

COMMUNITY

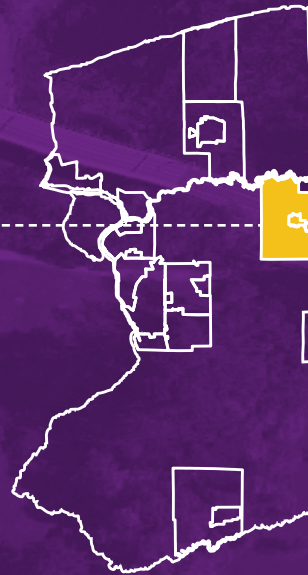
SNAPSHOT

1,647
live in or near
poverty

VILLAGE OF **Akron** AND TOWN OF **Newstead**

JANUARY 2020

Since 2011,
the population
living in **poverty**
decreased by
51%, while the
total **population**
increased by 2%.



Numbers in Need

IN BUFFALO NIAGARA



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



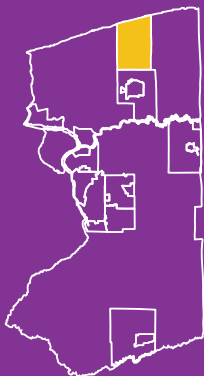
Prepared by



University at Buffalo
Regional Institute
School of Architecture and Planning

Village of Akron and Town of Newstead

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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 Village of Akron and Town of Newstead, 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 The John R. Oishei Foundation



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Regional Institute
School of Architecture and Planning

Defining Need

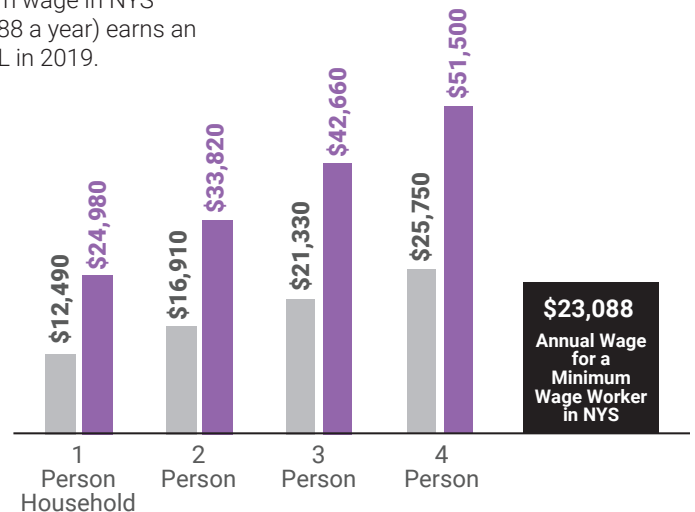
Over 1,640 residents in the Village of Akron and Town of Newstead (Akron-Newstead) live in or near poverty with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line.

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

The FPL is adjusted annually by the federal government and varies by household size. It is often used to determine eligibility for programs that assist individuals and families with basic living expenses such as food, utilities, and rental housing. Households with incomes that exceed 200% of the FPL (up to \$51,500 for a family of four) generally do not meet income guidelines for most programs.

Federal Poverty Guidelines, 2019

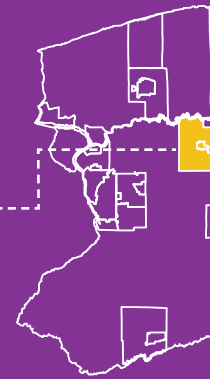
 Federal Poverty Level  200% of Federal Poverty Level



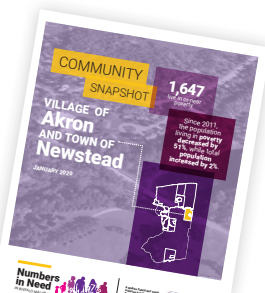
Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Reports for this Community

This report is part of a comprehensive suite of reports for the **Village of Akron and Town of Newstead**, 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.



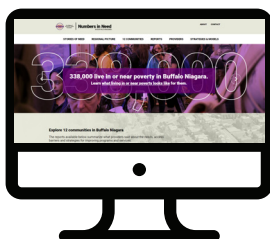
Insights from Residents

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 Akron and Newstead

Population In or Near Poverty, 2017

- 0%-25%
- 26%-50%

Among the total population of 8,722

4% ARE IN POVERTY

348

live on incomes below the federal poverty level.

+

15% ARE NEAR POVERTY

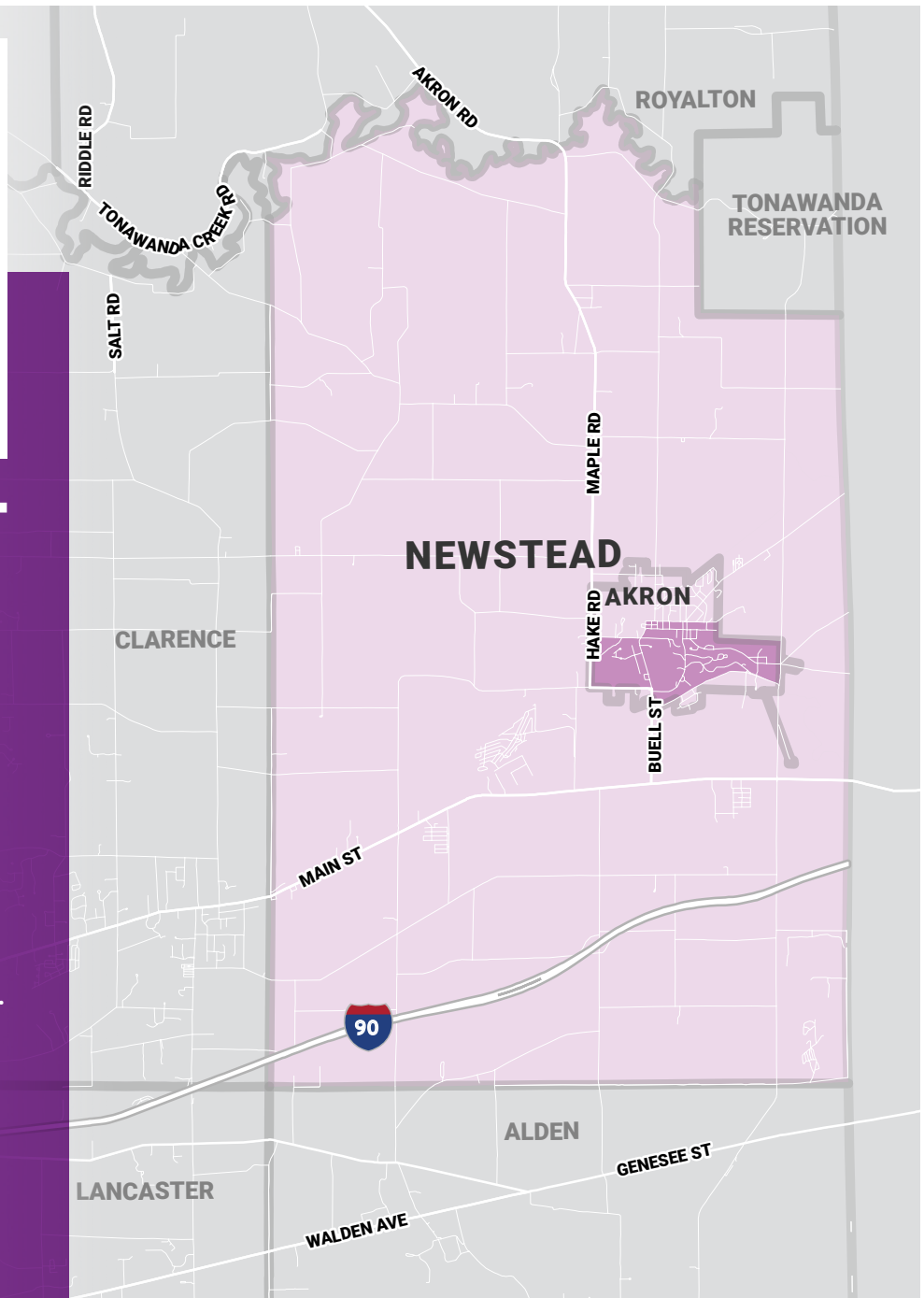
1,299

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

19% ARE IN OR NEAR POVERTY

1,647

residents are doing poorly or struggling financially.



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

Nearly one out of five Akron-Newstead residents live in or near poverty.

With less than 350 residents in poverty, Akron-Newstead's poverty rate is the lowest of all twelve communities (4%). Still, many residents struggle financially—about 1,300 live near poverty, or on incomes between 100% and 200% of the poverty line. These residents are most concentrated in the south side of the Village of Akron. In all other areas of the community, less than a quarter of residents live in or near poverty. From 2011 to 2017, the total number of Akron-Newstead residents living in or near poverty declined by nearly 20%. But in the southeastern part of town, the number of people in or near poverty increased but remains below 25% of the total population in this area.

Poverty, Need and Economic Vulnerability

Since 2011, fewer residents live in or near poverty in Akron-Newstead. The percentage of people living in poverty dropped from 8% to 4% of the total population between 2011 and 2017, while the percentage of people living near poverty declined from 16% to 15%. The total number of residents living in poverty fell from 710 in 2011 to 348 in 2017, a 51% decrease. Lower unemployment rates and a higher NYS minimum wage are factors that can contribute to poverty reduction.

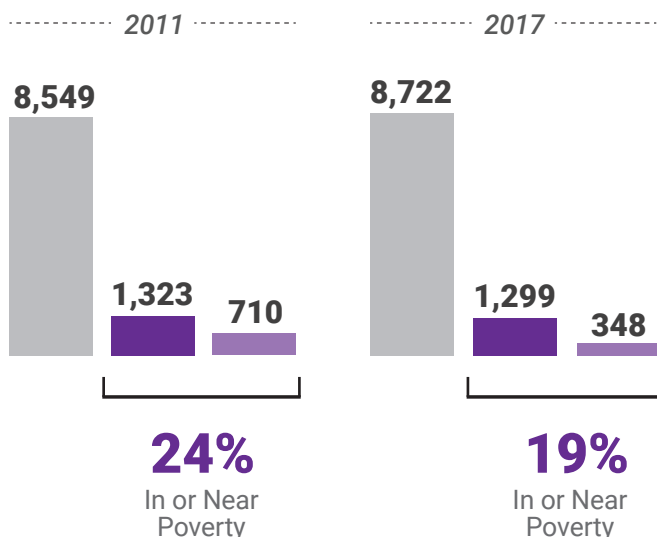
Some residents are more likely than others to live in poverty. For example, single parents and individuals age 75 and older are far more likely to live in poverty than others. Single parents face additional challenges that exacerbate poverty, such as single income households, childcare costs, and food costs. Senior citizens often have limited, fixed incomes, expensive and complicated healthcare needs, and mobility limitations.

In some ways, vulnerable populations in Akron-Newstead are better off than they are in other communities in the Buffalo Niagara Region. Children, for example, rarely live in poverty in Akron-Newstead, while virtually none of the town's married couples with children live in poverty. Essentially none of Akron-Newstead's nearly 300 refugees and immigrants are likely to live in poverty either. Young adults are also less likely to live in poverty than in several other communities.

The population in Akron-Newstead stayed relatively steady while those living in or near poverty declined by nearly 400.

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

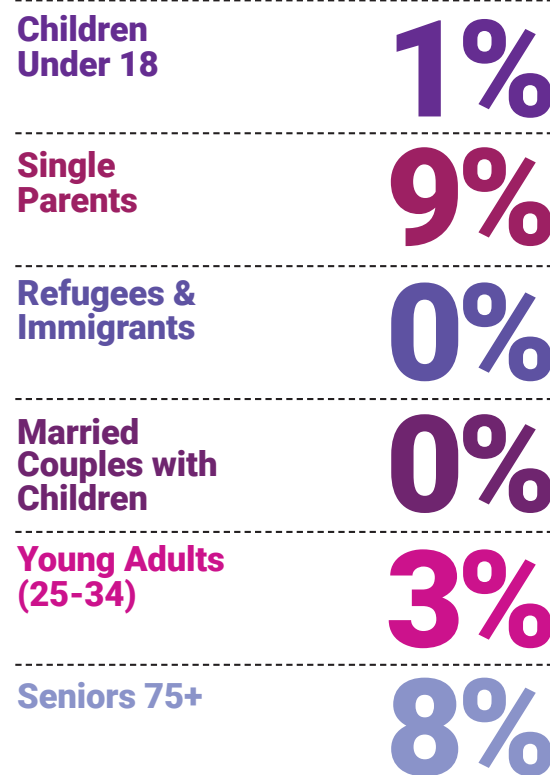
Population: ■ Total ■ Near Poverty ■ In Poverty



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

The poverty rate for single parents is the highest among vulnerable populations in Akron-Newstead. Older residents are more likely to be in poverty than younger residents.

Vulnerable Populations In Poverty, 2017



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

Factors That Matter

Perhaps not typical of a small, rural town, Akron-Newstead has several large employers in manufacturing. The top ten employers contribute more than 2,300 jobs to the town's total of about 3,000. Jobs in Akron-Newstead also tend to pay slightly better than they do regionally, with 78% paying \$15,000 or more per year, compared to 73% across the Buffalo Niagara region.

One way residents can improve their income is through training and education. Only 26% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, and median incomes for those with a bachelor's degree are about 80% higher than the median earnings for those with some college or an associate's degree. **Graduation rates dropped to a seven-year low in 2017, matching the regional average.**

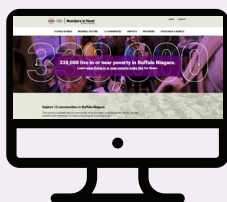
In contrast to other communities, most lower-income residents in Akron-Newstead are homeowners, and about half of homeowners are burdened by housing costs that consume almost a third or more of their income.

Most residents drive a car to get around, but older residents are significantly less likely to own a car. Seniors may have a harder time accessing daily needs and services.

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

Traditionally a farming community, today, these top 10 employers account for 79% of all jobs in Akron-Newstead.

Top 10 Employers, 2019

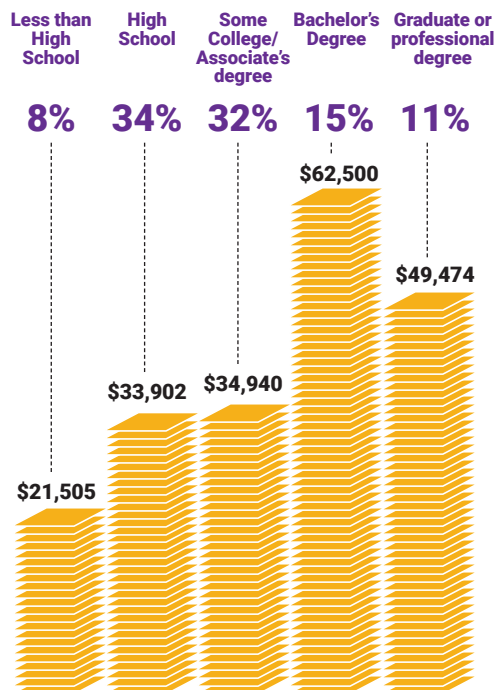
- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| #1 Strippit LVD | #6 Pixley's Bells Super Market |
| #2 ADESA | #7 Cold Spring Construction Co |
| #3 Whiting Door Mfg Corp | #8 I Squared R Element Co Inc |
| #4 Akron Central Schools | #9 Bank of Akron |
| #5 Perry's Ice Cream Co Inc | #10 Arrowhead Golf Club |

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

EDUCATION

Two-thirds of adults have a high school diploma or some college education. Earnings are 80% higher for those with a bachelor's degree.

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

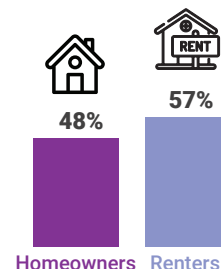


Source: American Community Survey, 2017 5-Year Estimates.

HOUSING

Renters are more likely to be burdened by the cost of housing.

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



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

TRANSPORTATION

Seniors are five times less likely than younger residents to have a vehicle.

% of Residents Without a Vehicle

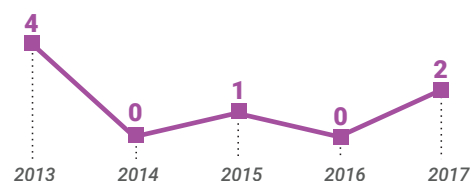


Source: American Community Survey, 2017 5-Year Estimates.

CRIME

Juvenile arrests stayed low.

Juvenile Arrests, 2013-2017



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

The Landscape of Providers

25

SERVICE PROVIDERS

in the Village of Akron and Town of Newstead

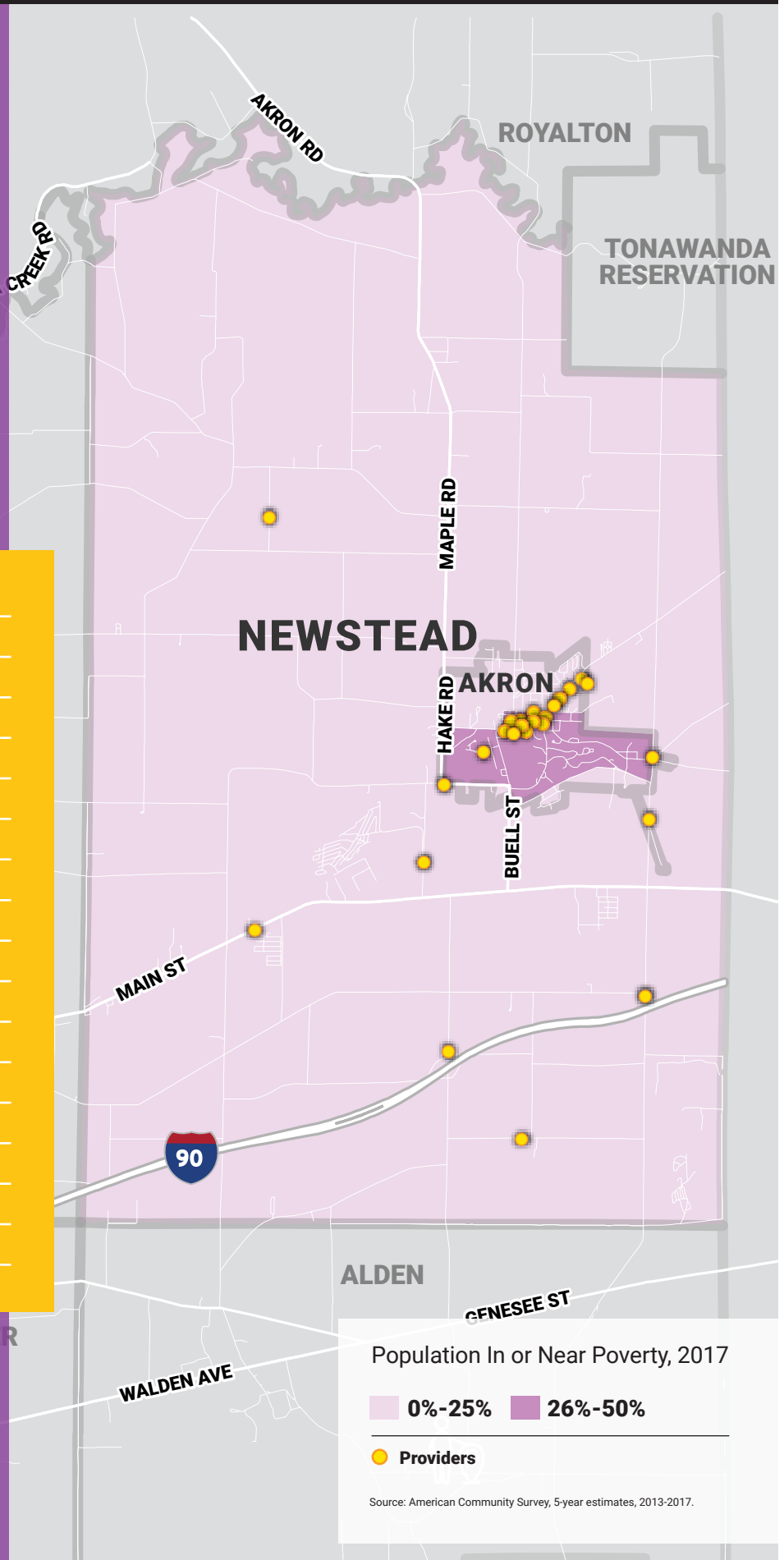


Types of services provided, by %

44%	Youth Programs
36%	Info/Referral
28%	Seniors
28%	Food
24%	Education/Training
24%	Housing/Utility
16%	Transportation
12%	Health/Wellness
8%	Mental Health/Addiction
8%	Financial Literacy
8%	Crime/Juvenile
4%	Teen Parents
4%	Clothing
0%	Veterans
0%	Homeless
0%	Legal

See more online

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

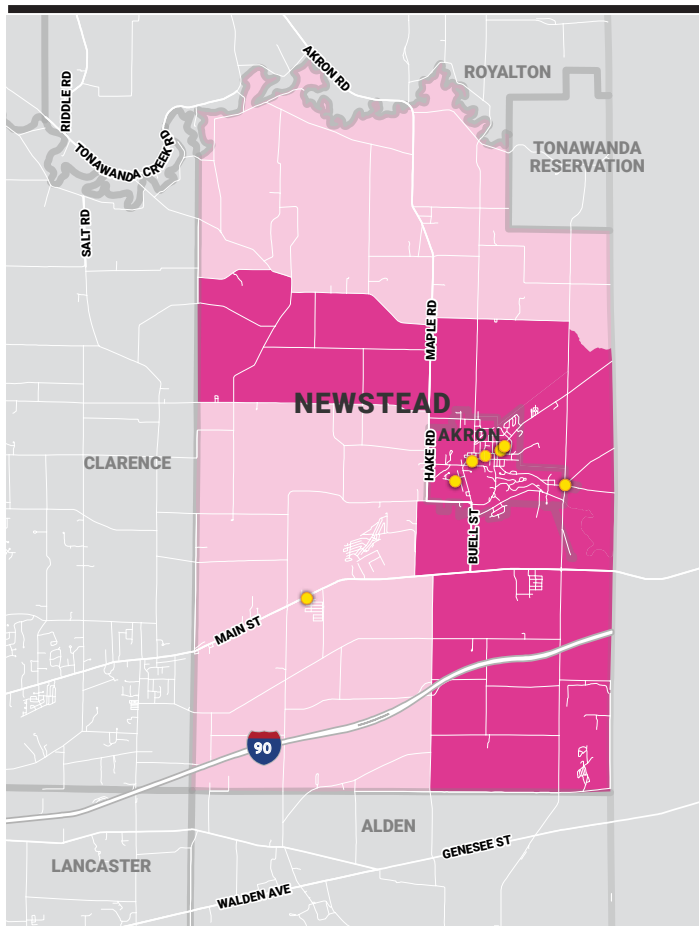


Providers and Resident Needs

% of Households Spending 30% or More of Income on Housing Costs, 2017

0%-10% 11%-20%

Providers offering Housing and Financial Services

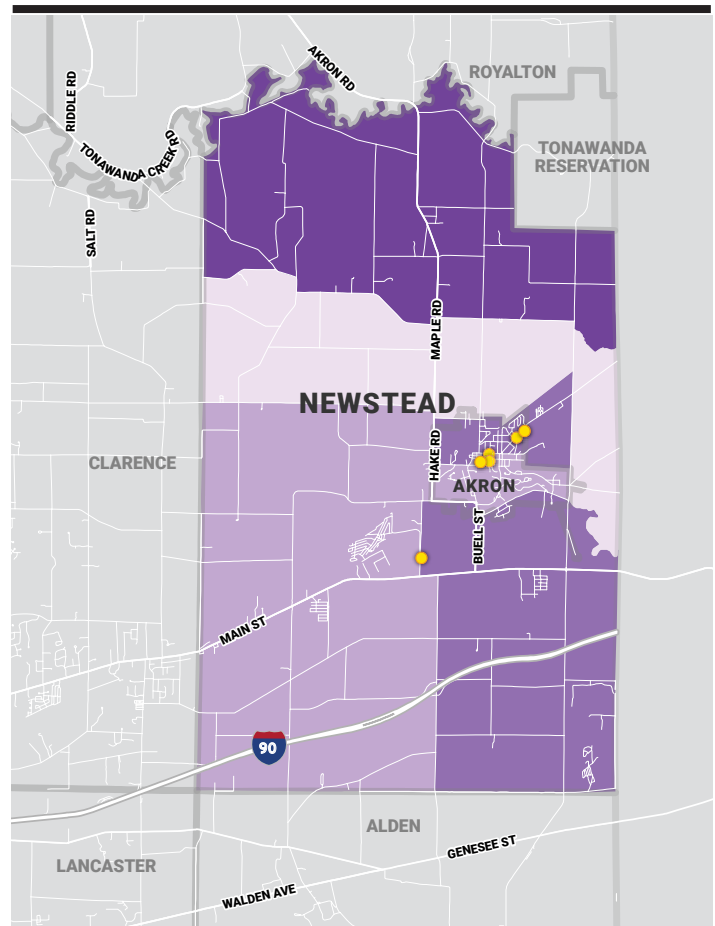


Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2013-2017.

% Adults without a College Education, 2017

0-30% 31%-40% 41%-50% 51%-60%

Providers offering Education and Training Services



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

A number of organizations offer financial and housing assistance, but many cost-burdened households are not located near providers.

Seven different organizations in Akron-Newstead provide financial or housing services. These include the Village of Akron and C. Dee Wright Community Center, as well as mobile home parks and rental property management organizations offering rental assistance. These providers tend to be located near affordable housing options, like mobile homes, but hundreds of cost-burdened households are dispersed in other parts of the community. Expanding the number and diversity of housing and financial supports can help households alleviate the burden of housing costs, especially with the relatively low availability of affordable housing and rental units in the community.

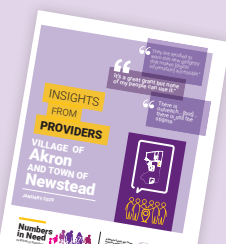
Many adults could enhance their job prospects by furthering their education, but resources for adult education are limited in Akron-Newstead.

Compared to other communities, education services are less common in Akron-Newstead. Six organizations offer education or training, but nearly all are for youth. The Akron School District is a strong community asset, but course offerings for adult education are limited. The Newstead Public Library is another resource, but it does not offer formal training. The Newstead Senior Center does provide education services, but they are not geared to workforce development. More workforce training and continuing education options could improve the earning potential for many of the nearly 2,700 adults in Akron-Newstead with no college experience.

Opportunities and Challenges for Providers

Read more Insights from Providers

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



What's happened over the past 5 years?

Akron-Newstead continues to have a small but active number of providers supporting the community's declining number of residents living in or near poverty. Although older residents in this community are at greatest risk for poverty and related challenges, senior programs and services continue to be seen as a strength of the service landscape. Over the past five years, Hearts & Hands, which started in Akron-Newstead and provides transportation and other services to vulnerable populations, has since expanded its service area. The organization now serves over a dozen communities in Erie and Niagara Counties and remains volunteer-driven.



The group of providers that convened to share insights and consider strategies for the 2012 community report formed a coalition that continues to meet, collaboratively tackle challenges, and advocate for the underserved in the community. Successes include having a representative of Erie County Department of Social Services (DSS) in the community, which reduces the need for residents to travel to Buffalo.

← - Available online at NumbersInNeed.org



Strengths of the System

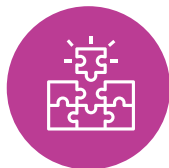
Over two dozen service providers are located in Akron-Newstead. On a per capita basis, the community has more providers than the other 11 communities in this study.

The relatively large percentage of providers offering youth programs is a valuable resource for children and their families and supports a relatively low rate of childhood poverty in this community.

Providers in the community see programs for seniors as a top strength in the overall landscape of services.

Services are located where residents in need are concentrated in the Village of Akron. Having providers in close proximity to residents increases the likelihood that services will be used.

A variety of providers offer transportation in Akron-Newstead to help residents connect with programs and services.



Gaps

Recent increases to mobile home lot rents have burdened the many lower-income residents living in these communities.

Providers say poverty data for seniors does not capture the variation in need that they see across younger seniors and older seniors ages 90 and up.

Providers acknowledge that a patchwork of transportation options exist for residents who do not have a vehicle or do not drive. **Yet providers also say that residents need more flexible, affordable transportation options.**

The service landscape is limited for many kinds of programs and services.

Providers expressed a need for more childcare programs, youth programs, home health providers, respite care, and mental health providers.



Barriers

Providers say transportation and traveling difficulty is a barrier residents face to programs and services for persons of all ages, especially with many services located outside the community.

Providers say pride prevents residents, especially seniors, from accepting help and utilizing services they need. Residents want to pay their bills and respond to requests for donations. If they can't, they prefer to go without.

Technology is a barrier to information delivery. Providers say some older residents do not know how to use a computer; others are resistant to new technology. With only one company offering internet service in Akron-Newstead, the cost of internet access is high and can be out of reach.

The stigma of mental health creates barriers to information delivery in public settings.



Promising Developments

An active coalition of service providers offers a strong foundation for information sharing, partnerships, and solution building that benefits residents and the community.

New legislation at the state level offers rent stabilization and new protections for mobile home owners. Increases to lot rent are capped at 3% annually unless expenses faced by landowners justify a larger increase.

Erie County Department of Social Services will soon have a full-service mobile van in Akron-Newstead. The van will offer access to programs and services for which residents currently have travel to Buffalo.

A partnership between Newstead Library, UB School of Social Work, and Erie County DSS continues to support a trained social work intern at the library who connects residents in need with social services and more.

Survey Results of Economically Vulnerable Residents

100 residents in need took the survey.

Only about 17% of survey respondents have an urgent concern, primarily related to debt, lacking money for food, and the threat of utilities being shut off because of overdue bills. Forty percent of respondents have some kind of financial concern as well. Debt is the foremost of residents' financial worries, whether from credit cards, medical bills, or student loans. Residents are also concerned about taxes and high lot rent.

Most residents drive, a near necessity in a rural town with few other practical options. Car payments and maintenance costs may also contribute to residents' consumer debt burden.

Healthcare is costly, too. Even though 98% of survey respondents reported that all adults in their household have health insurance, about a third of respondents have health care needs they cannot afford, possibly contributing to residents' worries about medical bills.

Read more Insights from Residents

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



17%

REPORTED HAVING SOME TYPE OF URGENT CONCERN

→ TOP 3 URGENT CONCERNS REPORTED BY THESE RESIDENTS

Outstanding Debt -----> **71%**

No Money for Food -----> **35%**

Utility Shut-off -----> **24%**

HEALTH CARE NEEDS

29%

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



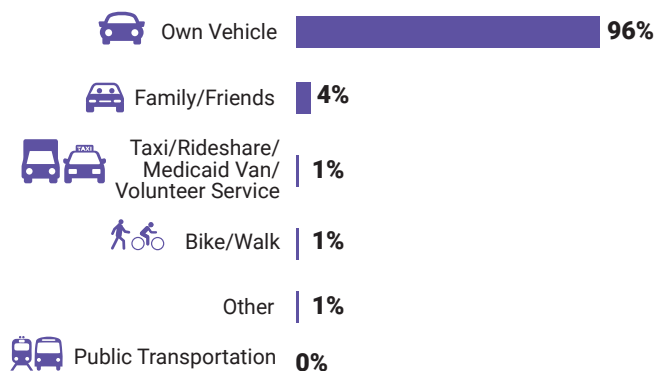
Despite the prevalence of health insurance coverage, many residents still have medical concerns they cannot afford to address, possibly because some care is not covered by insurance, or co-pays are too high.



TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

For many residents in rural Akron-Newstead, driving is the only practical way to get around. But residents who cannot drive or who don't own a car get around using family or friends, taxis, rideshare, volunteer services, medical transportation, or biking/walking.

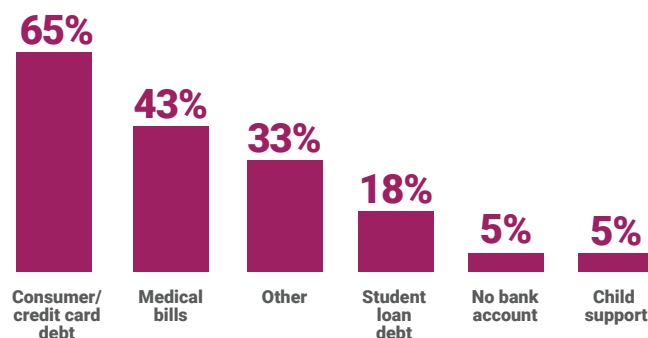
How respondents get around



FINANCIAL NEEDS

Forty percent of respondents are dealing with a financial challenge. Consumer debt is by far the most common concern, followed by medical bills. Other responses include student loans, taxes, and high lot rent costs.

Top 6 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 be supported by models of their implementation. Models from other places in the region, country, and world demonstrate how other communities have carried out a similar strategy. They serve as a starting point for understanding how strategies can be successfully implemented in this community.

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.



Health & Mental Health

Bring health and mental health services to residents in need through community outreach, mobile services, and online tools.

For many residents, access to healthcare services can be limited, especially those without a vehicle, in rural areas far from doctors and hospitals, and others facing economic, social, or language barriers. Thousands of Buffalo Niagara residents face such obstacles—over 60,500 households do not own a car, nearly 36,000 people with a disability live in poverty, and over 18,000 individuals have limited English fluency. Mobile health clinics can overcome these barriers by bringing essential health care services directly to residents in need where they live and work. Similarly, proactive community outreach by medical professionals, and online tools and resources can increase awareness and access to health care services, especially for those who face physical, cultural, or financial barriers.

Potential Action Steps

Operate mobile health clinics that travel to communities lacking convenient access to key health services. These can provide low-cost alternatives to primary care, screening and testing, mental health counseling, and other important services, including care outside of normal business hours..

Leverage data to determine where and how mobile health clinics can best reach underserved populations.

Travel to workplaces, and contact businesses, to directly reach people in need of health care services.

Consult with individuals experiencing financial, legal, cultural, or psychological barriers to accessing health care.

Provide consultation services to increase enrollment in health insurance, set up appointments with primary care or other physicians.

Advocate for policies that can facilitate the adoption of information technology for health solutions.

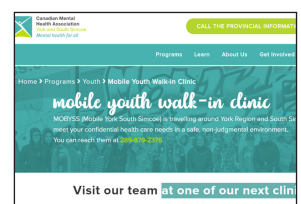
Potential Actors in the Community

Hospitals
Health clinics
Physicians
Health care providers
Health insurance companies
Local governments
Colleges and universities

Models to Consider

The Health Wagon
Various locations in Virginia
thehealthwagon.org/hwwwp

Mobile York South Simcoe (MOBYSS)
Ontario, Canada
cmha-yr.on.ca/programs/youth/mobyss



Regional Strategies and Models to Consider, cont'd.



Housing

Bolster supports for homeowners living on a fixed income, especially older adults.

Nearly a third (32%) of homes in Buffalo Niagara were built before 1940. In urban areas where economic need is more concentrated, this share is much higher. People in or near poverty are more likely to live in older homes, since they tend to cost less to rent or own (ACS, 1-year estimates, 2017). But older homes are often more expensive to maintain, which can be a challenge for those on a fixed income, like older adults. Based on insights from residents, many do not have enough in savings to cover costly repairs when issues arise. This can lead to difficult decisions, like having to choose between repairing a furnace or keeping up with health care costs. Helping low income residents cover the costs of home repairs can lead to financial security and enable older adults to age in place.

Potential Action Steps

Raise awareness of new and existing resources such as Eight Days of Hope and Erie County Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program offering zero-interest loans for major repairs that can be deferred until the home is sold or transferred.

Explore the creation of an emergency housing fund.

Consider a community solar project as a way to lower utility costs for low-income homeowners that typically face barriers to clean energy investments and utilization.

Create or strengthen block clubs, which have helped homeowners with necessary repairs in some neighborhoods, and may be able to negotiate lower prices with handymen and contractors.

Potential Actors in the Community

Housing service providers

Financial education service providers

Block clubs and community organizations

Senior service providers

Utility assistance providers

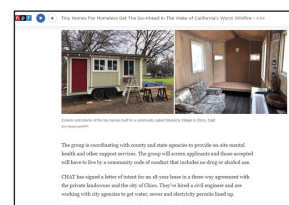
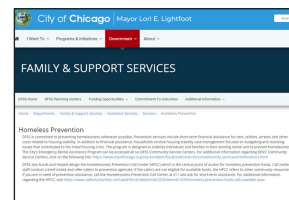
Models to Consider

Chicago Homeless Prevention Call Center
Chicago, IL

chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/provdrs/emerg/svcs/homeless_prevention

Tiny Homes

Rochester and Syracuse, NY and Chico, CA
atinyhomeforgood.org



Data Sources & Notes

Cover

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

US Census Bureau, US Decennial Census, 2000.

Defining Need, Page 2

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

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

Poverty Map, Page 4

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

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, 2011-17 5-Year Estimates.

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

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, 5-Year Estimates, 2017. 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, 5-Year Estimates, 2017. Low-income households in this instance are defined as households with incomes below \$35,000/year.

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

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 will be effective 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, 5-Year Estimates, 2017.

Provider Data: Information submitted by agency providers through a provider questionnaire updated a listing of providers developed for the 2014 community report for Akron-Newstead. 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.

Provider Services and Needs of Residents, Page 8

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

Provider Data: See note for page 6.

Opportunities and Challenges for Providers, Page 9

Hearts & Hands offers services to residents living in 13 communities in Erie and Niagara Counties. See the agency's website (Services>Who's Eligible) at <https://hnhcares.org/>.

Insights from Providers, Town of Newstead, December 2019. Provider insights come from an agency focus group held in July 2019 with seven provider representatives.

Survey Results of Economically Vulnerable Residents, Page 10

Insights from Residents, Town of Newstead, December 2019. Survey findings come from 100 surveys completed at eight locations and online in June and July 2019.

Strategies and Models to Consider

Housing ages in Buffalo Niagara: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2017.

People in or near poverty are more likely to live in older homes, since they tend to cost less to rent or own: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2017.

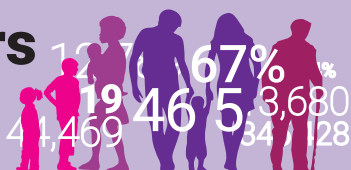
COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Village of Akron and Town of Newstead

JANUARY 2020

Numbers in Need

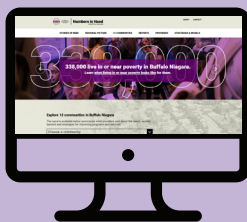
IN BUFFALO NIAGARA



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



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