



## SIENA COLLEGE RESEARCH INSTITUTE SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

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Contact:

Travis Brodbeck: 518-782-6997, [tbrodbeck@siena.edu](mailto:tbrodbeck@siena.edu)

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### Annual Statewide Holiday Poll

**89% of NY'ers Celebrate Christmas; Grinch Noses Out Rudolph As Favorite Character; *Home Alone* #1 Holiday Movie  
*Belief in Santa*, 26%; 76% *Putting Up a Christmas Tree*; *Prefer Artificial to Real* 73-27%; *Half Will Make Resolution for New Year*  
61% Will Donate to Help Those in Need; Only 32% Plan to Volunteer; 43% Will Attend Religious Ceremonies**

**Loudonville, NY** – Eighty-nine percent of New Yorkers celebrate Christmas according to a new statewide survey released today by the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI). Favorite holiday movie: *Home Alone* sits comfortably on top with 14% compared to *Elf*, 9%, *It's a Wonderful Life*, 8%, and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (6%). And favorite holiday characters: The Grinch (16%) tops Rudolph (13%), Buddy the Elf (7%), and Frosty the Snowman (7%).

For the second year in a row, only 26% of New Yorkers say that they believe in Santa Claus, tied with 2020, the pandemic year. Seventy-six percent, up from 69%, plan to put up a Christmas Tree in their home but, New Yorkers prefer artificial to real 73-27%. Forty-nine percent of New Yorkers will make a resolution for the New Year, and 83% of those, believe it is very or somewhat likely that they will keep their resolution. Nearly two-thirds of residents, 61%, will make donations of money, food, or gifts to charitable organizations, 32% plan on volunteering for organizations that help people during the holiday, and 43% will attend religious ceremonies during the holiday season.

“Through the various tellings of his tale in books, cartoons, and live-action movies, The Grinch won the hearts of New Yorkers as their favorite holiday character,” according to SCRI Associate Director of Data Management, Travis Brodbeck. “For residents under 50, *Home Alone* took the top spot in favorite holiday movie rankings, but among older residents, *It's a Wonderful Life* took the crown.”

Across the state, eight in ten New Yorkers, 81%, will celebrate New Year’s Eve slightly behind the 89% of residents who celebrate Christmas. Ninety-five percent of upstate residents celebrate Christmas compared to 83% in New York City. Nearly 9 in 10 younger adults between ages 18 and 49 celebrate New Year’s Eve compared 58% of residents 65 years or older. Additionally, the survey found 13% of adults celebrate Hanukkah and 6% celebrate Kwanzaa.

| Percent of New Yorkers that celebrate each holiday  |            |                |            |           |
|---|------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
|   | Christmas  | New Year’s Eve | Hanukkah   | Kwanza    |
| <b>New York State</b>                               | <b>89%</b> | <b>81%</b>     | <b>13%</b> | <b>6%</b> |
| New York City                                       | 83%        | 83%            | 16%        | 9%        |
| Suburbs   | 89%        | 83%            | 19%        | 2%        |
| Upstate   | 95%        | 78%            | 7%         | 4%        |
| Siena College Research Institute: December 11, 2024 |            |                |            |           |

Organizations helping people in need during the holidays are being supported through donations from 61% of New Yorkers and through volunteerism engaged in by 32% of residents. The degree of giving varies based on income with nearly 3 in 4 of those earning \$100K or more making donations compared to 47% of those earning less than \$50K a year. Volunteering is highest among younger residents with over a third of residents under 50 planning to volunteer compared to 21% of adults 65 years and older.

“Despite  $\frac{3}{4}$ ’s of New Yorkers putting up holiday trees, most having favorite movies and characters and a majority expressing the joy of the season with charitable gifts, belief in Santa remains perilously low,” Brodbeck said. “Only one in four proudly insist that Saint Nic is indeed real. Perhaps more will hear the sleigh land on their roof this year.”

“While 81% celebrate New Year’s Eve, fewer, just 49% plan on including a resolution as part of the holiday,” Brodbeck said. “Most, 83% of those making a resolution think it is at least somewhat likely that they will follow through on their commitment.”

“Whether you’re out traveling like the McCallister family or enjoying the Roast Beast with the residents of Who-ville, the Siena College Research Institute wishes you Happy Holidays,” Brodbeck said.

This Siena College Poll was conducted November 11 - 18, 2024, among 803 New York State Residents. Of the 803 respondents, 453 were contacted through a dual frame (landline and cell phone) mode (109 completed via text to web) and 350 respondents were drawn from a proprietary online panel (Cint). Telephone calls were conducted in English and respondent sampling was initiated by asking for the youngest person in the household. Telephone sampling was conducted via a stratified dual frame probability sample of landline and cell phone telephone numbers weighted to reflect known population patterns. The landline telephone sample was obtained from ASDE and the cell phone sample was obtained from Marketing Systems Group (MSG). Interviews conducted online are excluded from the sample and final analysis if they fail any data quality attention check question. Duplicate responses are identified by their response ID and removed from the sample. Three questions were asked of online respondents including a honey-pot question to catch bots and two questions asks the respondent to follow explicit directions. The proprietary panel also incorporates measures that “safeguard against automated bot attacks, deduplication issues, fraudulent VPN usage, and suspicious IP addresses”. Coding of open-ended responses was done by a single human coder. Data from collection modes was weighted to balance sample demographics to match estimates for New York State’s population using data from the Census Bureau’s 2023 U.S. American Community Survey (ACS), on age, region, race/ethnicity, and gender to ensure representativeness. The sample was also weighted to match current patterns of party registration using data from the New York State Board of Elections. It has an overall margin of error of +/- 3.9 percentage points including the design effects resulting from weighting. Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other public opinion poll. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social, and cultural research primarily in NYS. SCRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For survey cross-tabs: [www.Siena.edu/SCRI/research](http://www.Siena.edu/SCRI/research)

Appendix. Trendlines

