

THE STATE OF THE UNIONS 2026:

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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In the 2020s, workers and organized labor attracted extensive 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 a severe labor shortage and widespread discontent among workers, galvanized a substantial uptick in unionization efforts, and in strikes. Public support for organized labor grew, with 68 percent of respondents to a 2025 Gallup poll indicating that they approved of labor unions.¹ At the same time, surveys show that the proportion of non-union workers who indicate they would vote for a union if they had the opportunity to do so increased in the 2020s, especially among younger workers.²

But none of these developments—organizing wins, successful strikes, and growing public support for unions—have been of sufficient scale to reverse the long-term decline in union density (defined as the share of the labor force made up of union members). As Figure 1a shows, unionization rates have fallen over the past two decades, and while the rate of

decline has slowed in the last few years, it remains basically flat. Nationally, density in 2025-26 stood at 10.0 percent, slightly higher than the 9.9 percent level in 2024, but down from 10.8 percent in 2020. In New York City and State, density in 2025-26 was the same as in 2024, but well below the 2020 level, and far lower than at the start of the 21st century.

The return of Donald Trump to the White House in 2025 has already further eroded union power, although its impact is not yet apparent in the density data analyzed here. Trump has taken steps to hobble the National Labor Relations Board, which had been greatly reinvigorated under the previous administration, and launched aggressive attacks on federal workers’ unions and immigrant workers. Thanks to a sharply different political configuration in New York City and State, as our special feature on pp. 4-5 shows, those areas have fared better than the nation overall. As we discuss there, the election of Zohran Mamdani as the City’s mayor seems to suggest a more union-friendly environment, albeit one constrained by budget limitations.

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.³

Unionization Rates in New York City, New York State, and the Nation

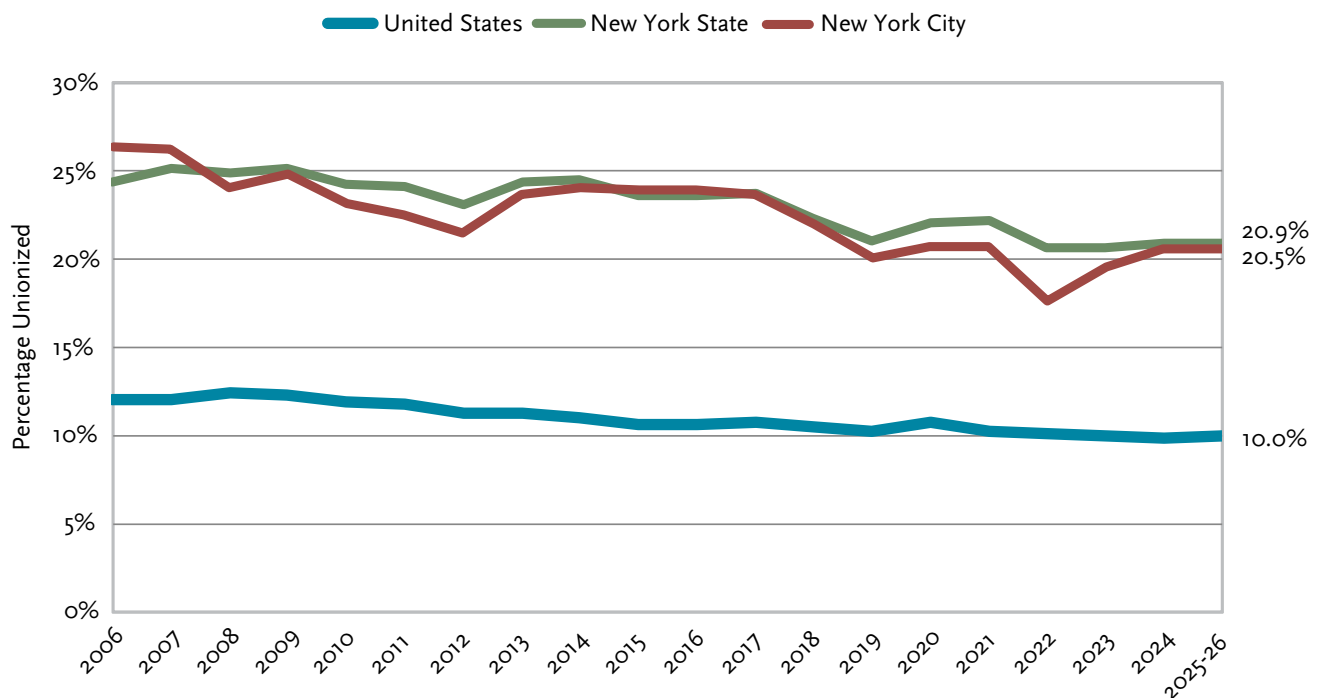
Organized labor has been much stronger in New York City and State than in the nation in recent decades. New York ranks first in union density among the nation’s largest states, with a unionization rate more than double the U.S. average, and it ranks second among all states (Hawaii’s union density is the nation’s highest, at 24.8 percent in 2025).⁴ In absolute terms, New York State had more union members—1.81 million—than any state except California, which has a far larger population. In 2025-26, there were about 779,000 union members residing in the five boroughs of New York City, accounting for 43 percent of all union members in the State.⁵

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. On the other hand, union density has fallen more in

New York City and New York State than in the nation as a whole in recent years. In the mid-2010s, both the City and State density rates hovered steadily at around 24 percent, but they began to fall after 2017. In 2025-26, only 20.5 percent of all wage and salary workers residing in the five boroughs of New York City, and 20.9 percent of those in the State, were union members.

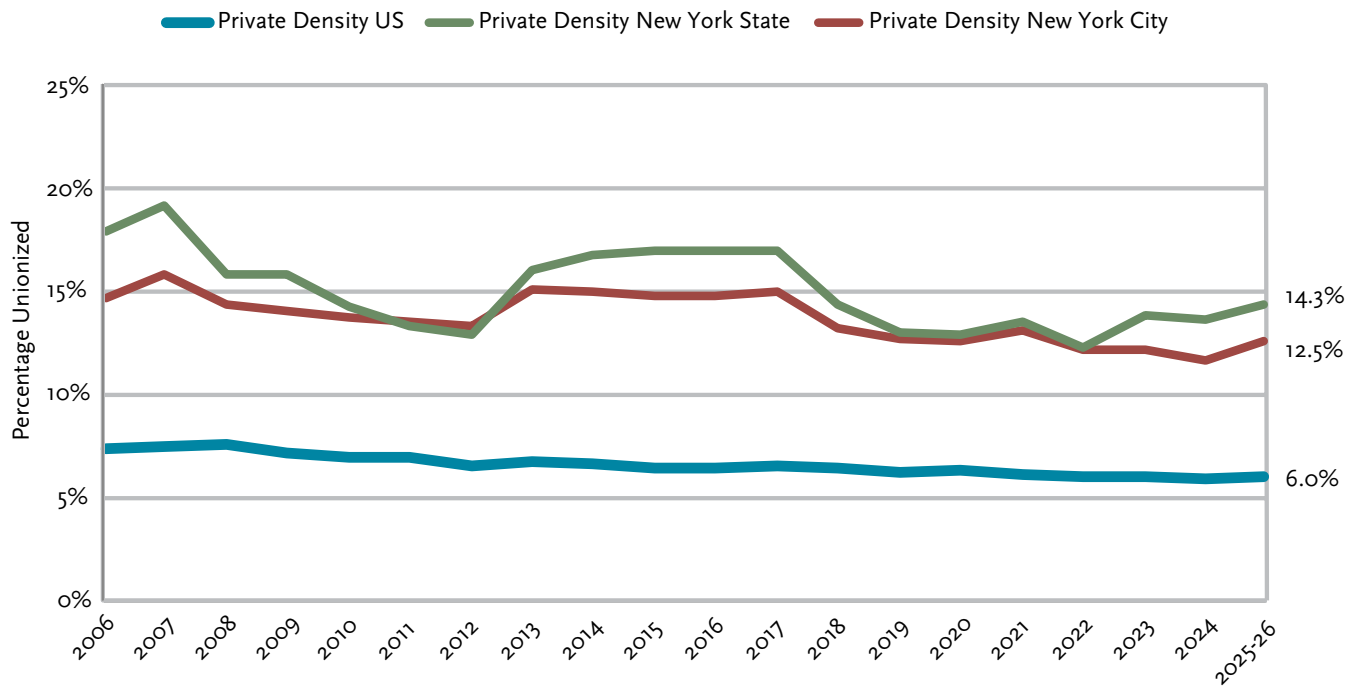
As Figures 1b and 1c show, losses in union membership have been disproportionately concentrated in the private sector in the City, State, and nation alike. This reflects the fact that private-sector employers have long been vigorously opposed to unionization. However, in recent years anti-union attacks have increasingly penetrated the public sector as well, especially since the 2018 U.S. Supreme Court ruling 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

FIGURE 1A. UNION DENSITY IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2006–26



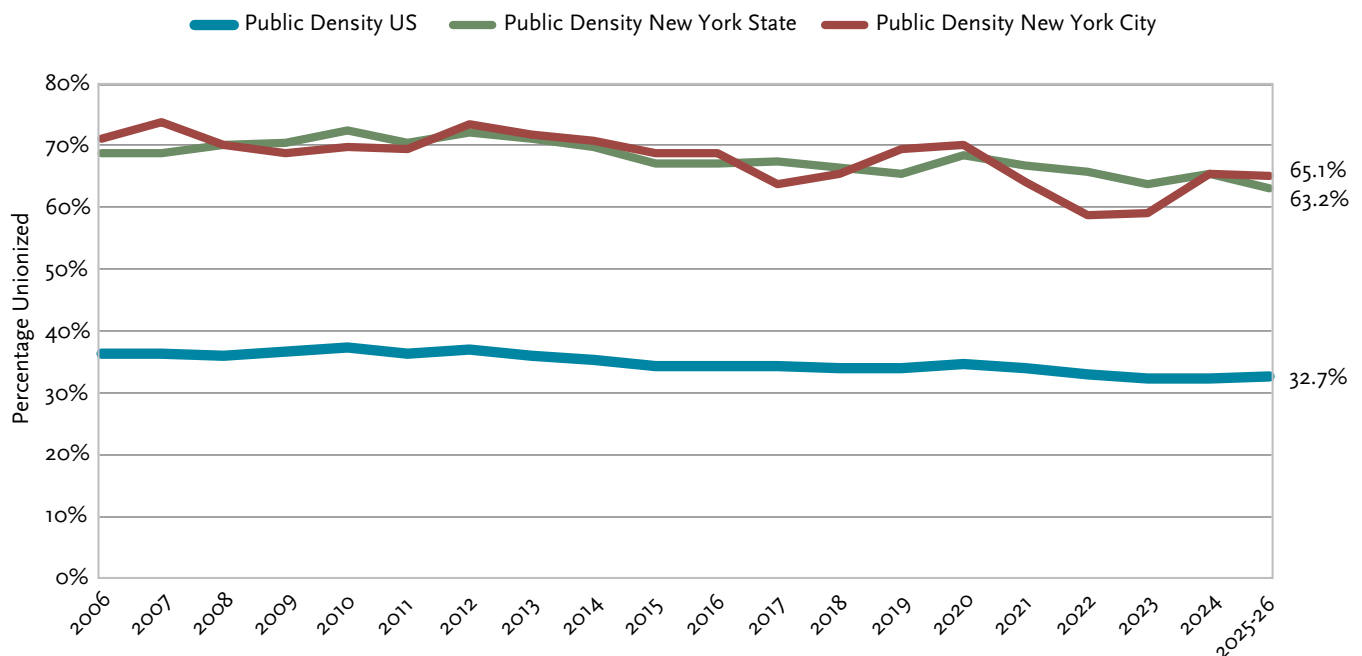
Percentages shown for 2025–26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

FIGURE 1B. PRIVATE-SECTOR UNION DENSITY IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2006–26



Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

FIGURE 1C. PUBLIC-SECTOR UNION DENSITY IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2006–26



Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

LABOR UNDER MAMDANI: THE RECORD SO FAR

At a time when the Trump administration is attacking workers' rights and organized labor on multiple fronts, New York City offers an alternative vision. Thanks to democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani, who was elected as mayor in November 2025, the City administration has proactively supported working people and their unions in recent months. Mamdani's electoral campaign centered on the issue of "affordability," which has since become a national clarion call. Since taking office in January 2026, he has promulgated a variety of muscular pro-labor policy measures and made staff appointments to enforce and elaborate them.¹

Mamdani's most high-profile appointee is Julie Su, his Deputy Mayor for Economic Justice, a newly created post. Su formerly served as the Biden administration's acting secretary of labor and prior to that accumulated a long record of pro-labor work in California. Her appointment signaled the centrality of labor issues and legal protections for workers to the administration's policy agenda.² Mamdani also created a new Office of Street Vendor Services; and won plaudits from the Taxi Workers Alliance for his appointment of Midori Valdivia to chair the Taxi and Limousine Commission.³ In July 2026, he also issued an unprecedented executive order to help protect outdoor workers from excessive heat.⁴ A month later, he announced his support for the proposed Delivery Protection Act, pending before the City Council, which if passed into law would make New York the first city in the nation to require companies like Amazon and FedEx to hire delivery drivers directly, rather than through independent contracting.⁵

In the early months of the Mamdani administration, the City also negotiated a series of legal settlements with employers who had violated the

Fair Workweek Law, minimum wage laws, and other worker protections. These settlements granted millions of dollars in back pay to workers who had been victims of wage theft or illegal "deactivations" from delivery platforms. The largest settlement involved \$5 million in restitution for more than 49,000 delivery workers at Uber Eats, Fantuan and Hungry Panda⁶; another required Walgreens to pay \$1.6 million to over 500 Walgreens workers.⁷

Mamdani has also evinced a strong commitment to efforts to increase the City's union density by organizing its vast non-union workforce. In April, for example, he stood alongside Bernie Sanders and Association of Flight Attendants president Sara Nelson at the public launch of "Union Now," a nonprofit whose mission is supporting union organizing drives, strikes, and union contract negotiations.⁸

In the eight months since he took office, Mamdani also has been a vocal supporter of the City's private-sector union members. His presence—and employers' awareness of it—contributed at least indirectly to the success of a series of private-sector strikes in the City during the first half of 2026. These included a two-month walkout by 15,000 nurses; another, shorter strike by 27,000 hotel workers, as well as strikes by adjunct faculty at NYU, and in the publishing and media sectors.⁹ All of these efforts generated substantial contract improvements for New York union members. The City's 34,000 building service workers also secured a strong contract settlement after voting to authorize a strike (but without actually striking) in the spring.¹⁰

The new administration also faces other, more complex challenges on the labor front. Recent controversies have focused public and media attention on three large groups of workers who, despite the fact that they are unionized, are

notoriously poorly paid. As recent news reports have detailed, New York City's 3,500 Emergency Medical Technicians earn as little as \$18 an hour, only a dollar above the City's legal minimum wage, even though they are members of the Firefighters Union.¹¹ Similarly, some 25,000 paraprofessional teaching assistants employed by the City are paid only about \$32,000 a year, despite their membership in the United Federation of Teacher (UFT).¹² In both cases low pay has generated high turnover and labor shortages in vital city services. Even more numerous are the City's unionized home care workers, primarily represented by SEIU 1199, who number in the hundreds of thousands. Their hourly pay is only slightly higher than the legal minimum wage, due to wage ceilings tied to state Medicaid reimbursement rates. Some are paid for only 13 hours during 24-hour shifts (as is legal under current state law): Many other unionized home care jobs are part-time, in which

workers generally struggle to earn a living wage.¹³ These home care workers' grievances can only be remedied by legislative action at the State level, but advocates are most vocal in the City. In regard to the K-12 school paraprofessionals, the New York City Council has passed a bill, proposed by the UFT, to pay them one-time bonuses of \$10,000. Mamdani has sued the city council over this bill, arguing that it is illegal under the State's Taylor Law, adding to tensions between his administration and the UFT leadership.¹⁴

But Mamdani's biggest challenge will come later in 2026, when the municipal labor contracts expire and new ones will be negotiated, affecting hundreds of thousands of workers. The City's limited control over budget resources will make this an especially daunting task, and much will depend on the strength of Mamdani's relationship with the Governor and the state legislature.

relatively stable. However, since 2020 it has fallen in both New York City and State (see Figure 1c).

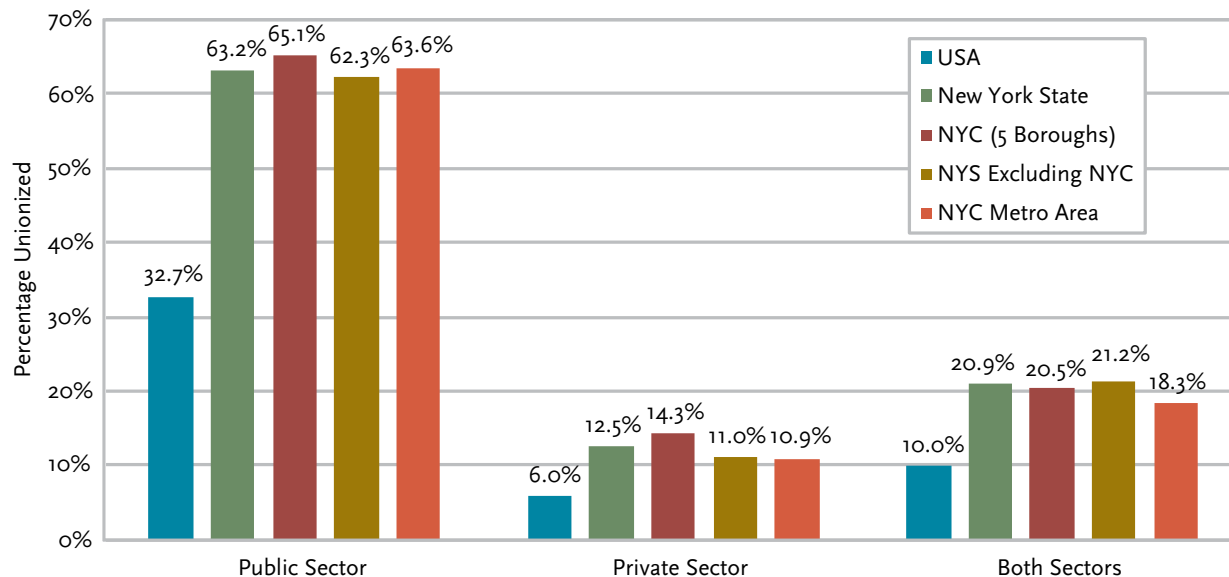
Figure 2 shows 2025-26 private- and public-sector union density levels for the United States, New York State, New York City, the remainder of New York State (excluding only the five boroughs of New York City), and the New York City metropolitan "Combined Statistical Area."⁶ These are the five geographical entities for which we present detailed data in the remainder of this report.

Public-sector union density is roughly double the national rate in New York State and New York City alike: in the City it was 65.1 percent in 2025-26, and 63.2 percent in the State, compared to only 32.7 in the nation as a whole. But regardless of geography, private-sector union density is consistently lower than in the public sector. In New York State the 2025-26 private-sector unionization rate was 12.5 percent, more than double the national average of

6.0 percent but only about one-fifth of the State's public-sector rate, as Figure 3 shows. In the New York City metropolitan area, private-sector density was 10.9 percent in 2025-26, slightly below the statewide private-sector rate. In New York City, private-sector density stood at 14.3 percent in 2025-26, substantially higher than statewide.

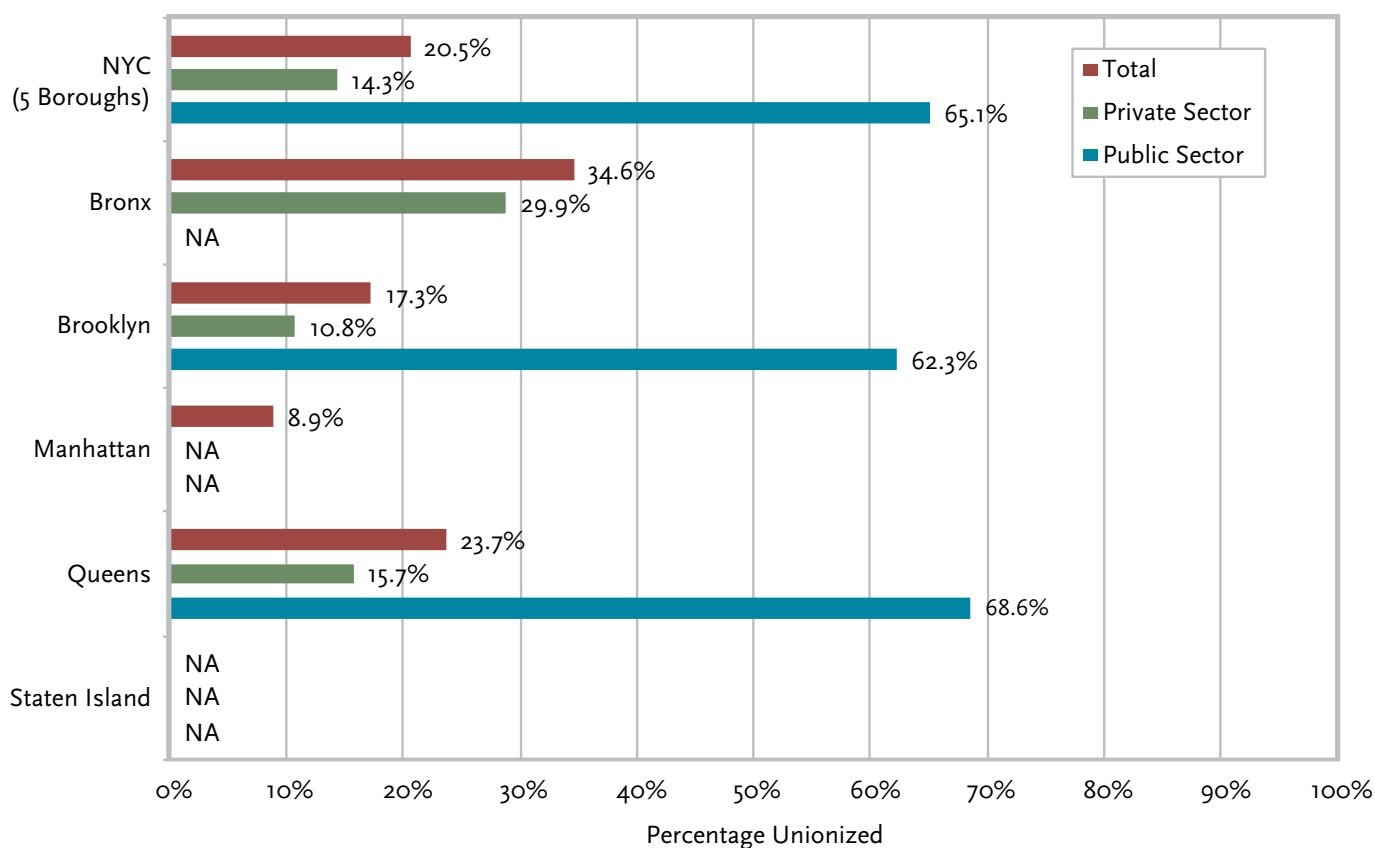
As Figure 3 shows, union density also varies among New York City's boroughs, with markedly higher 2025-26 unionization levels among residents of the "outer boroughs" than in the City as a whole. The Bronx had the highest overall rate, with Brooklyn and Queens lagging behind, and Manhattan had the lowest rate of all. Unfortunately, the CPS sample size is too small to estimate the public-sector rate in the Bronx, the private- and public-sector rates in Manhattan, or any of the rates in Staten Island.

FIGURE 2. UNION DENSITY, BY SECTOR, NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2025–26



Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

FIGURE 3. UNION DENSITY BY SECTOR, NEW YORK CITY AND ITS BOROUGHES, 2025–26



NA=Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 3 in the text.
Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

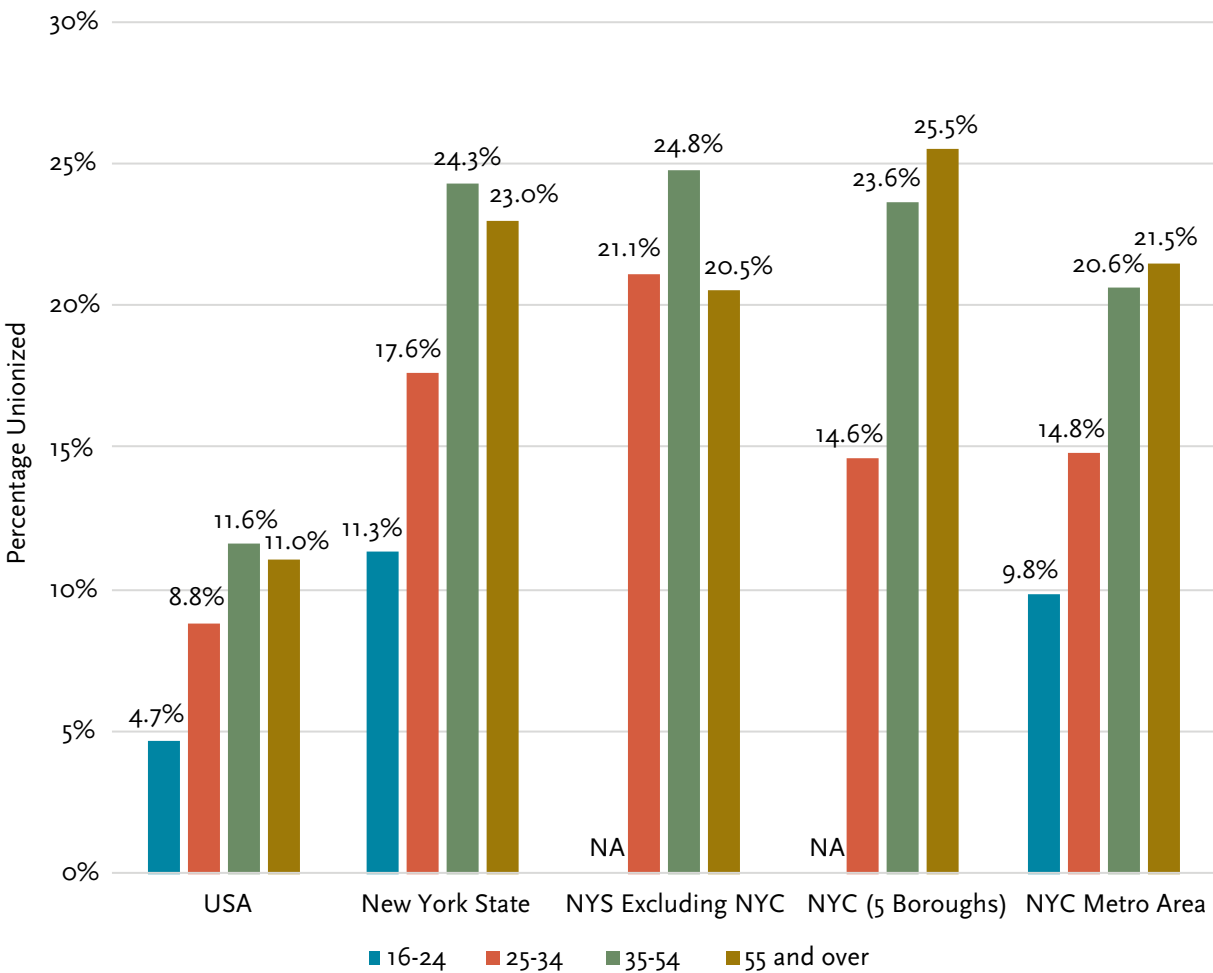
Union Membership by Age, Earnings, and Education

Although younger workers have been highly visible leaders in many recent organizing efforts, overall unionization rates remain much higher for workers aged 35 or more than for their younger counterparts. As Figure 4 shows, the rate for 16–24-year-olds lags behind that of older workers. In New York City and the New York City metropolitan area, unionization rates are highest for workers aged 55 years or more, slightly lower for those aged 35–54, and far lower for the 25–34-year-old group. Nationally, in upstate New

York, and in the State overall, the pattern is slightly different, with a higher unionization rate for 35-to-54-year-olds than for those 55 and over.

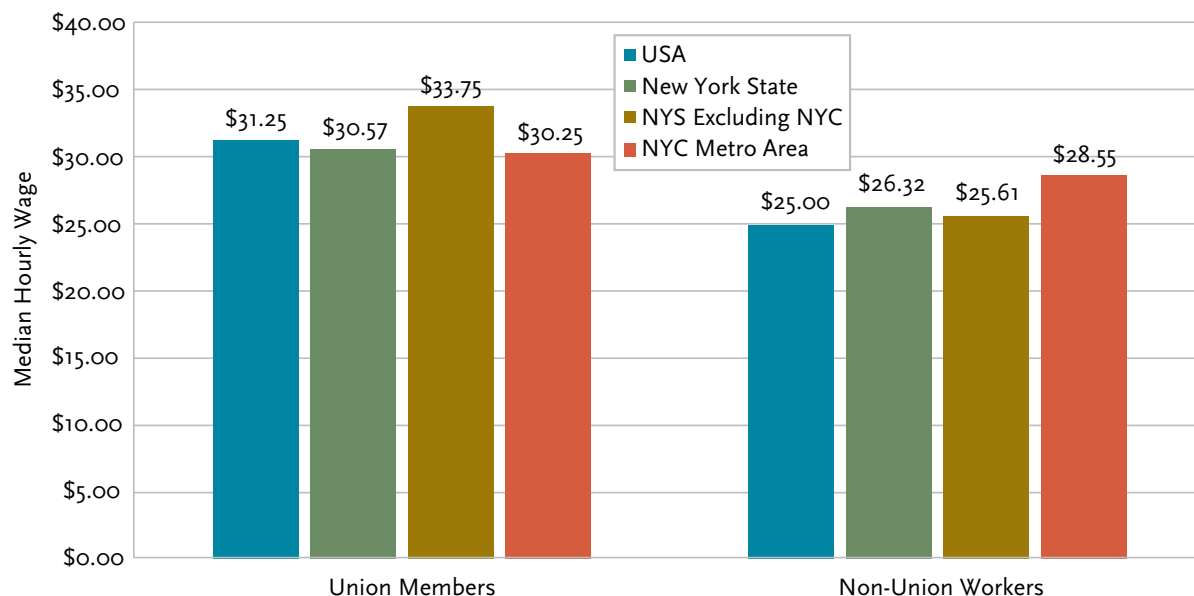
The age gradient shown in Figure 4 reflects the fact that, as Figure 5 shows, unionized jobs provide higher wages, on average, than non-union jobs do.⁷ Higher wages are in turn strongly associated with lower turnover, which tends to skew the unionized workforce toward older, more senior workers. In addition, unionized jobs generally offer more job security than non-union jobs, further reducing turnover and similarly skewing the age distribution of unionized workers.

FIGURE 4. UNIONIZATION RATES BY AGE, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2025–26



NA=Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 3 in the text.
Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

FIGURE 5. MEDIAN HOURLY WAGE, UNION MEMBERS AND NON-UNION WORKERS, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2025–26



Figures reflect preliminary estimates, in 2025 dollars.

Wages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.

Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

Figure 6 shows that in 2025-26—contrary to enduring stereotypes—in the nation as a whole, and in New York State excluding the five boroughs of New York City, college-educated workers had higher unionization rates than those with less education. Nationally, as Figure 7 shows, the unionization rate in 2025-26 was 12.8 percent for workers aged 35-54 with some college, and 12.3 percent for those in that age group with four-year degrees, compared to only 10.7 percent for those with a high school degree. Among workers under age 35, however, those with four-year degrees had the highest unionization rates.

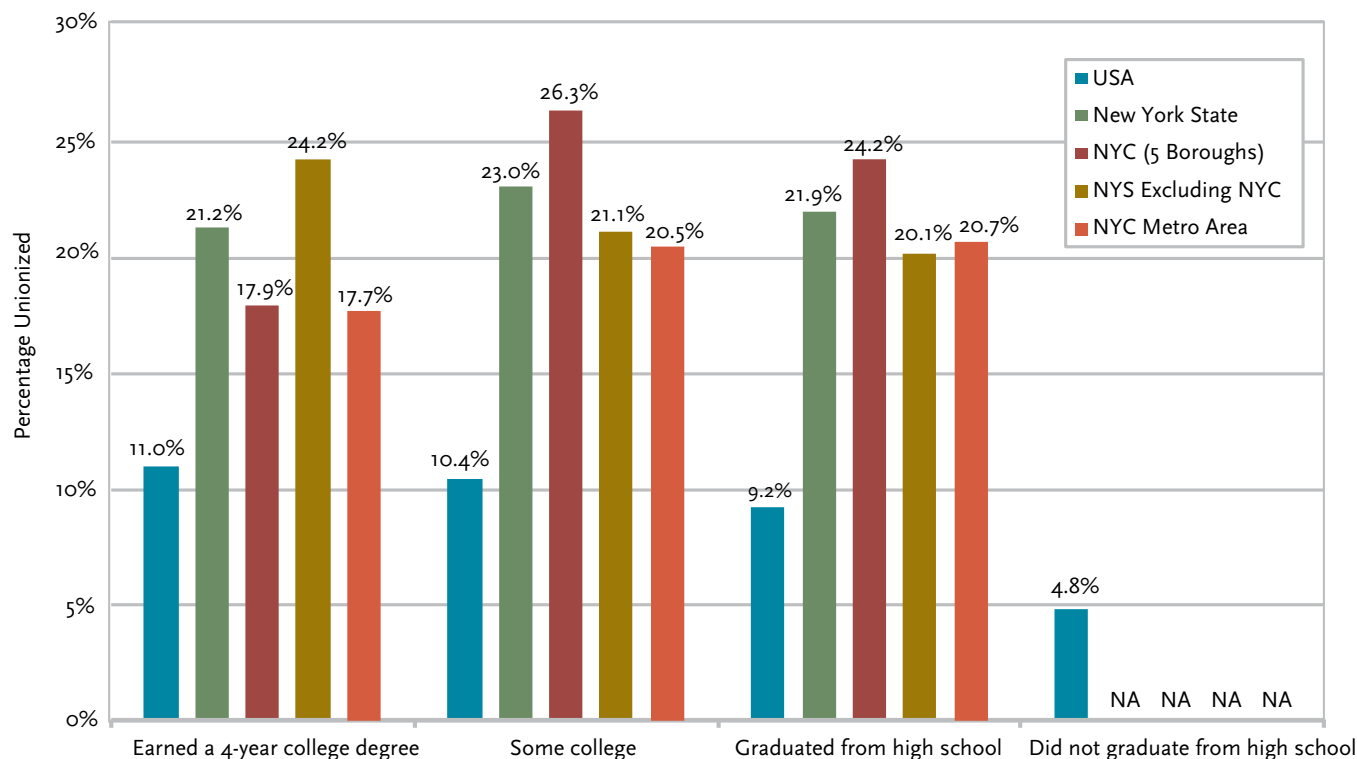
In New York State and New York City, the group with “some college”—education beyond high school but short of a four-year degree—has the highest unionization rate among the categories shown. By contrast, in the New York metropolitan area, the rate was slightly higher for high school graduates than for those with some college or four-year college degrees. Nationally, workers who lack high-school degrees had the lowest unionization rates of all (sample sizes are too small to determine whether or not this is the case for New York City and State.)

Decades ago, the typical union member was a blue-collar worker with limited formal education. But the data in Figures 6 and 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 organizing in the private sector has also disproportionately involved college-educated workers.

Industry Variation in Unionization Rates

In 2025-26 more than half (55.8 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 State and the New York City metropolitan area, those three industry groups accounted for an even larger share of unionized workers (63.6 percent and 61.4 percent, respectively). The key deviation is that the share of union membership accounted for by the health care and social assistance industry group is far greater in New York than nationally.

FIGURE 6. UNIONIZATION RATES BY EDUCATION, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2025–26

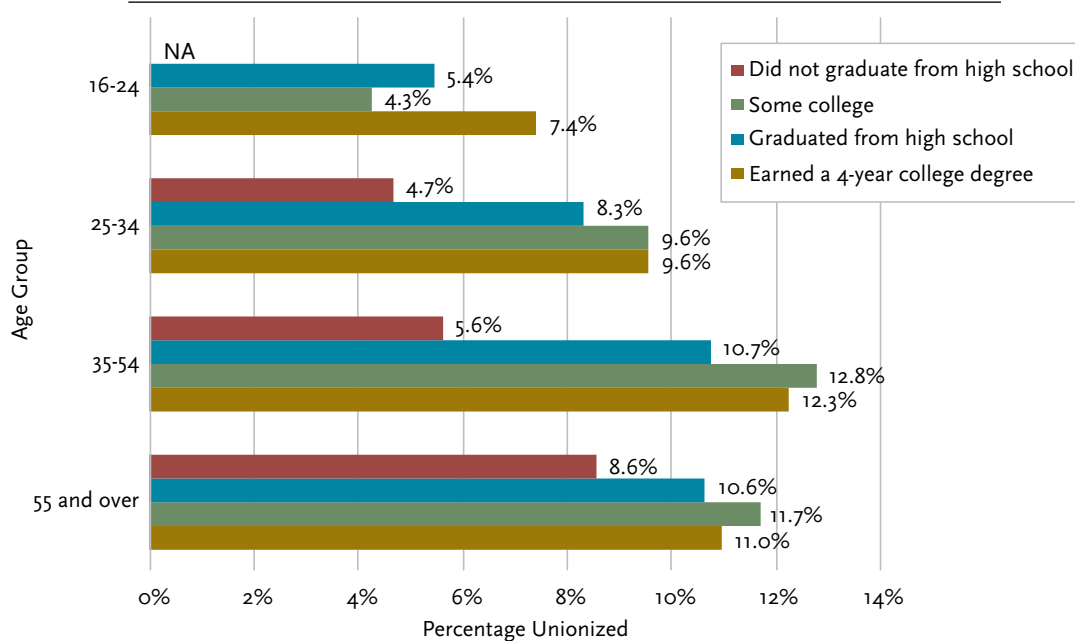


NA= Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 3 in the text.

Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.

Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

FIGURE 7. UNIONIZATION RATES BY AGE AND EDUCATION, UNITED STATES, 2025–26



NA= Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 3 in the text.

Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.

Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

These industry groups include large numbers of public-sector workers (although in health care a majority are in the private sector, as are over 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 2 shows the composition of wage and salary employment by industry group for the same geographical entities for which the composition of

**TABLE 1: COMPOSITION OF UNION MEMBERSHIP BY INDUSTRY GROUP,
FOR SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS IN NEW YORK AND THE UNITED STATES, 2025–26**

Industry Group	USA	New York State	NYS Excl. NYC	NYC Metro Area
Construction	7.7%	7.1%	8.5%	6.3%
Manufacturing	7.6%	NA	NA	NA
Wholesale and retail trade	5.2%	NA	NA	5.3%
Transportation and utilities	13.2%	9.9%	9.4%	11.5%
Information services	1.4%	NA	NA	NA
Finance, insurance and real estate	1.2%	NA	NA	NA
Professional and business services	3.2%	4.1%	NA	4.7%
Educational services	27.5%	27.7%	34.0%	28.0%
Healthcare and social assistance	12.1%	19.9%	13.6%	18.6%
Leisure and hospitality	2.8%	NA	NA	NA
Other services	1.5%	NA	NA	NA
Public administration	16.2%	16.0%	17.7%	14.8%
TOTAL of education, health and public administration	55.8%	63.6%	65.3%	61.4%

NA=Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 3 in the text.
Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

**TABLE 2: COMPOSITION OF WAGE AND SALARY EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY GROUP,
FOR SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS IN NEW YORK AND THE UNITED STATES, 2025–26**

Industry Group	USA	New York State	NYS Excl. NYC	NYC (5 Boroughs)	NYC Metro Area
Construction	6.4%	5.7%	6.5%	4.6%	5.5%
Manufacturing	9.9%	4.8%	6.8%	2.3%	4.7%
Wholesale and retail trade	12.3%	10.5%	11.6%	9.1%	10.7%
Transportation and utilities	6.3%	6.0%	5.8%	6.3%	6.4%
Information services	1.7%	2.8%	2.3%	3.5%	2.9%
Finance, insurance and real estate	6.8%	9.0%	7.4%	11.0%	10.2%
Professional and business services	12.5%	13.4%	11.3%	16.1%	15.2%
Educational services	9.7%	11.4%	13.5%	8.7%	10.5%
Healthcare and social assistance	15.0%	18.4%	16.8%	20.4%	17.3%
Leisure and hospitality	8.7%	8.3%	7.8%	9.0%	7.9%
Other services	4.2%	3.8%	3.5%	4.1%	4.1%
Public administration	5.4%	5.5%	6.1%	4.8%	4.6%
TOTAL	98.9%	99.6%	99.4%	99.9%	100.0%

NOTE: Totals may not sum due to rounding.
Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

union membership is presented in Table 1. Comparing the two tables reveals that, for most industry groups, the share of union membership deviates substantially 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 New York City metropolitan area, the State and the nation. Unionization rates vary widely across the industry groups shown. Nationally, education, public administration, and transportation and utilities are the most highly unionized industry groups. Health care and social assistance is also relatively highly unionized in the New York City metropolitan area and in New York State, although in the United States as a whole, the unionization rate for health care and social assistance is only slightly above the private-sector average. Nationally, the other outstanding high-density industry is construction, which has a higher unionization rate than that in health care and social assistance. Union density nationally is consistently low—in the single digits—in manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade; leisure and hospitality; professional and business services; information services; and 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 2025-26. For that reason, we created a different data set that consolidates CPS data over a much longer period, the twelve-and-a-half years from January 2014 to June 2026, inclusive. This 149-month blend provides a much larger sample size, permitting a far

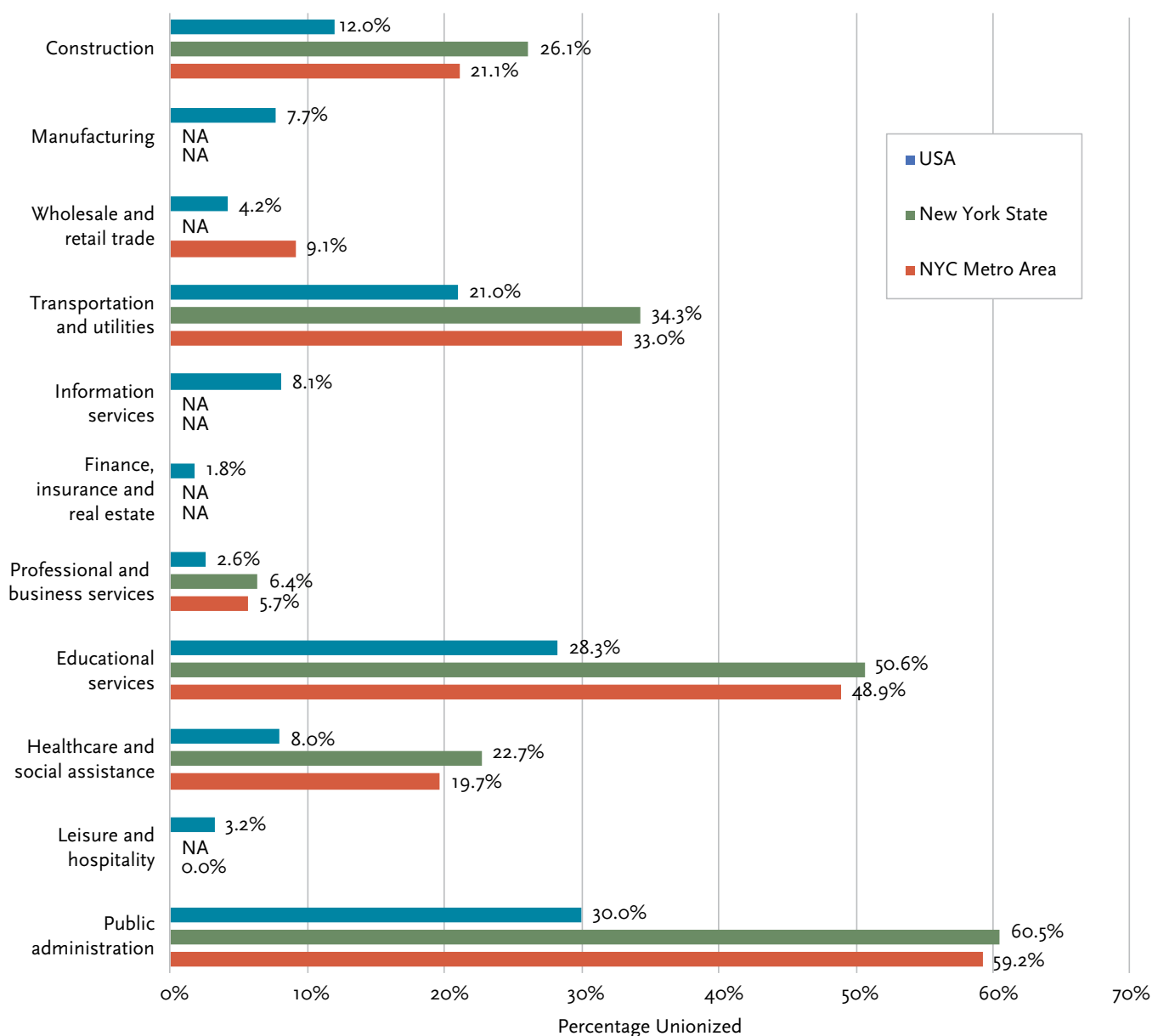
more disaggregated analysis of industry variations. Because of the longer time span represented in the data, however, the unionization rates derived from this data set differ somewhat from those shown in Figure 8 for 2025-26.⁸

Table 3 summarizes the 2014-2026 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 sole exception is "air transportation," in which the rate in the State was marginally lower than in the nation. In most industries the State rates were higher than those in the New York City metropolitan area, but the opposite was true in utilities; retail grocery stores; air transportation; amusement, gambling and recreation; hotels and accommodation; and restaurants, food service and drinking places.

In ten of the 36 industries shown for which sample sizes are sufficiently large to permit reliable estimates, 2014-2026 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; and "other educational services" 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 continue to do so in key industries like hospitals, nursing care facilities and telecommunications, as well

FIGURE 8. UNIONIZATION RATES BY INDUSTRY GROUP, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2025–26



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 3 in the text.
 Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

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.

TABLE 3. UNIONIZATION RATES BY INDUSTRY, NEW YORK CITY METRO AREA, NEW YORK STATE, AND THE UNITED STATES, 2014–2026

Industry	United States	New York Metro	New York State
TOTAL (All Industries)	10.0%	20.9%	18.3%
Agriculture and mining	3.4	NA	NA
Utilities	22.9	40.7	41.6
Construction	13.2	27.0	24.1
Food manufacturing	11.1	12.9	8.7
Textile and apparel manufacturing	3.3	NA	NA
Paper products and printing	11.3	27.6	NA
Other manufacturing	8.1	11.4	6.0
Wholesale grocery and beverages	8.6	14.0	12.5
Other wholesale trade	2.4	6.8	4.9
Retail grocery stores	15.0	18.6	22.9
Pharmacy and drug stores	4.5	NA	9.9
Department and discount stores	2.7	NA	NA
Other retail trade	1.9	4.8	4.5
Air transportation	39.3	37.6	42.7
Truck transportation	8.0	19.5	15.9
Bus service and urban transit	39.2	60.1	59.7
Postal service (transportation)	63.2	77.5	75.4
Couriers and messengers	18.8	27.7	25.3
Other transportation	25.1	26.5	25.1
Newspaper, periodical and book publishing	5.3	NA	NA
Motion pictures and video	13.0	20.6	19.4
Radio, television and cable	8.1	20.7	17.5
Wired and other telecommunication	12.5	28.4	20.8
Other information services	14.8	NA	21.5
Finance, insurance and real estate	2.3	8.1	6.5
Building and security services	4.9	14.4	12.8
Other management and professional services	1.9	5.0	3.5
Elementary and secondary schools	38.4	64.8	62.0
Other educational services	12.6	25.8	23.6
Offices of physicians and other health providers	2.9	6.3	5.6
Hospitals	13.3	36.3	33.1
Nursing care facilities	6.5	29.8	28.0
Home healthcare services	6.7	23.0	22.3
Child day care services	3.5	12.3	10.1
Other healthcare and social assistance	8.5	20.7	19.4
Performing arts, museums and sports	11.0	23.1	22.1
Amusement, gambling and recreation	5.1	6.3	6.5
Hotels and accommodation	7.3	21.3	24.0
Restaurants, food service and drinking places	1.5	3.5	3.8
Other services	3.0	7.3	6.7
Public administration	29.7	61.5	58.0

NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 3 in the text

Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2014 - June 2026. October 2025 excluded.

Similarly, while traditional supermarkets are still highly unionized, most other types of retail grocery stores are not.

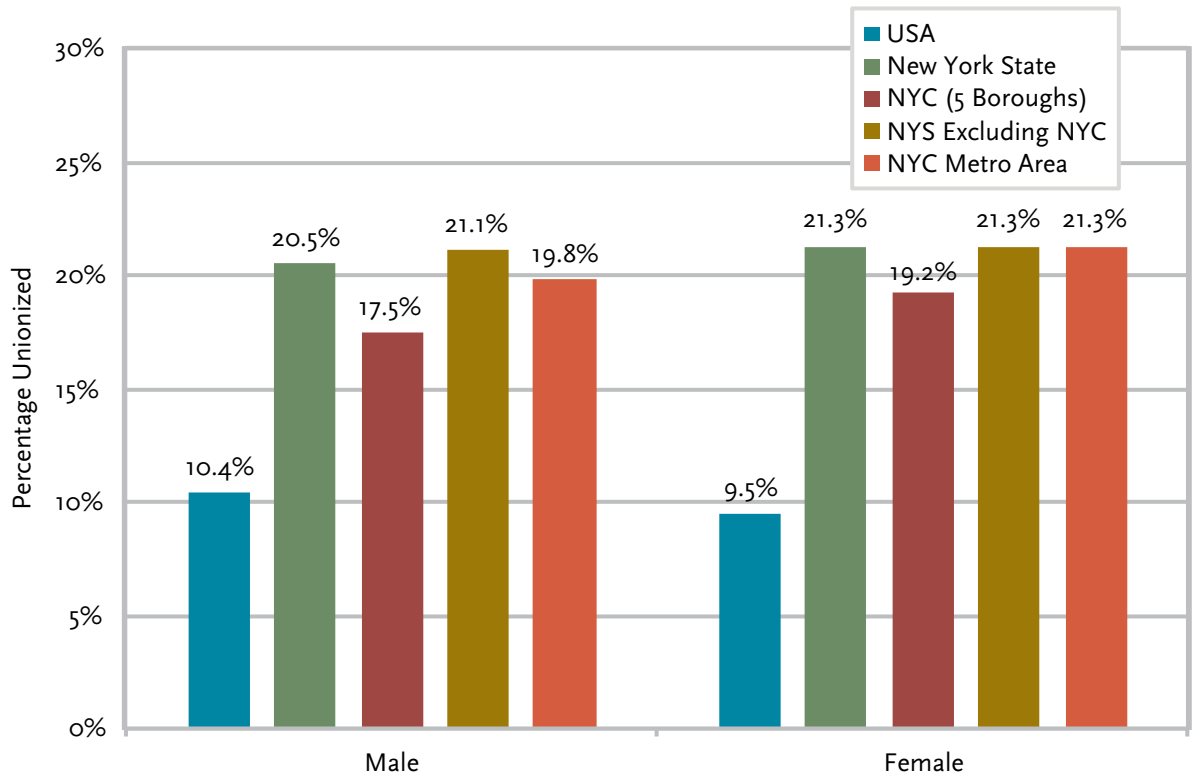
Union Membership Demographics

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.⁹ 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 2025-26 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 2025-26 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 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 transit sector, in which Blacks are overrepresented. In New York City, Latino workers had a higher unionization rate than non-Latino whites or non-Latino Asian-Pacific Islanders in 2025-26; however, in both the New York City metropolitan area and New York State, the Latino

FIGURE 9. UNIONIZATION RATES BY GENDER, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2025–26



Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

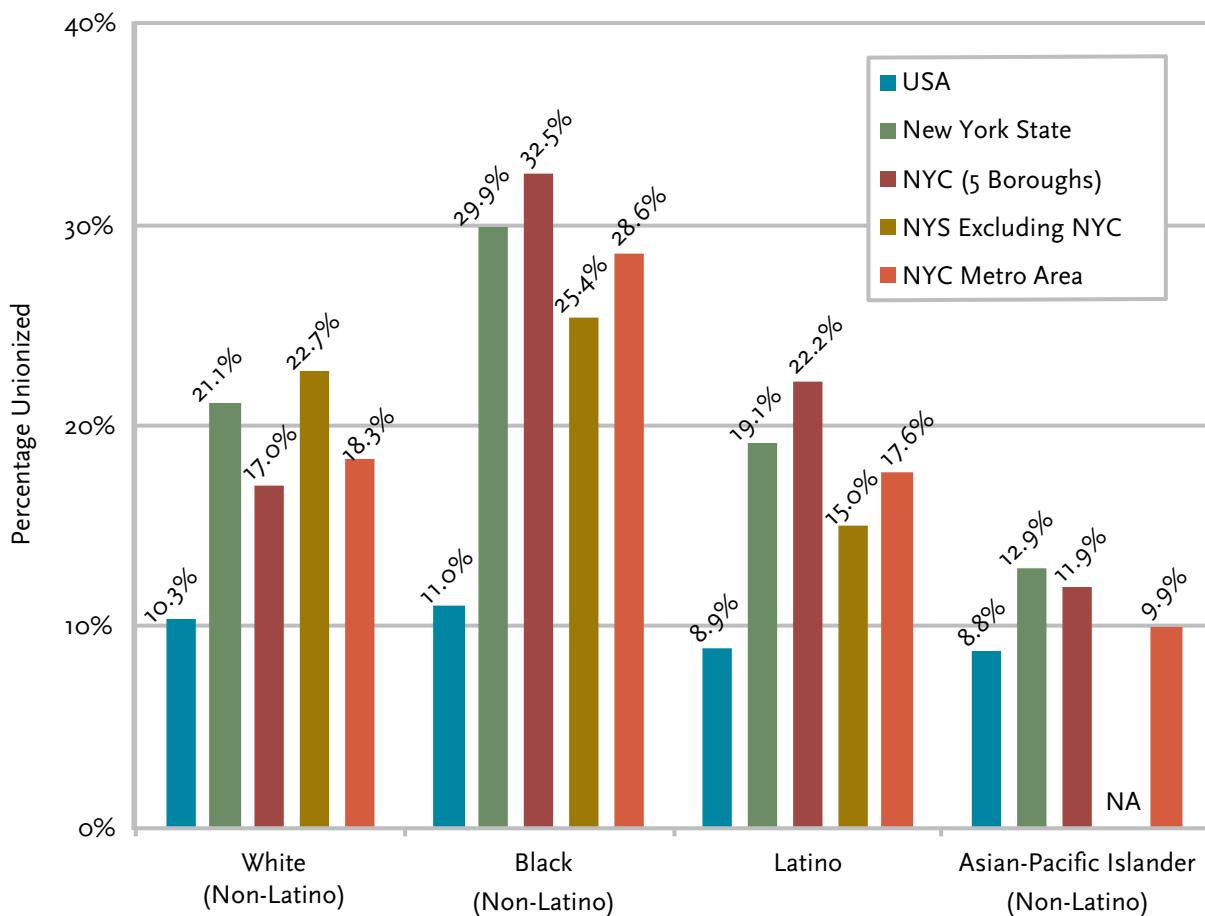
rate was higher than that of non-Latino Asian/Pacific Islanders but lower than that of non-Latino whites. However, nationwide, non-Latino whites had a slightly higher unionization rate than their Latino counterparts did (and non-Latino Asian-Pacific Islanders' rate was nearly equal to that of Latinos).

Unionization rates vary with nativity as well, as shown in Figure 11. In 2025-26, foreign-born workers' unionization rate was equal to 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 broadly, as Figure 12 shows, foreign-born workers are not a homogenous group. In New York City and in the United States as a whole, the unionization rate of naturalized U.S. citizens was higher than that of U.S.-born workers in 2025-26. Foreign-born non-citizens, by contrast, consistently have very low rates of unionization. They typically are recent arrivals, and most are relatively young (as noted above, younger workers are less likely

FIGURE 10. UNIONIZATION RATES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2025–26

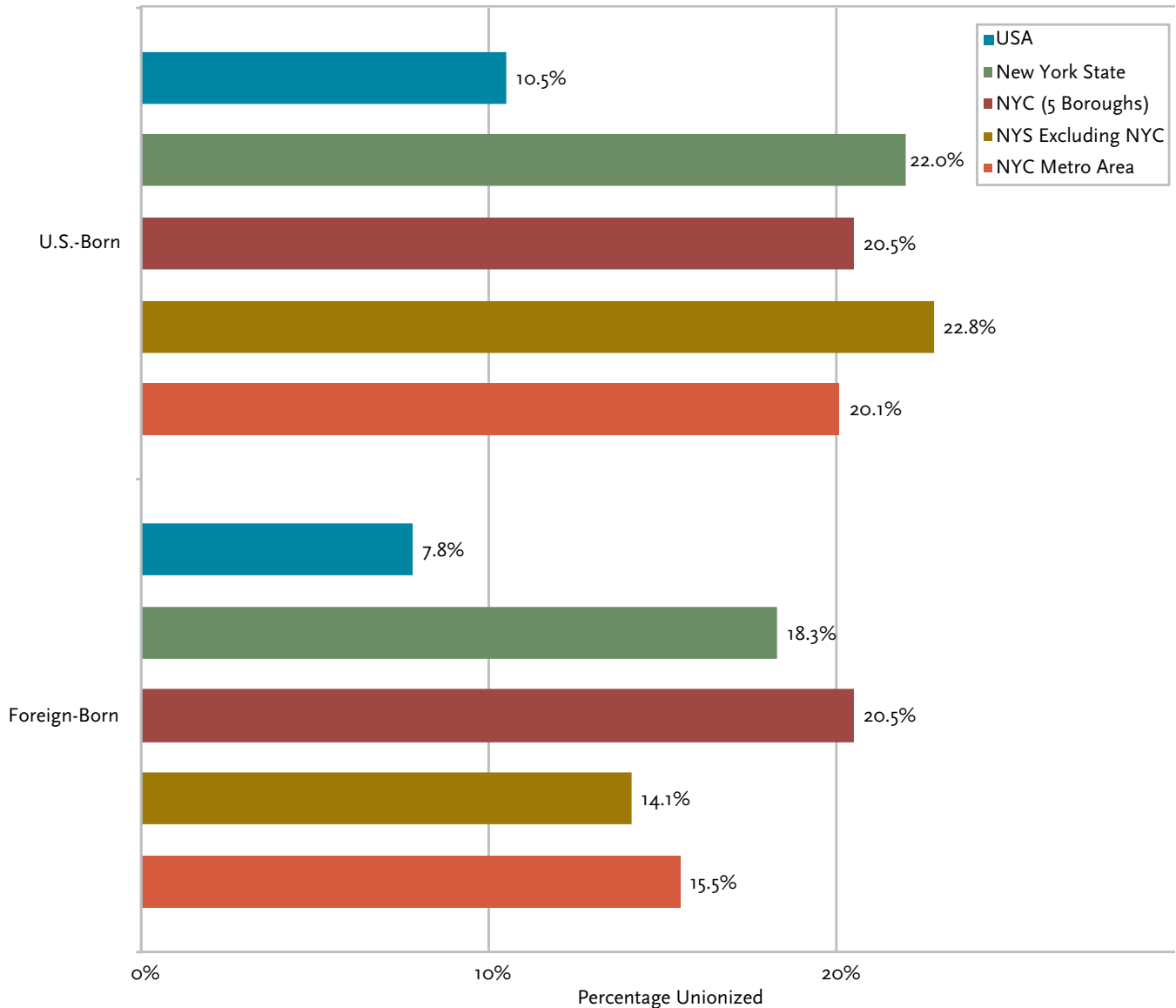


NA=Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 3 in the text.

Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.

Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

FIGURE 11. UNIONIZATION RATES BY NATIVITY, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2025–26



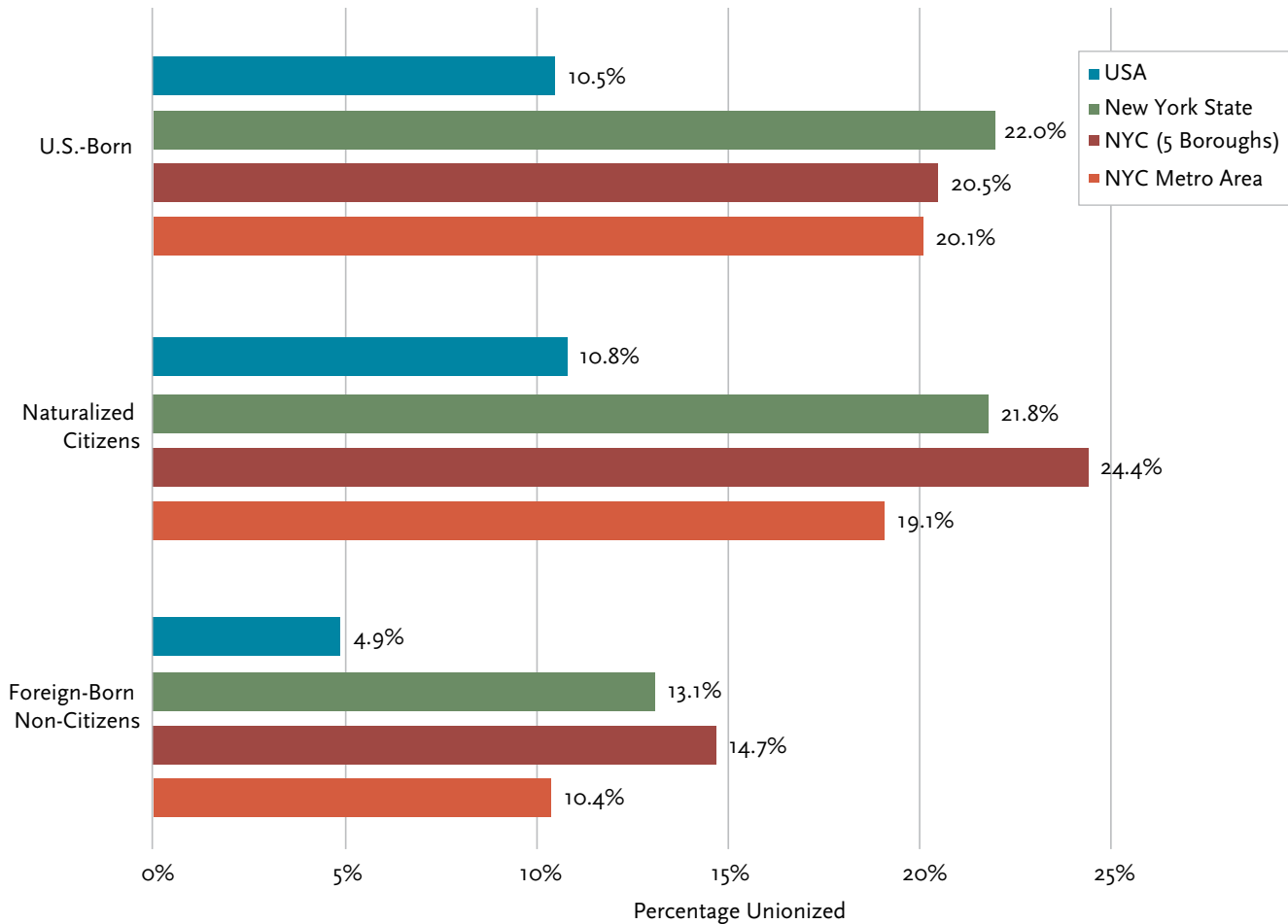
Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

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 move into more unionized sectors of the labor market, 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 2025-26, only 5.5 percent of all foreign-born noncitizens in the United States were employed in the public sector, compared to 15.5 percent of U.S. born workers and 11.4 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

FIGURE 12. UNIONIZATION RATES BY NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2025–26



Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

unionization rates are lower than public-sector ones for all groups, regardless of citizenship status.

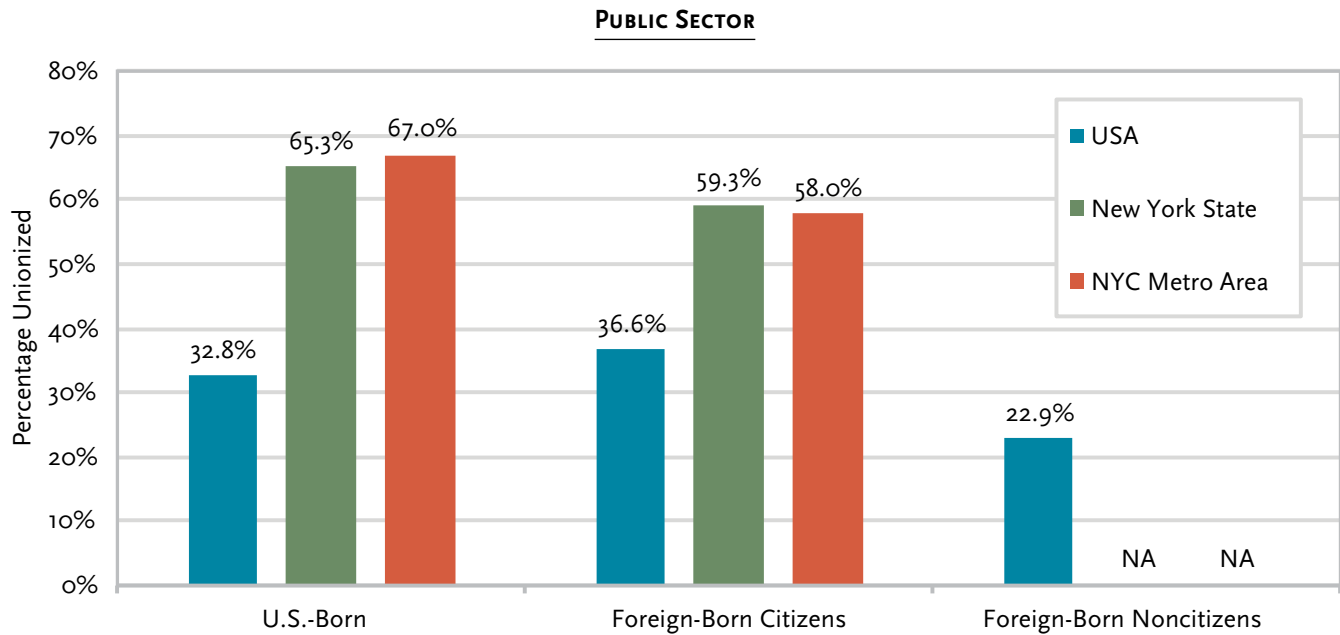
Conclusion

Actively recruiting new members into the ranks of the labor movement, as many dedicated labor organizers have done 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. As noted above, the organizing uptick over the past few years has been of insufficient scale to make a

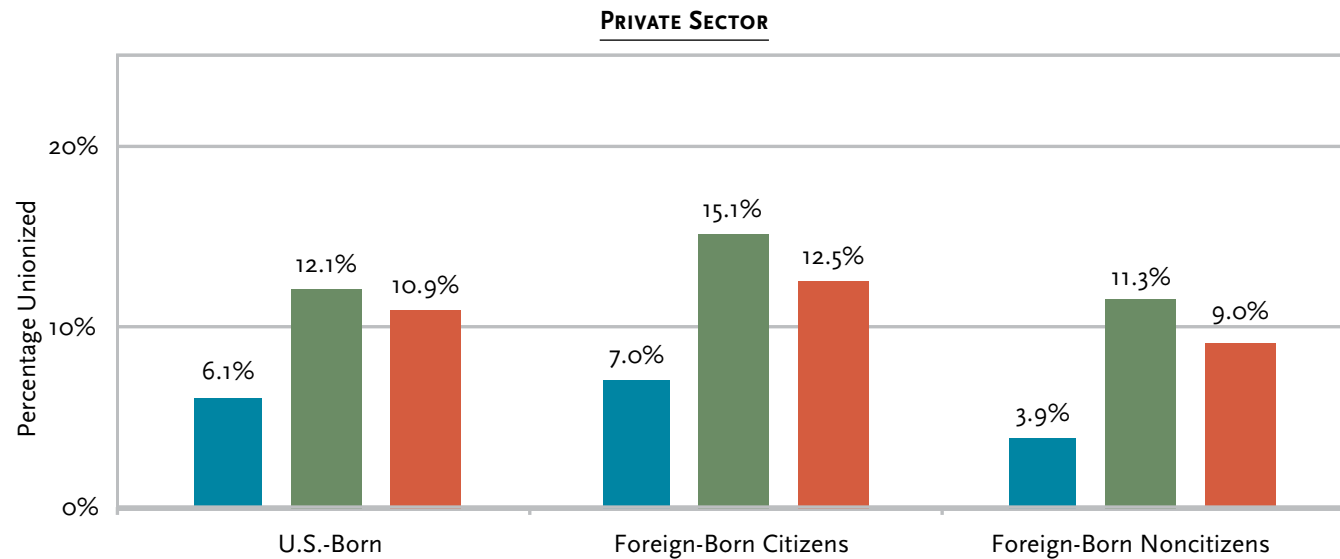
difference in the overall picture, despite the extensive media and public attention it has attracted.

Moreover, many other factors outside the control of the labor movement also critically influence the level of union density. All else equal, if employment 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

FIGURE 13. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE-SECTOR UNIONIZATION BY NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2025–26



NA=Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 3 in the text.
 Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.



Percentages shown for 2025-26 include the 17 months from January 2025 to June 2026. October 2025 excluded.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2025–June 2026.

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.¹⁰ 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, eleven percentage points above the 2025-26 level (14.3 percent) level, and statewide the figure was 24.0 percent as recently as 1983 (compared to 12.5 percent in 2025-26).¹¹

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.¹² 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; an impasse that deprived most City workers of significant increases in compensation for years. As discussed in this report’s special section, addressing that will be a challenge for the Mamdani administration in the coming months and years.

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/694472/labor-union-approval-relatively-steady.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 2025 and the first six months of 2026. We created a merged data set from the 17 monthly surveys conducted from January 2025 to June 2026, inclusive, except for October 2025 when the survey was not conducted due to the federal government shutdown. All the 2025-26 data discussed here and shown in the figures and tables below are the averages for those 17 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 where Hirsch, Macpherson, and William E. Even post annual updates (in contrast to the *Data Book*, which was discontinued after 2019). To ensure reliability, given the limitations of the CPS data set, 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 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 reports, based on CPS data for 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, January 2021-June 2022, January 2022-June 2023, January 2023-June 2024, and January 2024-June 2025, respectively. These earlier reports are available at <http://www.ruthmilkman.info/reports>.

4. For the state rankings, see Table 5 of <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf>

5. An estimated 778,626 union members resided in New York City's five boroughs in 2025-26, while the statewide total is estimated at 1,806,141. 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 2023. 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, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester Counties, New York; Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Union Counties, New Jersey; Greater Bridgeport and Western Connecticut Planning Regions, Connecticut; and Pike County, Pennsylvania. For details, see <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/OMB-Bulletin-23-01.pdf>

7. New York City is not shown in Figure 5 due to data problems.

8. Since unionization has declined somewhat since 2014 (see Figures 1a-1c), the results of this analysis overestimate the actual levels of density for each industry shown in Table 3. Note also that the 149 month data set does not include October 2025, when the CPS was not fielded due to the government shutdown.

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 non-union 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. 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_stateof-nyunions2007.pdf.

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

Notes for Special Feature

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3. Amir Khafagy, "Labor of Love? Mamdani's Record with Workers in His First 100 Days," *Documented NY*, April 10, 2026, <https://documentedny.com/2026/04/10/zohran-mamdani-first-100-days-mayor-labor-workers-immigrants/>

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6. "Mayor Mamdani Announces \$5 Million Settlement, Reinstatement of as Many as 10,000 Wrongfully Deactivated Food Delivery Workers" (Press Release, January 30, 2026, <https://www.nyc.gov/mayors-office/news/2026/01/mayor-mamdani-announces--5-million-settlement--reinstatement-of->

7. Khafagy, "Labor of Love?"

8. "Sanders and Mamdani Unite Forces, Launch Union Now to Champion Modern Labor Rights," *Harlem World*, April 13, 2026. <https://www.harlemworldmagazine.com/sanders-and-mamdani-unite-forces-launch-union-now-to-champion-modern-labor-rights/>

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York Times, February 21, 2026. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/21/nyregion/nyc-nurses-strike-ends.html>; Patrick McGeehan, "N.Y.C. Hotel Housekeepers Will Earn Over \$100,000 Under New Contract," *New York Times*, May 18, 2026. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/18/nyregion/nyc-hotel-housekeepers-pay.html>; Troy Closson and Kaja Andric, "N.Y.U Professors Reach a Deal on a Contract to End Strike After 2 Days," *New York Times*, March 25, 2026. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/25/nyregion/nyu-professor-strike-ends.html?searchResultPosition=2>; Todd Spangler, "Hearst Magazines Union Ratifies New Deal with Company Covering 410 Members," *Variety*, Feb. 23, 2026, <https://variety.com/2026/digital/news/hearst-magazines-union-agreement-wga-east-1236661085/>

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12. Matthew Haag and Dana Rubenstein, "Teachers' Union Boss Vows 'All-Out-War' if Mamdani Doesn't Back Bonuses," *New York Times*, July 24, 2026. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/07/24/nyregion/nyc-mamdani-teachers-union-bonuses.html>

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14. Dana Rubenstein and Eliza Shapiro, "Mamdani Sues City Council Over \$10,000 Bonuses to Teachers' Aides," *New York Times*, Aug. 19, 2026 <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/19/nyregion/mamdani-ny-city-council-lawsuit-teachers.html>

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 779,000 cited on page 4 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 2025) and other sources by Joseph van der Naald. Thanks to Ed Ott for assistance with this effort.

UNION NAME	Reported Membership
Amalgamated Transit Union ^c	14,781
American Federation of Government Employees ^c	6,548
American Federation of Musicians ^b	5,899
American Federation of School Administrators — Council of Supervisory Associations	6,548
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees ^c	154,662
American Federation of Teachers ^{a, c} (includes 19,568 members of PSC-CUNY, 124,591 in the NYC UFT, and 1,649 in the American Association of University Professors ^c)	160,108
American Postal Workers Union	7,447
American Train Dispatchers Association ^a	231
Anti-Defamation League Staff Association	185
Associated Actors and Artistes of America ^{b, c} (includes 16,139 members of Actors Equity Association; 969 members of the American Guild of Musical Artists; and 40,699 members of SAG-AFTRA)	58,027
Association of Commuter Rail Employees ^a	1,023
Association of Legislative Employees ^a	211
Association of Surrogates and Supreme Court Reporters Within the City of New York ^a	275
Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union ^c	1,298
Benefit Fund Staff Association	463
Brotherhood of Security Personnel	17
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen	884
Building and Construction Trades Department ^b	120
Campaign Workers Guild ^a	30

UNION NAME	Reported Membership
Citywide Association of Law Assistants of the Civil, Criminal and Family Courts ^a	300
Communication Workers of America ^{a, c} (includes 2,723 members of the NewsGuild of New York)	24,477
Co-Op City Police Benevolent Association	59
Court Attorneys Association of the City of New York ^a	230
EMS Superior Officers Association ^a	51
Faculty Interest Committee of Ethical Culture Fieldston School	285
Friends Seminary Teachers Association	104
Fordham Law School Bargaining Committee	80
Furniture Liquidators of New York	8
Harper Collins Sales Association	22
Hearst International Employees Association	11
Independent Association of Legal Workers	2
Independent Guard Union	1
Industrial Workers of the World	170
International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees ^{b, c}	23,152
International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers ^b	7,034
International Association of Fire Fighters ^a	8,382
International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers ^b	904
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers ^a	14,057
International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers ^{a, b}	8,355
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers ^b	402
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers ^b	23,578
International Brotherhood of Teamsters ^c	66,000
International Brotherhood of Trade Unions	87
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers	711
International Longshoremen's Association	1,455
International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots —Atlantic Maritime Group ^c	1,550
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers ^b	7,601
International Union of Allied Novelty and Production Workers ^c	1,104
International Union of Elevator Constructors ^b	2,853
International Union of Journeymen and Allied Trades ^b	22,155
International Union of Operating Engineers ^{a, b}	23,360
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades ^{a, b}	6,284
International Union of Police Associations ^a	112
International Union, Security, Police and Fire Professionals of America	243
Laborers' International Union of North America ^{b, c}	20,396
Law Enforcement Officers Security & Police Benevolent Association ^a	741
League of International Federated Employees	558
Local One Security Officers	1,096
Major League Baseball Players Association ^c	85
Marine Engineers Beneficial Association ^a	163
Maritime Trades Department Port Council	24
Metal Trades Department ^b	17
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra Association	87

UNION NAME	Reported Membership
MTA Commanding Officers Association ^a	26
Mount Sinai Pharmacy Association	145
National Air Traffic Controllers Association	196
National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees	442
National Association of Letter Carriers	10,498
National Association of Transportation Supervisors ^a	5,687
National Basketball Players Association ^c	34
National Labor Relations Board Union	39
National Treasury Employees Union	3,957
National Writers Union ^{c, e}	165
New York City Deputy Sheriffs' Association ^a	163
New York Focus Union	10
New York Professional Nurses Union	1,320
New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association ^a	702
New York State Federation of Physicians and Dentists	20
New York State Nurses Association	31,174
New York State United Teachers Legal Staff Association	30
Newspaper and Mail Deliverers Union	295
Office and Professional Employees International Union ^c	6,698
Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association ^b	931
Organization of Staff Analysts ^a	3,467
Organization of Union Representatives	4
Patrolmen's Benevolent Association ^a	21,958
Police Benevolent Association of New York State ^a	67
Police Benevolent Association of the New York State Troopers ^a	223
Postal and Federal Employees Alliance	442
Professional Association of Holy Cross High School	39
Professional Dieticians of New York City Presbyterian	50
Restaurant Workers Union 318	11
Safety Professionals of America	3
Security Alliance Federation of Employees	320
Service Employees International Union ^{a, c} (includes 187,449 members in 1199SEIU ^c ; 94,081 members in SEIU Local 32BJ ^c ; and 3,674 members in Workers United)	301,648
Special Patrolman Benevolent Association	80
Stage Directors and Choreographers ^{b, c}	1,153
St. John's Preparatory Teachers Association	31
Transport Workers Union ^a	50,910
UAW Staff United ^d	57
Uniformed Sanitation Chiefs Association ^a	73
Union of Automotive Technicians ^a	58
UNITE HERE ^d	35,952
United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters ^b	14,416
United Auto Workers ^c	20,494
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners ^{b, c}	15,674

UNION NAME	Reported Membership
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union ^d (includes 14,028 members in the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union)	38,910
United Nations International School Staff Association	217
United Probation Officers Association ^a	571
United States Park Police Sergeants Association	22
United Steelworkers ^d	2,715
United Uniformed Workers of New York ^{a, f}	33,671
United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers ^b	1,374
United University Professions ^a	2,394
Utility Workers Union of America	7,830
Women's National Basketball Players Association ^c	13
Writers Guild of America ^b	2,741
TOTAL	1,307,223

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 (2026), from Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests to the Office of the State Comptroller's Office (2025) and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (2025), from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (2025), or from Combined Continuing Disclosure Filings relating to the Metropolitan Transit and Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authorities (2026).

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: 5,219 members in the Detectives Endowment Association; 4,444 members in the Sergeants Benevolent Association; 1,646 members in the Lieutenants Benevolent Association; 4,779 members in the Correction Officers Benevolent Association; 6,907 members in the Sanitation Workers Local 831; 2,546 members in the Uniformed Fire Officers Association; 1,309 members in the Sanitation Officers Local 444; 110 members in the Assistant Deputy Wardens - Deputy Wardens Association; 755 members in the Captains Endowment Association; 482 members in the Correction Captains Association; 294 members in the NYC Detective Investigators Association; 1,100 members in the NYS Supreme Court Officers Association; 94 members in the Port Authority Detectives Endowment Association; 112 members in the Port Authority Lieutenants Benevolent Association; 1,743 members in the Port Authority Police Benevolent Association; 283 members in the Port Authority Sergeants Benevolent Association; 193 members in the Uniformed Fire Alarm Dispatchers Benevolent Association; 246 members in the Bridge and Tunnel Officers Benevolent Association; 1,269 members in the Police Benevolent Association MTA; and 140 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 2026.

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/>

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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*.