 a.m. They will not be allowed in the building until Security and School Staff are in the building.

Classes begin promptly at 8:30 a.m.

All Students should leave campus after classes unless they are working with a staff member. Office hours end at 4:45 pm, at which time students should leave campus. Exemptions can be made for special events.

DISTRICT MISSION

The mission of The Excel Center is to provide adults the opportunity and support to earn a high school diploma and post-secondary education while developing career paths that offer greater employment and growth opportunities. Our school will serve at-risk students who have experienced challenges in traditional academic settings by finding ways to "meet students where they are" in their education. This is done by providing a flexible structure and supportive relationships to help students manage work, life, and family concerns as they achieve their educational goals.

OUR VALUES

RELATIONSHIPS

Adult learners benefit from strong relationships with peers and staff. These relationships provide consistent support for student education by strengthening motivation to achieve goals and building resilience to overcome obstacles that might impede progress.

RELEVANCE

Students who have dropped out of high school often require flexibility in their education programs. Students will enroll in The Excel Center at various skill levels and will need to balance their education along with their many life challenges; this may include work and family obligations. Therefore, The Excel Center will use an individualized method – each student will establish their educational goals and move at their own pace to achieve those learning goals.

RIGOR

The need for a flexible education program does not diminish the need for academic rigor. The credibility of The Excel Center model lies in its academic rigor within an accelerated learning environment. The primary focus of The Excel Center will be to develop each student's ability to be successful in post-secondary environments and to develop the skills required to succeed in the modern workforce.

RESTORATIVE

We set high expectations and share compassion and empathy for every member of The Excel Center community. As a restorative school, The Excel Center applies a holistic teaching and learning approach that celebrates character, builds and maintains positive relationships, and aims to prevent conflict and harm.

RESPONSIVE

The Excel Center actively builds a culture that readily reacts to suggestions, influences, appeals, efforts, or opportunities with the goal of empowering all stakeholders to become respectful of, responsible for, and involved in learning, the learning process, and the learning community.

RESULTS

Excellence can be achieved by all students. We set ambitious goals and hold ourselves accountable for achieving results. We believe that ensuring success for our students is the best way to help them succeed in life and in seeing barriers they face as opportunities for learning and growth.

SERVICES

A. FREE TUITION

The Excel Center is a free charter high school that gives adult students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma.

B. TRANSPORTATION

The Excel Center makes every reasonable effort to ensure that students have reliable means to attend our school. Qualifying students, when possible, are provided with supplemental help to access transportation options.

C. CHILDCARE

The Excel Center provides access to free childcare on-site so that students may routinely attend class with the peace of mind that their children are safe and well-supervised.

D. LIFE COACHING

Each student is assigned a life coach. Our life coaches are compassionate and trained professionals who address life barriers and issues that may have caused students to drop out of high school in the past. Coaches are responsible for keeping students engaged and motivated to earn their high school diploma.

E. COLLEGE/CAREER PLANNING

In addition to high school coursework, the school will provide significant support for students to establish (1) career pathways in growth industry sectors in the local region and (2) effective transitions into postsecondary education and opportunities to earn industry recognized credentials. The College and Career Readiness (CCR) Specialists will assist in working with students to discover, plan, and fulfill post-graduation goals.

F. SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education Services are provided to our students through differentiated instruction in the classroom. Students who qualify for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan will receive services to meet their academic needs.

VISITORS

The Excel Center allows for visits, tours and observations of all classrooms by (1) students, (2) parent(s) of enrolled incapacitated adult pupils, (3) students who wish to enroll, or (4) parent(s) of incapacitated adult pupils who wish to enroll their children in any Excel Center, unless a visit, tour or observation threatens the health and safety of pupils and staff. All visitors to campus must first check in with Security. Once visitor approval has been verified, the Manager of Administration (MOA) will supply a visitor pass and escort the visitor to their destination. All visitors must wear their pass and be accompanied by an Excel Center staff member at all times.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Regular school attendance is vital for any student to be successful. A student who is not in school cannot learn. For this reason, it is important that all students make a commitment to ensure that they are in school on time. All student absences must be reported. Contact the school office or your Life Coach ahead of time if you know you will be absent. The office will then notify your teacher. Your teacher will work with you to identify a time to make up the work you missed.

We will be tracking attendance very closely.

- If a student has two (2) to five (5) consecutive unexcused absences or over ten (10) excused absences, the student will need to have a meeting with their Life Coach and School Director to discuss class credits.
- The Arizona Department of Education defines an excused absence as "...an absence due to illness, doctor appointment, mental or behavioral health, homelessness, bereavement, family emergencies, time necessary to process for the armed forces, and out-of-school suspensions. Excused absences due to out- of-school suspensions must not exceed 10% of the instructional days scheduled for the school year."
- All other absences not defined by the Arizona Department of Education's excused absences will be considered unexcused.
- In accordance with A.R.S. 15-841(B), a pupil that is sixteen (16) or older may be expelled for excessive absenteeism

TARDIES

Students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared for class every day. Students who arrive late interrupt the teacher and the students who have come to school on time. Developing a habit of punctuality will impact your learning, future employment opportunities, and relationships throughout your lives.

Repeated tardiness will result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to a meeting with your Life Coach or the School Director and may result in school suspension.

If a teacher detains a student, a pass is to be issued by the teacher causing the late arrival. The office will not issue passes for tardiness from one period to the another.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

In accordance with A.R.S. 15-901, the school is permitted to withdraw students who are absent for ten consecutive school days, except for excused absences identified by the Department of Education. Therefore, any student may be withdrawn after ten consecutive unexcused school day absences.

MATERIALS AND SCHOOL PROPERTY

Materials and school equipment/property are the student's responsibility after they have been issued by the school. If the school property issued to you is lost or damaged, you will be expected to pay for the replacement. Even if the item is stolen, you are responsible for it.

Any student who cuts, defaces, or otherwise damages any school property may be suspended from school, and this may result in the involvement of the authorities. The student will be held responsible for damages.

Administrative staff may preclude students from attending graduation events, including the graduation ceremony, if there are outstanding debts on their student account or unresolved damages. All student accounts must be current for a student to graduate.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

The individual student is responsible for all personal belongings. **The Excel Center will not be held liable or be required to search for any lost or stolen personal property. The Excel Center does not and will not cover theft of personal property.**

LOST AND FOUND

Clothing and other articles found at school will be placed in an area in the office. We encourage students to label all clothing and other personal items with a permanent marker or something similar that will not easily come off. Unclaimed items are donated to charity periodically throughout the year.

BICYCLES AND ROLLING DEVICES

Students who ride a bike to school should always ensure to walk their bike across campus. Always register, license, and lock your bike for your protection. The school will not be responsible for stolen or damaged bicycles.

Skateboards, roller blades, scooters, and any other types of rolling devices are not allowed on The Excel Center campus at any time.

PHOTO AND VIDEO USE

Occasionally, students may be photographed and/or videotaped in a school-related setting. These images may be reproduced in the media and/or school-related publications such as, but not limited to, newsletters, brochures, school/charter websites, charter-approved social media, and newspapers. Parents/guardians and of-age students may request that their image **not be included** in publicity by checking the related box on the Marketing Media document.

HEALTH

The school does not have a nurse. Front office staff will be available to assist except in the case of an emergency. In the case of an emergency, 911 will be called.

Below is a list of conditions that may require a student to leave campus due to illness. However, there are NO specific guidelines that cover every circumstance in determining whether a student remains in school or is sent home.

While every student is treated according to individual symptoms, the following examples often result in asking a student to leave campus.

- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- ✓ Obvious distress or discomfort, with or without fever
- ✓ Evidence of head lice
- ✓ Any injury that may require further attention

Your understanding and cooperation are appreciated by the staff, students, and administration.

No medication will be administered by the school. Each student is responsible for keeping and taking all medication as prescribed by their physician. Special accommodations will be made upon approval by the School Director.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Students must have proof of ALL required immunizations, or valid exemption, in order to attend the first day of school. Arizona law allows exemptions for medical reasons, laboratory evidence of immunity and personal or religious beliefs. Homeless students are allowed a 5-day grace period to provide records. The record for each vaccine dose must include the date and name of doctor or clinic. The statutes and rules governing school immunization requirements are Arizona Revised Statutes, R9-6-701-708.

STUDENT LOUNGE

The student lounge is equipped with a refrigerator and microwaves for use by students. You are welcome to bring your food in a container or paper bag with your name on it. The refrigerator is cleaned out every Friday; therefore, any items not removed by the end of the school day on Thursdays will be thrown out on Fridays.

CODE OF CONDUCT: PRINCIPLES FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Excel Students are expected to demonstrate exemplary behavior at all times.

The Code of Conduct is based on five principles that articulate The Excel Center's expectations for student behavior:

1. My words, actions, and attitudes demonstrate respect for myself and others at all times.
2. I demonstrate pride in myself, in my future, and in my school by arriving on time, dressed appropriately, and prepared to focus on my studies.
3. I always seek the most peaceful means of resolving conflict, and I obtain the assistance of teachers, administrators, or school staff when I am unable to resolve conflicts on my own.
4. I take pride in promoting a safe and clean learning environment at my school.
5. I seek positive relationships with all members of the school community, and I help restore relationships with school community members that are affected by my conduct.

If students abide by these principles, the learning environment in all schools will be strengthened.

For the complete code of conduct, including the definitions of disciplinary responses, student rights with respect to suspensions, and descriptions of levels of intervention and response to inappropriate or disruptive behavior, please review The Excel Center Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Response.

FIRE DRILLS/LOCKDOWNS

The Excel Center participates in fire drills and completes school-wide lockdown drills throughout the year. All students must follow the directions of their teachers during fire and lockdown drills.

Pulling a fire alarm when an emergency does not exist is **against the law**. Students involved will be disciplined as outlined in The Excel Center Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Response.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE CODE

The Excel Center expects that all students will dress in a way that is appropriate for the school day or for any school sponsored event. Student dress choices should respect the District's intent to sustain a community that is inclusive of a diverse range of identities. Students are responsible for ensuring that their attire fits within the school district's dress code. The school district is responsible for seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student, and that dress code enforcement does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, color, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size, or age. Any restrictions to the way a student dresses must be necessary to support the overall educational goals of the school and must be explained within this dress code.

Basic Principle: Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times. Clothes must be worn in a way such that genitals, buttocks, breasts, and nipples are fully covered with opaque fabric. School leadership has the discretion to determine a clothing violation.

STUDENTS CANNOT WEAR

- Violent language or images.
- Images or language depicting/suggesting drugs, alcohol, vaping, or paraphernalia (or any illegal item or activity).
- Hate speech, speech disruptive to the educational environment, profanity, pornography.
- Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized groups.
- Any clothing that reveals visible undergarments (visible waistbands and visible straps are allowed)
- Swimsuits (except as required in class or athletic practice).
- Accessories that could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon.
- Any item that obscures the face or ears (except as a religious observance or as personal protective equipment (PPE)).

DUE PROCESS

When severe or repeated violations of The Excel Center Code of Conduct occur, disciplinary action may result in extended suspension or expulsion.

EXTENDED SUSPENSION

An extended suspension is defined as the exclusion of a student from class for a period of more than ten (10) school days.

EXPULSION

Expulsion is defined as the exclusion of a student from school permanently.

DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

Every student is entitled to due process before they may be placed on extended suspended or expelled from school. If it is determined by the administration that the alleged student misconduct is serious enough to recommend a suspension of more than ten (10) school days or an expulsion, notification of a formal due process hearing will be sent to the student, or the parent(s)/guardian(s) of an incapacitated adult child, at least five (5) school days prior to the hearing according to the Arizona Revised Statute §15-843. For more information and the complete details about due process, please see the Manager of Registration and Administration.

During the period of time between the alleged misconduct and the day of the hearing, the student may remain in school unless it has been determined by the appropriate administrator that they are a clear and present danger to themselves or other people.

NOTICE OF DECISION

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Governing Board of Directors (“the Board”) may render a decision immediately or notify the student, or the parent(s)/guardian(s) of an incapacitated adult child, within 48 hours. In either event, written notification must be made within 48 hours. The notification shall be made by certified and regular mail.

APPEAL PROCESS FOR EXTENDED SUSPENSION

The student, or parent(s)/guardian(s) of an incapacitated adult child, has five (5) school days to appeal an extended suspension. Refer to The Excel Center Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Response for details on how to complete the appeals process.

The final decision to expel or reinstate a student rests with the Board. There is no administrative appeal from the Board’s decision to impose discipline.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Any student, or parent(s)/guardian(s) of an incapacitated adult child who engages in conduct unbecoming of The Excel Center, including (but not limited to) excessive behavior, raising of the voice to an unacceptable level, physical or verbal intimidation, or any action that disrupts the operation of the class, front office, school facility, or school event, will be immediately asked to leave the premises. Under Arizona Revised Statutes 15-507, any person who knowingly abuses a teacher or other school employee on school grounds or while the teacher or employee is engaged in the performance of his/her duties is guilty of a class 3 misdemeanor. *Law enforcement authorities shall be notified any time School or Charter officials have reason to believe that a person has verbally or physically assaulted a teacher or school employee, because it is a violation of the Law and may result in arrest. Such a person may be prohibited from entering school grounds or attending school events.*

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The administration has the legal right to search and seize property, including school property temporarily assigned to students, when there is reason to believe that a search will produce evidence that a student violated the law or a school rule. This would also include personal property such as backpacks, book bags, clothing, or other items carried by the students. Any search of property will be reasonable in scope and conducted in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the potential violation.

Items provided by the school for storage (e.g., lockers, desks) of personal items are provided as a convenience to the student and remain the property of the school and are subject to its control and supervision. Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy, therefore lockers, desks, storage areas, etc., may be inspected at any time, with or without reason, or with or without notice by school personnel.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The School will comply with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (USA PATRIOT ACT), and all other applicable state and federal laws in the establishment, maintenance, correction, and disposition of student records. The Executive Director shall establish procedures for such compliance, including informing parents/guardians, students, and the public of the contents.

The Executive Director will notify the student, or parents/guardians of an incapacitated adult child of their rights under FERPA each year, which shall include notification of all rights under FERPA and its implementing regulations. The notice shall also include a) the procedure for exercising the right to inspect and review education records; b) The procedure for requesting amendments of education records that the parents/guardians or eligible student believe to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise a violation of the student's privacy rights; and c) the conditions when prior consent is not required with the criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest.

The School has adopted a limited Directory Information Policy under FERPA, under which directory information will be disclosed only for the following specific purposes, or to the following specific parties:

PURPOSES

- ✓ The annual yearbook;
 - ✓ School publications, including school/class directories, lists, newsletters, and flyers;
 - ✓ Honor rolls or other awards or recognition lists;
 - ✓ Graduation programs;
 - ✓ Extracurricular programs, including playbills, concert programs, graduation programs and the like
-

PARTIES

- ✓ Parents or guardian of currently-enrolled students.
- ✓ School-recognized parents/guardians -teacher organizations.
- ✓ Except as otherwise necessary to fulfill one or more of the permissible purposes above, directory information will not be disclosed to parties seeking to use directory information for commercial purposes.

POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Excel Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size, or age in its admissions, programs, and activities. The following person has been designated to handle complaints regarding the non-discrimination policies: VP and Executive Director of Schools, Katrina Thurman, 602-535-4454 (Katrina.thurman@goodwillaz.org), and Director, Compliance and Reporting, Diana Byers, 602-535-4131 (diana.byers@goodwillaz.org).

DISABILITIES

The Excel Center School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size, or age or disability in admission to its programs, services or activities, in access to them, in treatment of individuals or in any aspect of their operations. The Excel Center School District does not discriminate in its hiring or employment practices. This notice is provided as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Questions, complaints, or requests for additional information regarding these laws may be forwarded to the designated coordinator, VP and Executive Director of Schools, Katrina Thurman, 602-535-4454, (Katrina.Thurman@goodwillaz.org), and Director, Compliance and Reporting, Diana Byers, 602-534-4131, (diana.byers@goodwillaz.org), The Excel Center School District, 2626 W. Beryl Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85021.

CHILD FIND NOTICE

The Excel Center School District is responsible for identifying and evaluating all students who are 18 to 21 years of age with disabilities and are eligible for specialized instruction or specialized equipment. All eligible students will be offered screenings within 45 calendar days of enrollment. The student's ability will be assessed in the areas of academics, vision, hearing, adaptive, communication, social/emotional and motor skills. If any concerns are noted, the student may be referred for additional help.

If you are aware of a student who may need special education services, please contact the ESS Coordinator at your school.

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS PROCESS

It is the objective of The Excel Center District to resolve any concerns or complaints at the lowest level, starting first with the classroom or teacher before progressing to the School Director, and then on to the administrators at the District Office. The District has comprehensive policies to address public concerns and complaints related to personnel, instructional resources or facilities and services. More information on these policies and the complaint process can be requested from the School Director.

DIPLOMA PATHWAY

The Excel Center focuses on preparing students for each individual's next steps beyond completing their high school diploma. In addition to earning the 22 credits required for a high school diploma, students will be able to earn either dual credit or a certification geared toward the career path or college they hope to pursue. Additionally, students will take Senior Seminar, a capstone class that prepares students with the technical skills and interpersonal skills needed for success after high school. The Senior Seminar class will also provide an individual road map for students to achieve their post-secondary goals.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The State Board is responsible for setting statewide minimum requirements for graduation from high school, which can be found in Arizona Administrative Code R7-2-302. Districts and charter schools may, at their discretion, establish graduation credit requirements for their students in addition to the statewide requirements. The statewide minimum course of study requires students to take at least 22 credits:

CREDITS	SUBJECT
Four (4) credits	English or English as a Second Language
Three (3) credits	Social Studies to include one credit of American history, including: ✓ Arizona history; ✓ One credit of World History/Geography/Global Studies ✓ One-half credit of American Government, including Arizona Government; and ✓ One-half credit of Economics
Four (4) credits	Mathematics to minimally include: ✓ Algebra 1, ✓ Geometry, ✓ Algebra 2 (or a personal curriculum), and ✓ a fourth course that contains high school content
Three (3) credits	Science in preparation for proficiency at the high school level on the statewide science assessment
One (1) credit	Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education and Vocational Education
Seven (7) credits	Additional courses prescribed by the local school district governing board or charter school
One-half (.5) credit	The Excel Center requires the course Capstone: Senior Seminar to count towards one of the seven credits of additional courses.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

COURSE GRADE WEIGHTS

Each course at The Excel Center will be graded using a weighted system to calculate student grades. Summative assessments, such as mid-term exams, final exams, unit exams, or cumulative projects, will account for 80% of a student's grade in a course. Formative assessments, such as quizzes, in-class assignments, checks for understanding, etc., will account for 20% of a student's grade in any given course.

ASSIGNMENT GRADING

All assignments in teacher-led courses will be graded on a 4-point scale. The lowest score for a completed assignment is a 2 (50%). See scale below for scoring details.

SCORE	Description
1	There is little to no evidence of the student meeting the learning target and/or performance expectations. Students will be provided with feedback and academic support, if needed.
2	There is some evidence of the student meeting the learning target and/or performance expectations. Students will be provided with feedback and academic support, if needed.
3	There is evidence of the student meeting the learning target and/or performance expectations.
4	There is evidence of the student exceeding the learning target and/or performance expectations.
	Teachers have the ability to give grades in increments of 0.5 if applicable. For example, 1.5 or 2.5.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued electronically for each student at the end of every term. Progress reports are available online in the Student View Portal of Synergy for students.

Students have the right to question grades, absence records and other school records. If you think an error has been made, the first level of appeal is “the point of origin”. For example, if you question a math grade, contact the teacher who recorded the grade. The second level of appeal is the School Director.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to complete their own work on all assignments. Any instance of cheating or plagiarism will be referred to the school administration and will result in disciplinary action ranging from a warning up to a loss of credit.

COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS

Even though it is not a graduation requirement, The Excel Center encourages participation in dual credit or industry certification courses. This promotes the pursuit of a post-secondary education for greater career opportunities. The additional post-secondary coursework not only gives students a taste of college and their ability to complete college-level work, but often provides a transferable credential in a high-demand career field which increases employment opportunities. Through dual credit classes, students can begin their post-secondary career with earned credits toward their degree. As mentioned previously, The Excel Center staffs College and Career Readiness Specialists (CCRs). These individuals are committed to employment, higher education and career planning, as well as post-graduate success.



STUDENT SIGNATURE/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I understand and acknowledge that as a student enrolled in The Excel Center, I must abide by the rules and regulations as well as the expectations set before me. This signature represents my confirmation that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by The Excel Center Student Handbook.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date ____/____/____



THE EXCEL CENTER-PAPAGO CAMPUS - SCHOOL CALENDAR

The Excel Center-Papago Campus School Calendar can be found on our website <https://excelcenteraz.org/>.

**EDUCATE.
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EXCEL.**



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(602) 535-4401