

Genesee County Summary

General Overview

Incorporated in 1805, Genesee County sits on the region's western border between the cities of Buffalo and Rochester, with Batavia as its county seat and largest municipality. Genesee derives its name from the Seneca word Gen-nis'-hee-yo, meaning "the Beautiful Valley." Genesee's standout attributes among the region include a low cost of living and a strong tourism industry anchored by Darien Lake Amusement Park, several golf courses, and Batavia Downs racetrack and casino.

Among its strengths, Genesee has relatively high revenue from tourism and strong growth in average salaries. The average salary in the county, adjusted for inflation, increased by 12% since 2000, more than the state or the nation. However, the county has also been losing population and saw increases in poverty: total poverty rate rose by 4 points and the child poverty rate rose by 11 points from 2000 to 2012-16, which was the highest rate of increase in child poverty among the region's counties.

Demographic Overview

Genesee County's population fell by 3.1% between 2000 and 2016, in contrast to an increase of 1.1% for the region, 4% for the state and 14.8% for the nation. In 2016, Genesee County was home to 58,482 residents, or about 5% of the total regional population.

Similar to other counties in the upstate region, Genesee County has an aging population:

- Between 2000 and 2012-16, the number of residents younger than 20 years declined 21% and the 20-to-39 range declined 12% - both greater decreases than for the region as a whole.
- The number of adults 85+ increased 54%, an increase greater than state, national and regional trends.

Despite an increase in diversity, Genesee County remains much whiter than the nation, state, and the region.

- Since 2000, the white population in Genesee has fallen by 5%, while the small number of Asians, African Americans, and Hispanics have increased by 33%, 14%, and 96% respectively.
- In 2016, 92% of Genesee residents were white, in line with the eight counties surrounding Monroe but much higher than the state (64%) and the nation (73%).

From 2000 to 2012-16 Genesee County, like the state and nation, experienced a decline in the share of households of married couples with children.

- In 2012-16, 19% of households consisted of married couples with children, down from 26% in 2000.
- The share of households with individuals living alone grew by 3 points to 28% from 2000 to 2012-16, while the largest category – married couples without children – rose 2 points to 32%.

Arts, Culture and Leisure

Genesee County attracted more tourism spending per capita than all other counties in the region besides Ontario and Yates. In 2016, tourism spending amounted to \$1,576 per resident, for a total of roughly \$92.2 million. Genesee's rate was higher than the region (\$1,305) but below the state (\$3,240).

Genesee also had the highest recreation spending per resident (\$205), with a rate almost three times higher than the region (\$72) but still below the state (\$363). Genesee's recreation spending per resident decreased by 12% from 2005 to 2016.

Children and Youth

Child poverty continues to be a problem for Genesee:

- In 2012-16, Genesee's child poverty rate was 20%, up from 9% in 2000. Genesee's rate was lower than the region and nation (both at 21%) and state (22%), but higher than all but three counties in the region (Monroe, Orleans, and Yates). In contrast, in 2000, Genesee had had the lowest county child poverty rate in the region.
- Genesee's 11-point increase from 2000 to 2012-16 was bigger than the increases experienced in that time period by the state, nation, region, and every county in the region.

This is despite families with two parents (and potentially two earners) being more common in Genesee than in the nation, state, or region.

- The proportion of families raised by single parents rose by 5 points from 2000 to 2012-16, less than the regional and national increases of 8 and 6 points respectively, but greater than the state's increase of 4 points.
- Genesee's rate of single parenthood in 2012-16 (31%) was the lowest among regional counties, the region, the state, and the nation.

The proportion of mothers receiving prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy rose by 9 points from 2000 to 2014, and another 8 points in 2015 to 86%. The rate is now above both the state (76%) and regional (79%) rates and is the highest among surrounding counties.

The proportion of low birth-weight babies has fluctuated in Genesee County over the decade, but remains below state and national levels:

- The rate of low-weight births was 6.2% in 2015, up slightly from 2000.
- The rate in Genesee has been below the national (8.1%), state (7.8%), and regional (7.6%) rate for every year from 2000 to 2015.

Child abuse and neglect has worsened since 2000 and remains a serious issue:

- The rate of indicated cases of child abuse and neglect (cases in which there was credible evidence) in Genesee increased by 41% from 2000 to 2016. This is a greater increase than the state (21%) and region (25%).
- The rate in 2016 was 24 per 1,000 children under 18, above the state rate of 16 and the regional rate of 18.

In 2016, Genesee's rate of foster care admissions was 2.5 per 1,000 children, a 34% decrease from its rate in 2000. Genesee's rate was higher than the state (2.0) and the region (2.1).

Genesee's rate of teen pregnancy decreased by 70% from 2000 to 2015, a greater drop than the state or region (the state change is through 2014 as 2015 data is not yet available). Its rate in 2015, 1.5%, was lower than the region (2.2%). Only three of the surrounding counties had lower teen pregnancy rates in 2015.

Community Engagement

Voter registration and election turnout has been declining, but remain comparatively robust:

- From 2000 to 2016, the proportion of voting-age residents who were registered to vote in Genesee County fell 3 points to 84%. This compares to an 80% registration rate for the state and an 82% rate for the region in 2016.
- In the 2014 midterms, 35% of Genesee adults turned out to vote, above the statewide rate of 25% and on par with the regional rate.
- In the 2016 presidential election, 57% of voting-age residents turned out to vote, the second lowest rate of the past five presidential elections and slightly below the regional
- (57%) and slightly above the national (55%) rate. However, the county still outperformed the state, which had 50% turn out in 2016.

Genesee County's registered borrowers was the highest in the region:

- In 2016, 78% of residents in Genesee's county library system were registered borrowers, above the state (55%) and region (63%), and every county in the region.
- The number of library visits has decreased 32% since 2000, but the number of visits per resident (6.8) remains higher than the state (5.3), region (6.0), and higher than every other county in the region except Orleans.

Average charitable giving has modestly increased but continues to lag behind the region, state, and nation:

- The average gift to charity per tax return increased 6% from 2011 to 2015 in Genesee, increasing from \$3,131 to \$3,316 per tax return. This increase is lower than the nation (23%), the state (26%), and the region (25%).
- Genesee's charitable giving as a share of income was at 1.3% of income in 2015, lagging behind the state (2.4%), nation (2.2%), and region (1.9%), but higher than some regional counties.

Economy

Like the state, region, and nation, Genesee's unemployment soared during the Great Recession and its aftermath. However, Genesee's recovery in terms of employment has been stronger than in other areas:

- Unemployment jumped from 4.5% in 2007 to a peak of 8.0% in 2010, but has since fallen to just 4.6% in 2016; Genesee's rate is less than 1 point higher than the low of 4.0% in 2000.
- Genesee's rate in 2016 was lower than the nation (4.9%), state (4.8%), region (4.7%), and was the third lowest rate of the regional counties (4.6%).

Genesee's job growth since 2001 has lagged behind the nation and state, but outperformed several counties in the region. Some sectors did better than others:

- Genesee experienced small (3%) job growth from 2001 to 2016, similar to the region (4%), but below state (18%), and national (17%) rates.
- In the Manufacturing sector, Genesee's total number of jobs fell less (down 5%) than the nation (down 23%), state (down 33%), and region (down 34%). In the Trade,
- Transportation and Utilities sectors, job growth in Genesee (23%) exceeded state and national increases.
- Job growth in Genesee was outperformed by the state, nation and region in the Education, Financial Activities, and Health Care sectors.

Genesee's salary growth, adjusted for inflation, has exceeded that of the state, nation and region, but its salary level continues to lag behind most of its peers in the counties surrounding Monroe:

- Salaries in Genesee grew 12% from an average of \$34,315 in 2000 to \$38,340 in 2016.
- This compares to 9% growth nationally, 8% statewide, and 3% for the region.
- Genesee's average salary in 2016 was lower than any of the regional counties besides Yates and Livingston, and was well below the national average of \$52,953 and the state average of \$67,093.

Education

Genesee County has made extraordinary progress in prekindergarten participation:

- Genesee's percentage of 4-year olds enrolled in prekindergarten was 57% in 2016, up from just 1% in 2001. This increase mostly occurred between 2007 and 2009.
- Genesee's rate of participation was higher than the state (52%) and the region (44%) in 2016.

Students in Genesee County showed mixed results on the Common Core-aligned state tests:

- In 2017, 36% of students passed 3rd grade English, about the same rate as the region, and a higher share of students passed 4th grade math (58%) compared to the region and the state.
- The passing rates for 8th grade English (43%) and math (16%) were about even with the region but below the state.

However, students fared relatively better on the Regents test:

- In 2017, 88% of Genesee students passed the Common Core Algebra 1 Regents, versus 75% for the state and 78% for the region.
- In that same year, Genesee posted an 88% pass rate for the Common Core English Regents, above both the state and the region (at 84% respectively).

Genesee's four-year high school graduation rate of 91% in 2017 was higher than the state (82%) and region (85%).

Genesee County adults ages 25 and over have lower education levels than the region, state or nation:

- In 2012-16, 55% of Genesee residents had attended at least some college, below the region (62%), state (59%) and nation (59%).
- A smaller share of adults (9%) had less than a high school diploma than in the state, region and nation, but only 21% of adults had a bachelor's degree or higher – lower than the state (35%), region (31%), and nation (30%).

Per-student spending rose by 50% from 2000 to 2016, higher than the region (46%) but lower than the state (52%). In 2016, Genesee districts spent \$21,024 per student, similar to the region but below the state (\$23,361).

Financial Self-Sufficiency

Genesee has seen its median income drop substantially since 2000:

- From 2000 to 2012-16, Genesee's median income fell 10% to \$52,640, compared to national and statewide decreases of 9% and 3% respectively. Within the region, only Wayne, Livingston, Orleans, and Monroe counties had larger decreases in their income over that time period.
- Genesee's median income in 2012-16 was below the national (\$55,320), state (\$60,740), and regional (\$54,110) levels. This was also the case in 2000 and 2007-11.

Poverty rates were relatively low, but have increased since 2000:

- In 2012-16, the poverty rate in Genesee was 12%, below the state (15%), national (15%), and regional (14%) rates. In the region, Genesee was in the middle of the pack: four counties each had either higher or lower and equal rates than Genesee.
- However, the rate has increased 4 points from 2000, a greater increase than the state, nation, and region.

The rate of people receiving temporary assistance has remained essentially flat:

- Genesee's rate was 1.0% in 2016, below the state, region, and every county besides Wyoming and Yates.

However, the rate of people receiving emergency meals has skyrocketed:

- In 2000, there were 1.3 emergency meals served per resident, lower than the state, region, and all counties in the region.

- In 2016, the rate stood at 7.1 – a five and a half fold increase from 2000 and up more than 137% from the end of the recession in 2009. The rate doubled from 2013 to 2014. The increases over both time periods were greater than in the state, region, and every county.
- The 2016 rate was lower than the state (7.4), but higher than the region (6.8). Genesee was the fourth lowest county in the region.

Health

The rate of people without health insurance is falling:

- In 2015, about 4,869, or 6% of Genesee County residents under the age of 65 were uninsured, below the rates for the state (8%) and nation (11%), but equal to the region.
- This is a 5-point decrease from its peak of 12% in 2011 and in-line with rate decreases in the nation, state and region.

The mortality rate, despite falling, has remained relatively high:

- Genesee's mortality rate in 2015 of 732 per 100,000 residents was higher than the state (634) and regional (706) rates.
- The mortality rate is down 12% from 2000; this is less than the statewide and region decrease of 21% and 13% respectively.

The number of people admitted into alcohol and substance abuse treatment programs rose 18% from 2007 to 2016, compared to decreases of 9% statewide and 1% regionally.

Housing

Median home values have fallen in Genesee, in contrast to the state and the nation:

- From 2000 to 2012-16, the median home value in Genesee fell 6% to \$108,700. This was a larger decrease than for the region (2%) and is a contrast to 19% national and 39% statewide increases.
- In 2012-16, the median home value in Genesee was lower than the median for the region (\$130,462), state (\$286,300), and the nation (\$184,700).

Since 2000, the median rent in Genesee has fallen by 4%, a smaller decrease than the region (down by 5%). Both the nation and the state saw median rent increases of 9% and 20%, respectively.

Housing and rent are particularly affordable in Genesee:

- Genesee's ratio of median home value to median household income, which is a measure of housing affordability, was lower in 2012-16 (1.7) than the region (1.9), state (3.4), and nation (2.6).
- The ratio was unchanged from 2000, as opposed to increases (indicating a decline in affordability) for the region, state, and nation.
- In 2012-16, 30% of median household income went to rent in Genesee, lower than the region (34 %), state (36%), and nation (32 %). Genesee's rate was lower than every county except Wyoming in 2012-16.

More people owned their homes in Genesee than the state, region, and nation:

- In 2012-16, 73% of housing units were owner-occupied, higher than the national rate of 64%, the state rate of 54%, and the regional rate of 68%. Genesee's rate did not change from 2000; in contrast, the rate fell slightly regionally and nationally.

Public Safety

Genesee's rate of serious crime remains above state and on par with the region:

- Genesee's rate fell by 21% from 2000 to 2016; a smaller decrease than in the region (39%), state (46%), and nation (31%) over that same period.
- Genesee's rate stood at 215 per 10,000 residents in 2016, higher than the state (166), lower than the nation (284) and on par with the region (215).

Genesee's rate of violent crime – 22 per 10,000 residents – has risen notably since 2000, in contrast to decreases in the state and nation.

- The rate of violent crime in Genesee was lower than the region (26), state (37), and nation (39) in 2016.
- However, violent crime has increased 53% from 2000 to 2016, versus a 17% rise in the region, and a drop in both the state (32%) and nation (24%) over that period.

The rate of property crimes in Genesee has fallen 25% from 2000, a smaller decline than in the region, state, and nation. The rate was 194 crimes per 10,000 residents in 2016, lower than the nation (245) but higher than the region (189) and the state (153).

The number of victims of domestic violence per 10,000 residents more than doubled from 2009 to 2016 - a far cry from the 7% drop for the state (excluding NYC) and the 14% drop for the region.

Genesee had a very low rate of juvenile delinquency intakes (33 per 10,000 children aged 7 to 16) as compared to other geographies:

- The rate of juvenile delinquency intakes fell 72% from 2000 to 2016, greater than decreases across the state, region and all surrounding counties except Yates. However, the rate increased 17% from 2015 to 2016 – in contrast to decreases for the state (11%) and region (9%).
- Genesee's rate of 33 per 10,000 children aged 7-16 was less than the state (45) and regional (51) rates in 2016. It was the second-lowest rate of all the regional counties.

Genesee faced an increasing demand for emergency services:

- The rate of responses to 911 calls increased 27% between 2004 and 2016, far greater than the regional increase of 11%.
- However, the rate of 4,790 calls per 10,000 residents was about a third of the regional rate.

Note: Data research and analysis completed [by the Center for Governmental Research](#)