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## **The State of the Unions 2024: A Profile of Organized Labor in New York City, New York State, and the United States**

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# THE STATE OF THE UNIONS 2024:

## A PROFILE OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE, AND THE UNITED STATES

RUTH MILKMAN AND JOSEPH VAN DER NAALD



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# THE STATE OF THE UNIONS 2024:

## A PROFILE OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE, AND THE UNITED STATES

RUTH MILKMAN AND JOSEPH VAN DER NAALD

Over the past few years, workers and organized labor have attracted widespread public and media attention, on a scale not seen for decades. The focus on “essential workers” at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with an unexpectedly long-lasting labor shortage and widespread discontent among workers, have led many of them to turn to unions to advance their interests. October 2021, dubbed “Strike-tober” by some commentators, inaugurated a series of large and successful strikes by long-unionized workers — most recently the writers’ and actors’ unions. With a formidable strike threat as leverage, UPS workers won a new union contract this summer with historic gains in pay and working conditions. Meanwhile, public support for labor has swelled, with 71 percent of respondents to a 2021 Gallup

poll indicating that they approved of labor unions, the highest level since 1959.<sup>1</sup> And recent surveys show that the proportion of nonunion workers who indicate they would vote for a union if they had the opportunity to do so has also increased, especially among younger workers.<sup>2</sup>

Both buoyed by and helping to fuel such public support, thousands of workers at iconic companies like Amazon, Starbucks and Apple have won union representation elections since 2021, thanks to energetic organizing efforts led primarily by young, college-educated workers. In recent years, that same demographic group has been actively unionizing journalists, museum workers, nonprofit staff, medical interns and residents, and especially graduate student workers and adjuncts in colleges and universities. Although attracting far less attention than the

The data we analyze in this report are from the U.S. Current Population Survey (CPS), which is a *household* survey. That means the union density figures reported below for “New York City” are based on data collected from workers who *reside* in the City’s five boroughs — as opposed to workers who are *employed* in the City (many of whom live in the surrounding suburbs). Similarly, the unionization rates reported for New York State are for *residents* of the State, regardless of where they are employed. An alternative perspective is offered in the Appendix to this report, which relies on data from a different source — unions themselves — indicating the number of unionized *jobs* located in New York City. However, only the CPS data are detailed enough to permit analysis of variations in unionization rates across demographic groups, industries and occupations, and thus are the basis for most of what follows.<sup>3</sup>

organizing campaigns at companies like Starbucks and Amazon, these efforts have been underway for a longer period and have often been more successful.

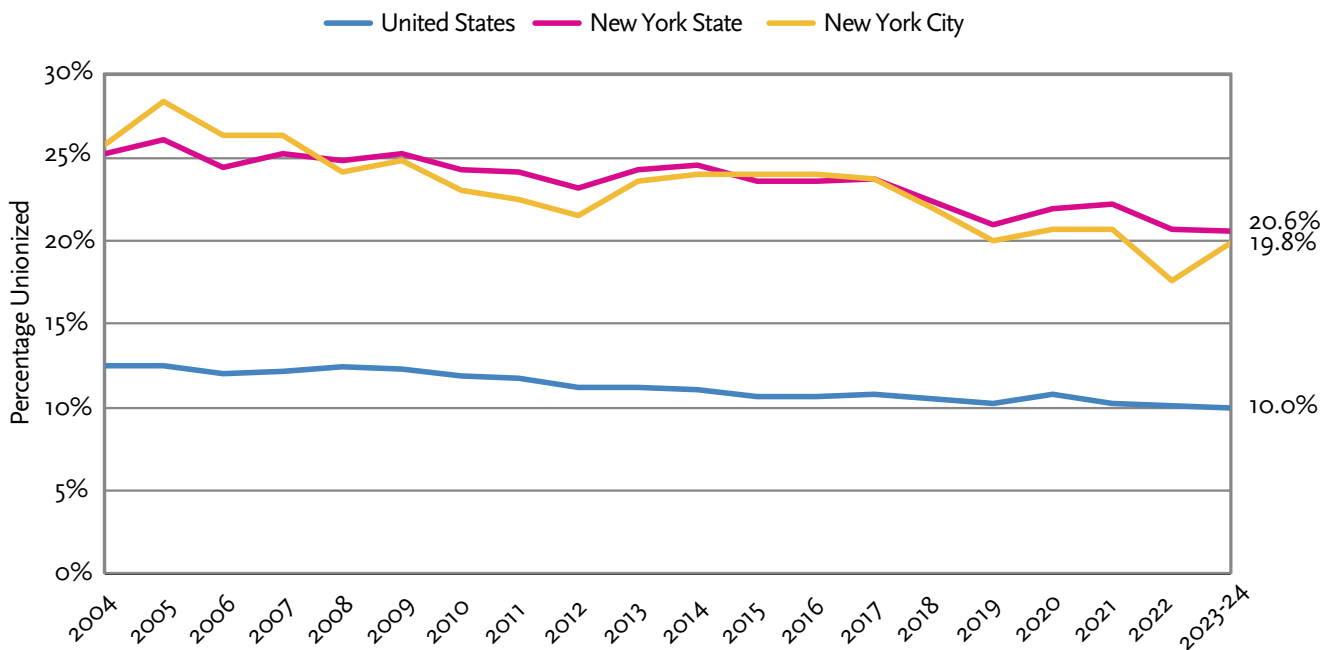
Our special feature on pages 6-11 analyzes private-sector union organizing in 2023-24 using data on National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) representation elections as well as on voluntary employer recognitions. Here we offer an analysis of these trends at the national level as well as for New York City and other selected urban areas, highlighting the unions that are especially active in recruiting new members through organizing. The data show that the organizing uptick that began earlier in the 2020s is continuing, and union win rates are also rising.

Despite all these developments—multiple organizing wins, successful strikes, and rising public support for unions—the long-term decline in union density (the share of the labor force made up of union members) has continued. As Figure 1a shows, unionization rates have fallen relentlessly over the

past two decades, and the last year and a half has been no exception. Both nationally and among residents of New York State, overall density in 2023-24 is slightly *lower* than it was in 2022. In New York City density in 2023-24 was higher than in 2022, although it was below the 2021 level (and that of all preceding years shown).

Organized labor has been much stronger in New York City and State than in the nation in recent decades. New York ranks first in union density among the nation’s largest states, with a unionization rate more than double the U.S. average, and it ranks second among all states (Hawaii’s union density is the nation’s highest, at 24.1 percent in 2023).<sup>4</sup> In absolute terms, New York State had more union members—1.71 million—than any state except California, which has a far larger population. In 2023-24, there were about 693,000 union members residing in the five boroughs of New York City, accounting for 40.7 percent of all union members in the State.<sup>5</sup>

**FIGURE 1A. UNION DENSITY IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2004-24**



Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

As Figure 1a shows, the overall level of unionization in both the City and State has been roughly double the national rate over the past two decades. But in the past few years, union density has fallen more in New York City and New York State than in the United States as a whole. In the mid-2010s, both the City and State rates steadily hovered around 24 percent, but then began to fall after 2017. In 2023-24, only 19.8 percent of all wage and salary workers residing in the five boroughs of New York City, and 20.6 percent of those in the state, were union members.

As Figures 1b and 1c show, losses in union membership have been disproportionately concentrated in the private sector in the City, State, and nation alike. This reflects the fact that the overwhelming majority of private-sector employers have long been vigorously opposed to unionization.

Anti-union attacks have increasingly penetrated the public sector as well, culminating in the 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Janus vs. AFSCME*, which

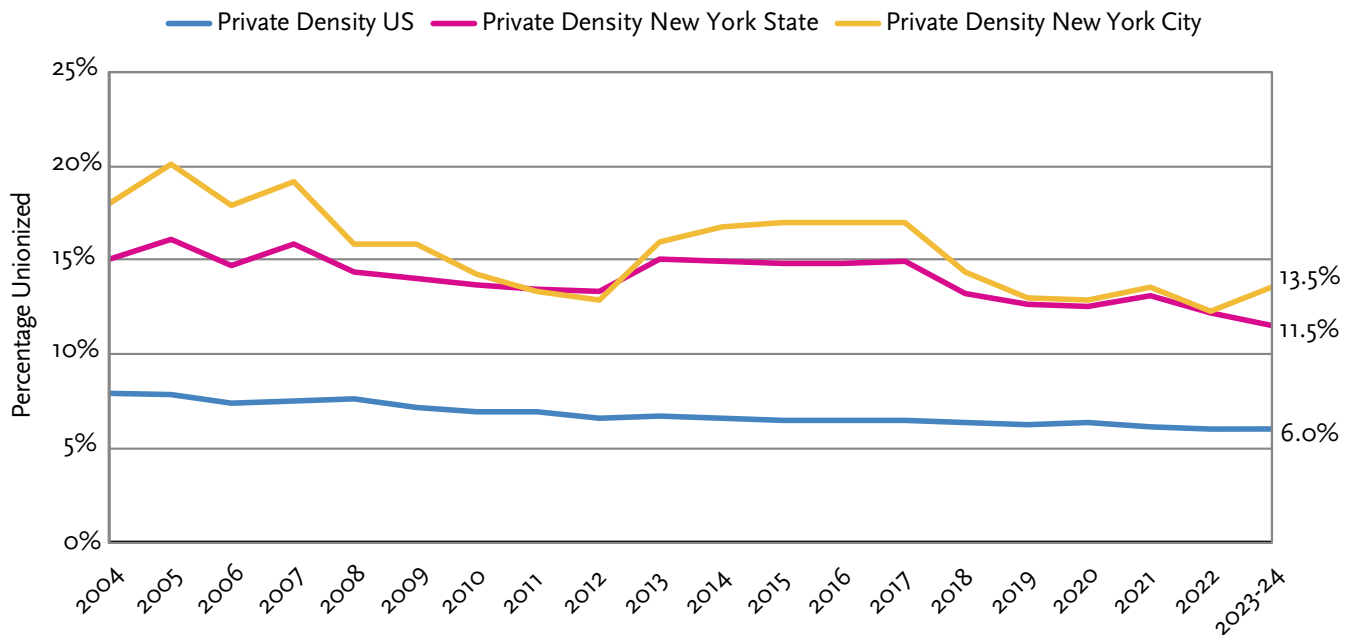
prohibits public-sector unions from collecting “fair share” or “agency” fees from non-members. In the immediate aftermath of that decision, public-sector union density remained relatively stable. However, since 2020 it has fallen in both New York City and State, with a sharper drop in the City (see Figure 1c).

## Geographical Variation in Union Density

Figure 2 shows 2023-24 private- and public-sector union density levels for the United States, New York State, New York City, upstate New York (excluding the five boroughs of New York City), and the New York City metropolitan “Combined Statistical Area.”<sup>6</sup> These are the five geographical entities for which we present detailed data in this report.

By way of background, however, we begin with a brief look at a selection of smaller geographical areas. Figure 3 shows the 2023-24 density figures for the State, the New York City metropolitan area, as well as the second and third largest metropolitan areas

**FIGURE 1B. PRIVATE-SECTOR UNION DENSITY IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2004-24**



Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

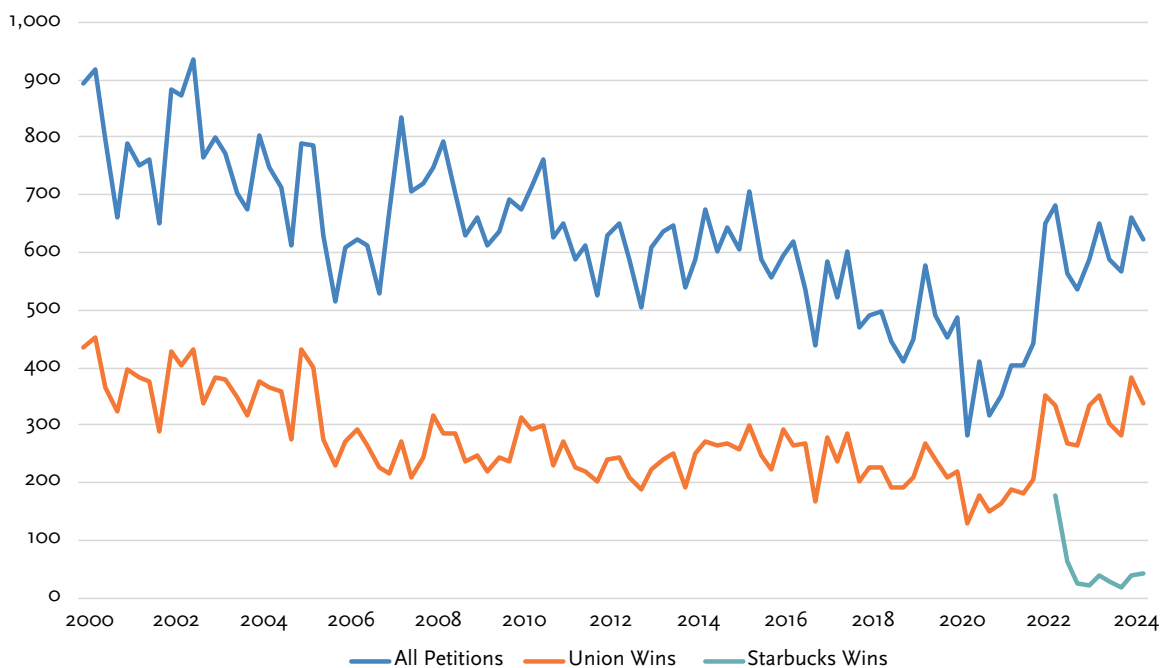
## ORGANIZING SURGE CONTINUES INTO 2024, WITH UNIONS WINNING A GROWING SHARE OF ELECTIONS

Private-sector union organizing efforts have been rising across the United States in the 2020s. The uptick in organizing that we documented in our 2022 report does not appear to have been a short-term effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, but has continued up through the time of writing (mid-2024), as Figure B1 shows. Unions are both petitioning for more representation elections and winning more of them – with over

three-quarters of all private-sector organizing attempts ending in union victories in 2023-24, as Figure B2 shows. The growth in election petitions has reversed a decade of decline, reaching a level not seen since 2015; current win rates outpace any since 2005.

Several factors have contributed to these trends, starting with the heightened awareness of labor issues sparked by the pandemic. Perhaps the single

**FIGURE B1. NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD REPRESENTATION PETITIONS, UNION WINS AT STARBUCKS, AND TOTAL UNION WINS, UNITED STATES, JANUARY 2000–JUNE 2024**



Source: <https://unionelections.org/>.

Note: Union wins are those certified through an National Labor Relations Board election, and petitions opened after January 1, 2000 and still open as of June 30, 2024 in which a majority of those eligible voted in favor of the union; voluntary recognitions are not included.

most important driver of the growth in union organizing is the persistently tight labor market. This diminishes the “fear factor” for union supporters: while it is illegal for employers to fire workers for organizing activity, such firings occur regularly; however, if comparable jobs are plentiful, this is a far less daunting obstacle to organizing than it would be in a time of high unemployment.

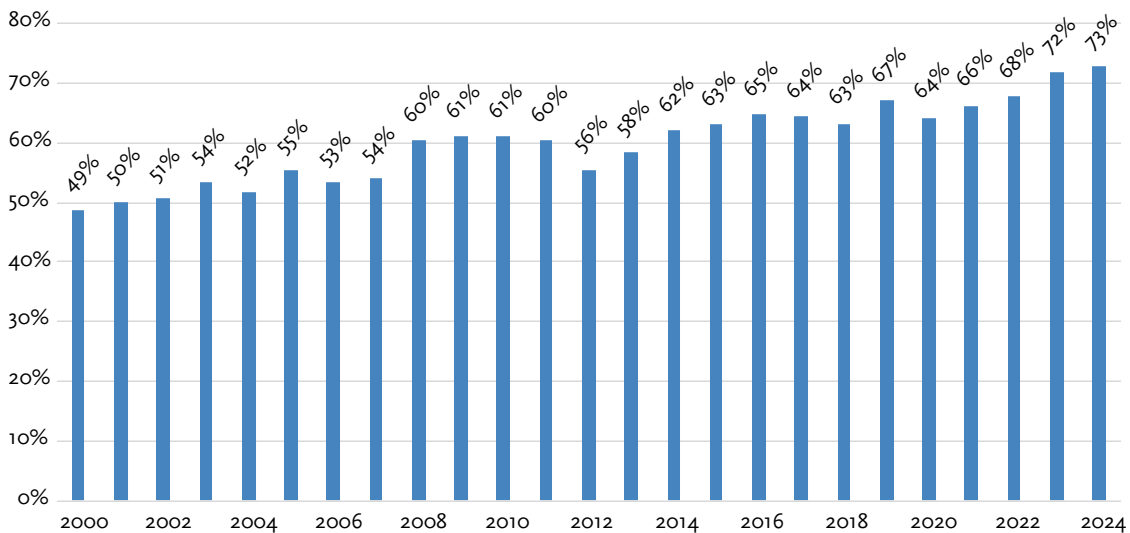
The tight labor market may not endure over the long term, but other factors contributing to the growth in new organizing are likely to be more sustained. As we noted in our 2022 report, young workers—especially those who have graduated from college—have become increasingly drawn to labor organizing in recent years. That change reflects the gap between the labor market expectations of college-educated workers and the reality of precarious, poorly compensated employment many of them encounter—along with skyrocketing

levels of student debt and soaring housing costs, especially in the urban areas to which many college-educated young people are attracted.

Recent polls show increased public support for unions, with Gallup reporting that 67 percent of Americans approved of labor unions in 2023, up from 49 percent in 2009.<sup>1</sup> Another 2023 survey, commissioned by the national AFL-CIO, documents the age gradient in support for unions: it found a 71 percent union approval rate among the overall population, but a much higher 88 percent rate among those under age 30.<sup>2</sup>

Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996), and especially Gen-Zers (born between 1997 and the early 2010s), are more pro-union than older generations. Indeed, these young workers are more supportive of unions than Baby Boomers and Gen-Xers were at their age, as a recent study by the Center for American Progress shows. That study

**FIGURE B2. NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD REPRESENTATION ELECTIONS, UNION WIN RATE, UNITED STATES, JANUARY 2000–JUNE 2024**



Source: <https://unionelections.org/>.

Note: Union wins are those certified through an National Labor Relations Board election, and petitions opened after January 1, 2000 and still open as of June 30, 2024 in which a majority of those eligible voted in favor of the union; voluntary recognitions are not included.



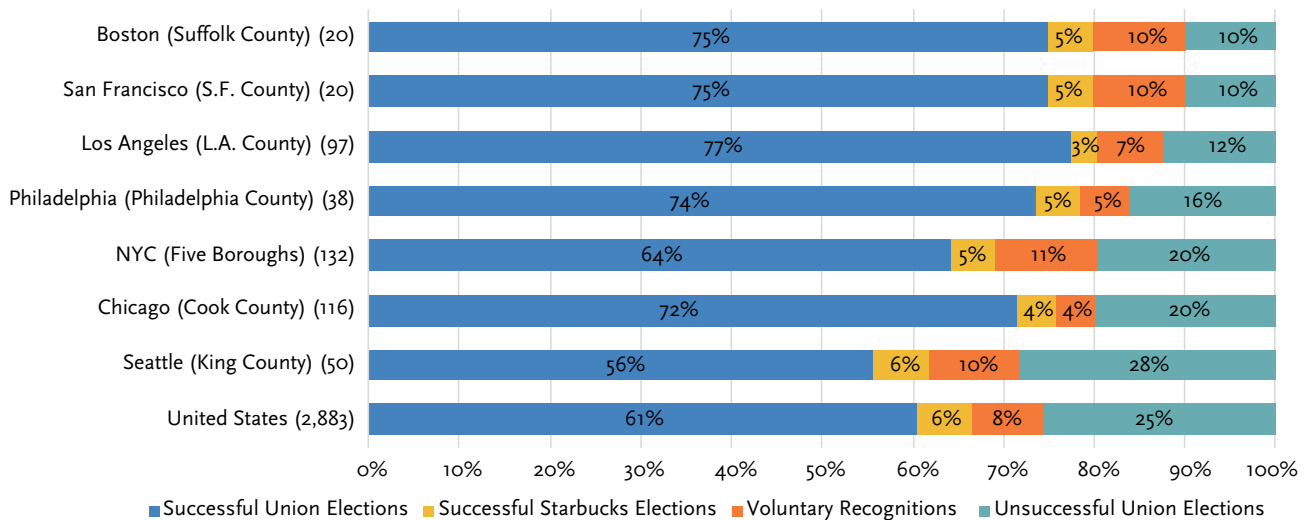
also found that college-educated Millennials were more pro-union than those with less education.<sup>3</sup> Another 2022 survey not only found that young workers had more pro-union attitudes, but also that they were disproportionately “union curious” — that is, open to unionism, even if lacking much knowledge about organized labor.<sup>4</sup>

As Figure B1 shows, a substantial share of recent representation election wins involved workers at Starbucks, where over 400 stores have voted to unionize since late 2021. This is another indication of the growing interest in unionism among young workers, who dominate the company’s workforce. As Figure B3 shows, over the past year and a half Starbucks union election victories comprised

between 3 and 6 percent of all elections in major U.S. urban areas, with Seattle — where the company is headquartered — showing the highest proportion of those shown. But Seattle also had the highest share of elections in which unions were unsuccessful, including three unsuccessful attempts at Starbucks stores. And the vast majority (154) of the 175 Starbucks stores where workers voted to unionize since 2023 were outside of the major cities shown in Figure B2.

Another sector where younger workers have led unionization drives is higher education, a phenomenon we covered in detail in our 2023 report. As Figure B4 shows, in Philadelphia and Boston,<sup>5</sup> higher-education workers comprised the majority

**FIGURE B3. SUCCESSFUL UNION ELECTIONS, STARBUCKS UNION ELECTIONS, AND VOLUNTARY RECOGNITIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL PRIVATE-SECTOR ORGANIZING ATTEMPTS, SELECTED OTHER URBAN AREAS AND THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 2023–JUNE 2024**



Sources: NLRB Recent Election Results are from <https://unionelections.org/>; Voluntary Recognitions Submitted to the NLRB are from <https://github.com/labordata/nlr-voluntary-recognitions>.

Note: The data shown include all National Labor Relations Board elections and voluntary recognitions from January 2023–June 2024. Numbers in parentheses next to each geographical entity refer to the total number of unionization attempts (whether the union or the employer prevailed), including voluntary recognitions. Successful union elections are those in which the unit was certified following an NLRB election, or, in petitions opened after January 1, 2023 and still open as of June 30, 2024, a majority of those eligible voted in favor of the union. Unsuccessful union elections include (a) those closed due to a certificate of results, in which a majority of those eligible voted against union representation, (b) those dismissed by the NLRB, and (c) petitions open as of June 30, 2024, in which a majority of those eligible voted against union representation. Not included here are: (a) union withdrawals of petitions for an election, and (b) open petitions in which the number of challenged ballots is large enough to determine the election outcome.

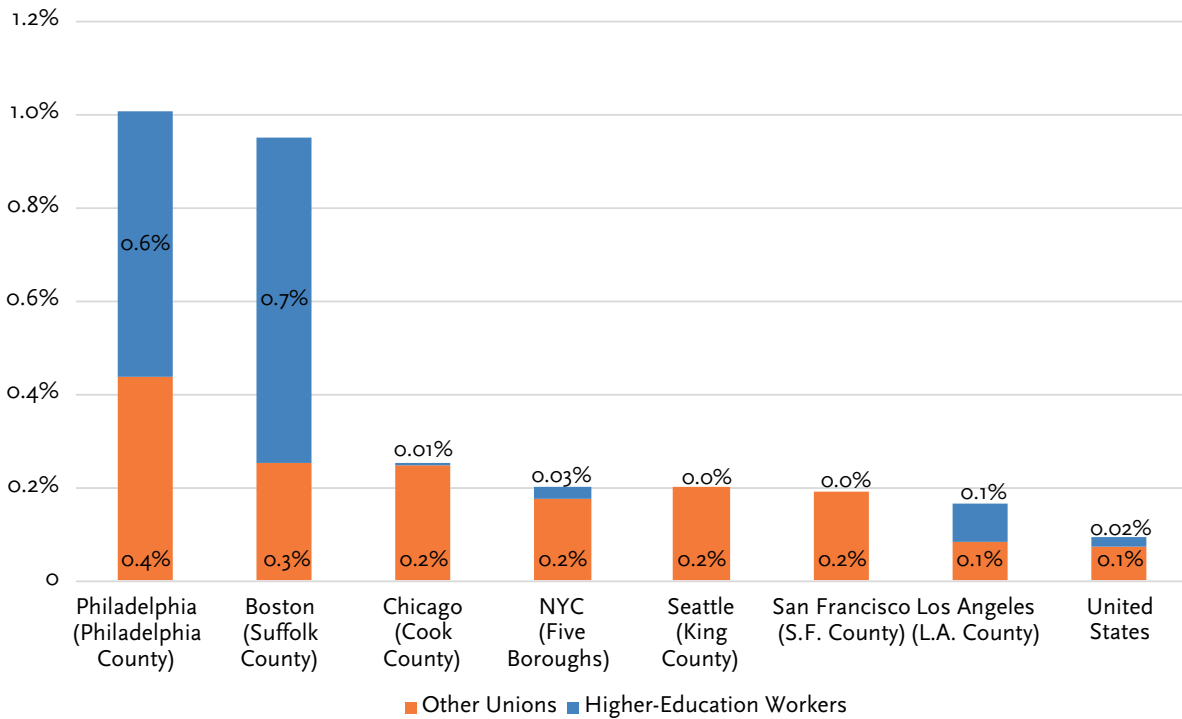
of newly organized private-sector union members in 2023-24, and in Los Angeles, they made up half the total. Nationally, however, as the rightmost bar in Figure B4 reveals, higher education accounts for only a small minority of all newly unionized private-sector workers.

The data in Figure B4 also help explain why, despite the recent surge in election wins and in pro-union attitudes, union density has not increased in the 2020s (as detailed in the body

of this report). Although unions have won an impressive number of representation elections in the 2020s, in most cases the number of workers involved has been modest. At Starbucks, for example, the typical bargaining unit is only about 20 workers. Indeed, as Figure B5 shows, a total of only 3,472 workers nationally were unionized by Starbucks Workers United in 2023-24.

Some union elections involve much larger numbers, however. One prominent example is

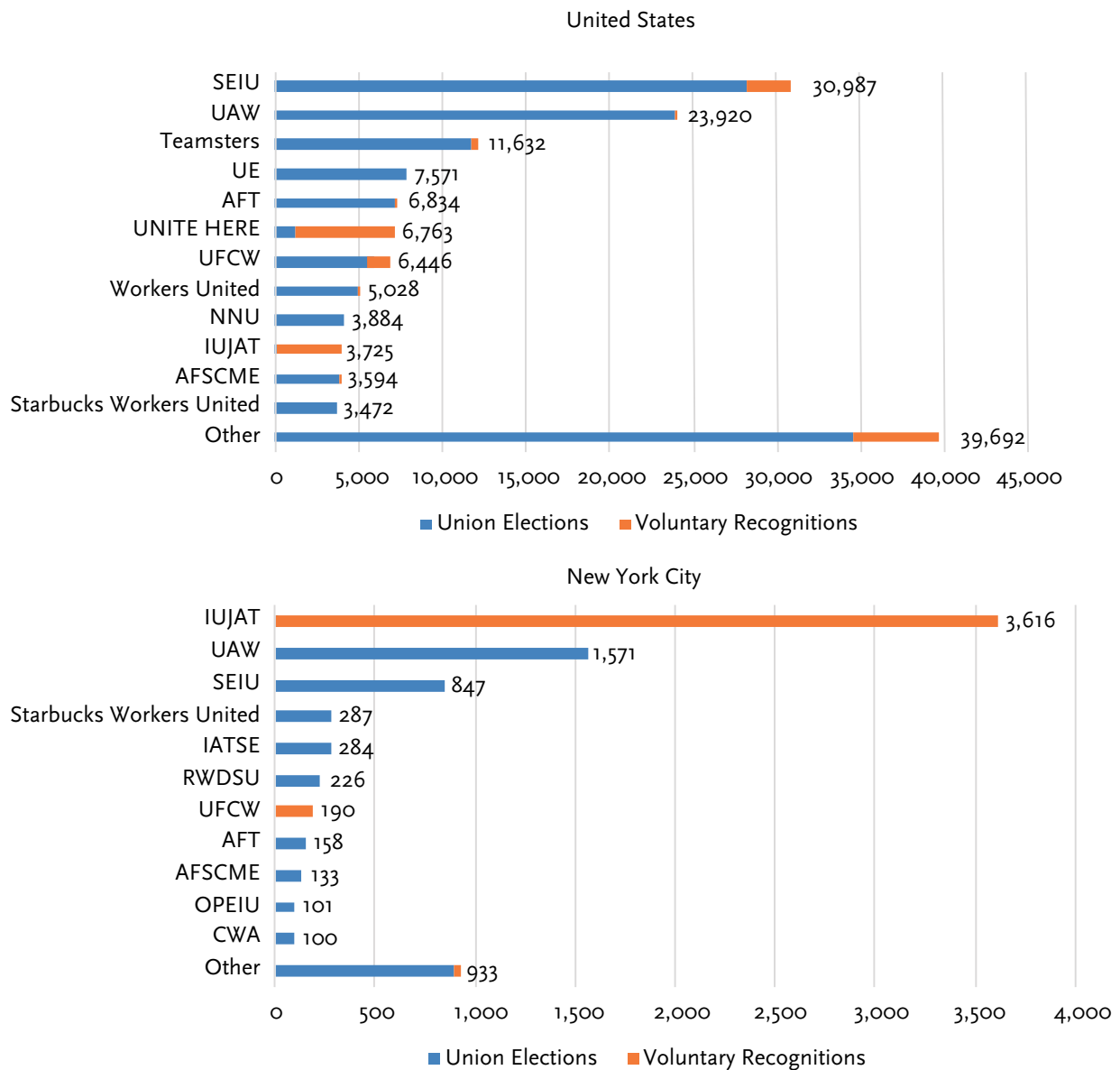
**FIGURE B4. NEWLY ORGANIZED PRIVATE-SECTOR UNION MEMBERS, HIGHER-EDUCATION AND OTHER PRIVATE-SECTOR WORKERS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE WAGE AND SALARY LABOR FORCE, SELECTED URBAN AREAS AND THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 2023–JUNE 2024**



Sources: NLRB Recent Election Results are from <https://unionelections.org/>; Voluntary Recognitions Submitted to the NLRB are from <https://github.com/labordata/nlr-voluntary-recognitions>; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Labor Force data are from <https://www.bls.gov/lau/>.

Note: The bars in this graph may appear inconsistent due to rounding. The number of newly organized union members for each geographical entity shown is the sum total of all eligible voters in collective bargaining units for which one of the following occurred: (a) the unit was certified following an NLRB election; (b) the employer voluntarily recognized the unit and notified the NLRB; or (c) the majority of those eligible in the unit voted in favor of the union in an NLRB election opened after January 1, 2023 and still open as of June 30, 2024. The denominator is the total wage and salary workforce in each geographical entity in June 2023, as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Higher-education workers include all private-sector units of faculty, postdoctoral researchers and fellows, graduate student workers, and undergraduate student workers, but excludes units of classified staff and non-instructional college and university employees.

**FIGURE B5. NEW UNION MEMBERS BY NATIONAL AFFILIATE, UNION ELECTIONS AND VOLUNTARY RECOGNITIONS, NEW YORK CITY AND THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 2023-JUNE 2024**



Sources: National Labor Relations Board, Recent Election Results are from <https://unionelections.org/>; Voluntary Recognitions Submitted to the National Labor Relations Board are from <https://github.com/labordata/nlr-voluntary-recognitions>.

Note: Data shown are for the 12 unions with the largest number of newly organized union members in the period from January 2023 to June 2024, inclusive, for New York City and the United States. "Other" is the sum of newly organized members from the remaining unions. These data include both workers unionized through successful NLRB elections and those for whom unions obtained voluntary recognition. Union acronyms (in alphabetical order): American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); American Federation of Teachers (AFT); Communication Workers of America (CWA); International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE); International Union of Journeymen and Allied Trades (IUJAT); National Nurses United (NNU); Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU); Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU); Service Employees International Union (SEIU); United Auto Workers (UAW); United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE); United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW); and Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union (UNITE HERE). RWDSU is affiliated with UFCW, and Workers United and Starbucks Workers United are both affiliated with SEIU.

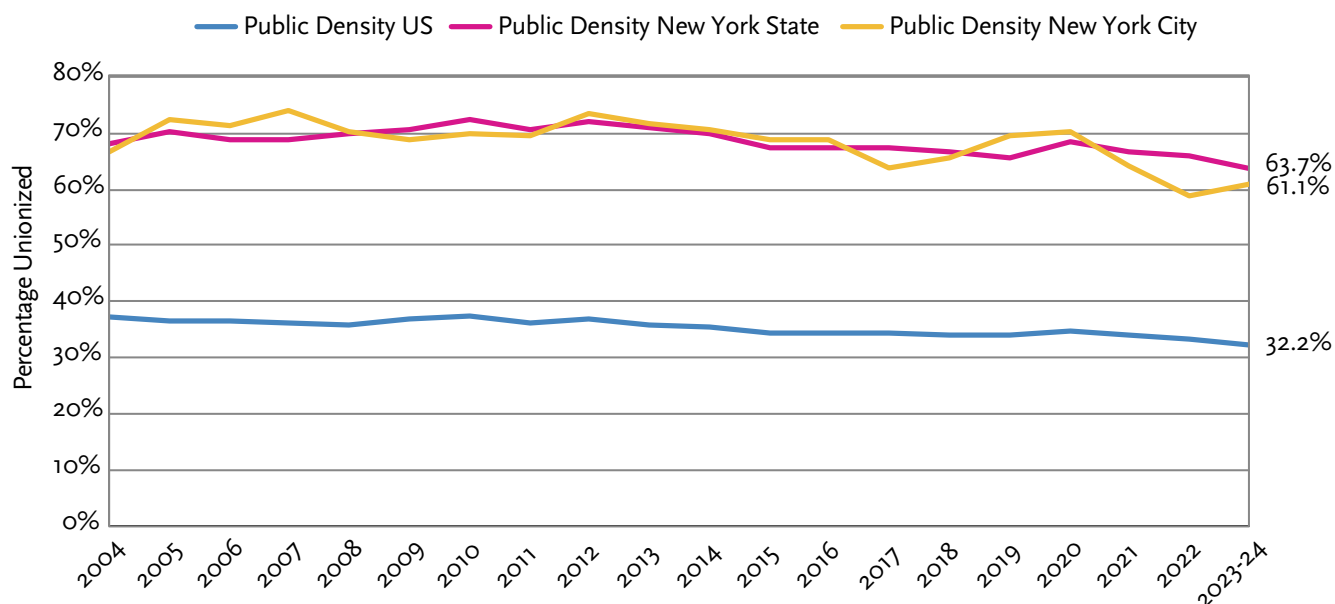
the United Auto Workers (UAW)'s 2024 win in the election at the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, which employs 5500 workers. The recent wave of higher-education union elections represents another exception, as single units of faculty or student employees can number in the thousands of workers. But the U.S. labor force includes over 165 million workers,<sup>6</sup> so even such relatively large bargaining units are far from sufficient to move the needle on the nation's union density. That would require a far more extensive surge in union organizing.

Meanwhile, employer opposition to unionism remains pervasive. Even when unions win elections, employers frequently challenge the outcome; in recent years only about half of union wins have yielded collective bargaining agreements a year later.<sup>7</sup> And as Figure B3 shows, voluntary union

recognition remains a rare event—it was the outcome in only 8 percent of all private-sector organizing attempts in 2023-24, and the bulk of those involved UNITE HERE, which has often succeeded in winning “neutrality agreements” with employers in recent years.

Figure B5 shows that a relatively small number of labor unions account for the bulk of the new organizing, both in the nation as a whole and in New York City. There are 60 unions in the AFL-CIO today, as well as other independent unions. Most of them are doing very little new organizing. The twelve unions shown in the top half of Figure B4 account for the bulk (74 percent) of all new private-sector union members organized across the nation in 2023-24; and the twelve shown in the bottom half account for 89 percent of those in New York City.

**FIGURE 1c. PUBLIC-SECTOR UNION DENSITY IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2004-24**



Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

in the State: Albany-Schenectady-Troy and Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls.<sup>7</sup>

In New York State as a whole, public-sector density was 63.7 percent, nearly double the national average of 32.2 percent. The New York City metropolitan area had a slightly lower level of public-sector density (63.1 percent). The rate was somewhat higher in the Albany-Schenectady-Troy metropolitan area, where public-sector density was 65.6 percent. That reflects the fact that the Capital District has a disproportionate share of public-sector employment—which also helps to explain why overall union density is far higher in the Albany-Schenectady-Troy than in either the Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls or New York City metropolitan areas, as Figure 3 shows.

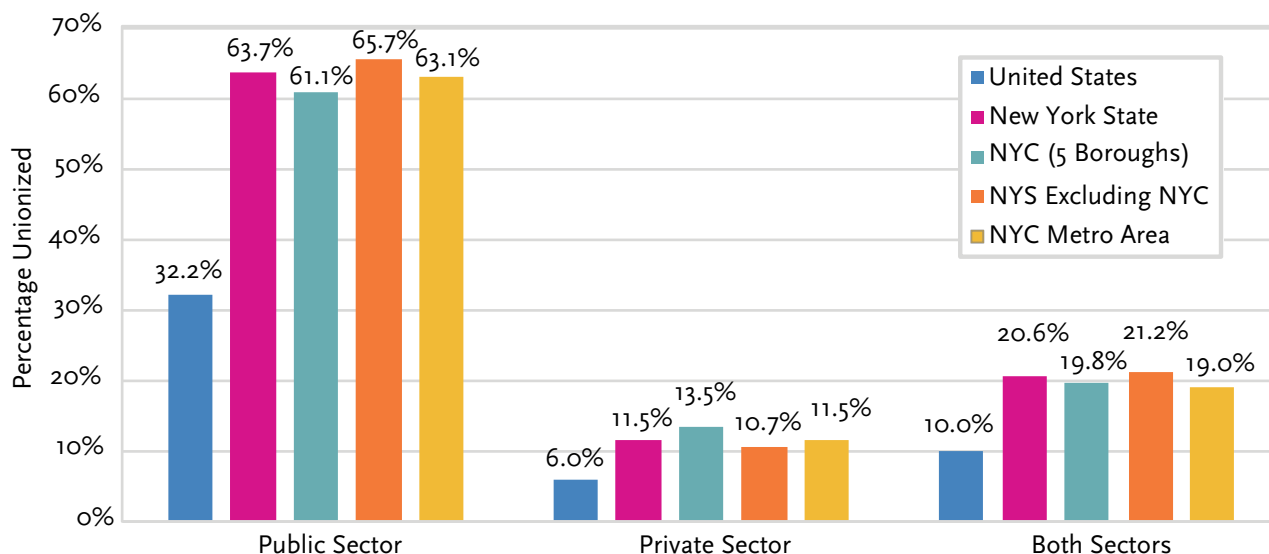
As expected, private-sector union density is consistently lower than in the public sector. In New York State the 2023-24 private-sector unionization rate was 11.5 percent, almost double the national average

of 6.0 percent but less than a fifth of the State’s public-sector rate (63.7 percent), as Figure 3 shows.

In the New York City metropolitan area, private-sector density was 11.5 percent in 2023-24, equal to the statewide private-sector rate. (Unfortunately, the CPS sample size is too small to reliably estimate private-sector density for the other two metropolitan areas shown in Figure 3.)

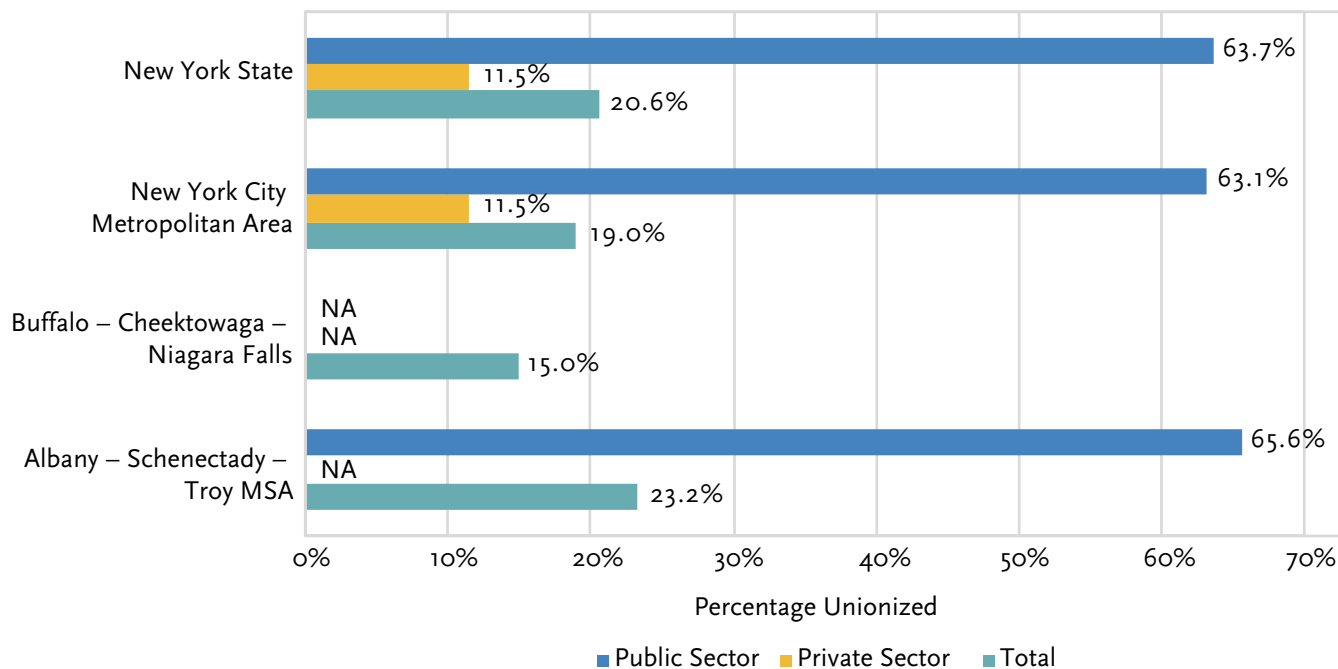
As Figure 4 shows, union density also varies among New York City’s five boroughs, with substantially higher 2023-24 unionization levels among residents of the “outer boroughs” than in the city as a whole. Staten Island and the Bronx have the highest rates, with Brooklyn and Queens lagging behind them. Unfortunately, the CPS sample size is too small to estimate the private- and public-sector rates in Manhattan or Staten Island, or the public-sector rate in the Bronx.

**FIGURE 2. UNION DENSITY, BY SECTOR, NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2023-24**



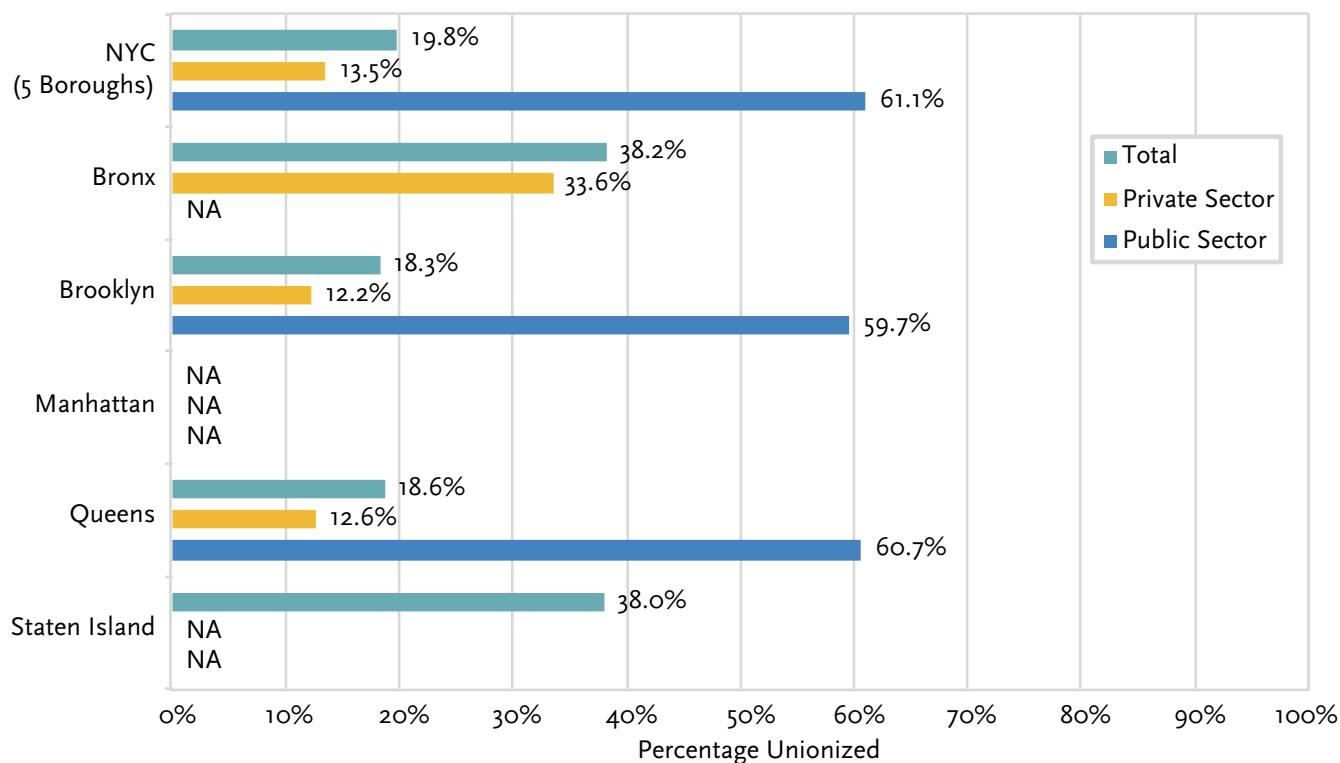
Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

**FIGURE 3. UNION DENSITY BY SECTOR, NEW YORK STATE AND SELECTED METROPOLITAN AREAS, 2023-24**



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.  
Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

**FIGURE 4. UNION DENSITY BY SECTOR, NEW YORK CITY AND ITS BOROUGH, 2023-24**



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.  
 Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

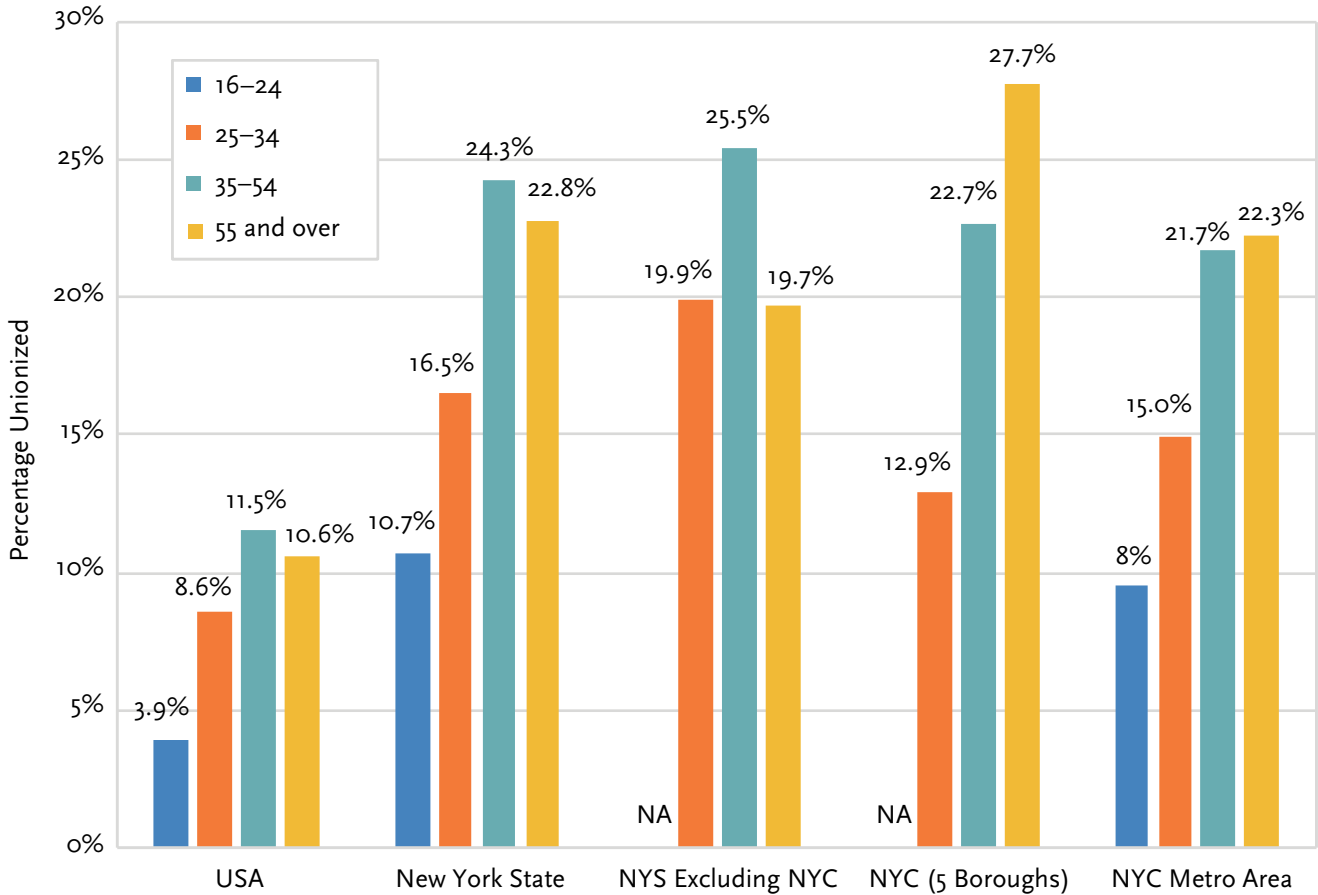
## Union Membership by Age, Earnings, and Education

Although younger workers have been the protagonists of many recent union organizing efforts, overall unionization rates remain much higher for workers aged 35 or more than for their younger counterparts. As Figure 5 shows, the 16-24 age group lags far behind in all five geographical jurisdictions. In New York City and the New York City metropolitan area, the rates are highest for workers aged 55 years or more, slightly lower for those aged 35-54, and far lower for the younger groups. The national pattern, and that in upstate New York (and in the State overall), is slightly different, with a higher unionization rate for 35- to 54-year-olds than for those 55 and over. The age

gradient manifest in Figure 5 reflects the fact that, as Figure 6 shows, unionized jobs provide workers with higher wages, on average, than non-union jobs do. Higher wages are strongly associated with lower turnover, which in turn tends to skew the unionized workforce toward older, more senior workers. In addition, unionized jobs generally offer more job security than nonunion jobs, further reducing turnover and similarly contributing to the age gradient among unionized workers.

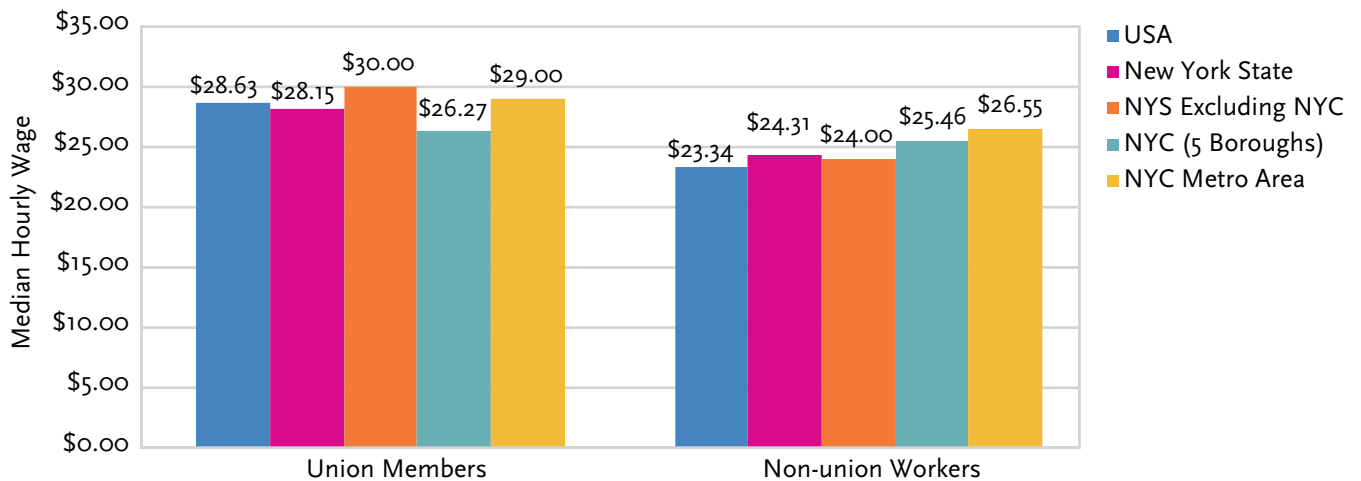
Figure 7 shows that—contrary to enduring stereotypes—in New York City and in the nation as a whole, college-educated workers had higher unionization rates than those with less education in 2023-24. Nationally, the rate is an even higher 12.7 percent for workers aged 35-54 with some college, and

**FIGURE 5. UNIONIZATION RATES BY AGE, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2023-24**



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.  
 Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

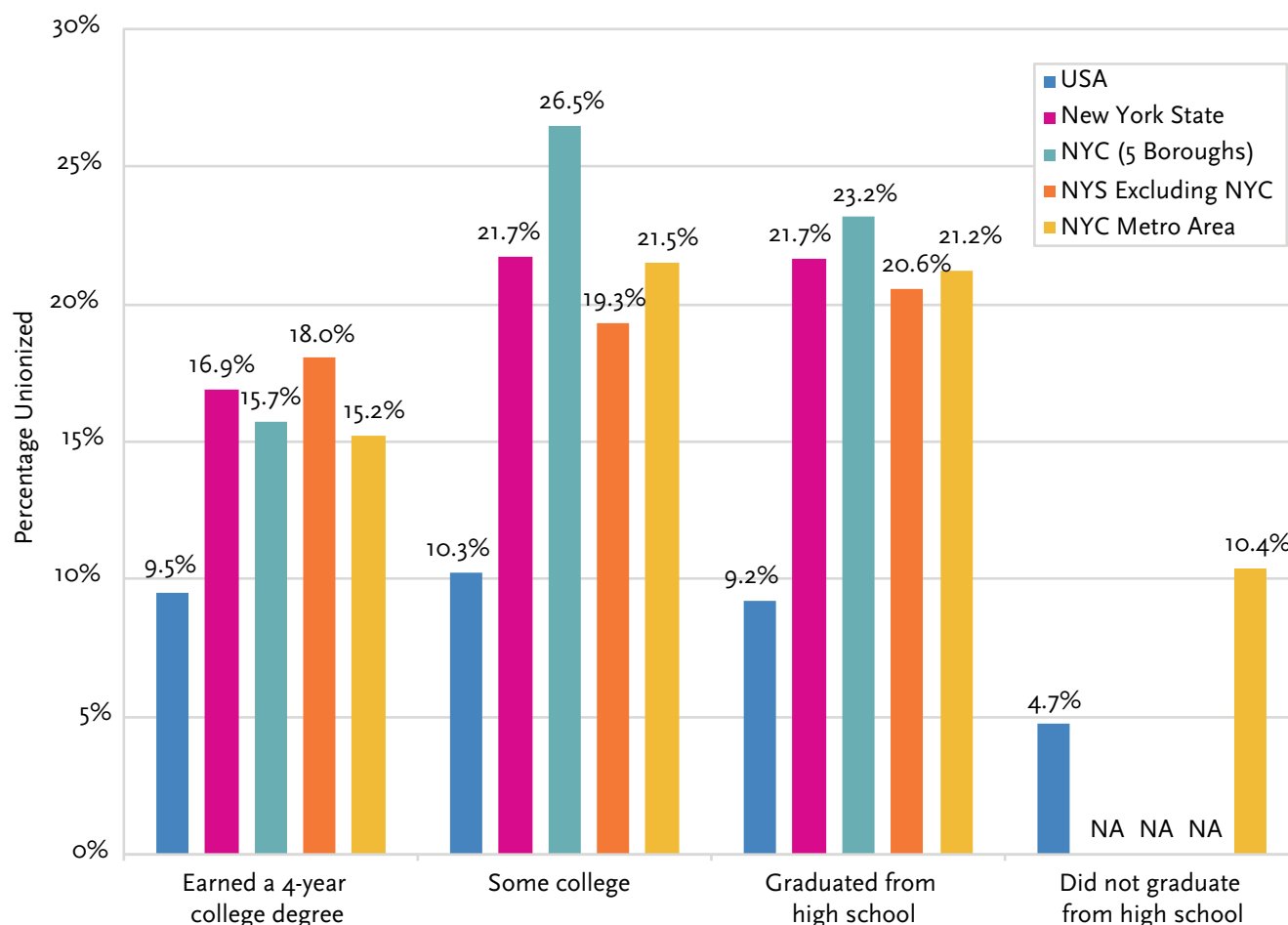
**FIGURE 6. MEDIAN HOURLY WAGE, UNION MEMBERS AND NON-UNION WORKERS, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2023-24**



Figures reflect preliminary estimates, in 2023 dollars.  
 Wages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.



**FIGURE 7. UNIONIZATION RATES BY EDUCATION, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2023-24**



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.  
 Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023 — June 2024.

10.7 percent for those in that age group with four-year degrees (not shown in Figure 7).

In New York City, in the New York City metropolitan area, and in the nation as a whole, the group with “some college” — education beyond high school but short of attaining a four-year degree — has the highest unionization rate. By contrast, in upstate New York the rate is slightly higher for high school graduates than those with some college or four-year college degrees. Workers who lack high-school degrees now have the nation’s lowest unionization rates, and that is also the case in the New York City metropolitan area.

Decades ago, the typical union member was a blue-collar worker with limited formal education. But the data in Figure 7 reflect the fact that college attendance rates have increased steadily over time, and that in the 21st century mid-level professionals in fields like education and public administration — most of whom have attended college — tend to be more highly unionized than other workers. Recent union organizing in the private sector has also disproportionately involved college-educated workers in sectors like journalism, museums, non-profits, and higher education (especially in urban areas), although the

scale of that organizing is still too modest to impact the data shown in Figure 7.

## Industry Variation in Unionization Rates

In 2023-24 more than half (55.4 percent) of all unionized workers in the United States were in three basic industry groups: educational services, health care and social assistance, and public administration, as Table 1 shows. In New York City and State, those three industry groups account for an even larger share of unionized workers (63.5 percent and 64.7 percent, respectively). All three of these industry groups include large numbers of public-sector workers (although in health care a majority are in the private sector, as are about one-third of those employed in education). It is also noteworthy that, in contrast to many traditional union strongholds, all three of these industries include relatively large numbers of college-educated workers.

Table 1 also reveals that the composition of union membership in New York City, and to a lesser degree in the State, deviates in other respects from the national pattern. Most notably, manufacturing accounts for a miniscule proportion of union membership in the five boroughs and in the New York City metropolitan area (so small that the CPS sample size makes it impossible to specify precise figures, which unfortunately is also the case for several of the other industries shown). By contrast, in New York City, the share of union membership accounted for by the health care and social assistance industry group is more than double its national share.

Table 2 shows the composition of wage and salary employment by industry group for the same five geographical entities for which the composition of union membership is presented in Table 1. Comparing the two tables reveals that, for most industry groups, the share of union membership deviates greatly

**TABLE 1: COMPOSITION OF UNION MEMBERSHIP BY INDUSTRY GROUP, FOR SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS IN NEW YORK AND THE UNITED STATES, 2023-24**

Industry Group	USA	New York State	NYS Excl. NYC	NYC (5 Boroughs)	NYC Metro Area
Construction	7.2%	6.2%	6.9%	NA	5.6%
Manufacturing	8.2%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Wholesale and retail trade	5.1%	NA	NA	NA	5.2%
Transportation and utilities	13.3%	10.0%	10.9%	NA	12.5%
Information services	1.4%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Finance, insurance and real estate	1.4%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Professional and business services	3.2%	4.1%	NA	NA	4.8%
Educational services	27.6%	28.8%	33.1%	22.6%	28.9%
Healthcare and social assistance	12.2%	20.3%	15.1%	27.7%	18.5%
Leisure and hospitality	3.0%	NA	NA	NA	3.8%
Other services	1.3%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Public administration	15.6%	15.6%	17.2%	13.2%	13.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>99.5%</b>	<b>85.0%</b>	<b>83.3%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>92.6%</b>
<b>TOTAL of education, health and public admin</b>	<b>55.4%</b>	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>65.5%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>60.8%</b>

Note: Total for the USA column does not add to 100% due to rounding; for the other geographical areas shown, totals include only industry groups for which reliable data are available.

NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.

Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.

Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023–June 2024.

**TABLE 2: COMPOSITION OF WAGE AND SALARY EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY GROUP, FOR SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS IN NEW YORK AND THE UNITED STATES, 2023-24**

Industry Group	USA	New York State	NYS Excl. NYC	NYC (5 Boroughs)	NYC Metro Area
Construction	6.4%	6.3%	6.9%	5.4%	6.0%
Manufacturing	10.3%	5.4%	7.7%	2.3%	6.1%
Wholesale and retail trade	12.6%	10.1%	11.1%	8.7%	10.7%
Transportation and utilities	6.1%	5.4%	5.6%	5.1%	6.1%
Information services	1.8%	2.2%	1.8%	2.7%	2.6%
Finance, insurance and real estate	6.5%	8.2%	7.0%	9.7%	9.1%
Professional and business services	12.0%	13.3%	11.0%	16.5%	14.5%
Educational services	9.7%	12.0%	13.1%	10.6%	11.1%
Healthcare and social assistance	14.6%	17.8%	16.5%	19.7%	16.5%
Leisure and hospitality	9.0%	9.5%	8.6%	10.8%	8.8%
Other services	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.0%
Public administration	5.5%	5.5%	6.3%	4.5%	4.4%
TOTAL	98.7%	99.7%	99.5%	100.0%	99.8%

Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding and missing data.  
 NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.  
 Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023 - June 2024.

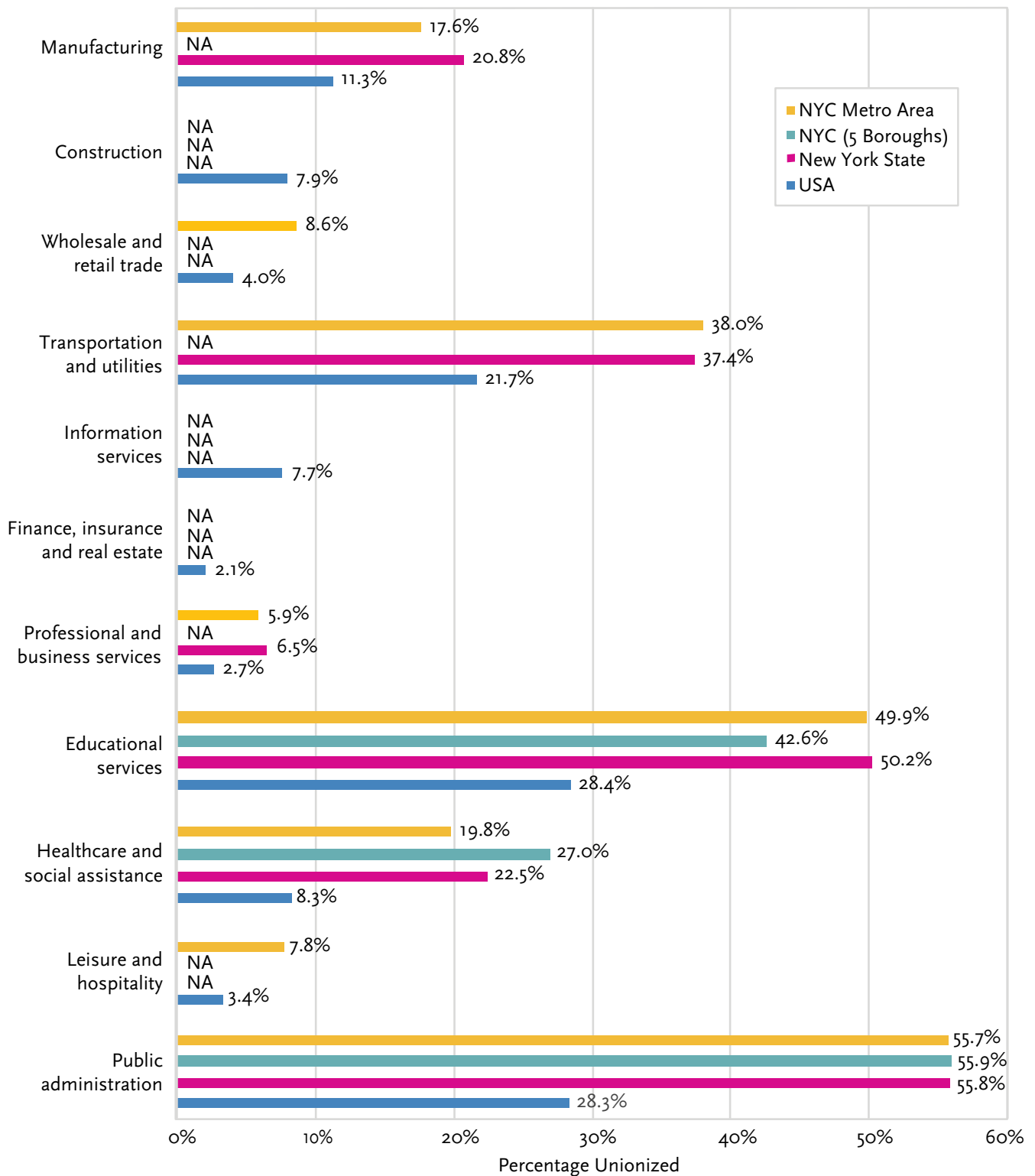
from the share of employment. Industry groups with high union density, such as educational services, or transportation and utilities, make up a much larger share of union membership than of employment. By contrast, wholesale and retail trade, and the leisure and hospitality industry group, account for a far more substantial share of employment than of union membership.

Figure 8 depicts the industry group data in a different format, showing unionization rates by industry (as opposed to the share of the unionized workforce in each industry group, as shown in Table 1) for the City, the metropolitan area, the State and the nation. Unionization rates vary widely across the eleven industry groups shown. Regardless of geographic jurisdiction, education, public administration, and transportation and utilities are the most highly unionized industry groups. In New York City, the next most unionized industry group is health care and social assistance, which is also relatively highly unionized in the New York City metropolitan area and in New York State. By contrast, in the United States as a whole, the unionization rate for health care and social

assistance is only slightly above the private-sector average. The other outstanding high-density industry is construction, which has a unionization rate comparable to that in health care and social assistance in the three geographical entities shown in Figure 8 (in New York City the sample size for construction is too small to permit a reliable estimate). At the other extreme, regardless of geography, union density is consistently low—in the single digits—in wholesale and retail trade; leisure and hospitality; information services; and in finance, insurance, and real estate.

Because these industry group data are highly aggregated, they obscure the complexity of the City, State and nation’s markedly uneven industry patterns of unionization. The limited sample size of the CPS restricts our ability to capture that complexity for 2023-24. For this reason, we created a different dataset that consolidates CPS data over a much longer period, the twelve-and-a-half years from January 2012 to June 2024, inclusive. This 150-month blend provides a much larger sample size, permitting a far more disaggregated analysis of industry variations. Because of the longer time span represented in the data, however,

**FIGURE 8. UNIONIZATION RATES BY INDUSTRY GROUP, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2023-24**



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.  
 Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

the unionization rates derived from this dataset differ somewhat from those shown in Figure 8 for 2023-24.<sup>8</sup>

Table 3 summarizes the 2012-2024 data for 41 industry groups, showing unionization rates in the New York City metropolitan area, New York State, and the United States as a whole. For all but one of the industry groups shown for which data are available, in this period the State had far higher union density than in the nation. The only exception is “air transportation” in which the rate in the State is marginally lower than in the nation. In the New York City metropolitan area, the unionization rate for the residual category “other transportation” was slightly below the State and national rates. Two other industries in the metropolitan area had a unionization rate below the national average: food manufacturing and “other manufacturing,” another residual category.

In 10 of the 36 industries shown for which sample sizes are sufficiently large to permit reliable estimates, 2012-2024 unionization rates were at least 25 percent in the New York City metropolitan area: utilities; air transportation; bus service and urban transit; postal service transportation; couriers and messengers; “other transportation,” elementary and secondary schools; hospitals; nursing care facilities; and public administration. These same 10 industries also had rates at or above 25 percent in New York State. Union density in construction; paper products and printing; wired and other telecommunication; “other educational services,” home healthcare services; and performing arts, museums and sports also met the 25 percent threshold in the State (but not in the metropolitan area). In the case of air transportation and postal service transportation, these high unionization rates are the product of national-level collective bargaining, while for the other industries they reflect union strength in local and/or regional labor markets.

Union contracts may no longer set the wage standard for the New York workforce as a whole, but they still do so in key industries like hospitals, nursing care facilities and telecommunications, as well as in public-sector industries like transit, education, home

health care (the unionized portion of which is publicly funded) and public administration.

That said, the portrait of industry-specific unionization rates shown in Table 3 fails to capture some important points of differentiation. A notable example is the variations among construction industry segments: commercial construction is far more unionized than its residential counterpart in the metropolitan area, the State and the nation alike. Similarly, while traditional supermarkets are still highly unionized, most other types of retail grocery stores are not.

## Union Membership Demographics

The patterns of unionization by industry have a powerful effect on the demographics of unionism because males and females, as well as workers of various racial and ethnic origins, are unevenly distributed across industries.<sup>9</sup> For example, educational services, as well as health care and social assistance, both of which have very high unionization rates, disproportionately employ female workers. This helps explain why the 2023-24 unionization rates for women in New York City, the New York metropolitan area, upstate New York, and New York State were higher than those of men, as Figure 9 shows. The male unionization rate was slightly above that of females in 2023-24 in the United States as a whole, but the national gender gap is relatively small by historical standards.

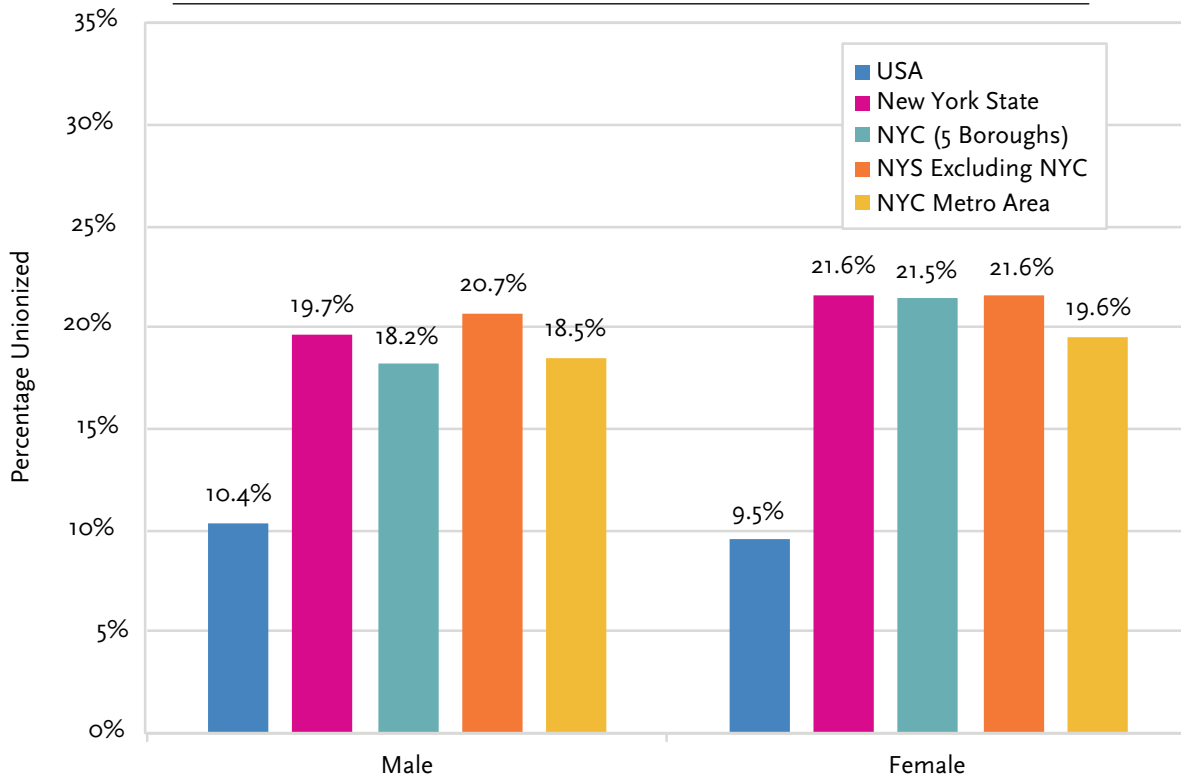
Unionization rates also vary by race and ethnicity, as Figure 10 shows. Like the gender dynamic, this reflects differential racial and ethnic patterns of employment across industries. Blacks are the most highly unionized group in all of the five geographical entities shown, in large part reflecting their disproportionate concentration in public-sector employment, in which (as shown above) unionization rates are far higher than in the private sector. This effect is further amplified in New York City—where the Black unionization rate is almost double that of whites—largely because of the large and highly unionized public

**TABLE 3. UNIONIZATION RATES BY INDUSTRY, NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE, AND THE UNITED STATES, 2012-2024**

Industry	New York Metro	New York State	United States
TOTAL (All Industries)	19.8%	22.7%	10.6%
Agriculture and mining	NA	NA	3.6
Utilities	43.4	43.6	23.6
Construction	24.7	27.1	13.7
Food manufacturing	7.6	11.8	11.6
Textile and apparel manufacturing	NA	NA	3.3
Paper products and printing	NA	26.7	11.4
Other manufacturing	6.8	12.0	8.5
Wholesale grocery and beverages	12.9	14.2	8.6
Other wholesale trade	5.2	6.8	2.5
Retail grocery stores	23.8	20.2	15.2
Pharmacy and drug stores	9.8	9.6	4.5
Department and discount stores	NA	NA	2.7
Other retail trade	4.2	4.6	1.9
Air transportation	43.1	39.0	39.1
Truck transportation	15.2	19.6	8.4
Bus service and urban transit	59.7	62.0	39.9
Postal service (transportation)	74.0	78.1	62.9
Couriers and messengers	27.3	30.5	21.3
Other transportation	26.8	28.1	27.2
Newspaper, periodical and book publishing	NA	NA	5.1
Motion pictures and video	18.1	18.4	12.7
Radio, television and cable	17.6	21.3	8.0
Wired and other telecommunication	21.9	31.7	13.4
Other information services	22.4	NA	15.3
Finance, insurance and real estate	7.1	8.9	2.4
Building and security services	12.7	15.1	5.0
Other management and professional services	3.5	5.1	1.9
Elementary and secondary schools	62.4	65.9	39.0
Other educational services	23.8	26.0	12.6
Offices of physicians and other health providers	5.6	6.7	2.8
Hospitals	33.4	37.4	13.5
Nursing care facilities	25.2	28.6	6.5
Home healthcare services	24.6	26.0	7.2
Child day care services	10.4	13.6	3.6
Other healthcare and social assistance	19.8	22.1	8.9
Performing arts, museums and sports	23.8	25.1	11.7
Amusement, gambling and recreation	6.3	6.3	5.0
Hotels and accommodation	22.4	21.2	7.3
Restaurants, food service & drinking places	3.1	3.1	1.5
Other services	6.0	7.0	3.0
Public administration	58.6	62.6	30.1

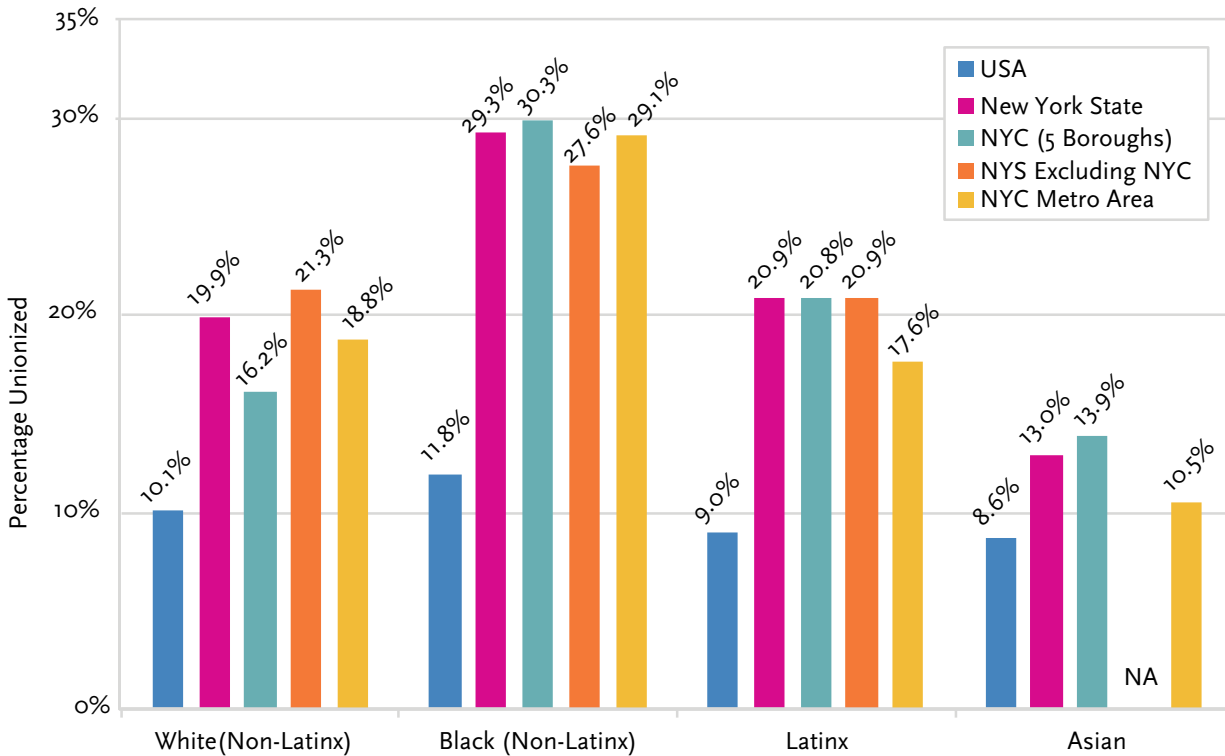
NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.  
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2012 - June 2024.

**FIGURE 9. UNIONIZATION RATES BY GENDER, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2023-24**



Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

**FIGURE 10. UNIONIZATION RATES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2023-24**



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.  
 Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

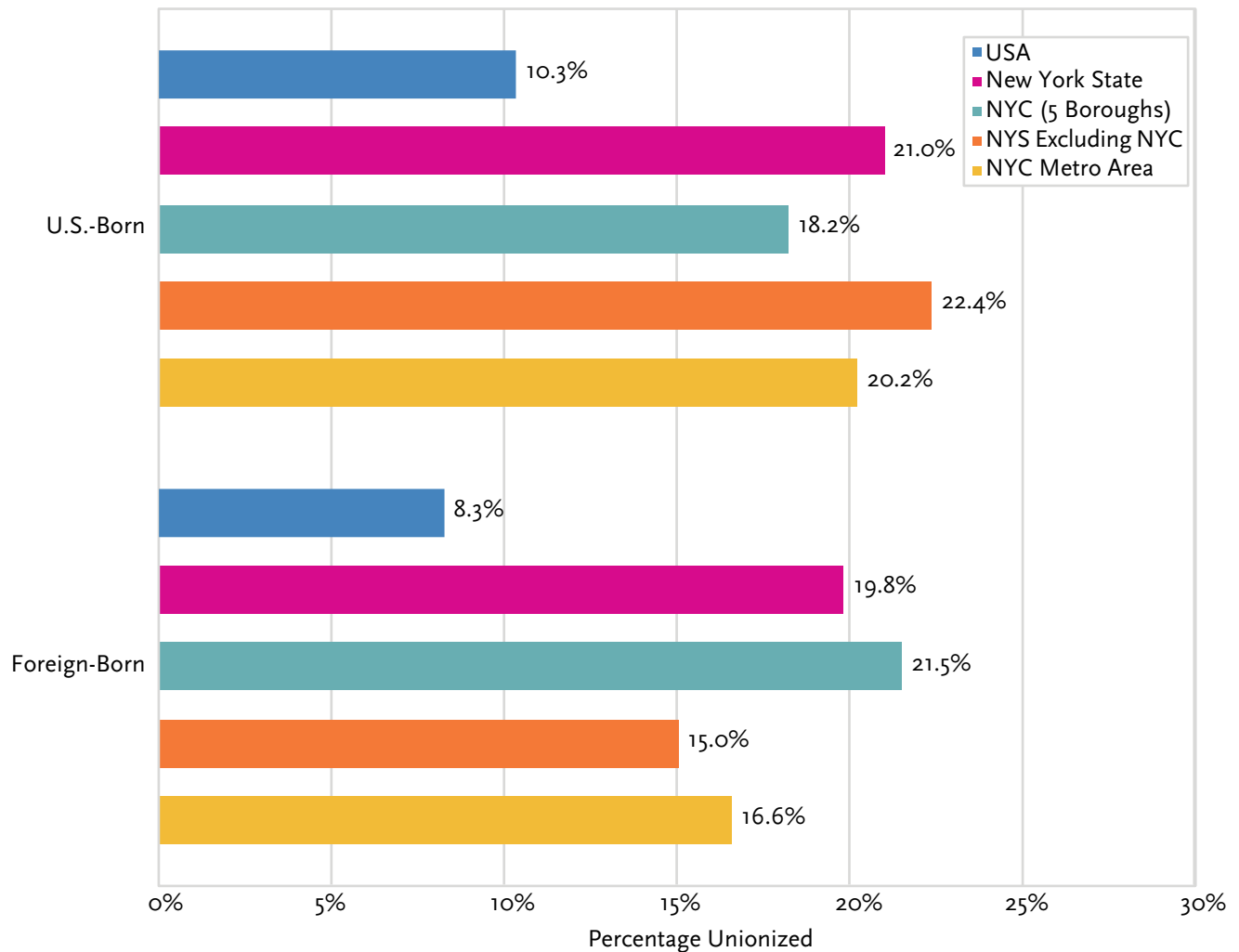
transit sector, in which Blacks are overrepresented. In New York City, and in New York State as a whole, Latinx workers' unionization rate was higher than that of non-Latinx whites in 2023-24; but in the other three jurisdictions shown, whites had a slightly higher unionization rate than their Latinx counterparts did.

Unionization rates vary with nativity as well, as shown in Figure 11. In 2023-24, foreign-born workers' unionization rate was slightly higher than that of U.S.-born workers in New York City. U.S.-born workers had a higher unionization rate than their foreign-born counterparts in the other four geographical areas

shown, however, reflecting the fact that relatively few foreign-born workers are employed in the highly unionized public sector. New York City is different from the other geographical entities shown because it has a large concentration of immigrants who arrived in the United States decades ago, many of whom are naturalized U.S. citizens; immigrants in this group are often employed in the public sector and far more likely to be union members than recent arrivals.

More generally, as Figure 12 shows, foreign-born workers are not a homogenous group. With the exception of upstate New York, the unionization rate

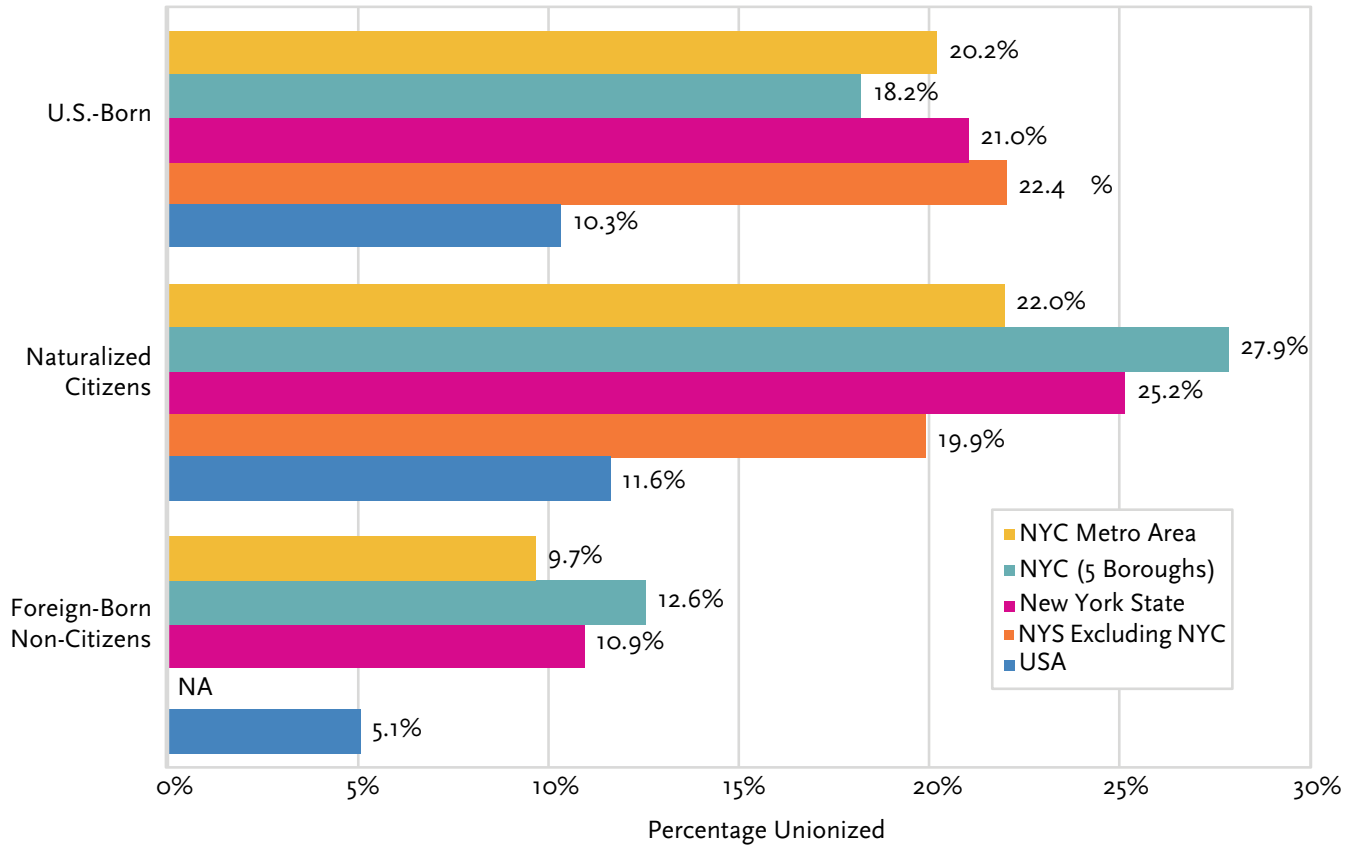
**FIGURE 11. UNIONIZATION RATES BY NATIVITY, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2023-24**



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text. Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024. Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.



**FIGURE 12. UNIONIZATION RATES BY NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2023-24**



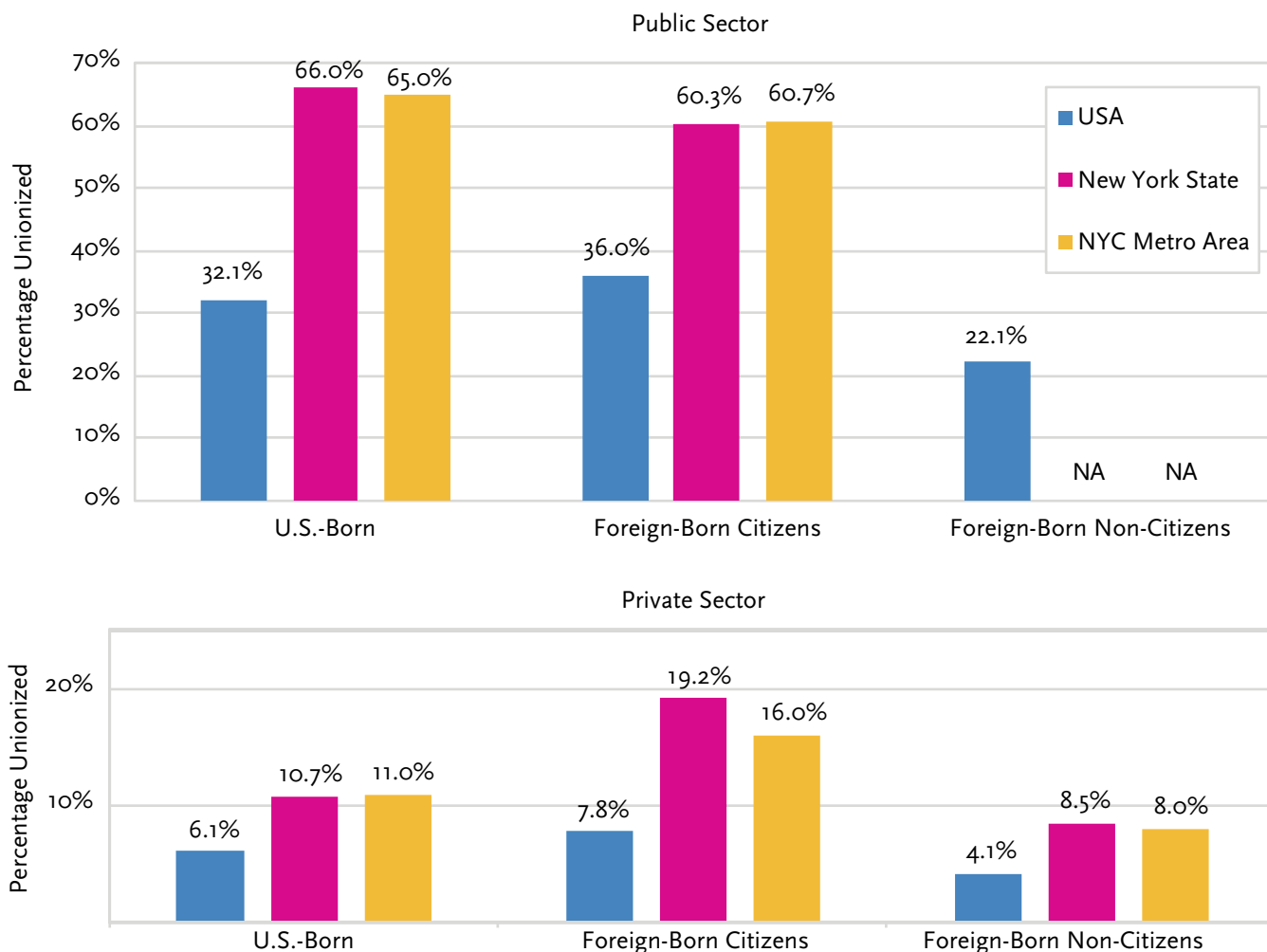
NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.  
 Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024.  
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

of naturalized U.S. citizens is higher than that of U.S.-born workers. Foreign-born non-citizens, by contrast, consistently have very low rates of unionization. They typically are recent arrivals, and most are also relatively young (as noted above, younger workers are less likely to be union members than older ones, regardless of nativity). Moreover, noncitizen immigrants are disproportionately employed in informal-sector jobs, which have very low unionization rates. Over time, however, many immigrants are able to move into sectors of the labor market where unions are present, especially those who are naturalized citizens.

Figure 13 shows that unionization rates for

foreign-born workers vary much less within the public and private sectors than between them, regardless of citizenship status. Relatively few noncitizens are employed in the public sector, however. In 2023-24, only 4.6 percent of all foreign-born noncitizens in the United States were employed in the public sector, compared to 15.4 percent of U.S. born workers and 14.1 percent of naturalized citizens. Thus, the high level of public-sector unionization among noncitizens does little to boost their overall unionization rate. And as the bottom half of Figure 13 shows, private-sector unionization rates are consistently lower for all groups, regardless of citizenship status.

**FIGURE 13. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR UNIONIZATION BY NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2023-24**



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text. Percentages shown for 2023-24 include the 18 months from January 2023 to June 2024. Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2023—June 2024.

## Conclusion

Actively recruiting new members into the ranks of the labor movement, as many dedicated labor organizers have sought to do in recent years, is the primary means by which unions themselves can act to increase the unionization level. Indeed, this is one potential counterweight to the downward trend in organized labor's influence, although only if it can be scaled up

to a higher level. As noted earlier in this report, the organizing uptick over the past few years has been of insufficient scale to make a difference in the overall picture, despite the extensive media and public attention it has attracted.

Moreover, many other factors that the labor movement cannot control also critically influence the level of union density. All else equal, if employment

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declines in a highly unionized sector of the economy or expands in a non-union (or weakly unionized) sector, union density will fall. The best-known example of this is the steady decline of manufacturing, a former union stronghold, over the past few decades, along with the expansion of private-sector service industries where unions have historically been weak; indeed, these combined trends have been a major driver of the general erosion of union density. Conversely, if employment expands in a highly unionized sector or declines in a non-union or weakly unionized one, the overall level of density will increase.

Privatization and subcontracting, both of which often involve a shift from union to non-union status for affected workers, further complicate the picture in some settings. Over the long term, given the “churning” effects of employment shifts and (in non-recessionary periods) normal labor market growth and turnover, simply to maintain union density at a given level requires a great deal of new organizing; and to increase density requires even far more extensive effort. This is why the recent uptick in union organizing has not impacted the overall density rates.

As we have seen, New York City and State’s unionization levels have been far higher than those in other parts of the nation – roughly double the national average – in recent years. However, this was not the case in the mid-20th century, when U.S. unionization was at a record high. In 1953, 34.4 percent of New York State’s workers were unionized, only slightly above the 32.6 percent national level.<sup>10</sup> Although since then organized labor has more than held its own in New York relative to the nation, in absolute terms unions have lost considerable ground in both the City and State over the past few decades – especially in the private sector. As recently as 1986, New York City’s

private-sector union density was 25.3 percent, nearly twelve percentage points above the 2023-24 level (13.5 percent) level, and statewide the figure was 24.0 percent as recently as 1983 (compared to 11.5 percent in 2023-24).<sup>11</sup>

As union strength in the private sector has ebbed, the ratio of public- to private-sector unionization in New York City and State has soared to record highs. That ratio has potentially serious implications. In labor’s glory days, a strongly unionized private sector helped foster a social-democratic political culture in New York City.<sup>12</sup> The decline in private-sector density is among the factors that have threatened to undermine that tradition in recent years. Even in the public sector (albeit to a far lesser extent than in the rest of the nation) unions in New York have lost some ground and have been increasingly on the political defensive. They were unable to negotiate new contracts for several years after the Great Recession; for years that impasse deprived most City workers of significant increases in compensation, with longer-term consequences.

More generally, even taking into account New York City’s and State’s unusually high union density levels – the highest of any major U.S. city and the second-highest of any state – organized labor continues to face daunting challenges. Yet unions continue to offer substantial protection to a diverse population of workers in the City and State, including teachers and other professionals, as well as large numbers of women, racial-ethnic minorities, and immigrants in both professional and nonprofessional jobs. And the recent surge of interest in organizing and the growth in public support for organized labor may also augur well for the coming years.

## Notes

1 <https://news.gallup.com/poll/12751/labor-unions.aspx>

2 <https://www.epi.org/publication/rise-of-the-union-curious/#epi-toc-5>

3 This report (apart from the Appendix) is based on analysis of the U.S. Current Population Survey (CPS) Outgoing Rotation Group data for calendar year 2022 and the first six months of 2023. We created a merged data set from the 18 monthly surveys conducted from January 2022 to June 2023, inclusive; the 2022-23 data discussed here and shown in the figures and tables below are the averages for those 18 months. All results are calculated using the CPS unrevised sampling weights, for employed civilian wage and salary workers aged 16 and over. CPS data used in this report come from the Economic Policy Institute Current Population Survey Extracts, available at <https://microdata.epi.org/>. We followed the sample definition and weighting procedures described in Barry T. Hirsch and David A. Macpherson, *Union Membership and Earnings Data Book* (Washington D.C., 2019). See also [unionstats.com](http://unionstats.com) where Hirsch and Macpherson post annual updates (in contrast to the Data Book, which was discontinued after 2019). To ensure reliability, given the limitations of the CPS dataset, we report unionization rates only for subgroups that have a minimum of 50 union members, unless otherwise noted. Rates for subgroups that fall below this threshold are labeled NA (not available). The New York City figures for earlier years are from our September 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 reports, based on CPS data for January 2009-June 2010, January 2010-June 2011, January 2011-June 2012, January 2012-June 2013, January 2013-June 2014, January 2014-June 2015, January 2015-June 2016, January 2016-June 2017, January 2017-June 2018, January 2018-June 2019, January 2019-June 2020, January 2020-June 2021, and January 2021-June 2022 respectively. These earlier reports are available at <http://www.ruthmilkman.info/reports>.

4 For the state rankings, see [unionstats.com](http://unionstats.com).

5 An estimated 693,460 union members resided in New York City's five boroughs in 2023-24, while the statewide total is estimated at 1,702,930. The CPS data on which these estimates are based rely on respondents' self-reports as to whether or not they are union members. (Respondents who indicate that they are not union members are also asked whether they are covered by a union contract, but the analysis in this report does not include those who replied affirmatively to that question.) As noted in the text, all geographical data in

the CPS (and in this report) refer to respondents' place of residence—which often differs from the location of their workplaces. Since many workers commute from other areas to their jobs in the city, this makes the data for the five boroughs of New York City an imperfect approximation of the extent of unionization in the city. Some sections of this report present data on union members residing in the wider New York metropolitan area; a group that captures some commuters but also includes many individuals who are employed outside New York City.

6 Throughout this report, unless otherwise indicated, we use the term “New York metropolitan area” to denote the New York-Newark, NY-NJ-CT-PA Combined Statistical Area (CSA), based on the CSA definitions introduced in 2020. The New York-Newark-CSA includes the following counties (in addition to the five boroughs of New York City proper): Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, Ulster and Westchester Counties, New York; Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Union Counties, New Jersey; Litchfield, New Haven and Fairfield Counties, Connecticut; Monroe and Pike Counties, Pennsylvania. For details, see <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Bulletin-20-01.pdf>. Throughout this report, we use the term “upstate” to refer to all of New York State, including Suffolk and Nassau counties, apart from the five boroughs.

7 These “Metropolitan Statistical Areas” are based on the 2013 U.S. Census (OMB) guidelines because the CPS currently uses the 2013 OMB definitions of these areas. For more details on the 2013 definitions, see [https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/legacy\\_drupal\\_files/omb/bulletins/2013/b13-01.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/legacy_drupal_files/omb/bulletins/2013/b13-01.pdf).

8 Since unionization has declined somewhat since 2011 (see Figures 1a-1c), the results of this analysis overestimate the actual levels of density for each industry shown in Table 3.

9 Given the nation's winner-take-all union representation system, and the fact that a relatively small proportion of present-day union membership is the product of recent organizing, the demographic makeup of union membership primarily reflects the demographic makeup of employment in highly unionized industries and sectors. Although unionized workers are more likely than their nonunion counterparts to express pro-union attitudes, this is typically a consequence—rather than a cause—of union affiliation. See Richard B. Freeman and Joel Rogers, *What Workers Want* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 68-77. Moreover, individual workers seldom have the opportunity

to make independent decisions about union affiliation. Instead, unionization occurs when entire workplaces (or occasionally, entire industries) are organized, and once established, unionization in those workplaces tends to persist over time. Later, as a result of workforce turnover and de-unionization, strongly pro-union workers may be employed in non-union settings, and workers with little enthusiasm for organized labor may find themselves employed in union shops.

10 See Leo Troy, *Distribution of Union Membership among the States, 1939 and 1953* (National Bureau of Economic Research, 1957), available at <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c2688.pdf>. In 1939 the figures were 23.0 percent for New York State and 21.5 for the nation. Figures for New

York City union membership levels during these years, unfortunately, are not available.

11 The 1986 private-sector figure is 25.3% for the New York PMSA (NYC's five boroughs as well as Putnam, Westchester and Rockland Counties). This and the 1983 statewide figure can be found at [unionstats.com](http://unionstats.com). See also Gregory DeFreitas and Bhaswati Sengupta, "The State of New York Unions 2007," (Hofstra University Center for the Study of Labor and Democracy, 2007), which includes 1980s data, available at [https://www.hofstra.edu/pdf/cld\\_stateofnyunions2007.pdf](https://www.hofstra.edu/pdf/cld_stateofnyunions2007.pdf).

12 See Joshua B. Freeman, *Working-Class New York* (New York: The New Press, 2000).

## Notes for Special Feature

1 <https://news.gallup.com/poll/510281/unions-strengthening.aspx>

2 <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cios-shuler-state-unions-strong-record-public-support-unprecedented-activism-and>

3 <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-closing-gender-education-and-ideological-divides-behind-gen-zs-union-movement/>

4 <https://www.epi.org/publication/rise-of-the-union-curious/#full-report>

5 Figure B3 excludes recently unionized student worker units at Tufts and Harvard University because of their location outside Suffolk County. These elections contributed more than 5,000 additional unionized faculty and student workers to the organized labor force, so including them in the percentage of Boston's wage and salary labor force represented by newly organized workers would have likely placed Boston in the lead among major urban areas in Figure B3.

6 <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CLF16OV>

7 <https://www.epi.org/publication/union-first-contract-fact-sheet/>

## Appendix\*

The table below is compiled from a variety of sources and indicates the number of members claimed by individual labor unions with jurisdictions in New York City-based workplaces. Unlike the Current Population Survey (CPS) data that serve as the basis for the rest of this report, which estimate the number of New York City residents who are union members, the data in this Appendix show the number of unionized jobs in New York City.

For a variety of reasons, the total number of union members in New York City shown in the table below is higher than the CPS-based estimate of 693,000 cited on page 5 of this report. Perhaps the most important factor causing this discrepancy is that many union members who are employed in the City are commuters who live in the surrounding suburbs. In addition, some unions may inflate their membership numbers, and unions with broader geographical jurisdictions do not always know precisely how many of their members are employed in the City. Moreover,

many of the unions listed, especially those in sectors like construction and entertainment, have large numbers of members whose employment is irregular and for whom unemployment is common. Even when they are employed, workers in these sectors may oscillate between jobs in the City and jobs in other locations. All these factors help account for the fact that the total shown in the table below is greater than the CPS estimate cited above. Another factor operates in the opposite direction: since the CPS is a household survey that relies on responses from individuals, it is likely to include numerous cases of unionized workers who are unaware of the fact that they are members of labor organizations, potentially leading to an undercount. (It is also possible that some individual respondents to the CPS believe they are union members when in fact they are not, but the greater error is likely to be in the opposite direction.)

\*The data in this table were compiled from the most recent available LM-2/3/4 forms (typically from 2023) and other sources by Joseph van der Naald. Thanks to Ed Ott for assistance with this effort.

UNION NAME	Reported Membership
Amalgamated Transit Union <sup>c</sup>	14,251
American Federation of Government Employees <sup>c</sup>	2,303
American Federation of Musicians <sup>b</sup>	6,077
American Federation of School Administrators — Council of Supervisory Associations	6,440
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees <sup>c</sup>	141,562
American Federation of Teachers <sup>a, c</sup> (includes 19,228 members of PSC-CUNY, 120,081 in the NYC UFT, and 638 in the American Association of University Professors <sup>c</sup> )	152,084
American Postal Workers Union	8,043
American Train Dispatchers Association <sup>a</sup>	215
Anti-Defamation League Staff Association	166
Associated Actors and Artistes of America <sup>b, c</sup> (includes 17,149 members of Actors Equity Association; 1,312 members of the American Guild of Musical Artists; and 39,609 members of SAG-AFTRA)	58,283
Association of Commuter Rail Employees <sup>a</sup>	469
Association of Legislative Employees <sup>a</sup>	177
Association of Surrogates and Supreme Court Reporters Within the City of New York <sup>a</sup>	253
Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union <sup>c</sup>	1,302
Benefit Fund Staff Association	456
Brotherhood of Security Personnel	18
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen	764

UNION NAME	Reported Membership
Building and Construction Trades Department <sup>b</sup>	129
Campaign Workers Guild <sup>a</sup>	32
Citywide Association of Law Assistants of the Civil, Criminal and Family Courts <sup>a</sup>	300
Civilian Technicians Association	4
Communication Workers of America <sup>a, c</sup> (includes 2,807 members of the NewsGuild of New York)	27,309
Co-Op City Police Benevolent Association	50
Court Attorneys Association of the City of New York <sup>a</sup>	214
EMS Superior Officers Association <sup>a</sup>	54
Faculty Interest Committee of Ethical Culture Fieldston School	285
Fordham Law School Bargaining Committee	80
Furniture Liquidators of New York	8
Harper Collins Sales Association	28
Independent Association of Legal Workers	3
Independent Guard Union	3
Industrial Workers of the World	408
International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees <sup>b, c</sup>	23,069
International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers <sup>b</sup>	7,398
International Association of Fire Fighters <sup>a</sup>	8,431
International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers <sup>b</sup>	929
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers <sup>a</sup>	12,632
International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers <sup>a, b</sup>	8,000
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers <sup>b</sup>	444
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers <sup>b</sup>	23,849
International Brotherhood of Teamsters <sup>c</sup>	60,000
International Brotherhood of Trade Unions	89
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers	151
International Longshoremen's Association	1,935
International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots—Atlantic Maritime Group <sup>c</sup>	1,550
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers <sup>b</sup>	8,137
International Union of Allied Novelty and Production Workers <sup>c</sup>	1,184
International Union of Elevator Constructors <sup>b</sup>	3,019
International Union of Journeymen and Allied Trades <sup>b</sup>	12,787
International Union of Operating Engineers <sup>a, b</sup>	22,373
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades <sup>a, b</sup>	6,956
International Union of Police Associations <sup>a</sup>	107
International Union, Security, Police and Fire Professionals of America	89
Laborers' International Union of North America <sup>b</sup>	18,875
Law Enforcement Officers Security & Police Benevolent Association <sup>a</sup>	227
League of International Federated Employees	942
Local One Security Officers	945
Major League Baseball Players Association <sup>c</sup>	90
Marine Engineers Beneficial Association <sup>a</sup>	162
Maritime Trades Department Port Council	24
Metal Trades Department <sup>b</sup>	17

UNION NAME	Reported Membership
MTA Commanding Officers Association <sup>a</sup>	26
Mount Sinai Pharmacy Association	136
National Air Traffic Controllers Association	153
National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees	496
National Association of Letter Carriers	10,770
National Association of Transportation Supervisors <sup>a</sup>	4,799
National Basketball Players Association <sup>c</sup>	40
National Labor Relations Board Union	45
National Postal Mail Handlers Union <sup>c</sup>	2,003
National Treasury Employees Union	3,280
National Writers Union <sup>c, e</sup>	184
New York City Deputy Sheriffs' Association <sup>a</sup>	145
New York Professional Nurses Association	1,272
New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association <sup>a</sup>	510
New York State Court Clerks Association <sup>a</sup>	1,316
New York State Court Officers Association <sup>a</sup>	1,367
New York State Federation of Physicians and Dentists	35
New York State Nurses Association	27,510
New York State United Teachers Legal Staff Association	29
Newspaper and Mail Deliverers Union	315
Office and Professional Employees International Union <sup>c</sup>	5,657
Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association <sup>b</sup>	1,082
Organization of Staff Analysts <sup>a</sup>	3,499
Organization of Union Representatives	8
Patrolmen's Benevolent Association <sup>a</sup>	21,482
Police Benevolent Association of New York State <sup>a</sup>	68
Police Benevolent Association of the New York State Troopers <sup>a</sup>	214
Postal and Federal Employees Alliance	333
Professional Association of Holy Cross High School	46
Professional Dieticians of New York City Presbyterian	40
Restaurant Workers Union 318	11
Safety Professionals of America	8
Security Alliance Federation of Employees	340
Service Employees International Union <sup>a, c</sup> (includes 166,030 NYC members in 1199SEIU <sup>c</sup> ; 92,200 members in SEIU Local 32B-J <sup>c</sup> ; and 4,296 members in Workers United)	279,108
Special Patrolman Benevolent Association	70
Stage Directors and Choreographers <sup>b, c</sup>	1,085
St. John's Preparatory Teachers Association	33
Taxi Workers Alliance <sup>e</sup>	27,000
Transport Workers Union <sup>a</sup>	50,043
Uniformed Sanitation Chiefs Association <sup>a</sup>	74
Union of Automotive Technicians <sup>a</sup>	54
UNITE HERE <sup>d</sup>	37,107
United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters <sup>b</sup>	14,749



UNION NAME	Reported Membership
United Auto Workers <sup>c</sup>	14,396
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners <sup>b, c</sup>	16,518
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union <sup>d</sup> (includes 13,640 members in the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union)	35,510
United Nations International School Staff Association	218
United Probation Officers Association <sup>a</sup>	641
United States Park Police Sergeants Association	31
United Steelworkers <sup>d</sup>	2,642
United Uniformed Workers of New York <sup>a, f</sup>	33,737
United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers <sup>b</sup>	1,409
United University Professions <sup>a</sup>	2,440
Utility Workers Union of America	7,379
Women's National Basketball Players Association <sup>c</sup>	12
Writers Guild of America <sup>b</sup>	2,998
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,260,681</b>

a Under the Landrum-Griffin Act (1959) and Civil Service Reform Act (1978) private-sector, postal and federal employee unions are required to file annually LM-2/3/4 forms with the U.S. Department of Labor, which report on their current membership (as well as other data). Public sector unions not covered by these acts are not required to file such forms, and thus some of the membership data were obtained directly from the unions, from the New York City Independent Budget Office (2024), from Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests to the Office of the State Comptroller's Office (2023 and 2024) and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (2023), from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (2024), or from Combined Continuing Disclosure Filings relating to the Metropolitan Transit and Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authorities (2024).

b Data for these unions include some members working outside New York City. It is impossible to obtain precise data for those employed in the City, because the occupations they represent are not tied to stable workplaces; rather workers are hired for specific projects which are typically, but not always, located in the five boroughs. As a result New York City data for these unions may be overstated.

c The membership figures for this union are available in LM2/3/4 forms. However because the union's geographical jurisdiction extends beyond the five boroughs of New York City, some or all of the number shown was obtained directly from the union.

d Precise membership estimates for one or more of the locals in this union are not available. The figures shown are likely to be inflated because they include some members employed outside New York City.

e This union has dues-paying members but does not currently have collective bargaining rights.

f This includes the following unions, some of which may have members working outside New York City: 5,362 members in the Detectives Endowment Association; 4,502 members in the Sergeants Benevolent Association; 1,773 members in the Lieutenants Benevolent Association; 5,168 members in the Correction Officers Benevolent Association; 6,837 members in the Sanitation Workers Local 831; 2,271 members in the Uniformed Fire Officers Association; 1,239 members in the Sanitation Officers Local 444; 103 members in the Assistant Deputy Wardens — Deputy Wardens Association; 742 members in the Captains Endowment Association; 580 members in the Correction Captains Association; 299 members in the NYC Detective Investigators Association; 995 members in the NYS Supreme Court Officers Association; 93 members in the Port Authority Detectives Endowment Association; 100 members in the Port Authority Lieutenants Benevolent Association; 1,717 members in the Port Authority Police Benevolent Association; 233 members in the Port Authority Sergeants Benevolent Association; 182 members in the Uniformed Fire Alarm Dispatchers Benevolent Association; 288 members in the Bridge and Tunnel Officers Benevolent Association; 1,146 members in the Police Benevolent Association MTA; and 107 members in the Superior Officers Benevolent Association - Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority. The numbers for individual unions in the coalition were obtained directly from the unions, from the New York City Independent Budget Office, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Employee Payroll Information Directory, and from Combined Continuing Disclosure Filings relating to the Metropolitan Transit and Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authorities; all are for 2024.

Source: Unless otherwise indicated, the above data are extracted from the most recent LM-2, LM-3 and LM-4 forms that private-sector unions are required to submit annually to the U.S. Department of Labor, available at <https://olmsapps.dol.gov/olpdr/>



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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## ABOUT THE CUNY SCHOOL OF LABOR AND URBAN STUDIES (SLU)

SLU was established in 2018, as an outgrowth of CUNY's Murphy Institute. The School offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in Labor Studies and Urban Studies designed to meet the needs of working adults as well as traditional-age college students who seek to learn more about the challenges confronting poor and working class populations in the workplace and in the community. It also collaborates with other units of CUNY to offer a range of college-credit programs designed to give workers the academic and technical skills they need for professional advancement. Its faculty includes distinguished scholars in the social sciences as well as expert practitioners in government, labor, and public service. In addition to its academic programs, SLU sponsors research, organizes forums and conferences, and publishes the journal *New Labor Forum*.

