

COMMUNITY

SNAPSHOT

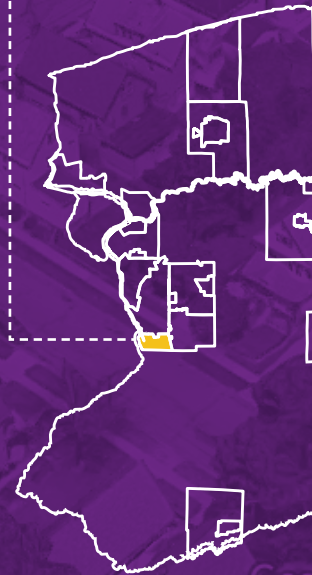
9,325

live in or near
poverty

CITY OF Lackawanna

JUNE 2020

Since 2011,
**poverty increased
by 24%**, while
total **population
decreased by 1%**.



Numbers in Need

IN BUFFALO NIAGARA



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



Prepared by



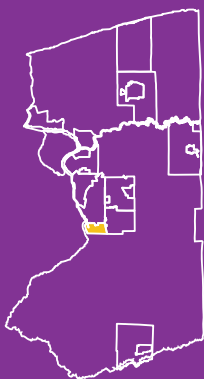
University at Buffalo

Regional Institute

School of Architecture and Planning

City of Lackawanna

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Numbers In Need is an initiative designed to strengthen the safety-net of human services in Buffalo Niagara communities that are most in need.

Visit NumbersInNeed.org

About this Report

This report offers a snapshot of findings for the City of Lackawanna, with new data on the community's population that lives in or near poverty. It includes the perspectives of human services 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
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Defining Need

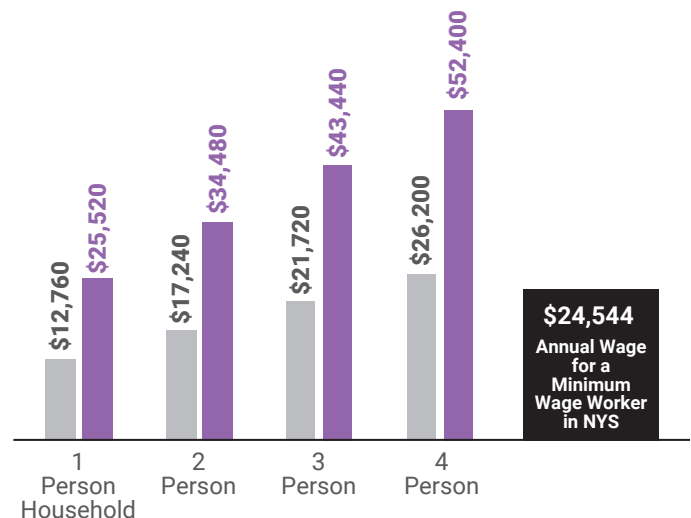
More than 9,300 residents in Lackawanna live in or near poverty with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line.

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 per 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 200% 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

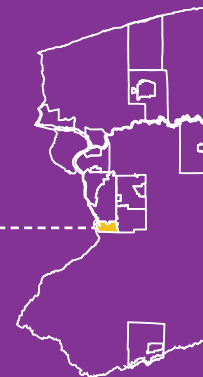
■ Federal Poverty Level
■ 200% of Federal Poverty Level



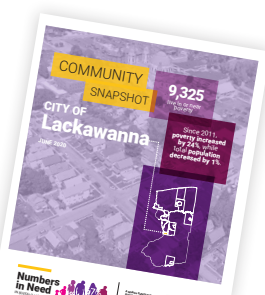
Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Reports for this Community

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

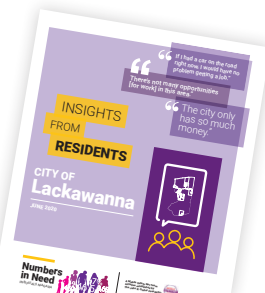


Each of these reports for this community is available online at NumbersInNeed.org



Community Snapshot

This report, **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.



Insights from Providers

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.

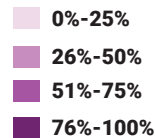


Visit us online at NumbersInNeed.org

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.

Population In or Near Poverty Across the City of Lackawanna

Population in or Near Poverty, 2017



Among the total population of 18,012

25% ARE IN POVERTY

4,514

live on incomes below the federal poverty level.



27% ARE NEAR POVERTY

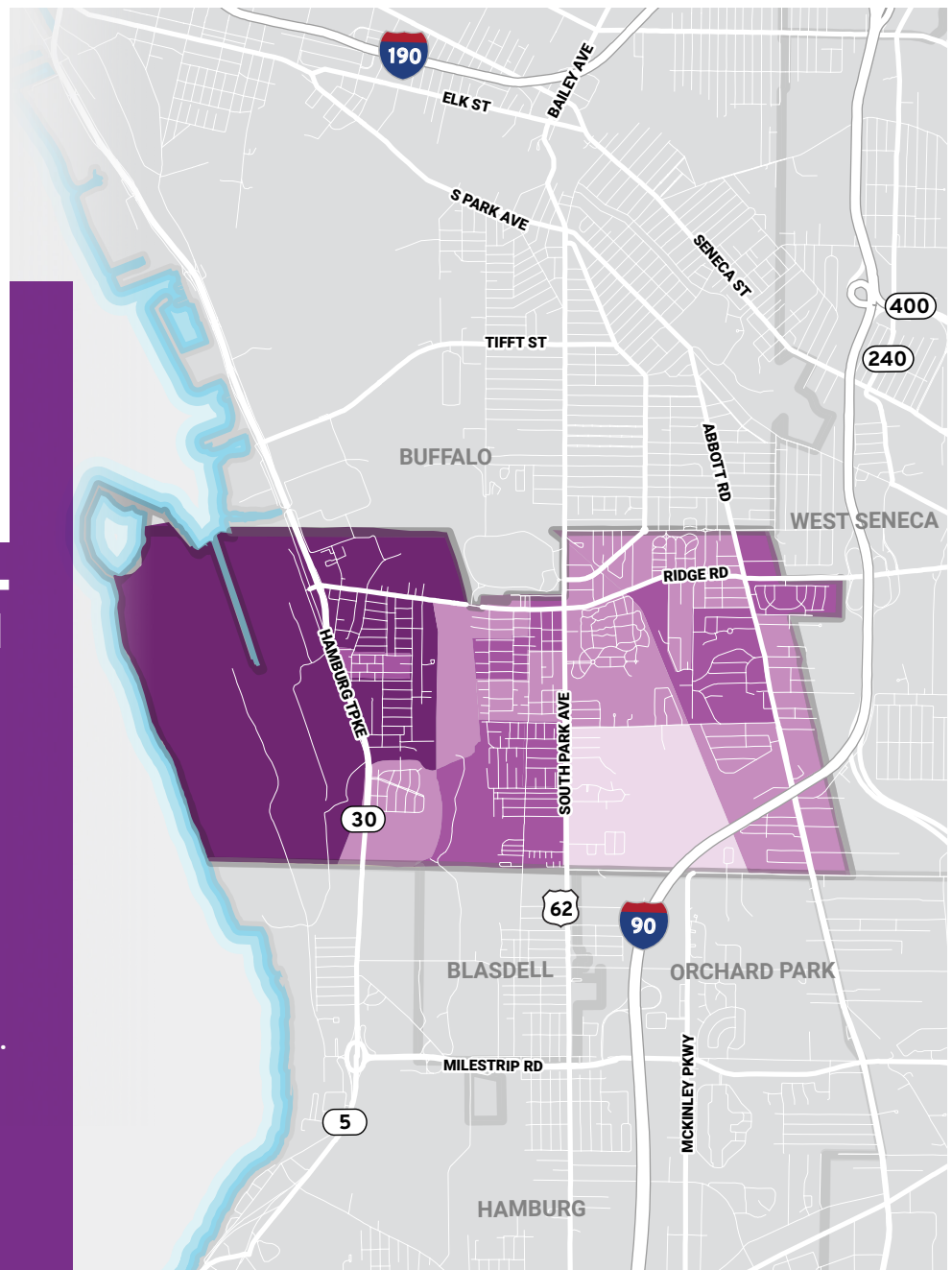
4,811

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

52% ARE IN OR NEAR POVERTY

9,325

residents are doing poorly or struggling financially.



Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

More than half of all Lackawanna residents live in or near poverty.

With 4,514 residents in poverty, Lackawanna's poverty rate (25%) is well above the regional average (15%). But many residents not in poverty also struggle financially—over 4,800 live near poverty, or on incomes between 100% and 200% of the poverty line.

The poverty rate has increased in Lackawanna in recent years. From 2011 to 2017, the number of Lackawanna residents living *in* poverty increased by 24% (3,635 to 4,514). The number of residents living *near* poverty also increased by 9% over that time (4,397 to 4,811).

Poverty is most concentrated in the western neighborhoods of the city which encompass the First Ward. These neighborhoods also saw the largest increases in the share of residents living in or near poverty from 2011 to 2017.

Poverty, Need and Economic Vulnerability

Between 2011 and 2017, the number of residents living in or near poverty increased by about 1,300. The percentage of people living *in* poverty increased from 20% to 25% of the total population between 2011 and 2017, while the percentage of people living *near* poverty increased slightly from 25% to 27% of the total population.

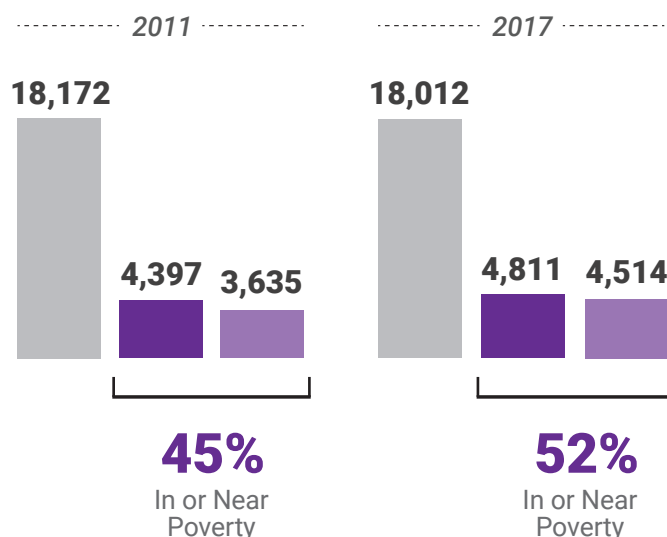
Of the community's most vulnerable populations, seniors are by far the least likely to live in poverty. Meanwhile, almost half of single-parent households live in poverty. Single parents face additional challenges that exacerbate poverty, such as a single income, childcare costs, food costs, and housing costs. Due to the high poverty rate among single parents, children under the age of 18 also have a higher poverty rate than other vulnerable populations. Unlike most other communities where married couples with children fare far better than other vulnerable populations, over a quarter of married couples with children in Lackawanna are also in poverty. Regionwide, only 6% of married couples with children live in poverty.

These percentages only tell part of the story. The 44% of children under 18 living in poverty represents 1,898 young people, the highest total number of any vulnerable population. The 34% of refugees and immigrants living in poverty represents 621 residents, the next largest vulnerable group in Lackawanna. In total, 118 seniors live in poverty.

While the overall population has remained steady since 2011, the number of people living in or near poverty has increased by almost 1,300.

Total Population and Population In or Near Poverty, 2011 and 2017

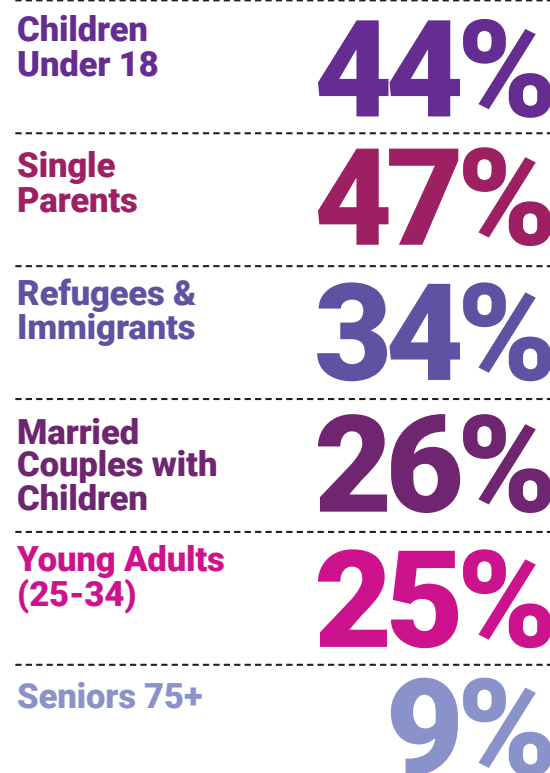
Population: ■ Total ■ Near Poverty ■ In Poverty



Source: American Community Survey, 2007-11 5-Year Estimates; American Community Survey, 2013-17 5-Year Estimates

Poverty rates for all of the selected vulnerable populations are higher than the regional averages, with the exception of seniors, for whom the poverty rate is about the same as the region. For example, married couples with kids are almost five times more likely to live in poverty in Lackawanna compared to the region.

Vulnerable Populations In Poverty, 2017



Source: American Community Survey, 2017 5-Year Estimates.

Factors That Matter

Job opportunities are available in a variety of industries in Lackawanna, including healthcare, manufacturing, and education. The top 10 employers in the community account for half of all jobs in Lackawanna.

Almost two thirds of the jobs in Lackawanna pay less than \$40,000 per year, and a quarter pay less than \$15,000 per year. One way residents can increase their incomes is through training and education. Only 14% of residents (age 25+) have a bachelor's degree or higher, but contrary to regional trends, the median income for those with a bachelor's degree is actually slightly lower than that of residents with an associate's degree or some college experience. Even those with graduate or professional degrees make less than their regional counterparts, and only slightly more than those with bachelor's degrees in Lackawanna.

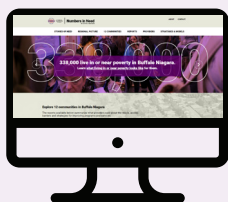
Nearly a quarter of households do not have a car, and about a third of adults 65 years old and older do not own a car. Residents who do not drive are twice as likely to carpool than to use public transportation.

Violent and property crime dropped in recent years, but juvenile arrests increased.

Community Data

Visit us online at NumbersInNeed.org

Explore more about this community and others in Buffalo Niagara through interactive features and stories.



WORK AND INCOME

The largest employers, many of which are in the non-profit and public sector, account for half of all jobs in Lackawanna.

Top 10 Employers, 2019

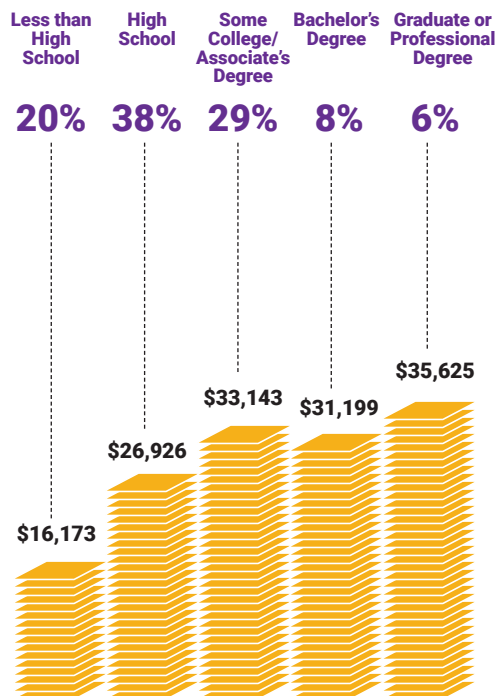
- | | |
|---|--|
| #1 Baker Victory Services | #6 Lackawanna Public Safety Dept. |
| #2 Lackawanna City School District | #7 Lackawanna Municipal Housing Authority |
| #3 Hazmat Environmental Group | #8 Monarch Little Learner Academy |
| #4 Mercy Nursing Facility At Our Lady of Victory | #9 Our Lady of Victory Homes of Charity |
| #5 Global Concepts Charter School | #10 So Park Corp |

Source: InfoGroup, ReferenceUSA Business Database, 2019; Buffalo Business First, Book of Lists, 2018.

EDUCATION

Most adults do not have a college education. Those with some college education earn \$6,200 more than high school graduates, on average.

Educational Attainment and Median Earnings of Adults Age 25+, 2017

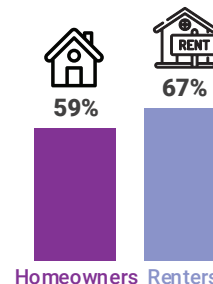


Source: American Community Survey, 2017 5-Year Estimates.

HOUSING

Renters in Lackawanna are more likely to be burdened by housing costs than homeowners.

% Lower-Income Households (earning less than \$35k/yr) that are Cost-Burdened, 2017



Source: American Community Survey, 2017 5-Year Estimates.

TRANSPORTATION

Over 1,600 households are without a car. Older adults are more likely to be without a vehicle.

% of Residents Without a Vehicle

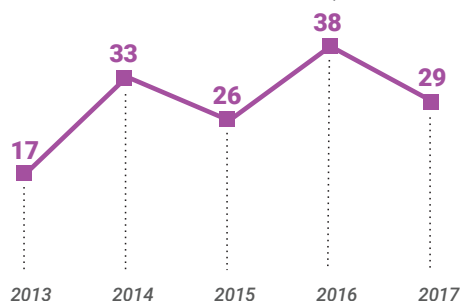


Source: American Community Survey, 2017 5-Year Estimates.

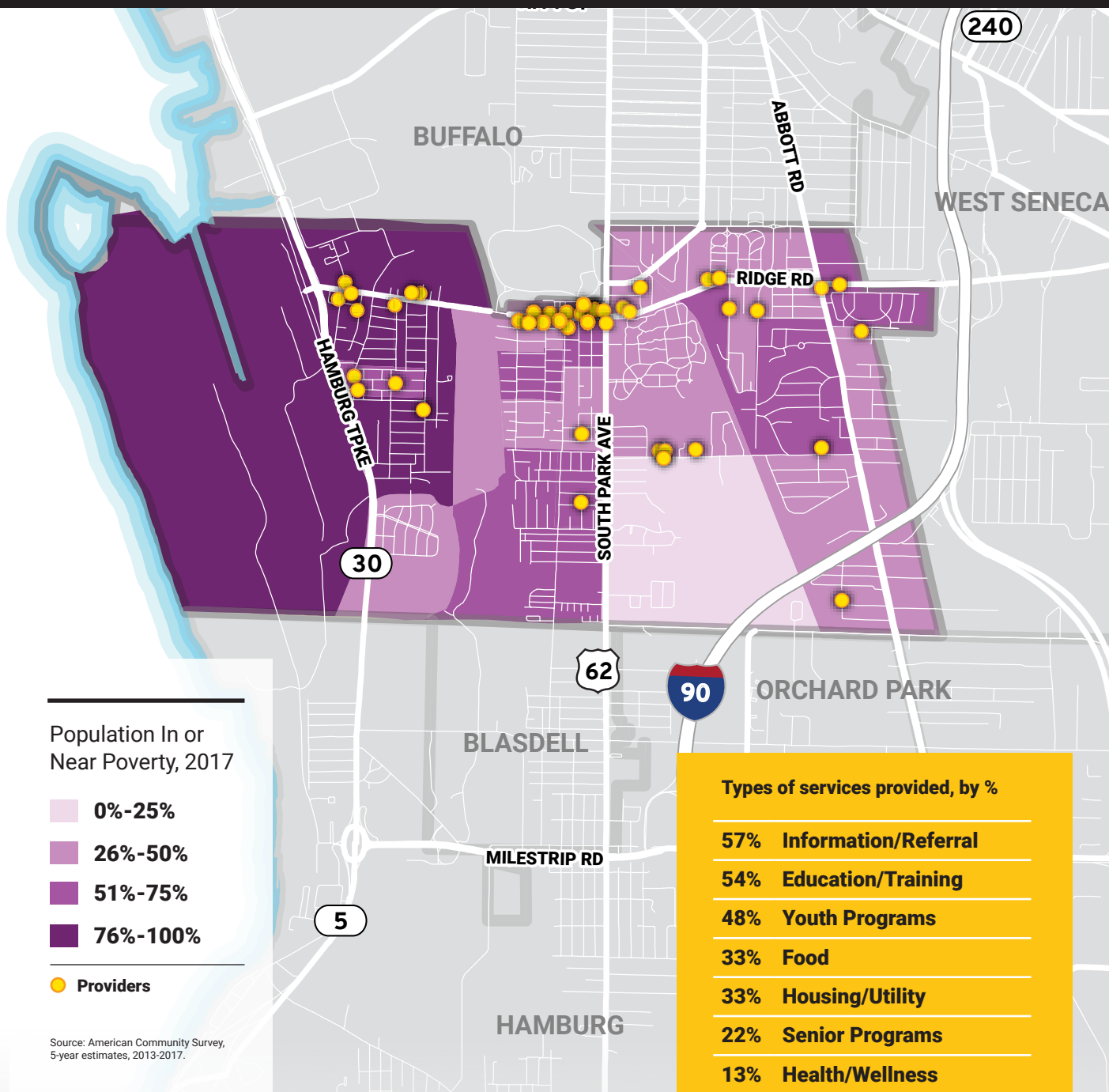
CRIME

The number of juvenile arrests in Lackawanna increased 70% from 2013 to 2017.

Juvenile Arrests, 2013-2017



Source: NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, Niagara County and Erie County, 2013-2017.



Types of services provided, by %

57%	Information/Referral
54%	Education/Training
48%	Youth Programs
33%	Food
33%	Housing/Utility
22%	Senior Programs
13%	Health/Wellness
13%	Mental Health
9%	Clothing
7%	Transportation
7%	Crime/Safety
4%	Legal
2%	Teen Parent Programs
2%	Homeless Program
2%	Financial Literacy
0%	Veteran Services

The Landscape of Providers

46

SERVICE PROVIDERS
in the City of Lackawanna



See more online

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

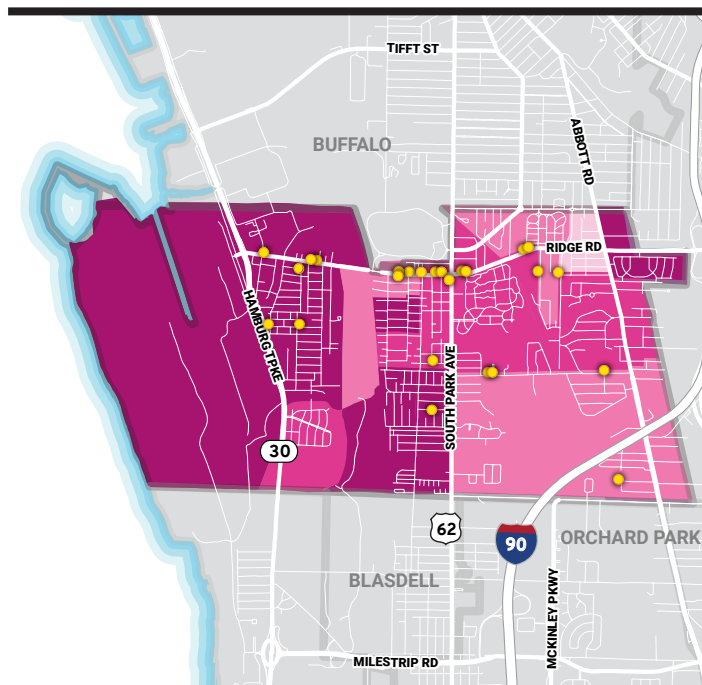


Providers and Resident Needs

% Adults (25+) without a College Education, 2017

31%-40% 41%-50% 51%-60% Over 60%

● Providers offering Education and Training Services

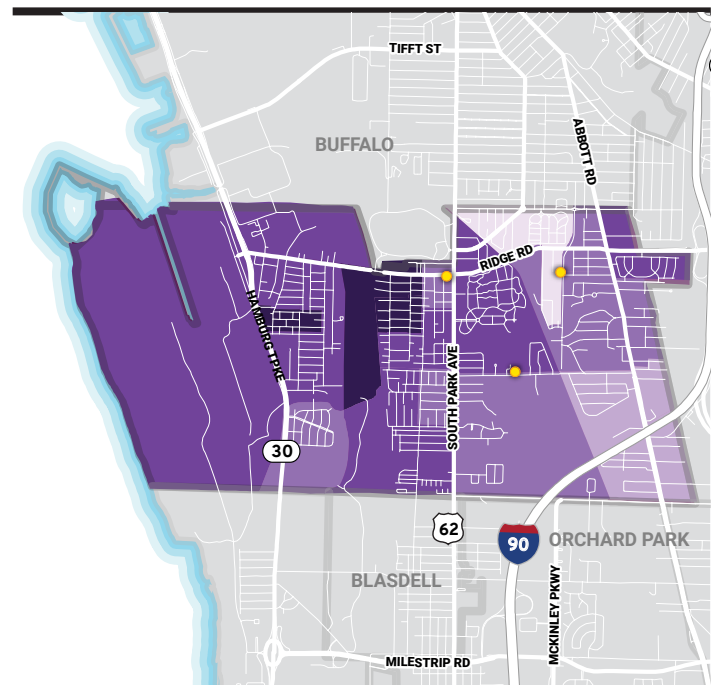


Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

% of Households without a Vehicle, 2017

0%- 5% 6%-10% 11%-20% 21%-30% Over 30%

● Providers offering Transportation Services



Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

There is a shortage of education and training options for adults in Lackawanna.

Education is offered by 24 providers in Lackawanna, but most of these are public schools or early childhood programs. Some providers offer education to target groups, like the Arabic Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) of WNY, but there are limited options for workforce training. Meanwhile, over half of adults in some neighborhoods lack college experience and may be in search of training. Though there are trainers in nearby communities, those without a vehicle may not be able to reliably access those services. Increasing the number and variety of education and training services in Lackawanna can help the city's 6,700 adults without college experience expand their job prospects and earnings potential.

Lackawanna has many households without a vehicle, but only a few transportation providers.

Three organizations in Lackawanna offer transportation to select groups—the Lackawanna City School District, the Lackawanna Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Senior Citizens Complex. The Erie County Department of Senior Services also provides trips for seniors, but there are no transportation providers for the broader public. And while most providers in Lackawanna are within a quarter mile of an NFTA bus stop, many residents find public transit unreliable, as fixed bus routes can make trips impractical. More reliable, low-cost transportation options in Lackawanna could help residents access key services, especially for the over 1,600 households in the community without a vehicle.

Opportunities and Challenges for Providers

Read more Insights from Providers

A detailed report exploring the perspectives from providers in this community.



What has happened over the past five years?

Lackawanna has a fairly large number of service providers to help residents climb out of poverty and achieve economic stability. The city has an active 20 member coalition of providers that works on programs, services, and events that address resident needs. The group brings together not-for-profits, government, and businesses. It offers a strong resource, along with the community's 46 service providers, for tackling residents' needs in Lackawanna, especially for youth, single parents, and refugees and immigrants.



A conversation with providers suggests a range of efforts may help reverse the increase in the number of residents living in or near poverty. These include continued investments in academically enriching programming for youth, workforce training for adults, continued access to healthy food, and community building initiatives that leverage the diverse talents and experiences of all residents and providers.

Providers spoke positively about the strong community efforts that helped to improve public transportation for residents in Lackawanna and the passion and commitment that providers have for improving services and quality of life for their community.

← - Available online at NumbersInNeed.org



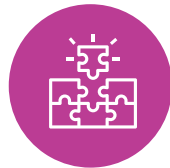
Strengths of the System

Lackawanna is rich in services with more providers per capita than most other communities in the study region. Nearly every type of service can be found in the city, and those in need can typically find at least three types of services at the 46 provider locations in the city.

Most providers are located within one mile of 5,400+ residents living in or near poverty. Moreover, 9 out of 10 providers are within a quarter mile of an NFTA bus stop.

Programs for seniors and food are a top community strength and available at 10 locations in the community.

Information and referral is another top strength of the service landscape identified by the provider focus group. More than half of providers offer information and referrals to residents in need, many of whom have lived in their current home for less than 5 years.



Gaps

Healthy food access is one of the greatest service gaps in Lackawanna. There are no full-service grocery stores in the city and many households do not have access to a vehicle.

Alternative transportation modes need to be promoted. Providers noted that making transit, biking, and walking safer and more convenient would improve access to services for many in need.

There is a shortage of quality, affordable housing, especially for renters with low incomes.

A lack of affordable childcare options can burden parents, particularly single parents, half of whom live in poverty.

A wider variety of youth and recreational programs are needed to support diverse groups. While youth programs account for nearly half of all services in Lackawanna, there is a need for a greater variety of youth programs to effectively reach a more diverse youth population.



Barriers

Transportation is the biggest barrier to services. This is especially true for young adults, single parents, and anyone without their own car.

Refugees and immigrants face numerous barriers. Expanding outreach and programs to those in need can improve outcomes for refugees and immigrants.

More education, training, and job opportunities are needed, especially for at-risk youth. A shortage of jobs, trainers, and alternative career pathways creates a critical gap in workforce development.

Increased collaboration between providers and communication with residents is needed. The overlapping missions of service providers can create confusion for residents and providers themselves. Bringing together diverse groups can be key to improving services.



Promising Developments

A 20-member Lackawanna Coalition is expanding provider partnerships and promoting services to residents in need through a Community Resource Hub and other events.

TMP Technologies has plans to relocate and expand at the old Bethlehem Steel site, creating higher-paying job opportunities for residents who live in or near poverty, especially in neighborhoods around the site.

A variety of providers are working to expand programs for underserved youth. There is also traction for a youth center.

Plans to expand the Botanical Gardens and revitalize Ridge Road could attract more visitors to Lackawanna and support small businesses and jobs across the city.

Lackawanna residents and businesses advocated for their needs with the NFTA, paving the way for other grassroots efforts that create positive community change.

Survey Results of Economically Vulnerable Residents

186 residents in need took the survey.

Over 40% of residents surveyed had an urgent concern about something in their lives. Most of those with a concern are worried about debt. It is possible that residents take on debt because they do not have enough money to pay for necessities like food, utilities, childcare, uninsured medical care, or transportation. More than four in five respondent households earn less than \$36,000 per year. Moreover, about a third of respondent households earn income from employment, meaning a majority rely on fixed incomes. Residents with financial challenges mostly deal with consumer/credit card debt, medical bills, and student loans.

Difficulty traveling is a barrier to services for many residents. Although there are multiple bus routes in the community, only 12% of respondents use public transit as their primary way of getting around. Driving a vehicle is the most common form of transportation, but gas, insurance, repairs, maintenance, and car payments make it one of the most expensive.

Read more Insights from Residents

A detailed report exploring the community's vulnerable populations, their needs, urgent concerns and barriers to support services.



45%

REPORTED HAVING SOME TYPE OF URGENT CONCERN

→ **TOP 3 URGENT CONCERNS REPORTED BY THESE RESIDENTS**

Outstanding Debt -----> 51%

Utility Shut-Off -----> 27%

No Money for Food -----> 27%

HEALTH CARE NEEDS

43%

of respondents are in need of some type of healthcare but can't afford it.

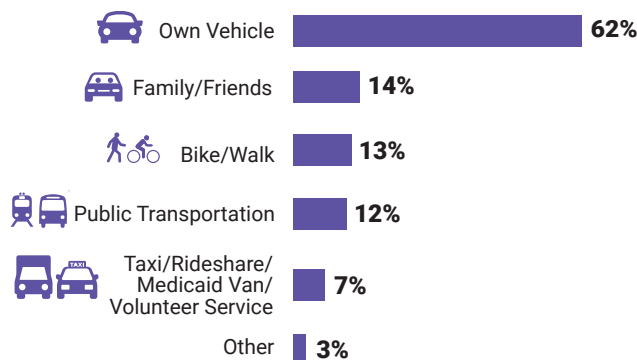
The vast majority of respondents are insured, but almost half still need medical care they cannot afford, possibly because some care is not covered by insurance or co-pays are too high.



TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Most respondents use their own vehicle to get around. Those who do not drive are more likely to rely on family and friends or to bike or walk than to take public transportation.

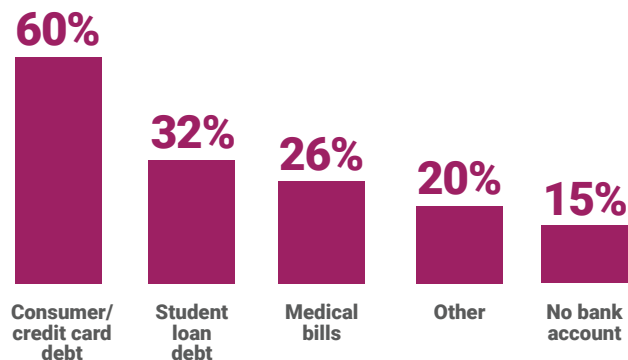
How respondents get around



FINANCIAL NEEDS

Sixty percent of respondents are dealing with financial concerns. Consumer debt was the most common financial concern, followed by student loan debt and medical bills.

Top 5 Financial Challenges in Household



Regional Strategies and Models to Consider



Finding solutions to community challenges begins with laying out strategies for addressing their root cause. Strategies outline potential action steps that can be implemented, name some of the actors who could be involved in completing those actions, and are supported by models of their implementation. Models from other places in the region, country, and world demonstrate how other communities carried out a similar strategy, and serve as a starting point for understanding how strategies can be successfully implemented in Lackawanna.

The following strategies and models are only examples of all the possible solutions to this community's challenges. **Please visit NumbersInNeed.org to view a more comprehensive collection of strategies and models that cover a broader range of topics.**

See more online

Visit NumbersInNeed.org to view a comprehensive collection of strategies and models that cover a broader range of topics.



Refugees & Immigrants

Engage in community education and outreach to create a welcoming environment for refugees and immigrants.

For refugees and immigrants to transition successfully to life in the US, the communities where they relocate need to provide a welcoming environment. However, insights from residents show how some long-time residents feel that assistance programs and support services favor new immigrants over their needs. Facilitating positive interactions between refugees and current community members can lead to successful, productive transitions. Promoting shared values and educating community members on the positive impact refugees have on a community's culture and economy can lay common ground for understanding and foster successful outcomes for refugees, immigrants, and their new communities.

Potential Action Steps

Overcome language barriers by employing people in government services and provider agencies who are fluent in languages commonly spoken by refugees and immigrants.

Involve parents of new American students in school programs and after-school activities.

Raise awareness among employers of the benefits of diversity in the workplace and support employers as they commit to hiring diverse populations, potentially by providing cultural sensitivity training to build welcoming workplace environments.

Advocate for refugees and immigrants by researching and quantifying the positive economic and cultural impacts they have on local communities.

Host community events to raise cultural awareness of immigrant and refugee populations.

Include refugee voices and perspectives in community planning processes, policy development, and program implementation.

Potential Actors in the Community

Immigrant and refugee service providers

Elected officials and policymakers

Housing service providers

Language assistance service providers

Financial education service providers

Business community

Block clubs and community organizations

Public school districts

Models to Consider

Circles USA

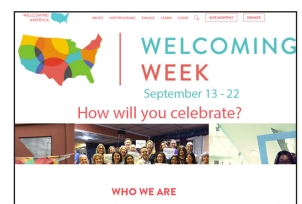
Various location across the U.S.

circlesusa.org

Welcoming America

Decatur, GA and various locations across the U.S.

welcomingamerica.org



Regional Strategies and Models to Consider, cont'd.



Parents & Families

Create and expand opportunities for small, family-run businesses in high-need neighborhoods and communities.

Some of the interviewed residents felt it was impossible to start their own business because of barriers like startup costs, poor or non-existent credit, or an inadequate understanding of how to start and operate a business. Nevertheless, some residents expressed a desire to start their own business, knowing that doing so would enable them to have more control over their own financial future. Small, family-owned businesses allow residents to earn money to meet household needs while also creating future opportunities for a younger generation to learn about business and potentially take over as their parent's age out of ownership. Neighborhoods also benefit from investments by small businesses in physical space and in the creation of additional jobs. In cases of retail, residents near small, family-run businesses benefit from additional shopping options.

Potential Action Steps

Increase awareness of existing programs that offer business training, grants, and low-cost business loans.

Collaborate with local business leaders, chambers of commerce, financial institutions, and elected officials to identify opportunities to facilitate small business creation through training and funding programs.

Work with non-profit organizations in the community to create a shared, affordable physical space where small businesses can run operations until they are stable enough to move into their own location.

Create affordable training programs for residents interested in learning about starting a small business, in partnership with colleges, universities, and other job trainers in the region.

Facilitate the connection between funding sources for small businesses and residents interested in beginning a small business.

Consider how small business creation can leverage community strengths and assets or address gaps in services.

Unite and grow small businesses through business districts and/or a startup incubator.

Potential Actors in the Community

Non-profit organizations

Colleges and universities

Workforce trainers

Financial institutions

Small business incubators

Elected officials

Chambers of commerce

Models to Consider

Westminster Economic Development Initiative: West Side Bazaar
Buffalo, NY
westsidebazaar.com



Data Sources & Notes

Cover

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-Year Estimates; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates.

Defining Need, Page 2

Federal Poverty Level: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HHS Poverty Guidelines for 2020.

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

Poverty Map, Page 4

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates.

Poverty, Need and Economic Vulnerability, Page 5

Population in or Near Poverty: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007-11 5-Year Estimates; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-17 5-Year Estimates.

Vulnerable Populations: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates.

Factors that Matter, Page 6

Work and Income: InfoGroup, ReferenceUSA Business Database, 2019; Buffalo Business First, Book of Lists, 2018. Top employers were first downloaded from ReferenceUSA and mapped to confirm location within the boundaries of the 12 communities. Top businesses by number of employees were cross-referenced with the Buffalo Business First Book of Lists (2018) to ensure accuracy in number of employees at the business location, when available.

Education: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-Year

Estimates. All income by education numbers are actual medians except those for graduate or professional degrees; these have been calculated by weighted averages of the medians, because combined medians were not available via Social Explorer.

Housing: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates. Low-income households in this instance are defined as households with incomes below \$35,000/year.

Transportation: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates.

Crime: NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, Niagara County and Erie County, 2013-2017.

In 2017, NYS passed Raise the Age legislation that deals with non-felony offenses committed by 16- and 17-year-olds outside of the criminal justice system. The law went into effect for 16-year-olds on October 1, 2018 and for 17-year-olds on October 1, 2019. While this law did not affect the juvenile arrest data shown in this report, it may affect trends in future years, beginning in 2018.

The Landscape of Providers, Page 7

Poverty Map: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates.

Provider Data: Information submitted by agency providers through a provider questionnaire updated a listing of providers developed for the 2014 community report for Lackawanna. Providers provided information on program and service locations, agency location, geographic scope and more. Most service providers are not-for-profit and public sector providers.

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.

Providers and Resident Needs, Page 8

Adults (25+) without a College Education, and Households without a Vehicle: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates.

Provider Data: See note for page 7.

Opportunities and Challenges for Providers, Page 9

Insights from Providers, Lackawanna, June 2020. Provider insights come from an agency focus group held in December 2019 with 11 provider representatives.

Most providers are located within one mile of 5,400+ residents living in or near poverty: UBRI analysis of provider locations relative to the population in poverty, 2019.

9 of 10 are within a quarter mile of a bus stop: UBRI analysis of provider locations relative to NFTA bus stops, 2019.

Survey Results of Economically Vulnerable Residents, Page 10

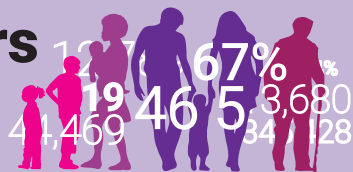
Insights from Residents, Town of Lackawanna, June 2020. Survey findings come from 186 surveys completed at 20 locations and online between November 2019 and January 2020.

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT City of Lackawanna

JUNE 2020

Numbers in Need

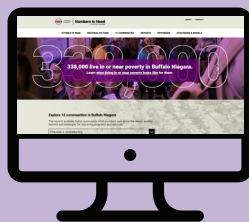
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