

“

The service is there but you need to know where to look for it.”

“

There's good services for seniors but are we focusing on them too much?”

“

There's nothing for older kids to do—they beat up play equipment meant for younger kids.”

INSIGHTS

FROM

PROVIDERS

TOWN OF

West Seneca

APRIL 2020



Numbers in Need

IN BUFFALO NIAGARA

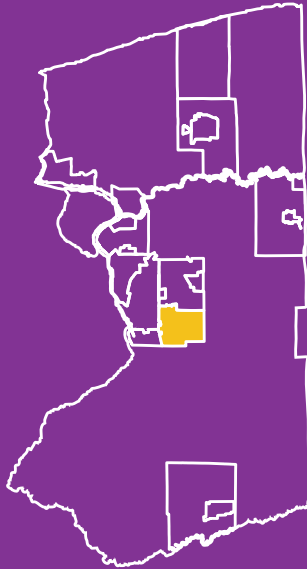


A Mobile Safety Net Team initiative established by The John R. Oishei Foundation



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

Town of West Seneca



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About this Report

This report offers a snapshot of findings for the Town of West Seneca, 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

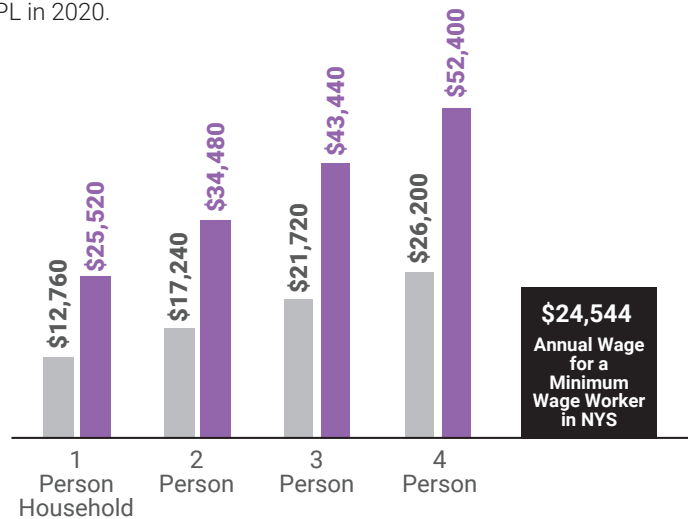
Close to 9,100 residents in West Seneca live in or near poverty on incomes below two hundred percent of the federal poverty line.

The federal poverty line (FPL) is \$12,760 for a household of one, \$17,240 for a two-person household, \$21,720 for a family of three, and \$26,200 for a family of four. A single parent of two who works full-time, year-round at the minimum wage in NYS (\$11.80 per hour or \$25,544 a year) earns an income just above the FPL in 2020.

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 \$52,400 for a family of four) generally do not meet income guidelines for most programs.

Federal Poverty Guidelines, 2020

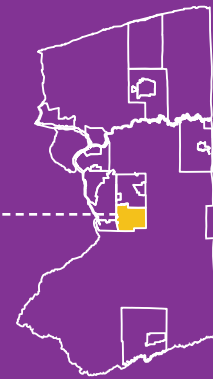
■ Federal Poverty Level ■ 200% of Federal Poverty Level



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 **Town of West Seneca**, one of 12 representative communities in the Buffalo Niagara region selected for assessment and investment as part of the Numbers in Need project.

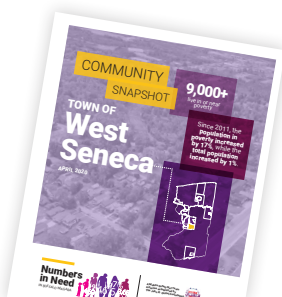


Each of these reports for this community is available online at NumbersinNeed.org



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.



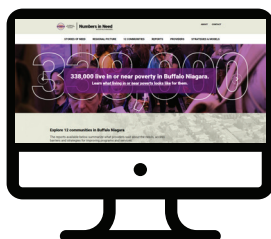
Community Snapshot

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 Town of West Seneca in May 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.

Community Data



Resident Surveys



Resident Focus Groups



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

Participating Organizations

- Concerned Citizen
- West Seneca Chamber of Commerce
- West Seneca Fire District
- West Seneca Food Pantry
- West Seneca Youth & Recreation
- Winchester Community Church

Provider Focus Groups



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

Perspectives and Insights from Providers

The findings presented in this report synthesize **what we heard from providers**. Insights were captured from several providers who participated in a focus group and shared additional perspectives and information on needs of 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

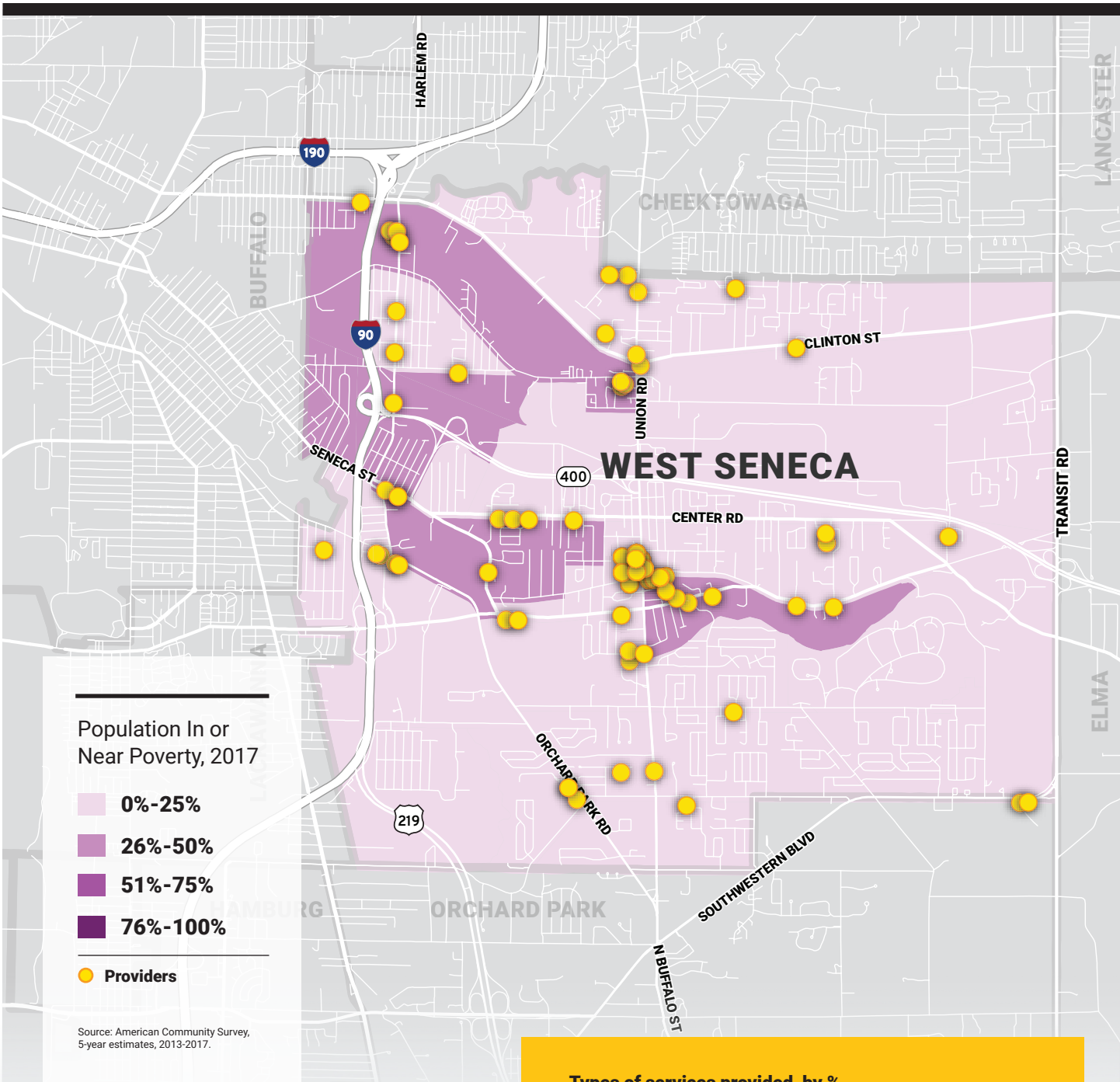


Models to Consider

Find it here:


Pg 5 of this report
(*The Landscape of Providers*)

Numbers in Need Website
(*Provider Tool*)



The Landscape of Providers

69 SERVICE PROVIDERS 
in the Town of West Seneca

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

Types of services provided, by %

51%	Education/ Training	6%	Housing/Utility
33%	Food	3%	Homeless
33%	Info/Referral	3%	Clothing
29%	Mental Health/ Addiction	3%	Legal
23%	Transportation	1%	Teen Parents
20%	Health/Wellness	1%	Veterans
17%	Youth Programs	1%	Financial Literacy
12%	Seniors	0%	Crime/Juvenile



Strengths of the Landscape

There are nearly 70 service providers in the community.

Exactly 69 service providers exist in West Seneca. This is a relatively large number of providers overall, and the town has about the same number of providers per capita as the study region's 12 communities as a whole. Most of the community's providers are located near the center of town or along major corridors such as Union Road and Harlem Road. Over half of West Seneca's providers are small, not-for-profit organizations that usually offer one or two types of services. Just about every type of service can be found in West Seneca. Seventeen locations in the town provide at least four types of services. These locations include local schools, the Quality of Life Improvement Center, and the Senior Citizen Center.

Half of all providers offer education and training.

Education is West Seneca's most common type of service. The town's 35 education providers are primarily for youth, including nine public schools. Education and youth programs are also offered by the public library, the Youth and Recreation Department, and community groups like Youth Engaged in Service. These youth programs were identified as both a strength and a gap in the community's social service landscape by a provider focus group, suggesting that while these programs are a valuable resource, there is also a need for more robust youth programs. The Erie 1 BOCES Potter Career & Technical Center is a workforce training resource for area high school students and adults. The school district also offers community education programs for adults.

Residents in need are located near many service providers.

Over 9,000 people in West Seneca live in or near poverty. Residents in need are most concentrated near the center of town, and in the northwestern part of town near Buffalo. Many of the town's service providers are also located in these areas. Most providers are situated within one mile of 1,000+ residents living in or near poverty, even though many people in need are dispersed across the town. More than half of West Seneca's providers are within a quarter-mile of an NFTA bus stop. Having providers close by that are accessible by public transit increases the odds that residents will utilize helpful services.

Senior programs are a top strength of West Seneca's social services landscape.

The provider focus group identified senior programs as the top strength in the community's social services landscape. Eight locations in the town offer senior programs. The most notable is the Senior Citizen Center which also offers transportation, health/wellness and other services for seniors. Programs for older adults are also offered at senior housing facilities, like the United Church Manor and People Inc. Senior Living Apartments. Senior programs are a great asset for the town's older adults, and the need for these services will increase as the town's older adult population continues to grow.

Just about every type of service is in the community. The most common services—education, food, and information/referral—are available at over 20 locations.

Source: UBRI analysis of provider locations, 2019.

1,000+ residents in or near poverty live within a one-mile radius of most service providers in West Seneca.

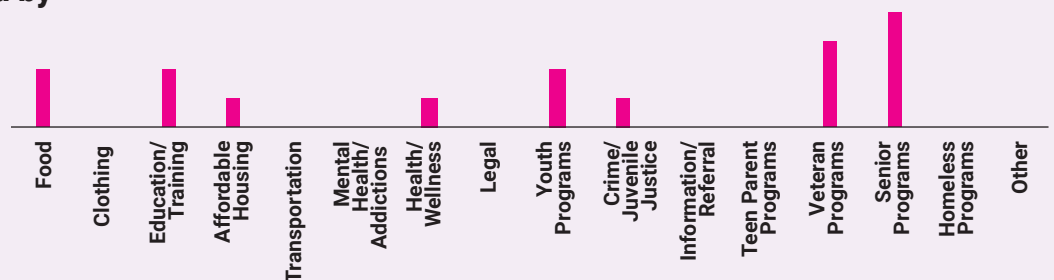
Source: UBRI analysis of provider locations relative to the population living in or near poverty, 2019.

More than half of providers in West Seneca 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. Programs for seniors and veterans were considered top strengths, followed by programs offering food and education/training.





Additional Gaps/Needs Identified by Providers

Even though a third of service providers offer information and referrals, providers say more needs to be done to raise awareness of services and expand communication channels.

Information and referral is West Seneca's top service gap, according to the provider focus group. While over 20 organizations offer information and referral as part of their services, focus group participants said more work needs to be done to enhance communication with residents and with each other. Oftentimes, services exist, but residents don't know where to go or where to look. The West Seneca Chamber of Commerce fields requests from residents who don't know where else to turn and are looking for anything from drug addiction counseling to food assistance and affordable housing. Providers said there is no centralized list of providers or services in West Seneca. West Seneca also does not have a provider coalition, as some communities do, which could convene non-profits, churches, schools and government agencies to build bridges between agencies, promote communication, and tackle shared challenges.

Additional youth programs are needed especially for older children living west of Union Road.

Youth programs are West Seneca's second most pressing need, according to the focus group of providers. While the community has many parks and playgrounds and a dozen providers of youth programs, including West Seneca Youth & Recreation, Southtowns Family YMCA, West Seneca Public Library, and Winchester Community Church, focus group participants said more youth services are needed. Demand is greatest for older children living near the city line where poverty is concentrated. With limited options, providers said kids play along busy streets and use play equipment at Russert Park meant for younger children. Providers suggested that strengthening and expanding youth programs could help prepare the town for future demographic shifts and a potential increase in the proportion of younger families. In considering indoor options, providers said older children look for creative outlets that cultivate career and technology skills. Another provider expressed interest in re-instituting a peer counseling program for middle school students to offer learning opportunities and reduce the incidence of drug use.

Few adult training options exist, even though education is the town's most common service.

Education is offered at 35 locations in West Seneca. Ten of these sites are K-12 schools. Many community groups, churches, childcare centers, and mental health providers also offer education as part of their mission. The school district runs a community education program with business and computer courses for adults, but not formal job training. Erie1 BOCES is the community's most robust workforce trainer, but programs can cost over \$4,000 for six months of training. A wider range of affordable workforce training options that train for local employer needs could help many of the nearly 13,000 adults in West Seneca without college experience improve their job prospects and earning potential.

“There is no coalition [of service providers]. But you are on the right track to develop one.”

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in West Seneca, 2019.

“There's good services for seniors but are we focusing on them too much? There are no services for youth....Kids were playing along a busy street.”

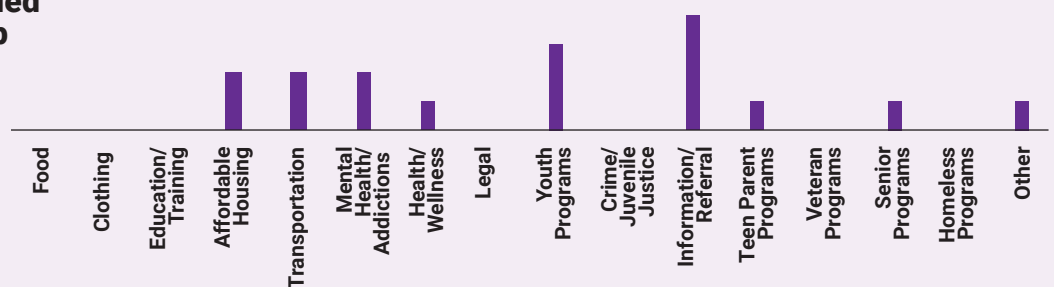
Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in West Seneca, 2019.

“There's more jobs than applicants...We need qualified staff.”

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in West Seneca, 2019.

Top gaps/needs identified by provider focus group

Providers identified service areas where expanded programs are needed. Information/referral and youth programs emerged as top needs, followed by affordable housing, transportation and mental health/addictions.





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

West Seneca needs more higher-paying job opportunities, as well as strategies for addressing employer hiring challenges.

Nearly 20,000 jobs exist in West Seneca. Top employers include manufacturers, schools, and retailers. The town has more jobs than many other communities in the study region, including larger communities like Lackawanna, Lockport, and the Twin Cities. However, most of these jobs (about 60%) pay less than \$40,000 per year. Focus group participants described how employers struggle to find qualified staff to fill openings for lower-paying, seasonal, or part-time jobs, even when the only job requirement is being 18 or older.

Focus group participants described how younger adults who used to fill jobs as lifeguards and fast food workers now seek career opportunities that strengthen college applications and resumes. Meanwhile, providers say the high cost of childcare keeps some parents out of the workforce, especially single parents and secondary earners in two-parent families. This shortage of qualified applicants could stymie economic development efforts if they are not paired with strategies that meet childcare needs of young families, develop career pathways for teens and young adults, and address the entrepreneurial interest of many residents.

Some important services are offered by only a few providers.

While nearly 70 service providers exist in West Seneca and many offer a wide variety of programs, some important services are provided by fewer than five providers in the community. For instance, only four service providers offer affordable housing and utility assistance. Two of these providers only serve seniors. Affordable housing supports are very limited for the hundreds of younger families across the town who live in or near poverty.

Other services offered by a small number of providers include financial literacy, legal support, clothing, and mental health treatment. Similarly, only a handful of providers offer programs for veterans, teen parents and the homeless. Although services that do exist may be strong and sufficient to meet demand, these services may be further away from where residents live, creating barriers for residents without a vehicle or those with mobility challenges. Residents may also be less likely to know about services outside the town or further away from where they live in West Seneca, making referrals is an important strategy for getting residents connected to programs that are available.

Providers need a way to target outreach to individuals in need and follow up with them after initial services are received.

Providers described how many families they work with have not just one but multiple, interrelated needs and how they could benefit from follow-up. For instance, residents could benefit from follow up or additional referrals after they receive transportation services, leave the hospital, report a domestic violence incident, or learn that their employer is closing and they are losing their job. "There are a lot of issues without methods of how to get people resources," said one focus group participant.

"We don't have a program in place to do referrals to county or state agencies."

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in West Seneca, 2019.

"There's a lot of issues without methods for how to get people the resources... There is no follow up."

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in West Seneca, 2019.

"Domestic violence is on the rise." There were 141 survivors of domestic violence in West Seneca in 2018.

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in West Seneca, 2019. NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, Domestic Violence Victims, 2018.



Barriers Residents Face to Programs, Services and Jobs

Limited transportation options can limit access to critical services such as food and youth programs.

Nearly 1,400 households across West Seneca do not have access to a vehicle. Among renters, nearly a fifth are without a car in their household. Providers participating in the focus group said that transportation is a big issue in this largely car-dependent suburban community. While there is a van for getting seniors to the senior lunch program and to medical appointments, few options exist for youth and working-age residents.

Limited alternatives for getting around create traveling barriers to even centrally located programs and services. For instance, a family living near Russert Park could spend over an hour traveling by bus to and from an evening program three miles away at the town's community center on Union Road. While the town's Youth & Recreation Center had a van for employees at one point, it was discontinued because it was underused. Another focus group participant stated that transportation can be a barrier to getting to the community food pantry which is centrally located near Union Road.

Without an organization that centralizes information or leads referrals, residents may not always connect with helpful programs and services that are available to them.

Confusing processes create obstacles to helpful programs and services for nearly half of surveyed residents who said they face barriers to services. The hassle and confusion involved in finding out about and connecting with services tied as the number one barrier residents face. The lack of a framework for outreach and referrals is a barrier for providers in the community who would like to connect with a larger number of residents in need. Providers generally agreed that the burden of navigating next steps often falls on residents to do on their own. While some have family members who help them, not everyone in need has that kind of support.

Providers said that greater awareness of existing resources would help, such as promotion of 211 WNY and NY Connects, both of which are sources of centralized information on programs and services. In addition, NY Connects offers coordination of services and case management.

Leveraging churches and their communication channels may be an untapped resource as well, according to some focus group participants. However, even more focus group participants said that more communication across all types of providers (churches, schools, governmental, and non-profit) is needed.

The high cost of childcare is a barrier to work for parents whose only job options are lower-paying.

The average cost of childcare in Erie County is \$11,000 per year for toddlers, and \$13,000 per year for infants. This expense represents over half the annual income of a full-time minimum wage worker in New York State, not considering taxes. Given that about 30% of jobs in West Seneca pay less than \$15,000 per year (this number includes part-time jobs) and about 60% of jobs pay under \$40,000 annually, provider focus group participants talked about how the cost of childcare is a barrier to work for many parents. For some parents, the cost of childcare creates obstacles to even leaving the house without the children. As one provider put it, "it costs \$50 to leave the door if they (the parents) want to go out...."

"Transportation is a big issue." Across West Seneca, nearly 1,400 households do not have a vehicle.

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in West Seneca, 2019. US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

"The service is there but you need to know where to look for it."

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in West Seneca, 2019.

"It costs \$50 to leave the door if [parents] want to go out on a date."

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in West Seneca, 2019.



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

Finding qualified childcare can be difficult too, stated another provider. A report completed by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services shows that there are close to six children under the age of 5 in West Seneca for every one opening at a regulated childcare provider. This is more children per opening than in neighboring communities, including Cheektowaga, Buffalo, and Orchard Park. Expanding workforce training opportunities for adults in West Seneca to earn higher-paying jobs would help families alleviate the burden of childcare costs, as would supporting economic development efforts to create more higher-paying jobs, and expanding qualified childcare providers.

Residents who live above but “near” the poverty line are less likely to qualify for some programs and services. They may also be less included to reach out for assistance.

Being turned away from programs and services because of income limits tied as the number one barrier faced by residents in West Seneca, according to the survey of residents. While residents with incomes under 200% of the federal poverty line often qualify for many programs and services, some programs limit participation to a smaller percentage of the federal poverty line. For instance, Medicaid is only available to individuals and families with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty line.

In some cases, residents with higher incomes may hesitate to participate in programs they qualify for because of the stigma associated with doing so. In other cases, these residents may not be encouraged to apply because their income seems high, even though it falls under 200% of the federal poverty level, considering the number of persons in the household or large expenses such as childcare or long-term care. For instance, an individual in a job earning \$50,000 per year earns slightly more than the average worker in Western New York but lives under 200% of the federal poverty level if they are the sole breadwinner in a household of four. Even some providers in the focus group were somewhat surprised that a household with earnings around \$50,000 would qualify for assistance with basic household needs, such as food, utilities, batteries for carbon monoxide detectors, and long-term care for elderly parents.

A shortage of applicants creates hiring barriers for service providers and limits their capacity to run and potentially expand programs.

Unemployment rates across the region are at an historic low. Focus group participants described how it's very difficult in today's economy to find qualified staff to fill open positions at their agencies. In past years, young adults would commonly work in programs offering seasonal and part-time employment as lifeguards or summer camp staff. Today's young adults seek paid internships that strengthen their college and career prospects.

There are more jobs than applicants, according to many focus group participants. Asked if there are programs that providers cannot offer because of this situation, one provider immediately responded “definitely.” The cost and availability of childcare contributes to applicant shortages. Some parents in West Seneca who would otherwise seek a part-time job can't afford the cost of childcare or find childcare for a position with weekend or evening hours.

“It's a little naive to think one institution will be able to meet [all the community's] needs....What's most helpful is to communicate together with others—police, governments, churches, schools, food pantry....”

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in West Seneca, 2019.

“Younger adults are not looking for summer camps or fast food employment.” They are looking more for “a paid internship or what will look good on their college applications.”

Source: Numbers in Need, Conversation with service providers in West Seneca, 2019.



Promising Developments

Programs and Partnerships

Residents in West Seneca are taking proactive, collaborative steps to improve their town in many meaningful ways. There are a number of recent examples. A small group of dedicated community members, the Friends of the Burchfield Nature and Art Center, is raising funds to restore the historic building after it suffered damage from a flood in January 2017. The group says the Center continues to expand its activities despite setbacks related to the damages. In the grounds nearby, a local Girl Scout troop designed and constructed a “tree stump garden” in 2018 that encourages creative play for children. In November 2019, nine local businesses and community groups banded together, pitching in funds to make the West Seneca American Legion post accessible to individuals with disabilities. Meanwhile, many community groups, like West Seneca Cares for Kids and the Lion’s Club, regularly organize events and collect donations for local families in need and other charitable causes.

Other residents are starting non-profits and charities to deal with broader issues. One recently launched a Concussion Relief Foundation that will issue grants to help youth who suffered head trauma receive medical treatment. Another West Seneca resident started Mats for a Mission, a nonprofit that creates sleeping mats for the homeless out of recycled plastic shopping bags. These dedicated community groups and residents are a unique asset for social services in West Seneca.

The West Seneca Chamber of Commerce is strengthening local businesses and growing jobs.

The Chamber increased its membership in 2019 as it seeks to cultivate more business-to-business partnerships and other opportunities to support local employers. The Chamber hosts a number of events for local businesses, including a series of networking events with Bryant & Stratton College launched in January 2020. These events bring in guest speakers and give local employers an opportunity to connect with other employers. The Chamber also hosts helpful webinars for businesses and features an events calendar and member directory on its website. At an agency focus group, representatives from the Chamber noted that they are working to accelerate small business creation and fill the local demand for entrepreneurship.

The new West Seneca Community Center and Library is an impressive public gathering space, and a hub for a reimagined walkable town center. West Seneca opened a \$13 million new community center and library next to the Town Hall on Union Road in July of 2018. Along with the library, the building contains town offices, the recreation department, a gym, the Chamber of Commerce, and a Spot Coffee. The Center hosts regular community meetings and free events for families and children. The new building is also seen as an anchor of what is envisioned to become a new walkable town center. The pedestrian-oriented vision for the town center is part of a broader effort to attract small businesses and industry into the community, as expressed in the 2016 update to the town’s comprehensive plan. The new Community Center is an undeniable asset for West Seneca’s residents and will help the town achieve its future goals for community and economic development.

New jobs and training opportunities are coming to West Seneca. While the number of jobs in West Seneca has been relatively stagnant in recent years, businesses and training centers are starting to create more quality opportunities for workers. Rosina Food Products, a food manufacturer now in Cheektowaga, is expanding in West Seneca. The firm’s new \$58 million facility is expected to create 40 new jobs at a long-abandoned brownfield site in West Seneca, while maintaining employment at its facility in Cheektowaga. A local freight rail car manufacturer also recently announced plans to expand facilities and add jobs in West Seneca.

The town is also home to a new training facility for skilled workers. The U.A. Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 22 opened a new headquarters and training center in West Seneca in 2018. The 36,800 square-foot facility houses welding shops, training rooms, and up to 35 part-time instructors to equip trainees with in-demand skills for plumbing, steamfitting, and HVAC jobs. These recent developments bring quality, in-demand job opportunities to West Seneca and prepare workers to take advantage of them.

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.

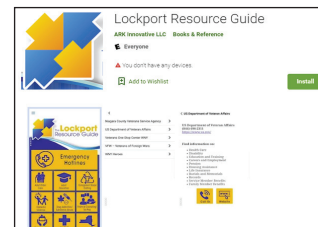
The Numbers in Need website—NumbersInNeed.org—contains additional models to consider and strategies for tackling the concerns and barriers experienced by providers in West Seneca. These are intended to inspire solution building and spur conversation as community leaders and agency representatives consider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



Awareness & Information

Lockport Resource Guide

Funded through the Grigg Lewis Foundation, Inc. and launched in 2019, the Lockport Resource Guide is a mobile application for Android and Apple that provides users with a categorized collection of service providers available in the Lockport community and Western New York. The application is a digital remaking of a formerly-printed guide created in partnership between the Mental Health Association, Lockport Family Focus Group, and the Grigg Lewis Foundation, Inc., with input from the Mobile Safety-Net Team and service providers in the community. Each provider section includes important information such as a description of available services, a phone number, a link to the organization's website, and the organization's address. Over time, the app will be updated to reflect changes in the services available in the community.



griggewis.server284.com



Youth & Teens

Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center

The Matt Urban Center provides a range of housing and community services such as homebuyer programs, senior services, food assistance, and youth after school programming. After school programs offer academic enrichment and development through tutoring, mentorships, cooking lessons, and entrepreneurship classes. There are also recreational programs like theater, sports activities, and bicycle building workshops. Teen students have access to the teen workforce development program. The Matt Urban Center is funded through a combination of public and private funds (i.e. City of Buffalo, United Way of Buffalo & Erie County, M&T Bank, etc). In 2018 this center served 690 children through summer programs, after school programming, and teen workforce development. Such programs help to keep youth engaged in positive activities and reduce involvement in behaviors that would put them at-risk.



urbanctr.org

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 2020 (posted in the Federal Register on 1/17/20).

Minimum Wage: New York State Department of Labor, Minimum Wage (effective 12/31/19).

Landscape of Providers, Page 4

Information submitted by agency providers through a provider questionnaire updated a listing of providers developed for *Strengthening WNY's Safety Net: A Community Report for Town of West Seneca*, released in May 2014. 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.

...nearly 13,000 adults in West Seneca

without a college experience: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey (5-year estimates).

Additional Needs/Gaps, Page 7-8

Nearly 20,000 jobs exist in West Seneca...: US Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2015.

Top employers include...: InfoGroup, ReferenceUSA Business Database, 2019 and Buffalo Business First, Book of Lists, 2018.

Most of these jobs pay less than \$40,000 per year...: US Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2017. Exactly 38% of all jobs in West Seneca pay at least \$40,000 or more a year.

Barriers Residents Face, Page 9-10

Nearly 1,400 households across West Seneca don't have a vehicle: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates).

Confusing processes create obstacles...: University at Buffalo Regional Institute, Numbers in Need in Buffalo Niagara, Insights from Residents, Town of West Seneca, April 2020.

The average cost of childcare in Erie County is \$13,000 per year...: See Michel, Lou, "Working Parents Struggle in Erie County's 'child care desert'" in *The Buffalo News*, May 26, 2019.

...about 30% of jobs in West Seneca pay less than 15,000 per year...: US Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2017.

A report completed by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services...: NYS Office of Children and Family Services, *New York State Child Care Demographics 2017* (See map on page 7 of the section on Erie County).

Being turned away from programs and services because of income limits tied as the number one barrier...: University at Buffalo Regional Institute, Numbers in Need in Buffalo Niagara, Insights from Residents, Town of West Seneca, April 2020.

For instance, an individual in a job earning \$50,000...: NYS Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 2018 (showing \$47,953 as the average wage across the Western New York Region in 2018).

Unemployment rates across the region are at a historic low: NYS Department of Labor, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, 2000-2018. 4.6% was the average unemployment rate for the Buffalo Niagara MSA in 2018. This rate was lower than in any year since 2000.

Promising Developments, Page 11

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The new West Seneca Community Center: Barbara O'Brien, "Call it 'New West Seneca': Community Center/Library to anchor town makeover." *The Buffalo News*, July 6, 2018; Toni Ruberto, "Spot Coffee opens in West Seneca Community Center." *The Buffalo News*, January 4, 2019; "Community Center and Library to host event for kids and families." *West Seneca Bee*, March 20, 2019; Joseph Popiolkowski, "West Seneca charts future in update to comprehensive plan," *The Buffalo News*, April 26, 2016.

New jobs and training opportunities: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2009-2013 and 2013-2017. ACS estimates show the number of jobs in West Seneca showed little change from 2013 (16,814 jobs) to 2017 (16,813 jobs); David Robinson, "Rosina plans to add 40 jobs with \$58 million expansion." *The Buffalo News*, August 12, 2019; Taylor Nigrelli, "Rosina factory officially coming to West Seneca." *West Seneca Bee*, January 16, 2019; Jonathan D. Epstein, "Ebenezer Railcar Services gets \$900,000 in tax breaks for West Seneca expansion." *The Buffalo News*, July 25, 2018. Jonathan D. Epstein, "Plumbers, welders union completes new training facility." *The Buffalo News*, November 13, 2018.

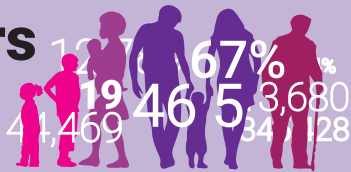
INSIGHTS FROM PROVIDERS

Town of West Seneca

APRIL 2020

Numbers in Need

IN BUFFALO NIAGARA



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

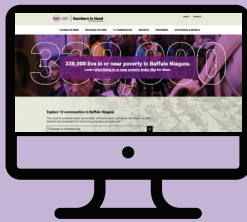


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