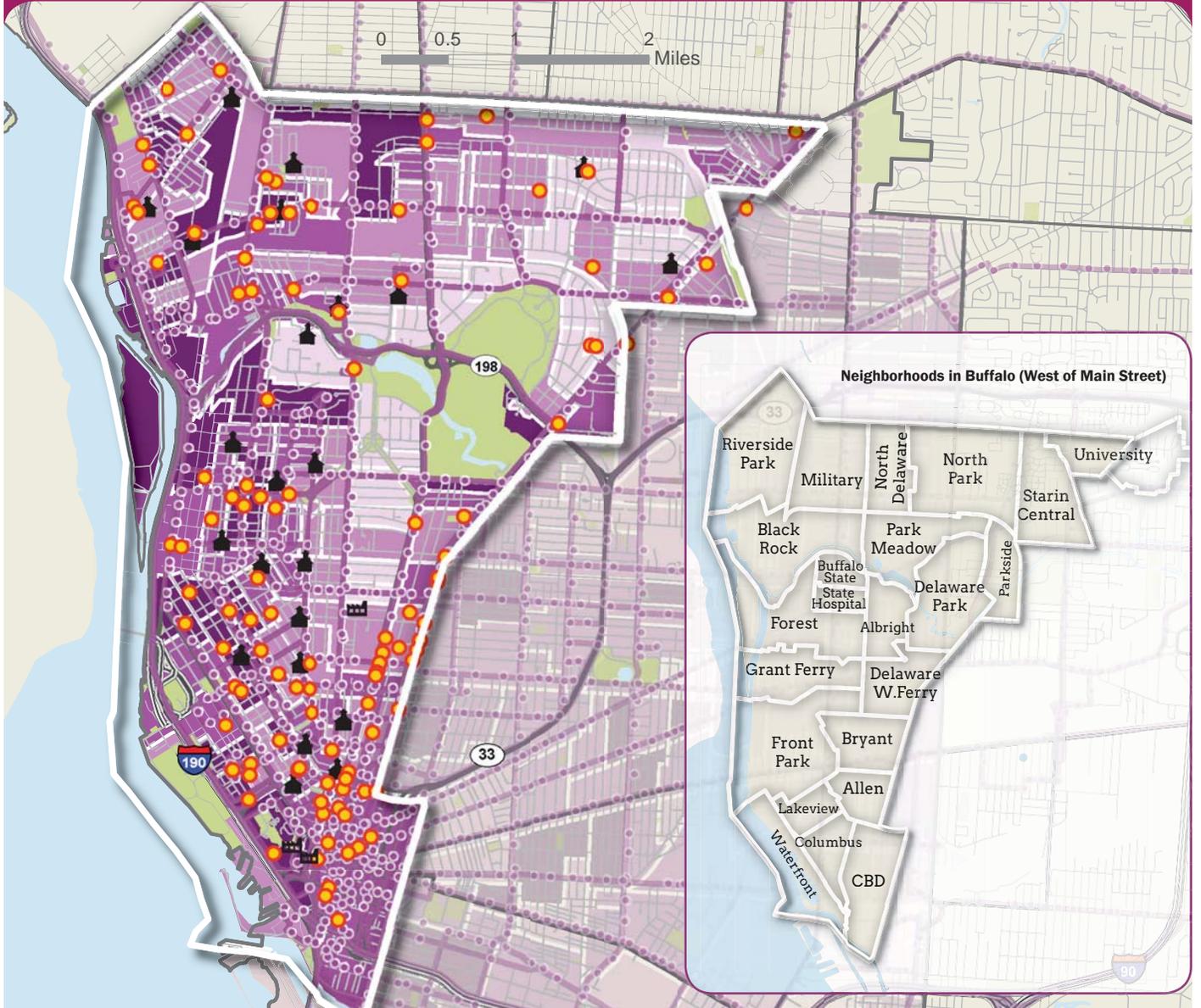


STRENGTHENING WNY's Safety Net

A COMMUNITY REPORT City of **BUFFALO** (West of Main Street)



Report prepared for
The John R. Oishei Foundation
by the University at Buffalo
Regional Institute
January 2014



SERVICE PROVIDERS

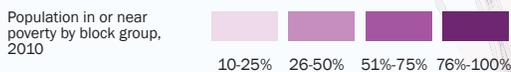
104 service providers employing about 10,955 employees exist in the City of Buffalo (West of Main Street) to provide a range of human services.

TRANSPORTATION

NFTA BUS ROUTES & STOPS

POPULATION IN OR NEAR POVERTY

Over 57,700 residents live on incomes under or near the federal poverty level.



SCHOOLS

Buffalo City School District:
10 elementary schools
4 middle schools
7 high schools
about 13,400 students enrolled in Buffalo public schools in this community

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Children's Hospital
Buffalo City Hall
HSBC

About This Report

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Background

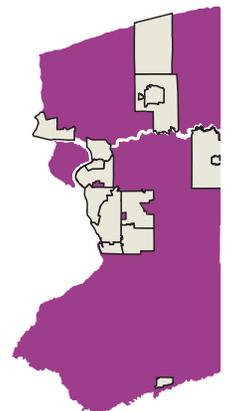
Between 2008 and 2009, regional employers shed almost 20,000 net jobs. The economic downturn, which continued into 2010, left large numbers of residents unemployed and unable to find new work for the first time in their lives. High levels of unemployment continue today. One out of 12 residents across the region seeks work, and need for support continues to escalate.

While the majority of those in poverty live in urban areas like Buffalo and Niagara Falls, families in the region's suburbs have experienced the biggest increase in poverty. One out of three with incomes below poverty now live outside urban areas where support services such as emergency food, housing and employment training are concentrated. Put another way, residents may be relatively far away from the services they need to get back on their feet. They may be unaware, too, of what's out there to help them. Meanwhile, all services providers are being challenged to expand capacity, improve access and generate additional revenues for expanded services, while at the same time, they may be dealing with funding cuts.

To strengthen the safety net in communities where residents are struggling the most, **The John R. Oishei Foundation created the Mobile Safety-Net Team Initiative in 2009** to go into dozens of communities in Erie and Niagara Counties to assess how the downturn in the economy is impacting residents, help connect residents with the services they need, build relationships with service providers and gather information about human service needs. The team has worked in 45 communities to date.



Twelve representative communities have been selected for additional assessment and investment as part of phase two of the Mobile Safety-Net Team initiative, which kicked off in 2012 and includes the team's partnership with the University at Buffalo Regional Institute. The purpose of phase two is to gather additional insights from residents, conduct focus groups, hear from organizations and develop a tool that will assist foundations and communities in strengthening the safety net of services. The western half of the City of Buffalo (hereinafter "Buffalo (West of Main Street)") is one of the 12 communities selected. (The eastern half of the city is a separate community for which an assessment is being completed.)



The in-depth analysis and recommendations contained herein are grounded in this work of the **University at Buffalo Regional Institute** and the **Mobile Safety-Net Team** and are intended to spur thought in the community on opportunities to create a stronger human services safety-net.

What Went Into This Report

Two Teams

This effort culminates months of research during 2013 by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute team, working in partnership with the Mobile Safety-Net Team.

University at Buffalo
Regional Institute

Mobile Safety-Net Team
an initiative of The John R. Oishei Foundation

The work of the teams
within the community
over several months...

Who We Talked to and What We Looked at

Residents and agency providers allowed us to explore how the system was currently working and gain insights into how to improve it.

Residents



Resident Survey

323 surveys were completed by residents in Buffalo (West of Main Street) providing new data on the demographics of the city's at-risk population, their needs, urgent concerns, utilization of human services benefits and barriers to support services.

Resident Focus Groups

9 focus groups with residents were conducted to gather insights into their most pressing concerns, barriers to accessing services and insights on how the system might be improved.

Agencies



Agency Interviews

Over a dozen human service agency representatives shared information on their programs and perspectives on opportunities.

Agency Focus Groups

Over a dozen representatives of public and private human services providers in the community took part in a focus group to gather agency perspectives on human services needs, barriers and strategies for improving the landscape of services.

Secondary Data



Data Sources

Information and insights were gathered from diverse sources, including the 2010 Census, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Social Explorer Reports, NYS Department of Health, NYS Education Department 2012 School Report Card, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Statistics and Reference USA.

Understanding the Report

The months of information gathering provided the structure for understanding the needs, the barriers and the strategies for improving the current system.

...led us to explore...

...which resulted in:

People



Places



Services

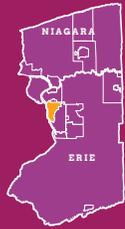


Insights &
Recommendations



STRENGTHENING WNY's Safety Net

A COMMUNITY REPORT City of **BUFFALO** (West of Main Street)



A large population in poverty or close to it...

Of the population of 117,925 in the City of Buffalo (West of Main Street)...

...about

32,815

residents live in poverty or on incomes under the federal poverty level.

...an additional

24,950

aren't in poverty but are close to it with incomes between 100-200% of poverty.

...about

57,765

are doing poorly or struggling financially. This is about one out of every two in the community.

Beyond poverty, other alarming indicators and trends...

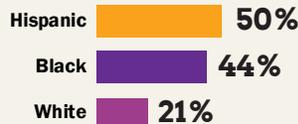
Racial and ethnic disparities exist. Non-whites are 2.5 times more likely to be in poverty. One out of every five white residents lives in poverty; while two out of every five black residents do. Most alarmingly, one out of every two Hispanics is living on an income below the federal poverty line.

50% of **HISPANICS** are in poverty

Nearly a fifth of adults lack a basic education and do not have a high school diploma or GED. Over the past three years, more than 3,000 students in the Buffalo City School District have dropped out.

Teen pregnancy contributes to generational poverty and a high proportion of children in poverty, with rates about double or more the county average in Zip Codes 14201, 14207, 14209 and 14213.

Poverty Disparities



Neighborhoods of deep poverty exist. Hardest hit are the Lower West Side, Front Park, Grant-Ferry and Black Rock where between 40-65% of individuals live in poverty.

One out of three has an urgent need or has encountered barriers to services.

Environmental conditions contribute to high health needs, while primary care is lacking. Rates of asthma-related emergency room visits among youth run up to triple the county average. Zip Code 14213 is where rates are highest, yet it has been designated as a medically underserved area.

Affordable rental housing is limited, with the large majority of renters paying more than 30% of their income on housing. Yet nearly three-quarter of vulnerable residents are renters, and urgent concerns related to housing affect nearly one out of ten of those at risk.

17,556 renters are cost burdened

Need for food is high. Well over half (62%) of vulnerable adults depend on food stamps and/or WIC to support purchases of food. Not having enough money to buy food was the most common urgent concern expressed by residents surveyed. While most of those with urgent needs get food stamps, not all are enrolled in this support program.

* Findings come from a survey of 323 at-risk households in Buffalo (West of Main Street), reflecting a statistically significant sample size at a confidence level of at least 95% and with a confidence interval of 5.

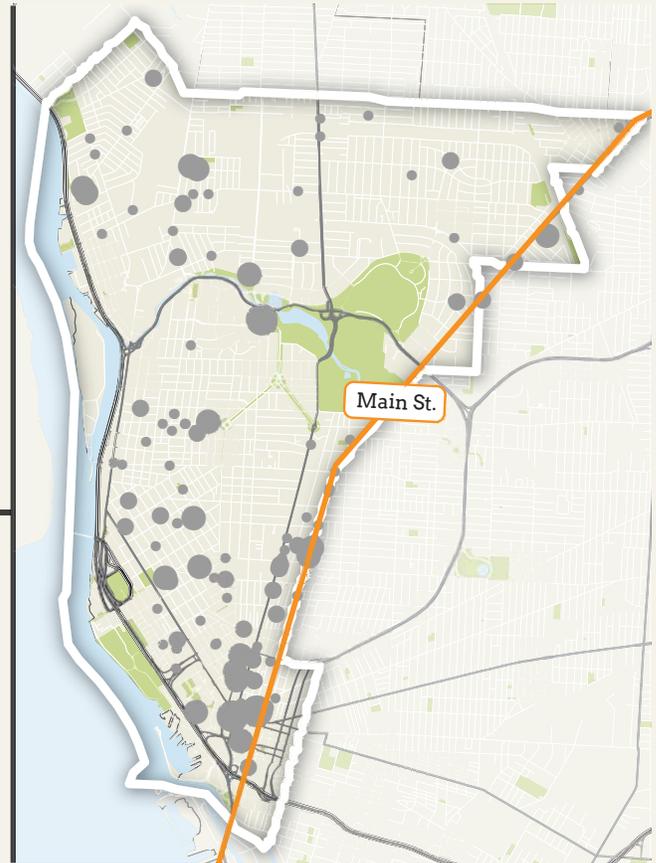
Landscape of human services providers...

104 public and private providers
employing about **10,955**

exist in the western portion of Buffalo to provide a range of human services to residents, from food, education, job training, youth programs, information services and more.

Providers are concentrated west of Delaware Ave and south of West Ferry Street with relatively fewer in North Buffalo.

The City of Buffalo and the Buffalo City Schools (West of Main Street) are the two largest human services supports, in terms of employment.



Strengths of the system include **strengths** the breadth and number of service providers in the community and these providers' relative accessibility via public transit, foot and bike; a number of strong food supports to build upon to meet urgent needs and growing demand; the presence of several colleges; and a community that is welcoming to refugees and immigrants, a population segment that's been a source of growth and neighborhood development.

Gaps in services exist for emergency housing, particularly for renters who are evicted; for translation services especially in doctors offices and during police encounters; for health services, especially primary care and care for chronic conditions; for ESL classes, Head Start slots and kindergarten instruction. **gaps**

Barriers and systemic challenges...

1 out of 4 residents surveyed say they have encountered difficulty getting services.



Not being able to read and/or speak English well is a frequently mentioned barrier to services described by residents and providers. Over 10,000 individuals lack fluency in English, creating barriers to education, work and services, especially health services in doctors offices and assistance in communicating with the police. Contributing to language barriers is the community's large foreign-born population. Eleven percent were born outside of the United States. Others are second- and third-generation immigrants, affected by these and related barriers.

1 in 9 are foreign born

Each year approximately 1,500 new refugees resettle in Buffalo. While a source of population growth and community redevelopment, this is a steady influx of a high-needs population, and the 90-day period over which federal resettlement services are provided is generally an inadequate time frame to achieve self sufficiency.

With over half of residents living at their current place of residence for less than 5 years, those in need may lack familiarity and awareness of what supports in the community are available to them. Refugees are particularly vulnerable.

Broader information and awareness gaps hinder residents in securing quality housing and navigating the system of support and services. Selected providers describe a population that prefers to get information through word of mouth from a trusted source.

The large majority of vulnerable adults do not own a vehicle. Rather, well over half of those at risk say they walk or use public transit, limiting their access not only to services but to jobs and training, particularly in suburban locales. With so few residents having a vehicle, even those who want to learn to drive encounter barriers to finding a car to acquire driving skills.

Gaps in services exist, especially for emergency housing, ESL classes and health services (primary care, dental, eye care, and treatment and prescriptions for chronic conditions).

Waiting lists for kindergarten, which is not mandatory in the Buffalo School District or most parts of the state, prevent some children from continuing on past pre-school without losing an entire year of education. Wait lists for slots in Head Start further exacerbate barriers to early education for the community's children.

10,000+ lack English fluency

Language services are expensive, rarely reimbursable (Medicaid is an exception) and can be frustrating to use, all which discourages the availability and use of these services even in settings where they are guaranteed by the federal Civil Rights Act.

A growing digital divide creates barriers to employment and other information. Selected agency providers say most their clients don't have a computer at home.

Federal funding cuts to Head Start, the AmeriCorps program and the 21st Century Learning Center initiative are being locally felt.

13,550 adults haven't completed high school

Program cut-offs hurt families. For instance, Head Start and Early Head Start are programs offering a variety of supports for young children and families. Yet parents who want to work and are even slightly over the income thresholds are disqualified, even though the need is there and they would benefit from these programs.

Over 14,000 households lack a vehicle

It's not a single barrier many individuals are faced with but multiple challenges, commonly lack of English fluency, limited education and awareness. At the same time, juggling work, house and kids create barriers for adults wanting to take classes and better themselves.

Long-standing silos and past unsuccessful collaborations have prevented service providers in the Hispanic community from collaborating in ways that could benefit a population segment where half are entrenched in poverty.

While the resident survey reveals low employment levels among those at risk, with only a third of adults between the ages of 18 and 64 working full or part time, **providers commonly describe clients who work two jobs to pay the bills, suggesting barriers to work paying a living wage,** from low skills and educational levels, to language barriers, transportation difficulty and the need for child care.

Recommendations to strengthen the safety net of human services...

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGIES	MODEL TO CONSIDER
Build upon existing connections among human services providers	<p>Strengthen existing partnerships to focus on a shared vision and forge connections across areas of need</p> <p>Use this assessment as a tool for fund development</p> <p>Partner with nearby colleges and universities to support fund raising, advocacy and other capacities of a coalition</p>	<p>The Seattle Human Services Coalition is an example of a long-standing group that has successfully garnered additional funding. http://shscoalition.org/</p>
Raise awareness and accessibility of information about programs and services	<p>Strengthen and raise awareness of existing comprehensive information resources such as Arounja and WNY 211</p> <p>Promote using multilingual, culturally-sensitive materials through local ethnic media, in addition to using libraries, schools, churches and other human services providers for outreach</p>	<p>The St. John Branch of the Austin Public Library is proactively working to narrow the information divide for Latino immigrants. http://library.austintexas.gov/locations/St.%20John%20Branch</p>
Bolster refugee and immigrant supports	<p>Raise awareness of federal requirements for language assistance, including options for better integrating these services in health and police settings</p> <p>Engaged local federal elected leaders in advocating for a longer window of benefits provided under the federal resettlement program</p> <p>Increase access to ESL, job training, and mental health care</p>	<p>Language access ordinances are how many cities across the nation are helping refugees and immigrants overcome a key barrier. New Orleans offers a model. http://www.alicelaw.org/uploads/asset/asset_file/1324/Leg_Ad_2012_Language_Access_Ordinance__2_.pdf</p>
Boost learning opportunities and resident educational levels	<p>Change state law to make kindergarten mandatory in Buffalo as other districts have done to ensure that every child has access to kindergarten</p> <p>Tap in the local workforce to increase the pool of mentors</p> <p>Strengthen learning opportunities and supports such as child care for parents returning to school</p>	<p>Union City School District in NJ was once near the bottom in rank. Today, nine out of 10 graduate, even though many are from poor non-English-speaking families. http://www.union-city.k12.nj.us/</p>
Expand access to vocational training and strengthen workforce participation supports	<p>Raise awareness of jobs and training available as part of the Advance Buffalo Program</p> <p>Engage state-level elected representatives in advocating for lifting state-imposed GED requirement of vocational programs, where possible, especially for immigrants and refugees</p> <p>Explore opportunities for van pooling and car sharing to increase job access for those without vehicles</p>	<p>Ride sharing and van pooling are affordable options for traveling for those without a vehicle in Dallas. http://www.dart.org/about/aboutdart.asp</p>
Grow affordable housing options for low-income tenants	<p>Ensure that immigrants and refugees have meaningful access to affordable HUD-supported housing</p> <p>Strengthen pathways to home ownership for low-income families, while removing barriers to loans</p> <p>Expand access to financial literacy, savings incentives, and affordable home supports</p>	<p>Family Assets for Independence has helped lift thousands of families in Minnesota out of poverty by encouraging savings of just \$40 a month. http://minnesotafaim.com/</p>
Build neighborhood service hubs, especially in areas and for populations of growing poverty	<p>Develop information and application hubs at neutral venues such as the libraries</p> <p>Support collaborative efforts to strengthen programs and services for the Hispanic community</p> <p>Engage churches to connect with residents in high-needs areas, and support efforts of providers such as Potter's Pantry to expand services and a develop service hub</p>	<p>Food pantries are evolving into spots where residents can get more than food. Response to Love on Buffalo's East Side offers training, caseworkers, health insurance sign-up and a baby ministry, in addition to food. http://www.responsetolovecenter.org/</p>
Continue to link revitalization strategies to cultural and other strengths	<p>Continue to foster refugee and immigrant entrepreneurship through training and technical assistance and stronger links with area universities</p> <p>Draw from success stories within the community to boost revitalization in areas with potential</p>	<p>Buffalo's Elmwood Village is a hub for businesses and a thriving community for residents. Yet it wasn't always this way. http://www.elmwoodvillage.org</p>

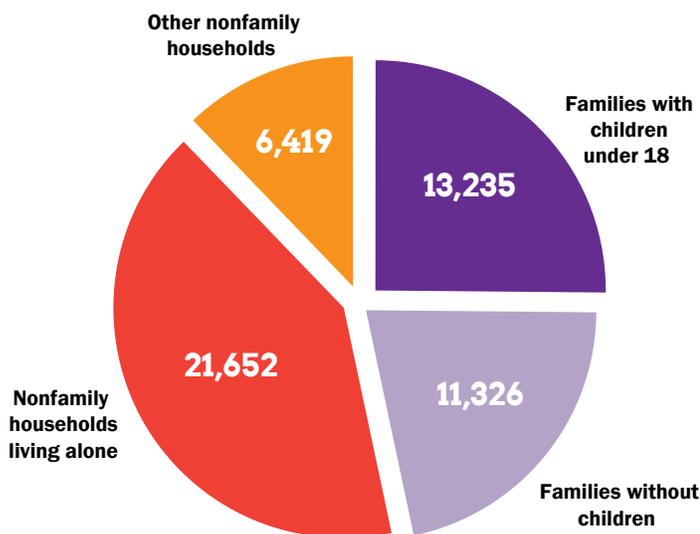
Context for Action

People in Need

Individuals and families, where we work, how much we earn and where we go to school

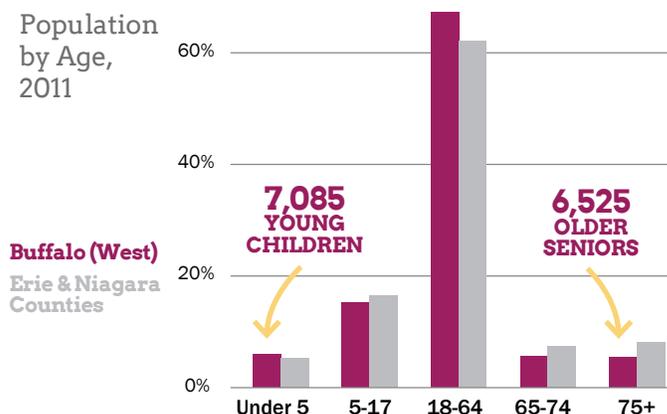


Households by Type, 2011



Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

Population by Age, 2011



Potentially At-Risk Populations, 2011

Non-white	50,917
Adults with HS education or less	30,893
Foreign-born individuals	12,531
Not fluent in English	10,404
Single Parent	7,938
Age 65+ living alone	5,231

Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

Individuals and Families

The City of Buffalo (West of Main Street) has a population of about 118,000 individuals across over 52,000 households. It represents slightly less than half (44%) of the city's total population (which stands at almost 264,000).

What distinguishes this community from many others in the region is its cultural diversity. The City of Buffalo (West of Main Street) is a melting pot of immigrants and refugees from around the world. In fact, two-thirds of immigrants living in the City of Buffalo live west of Main Street. Altogether, one out of nine residents in the community is foreign born, and a fifth speak a language other than or in addition to English.

Across the community, families predominate, and those with children under the age of 18 are more common than those without. Indeed, Buffalo (West of Main Street) is younger than the city and county as a whole, with more children under the age of 5 than

The western portion of Buffalo is a settling spot for immigrants and refugees from around the world. One out of nine residents is foreign born.

Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

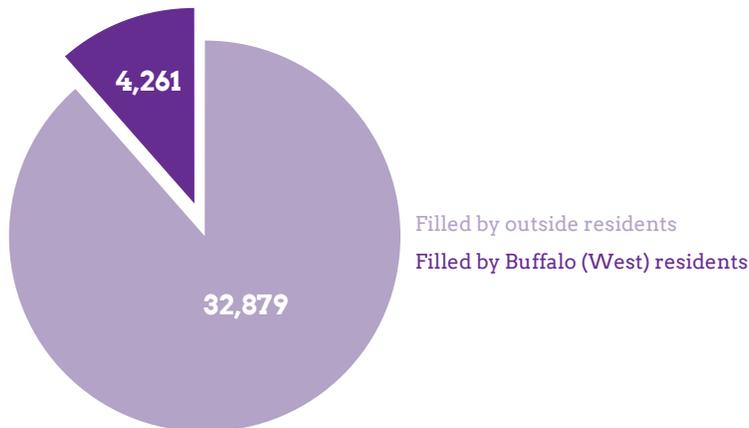
seniors age 75 or up. Seniors account for only slightly more than a tenth of the total population, compared to nearly a fifth in some other communities across the region.

Just over 5,200 seniors live alone, representing a population that is potentially at-risk and in need of human services, absent appropriate housing options and supports which are, in fact, relatively strong in this community.

Ethnic and racial minorities represent a much larger vulnerable population, with poverty rates that are nearly 2.5 times higher than those for white, non-Hispanic individuals. There are also over 30,000 adults in Buffalo (West of Main Street) that have no education or formal training beyond high school. The large majority of these are under normal retirement age and represent a population that is proportionally less educated and skilled than what exists across Erie County, creating barriers to work and self-sufficiency.

Those who are foreign born and lack fluency in English are other sizable groups living in the community who may experience higher levels of need due to a variety of challenges creating barriers to work, job training and human services, affecting not only themselves but sometimes second- and third-generation immigrants living in the community.

Higher-paying job filled by Buffalo (West of Main Street) Residents, 2010



Source: On The Map

Top 10 Employers in Buffalo (West of Main Street)

Employer	# of Employees
Children's Hospital of Buffalo	3,000
Buffalo City Hall	2,800
HSBC Tower	2,000
Blue Cross Blue Shield of WNY	2,000
Buffalo State College	1,557
City of Buffalo Schools (West of Main Street)	1,408
Rich Products	1,300
Buffalo Psychiatric Center	1,040
Sisters of Charity Hospital	1,000
Erie County Sheriff's Dept.	700

Source: Reference USA database, downloaded October 2013, New York State Education Department was the source of employment for the Buffalo City School District (West of Main Street), and Buffalo Business First Book of Lists (for HSBC employment).

Work and Income

About 80,450 jobs exist in Buffalo (West of Main Street). This is two jobs for every worker, requiring an influx of workers into the community to meet employer demand.

Education and health are the sectors dominating the community's largest employers, accounting for six of the top 10, including Blue Cross Blue Shield of WNY, a provider of health insurance. These employers replace the large industrial and manufacturing base the community once had.

Although the western half of Buffalo is an employment hub, relatively few residents find work here and when they do, it tends to be in lower-paying jobs. Residents fill only 11% of higher-paying jobs paying more than \$3,333 a month (about \$40,000 a year), whereas the proportion of lower-paying jobs filled by residents from the community is double this, suggesting that lack

Despite the large number of jobs in the community, relatively few residents find work here and when they do, it's in lower-paying jobs.

of training and education has created barriers to the better jobs existing practically in residents' back yard.

As a consequence, household income levels in the community are skewed toward the low end.

Four out of ten households live on \$25,000 a year, at most, compared to a quarter of households across the county. Median incomes in Buffalo (West)

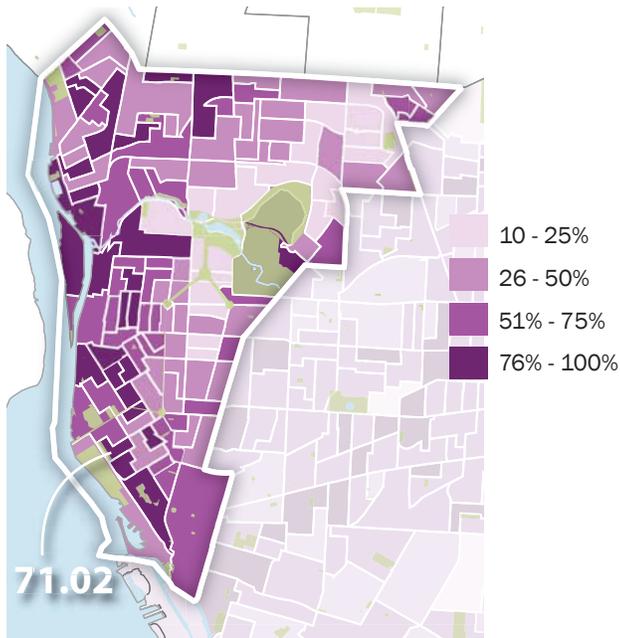
are over \$16,000 less than the county median (\$32,799 vs. \$48,805), and only one in eight households generates more than \$100,000. Across the county, one in five are high earners.

% Households by Income Levels

	Buffalo (West of Main Street)	Erie County
\$0 - \$25K	41%	26%
\$25K - \$100K	47%	55%
\$100K+	12%	19%

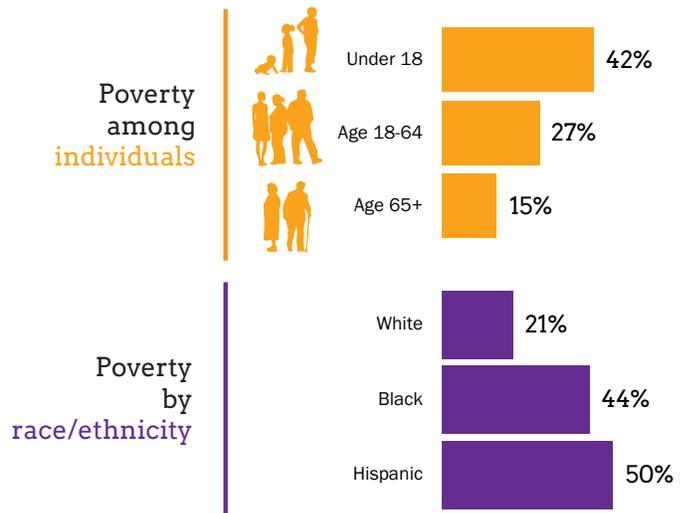
Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

Population in or near Poverty, 2010



Source 2006-10 American Community Survey

Population in Poverty by Age and Family Type, 2011



Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

Poverty

Almost 33,000 individuals (28% altogether) live on incomes below the poverty line. Poverty rates are highest among children (42%) and working age adults (27%). Among seniors, 15% live in poverty.

An additional 25,000 individuals are not in poverty but near it, meaning that altogether over half of residents in Buffalo (West of Main Street) are doing poorly or struggling economically. This is on par with city-wide figures, but are more than double poverty rates of Erie County and the United States.

The Niagara corridor on the western edge of the community is where poverty is most pronounced. Highest-need neighborhoods include Black Rock, the Forest neighborhood just south of Buffalo State, the Grant-Ferry district, the neighborhood surrounding Front Park, and most notably the Lower West Side. Indeed, Census Tract 71.01 has the highest poverty rate in the region, with 84% of individuals living in or near poverty. About one in five is an immigrant or refugee, with most being recent arrivals.

Zip Codes on the western edge of the community - 14201, 14207 and 14213 - have rates of teen pregnancy and teen births that are two to three times or more the county level. This only fuels demand for human services while fostering generational poverty and barriers to education and work for young women.

Poverty is also extraordinarily high among the community's growing Hispanic/Latino population. Half live in poverty, a percentage that is double that for Hispanics across the country and higher than that for any other ethnic group in the community. Barriers to work and

jobs paying a living wage factor highly into this finding, as only 49% of Hispanics between the ages of 16 to 64 are employed, compared to 64% of whites. Lack of access to treatment for substance abuse is another contributing factor to poverty, reports one human services leader.

While North Buffalo is perceived as being better off economically, and for the most part actually is, there is need, and it has been growing in areas north of Delaware Park, especially the North Delaware area where few human services currently exists (see cover map). Most neighborhoods in the Niagara corridor also saw an increase in poverty over the past decade, while many along the Main Street corridor are ones where families have improved economically.

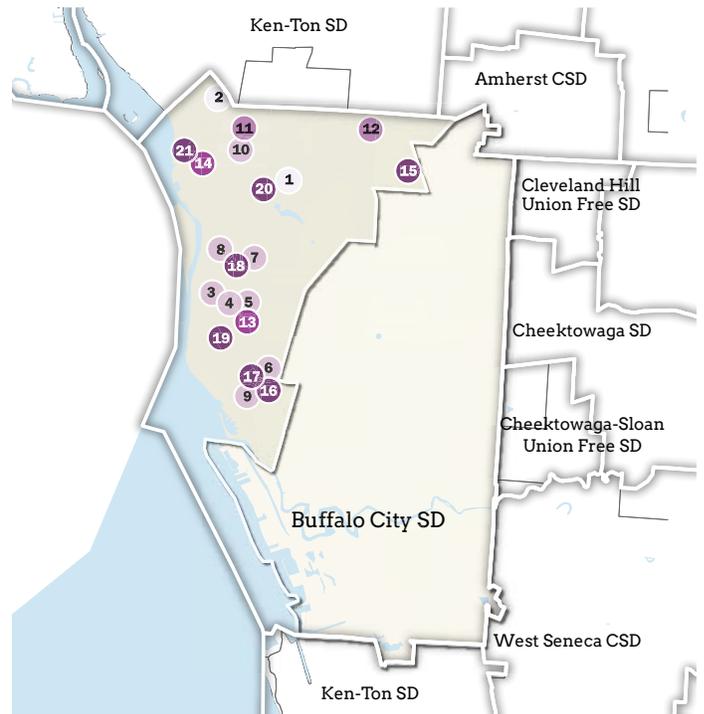
\$12.00 Amount a family of three pays for a single round trip by bus within the city without any transfers

\$17.84 Maximum daily amount a family of three lives on at the federal poverty level

\$20.00 Daily cost of owning and operating a car

Source: Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, 2013 Federal Poverty Guidelines, and Edmunds.com

	Schools in the City of Buffalo District (West of Main St.)	Enrollment, 2012	% Qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch
ELEMENTARY			
1	Frederick Olmsted #64	562	55%
2	Roosevelt Academy #65	369	83%
ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE			
3	Dr. Antonia Pantoja Community	513	80%
4	D'Youville-Porter Campus	654	83%
5	Frank A Sedita #30	756	85%
6	Herman Badillo Community	655	81%
7	International	756	92%
8	Native American Magnet	508	96%
9	Waterfront	874	96%
10	West Hertel Elementary	644	95%
MIDDLE			
11	Grabiarz School of Excellence	629	95%
12	North Park #66	386	81%
MIDDLE/HIGH			
13	International Prep at Grover Cleveland	495	87%
14	Math Science Technology Preparatory	408	76%
HIGH			
15	Bennett	729	68%
16	Emerson School of Hosp.	442	73%
17	Hutchinson Central Tech.	1,052	60%
18	Lafayette	738	68%
19	Leonardo Da Vinci	388	55%
20	McKinley Vocational	1,080	77%
21	Riverside Institute of Tech.	760	74%



Source: NYS Education Department 2011-2012 School Report Card

Education

The 22 schools that exist in the City of Buffalo (West of Main Street) as part of the Buffalo City School District enroll approximately 13,400 students. The overwhelming majority are poor, with 80% overall qualifying for free and reduced price lunch. In addition to these schools, the community has four charter schools enrolling about 1,660 students. These include Tapestry, Buffalo Academy of Science, Oracle and Elmwood Village. A number of private schools exist, as well, most notably Nichols, Buffalo Seminary, Nardin Academy and Canisius High.

While the Buffalo School District has a number of supports in place to bolster students' academic success (in-classroom breakfast, school-based health centers, and the recently-implemented Say Yes initiative), the concentration of deep poverty has created barriers to academic achievement. Indeed, more children than not are falling behind, and this backsliding begins at an early age.

For instance, only a third of third grade students at public schools in the community met or exceeded standards in Math during the 2011-12 school year. Even students who are classified as English proficient fall behind in large numbers at low-performing schools, suggesting that language is just one of other obstacles to learning.

Educational Attainment of Adults Age 25+, 2007-11

Buffalo (West of Main Street) Erie County

	Buffalo (West of Main Street)	Erie County
Less than High School	18%	11%
High School/GED	23%	29%
Some College/Associate's Degree	25%	30%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	34%	30%

Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

While not an apples-to-apples comparison with previous years, more recent student test scores released in August 2013 paint an even more dire picture, with fewer than one in 10 children meeting standards in many public schools in Buffalo.

This sets a trajectory for poor academic performance later in life. By 2012, less than half of Buffalo City School District students who began high school in 2008 graduated with a Regents or local diploma within this four year period. High schools located west of Main Street in Buffalo vary widely around this average. Some perform exceptionally better with graduation rates at 80% or higher (Emerson School of Hospitality, Hutchinson Tech, and Leonardo Da Vinci). The community's charter schools are also above-average performers in terms of graduation rates, even though most children enrolled in these schools are economically disadvantaged too, with 62% qualifying for free and reduced-price lunches).

Meanwhile, at Lafayette and Riverside High only one in four students that started out in 2008 graduated by August 2012. Across high schools located in Buffalo (West of Main Street), 460 students dropped out during 2012, a number that is fueled by Buffalo's high rate of teen pregnancy. Many other students were suspended for disruptive behavior. During 2012-13 academic year, there were over 10,600 suspensions district wide, averaging over a 1,000 students a month between September and June who lost classroom time due to behavioral problems. Studies show that students who are suspended are much more likely to drop out. Suspensions, in this way, perpetuate a pipeline of poverty, demand for human services and barriers to self sufficiency.

It is against this backdrop that Say Yes was recently implemented in Buffalo. It's a landmark collaborative effort intended, ultimately, to increase postsecondary graduation rates through the promise of free college to all graduates of the Buffalo City School District as well as the supports students need to achieve academically. This includes after-school programming, tutoring, mentors, health and mental health services, legal assistance, transportation supports and more. Objectives include not only increasing academic performance and graduation rates but decreasing disciplinary actions, teen pregnancy and engaging students to be motivated to

learn. Everything is free to students and the program will be fully implemented in all Buffalo schools by 2015-16.

The first free-tuition scholarships were awarded this year. Approximately 1,250 graduates qualified and will be attending a variety of post-secondary institutions, most here in the region.

As David Rust, executive director of the Say Yes Buffalo puts it, this initiative is intended to be a game changer. But it's a long game and will take some years before the ultimate goal of higher educational attainment levels are realized.

Another promising development is the implementation of Dream It, Do It Western New York in several schools (Bennett, McKinley, Hutch Tech and the Charter School for Applied Technologies which is close to the city border but in the Ken-Ton School District). The aim of this expanding initiative is to expose students to good-paying career paths in advanced manufacturing through tours, career fairs, training and competitions.

Yet today, low educational levels contribute to high levels of economic need and vulnerability experienced by residents. About one in five adults in the community has not earned a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 11 percent of all county residents. Yet there is also a population that is comparatively better educated, as the west half of Buffalo also has a greater percentage of adults who have completed a bachelor's degree or higher (34% in Buffalo (West of Main Street) versus 30% across the county). Contributing to this concentration of college graduates is the presence of several institutions of higher education in and/or near the community, in addition to thriving neighborhoods such as Elmwood Village, Allentown and Hertel Avenue which are attractive to young professionals because of their proximity to jobs and amenities, relative safety and affordability.

10,624
student
suspensions
during 2012-2013

Statistic reflects district-wide data and not just suspensions in this community.
Source: June 2013 Suspension Report, Buffalo Public School District

Context for Action

The Most Vulnerable



Demographics,
service usage,
urgent needs
and barriers

Assessing the Need

323 households in Buffalo (West of Main Street) responded to the Mobile Safety-Net Team Community Needs Assessment.

This one-page questionnaire gathered data and information on demographics, urgent needs, concerns and barriers experienced by residents in getting human services.

Assessments were completed at a variety of sites including Primera Food Pantry, North Buffalo Food Pantry, YWCA Pantry, First Presbyterian Church, Richmond Apartments, Jasper Parish Pantry, Richmond-Summer Senior Center, Niagara Street (on foot), the Belle Center, Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo, Holy Cross Head Start and local branches of the Buffalo and Erie County Library.

What human services are residents receiving?

Nearly all of those surveyed (98%) receive some form of human services or are living in a household that does. This percentage is higher than in any other community assessed so far.

The most common types of benefits reported by those who receive support

Food Stamps	62%
Medicaid	53%
SSI/SSD	45%
Rental Assistance	39%
HEAP	21%

58%

of those receiving some form of public assistance qualify for and receive more than one kind of benefit.

Pending applications. Nearly one out of five (18%) indicated they are seeking additional support. Applications to the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) were most commonly reported, followed closely by pending applications for SSI/SSD, federal programs offering cash assistance and access to medical care for those who are disabled and unable to work.

Are there indicators of greater need?

While most of those surveyed have connected with services, the data suggests that not all are receiving the level of support they need to get back on their feet. A quarter reported having an urgent concern, while this same percentage said they have encountered barriers to necessary services. Altogether, about one in three said they face a current crisis and/or barriers to the help they need.

25%

of survey takers report having an urgent concern.

The most urgent concerns of those surveyed

No money for food	11%
Homelessness	
Eviction	8%
Utility Shut-off	

Urgent Concerns: A quarter of those surveyed reported having an urgent concern, a percentage that is lower than in some other communities such as Niagara Falls (42%) and the Town of Tonawanda (30%). This may be due to the fact that most vulnerable residents in this community are receiving support. It may also be the case that poverty has become so ingrained in daily life that some needs are no longer seen as being "urgent," a matter that is somewhat subjective.

Need for additional food dominates among the pressing concerns identified, followed by housing-related crises from utility shut-off notices to eviction notices and homelessness.

Lack of Health Insurance.

Compared to other communities, Buffalo (West of Main Street) has a relatively small population lacking health insurance. The large majority say they receive some form of governmental insurance such as Medicaid or Medicare. That said, 13% or one out of 8 report that at least one person in their household is without insurance. In most cases, it's an adult. Only 5 respondents indicated that a child needed insurance.

What's causing this situation?

The vulnerable are highly dependent on public support programs for their basic needs for food, housing, income and insurance. A number of factors contribute to this and will create barriers to greater levels of economic independence unless addressed. These include:

Low levels of educational attainment.

Over half of vulnerable adults between the ages of 18 and 64, in their prime years for working, have nothing more than a high school diploma or GED, putting them at a disadvantage in competing for jobs in a region that pumps out thousands of college graduates every year. One in five doesn't even have a high school diploma and all of those in this category were age 22 or older. Although trade school is a good alternative to college, in terms of preparation for jobs paying a living wage and offering pathways for advancement, only 6 individuals (<3%) reported having trade schooling.

323 surveyed

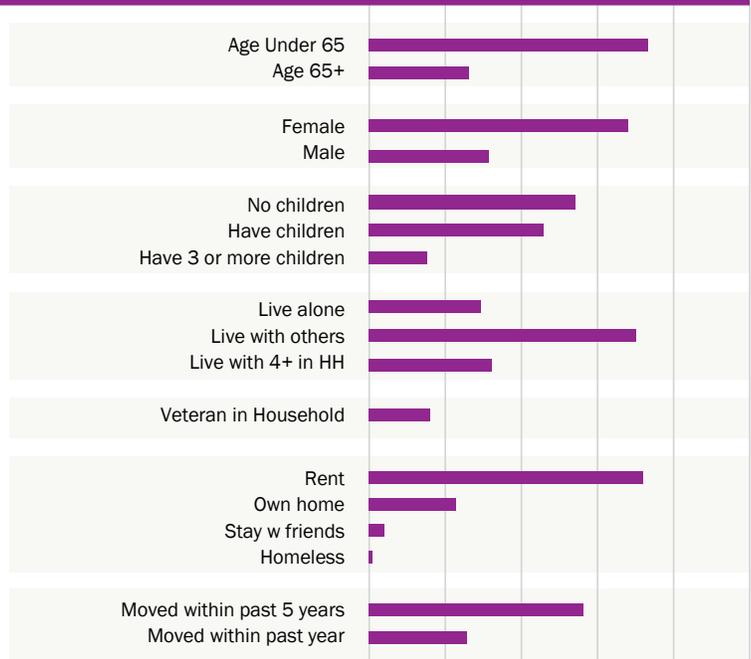
High levels of unemployment. Of individuals in their working years, more report being unemployed (40%) than working either full or part time (33%). Levels of unemployment are so high that less than one in five of these vulnerable adults reports working in a full time job. When asked if other adults in their household are employed full-time, only one in five indicated so.

Findings suggest unemployment has been persistent and not the result of a recent job loss, as only 5% reported unemployment insurance as part of their household's income sources.

More than not without a car. Working-age adults living in the western portion of Buffalo are no more likely than seniors to report having a car. Close to two-thirds (61%) of those surveyed between the ages of 18 and 64 said they travel by a means other than their own vehicle, very likely limiting their options for work to those employers that are easily accessible by foot, bike or public transit and with hours that coincide well with those for the bus and/or friends and family who can offer them rides. Indeed, more vulnerable residents without a vehicle say they primarily walk, bike or catch rides than depend on the bus. When asked why, the most common response was that public transit is "too expensive."

Asset poverty. With home ownership at 23% and only 39% of those surveyed with a car, most vulnerable households in West Buffalo have been unable to acquire or sustain the assets most residents in the region have to provide for their basic needs, both now and into the future, to improve their housing situation, draw upon for education and training and/or to provide for themselves during retirement.

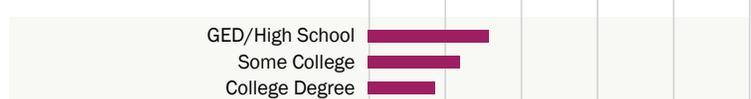
Individuals and Families



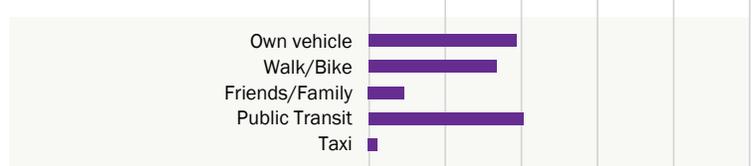
Work and Income



Education



Transportation



Source: Mobile Safety-Net Team Community Needs Assessment, 2012-13

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Barriers Residents Face

A clear majority of the city's most vulnerable families live in poverty and do not have an adequate education nor access to the basic resources needed to survive in today's economy.

Compounding this startling picture, when respondents try to access services, one in four report barriers. Traveling difficulties, income limits and confusing application processes were tied for the three most commonly encountered barriers, each reported by 7% of those surveyed. Language barriers are also common, reported by 6% of the sample. Smaller percentages reported not being able to get to an agency during their hours of operation (2%) or being unable to leave their home (4%).

Conversations with residents shed further light on the barriers and challenges vulnerable residents face in providing for themselves and their families. At the following four venues, nine conversations were held with parents, seniors and an asylee from Burma who has conducted an assessment of the Burmese community: Holy Cross Head Start on Lawn Ave, Holy Cross Head Start on Maryland Street, the International Institute of Buffalo and the Richmond-Summer Senior Center.

Need for flexible and affordable child care. Day care was frequently mentioned by parents in several focus groups as a key barrier to work and training. Gaps are greatest for parents needing care in the early mornings or late evenings,

A Voice from the Community

as options are very limited during off hours for those who work shifts or want to take evening classes.

State law creates barriers too, parents say, by limiting child care to no more than nine hours a day, while DSS does not allow subsidized care for parents wanting to pursue education; rather, it's available only for work.

Need is also great for children under five since parents say this is the usual minimum age for after-school programs run by places such as the Salvation Army, Belle Center and the schools. However, even parents of school-age children describe a need for more quality after-school programming for kids.

Parents talked about trade-offs, a consequence of the weak safety-net for child care. For one mother, it's staying in a

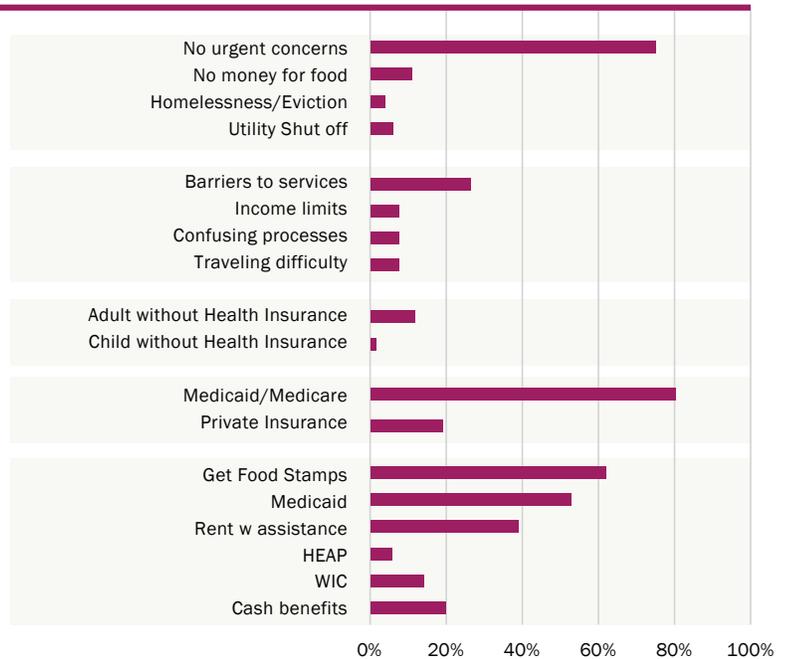
job that's less than desirable because it's close to home. The work day ends at 4 pm, and she can take her child into work if needed in a pinch. For another, it's putting off thoughts of returning to school and pushing for a career until her child gets older.

English fluency: Residents whose primary language is not English describe language barriers to employment and job training. One father, who migrated here from Angola, describes in broken English how he has been looking for work for six months now, actively applying for many jobs, without any success. When asked what kind of work he seeks, he replies "anything that pays." Another challenge for him, he says, is that his college courses from back home are not recognized here.

1 out of 4 residents surveyed say they have encountered difficulty getting services.



Needs & Barriers



Source: Mobile Safety-Net Team Community Needs Assessment, 2012-13

Penalties for work. Parents in one focus group at Holy Cross Head Start on the Lower West Side describe how their food stamps get immediately reduced if they work extra hours. What's more, the reduction is more than they see in increases to their take-home pay, creating disincentives to working extra hours. Disqualifying for benefits that would otherwise be out of the financial reach of families creates additional disincentives to work. As one parent put it, "insurance will rob your paycheck blind," meaning if they had to pay the full price of health insurance, they would have nothing of their paycheck left for food, housing and other expenses.

Those in transition get little help, they say, as the system has been built for the permanently dependent. As one young mother says, "Those who don't do anything get the most."

Varying access to quality primary education. While parents with children enrolled in some of the city's charter schools were generally very positive about the quality of education their children receive and the extracurricular programs they have access to, those with children in the Buffalo Public School District did not seem similarly pleased. Rather, they noted many challenges from unresponsive teachers and poor communication with parents to cuts in programs and services, no BOCES programs and a far-reaching suspension program that hurts parents by forcing them to find a way to stay home from work with their child.

Public transportation challenges. While most residents described public transit as adequate in getting them where they need to go, it's the logistics of using public

A Voice from
the
Community

"Insurance will rob your paycheck blind...."

transit to make multiple stops within specific time frames for day care and work that seem to create the greatest challenges for residents relying on public transit, particularly parents.

The cost associated with public transit was also raised as a barrier for some. In a group with seniors, some said \$2 one-way is too expensive, suggesting that some do not take advantage of NFTA's discount policy for seniors (offering a half-priced reduced fares for seniors and disabled individuals).

Barriers to affordable housing.

While most residents in rental housing expressed satisfaction with the quality and affordability of their apartments and the responsiveness of their landlord (in many cases, it was BMHA), those who have recently sought affordable housing described barriers and challenges. For instance, one mother, who had recently been homeless, spoke of how difficult it was to locate an apartment with the \$405 voucher she received from DSS.

Another woman—a recent domestic violence victim—says landlords have stopped taking vouchers because when there are damages to an apartment, the landlord loses out. For her, getting DSS to help with a security deposit took at least a month.

Gender-related cultural differences. As an asylee from Burma explains, many refugees are from countries where women do not work outside the home. Even though it's commonplace here, they don't

have a comfort level. Language barriers and lack of familiarity with the culture and public transit system just compound matters and exacerbate fear. These women look for work they can do from their home such as child care.

Judgment and stigma. Seniors participating in a focus group at the Richmond-Summer Senior Center, who were generally quite positive about life and human services in Buffalo, described going to the Rath Building as "brutal" in terms of how they were treated. One said it depends on who you get.

Younger residents also spoke of the stigma associated with applying for governmental support and a process that's less than helpful. At the same time, they said support attained from non-profits such as Crisis Services and Catholic Charities is much more palatable because they don't judge, there is no stigma and they have a no-nonsense approach.

For refugees, stigma is a barrier to mental health care. This is a population that will rarely self identify mental health needs, as in their home country, there is no mental health care unless someone is "crazy." There is a definite stigma, says a Burmese representative, even though the circumstances of getting into this country – fear of persecution and torture – are breeding grounds for mental health needs. Lack of service capacity only worsens the situation.

Stigma can be a barrier to employment for refugees, too. They don't want to waitress, for instance, since back home, this is one of the most lowly positions. "They want factory work," or a job where they can learn skills without needing a lot of English.

Crime and perceptions of safety. While most parents participating in a focus group on the Lower West Side were quick to say that their neighborhood is generally safe and they have not been directly impacted by crime, more described an environment that is intimidating because of people "hanging out" at all hours of the day, in the streets, at store fronts and at the parks, with no clear purpose for being there. It creates an atmosphere where parents feel uneasy going into a store or taking advantage of community amenities like nearby parks with their children.

In northwest Buffalo, parents spoke of being more directly impacted by nearby crime - drugs, gangs, assaults, and even murder. The area around the Shaffer Village Housing Projects was mentioned as particularly problematic.

ESL barriers. Some refugees view ESL as offering "nothing for them," according to one asylee from Burma who has conducted a needs assessment of Buffalo's Burmese community. Having no foundation for even basic literacy from their home country, classes begin at a level that's beyond them and are perceived as taking too long.

Voices from the Community

Insights and perspectives from those with first-hand experience

These are stories about real people*, individuals in Buffalo (West of Main Street) who agreed to talk with us and share some of their personal account. We asked them about the challenges they face, about the services and supports that have been helpful, about barriers and their goals for the future. Through these individuals, this study's findings are humanized, and a clearer picture emerges as to the interconnectedness of issues.

*Names have been changed for privacy purposes



A west side senior depends on friends for rides

Born on Christmas 84 years ago, Kathy is from a family whose circumstances haven't been easy. Her great grandfather was a slave in the south. However, he learned to read and that ultimately was the ticket to his freedom. A graduate of Lafayette High School, Kathy herself has some college under her belt. Before retiring over 20 years ago, she worked as both a teacher and civil servant.

Today she lives in small apartment on the Lower West Side operated by BMHA. She says it is "alright." A friend helped her find the place after she was put out by her former landlord when she withheld rent due to bedbugs. He also asked her to pay for a new hot water tank when that broke. "All he wanted was money."

A Voice from the Community

While Kathy has a network of friends for rides (she can no longer drive or can take the bus alone due to a health issue), getting to doctors appointments can be challenging, as she is dependent on the availability of friends, and the one most inclined to help her works double shifts. She doesn't know about other options but has heard some require at least two weeks advance notice. Kathy says she relies on those she trusts for information, including one of her doctors who has been a good source of referrals for her.

Living within a stone's throw of the senior center, Kathy attends regularly since it's within walking distance for her. She wishes other seniors got out of their apartments more. They don't look at the bulletin board or ask questions. The only time you see them is when a local store brings by bread and muffins on Saturday mornings.



Carlos

A father desires training and a more dependable car

Born in Puerto Rico, where the prevalent language is Spanish, Carlos is bilingual speaking both Spanish and English. He says he learned some English back home in school and during his time in the army.

Today Carlos lives downtown in subsidized housing, which he likes, except maybe for the weekend noise along Chippewa. "Sure, I'd like to live in Tonawanda or North Tonawanda," closer to his grown children, but he can't afford that now and also worries about how he would get around.

Carlos has a car but "it's broke more than it's fixed." It's a '95 Chevy, and when it proves to be not dependable, he takes the bus, which he praises, and gets rides from friends and fellow volunteers.

Out of work due to a disability, Carlos now does what he can to help others and the West Side community. He'd like to get the skills to get a paid position but that hasn't worked out so far. He was told at the EOC where he applied for training that there is a waiting list for his program of interest.

A Voice from the Community

Carlos says the community has many good programs but residents oftentimes don't know about them. Where he volunteers, just filling the ESL classes can be a challenge. Seeing churches as critical players in community outreach, Carlos wishes they were better utilized to reach those in need with information.



Rosario

A community volunteer calls the Lower West Side her second home

Rosario wanted to share her story as a community volunteer on the Lower West Side. She refers to it as her "second home." She says she communicates with everyone – all races, colors and languages. She speaks English and Spanish. She's from Puerto Rico. She came to Buffalo at the age of 19, and during her twenties attended Buffalo's public schools, graduating from Bennett High School and going on to work as a bilingual aide.

Today, although she is retired, she volunteers her time, Monday through Friday. Although it's above and beyond expectations, she even uses her personal van to take seniors to doctor's appointments in the suburbs and helps them communicate with their doctors. Sure, the bus goes out there, but it takes an hour and these are elders who don't speak English well.

She's also called upon to make referrals to the many who find themselves at her organization with needs beyond what is provided. "If I don't know where to send them, I get on the phone and call someone who may know." Word of mouth is how information travels here.

A Voice from the Community

Having both children and grandchildren, Rosario wishes the schools were better. Too many children are being carelessly suspended, she says. They are told to leave mid-day with nobody at home. She also wishes there was more unity within the community. Rather than seeing the benefit if someone gets a new car, it causes fighting.

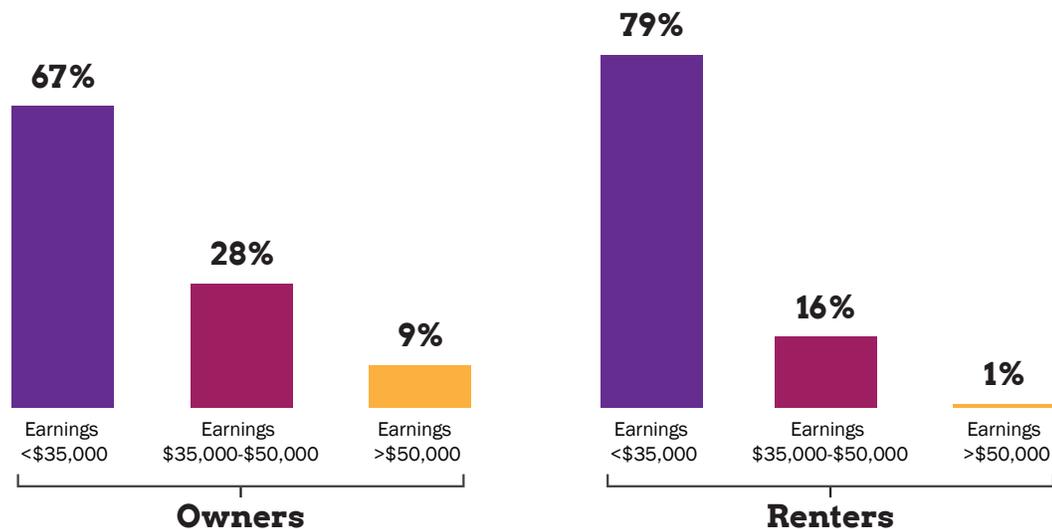
Context for Action

Places in Need



Where we live,
how we travel
and the safety
levels in our
community

Households in Buffalo (West of Main Street) Paying 30% or More of Their Income on Housing, by Income Category, 2011



Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

Housing

Almost 61,000 housing units exist in Buffalo (West of Main Street). One out of seven are vacant. Renters occupy the large majority (63%) of units. Put another way, home ownership in this community is well below what exists county-wide where two-thirds of housing units are owned. This is true even though the western portion of Buffalo has a relatively notable stock of affordable homes.

In fact, in Zip Codes 14207 and 14213 (Riverside and the West Side), it doesn't cost that much more to own than to rent. The median renter pays about between \$615 and \$655 a month, while a homeowner with a mortgage pays between \$881 and \$885 monthly. Mortgages are low because homes in these zip codes are valued at under \$50,000, according to Zillow home value data.

Yet most vulnerable residents in the community rent, and altogether, over 17,500 lower-income households are cost

Over 17,500 lower-income renters across Buffalo (West of Main Street) are cost burdened, paying more than 30% of their household income toward rental housing.

burdened, paying more than 30% of their household income on rent and utilities, compromising their ability to afford other necessities from food to child care, health care and transportation.

A representative of Belmont Housing describes this situation as indicative of challenges everywhere. While subsidized rental housing exists, there are wait lists for most of it. This is in addition to the 20,000+ households across Erie County on the wait list for a voucher. Belmont says it hasn't issued any since December of last year, reflective of federal sequestration cuts in funding for the program as well as the frequency at which renters who have a voucher leave the program allowing their voucher to be issued to another family in need.

While other strong housing resources exist to reduce housing costs through weatherization and financial literacy, agencies taking part in a focus group describe the need for more effective oversight of landlords, for greater emergency housing and for help for those needing to navigate the system.

With language and cultural barriers, the foreign born are at a particular disadvantage in securing rental housing and dealing with landlords. Leaders from International Institute of Buffalo also point to the fact that there are no refugees in HUD-supported housing due to lack of availability when they arrive and get settled.

Public Transit Times From Fargo Avenue near the Lower West Side



Destination	Time of Day	One-Way Travel Time Via Bus	Notes...
1 XCEL Leadership Center on Hertel Avenue in Buffalo	late morning	26 Min.	
2 Buffalo Carshare on Allen Street in Buffalo	mid morning	31 Min.	Walking to this destination takes about the same amount of time.
3 Seneca Niagara Casino in Niagara Falls	mid day	50 Min.	An entry-level job at the casino in Niagara Falls will involve almost an hour one-way commute.
4 One-Stop Center at ECC North	early afternoon	1 Hr., 29 Min.	Getting to this comprehensive center for job training and searching entails a 3 hour round trip commute by bus
5 Vehicle Technology Training Center at ECC in Orchard Park	early morning	1 Hr., 46 Min.	This destination is only 17 miles away, yet a round trip to this training center can take nearly 4 hours and 6 different buses (3 each way).

Source: Travel times used Google Maps with distances calculated from 435 Fargo Ave.

Transportation

At the same time the majority of workers in Buffalo (West of Main Street) use a car to get to work, the proportion who use public transit and alternative modes such as walking and bicycling is double what is seen county-wide. Nearly a quarter of workers in the community rely on alternative modes of traveling to work.

Altogether, 14,466 households across the community lack a vehicle. This is one out of four. In comparison to other communities where most without a car are seniors, four out of five here are households headed by someone under the age of 65, in their prime working years. The large majority are also renters, suggesting it's lack of affordability and not lack of need for other factors that weigh into the decision to go without.

For those relying on public transit (11% of workers), traveling within Buffalo is doable and involves relatively short commutes that are facilitated by the Metro Rail that runs along Main Street in Buffalo as well as major transfer points, all located downtown.

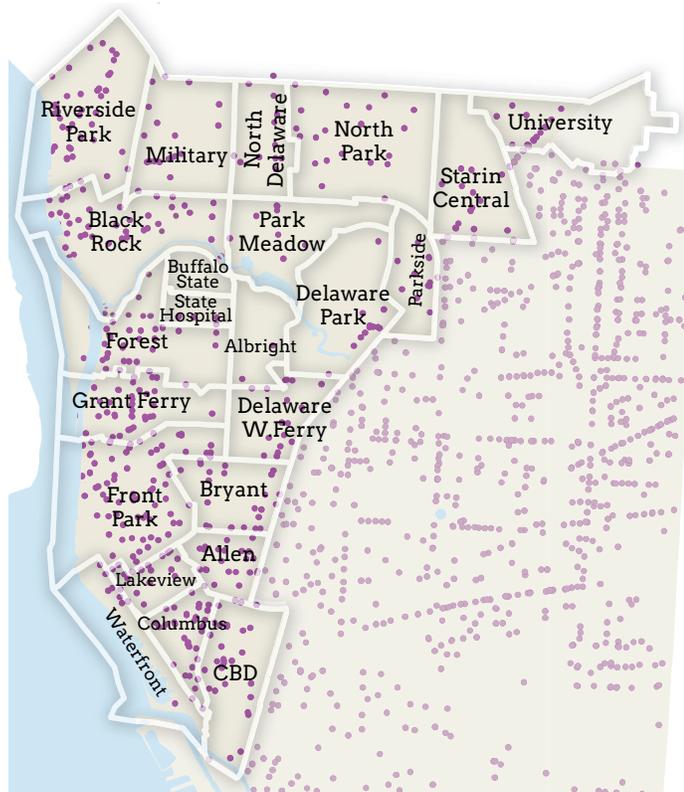
Things are more challenging for those traveling out to the region's suburbs, where many new jobs have taken root, and where notable job training and health specialists exist. Traveling to Orchard Park, for instance, where ECC's Vehicle Training Center and South Campus, are located, takes nearly two hours one way. Travel toward East Amherst, which has experienced significant business development can involve a three-hour round trip commute.

Characteristics of Householders Lacking a Vehicle, 2011

Household by Age	# Renter	# Owner	TOTAL
Householder Under Age 65	10,898	839	11,737
Householder Age 65+	1,970	759	2,729
Total	12,868	1,598	14,466

Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

Crime in Buffalo (West of Main Street), January - July 2013



Source: CrimeReports.com. Each dot marks the location of an incident of violent crime occurring between January and July of 2013.

Crime

Overall, the City of Buffalo is one of the least safe places in the region. In 2011, one out of every 100 individuals in the city was a victim of a violent crime. This rate is on par with that in the City of Niagara Falls but five times the rate in neighboring suburbs of Cheektowaga and Tonawanda. Moreover, rates of violent crime have increased, with the average rates between 2009 and 2011 being 27% higher than the three year average rate 20 years ago.

That said, the western portion of Buffalo is a safer community than the city overall, according to an analysis of violent incidences during the first six months of 2013. Exactly 35% of 2,179 total offenses

Proportionally less violent crime occurs west of Main Street.

more violent crime is concentrated in those neighborhoods where poverty is highest: Riverside, Black Rock, West Side and Lower West Side. These are also neighborhoods with easy access to the I-190, a drug conduit of sorts. As one provider puts it, thruway access allows people to come from the suburbs and access drugs, which are often at the root of violent crime and gangs.

against persons happened west of Main Street, even though 44% of the city's population resides in the community. This total includes reports to the Buffalo Police Department of homicide, robbery, sexual offenses and assault. As shown on a map of these offenses,

Although providers and residents echo what the data reveal about crime being on the rise, as compared to years ago, a conversation with seniors suggests that Buffalo (West of Main Street) nonetheless is a relatively safe place. While this group of seniors described drug dealing and prostitution as being very visible from their windows, they also said that those who turn a blind eye stay relatively safe. As one put it, "if you look the other way, you're fine."

Many parents who participated in focus groups also described the neighborhood they lived in as safe. Those in Riverside were an exception, noting violent crime, especially near Shaffer Village, as problematic. Wider concerns expressed by parents were too many adults just "hanging out" with no apparent purpose, creating an intimidating environment for them and their children and barriers to their full engagement with community services and amenities.

Meanwhile, agency providers described vulnerabilities of immigrants and refugees. Victims of crime who don't speak English don't always get the level of protection they need, especially in the case of domestic violence, as the "language line" (which offers translation and interpretation services) isn't always used by police officers. Rather, they rely on English-speaking friends and family at the scene for translation and interpretation, but this may paint a biased picture. Others without English fluency all too easily get caught up in the criminal justice system which is difficult to navigate with language barriers. Meanwhile, gangs lure children who see limited other options, while businesses prey on vulnerable adults dependent on them for services.

Landscape of Services



Service providers, their strengths, system gaps, barriers and promising developments

City of Buffalo
(West of Main St.)

Landscape of Services

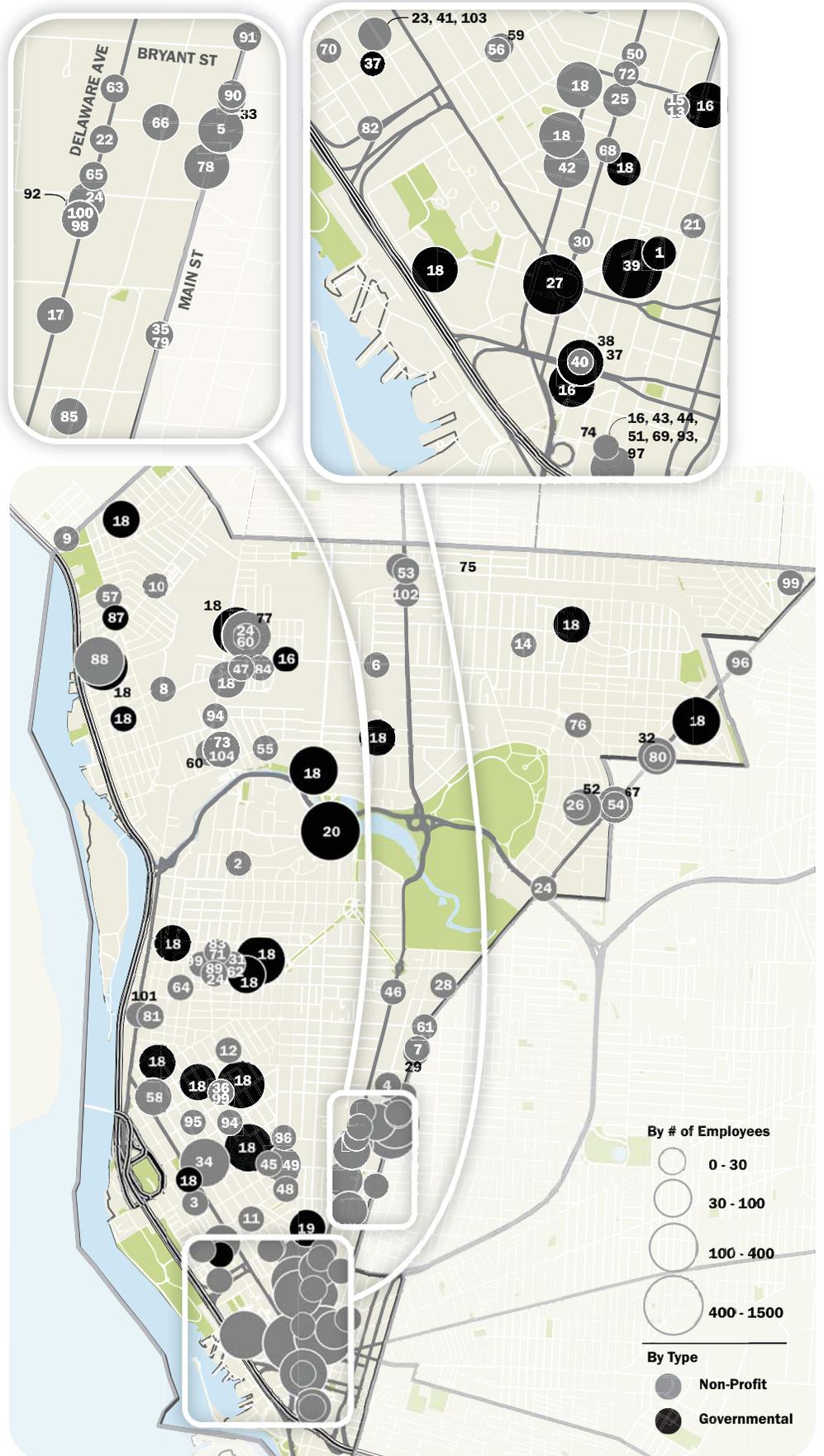
An impressive number of human services providers - almost 104 altogether - exists west of Main Street, to serve the needs of those seeking food, clothing, affordable housing, youth programs, job training and more. A number have programs targeting individuals who are particularly vulnerable such as young parents, veterans, seniors and the homeless.



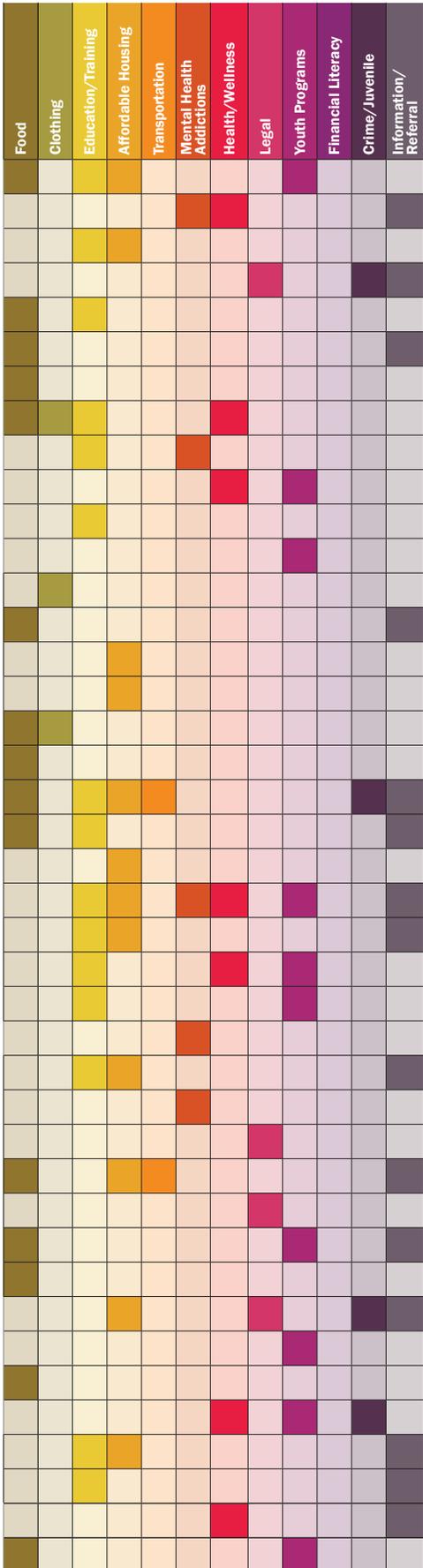
The large majority - about nine out of ten - are nonprofit providers. Many are located south of West Ferry Street, within 3 miles of downtown. The west side corridor, a high-needs area, also has a concentration of providers. Relatively few are in North Buffalo, west of Delaware Avenue and north of West Ferry Street.

Education, job training, food, health and youth programs are where the safety-net is deepest with many providers offering these services, while financial literacy, crime prevention and transportation are service areas where the safety net is relatively thin.

About
10,955 employees
across
104 providers
in Buffalo
(West of Main Street)
provide a range of
human services
to those in need.



HUMAN SERVICES: AGENCY NAME		Teen Parents	Veterans	Seniors	Homeless
41	Erie Regional Housing Development Corporation - The Belle Center			↙	
42	Evergreen Health Services (formerly AIDS Community Services)				
43	Everywoman Opportunity Center Inc.				
44	Family Justice Center of Erie County				
45	First Presbyterian Church - Geri Lyons Food Shelf				
46	Food for All				
47	Food Pantry-Jasper Parish				
48	Friends Of Night People				
49	Gateway-Longview				
50	Gay and Lesbian Services of Western New York				
51	GED Prep Center-Workforce Development				
52	Girl Scouts				
53	Goodwill				
54	Grassroots Gardens Of Buffalo				
55	Habitat for Humanity				
56	Heart Of The City				
57	Hearts for the Homeless				↘
58	HIS Dwelling Place Pantry				
59	Hispanics United Of Buffalo			↙	↘
60	Holy Cross Head Start (2 locations)				
61	HOME, Housing Opportunities Made Equal				
62	Homeless Alliance of WNY				↘
63	International Institute of Buffalo				
64	Jericho Road Ministries				
65	Jewish Community Center				
66	Jewish Family Services of Buffalo			↙	
67	Journey's End Refugee Services				
68	Lake Shore Behavioral Health				
69	Legal Services For The Elderly				
70	Los Tainos Senior Citizens Center			↙	
71	Massachusetts Avenue Project			↙	
72	National Federation for Just Communities				
73	Native American Community Services				
74	Neighborhood Legal Services				
75	North Buffalo Community Center			↙	
76	North Buffalo Food Pantry, Parkside Lutheran Church				
77	Northwest Buffalo Community Center			↙	
78	Olmsted Center for Sight				
79	Parent Network of WNY	↙			
80	Planned Parenthood	↙			
81	Potter's Pantry & Family Resource Ctr (2 locations)			↙	



Landscape of Services



Strengths,
Gaps, Barriers
and Promising
Developments

Strengths of the System

With about 1,500 refugees settling in the region every year, this population has been a source of population growth as well as vital business and community development, particularly in this community, which offers established and welcoming refugee communities, relatively affordable living, job opportunities, placement assistance and human services.

The Grant Street area has undergone significant revitalization and serves as a successful model for other neighborhoods in the community for building upon strengths and garnering collaboration and investments.

Thanks to a gift from an alumni, **Buffalo State College** has a newly established **Community Academic Center** focused on networking educators in the community, strengthening art programming for youth through partnerships, and bolstering literacy and ESL supports, particularly Buffalo English Language Learners, a consortium of 50 agencies involved in ESL programming. This center could be leveraged as a coordinating agency, given the diversity of its current networks.

Food is an area of strength. While the east side of Buffalo contains many areas classified as “food deserts” where residents lack access to nutritious food, none exist in Buffalo (West of Main Street) where there are many major grocers, food pantries, and the Massachusetts Avenue Project, an initiative that has been improving access from many angles, from urban farming to community education, youth training and a mobile market. There is also Food for All, a program of the Network of Religious Communities that educates and advocates on food policies, and Grassroots Gardens that has almost 50 gardens on the West Side offering a no/low cost solution to food access. Most recently, food providers have united, forming the West Side Food Pantry Coalition, in an effort to streamline pantry services and better support the needs of residents.

There are several already established partnerships and coalitions, including the West Side Community Collaborative, a newly-formed food pantry coalition, the West Side Youth Development Coalition, Black Rock Riverside Alliance, Buffalo State’s Community Academic Center, the Career Collegiate Institute and Say Yes, a landmark collaborative effort involving the Buffalo City School District, funders and nonprofits. Other groups have been established to unite residents of similar cultures and ethnicities, including Hispanics United and a newly created Burmese Community Support Coalition.

About
1,500
refugees
annually add
diversity

Gaps in Services

More emergency housing is needed for tenants whose landlord terminates their tenancy and have nowhere to go, due to a variety of factors such as no cash for security deposits, poor credit history, lack of references, or mental illness that limits their ability to plan and identify alternative housing.

Providers describe **gaps in health care, especially for primary care, speciality care, dental, eye and treatment for chronic conditions and substance abuse.** Even with Neighborhood Health Center’s second location on Niagara Street, most areas of the community are federally designated as medically underserved. A provider from Jericho Road points to the finding of a recent study showing that fewer than one out of four residents in zip code 14213 have a primary care provider. When care is sought it’s reactive to emergency health situations rather than preventive in nature. Meanwhile, only a small fraction of those locally with substance abuse locally get treatment, according to numbers gathered by Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo.

Case management services generally aren’t available to those who could benefit from them until individuals reach a crisis and this service is then mandated by the courts. Refugees and those with mental illness are two groups described as being in need of more help than what’s out there.

While human services agencies in West Buffalo are collaborating and a variety of special interest coalitions exists, **there is no human services collaboration or group for information sharing and brainstorming.** Moreover, some providers describe silos and competition among agencies with similar missions.

Buffalo General recently cut psychiatric services, deepening a service gap

Agencies expressed interest for **more evaluation tools and data, enabling them to demonstrate program effectiveness, improve services and expand successful programs.** Data related to costs and expenditures can be particularly

hard for them to obtain where it’s maintained by related providers who may be working under a different set of incentives.

Mental health services are needed for refugees whose baseline condition can create mental health needs, especially during the period when they are waiting for Medicaid coverage to be approved, which can take months. Providers who used to take refugees whose Medicaid status is pending no longer do. Residents in need sometimes go to Buffalo General for emergency treatment but commonly leave before they can be assessed. The stigma associated with mental health needs compounds matters by creating additional barriers for this population.

Barriers to Connecting with Residents

While the Civil Rights Act guarantees language access from providers receiving federal funding and a recent law expands access required of health providers, a Jericho Road provider says **there are obstacles to using the the language line, the one tool most have access too.** Waits can be up to an hour to find the right interpreter and miscommunication is frustrating. While in-person services are more effective, these are very expensive.

Transportation is a barrier to employment and health care located in suburban locations. Agency representatives describe clients who take three buses to get to major regional employers. In some cases, a job in places as nearby as Clarence or Lancaster isn't an option because public transportation may not be logistically practical and alternative modes don't exist.

Demand exceeds capacity in the areas of education, affordable housing and WIC. Some children lose an entire year of learning due to wait lists for kindergarten, as its not mandatory in the

Buffalo. Waits for ESL classes exist due to high demand and insufficient funding. Waits for most subsidized housing exist as well, and the list for Section 8 vouchers is so long, it has been closed by Belmont. Meanwhile, WIC sites in Northwest Buffalo are overloaded; referrals have increased by 50%.

Lack of
language
services
creates barriers

Income thresholds and eligibility requirements sometimes exclude those in need who could benefit. (For instance, there is an entire generation of young adults who have missed the benefits available under Say Yes.) There are also young parents who would benefit from Early Head Start but are past the age limit. **More broadly, program cut-offs force families to decide between working and qualifying for benefits that will be too expensive to purchase on the open market.**

The work of agencies fluctuates with available funding which is being cut at the federal level. Programs that have impacted locally include Head Start, AmeriCorps and the Belle Center's 21st Century Learning Program for teens

Lack of awareness and information hinders access to those newly in need, especially immigrants and refugees. Many get information word of mouth from trusted individuals in the community. Schools are another key source, yet this can leave information gaps for less connected individuals or those without children.

Federal policy that requires resettlement services be provided over a 90 days window is impractical and does not correspond with the time is actually takes refugees to become acclimated and economically self-sufficient, the overarching goal of these services, which are provided locally by one of four resettlement agencies.

Promising Developments

New leadership at Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo and the Belle Center is committed to breaking down silos of past decades, working together and in partnership with other agencies in the community to fill program and service gaps while reducing duplicative programming.

A newly-formed West Side Food Pantry Coalition unites a number of nearby food pantries to streamline services and strengthen their sustainability.

A stretch of Niagara Street was recently designated by the city as a Hispanic Heritage District, in recognition of the many ways the Hispanic community has contributed to community redevelopment and well-being. It also signifies willingness by political leaders to make additional investments to bolster even further the neighborhood's potential as a draw for residents, visitors and businesses.

Say Yes to Education, Inc.! is a model for improving student academic performance and increasing postsecondary graduation rates that was recently launched in the Buffalo Public School District, with the promise of free college to all students who graduate and the range of support services they need to succeed in school. College scholarships took effect with the class of 2013, while free after-school programming will be fully built-out by 2015-16. Another promising development is that **Buffalo Public Schools began providing sex education last year.**

1,250
students received
Say Yes
scholarships

Under a trail-blazing agreement, students at Lafayette High School, where the large majority fail to graduate, will now have the opportunity to receive vocational training from Erie 1 BOCES, which until this year has only been accessible to students in suburban school districts.

New job training opportunities in advanced manufacturing will become available as part of the Buffalo Billion. This includes a new workforce training center, scheduled to open next year and the Advance Buffalo workforce program already under way, including arrangements for transportation for those who need it.

GET SET (Success for Extraordinary Times) is a new initiative of the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York that seeks to strengthen internal operation capacity of health and human services agencies in response to declining levels of governmental and other revenues.

In an effort led by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, **Buffalo is one of 12 cities nationwide where a Green and Healthy Homes initiative is taking place to improve housing quality and the health of residents.**

Insights from the Field

Recommendations and Best Practices

Where we gathered our information and what we are reporting

These insights, recommendations and strategies are intended to spur thought and assist the community in developing its own priorities and action plans.

They come from a distillation of information gathered from a wide range of sources: interviews conducted by the Mobile Safety-Net Team, in addition to those conducted by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute with Say Yes Buffalo, the Buffalo Public School District, Adult Learning Center, Belmont Housing Resources of WNY, the Belle Center, Hispanics United of Buffalo, Catholic Charities, Jericho Road, North District Council Member Joe Golombek, Niagara Council Member David Rivera, West Side Neighborhood Housing Services, Grassroots Gardens, Food For All, Canopy of Neighbors, Buffalo State College Community Academic Center, Black Rock Food Pantry, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Erie County,

An agency focus group was held in June 2013, with 16 provider representatives present. Resident input was gathered through conversations with residents and a resident representative at the International Institute of Buffalo, Richmond-Summer Senior Center, and at two locations of the Holy Cross Head Start (Holy Cross Center and Northwest Center).

Local data also inform these findings and recommendations.



Build upon existing connections among human services providers

A strength of the community is the interest and willingness of its many providers to collaborate, as evidenced by the number of existing coalitions. However, so far, these partnerships have typically been program specific or focused on one aspect of poverty such as crime, youth, health or workforce development. Providers participating in a focus group who represented diverse service areas expressed support for a broader coalition that could tackle poverty more holistically and from diverse dimensions by sharing information, breaking down silos, brainstorming, growing support for successful programs, resource building and advocating for policy change.

STRATEGIES

Build upon existing partnerships to focus on shared vision and break down silos across areas of need. Say Yes Buffalo, which involves a landmark-size collaborative to address the academic and nonacademic needs of students and their families, may offer a forum for catalyzing a cross-cutting collaboration.

Use this assessment as a tool for fund and resource development, including grant development with other cities across the nation that are piloting efforts to alleviate poverty.

Explore collaborations to strengthen the capacity of smaller organizations with effective programming that could be positioned within the context of Say Yes.

Partner with the many universities within the community to increase capacity of a coalition, in terms of grant writing, research, policy development, advocacy and communications.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

All nonprofit and governmental human services providers, including representatives from existing coalitions and networks such as Say Yes, Buffalo State College's Community Academic Center, the newly formed Collegiate Institute, church-based providers; the Mobile Safety-Net Team, resident representatives; and representatives of those entities from business, higher education, philanthropy, and political leadership, all of which have an interest in alleviating poverty.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

The Seattle Human Services Coalition is an example of a long-standing successful group that has recently secured millions in additional local funding for human services and is advocating for member interests at the state level.

<http://shscoalition.org/>

MODELS TO CONSIDER

ELMWOOD VILLAGE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Established in 1994, The Elmwood Village Association is a non-profit partnership between businesses and residents in Buffalo, New York. In the move from vacant storefronts and devalued housing stock to vibrant, mixed-use community, Elmwood Village stakeholders used a national model - the Main Street Four-Point Approach® of organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring - for neighborhood revitalization. As a sign of success, more than a decade later the Elmwood Village was recognized as one of America's 10 Best Neighborhoods, as designated by the American Planning Association in 2007. This designation was based on a number of considerations, including its prosperous business district, proximity to cultural and social amenities, and a demonstrated commitment to growing a quality community that is safe for residents and visitors, and that is livable, walkable, clean and sustainable into the future. Since the hiring of an executive director in 2000, the Association now has a staff of 3. It is overseen by a Board of Directors and four active committees (Design, Economic Development, Marketing, and Neighborhoods). It is funded through membership dues and grants.

<http://www.elmwoodvillage.org/>



Raise awareness and accessibility of information about programs and services

According to both residents and providers, many in need learn of programs and services through word of mouth and referrals from trusted individuals. This heightens the burden on human services providers and broadens the capacity they need to readily make referrals outside their area of expertise. Some providers say they use information tools like 211 and Arounja. However, not all were familiar with these, saying they depend on personal networks or information they have gathered over the years and that lack of information hurts people. Refugees and immigrants are particularly affected by information gaps, lacking familiarity with processes in addition to services. Confusing processes tied with transportation and income limits as the number one barrier residents face in the western portion of Buffalo.

STRATEGIES

Raise awareness among both providers and residents of existing comprehensive information sources such as Western New York 211, a program of the Olmsted Center for Sight and Arounja.org, supported by a number of nonprofit and governmental providers in Erie County, including Community Connections of New York. Engage, schools, libraries, news media, the NFTA and existing human services

collaboratives to accomplish this. A provider summit could also build awareness and provider relationships.

All human services providers can help strengthen these existing information sources by ensuring their services are accurately described. Expanding information to include coalition membership could raise awareness while fostering stronger coalitions.

Consider adding features that allow users to readily download reports for geographies and services of interest and update their own entries.

Ensure that all providers know how they can use a free Google application to translate between dozens of languages.

Promote culturally sensitive materials and use local ethnic media such as LaVoz de WNY and Emisora De Dios WBBF-AM 1120.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

All human services providers, but especially Olmsted Center for Sight, United Way of Buffalo and Erie County, Community Connections of New York, Erie County, Gateway-Longview, New Directors Youth and Family Services, Family Voices Network of Erie County, Families' Child Advocacy Network, University at Buffalo, the John R. Oishei Foundation, and Bear Code; Community Action Organization of Erie County, libraries, Buffalo Public School District, NFTA, and local news media.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Public libraries are key players in offering access to information and bridging information gaps. St. John branch of the Austin Public Library, is exceptionally proactive in connecting with the community's Latino population by going outside the library's walls to get them in, developing culturally-sensitive information and empowering them with information.

<http://library.austintexas.gov/locations/St.%20John%20Branch>

MODELS TO CONSIDER

MODEL LANGUAGE ORDINANCES

Cities around the country have enacted laws requiring government to offer language assistance services to immigrants. For example, facing a significant increase in immigrants in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Minneapolis City Council passed Resolution R547 in 2003 approving the creation of a citywide Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan. One of the first of its kind in the country, this plan among other items, requires that the city proactively notify individuals of their right to LEP services. This includes posting signs in appropriate areas such as waiting rooms and reception areas; hiring full-or part-time translators or interpreters to meet LEP service needs; and holding public meetings with interpreters available upon 5 business days notice. Other cities have since promoted language access in government, such as New Orleans. The New Orleans ordinance mandates the city to hire multilingual staff to assist city departments with language access; maintain a complaint form on its Web site translated into Spanish and Vietnamese so that LEP persons can file complaints regarding services; use surveys to analyze the need for improved services for LEP persons; and prioritize budget allocations to improve language access in departments that provide essential services including police and health.

http://www.alicelaw.org/uploads/asset/asset_file/1324/Leg_Ad_2012_Language_Access_Ordinance__2_.pdf

ORDINANCE
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
CITY HALL, November 19, 2012
CALENDAR NO. 30396
NO. 50-MAYOR/COUNCIL, SERIES
BY: COUNCILMEMBER ABEL S. DELGADO

AN ORDINANCE to mandate that city departments survey the need for improved services for Limited English Proficient persons who reside in the City of New Orleans and work with the Office of Neighborhood Engagement and the Chief Administrative Officer to improve those services.

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the City of New Orleans to deliver effective, courteous, and responsive services for all of its residents, including those who have limited proficiency in English; and

WHEREAS, city departments require additional funding in order to address the needs of residents with limited proficiency in English; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and the City Council seek to encourage departments to generate innovative and creative budget proposals that achieve results reflecting the city's "NOW, THEREFORE:

"EN. 1. THE COUNCIL, OF THE CITY OF NEW ORL"

Bolster refugee and immigrant supports

At the same time refugees have been a source of population growth and community revitalization, neighborhoods in Buffalo with the largest concentration of immigrants and refugees report the highest levels of poverty. Providers and residents say language is a key barrier to work and services, especially outpatient health and police services. Meanwhile culturally-sensitive mental health services are increasingly lacking, to both identify those in need and assist them with the impacts of trauma.

STRATEGIES

Continue to raise awareness of federal requirements under the Civil Rights Act for language assistance, including options for translation and interpretations services and reimbursement, such as through Medicaid in health settings.

Expand law enforcement use of the language line, especially in cases such as domestic violence where nearby witnesses offering translation assistance may be unable to offer unbiased assistance.

Engage local federal elected officials in advocating for a longer window of benefits provided under the federal resettlement program, which generally offers 90 days of resettlement benefits, provided by one of four resettlement agencies in the region.

Better train primary care health providers to identify mental health symptoms in the refugee and immigrant population. Expand access to culturally sensitive and culturally competent treatment that addresses barriers of stigma and mistrust.

Explore opportunities for increasing ESL participation at sites with high demand (such as at the Belle Center and First Presbyterian Church), and removing barriers to participation at other sites such as the need for child care. The network being created by Buffalo State's Community Academic Center offers a framework for accomplishing this.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

The region's four refugee resettlement agencies (Catholic Charities, International Institute of Buffalo, Journey's End, and Jewish Family Services); the Buffalo Police Department, especially Precinct B, University at Buffalo School of Medicine; all post-secondary training programs in the region for nursing and physician assistants; Jericho Road, Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo, ECMC, Buffalo General Hospital, Lakeshore Behavioral Health; all ESL provider sites (including First Presbyterian Church, Asbury Shalom Zone, the Belle Center, and International Institute) and Buffalo State College's Community Academic Center.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Language Access Ordinances are how many cities across the nation are helping refugees and immigrants overcome a key barrier. New Orleans offers a model.

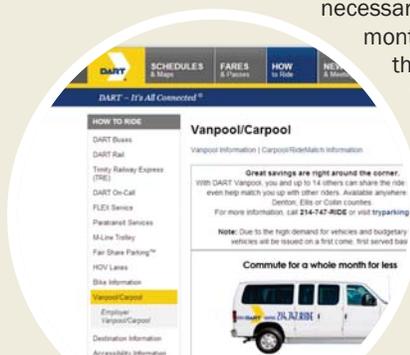
http://www.alicelaw.org/uploads/asset/asset_file/1324/Leg_Ad_2012_Language_Access_Ordinance__2_.pdf

MODELS TO CONSIDER

DART Vanpool and Carpool Services

Ride sharing and carpooling are affordable options for those traveling without a vehicle in Dallas, Texas. The Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) provides van service that allows between 6 to 15 people (depending on van size) to share a ride within geographically identified boundaries. Drivers and passengers are recruited by signing up through the agency's Web site or calling the agency. Names are placed on a list, and once a van is full for a specified area, DART issues an agreement, participants' driving records are verified (if necessary), training is provided, and a van is issued. The cost ranges from \$460-\$480 per month (not including the cost of gas), which is split among the number of people sharing the van service. The DART covers the cost of insurance. Benefits include discounted transportation costs, reduced parking costs, access 7 days a week, and emergency services transportation for those in a group. There is tremendous demand for this service, with vehicles issued on a first-come, first-serve basis.

<http://www.dart.org/about/rideshare.asp>



Step up learning opportunities and resident educational levels

With one in five adults lacking a basic high school education, educational attainment levels among residents in the community are a threat to the financial stability of families as well as the region's workforce. At the same time the economy needs lifelong learners, thousands of youth have dropped out of Buffalo Public School District in recent years. Meanwhile, in many public schools in the community, fewer than one in ten students meet standards reflecting grade-appropriate measures of college and career readiness.

STRATEGIES

Engage local state representatives and Governor Cuomo in ensuring all children in Buffalo have access to kindergarten by making it mandatory in the Buffalo Public School District, as other districts across the state have done. State-level legislation for Rochester and New York City offers a model.

Increase awareness among parents on how they can improve their child's school-readiness and lifelong academic performance before they even begin school through reading and literacy promotion, diet and good nutrition, and early screening and intervention for developmental challenges and attention deficits.

Tap into the local workforce and the community's relatively large population of college graduates to increase the pool of mentors for children and teen parents.

Support Say Yes Buffalo in achieving its \$30 million goal to be fully built out and self sustaining.

Encourage all youths under the age of 21 who have dropped out of high school with decades of working years in front of them to reenroll in school and benefit from the promises of Say Yes.

Reduce teen pregnancies which creates barriers to learning and completing high school. (This is one objective of the after-school programming being implemented by Say Yes.)

Expand online options of classroom participation at the post-secondary level, to reduce barriers parents experience in returning to school (such as need for child care, transportation and coordination with varying work schedules).

For adults who are disabled, raise awareness of the comprehensive education and job training benefits available to SSD recipients through ACCES-VR (formally VESID).

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Buffalo Public School District, Say Yes Buffalo and its existing base of supporters, Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network, EPIC (Every Person Influences Children), Jericho Road, Mid-Erie Mental Health, Buffalo and Erie County Library, the region's post-secondary institutions, parents and teens who dropped out of school.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Union City School District in NJ was once near the bottom in rank. Today, nine out of 10 graduate, even though many are from poor non-English-speaking families.

<http://www.union-city.k12.nj.us/>

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Union City School District (Hudson County, New Jersey)

With more than 13,000 students and a \$247 million budget, the Union City School District is a national model for revitalizing schools and improving the performance of underperforming children. Described as "wretched" 25 years ago, students in this school district now achieve comparable state test scores to suburban students.

Embracing a systems approach to education, the school district's success is attributed to several strategies, including high-quality full-day preschool starting at age three; classroom emphasis on language and vocabulary; allowing immigrant children to become fluent in their native language before becoming fluent in English; a challenging and cohesive curriculum; scrutiny of student test scores to address learning problems; hands-on assistance to teachers and students; viewing parents as partners in education; good union-management relations; and high expectations, recognizing dramatic shift takes time. In 2012 almost 90 percent of students graduated from high school (15 percent higher than the national average) and almost 75 percent attended college. Leadership began to see a culture shift after 5 years.

<http://www.union-city.k12.nj.us/>



Expand access to vocational training and workforce participation supports

Vocational training may be the most promising ticket out of poverty for the masses of vulnerable working-age adults who lack any training beyond high school, circumstances which leave many unemployed and living in poverty on minimum wage pay. Vocational training is also a good fit with the region's workforce needs, as many local employers in fields like advanced manufacturing and healthcare have job openings for those willing to be trained. These are good, full-time jobs with benefits and opportunities for career advancement. Yet, beyond skills, barriers to workforce participation exist for many and include lack of flexible and affordable transportation options and the need for child care. Obtaining a GED, a test that is described as "culturally biased" is an additional barrier some refugees encounter to vocational training.

STRATEGIES

Engage providers in raising awareness of the many jobs and training programs available as part of the Advance Buffalo Program through outreach engaging residents, human services providers, churches and other leaders in high poverty areas, particularly Riverside and the Lower West Side.

Continue to support the implementation of Dream It, Do It in two of the communities high schools (East High School and Hutch Tech).

Strengthen pathways to skills development for adult refugees and immigrants by better integrating literacy and language training with skills training for jobs with openings. Washington's I-BEST model is a nationally recognized best practice for doing so, and it was developed because so few ESL participants were pursuing training beyond ESL.

Improve refugee's access to vocational training by engaging state-level elected leaders in advocating for lifting the GED requirement for vocational programs, where possible, especially for immigrants and refugees. According to leaders from the International Institute, this practice is being successfully implemented in Minnesota for select training programs, where the GED creates a barrier to vocational training.

Explore opportunities to expanding access to vocational training for every child in the Buffalo Public School District who is not college bound and who will need to leave high school with higher-level job skills to earn above minimum wage. The recent partnership between BOCES and the Buffalo Public School District offers a model. Strengthening partnerships between the school district, local unions and employers is another opportunity.

Explore opportunities for van pooling and car sharing to increase job access for those without vehicles. Consider the feasibility of reinstating Wheels to Work or something similar, which offers low-cost vehicles to low-income parents who desire to work. The program, which relied on state support, was forced to be cut by Everywoman Opportunity Center.

Raise awareness among employers of financial incentives available for hiring welfare recipients. PIVOT (Placing Individuals in Vital Opportunity Training) is one wage-subsidy program that pays the first six months of wages for employees in need of on-the-job training.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Buffalo Public School District, Erie 1 BOCES, NYS Education Department, Buffalo Niagara Partnership, Dream It, Do It Western New York, ESL providers, local unions, employers in the advanced manufacturing industry, NFTA, and Everywoman Opportunity Center. Through their provider and community connections, the Mobile Safety-Net Team and the UB Regional Institute could also be key supports in terms of outreach and the promotion of programs such as Advance Buffalo.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Riding sharing and van pooling are affordable options for traveling for those without a vehicle in Dallas.

<http://www.dart.org/about/aboutdart.asp>

Grow affordable housing options for low-income tenants

Over 22,000 households are living in a financially precarious housing situation, paying more than 30% of their household income on housing. Most rent, even though rents in some of the poorest areas are some of the highest in the region, relative to home prices. While agency providers say the number of foreclosures have waned, they report a growing tide of landlords who do not maintain their rentals. Providers also say the safety-net for housing can be difficult to navigate, while housing-related crises were the second most common concern described by vulnerable residents.

STRATEGIES

Consider promoting “good landlords” and tenant choice through certification that may involve a partnership between the city and selected housing providers.

Ensure that immigrants and refugees have meaningful access to affordable HUD-supported housing, which residents speak very positively about in terms of being well maintained.

Strengthen pathways to home ownership for lower-income families, while removing barriers to loans. Consider options for implementing an asset building program, modeled after the well-developed Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota, which is helping the working poor purchase homes, pay for higher education and open small businesses.

Develop guidance for lower-income tenants, especially refugees, on the safety-net of housing services in the community, including resources as well as where to turn in crisis situations, what documentation to bring and what to expect.

Raise awareness of housing supports such as HEAP, EMPOWER NY, ReUse Buffalo, Habitat for Humanity and CASH Buffalo.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, Belmont Housing, Habitat for Humanity, West Side Neighborhood Housing Services, Neighborhood Legal Services, PUSH Buffalo, Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Heart of the City, large local employers, area foundations.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Family Assets for Independence has helped lift thousands of families in Minnesota out of poverty by encouraging savings of just \$40 a month.

<http://minnesotafaim.com/>

Continue to strengthen neighborhood service hubs, in areas and for populations of growing need

With the majority of service providers in the western portion of Buffalo located within 3 miles of downtown or along the west side, the safety net of human services is relatively weaker in neighborhoods to the north with high and/or growing needs. This includes Riverside and North Buffalo. It’s a demand-supply mismatch that creates access barriers. Meanwhile, long-standing silos have prevented, until recently, partnerships, programming and services that could better serve the community’s growing Hispanic/Latino population, nearly half of whom live in poverty.

STRATEGIES

Support collaborative efforts among service providers focused on serving the Hispanic community that fill gaps in services such as skills development for young adults, ESL programming, housing, and primary health care.

Develop information and human services application hubs at neutral venues in the northern neighborhoods of Buffalo such as the North Park Branch on Hertel Ave and the Riverside Branch on Tonawanda Street. The public schools in these neighborhoods, which will now be open until 5 or 6 pm to accommodate Say Yes programming, offer another venue.

Engage churches and libraries in raising awareness of safety-net programs and services in high-needs areas where poverty is growing.

Support efforts of providers such as Potter’s Pantry to expand services and develop service hubs.

Bring mobile offerings to public housing sites, food pantries and Head Starts.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo, the Belle Center, Los Tainos, North Buffalo Food Pantry, North Buffalo Community Center, Catholic Charities, Buffalo and Erie County Library branches; churches near North Buffalo’s Delaware and Riverside areas.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Food pantries are evolving into hubs for human services. Response to Love on Buffalo East Side offers training, caseworkers, health insurance sign-up and a baby ministry, in addition to food.

<http://www.responsetolovecenter.org/>

Continue to link revitalization strategies to cultural and community strengths

Many strong assets exist in this community. In addition to cultural diversity unlike anywhere else in the region and a rich history, the community is home to several colleges and universities, major regional employers, cultural assets, and the largest foundations in the region. Moreover, neighborhoods like Elmwood Village, Allentown and Grant Street are success stories sitting next to some of the deepest poverty levels regionally. Greater connectivity and accessibility to these assets could help spur economic development, ultimately lifting the standard of living and quality of life for residents on the west side where poverty is concentrated.

STRATEGIES

Continue to foster refugee and immigrant entrepreneurship through training and technical assistance and stronger links with area colleges such as the Small Business Development Center at Buffalo State College and the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership at UB, which also offers a program for minority and women entrepreneurs.

Draw from success stories within the community to boost revitalization in areas with potential through connections with the Elmwood Village Association and the Allentown Association.

Strengthen partnerships between community agencies and the Buffalo Police Department to reduce crime and enhance perceptions of safety in problematic areas, as this detracts significantly from a community's livability and walkability. Block clubs are a tool being used in other Buffalo city neighborhoods to reduce crime, increase safety, voice concerns to the city, beautify property, raise funds, and strengthen neighborhoods in a way that makes that more attractive to potential homebuyers.

Continue to grow community identity, pride and cohesion within and across cultures and neighborhoods through festivals, public arts and special events.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Neighborhood business associations (Elmwood Village Association, Allentown Association Grant-Amherst Association, Riverside Business Association); Northwest Buffalo Community Development Corp., PUSH Buffalo, University at Buffalo, Buffalo State College, Mobile Safety-Net Team, Buffalo Niagara Partnership, leaders from cultural organizations in neighborhoods poised for revitalization; Buffalo Police Department; the foundation community.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Buffalo's Elmwood Village is a hub for businesses and a thriving community for residents. Yet it wasn't always this way.
<http://www.elmwoodvillage.org>

Appendices

Appendix A - Data Sources and Notes

1.1 Cover Map

Service providers: The human service providers that are mapped are listed on pages 27 and 28 of the report. The cover map does not represent these providers by their employment size or organizational status as the inside map (see page 26) does.

Population in poverty: The map draws upon 2006-10 American Community Survey data at the block group level, with all municipal boundaries for the map from U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 and 2012 Tiger Line Shape files. Those in or near poverty are individuals whose income is under 200% of the federal poverty level.

Transportation: NFTA routes and bus stops are from the NFTA and reflect 2012 information.

Schools: The locations of elementary and secondary schools in Buffalo (West) are from the 2012 NYS School Report Card database available from the NYS Education Department. Total enrollment reflects total students enrolled at these 22 schools during 2011-12.

Major Employers: Selected large employers in Buffalo (West of Main Street) are shown on the map. Employment size was determined using Reference USA's 2012 Business Database and 2011 Buffalo Business First Book of Lists.

Map Layers: Boundary files for the City of Buffalo, including census tracts, block groups, parks, roads, water bodies and more, were mapped using data from the NYS GIS Clearinghouse and the U.S. Census Bureau 2011 and 2012 Tiger Line Shape files. Neighborhood boundaries drawn from a map created by the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, "Planning Neighborhoods and Census Tracts By Planning Community," available on the city's website at http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/MapDesc/dd_panels_comunity.pdf.

1.2 Executive Summary

Population in poverty: The 2007-11 American Community Survey is the source of data on individuals living in or near poverty. Those in poverty are individuals with incomes under the federal poverty level. Those near poverty are defined as those with incomes between 100% and 200% of the federal poverty level. The City of Buffalo (West of Main Street) total population is from the same source. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Indicators and trends: Indicators on barriers and food needs of vulnerable individuals is from a survey of at-risk residents in the community described in Data Sources and Notes Section 1.3. See the subsection on "The Most Vulnerable."

The NYS Department of Health supplied data on pregnancies by Zip Code and asthma-related emergency department usage.

All other analyses use census-track level data from 2007-11 American Community Survey.

Landscape of human services: A listing a human services providers comes from data compiled by the Mobile Safety-Net Team and Reference USA's 2012 Business Database. Employment at these organization's and agencies is primarily from Reference USA's 2012 Business Database.

Barriers and systemic challenges: The percentage of residents experiencing barriers is from a survey of at-risk residents in Buffalo (West) described in Data Sources and Notes Section 1.3. See the subsection on "The Most Vulnerable." This survey was also the source of the percentage of vulnerable residents who do not have a car and primarily rely on alternative modes of travel to get places, in addition to the percentage of vulnerable working-age adults who are employed .

The 2007-11 American Community Survey was the source of data on the community's foreign born population, number of individuals who lack English fluency and households without a vehicle.

1.3 Context for Action

People in Need

Individuals and Families: Population and household counts are from the 2007-11 American Community Survey and reflect figures for City of Buffalo Census Tracts 45, 46.01, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52.01, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58.01, 58.02, 59, 61, 62.01, 63.01, 63.02, 65.01, 66.01, 66.02, 67.01, 67.02, 68, 69.01, 69.02, 70, 710.01, 710.02, 720.02, 165, 169 and 171. These tracks wholly or partially west of Main Street in Buffalo.

As defined by the Census, families are housing units where two or more persons related by birth, marriage or adoption reside. Non-family households include persons living alone or with another person not related by birth, marriage or adoption.

Population by Age: The 2007-2011 American Community Survey is the source of population counts by age group. Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of individuals in various age groups by the total population for Buffalo (West of Main Street) and Erie and Niagara Counties, respectively.

Potentially At-Risk Populations: These are individuals and households that have experienced higher than average rates of poverty as a result of barriers to education and/or work, either themselves or by those they are dependent on, as in the case for young children. Counts are from and/or calculated using data from the 2007-11 American Community Survey. The listing is not intended to be inclusive of all possible groups that may be economically vulnerable but rather some of those that are significant to community and region.

Work and Income: U.S. Census Bureau's Local Employment Dynamics data for 2010, available through the OnTheMap tool, was used to determine the number of higher- and lower-paying workers in Buffalo (West) that reside within the community. Workers earning \$1,250 per month or less (less than or equal to \$15,00/year) are described as being in lower-paying jobs while those earning at least \$3,333 per month (about \$40,000/year) are described as being in higher-paying jobs. The analysis is based on 2010 data, the most current year available, and reflects primary jobs. A primary job is the individual's highest paying job for the year, and a count of primary jobs is the same as the count of all workers, so there isn't a double counting of jobs.

The community's top employers comes from several sources. School data is from the NYS Education Department 2012 Report Card database and reflects employment at schools located only within the City of Buffalo (West of Main Street). The Buffalo Niagara Partnership provided data from its most current Buffalo Business First Book of Lists on employment at HSBC's tower. The other employment figures are from Reference USA's Business Database, downloaded October 1, 2013.

Households by income level were calculated using data from the 2007-11 American Community Survey. This was also the data source for median incomes, as provided by Social Explorer for all Census Tracts in Buffalo (West) as well as Erie County as a whole.

Poverty: The 2006-11 American Community Survey is the source of data on individuals living in or near poverty. Income relative to poverty level is provided for individuals by age group and race/ethnicity. The map shows poverty rates by census block group. In considering poverty by neighborhood, the data from the following census tracts were used Black Rock (Census Tracts 55 and 59), Forest (Census Tracts 63.01 and 171), Front Park (Census Tracts 61 and 65.01), Lower West Side (Census Tracts 71.01 and 71.02).

Trends in poverty between 2000 and 2010 were analyzed using data from the 2000 U.S. Census, STF3 and 2006-10 American Community Survey. Due to changes in census tract boundaries over this time period, Census crosswalk files and block group data were used to apportion data into comparable areas.

The daily amount a family of three lives on at the federal poverty level is calculated by dividing the 2013 annual poverty threshold for this family size by the number of family members and the number of days in a year. The cost of the a round trip by bus for a family of three was calculated using NFTA's standard one-way fare of \$2.

Edmunds was used to calculate the cost of car ownership. The estimate is based on the purchase of a used 2008 Chevrolet Cobalt. In addition to the cost of the car itself (about \$6,800), the cost reflects, taxes and fees, financing, fuel, insurance, maintenance and repairs. \$20.00 is the average daily cost over five years of ownership.

Education: Student enrollment figures and the percentage of children qualifying for free and reduced priced lunch are from the 2012 School Report Card database, available from the NYS Education Department. Children qualify for free or reduced priced lunch if their family income is under 185% of the federal poverty level.

Academic performance data for Math for 2011-12 is from the NYSED's 2012 School Report Card Database, providing performance data by school and by district for various categories of students, including by English proficiency and economic disadvantage. Student performing at levels 3 or 4 are described as meeting or exceeding standards.

Academic performance data for 2013 come from school and district data released by the Buffalo News as part of an article on August 8 entitled "Tougher exams significantly lower scores across Buffalo Niagara."

Graduation data is from a NYSED report entitled "Public School Total Cohort Graduation Rate and Enrollment Outcome Summary, 2011-12 School Year, offering school-level graduation outcomes for all schools across New York State. The NYSED's 2012 School Report Card Database was the source of drop-out data, while the number of suspensions is taken from a presentation by the Buffalo City School District at the Say Yes Community Leadership Meeting at WNEC on August 7, 2013. Numbers are district-wide figures reflecting short-term suspensions.

Information on Say Yes is from an interview with David Rust, Executive Director, as well as information released at the Say Yes Community Leadership Council Quarterly Meeting on August 7, 2013. Information on the implementation of Dream It Do It comes from Nadine Powell and Susan Witt of The Buffalo-Niagara Partnership.

Educational attainment levels in the community are from the 2007-11 American Community Survey.

The Most Vulnerable

323 adults residing in City of Buffalo (West) Zip Codes 14201, 14202, 14207, 14208, 14209, 14213, 14214, 14216 and 14222 completed a one-page questionnaire providing demographic and socioeconomic data as well as information on human services needs, concerns, benefits, and access barriers.

The survey was prepared by the Mobile Safety-Net Team with input from the University at Buffalo Regional Institute. It was administered by the Mobile Safety-Net Team during 2013 at several different venues across the community, including North Buffalo Food Pantry, YWCA Pantry, First Presbyterian Church, Richmond Apartments, Jasper Parish Pantry, Richmond-Summer Senior Center and Niagara Street.

Survey sites were selected to capture a representative sample of residents in poverty or at risk of poverty (lower-income parents, seniors, non-English speakers, etc.) as well as a cross section of neighborhoods from within the community. Because the survey captured only those residents who are able to physically get to these locations, the survey findings may under-represent those who are unable to leave their homes due to disability or lack of transportation.

Where residents needed assistance completing the survey and the survey was conducted in the presence of Mobile Safety-Net Team members, assistance was provided by reading the survey questions to residents and helping them complete the survey instrument. Agency staff also assisted with the translation of the survey, which was prepared in English, where necessary.

Survey data were coded by the Mobile Safety-Net Team and analyzed by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute. The 323 surveys represent a sample for the community's vulnerable population that is statistically significant with a confidence level of 95% and with a confidence interval of 5. Surveys completed by household representatives who reported a Zip Codes corresponding to an area outside the City of Buffalo (West) were not included in the analysis.

Not all survey respondents answered every survey question. The question soliciting information on household income had the lowest level of responses, with 220 answering this question. This number of responses still represents a sample size far exceeding the 96 or more responses needed to obtain a statistically significant sample size for Buffalo (West of Main Street) at-risk population within a 95% confidence interval +/- 10%.

The 98% of survey respondents who are said to receive some form of human support services or live in a household with someone who does reflect those survey takers saying they receive food stamps, Medicaid, cash benefits, unemployment, disability income, HEAP, SSI/SSD, WIC, and/or rental assistance. This information is captured by multiple questions on the survey and the findings from these questions are aggregated to calculate an overall percentage of those receiving some kind of assistance.

The chart presents selected findings from the questionnaire. The variables shown are in many cases an aggregation of two or more response categories. Where percentages across subcategories add up to over 100, it is because survey takers were allowed to select more than one category as their response to the question, as is the case of the question soliciting information on respondent household's sources of income and types of human benefits they receive.

Percentage shown are calculated based on the number of respondents answering the particularly survey question, which may be less than the full sample.

Places in Need

Housing: Housing costs as a percentage of income for renters and owners come from the 2007-11 American Community Survey. Costs include mortgages, second mortgages, rent, utilities (electricity, gas, water, sewer), homeowners insurance and property taxes. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, households paying more than 30% of income on housing are considered cost burdened, as this standard is generally accepted as the cut-off for affordable housing. Those paying more than 50% are considered severely burdened. Low-income households lacking affordable housing are at particular risk of not being able to afford other necessities such as food, clothing, medical care and transportation. The U.S. Census Bureau tracks household data for both the 30% and 50% standard.

Median housing costs by Zip Code for both renters and homeowners are from the same source.

Information on Section 8 vouchers is from an interview with representative of Belmont Housing Resources of WNY.

Transportation: Vehicle access data for households and workers in the City of Buffalo (West of Main Street) are from the 2006-11 American Community Survey.

Public transit times are calculated from 435 Fargo Avenue on the West Side of Buffalo to various destinations in and beyond Niagara Falls using Google Maps, which estimates travel time based on mode of travel and time of day. One-way travel times include walk times to bus stops.

Crime: City-wide crime data is from the U.S. Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics. Rates of crime for both the City of Buffalo and surrounding municipalities reflect violent offenses (murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery and aggravated assaults) and property crime, along with population totals.

Crime data for Buffalo (West of Main Street) is from CrimeReport.com and reflects only violent incidences reported by the Buffalo Police Department between January 16, 2013 and July 15,

2013 (the only time periods available for downloading). Violence incidences include homicides, robberies, sexual offenses and assaults. Each incident was mapped at the center of the street block the crime occurred. Counts of violent incidences at the neighborhood level were determined by overlaying neighborhood boundary files with this data.

Landscape of Human Services

Human services organizations typically provide food to the hungry, jobs training to unemployed adults, shelter to the homeless, youth development to children at risk, recovery to those affected by disaster, and assistance to victims of crime. The listing shown includes human services organizations as well as those that may not be officially classified as human services organizations but have been identified as providing critical services to vulnerable populations. The analysis draws upon organizational data compiled by the Mobile Safety-Net Team and supplemented by information from Reference USA's 2012 Business Database. Both nonprofits and governmental agencies are included. Only organizations with operational sites within the community are included in this listing for the purpose of analyzing what supports residents have access to within the community.

Organizations providing services to target populations such as veterans, teen parents, seniors and the homeless are those whose organizational mission it is to connect with these particular populations (such as the services for seniors at the senior centers). Alternatively, they may have significant programming for these populations.

Service categories are defined as follows:

Food – includes food pantries, mobile markets and places where free meals are provided as well as organizations and agencies offering connection points for food access such as the Erie County Department of Social Services where the SNAP program is administered.

Clothing – includes clothes closet and sites where free clothing is available, as well as programs providing emergency clothing. Includes organizations offering only specific kinds of clothing such as that needed for work.

Education/Training – includes places of formal education as well as sites for job training, GED, ESL, literacy skills, community/continuing education, and parenting training.

Affordable Housing – subsidized housing and other non-market rate homes and rental units available to lower-income populations. Also included are sites providing access to supports such as rental assistance, utility assistance, weatherization, emergency housing repair, and HEAP such Erie County Department of Social Services and the Community Action Program. Also includes organizations working to expand options for affordable housing such as the Habitat for Humanity and PUSH Buffalo.

Transportation – includes organizations that offer transportation via buses, vans and shuttles, as part of the suite of services they regularly provide (such as the Erie County's Senior Services). Also includes agencies offering transportation supports such as ACCES-VR and Everywoman Opportunity Center.

Mental Health/Addictions - includes sites providing mental health treatment including counseling and addictions support groups. Covers out-patient and residential programs. Does not include organizations that only serve as a source of information for mental health services.

Health/Wellness – includes sites providing health services, preventive medial exams and/or screening, particularly for lower-income or vulnerable populations. Does not include organizations that only serve as a source of medical/health insurance information. Nor does this category include programs providing primarily fitness or recreational benefits.

Legal - includes legal assistance for low-income populations, especially assistance in obtaining benefits. Includes such assistance for limited populations only such as victims of domestic violence or the elderly.

Youth Programs - includes providers of after-school programs and activities for school-age youth. Also included are mentoring programs. This category does not include programming provided as part of a residential treatment program for youth. Nor does it include programs providing only information about youth programs.

Financial literacy - includes financial literacy training and budget counseling services. Includes programs for limited vulnerable populations.

Crime/Juvenile – includes crime prevention programs, juvenile justice, and victim assistance programs (such as the domestic violence services provided by Catholic Charities.) Does not include safety classes or crime prevention awareness.

Information/Referral - includes agencies, programs and positions providing information and referral to a wide variety of human support services for individuals and families.

Providers are classified as governmental if they are an arm of a local, state or federal level agency or department.

Most employment figures used to map human services organizations by employment size come from Reference USA's 2012 Business Database providing the number of employees an organization or agency has working at a particular site.

Models to Consider

Information and data were gathered from a variety of online sources, and has been supplemented with telephone conversations with leaders at these organizations, agencies and school districts, where possible.

Appendix B - Resident Questionnaire

MOBILE SAFETY-NET TEAM COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your answers will assist us in better understanding the needs in the community and help us build a stronger safety net that more readily connects residents to the human services they need. Please select one response unless indicated otherwise. **Your answers will remain completely confidential.**

Age _____ Gender (M/F) _____ Zip Code _____ Location _____

Including yourself, how many people are in your household?

- Adults (18 and older) _____
- Children (under 18) _____

Has anyone in your household ever served in the armed forces?

- Yes¹
- No²

Are there any urgent concerns or special needs that you or someone in your household might have?

- Utility shut-off notice¹
- Foreclosure / eviction²
- Homelessness³
- No money for food⁴
- Domestic violence⁵
- No urgent concerns⁶
- Other: _____⁷

Has anyone in your household ever encountered any difficulty in getting necessary services they need (such as assistance with food, housing, utilities, medical care, etc.)?

- Yes¹
- No²

If you marked "yes", please describe what barriers were faced:

- Traveling to get services is difficult¹
- I don't speak / read English well²
- I can't get there during the hours the agency is open³
- I've been turned away because of income limits⁴
- It can be physically difficult for me to leave my home⁵
- It's too much of a hassle because the process is confusing⁶
- Other: _____⁷

What is your current employment status? (select all that apply)

- Employed full-time¹
- Employed part-time²
- Unemployed, looking³
- Unemployed, not looking⁴
- Student⁵
- Retired⁶
- Disabled⁷
- Other: _____⁸

What are your household's sources of income? (Select all that apply)

- Employment¹
- Unemployment insurance²
- Public assistance³
- Social Security⁴
- Pension⁵
- Disability⁶
- Worker's compensation⁷
- Child Support⁸
- No Income⁹
- Other: _____¹⁰

How much money is currently received from these sources to support your household each month (net income)?

What is your primary form of transportation?

- Bicycle¹
- Family / Friends²
- Own vehicle³
- Taxi⁴
- Public Transportation⁵
- Walk⁶
- Car Share Service⁷
- Other: _____⁸

If you don't own a vehicle and are not a regular public transit user, why don't you use public transit more often?

- Too expensive¹
- Takes too long to get places²
- No service to where I need to go³
- No evening or weekend service⁴
- Buses
- It's too
- Service
- I don't feel safe⁵
- Schedule is too confusing⁹
- Other (please specify): _____¹⁰

Does anyone in your household lack health insurance? (select all that

Appendix B - Resident Questionnaire (Continued)

Other: _____

What is the current employment status of other adults in your household? (select all that apply)

- Employed full-time¹
- Employed part-time²
- Unemployed, looking³
- Unemployed, not looking⁴
- Student⁵
- Retired⁶
- Disabled⁷
- Not Applicable / No other adults in household⁸
- Other: _____⁹

What is your current living situation?

- Own¹
- Rent, with assistance²
- Rent, without assistance³
- Staying with friend / family⁴
- Homeless⁵
- Other: _____⁶

How long have you lived at your current address?

- Less than 3 mos.¹
- 3 mos. – 1 year²
- 1-5 years³
- 6 - 10 years⁴
- More than 10 years⁵

What is the highest level of education/training you've completed?

- High School / GED¹
- Some College²
- College Degree (2-yr or 4-yr)³
- Post-graduate degree⁴
- Military⁵
- Trade School⁶
- Did not finish high school⁷

Does anyone in your household lack health insurance? (select all that apply)

- Yes, one or more adults do not have health insurance¹
- Yes, one or more children do not have health insurance²
- No, we all have health insurance³

If insured, select the type of health insurance currently used by members of your household (please select all that apply):

- Private insurance¹
- Managed care (HMO, PPO)²
- Medicare (65+, disabled)³
- Medicaid⁴
- Government (VA, Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus)⁵
- Health Savings Account⁶
- Other: _____⁷
- Do not know/Unsure⁸
- Do not have health insurance⁹

Are you, or is anyone in your household currently receiving any of the following forms of public assistance?

- Food stamps¹
- Medicaid²
- Cash benefits³
- HEAP⁴
- SSI / SSD⁵
- WIC⁶
- Other _____⁷
- None⁸

Does anyone in your household have a pending application for any of the following?

- Food stamps¹
- Medicaid²
- Cash benefits³
- HEAP⁴
- SSI / SSD⁵
- WIC⁶
- Other _____⁷
- None⁸

If you have an immediate need and would like someone to call you for assistance, please write your name and phone number on the back of this survey and a member of our team can contact you. Thank you!

Appendix C - Senior Focus Group Tool



What are the most critical human support needs facing you and your family?

Most Critical Need

2nd Biggest Need

3rd Biggest Need

- _____ Counseling and Treatment
- _____ Financial/Budgeting/Taxes
- _____ Food/Nutrition
- _____ Health Care
- _____ Health Insurance Coverage
- _____ Legal
- _____ Mortgage/Rent or Housing
- _____ Referrals/Information
- _____ Senior Activities
- _____ Safety/Crime Prevention
- _____ Transportation
- _____ Weatherization

Tell Us About Yourself

How old are you? _____

What is your gender? Male Female

How many people, including yourself, do you live with? _____

What is your Zip Code _____

Appendix C - Parent and Younger Adult Focus Group Tool



What are the most critical human support needs facing you and your family?

Most Critical Need

2nd Biggest Need

3rd Biggest Need

- _____ Child Care
- _____ Counseling and Treatment
- _____ Financial/Budgeting/Taxes
- _____ Food/Nutrition
- _____ Health
- _____ Housing
- _____ Jobs/Training
- _____ Legal
- _____ Referrals/Information
- _____ Safety/Crime
- _____ Senior Activities
- _____ Transportation
- _____ Youth Programs

Tell Us About Yourself

- How old are you? _____
- What is your gender? Male Female
- How many people, including yourself, do you live with? _____
- How many children do you have? _____
- What is your Zip Code? _____

A COMMUNITY REPORT
City of Buffalo
(West of Main Street)

This is a collaborative effort of the **University at Buffalo Regional Institute** and the **Mobile Safety-Net Team** established by **The John R. Oishei Foundation**. Commissioned by The John R. Oishei Foundation, this assessment presents a detailed analysis of human services needs, key resources, barriers, and opportunities for strengthening the system, and in turn, residents. The insights and recommendations provided are intended to assist the foundation community, human services providers and other stakeholders in closing gaps and developing comprehensive, efficient and cost-effective strategies for connecting with a greater number of economically vulnerable individuals and families.



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