



# **Homeless & Panhandling Report**

Hillsborough Street Community Service Corporation

**March 2024**



# About Us

## **Hillsborough Street Community Service Corporation**

We celebrate Hillsborough Street! We are a diverse coalition of Hillsborough Street community partners advocating for a vibrant and unique district.

The Corporation's mission is to make the Hillsborough Street community a distinct destination in Raleigh by providing services and programs that improve the economic sustainability of the territory's businesses and increase the market value of its properties.

The Hillsborough Street Community Service Corporation is an independent, not for profit municipal service district, which began providing services and programs in the fall of 2010. The district was created by the City of Raleigh in partnership with NC State University and the property owners, merchants and residents on and around Hillsborough Street.



# About Us

The HSCSC territory is a 3-mile long corridor that runs on both sides of Hillsborough Street, from St. Mary's School to Meredith College and the I440 Beltline (including Morgan St., a few side streets and connections with Cameron Village). The territory includes a diverse collection of businesses, organizations, institutions and residential options.

We support an equitable and inclusive community, enabling all people to participate and reach their full potential. We believe in promoting equitable access and opportunity, recognizing the need to address systemic and institutional inequities, especially in matters of race. We recognize that to achieve our vision, we must lead our sector in making the changes we want to see in society.

HSCSC annually provides a range of services and programs that help to make the Hillsborough Street community a better place to live, work, play, shop, dine, learn and visit, including: cleaning, security, beautification, marketing and communications, economic development, special events and tourism, planning and advocacy, parking and transportation, research, arts and community.



# Introduction

The following report is designed to summarize the homeless & panhandling population within the Hillsborough Street MSD boundary. Included in this report will be an overview of:

- Who is impacted by homelessness
- What our current conditions are
- When we take our Point In Time (PIT) counts
- Where we see the most interaction
- How we will manage/track the issue in the future.

This report will also highlight organizations like HOST, an organization whose purpose is “to address housing needs without costly emergency shelters or transitional housing programs”, and Wake County Continuum of Care whose mission is “to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time”.

Reporting on the issue will allow us to understand if the homelessness/panhandling population is growing and serve as a baseline for future reporting on the subject. Much of the data collected has been used to keep an inventory of specific Persons Of Interest (POIs) on the street, but for this report, it will be used as a numerical reference.



# Key Definitions

- **Homelessness** - Describes the situation of an individual, family or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination.
- **Panhandling** - a subsistence strategy that refers to begging for money, food and other items. The activity is considered to be part of informal economy and is commonly associated with homelessness.
- **Point-in-Time Count (PIT)** - A method used to determine the number of homeless individuals in a specific area at a particular moment. In this method, locations where homeless people gather are surveyed, demographic information is recorded, and the number of individuals observed are tallied.
- **Person Of Interest (POI)** - A person being monitored, sought, or questioned as it pertains to being homeless, panhandling or loitering the street.



# Ambassador Team

Adam Zimmermann, Head of Ambassador Operations

Juan Hilliard, Outreach Specialist (Part-Time)

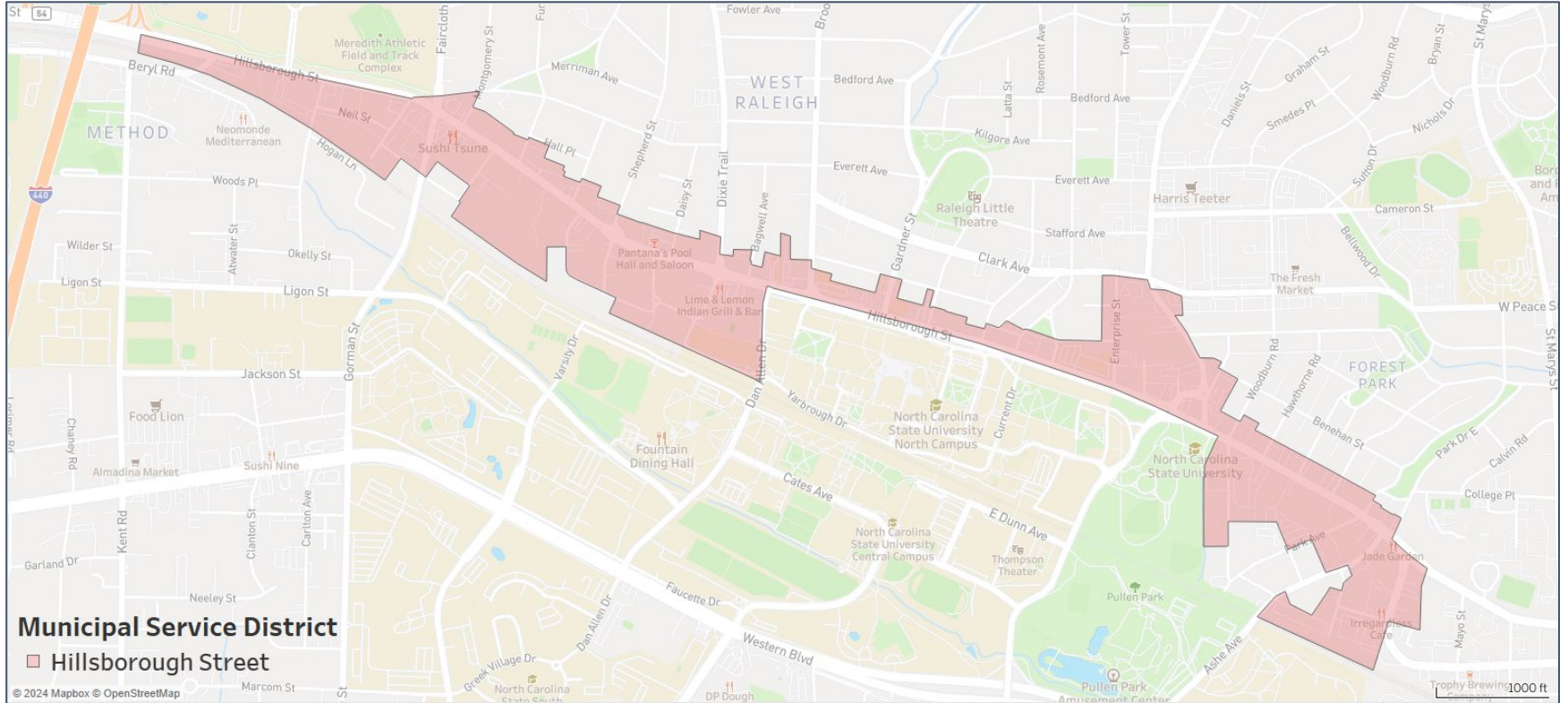
Ricardo Kearney, Safety Patroller (Weekends)

Justin Ramirez, Ambassador

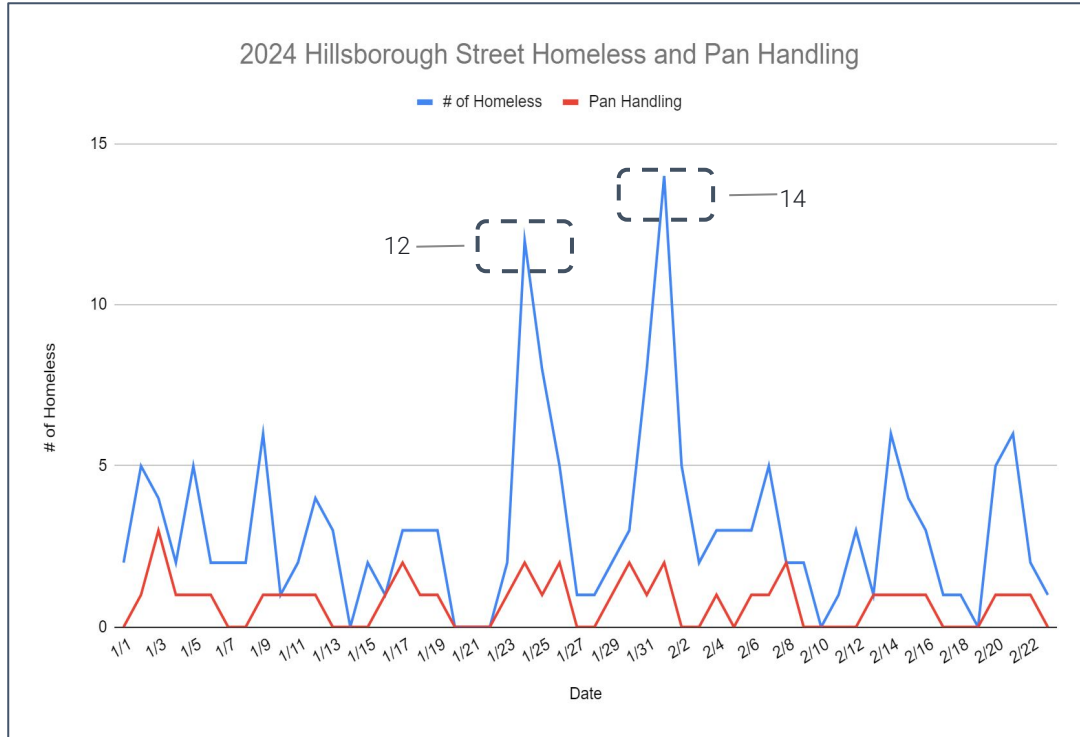
Alex Hilliard, Ambassador



# Hillsborough Street MSD



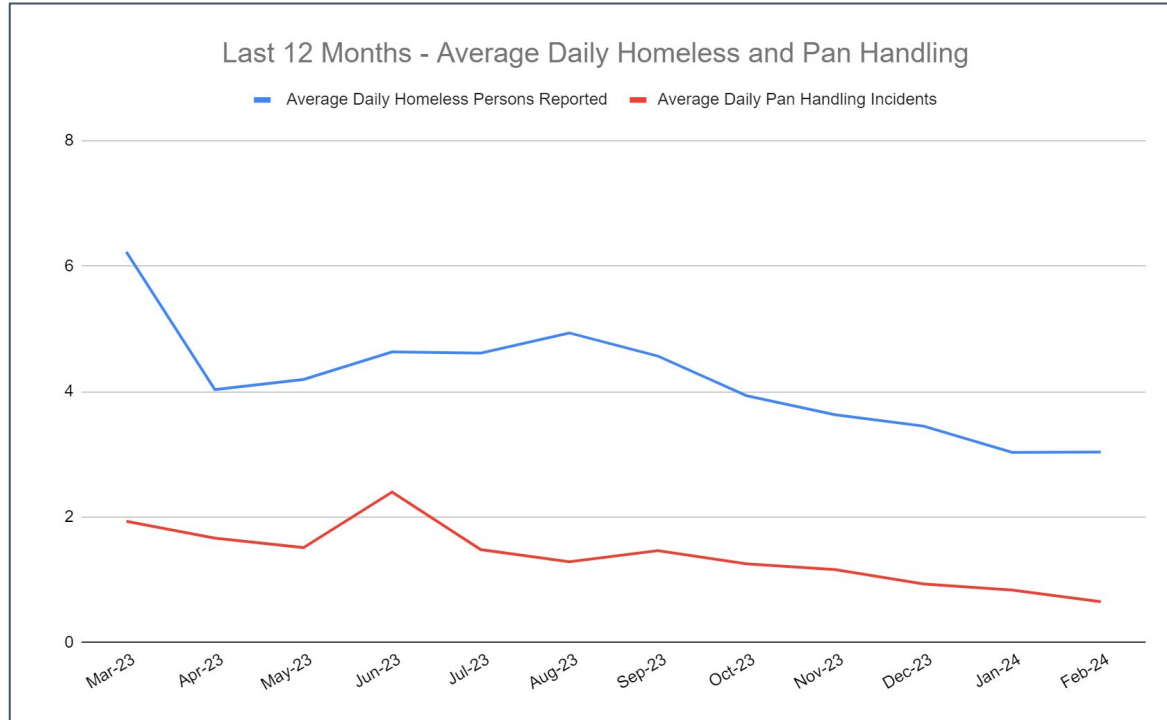
# Current Conditions (2024)



- This graph shows the tracking of homelessness and panhandling this year to date.
- A pattern can be seen in the weekly PIT counts, which can be attributed to the tracking methods currently in place.
- More counts in the middle of the week due to consistent PIT counts on Wednesday.
- The median count of homeless individuals is **6**.

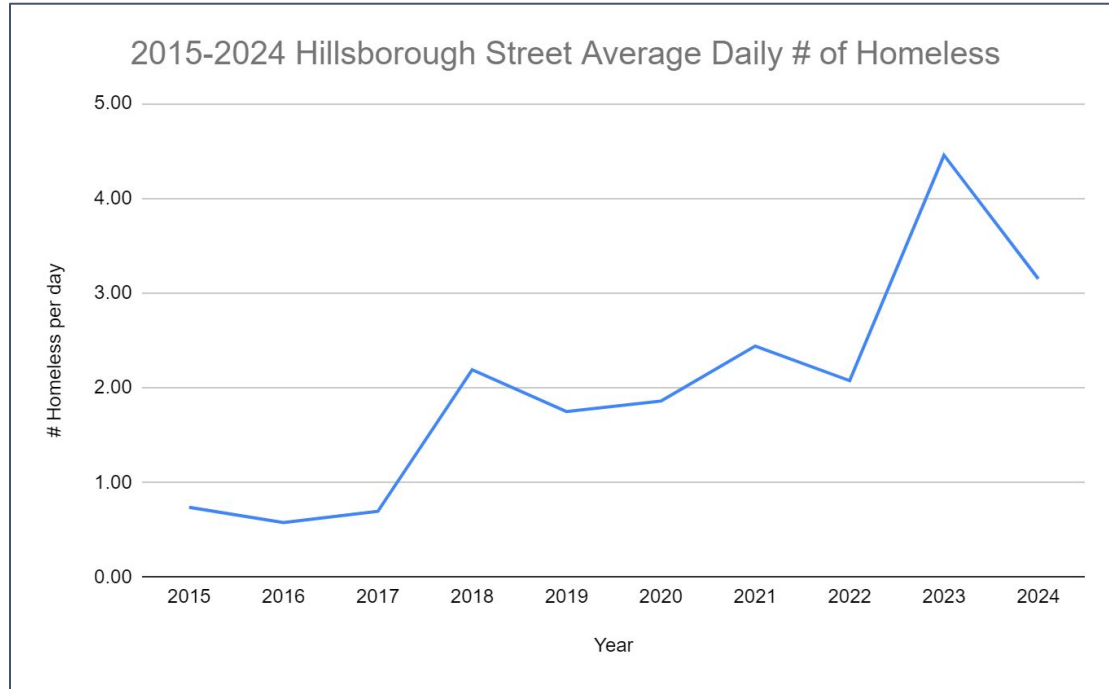


# Current Conditions (March '23 - Feb '24)



- The graph highlights the daily frequency of the homelessness and panhandling problem on Hillsborough Street in the past year.
- Note that weekly PIT counts began in July 2023.

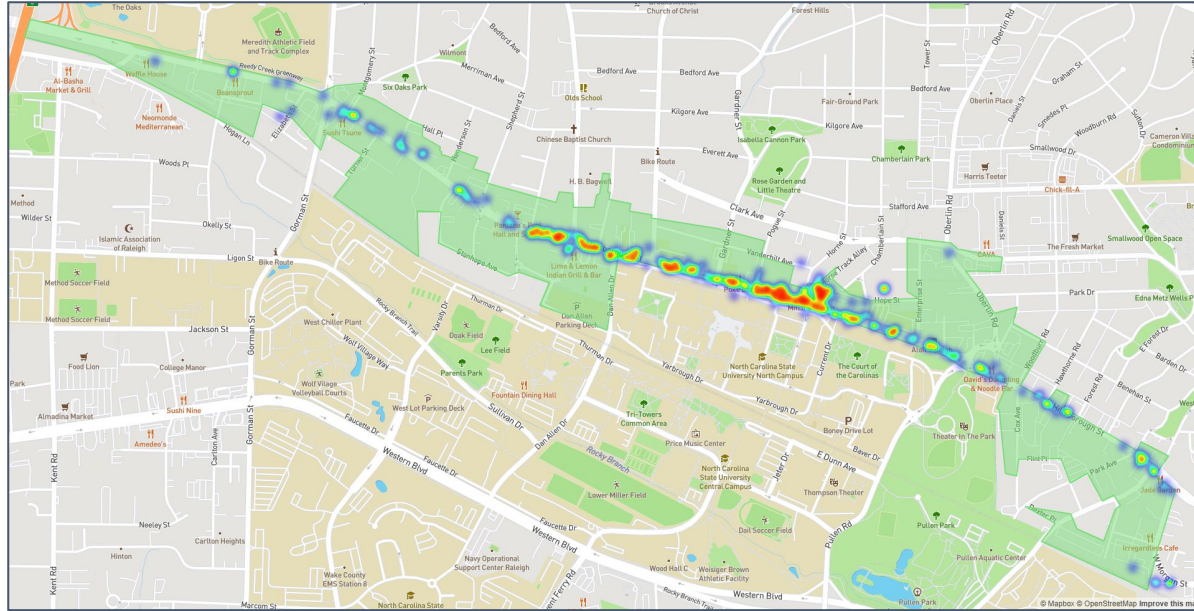
# Historical Conditions ('15-'24)



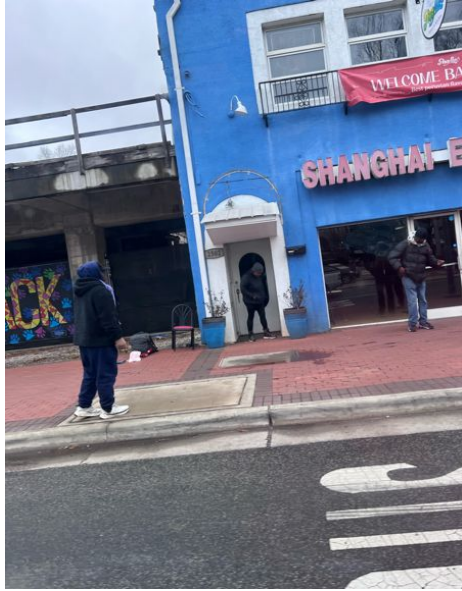
- Data goes back as far as 2015, but there was a lack of consistent tracking of the homeless population which influenced the validity of the data.



# PIT Locations (Jan '23 - Feb '24)



- Heat map of PIT count contacts w/ people experiencing homelessness on Hillsborough Street
- Clustered near NC State University campus area
- Green Area: MSD boundary







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# Contributing Factors

- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Lack of Affordable Housing options
- Lifestyle choice



# Current Engagement Activities

- Conducting Weekly Point In Time (PIT) Counts
- Speaking with the homeless/panhandling populations to see how we can help them
- Helping with application for services documentation
- Distributing water bottles on hot summer days
- Conducting wellness checks on Persons Of Interest (POI)
- Cleaning up trash that is left behind
- Discouraging aggressive panhandling
- Engaging with DRA Outreach Specialist to exchange information
- Reporting to Raleigh Crisis team to inform them of POIs that are in crisis
- Meeting quarterly with Raleigh Police Department and NC State police to discuss current crime trends in the area



# Possible Future Engagement Activities

As of July 2023, the Hillsborough Street Community Service Corporation has had a part-time outreach specialist conduct Point In Time (PIT) counts every Wednesday. Also, Clean & Safe ambassadors have logged all homeless/panhandling interactions, causing some double counts to occur.

In order to ensure accurate data, it would be beneficial to the corridor to have a full-time Outreach Specialist who solely focuses on researching and interacting with the homeless/panhandling population.

The Outreach Specialist would conduct counts daily, make sure the population has the help/resources they need and analyze ways to continue to make Hillsborough Street a safe place.





# Possible Future Engagement Activities

## Engage more with stakeholders

- Conduct a survey specifically asking property owners and merchants about their interactions with homeless/panhandling individuals
- Add questions about homelessness/panhandling to our Annual Survey
- Continue meeting with Student Housing property managers to understand the level of safety felt by their residents and how we may improve their comfort levels
- Continue meeting with the University Park Housing Association (UPHA) to track and understand how spillover of homeless/panhandling populations from Hillsborough Street impacts the communities that surround it
- Interface with NC State Campus Police to learn about how they are affected by the homeless population on Hillsborough Street
- Make sure that **ALL** stakeholders have Adam Zimmerman's and Juan Hilliard's contact information to let them know if there is an issue within our community
- Continue communicating with DRA to see which POIs are interacting with both organizations



# Possible Future Engagement Activities

## Understand the Why

- Engage with the homeless/panhandling population more by asking the question **WHY?**
- Examples of Questions may include...
  - How long have you been experiencing homelessness?
  - Would you like to change your situation? If so, how can HSCSC help you accomplish that goal?
  - What were you doing before you started to experience homelessness?
  - Do you have family in the area? If not, where is your family now?
  - Are you experiencing a substance abuse issue?
  - Are you aware of the shelters in the area?



# Partner Organizations

## Housing Options for Students Today (HOST)

- “HOST is a community-engaged strategy to address housing needs without costly emergency shelters or transitional housing programs.”
- HOST can provide housing options by connecting students with vetted hosts. This program can reduce the amount of housing insecurity and youth homelessness on Hillsborough Street.

[hostnc.org](http://hostnc.org)



# Partner Organizations

## Wake County Continuum of Care

- Coordinated Access/Entry: A system where individuals and families are assessed and connected to housing first and other services, based on their needs.
- Access Sites: Oak City Cares, Haven House
  - These sites can assess needs, refer shelters and other programs.

[wakenc507.org](http://wakenc507.org)

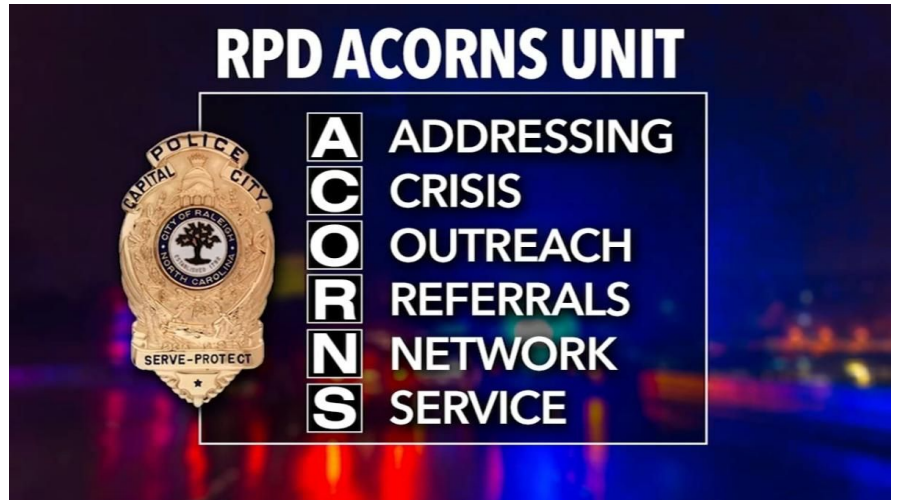


# Partner Organizations

## ACORNS

- A proactive team that provides field services and works with residents in crisis, directing them to available resources using a “care and safety first” approach.
- The ACORNS team combines social workers and law enforcement officers who are tasked to help by using the most appropriate and least invasive interventions possible.

<https://raleighnc.gov/safety/services/acorns>



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The information in this report has been secured from sources HSCSC believes to be reliable. However, HSCSC makes no representations or warranties, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy of the information.

**Hayes Boone**

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