Older Adult Homelessness in Western New York

Population Trends, Unique Needs and Barriers, and Next Steps
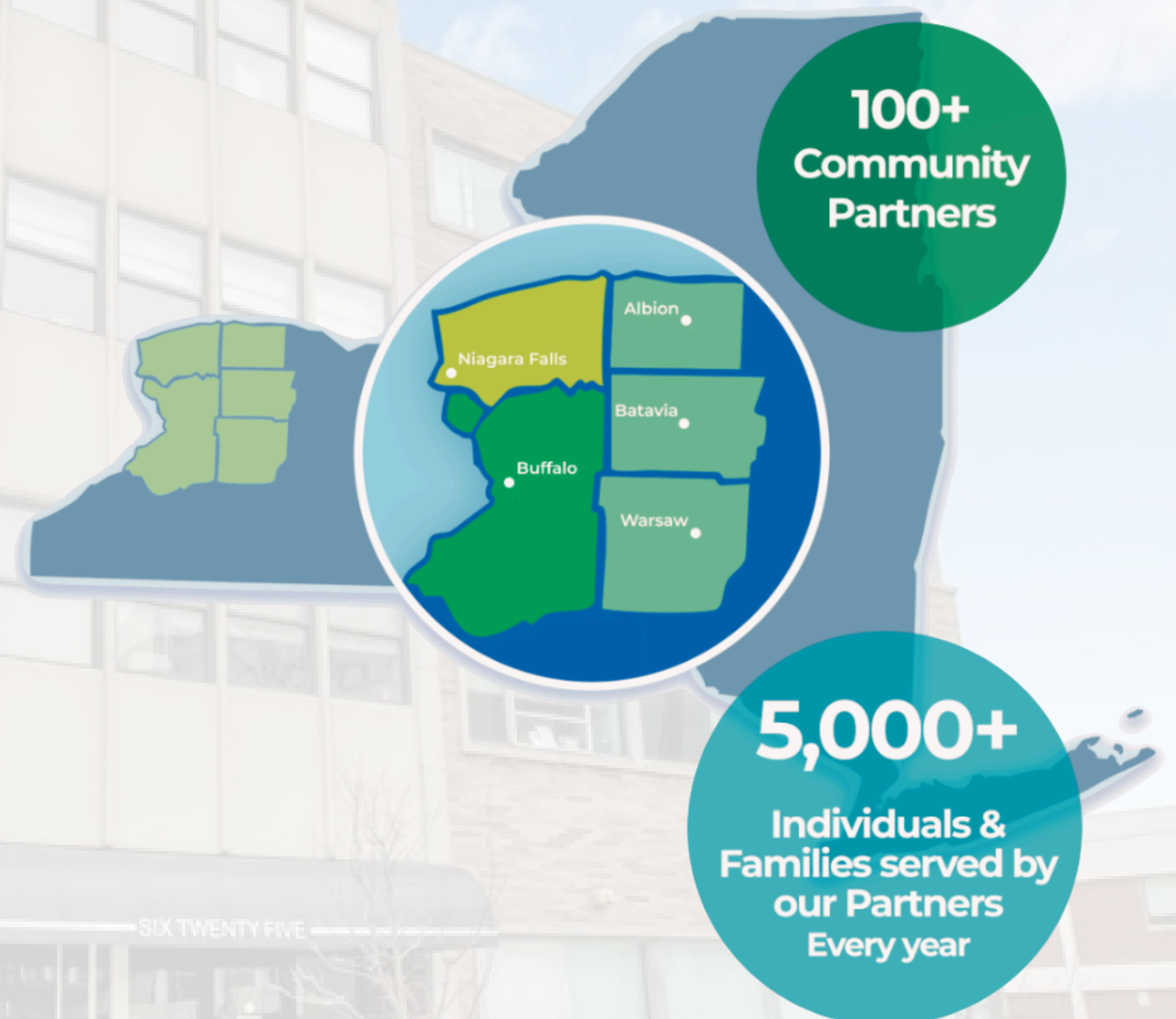
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Agenda

- Overview of the Homeless Alliance of WNY
- Population Trends in NYS and WNY
- Unique Challenges & System Barriers
- Next Steps

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Homeless Alliance of WNY

The Homeless Alliance of Western New York (HAWNY) is the **lead agency for the NY-508 Continuum of Care (CoC)** and the **administrator of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** for the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, and Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming counties. HAWNY is also the **Lead Agency for Coordinated Entry**.

Mission: To unify and lead providers to improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness by sharing expertise, maximizing resources, and advocating for change.

Vision: A community committed to ending homelessness.

100+
Community Partners

Niagara Falls
Albion
Batavia
Buffalo
Warsaw

5,000+
Individuals & Families served by our Partners Every year

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Homelessness Among Older Adults

- Chronic health issues appear **15-20 years earlier** than adults who are housed

- Adults experiencing homelessness are often considered to be "older adults" at age 50

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Source: Brown et al. (2013). Meeting the Housing and Care Needs of Older Homeless Adults: A Permanent Supportive Housing Program Targeting Homeless Elders.

New York State Trends

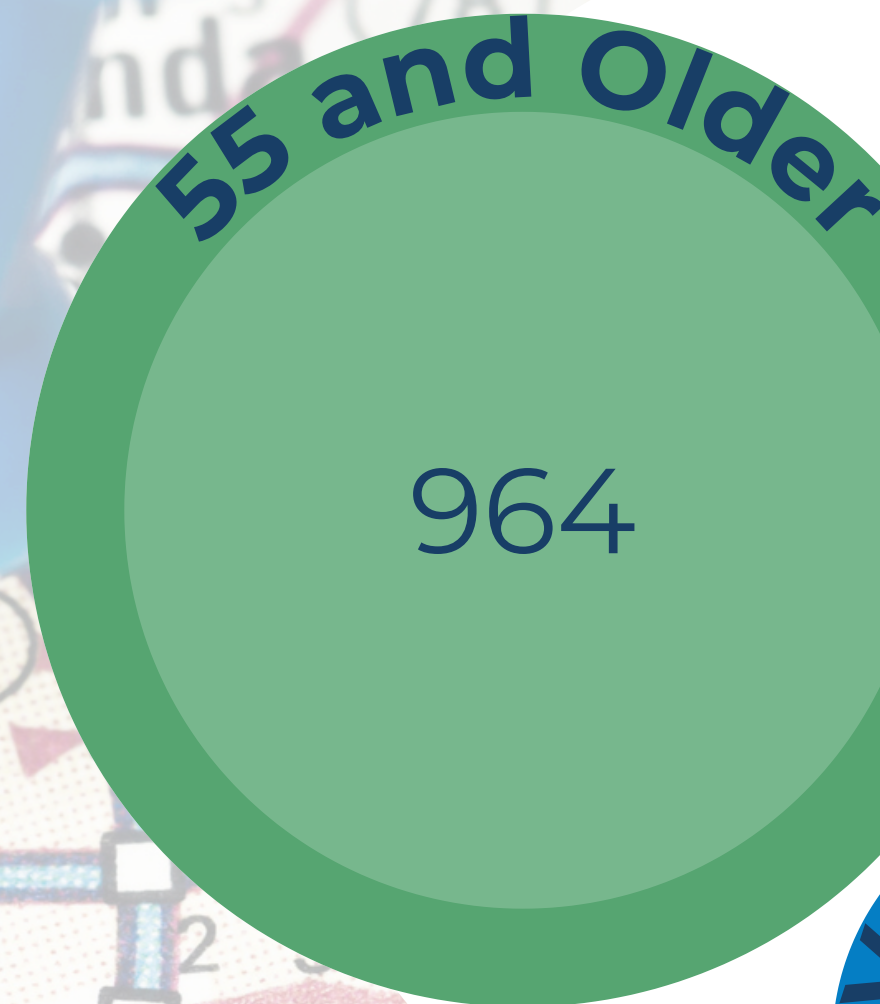More than **14,000 adults over the age of 55 experienced homelessness in New York State** in 2024

Nearly **1,700 adults over the age of 55 experienced <u>unsheltered</u> homelessness in New York State** in 2024

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NY-508 CoC Trends & Data

15% of individuals experiencing homelessness in Western New York **are 55 and older.**

More than 300 lack health insurance

More than 150 are veterans

55 and Older
964

Uninsured
300+

Veterans
150+

Source: Data from NY-508 HMIS FY2024

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Pathways into Homelessness

Aging into Homelessness

Individuals experience homelessness as younger adults and remain homeless as they age

First-time Homelessness

Older adults who face a crisis later in life that leads to them experiencing homelessness for the first time in their lives

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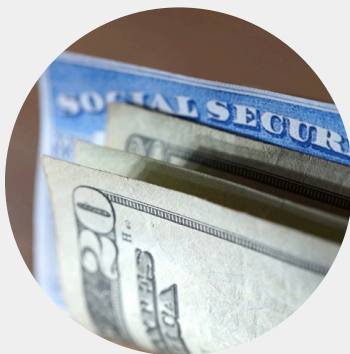# Contributing Factors

Rising Housing Costs
Buffalo Fair Market Rent - One-Bedroom:
- **2019: $695/month**
- **2024: $992/month**

Shortage of Affordable Housing
- Buffalo lacks approximately **8,500 affordable housing units**
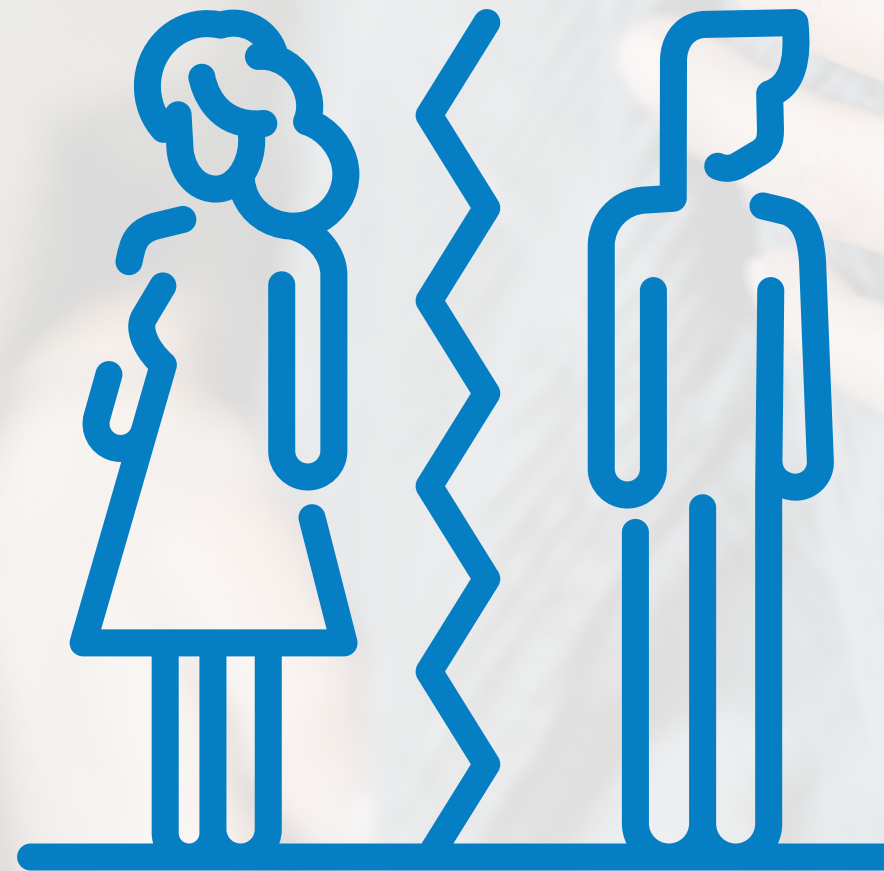
Insufficient Average Monthly Benefits
- Average SSI benefit for adults 65+ in NYS: **$574/month**

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Other Risk Factors

Social isolation

Loss of a relationship

Living "doubled-up"

Source: Brown et al. (2013). Meeting the Housing and Care Needs of Older Homeless Adults: A Permanent Supportive Housing Program Targeting Homeless Elders.
and https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/2024-05/Older%20Adult%20Homelessness%20Report%2005.2024.pdf

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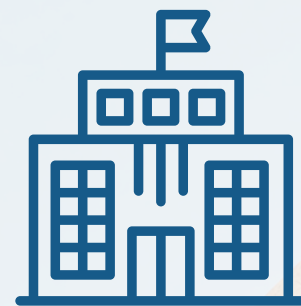of Western New York

Top Reported Reasons for Homelessness among Older Adults in Western New York

Eviction

The top reported reason for homelessness among adults age 55 and older in NY-508 CoC.

Release from an institution

Mental health

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Dementia

- Homelessness is a risk factor for and a consequence of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

- Experiencing homelessness increases the risk of developing dementia, while the onset of dementia increases the likelihood of experiencing homelessness

Source: Babulal et al. (2022). Associations between Homelessness and Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia: A Systematic Review.

Elder Abuse

Elder abuse is an overlooked risk factor for homelessness

The risk factors for elder abuse are also risk factors for homelessness
Medical, functional, or cognitive decline
Loss of financial independence

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Unique Challenges and Barriers for Older Adults

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)

Mobility limitations and accessibility barriers
- **Fall and injury risks**

Difficulty re-entering the workforce
- **Ageism, Lack of training and education, and Gaps in work history**

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Preventing and Addressing Homelessness among Older Adults

1. Eviction prevention
2. Increase access to Social Security benefits
3. Legal assistance
4. Rent subsidies and emergency rental assistance
5. Addressing health and healthcare needs
6. Collaboration between **aging agencies, housing systems, community partners and government entities**

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National Alliance to End Homelessness Learning Course - Caring for Older Adults Experiencing Homelessness: For Service Providers

Local Training: The Homeless Alliance will facilitate a follow-up training for providers (details to come)

Help us shape a committee on aging and homelessness
- **Scan QR Code to complete Interest Form**
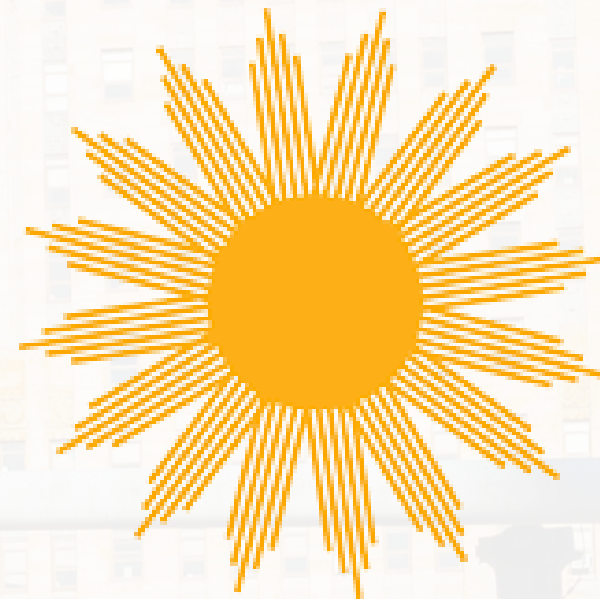
What's Next... Where do we go from here?

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Local Partners

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Services and Supports

of ERIE COUNTY

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Thank You

Haley Diagostino
Aging Coordinator
diagostino@wnyhomeless.org