THE STATE OF THE UNIONS 2026

A Profile of Unionization in Chicago, in Illinois, and in the United States

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PROJECT FOR MIDDLE CLASS RENEWAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Support for labor unions remains at a historically high levels, with 7-in-10 Americans approving unions. Three-fifths say that unions strengthen the economy and that their decline has been bad for the country. Unions enjoy bipartisan, positive net favorability ratings.

In 2025, union membership in the United States grew by the largest amount in nearly two decades.

- The United States added 411,000 union members, the most since 2008 (427,000 members), and the national unionization rate ticked up to 10 percent.
- The increase in union membership reflected the broad desire to join unions and public sector workers turning to unions amidst federal actions and lawsuits that were unresolved until this year.
- Illinois added 24,000 union members following a gain of 27,000 the year before, and now has its most union members (759,000 members) since 2019
- The union success rate for new organizing drives was 51 percent in Illinois.
- Illinois organized more union members from 2022 through 2025 (22,000 new members) than the previous seven years combined (16,500 new members).

Illinois' union membership rate is now 13 percent, which is the 12th-highest share in the United States.

- One-in-five military veterans (22 percent) are union members.
- 19 percent of Black workers are unionized compared to 12 percent of white workers and 13 percent of Hispanic workers.
- U.S. citizens (14 percent) are more likely to be unionized than foreign-born workers (8 percent).
- Union membership rates in Illinois exceed the national average across the board, including by age, gender, race and ethnicity, veteran status, education, industry, and occupation.

Labor unions improve job quality for workers and reduce costs for taxpayers.

- Unions boost worker earnings by 11 percent in Illinois, the 5th-highest union advantage in the nation.
- Unions raise average wages by 8 percent nationally and by at least 5 percent in 46 U.S. states.
- Union members in Illinois are 8 percent more likely to own their homes and 1 to 4 percent less likely to rely on government assistance programs like Medicaid and food stamps.
- Union members nationally are 6 percent more likely to be homeowners and 1 to 3 percent less likely to rely on government assistance programs like Medicaid and food stamps.

Workers fare better in the 25 jurisdictions that protect workers' rights to collective bargaining than in the 26 states with so-called "right-to-work" laws.

- Union membership rates are now 14 percent in collective bargaining states and just 5 percent in "right-to-work" states, a 9 percent gap.
- In 2025, collective bargaining states added three times as many union members (nearly 305,000) as "right-to-work" states (almost 107,000), including four times as many in the public sector and two times as many in the private sector.
- Worker earnings grew 3 percent slower in "right-to-work" states from 2019 to 2025, and workers now earn 8 percent less in "right-to-work" states after adjusting for cost-of-living differences—a wider gap than prior to the pandemic.
- Illinois' workers earn 19 percent more ($37 per hour) than their peers in four neighboring states with "right-to-work" laws ($31 per hour), or 9 percent more after accounting for the cost of living.

To reflect public opinion, lawmakers and voters nationally could consider repealing "right-to-work" laws and enacting Workers' Rights Amendments that ban "right-to-work" laws and blocking legislation restricting collective bargaining rights for public service workers. Streamlining the process of forming unions and penalizing businesses that violate labor rights would also spur union membership growth and boost worker earnings.

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INTRODUCTION

Americans strongly support labor unions. Seven-in-10 Americans approve of unions, including 9-in-10 Democrats, 7-in-10 independents, and over half of Republicans (Gallup, 2026; Saad, 2026; Brenan, 2025; Brenan, 2024; GBAO, 2023). Unions enjoy a bipartisan, positive net favorability rating of +36 percent, including +73 percent among Democrats, +34 percent among independents, and +8 percent among Republicans—with younger Republicans holding positive views that mirror the broader population (American Compass, 2025). Three-fifths of Americans say that unions strengthen the economy, and four out of every five voters say that unions improve workplace safety, worker pay and hours, and healthcare access and affordability (GBAO, 2023; Saad, 2023). Three-fifths also say that the decline of unions has been bad for the country (Van Green, 2025). A record-high 47 percent of Americans want unions to have more influence in the United States compared to 23 percent who want them to have less influence (Saad, 2026). Millions more workers would like to become union members, as 48 percent of nonunion workers have reported that they would vote to unionize their workplaces if they could (Shierholz et al., 2024; Kochan et al., 2019).

Research has long established a connection between unionization and higher job quality (U.S. Treasury, 2023). Union households have earned an average of 10 to 20 percent more than nonunion households every year since the 1930s (U.S. Treasury, 2023; Farber et al., 2021; Schmitt, 2008). In 2025, median weekly earnings were $1,404 for union members and $1,174 for nonunion workers, a 20 percent difference (BLS, 2026a). The U.S. Department of Labor reports that 95 percent of union workers have access to healthcare coverage and 94 percent have access to retirement plans. By contrast, just 71 percent of nonunion workers have healthcare access and 72 percent have retirement plan access (BLS, 2025). Additional research has linked union representation with safer workplaces, lower worker turnover, lower levels of poverty, and less reliance on government assistance programs (Han et al., 2024; Banerjee et al., 2021; Ford & Freund, 2022; Bach & Kinder, 2021; Sojourner & Pacas, 2018). Union workers are a better trained, more productive, and cost-effective option for many business models (McFadden, Santosh, & Shetty, 2022).

Union membership, however, has gradually declined from 24 percent in 1973 to 10 percent today, driven by the spread of so-called "right-to-work" conditions and other anti-union legislation (Hirsch, Macpherson, & Even, 2026). "Right-to-work" laws incentivize workers to receive services, benefits, and representation from unions for free without paying either dues or fees. In 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned four decades of precedent and imposed "right-to-work" conditions on state and local government employees nationwide in a 5-4 *Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 31, et al.* decision (Oyez, 2018). These laws increase free riding by 34 to 47 percent, reducing the resources that unions have available to advocate for employees and organize new members—eroding worker bargaining power and decreasing union membership by between 2 and 16 percent (Bono-Lunn, 2024; Manzo & Bruno, 2023a; Fortin, Lemieux, & Lloyd, 2022; VanHeuvelen, 2020; Stansbury & Summers, 2020; Hogler, Shulman, & Weiler, 2004; Davis & Huston, 1993).

More recently, the Trump administration has attempted to weaken unions at the federal level by Executive Order. The administration revoked collective bargaining rights for more than 1 million workers employed at the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of the Treasury, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and National Science Foundation (NSF) (Glass, 2025; Cameron, 2025; Bellisle, 2025). President Trump also rescinded an Executive Order that directed government agencies to award grants and federal contracts to applicants that include project labor agreements (PLAs), union neutrality agreements, prevailing wage standards, and registered apprenticeships (McNicholas et al., 2025).

This report, conducted by researchers at the Illinois Economic Policy Institute (ILEPI) and the Project for Middle Class Renewal (PMCR) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, analyzes the course of unionization in Illinois, in the Chicago metropolitan statistical area (MSA), and in the United States from 2016 to 2025. It is the 12th annual report of its kind for union members in Illinois, with the previous release in August 2024 and the initial release dating back to April 2014 (Manzo & Bruno, 2025; Manzo, Bruno &

Parks, 2014). The report first explores union petition data and the recent success rate of organizing campaigns in Illinois. The report then tracks unionization rates and investigates union membership across demographic, educational, sectoral, industry, and occupational classifications before evaluating the impact of union membership on worker earnings and other socioeconomic outcomes. The penultimate section compares outcomes in states that protect workers' rights to collective bargaining against states that have so-called "right-to-work" laws. The conclusion recaps key findings.

Union Petitions

There have been signs of a resurgent labor movement in Illinois. In November 2022, voters approved of the Workers' Rights Amendment to the Illinois Constitution. The Amendment declares that "no law shall be passed that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and work place safety" (ILGA, 2026). The Amendment guarantees the fundamental right of workers to unionize and bargain collectively, effectively bans in perpetuity so-called "right-to-work" laws, and blocks any future legislation that would limit the items over which public service workers can bargain in Illinois. The Amendment passed with bipartisan support, driven by union members—88 percent of whom voted in favor—as well as robust support from middle-class households and rural working-class voters (Manzo & Bruno, 2023b; Manzo & Bruno, 2023c).

There has been an uptick in union organizing activity (Figure 1). Data on union petitions assigned to the Region 13 Chicago office of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) show that there were 53 successful organizing drives at Illinois workplaces that newly unionized about 3,300 workers in 2025. This represented a 51 percent union success rate. These numbers are down slightly from 2024, when 3,700 employees at 75 workplaces were newly unionized at a 53 percent success rate, but still exceed pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 1: Union Petition Data, Illinois Petitions at NLRB Region 13 (Chicago), 2015-2024

Year	Successful Petitions	Union Petitions	Closed Petitions	Success Rate (of Closed)	New Employees Represented
2015	56	128	128	43.8%	2,284
2016	42	95	95	44.2%	1,257
2017	38	92	92	41.3%	4,331
2018	35	77	77	45.5%	2,317
2019	51	112	112	45.5%	2,409
2020	29	76	76	38.2%	1,069
2021	60	100	99	60.6%	2,824
2022	76	133	131	58.0%	9,847
2023	90	142	141	63.8%	5,271
2024	75	151	142	52.8%	3,662
2025	53	116	104	51.0%	3,256

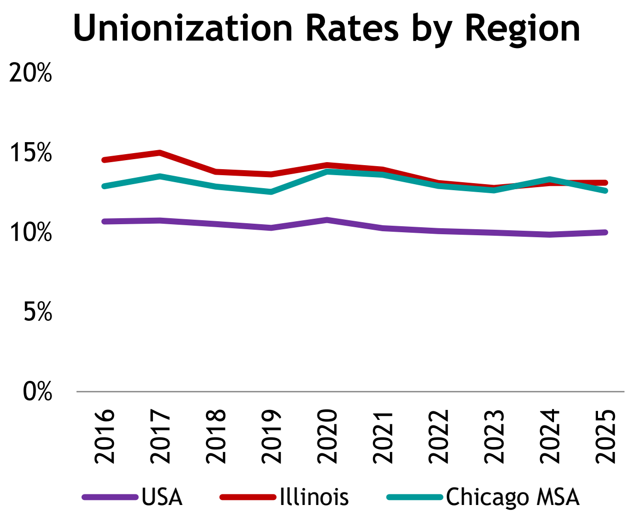
Source: "Recent Charges and Petitions Filings" from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB, 2026).

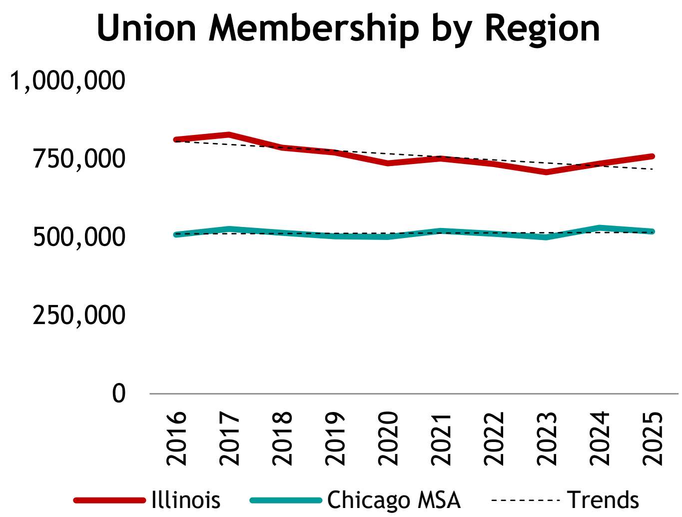
The two largest workplaces to unionize in 2025 were at Northwestern University, where 1,300 post-doctoral researchers voted 98 percent in favor, and at the Ingalls Memorial Hospital, where 309 technicians, lab associates, assistants, secretaries, and on-demand nurses became members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Healthcare of Illinois and Indiana after a 64 percent yes vote (NLRB, 2025a; NLRB, 2025b). Overall, Illinois organized more union members in the past four years (about 22,000 new members) than the previous seven years combined (about 16,500 new members), an outcome that may be attributed to passage of the Workers' Rights Amendment (Figure 1).

Unionization Rates and Trends by Demographics, Geography, and Education

This report largely utilizes data from the *Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups* (CPS-ORG) (EPI, 2026). The CPS-ORG is collected, analyzed, and released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) at the U.S. Department of Labor. The ten-year dataset from 2016 through 2025 captures survey data on nearly 2.7 million individuals aged 16 to 80 years old in the United States. These observations include 73,394 Illinois residents, of whom 43,922 were employed. In 2025, employed respondents totaled 3,256 in Illinois and 2,233 in the Illinois portion of the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin metropolitan statistical area ("Chicago MSA" or "Chicago area"). No out-of-state residents who work in Illinois are included. Results are weighted to adjust the survey data to the overall population based on Census Bureau estimates.[1]

Figure 2: Graphs of Unionization Rates and Total Union Membership by Region, 2016-2025





	Illinois		Chicago MSA		USA	
Year	*Members*	*Rate*	*Members*	*Rate*	*Members*	*Rate*
2016	812,397	14.5%	508,058	12.9%	14,549,634	10.7%
2017	828,066	15.0%	526,875	13.5%	14,811,525	10.7%
2018	785,966	13.8%	514,629	12.9%	14,740,188	10.5%
2019	771,465	13.6%	503,086	12.5%	14,566,657	10.3%
2020	736,186	14.2%	501,209	13.8%	14,250,234	10.8%
2021	752,063	13.9%	520,254	13.6%	14,003,553	10.3%
2022	734,430	13.1%	510,982	12.9%	14,280,077	10.1%
2023	707,829	12.8%	499,878	12.6%	14,415,235	10.0%
2024	734,842	13.1%	530,628	13.3%	14,245,481	9.9%
2025*	**758,517**	**13.1%**	**518,100**	**12.6%**	**14,656,960**	**10.0%**

*Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026). Values may not sum perfectly due to rounding. Illinois' 13.1% unionization rate ranks 12th in the United States. *Note: Due to the 2025 federal government shutdown, October data was not collected and was not available for the CPS-ORG. 2025 relies on a smaller sample size and only 11 months of data.*

The United States added 411,000 union members in 2025 (Figure 2). This was the largest growth in nearly two decades, surpassed only by 427,000-member gain in 2008 (Hirsch, Macpherson, & Even, 2026). The 14.7 million union members nationally are 107,000 more than at the start of the decade and represent 653,000 more than the historic low of 14.0 dues-paying members that was recorded in 2021.

[1] For more on the *Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups* (CPS-ORG) data, its limitations, and recent issues, see the Appendix.

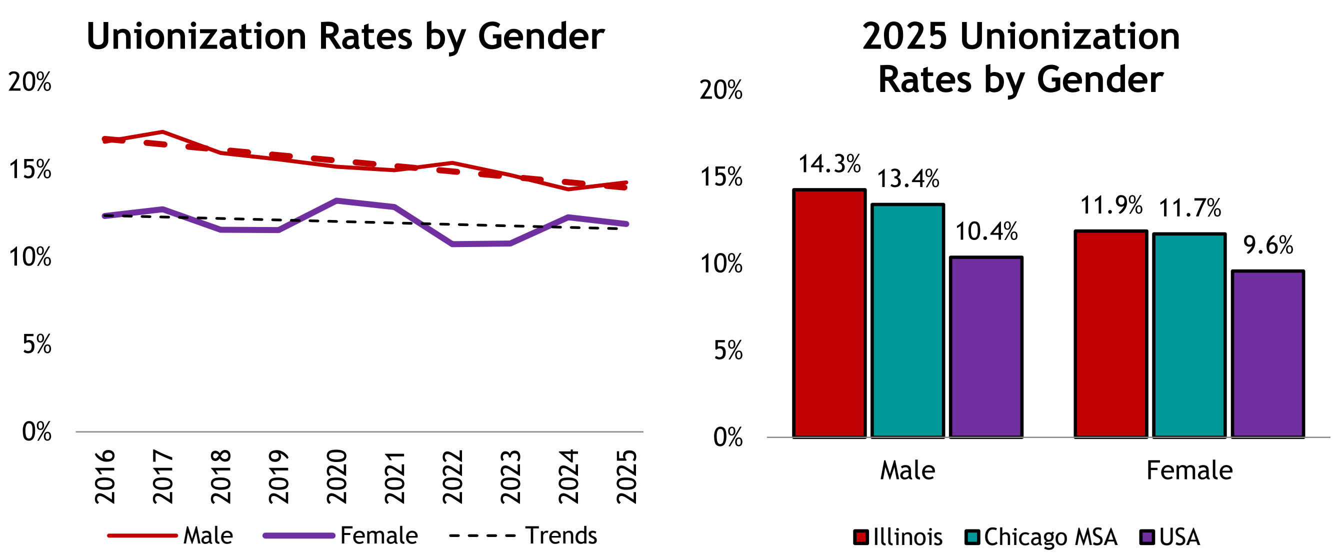
Union membership grew in Illinois last year (Figure 2). The unionization rate was 13.1 percent, the 12th-highest among the 50 U.S. states. Illinois added 24,000 union members in 2025 after a 27,000-member expansion in 2024, increasing from 708,000 members in 2023 to about 759,000 union members in 2025. This is the more union members than the state has recorded at any point since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Chicago area lost more than 12,000 union members in 2025 as its unionization rate dropped from 13.3 percent to 12.6 percent. The rest of Illinois, sometimes referred to as "Downstate," added 36,000 union members last year.

Over the long run, unionization has declined in Illinois (Figure 2). The total union membership rate was 14.5 percent in 2016 but fell to 13.1 percent in 2025. There are about 54,000 fewer union members in the state than there were in 2016, which includes 64,000 fewer union members in Downstate communities offset by 10,000 more union members in the Chicago area. This broader historical decline can be attributed to several factors, including migration patterns as Illinois has become less rural and economic changes as the state has added managerial, business, and professional services positions but lost manufacturing and installation, maintenance, and repair jobs (Illinois Future of Work Task Force, 2022).

Gender

Since 2016, the unionization rate for employed men in Illinois has fallen from 16.6 percent to 14.3 percent, a drop of 2.3 percent (Figure 3). The unionization rate of employed women has also decreased, from 12.3 percent to 11.9 percent, a drop of 0.5 percent. However, both men and women in Illinois continue to have higher unionization rates than their counterparts across the United States. Illinois' male unionization rate is 3.9 percent higher and its female unionization rate is 2.3 percent higher than their comparable national averages (10.4 percent and 9.6 percent, respectively).

FIGURE 3: GRAPHS OF UNIONIZATION RATES BY GENDER, 2016-2025

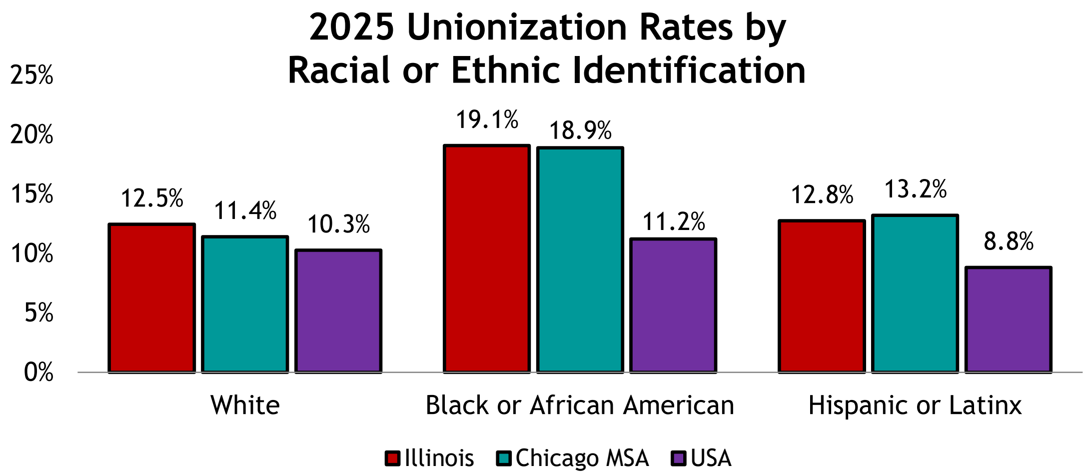


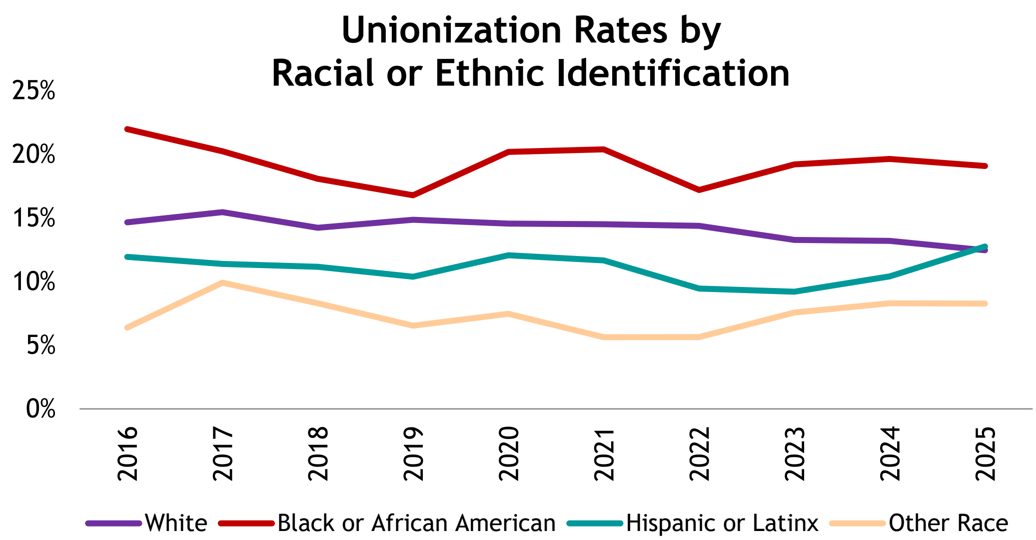
Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026).

Racial or Ethnic Background

Black workers are the most unionized racial or ethnic group (Figure 4). The unionization rate for Black workers is 19.1 percent in Illinois, 18.9 percent in the Chicago area, and 11.2 percent in the United States. In comparison, white union density is 12.5 percent in the state, 11.4 percent in the Chicago area, and 10.3 percent across the nation. Respective unionization rates for Hispanic workers are 12.8 percent, 13.2 percent, and 8.8 percent. Between 2016 and 2025, Black workers had the largest decline in union membership (-2.9 percent), while Hispanic workers (0.8 percent) and those belonging to all other racial and ethnic classifications experienced gains (1.9 percent).

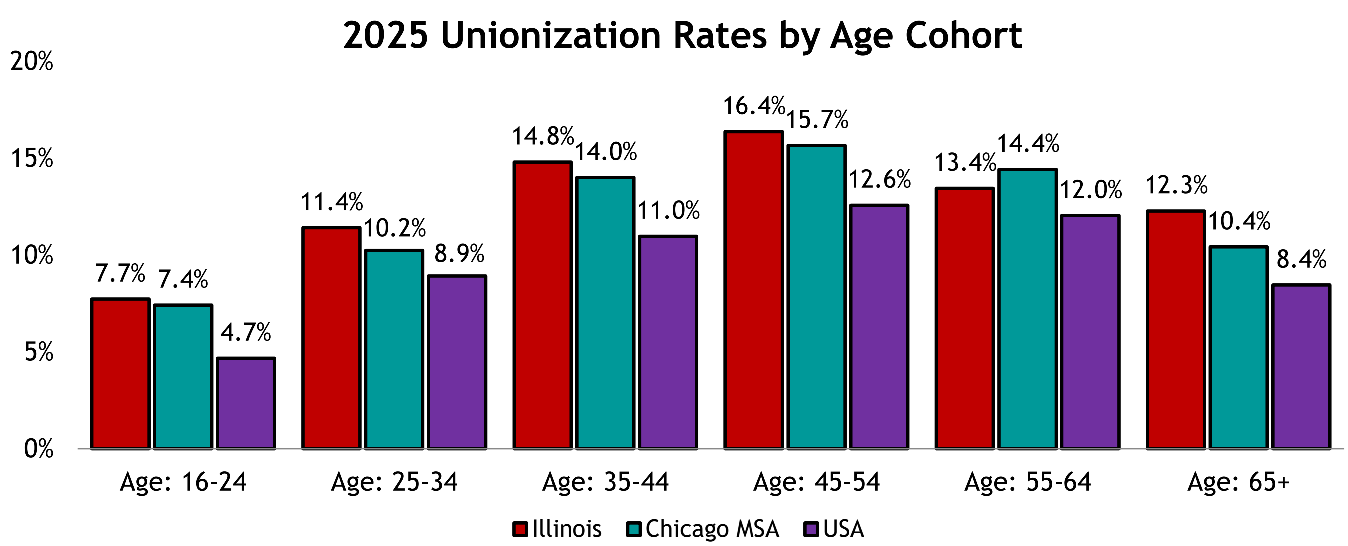
FIGURE 4: GRAPHS OF UNIONIZATION RATES BY RACIAL OR ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION, 2016-2025





Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026).

FIGURE 5: UNIONIZATION RATES BY AGE COHORT BY REGION, 2025



Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026).

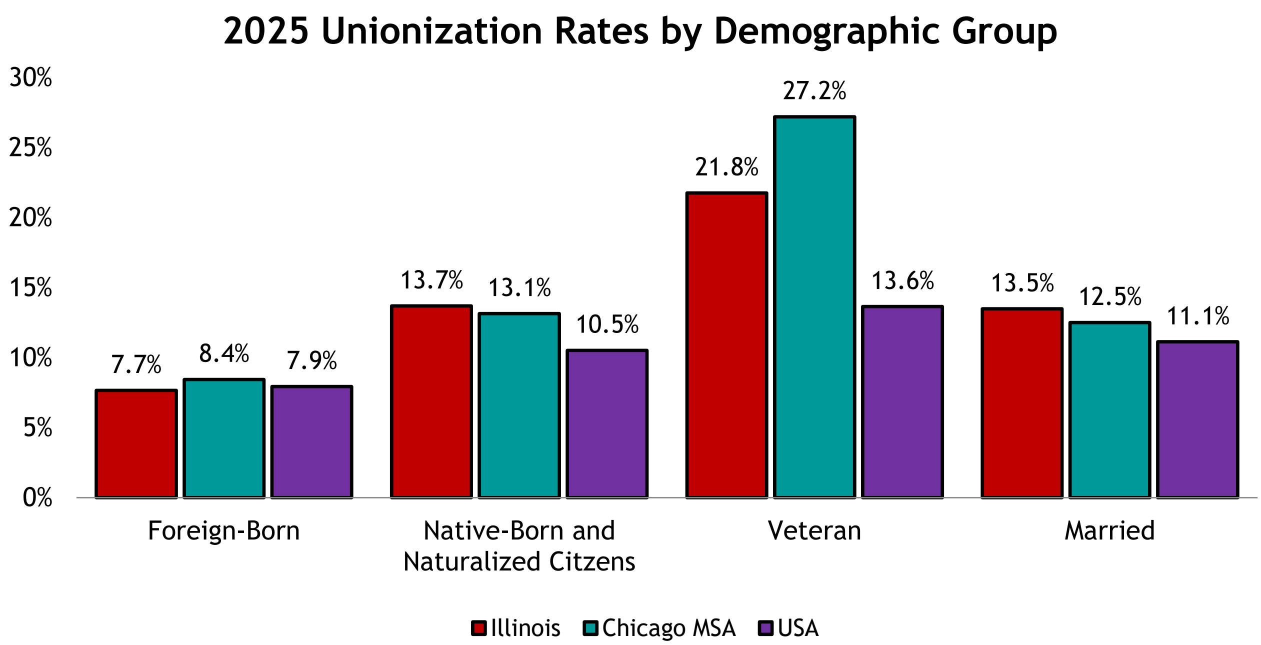
Age

Unionization rates are higher for middle-aged workers than for young workers and older workers (Figure 5). For example, the unionization rate of workers between the ages of 45 and 54 years old is 16.4 percent in Illinois. Similarly, workers aged 35 to 44 years old and those aged 55 to 65 years have unionization rates of 14.8 percent and 13.4 percent. By contrast, for young workers aged 16 to 24 years old and those aged 25 to 34 years old, unionization rates are just 7.7 percent and 11.4 percent. For those 65 years or older, the unionization rate is 12.3 percent in the state. Across all age cohorts, workers in Illinois and in the Chicago area are more likely to be union members than the national average.

Other Demographic Groups

Union membership varies across other demographic classifications as well (Figure 6). Military veterans are Illinois' most unionized demographic group. At least one-in-five employed veterans are union members in Illinois (21.8 percent) and over one-fourth are in the Chicago area (27.2 percent). Across the United States, 13.6 percent of employed veterans are unionized. Unionization rates for married workers (13.5 percent) and U.S. citizens (13.7 percent) are each above the national average in Illinois. U.S. citizens are 6.0 percent more likely to be union members than foreign-born workers (7.7 percent) across the state.

Figure 6: Unionization Rates of Selected Demographic Groups by Region, 2025



Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026).

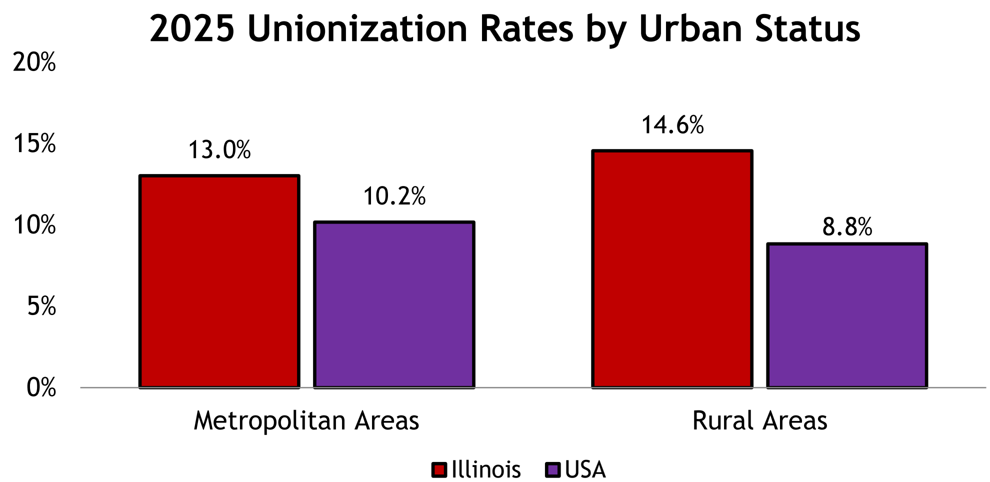
Geography

Unionization is higher in the rural portions of Illinois (Figure 7). The union membership rate is 13.0 percent in metropolitan areas like Chicago, Rockford, Bloomington, Springfield, and Carbondale, but 14.6 percent in rural portions as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Both are more unionized than their national counterparts. Illinois' urban and suburban areas are 2.8 percent more unionized than the comparable national average (10.2 percent) and its rural areas are 5.7 percent more unionized (8.8 percent).

Educational Attainment

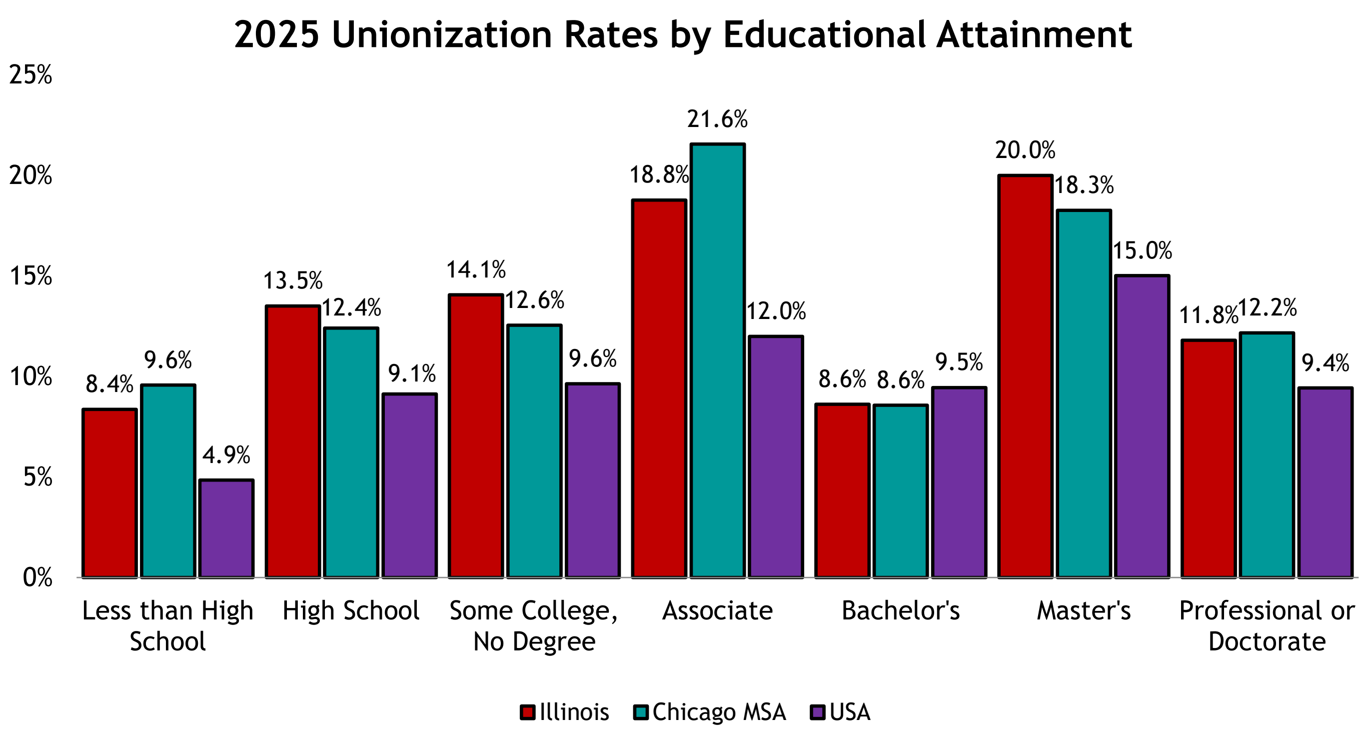
Workers with master's degrees and associate degrees the most unionized educational groups (Figure 8). Nationally, more than one-in-seven master's degree holders are union members (15.0 percent). In Illinois, one-in-five workers with master's degrees are union members (20.0 percent). Workers with associate degrees have unionization rates of 18.8 percent in Illinois, 21.6 percent in the Chicago area, and 12.0 percent in the United States. Workers without high school degrees and workers with bachelor's degrees comprise the two least-organized educational groups. Except for workers with bachelor's degrees, union membership rates are higher in Illinois than the U.S. average regardless of educational attainment level.

FIGURE 7: UNIONIZATION RATES BY URBAN STATUS IN ILLINOIS AND THE UNITED STATES, 2024



Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026).

FIGURE 8: UNIONIZATION RATES BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OR STATUS BY REGION, 2025



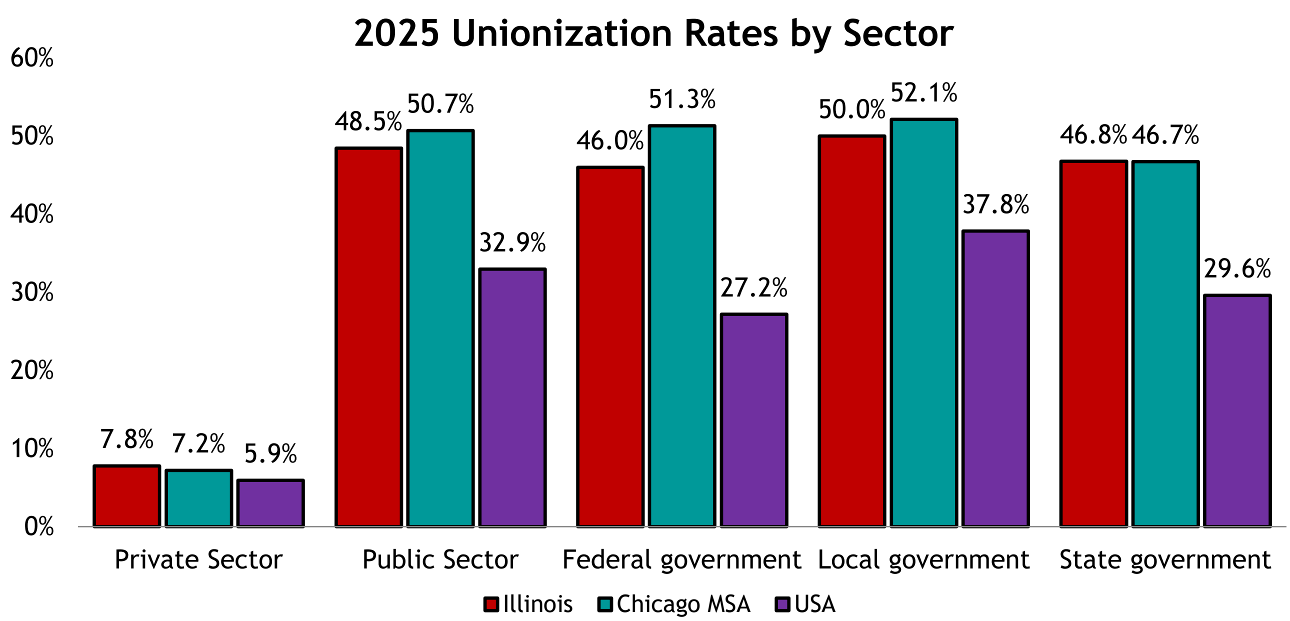
Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026).

Unionization Rates by Sector, Industry, and Occupation

Sector

While fewer than one-in-twelve private sector workers are now union members in Illinois (7.8 percent), the Chicago MSA (7.2 percent), and the United States (5.9 percent), Illinois' private sector unionization rate is 0.2 percent above its low point of 7.6 percent in 2022 (Manzo & Bruno, 2023d). Unionization rates are considerably higher for public service workers (Figure 9). Half of public service workers are unionized in both Illinois (48.5 percent) and the Chicago area (50.7 percent), as are about one-third nationwide (32.9 percent). The most unionized public sector group is local government employees in Illinois (50.0 percent), the Chicago area (52.1 percent), and nationally (37.8 percent), which includes teachers, police officers, and firefighters. Nearly half of state government workers, including those at public universities, are unionized in Illinois (46.8 percent) as are almost half of federal government employees (46.0 percent).

Figure 9: Unionization Rates by Sector Or Level of Government by Region, 2025



Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026).

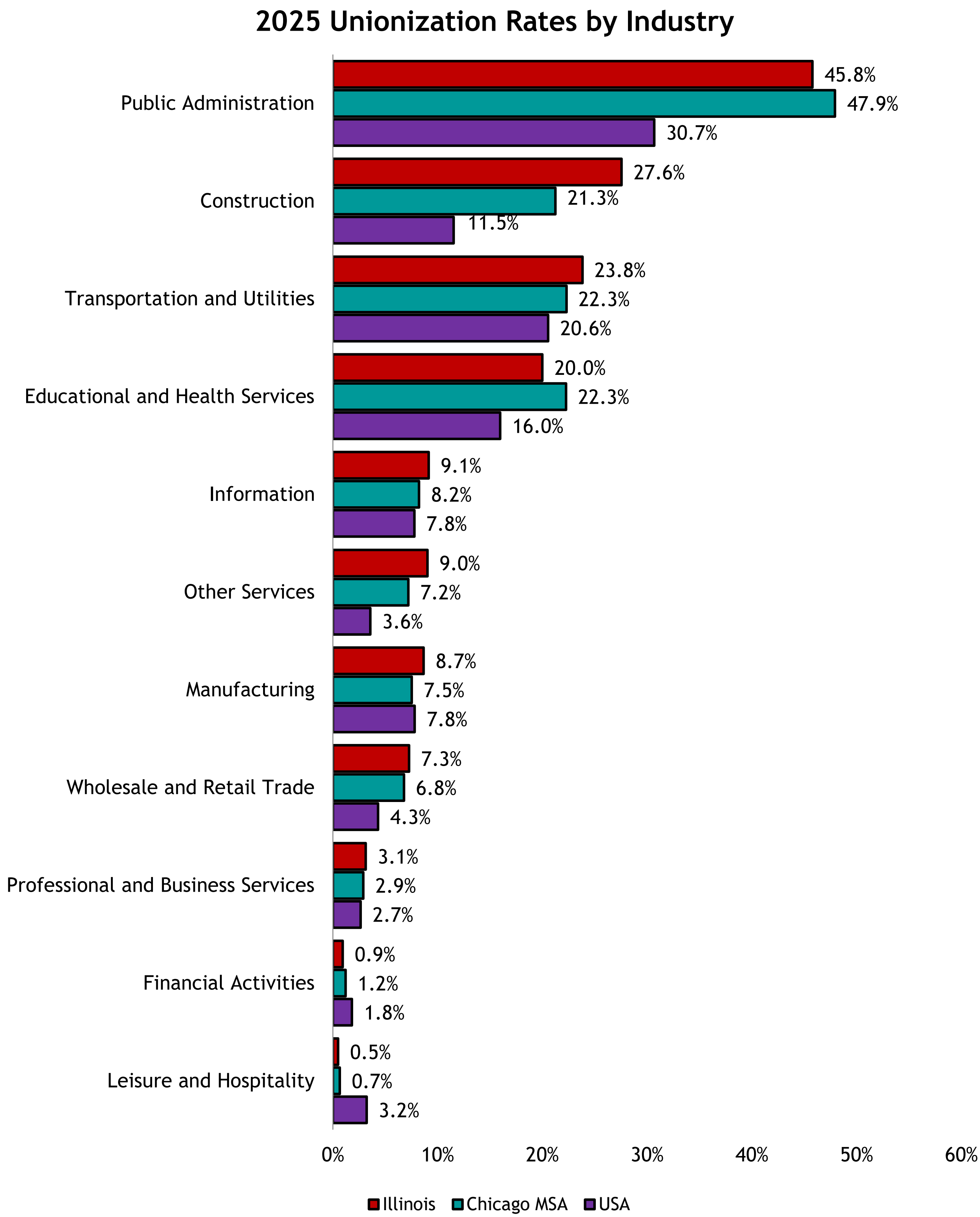
Industry

Union membership rates vary widely by industry (Figure 10). The top four industries in Illinois are public administration (45.8 percent), construction (27.6 percent), transportation and utilities (23.8 percent), and the combined educational and health services industry (20.0 percent). The manufacturing workforce, associated historically as a leader in industrial unionization, is now only 8.7 percent organized in Illinois, just 7.5 percent in the Chicago area, and 7.8 percent nationally. The least-unionized industries generally are leisure and hospitality, financial activities, and professional and business services.

Occupation

Figure 11 depicts unionization rates for major occupations. The highest rates in Illinois are among those in protective service careers (52.6 percent); education, training, and library professions (49.0 percent); construction and extraction trades (34.1 percent); production jobs (18.1 percent); and installation, maintenance, and repair roles (17.6 percent). These occupations have relatively high union densities exceeding 15 percent. More specifically, essential workers like police officers and firefighters are 80.6 percent unionized and public pre-K through 12 teachers are 78.8 percent unionized in Illinois. On the other hand, the lowest unionization rates are for those in legal occupations (2.5 percent), sales and related jobs (3.2 percent), and computer and mathematical science careers (3.4 percent) (Figure 11).

FIGURE 10: UNIONIZATION RATES BY MAJOR INDUSTRY BY REGION, 2025



Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026).

FIGURE 11: UNIONIZATION RATES BY OCCUPATION BY REGION, 2025

Selected Occupations (2025)	Illinois	Chicago MSA	USA	Illinois vs. USA
Protective Service*	52.6%	58.4%	31.2%	**+21.4%**
Education, Training, and Library*	49.0%	48.3%	32.5%	**+16.5%**
Construction and Extraction	34.1%	31.5%	16.4%	**+17.7%**
Production	18.1%	16.5%	11.8%	**+6.3%**
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	17.6%	13.1%	12.5%	**+5.1%**
Transportation and material moving	14.7%	16.7%	12.8%	**+1.9%**
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	11.6%	11.7%	8.2%	**+3.4%**
Community and Social Service	11.5%	15.4%	14.5%	**-3.0%**
Office and Administrative Support	11.0%	8.1%	8.7%	**+2.3%**
Life, Physical, and Social Science	10.9%	7.2%	10.8%	**+0.1%**
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical	10.7%	13.0%	12.0%	**-1.3%**
Healthcare Support	9.4%	11.9%	8.7%	**+0.7%**
Personal Care and Service	7.0%	6.6%	4.0%	**+3.0%**
Architecture and Engineering	5.7%	1.4%	6.4%	**-0.7%**
Management	4.9%	5.0%	4.1%	**+0.8%**
Business and Financial Operations	4.9%	4.2%	4.7%	**+0.2%**
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	4.2%	5.0%	6.6%	**-2.4%**
Computer and Mathematical Science	3.4%	3.2%	3.7%	**-0.3%**
Sales and Related	3.2%	3.1%	2.5%	**+0.7%**
Legal	2.5%	2.9%	7.3%	**-4.8%**

*Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026). *Note: Pre-K through secondary education teachers employed in the public sector had a unionization rate of 78.8 percent and police officers and firefighters had a unionization rate of 80.6 percent.*

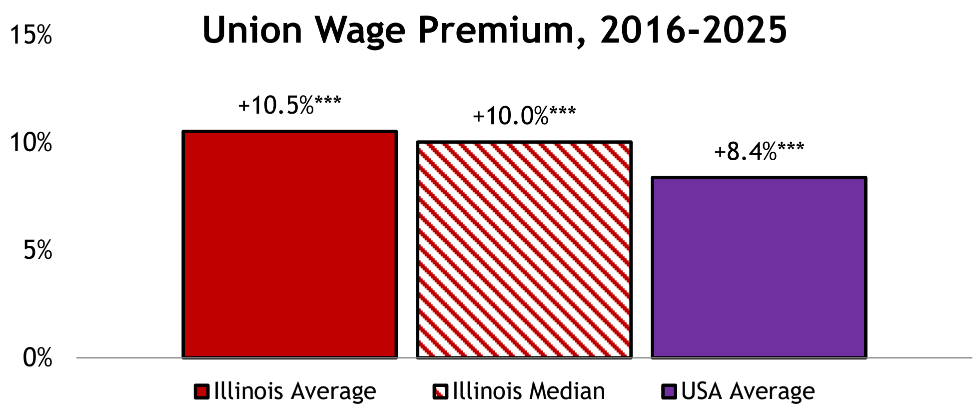
THE IMPACT OF UNION MEMBERSHIP ON WORKER EARNINGS

Union workers earn more than their nonunion counterparts (Figure 12). Many factors can influence worker earnings, including level of educational attainment, occupation, geographic location, and demographic characteristics. Statistical models called "regressions" are utilized to account for these and other important variables to isolate the independent effect of union membership on wages from 2016 through 2025. After accounting for these factors, union membership statistically increases hourly earnings by an average of 8.4 percent for workers across the United States.

The union wage premium is higher in Illinois (Figure 12). Union membership boosts Illinois workers' hourly earnings by an average of 10.5 percent. Furthermore, a unique analytical tool called a "quantile regression" finds a 10.0 percent union wage advantage for the median worker in Illinois. All results are statistically significant at the 99-percent level of confidence. The data reveal that unionization boosts worker wages.

How does the average Illinois union earnings difference of 10.5 percent compare to the wage premium in other states? Similar regressions are run to assess each of the 49 other states plus the District of Columbia against Illinois. The results, reported in Figure 13, reveal that Illinois has the 5th-highest union advantage in the nation, behind only Nevada (14.0 percent), Indiana (12.2 percent), Missouri (11.0 percent), and Wisconsin (10.7 percent). In total, 15 states have union wage effects that are higher than the national average of 8.4 percent. Importantly, the union wage gain exceeds 5 percent in 46 states and is positive in every jurisdiction (Figure 13).

FIGURE 12: REGRESSIONS OF UNION WAGE PREMIUMS FOR THE UNITED STATES AND ILLINOIS, 2016-2025



Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026). Three asterisks (***) indicate significance at the 1-percent level. Two asterisks (**) indicate significance at the 5-percent level. Statistics are weighted to match the population ages 16 to 80 years old. Regression outputs are converted to percent changes using correct adjustments to interpret natural logarithms (Kennedy, 1981; IDRE, 2026). For more, see the Appendix.

FIGURE 13: UNION WAGE PREMIUMS BY STATE, OLS REGRESSIONS, 2016-2025

Rank	State	Union Premium	Rank	State	Union Premium
--	*United States*	*+8.4%*	26	New Hampshire	+7.4%
1	Nevada	+14.0%	27	New Mexico	+7.2%
2	Indiana	+12.2%	28	Arkansas	+7.2%
3	Missouri	+11.0%	29	Mississippi	+7.1%
4	Wisconsin	+10.7%	30	Rhode Island	+7.1%
5	**Illinois**	**+10.5%**	31	Michigan	+7.0%
6	Connecticut	+10.4%	32	South Dakota	+7.0%
7	California	+10.0%	33	Montana	+7.0%
8	Delaware	+9.9%	34	Tennessee	+6.6%
9	Alaska	+9.8%	35	Oregon	+6.4%
10	Arizona	+9.7%	36	Iowa	+6.4%
11	Georgia	+9.2%	37	West Virginia	+6.1%
12	North Dakota	+9.0%	38	Virginia	+6.1%
13	Kansas	+8.9%	39	Washington	+6.1%
14	New Jersey	+8.7%	40	Alabama	+5.9%
15	Maryland	+8.4%	41	Ohio	+5.9%
16	Wyoming	+8.3%	42	South Carolina	+5.7%
17	Texas	+8.3%	43	Louisiana	+5.7%
18	Kentucky	+8.2%	44	New York	+5.2%
19	Pennsylvania	+8.1%	45	Maine	+5.0%
20	Utah	+8.0%	46	Vermont	+4.9%
21	Minnesota	+8.0%	47	Florida	+4.7%
22	Hawaii	+8.0%	48	Colorado	+4.3%
23	Nebraska	+7.9%	49	Massachusetts	+4.0%
24	Oklahoma	+7.5%	50	North Carolina	+3.5%
25	Idaho	+7.4%	51	District of Columbia	2.4%

Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026). All estimates are statistically significant at the 1-percent level, except for South Carolina and the District of Columbia which are at the 5-percent level and North Carolina which is at the 10-percent level. Statistics are weighted to match the population ages 16 to 80 years old. Regression outputs are converted to percent changes using correct adjustments to interpret natural logarithms (Kennedy, 1981; IDRE, 2026).

UNION MEMBERSHIP, SOCIOECONOMIC OUTCOMES, AND GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

This section uses data from an extension of the *Current Population Survey* called the *Annual Social and Economic Supplement* (CPS-ASEC) (Flood et al., 2025). The CPS-ASEC is collected every March and includes more detailed information on households, health insurance coverage, and government assistance metrics than the core *Current Population Survey*. While the ten-year CPS-ASEC dataset from 2016 through 2025 captures survey data on 40,361 Illinois residents, only 2,701 of them were employed and had information available regarding their union status because they were included in the CPS-ORG dataset. The data are weighted to adjust for the overall population based on Census Bureau estimates.

In Illinois, union members are significantly more likely to be homeowners and much less likely to rely on government assistance programs (Figure 14). Fully 79.9 percent of union members own their homes, 8.4 percent higher than nonunion workers (71.5 percent). Union members are 4.0 percent less likely to rely on Medicaid (3.9 percent) than nonunion workers (7.9 percent) and 0.7 percent less likely to rely on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food stamps. Union members are 9.4 percent more likely to be married and 4.2 percent less likely to be immigrants lacking citizenship status. Outcomes are similar nationally. Specifically, union members are 5.7 percent more likely to own their homes, 2.9 percent less likely to rely on Medicaid, and 1.5 percent less likely to rely on food stamps. In Illinois and across the nation, union workers earn higher wages, contribute more toward taxes, and are less dependent on government assistance programs—improving public budgets and reducing costs for taxpayers.

FIGURE 14: SOCIOECONOMIC OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS BY UNION STATUS, 2016-2025

Socioeconomic Outcomes by Union Status (2016-2025)	Illinois Workers			All U.S. Workers		
	Union	Nonunion	Difference	Union	Nonunion	Difference
Homeownership Rate	79.9%	71.5%	**+8.4%**	74.7%	68.6%	**+5.7%**
Medicaid Health Coverage	3.9%	7.9%	**-4.0%**	5.2%	8.0%	**-2.9%**
Received SNAP Food Stamps	3.4%	4.1%	**-0.7%**	3.3%	4.7%	**-1.5%**
Marriage Rate	63.7%	54.5%	**+9.4%**	59.4%	55.3%	**+5.2%**
Noncitizen Immigrant	3.7%	7.8%	**-4.2%**	3.0%	6.9%	**-3.9%**

Source: CPS-ASEC, IPUMS, 2016-2025 (Flood et al., 2025). The full sample of 100,342 respondents, including 10,541 union members nationally and 2,701 total respondents in Illinois—of whom 386 are union members—is weighted to match the overall population.

LABOR MARKET OUTCOMES IN "RIGHT-TO-WORK" STATES

There are currently 26 states that have weakened unions by adopting so-called "right-to-work" laws and 24 states plus the District of Columbia that protect workers' rights to collective bargaining. From 2024 to 2025, "right-to-work" states added about 107,000 members and collective bargaining states added three times as many, or nearly 305,000 members. Public sector union membership grew by 55,000 members in "right-to-work" states and by 205,000 members, or four times more, in collective bargaining states. The gain in private sector union members was twice as large in collective bargaining states (100,000 members) as in "right-to-work" states (52,000 members) (Figure 15).

The increase in union membership regardless of state labor policy reflects public support for unions and the broad desire of workers to join unions (Brenan, 2025; Shierholz et al., 2024). Public sector union membership growth was strong, as federal government employees turned to unions in response to actions by the Trump administration to terminate their collective bargaining rights (Sainato, 2026; Glass, 2025). After preliminary injunctions initially nullified the President's actions in 2025, federal district courts in 2026 kept collective bargaining agreements intact for 47,000 Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers and more than 300,000 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) workers but allowed the administration to strip bargaining rights from over 950,000 other federal employees (AFGE, 2026). As a result, predicted drops in union membership among federal government employees were likely delayed by one year as these legal battles occurred without resolution.

It is also worth noting that union membership could have grown in collective bargaining states if not for the 2018 *Janus* Supreme Court decision, which only directly affected state and local government employees in collective bargaining states. Prior to the ruling, workers in "right-to-work" states could already "free-ride" and opt to receive union services and benefits for free without paying anything for them. The *Janus* headwind has likely muted union membership growth in states that otherwise protect workers' rights to collective bargaining.

Figure 15: Union Membership in "Right-to-Work" and Collective Bargaining States, 2024-2025

Union Members	State Labor Policy	2024	2025	Change
Total	"Right-to-Work" States	3,590,895	3,697,637	**+106,742**
	Collective Bargaining States	10,654,586	10,959,323	**+304,736**
Public Sector	"Right-to-Work" States	1,610,806	1,665,944	**+55,139**
	Collective Bargaining States	5,405,905	5,610,427	**+204,522**
Private Sector	"Right-to-Work" States	1,980,090	2,031,693	**+51,603**
	Collective Bargaining States	5,248,681	5,348,896	**+100,214**

Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2024-2025 (EPI, 2026). Note that the weighted average number of workers with union status information reported was 69,762,127 in "right-to-work" states (47.6 percent) and 76,924,651 in collective bargaining states (52.4 percent).

Compared to pre-pandemic levels, "right-to-work" states have seen their union membership rate go from 6.0 percent to 5.3 percent, a 0.7 percent drop (Figure 16). The concurrent decline in collective bargaining states was a 0.2 percent fall from 14.5 percent to 14.2 percent. As a result, the unionization rate in "right-to-work" states is now 8.9 percent below the unionization rate in collective bargaining states.

Figure 16: "Right-to-Work" (RTW) and Collective Bargaining (CB) State Outcomes, 2019-2025

Labor Market Outcome	Unionization Rate			Average Hourly Earnings		
Year	RTW	CB	Difference	RTW	CB	RTW Difference
2019	6.0%	14.5%	-8.4%	$25.02	$28.84	-13.3%
2020	6.4%	15.2%	-8.8%	$27.05	$31.31	-13.6%
2021	5.7%	14.9%	-9.2%	$27.63	$32.70	-15.5%
2022	5.6%	14.6%	-8.9%	$29.80	$35.12	-15.1%
2023	5.8%	14.3%	-8.5%	$31.22	$36.86	-15.3%
2024	5.2%	14.2%	-9.0%	$31.91	$37.35	-14.6%
2025	5.3%	14.2%	-8.9%	$32.68	$38.57	-15.3%
Growth: 2019 to 2025	**-0.7%**	**-0.2%**	**-0.5%**	**+30.6%**	**+33.7%**	**-3.1%**

Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026). Wages are in nominal dollars (I.e., they are not adjusted for inflation). Numbers may not sum perfectly due to rounding. RTW represents "right-to-work" states while CB represents collective bargaining states. Note that the weighted average number of workers with union status information reported was 69,762,127 in RTW states and 76,924,651 in CB states.

Workers have fared better in collective bargaining states (Figures 16 and 17). In collective bargaining states, average hourly earnings have grown by 33.7 percent since 2019 (not adjusted for inflation). In "right-to-work" states, average hourly earnings have only increased by 30.6 percent. Put differently, wages have grown 3.1 percent slower in "right-to-work" states since 2019, widening the gap between states that protect and do not protect collective bargaining rights (Figure 16). As of 2025, worker earnings averaged $32.68 per hour in "right-to-work" states, which was 15.3 percent less than the $38.57 per hour earned by their counterparts in collective bargaining states. Even after accounting for differences in the cost of living through regional price parities by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) at the U.S. Department of Commerce, workers still earn less in "right-to-work" states. Although their cost-of-living is 7.6 percent lower on average, workers in "right-to-work" states earned 8.3 percent less than those in collective bargaining states after adjusting for price differences (Figure 17).

Regionally, Illinois workers have a substantially higher union membership rate and earn much more than their peers in four neighboring states with "right-to-work" laws—Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, and Wisconsin

(Figure 18). In 2025, Illinois' 13.1 percent unionization rate was 5.5 percent above the four-neighbor average (7.6 percent), ranging from 4.2 percent above Kentucky to 6.7 percent above Wisconsin. Hourly earnings averaged $37.15 in Illinois and just $31.25 in neighboring "right-to-work" states, an 18.9 percent gap. Even after accounting for an 8.6 percent higher cost of living, workers still earned 9.4 percent more in Illinois than they did in bordering "right-to-work" states. In cost-of-living-adjusted terms, Illinois workers earn 3.8 percent more than those in Wisconsin and 17.4 percent more than those in Kentucky.

FIGURE 17: WORKER EARNINGS IN "RIGHT-TO-WORK" AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING STATES, 2025

2025 Economic Outcome	National Average	"Right-to-Work" States	Collective Bargaining States	"Right-to-Work" Difference
Average Hourly Earnings	$35.77	$32.68	$38.57	**-15.3%**
Regional Price Parity*	100.00	95.67	103.58	**-7.6%**
Cost-of-Living-Adjusted Earnings	$35.77	$34.16	$37.24	**-8.3%**

*Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2025 (EPI, 2026); "Regional Data: GDP and Personal Income," U.S. Department of Commerce (BEA, 2025). *Note: Regional price parities (RPPs) measure cost-of-living differences across states for 2024, the latest year for which data were available, and are expressed as a percentage of the overall national price level, which is indexed to 100.0.*

Surveys disclose that more U.S. adults support eliminating state "right-to-work" laws (a +5 percent net favorability), banning captive-audience meetings (a +18 percent net favorability), and imposing stricter penalties on businesses that violate labor rights (a +39 percent net favorability) than oppose these potential reform options (American Compass, 2025). There have also been meaningful "right-to-work" rejections in both Democratic-leaning and Republican-leaning states over the past decade, beginning with 67 percent of Missouri voters overwhelmingly opposing a "right-to-work" referendum in 2018 (Ballotpedia, 2018). Legislatures in Montana and New Hampshire both rejected "right-to-work" bills in 2021 (Ambarian, 2021; Sherer & Gould, 2024). In 2022, 59 percent of Illinois voters approved of the Workers' Rights Amendment, guaranteeing the fundamental right to bargain collectively and effectively banning "right-to-work" legislation in perpetuity (Ballotpedia, 2022; Manzo & Bruno, 2023b). Finally, in 2024, Michigan became the first state in 58 years to repeal a "right-to-work" statute (Michigan AFL-CIO, 2024). The data indicates that repealing so-called "right-to-work" laws and enacting Workers' Rights Amendments in other states would expand union membership and boost worker earnings.

FIGURE 18: WORKER EARNINGS IN "RIGHT-TO-WORK" AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING STATES, 2025

2025 Economic Outcome	Union Membership Rate	Average Hourly Earnings	Regional Price Parity*	Cost-of-Living-Adjusted Earnings
Illinois	13.1%	$37.15	99.96	$37.17
Four "Right-to-Work" Neighbors	7.6%	$31.25	92.00	$33.97
Indiana	*8.3%*	*$30.90*	*93.33*	*$33.11*
Iowa	*6.9%*	*$30.81*	*87.76*	*$35.10*
Kentucky	*8.9%*	*$28.55*	*90.16*	*$31.67*
Wisconsin	*6.4%*	*$33.69*	*94.10*	*$35.81*
Illinois Difference (vs. Four Neighbors)	**+5.5%**	**+18.9%**	**+8.6%**	**+9.4%**

*Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2025 (EPI, 2026); "Regional Data: GDP and Personal Income," U.S. Department of Commerce (BEA, 2025). *Note: Regional price parities (RPPs) measure cost-of-living differences across states for 2024, the latest year for which data were available, and are expressed as a percentage of the overall national price level, which is indexed to 100.0.*

CONCLUSION

Unions continue to promote job quality and boost worker earnings. Following an increase of 24,000 union members in 2025, Illinois now has a 13 percent unionization rate—with military veterans, Black workers, U.S. citizens, and public service workers among the most unionized groups. Unions raise wages by 11 percent in Illinois, the 5th-highest union advantage in the nation. Union members are also 8 percent more likely to own their homes and up to 4 percent less likely to rely on government assistance programs than nonunion workers, which reduces costs for taxpayers.

Nationally, unions added 411,000 members in 2025. Three-quarters of that growth, or 305,000 union members, occurred in states that protect workers' rights to collective bargaining. These collective bargaining states now have a 9 percent higher unionization rate than those with so-called "right-to-work" laws. "Right-to-work" states have seen wages grow 3 percent slower over the past six years, resulting in cost-of-living-adjusted earnings that are now 8 percent below their counterparts in collective bargaining states—a wider gap than prior to the pandemic.

With public opinion polls showing that 7-in-10 Americans support unions and millions of nonunion employees are interested in joining the labor movement, lawmakers and voters nationally could consider repealing "right-to-work" laws and enacting Workers' Rights Amendments. Streamlining the process of forming unions and imposing stricter penalties on businesses that violate labor rights would facilitate the expansion of union membership and boost worker earnings.

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APPENDIX

This report largely utilizes data from the *Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups* (CPS-ORG). CPS-ORG data reports individual-level information on more than 20,000 respondents nationwide each month. The records include data on wages, unionization, hours worked, sector, industry, and occupation, as well as other demographic, geographic, and education variables. The data was extracted from Economic Policy Institute Microdata Extracts (EPI, 2026).

There are limitations to using CPS-ORG data which have worsened over time. The biggest limitation is that not every surveyed worker replies to the union membership question. For example, in 2025, union membership data was only available for 2,999 of the 3,256 surveyed workers (92 percent) in Illinois. While this does not impact unionization rates, estimates are likely *underreported* for both total union members and total nonunion workers.

Another major limitation is that U.S. resident response rates to BLS surveys such as the CPS-ORG have been declining over time. In December 2016, 86 percent of households responded to the *Current Population Survey*. By December 2025, only 64 percent did, a 21 percent decrease (BLS, 2026b). In 2025, the number of respondents was also reduced by about one-twelfth, as a 43-day federal government shutdown prevented October data from being collected (BLS, 2026c).

To correct for nonresponse bias, analytic weights are provided by the Department of Labor to match the sample to the estimated U.S. population between the ages of 16 and 80 years old. However, population estimates have *themselves* become problematic. Two groups that have historically been at the most risk of undercounts by the U.S. Census Bureau are foreign-born individuals and Hispanic individuals due to structural factors such as administrative barriers, language barriers, reduced access to broadband internet, and lack of trust in the government based on immigration status (Lou & Martin, 2022). In fact, in the 2020 Census, there was a record undercount of Hispanic residents, with the Census Bureau missing one-in-20 Hispanic people (Cohn & Passel, 2022). These projections have led to "wildly erroneous" underestimates of Illinois' population (Miller, 2022; Ramos & Armentrout, 2022).

TABLE A: ILLINOIS' ADULT POPULATION ESTIMATES AND DECLINING CPS-ORG RESPONSES, 2015-2024

Population Estimates (Ages 16-80 Years Old) by Year	Estimated Illinois Population	Surveyed Individuals in Illinois	Analytic Weight Per Surveyed Person	Individuals Surveyed in United States	Illinois' Share of Responses
2016	10,074,065	9,148	1,101	313,591	2.9%
2017	10,040,700	8,744	1,148	308,664	2.8%
2018	10,048,848	8,346	1,204	301,053	2.8%
2019	10,009,776	7,715	1,297	290,217	2.7%
2020	9,975,234	7,329	1,361	270,123	2.7%
2021	9,924,430	7,117	1,394	264,623	2.7%
2022	10,003,941	6,606	1,514	251,377	2.6%
2023	10,000,608	6,421	1,557	242,582	2.6%
2024	10,028,307	6,444	1,556	243,236	2.6%
2025*	10,230,806	5,524	1,852	214,211	2.6%
2016-2025 Change	**+156,741**	**-3,624**	**+751**	**-99,380**	**-0.3%**
Percent Change	***+1.6%***	***-39.6%***	***+68.2%***	***-31.7%***	***-11.6%***

*Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026). Values may not sum perfectly due to rounding. *Note: Due to the 2025 federal government shutdown, October data was not collected and is not available for the CPS-ORG.*

Between 2016 and 2025, the population between the ages of 16 and 80 years old in Illinois was estimated to have grown by about 157,000 people (1.6 percent), from just under 10.1 million to just over 10.2 million

(Table A). However, this estimate is based on a rapidly declining number of respondents and an increasingly higher analytic weight applied per response. Over the ten-year period, the number of people from Illinois who responded to the survey decreased from about 9,100 to just over 5,500, a drop of 40 percent. Early in the decade, each respondent corresponded to approximately 1,100 estimated people in the state. By the end of the decade, each respondent was representing nearly 1,900 estimated people in Illinois, a 68 percent increase. Illinois residents have also decreased a share of survey respondents nationally—a notable shift that could contribute to lower population and employment relative to reality.

With these caveats in mind, it is worth noting that the CPS-ORG estimates of Illinois' population ages 16 to 80 have been below projections of Illinois' population from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, which samples 5 percent of credit reports from Equifax to understand household debt, including mortgage, credit card, auto loan, and student loan balances (Table B). The CPS-ORG data suggests that Illinois has had between 9.9 million and 10.2 million people ages 16 to 80 years old each year since 2016. In comparison, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York has reported that between 10.4 million and 11.0 million Illinois residents ages 18 years and older have had credit files since 2016. While these sources assess slightly different groups of people, the CPS-ORG estimates have gone from estimating 4 percent fewer adults in Illinois to 7 percent fewer as of 2025.

TABLE B: ILLINOIS' ADULT POPULATION ESTIMATES, CPS-ORG VS. NEW YORK FED EQUIFAX, 2016-2025

Estimated Illinois Population by Year	CPS-ORG Estimated Population (Ages 16-80)	New York Fed Consumer Credit Panel / Equifax (Ages 18+)	CPS-ORG Difference
2016	10,074,065	10,517,100	-4.2%
2017	10,040,700	10,526,580	-4.6%
2018	10,048,848	10,503,020	-4.3%
2019	10,009,776	10,564,280	-5.2%
2020	9,975,234	10,567,240	-5.6%
2021	9,924,430	10,628,560	-6.6%
2022	10,003,941	10,699,920	-6.5%
2023	10,000,608	10,710,340	-6.6%
2024	10,028,307	10,838,060	-7.5%
2025*	10,230,806	10,978,040	-6.8%
2016-2025 Change	**+156,741**	**+460,940**	**-304,199**

*Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026); Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit: Household Debt Statistics by State, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2003-2025 (New York Fed, 2026). New York Fed data sample 5 percent of Equifax credit reports in the fourth quarter of each year (i.e., October, November, and December). Values may not sum perfectly due to rounding. *Note: Due to the 2025 federal government shutdown, October data was not collected and is not available for the CPS-ORG.*

Separately, robust ordinary least squares (OLS) and quantile regression models are included in this report. These statistical techniques account for other variables to parse out the actual and unique causal effect that union membership has on average hourly wages. The analyses control for a host of demographic, work, sector, industry, occupation, and education variables that could also have an impact on hourly earnings. In the U.S. model, Regression (1), state indicator variables are included to factor in unmeasured state-specific characteristics. The sample, in all cases, is weighted to match population estimates. Regression (2) compares the impact of union membership on wages for Illinois compared to the nation from robust OLS analyses and Regression (3) provides the median regression from a quantile regression for Illinois. In this report, regression outputs are converted to percent changes using correct adjustments to interpret natural logarithms (Kennedy, 1981; IDRE, 2026). The correct interpretations of these results are $e^{(\text{coefficient})} - 1$.

TABLE C: ROBUST OLS AND QUANTILE REGRESSIONS OF THE IMPACT OF UNION MEMBERSHIP ON THE NATURAL LOG OF HOURLY WAGES, 2016-2025

Ln(Nominal Wage)	(1) USA Mean		(2) Illinois Mean		(3) Illinois Median	
	Coefficient	(St. Err.)	Coefficient	(St. Err.)	Coefficient	(St. Err.)
Union member	0.0804***	(0.0017)	0.1001***	(0.0084)	0.0956***	(0.0093)
Age	0.0326***	(0.0002)	0.0324***	(0.0013)	0.0275***	(0.0012)
Age^2	-0.0003***	(0.0000)	-0.0003***	(0.0000)	-0.0003***	(0.0000)
Female	-0.1611***	(0.0011)	-0.1601***	(0.0061)	-0.1388***	(0.0061)
White	0.0448***	(0.0047)	0.0878**	(0.0383)	0.0902***	(0.0298)
Black/African American	-0.0590***	(0.0049)	-0.0190	(0.0391)	-0.0113	(0.0307)
Hispanic/Latinx	-0.0292***	(0.0049)	0.0229	(0.0388)	0.0301	(0.0303)
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.0654***	(0.0053)	0.1334***	(0.0401)	0.1373***	(0.0326)
Veteran	0.0099***	(0.0024)	0.0069***	(0.0153)	0.0043	(0.0187)
Married	0.0702***	(0.0011)	0.0790***	(0.0060)	0.0780***	(0.0064)
Citizen	0.0615***	(0.0025)	0.0564***	(0.0121)	0.0663***	(0.0125)
Foreign-born	-0.0350***	(0.0021)	-0.0567***	(0.0104)	-0.0583***	(0.0110)
Metro Area	0.0625***	(0.0014)	0.0970***	(0.0092)	0.1000***	(0.0090)
Federal government	0.0135***	(0.0034)	-0.0026	(0.0207)	0.0159	(0.0235)
State government	-0.1209***	(0.0024)	-0.1483***	(0.0154)	-0.1516***	(0.0170)
Local government	-0.1052***	(0.0022)	-0.1071***	(0.0119)	-0.1032***	(0.0140)
Usual hours worked	0.0051***	(0.0001)	0.0055***	(0.0003)	0.0063***	(0.0003)
Less than high school	-0.1180***	(0.0018)	-0.1027***	(0.0096)	-0.0849***	(0.0091)
Some college	0.0332***	(0.0014)	0.0426***	(0.0075)	0.0424***	(0.0077)
Associate’s	0.0743***	(0.0016)	0.0749***	(0.0091)	0.0704***	(0.0091)
Bachelor’s	0.2920***	(0.0016)	0.3169***	(0.0085)	0.3069***	(0.0094)
Master’s	0.4233***	(0.0022)	0.4492***	(0.0114)	0.4572***	(0.0120)
Professional/Doctorate	0.5853***	(0.0037)	0.6156***	(0.0188)	0.6306***	(0.0216)
Year: 2017	0.0287***	(0.0019)	0.0293***	(0.0104)	0.0329***	(0.0116)
Year: 2018	0.0617***	(0.0020)	0.0756***	(0.0105)	0.0645***	(0.0118)
Year: 2019	0.0986***	(0.0020)	0.0997***	(0.0107)	0.1024***	(0.0115)
Year: 2020	0.1511***	(0.0021)	0.1486***	(0.0110)	0.1507***	(0.0114)
Year: 2021	0.1900***	(0.0021)	0.1932***	(0.0111)	0.2026***	(0.0120)
Year: 2022	0.2568***	(0.0021)	0.2712***	(0.0118)	0.2515***	(0.0115)
Year: 2023	0.3031***	(0.0021)	0.3209***	(0.0115)	0.3130***	(0.0112)
Year: 2024	0.3390***	(0.0021)	0.3334***	(0.0109)	0.3371***	(0.0113)
Year: 2025	0.3685***	(0.0022)	0.3676***	(0.0116)	0.3807***	(0.0120)
Industry Variables	Y		Y		Y	
Occupation Variables	Y		Y		Y	
State Fixed Effects	Y		N		N	
Constant	1.7506***	(0.0079)	1.6001***	(0.0493)	1.6352***	(0.0422)
R^2	0.4524		0.4513		0.2999	
Observations	1,302,038		37,756		37,756	
Weighted	Y		Y		Y	

Three asterisks (***) indicate significance at the 1% level, two asterisks (**) indicates significance at the 5% level, and one asterisk (*) indicates significance at the 10% level. Source: CPS-ORG, Economic Policy Institute, 2016-2025 (EPI, 2026). The data are weighted to match the population ages 16 to 80 years old. Note: Only 119 months of weights are used because October 2025 data was not collected due to a 43-day federal government shutdown (“lapse in appropriations”).