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Livingston County

General Overview

Livingston County, formed from parts of Genesee and Ontario counties in 1821, is home to some of the region's most picturesque Finger Lakes landscapes, as well as the highly ranked liberal arts college SUNY Geneseo.

Letchworth State Park, popularly referred to as the "Grand Canyon of the East", is a 14,000-acre destination that boasts a diverse range of terrain, hiking trails, and other outdoors activities. Letchworth was given the USA Today Reader's Choice award in 2015 for best state park in the nation.

Livingston County has had growth in some sectors of the economy and falling crime rates over the past decade, despite the economic downturn caused by the recession of 2008. The teen pregnancy rate in the county is the lowest in the region at 0.8%. Livingston had one of the highest graduation rates in the region in 2017 at 89%, but performance on state tests was mixed.

Demographic Overview

Livingston County's population change demonstrated a very small decline between 2000 and 2016, as compared to an increase of 1.1% for the region, 4.0% for the state and 14.8% for the nation. In 2016, Livingston County was home to just over 64,200 residents, or about 5% of the total regional population.

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

- Between 2000 and 2012-16, the number of residents younger than 20 years declined 16% and the 20-to-39 range declined 12%.
- The number of adults 85+ increased 69%, greater than the 40% for the region and the state, and 46% in the nation.
- The 40-to-59 age group has become the largest in the county, accounting for 28% of the county's population, close to the 27% share for both the state and nation.
- The 60-84 age group grew by 33% from 2000 to 2012-16, well above the region, state, and every other county besides Ontario.

Despite an increase in the number of Hispanic and Asian residents, Livingston County remains overwhelmingly white:

- From 2000 to 2012-16 the Hispanic population grew by 48% and the small Asian population grew by 80%; over the same period, the white was unchanged and the African American population fell by 15%.
- Whites made up 93% of the population in 2012-16, while African Americans and Hispanics each had a share of 3%.

In 2012-16, 32% of Livingston County households were comprised of married couples without children, 18% were married couples with children, and 28% were people living alone.

Livingston's share of households living with relatives (4%) was lower than the state, nation, and region, while its share of households living with nonrelatives, at 8%, was higher than the state, nation, and region.

Arts, Culture, and Leisure

Livingston County attracted less tourism spending per capita than all other counties in the region besides Orleans and Wayne. In 2016, tourism spending amounted to \$790 per resident, for a countywide total of \$50.8 million. In percentage terms, this was a 26% increase from 2005 levels. Livingston's 2016 rate was below the region (\$1,305) and state (\$3,240).

In 2016, only one county, Wayne, had lower recreational spending per resident than Livingston (\$21). It was also less than a third of the regional rate (\$72) and far below the state rate of \$363. Livingston's recreational spending decreased by 5% from 2005 to 2016.

Children and Youth

From 2000 to 2015, the share of mothers receiving prenatal care in the first trimester increased by 1 point to 81%. It currently stands above the state (76%) and regional (79%) rates.

While not as severe as the state, nation, and region, the child poverty rate in Livingston County has risen from 10% in 2000 to 19% in 2012-16:

- Livingston's rate increase of 9 points from 2000 to 2012-16 was a larger increase than the state (2 points), nation (4), region (7), and every other county in the region except for Genesee.

Single parent families have also been on the rise in Livingston:

- The proportion of families raised by single parents rose by 8 points from 28% in 2000 to 36% in 2012-16, equal to the increase in the region but greater than the state and national increase of 4 and 6 points, respectively.
- In 2012-16, Livingston's rate was similar to the nation (35%) and state (37%), and lower than the region (39%).

In 2016, Livingston had a decrease in its rate of foster care admissions:

- Livingston's rate in 2016 was 2.9 admissions per 1,000 children – higher than both the state (2.0) and region (2.1).
- The rate – partly due to the small number of total admissions – has fluctuated substantially over the years since 2000, but though the total number of admissions currently the same as its total in 2000 (30), the current rate per 1,000 children is higher than it was in 2000 (2.2). This compares to a drop in the rates for the region, state and most surrounding counties over the same timeframe.

Livingston's rate of child abuse and neglect in 2016 (21 per 1,000 children) was higher than the state and region but lower than all of the counties in the region except Wyoming and Monroe. The rate has increased by 42% since 2000, above the regional increase of 25%.

The proportion of low birth weight babies has remained fairly steady – between 5% and 7% - between 2000 and 2015. A 2.4-point increase was seen from 2014 to 2015, bringing the rate of low-weight births in Livingston to 6.6%. This rate remains below those of the region (7.6%), state (7.8%), and nation (8.1%).

Livingston County had the lowest teen pregnancy rate in the region (0.8%) in 2015. In the years since 2000 – during which the rate fell by 75% - Livingston's rate has consistently been below the state, region, and most other counties in the region.

Community Engagement

In 2016, voter registration in Livingston County (80%) was below the regional rate (82%), but was on par with the state rate.

In the 2016 presidential election, voter turnout was 58%, a higher rate in Livingston than the 2012 presidential elections but on par with 2008. Livingston County had a higher rate of voter turnout than the state (50%) and nation (55%), but was on par with the region. Livingston's turnout rate for the 2014 midterm elections was 36%, the lowest of the past four midterm elections, but still above the state (25%) and region (35%).

Livingston County's registered borrowers was the second lowest in the region:

- In 2016, 40% of residents of Livingston's county library system were registered borrowers, below the state (55%) and region (63%), and every county in the region except Wyoming.
- The number of library visits have more than doubled since 2000, a bigger increase than the state, region, and all counties in the region in that timeframe.

Following the regional trend, average charitable giving in Livingston County increased by 24% from 2011 to 2015. The average annual charitable contribution in 2015 was about \$3,290, below the regional level of \$4,440 and the state level of \$6,950.

Economy

Like the state, region, and nation, Livingston's unemployment rate soared during the Great Recession and its aftermath. Employment levels have mostly recovered, unemployment is less than one point higher than its 2000 low:

- Unemployment jumped from 4.9% in 2007 to a high of 8.4% in 2009, but has since returned to 4.9% in 2016. The total increase from 2000 to 2016 of .8 points is slightly less than the nation and region but larger than the state.
- Livingston's rate in 2016 was similar to the nation (4.9%), state (4.8%), and region (4.7%).

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

- Livingston has seen a 4% increase in total jobs from 2001 to 2016, equal to the regional (4%) but less than the state (18%), and national (17%) rates.
- Livingston's total number of jobs fell less (13%) than the nation (23%), state (33%), and region (34%) in the Manufacturing sector, and grew more than the state, nation, and region in the Construction, Education, and Financial Activities sectors. Livingston's Information sector jobs grew modestly (5%) from 2001 to 2016, in stark contrast to
- double-digit declines in the state, nation, region, and every county in the region except Wyoming.
- Job growth in Livingston was outperformed by the state and nation in the Health Care sector.

Average salaries have grown at a rate far behind the nation and state, but similar to the region, from 2000:

- The average salary in Livingston County, adjusted for inflation, grew by 3% from 2000 to 2016. While similar to the regional rate, Livingston's rate of growth was lower than the nation and state.
- Livingston's average salary in 2016, at \$36,490, was the second lowest in the region after Yates and was well below the region (\$46,460), state (\$67,090), and nation (\$52,950).

Education

Livingston County has made great progress in prekindergarten participation, but still lags behind the state and region:

- Livingston County's prekindergarten participation increased dramatically from 4% in 2001 to 32% in 2016.
- Livingston's rate of participation was lower than the state (52%) and the region (44%) in 2016. Its increase of 28 points was lower than the state and region (37 and 33 points).

Passing rates for the Common-Core aligned tests were generally better than the state and the region in math:

- Livingston had the highest passing rate (32%) in the region in 8th grade math in 2017, and was about level with the state in 8th grade English (44% passing).
- Livingston's 35% pass rate in 2017 for 3rd grade English was lower than the state and region and the 4th grade math passing rate of 39% was below the state and the region.

Livingston students passed Common Core-aligned Regents tests at higher rates than the state and region, with 89% passing English and 90% passing Common Core Algebra 1 in 2017.

Livingston had among the highest graduation rates in the region in 2017 at 89%; this is an increase of 4 points from 2008. The graduation rate in 2017 was above the state (82%) and region (85%).

Livingston adults were less educated than the state and region:

- In 2012-16, 55% of adults had attended at least some college, below the state and national rates of 59% and the regional rate of 62%.
- Livingston's most educated – those with a bachelor's degree or higher – made up just 24% of the population, as compared to 30% for the nation, 35% for the state, and 31% for the region.

Per-student spending on education (this includes instruction, administration, transportation, etc.) has risen by 52% from 2000 to \$21,100 in 2016. This was about level with the region but below the state (\$23,360).

Financial Self-Sufficiency

Livingston has seen its median income drop since 2000:

- From 2000 to 2012-16, Livingston's median income fell by 13% to \$52,720 compared to national and statewide decreases of 9% and 3% respectively. Within the region, only Wayne and Monroe counties had larger decreases in their income over that time period.
- Livingston's median income in 2012-16 was below the national (\$55,320), state (\$60,740), and regional (\$54,110) levels. However, these income trends varied from 2007-11 when Livingston's median household income was slightly higher than the nation but lower than the state.

Livingston's poverty rate has increased steadily since 2000:

- In 2012-16, the poverty rate in Livingston was 15%, on par with the state and nation, and above the region (14%).
- The total increase since 2000 of 5 points was above the national, state, and regional increases, but equal to regional estimates over that period.

The percentage of people receiving temporary assistance has increased a half point from 2001 to 2016, more than the state and the region:

- Every county (besides Genesee and Monroe) in the region saw an increase in their rates from 2001 to 2016, but the increase has been largest in Livingston. For comparison, over that period, the state and regional rates decreased 0.7 and 0.3 points respectively.
- Livingston's rate of 2.1% in 2016 is lower than the state and region but higher than many of the counties surrounding Monroe.

The rate of people receiving emergency meals has grown but remains comparatively low:

- In 2016, there were 5.8 emergency meals served per resident in Livingston, well below the state (7.4), region (6.8), and every other county in the region except Monroe.
- The rate has more than tripled from 2000 to 2016, a larger increase than the state and region.

Health

The rate of uninsured has fallen and is lower than the state and nation:

- In 2015, 6% of Livingston residents were uninsured, well below the national (11%) and state (8%) rates and on par with the region.
- Livingston's rate has fallen by 5 points from 2008, in-line with rate decreases in the nation, state and region.

The mortality rate in Livingston has fallen more than the region and state:

- In 2015, the mortality rate was 685 per 100,000 residents, above the state rate of 634 and below regional rate of 706.
- The rate fell by 24% from 2000 to 2015, a steeper drop than in the region, state and any county in the region.

The percent of Livingston County residents enrolled in Medicaid Managed Care in 2016 – 13% - was lower than the state, region, and every regional county except Wyoming and Ontario.

The number of people admitted into alcohol and substance abuse treatment programs rose 88% from 2007 to 2016, as compared to 9% decrease in the state and 1 % increase in the region.

Housing

Median home values have stayed relatively flat in Livingston, in contrast to large increases for state and the nation:

- From 2000 to 2012-16, the median home value in Livingston remained essentially unchanged, rising slightly from \$120,280 to \$123,000 (2% increase). This compares to a 19% increase nationally and a 39% increase statewide during the same period.
- The regional median and most county medians fell slightly from 2000 to 2012-16.
- In 2012-16, the median home value in Livingston was lower than the median value in the region (\$130,460), state (\$286,300), and the nation (\$184,700).

The median rent has fallen by 7% from 2000 to 2012-16. In 2012-16, the median rent in Livingston was \$722, compared to \$949 nationally, \$1,159 for the state, and \$804 for the region.

Housing is particularly affordable in Livingston:

- Despite rising by 15% from 2000 to 2012-16, the ratio of median home value to median household income (which is a measure of housing affordability) was equal to the region (1.9), but lower than the state (3.4) and nation (2.6).
- The ratio rose less in Livingston from 2000 to 2012-16 than the nation (24%), state (42%), and region (17%).

The share of household income that went to rent was 33% in 2012-16, slightly above the national rate (32%) but below the state (36%) and regional (34%) figures. Like in many regional counties, the state, and nation, the Livingston rate rose from 2000 to 2012-16.

In 2012-16, Livingston's homeownership rate was 73%, similar to rates in surrounding counties, but higher than the rates for the state (54%), nation (64%) and region (68%).

Public Safety

Serious crimes have fallen and remain relatively low in Livingston:

- From 2000 to 2016, the rate of serious crimes in the region dropped 43% - more than the nation and region but less than the state to 137 per 10,000 residents.
- In 2016, Livingston's rate was below the national rate of 284, the state rate of 166, and the regional rate of 215.

Though Livingston's violent crime rate increased in the past year, it has fallen almost 4% since 2000 and stands lower than the nation, state, and region:

- The rate of 14 per 10,000 residents in 2016 was a 20% increase from 2015, much greater than increases in the nation (3%) and region (7%), and in stark contrast to the state's small decrease (down 1%). Livingston's one year increase was larger than any county in the region.
- Despite this increase, Livingston's rate was the third-lowest in the region in 2016 and has consistently remained below state, national, and regional rates.

The rate of property crime was also low at 123 per 10,000 in 2016, and has fallen by 46% since 2000.

Juvenile delinquency intakes in Livingston County have declined 58% since 2000, a decrease on par with the region. In 2016, there were 65 intakes per 10,000 children (ages 7-16), higher than the region (51), state (45), and the regional counties excluding Monroe (60).

Livingston had a relatively low rate of responses to 911 calls in 2016 (4,314 per 10,000 residents). The 10% decrease in response rate since 2004 is in contrast to an 11% increase in the region and 70% in the regional counties excluding Monroe.

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