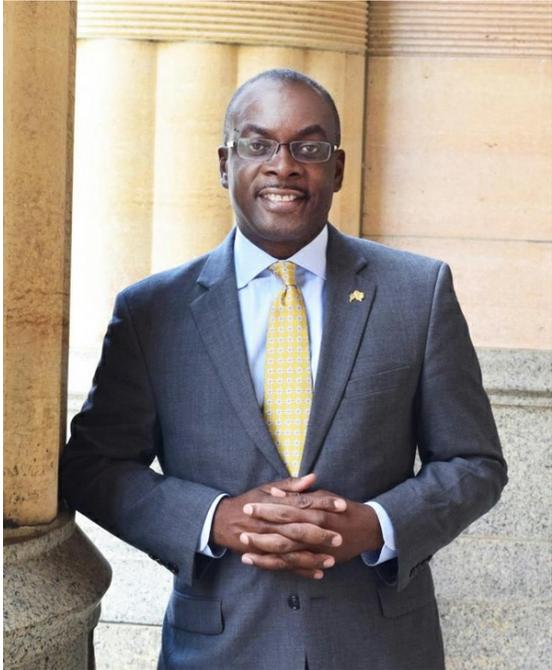


# BURA NEWS



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

## MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN



As Chairman of the City of Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency (BURA), I am looking forward to this year with a renewed vision for Buffalo and remain committed to innovative and sound strategies to help our community succeed.

I am also pleased to announce the first edition of BURA News! BURA News is a monthly newsletter, filled with information about the many great programs and initiatives underway to enhance the quality of life in the City of Buffalo.

2020 was a challenging year for all of us. Since 1966, BURA, an agency of the City of Buffalo, has worked alongside members of our community to strengthen neighborhoods. With additional funds provided by the Federal

CARES Act, we continue to expand programs to meet the needs of our residents and small businesses that were impacted by COVID-19. Through collaborative outreach and community partners, BURA continues to work diligently with residents to deliver assistance that addresses challenges and creates solutions. In 2021, BURA will remain steadfast in its mission to further revitalize and strengthen neighborhoods in the City of Buffalo.

BURA has already brought several important economic and community development projects to our neighborhoods and there are more to come! As part of its goal to keep you informed, BURA News will highlight upcoming projects, newly offered community programs, and the hard work from our team members that bring it all together. I hope you enjoy the first edition of this monthly newsletter. We want to hear your feedback, so do not hesitate to message BURA at [BURANews@buffalony.gov](mailto:BURANews@buffalony.gov) if you have an idea or something you would like to share.

**Chairman, Mayor Byron W. Brown**

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Hello, City of Buffalo,

Welcome to the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency's first issue of BURA News! It is an exciting time for the agency! Since the 1960s, BURA has developed urban revitalization programs designed to prevent or eliminate blight and deterioration in our City. Now 55 years later, I'm honored to have the opportunity to share with you our continued successes.

As the first Communications Manager with the agency, I take great pride in showcasing the incredible work that the City of Buffalo has entrusted with BURA. We continue to exemplify our mission of putting our residents' needs first. BURA has proactively developed new programs, expanded existing ones, and passionately explores unique approaches to strengthening and uplifting communities every day.

As an agency, we embrace our undertaking to add value to the City of Buffalo that far exceeds monetary measures. We advocate for those who may not have the means to advocate for themselves. We believe in higher goals that touch the hearts and minds of those we serve. We recognize the importance of creating safe housing to support the health of our City. And we believe in touching the hearts and minds of our partners, building upon relationships that will tear down barriers and divides within our communities.

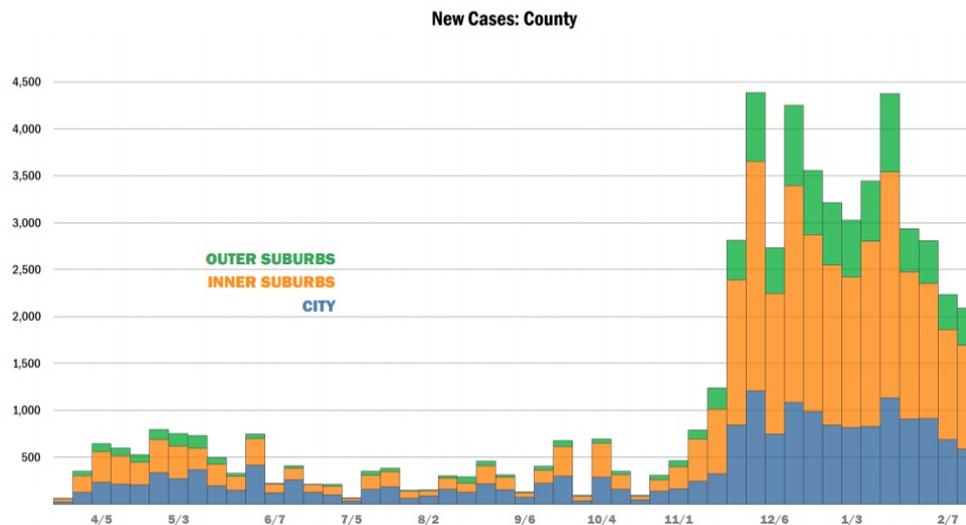
The contents within this issue cover new and existing programs, housing projects, and partnerships, as well as initiatives to help combat the very real impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Buffalo and communities across the nation. So, I



encourage you to join BURA on this journey as we STAND UP, build and grow our city one brick at a time. Enjoy!

Dana R. Harris

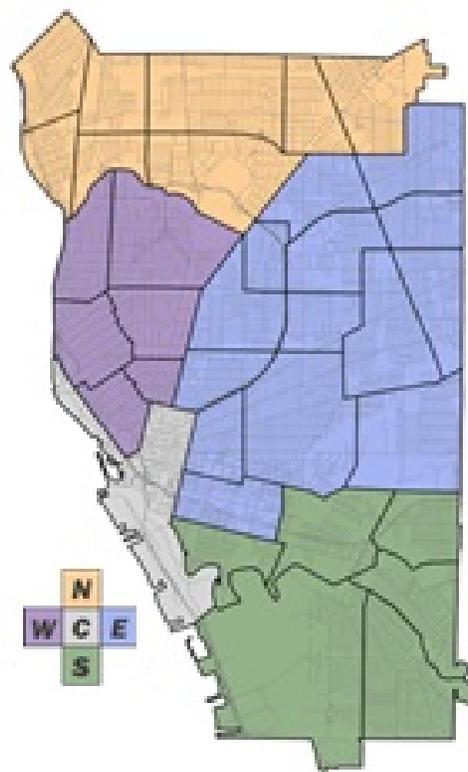
## BURA'S DATA INSIGHTS: COVID-19 ASSISTANCE



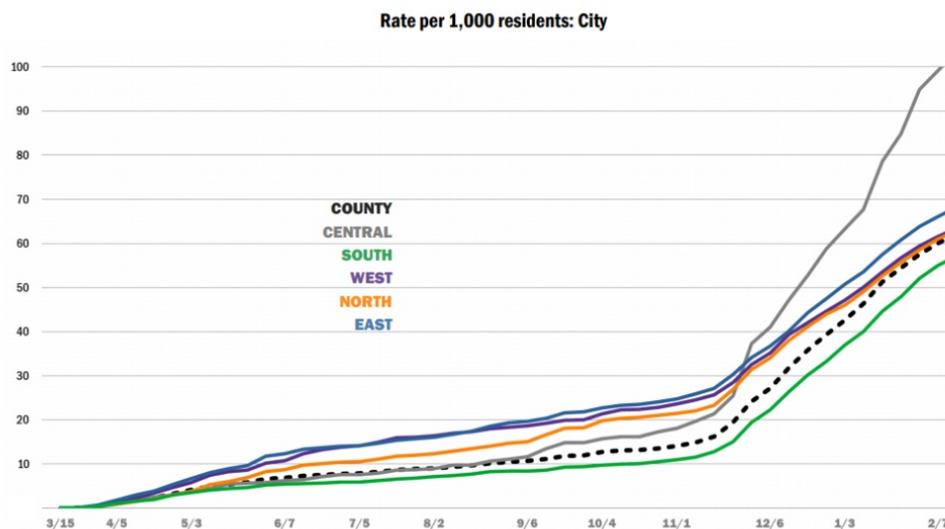
These are challenging times for many, and City leaders understand that now, more than ever, our residents, small businesses, and community organizations require much-needed relief. BURA has been tracking the impacts on our residents and businesses in an effort to provide the city with useful data and observations. This data helps to identify areas in the city where residents are facing the greatest impacts from COVID-19 and to develop, target, and implement programs designed to address those needs.

BURA began monitoring the impact of COVID-19 in April 2020. Our analysis uses data from Erie County, which is broken down by the zip codes where people who have tested positive reside. To better understand these dynamics, zip codes were split into three categories: the City of Buffalo, which includes 17 zips; the inner suburbs, which include 18 zips that border the city; and the outer suburbs, which include 25 zips that are more distant from the city.

For the week of February 14, there were 2,090 new cases across Erie County. To put this number in perspective, the average number of new cases from the start of the pandemic in March to when rates shot up in early November was just 374 per week. The county's recent infection rate continues to be significantly higher than both the state and national rates. Although the city has seen fewer new cases in the second wave relative to the suburbs, its cumulative infection rate is still higher than those in both the inner and outer suburbs.



Within the city, three of the four sectors have COVID-19 rates that remain above the countywide average. The East and West sides have generally seen the highest rates, although the initial gaps between sectors have been narrowing over time. There are also significant differences among specific zips within each sector. The City has been using data at the zip code level to target relief efforts to neighborhoods with the highest infection rates.



In collaboration with Erie County, BURA has offered grants for small businesses, as well as mortgage and rental assistance to residents during the pandemic. As we move into the second year of this pandemic, BURA will continue to analyze the trends and the impact of COVID-19 on our community and maintain a focus on the data that can influence how to target support to city residents.

*All information is current at the time of release.*

# STAND UP BUFFALO

## PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES:

BURA has officially launched the Small Business, Tenants, And Neighborhood Development Underwriting Program or "STAND UP Buffalo" Initiative. This initiative is comprised of a series of COVID-19 assistance programs that respond to housing and small business needs that the pandemic has created in our community and across the country.

The City of Buffalo received \$11 million from the CARES Act and other sources to fund the [STAND UP Buffalo](#) programs. From that grant, BURA proactively developed programs to meet the specific needs, which are identified as:

- Eviction Prevention
- Foreclosure Prevention
- Fair Housing
- Owner and Rental Rehab
- Microenterprise Assistance

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## WHAT'S TO COME:

# AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS



PS #75 REDEVELOPMENT  
WNY Veterans Housing Coalition  
NO SCALE - FREE  
SCALE 1" = 8' = 1/4"  
JUN 1 2020



LA PLAZA SENIOR RESIDENCES  
BURA, New York

LA PLAZA SENIOR RESIDENCES  
BURA, New York



LA PLAZA SENIOR RESIDENCES  
BURA, New York

## School 75 and La Plaza de Virginia

### BURA teams up with community partners to provide affordable housing to low-income veterans and seniors

The City recently closed on two projects geared toward increasing affordable housing for low-income veteran and senior residents in the Niagara and Fillmore districts. Combined, the reconstruction of Public School #75 and La Plaza de Virginia will produce 93 new affordable housing options within these communities.

Under the City's HOME Investment Partnership Program project, funding will be allocated to demolish vacant buildings and reconstruction for commercial and community use. In partnership with the Western New York Veterans Housing Coalition, BURA conceptualized repurposing the building at 57 Howard Street for vulnerable veterans at the old public-school location. This project totals over \$29 million and is anticipated to begin accepting

tenant applications in February of 2023.

The building had not operated as a school since 1979, when it was used for recreational purposes up until the most recent decade. Since then, the building and surrounding parcels of land have been vacant, limiting the community's mobility. The total renovation of these parcels will soon provide a safe and affordable housing alternative to vulnerable demographics on the city's East Side. The project will also create space for the WNY Veterans Housing Coalition office and community area, further contributing to the neighborhood's upward mobility.

On the other side of town, the city is simultaneously working to produce 46 affordable housing units in partnership with Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo Inc. (HUB) for low-income seniors in the upper west side community. The La Plaza de Virginia project will develop a three-story mixed-use building to be accessed by the targeted demographic. The \$17 million project will include a restaurant/café, laundry room, community room, space for HUB's Senior Recreational Program, Social Day Care, and office space for other non-profit organizations. La Plaza de Virginia will be situated directly across from HUB's administrative office.

HUB has provided health care, housing, and social services to the Western New York community for over 27 years, specifically impacting Latino residents in target areas. Their services include substance abuse counseling, preventive social services, supportive housing, education, employment, senior services, and emergency food provision. With the complete renovation of this space, the La Plaza de Virginia project will provide stable and affordable housing for low-income senior residents and aid in the expansion and growth of one of the most impactful organizations for Latino people in the Greater Buffalo area.

These projects were brought before Chairman Mayor Byron W. Brown, Council President Darius J. Pridgen, and the BURA board for approval. The project completion points' approval emphasizes the City's ongoing effort to better the quality of life for vulnerable residents on the East and West Sides.

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## PROJECT UPDATES

### Building up Jefferson Avenue



BURA has provided \$500,000 in HOME funding to assist with this \$31.1 million mixed-use project that now sits tall and proud on Jefferson Avenue between Dodge and North Hampton Streets. The Jefferson Apartments include a total of 89 mixed-income apartments. Sixteen of the units have been set aside for tenants with intellectual or developmental disabilities and individuals with mobility, visual and hearing difficulties. The development also includes commercial space, a large community room, and on-site laundry.

## More Affordable Senior Living



Construction is nearing completion for the Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Center's Westminster Commons on Monroe Street located on the city's East Side. The \$22.6 million housing and healthcare development will feature a total of 84 units of affordable housing upon the anticipated completion in April 2021. The existing and historic Westminster Settlement House is being rehabilitated and converted to accommodate a commercial and community service facility space that will house a certified adult day program, primary health care satellite office, and more. A second newly constructed building includes a four-story multi-family residential building that consists of 40 units designated for seniors with a severe and persistent mental illness, and 26 units for those faced with homelessness and mental illness.

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## A GLIMPSE OF BURA HISTORY



If you frequent the Downtown Buffalo area bordering Larkinville, you may remember a time where the eight-story Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company warehouse stood for over 100 years at the corner of Swan and Hamburg Streets. With BURA's assistance in 2017, KCG Development received \$975,000 in HOME funds to support what is now the AP Lofts at Larkinville. This is a mixed-use, mixed-income, historic adaptive re-use project featuring modern loft-style apartment homes. The \$40 million project, completed in Spring of 2019, converted the vacant warehouse into 147 mixed-income rental units. 112 units are designated as affordable and seven units are HOME assisted.



[buffalourbanrenewal.com](http://buffalourbanrenewal.com)

Contact: [buranews@buffalony.gov](mailto:buranews@buffalony.gov)