

Seneca County Summary*

General Overview

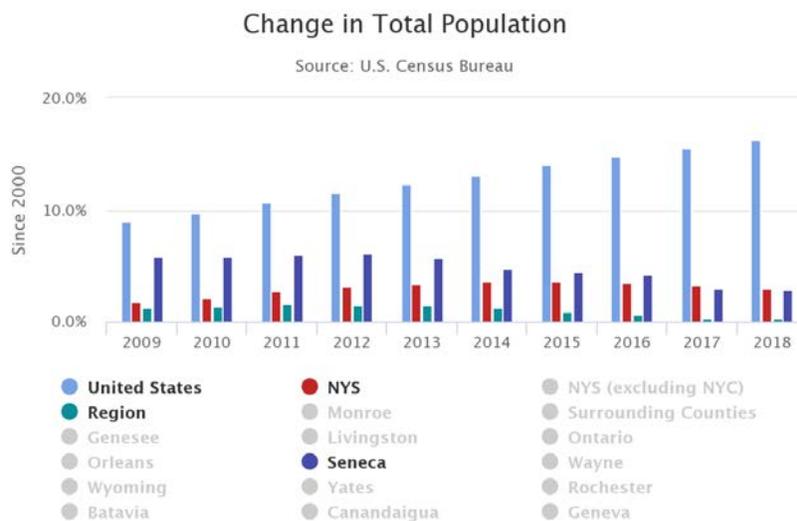
Formed in 1804, Seneca is a geographically small county located southeast of Rochester, between Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. Seneca is well known as the home to the 1848 Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention, a pivotal first step in the modern Women’s Rights Movement.

While Seneca is the second smallest county 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 74%) 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 (16.3%), 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.



*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 2013-17, below the growth in the nation (48%) and the state (43%), and on par with the region. Seneca also had a large increase (31%) in the number of residents ages 60 to 84 – below the nation (33%) and region (40%) but similar to the state (31%).
- Seneca’s population under 20 fell by 12%, similar to the region but greater than the loss for the state (7%) and in contrast to a 3% increase nationally. However, the number of residents ages 20 to 39 grew by 2%, in contrast to the decline in the region (5%).

Some ethnic groups in Seneca grew in population – growth was fastest among African Americans:

- The comparatively small number of African American and Hispanic residents grew from 2000 to 2013-17, while the number of white residents remained essentially flat, and the Asian population decreased. The African American population grew by 117%, well above increases for the state (4%) and region (14%).
- However, Seneca remained overwhelmingly white (93% of total population). In 2013-17, African Americans and Hispanics made up just 5% and 3% of the total population, respectively.

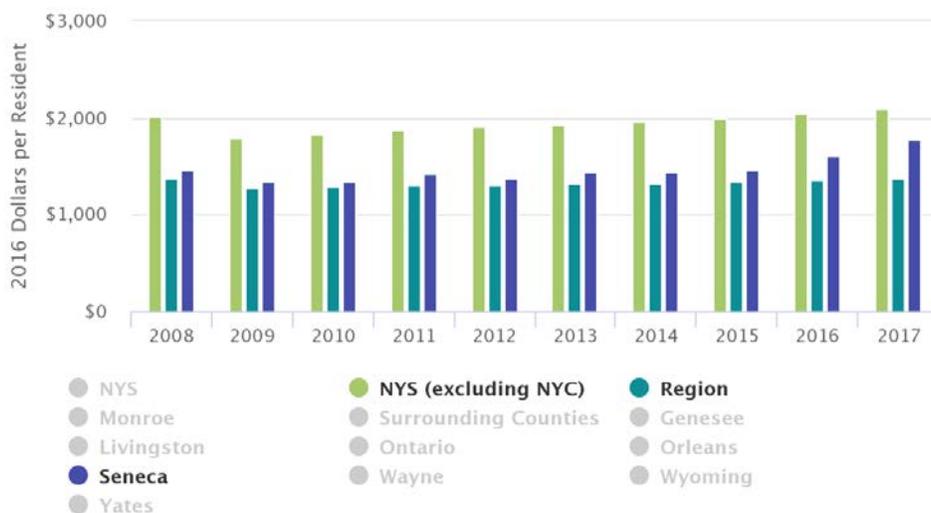
Community Vitality

Between 2005 and 2017, total tourism revenue grew by more than the state and region, while recreational revenue per resident has been stagnant:

- In 2017, Seneca County generated \$1,776 in tourism revenue per resident, below the state excluding NYC (\$2,089) but above the region (\$1,368). From 2005, tourism revenue per resident grew by 77%, more than the state (excluding NYC) and the region (both 9%).

Tourism Revenue, per Resident

Source: NYS Empire State Development



- Tourism revenue in Seneca (\$61 million) made up 4% of the region's total tourism revenue, a share in line with its relative population. From 2005, Seneca's total revenue grew by 74%, a larger increase than the region (9%) and every county in the region.

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

- In 2017, there was \$58 in recreation spending per resident in Seneca, lower than the state (excluding NYC, \$184) and region (\$76). Revenue per resident increased 7% from its peak of \$53 in 2008. While Seneca's recreation spending has remained relatively flat since 2005, the region decreased by 4%. The state's (excluding NYC) recreation spending, however, increased by 39% in this time period.

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 state and region increased by 3 and 1 points, respectively.

In the midterm election of 2014, 34% of voting-age residents voted, just below the region (35%) but above the state (25%). Seneca's turnout of 51% in the 2016 presidential election was below the region (58%), but above the state (50%).

Seneca County's share of registered borrowers decreased by 28 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 18% since 2000, the third largest county-level increase in the region, and in contrast to the state and region.

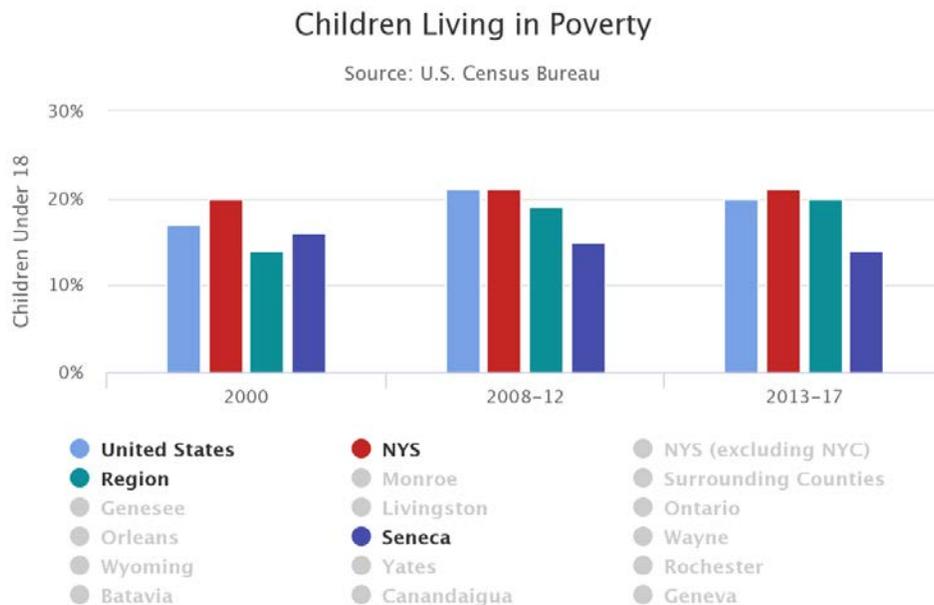
In 2016, residents in Seneca County gave 1.2% of their income to benefit charitable causes, a stabilized rate since 2011. However, the county did increase its total contribution amount by 5% since 2011, the third highest increase in the region.

In 2013-17, 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 2013-17, the child poverty rate in Seneca was 14%, lower than the state (21%), region and nation (both 20%). Seneca had a lower rate than all counties in the region but Ontario.



The rate of single-parent families has increased since 2000, but has dropped slightly since 2008-12:

- In 2013-17, 36% of Seneca families were headed by single parents, equal to the state and lower than the region (39%), but higher than the nation (34%).
- The rate of single-parent families increased by 8 points in Seneca from 2000 to 2008-12, then fell by 2 points from 2008-12 to 2013-17.

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

- In 2017, there were 27 cases of abuse and neglect per 1,000 children in Seneca – above the state (17) and regional (18) rates.
- Seneca's rate for 2017 was on par with 2000, in contrast to a 31% increase for the state and 29% increase regionally.

In 2017, 2% of pregnancies in Seneca County were among teen females age 15-19. Seneca's teen pregnancy rate for 2017 was a 60% decrease from 2000 (5%).

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 56% since 2000.

Seneca was lagging in mothers accessing early prenatal care, with 65% of mothers in 2016 accessing early care, a decrease from 73% in 2000. Seneca’s rate in 2016 was below the state (77%), nation (75%), and region (80%). Of regional counties, Seneca had the second lowest rate.

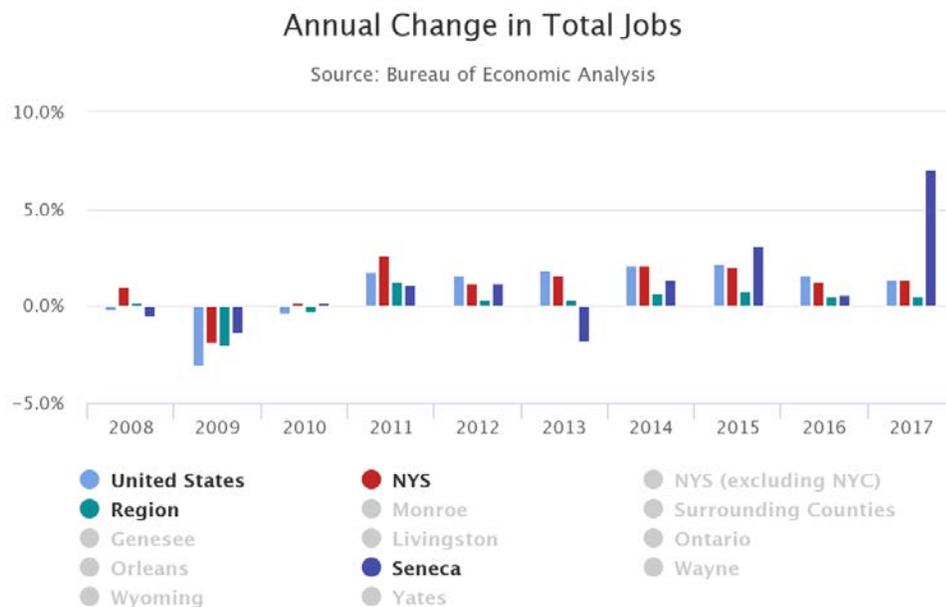
Economy

Unemployment rate has recovered somewhat since the recession, and has dropped 51% since its peak of 8% in 2012:

- In 2018, the unemployment rate in Seneca was 3.9%, on par with the nation, and lower than the state (4.1%), and the region (4.2%).
- The unemployment rate has fallen by 4.3 points since its peak in 2010 (8.2%) – equal to the regional change, though a smaller decrease over that period than at the state and national level.

Job growth since 2001 has outpaced all other regional counties:

- The total number of jobs grew 7% from 2016 to 2017, the largest increase of any county and greater than the increases in the region (0.5%), the nation and state (both 1.4%).



- The number of jobs grew most in Leisure and Hospitality (91%) and Financial Activities (43%); the former's rate well above the state and region, the latter's rate similar to the state and above the region.
- Gains were also made in Government (16%), well above the nation (5%), and in contrast to losses in government jobs nationally and statewide (both down 2%).

Salary growth in Seneca was greater than the state and nation, although the average salary remained lower in 2017:

- In 2017, the average salary in Seneca was \$42,471, compared to \$55,375 for the nation, and \$70,538 for the state.
- The average salary grew by 12% from 2000 to 2017 after adjusting for inflation – a greater increase than the nation and state (both 10%).

Education

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

- In 2017, 46% of eligible children were enrolled in prekindergarten, compared to 52% for the state and 44% for the region.
- Seneca's participation rate rose 21 points from 2001, in contrast to increases of 37 and 33 points for the state and 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 2018, 32% passed 3rd grade English, below the region (43%) and the state (51%). Additionally, 51% passed 3rd grade Math, above the region (48%), but below the state (54%).
- However, 31% passed 8th grade English and just 8% 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 2018, 72% of students passed the Common Core Algebra 1 Regents, similar to 73% for the region and above the state's 75% passing rate. Along with Monroe, Seneca had among the lowest rates in the region.
- Seneca's passing rate for English Regents in 2018 was 75%, below the region (78%), and the state (79%). Seneca's rate declined by 10% in 2018, a steeper decrease than any other county in the region or the state.
- We note that a substantial number of students did not take state exams in 2018 due to parent concerns about testing in schools. In our region in 2018, 19% of 3rd-8th graders in the region opted not to take the English or Math exams.

Seneca's graduation rate has improved, rising 9 points since 2008 from 73% to 82% in 2018, slightly lower than the region (85%), and the state (83%).

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

- In 2013-17, 50% of Seneca residents ages 25 and older had attended at least some college, lower than in the region (62%), nation and state (both 60%).
- Seneca also had a particularly low rate of adults who had attained a bachelor's or higher (20%) compared to the state (35%) and region (32%).

Spending per student by school districts in Seneca County has increased 96% since 2000, after adjusting for inflation – a greater increase than the state (excluding NYC), the region and every county in the region. In 2017, Seneca school districts spent \$26,649 per student, above every county in the region and the state.

In 2017, Seneca County spent \$17,067 per student on instructional expenses (spending directly related to a student’s classroom experience), above the region (\$15,778), but below the state (\$18,604). Seneca’s instructional spending per student has increased 74% since 2000, more than the region (43%), and the state (60%).

Economic Security

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

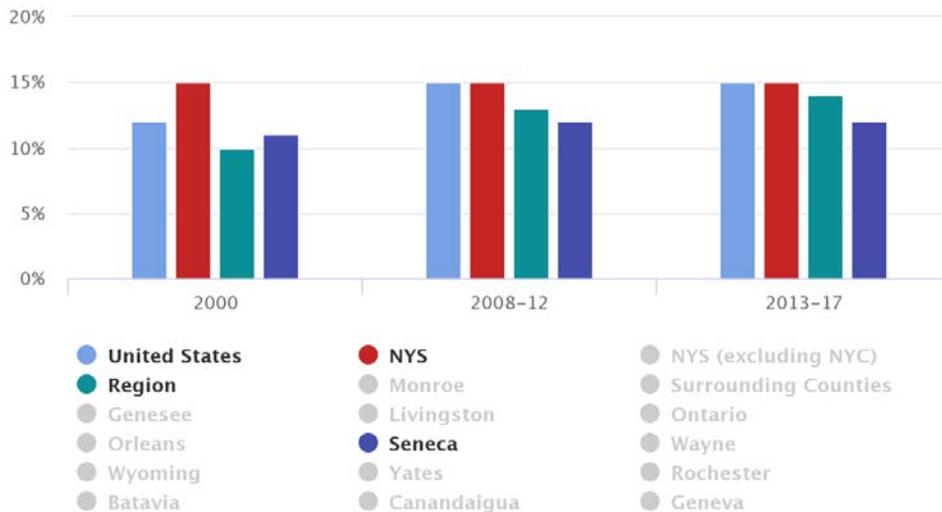
- In 2013-17, the median household income in Seneca was \$51,601, below the nation (\$57,652), state (\$62,765), and region (\$54,972).
- Median income fell by 6% from 2000 to 2013-17, more than the state’s decrease (2%), but below the national and regional declines (7% and 14%, respectively).

The poverty rate rose from 2000 to 2013-17, but remains below the nation, state, and region:

- In 2013-17, 12% of Seneca residents lived below the poverty line, compared to 15% for the state, 15% for the nation, and 14% for the region.
- The rate rose by 1 point from 2000 to 2013-17, below the nation and region increases (3 and 4 points respectively) and greater than the state (no change).

People Living in Poverty

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Despite increasing from 2001, the rate 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.
- The rate rose by 0.1 points from 2001 to 2018, in contrast to a 0.9 point decrease for the state and 0.8 point decrease for the region.

The rate of disengaged youth in Seneca County was 5% for 2013-17, a slightly lower rate than the region (6%), and among the lowest of the region's counties.

In 2013-17, 12% of households in Seneca County participated in SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). This rate was 3 points higher than it was in 2008-12, more than the increases seen on the national and statewide levels (both 2 points).

Health

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

- In 2017, 6% of Seneca residents lacked health insurance, a lower proportion than the state (7%) and nation (10%) but higher than the region (5%).
- The rate dropped 8 points from 2008 to 2017, a larger drop than the state and region.

Despite dropping from its peak in 2015, Seneca's mortality rate remains highest of all counties in the region:

- In 2016, there were 782 deaths per 100,000 residents, higher than the state (624) and region (685) and highest among the local counties.
- 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 the lowest concentration of doctors in the region (3.5 doctors per 10,000 residents) in 2016. This was substantially less than the regional (34) and state (40) 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 2017, Seneca had 29 cases per 10,000 residents, nearly triple the rate in 2001.
- In 2017, Seneca reported one of the lowest rates of gonorrhea cases in the region.
- At 3 reported cases per 10,000 residents, Seneca's rate was much lower than the region and the state (both 17 per 10,000 residents). Reported gonorrhea cases in the county have generally fluctuated since 2000 with 2017's rate being half of what it was in 2016 (6), but triple the rate from 2000 (1).
- In 2016, 0.6 cases of early syphilis per 10,000 residents were reported in Seneca, less than the region (0.8) and the state (3.1).

Housing

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

- In 2013-17, the median home value in Seneca was \$98,400, compared to \$193,500 for the nation, \$293,000 for the state, and \$133,156 for the region.
- Median home value remained relatively unchanged from 2000 to 2013-17, in contrast to a small decrease for the region and large increases nationally (18%) and statewide (35%).

In 2013-17, the homeownership rate in Seneca was 73%, higher than the region (68%), state (54%) and nation (64%). The homeownership rate decreased only slightly from 74% in 2000.

Seneca was relatively affordable for both homeowners and renters for 2013-17:

- Rent consumed 30% of median household income in 2013-17, just at the threshold for affordability, and slightly below the regional rate of 34%.
- The ratio of median home value to income, a measure of affordability for homeowners, remained unchanged from 2000 to 2013-17, at 1.9 and remained below the state (4.7), 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 2013-17, a 13% 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 2017, there were 165 serious crimes per 10,000 people in Seneca County, less than the nation (275), region (214), and the state (182).
- The serious crime rate has declined 20% since 2000, in comparison to larger decreases for the state (41%), region (39%), and nation (33%).

Although lower than the state, nation, and region, Seneca's violent crime rate has more than doubled from 9 per 10,000 residents in 2000 to 21 in 2017, in contrast to declines in the nation and state. This was also the largest increase among the regional counties.

Seneca County had approximately 224 arrests per 10,000 residents in 2017. Arrests in the county saw a decrease of 13% from 2000 (258), and was similar to the state (226), but greater than the region (198).

Seneca County had an incarceration rate of approximately 23 per 10,000 residents in 2017, the highest in the region, and above the rates for the state (12) and the region (14). Incarcerations in Seneca for 2017 were 53% 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, 31%, and Livingston, 42%).

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