

# Success Through Engagement & Partnership



**2018-2019**

Annual Report



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Agency Profile

The mission of STEP is to engage diverse individuals, families, and communities in the pursuit of social and economic success. STEP is one of approximately 1,000 Community Action Agencies nationwide (with 43 in Pennsylvania), and, based on the size of its annual budget, is the 3rd largest of the agencies serving solely in Pennsylvania. STEP is an active member of the national Community Action Partnership and the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania (CAAP). STEP fulfills its mission and achieves the three national community action goals through programs under its five Pathways to Success: Early Learning, Housing Options, Workforce Development, Community Collaboration, and Independent Living.


Three National Community Action Goals:

- 1. Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
- 2. Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.
- 3. People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.


Services and strategies utilized by STEP to achieve the National Community Action Goals:




Education & Cognitive Development




Income, Infrastructure, & Asset Building




Housing



Employment



Health/Social Behavioral Development



Civic Engagement & Community Involvement

Message from the President & CEO

Families and Communities

In accordance with STEP’s Mission, we tackle needs by offering services to families and by seeking to improve the fabric of the communities in which we operate. We strive to complement programs directly serving families with community-based initiatives. In the last year, the continued development of the Early Learning Resource Center for Region 7 connected families to child care and also improved the quality of early learning programs that are available to all parents. Another development is housing many STEP Head Start classrooms and WIC offices in the same location in both Clinton and Lycoming counties, easing our target population’s access to high-quality early learning experiences, nutrition education, and preventative health care. The expansion of the Loyalsock Center for Healthy Aging will benefit all older adults in and around Loyalsock Township, while also increasing capacity for after-school programs.

Community problems require community solutions. Through these initiatives and outcomes, we can work over time to improve the places where we and our customers live and work. When you support STEP, you are directly helping families and contributing to a long-term, strategic improvement of your community. I hope you will take a few moments to look at what we have done for families and communities in this Annual Report!



Jim Plankenhorn  
President & CEO  
STEP, Inc

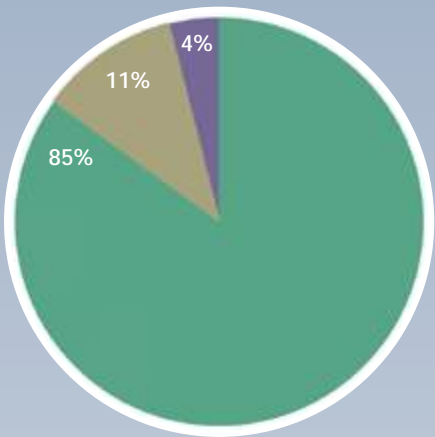
Financial Position

Statement of Financial Position

Total Assets.....	\$10,690,012
Total Liabilities.....	\$3,794,998
Net Assets.....	<u>\$6,895,014</u>

Statement of Activity

Total Grant Revenue & Other Support.....	\$26,801,332
Total Program Expenses.....	\$26,763,022
Excess (Deficit) Revenue Over Expenses.....	<u>\$38,310</u>



85% Federal/State Grants & Contracts	\$21,033,257
11% Local Grants & Contracts	\$2,670,659
4% Service Fees & Miscellaneous	\$1,149,987

Program Expenditures

Early Learning 54%.....\$14,372,830 ■

- Head Start \$3,936,552
- Head Start Supplemental Program \$968,104
- Pre-K Counts \$1,020,000
- Early Head Start \$2,079,481
- Maternal, Infant, & Early Childhood Visitation \$162,504
- Early Learning Resource Center \$6,206,189

Housing Options 6%.....\$1,654,742 ■

- Weatherization & Housing Services \$1,359,430
- Outreach Services \$295,312

Workforce Development 1%.....\$244,230 ■

- Work Ready \$174,026
- Employment Transportation Assistance Program \$70,204

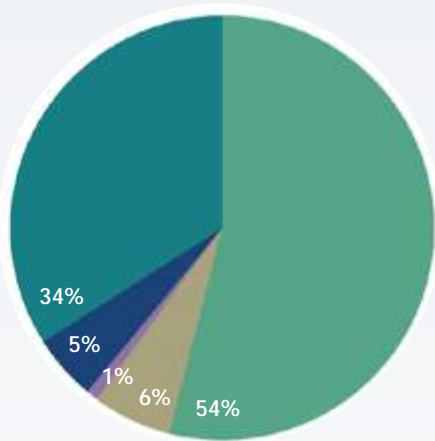
Community Collaboration 5%.....\$1,494,022 ■

- AmeriCorps \$590,159
- Neighborhood Assistance \$76,296
- Supportive Housing Program \$217,030
- Service Navigation \$243,000
- Administration & Planning \$367,537

Independent Living 34%.....\$8,997,198 ■

- Office of Aging \$4,719,481
- Shared-Ride Transportation Services \$2,047,644
- Medical Assistance Transportation \$2,230,073

Total Program Expenditures.....\$26,763,022



Message from the Chief Financial Officer

Continuing to pursue fiscal responsibility and planning for the future, STEP was successful in establishing our fourth endowment fund in 2018, for the Community Collaboration Pathway. Following that success, we started planning and fundraising for the Early Learning Pathway Endowment, expected to be completed in late 2019. The generous support from our community and the hard work of our employees and volunteers helps to ensure STEP’s ability to continue its mission long into the future.

Patti Kiessling  
Chief Financial Officer  
STEP, Inc.



Message from the Chairperson

It has been my pleasure to serve another year as the Chairperson of STEP's Board of Directors. On the board, we are able to see the family and community impacts made by STEP. We are also able to see what happens within the agency to make sure those impacts happen. From finding out the community's needs and resources, planning programs based on that data, and looking at how to improve the programs, to staff and board training, STEP as an agency is always working to stay relevant and moving toward long-term goals.

STEP's board of directors sees the work and impacts at STEP, and I believe this makes us powerful advocates for the agency. We spread the word about what STEP is accomplishing and voice our defense of effective programs that we see being threatened. We are coming from a place of having observed, up close and over time, the operations of STEP and the changes STEP brings about for individuals, families, and communities, and knowing they are only possible because of the hard work of everyone at the agency.

Jeffrey Snyder  
Chairperson  
STEP Board of Directors

GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors

STEP's Board of Directors is tripartite in structure, with members representing the public, private, and low-income sectors/populations of Lycoming and Clinton counties.



Jeffrey Snyder  
Chairperson  
Clinton County Commissioner



Aron Carter  
Vice Chairperson  
Jersey Shore State Bank



Regan Garey  
Secretary  
Lock Haven University



Lindsay Stamm  
Treasurer  
Lycoming County Housing Authority



Randall Allison  
Williamsport City Council



Susan Bigger  
Williamsport Area School District



Maria Boileau  
Clinton County Voter Registration



Linda Hess  
STEP Aging Advisory Council Representative



Tia Hillyer  
Clinton County Housing Authority



Joanne Ludwikowski  
McCormick Law Firm



Jack McKernan  
Lycoming County Commissioner



Gail Nestlerode  
Nestlerode Contracting Co., Inc.



Brenda Nichols  
Larson Design Group



Jacqueline Oliva  
River Valley Health & Dental Center



Amber Wilt  
Head Start Policy Council Representative

Also serving in 2018-2019: Robert Cross

Aging Advisory Council



- Officers**
- Raymond Humphrey**  
Chairperson
- Linda Hess**  
Vice Chairperson
- David Heiney**  
Secretary
- Also serving in 2018-2019:**  
Barbara Barger

- Members**
- Sharon Cashwell  
Lucille Evans  
Leslie Houser  
Rochelle Keefer  
Jack McKernan  
Paulette Seitzer  
Jeffrey Snyder  
Joseph Sohmer  
Nancy Watson  
Edward Weinoffer

Head Start Policy Council



- Officers**
- Heather Stroble**  
Chairperson
- Malena Dunn**  
Vice Chairperson
- Aron Carter**  
Treasurer
- Also serving in 2018-2019:**  
Stefan Henderson, Patricia Hutchinson, Alicia Johnson, Allison Reeder, Amber Wilt

- Members**
- Canda Boatman  
Leigh McCarty  
Kenneth Hoover  
Paulette Clementoni  
Ruth Love Schooley  
Patricia Wylie  
Debra Zinck

VOLUNTEERS

STEP appreciates all of its volunteers. As a Community Action Agency, STEP relies on volunteers to meet its goals. Many of STEP's volunteers are concentrated in its Office of Aging and Early Learning Programs, as well as STEP's governing bodies. All service provided by members of the STEP Board of Directors, Head Start Policy Council, and Aging Advisory Council is on a volunteer basis, complementing thousands of volunteers and AmeriCorps members who serve with the agency.

- **710** STEP Head Start, Early Head Start, and Pre-K Counts parent volunteers contributed **16,039** hours.
- STEP Office of Aging volunteers provided **41,838** hours of service.
- STEP Board of Directors members gave **225** hours through meetings, training, events, and planning.



Everyday Hero

Mary Fischer (picutred at left with Center Coordinator Kathryn Stevenson) was nominated for Woodlands Bank's annual community service award, Everyday Hero, by STEP, Inc. Individuals nominated for the award have gone above and beyond the normal call of duty as volunteers for their organizations and by doing so, they help make our community a better place.

As a STEP Office of Aging Volunteer, Mary has led Healthy Steps in Motion classes for over 15 years, been a Tai Chi instructor for 9 years, and recently began packing for our Meals on Wheels program. In addition, she has been a leader in the fundraising efforts towards the establishment of the Loyalsock Center for Healthy Aging, which broke ground in June 2019.

EMPLOYEES

Employee of the Year



**Nikolina Cleaver**  
Protective Services Case Worker  
STEP Office of Aging

Quarterly Award Winners

- Gretchen Mantle**  
Contract Specialist  
STEP Early Learning Resource Center
- Nikolina Cleaver**  
Protective Services Case Worker  
STEP Office of Aging
- Heather Rhine**  
Family Navigator  
STEP Service Navigation
- Tom Salisbury**  
Database Administrator  
STEP Information Technology

Employee Milestones

- Ann Loudenslager**  
40 Years of Service  
STEP Office of Aging
- Tom Salisbury**  
35 Years of Service  
STEP Information Technology
- Brigette Bardo**  
30 Years of Service  
STEP Head Start
- Jane Thompson**  
25 Years of Service  
STEP Office of Aging
- Toni Troxell**  
25 Years of Service  
STEP Fiscal Department
- Tobi Allen**  
20 Years of Service  
STEP Early Learning Resource Center
- Fred Englert**  
20 Years of Service  
STEP Housing Options



# EARLY Learning



STEP's Early Learning Pathway includes Head Start, Pre-K Counts, Early Head Start, Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC), and the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV). These high-quality early learning experiences are provided by skilled professionals, in partnership with parents and communities. The Early Learning Pathway leads to success in school and life.

- **637** children demonstrated skills for school readiness.
- **650** children improved their attention skills.
- **616** individuals demonstrated improvements in cooking, shopping, or growing food.
- **33** caregivers demonstrated increased sensitivity and responsiveness toward their children.
- **745** children were up to date on immunizations.
- **43** children were referred for mental health services.
- **536** family partnerships were established, leading to **105** family goals being achieved.
- **1,232** children were enrolled in a child care facility with a level three or four Keystone STARS rating.
- **72** child care providers obtained or kept a STAR designation.
- **13** Merit Awards were issued to Child Care Providers through ELRC.
- Total Early Head Start, Head Start, Pre-K Counts, and MIECHV enrollment: **644** children.



## First Day of Play

Tuesday, June 11 marked the "First Day of Play" at STEP Round Hills Campus as STEP Head Start children and staff set foot on the newly installed play areas for the first time.

This STEP Head Start project was made possible with a \$108,000 grant from the Williamsport Lycoming Community Fund at the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania, which was combined with Head Start funds to install two outdoor play areas.



Both play areas include climbers, water/sand tables, rhythm walls, play houses, and multiple raised garden beds for planting and growing flowers and food. These items provide opportunities for fun and both social and physical development, as they allow play to be combined with learning and growth. "The staff and children are super excited about having two new play areas at the Round Hills facility," said STEP Head Start Director Carolyn Hawk.

It is expected that about 400 STEP Head Start children will utilize the equipment each year. Additionally, their siblings, neighborhood visitors, and children involved in other programs at the site will have access to the play equipment. Over the expected 10-year life span of most equipment, the initial grant will impact at least 4,000 children.

# HOUSING Options

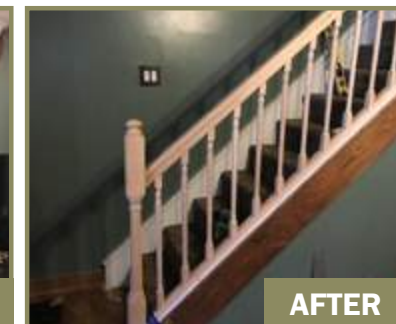
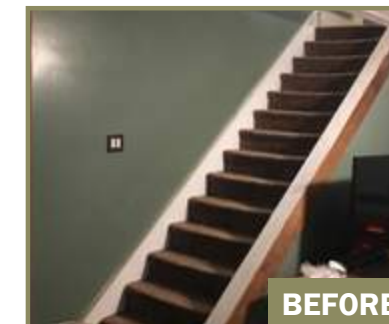
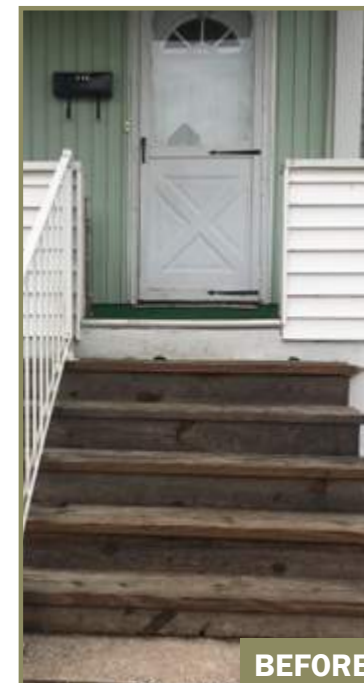


STEP's Housing Options Pathway includes Weatherization, Housing and Building Initiatives, and the Utilities Assistance Program. Individuals and families secure and maintain safe, affordable, and energy-efficient housing. The Housing Options Pathway leads to a safe and affordable home.

- **208** households experienced increased health and safety due to home improvements.
- **4,088** households improved energy efficiency and/or reduced their energy burden; **270** did so through weatherization.
- **20** households received code-compliance assistance through housing rehabilitation.
- **28** households enrolled in a STEP program obtained safe and affordable housing for 180 days; **437** maintained safe and affordable housing.
- **24** households avoided eviction or foreclosure.
- **2,603** customers enrolled in utility assistance programs to reduce their monthly costs and cure arrearages.

**I wanted to thank everyone responsible for all the home improvements done at my address. I am so grateful for all the hard work, effort, and time spent on my home. All the guys did a terrific job and I couldn't have asked for a better group of people. Nice Work!**

## Safety & Efficiency Updates





# WORKFORCE *Development*



STEP's Workforce Development Pathway includes the Work Ready Program and the Employment Transportation Assistance Program. Through these programs, individuals overcome barriers to obtain or maintain employment and achieve self-sufficiency. The Workforce Development Pathway leads to employment and self-support for individuals, and economic success for the community.



Jeremy Weston received his high school equivalency diploma.

- **69** unemployed youth obtained employment.
- **116** adults obtained employment below a living wage; **40** at or above a living wage.
- **28** employed participants increased benefits.
- **38** employed participants in a career-advancement program increased income through wage or salary improvement.
- **169** individuals obtained or kept employment by accessing reliable transportation options.

## Youth Enrichment for Success

Josh Bower entered the Youth Enrichment for Success (YES) Program on August 21, 2018. Josh worked with a Lead Family Navigator to develop and implement a goal plan which included resume building, improving relationship building skills, graduating high school, employment searching, individual counseling, eliminating involvement with the legal system, continued payment of court fines, and obtaining a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Permit.

Since enrollment with the YES Program, Josh attended school regularly and graduated from Compass Academy on May 30, 2019 and Montgomery Area Junior/Senior High School on May 31, 2019. With the assistance of his Family Navigator, Josh created a resume which he used to obtain employment with Ralph Alberts while still enrolled in school. During this time, he attended individual counseling appointments, addressed building healthy relationships with peers, and continued to meet with his probation officer regularly.

Josh plans on increasing his hours at Ralph Alberts and completing his CDL Permit in order to enhance his skills through his employer. He looks forward to being involved in the workforce and is eager to learn new skills!

Upon completion of the YES Program, Josh was nominated by STEP, Inc. for the 2019 Community Action Association of Pennsylvania (CAAP) Self-Sufficiency Awards. The CAAP Self-Sufficiency Awards recognize the significant accomplishments of the award winners while showcasing how Community Action Agencies support a person's journey toward financial stability.



Joshua Bower at the 2019 CAAP Self-Sufficiency Awards

# COMMUNITY *Collaboration*



STEP's Community Collaboration Pathway consists of Service Navigation and STEP AmeriCorps. Through cooperation and partnerships, resources are maximized, and organizations and communities are enriched. The Community Collaboration Pathway leads to increased resources for individual and community success.

- **71** individuals achieved and maintained capacity to meet basic needs for 90 days.
- **60** individuals engaged with Community Action reported improved financial wellbeing.
- **76** participants increased skills, knowledge, and abilities allowing them to work with Community Action to improve conditions in their communities.
- STEP worked with **693** partners to eliminate service gaps and duplication.
- **47** AmeriCorps members completed their term of service and received an Education Award.
- **21,204** referrals were made to STEP programs and external partners to connect customers with the services they need.



## STEP AmeriCorps: MLK Day of Service

In 1994, congress designated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a national day of service, making it the only federal holiday to receive that designation. The organization charged with leading the service efforts, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), calls to "make it a day on." The programs of CNCS, which include AmeriCorps, serve communities at over 60,000 locations nationwide; locally, STEP AmeriCorps members serve at 19 sites, helping nonprofits meet community needs and build their capacity to serve.

This year, in partnership with Lycoming College, Pennsylvania College of Technology, and the Beloved Community Council, STEP AmeriCorps participated in Dream Week, a series of events centered around MLK Day. The week began on Saturday, January 19 with the annual Peace Walk in downtown Williamsport. Other Dream Week activities included workshops, the "More Than a Meal" packing event, round-table discussions, and guest speakers - all aimed to empower individuals to bring about change.

The "More Than a Meal" packing event, held on Monday, January 21, was STEP AmeriCorps' largest service project of the year. The service project leveraged more than 200 volunteers in partnership with the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, Lycoming College, Pennsylvania College of Technology, and the Beloved Community Council. The event saw more than 5,000 pounds of food packed into meal kits, which will be given to area families who struggle with hunger. They will be distributed through the Food Bank's partner agencies and programs.



# INDEPENDENT *Living*



STEP's Independent Living Pathway consists of Office of Aging services and STEP Transportation. Through these programs, senior citizens and persons with disabilities maintain their independence with self-reliance, and continue to participate in community activities. The Independent Living Pathway leads to dignity and choices throughout life.

- **3,785** adults age 65+ and **1,198** individuals with disabilities maintained independent living situations.
- **72** older adults demonstrated increased nutrition skills.
- **42** seniors received home modifications and/or assistive devices to maintain independence.
- **155** adults obtained access to health screening services.
- **3,098** individuals registered for STEP Transportation maintained their independence by receiving rides to medical appointments, work, and other activities.
- **152** seniors stayed in their homes while receiving nursing facility level of care.
- **244** Adult Protective Services investigations from **546** reports of need ensured the health, safety, and financial security of older adults.
- **1,430** tax returns were filed through AARP Tax Aide, with **\$1,058,722** in federal returns for customers. **621** property tax rebates were filed for **\$211,847** in rebates.

## Pathways to Fitness

On August 10, 2018 Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn and Department of Aging Secretary Teresa Osborne joined STEP, the Lycoming County Commissioners, and other local officials in the dedication of wellness enhancements in the South Williamsport Community Park Complex and STEP RiverWalk Center.

Built next to the Susquehanna RiverWalk, STEP's RiverWalk Center now provides an expanded variety of recreational and wellness activities and services geared toward healthy aging. STEP partners with the South Williamsport Borough and others to offer services benefitting individuals, families, and communities.

The Pathways to Fitness initiative was funded as a Health Pilot Project by DCNR and the Department of Aging, and made possible through partnerships with STEP and the Borough of South Williamsport. A Department of Aging investment of \$90,000 benefitted the STEP Office of Aging. This funding enabled the purchase and installation of fitness trail equipment, bicycles, walking poles, and implementation of a Pathways to Fitness Program. The Borough of South Williamsport received a DCNR Keystone Community Grant of \$75,000, earmarked for its Community Park Complex, related parking lot improvements, walking path connectors, and the purchase and installation of playground equipment and signage.

Geared to benefit the community's aging residents, and building upon existing DCNR investments in the area, the Pathways to Fitness initiative seeks to increase connections to the Susquehanna RiverWalk and provide community assets – both indoor and outdoor – for long-term, healthy lifestyles.

# 2018-2019 *Agency Highlights*



## Early Learning Resource Center Region 7

The Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Region 7 is now part of STEP's Early Learning Pathway. July 2, 2018 was the "go live" date for ELRC. We now have offices in Wellsboro and Lock Haven along with the existing ones at Lincoln Street in Williamsport. ELRCs serve parents, providers, partners, and the community to have a true regional hub for information and services connected to Early Learning and Care in Pennsylvania.



## Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) at STEP

Administered by Hope Enterprises, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, known as WIC, moved its Lock Haven office inside STEP's Clinton County Community Center, expanding its partnership with STEP and the Head Start Program. WIC serves more than 700 families in Clinton County. It offers participant-centered nutrition education, healthy food, breastfeeding support, and has served as a gateway for preventative health for almost 45 years.



## STEP Head Start at Hope's Children's Campus

STEP, Inc. began offering Early Head Start and Preschool Head Start classes at the Hope Children's Campus in August 2018, providing a vital educational opportunity for children and families in the area. Classrooms include one Early Head Start classroom (birth through age 3), one Preschool Head Start classroom (age 3-5), as well as an Early Head Start playgroup classroom where students in the Home-Based program gather for playgroups (birth through age 3). Hope's Children's Campus also houses a WIC office and a variety of therapy services provided by Hope Enterprises.



## STEP Healthy Homes Initiative

The STEP Healthy Homes Initiative will utilize the Neighborhood Assistance Program Special Program Priorities contributions to complete health, safety, and other indoor air quality issues to nine homes. In these cases, rehabilitation services could not be provided until the health/safety issues are addressed. Once the issues are remediated, rehabilitation can then be completed under existing grant funding within STEP's Housing Initiatives.



## STEP Transportation & Experience Works

STEP Transportation has partnered with Experience Works Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. This program engages individuals age 55 and older in a diverse range of volunteer activities. Participants in the program have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of Clinton and Lycoming county residents by driving residents to and from non-emergency medical appointments and other locations of need, in STEP vehicles.



## Loyalsock Center for Healthy Aging

STEP Office of Aging broke ground for an expansion of the Loyalsock Township Community Center on June 30, 2019. STEP currently offers its wellness and fitness activities for seniors in the township space. This expansion will allow all Center for Healthy Aging programs – including home-delivered and congregate meals, social activities, education, and more – to be under one roof.



2138 Lincoln Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
**570.326.0587**



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**Raise The Region**

[www.raisetheregion.org](http://www.raisetheregion.org)



**Endowment Funds:**

STEP General Endowment  
Early Learning  
Housing Options  
Community Collaboration  
Independent Living

*Join!*



**Volunteer with us**

[www.stepcorp.org/Get\\_Involved](http://www.stepcorp.org/Get_Involved)



**Join AmeriCorps**

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## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS

July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

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