

“

What I see on a daily basis are issues that can be lumped under mental health.”

“ We tried to attack the problem of transportation, and we found ourselves running into a brick wall...”

“

We don't have the time or money to take over what the for-profit health system is leaving behind.”

INSIGHTS

FROM

PROVIDERS

CITIES OF
**Tonawanda
 and North
 Tonawanda**

FEBRUARY 2020



**Numbers
 in Need**

IN BUFFALO NIAGARA

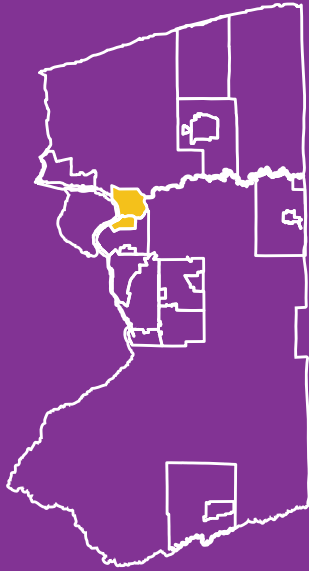


A Mobile Safety Net Team initiative established by The John R. Oishei Foundation



Prepared by  **University at Buffalo**
 Regional Institute
 School of Architecture and Planning

Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda



- 4 What Went Into This Report
- 5 The Landscape of Providers
- 6 Strengths of the Landscape
- 7 Additional Gaps/Needs Identified by Providers
- 9 Barriers Residents Face to Programs, Services and Jobs
- 11 Promising Developments
- 12 Models to Consider
- 13 Data Sources and Notes

About this Report

The Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda are distinct communities with unique resources. They share a border and some similar challenges, and are treated as a single study region for this research. This report offers a snapshot of findings for the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda (the “Twin Cities”), with new data on the community’s population that lives in or near poverty. It includes the perspectives of human service providers, the landscape of providers, and strategies that could strengthen the safety-net for individuals and families.

Research in this report was led by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute in partnership with the Mobile Safety-Net Team. It was commissioned by The John R. Oishei Foundation. This work updates and expands upon a community report completed by the research team in 2014.

A Mobile Safety Net Team initiative established by The John R. Oishei Foundation



Prepared by  University at Buffalo Regional Institute School of Architecture and Planning

Defining Need

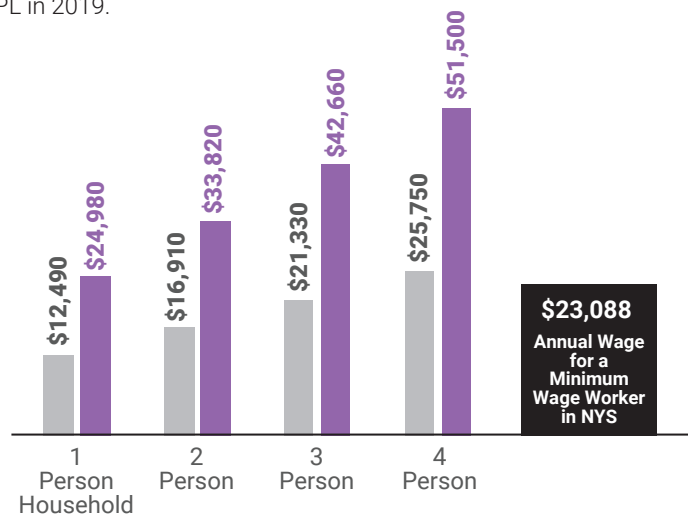
Close to 12,700 residents in the Twin Cities live in or near poverty on incomes below two hundred percent of the federal poverty line.

The federal poverty line (FPL) is \$12,490 for a household of one, \$16,910 for a two-person household, \$21,330 for a family of three, and \$25,750 for a family of four. A single parent of two who works full-time, year-round at the minimum wage in NYS (\$11.10 per hour or \$23,088 a year) earns an income just above the FPL in 2019.

The FPL is adjusted annually by the federal government and varies by household size. It is often used to determine eligibility for programs that assist individuals and families with basic living expenses such as food, utilities, and rental housing. Households with incomes that exceed two hundred percent of the FPL (up to \$51,500 for a family of four) generally do not meet income guidelines for most programs.

Federal Poverty Guidelines, 2019

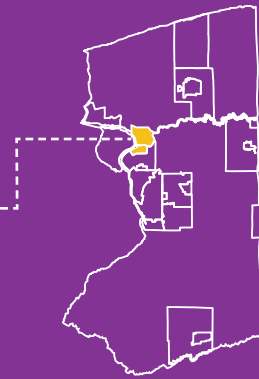
■ Federal Poverty Level ■ 200% of Federal Poverty Level



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Reports for this Community

This report is part of a comprehensive suite of reports for the **Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda**, one of 12 representative communities in the Buffalo Niagara Region selected for assessment and investment as part of the Numbers in Need project.



Each of these reports for this community is available online at NumbersinNeed.org



Insights from Providers

This report, *Insights from Providers*, explores the perspectives of service providers in the community with respect to gaps in the landscape of services, barriers to reaching residents, promising developments, and strategies for strengthening the landscape of programs and services. A focus group with agency leaders informed the findings presented in this document. Agency and community leaders can use this report to shape programs and services that respond to identified gaps and barriers, while leveraging system strengths and promising developments.



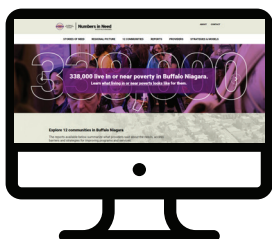
Community Snapshot

Community Snapshot presents an overview of findings from the research in this community, with new data and information on the people living in or near poverty, their barriers to programs and services, the landscape of service providers, and strategies for strengthening the community so that all residents can thrive economically. This report draws from more detailed findings available on the Numbers in Need website, as well as from Insights from Residents and Insights from Providers. Agency and community leaders can use this report to understand key findings and identify topics for further exploring.



Insights from Residents

Insights from Residents presents a more detailed look at the community's vulnerable populations, their needs, urgent concerns, and barriers to programs and services. A survey of residents and conversations with residents inform findings in this report. Agency and community leaders can use this document as they develop programs and services that respond to the needs of residents and remove barriers to jobs, programs and services faced by residents.



Visit us online at NumbersinNeed.org

NumbersInNeed.org is an online tool that leaders can use to understand economically vulnerable populations in the Buffalo Niagara Region, their urgent needs and concerns, barriers to services and factors that matter such as access to good paying jobs, educational attainment, and transportation options. The website features individual stories, community and regional indicators, interactive lists and maps of service providers, strategies for strengthening communities and models to consider.

What Went Into This Report

Building an Updated Landscape of Providers



The 2014 Baseline Community Report was the starting point.

Baseline Community Reports

The report completed for the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda in 2014 offered a starting point for analyzing the landscape of services.



Information was updated through an Agency Questionnaire.

Agency Questionnaire

Dozens of not-for-profit and governmental human service providers completed an agency questionnaire, which asked providers for updated information on their organizations, including the programs and services they offer.



Gaining Insights from Providers



We shared what we heard from residents and what the data said about the community.

Talking with agencies that provide programs and services to residents in the community highlighted challenges and barriers that preliminary data findings did not show. In some cases, providers turned our attention to new topics and areas of concern. In other cases, they offered additional insights on data and trends revealed through outreach to residents and analysis of detailed community data on poverty, housing costs, vehicle access, educational attainment, work, income and family factors that contribute to economic vulnerability.

Participating Organizations

- City of North Tonawanda
- City of Tonawanda Public Library
- Niagara Community Action Program (NiaCAP)
- North Tonawanda City Schools
- North Tonawanda Common Council
- Prevention Focus
- Salvation Army of Tonawanda
- St. Francis of Assisi
- Tonawanda City School District
- Tonawanda Housing Authority
- Twin Cities Meals on Wheels
- Veterans Assistance Local Ongoing Recognition (VALOR) WNY
- Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 77
- Western New York Law Center

Community Data



Resident Surveys



Resident Focus Groups



Preliminary findings from these activities were shared at provider focus group meetings and through provider interviews.

Provider Focus Groups



19 representatives of not-for-profit organizations and governmental service providers participated in a focus group sharing insights on additional areas of concern, barriers, successes and strategies for the future.

Provider Interviews



In some communities, conversations with selected agency representatives offered new and additional information on human service challenges, barriers and promising developments in the community.

Perspectives and Insights from Providers

The findings presented in this report synthesize **what we heard from providers**. Insights were captured from several providers who were interviewed, who shared additional perspectives and information on needs in the community, barriers they face in connecting with residents and promising developments.



Strengths of the Landscape



Additional Gaps/Needs Identified by Providers



Barriers Residents Face to Programs, Services and Jobs



Promising Developments

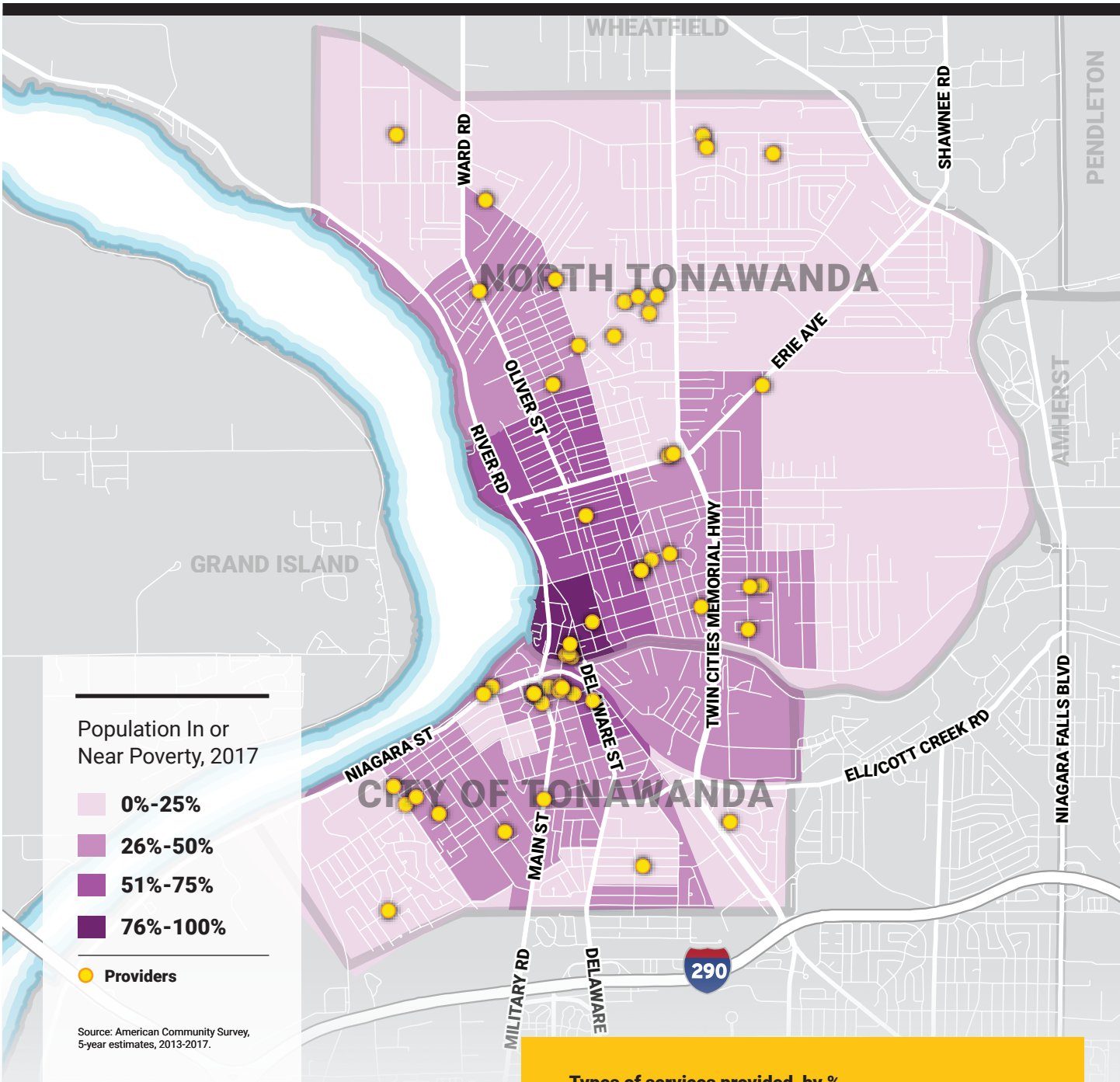


Models to Consider

Find it here:

Pg 5 of this report
(The Landscape of Providers)

Numbers in Need Website
(Provider Tool)



The Landscape of Providers

52

SERVICE PROVIDERS



in the City of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda

See more online

Visit NumbersInNeed.org to view additional maps and the listing of service providers.



Types of services provided, by %

56%	Education/ Training	8%	Veterans
42%	Food	8%	Clothing
33%	Youth Programs	8%	Health/Wellness
27%	Transportation	8%	Crime/Juvenile
21%	Info/Referral	4%	Legal
19%	Seniors	2%	Teen Parents
19%	Mental Health/ Addiction	2%	Homeless Services
13%	Housing/Utility	2%	Financial Literacy



Strengths of the Landscape

There are 52 service providers in the community.

There are 52 service providers in the Twin Cities. This is a relatively large number of providers overall, but on a per-person basis, the Twin Cities has fewer providers per capita than most of the study region's 12 communities. The majority of the community's providers (32) are located in the City of North Tonawanda. About half of providers in the Twin Cities are small, not-for-profit organizations that typically specialize in one or two services. Seventeen locations in the Twin Cities offer at least four types of services, including local schools, the City of Tonawanda Senior Center, and the Salvation Army.

Over half of providers offer education or youth programs.

Education is offered at 29 locations in the Twin Cities, making it the community's most common service. These education providers are primarily for youth. Most are local schools, but youth programs are also offered at seventeen locations, including the Boys & Girls Club, the YWCA, public libraries, and parks and recreation departments. These youth programs, identified as a community strength by the agency focus group, are a valuable resource for the nearly 650 families with children who live in poverty in the Twin Cities. While training options for adults are less abundant, a few resources do exist, including Catholic Charities' Workforce & Education and senior centers.

Food, clothing, and housing programs are a community strength.

Services that provide assistance for basic necessities, such as food, clothing, and housing, were identified as community strengths by the agency focus group. These services are common in the Twin Cities. Food is available at 22 locations, including local schools, the Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels, and food pantries. Meanwhile, housing services are offered at eight locations, and clothing is available at four sites. Agencies providing these services typically offer a range of other services at the same location.

Residents in need are located near many service providers.

Nearly 12,700 people in the Twin Cities live in or near poverty. Residents in need are most concentrated near the downtown area, but many live in other parts of the Twin Cities. Although people in need are dispersed across the community, most providers are located within one mile of thousands of residents living in or near poverty. Moreover, nearly half of providers are within a quarter-mile of an NFTA bus stop. Having providers nearby that are accessible by public transit increases the likelihood that residents will use the services available to them.

Senior programs are a strength of the social services landscape.

Ten locations in the community offer senior programs, including the Salvation Army and the City of Tonawanda Senior Center. Senior programs are a great asset for older adults and were identified as the community's top strength by the agency focus group.

There is at least one provider for every type of service in the community. The most common services—education, and food—are available at over twenty locations.

Source: UBRI analysis of provider locations, 2019.

3,000+ residents in or near poverty live within a one-mile radius of most service providers in the Twin Cities.

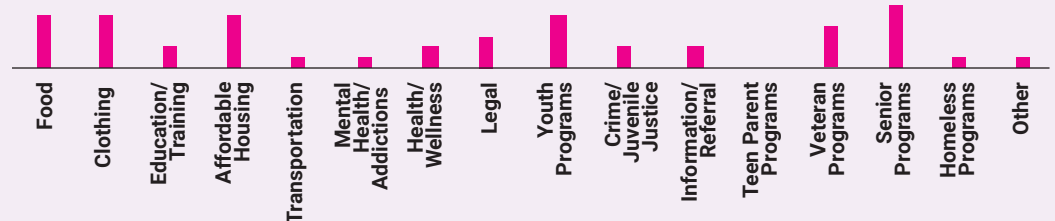
Source: UBRI analysis of provider locations relative to the population living in or near poverty, 2019.

Nearly half of providers in the Twin Cities are located within a quarter-mile of an NFTA bus stop.

Source: UBRI analysis of provider locations and NFTA transit stops, 2019.

Top strengths identified by provider focus group

Providers were asked to identify the community's strongest programs and services. Programming for seniors was identified as the top strength, followed by food, clothing, affordable housing, and youth programs.





Additional Gaps/Needs Identified by Providers

Higher-paying jobs in the trades go unfilled while households in the Twin Cities are saddled with student loan debt.

Residents in the Twin Cities with a bachelor's degree earn about \$16,000 more per year than residents who stopped their education at high school. One provider questioned whether education beyond high school is worth it, considering the student loan debt commonly associated with going to college. With top employers in healthcare, manufacturing and logistics, a four-year degree may not be as valuable as worker skills, training and experience. Providers say high school graduates do not often consider the high cost of college and less expensive training options that could prepare them for good-paying positions such as electricians, plumbers, and welders. Rather, many students still go to college. Student loan debt was the second most common financial concern of households, and outstanding debt was the most pressing urgent concern facing households in the Twin Cities. One service provider in the focus group said many of their clients are the working poor and seniors who are sued because of debt they cannot manage.

Drug and alcohol use is common, both among students and parents, and it contributes to financial hardship.

Provider focus group participants described the Twin Cities as a relatively safe community. Yet they also described an uptick in substance use and alcoholism, which may be correlated with poverty and criminal activity. "There are a lot of [youth] with alcohol and drug use," said one provider in the agency focus group. Providers said that reaching out to younger users through their parents is a challenge because many parents are struggling with addiction too. Providers see a growing complacency around drug use prevention. They say community meetings have offered parents and other residents an opportunity to voice concerns and brainstorm solutions, but few individuals attend these meetings.

Additional transportation services are needed in the Twin Cities.

Although fourteen providers in the Twin Cities offer transportation, eleven of these providers are public schools that only transport students. Providers described a scarcity of affordable, flexible travel options for the community's 1,800 households without a vehicle. One provider said that a bus used to run between the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, but ridership was not high enough to sustain the route. Ultimately, the financially infeasible route was cut by the NFTA. "It's all about profit margins. They're not willing to bend at all," said one focus group participant. Providers say public transit to Niagara County's larger cities such as Niagara Falls and Lockport remains intact, but riders looking to travel within the community face few options. Travel for medical services, mental health care, employment, and shopping for food and household necessities are the greatest needs.

Student loan debt was the second most common financial concern facing households in the Twin Cities, and outstanding debt was the top urgent concern.

Source: Numbers in Need, Survey of residents in the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, 2019

"There is so much poverty. Usually there is a correlation between the two (substance use and poverty).

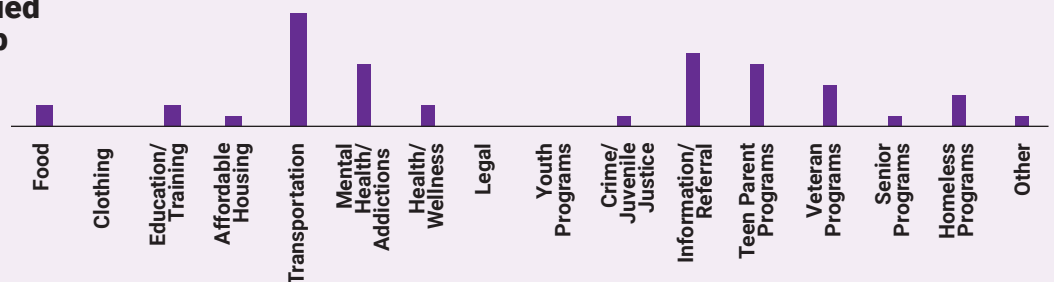
Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, 2019

"We (providers) tried to attack the problem of transportation, and we found ourselves running into a brick wall. It's all about profits and profit margins."

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, 2019

Top gaps/needs identified by provider focus group

Providers identified service areas where expanded programs are needed. Transportation emerged as the top need, followed by services for mental health and addictions, information/referral, and teen parents.





Additional Gaps/Needs Identified by Providers, cont'd.

Mental health is at the root of many poverty-related concerns, yet coordinating mental health services is very challenging.

One focus group participant whose expertise is in the mental health field described how poverty and mental health often go hand-in-hand. Mental health affects one's ability to work, go to school, get training, and follow through with referrals for additional support services. "Mental health is connected to everything," stated the service provider. "What I see on a daily basis are issues that can be lumped under mental health." At the same time, poverty perpetuates poor mental health through stress related to debt, joblessness, and a lack of reliable transportation which limits one's ability to access support services.

Providers say that while there are services available to address mental health concerns and related challenges, these services are not coordinated. Rather, service delivery is largely fragmented, often based on funding, revenue streams, and agency goals. Lack of mental healthcare coordination makes the system difficult to navigate, especially for individuals with poor mental health who lack a vehicle, family supports, or an advocate who can help them navigate a system that could be more accessible and integrated. Providers say the stigma of mental health creates additional barriers, as some residents will not even admit that they need help.

Families with children would benefit from additional services and supports.

Across the Twin Cities, more than 1,100 children, many in single-parent households, are living under the federal poverty level. Single-parent families are particularly vulnerable. About a third are in poverty across the Twin Cities. The vulnerability is even greater in the City of Tonawanda where 45% of single parents live in poverty. Service providers participating in the agency focus group described many areas where the landscape of services could be strengthened to support the community's families. For youth, providers mentioned the need for more early childhood education, early literacy, youth mentoring, peer-to-peer programs, and community-wide youth programs. For parents, providers identified a need for childcare, parenting programs, transportation, and child abuse prevention programs. For families, mental health services that are easy to access are needed. A couple of providers mentioned the need for more recreational programming and events in the community, such as family walks and talks, family days, and other parent-child events. Providers emphasized the importance of positive activities for youth outside of school. As one provider said, "For a lot of these kids [growing up in poverty and broken families]...failure is in the back of their head."

Few providers in the Twin Cities offer financial counseling or programs for teen parents.

In addition to the service gaps that agency focus group participants identified, an analysis of the service landscape shows that other services that are needed in the community are only offered by a few providers. For instance, only 2% of providers offer financial education and counseling. Yet debt was the number one urgent concern of residents who were surveyed in the Twin Cities. Similarly, only 2% of providers have programs focused on teen parents. Yet single parents in the Twin Cities are more likely to live in poverty than other families. While providers of these services exist in the community and across the Buffalo Niagara region, outreach and access is particularly important when services are not available at the neighborhood level.

Over a quarter of surveyed residents in the Twin Cities said they or someone in their household has a mental health disability.

Source: Numbers in Need, Survey of Residents in the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, 2019

While nearly all resident survey respondents have health insurance, 14% said they need mental healthcare or counseling that they can't afford.

Source: Numbers in Need, Survey of Residents in the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, 2019

Less than 5% of providers offer programs for teen parents, the homeless, or lower-income families in need of financial education or counseling.

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with providers in the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, 2019



Barriers Residents Face to Programs, Services and Jobs

Transportation is a barrier to programs, services and jobs, and the cost of owning a vehicle often contributes to household debt.

Traveling difficulty emerged as the second most common barrier to programs and services reported by residents who were surveyed in the Twin Cities. Providers described the lack of traveling options as a barrier residents face to mental health care, health services, legal help, and shopping for day-to-day needs. A provider from the school district described how some children enter school not immunized because their parents can't get them to the doctor. Another provider concurred that the need for additional transportation services is especially dire for families who are not eligible for Medicaid, which provides enrollees with rides to medical care including non emergency doctor visits. The majority of households in the Twin Cities are not insured by Medicaid, according to the survey of residents. Because getting around in the Twin Cities so often requires a car, most residents have a vehicle. However, providers talked how vehicle ownership adds to household debt—the top urgent concern in the Twin Cities. They say residents commonly pay for car repairs with high interest credit cards.

Some services are not promoted the way they have been in the past before the Tonawanda News closed.

Nearly half of those surveyed reported living in their current residence less than five years. Newcomers to the community or neighborhood may be less informed than longtime residents about what programs and services exist to support youth and families, help seniors age in place, or connect vulnerable populations such as Veterans to the services they need. Providers say loss of the daily community newspaper (Tonawanda News closed in 2015) has made it more difficult for them to get the word out and connect with residents. A representative from Meals on Wheels reported that they deliver fewer meals since the paper ceased operations. While the community still has weekly papers, coverage is more focused on police reports than the promotion of community services.

Vulnerable populations such as Veterans are often not aware of existing programs and services.

Nearly 20% of residents surveyed in the Twin Cities reported that someone in their household served in the armed forces. Former service members and their families often have a variety of needs connected to their service, from mental health care to disability support, transitioning services, and education. While there are many helpful resources for Veterans both in the Twin Cities and across the region (VALOR, VA Chapter 77, Salvation Army, and the North Tonawanda City Council with programs and services for Veterans in the community) providers say Veterans are often unaware of the services that are available and the programs they qualify for. Another focus group participant noted that service providers also need better information about existing resources so they can make helpful referrals to residents in need.

Limited information sharing across providers creates barriers for agencies eager to connect with more residents.

An emerging theme from the conversation with service providers was that service capacity within the community could be strengthened through greater coordination of services, more information sharing across agencies, and increased information and awareness. While good things are happening and there are promising developments on the horizon, providers described a system that is fragmented and impedes access for residents in need. Some providers see opportunities for information sharing that would make it easier for them to proactively reach residents in need.

Nearly 1,800 households in the Twin Cities, or about one in ten, do not have access to a vehicle.

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2017 (5-year estimates).

Nearly half of residents surveyed report living in their current home less than 5 years. Being relatively new to the neighborhood or community, these residents may not know what resources exist.

Source: Numbers in Need, Survey of Residents in the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, 2019

“We need to go back to community health clinics that are more accessible and don't require a major piece of transportation... [but they are] just not there.”

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with providers in the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, 2019



Barriers Residents Face to Programs, Services and Jobs, cont'd.

Employers in the Twin Cities are hiring, but many job seekers do not consider low-wage work or jobs in the trades.

Exactly 5% of residents surveyed in the Twin Cities said they are unemployed and looking for work. While providers said many job openings in the community are for lower-paying work in food and hospitality, they also said there is a lot of opportunity for better-paying positions such as carpenters, welders, plumbers, and electricians. Apprenticeship programs and companies across the region struggle to fill positions, according to focus group participants. As emphasis on diversity and inclusion grows, career pathways in the trades may present opportunities for women and people of color, who are traditionally underrepresented in these careers. Despite this labor shortage, provider focus group participants said youth do not consider these higher-wage opportunities often enough. As one put it, "the trades were being discouraged up until recently." Only 7% of surveyed residents reported completed training in the trades or a certificate program.

The digital divide makes it increasingly difficult for some agencies to connect with residents.

While many residents may have internet access on their cell phone, over 4,700 households in the Twin Cities have no computer in their home, or have a computer without an internet subscription. As service providers move more information about their programs, services and organizations online, having access to technology and online resources is important for residents. Households with lower incomes that are most in need are at a particular disadvantage without access to technology that enables them to learn about agencies and the services they offer, submit applications for benefits, and/or apply for jobs online. One provider in the community specifically stated that technology literacy and accessibility has made it more difficult for them to connect with residents in need.

"A lot of these kids could go into apprenticeship programs but they don't want to."

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, 2019

23% of households in the Twin Cities do not have a computer, or have a computer but no internet subscription.

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2017 (5-year estimates)



Promising Developments

Programs and Partnerships

Launched in 2017, the North Tonawanda Community Resource Hub brings together approximately 25 service providers under one roof. The Hub offers economically vulnerable residents a one-stop shop for information on a range of services from legal assistance to housing, healthcare, utility assistance programs and more. The Hub is located inside of Redeemer Lutheran Church and meets quarterly. Providers say that this collaborative initiative has potential to expand, bringing in new services and providers to meet identified community needs. One provider recommended that the Hub be available more frequently, on a monthly basis, to support greater awareness among residents of what services are available in the community. Providers spoke highly about the Mobile Safety-Net Team, which has bolstered and contributed to the success of the Hub.

The North Tonawanda School District is preparing to open a city-wide resource center. The center will offer information and referrals to programs and services that support students and strengthen families and individuals across the community. The center will be open and available to all residents in the district, whether they have a student enrolled in the district or not. District representatives are hopeful that the center will offer opportunities for the district to cultivate new partnerships with service providers in the community and work with them in new ways.

Leadership at Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. (NiaCAP) described how community reports completed in 2014 by the Mobile Safety-Net Team in partnership with the UB Regional Institute have helped the organization secure grants and other funding for programs that support vulnerable populations across a variety of service areas including food, clothing, affordable housing, childcare, and senior programs. **NiaCAP leadership anticipates that updated community reports and online resources available through NumbersInNeed.org will continue to support grant writing, fundraising, and program development** for people in need in the Twin Cities and beyond.

Tonawanda City School District reports that an increasing number of high school students in the district are attending BOCES where they receive vocational training for higher-paying jobs with high employer demand. Approximately one-third of juniors and seniors in the Tonawanda City High School are attending BOCES this year (2019-20). Service providers in the Twin Cities describe the trades as an opportunity to prepare students for higher-paying jobs. Providers say that apprenticeship programs struggle to find enough workers. Representatives from the Tonawanda City School District agree, saying that BOCES cannot keep up with demand for occupations such as welders and can almost guarantee students a job in the region when they complete the BOCES program.

Tonawanda City School District partners with Beechwood Continuing Care to train students for careers in healthcare. In addition to the training they receive, students are bused from the district to their training site at Beechwood, which is in Getzville, NY. That said, providers say students who complete training and rely on public transit to get to a job at Beechwood could spend four hours a day commuting back and forth from the Twin Cities.

Several providers spoke highly of leadership at Tonawanda Housing Authority, noting their demonstrated interest in partnering with service providers and the Tonawanda City School District. The Tonawanda Housing Authority also has a new library that expands access to books for children in poverty and cultivates a love for reading.

Models to Consider



Good things are happening in this community and beyond that are transforming the way human services are delivered. The models on this page offer two examples of ways service providers are tackling challenges in innovative ways that respond to the needs of the community.

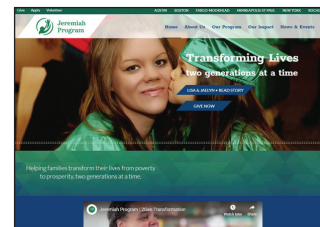
The Numbers in Need website—NumbersInNeed.org—contains additional models to consider and strategies for tackling the concerns and barriers experienced by providers in the Twin Cities. These are intended to inspire solution building and spur conversation as community leaders and agency representatives consider how they might partner with each other and tailor existing programming to break down barriers that keep individuals and families in poverty.



Workforce Development

Jeremiah Program

Similar to the work Gerard Place is doing in Buffalo, Minneapolis-based Jeremiah Program has improved the lives of 3,600 single mothers and their children over the last 20 years through a holistic approach that supports women through a career-track college education. The organization has campuses in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Rochester, MN, as well as Austin, TX, Fargo, ND, Boston, MA, and New York City. Low income single mothers enter the program with the determination to better both their own and their children's lives by pursuing a college education. Jeremiah Program provides these mothers and children with safe, affordable housing, quality early childhood education and childcare, and life skills training in financial literacy, physical and emotional health, and positive parenting. This strategy cuts the cycle of poverty short by supporting the long-term financial well-being of single mothers, improving education, health, and financial outcomes of their children in the process. Jeremiah Program graduates show increases in income, a decreased reliance on social assistance programs, and improved educational outcomes for their children. Jeremiah Program is funded primarily through grants and contributions, in addition to events, investments, rental income, child care services, and other support.



jeremiahprogram.org

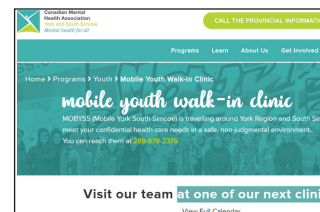
gerardplace.org



Health & Mental Health

Mobile York South Simcoe (MOBYSS)

The Canadian Mental Health Association's Mobile York South Simcoe (MOBYSS) launched in 2015 as Ontario's first mobile mental health clinic. MOBYSS focuses on providing a range of confidential mental health services to youth ages 12-25 free of charge, without appointments. The clinic also offers preventive care, acute care, and reproductive health services to youth in the region. The clinic is funded by a number of organizations, including the United Way and provincial government departments, along with community donations. MOBYSS has nurse practitioners, peer support volunteers, and mental health counselors on its staff that assist young people at the travelling MOBYSS vehicle. In its first 18 months, the clinic met with nearly 4,200 young people, 40% of which used mental health support services.



cmha-yr.on.ca/programs/youth/mobyss

Data Sources & Notes

Most information in this report comes from conversations with agency providers. Data and information from additional sources outside of these conversations are listed below, unless otherwise noted within this report.

Defining Need, Page 2

Federal Poverty Level: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HHS Poverty Guidelines for 2019.

Minimum Wage: New York State Department of Labor, Minimum Wage (effective 12/31/18).

Landscape of Providers, Page 4

Information submitted by agency providers through a provider questionnaire updated a listing of providers developed for the 2014 community report for the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda. Providers provided information on program and service locations, agency location, geographic scope and more.

Tax records available through the IRS and National Center for Charitable Statistics were used to identify new not-for-profits with locations in the community since 2014.

Strengths of the Landscape, Page 6-7

Top Strengths (and Top Gaps/Needs)

Agency focus group participants ranked the strongest programs in the community as well as the programs where the greatest need existed. Each provider had three dots for placing next to the strongest programs and three dots for identifying where need was greatest across 16 categories of programs and services. Dots could be used to identify up to three strengths and weaknesses or several dots could be allocated to fewer categories. Highest ranking categories are those that generated the largest number of dots.

Additional Needs/Gaps, Page 7-8

Residents in the Twin Cities with a bachelor's degree earn about \$16,000 more per year than residents who stopped

their education at high school: US Census, 2017 American Community Survey (5-year estimates).

Across the Twin Cities, more than 1,100 children, many in single-parent households, are living under the federal poverty level. US Census, 2017 American Community Survey (5-year estimates).

...the community's 1,800 households without a vehicle: US Census, 2017 American Community Survey (5-year estimates).

The risk is even greater in the City of Tonawanda where 42% of single parents live in poverty. US Census, 2017 American Community Survey (5-year estimates).

Barriers Residents Face, Page 9-10

Traveling difficulty emerged as the #2 barrier to programs and services reported by residents who were surveyed in the Twin Cities: University at Buffalo Regional Institute, Insights From Residents: Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, February 2020, p7.

Nearly half of residents surveyed in the Twin Cities reported living where they do now less than five years: University at Buffalo Regional Institute, Insights From Residents: Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, February 2020, p5.

Near 20% of residents surveyed in the Twin Cities reported that someone in their household served in the armed forces: University at Buffalo Regional Institute, Insights From Residents: Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, February 2020, p5.

Nearly 10% of residents surveyed in the Twin Cities said they are unemployed...: University at Buffalo Regional Institute, Insights From Residents: Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, February 2020, p5.

And the majority of residents surveyed were in households living on less than \$2,000 per month: University at Buffalo Regional

Institute, Insights From Residents: Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, February 2020, p10.

Only 7% of surveyed residents reported completed training in the trades or a certificate: University at Buffalo Regional Institute, Insights From Residents: Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, February 2020, p5.

Over 4,700 households in the Twin Cities have no computer in their home, or have a computer without an internet subscription: US Census, 2017 American Community Survey (5-year estimates).

Promising Developments, Page 11

Christoforos, Angela, North Tonawanda Community Hub offers dozens of service providers for people in need, WIVB, September 7, 2017.

Models to Consider, Page 12

Jeremiah Program

Erin Hinrichs, "The Jeremiah Program, a national leader in addressing intergenerational poverty, continues to expand," 2019. Retrieved August, 2019 from www.minnpost.com/education/2019/07/the-jeremiah-program-a-national-leader-in-addressing-intergenerational-poverty-continues-to-expand/

Mobile York South Simcoe (MOBYSS)

Canadian Mental Health Association, "Youth flock to Ontario's only mobile health/mental health clinic; Health Minister Jane Philpott tours MOBYSS today," 2016. Retrieved August, 2019 from ontario.cmha.ca/news/youth-flock-ontarios-mobile-healthmental-health-clinic-health-minister-jane-philpott-tours-mobyss-today/

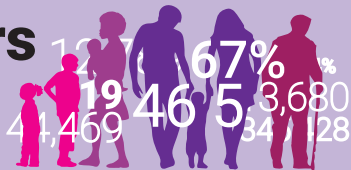
INSIGHTS FROM PROVIDERS

Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda

FEBRUARY 2020

Numbers in Need

IN BUFFALO NIAGARA



A Mobile Safety Net Team initiative established by The John R. Oishei Foundation

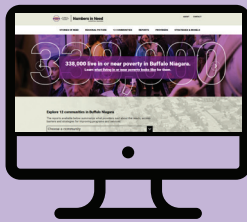


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