

Pain Point Analysis: Buffalo

July 29, 2022

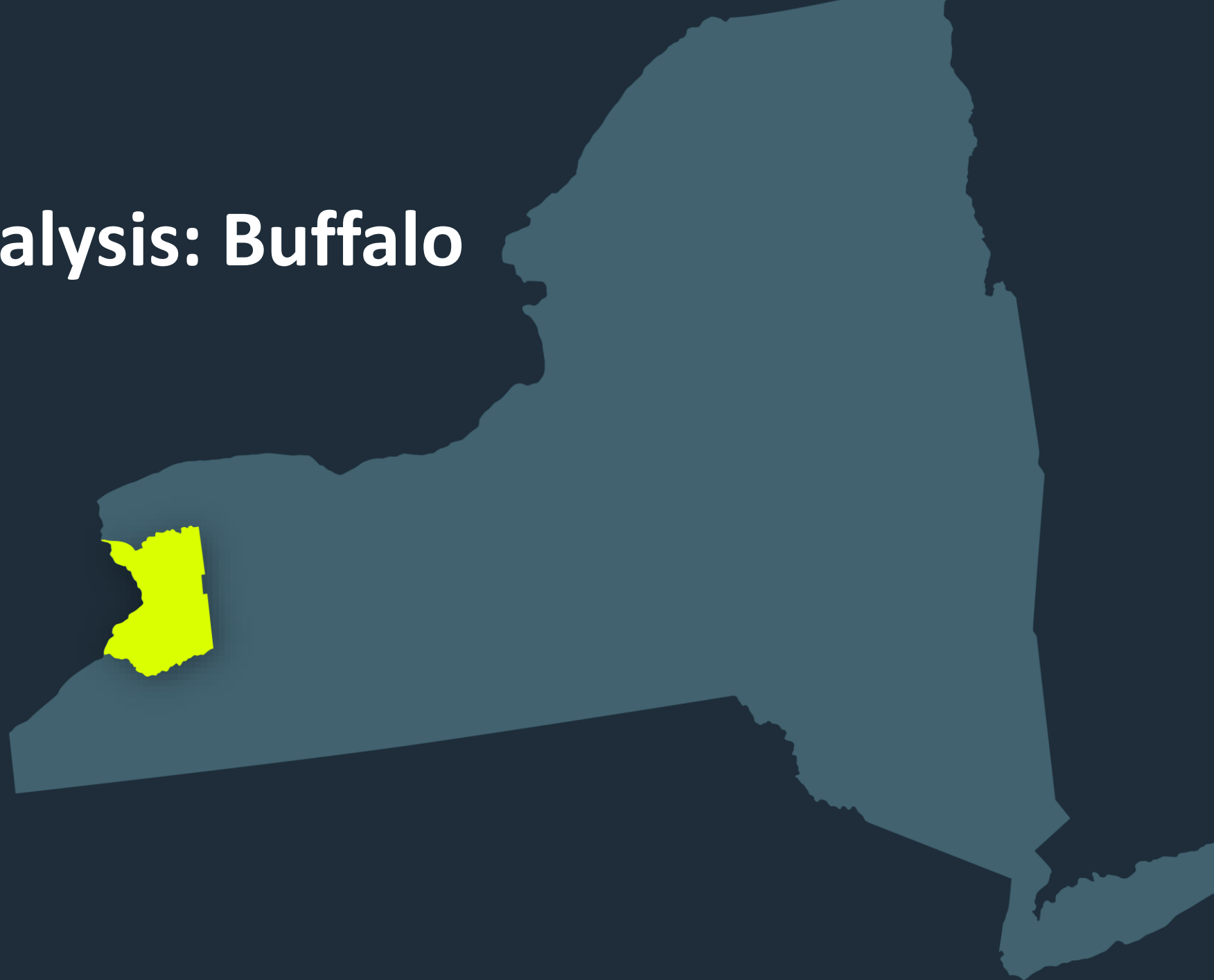


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Overview

Buffalo Snapshot



267,807

Total population



\$39,677

Median household income

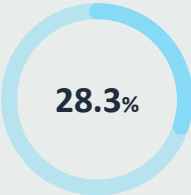
Zeitgeist

Buffalo’s diverse landscape, coupled with pervasive economic inequities, makes trust a key aspect in engaging the community, while also facing challenges with poverty, public health, health insurance, and crime.



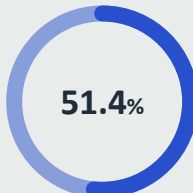
19.8%

Households without internet access



28.3%

Population in poverty



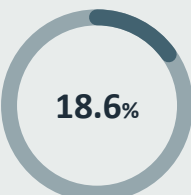
51.4%

Housing cost burdened



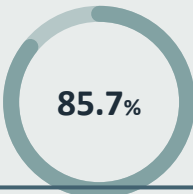
10.4%

Born abroad



18.6%

Non-English language speakers at home



85.7%

High school graduate or higher

12.2%

Hispanic/Latinx

6.3%

Asian

43.4%

White alone, non-Hispanic

35.28%

Black

0.5%

American Indian

2.4%

Other

Overview

- Buffalo is New York's second-largest city. Buffalo is one of the most affordable places to live in the U.S., with a cost-of-living 17 percent lower than the national average.
- Educational services, health care, social services, arts, entertainment, and hospitality are the largest industries in Buffalo, covering 42.1 percent of the workforce.
- Latinx, Indigenous, and Black residents – particularly on the East Side – have poorer health conditions than their white counterparts, with poverty being a primary factor.
- A significant factor impacting the poverty rate is educational disparities – 17.6 percent of Black students do not graduate from high school, compared to 9.3 percent of white students.
- Buffalo's median household income of \$39,677 is well below the national median household income of \$64,994. The city's homeownership rate is 41 percent, compared to the national average of 64 percent.
- The city houses many colleges and universities, most notably the University of Buffalo. Healthcare companies such as Kaleida Health and Catholic Health Systems are some of the city's largest employers. Buffalo is also home to several professional sports teams, including the NFL Buffalo Bills, NHL Buffalo Sabres, and MLB-Affiliate Buffalo Bisons.
- Byron Brown, a Democrat, is Buffalo's first Black and longest-serving mayor, having first been elected in 2006. He established the Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable, a community board focused on reducing racial disparities.



Pain Points

Poverty

- In Buffalo, 28.3 percent of residents live below the poverty line, the 7th highest city percentage nationwide in 2021. Over half of Buffalo residents cannot afford rent, and one-fourth spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing.
- Over 40 percent of the city's youth live in poverty, and three-quarters of children in Buffalo public schools are eligible for free lunches. Thirty percent of white children in Buffalo experience at least one year in poverty before turning 18, compared to more than 75 percent of Black youth.
- As of 2021, 35 percent of Black residents in Buffalo live in poverty, compared to less than 10 percent of white individuals. A 2018 study found that 12 percent of the region's white people live in areas of concentrated poverty, compared to 37 percent of Black residents. While 15.7 percent of Black individuals in the city have a college degree, 38.1 percent of white residents do.
- \$331 million in American Rescue Plan funds will be invested in government and community programs to combat these inequities.



Public Health and Access to Care

- In five zip codes on Buffalo's East Side with predominantly low-income populations, hospital admissions are triple of those neighborhoods with predominantly high-income residents.
- Buffalo's East Side has many food deserts, leading to issues such as hunger, obesity, and diabetes. Buffalo's Black residents are six times more likely than white people to live in a neighborhood without access to a grocery store.
- On the West Side, over 45 percent of residents report a respiratory illness in their households. Lead poisoning cases are concentrated in communities of color. These regions are close to highways such as Route 33 and Route I-190, which contribute to air pollution.
- Erie County data shows that COVID-19 cases have been centered in predominantly Black neighborhoods. In May 2020, the county's five majority Black zip codes had an 88 percent higher rate of infection than the county average.
- Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown has launched The City of Buffalo Wellness Program, promoting health to address social, human, environmental, and economic factors. The program was launched with the Wellness Institute of Buffalo, a local nonprofit.
- In 2021, Erie County founded the Office of Health Equity to help combat health disparities in low-income and Black communities.



Crime

- Buffalo had a homicide rate of 24 per 100,000 people in 2020, the highest in the country; the national homicide rate is 6.5 per 100,000 people. In 2021, there were 295 shootings in Buffalo, a 44 percent increase from 205 shootings in 2019. Additionally, in 2021 there were 67 homicides and in 2022 there have already been 40 homicides.
- Since Mayor Byron Brown took office in 2006, Buffalo's violent crime rate has decreased by 36 percent. Comparatively, the national violent crime rate has decreased 16 percent. However, Buffalo's violent crime rate of 991 per 100,000 residents still ranks 12th among mid-sized U.S. cities.
- In May 2022, a racially motivated mass shooting in an East Buffalo market located in a predominantly Black neighborhood killed 10 people and injured three others. All the victims were Black.
- The Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency operates a Community Crime Prevention Initiative that partners with Buffalo Public Schools, community leaders, and business representatives. Since its start in 2018, the initiative created 12 crime prevention programs and trained 45 Buffalo community members and four police officers in crime prevention.



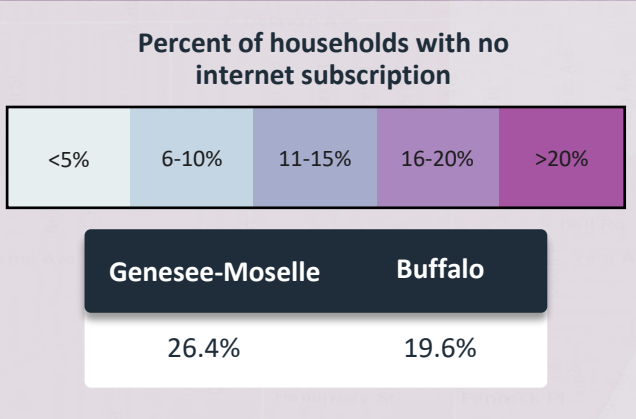
Priority Neighborhoods

Genesee-Moselle

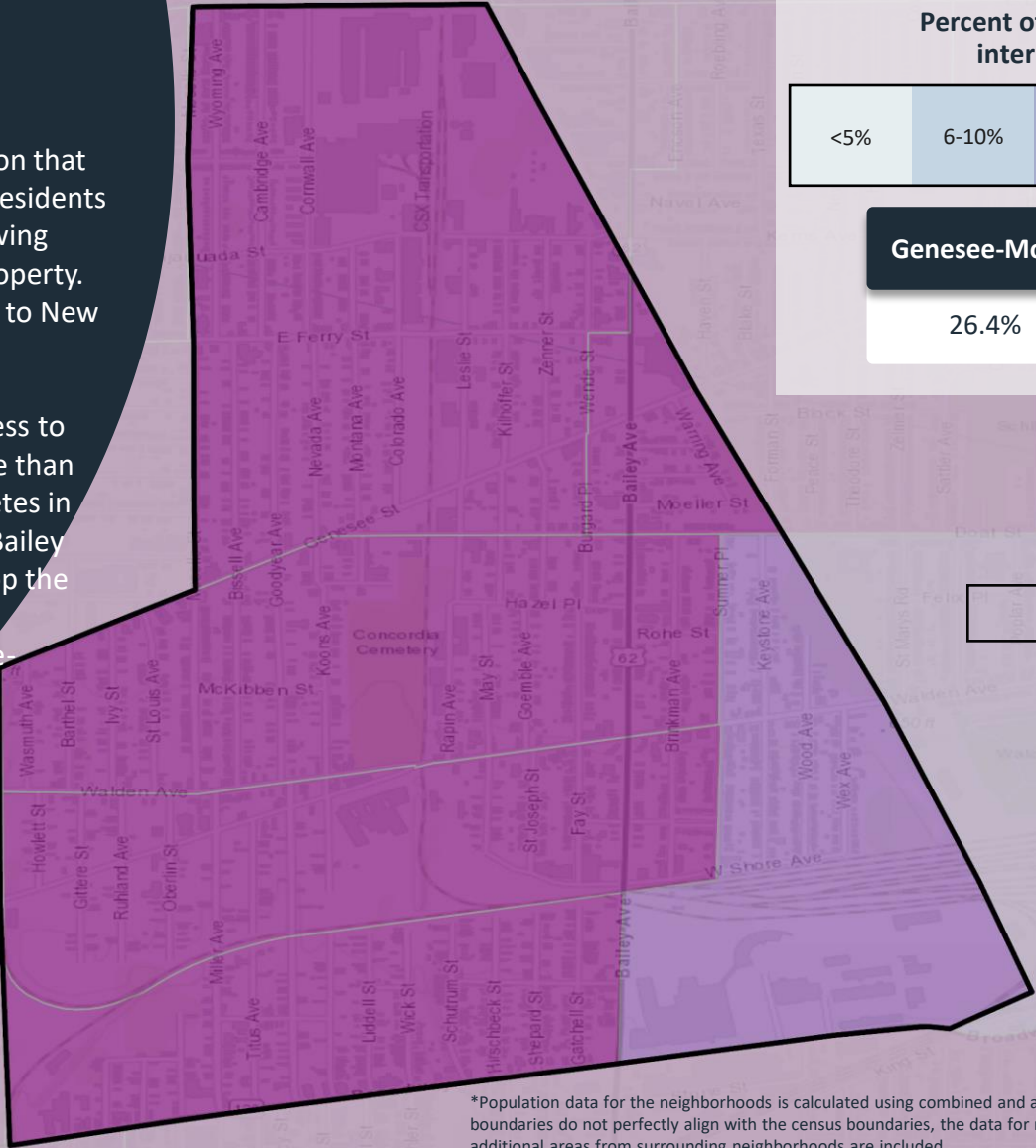
Population: 13,036*

Genesee-Moselle is a low-income and diverse community with a population that is 65 percent Black, 10 percent Latinx, and 10 percent Asian. One-fifth of residents speak a language other than English at home. Over the last decade, a growing Bangladeshi community has helped revitalize the area by rehabilitating property. The area’s low cost of living has attracted newcomers seeking alternatives to New York City and other urban areas.

Still, neighborhood residents struggle due to violence and insufficient access to resources, especially with 26 percent of households lacking internet. More than half of all adults have high blood pressure, and one in five have diabetes in East Buffalo neighborhoods like Genesee-Moselle, as of May 2020. Bailey Green residents partnered with the University at Buffalo to develop the Bailey Commons – a plan to transform vacant lots in the area into community and green spaces. Over 20 percent of Genesee-Moselle housing units are vacant.



Zip Codes Represented	Approximate Enrollees within Zip Codes**
14211	12,218



*Population data for the neighborhoods is calculated using combined and averaged census tract level information. As neighborhood boundaries do not perfectly align with the census boundaries, the data for neighborhoods is only an estimated value as some additional areas from surrounding neighborhoods are included.

**Approximate enrolled population is derived from New York State of Health’s publicly available data, last updated in April of 2022. The data is published at the zip code level and reflects the average number of enrollees per zip code by all data collection options. Neighborhoods were assigned the total enrollment population reflective of the zip code they fall within.

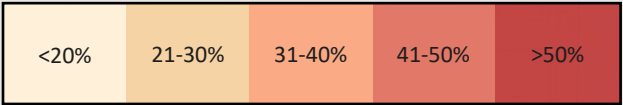
Schiller Park

Population: 12,331*

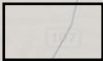
Located in East Buffalo, Schiller Park’s population is 68 percent Black, 10 percent Asian, and nine percent Latinx. Nine percent of residents were born abroad, and 17 percent of households speak a non-English language at home. Schiller Park is home to a robust Jamaican community and notable Vietnamese, Polish, and Sub-Saharan African populations, with a particularly engaged Muslim community. About half of the residents receive SNAP benefits, and the median household income is \$27,095. It is located within a zip code that has the lowest household income in Buffalo. The disparity is exacerbated by 26.9 percent of residents not having access to the internet and 34.4 percent not owning a vehicle.

Schiller Park is disproportionately impacted by gun violence. In parts of the neighborhood, an average of one person was shot per month for 8.5 years, as of July 2020. Its crime rate of 6,125 per 100,000 people is significantly higher than the U.S. rate of 2,346 per 100,000 people. A coalition of Black and Muslim community members and grassroots organizations, led by the anti-violence group Most Valuable Parents, has held public meetings to develop solutions to end gun violence. Schiller Park also has high levels of lead poisoning. The Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency is focused on deploying its Lead Paint Hazard Reduction Program in the community.

Percent of households with no vehicles



Schiller Park	Buffalo
34.4%	26.3%



Schiller Park Neighborhood Boundary

Zip Codes Represented	Approximate Enrollees within Zip Codes**
14211	12,218

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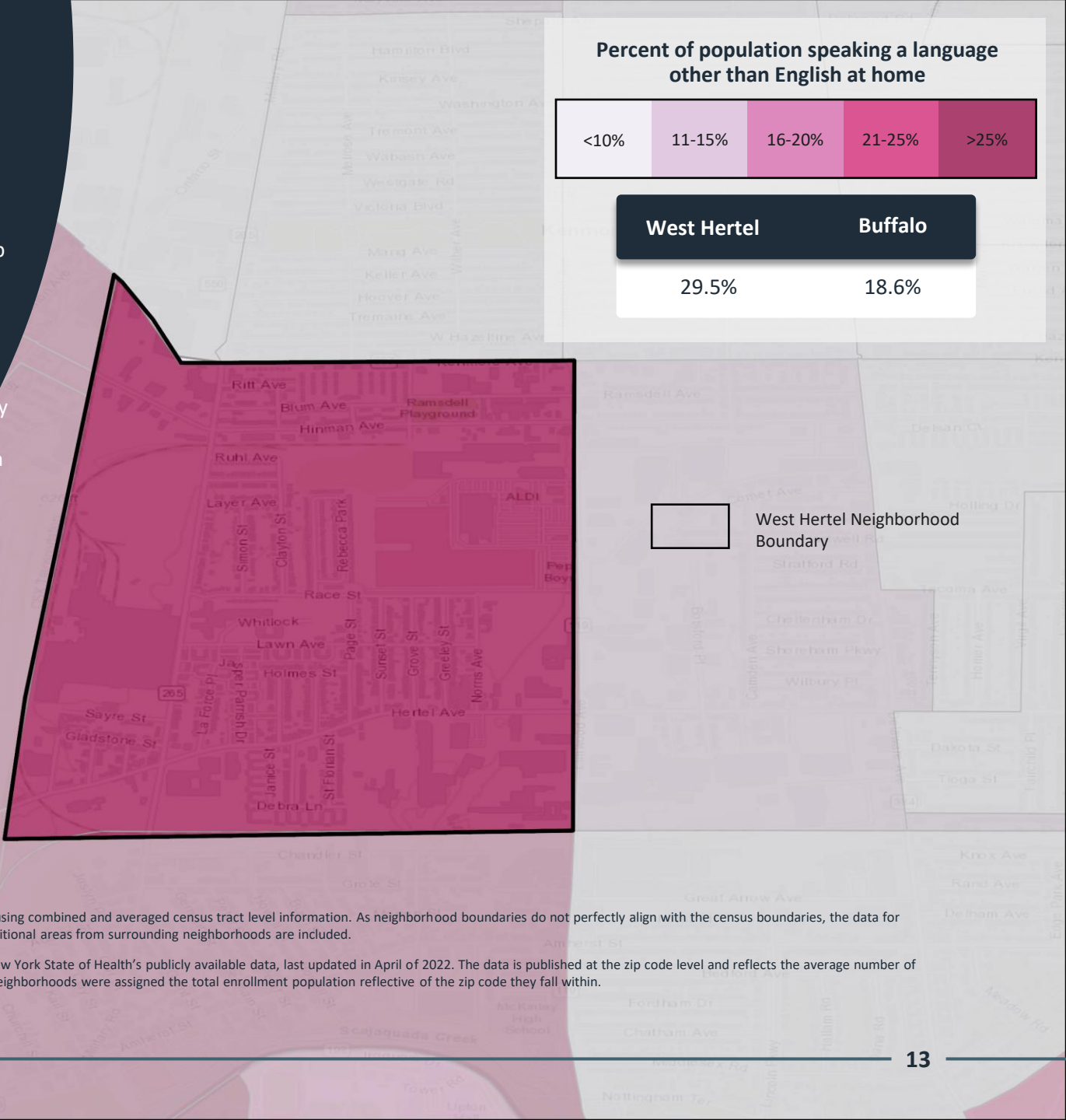
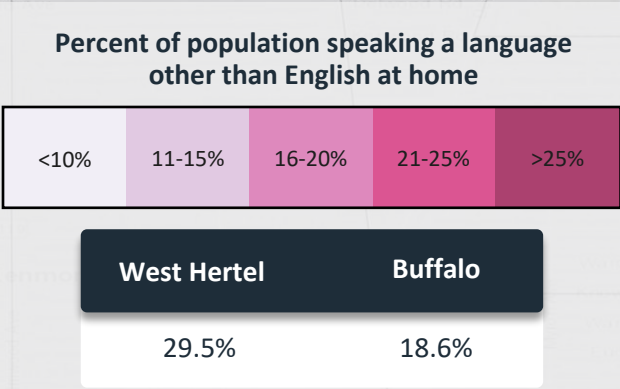
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West Hertel

Population: 3,960*

West Hertel is a lower-income neighborhood with an average median household income of \$26,682. The community is 33.5 percent white, 23.7 percent Latinx, and 24.6 percent Black. Its top industries include manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade. In 2017, West Hertel was classified as one of Buffalo’s 17 Opportunity Zones – an “economically-distressed” community where developers can receive preferential tax treatment. The area has many vacant land parcels and buildings and is in a high-traffic area.

Key issues facing West Hertel residents include food access, a digital divide, and a community school, West Hertel Academy, that was threatened with a state takeover in 2016 due to poor performance metrics. Approximately one-third of residents speak a language other than English at home; in 2016, 36 percent of students at West Hertel Academy were learning English as a new language, with the top native languages being Nepali, Somali, Burmese, and Arabic. In June 2020, Buffalo Business First ranked West Hertel Academy 17th out of 455 on its list of most diverse schools in Western New York.



Zip Codes Represented	Approximate Enrollees within Zip Codes**
14207	10,821

*Population data for the neighborhoods is calculated using combined and averaged census tract level information. As neighborhood boundaries do not perfectly align with the census boundaries, the data for neighborhoods is only an estimated value as some additional areas from surrounding neighborhoods are included.

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Key Findings

Key Findings

Pervasive poverty and crime make trust and access to resources challenging for re-enrollment efforts in Buffalo. The importance of health insurance to economic mobility must be emphasized in outreach efforts to incentivize re-enrollment in Buffalo's highest-need communities.

- Given low internet access in some Buffalo communities, NY State of Health should employ multi-modal outreach strategies. Partnering with local resource networks, such as those conducting job counseling and financial education programs, can help alleviate this barrier.
- Spanish, Chinese, and Bengali are some of the primary languages in which NY State of Health should produce materials and leverage assistors and navigators who are fluent in them. Partnering with local ethnic and non-English language media and cultural community centers such as Bangladesh Community at Buffalo will help reach a broader audience.
- In 2020, Buffalo Public Schools launched its “Farm to School to You” food truck which visits sites throughout the city to bring free meals to families in need, regardless of whether they have children enrolled in the district. Partnerships with initiatives like this could draw the attention of low-income populations.

