

Seneca County Summary*

General Overview

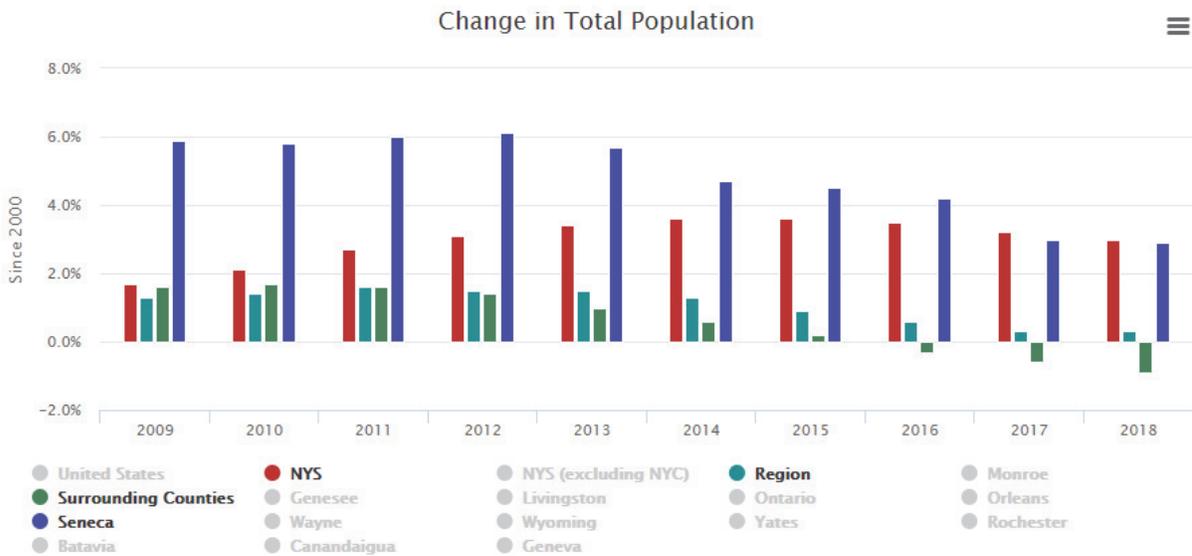
Formed in 1804, Seneca is a geographically small county located southeast of Rochester, between Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. Seneca is well known as the home to the 1848 Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention, a pivotal first step in the modern Women’s Rights Movement.

While Seneca is one of the smallest counties by population and smallest by area in the Finger Lakes Region, its population has grown more than the region and every regional county besides Ontario. Seneca had among the lowest child poverty rates in the region, and its rate on this measure has remained relatively stable in contrast to increased child poverty in the region, state and nation. Tourism revenue in the county has increased more since 2005 (by 86%) than any other county in the region.

Demographic Overview

Seneca County had the second highest population growth in the region:

- Seneca’s population grew by 2.9% from 2000 to 2018, less than the state (3%) and the nation (16%), but greater than the region (0.3%).
- Seneca’s population in 2018 was 34,300 – just 3% of the total regional population – and was the second smallest county by population in the region.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

*Please note, the indicator information included in this summary reflects the data available at the time of its composition. Some indicator data may have since been updated on our website. Visit actrochester.org/all-indicators for updates.

Like other counties in the region, Seneca County’s population is aging:

- Seneca’s population 85 and older grew by 36% from 2000 to 2014-18, below the growth in the nation (49%), the state (44%), and similar with the region (37%). Seneca also had a large increase (35%) in the number of residents ages 60 to 84 – below the nation (37%) and region (43%) but above the state (33%).
- Seneca’s population under 20 fell by 14%, on par with the region but greater than the loss for the state (8%) and in contrast to a 2% increase nationally. However, the number of residents ages 20 to 39 grew by 1%, in contrast to the decline in the region (5%).

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

- The comparatively small number of African American and Hispanic residents grew from 2000 to 2014-18, while the number of white residents remained essentially flat, and the Asian population decreased. The African American population grew by 116%, well above increases for the state (3%) and region (13%).
- However, Seneca remained overwhelmingly white (92% of total population). In 2014-18, African Americans and Hispanics made up just 5% and 3% of the total population, respectively.

Community Vitality

Between 2005 and 2018, total tourism revenue grew by more than the state and region, while recreational revenue per resident has been stagnant:

- In 2018, Seneca County generated \$1,906 in tourism revenue per resident, below the state excluding NYC (\$2,259) but above the region (\$1,419). From 2005, tourism revenue per resident grew by 86%, more than the state (excluding NYC) and the region (15% and 10% respectively).
- Tourism revenue in Seneca (\$65 million) made up 4% of the region’s total tourism revenue, a share in line with its relative population.



Source: NYS Empire State Development

Recreational spending per resident increased only slightly since 2005, and is lower than the state (excluding NYC) and region:

- In 2018, there was \$62 in recreation spending per resident in Seneca, lower than the state (excluding NYC, \$162) and region (\$80). Revenue per resident increased 18% since 2005, in contrast to the region's 1% decline.

Voter registration in Seneca County lagged behind state and regional rates:

- In 2018, 76% of voting-age adults were registered, below 83% for the region and 82% for the state.
- The registration rate fell by 11 points from 2000 – the second largest drop in the region after Yates. In contrast, the region and state increased by 1 and 3 points, respectively.

In the midterm election of 2018, 27% of voting-age residents voted, below the region (46%) and similar to the state (26%). Seneca's turnout of 51% in the 2016 presidential election was below the region (59%) and similar to the state (50%).

Seneca County's share of registered borrowers decreased by 20 percentage points since 2000, but library visits have increased:

- In 2017, 49% of residents of Seneca's county library system were registered borrowers, below the state (56%) and the region (61%) and a sharp decline from its peak rate of 81% in 2004.
- The number of library visits increased 82% since 2000, the second largest county-level increase in the region.

In 2017, residents in Seneca County gave 1.2% of their income to benefit charitable causes, a stabilized rate since 2011. However, the county did increase its total contribution amount by 8% since 2011, the third highest increase in the region.

In 2014-18, Seneca had a lower share of households without a vehicle (8%) than the nation (9%), and the region and state (excluding NYC) (both 10%). Seneca's rate was on par with many other regional counties, and remained relatively stable since 2000.

Children and Youth

The child poverty rate in Seneca is relatively low and has stayed fairly flat while the state, nation and region increased.

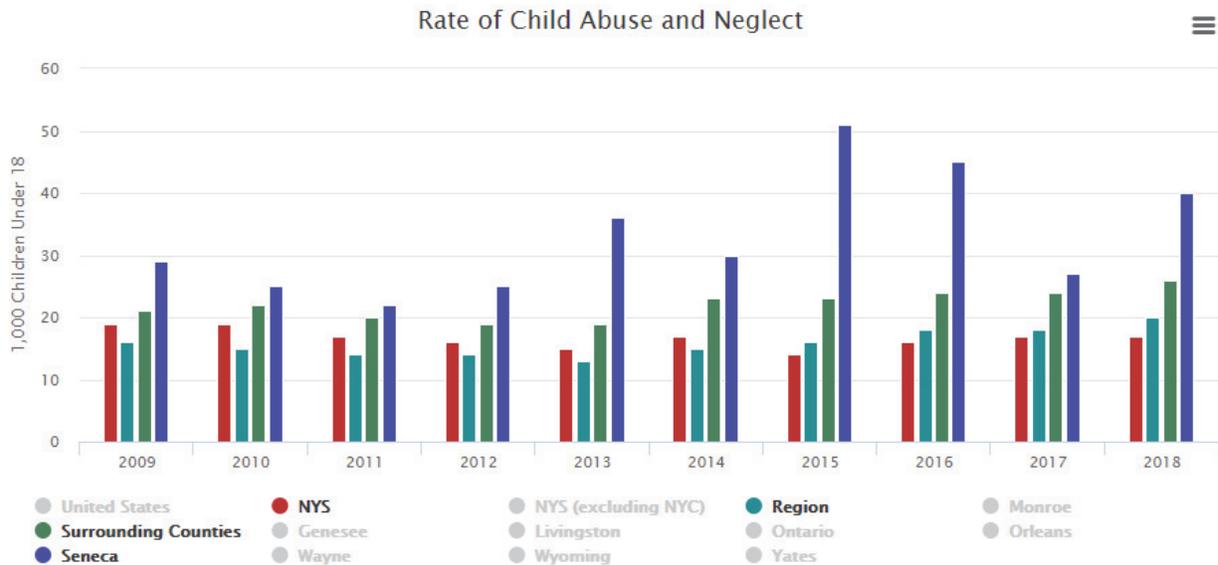
- In 2014-18, the child poverty rate in Seneca was 15%, lower than the state (21%), region and nation (both 20%).

The rate of single-parent families has increased since 2000, but is below the region:

- In 2014-18, 35% of Seneca families were headed by single parents, similar to the state (36%) and nation (34%), but lower than the region (39%).
- The rate of single-parent families increased by 5 points in Seneca since 2000.

Seneca’s rate of child abuse and neglect has consistently been higher than the state and region:

- In 2018, there were 40 cases of abuse and neglect per 1,000 children under 18 in Seneca – above the state (17) and regional (20) rates.
- Seneca’s rate increased 45% since 2000, higher than the 39% increase for the region and 23% increase statewide.



Source: New York State Kids' Well-being Indicator Clearinghouse

In 2017, 1.8% of pregnancies in Seneca County were among teen females age 15-19. Seneca’s teen pregnancy rate declined 3 points from 2000 (4.8%).

Seneca County has experienced a considerable decline in teen births since 2000, with rates similar to or lower than the nation, state and region:

- In 2017, there were 14 live births per 1,000 females 15 to 19 years old in Seneca County, less than the nation (19), and only slightly higher than the state (12) and the region (13).
- Similar to other regional counties, live teen births in Seneca have dropped 55% since 2000.

Seneca was lagging in mothers accessing early prenatal care, with 56% of mothers in 2017 accessing early care, a decrease from 73% in 2000. Seneca’s rate in 2017 was below the state (77%), nation (75%), and region (77%). Of regional counties, Seneca had the second lowest rate.

Economy

The unemployment rate has recovered somewhat since the recession, and has dropped 4 points since its peak of 8.2% in 2010:

- In 2018, the unemployment rate in Seneca was 3.9%, on par with the nation, and lower than the state (4.1%), and region (4.2%).

Seneca County had minor job growth from the previous year, but has outpaced all other regional counties since 2001:

- The total number of jobs grew 0.7% from 2017 to 2018, the smallest increase of any county except Orleans which had a decline.
- The number of jobs grew most in Leisure and Hospitality (89%) well above the nation, state and region.
- Gains were also made in Government (16%), above the nation (6%) and state (1%) and in contrast to losses in the region (2%).

Salary growth in Seneca was greater than the state, nation and region, although the average salary remained lower in 2018:

- In 2018, the average salary in Seneca was \$44,566, compared to \$57,265 for the nation, and \$72,902 for the state.
- The average salary grew by 15% since 2000 after adjusting for inflation – a greater increase than the region (3%), nation and state (both 11%).

Education

Seneca's prekindergarten participation rate was low compared to the state and region:

- In 2018, 37% of eligible children were enrolled in prekindergarten, compared to 52% for the state and 45% for the region.
- Seneca's participation rate rose 7 points from 2008, in contrast to increases of 33 points for the state and 25 points for the region.

Students in Seneca struggled to match their peers in the state and region on Common Core-aligned tests in Math and fared worse in English:

- In 2019, 35% passed 3rd grade English, below the region (44%) and the state (52%). Additionally, 42% passed 3rd grade Math, below the region (49%) and the state (55%).
- However, 27% passed 8th grade English and just 40% passed 8th grade Math, both performance measures were below the rates of the region and the state.

Seneca students performed below other counties on Regents tests:

- In 2019, 70% of students passed the Common Core Algebra 1 Regents, similar to 71% for the state and below the region's 73% passing rate. Along with Monroe, Seneca had among the lowest rates in the region.
- Seneca's passing rate for English Regents in 2019 was 82%, similar to the region (83%), and below the state (84%). Seneca's rate increased 7 points from 2018, a larger increase than any other county in the region or the state.

We note that a substantial number of students did not take state exams in 2019 due to parent concerns about testing in schools. In our region in 2019, 15% of 3rd-8th graders in the region opted not to take the English exam and 16% opted not to take the Math exam.

Seneca's graduation rate has improved, rising 8 points since 2009 from 76% to 83% in 2019, slightly lower than the region (86%) and on par with the state.

Fewer adults attended college in Seneca County compared to the nation, state or region:

- In 2014-18, 51% of Seneca residents ages 25 and older had attended at least some college, lower than in the region (62%), nation (61%) and state (60%).

- Seneca also had a particularly low rate of adults who had attained a bachelor's or higher (21%) compared to the state (36%) and region (33%).

Spending per student by school districts in Seneca County has increased 82% since 2000, after adjusting for inflation – a greater increase than the state (excluding NYC), the region and every county in the region except Yates. In 2018, Seneca school districts spent \$25,300 per student, above every county in the region and the state (excluding NYC).

In 2018, Seneca County spent \$17,236 per student on instructional expenses (spending directly related to a student's classroom experience), above the region (\$16,363), but below the state (\$19,637). Seneca's instructional spending per student has increased 72% since 2000, more than the region (45%), and the state (60%).

Economic Security

Like the state, region and nation, median household income in Seneca has been falling relative to inflation:

- In 2014-18, the median household income in Seneca was \$54,695, below the nation (\$60,293), state (\$65,323), and region (\$57,350).
- Median household income fell by 2% from 2000 to 2014-18, less than the national and regional declines (5% and 12%, respectively).

The poverty rate remains below the nation, state, and region:

- In 2014-18, 12% of Seneca residents lived below the poverty line, compared to 15% for the state and 14% for the nation and region.
- The rate rose by 1 point since 2000, below the national and regional increases (2 and 4 points respectively).

The rate in Seneca County of people receiving temporary assistance was lower than the state and region:

- In 2018, 1.1% of Seneca residents received temporary assistance, versus 2.7% statewide and 2.3% in the region.

In 2014-18, 12% of households in Seneca County participated in SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) on par with the nation and below the region and state.

Health

The rate of residents in Seneca lacking health insurance has fallen steadily since 2008:

- In 2018, 6% of Seneca residents lacked health insurance, on par with the state, similar to the region and lower than the nation (10%).
- The rate dropped 8 points from 2008 to 2018, a larger drop than the nation, state and region.

Despite dropping from its peak in 2015, Seneca's mortality rate remains higher than the region and state:

- In 2017, there were 755 deaths per 100,000 residents, higher than the state (610) and region (700).
- Seneca's rate has declined from its peak in 2015 (916), the highest of all counties for that year.

A rural county, Seneca County had one of the lowest concentration of doctors in the region (4.1 doctors per 10,000 residents) in 2017. This was substantially less than the regional (35) and state (41) rates.

Seneca had mixed results for reported Sexually Transmitted Infections:

- The county saw a large increase in the number of reported cases of chlamydia infections since 2001, in line with regional and state trends. In 2018, Seneca had 24 cases per 10,000 residents, double the rate in 2001.
- In 2018, Seneca reported one of the lowest rates of gonorrhea cases in the region. At 6 reported cases per 10,000 residents, Seneca's rate was much lower than the region and the state (18 and 19 per 10,000 residents respectively).
- Reported gonorrhea cases in the county have generally fluctuated since 2000 with 2018's rate at 6 per 10,000 residents the second highest rate since 2016.

Housing

The median home value in Seneca was much lower than the state, nation, and region:

- In 2014-18, the median home value in Seneca was \$101,400, compared to \$204,900 for the nation, \$302,200 for the state, and \$135,915 for the region.
- Median home value declined 4% since from 2000, in contrast to a small decrease for the region and large increases nationally (22%) and statewide (36%).

In 2014-18, the homeownership rate in Seneca was 74%, higher than the region (68%), state (54%) and nation (64%). The homeownership rate has remained steady since 2000.

Seneca was relatively affordable for both homeowners and renters for 2014-18:

- Rent consumed 30% of median household income in 2014-18, just at the threshold for affordability, and below the regional rate of 34%.
- The ratio of median home value to income, a measure of affordability for homeowners, remained unchanged from 2000 at 1.9 in 2014-18 and remained below the state (4.6), nation (3.4), and region (2.4). A rate of less than 2 or 3 is considered affordable.

The rate of vacant housing units was 17% in Seneca County for 2014-18, a 3 point increase from 2000. Seneca's vacant housing rate was higher than the region as a whole (10%), as well as the state and nation (both 12%).

Public Safety

The rate of serious crimes in Seneca has fluctuated, in contrast to large decreases for the state, nation, and region:

- In 2018, there were 133 serious crimes per 10,000 people in Seneca County, less than the nation (257), region (190), and the state (178).
- The serious crime rate has declined 36% since 2000, similar to decreases for the nation (38%) and below the state (42%) and regional (46%) declines.

Although lower than the state, nation, and region, Seneca's violent crime rate has at 14 per 10,000 residents in 2018 increased since 2000. This is in contrast to the declines at the nation and state.

Seneca County had approximately 200 arrests per 10,000 residents in 2018. Arrests in the county saw a decrease of 23% from 2000 (258), and was similar to the state (209), but greater than the region (188).

Seneca County had an incarceration rate of approximately 22 per 10,000 residents in 2018, the highest in the region, and above the rates for the state (12) and the region (13). Incarcerations in Seneca for 2018 were 48% higher than in 2008 making it one of the few counties in the region to experience an increase during this period (the others being Genesee, 44% and Livingston, 47%).

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