

Fact Sheet



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The Union Advantage in Wireline Telecommunications for African-Americans, Hispanics, and Women

Jobs in the wired telecommunications industry traditionally provide excellent opportunities to African-American, Hispanic, and women nonsupervisory workers. These jobs offer nonsupervisory workers higher earnings, more full-time work schedules, and greater labor union representation compared to all nonsupervisory positions in the U.S. economy (Table 1). Wired telecommunications jobs are also more likely to be held by black workers.

Table 1: Nonsupervisory worker characteristics in the U.S. economy and the wired telecommunications industry.

	All Industries	Wired Telecommunications
Percent Female	47%	40%
Percent African-American	13%	17%
Percent Hispanic	19%	11%
Percent Full-time	76%	96%
Percent Union	14%*	38%**

Source: IWPR analysis of the 2007–2009 Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Groups.

*Percent union all industries includes public and private sectors. Percent union private sector is 7 percent

** Percent union at former Bell companies wired telecommunications is 90 percent. Source: CWA Membership Development Reports.

Not only are nonsupervisory workers in wired telecommunications more likely to be union members or covered by a union contract, union representation increases earnings for nonsupervisory workers substantially (Table 2). In 2009, the average hourly wage for production and nonsupervisory workers was \$18.63 or \$745 for a 40 hour work week (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2011). Median earnings in wired telecommunications are above average overall and union workers are doing much better.

Table 2: Median weekly earnings for full-time nonsupervisory workers in the wired telecommunications industry.

Overall	\$774
Non-Union	\$680
Union	\$997
Union Premium	47%

Source: IWPR analysis of the 2007–2009 Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Groups.

Table 3: Characteristics of nonsupervisory workers in the wired telecommunications industry for selected occupations.

	Radio & Telecommunication Equipment & Line Installers & Repairers	Customer Service Representatives
Percent Female	8%	68%
Percent African-American	11%	26%
Percent Hispanic	11%	14%
Average Age (years)	42.7	38.8
Percent College Graduates	15%	24%
Percent Union	53%	25%

Source: IWPR analysis of the 2007–2009 Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Groups.

Table 4: Median weekly earnings of nonsupervisory workers in the wired telecommunications industry for selected occupations.

	Radio & Telecommunication Equipment & Line Installers & Repairers	Customer Service Representatives
Percent Part-time	2%	4%
Earnings (Full-time Workers)	\$997	\$639
Earnings (Full-time, Non-union)	\$853	\$600
Earnings (Full-time, Union)	\$1,100	\$750
Union Premium	29%	25%

Source: IWPR analysis of the 2007–2009 Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Groups.

Communications infrastructure is vital to our information economy. We rely on the flow of information across constantly expanding telecommunication networks. The wired telecommunications industry continues to provide excellent jobs to workers and remains an important segment of that network.

The evidence suggests that unions play an important role in ensuring that these jobs are quality jobs. Within wired telecommunications overall and in two of the larger occupations within the industry, full-time, nonsupervisory workers who are covered by union contracts earn substantially more than similar workers without the benefit of union representation. African Americans benefit from holding a larger share of jobs in wired telecommunications than the economy as a whole and women in wired telecommunication benefit from the high share of jobs in this industry that are full-time and covered by collective bargaining agreements.

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