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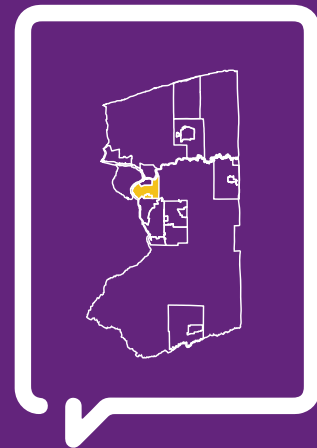
INSIGHTS

FROM

PROVIDERS

TOWN OF Tonawanda

JULY 2020



Numbers in Need

IN BUFFALO NIAGARA

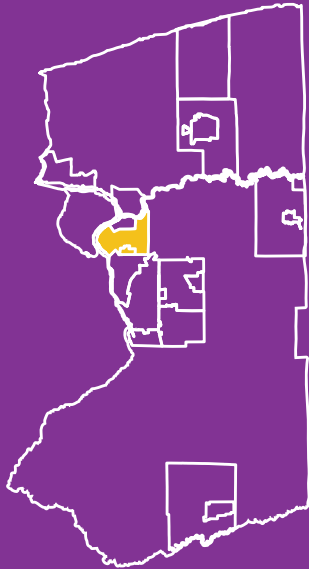


A Mobile Safety Net Team initiative established by The John R. Oishei Foundation



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

Town of Tonawanda



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About this Report

This report offers a snapshot of findings for the Town of Tonawanda, including the Village of Kenmore, 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 2013.

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Defining Need

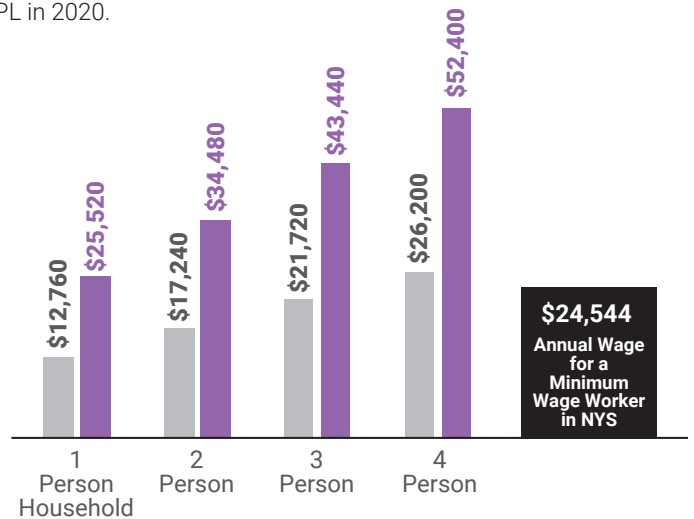
More than 17,400 residents in Tonawanda live in or near poverty on incomes below two hundred percent of the federal poverty line.

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 \$24,544 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

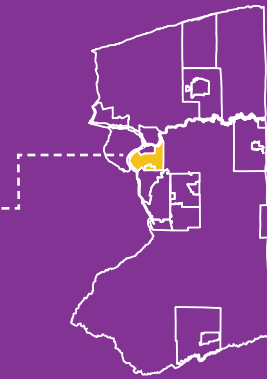
■ Federal Poverty Level ■ 200% of Federal Poverty Level



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 Tonawanda**, one of 12 representative communities in the Buffalo Niagara Region selected for assessment and investment as part of the Numbers in Need project.

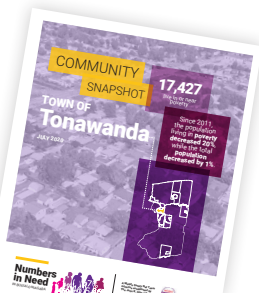


Each of these reports for this community is available online at NumbersinNeed.org



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.



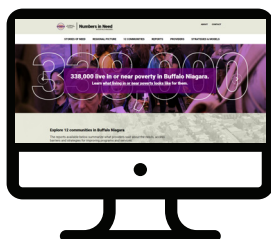
Community Snapshot

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 2013 Baseline Community Report was the starting point.

Baseline Community Reports

The report completed for the Town of Tonawanda in October 2013 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 with providers.

Provider Focus Groups

7 representatives of not-for-profit organizations and governmental service providers participated in conversations and/or a survey of agency providers to share insights on areas of concern, barriers, successes, and strategies for the future.

Participating Organizations

- Catholic Charities of Buffalo
- Hearts & Hands
- Kenmore United Methodist Church
- Ken-Ton Family Support Center
- Ken-Ton School District
- Town of Tonawanda Office of Planning & Development
- Town of Tonawanda Youth, Parks & Recreation

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 telephone interviews or completed a provider questionnaire, sharing perspectives and information on needs of the community, barriers they face in connecting with residents, and promising developments.

Find it here:

Pg 5 of this report
(The Landscape of Providers)

Numbers in Need Website
(Provider Tool)



Strengths of the Landscape



Additional Gaps/Needs Identified by Providers



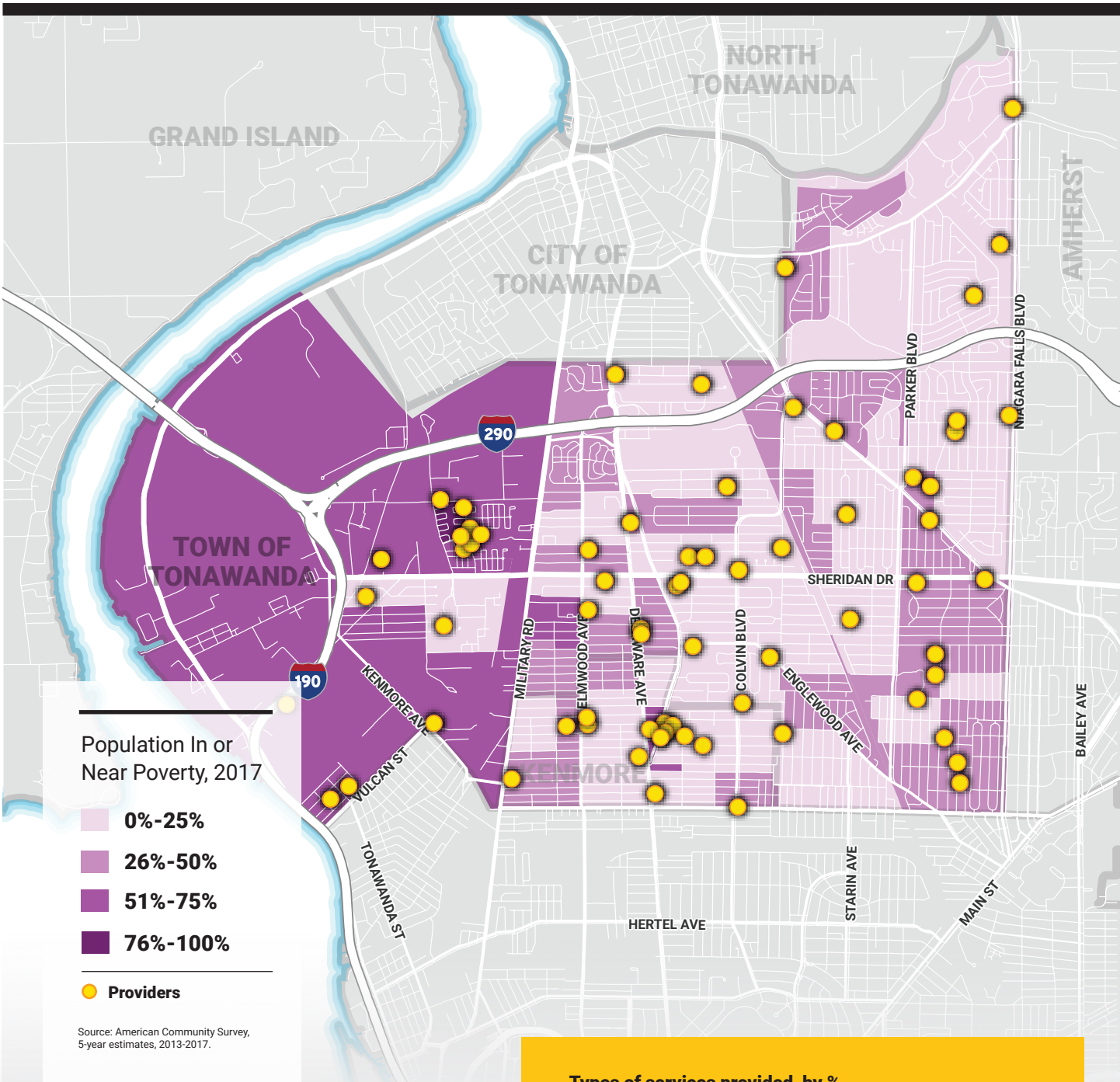
Barriers Residents Face to Programs, Services, and Jobs



Promising Developments



Models to Consider



Population In or Near Poverty, 2017

- 0%-25%
- 26%-50%
- 51%-75%
- 76%-100%

● Providers

Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2013-2017.

The Landscape of Providers

70 SERVICE PROVIDERS in the Town of Tonawanda

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



Types of services provided, by %

43%	Education/ Training	6%	Affordable Housing
29%	Food	6%	Transportation
16%	Info/Referral	4%	Crime/ Juvenile
11%	Youth Programs	4%	Homeless
9%	Clothing	4%	Seniors
7%	Health/Wellness	1%	Legal
6%	Mental Health/ Addiction	1%	Teen Parents
		1%	Financial Literacy
		1%	Veterans



Strengths of the Landscape

Exactly 70 service providers are located in Tonawanda.

Every type of service is available in Tonawanda, and the town has more service providers than most other communities in the study region. The vast majority of providers in the town (94%) offer one or two types of services. More than half of Tonawanda's providers are nonprofit organizations, most with under 30 employees. Education is the community's most abundant service with 30 locations, including public and private K-12 schools. Although the town has fewer providers per capita than any of the study region's twelve communities, the total number of providers in Tonawanda remains a community strength.

Providers are located near thousands of residents in need.

Over 17,400 individuals across Tonawanda live in or near poverty. Economic need is most pronounced in western parts of the town along Military Road, but there are also pockets of poverty in neighborhoods along other major corridors, like Niagara Falls Boulevard and Eggert Road. Many service providers are also located along these corridors, and most are within a quarter-mile of a NFTA bus stop. On average, there are nearly 4,600 people living in or near poverty within a one-mile radius of each service provider in Tonawanda. Having providers located in close proximity to residents, and public transit service, is important because residents are more likely to be aware of and use helpful nearby services.

Education and food programs are strengths of the landscape.

While providers in Tonawanda identified education and training as a top need in the community, education is also Tonawanda's most common type of service. Nearly half of all providers in the town offer education. These include public schools in the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District, a number of private K-12 schools, early childhood programs like Head Start, and two Erie1 BOCES locations offering technical training. Food programs are available at a total of 20 sites in the town, including a number of church food pantries and schools. Currently, all students in the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District qualify for free breakfast and lunch, in light the COVID-19 crisis. Information/referral services are also widely available in Tonawanda, offered at ten locations. The number and variety of these basic services are a strong foundation for the landscape of services in Tonawanda.

There are a variety of job opportunities at all education levels.

Jobs tend to pay more in Tonawanda. Compared to the region overall, a higher portion of jobs in the town pay over \$40,000 a year. Compared to the region, residents with less education earn relatively more—median incomes for those without a high school diploma are 27% higher than the region. Higher incomes may indicate Tonawanda's employers offer quality jobs, in sectors like manufacturing, healthcare, and retail, that raise incomes for those without a college education, including young adults. Some students in the youth focus group discussed how easy it is to find jobs in the community, but others said that many jobs are temporary and lower-paying. While more can be done to promote higher-paying career pathways, the number and variety of jobs in Tonawanda give residents a comparative advantage to grow their economic opportunities across all education levels.

Every type of service can be found in Tonawanda. The most common services, such as education, food, and information/referral, are available at ten or more locations.

Source: UBRI analysis of provider locations, 2020.

Tonawanda's service providers are within a one-mile radius of nearly 4,600 residents in or near poverty, on average.

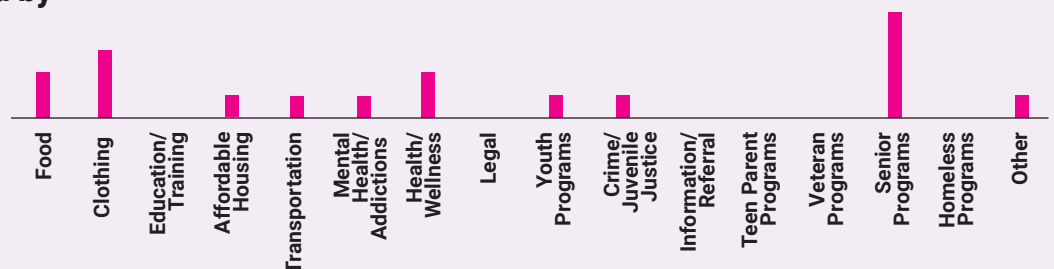
Source: UBRI analysis of provider locations relative to the population living in or near poverty, 2020.

Two-thirds of Tonawanda's service providers are located within a quarter-mile of an NFTA bus stop.

Source: UBRI analysis of provider locations and NFTA transit stops, 2020.

Top strengths identified by provider focus group

Providers were asked to identify the community's strongest programs and services. Programs for seniors and clothing are considered top strengths.





Additional Gaps/Needs Identified by Providers

The town has a need for more health and mental health services.

The town has about half the number of health and mental health providers per person than across the study region as a whole—just seven providers offer health or mental health services. Providers such as Catholic Charities, People Inc., Kenmore Mercy Hospital, and others offer a range of helpful health and mental health services. However, no health or mental health service providers exist in the western areas of town where more than one out of every three children live in poverty. Furthermore, these providers lack the resources to effectively carry out the capacity-building, community engagement, and public education work required to overcome the negative stigmas often associated with mental health issues. More of these supports are needed to promote access to health and mental health treatment services for all residents in need, especially for the over 800 families with children who live in poverty in Tonawanda.

Tonawanda has a need for more housing and financial services.

About 7,000 Tonawanda households spend over 30% of their income on housing—more than any of the 12 communities outside of Buffalo. However, Tonawanda has fewer affordable housing and financial literacy services per capita than any of the study region's twelve communities. Affordable housing or financial literacy services are offered at five sites in Tonawanda. These providers, including the Kenmore Housing Authority and the Tonawanda Department of Planning & Development, are very close to many households in need, but residents remain underserved. Providers also say that not enough residents utilize existing financial literacy services even when referrals are made.

There is also a need for services to support homeowners, especially seniors on low, fixed incomes who struggle to keep up with home maintenance and repair costs. While the town has a Residential Rehabilitation Program offering a 0% loan to income-eligible homeowners, the wait list for this program continues to grow. According to one provider, the lack of qualified contractors to bid on these projects contributes to a “bottleneck” of services for lower-income homeowners. Meanwhile, an even greater need lies in services for renters, who are more likely to be burdened by housing costs than owners. Providers mentioned a need for more affordable rental options, noting more than year-long waits for families seeking an affordable place. One described how even some affordable apartments costing \$750/month with utilities are out of reach for some lower-income residents. For seniors, accessibility is a consideration that may limit options to first-floor flats or apartments in a building with an elevator.

Older residents need additional aging-in-place supports.

Nearly 5,200 seniors ages 65 and up are aging alone. Nearly 70% live in a home they own and may struggle to maintain, both financially and physically. Simply identifying a reputable contractor who offers an affordable rate for work can be challenging, said one service provider. While older adults in Tonawanda are less likely to live in poverty than younger residents, they may also be less likely to know the range of programs and services available to assist them.

Forty percent of residents surveyed in Tonawanda said they needed healthcare that they could not afford.

Source: Numbers in Need, Survey of residents in Tonawanda, 2019-20.

“Our ability to refer people to anyone to help them with [affordable] housing has pretty much dried up.”

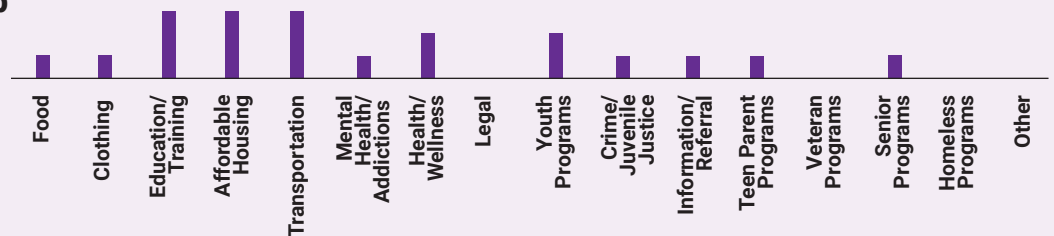
Source: Numbers in Need, Provider interviews and survey, 2020.

Debt was the #1 urgent concern of resident survey respondents in Tonawanda.

Source: Numbers in Need, Survey of residents in Tonawanda, 2019-20.

Top gaps/needs identified by provider focus group

Providers identified where expanded programs are needed. Affordable housing, education/training, and transportation emerged as top needs, followed by youth programs and health/wellness programs and services.





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

Providers say some seniors are homebound due to recent falls or other medical conditions. Others face a digital information divide, as the majority of households in the town without a computer are headed by someone age 65 and up. Providers say that while the town has many valuable programs for seniors, including those run by Ken-Ton Meals on Wheels, Hearts & Hands and the Senior Citizen Center, having staff to coordinate these services for seniors would be helpful. As a model for this, the towns of Amherst, Clarence and Newstead together fund a senior outreach services position to help older residents connect with resources that support independent living. Another provider mentioned that having a compilation of resources for family caregivers would be helpful too, so adult children can help aging parents navigate the landscape of supports for in-home health services, financial assistance, long-term care, transportation, and social activities.

While some providers offer transportation services, the flexible options that all residents need are lacking.

Over 3,000 households in Tonawanda do not have access to a vehicle. While public transit is available in Tonawanda for those without a car, providers describe how taking the bus to get around often involves multiple bus transfers, long walks to and from bus stops, and long rides, which can be difficult especially when traveling with children or for those with health challenges. While several providers in town offer transportation, these services vary based on who is eligible to ride, where the van goes, how far in advance trips must be booked, and whether there is a cost involved. For instance, Ken-Ton Family Support Center offers free transportation to any family in the district who needs a ride to the center. Kenmore United Methodist Church offers rides to church members only for medical appointments and shopping. The Senior Center Van offers rides for a small fee to the Senior Citizen Center, shopping, and medical appointments. Despite these and other services which are an asset to the community, several providers said that the lack of easy access to community resources, especially for families and single parents without a vehicle, is one of the biggest gaps they see in the landscape of services.

More outreach to the town's most vulnerable families is needed.

Many adults in Tonawanda face difficulty accessing important services in the community because they don't have a car. Other families have limited access to online resources because they don't have internet access, even though they may have multiple electronic devices in their household. Providers say vulnerable individuals often lack awareness of what is available in the community to help them. In the days following the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, providers said more needs to be done to reach out to these families, to talk to them about their needs, and get them in touch with people and organizations that can help them. Doing this involves an investment of time that under-resourced and overstretched agencies do not always have. One provider described making close to two dozen calls a day, but this was a small dent in an active caseload of hundreds of families. Another provider mentioned that recruiting an adequate number of volunteers has made it difficult for them to connect with more residents in Tonawanda.

Funding for free and low-cost youth programs is scarce.

Delivering high-quality sports and recreational programs for youth can be costly. Research by the Wallace Foundation on the cost of quality out-of-school programs estimates that it costs approximately \$7 per hour per slot to operate a quality program for elementary/middle school students based on the cost of staff, facilities, equipment, and supplies. Programs are even more expensive for teenagers. While out-of-school programs can help children academically achieve and prepare them for careers and adulthood, the cost of these programs can be out of reach for many parents, especially the 800 families in Tonawanda who live in poverty. While providers say they would like to deliver programming that all families can afford, one described how funding limits their ability to offer free or reduced cost youth programming while covering their own expenses.

Tonawanda has nearly 5,200 residents ages 65 and up who live alone. Most live in a home they own.

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2013-2017.

“Community outreach and information in time of crisis...it's something lacking.”

Source: Numbers in Need, Provider interviews and survey, 2020.

“2-1-1 is wonderful, if you know 2-1-1 exists.”

Source: Numbers in Need, Provider interviews and survey, 2020.



Barriers Residents Face to Programs, Services and Jobs

Transportation continues to be a barrier to programs and services, especially for families without a vehicle.

Most service providers in Tonawanda mentioned transportation as one of the most significant barriers to programs and services. This is especially true for families with children, particularly single parent families which face the highest rate of poverty of all vulnerable populations in Tonawanda. While the town's senior van gets older adults to medical appointments, shopping, and the Senior Citizen Center, affordable, flexible options that younger adults need to regularly get to work, childcare facilities, youth programs, and more are lacking. While the community is rich in many services, and most providers are located near an NFTA stop, providers are not centralized at any one spot but generally dispersed across the town. This makes traveling by bus much more difficult for residents, often requiring separate trips in different directions. Less than 10% of residents surveyed said public transit is their primary form of transportation. When asked why they don't use it more often, the most common answers were that it takes too long to get places and bus stops are too far away to walk.

Lack of internet access is another barrier.

More than 6,200 residents in Tonawanda don't have access to the internet or to any type of computer in their home, including a tablet or smart phone. This number represents one in five households. Older residents ages 65 and up are slightly more likely to not have a computer and/or internet access. Among residents surveyed for this study, a fifth of those reporting barriers to programs and services said that limited internet access is a barrier for them. Several service providers in the community agreed. In the days and weeks after the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, providers said the digital divide makes it difficult for them to connect with some residents, especially as more and more programs and services are put online. Limited awareness by residents about what's available contributes to this problem. For instance, in March 2020 Spectrum began offering 60 days of free Internet access to any household with a student that does not already have service, to help support remote education due to COVID-19. But one provider questioned how households without broadband access would know about this new free resource. Efforts to raise awareness of programs such as this and resources such as Mission Ignite (offering affordable computers for purchase or rent by residents and organization in the region) will help residents in Tonawanda connect with a growing number of online programs and services.

Closer communication and partnerships between providers could reduce information barriers and improve service delivery.

Several providers mentioned that simply improving communication and service promotion within Tonawanda would help to connect residents with more programs and services and improve service delivery overall. One provider specifically mentioned the need for greater coordination between providers and how integrating referrals into the existing service delivery framework would be beneficial. To underscore the need for doing so, this provider described how they still see families in Tonawanda without health insurance, even though many health insurance companies have outreach workers who are eager to help individuals learn about options, complete an application, and get signed up for insurance they can afford.

How information is provided to residents is important. As one provider described, simply giving residents a website to go to or a telephone number to call is often not sufficient to connect them with services. They need information that is direct, detailed and actionable, including the name of the person they should talk with, their telephone number, and what they can expect to happen after they make the call. Without this level of detail, navigating the landscape of services can be too overwhelming for people to tackle.

More than 3,100 households in Tonawanda do not have a vehicle. Close to half are headed by younger residents under the age of 65.

Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2012-2017.

About one in five households in Tonawanda lack Internet access and/or any type of computer at their home.

Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2013-2018.

“We still have families with no health insurance. The marketplace can be pretty overwhelming for people to tackle.”

Source: Numbers in Need, Input from service providers in Tonawanda, 2020.



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

Another provider described how a lot of communication requires residents to actively seek it out and know where to look. This provider's organization promotes its programs and services online and through social media, as well as through posters and flyers at local schools and businesses. However, they acknowledged "unless people know to look for us/our services, they probably wouldn't know what we offer."

Another provider described how resource events were used in the past to promote programs and services, but said these events did not attract large numbers of residents. This provider suggested that reaching residents where they already are, such as at doctor offices, schools, or in their own home, is the most effective approach to identifying their needs, offering information and making referrals.

Lastly, one service provider suggested that the faith community could increase its capacity to meet the needs of residents with no new additional resources, if they came together and collaborated more. An event held last year called March Mission Madness offered a venue for conversation and faith-based network building focused on community outreach.

There is no single spot in the community where residents can go to learn about what's available.

Putting services in close proximity to people in need is an important way of making it more likely for residents to easily access the programs and services they need. However, without clear, consistent, global communication about who is where and what is available when and where, providers suggest that the lack of physical centralization adds to resident confusion and the complexity of navigating the landscape of services. The Town of Tonawanda, for instance, is a great hub of a wide range of important services for individuals and families. These include senior services, youth programs, housing rehabilitation programs, tax exemption programs, community events, and more. However, most of these programs and services are at different locations across the town, making them more difficult for residents to access.

"The population I work with is mostly homebound and just dealing with how to get through the day. So asking them to go onto a website, research something and work their way through is not a reasonable request."

Source: Numbers in Need, Input from service providers in Tonawanda, 2020.

10% of resident survey respondents in Tonawanda said that confusing processes create barriers for them.

Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2013



Promising Developments

Programs and Partnerships

The town's senior van is an even stronger resource than it was years ago. When transportation for seniors was identified as a gap in *Strengthening WNY's Safety Net: A Community Report for Town of Tonawanda*, a report completed in October 2013, the town purchased an additional van using funds from the Community Development Block Grant to subsidize the expense. The additional van supported a large increase in ridership.

The food pantry at New Covenant Church is a strong and growing resource in the community for fighting hunger and supporting vulnerable residents. This church-based pantry is open to all residents in ZIP Codes 14217 and 14223 and features a food pantry where residents can pick up all sorts of groceries and small household items. There is also a lunch program on site, information and referrals, and access to other providers in the community who are on-site with information about their programs and services. The pantry is led by the church's community outreach pastor and staffed by dozens of volunteers who pick up and sort through food allotments and help to operate the pantry. The pantry receives donations from a number of local grocers and retailers that it has cultivated partnerships with in addition to FeedMore WNY.

An expansion of the town's community policing program engages police officers in reaching out to residents in low income neighborhoods. Police go door to door introducing themselves and giving out information to residents based on any needs or concerns they hear about from residents. Residents interviewed for this study mentioned how the police have played a large role in keeping neighborhoods safe and increasing quality of life for all residents. This program is supported by the town's Community Development Block Grant.

A Sunday afternoon community meal at Kenmore United Methodist Church has been successful in connecting with vulnerable residents of all ages in the Kenmore-Tonawanda area. The weekly event attracts between 50 and 70 individuals. It offers a nutritious meal and fellowship. In addition, residents can take part in nutrition classes and receive fresh fruit for the week. A grant from the Catholic Health System has helped to expand this popular community meal and deliver better nutrition to residents through healthy foods and education.

The COVID-19 crisis has forced many providers, including some in Tonawanda, to develop virtual platforms for delivering programs and services from education and training to medicine and family therapy. For some, it's what they have been wanting to do for a long time but have been stymied until now by federal legislation. Leveraging technology to deliver services allows providers to connect with residents where they are, overcoming transportation barriers, so long as they have the needed technology in their home.

The Ken-Ton Closet supports a growing number of vulnerable children and their parents since it launched in 2013. This volunteer-run organization provides free clothing and school supplies to all families in need in the Ken-Ton school district. Hundreds of families utilize the closet which is open throughout the school year. It serves as an important resource not only for children and families but to staff at the school district who make referrals. The Ken-Ton Closet collects donations at various drop-off locations throughout the community and through an Amazon Wish List.

Working with the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County and the Ken-Ton School District, the Ken-Ton Family Support Center established a transportation fund that supports families that do not have a vehicle. The fund allows staff at the center to offer taxi rides to families in need. Through the fund, staff responded to approximately 750 requests for transportation over a 9-month period in 2019-20. The Ken-Ton Family Support Center partners with a local taxi company that offers affordable, on-demand services. With the fund established through the United Way, teachers and administrators in the school district can easily donate to the fund through a payroll deduction.

A new Amazon warehouse being built in Tonawanda will create hundreds of local jobs that residents could potentially fill when the facility opens in 2020. In addition to employment by Amazon, the new facility will also support resident entrepreneurs who start their own delivery business and partner with Amazon through Amazon Flex, a program that allows individuals to be their own boss, pick up shifts on a flexible basis, and earn up to \$25 per hour.

With many adults in Tonawanda temporarily out of work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some organizations such as Hearts & Hands have seen an influx of volunteers that it hopes to retain, even as adults return to work, to meet the needs of older residents who are sheltering in place until a vaccine is available.

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.

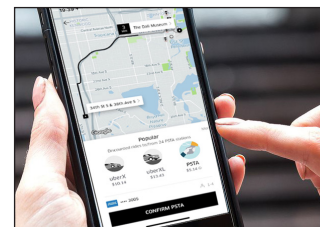
The Numbers in Need website—NumbersInNeed.org—contains additional models to consider and strategies for tackling the concerns and barriers experienced by providers in Tonawanda. These are intended to inspire solution building and spur conversation as community leaders and agency representatives consider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



Transportation

PSTA Direct Connect

In Pinellas County, Florida, a partnership between the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) and Uber or United Taxi gives a \$5 discount to riders who are traveling to or from one of 24 “Direct Connect” locations in the region. Direct Connect locations are specific transit stops identified as places where first-mile and last-mile connections to transit are needed. Aside from the partnership with Uber and United Taxi, riders can also receive a \$25 discount on Wheelchair Transport to or from any Direct Connect location. The program began in February 2016 with a limited number of Direct Connect locations, but expanded to include 24 Direct Connect locations today. Subsidies are paid for by the PSTA.



uber.com/blog/tampa-bay/uber-psta-dc/

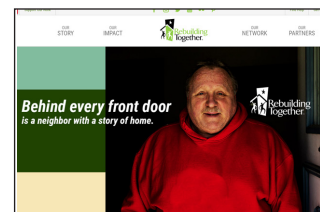


Housing

Rebuilding Together

Rebuilding Together, a national non-profit organization with a network of affiliates and partners in 39 states, rehabilitates homes and community spaces for those who cannot afford to do so on their own. Created in 1988, Rebuilding Together works with corporate and individual donors, skilled trades individuals and associations, and over 100,000 volunteers to provide critical repairs and renovations to almost 10,000 homes each year. In the thirty years since its inception, the organization has performed services for over 210,000 homes, nonprofit facilities, and community spaces with an estimated impact on more than 6.2 million people. Their work aims to create safer and more accessible homes, allowing residents to age in place longer, while also preserving affordable housing options and stabilizing neighborhoods. Rebuilding Together is funded through corporate contributions, individual and foundation donations, government contracts, affiliate dues, investments, and other fundraising activities.

rebuildingtogether.org



Data Sources & Notes

Most information in this report comes from input from agency providers gathered through one-on-one interviews and a survey of 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 Tonawanda*, released in October 2013. 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 2013.

Strengths of the Landscape, Page 6

Currently, the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District offers free breakfast and lunch to all students in the district, in light of COVID-19. The district began offering free breakfast and lunch to all students in the district in April 2020. See <https://www.ktufsd.org/Page/18948>. Prior to this, students in the district had to meet income eligibility requirements to qualify for the program.

Sweet Home Central School District, which covers a portion of the Town of Tonawanda, has offered free breakfast and lunch to all

students throughout 2019-20. See <https://sweethomeschoolsnutrition.org/>

Top Strengths (and Top Gaps/Needs)

Agency service providers were asked to select the strongest programs in the community as well as the programs where the greatest needs existed. Each provider was asked to select up to three programs and services representing top strengths and top needs. In instances where providers selected more than three, all selections by that provider were included in the analysis.

Over 17,400 individuals across Tonawanda live in or near poverty. Economic need is most pronounced: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates). See the Numbers in Need website for a map of how poverty is geographically distributed across the Town of Tonawanda, at <https://numbersinneed.org/communities/town-of-tonawanda/>

Compared to the region overall, a higher portion jobs in the town pay over \$40,000 a year: US Census Bureau, LEHD, 2015.

Median incomes for those without a high school diploma are 27% higher than the region: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates).

Additional Needs/Gaps, Page 7-8

About 7,000 Tonawanda households spend over 30% of their income on housing: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates).

Nearly 5,200 seniors age 65 and up are aging alone. Nearly 70% live in a home they own: US Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates).

...the majority of households in the town without a computer are headed by someone ages 65 and up. US Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates).

Over 3,000 households in Tonawanda do not have access to a vehicle: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates).

Research by the Wallace Foundation on the cost of quality out-of-school programs: Jean Baldwin Grossman, Christianne Lind, et al. "The Cost of Quality of Out-of-School Time Programs, Wallace Foundation, 2009.

The estimate of \$7 per hour per slot was calculated for the Buffalo, NY area using the foundation's Out-of-School Time Cost Calculator, available at <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/pages/default.aspxcalculator>.

\$7 represents a rounded median estimate for a community-based program.

Barriers Residents Face, Page 9-10

Less than 10% of residents surveyed said public transit is their primary form of transportation: University at Buffalo Regional Institute, Insights from Residents: Town of Tonawanda, July 2020, p. 9.

More than 6,200 residents in Tonawanda don't have access to the Internet and/or to any type of computer: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates).

For instance, in March, 2020 Spectrum began offering 60 days: "Spectrum to offer free internet to nonsubscribers with students at home," *The Buffalo News*, March 13, 2020 (original publication date) and April 4, 2020 (updated).

Promising Developments, Page 11

Information about the New Covenant Food Pantry comes largely from a tour of the pantry and a conversation with Pastor Kent Arneth, Director, on February 13, 2020.

Ken-Ton Closet Website, <https://www.kentoncloset.org/>, accessed April 15, 2020.

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr Foundation Website, Our Focus, <https://www.ralphcwilsonjrfoundation.org/>, accessed April 20, 2020.

Watson, Steve, "Amazon confirms it's opening a \$25 million distribution center in Tonawanda," *The Buffalo News*, September 24, 2019.

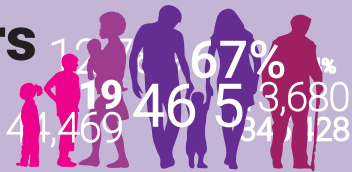
INSIGHTS FROM PROVIDERS

Town of Tonawanda

JULY 2020

Numbers in Need

IN BUFFALO NIAGARA



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

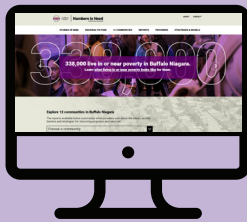


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Visit us online to learn more about this and other communities in need across Buffalo Niagara.



NumbersInNeed.org