

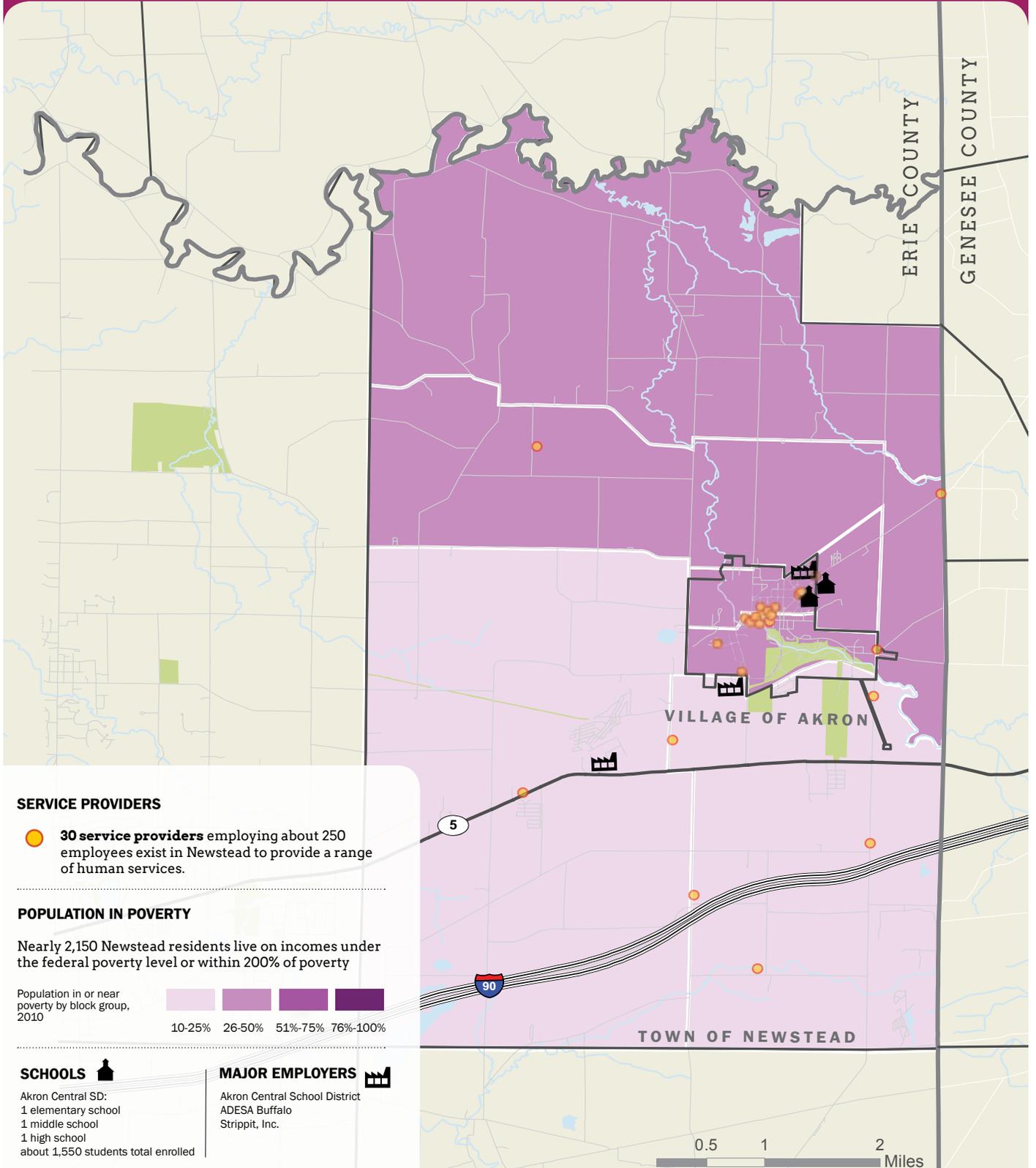
# STRENGTHENING WNY's Safety Net

## A COMMUNITY REPORT Town of **NEWSTEAD**



Report prepared for  
The John R. Oishei Foundation  
by the University at Buffalo  
Regional Institute

December 2012



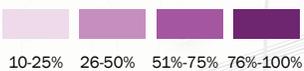
### SERVICE PROVIDERS

**30 service providers** employing about 250 employees exist in Newstead to provide a range of human services.

### POPULATION IN POVERTY

Nearly 2,150 Newstead residents live on incomes under the federal poverty level or within 200% of poverty

Population in or near poverty by block group, 2010



### SCHOOLS



Akron Central SD:  
1 elementary school  
1 middle school  
1 high school  
about 1,550 students total enrolled

### MAJOR EMPLOYERS



Akron Central School District  
ADESA Buffalo  
Stripit, Inc.

0.5 1 2 Miles

# About This Report

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## Background

Between 2008 and 2009, regional employers shed almost 20,000 net jobs. The economic downturn, which continued into 2010, left large numbers of residents unemployed and unable to find new work for the first time in their lives. High levels of unemployment continue today. One out of 12 residents across the region seek work. For many, the situation has been long term and is now dire. As one indicator of this, Erie County Department of Social Services reports an unprecedented number of requests for emergency housing.

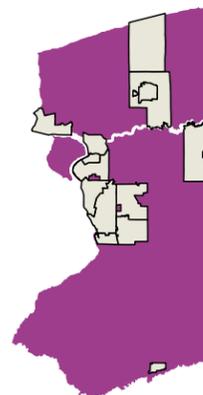
Families in the region's suburbs have experienced the biggest increase in poverty. One out of three with incomes below poverty live outside urban areas where support services such as emergency food, housing and employment training are concentrated. Put another way, residents may be relatively far away from the services they need to get back on their feet. They may be unaware, too, of what's out there to help them. Meanwhile, services providers are challenged to expand capacity, improve access and generate additional revenues for expanded services, while at the same time, they may be dealing with funding cuts.

To strengthen the safety net in communities where residents are struggling the most, **The John R. Oishei Foundation created the Mobile Safety-Net Team Initiative in 2009** to go into



dozens of communities in Erie and Niagara Counties to assess how the downturn in the economy is impacting residents, help connect residents with the services they need, build relationships with service providers and gather information about human service needs. The team has worked in 45 communities to date.

**Twelve representative communities** have been selected for additional assessment and investment as part of Phase 2 of the Mobile Safety-Net Team initiative, which kicked off in 2012 and includes the team's partnership with the University at Buffalo Regional Institute. The purpose of phase two is to gather additional insights from residents, conduct focus groups, hear from organizations, and develop a tool that will assist the foundation community and communities in strengthening the safety net of services. Newstead was one of the 12 communities selected. The in-depth analysis and recommendations contained herein are grounded in this work by the **University at Buffalo Regional Institute** and the **Mobile Safety-Net Team**.



## What Went Into This Report

### Two Teams

This effort culminates six months of research during 2012 by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute, working in partnership with the Mobile Safety-Net Team.

University at Buffalo  
Regional Institute

Mobile Safety-Net Team  
an initiative of The John R. Oishei Foundation

The work of the teams within the Newstead community over several months...

### Who We Talked to and What We Looked at

Residents and agency providers allowed us to explore how the system was currently working and gain insights into how to improve it.

#### Residents



#### Resident Survey

151 surveys of households living in Newstead Zip Code 14001 were completed, providing new data on the demographics of Newstead's at-risk population, their needs, urgent concerns, utilization of human service benefits, and barriers to support services.

#### Resident Focus Groups

To gather insights on residents' most pressing concerns, barriers to accessing services and insights on strengthening the safety net of human services, focus groups were held at the Newstead Senior Center, Quarry Hill Estate (a mobile home community) and Newstead Public Library.

#### Agencies



#### Agency Interviews

Dozens of human service agency representatives shared information on their programs and perspectives on community needs and opportunities.

#### Agency Focus Groups

About a dozen human services providers in Newstead took part in a focus group/ summit that was held at the Newstead Fire Hall to gather agency perspectives on human service needs, barriers and strategies for improving the landscape of services.

#### Secondary Data



#### Data Sources

Information and insights were gathered from diverse sources, including the 2010 Census, 2006-2010 American Community Survey, Social Explorer Reports, NYS Department of Health, NYS Education Department 2011 School Report Card, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Statistics and Reference USA.

### Understanding the Report

The months of information gathering and research provided the structure for understanding the needs, the barriers and the strategies for improving the current system.

...led us to explore...



...which resulted in:

Insights & Recommendations



# STRENGTHENING WNY's Safety Net

## A COMMUNITY REPORT Town of **NEWSTEAD**



### A large population in poverty or close to it...

Among Newstead's population of 8,594...

...about **725**

Newstead residents live on incomes under the federal poverty level.

...an additional **1,400**

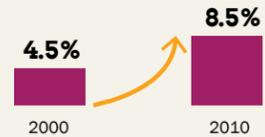
are close to poverty, with incomes between 100%-200% of the poverty level.

...about **2,135**

are doing poorly or struggling financially. This is almost one out of every four in Newstead.

### Beyond poverty, other alarming indicators and trends...

The **population in poverty** has nearly doubled since 2000. Ten years ago, one out of every 22 residents in Newstead lived in poverty. In 2010, one out of every 12 do.



Poverty rates in Newstead have nearly doubled over the past 10 years.

Food stamp use has been **on the rise** over the past 2 years

Between October 2010 and October 2012, the number of households across Newstead that depend on food stamps grew 40% or by nearly 200 cases.

Newstead's **senior population** has grown over the past 10 years at a rate that is 4 times that of the town's overall population growth (8% v. 2%).

**Lower-income households** are more likely to own their home and face high expenses relating to home ownership, repair and weatherization. Weatherization emerged as a top concern for about a quarter of seniors participating in a focus group.

**40%** of arrests are drug or alcohol-related

40% of criminal arrests in Newstead involve drugs and alcohol-related offenses.

**Drug use among youth** in Akron is described as prevalent and on the rise, and there is a need for counseling for youth and families.

**3 Suicides** of young adults in recent months

One out of 9 households **lack health insurance**, with adults three times more likely to be uninsured than children.\*

The majority of those at risk in Newstead are working adults or have someone in their household who works.

**Native Americans** are a sizable population at risk, especially among youth where they account for 11% of the school district's student body. Most live on the Tonawanda Indian Reservation where many don't have running water or electricity.

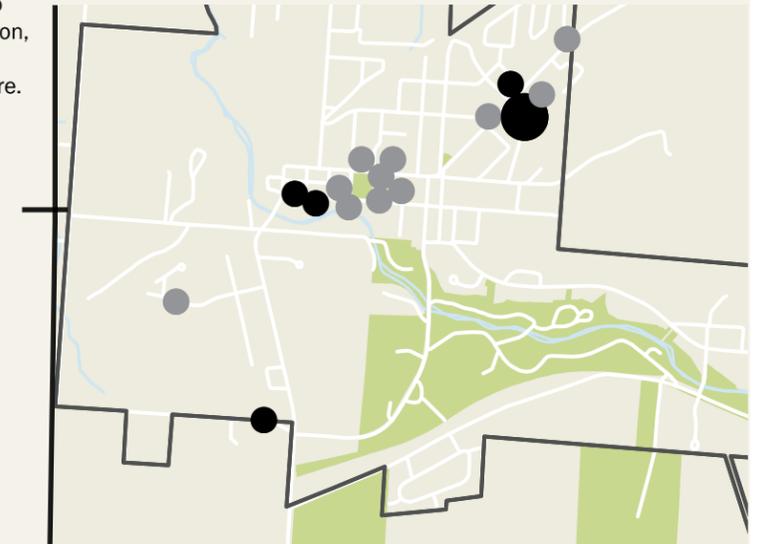
\* Findings come from a survey of 151 at-risk households in Newstead, reflecting a statistically significant sample size at a confidence level of 95% and with a confidence interval of 7.5.

### Newstead's landscape of human services providers...

Almost **30** public and private providers employing about **250**

exist in Newstead to provide a range of human services to residents, from food, education, job training, youth programs, information services and more.

Nearby Akron Central School District and north of Main Street, there exists a **critical mass of providers** in the Village of Akron, offering a solid basis for collaboration and connecting with the 880 residents living in or near poverty who reside in the Village of Akron.



# strengths

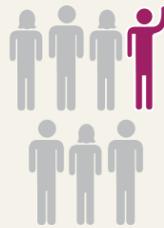
Strengths of the system include the work and commitment of the faith community in providing human services, the willingness of residents to volunteer, the caseworker the senior center provides through a cluster program with Clarence, and the presence of Hearts and Hands Faith in Action, a best practice model for providing affordable transportation to vulnerable populations and enabling seniors to age in place.

# gaps

Gaps in services exist for a wide variety of services: counseling for youth and families, home health services, youth programming, food, clothing, weatherization, domestic violence, emergency housing, legal aid, and low-cost primary health care.

## Barriers and systemic challenges...

**1 out of 7 residents surveyed in Newstead say they have encountered difficulty getting services.**



**Transportation** is a major barrier described by residents and providers alike. There are no public transit routes in and out of Newstead, and the low-cost transportation services that exist are primarily for seniors, to get them to medical appointments and enable them to run occasional errands.

# 189

Households without access to a vehicle

Newstead is **geographically isolated** and a distance to human services sites located outside the town. Newstead is a 45-minute drive to downtown Buffalo for residents seeking a legal clinic or domestic violence help. It's a half hour drive to Lancaster or Lockport for family and youth counseling services. Moreover, there is a perception among Newstead residents that anything past Transit Road is "too far." Newstead's distance from the region's urban centers also hinders access to in-home service providers (home health aides, for example) who don't always have access to a vehicle and may not get reimbursed for travel.

**10%** of residents surveyed said traveling to services is difficult and has posed barriers

The town has **lost key services and supports**. It used to have a Teen Center, but this was short lived. More recently, it lost a Family Support Center within Akron Central School District. This served as a connection point for services and a satellite location for providers such as Family Services, Catholic Charities and the United Way. During the 1990's, Akron also had a program funded by the East Hill Foundation called Health Connection that linked individuals to health and human services.

Key weatherization programs have **long waiting lists and exclusions**. The Weatherization Assistance Program reports waits of at least 5 1/2 years for Newstead. NYSERDA's EMPOWER program, which helps residents find energy efficiencies and may even provide free energy-efficient appliances, does not cover Newstead residents to the extent they receive utility service from the village utility, which does not pay into or participate in the EMPOWER program.

Newstead is almost **1 hour** away from the region's urban core

**Existing services are underutilized.** While Meals on Wheels for Western New York has been expanding service in Newstead, only 36 residents receive meals, even though there are an estimated 100+ seniors in Newstead who don't have a vehicle and others are shut-in. Meanwhile, skills training programs at the C. Dee Wright Center have been canceled because nobody has come. Yet there have been hundreds of newly unemployed individuals in Newstead in recent years.

**Privacy, pride and the stigma** associated with human services benefits create barriers, too. Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church's Food Pantry reports some residents turn away when asked to complete an application and disclose their income. The Senior Outreach Specialist at Newstead Senior Center also reports difficulties in getting seniors to disclose personal information such as income that would make them eligible for benefits. Only about two-thirds of residents provided their income on the questionnaire for this initiative.

# 378+

are new to the system

**Lack of awareness** among human services providers about what their neighbors are doing prevent them from making referrals to residents in need and from collaborating to fill existing gaps and operate more efficiently. One youth service provider, located just 1/2 mile away from another major youth service provider, indicated they didn't know that the other existed. Fueling the lack of coordination is tension between the village and town; there is a sense of "otherness."

## Recommendations to strengthen the safety net of human services...

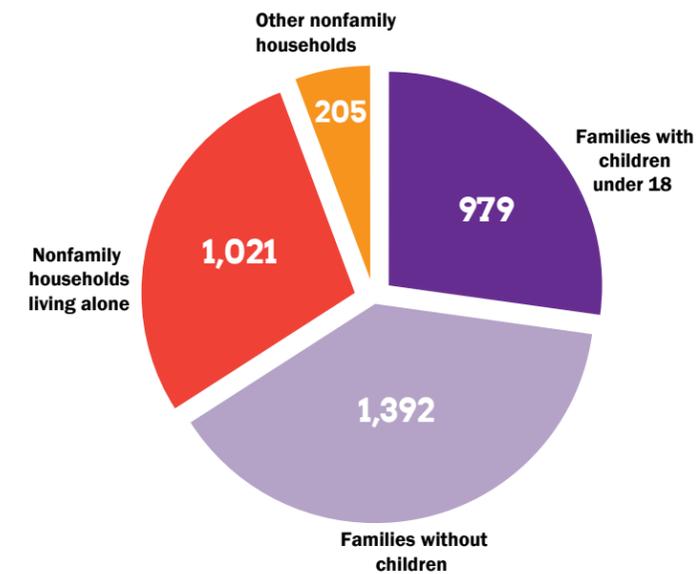
RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGIES	MODEL TO CONSIDER
<b>Expand connections among human services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a human services coalition open to all providers</li> <li>Continue to meet regularly</li> </ul>	The Seattle Human Services Coalition is an example of a long-standing successful group. <a href="http://shscoalition.org/">http://shscoalition.org/</a>
<b>Raise awareness of human services and reduce fragmentation through centralization of information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain the directory of services created by the MSNT</li> <li>Distribute to all human services providers</li> <li>Disseminate an abbreviated one-page version to all individuals and families annually</li> </ul>	As information hubs and neutral spaces, libraries can play a key role in raising awareness and centralizing information. The New Rochelle Public Library is a forerunner in New York State. <a href="http://www.nrpl.org/socialservices/">http://www.nrpl.org/socialservices/</a>
<b>Fill transportation gaps through expanded services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore innovative models of transportation, include joint vehicle options</li> <li>Consider funding options to expand current services</li> <li>Increase usage of programs such as PACE that include transportation within the package of services provided</li> </ul>	The Brunswick Explorer is a 14-seat, wheelchair accessible hybrid bus serving the disabled and other low-income individuals in rural Maine. Federal funding currently covers 80% of its operating budget. <a href="http://www.brunswickexplorer.org/">http://www.brunswickexplorer.org/</a>
<b>Reduce the stigma associated with human services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen work-place connection points for human service benefits</li> <li>Locate services and human services information at neutral, mixed-use sites</li> </ul>	Bridging the Gap reduces the stigma of benefits by using workplaces as points of connection with the working poor. <a href="http://nationalassembly.org/fspc/BridgingTheGap/">http://nationalassembly.org/fspc/BridgingTheGap/</a>
<b>Develop a drug and alcohol prevention strategy including counseling for youth and families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a vision for substance abuse prevention that engages all local stakeholders</li> <li>Develop programming for youth focused on drug prevention, and training for parents and educators</li> <li>Further explore options for offering counseling to youth at a site within the school district or at a nearby venue</li> </ul>	The Sweet Home Family Support Center is a successful local model for offering prevention, intervention and counseling for youth and families within the school district. <a href="http://district.shs.k12.ny.us/community/fsc">http://district.shs.k12.ny.us/community/fsc</a>
<b>Increase the availability and accessibility of after-school activities for lower-income children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness of existing programs</li> <li>Explore partnership opportunities for additional programming, with a particular focus on at-risk children</li> </ul>	The Collaborative for Building After-School Systems offers best practices for partnerships that increase access to high quality after-school programs. <a href="http://www.afterschoolsystems.org/">http://www.afterschoolsystems.org/</a>
<b>Further cultivate the C. Dee Wright Center as a community resource and site for satellite programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incubate a human services program involving multiple partnerships</li> <li>Raise the center's profile as a neutral venue</li> <li>Consider using the center as a location for satellite programming and outreach</li> </ul>	Hearts and Hands Faith in Action is an expanding interfaith coalition of 8 member churches in Akron/Newstead that had its beginning at a single church. <a href="http://hnhcares.org/">http://hnhcares.org/</a>
<b>Strengthen the safety-net for food and weatherization services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign to the Food Pantry a dedicated phone number, and consider a partnership with the Food Bank of WNY</li> <li>Increase utilization of Meals on Wheels through referrals</li> <li>Explore partnerships to stretch dollars that assist low-income homeowners with necessary repairs</li> </ul>	Mobile pantries are a growing outreach strategy for rural areas. The Senior Mobile Food Pantry Program in the Southern Tier is an award-receiving program. <a href="http://www.foodbankst.org/index.asp?pagelD=82">http://www.foodbankst.org/index.asp?pagelD=82</a>

Context for Action  
**People in Need**



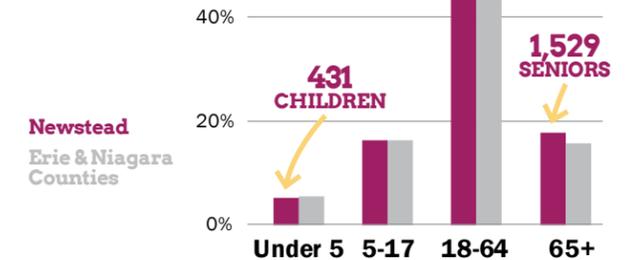
Individuals and families of Newstead, where we work, how much we earn and where we go to school

Households by Type, 2010



Source: 2010 Census

Population by Age, 2010



Potentially At-Risk Populations, 2010

Adults with high school or less	1,428
Veterans	821
Foreign-born Individuals	287
Non-white Individuals	254
Single Parents	245

Source: 2010 Census and 2006-10 American Community Survey

**Individuals and Families**

Approximately 8,600 individuals reside in the Town of Newstead, which includes the Village of Akron where one out of three live. This overall population figure represents notable growth of 15.5% or 1,154 individuals, over the past 20 years. Most of the increase occurred during the 1990's, and all of it occurred outside the Village of Akron, which actually experienced a slight population decline of 1.3% since 1990. During the past 10 years, the village lost 7% of its people.

Population, 1990-2010

**+15.5%**

Newstead's population gain over the past 20 years has largely occurred outside the village.

Source: 1990 Census and 2010 Census

Newstead is a family community, but it's an aging one as well, where families without children are more common than families with children under the age of 18. Indeed, growth of Newstead's senior population has outpaced the town's overall population rise for at least the past two decades. Moreover, while the number of

seniors rose 8% since 2000, the number of youth declined 10% over the same period. Yet there are still more youth in Newstead than seniors age 65 and up (1,831 youth versus 1,529 seniors, as of 2010).

Aside from children and seniors, who tend to be more economically vulnerable because of age-related work barriers (including those experienced by parents), there are more than 1,400 adults in Newstead age 25 and up who may be struggling economically as a result of limited educational levels and access to higher-wage jobs. Veterans, foreign-born, non-white individuals and single parents are others in Newstead that may experience greater barriers to education and work, and therefore may potentially be at risk economically.

### Employment by Sectors, 2010

	Town of Newstead	Erie County
Private, for-profit	71%	66%
Private, non-profit	6%	10%
Self-employed/unpaid family	9%	7%
Public	14%	17%

Source: 2006-10 American Community Survey

### Newstead's Top 10 Employers

Employer	# of Employees
ADESA Buffalo	500
Strippit Inc	500
Whiting Door Mfg Corp	300
Perry's Ice Cream Co.	260
Akron Central School District	150
Cold Spring Construction	100
Pixley's Shur Fine Food Mart	100
I Squared R Element Co Inc	80
Wood Maxx Power Equipment	65
Jan's Smoke & Craft Shop	53

Source: Reference USA

## Work and Income

While Newstead is traditionally a rural farming community, today, employment in manufacturing and wholesale trade account for more than half of jobs. Top employers include ADESA (providing auction and vehicle remarketing services), Perry's Ice Cream Company, (one of the region's largest family-owned businesses that was founded on a dairy farm in Akron in 1918), and Strippit, Inc. (a machinery manufacturer). Akron Central School District is Newstead's only top 10 public employer. Newstead's economy is heavily comprised of private-sector employers, with a relatively small public sector. Newstead residents are more likely than those across Erie County to work for a private, for-profit company or to be self employed.

This relatively high private-sector concentration has, perhaps, made Newstead particularly vulnerable to the recent economic downturn. Between 2005 and 2010 private-sector employers located in Newstead shed about a fifth of their workforce, slashing 689 jobs or about a fifth of the total. For the most part, the jobs that remain are not high paying. About 30% pay \$1,250 a month or less, and only 33% require a bachelor's degree or higher.

Limited employment opportunities within the town may be one of the reasons the large majority of Newstead residents who work – 83% – leave Newstead for their jobs. Top destinations include Amherst (15%), the City of Buffalo (12%) and Clarence (11%).

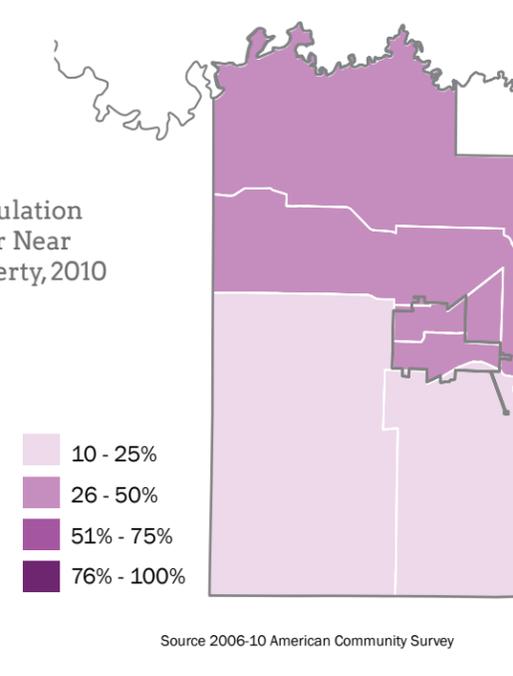
Mobility to higher-paying jobs elsewhere in the region supports a median household income in Newstead that is 17% higher than across Erie County (\$55,655 vs. \$47,372, respectively). Yet incomes aren't evenly distributed around this middle. Rather, they are weighted toward the lower end, especially in the Village of Akron where 29% of households live on less than \$25,000 annually, while only 11% make more than \$100,000.

### % Households by Income Levels

	Town of Newstead	Village of Akron
\$0 - \$25K	20%	29%
\$25K - \$100K	66%	61%
\$100K - \$200K	14%	11%

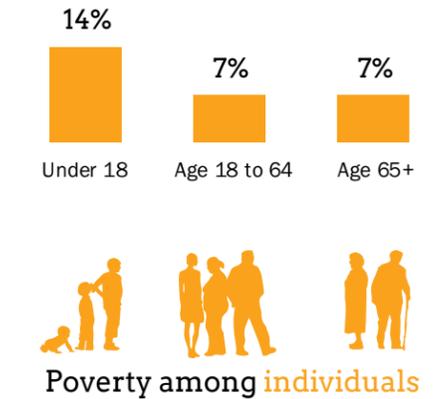
Source: 2006-10 American Community Survey

### Population in or Near Poverty, 2010



Source 2006-10 American Community Survey

### Population in Poverty by Age, 2010



Source: 2006-10 American Community Survey

## Poverty

Across Newstead, there are 728 individuals (8.5% of the total) living in poverty (or on less than \$19,090 annually for a family of three). Another 1,406 are managing on incomes between 100% and 200% of the federal poverty level. Altogether, 25% of the population—one in four—is either in poverty or financially at risk. Economic hardship is more heavily concentrated in the Village of Akron and northern parts of the town. In certain tracks, up to 38% of residents are poor or close to it.

Not everyone in Newstead is affected equally by poverty. Children comprise a group that is disproportionately impacted. The percentage of youth under age 18 who are living in poverty (14%) is 1.6 times the overall average. Poverty rates are also high among Native Americans, with 15% living in poverty. Living conditions are even worse on the nearby Tonawanda Indian Reservation where families live without even basic necessities like running water and electricity.

**\$17.43** Daily amount a family of three lives on at the federal poverty level

**\$27.00** Cost of a one-way trip from Akron to Amherst via taxi

Source: 2012 HHS Poverty Guidelines and price quote from a local taxi company serving the Akron area

Schools in Akron Central SD	Enrollment, 2011	% Qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch
<b>ELEMENTARY</b>		
1 Akron ES	699	30%
<b>MIDDLE</b>		
2 Akron MS	336	33%
<b>HIGH</b>		
3 Akron HS	513	23%

Source: NYS Education Department 2011 School Report Card

### Education

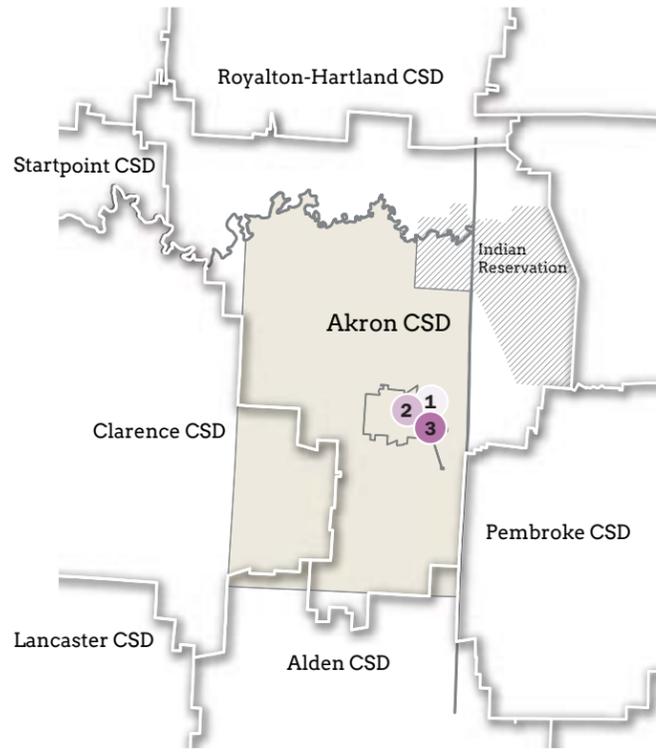
About 1,550 students are enrolled in Akron Central School District, which contains a single elementary school, middle school and high school. Overall, the district ranks well compared to other districts in Western New York, standing at 14 out of 97, according to recent academic rankings published by Business First.

While students in Akron perform comparatively well, there are significant disparities between students who are economically disadvantaged and those who are not. In 4th grade, for instance, about three-quarters of students who are not economically disadvantaged are meeting or exceeding academic standards in math. At the same time, less than half (40%) of economically disadvantaged students perform at this level. By 8th grade, 50% of disadvantaged students meet or exceed standards, while the large majority (82%) of economically advantaged students are scoring at standards or higher.

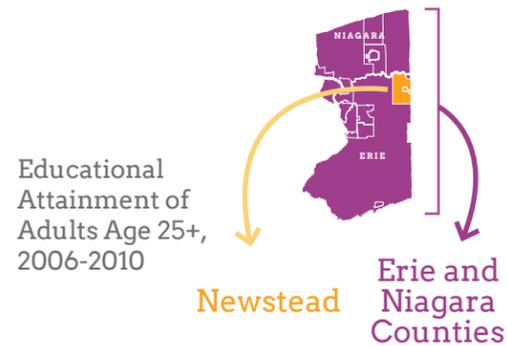
Disadvantaged students account for about 30% of the district total, with higher percentages in the elementary and middle schools. District leaders say this figure, which represents students who receive free- or reduced-price lunches, underestimates the actual number of students in need since families are reluctant to complete the necessary paperwork to become eligible for benefits.

Native American students, at 11% of the student body, represent the largest minority group the district serves. These students are also some of the most in need. Many live on the nearby Tonawanda Indian Reservation where poverty is high, jobs are scarce, and where drug and alcohol use is a challenge, according to representatives from the Reservation.

While students in Akron Central School District are more likely than those across the region to graduate from high school, those that continue to live in Akron are less likely to pursue higher education. Only 22% of adults in Newstead have a bachelor's degree or higher versus 27% regionally. Limited job opportunities in Newstead for those with higher education contribute to these percentages.



Source: NYS Education Department 2011 School Report Card and NYS GIS Clearinghouse



	Newstead	Erie and Niagara Counties
Less than High School	11%	12%
High School	37%	31%
Some College/ Associate's Degree	30%	30%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	22%	27%

Source: 2006-10 American Community Survey

## Context for Action

# Newstead's Most Vulnerable



Demographics, the services we use, urgent needs and the barriers faced

## Assessing the Need

### 151 Newstead households responded to the Mobile Safety-Net Team Community Needs Assessment.

This one-page questionnaire gathered data and information on demographics, urgent needs, concerns and barriers experienced by residents in getting human services.

Assessments were completed at about a dozen different sites and venues across Newstead, including the C. Dee Wright Center, Newstead Senior Center, Newstead Public Library, Akron Central School District, Akron Holy Cross Headstart, Quarry Hill Estates, the Super Cruise and Craft Show, and a telephone survey of Hearts and Hands Faith in Action clients.

### What human services are residents receiving?

A relatively low number (32%) of those surveyed at a variety of sites and venues across Newstead report receiving some form of human services support or living in a household with someone who does.

#### The most common types of benefits reported by those who receive support

HEAP	49%
Medicaid Insurance	41%
Food Stamps	39%
SSI/SSD	35%
Public Assistance Income	14%

## 49%

of those receiving some form of public assistance qualify for and receive more than one kind of benefit.

**Pending applications.** Only 2% of those not receiving any benefit at this time say they have an application pending for public assistance.

### Are there indicators of greater need?

The need for support with food, health insurance, housing costs and cash assistance is at least slightly greater than indicated by the number of recipients since both those currently receiving benefits as well as those who don't report having experienced access barriers. Traveling difficulties, income cut-offs and confusing processes that create hassles for benefit applicants are among those most frequently reported.

## Only 10%

of survey takers report having an urgent concern.

#### The most urgent concerns of those surveyed

Foreclosure/Utility Shut-off	3%
Food	2%
Other	7%

**Urgent Concerns:** The large majority of residents surveyed didn't identify any urgent concerns. Rather, only about one out of ten survey takers reported having a pressing need in their household. About half of those who said they were in a crisis situation were public

assistance recipients. The others with urgent concerns were not currently receiving support of any kind and may lack familiarity with the supports that are available for individuals and families in the community.

**Lack of Health Insurance.** About one in nine reported that at least one person in their household lacks health insurance. For every survey taker who said there is an uninsured child in their home, three said there was at least one uninsured adult.

### Why aren't needs greater?

A confluence of factors are at play in the lives of Newstead residents that appear to be buffering them from greater need. The survey findings reveal that Newstead remains a relatively stable community where even those at risk are relatively educated, insured and near middle class. Moreover, while poverty in Newstead has doubled over the past decade, there are not yet indicators of widespread or persistent generational poverty seen in other communities.

**Among the factors protecting Newstead's at-risk population from deeper levels of poverty and higher levels of need include:**

**Employment.** Almost nine out of ten surveyed reported being employed or currently retired. Full-time employment was, in fact, the most common response to the employment question. Moreover, it was common for respondents

to report living with another adult who was employed full or part time. Only four survey respondents, less than 5% of the sample, indicated that either they or someone else in their household was currently unemployed and looking for work.

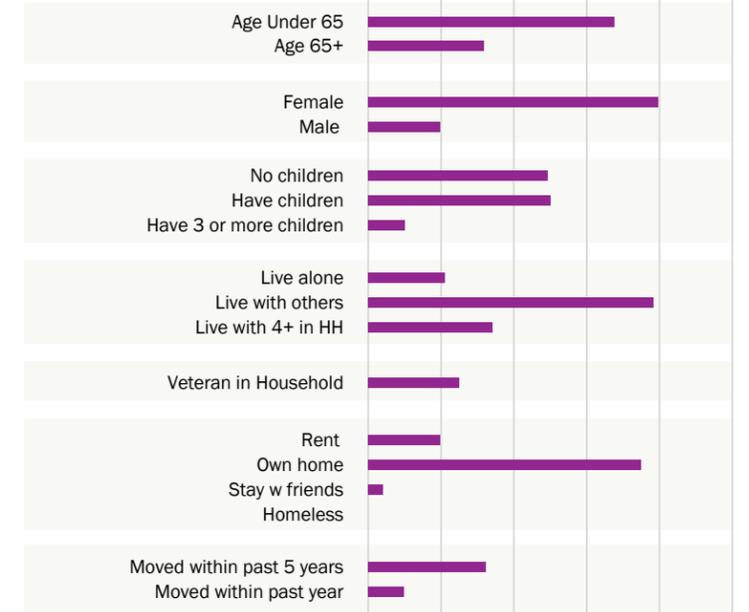
**Lower to middle-class income.** Newstead's at-risk population is lower to middle-class in terms of income. \$2,500 a month or \$30,000 a year was the median income reported by those surveyed who reported their income. (Only 104 responded to this question on the survey.) A larger percentage said their household income was over \$3,000/month than under \$1,250 monthly (40% v. 26%, respectively).

**Education and skills.** Almost half (46%) said they completed at least a two-year degree or trade school. Another 18% reported having some college. While slightly over a third stopped their education at high school, it appears to be uncommon for those at risk in Newstead to lack a basic high school education. Only four survey respondents fell into this latter category and two of them were seniors, born at a time when a higher education was not as essential to obtaining a job paying a living wage as it is today.

**Assets.** The overwhelming majority of those at risk in Newstead are not completely asset poor. 94% own a home, an automobile or both, assets offering some security during economic hardship. Moreover, Newstead's vulnerable population has been relatively stable. Nine out of 10 report being at their current residence for at least a year. Half have lived where they are now for more than 10 years.

# 151 residents surveyed

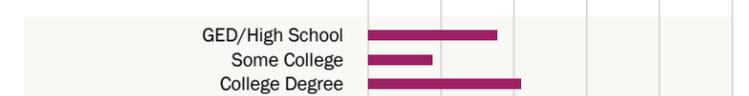
### Individuals and Families



### Work and Income



### Education



### Transportation



Source: Mobile Safety-Net Team Community Needs Assessment, 2012

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

## Barriers Residents Face

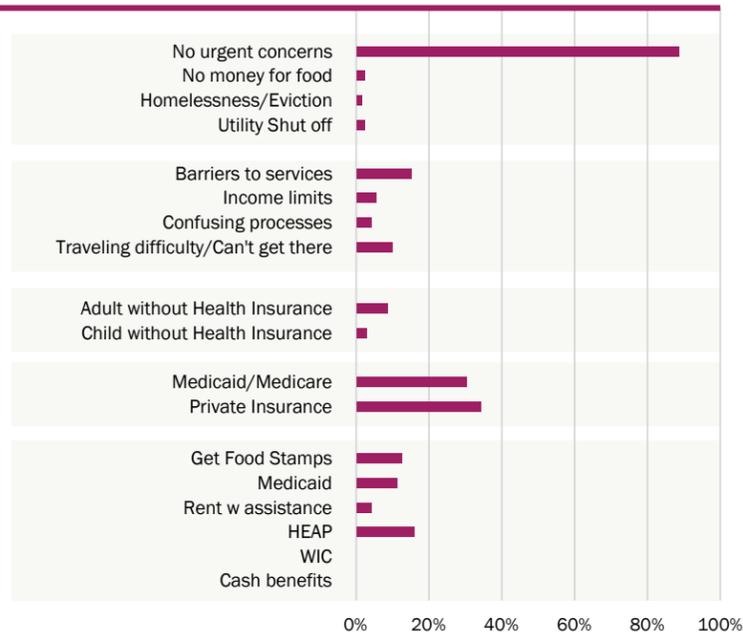
Traveling to get services was the most common barrier reported by Newstead residents surveyed. One in 10 say the difficulty they face in getting places has impeded them or someone in their household in connecting with the human services they need. Income limits was the second most common barrier reported, with one out of every 20 residents (5%) saying they have been turned away for services because of income cut-offs imposed by agencies. Less than 5% of residents said they have encountered difficulty because of hassles and confusing processes in applying for benefits (4%), because it's physically difficult for them to leave home (2%), because of agency hours of operation (1%), or a language barrier (0%).

Residents participating in focus groups offered additional insights into the barriers that exist. Transportation was one most discussed.

### A Voice from the Community

While residents seemed aware of the transportation services provided by Hearts and Hands Faith in Action and generally spoke highly of the service, they described being unable to use it for short-notice appointments (such as back-to-back medical appointments) due to the advance notice required. Also, since medical appointments take priority, seniors who don't drive can be socially isolated. Some residents at Quarry Hill rarely leave the mobile home park due to transportation and other barriers. Even getting to the senior center is impossible

### Needs & Barriers



Source: Mobile Safety-Net Team Community Needs Assessment, 2012

for those who don't drive, absent occasional rides offered by friends and neighbors.

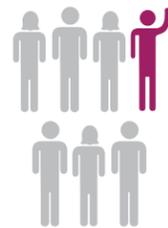
Lack of awareness and information is another barrier. Seniors at Newstead Senior Center were very interested to learn about Rural Transit Service, when one participant mentioned that he was a volunteer driver. At the same time, many residents at Quarry Hill expressed being unaware of activities at the senior center as well as services available more broadly within the community. They expressed desire for greater advertisement at their mobile home community or at other locations such as the grocery store or library.

Lack of services in Newstead creates additional barriers. Residents described how there

are no counseling services, and how it's difficult to get in-home health aide due to the distance providers need to travel to get to Newstead. Weatherization is also an area of need. One resident described a ten-year waiting list for roof repairs on his mobile home.

Compounding matters is a perception that anything past Transit Road is too far to go. While residents described being willing to travel to Batavia, Clarence or Williamsville, some expressly stated they would not travel as far as Buffalo.

**1 out of 7 residents surveyed in Newstead say they have encountered difficulty getting services.**

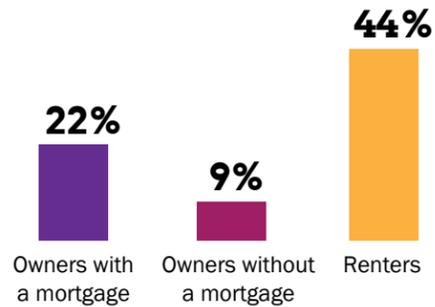


## Context for Action Places in Need



Where we live, how we travel and the safety levels in our community

### Households in Newstead Paying 30% or More of Their Income on Housing, 2010



Source : 2006-10 American Community Survey

### Housing

There are 3,900 housing units in Newstead. Eight percent are vacant. About eight out of ten occupied units are owner occupied, while the balance are occupied by renters. Newstead has a significantly lower proportion of renters than Erie County (21% v. 35%). For lower-income residents, Newstead’s housing market offers more mobile homes than apartments. In fact, about one out of every five housing units (18%) in Newstead is a mobile home. Across Erie County, mobile homes account for less than 2% of housing stock.

Yet renters in Newstead are most likely than owners to experience high housing costs, relative to their income. Nearly half of renters (44% or 302 altogether) incur housing costs that exceed 30% or more of their income.

While the percentage of owners incurring comparably high housing costs is lower, the absolute number is higher, with 841 homeowners paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs related to a mortgage, insurance, taxes, and utilities. Repairs are over and above this, with both homeowners and service providers reporting that for low-income homeowners in Newstead, the cost of home repairs can be prohibitively expensive.

**A Voice from the Community**

All residents at Quarry Hill Mobile Home Estates, one of three mobile home communities in Newstead, expressed concerns regarding the weatherization of their home. A quarter of seniors participating in a focus

group held at the senior center also marked weatherization as one of their top three concerns.

Hearts and Hand Faith in Action, an organization that assist seniors will small repairs but does not cover the cost of supplies, describes how seniors put off repairs because they don’t have the financial means to pay for them. The condition then worsens, becoming not only more costly to repair but sometimes creating a health hazard for residents.

**1 out of 5 housing units in Newstead are mobile homes.**

### What are the Traveling Options for Those in Newstead Without a Car?

Provider	Qualifying Populations	Description of Transportation Services	User Cost	Advance Notice	Wheelchair Accessible
<b>Hearts and Hands Faith in Action</b>	Seniors and disabled	Door-to-door transportation for medical appointments and routine errands.	Free	About one week	No
<b>Rural Transit Service, Inc.</b>	Seniors, disabled, and low/mod income	Transportation for medical, grocery shopping and social activities, but medical takes priority. No more than two trips per week. No service to the City of Buffalo.	\$3 donation per trip is suggestion	48 hours	No
<b>Medicaid Van</b>	Medicaid recipients	Transportation for non-emergency appointments, arranged through the Center for Transportation Excellence.	Free	48-72 hours, depending on insurance	Yes
<b>Going Places Van</b>	Seniors	Transportation provided on Tuesdays and Fridays with medical appointments taking priority.	\$6 suggested donation per round trip	At least 1-2 days in advance	No
<b>Private Taxi</b>	All	Transportation to any area destination.	\$27 to travel one way from Akron to Amherst	Less than a day	Limited number of services offered

### Transportation

To get to work, the large majority—94%—of Newstead’s working residents ages 16 and up depend on a vehicle, and another 3% do not travel because they work from home. Only 3% use alternative means of travel such as walking. Because there are no bus lines in Newstead, public transit isn’t an option.

Although life in Newstead is largely auto dependent, 189 households across the town are without a vehicle, and therefore dependent on alternative modes of travel to get to work and other destinations. These households are more likely than not to be headed by a senior and to be homeowners rather than renters.

For those without a vehicle, isolation is a concern. Residents at Quarry Hill Estates describe how many residents do not leave the grounds due to transportation barriers. Some cannot get to the senior center. Indeed, transportation emerged as a top concern for seniors

#### No Vehicle Access

**189 households are without access to a vehicle, even though there are no public transit lines in or out of Newstead.**

**A Voice from the Community**

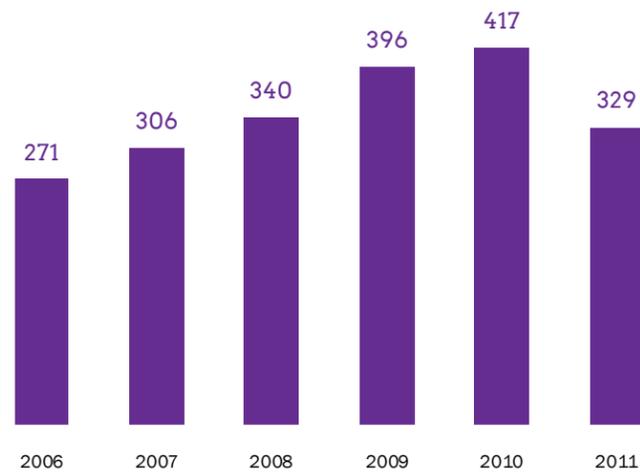
across Newstead, even for those who currently drive. Human service providers in Newstead also described transportation as a significant barrier to connecting residents in need.

#### Characteristics of Householders Lacking a Vehicle, 2010

Household by Age	# Renters	# Homeowners	TOTAL
Householder Under Age 65	43	38	81
Householder Age 65+	17	91	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>189</b>

Source: 2006-10 American Community Survey

Complaints of Crime Investigated by the Akron Police Department, 2006 - 2011



Source: [http://www.erie.gov/akron/village\\_gov\\_police.asp](http://www.erie.gov/akron/village_gov_police.asp)

### Crime

While Newstead has traditionally been a very safe place to live with low levels of crime, especially violent crime, complaints of criminal activity have been on the rise. In 2006, Akron Police Department investigated 271 complaints of various crime, including criminal mischief, disorderly youth, assaults, and narcotic complaints. By 2010, this figure reached 417, an average of more than one complaint every day of the year. Although overall complaint levels dipped in 2011, as a result of some key arrests, an alarming trend that continued was a rise in domestic incidences, which increased 53% from 31 complaints in 2006 to 55 in 2011.

Another alarming trend that these overall totals mask is the recent upsurge of drugs in Newstead. While only seven narcotics complaints from the community were reported to the Akron Police Department in 2011, drug use is described by several human service providers as being a serious challenge in town. Indeed, in 2010, 40% of arrests by the Akron Police Department were drug and alcohol-related offenses. The police department reports that

**40%**  
of arrests by Akron Police Department involve drug and alcohol offenses

much of crime in Newstead can be traced to drugs and drug use. However, complaints aren't made to the police until drug use culminates in some other criminal activity such as causing the offender to steal.

A Voice from the Community

Oftentimes, substance abuse begins with prescription drug abuse, a growing national epidemic. This progresses to addiction and use of illicit drugs. Heroin is described as a cheaper and easily accessible option, purchased readily at locations outside of Newstead.

Drug use among youth is a particular problem. Leadership from the Akron Central School District say drug use among students has spiked in the past couple of years. Other youth program providers agree. When asked why drug-related complaints to the police are relatively low given the seeming prevalence of drugs in the community, one provider answered that people don't want to get involved; it's a small town where everyone knows everyone.

## Landscape of Services



Newstead's service providers, their strengths, system gaps, barriers and promising developments

## Landscape of Services

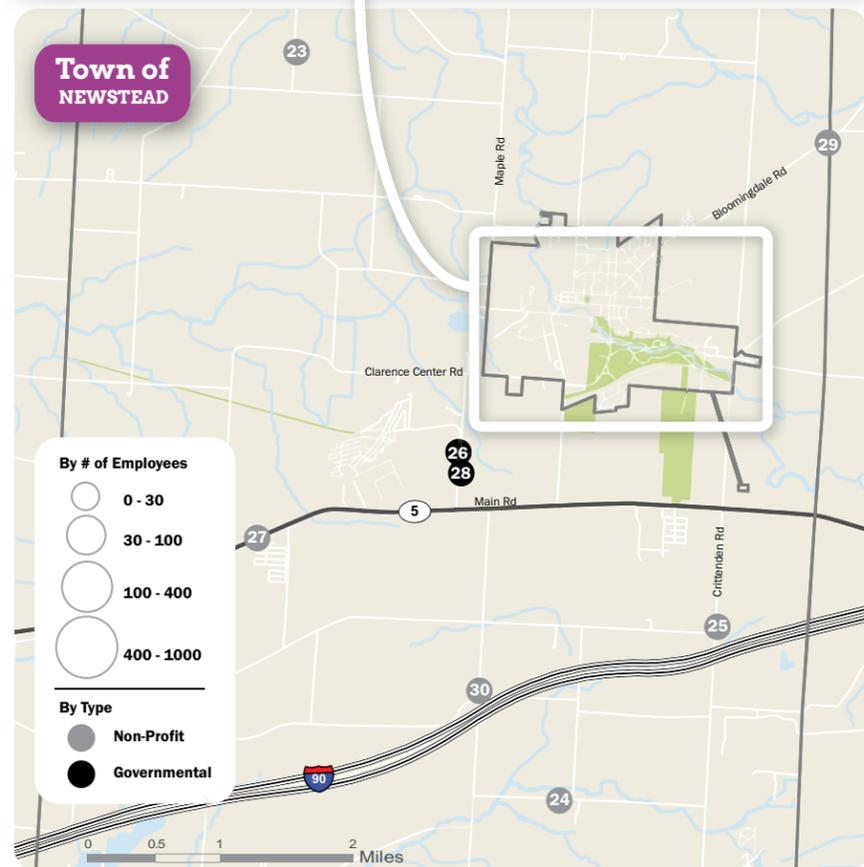
While a number of public and private human service providers exist, Newstead's safety net is thin, despite growing poverty in the community. Few or no agencies provide clothing, legal, financial literacy, or crime/juvenile justice assistance.

Senior services is a relative strength, with several providers offering services for Newstead's elders.

The typical provider is a small nonprofit with fewer than 10 employees and located in the Village of Akron. The corridor along Main Street and Bloomingdale Avenue is where many are clustered, including Akron Central School District, the community's largest human services asset.

Also located in the Village are three out of four of the town's most cross-cutting providers, in terms of the variety of services they deliver. These include the school district, the library, and Akron Free Methodist Church.

**About 250 employees across 30 providers in Newstead offer a range of human services to those in need.**



AGENCY NAME	Target Population				Services											
	Teen Parents	Veterans	Seniors	Homeless	Food	Clothing	Education/Training	Affordable Housing	Transportation	Mental Health/Addictions Program	Health/Wellness	Legal	Youth Programs	Financial Literacy	Crime/Juvenile	Information/Referral
1 Akron Central School District																
2 Akron Parent Teacher Association, Inc.																
3 Akron Chamber of Commerce																
4 Akron Child Connection, Inc.																
5 Akron First United Methodist Church																
6 Akron Free Methodist Church																
7 Akron Mobile Home Park																
8 Akron Parents Association Nursery School																
9 Akron Police Department																
10 C. Dee Wright Center/Akron First United Methodist Church																✓
11 Grandparents as Reading Partners (GARP)																✓
12 Hearts and Hands Faith in Action																✓
13 Holy Cross Head Start																
14 Newstead Public Library																
15 Newstead Recreation Department																
16 Pennysaver (Akron-Corfu edition)																
17 People Inc., Leisurtime Apartments																✓
18 Second's Best Consignment																
19 The Cloisters																✓
20 Town of Newstead																
21 Village of Akron																
22 Akron Brownie Troop 30620																
23 Akron Bugle																
24 Akron Lioness Organization																
25 Ms. Jean's Childcare, Inc.																
26 Newstead Senior Center																✓
27 Quarry Hill Estates																✓
28 Senior Outreach Services																✓
29 Tonawanda Indian Community House																
30 Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church's Food Pantry																

See Data Sources and Notes for definitions

## Strengths of the System

The presence, work and commitment of the **faith community** play a significant role in the delivery of human services.

Many community and human services **leaders wear two or more hats, laying a stronger foundation for cross-cutting solutions** to human services delivery.

**Hearts and Hand Faith in Action is a best practices model** for providing affordable transportation to vulnerable populations that has been expanding its reach to surrounding communities. It's also a model for mobilizing the faith community to deliver services that are perceived as being neutral or not linked to any one particular place of worship.

**Residents are willing to volunteer**, as evident from the number of service operations in the community including the food pantry, Hearts and Hands Faith in Action, Meals on Wheels, and Rural Transit.

**Akron School District is the community's largest educational and social services asset but it has faced cutbacks.**

County Department of Senior Services cluster agency in Amherst.

Nonprofit providers account for **3 out of 4** of total providers.

The Newstead Senior Center offers a part-time **Senior Outreach Service** to connect residents with human services, assist them with paperwork, and act as a problem solver for seniors in need. It's highly regarded by both providers and families in the community as a "go-to person" for help with elder issues. The position is part of Erie

## Gaps in Services

**A large number of services are not available in Newstead.** Mental health counseling is a service that was frequently mentioned as not being available but needed. Other human services that Newstead lacks include domestic violence programming, child and protective services, senior day care programs, and legal aid.

The **safety net is weak in the area of food assistance.** There is only one food pantry. It's open once a month and does not have a dedicated phone number. There is also a single grocery store, and residents say prices there are more expensive than at larger chains.

While there is one shop in Akron that sells lower cost clothes on consignment, there are no **clothes pantries** for those in need.

Aside from **emergency housing** offered four times a year for a few weeks at the C. Dee Wright Center, there is no homeless shelter.

**Although some youth programs exist, providers express a need for more** due to cuts in programming by the school district and the number of teens that simply "hang out" at the park and are involved in drugs.

**Prevalence of drug use is a concern.** Youth service providers say drugs are too readily available. Drug deals are even observed taking place at the park, yet relatively few drug-related complaints are lodged by community members.

There is **no community center** in Newstead. About 12 years ago, the town had a Teen Center at 58 Main Street, but it was short-lived. Reports of loitering and safety concerns, allegedly prompted its closing.

**Weatherization and home repair services** exist but tend to have long wait lists and exclusions. NYS's Weatherization Assistance Program has at least a 5 1/2 year wait in Newstead. At the same time, NYSERDA's Empower Program excludes Village of Akron residents that receive electric service from the village's municipal utility since it does not pay into or participate in the EMPOWER program. Akron's municipal utility offered its own weatherization program last year, through IEEP funding available through the NY Municipal Electric Association, but this funding has been fully consumed. For mobile home owners, the county offers a Mobile Home Repair Program. While funding has been exhausted for 2012, applications are being accepted and there is already a waiting list for services next year.

Agencies and residents alike describe **difficulty getting in-home nursing care** in Newstead.

Gaps exist in **transportation services**, especially for those requiring services with wheelchair access and for short-notice appointments.

## Barriers to Connecting with Residents

**Pride and the stigma associated with human services** make it difficult for residents to identify needs and accept help. Agencies describe how residents would rather go without health care or get by with less food than accept assistance.

**Income is regarded by many residents as highly personal and private information.** Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church's Food Pantry describes losing potential clients because they would not complete an intake form and disclose their income to qualify for services. Only two-thirds of survey takers were willing to disclose their income on the anonymous survey conducted by the Mobile Safety-Net Team.

Until recently, the **town has never had a centralized listing of human services. This has contributed to a lack of awareness** among service providers about what exists in the community, especially for youth and younger adults. One youth service provider described not knowing that another youth service provider, located just streets away, even existed. Another human service representative and long-time community resident described not knowing where he would refer a family in need of assistance. Levels of awareness are higher for senior services where referrals are made to the Newstead Senior Center and the Senior Outreach Specialist.

**70% of local providers are located within the Village of Akron.**

Akron Central School District, the town's largest human services support, slashed its budget by \$1.8 million in recent years. Nonessential programs such as after-school activities have been most impacted. In the middle and high schools, **after-school clubs have been reduced by half.** The district has also lost, due to budget cuts, a Family Support Center and social worker. The Family Support Center used to be a satellite location for a number of human services agencies.

**Newstead is geographically far from the region's urban core**, being almost an hour's drive from Buffalo and Niagara Falls, and a 30 minute drive to Amherst. Not only does distance create barriers for residents needing to leave the community for services but it limits provider capacity to bring services into Newstead. Home health care is an example. Because many health aides live in Buffalo, rely on public transit, and don't always get reimbursed for travel, it is difficult to get this service in Newstead.

## Promising Developments

The **C. Dee Wright Center offers potential** as a possible site for a wide range of community programming and outreach. Moreover, its location is central and nearby other key human resources such as the Akron Central School District and the Department of Recreation. It's currently the site for Boy Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous, Grandparents as Reading Partners (GARP) and a homeless outreach. However, to date, the potential hasn't been realized and the center is underutilized for a number of reasons, notably its close affiliation with Akron First United Methodist Church. As such, it is not perceived as a community resource but a program of the church.

**Horizon Health Services is very interested in working with Akron Central School District** to provide counseling to youth in need, and to help the district address high levels of drug and alcohol use among students via training programs for educators, parents and students. Representatives from Horizon Health and the school district have talked about possibilities and both are interested in further discussions.

**Horizon Health (one of the region's largest not for profit) is interested in bringing needed services to Newstead.**

# Insights from the Field Recommendations and Best Practices

## Where we gathered information and what we are reporting

These insights and recommendations come from a distillation of information gathered from a wide range of sources: more than two dozen agency interviews conducted by the Mobile Safety-Net Team and follow-up interviews and conversations conducted by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute with the Akron Central School District, Newstead Senior Center, the Senior Outreach Services, C. Dee Wright Center, Newstead Recreation Department, Hearts and Hands Faith in Action, Rural Transit, Tonawanda Indian Reservation, Erie County Mobile Home Repair Program, NYS Weatherization Assistance Program, Village of Akron Public Works Department, NYSEDA's EMPOWER Program, Village of Akron Police Department, and Meals on Wheels for Western New York.

An agency focus group was held in September 2012. About a dozen provider representatives participated. A resident focus group with seniors was held at the Newstead Senior Center, while one for younger adults was held at Newstead Public Library. The Mobile Safety-Net Team also had a conversation with residents of Quarry Hill Estates while conducting surveys at this mobile home community. The recommendations and strategies set forth here also draw from local data and trends.



## Expand connections among human services providers

Although some connections exist within Newstead's human services sector, providers are often not aware of what neighboring agencies do. Sometimes they don't even know that neighbors providing similar kinds of services, such as youth programs, even exist. The agency focus group that convened providers as part of this initiative was the first time human services leaders in Newstead met together as a group.

### STRATEGIES

Build a coalition of human services providers to develop a vision for expanding the reach of human services delivery in Newstead in identified areas of need such as after-school youth programs for latch-key children.

The coalition should be open to all interested providers, including those who participated in the September 2012 focus group. The group should also include representation from Akron Central School District and Newstead Public Library, and it should convene at least monthly. The coalition should include citizen representation, to bring to the table a perspective on how human services is experienced by users.

Expand learning opportunities for coalition members to build awareness of what each offers in terms of services and capacities. Monthly presentations are an option for this and could bring in human services providers and potential partners from outside Newstead in identified areas of need.

Consider a small membership fee to support coalition activities such as the annual printing of brochures for distribution by the town to residents.

### WHO NEEDS TO ACT

All human service providers especially those in key need areas such as youth programs, senior services, transportation services, food, health and housing. Because both youth and senior services are two significant areas of need yet are perceived to compete for limited resources, co-leadership of the coalition should be considered to provide balance where necessary. Leadership from the Newstead Senior Center and Hearts and Hands Faith in Action has offered to lead the next meeting.

### MODELS TO CONSIDER

The Seattle Human Services Coalition is an example of a long-standing successful group.

<http://shscoalition.org/>

## MODELS TO CONSIDER

### FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

The Family Support Center (FSC) of the Sweet Home Central School District is a highly regarded, state recognized center that will soon celebrate 20 years of operation. Established by SUNY Chancellor Emeritus Bob Bennett, FSC directly works with 200 families annually, offering on-site counseling and connecting families with community supports, from food, health insurance, counseling, drug treatment, and more. On-site counseling is provided by private practitioners and paid for through health insurance. Where not covered, FSC has a fund through the United Way generating up to \$5,000 in donations annually. Otherwise, FCS is funded entirely by the district for the cost of the coordinator's salary. There is also a secretary whose primary role is student registration. This cross-over helps FSC identify families in need as soon as a student enters the district. In addition to counseling and referrals, FSC sponsors parenting workshops and drug and alcohol prevention programming. Strong connections within the school and with community agencies have contributed to the center's success and sustainability.

<http://district.shs.k12.ny.us/community/fsc>



**Raise awareness of human services and reduce fragmentation through centralization of information**

Human services providers agree that what is needed is a “comprehensive menu” covering the range of services available for individuals and families of all ages in Newstead since even long-time residents of Newstead working in the human services field are not aware of what’s available or where to refer individuals and families in need. Newstead residents participating in focus groups also expressed lack of awareness of transportation and other support services available in the community.

**STRATEGIES**

Maintain the directory of human services providers created by the Mobile Safety-Net Team. The newly created coalition would be a natural fit for taking ownership of this initiative and keeping the directory up to date.

Broadly distribute an electronic version of the directory to town and village offices, human service providers, schools, the library, churches and the three mobile home communities within Newstead. An electronic copy could also be posted on the websites for the Akron Central School District, the Town of Newstead and Village of Akron.

Develop an abbreviated, one-page, quick reference version for print distribution to all households in Newstead (about 3,600 households altogether) with the annual tax bill mailing as well as for distribution at the town hall, pharmacies, library and other outlets. Membership fees paid to a newly created coalition of human services providers would cover printing costs. To reduce costs, the a coalition could ask area churches for donations of paper.

**WHO NEEDS TO ACT**

The coalition of human service providers, leadership for the Town of Newstead and Village of Akron, area churches, the mobile home communities, local pharmacies and other businesses that regularly connect with residents in need.

**MODELS TO CONSIDER**

As information hubs and neutral spaces, libraries can play a key role in raising awareness and centralizing information. The New Rochelle Public Library is a forerunner in NYS.  
<http://www.nrpl.org/socialservices/>

**Fill transportation gaps through expanded services**

Transportation barriers were frequently described by residents and human service agencies alike. The largest gaps exist for physically disabled residents who use wheelchairs, as well as for seniors desiring to get to the senior center, the mall, and other destinations that don’t take priority with transportation services such as Rural Transit and Hearts and Hands Faith in Action.

**STRATEGIES**

Explore innovative models for filling transportation gaps. These might include a van service from the three mobile home communities to the Newstead Senior Center, and occasional service (weekly or bimonthly) to the mall and a major grocer such as Tops or Wegmans. A joint purchase of a wheelchair accessible van by the Newstead Senior Center, Hearts and Hands, and the mobile home communities may be an option for coordination and achieving efficiencies.

Explore funding options to expand current services such as those operated by Hearts and Hands and Rural Transit. These should be consistent with the recommendations made by GBNRTC and the NFTA in the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for Erie and Niagara Counties and take advantage of selected FTA funding programs where possible.

Increase awareness of existing transportation services, particularly among residents living Newstead’s mobile home communities. Raise awareness, also, of programs such as PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) which provide not only services but the transportation necessary to take advantages of them.

**WHO NEEDS TO ACT**

Human service transportation providers such as Hearts and Hands Faith in Action and Rural Transit, GBNRTC, the mobile home communities, People, Inc., and Catholic Health.

**MODELS TO CONSIDER**

The Brunswick Explorer is a 14-seat, wheelchair accessible hybrid bus serving the disabled and others in rural Maine. Federal funding currently covers 80% of its operating costs.  
<http://www.brunswickexplorer.org/>

**MODELS TO CONSIDER**

**MOBILE COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICE**

The MOBILE COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICE is transforming business for the Department of Social and Health Services in Washington State. Rather than require rural populations, seniors and other vulnerable populations to travel long distances to apply for governmental benefits, the department is bringing application materials to these communities through a mobile van. The mobile units function as full service offices where staff conduct interviews and intake and help individuals get signed up for benefits. Growing poverty in rural areas was the impetus, along with data showing that many of those eligible for benefits are not getting the assistance they need, and that the state, therefore, is foregoing federal dollars that could benefit residents with nutrition assistance, medical coverage and other human services supports. The van will also be used to reach out to communities with emergency assistance during extreme weather events. Funding is from a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/mobileoffice/>



**BRIDGING THE GAP**

BRIDGING THE GAP is an initiative of the National Human Services Assembly that uses human resource professionals in the workplace to help connect lower-wage working families with the supports they need, thereby creating a higher functioning safety net that offers intervention before families reach rock bottom. In targeting the nonprofit industry, this initiative strengthens workers who are called upon in their jobs to similarly assist others. Launched in 2009, Bridging the Gap uses HR staff to educate workers on the range of benefits they may qualify for, including tax credits, food stamps, WIC, Medicaid, HEAP, affordable housing and child care. This is in addition to the company-sponsored benefits. Using workplaces as one-stop shops helps raise awareness, simplify enrollment processes and removes the stigma associated with support programs. The model can be implemented for the cost of training and is adaptable to any workplace. 500 local agencies of the NHSA haven been trained and are now taking part.  
<http://nationalassembly.org/fspc/BridgingTheGap/>



### Reduce the stigma associated with human services benefits

Providers frequently report how pride and the stigma associated with human services is a significant barrier to connecting with residents in need, describing instances where residents are willing to sacrifice their health and well being rather than identify a need and ask for assistance.

#### STRATEGIES

Strengthen workplace connection points where lower-wage workers can learn about human services supports they may qualify for as part of their overall compensation package. Measures can be as simple as attaching flyers to paychecks about supports for food and heat, or by making applications for these programs available from workplace human resource professionals. Bridging the Gap is an initiative of the National Human Services Assembly that offers a model for strengthening these connections. Begin with workplaces in Newstead that employ relatively large numbers of lower-wage workers such as those in the retail and services sectors.

Conduct outreach and locate satellite offices for human services at neutral, mixed-use sites such as the Newstead Public Library, Akron Central School District, Pixley's Shur Fine Food Mart, area churches, government buildings, and the Newstead Senior Center.

Identify human service users from the community who are willing to share their story and experience with services providers by Hearts and Hands Faith in Action, Meals on Wheels, and others in a short article featured in the Akron Bugle or Pennysaver, which are described as being well read by residents. This could be an initiative of a newly formed coalition of human services providers.

#### WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Local employers, especially those in the retail and services sectors, potential venues for outreach and satellite services (C. Dee Wright Center, Newstead Public Library, government buildings, Akron Central School District), the coalition of human services providers, and local news and information venues such as the Akron Bugle and Pennysaver.

#### MODELS TO CONSIDER

Bridging the Gap reduces the stigma of benefits by using workplaces as points of connection with the working poor. <http://nationalassembly.org/fspc/BridgingTheGap/>

#### MODELS TO CONSIDER

### HEARTS AND HANDS FAITH IN ACTION

HEARTS AND HANDS FAITH IN ACTION offers not only a model for providing transportation and other services to vulnerable individuals, but it also provides a success story for raising the profile of a church-based outreach from one serving primarily the needs of church members to an interfaith coalition serving the broad community. Hearts and Hands took root in 2003 when the pastor of First United Methodist Church of Akron observed how many seniors were heading for institutional care because they needed a little help with everyday activities and this help was not available. The idea was to pool ministries across churches, and have members volunteer to help elders in need. In addition to pooling human resources, at least a small amount of funding came from each church buying into the idea. The initiative also garnered an interfaith caregiving grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, raising the coalition's profile to new heights. Still, the perception lingered that they were part of one church until operations moved from the church to more neutral ground. Today, Hearts and Hands operates through dozens of church partnerships. It has a volunteer base of 250 and serves almost 400 individuals.

<http://hnhcares.org/>



### Develop a drug and alcohol prevention strategy including counseling for youth and families

Drug use among youth is prevalent. Recently, three young adults have committed suicide. Others are not getting mental health services because there is no counseling in town. Meanwhile, budget cuts within the Akron Central School District have eliminated a Family Support Center, the school social worker and other supports for students and families.

#### STRATEGIES

Develop a vision for substance abuse prevention that engages parents, youth, schools, youth program providers, mental health professionals and law enforcement and focuses on prevention, treatment for current users and law enforcement. Explore the creation of a neighborhood watch program to mobilize residents and report drug use to the police.

Expand in-school drug prevention programs through partnerships with providers such as Horizons Health, which offers prevention training for educators, administrators and parents.

Reach youth outside of school by incorporating substance abuse prevention strategies into after-school activities. Create a safe, drug-free place for youth to be after school and develop new programming aimed at at-risk children. This may include a mentoring program, taking advantage of the willingness of Newstead residents to volunteer.

Further explore options for offering counseling within the school district or nearby within the community, as well as potential funding sources. The Sweet Home School District offers a best practice. Students can receive counseling at the school by private practitioners who are there a day or two every week. Services are billed to student's health insurance, or covered by donations generated for the center through the United Way.

#### WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Akron Central School District, Akron Parent Teacher Association, Newstead Recreation Department, C. Dee Wright Center, Akron Police Department, Horizons Health. Leadership at Akron Central School District may be best positioned to lead this effort.

#### MODELS TO CONSIDER

The Sweet Home Family Support Center is a successful local model for offering prevention, intervention and counseling for youth and families within a school district.

<http://district.shs.k12.ny.us/community/fsc>

### Increase the availability and accessibility of after-school activities for lower-income children

The Akron Central School District eliminated half of all after-school clubs when it recently cut its budget by \$1.8 million. While the Newstead Department of Youth offers after-school sports for a nominal fee, programs do not begin until 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. in the evening to accommodate after-school sports in the school gym, leaving many children, especially those from lower-income families, with nothing to do immediately after school. As a result, kids hang out in the park where drug deals are observed, and drug use among youth is described as prevalent.

#### STRATEGIES

Raise awareness of existing programs through centralization of information and the distribution of this information to families on the school's website and in the form of a one-page brochure mailing to every household.

Engage the school to identify where programmatic needs are greatest.

Explore partnership opportunities for additional programming at the school or at off-site locations such as the C. Dee Wright Center. While additional sports programming at the school may not be possible, there may be opportunities for partnerships that expand the Department of Youth's programming to include vocational clubs, arts, music, and dance, all of which could take place immediately after regular school hours.

#### WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Akron Central School District, existing youth program providers and potential youth program providers.

#### MODELS TO CONSIDER

The Collaborative for Building After-School Systems offers best practices for partnerships that increase access to high quality after-school programs.

<http://www.afterschoolsystems.org/>

### Further cultivate the C. Dee Wright Center as a community resource and site for satellite programming

The C. Dee Wright Center offers potential as a site for a variety of human services. Indeed, the First United Methodist Church, which owns and operates the center, would like the building to be a site for youth programs, outreach, and service work to benefit the Tonawanda Indian Reservation. However, this asset is currently underutilized, perceived more as a program of the church than a neutral community gathering spot.

#### STRATEGIES

Incubate an on-site a human services program involving multiple partnerships at the C. Dee Wright Center. A youth program for latch-key children is one that many providers describe as needed and that could engage a variety of partners such as Akron Central School District, the Department of Youth, Hearts and Hands Faith in Action, and the C. Dee Wright Center.

Raise the center's profile as a neutral venue and community asset. Collaborative programming and more permanent staffing would help. Hearts and Hands Faith in Action provides a model and best practice for accomplishing this.

Consider using this site as a location for satellite programming to strengthen Newstead's safety net in areas of need. It offers a central and conveniently located site for counseling as well as community outreach. Other options for this would be Akron Central School District or Newstead Public Library.

#### WHO NEEDS TO ACT

First United Methodist Church, partnering churches, C. Dee Wright Center leadership, the coalition of human services providers, and human services providers from outside the community. The John R. Oishei Foundation is well positioned to facilitate a conversation among key partners to explore possibilities.

#### MODELS TO CONSIDER

Hearts and Hands Faith in Action is an expanding interfaith coalition with eight member churches in the Newstead area that originated at the First United Methodist Church.

<http://hnhcares.org>

Lockport Cares in another faith-based model that is garnering growing support in tackling homelessness in Lockport.

<http://www.lockportcares.org/>

### Strengthen the safety net in the areas of food and weatherization

One out of four seniors participating in a focus group marked food and/or weatherization as one of their top three concerns. At the same time, conversations with agencies revealed opportunities for strengthening services and removing barriers in these areas which include limited funding, long waiting lists and limited hours of operation.

#### STRATEGIES

Provide the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church's Food Pantry with a dedicated phone number and volunteer staffing so that it can open more than once a month, at least for a trial period. Consider a partnership with the Food Bank of WNY and its Food Express Truck that brings free fresh food into communities each month.

Continue to increase utilization of Meals on Wheels by raising community awareness of this service through brochures of human services providers mailed to every household and referrals by Hearts and Hands and the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church's Food Pantry.

To stretch the very limited dollars available to low-income mobile home owners under Erie County's Mobile Home Repair Program, explore a partnership between this program and Hearts and Hands Faith in Action under which the Mobile Home Repair Program would cover up to \$5,000 in materials for homeowners and Hearts and Hands volunteers would donate the labor for repairs. Similar partnerships are in place in Lackawanna and the Southtowns to assist low-income homeowners with essential repairs.

Increase awareness of NYSEDA's EMPOWER program, which covers eligible residents outside the Village of Akron, and may be able to provide limited program services to village residents.

#### WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church Food Pantry, partnering churches, Meals on Wheels for Western New York, Hearts and Hands, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning. Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church may be best position to take the lead on the issue of food, while Hearts and Hands is best poised to explore partnerships that could strengthen the safety net in the area of weatherization.

#### MODELS TO CONSIDER

Mobile pantries are a growing outreach strategy for rural areas. The Senior Mobile Food Pantry Program in the Southern Tier is an award-receiving program.

<http://www.foodbankst.org/index.asp?pageld=82>

# Appendices

# Appendix A - Data Sources and Notes

## 1.1 Cover Map

**Service providers:** The human service providers that are mapped are listed on page 23 of the report. Cover map does not represent these providers by their employment size or organizational status as the inside map does. Agency employment comes from Reference USA's 2012 Business Database.

**Population in poverty:** The analysis uses 2006-10 American Community Survey data at the block group level, with all municipal boundaries for the map from U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 and 2012 Tiger Line Shape files. Those in or near poverty are individuals whose income is under 200% of the federal poverty level.

**Schools:** The location of elementary and secondary schools in Newstead is from the 2011 NYS School Report Card database available from the NYS Education Department. Total enrollment reflects total students enrolled at these three schools during 2010-11.

**Major Employers:** Selected large employers in Newstead are shown on the map. Employment size is from Reference USA's 2012 Business Database. Other large employers can be found listed on page 10 of the report.

**Map Layers:** Boundary files for Newstead, including the census tracts, block groups, parks, roads, water bodies and more, were mapped using data from the NYS GIS Clearinghouse and the U.S. Census Bureau 2011 and 2012 Tiger Line Shape files.

## 1.2 Executive Summary

**Population in poverty:** The 2006-10 American Community Survey is the source of data on individuals living in or near poverty. Those in poverty are individuals with incomes under the federal poverty level. Those near poverty are defined as those with incomes between 100% and 200% of the federal poverty level. Numbers reflect populations across the Town of Newstead which includes the Village of Akron. For more information see the "Poverty" in Data Sources and Notes Section 1.3.

**Indicators and trends:** Trends in poverty over time are calculated using data from the 2006-10 American Community Survey and 2000 Census. The same sources provided the data used to look at trends in population by age.

Food stamps usage comes from monthly caseload data reported by Erie County Department of Social Services, and reflects households within Zip Code 14001 that receive food stamp benefits.

Indicators on work and health insurance are from a survey of residents in Newstead, as described in Data Sources and Notes Section 1.3. See the subsection on "Newstead Most Vulnerable."

Crime data is from the U.S. Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics. For additional notes, see "Crime" in Data Sources and Notes Section 1.3.

Information provided on drug use among youth, as well as recent suicides of young adults are from interviews with Akron Central School District, the C. Dee Wright Center and Newstead Department of Recreation.

**Landscape of human services:** A listing a human services providers comes from data compiled by the Mobile Safety-Net Team and Reference USA's 2012 Business Database. Employment at these organization's and agencies is from Reference USA's 2012 Business Database. The map shown reflects a portion of the Village of Akron where a cluster of human resources is concentrated. Persons in or near poverty reflect those across the entire Village of Akron with incomes under 200% of the federal poverty level.

**Barriers and systemic challenges:** The number of households in Newstead without a vehicle are from the 2006-10 American Community Survey. For additional related information, see "Transportation" in Data Sources and Notes Section 1.3.

The percentage of residents who have encountered transportation barriers is from a survey of residents in Newstead described in Data Sources and Notes Section 1.3. See the subsection on "Newstead's Most Vulnerable."

The number of individuals who are "new to the system" represent the absolute increase the number of persons living in poverty in Newstead, as calculated using data from the 2000 U.S. Census and the 2006-10 American Community Survey.

Other information reported draws from focus groups with residents and agencies, as well as follow-up conversations conducted with individual agency representatives.

## 1.3 Context for Action

### People in Need

**Individuals and Families:** Population and household counts are from the 2010 U.S. Census. Population data from the 1990 U.S. Census were used to calculate changes since 1990. Data for Newstead reflect figures for the Town of Newstead which includes the Village of Akron. Data were also examined for trends at the census-tract level. Census tracts for Newstead include 148.01 and 148.03.

As defined by the Census, families are housing units where two or more persons related by birth, marriage or adoption reside. Non-

family households include persons living alone or with another person not related by birth, marriage or adoption.

**Population by Age:** The 2010 U.S. Census is the source of population counts by age group. Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of individuals in various age groups by the total population for Newstead and Erie and Niagara Counties, respectively.

**Potentially At-Risk Populations:** These are individuals and households that have experienced higher than average rates of poverty as a result of barriers to education and/or work, either themselves or by those they are dependent on, as with young children. Counts are from the 2006-10 American Community Survey and reflect those for Newstead. The listing is not intended to be inclusive of all possible groups that may be economically vulnerable but rather some of those that are significant to Newstead or Erie and Niagara Counties.

**Work and Income:** The 2006-10 American Community Survey provides employment across the private, public and nonprofit sectors. This was also the source of data on the number of households by annual household income.

Newstead's top employers are from Reference USA's Business 2012 Database.

Workforce inflows and outflows for Newstead are analyzed using the U.S. Census Bureau's Local Employment Dynamics data, available through the On The Map tool.

**Poverty:** The 2006-10 American Community Survey is the source of data on individuals and families living in or near poverty. Income relative to poverty level is provided for individuals by age group and for families by family type. Poverty rates are calculated by dividing total individuals or families with incomes under the federal poverty threshold by the total number of individuals or families, respectively. The map shows poverty rates by census block group.

The daily amount a family of three lives on at the federal poverty level is calculated by dividing the 2012 annual poverty threshold for this family size by the number of family members and the number of days in a year. The cost of a taxi from the Village of Akron to Amherst reflects a price quote provided by 24/7 Taxi Service at (716) 603-0609, with pick up in the Village of Akron and drop off in Amherst near the corner of Transit Road and Sheridan Drive.

**Education:** Student enrollment figures and the percentage of children qualifying for free and reduced priced lunch are from the 2011 School Report Card database, available from the NYS Education Department. Children qualify for free or reduced priced lunch if their family income is under 185% of the federal poverty level. This dataset also contains academic performance data from which we calculated students performing at proficiency standards

or above for mathematics (at Levels 3 or 4).

High school completion data, as well as data on students plans after high school, come from the 2011 School Report Card database. The latter reflect survey data collected from students during their senior year and may not accurately reflect the percentage of students who do or do not actually enroll in college following high school graduation.

Educational attainment levels are from the 2006-10 American Community Survey and reflect those of the population ages 25 and up.

## Newstead's Most Vulnerable

151 adults residing in Newstead Zip Code 14001 completed a one-page questionnaire providing demographic and socioeconomic data as well as information on human services needs, concerns, benefits, and access barriers.

The survey was prepared by the Mobile Safety-Net Team with input from the University at Buffalo Regional Institute. It was administered by the Mobile Safety-Net Team during the summer and fall of 2012 at almost a dozen different venues, including Grandparents as Reading Partners (GARP) orientation at the C. Dee Wright Center, Akron Holy Cross Headstart Open House at Akron Holy Cross Headstart, Freshman Orientation at Akron Central School District, a table set up at the Newstead Public Library, the Super Cruise and Craft Show on Main Street sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the Bake Sale and Flu Shot Day at the Akron Newstead Senior Center, the senior focus group at the Akron Newstead Senior Center, the residential focus group at the Newstead Public Library, a HEAP outreach at Akron Newstead Senior Center, a Parent Teacher Conference at Akron Central School District, and Hearts and Hands phone surveys.

Sites were selected to capture a representative sample of residents in poverty or at risk of poverty. Because the survey largely captures those residents who are able to physically get to these sites (the telephone surveys of Hearts and Hands clients are an exception), the survey findings may under-represent those who are unable to leave their homes due to disability or lack of transportation.

Where residents needed assistance completing the survey and the survey was conducted in the presence of Mobile Safety-Net Team members, assistance was provided by reading the survey questions to residents and helping them complete the survey instrument. Otherwise, clients completed surveys on their own.

Survey data were coded by the Mobile Safety-Net Team and analyzed by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute. The 151 surveys represent a sample that is statistically significant with a confidence level of 95% and with a confidence interval of 7.5

Not all survey respondents answered every survey questions. The question soliciting income information had the lowest level of responses, with 104 answering this question. This number of responses still represents well over a sample size of 92, needed to

obtain a statistically significant sample size for Newstead's at-risk population within a 95% confidence interval +/- 10%.

The 32% of survey respondents who are said to receive some form of human support services or live in a household with someone who does are those who reported receiving food stamps, Medicaid, cash benefits, unemployment, disability income, HEAP, SSI/SSD, WIC, and/or rental assistance. This information is captured by multiple questions on the survey and the findings from these questions are aggregated to calculate an overall percentage of those receiving some kind of assistance.

The chart presents selected findings from the questionnaire. The variables shown are in many cases an aggregation of two or more response categories. Where percentages across subcategories add up to over 100, it is because survey takers were allowed to select more than one category as their response to the question, as is the case of the question soliciting information on respondent household's sources of income and types of human benefits they receive.

## Places in Need

**Housing:** Household counts by type and housing costs as a percentage of income for renters and owners come from the 2006-10 American Community Survey.

**Transportation:** Modes of commute to work and vehicle access data for households in Newstead are from the 2006-10 American Community Survey.

Information about transportation options for those without access to a vehicle come from a conversation with the organizations listed in the chart, supplemented with information gathered from their websites.

**Crime:** Total criminal complaints reflect the sum of complaints investigated and acted upon by the Akron Police Department across all types of crime, including burglaries, larcenies, disorderly persons and incidents, criminal mischief, disorderly youth, domestic incidents, narcotic complaints, penal law arrests, stolen vehicles, assaults and other reportable crimes. The number of complaints by type for 2006 through 2011 are reported on the Village of Akron's website. Because of the Akron Police Department covers just the village, with the Sheriff's Department covering the rest of Newstead, these figures provide an indicator of crime in Newstead and do not fully reflect all complaints within the town. The Sheriff's Department was contacted for comparable data for Newstead, outside the village, but no local office could provide this information.

Arrest data are from the U.S. Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics. Drug and alcohol related arrests, which reflected 40% of the total in 2010, including driving under the influence offenses, liquor law

violations, possession of drugs, and the sale/manufacturing of drugs. Arrests of youth under age 18 reflect about 30% of total arrests by the Akron Police Department in 2010.

## 1.4 Landscape of Human Services

Human services organizations typically provide food to the hungry, jobs training to unemployed adults, shelter to the homeless, youth development to children at risk, recovery to those affected by disaster, and assistance to victims of crime. The listing shown includes human services organizations as well as those that may not be officially classified as human services organizations but have been identified as providing critical services to vulnerable populations. The analysis draws upon organizational data compiled by the Mobile Safety-Net Team and supplemented by information from Reference USA's 2012 Business Database. Both nonprofits and governmental agencies are included. Only organizations with operational sites within Newstead are included in this listing for the purpose of analyzing what supports residents have access to within the community.

Organizations providing services to target populations such as veterans, teen parents, seniors and the homeless are those whose organizational mission it is to connect with these particular populations (such as Hearts and Hands Faith in Action, whose mission it is to provide services to help seniors age in place). Alternatively, they may have significant programming for these populations (such as shelter provided for the homeless at the C. Dee Wright Center), even though the organization's mission is to support a broader population.

Service categories are defined as follows:

**Food** – includes food pantries as well as organizations providing meals, food, or water, either on site or delivered to residents' home, as part of their regular programming such as the meals provided to children within the Akron Central School District or to seniors at the Newstead Senior Center. Meals on Wheels provides food to seniors in Newstead via the Clarence Newstead Meals on Wheels Task Force but is not included on this list because they operate from a site in the Town in Clarence.

**Clothing** – includes clothes closets and programs providing emergency clothing. Also includes consignment shops, the only source of lower-cost clothing identified within Newstead.

**Education/Training** – includes places of formal education (Pre-K through college) as well as sites for job training, GED, literacy skills, and community/continuing education.

**Affordable Housing** – subsidized housing and other non-market rate homes and rental units available to lower-income populations. Also included are communities with a concentration of lower-priced homes such as the mobile home communities in Newstead where larger numbers of lower-income individuals and families live. Sites providing access to financial supports that make housing affordable are also included such as the appliance rebate program offered by

the Village of Akron.

**Mental Health/Addictions** - includes sites providing mental health treatment including counseling, grief support, and addictions support groups such as Alcohol Anonymous.

**Health/Wellness** – includes sites providing health services, preventive medical exams and/or screening, particularly for lower-income or vulnerable populations. This include satellite clinics such as that operated by Buffalo General at the Tonawanda Indian Community House. Does not include organizations that only serve as a source of medical/health insurance information. Nor does this category include programs providing primarily fitness or recreational benefits.

**Legal** - includes legal assistance for low-income populations, especially assistance in obtaining benefits. Includes such assistance for at-risk populations such as seniors or the disabled.

**Youth Programs** - includes providers of after-school programs and activities for school-age youth. Also included are occasional programs for youth such as the movie nights and book fairs sponsored by the Akron Parent Teacher Association. This category does not include programming provided as part of a residential treatment program for youth. Nor does it include programs providing only information about youth programs.

**Financial literacy** - includes financial literacy training and budget counseling services.

**Crime/Juvenile** – includes crime prevention programs, juvenile justice, and victim assistance programs. Does not include safety classes or crime prevention awareness.

**Information/Referral** - includes programs and positions providing information and referral to a wide variety of human support services for individuals and families.

Providers are classified as governmental if they are an arm of a local, state or federal level agency or department.

Employment figures used to map human services organizations by employment size come from Reference USA's 2012 Business Database providing the number of employees an organization or agency has working at a particular site.

## Appendix B - Resident Questionnaire

### MOBILE SAFETY-NET TEAM COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your answers will assist us in better understanding the needs in the community and help us build a stronger safety net that more readily connects residents to the human services they need. Please select one response unless indicated otherwise. **Your answers will remain completely confidential.**

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender (M/F) \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Including yourself, how many people are in your household?

- Adults (18 and older) \_\_\_\_\_
- Children (under 18) \_\_\_\_\_

Has anyone in your household ever served in the armed forces?

- Yes<sup>1</sup>  
 No<sup>2</sup>

Are there any urgent concerns or special needs that you or someone in your household might have?

- Utility shut-off notice<sup>1</sup>       Domestic violence<sup>5</sup>  
 Foreclosure / eviction<sup>2</sup>       No urgent concerns<sup>4</sup>  
 Homelessness<sup>3</sup>       Other: \_\_\_\_\_<sup>7</sup>  
 No money for food<sup>4</sup>

Has anyone in your household ever encountered any difficulty in getting necessary services they need (such as assistance with food, housing, utilities, medical care, etc.)?

- Yes<sup>1</sup>  
 No<sup>2</sup>

If you marked "yes", please describe what barriers were faced:

- Traveling to get services is difficult<sup>1</sup>  
 I don't speak / read English well<sup>2</sup>  
 I can't get there during the hours the agency is open<sup>3</sup>  
 I've been turned away because of income limits<sup>4</sup>  
 It can be physically difficult for me to leave my home<sup>5</sup>  
 It's too much of a hassle because the process is confusing<sup>6</sup>  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_<sup>7</sup>

What is your current employment status? (select all that apply)

- Employed full-time<sup>1</sup>  
 Employed part-time<sup>2</sup>  
 Unemployed, looking<sup>3</sup>  
 Unemployed, not looking<sup>4</sup>  
 Student<sup>5</sup>  
 Retired<sup>6</sup>  
 Disabled<sup>7</sup>  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_<sup>8</sup>

What is the highest level of education/training you've completed?

- High School / GED<sup>1</sup>       Post-graduate degree<sup>4</sup>  
 Some College<sup>2</sup>       Military<sup>5</sup>  
 College Degree [2-yr or 4-yr]<sup>1</sup>       Trade School<sup>6</sup>  
 Did not finish high school<sup>7</sup>

What are your household's sources of income? (Select all that apply)

- Employment<sup>1</sup>  
 Unemployment insurance<sup>2</sup>  
 Public assistance<sup>3</sup>  
 Social Security<sup>4</sup>  
 Pension<sup>5</sup>  
 Disability<sup>6</sup>  
 Worker's compensation<sup>7</sup>  
 Child Support<sup>8</sup>  
 No Income<sup>9</sup>  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_<sup>10</sup>

How much money is currently received from these sources to support your household each month (net income)?

What is your primary form of transportation?

- Bicycle<sup>1</sup>  
 Family / Friends<sup>2</sup>  
 Own vehicle<sup>3</sup>  
 Taxi<sup>4</sup>  
 Public Transportation<sup>5</sup>  
 Walk<sup>6</sup>  
 Car Share Service<sup>7</sup>  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_<sup>8</sup>

Does anyone in your household lack health insurance? (select all that apply)

- Yes, one or more adults do not have health insurance<sup>1</sup>  
 Yes, one or more children do not have health insurance<sup>2</sup>  
 No, we all have health insurance<sup>3</sup>

## Appendix B - Resident Questionnaire (Continued)

What is the current employment status of other adults in your household? (select all that apply)

- Employed full-time<sup>1</sup>  
 Employed part-time<sup>2</sup>  
 Unemployed, looking<sup>3</sup>  
 Unemployed, not looking<sup>4</sup>  
 Student<sup>5</sup>  
 Retired<sup>6</sup>  
 Disabled<sup>7</sup>  
 Not Applicable / No other adults in household<sup>8</sup>  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_<sup>9</sup>

What is your current living situation?

- Own<sup>1</sup>  
 Rent, with assistance<sup>2</sup>  
 Rent, without assistance<sup>3</sup>  
 Staying with friend / family<sup>4</sup>  
 Homeless<sup>5</sup>  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_<sup>6</sup>

How long have you lived at your current address?

- Less than 3 mos.<sup>1</sup>  
 3 mos. - 1 year<sup>2</sup>  
 1-5 years<sup>3</sup>  
 6 - 10 years<sup>4</sup>  
 More than 10 years<sup>5</sup>

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SURVEY LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

If insured, select the type of health insurance currently used by members of your household (please select all that apply):

- Private insurance<sup>1</sup>  
 Managed care (HMO, PPO)<sup>2</sup>  
 Medicare (65+, disabled)<sup>3</sup>  
 Medicaid<sup>4</sup>  
 Government (VA, Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus)<sup>5</sup>  
 Health Savings Account<sup>6</sup>  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_<sup>7</sup>  
 Do not know/Unsure<sup>8</sup>  
 Do not have health insurance<sup>9</sup>

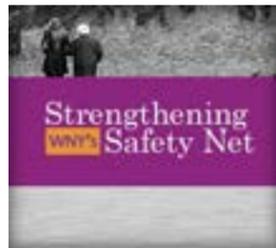
Are you, or is anyone in your household currently receiving any of the following forms of public assistance?

- Food stamps<sup>1</sup>       SSI / SSD<sup>1</sup>  
 Medicaid<sup>2</sup>       WIC<sup>6</sup>  
 Cash benefits<sup>3</sup>       Other \_\_\_\_\_<sup>7</sup>  
 HEAP<sup>4</sup>       None<sup>8</sup>

Does anyone in your household have a pending application for any of the following?

- Food stamps<sup>1</sup>       SSI / SSD<sup>1</sup>  
 Medicaid<sup>2</sup>       WIC<sup>6</sup>  
 Cash benefits<sup>3</sup>       Other \_\_\_\_\_<sup>7</sup>  
 HEAP<sup>4</sup>       None<sup>8</sup>

## Appendix C - Resident Focus Group Tool



What are the most critical human support needs facing you and your family?

Most Critical Need

2nd Biggest Need

3rd Biggest Need

\_\_\_\_\_ Counseling and Treatment

\_\_\_\_\_ Financial/Budgeting/Taxes

\_\_\_\_\_ Food/Nutrition

\_\_\_\_\_ Health Care

\_\_\_\_\_ Health Insurance Coverage

\_\_\_\_\_ Legal

\_\_\_\_\_ Mortgage/Rent or Housing

\_\_\_\_\_ Referrals/Information

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior Activities

\_\_\_\_\_ Transportation

\_\_\_\_\_ Weatherization

Tell Us About Yourself

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender?  Male  Female

How many people, including yourself, do you live with? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you live?  Akron  Newstead (*outside the Village of Akron*)

## Appendix C - Resident Focus Group Tool (Continued)



What are the most critical human support needs facing you and your family?

Most Critical Need

2nd Biggest Need

3rd Biggest Need

\_\_\_\_\_ Child Care

\_\_\_\_\_ Counseling and Treatment

\_\_\_\_\_ Financial/Budgeting/Taxes

\_\_\_\_\_ Food/Nutrition

\_\_\_\_\_ Health

\_\_\_\_\_ Jobs/Training

\_\_\_\_\_ Legal

\_\_\_\_\_ Mortgage/Rent or Housing

\_\_\_\_\_ Referrals/Information

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior Activities

\_\_\_\_\_ Transportation

\_\_\_\_\_ Weatherization

\_\_\_\_\_ Youth Programs

Tell Us About Yourself

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender?  Male  Female

How many people, including yourself, do you live with? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you live?  Akron  Newstead (*outside the Village of Akron*)

## Appendix D - Outreach Poster for Focus Group at Newstead Public Library



# We Need You

We want to hear how the downturn in the economy is impacting you, your family and your community.

We are the Mobile Safety-Net Team, created to help people in the community by connecting them with housing, food, employment, financial assistance, legal help, health insurance, crisis services and more.

## Two Ways You Can Help

### Complete a Survey

*Tell us about yourself, your concerns, and your needs for food, housing, employment, health care or other services.*

### Join a Conversation

*Share your thoughts and experiences in a small group.*

**Meet with us:**  
**Wednesday, September 26**  
**from 1:30 to 2:30 at**  
**Newstead Public Library**  
**33 Main Street, Akron, NY**  
**Questions? Call 878-2429**

The work of the Mobile Safety-Net Team has two parts:

During **Phase 1**, we went into dozens of communities across Erie and Niagara Counties to identify needs, assess available services and help residents connect with the human support services they need.

**Phase 2** will invest in those communities affected by the economic downturn. Newstead is one of 12 communities selected. We're partnering with the University at Buffalo to gather additional thoughts from residents, conduct focus groups, hear from organizations, and develop a community tool to help residents and organizations.

*Sponsored by The John R. Oishei Foundation*

**Learn more about the effort**  
contact the Mobile Safety-Net Team at 854-3494

A COMMUNITY REPORT  
Town of **NEWSTEAD**

This is a collaborative effort of the **University at Buffalo Regional Institute** and the **Mobile Safety-Net Team** established by **The John R. Oishei Foundation**. Commissioned by The John R. Oishei Foundation this assessment presents a detailed analysis of Newstead's human services needs, key resources, barriers, and opportunities for strengthening the system, and in turn, residents. The insights and recommendations provided are intended to assist the foundation community, Newstead's human services providers and other stakeholders in closing gaps and developing comprehensive, efficient and cost-effective strategies for connecting with a greater number of economically vulnerable individuals and families.



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