

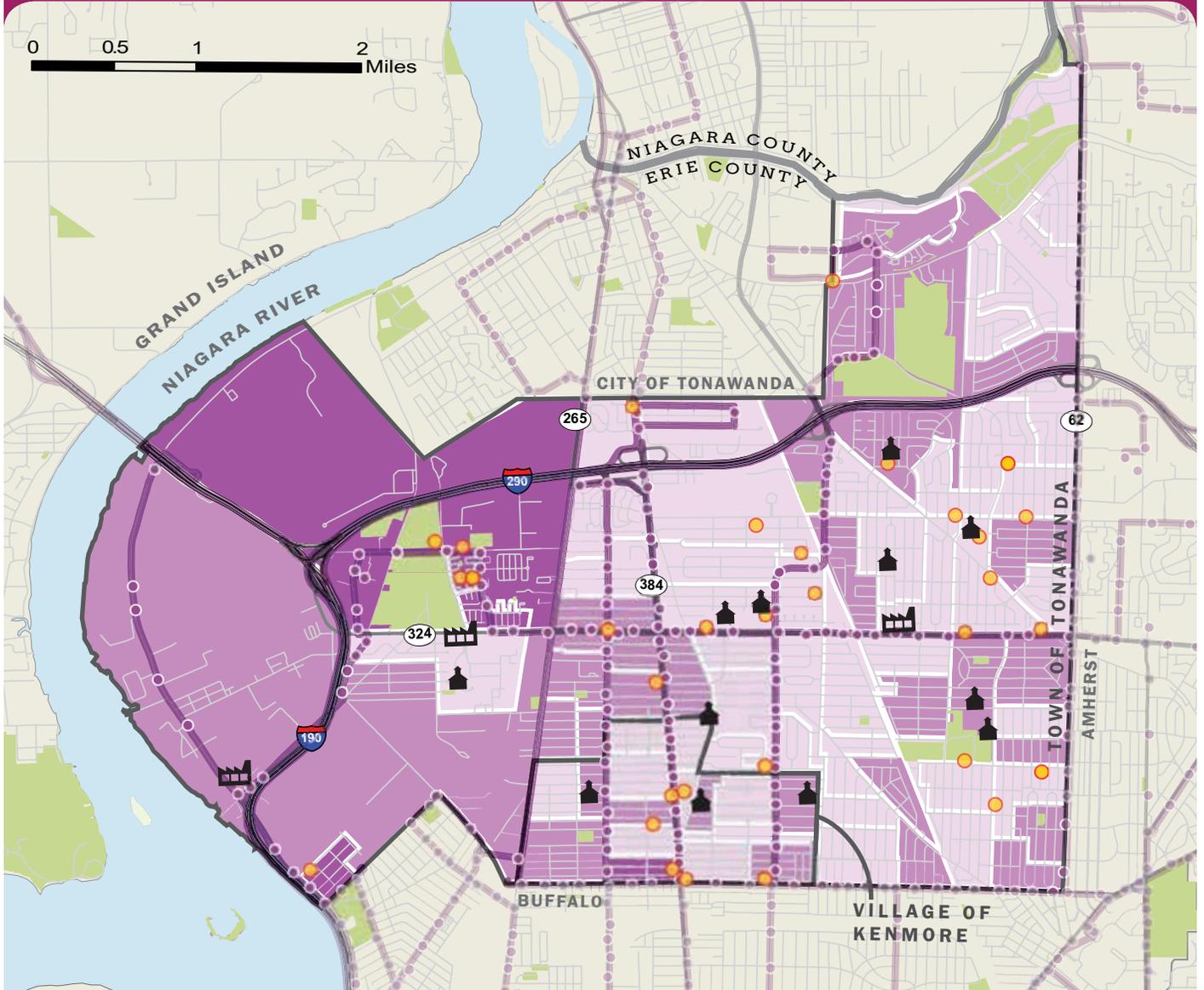
STRENGTHENING WNY's Safety Net

A COMMUNITY REPORT Town of **TONAWANDA**



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

October 2013



SERVICE PROVIDERS

43 service providers employing about 2,435 employees exist in Tonawanda to provide a range of human services.

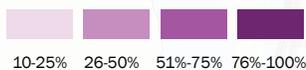
TRANSPORTATION

NFTA BUS ROUTES & STOPS

POPULATION IN POVERTY

Approximately 18,200 Tonawanda residents live on incomes under or near the federal poverty level

Population in or near poverty by block group, 2010



SCHOOLS

Kenmore Town of Tonawanda UFSD:
7 elementary schools
3 middle schools
2 high school
about 7,200 students total enrolled

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

GM Powertrain Tonawanda Engine
Caregivers
Goodyear Dunlop Tires

About This Report

Table of Contents

2	About This Report
4	Executive Summary
8	Context for Action
8	People in Need  Includes factors relating to individuals and families, work, income, poverty and education that may put Tonawanda residents at risk.
13	Tonawanda's Most Vulnerable  A special look at the characteristics of this population, their demographics, human service needs and barriers they experience to getting the support services they need.
17	Places in Need  Indicators of high housing costs, transportation barriers and crime.
21	Landscape of Services  Includes the strengths of the human services system, gaps in services, barriers to connecting with residents and promising developments.
26	Insights from the Field: Recommendations and Best Practices  Recommendations and strategies for strengthening the landscape of services, along with models for doing so that are working in other areas.
33	Appendices

Background

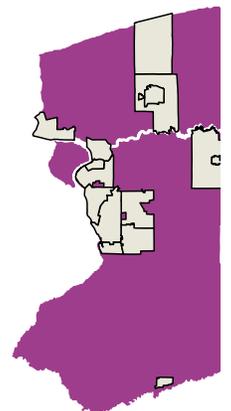
Between 2008 and 2009, regional employers shed almost 20,000 net jobs. The economic downturn, which continued into 2010, left large numbers of residents unemployed and unable to find new work for the first time in their lives. High levels of unemployment continue today. One out of 12 residents across 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 a second phase 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. The Town of Tonawanda was one of the 12 communities selected. The in-depth analysis and recommendations contained herein are grounded in this work of the **University at Buffalo Regional Institute** and the **Mobile Safety-Net Team**.



What Went Into This Report

Two Teams

This effort culminates seven months of research during 2012 and early 2013 by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute team, 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 Tonawanda 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

125 surveys were completed by residents in Tonawanda, providing new data on the demographics of Tonawanda's at-risk population, their needs, urgent concerns, utilization of human services benefits and barriers to support services.

Resident Focus Groups

A focus group was held with parents at Alexander Hamilton Elementary and with seniors at the Tonawanda Senior Citizen Center to gather insights into their most pressing concerns, barriers to accessing services and insights on how the system might be improved for them.

Agencies



Agency Interviews

Many human service agency representatives shared information on their programs and perspectives on opportunities.

Agency Focus Groups

A dozen representatives of public and private human services providers in Tonawanda took part in a focus group to gather agency perspectives on human services 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, 2007-2011 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 provided the structure for understanding the needs, the barriers and the strategies for improving the current system.

...led us to explore...

...which resulted in:

People



Places



Services



Insights &
Recommendations



STRENGTHENING WNY's Safety Net

A COMMUNITY REPORT Town of **TONAWANDA**



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

Among Tonawanda's population of 73,812...

...about **7,750**

Tonawanda residents live on incomes under the federal poverty level.

...an additional **10,455**

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

...about **18,200**

are doing poorly or struggling financially. This is **one out of every four** in Tonawanda.

Beyond poverty, other alarming indicators and trends...

Seniors, particularly those age 75+, account for a larger proportion of the town's population than across Erie County. One out of every nine residents in Tonawanda (8,380 altogether) is at age 75 or older.

One out of every nine residents is **75 or older**

Almost one in five lack health insurance.* The large majority are adults in need. Meanwhile, environmental and health concerns plague the town. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has identified Tonawanda Coke as a "significant source of fugitive benzene emissions." Benzene is a known carcinogen, and residents attribute these emissions to higher cancer rates.

* Findings come from a survey of 125 at-risk households in Tonawanda, reflecting a statistically significant sample size at a confidence level of at least 95% and with a confidence interval of 8.8.

68% Two-thirds of residents in the **Sheridan-Parkside neighborhood** are in poverty or close to it.



A pocket of deep poverty exists. In the Sheridan Parkside tract, almost half of families (44% or about 300) live in poverty. Unemployment runs at 17.5%. Yet, this neighborhood is nearby some of Tonawanda's largest employers that have been adding jobs, suggesting a skills gap among lower-income residents in this neighborhood.

Unemployment is a concern. Only a tenth of the town's at-risk population works full time, even though the large majority are between the ages of 18 and 64.

Affordable rental housing is limited. Utility shut-off notices and eviction/homelessness are concerns facing Tonawanda's most vulnerable.

73% of lower income renters pay more than 30% of income on housing

Altogether, **30% of the town's at-risk population describes urgent concerns.** The most common are a utility shut-off notices (44%) and having no money for food (39%). Evictions and homelessness are also a concern, reported by one in five families in crisis.

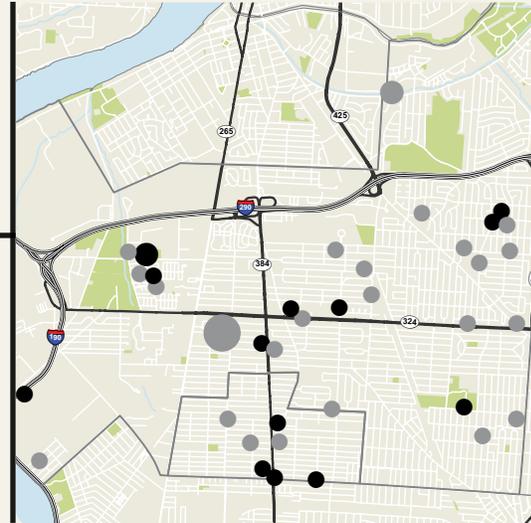
URGENT CONCERNS trouble almost one out of three vulnerable residents

Tonawanda's landscape of human services providers...

43 public and private providers
employing about
2,435

exist in Tonawanda to provide a range of human services to residents, from food, education, job training, youth programs, information services and more. The Kenmore-Tonawanda School District is the town's largest human services support asset.

There is a small cluster of providers in the Sheridan Parkside neighborhood, the town's most poverty-stricken community located on the western side of town between Sheridan Drive and the I-290.

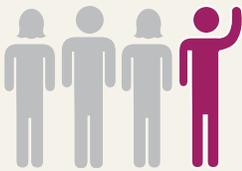


Strengths of the system include
strengths the existence of the Ken-Ton Family Support Center, which is open to all residents in the school district; a successful food program for seniors - Ken-Ton Meals on Wheels - that reaches 500 individuals a year and is largely volunteer run; a highly regarded senior center which serves as a hub of senior activities; and a Special Needs Registry maintained by the town to provide better emergency assistance to disabled individuals and others with special needs.

Gaps in services exist for
gaps youth programs, especially for low-income middle-school students; vocational training and skills development for adults; transportation to food pantries and soup kitchens; affordable housing supports; and parent training.

Barriers and systemic challenges...

1 out of 4 residents surveyed in Tonawanda say they have encountered difficulty getting services.



One in four residents surveyed say they have encountered **barriers to getting services**. **Traveling difficulties are by far the most frequently reported**, noted by 70% of those saying they had trouble getting services. Providers describe how some residents use taxis, paying up to \$40 for a round trip, to get to food pantries. While the town operates a van, seniors describe the service as expensive. It costs \$5 per one-way stop within the town and \$10 to destinations beyond town borders.

3,120

Households without access to a vehicle.

Altogether, 3,120 households don't have access to a vehicle, and 37% of the town's most vulnerable report **relying on a form of transportation other than their own vehicle**. Public transit and walking are what are most common.

2,445+

are new to poverty

Lack of awareness of what services are out there and **confusion over how to apply** for benefits hinders residents. For instance, multiple trips to Erie County Department of Social Services (DSS) and time off work are described as being needed to apply for child care subsidies. Yet DSS leaders say applications for all benefits except emergency services are accepted through the mail.

Erie County DSS application processes are not well understood

Tonawanda is a town divided, sliced into distinct neighborhoods by several major thoroughfares and expressways, including the I-190, I-290, Sheridan Drive, Military Road and Delaware Ave. There is no town center, making it difficult to centralize services. There is also an unwillingness of residents to travel to distant neighborhoods within the town.

Severe poverty is masked by its concentration

The **geographic concentration of extreme poverty** within the town tends to hide it and the wide-ranging effects it can have on the entire community such as higher local government costs, reduced private sector investment and depressed home values for all residents.

Budget cuts have eliminated or substantially reduced supportive services and programs, including a successful Empire Zone program, Prime Time youth services and many non-mandated school programs. Others are at risk of being cut.

As needs rise, budget cuts have reduced support programs

Demand exceeds supply for some support services. For instance, nearly three-quarters of low-income renters face high housing costs. However, there is no affordable housing for low-income families in Tonawanda, and 20,000 households in Erie County are on the waiting list for Section 8 vouchers.

Greater coordination among the community's many food pantries and better access for residents to these supports are needed to meet existing urgent needs for food.

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

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGIES	MODEL TO CONSIDER
Expand connections among human service providers	<p>Create a human services coalition that meets regularly and encompasses existing informal coalitions</p> <p>Encourage collaboration via subgroups covering particular need areas</p>	<p>The Seattle Human Services Coalition is an example of a long-standing successful group. http://shscoalition.org/</p>
Raise awareness of human services and reduce fragmentation through centralization of information	<p>Maintain directory of services created by the MSNT</p> <p>Distribute to all providers; make available online and at community hubs</p> <p>Use newspapers and other news outlets to raise awareness of human services through articles about these programs</p>	<p>Washington Knows is an interactive information tool that centralizes information for residents and human services providers in Washington County, PA. http://www.washingtonknows.org/about.php</p>
Expand transportation services for low-income residents	<p>Consider pricing options for making the senior van more affordable</p> <p>Expand transportation services to the food pantries and soup kitchens</p> <p>Increase accessibility of public transit between residences and job centers</p>	<p>Hearts and Hands Faith in Action is local model providing seniors with free transportation. http://hnhcares.org/</p>
Build upon partnerships with local employers to expand workforce development opportunities	<p>Expand opportunities for vocational education and skills development focusing on the town's most vulnerable</p> <p>Expand partnerships between the school district and local companies</p> <p>Create incentives and otherwise encourage local employers and unions to provide ongoing training for current workers</p>	<p>Health Careers for Youth provides a best practice for creating strong career pipelines in low-income neighborhoods. http://www.wtb.wa.gov/GovernorsBestPracticesAwards2009.asp#Healthcare</p>
Increase the availability and accessibility of after-school activities	<p>Raise awareness of existing programs</p> <p>Explore partnership opportunities for affordable after-school programming, especially for low-income and middle-school children</p> <p>Raise awareness and accessibility of childcare subsidies, as appropriate</p>	<p>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/</p>
Promote programs and services that make housing more affordable	<p>Raise awareness of and access to weatherization programs, HEAP and emergency assistance for housing</p> <p>Support energy efficiency initiatives such as PUSH Green</p> <p>Explore creation of an emergency housing fund</p>	<p>Connecting Point provides a one-stop shop for families facing a housing crisis. http://compass-sf.org/programs/connecting-point</p>
Develop a drug and alcohol prevention strategy	<p>Create information and outreach for educators and parents, focusing on prescription drugs</p> <p>Expand drug prevention programming for youth</p> <p>Educate adults, including seniors, on the danger of prescription medications</p>	<p>Across Ages is an award-winning intergenerational mentoring program for the prevention of drug use. http://acrossages.org/</p>
Develop community hubs as sites for mobile services	<p>Strengthen the landscape of services through mobile offerings, including legal, financial literacy, and other</p> <p>Locate at existing hubs such as the Senior Center, Ken-Ton Family Center, Brighton Place and Brighton Square</p>	<p>Erie County's Senior Outreach Services offers a mobile model for partnership and outreach. http://www.amherst.ny.us/pdf/senior/sos.pdf</p>

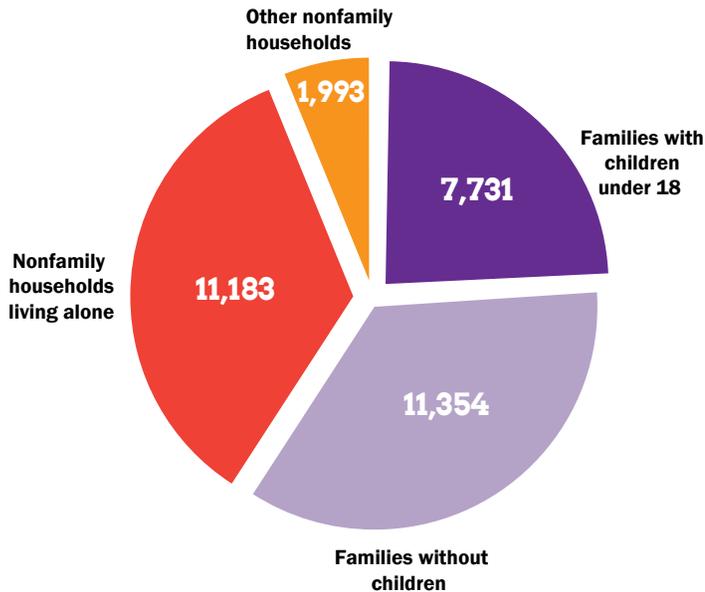
Context for Action

People in Need

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

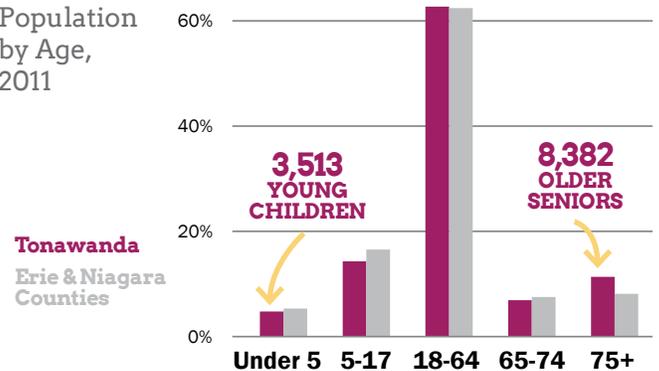


Households by Type, 2011



Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

Population by Age, 2011



Potentially At-Risk Populations, 2011

Adults with HS education or less	19,825
Veterans	5,909
Non-white	4,649
Age 65+ living alone	4,597
Foreign-born individuals	3,130
Single Parent	2,374

Source: 2010 Census and 2007-11 American Community Survey

Individuals and Families

Tonawanda is the fourth most populous subdivision of Erie County. Approximately 73,810 individuals reside in the Town of Tonawanda, which includes the Village of Kenmore, where a fifth of all town residents live. This overall population figure represents a sizable decline of 10.5% or 8,650 individuals over the past 20 years. The Village has experienced the same proportional decline since 1990, a loss which has hastened slightly town-wide over the past decade.

While Tonawanda is a community where families predominate, it is an aging community as well, where families without children are more common than families with children

under 18, and where seniors who live alone represent a sizable population that is potentially at risk. In fact, for every young child under the age of five in Tonawanda, there are more than

-10.5%
Population Loss
Tonawanda has 8,650 fewer residents today than it did in 1990, representing a 10.5% loss. The Village of Kenmore has experienced the same proportional decline

Source: 1990 Census and 2011 American Community Survey

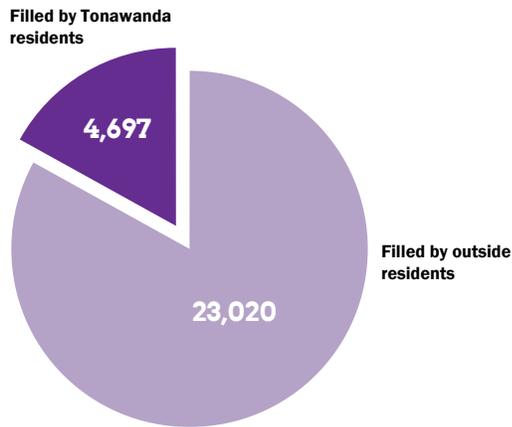
two seniors age 75 and up, an age cohort where disabilities can interfere with the ability to live independently. This population of older seniors has been the town's fastest growing age cohort, increasing 40% over the past 20 years.

Yet, an even larger population at risk in Tonawanda are adults with limited levels of education. Almost 20,000 residents have a high school diploma, at most, and nearly two-thirds are in their working years, between 25 and 64, where access to higher paying jobs oftentimes depends on higher levels of education and skills.

+40%
Growth in Oldest Seniors
If it wasn't for the town's oldest seniors, population declines would be more severe since this is the only age group where population increased, by over 40% over the past 20 years.

Source: 1990 Census and 2011 American Community Survey

Private-sector jobs filled by Tonawanda Residents, 2010



Source: On The Map

Tonawanda's Top 10 Employers

Employer	# of Employees
CareGivers	1,800
Goodyear Dunlop Tires	1,200
Praxair, Inc.	1,100
Kenmore-Tonawanda School District	1,052
GM Powertrain Tonawanda Engine Plant	841
Kenmore Mercy Hospital	755
3M Company	320
John W. Danforth Company	265
McAuley Residence	259
M J Mechanical Services	228

Source: Reference USA, NYS Department of Education, and Buffalo Business First Book of Lists 2011

Work and Income

A strong industrial base exists in Tonawanda with top employers such as Goodyear Dunlop Tires, Praxair, Inc. and GM Powertrain Tonawanda Engine Plant. Several other top companies are in the healthcare sector including CareGivers (a home health agency), Kenmore Mercy Hospital (operated by the Catholic Health System) and McAuley Residence (a nursing home). Only one public employer – the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District - is among the town's top 10 employers.

Altogether, 27,717 private-sector jobs exist in Tonawanda. This is slightly less than one job for every resident who works in the private sector. Yet only about 4,700 Tonawanda residents actually find work in Tonawanda. Rather, the large majority leave town for work. The City of Buffalo is a top destination, where 27% of Tonawanda residents find jobs. Cheektowaga, where 6% work, is another top locale. Yet the overall quality of the jobs that Tonawanda residents leave their home community for isn't as high as those in their own backyard, at least in terms of pay. Only 33% of those who leave town for work earn more than \$3,333 a month or \$40,000 a year, while almost 40% of the jobs that local employees fill by outside workers pay at this level.

With fewer residents reaching the upper income echelons, Tonawanda has a smaller foundation of higher income householders than the county as a whole. At the same time about one in five households across the county earn \$100,000 or more in income, only about one in seven households in Tonawanda generate income at this level. Yet with relatively smaller proportions of households

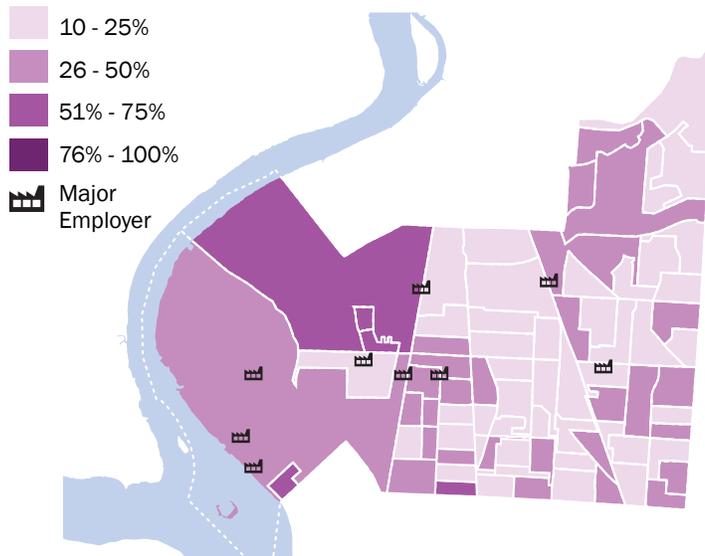
living on less than \$25,000 a year, Tonawanda also has a larger middle class than the county, and a median household income that is slightly higher than across the county as a whole (\$50,336 in Tonawanda vs. \$48,805 in Erie County).

% Households by Income Levels

	Town of Tonawanda	Erie County
\$0 - \$25K	23%	26%
\$25K - \$100K	63%	55%
\$100K+	15%	19%

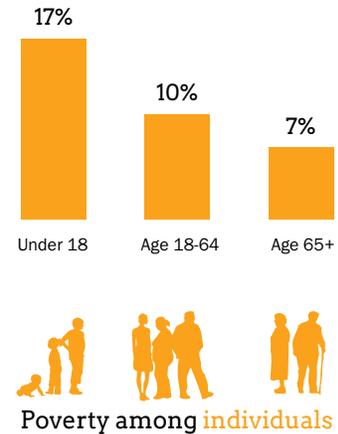
Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

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

There are 7,753 individuals (11% of the total) living in poverty (or on less than \$19,090 annually for a family of three). Another 10,456 are struggling economically with incomes hovering between 100% and 200% of the federal poverty level. Altogether, 25% of the population—one in four—is either in poverty or struggling financially and at risk.

Economic hardship isn't evenly distributed across the town. The west side of Tonawanda is most impacted and the deepest pocket of poverty exists in Census Tract 83 which encompasses the Sheridan Parkside neighborhood. Two-thirds of the 2,734 residents in this tract have incomes under 200% of the federal poverty level, and a significant majority of impoverished families are female-headed households with children. The Kenilworth neighborhood on the southeastern portion of town, where the borders of Tonawanda and the City of Buffalo meet, is another densely populated area where 1,517 residents, or 27% of the total, live in or near poverty.

While poverty across age groups is highest among children, at 17% (or 2,352 children in poverty), working age adults represent the largest vulnerable population, with over 4,500 adults living below the federal poverty threshold.

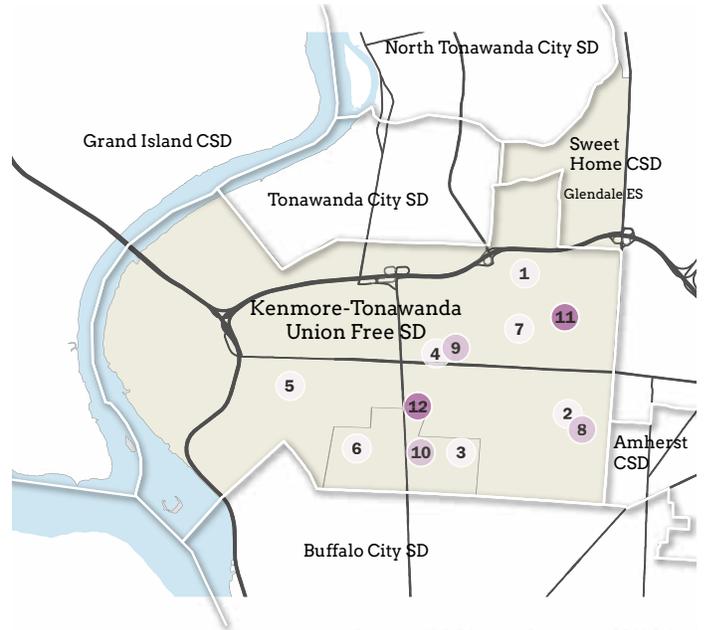
These demographics represent a rather drastic shift from 10 years ago, as the number of persons in poverty across Tonawanda has grown 46%, while the town's total population has declined 6% since 2000.

43% of families living in Census Tract 83 covering the Sheridan Parkside neighborhood are in poverty.

\$17.43 Maximum daily amount a family of three lives on at the federal poverty level

Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

Schools in the Kenmore-Tonawanda UFSC		Enrollment, 2011	% Qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch
ELEMENTARY			
1	Alexander Hamilton ES	382	36%
2	Ben Franklin ES	506	52%
3	Charles A. Lindbergh ES	513	20%
4	Herbert Hoover ES	586	45%
5	Holmes ES	292	76%
6	Theodore Roosevelt ES	353	50%
7	Thomas A. Edison ES	454	27%
MIDDLE			
8	Ben Franklin MS	502	41%
9	Herbert Hoover MS	651	40%
10	Kenmore MS	628	34%
HIGH			
11	Kenmore East HS	1,143	26%
12	Kenmore West HS	1,461	30%



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

Source: NYS Education Department 2011 School Report Card

Education

The Kenmore-Tonawanda School District enrolls 7,200 students across 12 schools. Several private and charter schools in town enroll additional students.

The Kenmore-Tonawanda School District falls mid-range, in terms of its rank, standing at 48 out of 97 districts in the region, according to recent academic rankings published by Business First.

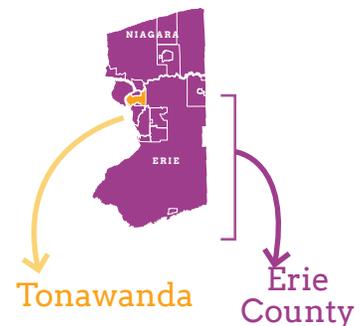
Like the town, the district once served a much larger population. Enrollment peaked during the 1960s, when more than 22,000 students were enrolled. Today's figures represent a fraction of this, and the district is currently considering options for consolidation. As a result of declining enrollment, Thomas Jefferson Elementary School was recently closed.

A Voice from the Community

While the large majority of children are performing at standards, there is a significant drop-off in performance between 4th and 8th grade among economically disadvantaged students. Although 70% of economically disadvantaged students meet or exceed standard in math in 4th grade, this drops to just over half, 57%, by 8th grade.

Altogether, one out of three students are economically disadvantaged, with much higher percentages at Holmes Elementary, which serves some of the town's poorest youngsters from the Sheridan Parkside neighborhood. Increasing poverty,

Educational Attainment of Adults Age 25+, 2007-2011



	Tonawanda	Erie County
Less than High School	7%	11%
High School	31%	29%
Some College/ Associate's Degree	31%	30%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	31%	30%

Source: 2007-11 American Community Survey

transiency, illiteracy, and tremendous academic variation in the classroom, all on top of budget cuts, are the biggest challenges facing the district, according to its leaders.

Although 85% of high school students in the district plan to go to college, almost 40% of adults in Tonawanda don't have anything beyond a high school diploma, a barrier to higher paying jobs and a risk factor for unemployment. In fact, 83% of Tonawanda's unemployed lack a four-year degree or more.

Context for Action

Tonawanda's Most Vulnerable



Demographics,
service usage,
urgent needs
and barriers

Assessing the Need

125 Tonawanda 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 a variety of sites including the food pantry and food express truck at New Covenant Tabernacle Church, the Senior Citizen Center, AARP tax preparations at Kenmore Branch Library, and a HEAP Outreach at Kenilworth Volunteer Fire Company.

What human services are residents receiving?

More than half (59%) of those surveyed at a variety of sites and venues across Tonawanda are 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

Food Stamps	59%
Medicaid Insurance	32%
Rental Assistance	31%
SSI/SSD	11%
HEAP	7%

68%

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

Pending applications. 14% of those surveyed said they have an application for additional public assistance pending. Those for Medicaid, HEAP and SSI/SSD are most common and account for over two-thirds of pending applications.

Are there indicators of greater need?

The need for support with food, health insurance, housing costs and cash assistance is probably greater than indicated by the current number of recipients since both those receiving benefits as well as those who don't report having experienced access barriers. Altogether, 30% say they have encountered difficulty getting services. Traveling difficulties are by far the most frequently reported barrier.

30%

of survey takers report having an urgent concern.

The most urgent concerns of those surveyed

Homelessness /Eviction /Utility Shut-off	16%
No Money for Food	11%

Urgent Concerns: While the majority of survey takers reported that their household didn't have an urgent concern, almost a third (30%) identified specific pressing needs.

These desperate needs, with those related to food and housing being the most common, are reported by both

those receiving services as well as those who don't, indicating current levels of support that residents and their families are connecting with are not sufficient.

Lack of Health Insurance.

Almost one in five (18%) 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, 8 said there was at least one uninsured adult.

What's causing this situation?

A confluence of factors are at play in the lives of Tonawanda residents who are in need of services or at risk, including factors affecting their capacity to work and be self-sufficient as well as factors that weigh heavily on the needs of individuals and families.

The most pressing identified by the survey include:

Unemployment/ Underemployment. Although 70 percent of those surveyed are between the ages of 18 and 64, only 10 percent reported working full time and only slightly more than this (a quarter of those surveyed) said they work at least part time. Compounding matters, only 20 percent said that other adults in their household are employed full or part time. Rather, a fifth (21%) reported being unemployed, while another fifth said they were disabled. Over a third (38%) described their employment status as retired.

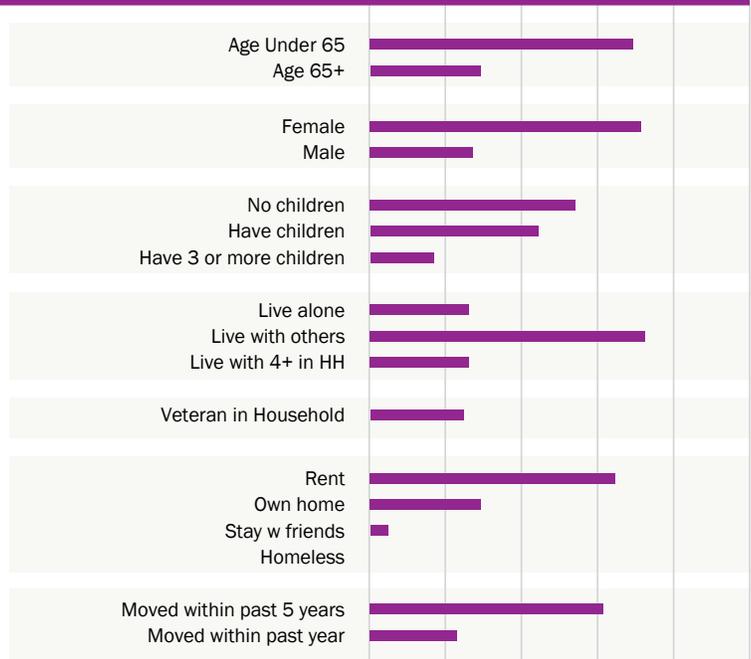
125 surveyed

Low income. Half of those surveyed who reported their income earn less than \$1,249 per month. This is less than the poverty level for a household of two, the median household size for those surveyed. Three-quarters of those at risk live in a household earning less than \$24,000 a year.

Limited education and skills. Over half of those in their working years, between the ages of 18 and 64, indicated that they had, at most, a high school diploma or GED. Only 1 respondent indicated that they had finished trade school, while 12 percent reported they did not complete high school. Only 22% of these adults under age 65 have a two-year college degree or higher more.

Transportation. 36% report they depend on a mode of travel other than a vehicle they own. For those without a car, public transit was the most commonly reported option, reported by 15% of the total responding to this question. Walking was a close runner-up, with 14% of the total saying they primarily get places by foot, an option that severely limits the distance residents can travel for services and employment prospects. About one in ten describe relying on friends and family.

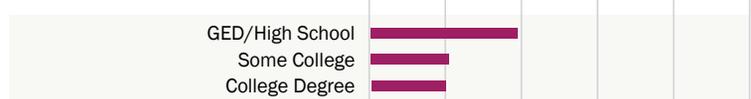
Individuals and Families



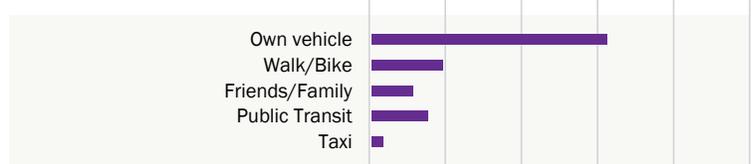
Work and Income



Education



Transportation



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

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

Barriers Residents Face

Difficulties in traveling to get services was the most common barrier reported by Tonawanda residents surveyed. In fact, 70% of those who reported encountering difficulties in getting assistance with food, medical care, housing, utilities and other supports, reported that traveling is difficult and has presented barriers. This figure represents one out of every six vulnerable individuals in Tonawanda. Interestingly, all of those who reported transportation barriers were under the age of 65.

Confusing processes create the second most commonly reported barrier, with 17% of those encountering access difficulties attributing it to application processes that are confusing or too much of a hassle.

Smaller proportions reported other barriers such as not being able to get to agencies during their hours of operation (3% of all respondents), being turned away due to income limits (3%) or being physically unable to leave home (3%).

Human service providers taking

A Voice from the Community

part in a focus group echoed that lack of affordable

transportation options hinders low income populations. Providers describe how taxis are sometimes used by residents to get to food pantries. Families will spend \$40 on a taxi, but they see it as worthwhile to get affordable groceries.

Transportation also emerged as a top concern among seniors participating in a focus group.

They described the senior van as expensive, especially compared to the \$2 optional donation it used to charge. It's also more expensive than the senior van run by Erie County, which operates on a voluntary donation of \$3 one-way. The town no longer participates in the county's Going Places Transportation Program since it provides its own service. In Tonawanda, traveling within town costs seniors \$5 one-way. A round trip outside Tonawanda costs at least \$20. (The Village of Kenmore has a van offering seniors transportation to the senior center for a \$1 donation.)

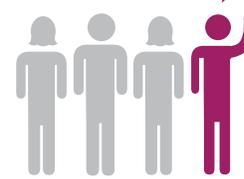
Some seniors say they use public transit but described the buses as "terrible" and hard to use when carrying heavy bags. Even seniors who currently drive expressed transportation concerns, worrying about what

they would do if their car broke down or if they became unable to drive.

Yet access challenges are broader, with seniors not knowing where to turn locally for information or referrals. The Senior Citizens Center does not have an outreach office or provide human services. While there is a senior case worker for the community working out of People, Inc., this does not seem to be well-known, as the existence of this position did not come to light until near the end of this study.

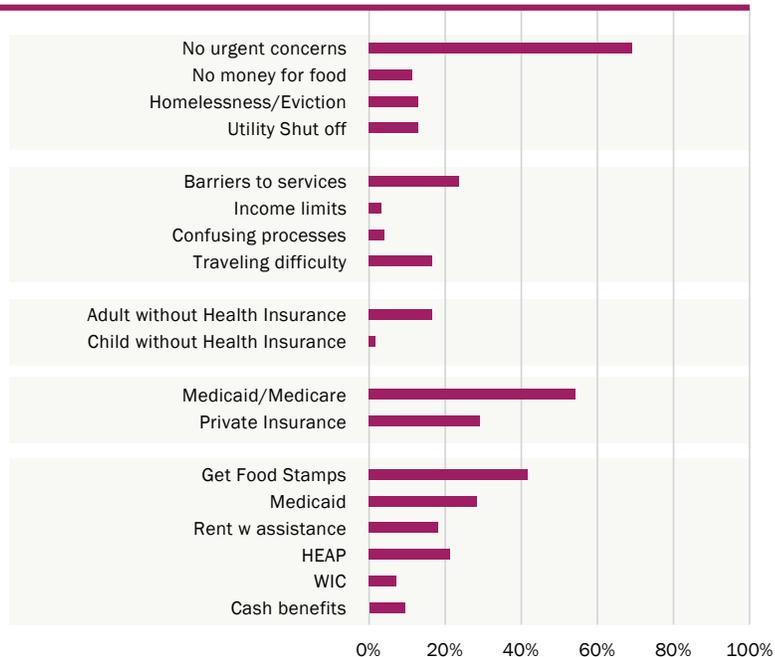
Barriers described by parents were predominately work related and included a lack of affordable after-school programs and child care. One said, "there is no such thing as affordable day care," describing how most mothers work to simply pay the day care bill.

1 out of 4 residents surveyed in Tonawanda say they have encountered difficulty getting services.



Others described frustration with systemic barriers, or a system whereby people are better off and have access to better benefits - medical insurance, housing, and food - by not working than by working more.

Needs & Barriers



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

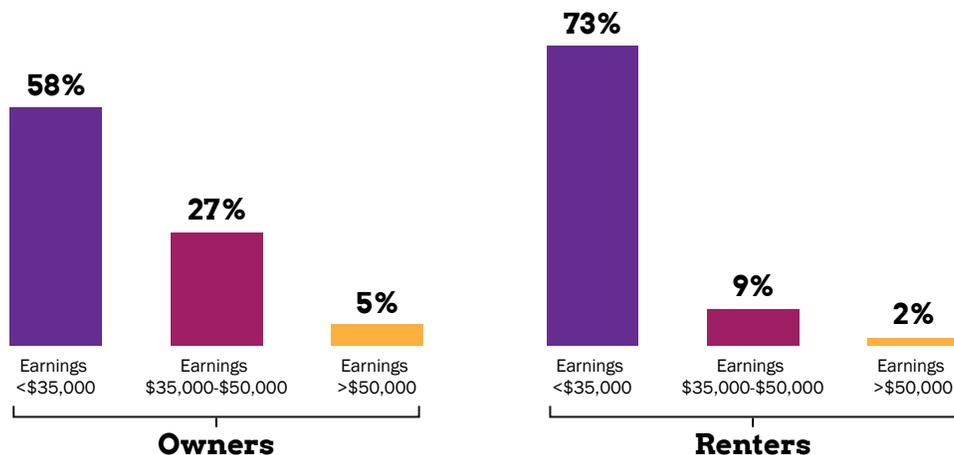
Context for Action

Places in Need



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

Households in Tonawanda Paying 30% or More of Their Income on Housing, by Income Category, 2010



Source: 2006-10 American Community Survey

Housing

There are 33,640 housing units in Tonawanda. With only 5% vacant, the housing market in Tonawanda is tight. The rate of home ownership is nearly 80%. Indeed, Tonawanda has a lower proportion of renters than Erie County.

For lower-income residents, the Sheridan Parkside neighborhood offers housing valued at \$40,000 less than the median across town (\$66,700 vs. 109,800). A lot of this housing was constructed by the federal government during the early 1940s to accommodate local war-time workers, and because the quality isn't comparable to what's available elsewhere, it has allowed for an area of concentrated poverty where the majority of units are occupied by renters rather than the owner-occupied dwellings that predominate elsewhere in Tonawanda.

At the same time, the town has constructed some new housing in the Sheridan Parkside area, with a vision to transform it into a neighborhood with a greater proportion of homeowners. These new builds offer young families new homes at very affordable prices.

While there is public housing in Tonawanda, it is all for seniors and handicapped individuals, available through the Kenmore Housing Authority, which operates two high-rises at the corner of Kenmore Ave and Colvin Blvd. Rent is set at approximately 30% of residents' monthly income. In addition, about 200 households in Tonawanda are receiving Section 8 vouchers through Belmont

Housing Resources of WNY. These vouchers allow tenants to live in any neighborhood they want, with the federal government paying the landlord a subsidy and the tenant making up any difference. The waiting list for Section 8 vouchers in Erie County is 20,000 households long, so long that Belmont is no longer accepting new applicants.

With public housing and subsidies so limited in Tonawanda, low-income renters are the ones most likely to experience high housing costs. Nearly three-quarters of renters with annual household incomes under \$35,000 incur housing costs that exceed 30% or more of their income, a commonly used standard of housing affordability. Costs reflect mortgage, rent, real estate taxes, homeowners insurance and utilities. While the percentage of low-income homeowners incurring comparably high costs is lower, the absolute number is higher, with 5,673 paying more than 30%. Combined, over 10,000 lower-income households in Tonawanda are burdened with housing costs that may make it hard for them to afford other necessities in life such as food, clothing, transportation and child care, not to mention housing-related expenses. Utility shut-off notices were, in fact, the most frequently reported urgent concern among Tonawanda's most vulnerable.

Public Transit Times From Longfellow Court in the Sheridan Parkside Neighborhood

Destination	Time of Day	One-Way Travel Time Via Bus	Notes...
1 Buffalo Employment & Training Center in Buffalo	early morning	1 Hr., 1 Min.	Will need to leave home shortly after 6 am to make it to BETC for a computer class beginning at 8 am
2 Boulevard Mall in Amherst	evening	26 Min.	Working an evening shift may not be possible, with the last bus at 9:57 pm, convenient for shoppers but not workers who need to balance registers and clean after the store closes.
3 Geico in Amherst	mid afternoon	1 Hr., 23 Min.	Will need to leave home at noon to be at work for a 2 p.m. start. The return trip home at night will take close to 2 hours.
4 ECC North Campus	mid morning	1 Hr., 30 Min.	For parents, hiring a babysitter for an additional 3 hours will cost about \$30.
5 Ken-Ton Family Support Center in Tonawanda	mid afternoon	36 Min.	The Family Support Center moved to the Longfellow Bldg. on Myron Ave in Kenmore to closer to the bus lines.



Source: Travel times by public transit were calculated using Google Maps

Transportation

To get to work, nine out of ten—91%—of working residents ages 16 and up depend on a vehicle, and another 2% do not travel because they work from home. Only 2.5% use public transportation. In fact, walking is almost as common among residents in Tonawanda as riding the bus, as a means to get to work.

Yet, 3,116 households across town— one in ten—do not have access to a vehicle. Seniors account for about half of this total, while the others are households headed by someone younger in their working years. Renters predominate, and the proportions lacking a vehicle are highest where poverty is deepest. In the Sheridan Parkside tract, 36% of households – 410 altogether – do not have an automobile available. This percentage is on par with the proportion of vulnerable households across Tonawanda without a vehicle.

Getting to jobs, training and support services by bus can take up to 4 and 5 times longer than by car, especially for those traveling east, towards places in the region such as Amherst where new development and job growth have been taking place for years.

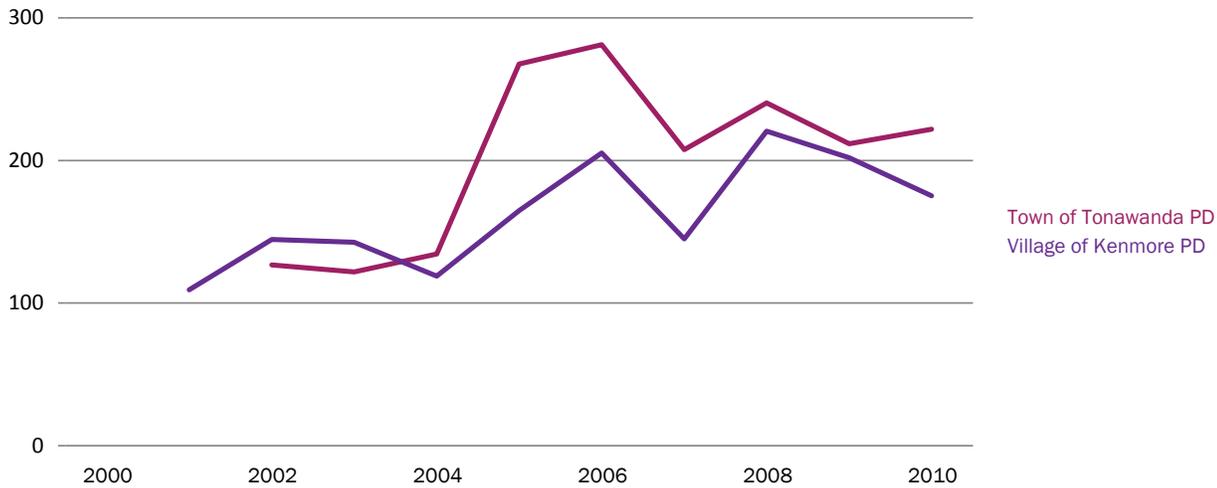
For instance, from a residence on Longfellow Court in the Sheridan Parkside neighborhood, it will take 1 hour and 23 minutes to get to Geico for a customer service job with a 2 p.m. shift start. By

car, traveling to Geico, a company that currently employs 300-400 from Tonawanda and will be hiring 800 new workers over the next year, takes only 16 minutes. Similarly, a round-trip to ECC's North Campus, for college classes or for free computer programs or occupational training for low-income residents, will take, by bus, three hours a day. The situation for riders will only worsen if the NFTA moves forward with its proposed cuts in Tonawanda.

Characteristics of Householders Lacking a Vehicle, 2010

Household by Age	# Renters	# Homeowners	TOTAL
Householder Under Age 65	1,290	230	1,520
Householder Age 65+	755	841	1,596
Total	2,045	1,071	3,116

Rates of Violent Crime in Tonawanda Per 100,000 Population, 2000 - 2010



Source: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics

Crime

Violent crime across Tonawanda has been on the rise. Relative to the town's population, the frequency of assaults, robberies, rapes and murders over the past several years is close to double what the Town of Tonawanda Police Department reported between 2000 and 2003, reflecting a combination of better reporting as well as community factors affecting crime.

Domestic Violence
affects at least
1 Resident
Each Day
on average

victims in 2011, more than one every day of the year, on average. The large majority were victims of what's described as a "simple assault" or incidences where serious injury to the victim did not occur. Stalking, harassment and intimidation are included in this

Rates in Kenmore are, on average, 50% higher. Contributing most to the increase are incidences of aggravated assaults. Levels of domestic violence, in particular, are growing. Together, the police departments for the Town of Tonawanda and Village of Kenmore report more victims of domestic than any other reporting agency in Erie County except the City of Buffalo and Cheektowaga. There were 417

category.

Violent and disruptive incidences in the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District are also a concern. In 2010, there were 418 suspensions district-wide, up 30% from 321 in 2008. Suspension rates were highest in Kenmore West Senior High School where 15% of the student body was suspended in 2010. By comparison, 20% is the proportion of students across the City of Buffalo School District that were suspended that same year.

Contributing to crime in Tonawanda is the growing prevalence of substance abuse, especially prescription drugs. Human service providers describe it as a big issue that is interconnected with others, including access to health insurance and treatment services, as well as parenting skills. Providers say painkillers are a common source of addiction among adults, and even among children, providers observe parents seeking Adderall and Ritalin for their children, even before there is any diagnosis.

Rates of Violent Crime in Selected Suburbs of Erie County Per 100,000 Population, 2010

Suburb	Rate
Tonawanda	222
Cheektowaga	197
West Seneca	107
Amherst	102

Source: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics

Landscape of Services



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

Landscape of Services

An array of public and private providers exist in Tonawanda to serve the needs of those seeking human services such as food, clothing, affordable housing, youth programs, job training and more.

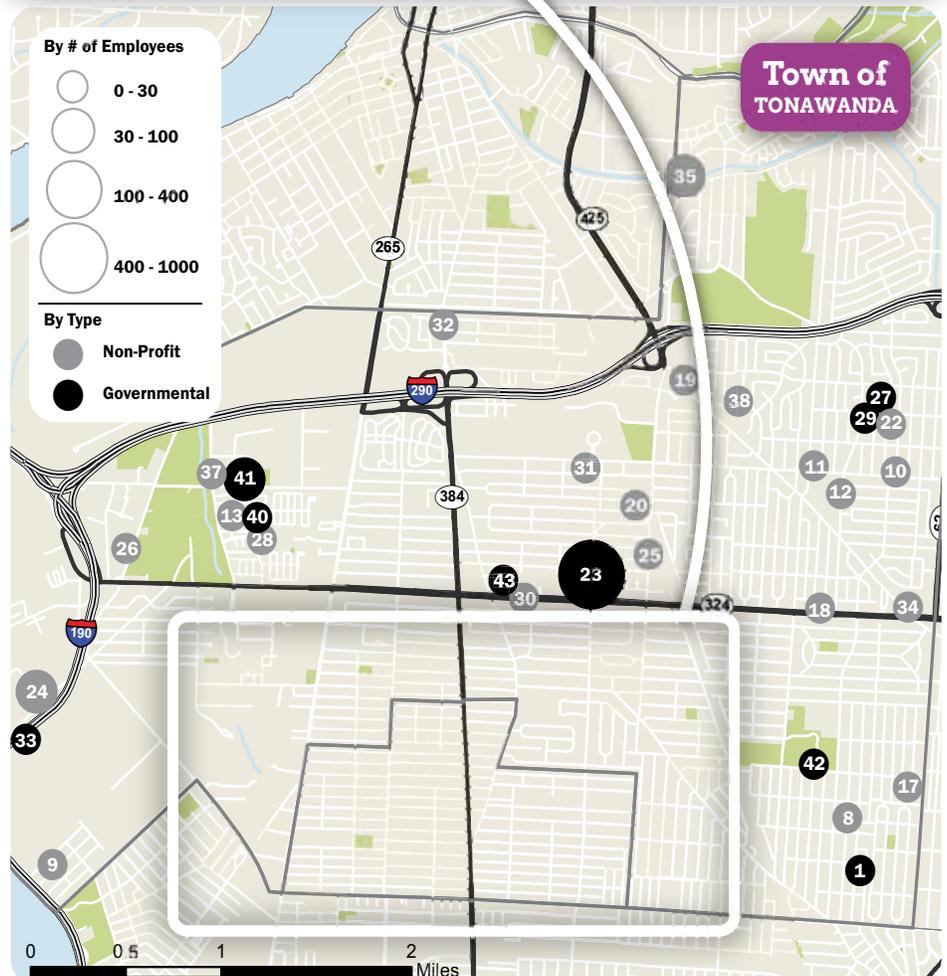
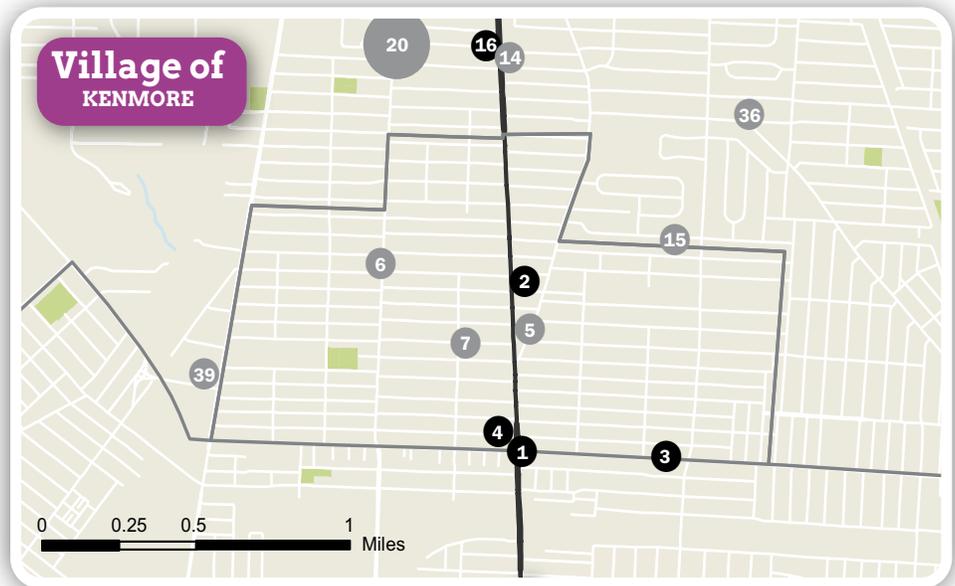
A small handful of agencies have programs targeting individuals who are particularly vulnerable such as young parents, veterans, seniors and the homeless.



The typical service provider in Tonawanda is a small nonprofit with under 10 employees, located outside the Village of Kenmore. Indeed, with no town center, providers are relatively dispersed across the town, although there exists a small concentration in the Sheridan Parkside neighborhood.

In terms of employee number, the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District and Kenmore Mercy Hospital are the two largest human services support assets.

About 2,435
employees across
43
providers
in Tonawanda provide
a range of human
services to those in
need.



Strengths of the System

Tonawanda's **safety-net is strongest in the area of food**, with over a dozen food pantries and food programs operating locally.

Ken-Ton Meals on Wheels is a largely volunteer-run food program for seniors that reaches approximately 500 elders in the town during the year.

The Kenmore-Tonawanda School District offers an 11-year-old **Family Support Center**, currently serving 600 families. It is open to all residents in the district and offers referrals to community resources, counseling, parenting groups and prevention programs.

The town's **Senior Citizen Center** is highly used, with 500 members and overall attendance during 2011 at 2,500. It serves as a hub for senior activities and meals, although these are primarily recreational in nature. It also sponsors an annual trade show that brings together various vendors.

The town maintains a **Special Needs Registry** to provide better emergency assistance to disabled individuals and others with special needs.

Located in the Sheridan Parkside neighborhood, the town maintains the **Sheridan Youth Center** offering after-school recreational activities for area youth.

A well-regarded **community education program** is operated by the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District, featuring almost 150 different programs in the current quarter, including classes on computer use, job searches, interview preparation and GED training. There is also occupational training for medical secretary positions. Residents of the town pay discounted fees.

A **STAR program exists for home-owning seniors** that provides school district tax relief. Lowest-income seniors receive the largest exemptions, up to \$62,200 in home value, for the current fiscal year.

Nonprofit providers
account for
7 out of 10
of total providers.

Gaps in Services

While many **food** pantries and programs exist in Tonawanda, food was the second most frequently reported urgent concern of at-risk residents, an indicator that gaps exist.

The safety-net is weak, with few or no local providers, in the areas of free or low cost **legal aid, financial literacy or parent training** for young parents.

There is a lack of **health information and health screening**, especially for cancer, particularly in higher-poverty areas of town where cancer rates are elevated such as the Sheridan Park area.

At the same time the town operates a senior van service, and its three vans take seniors to destinations within Tonawanda and beyond, **affordable transportation options are lacking for Tonawanda's poorest**, especially to places like food pantries and soup kitchens. Providers describe how families sometimes take taxis to food pantries. Transportation is also one of seniors' most pressing concerns. The senior van, which charges \$5 one-way in town and \$10 to destinations outside Tonawanda, is described as expensive, costing more than programming at the senior center itself. While the Village of Kenmore's van offers travel for seniors for \$1 donation, it is not as flexible, in terms of destinations.

Funding for **child care subsidies** available through Erie County Department of Social Services has been exhausted and eligible applicants are being put on a wait list. Meanwhile, unsubsidized care costs \$9,000-\$10,000 a year for children age 5 and under.

Affordable after-school programs are described as lacking, especially for middle school students. Funding for Prime Time, a youth program that was once viewed as a model for other communities, has been significantly reduced. Meanwhile, the school district has eliminated or reduced many after-school programs.

The town **lost an Empire Zone Program** three years ago. Not only did it provide incentives for businesses to locate and expand in Tonawanda, but it featured workforce development opportunities and job assistance for low-income individuals, especially in the Sheridan Parkside and Lincoln Park neighborhoods. Currently, there is no workforce center in town where residents can go for free comprehensive help with their resume, computer skills and job searches.

HUD funding for the town's Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) ended as of July 2012. While much smaller amounts of new funding are being made available, it will focus more on the homeless and less on prevention, and it will target selected populations such as domestic violence victims and mothers with children. Without the HPRP program, which offered emergency assistance to those at risk of losing their home and assisted 650 individuals since 2009, those with high housing costs in Tonawanda could be at higher risk for homelessness.

Barriers to Connecting with Residents

Cuts in governmental funding have eliminated or drastically reduced many support programs and will continue to limit the town's capacity to increase services to fill gaps or meet rising demand. Funding for the Town's Community Development Department, for instance, is down 80% from 1978 levels.

The **waiting list across Erie County for Section 8 vouchers** available through Belmont Housing Resources for WNY is 20,000 households long. Because only 1,000 to 1,500 vouchers become available during a given year, Belmont closed the waiting list for the first time over a year ago. Kenmore Housing Authority does not offer vouchers or affordable housing options for families. Rather, it operates public housing for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Lack of awareness and confusion over Erie County Department of Social Services (DSS) application requirements creates barriers. Agencies and residents describe confusing and time-consuming in-person application requirements for benefits such as

Section 8
wait list
has 20,000
households

child care subsidies and Medicaid. However, DSS representatives say they will accept most applications by mail. Applications for emergency assistance are the exception where an in-person application is required. However, these applications that may be mailed in are not readily found on DSS's

website. Some are not posted at all, and require calling DSS offices and proceeding through multiple prompts in order to leave a request for an application to be mailed out.

Income cut-offs, especially for high-cost benefits, create barriers and put residents at risk. For instance, for families who miss the threshold for governmental-sponsored health insurance, family coverage under an employer-based plan can exceed \$12,000 a year, with deductibles for coverage and co-pays as high as \$75.

At the same time drug use is prevalent, providers describe how the **cost of in-patient substance abuse treatment** can run up to tens of thousands. Insurance, if it applies, covers only a fraction.

Stigma and the lack of motivation by residents in need of mental health and substance abuse treatment also prevents them from seeking services until their situation reaches a crisis.

The costs associated with the town's senior van service are prohibitive. Even with what senior riders are charged, the town doesn't recoup the costs of this service which include the vans, maintenance, insurance and paid part-time drivers.

Promising Developments

Healthcare and manufacturing are growing sectors in Tonawanda, and local employers are reporting additional employment opportunities. Kenmore Mercy Hospital has plans to add a nursing unit to meet growing demand that will double its room count. Meanwhile, Tonawanda GM Powertrain announced last fall that it will grow its workforce by 700 to support production of a new Corvette engine. Around the same time, UnitedHealthcare announced that it will add 150 jobs to its operations center in Tonawanda.

New federal health care regulations, which penalize hospitals for preventable readmissions and encourage discharge planning, provide hospitals like Kenmore Mercy with greater reason to coordinate care and connect patients with community supports such as food, mental health supports and transportation. Because federal guidelines don't take into account socioeconomic status and because readmissions tend to correlate with lower patient socioeconomic status, the incentive to connect patients with human services is even greater in areas like Tonawanda with higher poverty and other risk factors.

Tonawanda
employers are
adding jobs

The **Kenmore-Tonawanda School District is currently undertaking an intra-district consolidation feasibility study** to consider economically viable options for maintaining service delivery and preserving non-mandated programs.

Tonawanda's Community Development Department will soon have access to **funding through an Emergency Solutions Grant** to address families, particularly victims of domestic violence, facing homelessness or utility shutoff. Grants for homeless programs have otherwise been significantly cut.

Insights from the Field

Recommendations and Best Practices

Where we gathered our 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 a dozen agency interviews conducted by the Mobile Safety-Net Team, follow-up interviews and conversations conducted by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute with Kenmore Housing Authority, Belmont Housing Resources for WNY, Tonawanda Community Development Office, Kenmore-Tonawanda School District, Horizon Health, Hearts and Hands, Neighborhood Legal Services, Erie County Department of Social Services and the Clean Air Coalition.

An agency focus group was held in October 2012, with 13 provider representatives present. Resident input was gathered through focus groups conducted at the Tonawanda Senior Citizens Center and with parents at Alexander Hamilton Elementary. Local data and trends also inform these findings and recommendations.

Expand connections among human services providers

Providers of human services are not always working with each other. Nor do they always know what programs neighboring agencies offer. This has resulted in lack of communication and coordination. There are, for instance, over a dozen largely uncoordinated food pantries and programs in Tonawanda, yet urgent needs for food still exist among residents. With the town's aging population and diminishing tax base, coordination will be critical to meet growing levels of demand without higher levels of funding.

STRATEGIES

Formalize a human services coalition that meets regularly and is open to all service providers in the community, including existing informal networks and the faith-based partnerships.

Encourage collaboration through committee subgroups covering selected need areas such as food, workforce development, transportation and housing. Develop a vision for filling gaps in these key areas and for meeting growing demand for senior services, health care, transportation, seniors and food. A community-operated program similar to Angel Food Ministries is an example of an initiative that a coalition might consider.

Provide regular opportunities for members to share information,

learn about each other's programs as well as best practices from across the region and beyond. These might take the form of roundtables, luncheons or attendance at the Senior Citizen Center trade show to promote both human service programs and the coalition as a source of human services information in the community.

The coalition should include one or two resident representatives, to give voice to human services users and to bring a user perspective to the table. The town's Neighborhood Watch Teams may be a starting point for identifying interested residents.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

All public and private human service providers, especially those in key need areas such as housing, transportation, mental health, senior services, youth programs, education and job training. The Ken-Ton Clergy Association is an existing faith-based partnership to include.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

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

<http://shscoalition.org/>

MODELS TO CONSIDER

ACROSS AGES

Based at Temple University, ACROSS AGES is an award-winning, intergenerational mentoring program to prevent drug and alcohol abuse. With focus on high-risk students ages 9-13, the goal of Across Ages is to increase knowledge of health/substance abuse issues and foster healthy attitudes, intentions and behavior regarding drug use among targeted youth; improve school bonding, including academic performance, school attendance and behavior and attitudes toward school; strengthen relationships with adults and peers; and enhance problem-solving and decision-making skills. There are four parts to this program: 1) Mentors are older adults in the community who are trained and spend a minimum of two hours per week in one-on-one contact with at-risk youth; 2) Youth spend one to two hours per week performing community service, which includes regular visits to frail elders in community nursing homes; 3) In order to help youth with problem-solving and peer pressure, youth receive social competence training through 26 weekly lessons; and 4) Monthly weekend events are held for youth, their family members and mentors and include activities that are culture-specific as well as recreational, social and sporting events.

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



Raise awareness of human services and reduce fragmentation through centralization

Poverty in Tonawanda has grown 46% over the past decade, with many in need for the first time and unaware of what supports are available in the community. A recommendation coming out of the focus group of human services providers was to increase awareness and information about programs and services through centralization and strategic outreach, so that agencies are in a better position to make referrals to residents in need, and residents in need know where to turn.

STRATEGIES

Maintain the directory of services created by the Mobile Safety-Net Team. Staff at the Ken-Ton YMCA has offered to take a leadership role in keeping this directory up to date with contact information provided by each agency as well as information about each organization's primary programs and services. The Ken-Ton YMCA will also arrange to have the directory printed, for those desiring a hard copy version.

Distribute the directory to all providers, electronically and hard copy, as desired; make available online and at community hubs such as the Senior Citizen Center, Kenmore-Tonawanda School District, Kenmore Branch Library, Brighton Place, Kenmore Housing Authority, the Mang Center, Sheridan Youth Center, and churches.

Getting this information into the hands of Meals on Wheels volunteers, teachers, social workers and others who serve as a critical first point of contact with residents in need will also facilitate outreach and help providers connect residents with needed services.

Use the Ken-Ton Bee and other news and information venues to raise awareness of human service programs through articles about these programs and features of residents who have been assisted.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

While the Ken-Ton YMCA has offered to coordinate updates of a human services directory, the success of this initiative will depend on the timely input from all human services providers in Tonawanda, which can be supported by the coalition of human service providers.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Washington Knows is an interactive information tool that centralizes information for residents and human services providers in Washington County, PA.

<http://www.washingtonknows.org/about.php>

MODELS TO CONSIDER

CONNECTING POINT

CONNECTING POINT was founded in 1995 through a collaborative community process in San Francisco, and serves as a single point of service access for families who are facing a housing crisis.

Connecting the dots in what would otherwise be a fragmented system, Connecting Point provides a single location for families to obtain housing and support services. Connecting Point's mission is to furnish the means for families to easily and efficiently access housing and services; ensure that each family receives a thorough intake and assessment that uncovers the strengths and needs of the whole family; and track each family to a housing and services package in which it will succeed. Key to program success is a screening and assessment process, which thoroughly explores the family's situation and offers individualized solutions. Connecting Point is administered by the Shelter Consortium, comprising city staff, representatives from family shelters, and Connecting Point staff. The Shelter Consortium meets weekly to develop program policies and procedures, and to review and make decisions around priority family cases.

<http://compass-sf.org/programs/connecting-point>



to

Expand transportation services for low-income residents

More than 3,110 households in Tonawanda don't have access to a vehicle and are dependent on public transit and other options for getting places. Difficulty in traveling to get services emerged as the number one barrier facing Tonawanda's most vulnerable. Transportation is also a top concern expressed by seniors, and human services providers described how lack of affordable options limit their ability to connect with residents.

STRATEGIES

Consider pricing options for making the senior van more affordable, especially for lower-income residents. This might also include discounts for frequent users or group discounts for a number of seniors traveling to a common destination such as the grocery store.

Explore the possibility of expanding the town's van service to include low-income residents under the age of 60, at least for purposes of transportation to human services providers such as food pantries, soup kitchens, Catholic Charities, Erie County Department of Social Services, or the ECC One-Stop.

A van sharing agreement between the town and human service providers offering evening and weekend supports may be another way of filling transportation gaps while making maximum use of existing resources within the community. Another option for

filling gaps is Hearts and Hands Faith in Action, a growing local organization offering free transportation and other support services to seniors in rural Erie County. Support from the faith community will be critical to the success of such a program in Tonawanda. Canopy of Neighbors is a similar service based in Buffalo that offers seniors transportation and other support services, although it charges an annual fee.

Increase accessibility of public transit between low-income residences and growing job centers such as Crosspoint Parkway in eastern Amherst where Geico will be adding 800 new jobs and where employment has about tripled between 2002 and 2010.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Town of Tonawanda, Village of Kenmore, Tonawanda Community Development Department, providers of food pantries and soup kitchens, and the NFTA. Hearts and Hands Faith in Action could also be a part of this discussion.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Hearts and Hands Faith in Action is a best practice model from within the region that is meeting demand for affordable transportation among vulnerable populations.

<http://www.heartsandhandsfia.org>

HEARTS AND HANDS

HEARTS AND HANDS FAITH IN ACTION is filling gaps in transportation for vulnerable individuals in several rural communities in Erie County, including its home base in Akron and sites where it has since expanded including Clarence, Alden and Wales. Although its approximately 250 volunteers are trained to deliver a variety of services, transportation is the service most requested, and 97% of all requests since 1997 have been fulfilled. Executive Director James Bender sees no reason why Hearts and Hands cannot expand its footprint into suburban areas like Tonawanda to fill voids in transportation, if the support in the community is there. In fact, he says there are federal dollars available that he would like to take advantage of for volunteer-based transportation programs like his. What it would take to make this a reality is a lot of leg work, and face-to-face coalition building with churches in Tonawanda, to develop a ministry network and local volunteer base. Fundraising is also necessary to raise revenue to cover expenses such as mileage reimbursement for volunteers and a local program coordinator.

<http://hnhcares.org/>



Build upon partnerships with local employers to expand workforce development opportunities

There is an evident skills gap in Tonawanda, with a growing number of good-paying jobs in close proximity to residents living in areas highly concentrated with poverty. The situation has worsened since the town lost an Empire Zone Program three years ago. The town's most vulnerable are missing out on economic expansion happening in their backyard.

STRATEGIES

Raise awareness of existing workforce development opportunities available through the school district's community education program as well as major resources outside the community such as the Buffalo Employment & Training Center and Erie Community College's One-Stop Center providing a full-range of free job search assistance and training.

Strengthen existing partnerships, like the one between the school district and Praxair, to include greater workforce coordination between the school district, Erie 1 BOCES and local companies that project new hiring on the horizon such as Tonawanda GM

Powertrain, Kenmore Mercy Hospital, and UnitedHealthcare. Specific strategies may include internships, apprenticeship programs, and student mentors from companies in Tonawanda.

The school district's community education program provides a strong framework for making vocational education accessible to adults in the community. Explore opportunities for expanding this program to offer a greater variety of vocational programs through partnerships with Erie Community College, ERIE 1 BOCES, and area employers. Incorporate elements of successful vocational training programs at Big Picture Schools and through initiatives such as Year Up, which trains disadvantaged high school graduates for jobs at large companies. Funding for an expansion would be through partner agencies and the business community.

Create incentive programs and otherwise encourage local employers and unions to provide ongoing training for current workers so they can advance in their jobs and expand skills.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Educators (Kenmore-Tonawanda School District, ECC, Erie 1 BOCES), top employers in Tonawanda, employee unions, the Ken-Ton Chamber of Commerce, and the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Health Careers for Youth is an award-winning program that creates a pipeline from high school to college and jobs in the growing healthcare industry.

<http://www.wtb.wa.gov/GovernorsBestPracticesAwards2009>.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

HEALTH CAREERS FOR YOUTH

HEALTH CAREERS FOR YOUTH is an award-winning program that creates promising health care career and educational pathways for low-income youth through career exploration, Certified Nursing Assistant training (which leads to careers in nursing, phlebotomy, and medical assisting, among others), prerequisite coursework in nursing and allied health occupations, and work-based learning. This program is referred to as a "wraparound model" because it creates a seamless, coordinated and supportive pipeline from high school through college and into the workplace. Partners include the Washington State Hospital Association's Health Work Force Institute; City of Seattle Youth Employment Program; North Seattle Community College; Seattle Vocational Institute; Seattle Central Community College; Renton Technical College; and the King County Work Training Program; High Schools in Seattle and Renton School Districts. The project originally was supported by a \$200,000 grant from the Governor's 10 Percent Workforce Investment Act, discretionary funding, and several other funding resources. Of the forty students who completed the program, 90 percent completed CNA training; 60 percent passed the national CNA certification exam; and 75 percent successfully completed college coursework while in high school.

<http://www.wtb.wa.gov/GovernorsBestPracticesAwards2009.asp#Healthcare>



Increase the availability and accessibility of after-school activities

Parents and human services providers alike describe a lack of after-school programs for middle school students. Too old for typical child care and too young for high school activities, middle school is an age where students get disconnected. Leaders from the school district say after-school programs at all levels have been reduced or eliminated over the last four years.

STRATEGIES

Raise awareness of existing youth programs, both in the community, and beyond by making the directory of human services providers available on the school's website.

Explore partnership opportunities for affordable after-school programming, especially for middle-school children and those from low-income families. Academic intervention, drug use prevention, and skills development are elements that needed programs could incorporate. One innovative model to consider is Twilight, an after-school program for at-risk children that offers academic support. It was recently implemented at Niagara-Wheatfield High School and is reporting success with plans to expand it.

Consider the creation of a scholarship program to ensure no child in need is denied access to quality programming because of family income.

As funding becomes available again, raise awareness and accessibility of childcare subsidies available through Erie County Department of Social Services by making applications available at places they regularly connect with parents of pre-school children such as libraries, doctor offices, and Catholic Charities WIC Office.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Kenmore-Tonawanda School District, youth providers (Ken-Ton Family Branch YMCA, Boys and Girls Club-Town Club, and Sheridan Youth Center), emerging youth program organizers (such as Ken-Ton Parent Organization and Home School Association), and libraries. Regional scouting chapters could also be a part of a discussion.

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/>

Promote programs and services that make housing more affordable

About three-quarters of low-income renters in Tonawanda spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Half of lower-income homeowners do, as well. Altogether, over 10,000 across town are burdened with high housing costs and may be at risk for homelessness. Utility shut-off notices were the most frequently reported urgent concern facing those at risk in Tonawanda. Yet only 22% are receive housing supports through programs such as HEAP.

STRATEGIES

Raise awareness of support programs such as EmPower, the Weatherization Assistance Program, Push Green, HEAP and emergency assistance for housing through information and applications at community hubs such as the Senior Citizen Center, Town of Tonawanda Public Library, Kenmore Branch, Ken-Ton Family Support Center, Brighton Place, and Town of Tonawanda offices where seniors come annually to reapply for the STAR program.

Explore the creation of an emergency fund to assist residents with housing expenses not covered by any other program. The fund could also be used to promote home ownership in the community through down payment assistance. Tonawanda's faith community, which is already providing some human services, might partner to incubate and grow a program.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Providers of human services information and outreach; local news venues such as the Ken-Ton Bee; the local church community; and housing support programs serving Tonawanda (Tonawanda Office of Community Development, Kenmore Housing Authority, McKinney-Vento Program, PUSH Green, and the Salvation Army).

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Connection Point creates a centralized one-stop shop for families facing a housing crisis.

<http://compass-sf.org/programs/connecting-point>

Develop a drug and alcohol prevention strategy

Human service providers describe substance abuse, especially prescription drugs, as a big issue. Providers say adults get addicted to painkillers, not even knowing they are taking an addictive substance. At the same time, it's not uncommon for parents to seek out medication for their children, as treatment for disruptive behavior. While counseling services are generally available, lack of motivation and stigma create barriers until problems grow and there is a need for inpatient treatment or medication that may be expensive or not covered by insurance.

STRATEGIES

Create information and outreach for educators, youth, parents, and grandparents, focusing on the dangers and death risk from the misuse of prescription drugs.

Develop opportunities for parent training through partnerships between Catholic Charities, the Parent Network of WNY and Every Person Influences Children (EPIC)'s Ready, Set Parent Program.

Explore opportunities to implement a drug court, as well as element's of Vermont's Rapid Referral Program which refers defendants in drug-related offenses for treatment and counseling before, rather than after, they are found guilty. Expedited treatment has proven successful, with significantly lower recidivism rates. The Bureau of Justice Assistance currently offers grants to establish drug courts and provide recovery support services through its Adult Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

Youth service providers and educators (particularly the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District, Ken-Ton Family Branch YMCA and the Sheridan Youth Center), police departments for the Town of Tonawanda and Village of Kenmore, the Senior Citizens Center, the medical community, including Kenmore Mercy Hospital and Neighborhood Watch Teams.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Across Ages is an award-winning intergenerational mentoring program for the prevention of drug use.

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

Develop community hubs as sites for mobile services, especially for seniors

Although Tonawanda has a growing population of seniors, it lacks a one-stop shop where senior residents can go to learn about support programs and services. While it has a well-attended senior center, and seniors see it as a hub, it is largely recreational in nature. At the same time, the Kenmore Housing Authority, where about 200 low-income seniors live, is primarily a landlord. Meanwhile seniors expressed urgent needs for transportation, health care, connection with well visits and other support programs.

STRATEGIES

Strengthen the landscape of services through information and referral, shared services, and mobile offerings of a variety of human services, particularly for seniors and lower-income populations.

Locate at existing hubs such as the Senior Citizens Center, Kenmore Housing Authority's facilities, Brighton Place, Brighton Square, food pantries and in the Sheridan Park area.

Train designated staff to help residents identify resources and navigate the system, particularly Erie County Department of Social Services. Explore opportunities to develop a service like Health Leads, a growing organization that uses trained students to connect patients in need to community supports such as food, housing, and transportation.

Raise awareness of the senior outreach specialist in Tonawanda, working out of People, Inc., who provides information, referrals and caseworker assistance to seniors in the community, but seems to be relatively unknown. Greater presence and connection with the Senior Citizen Center would be of value.

WHO NEEDS TO ACT

The Tonawanda Senior Citizens Center, Brighton Place, Brighton Square, Mang Center, Ken-Ton Family Center, churches, food pantries and the coalition of human services providers.

MODELS TO CONSIDER

Senior Outreach Services provide mobile caseworkers to seniors in need across Erie County, with smaller communities sharing a caseworker, as in the Towns of Amherst, Clarence and Newstead. The service reflects partnerships between the county, local municipalities and community organizations.

<http://www.amherst.ny.us/pdf/senior/sos.pdf>

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.

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.

Transportation: NFTA routes and bus stops are from the NFTA and reflect 2012 information.

Schools: The location of elementary and secondary schools in Tonawanda is from the 2011 NYS School Report Card database available from the NYS Education Department. Total enrollment reflects current data supplied by district leadership at a release meeting of draft findings for this assessment held in September 2013.

Major Employers: Selected large employers in Lockport are shown on the map. Employment size was determined using Reference USA's 2012 Business Database. Other top employers in Tonawanda can be found on page 10 of the report.

Map Layers: Boundary files for Tonawanda, 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 2007-11 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 Tonawanda, including the Village of Kenmore. For more information about this data, see the subsection on "Poverty" in Data Sources and Notes Section 1.3.

Indicators and trends: Indicators on work unemployment, lack of insurance coverage, and urgent concerns are from a survey of residents in Tonawanda described in Data Sources and Notes Section 1.3. See the subsection on "Tonawanda's Most

Vulnerable."

Poverty figures for the Sheridan Parkside neighborhood are from the 2007-11 American Community Survey. Data on housing costs by income category are from the same source.

The Clean Air Coalition was a source of information about residents' concerns about the safety of their community environment and adverse health impacts associated with emissions from Tonawanda Coke. This is substantiated by two reports, one issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency entitled "Tonawanda New York Community Quality Study and Evaluation of the Tonawanda Coke Facility." This was released in April 2011 and is the source of the quote on page 4. The other is a study conducted by the New York State Department of Health on cancer rates and adverse birth outcomes in the Town of Tonawanda and sub-areas of the community. See "Tonawanda Study Area Health Outcomes Review: Birth Outcomes and Cancer, Erie County, NY," February 1, 2013.

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 primarily from Reference USA's 2012 Business Database. School employment was calculate for the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District using figures from the NYS Education Department 2011 School Report Card database.

Barriers and systemic challenges: Barriers are from a survey of residents in Tonawanda described in Data Sources and Notes Section 1.3. See the subsection on "Tonawanda's Most Vulnerable."

The number of households in Tonawanda without a vehicle are from the 2007-11 American Community Survey. For additional related information, see "Transportation" in Data Sources and Notes Section 1.3.

The number of individuals who are "new to poverty" represent the absolute increase the number of persons living in poverty in Tonawanda since 2000, as calculated using data from the 2000 U.S. Census and the 2007-11 American Community Survey.

1.3 Context for Action

People in Need

Individuals and Families: Population and household counts are from the 2007-11 American Community Survey. Population data from the 1990 U.S. Census were used to calculate changes since 1990. Data are an aggregation of counts across the Town of Tonawanda, including the Village of Kenmore (herein defined "Tonawanda" except as otherwise noted).

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 2007-2011 American Community Survey 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 Tonawanda 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 in the case for young children. Counts are from the 2007-11 American Community Survey. 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 Tonawanda or Erie and Niagara Counties.

Work and Income: The 2006-10 American Community Survey provides unemployment levels by age and educational attainment. This was also the source of data on the number of households by annual household income.

Tonawanda's top employers are from Reference USA's Business 2012 Database, with one exception. Specifically, employment for the Kenmore-Tonawanda School District was calculated using employment counts from the Staff file in the NYS Education Department 2011 School Report Card database.

Workforce inflows and outflows for Lockport are analyzed using the U.S. Census Bureau's Local Employment Dynamics data for 2010, available through the On The Map tool. This tool was also provided the number of jobs filled by Tonawanda residents. Figures reflect all private sector jobs existing in Tonawanda as of 2010, the latest year available.

Households by income level come were calculated using data from the 2007-11 American Community Survey

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.

Poverty levels were examined by census tract within Tonawanda. These include Census Tracts 79.01, 79.02, 79.03, 79.04, 79.05, 80.01, 80.02, 80.03, 81.01, 81.02, 82.01, 85, 86, 87, and 88.

Data from the 2000 Census was used to calculate increases in poverty since 2000.

Education: Student enrollment figures by school 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). Overall district enrollment of 7,200 reflects current data and was supplied by district leadership at a release meeting held in September 2013.

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 2007-11 American Community Survey and reflect those of the population ages 25 and up. Educational attainment of Tonawanda's unemployed population is from this same source, and reflects the population between age 25 and 64.

Findings in this section also incorporate information from an interview with leadership from the Kenmore-Tonawanda UFSD.

Tonawanda's Most Vulnerable

The survey results described in the report reflect findings from a survey of 125 households residing in Tonawanda Zip Codes 14150, 14207, 14217 and 14223 that 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 2012 at several different venues across town, including a HEAP outreach at Kenilworth Fire Hall, AARP tax preparations at Kenmore Branch Library, New Covenant Tabernacle Church food express truck and food pantry, and the trade show at the Senior Citizen Center.

Sites were selected to capture a representative sample of residents in poverty or at risk of poverty. Because the survey captured only those residents who are able to physically get to these sites, 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 125 surveys represent a sample of Tonawanda's vulnerable population that is statistically significant with a confidence level of 95% and with a confidence interval of 8.8. Surveys completed by household representatives who reported a Zip Codes corresponding to an area outside the Tonawanda were not included in the analysis.

Not all survey respondents answered every survey questions. The question soliciting health insurance information had the lowest level of responses, with 97 answering this question. This number of responses still represents a sample size of 96 or better, needed to obtain a statistically significant sample size for Lockport's at-risk population within a 95% confidence interval +/- 10%.

The 68% 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.

Percentage shown are calculated based on the number of respondents answering the particular survey question, which may be less than the full sample.

Because the survey asked about benefits households are currently receiving or have applied for, responses associated with seasonal benefits such as HEAP may be sensitive to the time of year when the survey was conducted.

Earlier survey findings: The survey findings described in the report are substantially supported by a survey of 260 resident households conducted prior to the beginning of phase 2 of this initiative, only some of which were included in the results described in this report. An analysis of the findings of these earlier surveys affirm that high utility costs and food are urgent concerns. Altogether, one in five reported an urgent concern. Utility shut-off notices and not having money for food accounted for 70% of total urgent concerns reported.

While this slightly abbreviated survey did not inquire into possible barriers that prevent residents from connecting with existing programs and services, it did contain a question on transportation. Forty percent said they depend on a mode of travel other than a vehicle they own. This is very close to the findings described herein that show 36% of those at risk do not have access to a car, and traveling difficulties emerged as the number one barrier to needed

services and supports.

Transportation may also be a barrier to work since only 10% of those previously surveyed work full time and 20% work at all, on par with what is described in the report for Tonawanda's most vulnerable. Similarly, half of those reported their income at less than \$1,249 a month.

These survey findings also provide evidence of a skills gap, with only a quarter with a college degree. Similar to the vulnerable in Tonawanda described in pages 14-15 of the report, the majority in this group were of working age between 18 and 64.

Those surveyed previously, however, are more likely to have children and live in a home they own. They were slightly less likely, though, to report a lack of health insurance in their household, with only 12% saying someone in the household lacks insurance. This may be accounted for by the slightly higher proportion of seniors in the earlier sample, which are more likely to be covered by Medicare.

Like those surveyed more recently, food stamps and Medicaid were the most common public benefits residents received. However, this group was less likely overall to be connected with some kind of public benefit than those described in pages 14-15 of the report.

Places in Need

Housing: Housing costs as a percentage of income for renters and owners come from the 2007-11 American Community Survey. Costs include mortgages, second mortgages, rent, utilities (electricity, gas, water, sewer), homeowners insurance and property taxes.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, households paying more than 30% of income on housing are considered cost burdened, as this standard is generally accepted as the cut-off for affordable housing. Those paying more than 50% are considered severely burdened. Low-income households lacking affordable housing are at particular risk of not being able to afford other necessities such as food, clothing, medical care and transportation. The U.S. Census Bureau tracks household data for both the 30% and 50% standard.

Median housing costs by census tract are from the same source. Information on Section 8 vouchers is from an interview with representative of Belmont Housing Resources of WNY.

Transportation: Vehicle access data for households in Tonawanda are from the 2006-10 American Community Survey.

Public transit times are calculated from the Longfellow Court in the Sheridan Parkside neighborhood to various common destinations using Google Maps, which estimates travel time based on mode of travel and time of day. One-way travel times include walk times to bus stops.

The addition of 800 jobs at Geico comes from a January 25, 2013 news article in Buffalo Business First, "Growth spurt: Geico wants to hire 800 in Buffalo" by Tracey Drury. Salaries for these jobs will start at about \$31,000 and while some will require a college degree, many will not.

Crime: Crime rates are from the U.S. Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics. Data reflect offenses reported by the Kenmore Village Police Department and the Town of Tonawanda Police Department. Violent crime includes murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Overall rates of violent crime by municipality come from the same source.

Domestic Violence statistics are from the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services' report on "Domestic Violence Victims Reported in 2011, Erie County. The report has figures for all reporting police departments within Erie County. Figures for the Town of Tonawanda and Village of Kenmore were added.

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 Tonawanda 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 the services for seniors at the Senior Citizens Center). Alternatively, they may have significant programming for these populations (such as the Senior Outreach Specialist who provides caseworker assistance to seniors in Tonawanda and works out of People, Inc.).

Service categories are defined as follows:

Food – includes food pantries as well as organizations providing meals or other food, either on site, such as at the Senior Citizen Center, or delivered to residents' home, such as through Meals on Wheels, as part of their regular programming. Also includes significant connection points for food access such as sites for the federal WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program. Does not include food or meals provided as part of a residential program. Nor are organizations that raise money to support food needs included in this category.

Clothing – includes clothes closets and sites where free clothing is available, as well as programs providing emergency clothing.

Education/Training – includes places of formal education as well as sites for job training, GED, literacy skills, and community/continuing education. Sites for workforce development and vocational education are included, even if these are one of other

programs offered by an agency such as Catholic Charities. Also included are programs focused on removing barriers to education and training such as the McKinney-Vento Program. Education and training programs for selected population are included as well, such as those offered by Heritage Center for individuals with disabilities.

Affordable Housing – subsidized housing and other non-market rate homes and rental units available to lower-income populations. Also included are sites providing access to supports such as rental assistance, utility assistance, weatherization, emergency housing repair, HEAP and services under the EMPOWER program. Does not include rental facilities where Section 8 voucher holder live or ones that are friendly to Section 8 voucher holders.

Transportation – includes organizations that offer transportation via buses, vans and shuttles, as part of their regular programming.

Mental Health/Addictions - includes sites providing mental health treatment including counseling and addictions support groups. Covers out-patient and residential programs. Does not include organizations that only serve as a source of information for mental health services.

Health/Wellness – includes sites providing health services, preventive medical exams and/or screening, particularly for lower-income or vulnerable populations. 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 limited populations only such as seniors or the disabled.

Youth Programs - includes providers of after-school programs and activities for school-age youth. Also included are mentoring programs. 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. Includes programs for limited vulnerable populations.

Crime/Juvenile – includes crime prevention programs, juvenile justice, and victim assistance programs (such as the domestic violence services provided by Catholic Charities.) Does not include safety classes or crime prevention awareness.

Information/Referral - includes agencies, 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.

Most 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 _____ Location _____

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?

- Yes¹
- No²

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

- Utility shut-off notice¹
- Foreclosure / eviction²
- Homelessness³
- No money for food⁴
- Domestic violence⁵
- No urgent concerns⁶
- Other: _____⁷

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.)?

- Yes¹
- No²

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

- Traveling to get services is difficult¹
- I don't speak / read English well²
- I can't get there during the hours the agency is open³
- I've been turned away because of income limits⁴
- It can be physically difficult for me to leave my home⁵
- It's too much of a hassle because the process is confusing⁶
- Other: _____⁷

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

- Employed full-time¹
- Employed part-time²
- Unemployed, looking³
- Unemployed, not looking⁴
- Student⁵
- Retired⁶
- Disabled⁷
- Other: _____⁸

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

- Employment¹
- Unemployment insurance²
- Public assistance³
- Social Security⁴
- Pension⁵
- Disability⁶
- Worker's compensation⁷
- Child Support⁸
- No Income⁹
- Other: _____¹⁰

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

What is your primary form of transportation?

- Bicycle¹
- Family / Friends²
- Own vehicle³
- Taxi⁴
- Public Transportation⁵
- Walk⁶
- Car Share Service⁷
- Other: _____⁸

If you don't own a vehicle and are not a regular public transit user, why don't you use public transit more often?

- Too expensive¹
- Takes too long to get places²
- No service to where I need to go³
- No evening or weekend service⁴
- Buses don't run often enough⁵
- It's too long to walk to bus stop⁶
- Service isn't reliable⁷
- I don't feel safe⁸
- Schedule is too confusing⁹
- Other (please specify): _____¹⁰

Appendix B - Resident Questionnaire (Continued)

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

- Employed full-time¹
- Employed part-time²
- Unemployed, looking³
- Unemployed, not looking⁴
- Student⁵
- Retired⁶
- Disabled⁷
- Not Applicable / No other adults in household⁸
- Other: _____⁹

What is your current living situation?

- Own¹
- Rent, with assistance²
- Rent, without assistance³
- Staying with friend / family⁴
- Homeless⁵
- Other: _____⁶

How long have you lived at your current address?

- Less than 3 mos.¹
- 3 mos. – 1 year²
- 1-5 years³
- 6 - 10 years⁴
- More than 10 years⁵

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

- High School / GED¹
- Some College²
- College Degree (2-yr or 4-yr)³
- Post-graduate degree⁴
- Military⁵
- Trade School⁶
- Did not finish high school⁷

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

- Yes, one or more adults do not have health insurance¹
- Yes, one or more children do not have health insurance²
- No, we all have health insurance³

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

- Private insurance¹
- Managed care (HMO, PPO)²
- Medicare (65+, disabled)³
- Medicaid⁴
- Government (VA, Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus)⁵
- Health Savings Account⁶
- Other: _____⁷
- Do not know/Unsure⁸
- Do not have health insurance⁹

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

- Food stamps¹
- Medicaid²
- Cash benefits³
- HEAP⁴
- SSI / SSD⁵
- WIC⁶
- Other _____⁷
- None⁸

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

- Food stamps¹
- Medicaid²
- Cash benefits³
- HEAP⁴
- SSI / SSD⁵
- WIC⁶
- Other _____⁷
- None⁸

If you have an immediate need and would like someone to call you for assistance, please write your name and phone number on the back of this survey and a member of our team can contact you. Thank you!

Appendix C - Senior 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
- _____ Safety/Crime Prevention
- _____ 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? Kenmore Tonawanda (*outside Village of Kenmore*)

Appendix C - Parent 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

- _____ 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? _____
- How many children do you have? _____
- Where do you live? Town of Tonawanda Village of Kenmore

Appendix D - Outreach Poster for Focus Group with Parents



We Need You

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

.....

Two Ways You Can Make an Impact

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, November 7
During PTA meeting @ 6:30pm
Hamilton Elementary, 44 Westfall Drive**

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The Mobile Safety-Net Team is 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.

For more information, call 854-3494

A COMMUNITY REPORT
Town of **Tonawanda**

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 Tonawanda'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, Tonawanda'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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