

Gains, Gaps & Goals:

The Status of Women &
Girls in Fairfax County

Presentation by
University of Virginia



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Collaborative Approach

Leveraged prior work

- Fairfax County Strategic Plan *and* One Fairfax Equity Plan
- Health Needs Assessment
- Fairfax County workgroup plans to implement the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Choose indicators – Literature review, including above documents; created list of 25 key issues & narrowed through discussion with Fairfax team; crosswalked with County’s strategic plan; leveraged our Social Impact Data Commons research.

Exploratory analysis and descriptive statistics

Community Conversations with women and girls in Fairfax County and Washington DC metro area.

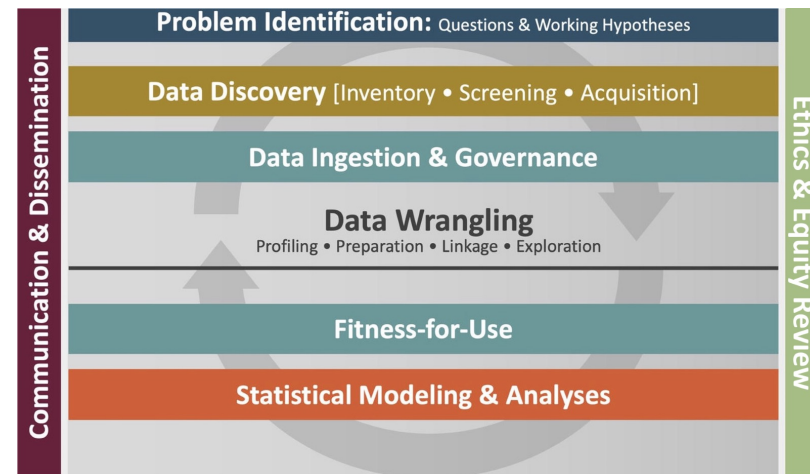
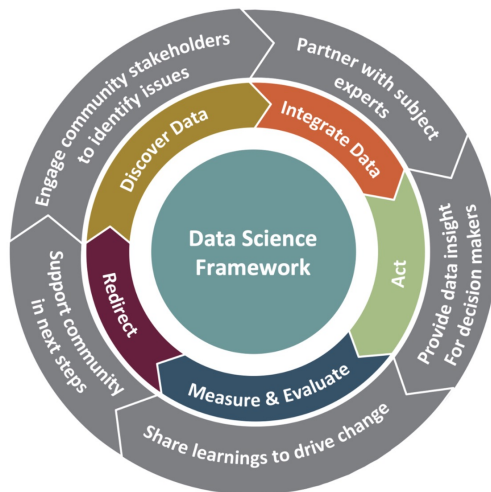
Discussions with County Program Leaders



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Community Learning Through Data-Driven Discovery (CLD3)

- CLD3 and our Data Science Framework guide our process.
- Engaged in an iterative process with the Fairfax County Working Group and WG leaders to guide research questions, data discovery, and analyses.



The role for Intersectionality in this study aligns with the One Fairfax Policy

One Fairfax Policy

- *All residents deserve an equal chance to succeed, regardless of their race, color, sex, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, disability, income, or where they live.*
- *Requires the county and schools to consider equity in decision-making and in the development and delivery of future policies, programs, and services.*
- *Compels the county and schools to look intentionally, comprehensively, and systemically at barriers that may be creating gaps in opportunity.*

This study focuses on research on women and girls using an **intersectional lens**.

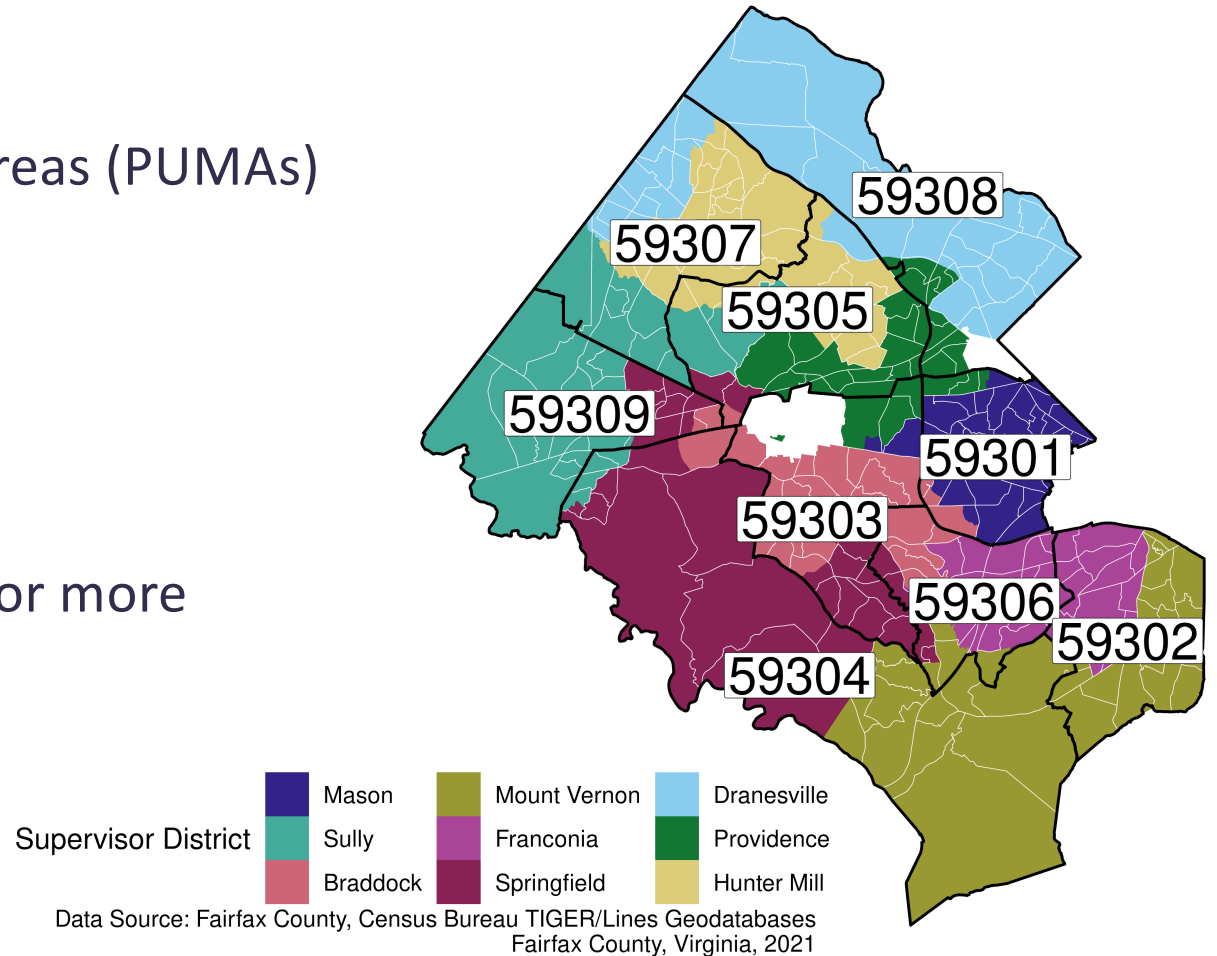
- Intersectionality is a theoretical framework.
 - Describes how **intersecting identities** of individuals and groups **produce interdependent experiences of discrimination**.
 - Identifies **vulnerable populations**.



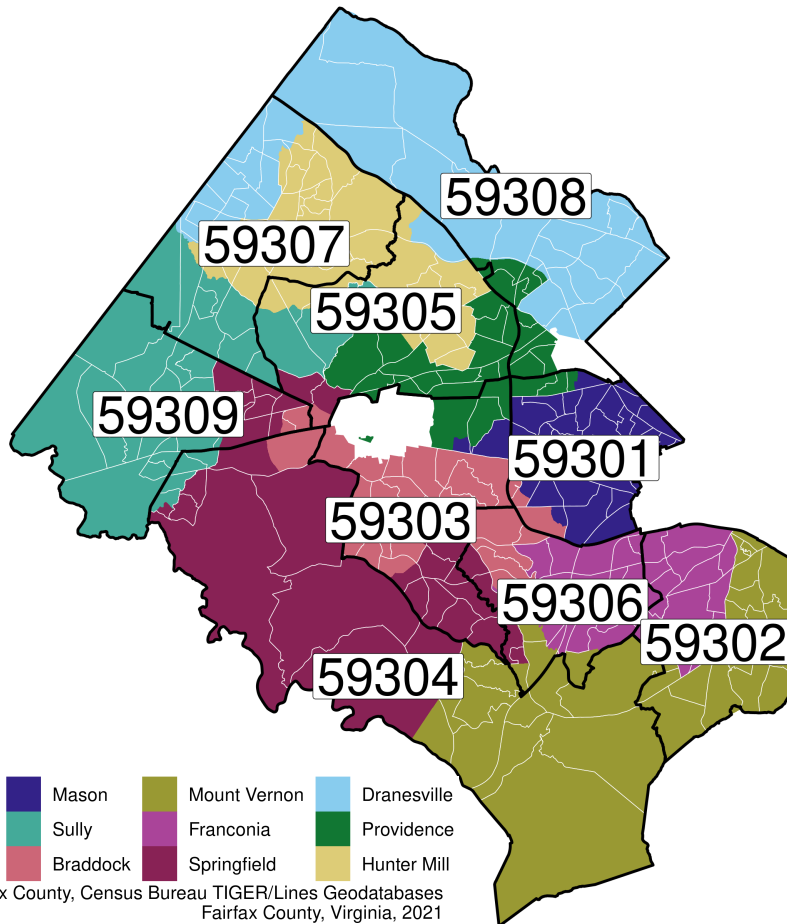
Fairfax County Subcounty Geographies

In report, we include:

- Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs)
- High school pyramids
- Census tracts
- Supervisor districts
 - Mapped to PUMAs
 - PUMAs include one or more supervisor districts



Fairfax County PUMAs to Supervisor Districts



PUMA	Supervisor District(s)
59301	Mason
59302	Franconia and Mount Vernon
59303	Braddock
59304	Springfield and Mount Vernon
59305	Providence and Hunter Mill
59306	Franconia and Braddock
59307	Hunter Mill and Dranesville
59308	Dranesville
59309	Sully and Springfield

We examined three types of indicators



To study the status of women and girls in Fairfax County, we chose and prepared:

- Economic indicators
- Health indicators
- Work-life balance indicators

Economic Indicators

Wage Gap

Women-owned businesses

Poverty

Household Living Budget

Employment



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Key Takeaways – Economic indicators

In Fairfax County:

- **Wage gap persists** despite women's gains in education.
- Female heads of households are more likely to be **economically vulnerable** than their male counterparts.
 - 28% of households are economically vulnerable.
 - 44% of these households have children younger than 18.
- Public School **Girls of Color** are more likely than Boys and White Girls to **work 3+ hours on an average school day.**



Community Conversation Insights

- **It is expensive to live and raise a family**, requiring long work hours.
- **Women are community champions** who are dedicated to and volunteer in their communities.



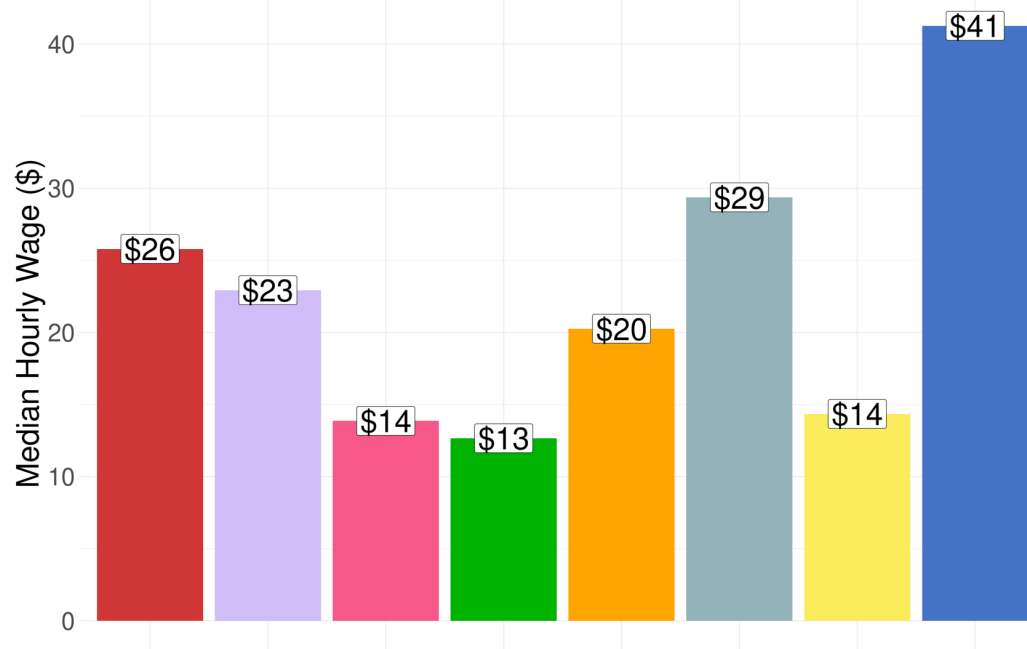
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Wage Gap Persists in Fairfax County

Wage Gap is the difference in pay between men and women

Median Hourly Wages by Sex, Race, and Ethnicity



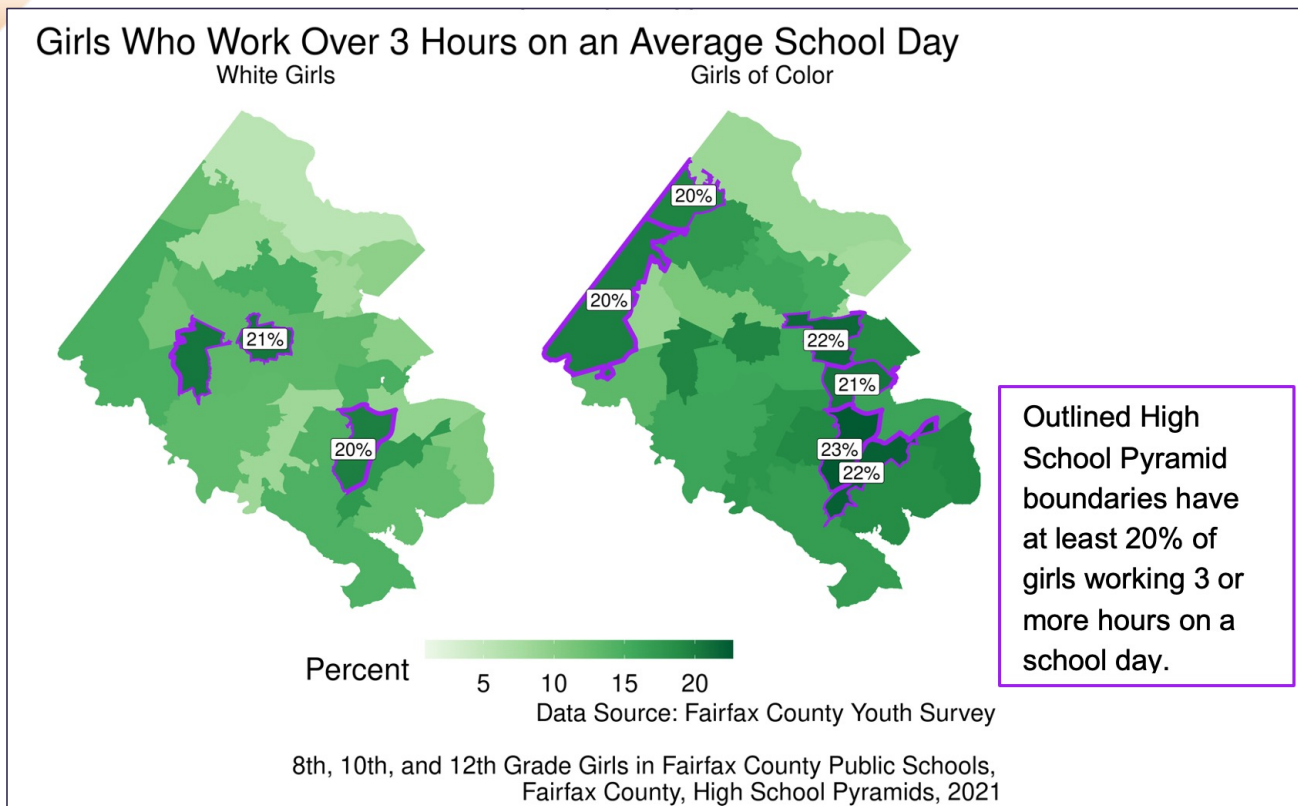
Female, Asian
Female, Black
Female, Hispanic
Female, Native
Female, Other race
Female, Two or more races
Female, White
Male, White

Data Source: American Community Survey Microdata

Individuals in the workforce, Fairfax County, Virginia, 2021

- Median Hourly Wages for women are lower than for White men.
- Women are less likely to be in higher-paying occupations and to earn wages in the top 50th percentile.
- The wage gap widens as women get older, especially in salary positions.
- Women of color experience larger wage gaps than White and Asian women.

Teen Employment in Fairfax County



- Teen girl students are more likely than teen boy students to work three or more hours on an average school day.
- More girls of color work three or more hours daily than White girls.

Household Living Budget (HLB) considers local and family context in economic vulnerability

- The amount of income necessary to meet a household's needs to function at a modest yet adequate standard of living.
 - Components are the local cost of housing, food, transportation, childcare, health insurance, broadband, other necessities, and federal & state taxes
 - **Economically Vulnerable Households:**
 - $\text{Income} < \text{Household Living Budget}$
- **HLB > official poverty threshold for all family types.**
- **Also, cost of living is significantly higher.**
- **One out of three (31%) married couples with children are economically vulnerable** compared to 17% of married couples without children.
- **Two out of three (66%) female-headed single-parent households are economically vulnerable** compared to 43% of male-headed single-parent households.
- **Use HLB to compute a “living wage”** at the census tract level by different household types.

A Living Wage does not just benefit workers. It also benefits businesses and society.

(Forbes, 2022)

Health Indicators

Health care availability

Preventive health

Chronic health conditions

Life expectancy



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Key Takeaways – Health Indicators

In Fairfax County:

- Economically vulnerable women have higher rates of some **chronic health conditions**, like poor mental health and arthritis, compared to men and obtaining **preventive care** is a challenge for many women.
- Women ages 18 to 64 and **foreign-born women** are most likely to be **uninsured**.
- Women generally have **longer life expectancy** than men.



Community Conversation Insights

- Many women expressed **mental health concerns** like isolation and feelings of depression.
- **Women with families from other countries** expressed great concern for their well-being, had less ability to visit relatives, and felt they had **less caregiving support**.
- Women noted that **not having access to a car made household tasks**, including keeping up with medical appointments, much more **difficult**.

Work-Life Balance Indicators

Weekly hours worked

Intergenerational family households

Single parents

Childcare costs

Key Takeaways – Work-Life Balance Indicators

In Fairfax County:

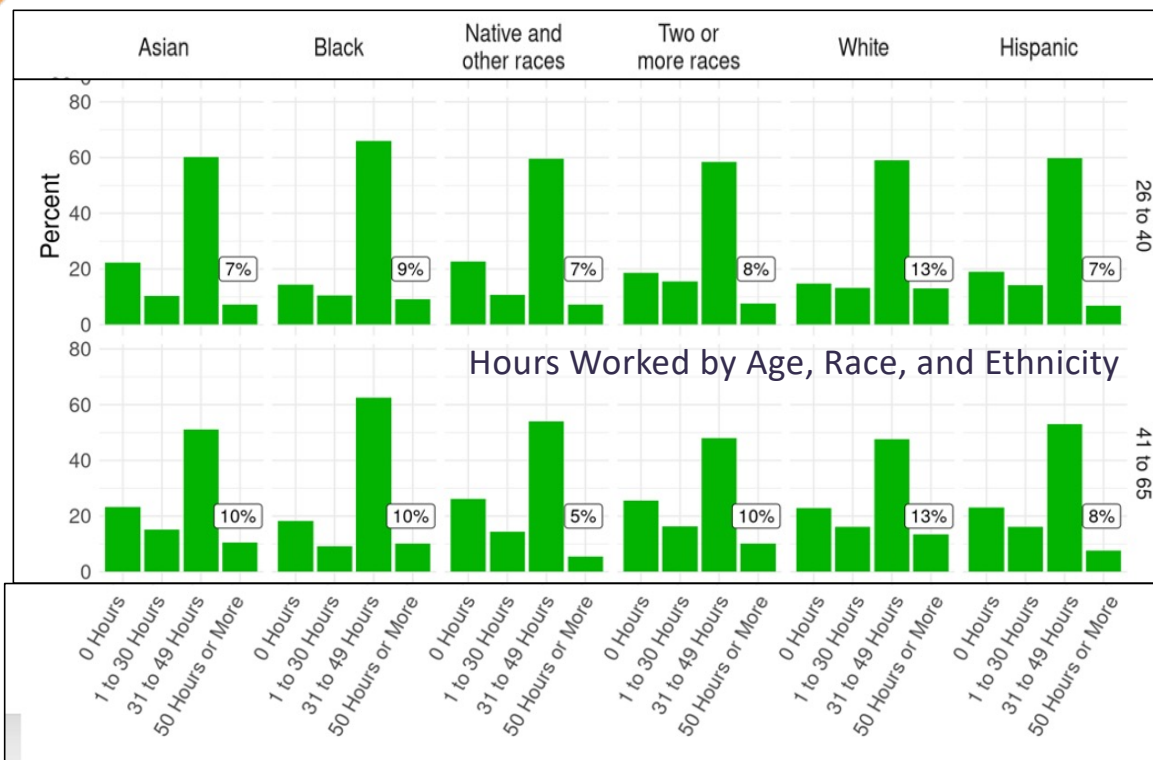
- **Employers** (businesses, government, nonprofits) **play a key role in supporting women and mothers.**
- **Childcare is a large percentage of income** for women and families with young children (8 to 14% for infants and toddlers).
- Asian and Hispanic women are more likely to live in **multigenerational households.**



Community Conversation Insights

- **Support and resources**, like quality childcare and teen activities, can improve work-life balance for women.
- Working **long hours is necessary** because of financial constraints and also for fulfillment.
- Women stated that caregiving and managing a home are not valued or appreciated in the same way as working for wages.

8% of Women Work Over 50 Hours per Week; *this is associated with poor health outcomes*



Hours Worked per Week by Race, Ethnicity, and Age in Fairfax County

- 5% to 13% of women ages 26 to 65 work over 50 hours per week.
- Those who do make an average of \$31 per hour.
 - This is \$8 higher than those working less than 50 hours per week.
- 15% are single mothers.
- 10% live in Hunter Mill and Dranesville districts.
- Current data do not provide information about multiple job holders



Community conversations

- Women often expressed that they were working long hours due to the cost of living in Fairfax County. Some women worked multiple jobs to support families.



Policy Recommendations

- Advocate at State and Federal levels, e.g., Increase Child and Dependent Care Credit, pilot a Living Wage, and implement other policies to benefit women and girls.
- **Expand state and county-funded care for children and older populations.**
 - Explore how to professionalize childcare workers to be part of the educational system, including paying them higher wages and benefits as teachers of young children.
 - Expand eligibility for subsidies for childcare and out-of-school programming for all age groups.
 - Create similar programs for women (and families) to obtain home health and daycare for their parents and relatives.
- **Enhance outreach and education** about benefits and resources available to women and girls in need.
- Assess the need for more **community-based organizations** to support women.
- **Evaluate parental and family leave guidelines across sectors.**
- Incorporate the **intersectional nature of gender and racial identity and marginalization** through the One Fairfax Equity Policy and Strategic Plan. Establish a gender-specific baseline and integrate strategies in the strategic plan.
- Advocate for **new data discovery and exploration** to understand nuances in **work-life balance issues**, e.g., measuring multiple job holders.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to our sponsors and other team members.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Fairfax County Women and Girls Study (WGS) Working Group

Fairfax County Commission for Women

Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services

Fairfax County Opportunity Neighborhood Program

Center for Health and Society, Virginia Commonwealth University

Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Participants in the Community Conversations

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