

# Who are today's union workers?

Unionized workers are diverse, and they work in most industries across America

**Fact Sheet** • April 21, 2021

One in nine workers—15.9 million working women and men in the United States—are represented by a union.<sup>1</sup> This makes organized labor one of the largest institutions in America. It is also one of the most diverse, representing workers of all ages, at all levels of education, of diverse races and ethnicities, and across most industries in America.

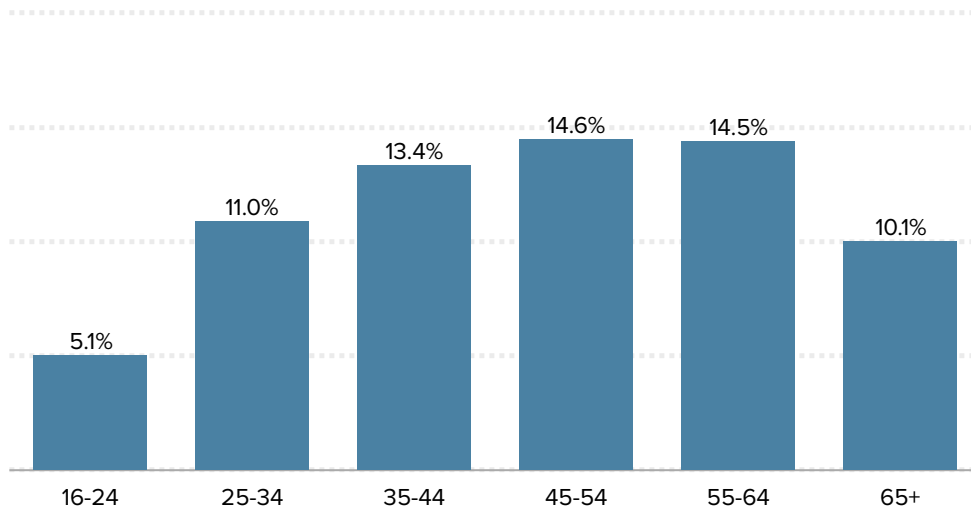
**Altogether, about two-thirds of working people ages 16+ who are covered by a union contract are women and/or people of color.**

- As of 2020, roughly 10.6 million of the 15.9 million workers covered by a union contract are women and/or people of color.
- Almost half of workers represented by a union are women (47.1%).
- Nearly four in 10 (37.4%) are African American, Hispanic, AAPI, or other nonwhite workers.
- Black workers are the most likely to be represented by unions: 13.6% are covered by a collective bargaining agreement, compared with 12.3% of white workers, 11.0% of Hispanic workers, and 10.3% of AAPI workers.

**Unions represent workers of all ages, as shown in Figure A.**

Figure A

## Union coverage rate by age group, 2020



**Note:** Union coverage rate refers to the share of workers in each age group who are covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

**Source:** Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), "Table 1. Union Affiliation of Employed Wage and Salary Workers by Selected Characteristics," in "Union Membership (Annual) News Release," January 22, 2021.

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## Union workers hail from a variety of sectors, but the biggest share work in education or health services.

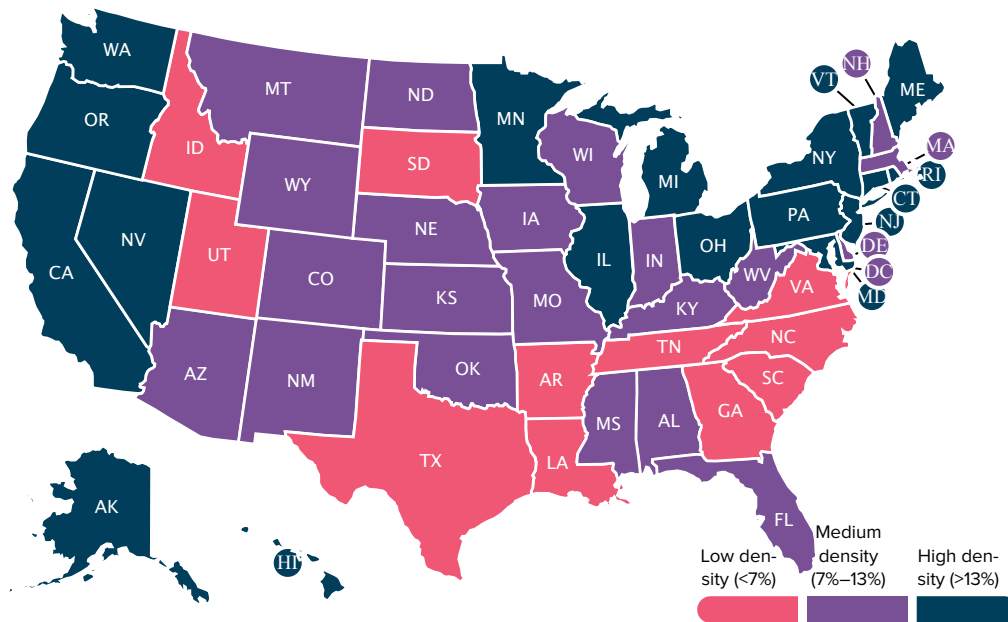
- Nearly three in 10 private-sector workers (27.2%) covered by a union contract work in education or health services.
- Nearly half of workers (49.7%) covered by a union contract are public-sector workers.
- Roughly one in seven workers (15.1%) covered by a union contract works in transportation or utilities.
- Nearly one in 10 private-sector workers (9.3%) covered by a union contract works in manufacturing.

## Unions represent workers at all levels of education.

- Roughly three in 10 workers (30.3%) ages 16+ and covered by a union contract have a high school or less education.
- Nearly six in 10 workers (58.4%) covered by a union contract have an associate degree or more education.
- Close to half (46.5%) have a bachelor's degree or more education.

Figure B

## Union coverage rate by state, 2020



**Note:** Union coverage rate refers to the share of workers in each state who are covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

**Source:** EPI analysis of 2020 Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group (CPS-ORG) data for all workers ages 16 and older.

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## Union density varies widely from state to state, as shown in Figure B.

Data in this fact sheet come from EPI analysis of 2020 Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group (CPS-ORG) data for all workers ages 16 and older, unless otherwise noted.

### Note

1. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), [Union Membership Summary \(News Release\)](#), January 22, 2021.