

# STRONGER TOGETHER

## Union Membership Boosts Women's Earnings and Economic Security

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*In every state, unionized women out earn women in non-union jobs—an essential wage advantage that would increase women's economic security following the pandemic-induced "she-cession."*

### RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- **Women are well represented in today's unions.** They make up almost half of union members (46.8 percent), or those covered by a union contract (47.1 percent), just below women's share of all workers (48.0 percent).
- **Women's union membership varies by state.** The share of women workers covered by a union contract varies by state, from a low of 3.0 percent in South Carolina to a high of 24.7 percent in New York. Nationally, 11.8 percent of women, and 12.3 percent of men, are covered by a union contract.
- **Unionized women earn higher wages.** Women covered by a union contract earn on average \$195 (or 22.6 percent) more per week than non-unionized women.
- **Unions are associated with a narrowed gender wage gap.** The gender wage gap for workers covered by union contracts is markedly less than for those not covered by a union contract. Women covered by a union contract earn 87.3 cents for every dollar paid to union men, compared to non-unionized women who earn 82 cents for every dollar paid to non-unionized men.

- **Wages are lower for workers in states where unions have less power.** In “right-to-work” states, where unions have limited power to bargain on behalf of all workers, wages are lower than in other states regardless of gender and union membership status.
- **Women in unions have stronger employer-sponsored benefits.** Women covered by a union contract are more likely to have an employer-sponsored pension or retirement plan or to receive health insurance from their employer than other women.
- **For women, union membership can be the difference between making the rent and experiencing housing instability.** The difference in the median pay for women covered by a union contract compared to non-unionized women translates to 81 percent of median rent nationally. In 43 states, at least half of the yearly average rent costs could be paid with the yearly union wage advantage,<sup>1</sup> and in 12 states, the union wage advantage pays for a full year or more of average rent.

A powerful force for change in the workforce, labor unions bring transparency to pay negotiations, help employees secure overtime wages, and grant them greater protections. Unions often champion policies most critical to working women and families, such as paid sick time and family leave. And, because hiring, pay, and promotion criteria are more transparent in unionized workplaces, gender and racial bias is minimized (Anderson, Hegewisch, and Hayes 2015; Sun, Rosenfeld, and Denice 2021). Women, and especially women of color, who are either affiliated with a union or whose job is covered by a union contract, earn higher wages and are much more likely to have employer-provided benefits than women who are not in unions (Ahmed and Hegewisch 2021).

The role of unions and collective bargaining are especially critical to securing women’s prosperity now, as the United States seeks to recover from the pandemic and its resulting “she-cession.” COVID-19 has made clear: Workers in unions fare better in economic crises. The additional wages and economic security that comes with unionization helped protect union workers from the economic shock of the pandemic recession. Additionally, unionized workers were able to negotiate additional pay, health and safety measures, and paid sick leave during the pandemic—vital benefits that boost economic security and protect the health and well-being of workers (McNicholas et al. 2020).

This brief shares insights on the ways unions narrow gender wage gaps and improve economic security for all women. It captures women’s union membership and coverage by a union contract—nationally, by race and ethnicity, and by state—as well as women’s share of union leaders. The brief also discusses the union advantage and what that means in terms of increased wages to pay rent. It concludes with policy recommendations to promote women’s access to quality, high-paying union jobs to ensure an equitable recovery that centers all women and addresses the unequal impacts of COVID-19.

## **WOMEN’S MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP IN LABOR UNIONS**

Following the Great Recession, the increase in low-wage and part-time jobs—jobs that are less likely to be covered by a union contract and disproportionately employ women—left women increasingly vulnerable and contributed to the pandemic-induced recession (Sun 2021). Increasing collective bargaining rights and union membership rates would help protect workers who are especially

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<sup>1</sup> The “union wage advantage” represents the difference in wages between women with and without union representation, as seen as the benefit earned by women with union coverage.

vulnerable to economic downturns, such as the “she-cession.” However, union membership has been on the decline for several decades.

While the overall union membership rate has declined over the last four decades—from 20.1 percent in 1983 to 10.8 percent in 2020—the share of women among union workers has grown. In 2020, women made up almost half of union members (46.8 percent), up from just one-third in 1983 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021; 2009). Women are only slightly less likely to be union members than men: 10.5 percent of working women are in unions compared with 11 percent of working men. Women are also slightly less likely than men to work in a workplace that is covered by a union contract, 11.8 percent of women compared to 12.3 percent of men; in 2020, women were 47.1 percent of workers covered by a union contract (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021).

Union coverage has declined sharply during the last three decades, particularly for men.<sup>2</sup> Yet, the numbers of unionized<sup>3</sup> women workers has grown in both relative and absolute terms, while men’s numbers have fallen during the last three decades (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015).<sup>4</sup> This reflects a decline in manufacturing, where men’s jobs were particularly likely to be unionized, and an increase in public sector employment, including education, where women are most likely to be unionized (Ahmed and Hegewisch 2021).

The share of women covered by a union contract varies by race and ethnicity. Black and White women workers are the most likely to be covered by a union (13.3 and 11.7 percent, respectively), while only 10.8 percent of Asian women workers and 10.7 percent of Latina workers are covered by a union (Table A2; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021). While Black, Latino, and White men are slightly more likely to be covered by union contracts than women in each of these racial and ethnic groups, Asian women are slightly more likely than Asian men to be covered by a union contract (Table A2). As a result of deindustrialization and anti-union policies, union coverage has declined substantially since the 1980s for all women, regardless of race or ethnicity. However, coverage declined most strongly for Black and Asian women (Ahmed and Hegewisch 2021).

### **Women’s Union Coverage Varies by State**

The share of women workers who are union members or covered by a union contract varies greatly from one state to the next. This variation is important because unions provide a pathway to opportunity and increased wages for women, especially those who are economically vulnerable and experienced job loss or instability during the pandemic. In states where women’s union membership is lower, women will likely experience a protracted and painful recovery period from the “she-cession.” Likewise, expanding union membership among women will improve women’s ability to earn much-needed family-sustaining wages.

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<sup>2</sup> In 1990, 21.2 percent of men workers were still covered by union contracts, as well as 14.9 percent of women workers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009).

<sup>3</sup> In this brief, we use the terms “unionized” or “covered by a union” to include both those who are union members and workers whose jobs are covered by a union or employee association contract.

<sup>4</sup> In 1990, 10.6 million men were union members, compared with 7.6 million in 2020 (total union coverage was roughly 11.8 million, compared to 8.4 million); the number of women waged and salaried workers who were union members increased over the same period, from 6.2 to 6.7 million, and the number of women covered by union contracts from 7.3 to 7.5 million.



Women are most likely to be unionized in public sector jobs, including in education (Ahmed and Hegewisch 2021).

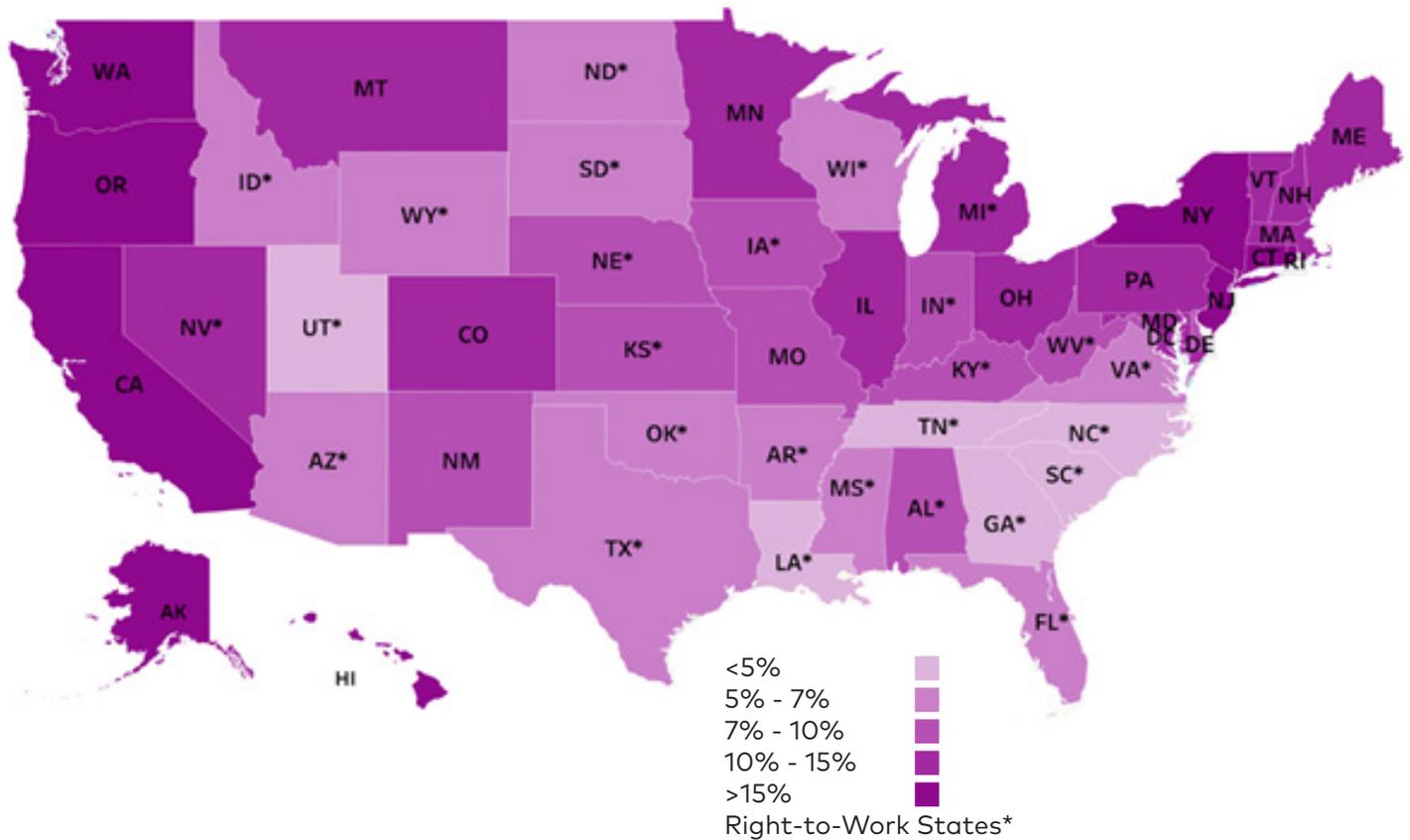
State-to-state variation in union coverage includes:

- The share of unionized women workers ranges from a low of 3.0 percent in South Carolina to a high of close to one in four women workers (24.7 percent) in New York (Map 1).
- In most states, larger shares of men than women are covered by unions. However, the share of women covered by a union exceeds that of men in eight states: California (17 percent of women versus 15.8 percent of men), Colorado (11 percent versus 10.8 percent), Connecticut (17.6 percent versus 16.1 percent), Massachusetts (13.9 percent versus 13.5 percent), New Hampshire (12.5 percent versus 11.6 percent), New York (24.7 percent versus 23.4 percent), Oregon (16.1 percent versus 14.6 percent), and Vermont (14.3 percent versus 9.5 percent).
- Women make up the majority of unionized workers in Connecticut (52.2 percent), Massachusetts (50.9 percent), New York (50.7 percent), and Vermont (60.0 percent). Women make up at least 30 percent of the total union workforce in all states (Table A1).

By January 2021, 27 states had enacted “right-to-work” laws, which prohibit requiring the payment of union membership dues, for those who are not members of a union, as a condition of employment. These laws undermine the power of unions to collectively bargain for benefits for all employees (regardless of union membership status). In general, states with the lowest share of women workers represented by unions are primarily right-to-work states: The percentage of women workers covered by unions is more than twice as large in right-to-work states as it is in non-right-to-work states (15.6 percent compared with 6.6 percent).<sup>5</sup> The share of women covered by a union is about four percentage points lower in right-to-work states than in non-right-to-work states (43.2 percent compared with 47.0 percent; Table A1).

<sup>5</sup> Of the 18 states in the top third for the share of unionized women workers, only two (Michigan and Nevada) have “right-to-work” laws.

## MAP 1. Women Workers Covered by a Union Contract and Right-to-Work States



**Notes:** Data are for workers ages 16 and older who are covered by union contracts, regardless of union membership, and are three-year (2017–2019) averages. Data on right-to-work states are as of 2021.

**Sources:** IWPR analysis of data from the 2017 to 2019 Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups (Version 2.5); National Conference of State Legislatures 2021.

### Women Are Still Underrepresented in Union Leadership Positions

Increasing gender and racial diversity in union leadership positions will ensure that issues of importance to women—such as pay equity, access to affordable and quality child care, sexual harassment, and workplace accommodations for pregnant women—are raised and addressed (Shaw and Milli 2021; Thomason and Bernhardt 2018). With the impact of the “she-cession,” tackling these issues is more important than ever, especially to working women and mothers who are concerned about being able to afford quality child care and healthcare and to earn a living wage (Hayes and Mason 2021a; 2021b). More women should be promoted to influential union leadership positions and existing women union leaders should be given enhanced decision-making power. Collective efforts to support and promote women within unions are needed to combat systemic and entrenched gender- and race-related barriers, especially from those at the top (Lyness and Grotto 2018; Shaw and Milli 2021).

While women have made substantial progress when it comes to joining unions, they are still much less likely than men to be found in leadership positions, particularly at top levels. Among the major national labor unions, women’s share of leadership positions ranges from 19.1 percent (9 out of 47)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> While there are 55 members of the Executive Council, only 47 are listed on the AFL-CIO website.

of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) to 71.4 percent (5 out of 7) of the leadership of Service Employees International Union.<sup>7</sup> While data on union leadership is not readily available at the local level, these numbers on the gender composition of national union leadership suggest that unions continue to face challenges with regards to gender equity.

While comprehensive data on the gender and racial/ethnic composition of union leadership is lacking, anecdotal evidence suggests that the share of women of color in leadership positions in unions does not reflect their share of union membership. An Institute for Policy Study (2015) survey of Black women in labor found that while 89 percent of Black women reported having been a union member, staff, or leader, less than three percent reported holding an elected position.

## THE UNION WAGE ADVANTAGE FOR WOMEN

Earnings disparities between women and men means lower lifetime earnings and higher rates of poverty for women, which left them vulnerable to the economic shock of the pandemic recession (Shaw and Mariano 2021). Unions provide tools that are essential to eliminating gender-based pay gaps and promoting gender and racial equity in the workplace. Through collective bargaining, unions hold employers accountable for setting standardized wage rates across similar occupations, building objective and transparent systems for hiring and promoting workers, and enforcing grievance procedures for discrimination cases (Thomason and Bernhardt 2018). Unions increase pay transparency, which helps equalize earnings and reduce the gender and racial wage gaps (Sun, Rosenfeld, and Denice 2021). The advantages and benefits that all women gain through union membership are even more pronounced for women of color and women who work in low-wage jobs:

- Among full-time workers ages 16 and older, women covered by a union earn an average of \$195, or 22.6 percent, more per week than women in non-union jobs. On average, men covered by a union of the same age range earn \$159, or 15.1 percent, more per week than those without union representation (Figure 1; Table A2). Notably, the wage advantage gained from union membership persists when accounting for factors such as age, education, and industry (Thomason and Bernhardt 2018).
- The gender wage gap between women and men represented by unions is smaller than the wage gap between women and men in non-union positions. On average, unionized women are paid 87.3 cents for every dollar paid to unionized men. Among non-unionized workers, women earn 82.0 cents for every dollar paid to men, on average (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021).<sup>8</sup>
- Women across all racial and ethnic groups covered by a union have a wage advantage compared to non-unionized women. While Latinas face the largest wage gap among women—earning only 55.4 percent of what White men earn (Lacarte, Mariano, and Hegewisch 2020)—Latinas represented by labor unions have median weekly earnings that are 38.5 percent higher

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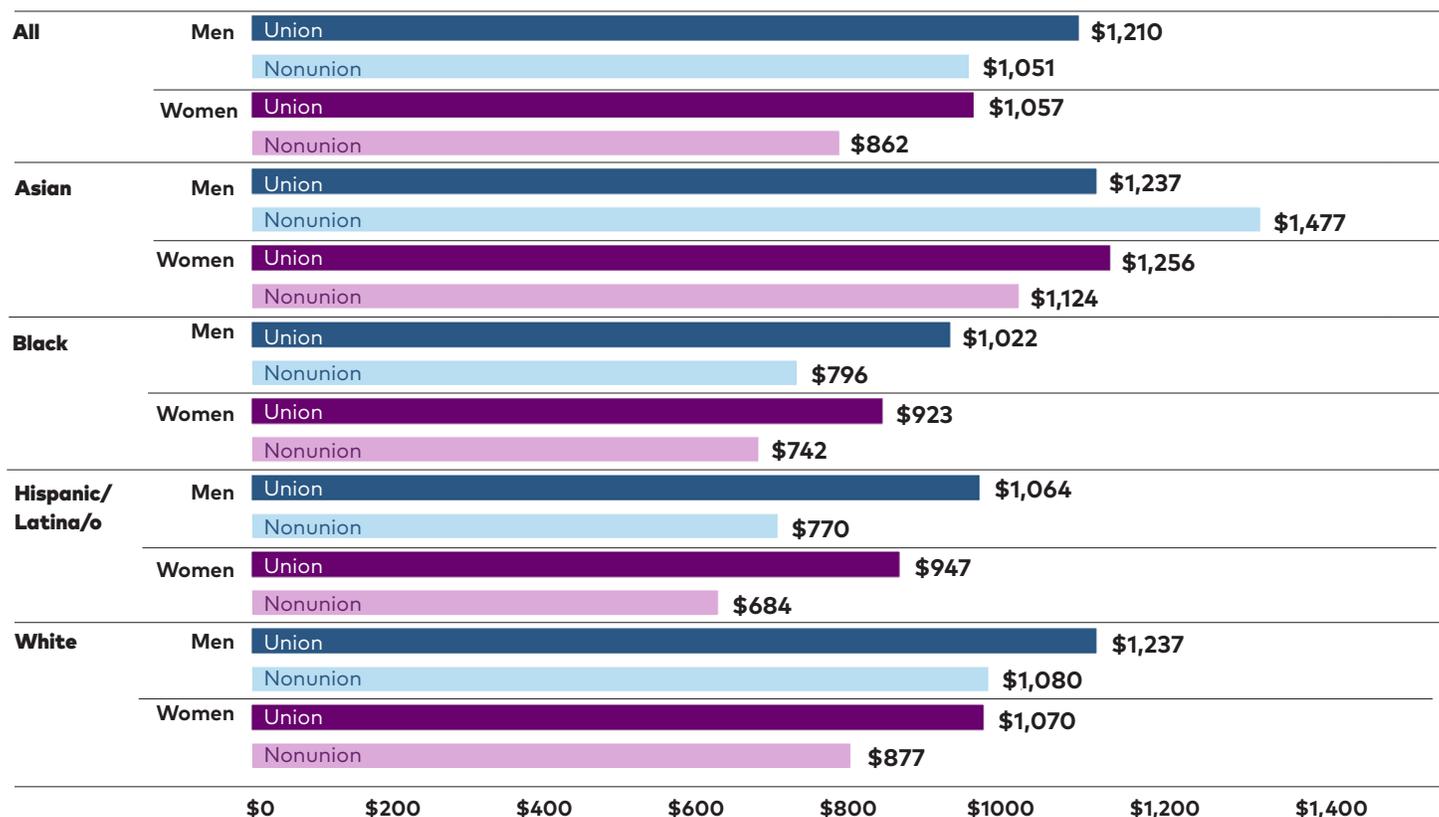
<sup>7</sup> Women make up 19.1 percent (9 out of 47) of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO 2021), 31.4 percent (11 out of 35) of the International Vice Presidents of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME 2021), 45 percent (9 out of 20) of the Executive Board of the Communications Workers of America (CWA 2021), 42.9 percent (18 out of 42) of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT 2021) Vice Presidents, 71.4 percent (5 out of 7) of the leadership of Service Employees International Union (SEIU 2021), and 40.0 percent (2 out of 5) of the General Officers of UNITE HERE (2021).

<sup>8</sup> The wage gaps for unionized and non-unionized women are calculated using average weekly earnings.

than those without union representation, the largest wage gain from union coverage among women from all racial and ethnic groups (Figure 1).

- Among men, Latinos experience the largest benefit from union membership. Latinos with union representation have earnings that are 38.2 percent higher than their non-unionized counterparts (Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1. Union Wage Advantage for Women by Race/Ethnicity and Union Status: Median Weekly Earnings for Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers, United States, 2020**



**Notes:** Data for full-time waged and salaried workers ages 16 and older. Racial categories are non-Hispanic/Latina/o. Hispanics or Latina/os may be of any race. Asians do not include Pacific Islanders. Data are not available for Native Americans or those who identify with two or more races. Self-employed workers are excluded. "Union" refers to both union members and workers who report no union affiliation but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract.

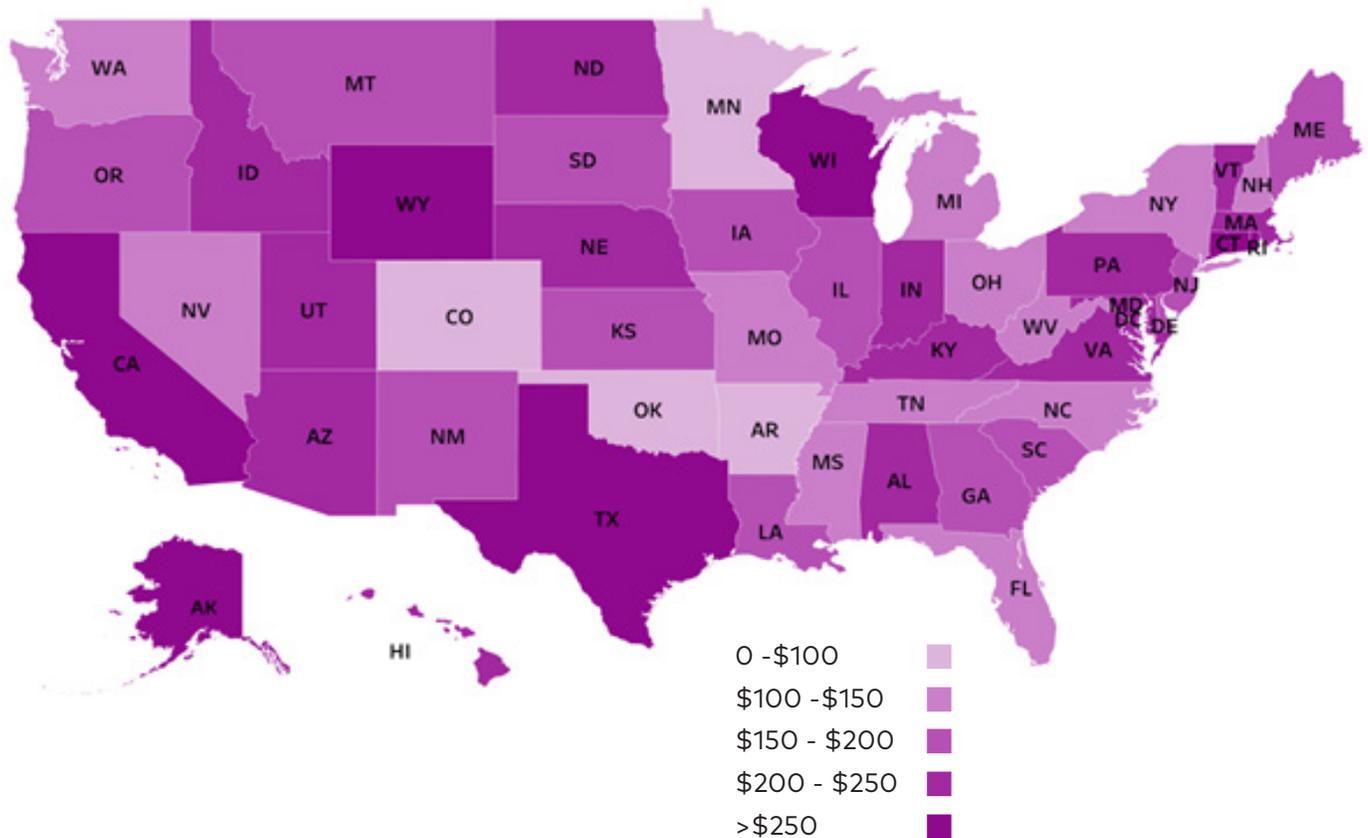
**Source:** IWPR compilation of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021.

Union membership boosts wages for women in every state, but the size of that advantage varies across states.

- In every state, the full-time weekly earnings of women covered by union contracts are higher than the earnings of women not represented by unions (Map 2).
- Women covered by a union contract in Wyoming, Rhode Island, and Alaska see especially large wage advantages over their non-unionized counterparts (47.2, 41.0, and 40.7 percent, respectively).
- The states with the smallest union wage advantage for women are the District of Columbia (0.9 percent), Arkansas (4.0 percent), and Colorado (8.3 percent; Table A3).

- In right-to-work states, wages for all full-time salary workers are lower than wages for workers in other states regardless of gender and union membership status (see Table A1). In 2019, the median weekly earnings for full-time women workers in right-to-work states was \$768, which is about 16.7 percent lower than in states with full union rights. Similarly, men in right-to-work states earn roughly 11.0 percent less than their counterparts in other states (IWPR analysis of Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups).

**MAP 2. The Union Wage Advantage for Women**



**Notes:** Data on earnings are median weekly earnings for full-time wage and salary workers aged 16 and older and are three-year (2017–2019) averages. Earnings are in 2019 dollars and are not controlled for age, level of education, or industry.

**Source:** IWPR analysis of data from the 2017 to 2019 Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups (Version 2.5).

### Unionized Women Have Higher Wages than Non-Unionized Women across All Major Occupations

The union wage advantage also exists in all major occupational groups for women covered by a union contract. Women experience the largest union wage advantage in men-dominated occupations. For example, women’s union advantage is largest in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations (67.4 percent), with unionized women earning more than 1.5 times as much as non-unionized women in these occupations. Given the potential for massive infrastructure investments by the federal government, now is a particularly important time to ensure equal access to union-covered jobs in men-dominated occupations.

For women in “office and administrative support” and “professional and related” occupations, the weekly wage advantage is more than 10 percent (15.2 and 12.4 percent, respectively). In all these major groups, the wage advantage is at least four percent compared with non-unionized women in the same broad occupation (Table 1).

**TABLE 1. Median Weekly Earnings for Full-Time Workers by Gender, Union Status, and Occupation, United States, 2019**

	Union		Non-Union		Union Wage Advantage		Union Wage Advantage (in Percent)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Management, Business, and Financial</b>	\$1,244	\$1,472	\$1,196	\$1,577	\$48	-\$105	4.01%	-6.66%
<b>Professional and Related</b>	\$1,164	\$1,405	\$1,036	\$1,472	\$128	-\$67	12.36%	-4.55%
<b>Service Occupations</b>	\$627	\$992	\$518	\$609	\$109	\$383	21.04%	62.89%
<b>Sales and Related</b>	\$703	\$916	\$667	\$993	\$36	-\$77	5.40%	-7.75%
<b>Office and Administrative Support</b>	\$820	\$954	\$712	\$738	\$108	\$216	15.17%	29.27%
<b>Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance</b>	\$1,003	\$1,197	\$599	\$809	\$404	\$388	67.45%	47.96%
<b>Production, Transportation, and Material Moving</b>	\$717	\$996	\$566	\$747	\$151	\$249	26.68%	33.33%

**Notes:** For workers aged 16 and older. Data are three-year (2017–2019) averages. Earnings are in 2019 dollars. Union refers to both union members and workers who report no union affiliation but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract. "Non-union" refers to workers who are neither members of a union nor represented by a union on their job.

**Source:** IWPR analysis of Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups (Version 2.5) data.

## THE UNION BENEFITS ADVANTAGE FOR WOMEN

The pandemic and economic recession has highlighted the increased importance of employer-sponsored benefits, which are more likely to be offered in unionized jobs. For example, the COVID-19 health crisis highlighted the need for equitable access to quality and affordable health care. However, access to affordable insurance is often tied to employment. Thus, the "she-cession" left many women in a precarious position: 46.2 percent of women surveyed by IWPR reported they were worried about maintaining health insurance coverage for their families because of the pandemic recession, with Latinas (66.4 percent) and mothers (55.4 percent) worried the most (Hayes and Mason 2021a; 2021b). Additionally, retirement and pension plans provide a vital economic cushion for those who have lost their jobs, face long-term unemployment, or drop out of the workforce.

A larger share of women covered by a union have a retirement or pension plan through their employers compared with women who are not unionized. The percentage of women covered by a union who participate in a pension plan is almost twice as large as women who are not unionized

(62.1 percent and 33.4 percent, respectively; Figure 2). Among all racial and ethnic groups, the difference in participation rates between those with and without union coverage ranges from 10.6 percentage points for women who identify with another race or two or more races to 32.1 percentage points for Black women (Figure 2).

Larger percentages of women covered by a union also have employer-sponsored health insurance than do women who are not. As of 2019, approximately four in five women represented by a union (80.2 percent) have employer- or union-provided health insurance coverage, whereas health insurance coverage among non-unionized women is only 70.8 percent (Figure 3). Among the largest racial and ethnic groups, the difference between health insurance coverage rates for women with and without a union coverage was greatest for women who identify as a race outside of the other listed racial/ethnic groups or two or more races (22.8 percentage points), followed by White women (10.8 percentage points; Figure 3).

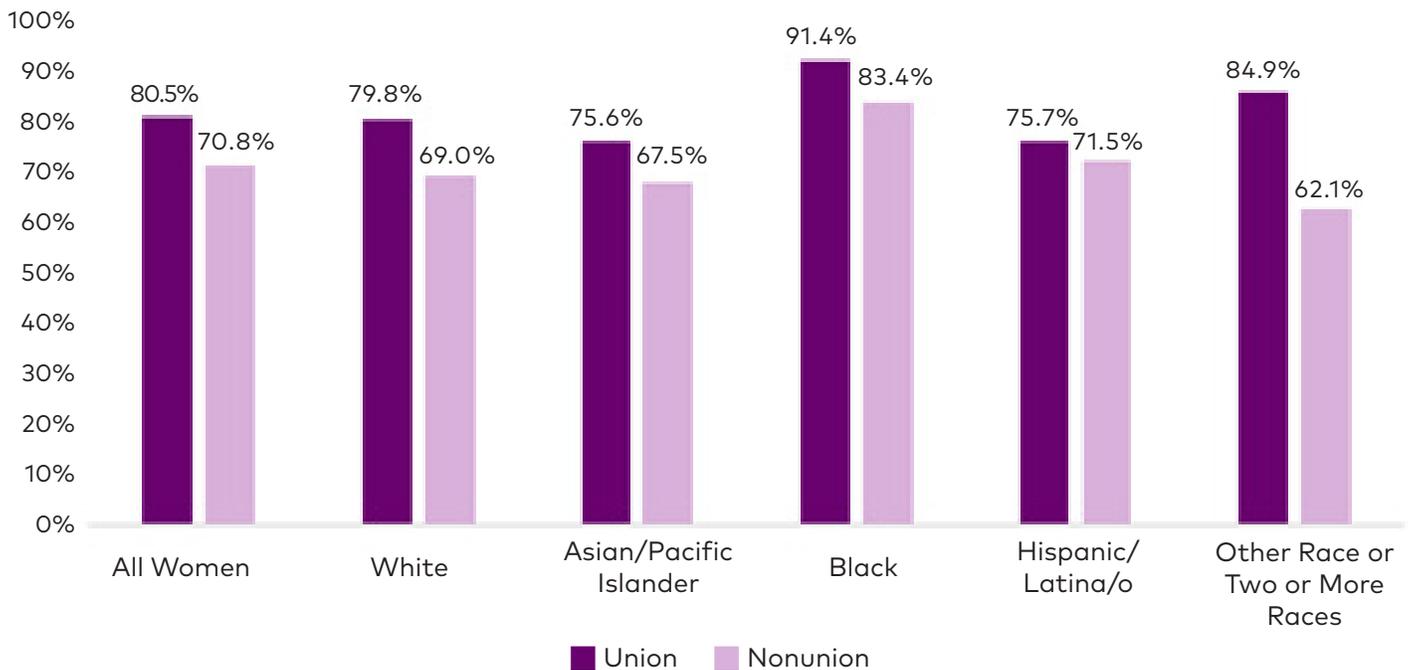
**FIGURE 2. Women Workers with a Pension Plan by Union Status and Race and Ethnicity, United States, 2019**



**Notes:** Racial categories are non-Hispanic. Hispanics/Latina/os may be of any race or two or more races. Data include all workers aged 15 and older and are three-year averages (2017–2019, for calendar years 2016–2018). Native Americans are included in "other race or two or more races"; sample sizes are insufficient to report estimates for Native Americans separately. Union refers to both union members and workers who report no union affiliation but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract. "Non-union" refers to workers who are neither members of a union nor represented by a union on their job.

**Source:** IWPR analysis of 2017 to 2019 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

**FIGURE 3. Employed Women with Health Insurance Coverage through Employer or Union by Race/Ethnicity and Union Status, United States, 2019**



**Notes:** Racial categories are non-Hispanic. Data include all workers aged 15 and older and are three-year averages (2017–2019, for calendar years 2016–2018). Native Americans are included in “other race or two or more races”; sample sizes are insufficient to report estimates for Native Americans separately. Union refers to both union members and workers who report no union affiliation but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract. “Non-union” refers to workers who are neither members of a union nor represented by a union on their job.

**Source:** IWPR analysis of data from the 2017–2019 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

## THE UNION WAGE ADVANTAGE AND THE COST OF RENT

In recent years, housing costs have risen while wages have stagnated (Joint Center for Housing Studies 2020). Workers throughout the United States struggle to afford rent, with minimum wage workers earning too little to afford the average rent in any state (Adamczyk 2020). Many families were already at risk of or one paycheck away from homelessness prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic “she-cession” has left women in every state increasingly housing insecure: As many as one in five women reported being behind on their housing payments as a result of the pandemic in Alabama, New York, and Mississippi (IWPR 2020). The federal government put policies like the eviction moratorium and the Emergency Rental Assistance program in place to protect those at risk of and experiencing housing insecurity. The end to the so-called “eviction ban,” however, could lead to millions being forced from their homes.

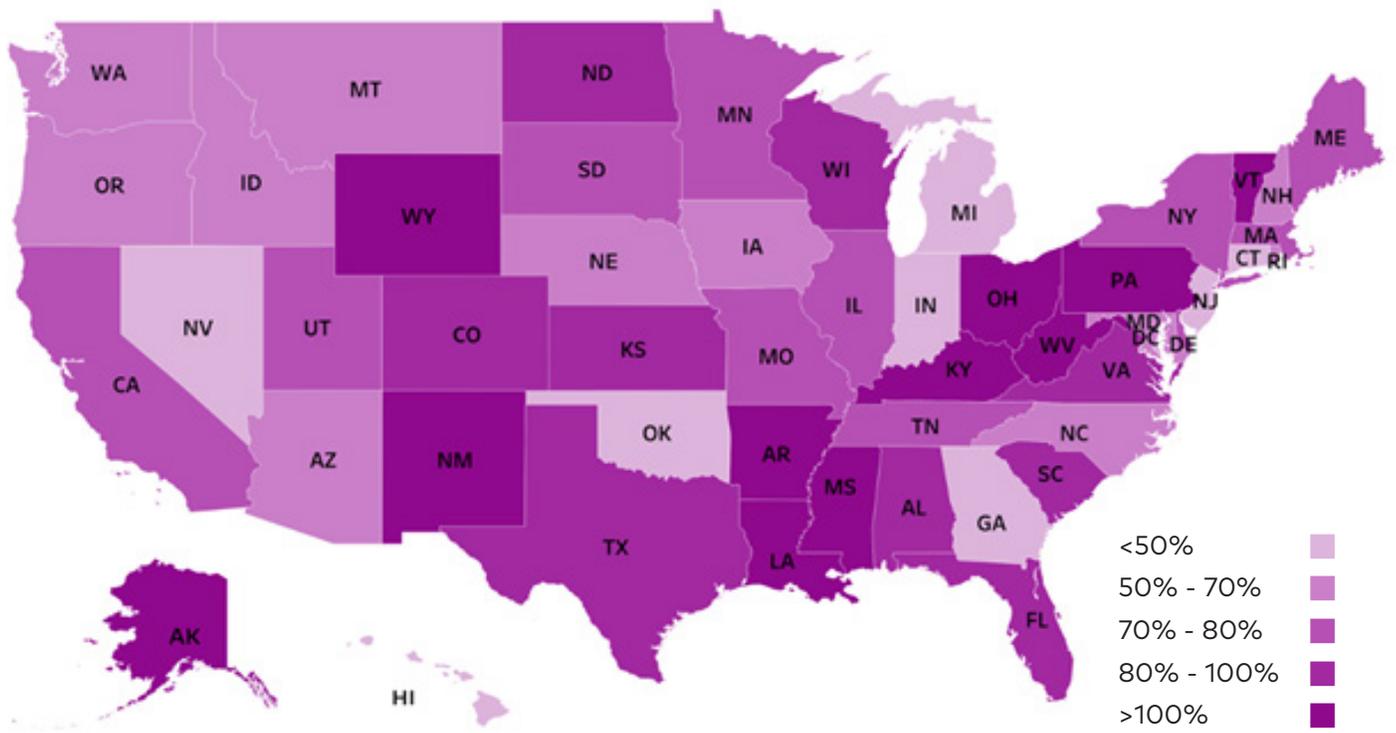
Nationally, the median cost of renting an apartment in the United States is 30.5 percent of the median woman’s salary, meaning about half of all women pay more than this (IWPR analysis of 2019 American Community Survey data). At the same time, those who pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing are living in unaffordable housing, which means many women can be considered housing insecure (Adamczyk 2020).

The union wage advantage for women workers, marked by the difference in wages between unionized and non-unionized women, translates into more economic security for women, lowering the share of those who are housing insecure. For women covered by a union, rent is only 25.4 percent of their median earnings, while for non-unionized women it rises to 31.9 percent (Table A4). In addition to the union wage benefit itself, union workers are more likely to receive paid medical leave and have more stability in their job status, which helps workers maintain the wages needed to continue paying for housing (Gould 2020; McNicholas, Shierholz, and Poydock 2021).

Each year, the union wage advantage for women nationally pays for 10 months (or 81 percent) of rent. The number of weeks of additional rent that the union wage advantage provides to women varies greatly by state:

- In 12 states, the yearly union wage advantage for women covers completely or exceeds the median yearly cost of rent.
- In 43 states, the yearly union wage advantage for women covers half or more of the yearly median cost of rent (Map 3).
- The yearly union wage advantage for women covers the highest percentage of rent in Wyoming, where each year, unionized women earn \$17,888 more than non-unionized women, enough to cover almost two years of rent for an average Wyoming apartment (181 percent; Table A4).
- The yearly union wage advantage for women covers only three percent of rent in Washington, DC, and only 16 percent of rent in Arkansas (Table A3).

**MAP 3. Share of Yearly Rent Covered by Women’s Union Wage Advantage**



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As the nation emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical to ensure that women have access to quality jobs with livable wages, strong benefits, and safe working conditions. Policymakers, employers, and advocates can support policies that would bring more equity for working women. Recommendations include:

- **Ensuring gender and racial equity are central to all economic policies:** The Biden administration's American Jobs Plan and pending investment in the nation's infrastructure represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to increase the accessibility of well-paying union jobs to low- and moderate-income women of diverse backgrounds. Federal and state infrastructure funds should be allocated and distributed with gender and racial equity goals at the forefront.
- **Supporting policies that increase collective bargaining and protect workers:** Passing legislation that limits employers' ability to interfere with union organizing—and increases punitive measures for those who do engage in union-busting activity—will pave the way for workers who would like to join a union.
- **Improving women's access to jobs with good union representation where they are underrepresented:** Women, and men, experience a particularly high union wage advantage in construction, natural resources, and maintenance occupations, yet fewer than one-in-twenty workers in these occupations are women (Ahmed and Hegewisch 2021). Increasing pathways for women to step into these higher-paying union jobs could include building women-focused pre-apprenticeship programs; expanding training, mentorship, and outreach programs for the trades; and ensuring women have the supports needed to be successful once in these roles. These supports include access to reliable transportation, subsidies for purchasing tools and work clothes, and helping women with children locate and pay for child care.
- **Increasing women's share of union membership and leadership positions:** Unions should take intentional steps to promote more women in union leadership positions. Unions should set concrete targets and goals for increasing women's union membership and leadership—actively tracking these metrics to ensure progress is made.

## APPENDIX A. Methodology and List of Tables

This brief uses data from the American Community Survey and the Current Population Survey, as noted in each table and figure. Where data is reported by race and ethnicity, those who identify as Hispanic/Latina/o may be of any race. The other race categories therefore only include those who identify as Black, White, or Asian and who do not identify as Hispanic. Race and ethnicity are self-identified.

Where Current Population Survey microdata is disaggregated by state, three-year (2017–2019) weighted averages are used to ensure sufficient sample sizes. All dollar amounts were converted to 2019-dollar equivalents using the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers.

IWPR did not calculate or report measures of statistical significance; generally, the larger a difference between two values (for any given sample size), the more likely it is that the difference is statistically significant. Sample sizes differ among the indicators analyzed.

**TABLE A1. Union Membership and Coverage  
by Gender and State, and Right-to-Work States, 2019**

State	Share of Workers Who Are Union Members or Covered by a Union Contract <sup>a</sup>		Share of Union Workers Who Are Women <sup>a</sup>	"Right-to-Work" State <sup>b</sup>
	Women	Men	Percent	
Alabama	9.1%	9.6%	46.9%	Yes
Alaska	18.5%	20.2%	45.9%	No
Arizona	5.5%	7.0%	41.1%	Yes
Arkansas	5.1%	6.5%	43.6%	Yes
California	17.0%	15.8%	48.2%	No
Colorado	11.0%	10.8%	47.4%	No
Connecticut	17.6%	16.1%	52.2%	No
Delaware	9.3%	12.1%	44.0%	No
District of Columbia	10.6%	11.7%	49.9%	No
Florida	6.7%	7.2%	47.5%	Yes
Georgia	4.4%	5.9%	42.0%	Yes
Hawaii	21.8%	26.5%	44.5%	No
Idaho	5.2%	6.4%	40.8%	Yes
Illinois	12.8%	17.2%	41.4%	No
Indiana	7.6%	11.4%	37.9%	Yes
Iowa	7.6%	9.3%	43.7%	Yes
Kansas	8.9%	11.2%	42.1%	Yes
Kentucky	9.4%	13.0%	40.5%	Yes
Louisiana	4.5%	7.0%	38.7%	Yes
Maine	13.3%	15.1%	47.3%	No
Maryland	11.8%	12.6%	47.7%	No

**TABLE A1. Union Membership and Coverage  
by Gender and State, and Right-to-Work States, 2019**

State	Share of Workers Who Are Union Members or Covered by a Union Contract <sup>a</sup>		Share of Union Workers Who Are Women <sup>a</sup>	"Right-to-Work" State <sup>b</sup>
	Women	Men	Percent	
Massachusetts	13.9%	13.5%	50.9%	No
Michigan	14.3%	17.1%	43.5%	Yes
Minnesota	14.9%	15.8%	48.1%	No
Mississippi	6.3%	8.7%	42.6%	Yes
Missouri	8.6%	13.5%	38.9%	No
Montana	13.1%	13.2%	47.7%	No
Nebraska	8.3%	9.4%	45.9%	Yes
Nevada	14.1%	16.7%	42.2%	Yes
New Hampshire	12.5%	11.6%	50.0%	No
New Jersey	16.3%	17.5%	47.1%	No
New Mexico	8.0%	8.8%	45.3%	No
New York	24.7%	23.4%	50.7%	No
North Carolina	3.7%	3.9%	48.1%	Yes
North Dakota	6.8%	7.2%	46.1%	Yes
Ohio	12.1%	15.1%	43.1%	No
Oklahoma	7.0%	7.9%	43.5%	Yes
Oregon	16.1%	14.6%	50.0%	No
Pennsylvania	10.8%	15.5%	40.4%	No
Rhode Island	18.1%	18.4%	49.4%	No
South Carolina	3.0%	3.8%	42.4%	Yes
South Dakota	6.6%	7.0%	48.0%	Yes
Tennessee	4.9%	7.2%	38.4%	Yes
Texas	5.4%	5.5%	45.8%	Yes
Utah	4.7%	6.4%	36.9%	Yes
Vermont	14.3%	9.5%	60.0%	No
Virginia	5.5%	5.5%	48.2%	Yes
Washington	19.9%	20.6%	45.7%	No
West Virginia	9.3%	13.1%	39.6%	Yes
Wisconsin	6.4%	11.3%	35.6%	Yes
Wyoming	5.7%	9.3%	34.5%	Yes
<b>United States</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>45.9%</b>	

**Notes:** <sup>a</sup> Data are for workers ages 16 and older who are covered by union contracts, irrespective of union membership, and are three-year (2017–2019) averages.

<sup>b</sup> Data on right-to-work states are as of 2021.

**Source:** IWPR analysis of data from the 2017 to 2019 Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups (Version 2.5); National Conference of State Legislatures 2021.

**TABLE A2. Union Coverage and Wage Advantage  
by Gender, Union Status, and Race/Ethnicity, United States, 2020**

Median Weekly Earnings for Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers					
	Union Coverage	Union	Non-Union	Union Wage Advantage	Union Wage Advantage (Percent)
<b>All Women</b>	11.8%	\$1,057	\$862	\$195	23%
<b>Hispanic/ Latina</b>	10.7%	\$947	\$684	\$263	38%
<b>Black</b>	13.3%	\$923	\$742	\$181	24%
<b>White</b>	11.7%	\$1,070	\$877	\$193	22%
<b>Asian</b>	10.8%	\$1,256	\$1,124	\$132	12%
<b>All Men</b>	12.3%	\$1,210	\$1,051	\$159	15%
<b>Hispanic/ Latino</b>	11.2%	\$1,064	\$770	\$294	38%
<b>Black</b>	14.6%	\$1,022	\$798	\$224	28%
<b>White</b>	12.2%	\$1,237	\$1,080	\$157	15%
<b>Asian</b>	9.3%	\$1,237	\$1,477	-\$240	-16%

**Notes:** Data for full-time workers ages 16 and older. The wage advantage is the difference between the median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers who are union members or are covered by a union contract, and those who are not. The wage advantage as a percentage is the wage advantage in dollars divided by non-unionized women's earnings. Hispanics/Latina/os may be of any race or two or more races and are classified by both ethnicity and race. Asians do not include Pacific Islanders. Data are not available for Native Americans or those who identify with two or more races. Self-employed workers are excluded.

**Source:** IWPR compilation of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021.

**TABLE A3. Earnings and the Union Wage Advantage by Gender and Union Status, 2019**

State	Median Weekly Earnings for Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers				Union Wage Advantage			
	Women		Men		Women		Men	
	Union	Non-Union	Union	Non-Union	Dollars	Percent	Dollars	Percent
Alabama	\$898	\$680	\$1,038	\$914	\$218	32.06%	\$124	13.57%
Alaska	\$1,166	\$829	\$1,312	\$1,036	\$337	40.65%	\$276	26.64%
Arizona	\$978	\$775	\$1,153	\$954	\$203	26.19%	\$199	20.86%
Arkansas	\$729	\$701	\$1,005	\$831	\$28	3.99%	\$174	20.94%
California	\$1,123	\$840	\$1,210	\$996	\$283	33.69%	\$214	21.49%
Colorado	\$976	\$901	\$1,133	\$1,044	\$75	8.32%	\$89	8.52%
Connecticut	\$1,210	\$898	\$1,226	\$1,133	\$312	34.74%	\$93	8.21%
Delaware	\$966	\$795	\$1,052	\$965	\$171	21.51%	\$87	9.02%
District of Columbia	\$1,327	\$1,315	\$1,365	\$1,508	\$12	0.91%	-\$143	-9.48%
Florida	\$888	\$742	\$1,052	\$873	\$146	19.68%	\$179	20.50%
Georgia	\$943	\$757	\$1,049	\$925	\$186	24.57%	\$124	13.41%
Hawaii	\$977	\$766	\$1,066	\$941	\$211	27.55%	\$125	13.28%
Idaho	\$899	\$690	\$1,150	\$905	\$209	30.29%	\$245	27.07%
Illinois	\$996	\$823	\$1,178	\$1,053	\$173	21.02%	\$125	11.87%
Indiana	\$918	\$710	\$1,182	\$911	\$208	29.30%	\$271	29.75%
Iowa	\$928	\$764	\$1,108	\$959	\$164	21.47%	\$149	15.54%
Kansas	\$897	\$742	\$1,083	\$930	\$155	20.89%	\$153	16.45%
Kentucky	\$936	\$693	\$1,009	\$862	\$243	35.06%	\$147	17.05%
Louisiana	\$888	\$708	\$1,149	\$942	\$180	25.42%	\$207	21.97%
Maine	\$934	\$778	\$1,054	\$945	\$156	20.05%	\$109	11.53%
Maryland	\$1,204	\$964	\$1,210	\$1,152	\$240	24.90%	\$58	5.03%
Massachusetts	\$1,198	\$995	\$1,214	\$1,205	\$203	20.40%	\$9	0.75%
Michigan	\$915	\$790	\$1,096	\$977	\$125	15.82%	\$119	12.18%
Minnesota	\$1,003	\$904	\$1,195	\$1,077	\$99	10.95%	\$118	10.96%
Mississippi	\$791	\$650	\$1,011	\$820	\$141	21.69%	\$191	23.29%
Missouri	\$906	\$763	\$1,128	\$957	\$143	18.74%	\$171	17.87%
Montana	\$896	\$710	\$1,060	\$920	\$186	26.20%	\$140	15.22%
Nebraska	\$972	\$761	\$1,101	\$918	\$211	27.73%	\$183	19.93%
Nevada	\$816	\$713	\$1,023	\$836	\$103	14.45%	\$187	22.37%
New Hampshire	\$1,017	\$878	\$1,166	\$1,094	\$139	15.83%	\$72	6.58%
New Jersey	\$1,090	\$920	\$1,166	\$1,190	\$170	18.48%	-\$24	-2.02%
New Mexico	\$861	\$709	\$1,033	\$839	\$152	21.44%	\$194	23.12%
New York	\$998	\$849	\$1,121	\$1,008	\$149	17.55%	\$113	11.21%
North Carolina	\$899	\$772	\$1,017	\$908	\$127	16.45%	\$109	12.00%
North Dakota	\$972	\$761	\$1,169	\$1,015	\$211	27.73%	\$154	15.17%

**TABLE A3. Earnings and the Union Wage Advantage by Gender and Union Status, 2019**

State	Median Weekly Earnings for Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers				Union Wage Advantage			
	Women		Men		Women		Men	
	Union	Non-Union	Union	Non-Union	Dollars	Percent	Dollars	Percent
Ohio	\$920	\$777	\$1,067	\$972	\$143	18.40%	\$95	9.77%
Oklahoma	\$795	\$709	\$1,078	\$919	\$86	12.13%	\$159	17.30%
Oregon	\$966	\$797	\$1,116	\$997	\$169	21.20%	\$119	11.94%
Pennsylvania	\$1,014	\$804	\$1,086	\$1,018	\$210	26.12%	\$68	6.68%
Rhode Island	\$1,132	\$803	\$1,175	\$1,019	\$329	40.97%	\$156	15.31%
South Carolina	\$914	\$741	\$1,036	\$954	\$173	23.35%	\$82	8.60%
South Dakota	\$883	\$726	\$1,106	\$914	\$157	21.63%	\$192	21.01%
Tennessee	\$866	\$729	\$1,082	\$910	\$137	18.79%	\$172	18.90%
Texas	\$1,016	\$755	\$1,167	\$934	\$261	34.57%	\$233	24.95%
Utah	\$936	\$726	\$1,143	\$1,009	\$210	28.93%	\$134	13.28%
Vermont	\$1,034	\$821	\$1,095	\$973	\$213	25.94%	\$122	12.54%
Virginia	\$1,111	\$883	\$1,170	\$1,110	\$228	25.82%	\$60	5.41%
Washington	\$963	\$850	\$1,264	\$1,095	\$113	13.29%	\$169	15.43%
West Virginia	\$798	\$691	\$1,009	\$861	\$107	15.48%	\$148	17.19%
Wisconsin	\$1,053	\$802	\$1,118	\$975	\$251	31.30%	\$143	14.67%
Wyoming	\$1,073	\$729	\$1,207	\$1,034	\$344	47.19%	\$173	16.73%
United States	\$997	\$793	\$1,147	\$977	\$204	25.73%	\$170	17.40%

**Notes:** For notes on calculation of wage advantage, see Table A2. Data on earnings are for those aged 16 and older and are presented in 2019 dollars. Data are three-year (2017–2019) averages, and hence differ from Figure 1 and Table A2. Earnings are not controlled for age, level of education, or industry. Union refers to both union members and workers who report no union affiliation but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract. "Non-union" refers to workers who are neither members of a union nor represented by a union on their job.

**Source:** IWPR analysis of data from the 2017 to 2019 Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups (Version 2.5).

**TABLE A4: Union Wage Advantage and Cost of Rent by State**

State	Median Weekly Cost of Rent <sup>a, d</sup>	Cost of Rent as Percent of Women's Median Earnings <sup>b, d, e</sup>		Weekly Union Wage Advantage for Women <sup>e</sup>	Share of Median Rent Covered by Union Wage Advantage <sup>c</sup>
		Union	Non-Union		
Alabama	\$186.2	20.7%	27.4%	\$218	117%
Alaska	\$277.2	23.8%	33.4%	\$337	122%
Arizona	\$254.1	26.0%	32.8%	\$203	80%
Arkansas	\$171.2	23.5%	24.4%	\$28	16%
California	\$372.5	33.2%	44.3%	\$283	76%
Colorado	\$315.9	32.4%	35.1%	\$75	24%
Connecticut	\$271.6	22.4%	30.2%	\$312	115%
Delaware	\$257.5	26.7%	32.4%	\$171	66%
District of Columbia	\$369.9	27.9%	28.1%	\$12	3%
Florida	\$285.7	32.2%	38.5%	\$146	51%
Georgia	\$242.1	25.7%	32.0%	\$186	77%
Hawaii	\$381.0	39.0%	49.7%	\$211	55%
Idaho	\$203.1	22.6%	29.4%	\$209	103%
Illinois	\$235.4	23.6%	28.6%	\$173	73%
Indiana	\$193.8	21.1%	27.3%	\$208	107%
Iowa	\$186.5	20.1%	24.4%	\$164	88%
Kansas	\$198.9	22.2%	26.8%	\$155	78%
Kentucky	\$178.4	19.1%	25.7%	\$243	136%
Louisiana	\$199.8	22.5%	28.2%	\$180	90%
Maine	\$200.8	21.5%	25.8%	\$156	78%
Maryland	\$323.3	26.9%	33.5%	\$240	74%
Massachusetts	\$313.8	26.2%	31.5%	\$203	65%
Michigan	\$204.9	22.4%	25.9%	\$125	61%
Minnesota	\$234.5	23.4%	25.9%	\$99	42%
Mississippi	\$179.3	22.7%	27.6%	\$141	79%
Missouri	\$192.5	21.2%	25.2%	\$143	74%
Montana	\$191.8	21.4%	27.0%	\$186	97%
Nebraska	\$198.2	20.4%	26.0%	\$211	106%
Nevada	\$269.5	33.0%	37.8%	\$103	38%
New Hampshire	\$264.7	26.0%	30.1%	\$139	53%
New Jersey	\$317.5	29.1%	34.5%	\$170	54%
New Mexico	\$195.5	22.7%	27.6%	\$152	78%
New York	\$302.1	30.3%	35.6%	\$149	49%

**TABLE A4: Union Wage Advantage and Cost of Rent by State**

State	Median Weekly Cost of Rent <sup>a, d</sup>	Cost of Rent as Percent of Women's Median Earnings <sup>b, d, e</sup>		Weekly Union Wage Advantage for Women <sup>e</sup>	Share of Median Rent Covered by Union Wage Advantage <sup>c</sup>
		Union	Non-Union		
North Carolina	\$214.8	23.9%	27.8%	\$127	59%
North Dakota	\$185.5	19.1%	24.4%	\$211	114%
Ohio	\$187.6	20.4%	24.1%	\$143	76%
Oklahoma	\$187.8	23.6%	26.5%	\$86	46%
Oregon	\$273.5	28.3%	34.3%	\$169	62%
Pennsylvania	\$219.5	21.6%	27.3%	\$210	96%
Rhode Island	\$240.7	21.3%	30.0%	\$329	137%
South Carolina	\$212.8	23.3%	28.7%	\$173	81%
South Dakota	\$177.5	20.1%	24.4%	\$157	88%
Tennessee	\$208.6	24.1%	28.6%	\$137	66%
Texas	\$251.8	24.8%	33.3%	\$261	104%
Utah	\$253.4	27.1%	34.9%	\$210	83%
Vermont	\$226.2	21.9%	27.5%	\$213	94%
Virginia	\$289.4	26.0%	32.8%	\$228	79%
Washington	\$313.6	32.6%	36.9%	\$113	36%
West Virginia	\$167.8	21.0%	24.3%	\$107	64%
Wisconsin	\$200.1	19.0%	24.9%	\$251	125%
Wyoming	\$189.7	17.7%	26.0%	\$344	181%
United States	\$253.2	25.4%	31.9%	\$204	81%

**Notes:** <sup>a</sup> Weekly rent was calculated by multiplying the monthly rent by 12 and dividing by 52. For notes on calculation of union wage advantage, see Table A2.

<sup>b</sup> Cost of rent as a percentage of women's earnings was calculated by dividing weekly rent by median earnings for unionized and non-unionized women in each state.

<sup>c</sup> Share of median rent covered by union wage advantage was calculated by dividing the weekly union wage advantage for women by weekly rent.

**Sources:** <sup>d</sup> IWPR analysis of 2019 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Version 5.0). <sup>e</sup> IWPR analysis of data from the 2017 to 2019 Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Groups (Version 2.5).

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