

Civic Engagement



Introduction: Civic Engagement

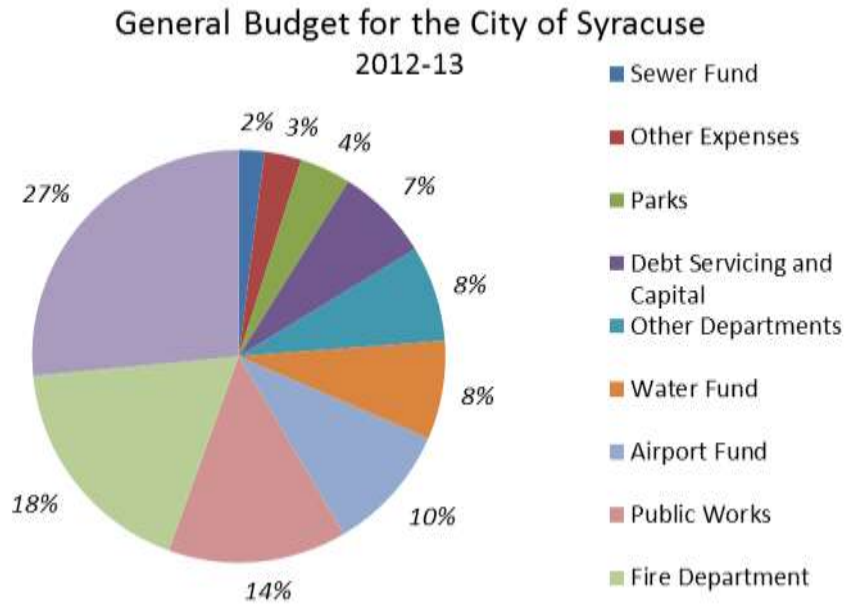
As a cultural and economic hub in Central New York, Onondaga County also has an important relationship with citizen participation with democracy and government. . In this section, Onondaga County’s government and citizens are examined in order to understand the current state of civic engagement. Civic engagement—the slow, patient building of first coalitions and then majorities can generate social change. (Carter and Elshain, 1997.) In the political context of Central New York, John Mueller’s, definition of democracy ties into civic engagement. In a democracy infused with civic engagement, there are various nonviolent mechanisms that can remove people in office besides elections. Governments are usually subject to protest, embarrassment or challenged with the court system.

The current state of civic engagement in Central New York is at a crossroads. Voter apathy and uncontested elections hinder civic engagement in Onondaga County. According to the Onondaga County Board of Elections, from 1984 to 2011, the average election turnout rate was 57%. Turnout is even lower for local elections that fall between presidential races. According to the Central New York Political Institute, 50% of senate and town races in Onondaga County are uncontested. Out of all the school board and village races in the county, 70% and 60% of them are uncontested. 25% of state Senate races are uncontested.

This section of CNY Vitals will examine political trends in Onondaga County and local government finances.



1. More than one-quarter of the general budget for the city of Syracuse goes to Police services in 2012-13.



Source: Department of the Budget

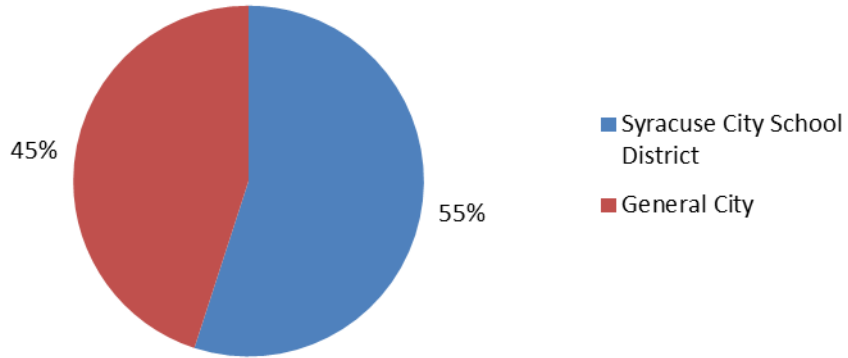
http://www.syracuse.ny.us/uploadedFiles/Departments/Budget/Content/Budget_Documents/Final%202012-13%20Budget.pdf

2012-13 General Budget for the City of Syracuse		
Expense	Percent	Amount
Sewer Fund	2.0%	\$5,962,005
Other Expenses	2.9%	\$8,644,907
Parks	4.0%	\$11,924,009
Debt Servicing and Capital	7.4%	\$22,059,417
Other Departments	7.5%	\$22,357,517
Water Fund	7.7%	\$22,953,717
Airport Fund	10.0%	\$29,810,023
Public Works	14.0%	\$41,734,032
Fire Department	18.0%	\$53,658,041
Police Department	26.5%	\$78,996,561

Mean	10.0%	\$29,810,023
Median	7.6%	\$22,655,617

2. 55% of the total budget for the city of Syracuse is allocated to the Syracuse City School District in 2012-13.

Total City Budget for the City of Syracuse
2012-13



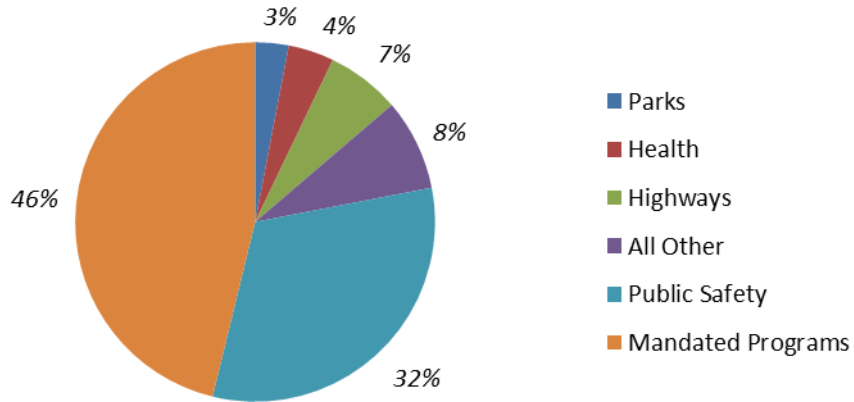
Source: Department of the Budget

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Total City Budget for the City of Syracuse 2012-13		
Total Net Expenditures	Percent	Amount
Syracuse City School District	55%	\$361,620,492
General City	45%	\$295,871,312

3. Onondaga County allocated 77.9% of its funds to mandated programs and public safety in the 2012-13 budget.

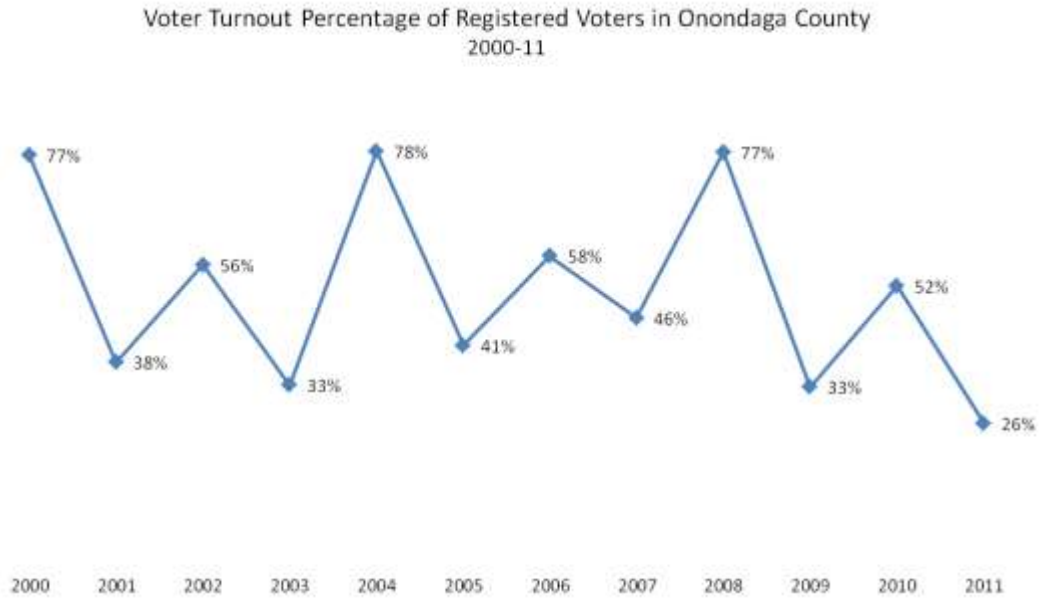
General Budget by Percent for Onondaga County
2012-13



Source: Onondaga County Department of Finance
<http://www.ongov.net/finance/documents/1OverviewFINAL.pdf>

General Budget by Percent for Onondaga County 2012-13		
Expense	Percent	Amount
Parks	3.0%	\$11,651,812
Health	4.1%	\$15,924,144
Highways	6.6%	\$25,633,987
All Other	8.2%	\$31,848,287
Public Safety	31.8%	\$123,509,210
Mandated Programs	46.1%	\$179,049,516

4. Registered voter turnout in Onondaga County was 26% in 2011, a 26% decrease from 2010.



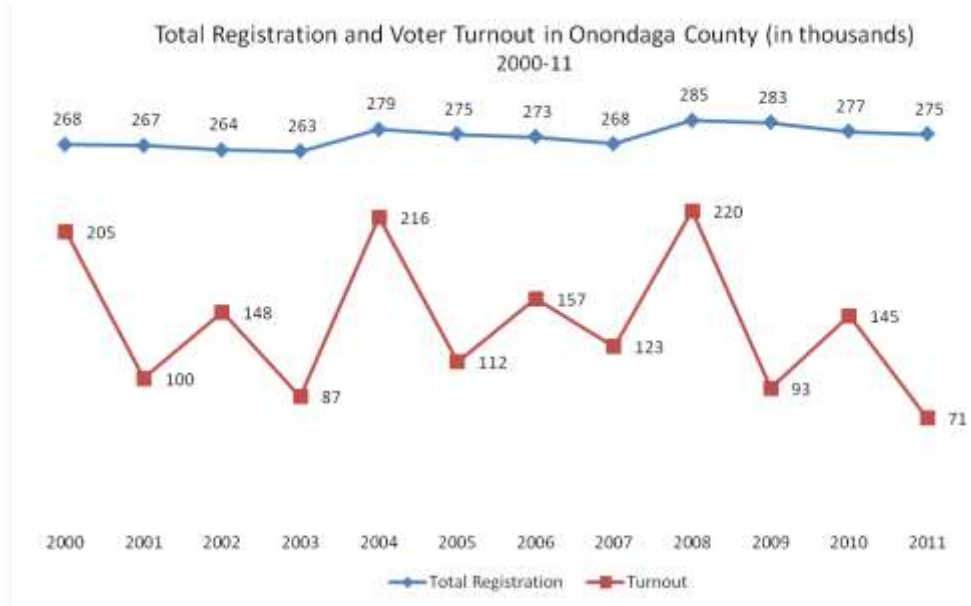
Source: Onondaga County Board of Elections

Comment: This graph aggregates voters in all local, state-wide and national elections.

Voter Turnout Percentage of Registered Voters in Onondaga County, 2000-11			
Year	Registered Voters	Turnout	Percent Turnout
2000	267,623	205,388	76.70%
2001	267,108	100,312	37.60%
2002	263,949	147,735	56%
2003	262,835	87,278	33.20%
2004	278,579	215,822	77.50%
2005	275,136	112,196	40.80%
2006	273,094	157,361	57.60%
2007	268,161	123,303	46.00%
2008	284,880	220,168	77.30%
2009	283,456	93,260	32.90%
2010	276,906	145,152	52.00%
2011	275,078	71,765	26.00%

Mean	51.10%
Median	49.00%

- 3 out of every four registered voters cast ballots in the three presidential elections since 2000.



Source: Onondaga County Board of Elections

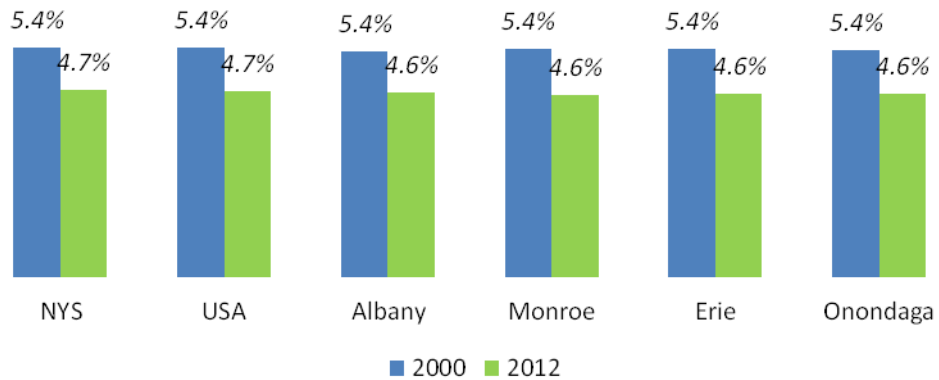
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Mean	51.1%
Median	49.0%

6. Households with memberships in charitable organizations in Onondaga County decreased by 0.8% from 2000-12.

Percent of Households With Membership in Charitable Organizations
2000-12

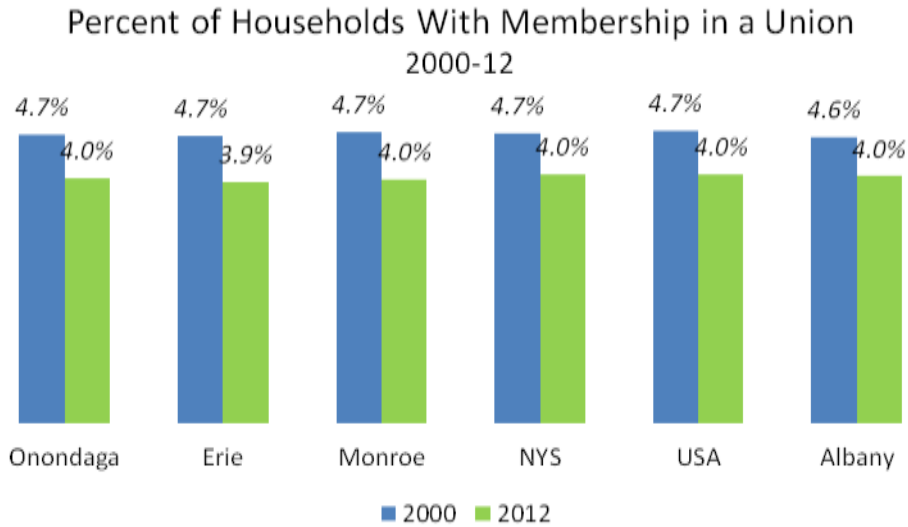


Source: Mediamark Research, Inc. (MRI), Survey of the American Consumer (2012); 2010 Census PL 94 – 171 files for April 1, 2010, Current Population Survey (Mid March 2012); U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (1/1/2012); U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates Branch, 2012 Housing Unit Estimates (7/1/2012); U.S. Postal Service Data: Mailable Households derived from a ZIP4 Carrier route File & Delivery Statistics (1/1/2012).

Comment: This finding calculates the total number of households who have members in registered charitable organizations in Onondaga County. The total number of members serving charitable non-profit organizations is then divided by the total number of county households.

% Household Membership in Charitable Organizations						
County	Albany	Erie	Monroe	NYS	Onondaga	USA
2000 Number	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
2012 Number	4.6%	4.6%	4.6%	4.7%	4.6%	4.7%

7. Onondaga County households associated with labor unions decreased by 0.7%, 2000-12.



Source: Mediamark Research, Inc. (MRI), Survey of the American Consumer (2012); 2010 Census PL 94 – 171 files for April 1, 2010, Current Population Survey (Mid March 2012); U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (1/1/2012); U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates Branch, 2012 Housing Unit Estimates (7/1/2012); U.S. Postal Service Data: Mailable Households derived from a ZIP4 Carrier route File & Delivery Statistics (1/1/2012).

Comment: This finding calculates the total number of households with at least one (1) member registered in a workers union. The total number of households with union members is then divided by the total county population.

% Household Membership in a Union						
County	Albany	Erie	Monroe	NYS	Onondaga	USA
2000 Number	4.6%	4.7%	4.7%	4.7%	4.7%	4.7%
2012 Number	4.0%	3.9%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%