

California Union Membership

According to the Current Population Survey (CPS), there were 14.6 million union members in the United States in 2014. Nationwide, private-sector industries had 7.4 million union members, while 7.2 million members were employed in the government sector. California had 2.4 million union members in 2014 and the state's share of the U.S. total was 16.4 percent. In this report, *union memberships* are defined as persons who are members of a labor union or employee association.

The Current Population Survey (CPS) is a monthly survey of households conducted by the Bureau of Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The survey provides comprehensive data on the labor force, employment, unemployment, persons not in the labor force, hours of work, earnings, and other demographic characteristics.

California had a higher union membership rate than the U.S.

The *union membership rate* represents the share of wage and salary workers who were members of labor unions or employee associations similar to a union. In 2014, according to the CPS, the nation had a union membership rate of 11.1 percent while California had a rate of 16.3 percent. California was one of 19 states with a membership rate higher than the national average. New York's membership rate was the highest of any state at 24.6 percent, while North Carolina had the lowest rate in the nation, with just 1.9 percent of their respective employed wage and salary workers in unions.

California's union members are typically male and older.

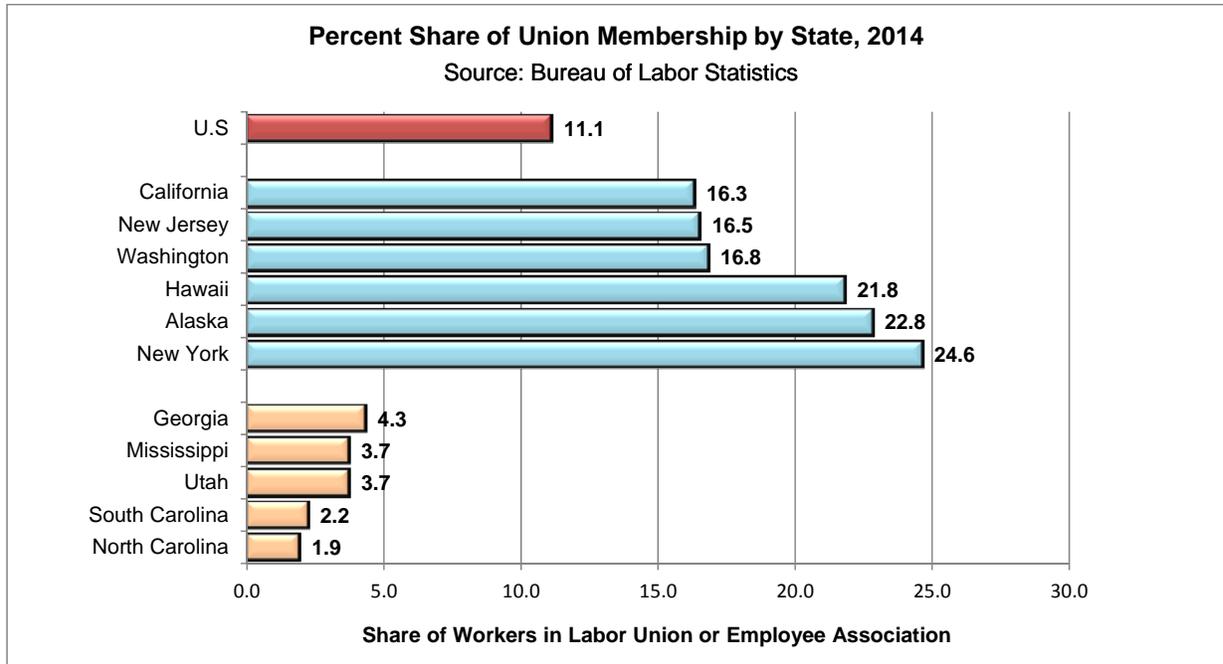
Between 2004 and 2014, male workers held more than a 50 percent share of total union membership in California. However, female union memberships increased by more than 100,000 members, representing an increase of 2 percent over the ten-year period. In 2014, union members aged 45 years and older represented more than 50 percent of memberships in California. Within this age group, members aged 55 and older added more than 200,000 members, a ten-year increase of 7.5 percentage points.

Workers with a bachelor's degree or higher had the largest share of union membership in California.

In 2004 and 2014, union memberships were highest among workers with a bachelor's degree or higher (36.6 percent and 40 percent respectively). Memberships declined among most of the educational groups, except among those with at least a bachelor's degree. Members with this level of education grew by 3.4 percent (123,000) over the past ten years.

California's government sectors added more union members than the private sector between 2004 and 2014.

In 2014, government sectors held a larger share (52.6 percent) of union memberships when compared to the private sector (47.4 percent). Within the public sectors, the union membership rate was higher for local and state government (32.7 percent and 14.6 percent respectively), whereas the federal government accounted for 5.3 percent. Between 2004 and 2014, state government union totals grew by 1.7 percentage points, the largest increase when compared to the federal, local, and private sectors. These data, together with the information on educational attainment above, signal a shift in California's union membership makeup during the last 10 years towards a more government-based workforce.



Demographic Characteristics of California Union Membership, 2014						
Characteristics	July 2004		July 2014		Trends between July 2004 and July 2014	
	Total	Percent Share	Total	Percent Share	Net Change	Percentage Point Change
Statewide Total	2,363,100	100%	2,471,700	100%	108,600	0.0
Sex						
<i>Male</i>	1,249,200	52.9%	1,257,400	50.9%	8,200	-2.0
<i>Female</i>	1,113,900	47.1%	1,214,300	49.1%	100,400	2.0
Age						
16-24	141,800	6.0%	121,700	4.9%	-20,100	-1.1
25-34	517,200	21.9%	506,200	20.5%	-11,000	-1.4
35-44	629,300	26.6%	595,300	24.1%	-34,000	-2.5
45-54	703,800	29.8%	675,200	27.3%	-28,600	-2.5
55 and older	371,000	15.7%	573,400	23.2%	202,400	7.5
Ethnicity						
<i>Hispanic</i>	645,700	27.3%	799,000	32.3%	153,300	5.0
<i>Non-Hispanic</i>	1,717,400	72.7%	1,672,700	67.7%	-44,700	-5.0
Educational Attainment						
<i>Less than a high school diploma</i>	185,000	7.8%	163,000	6.6%	-22,000	-1.2
<i>High school graduates, no college</i>	476,500	20.2%	482,700	19.5%	6,200	-0.6
<i>Some college, no degree</i>	553,900	23.4%	557,000	22.5%	3,100	-0.9
<i>Associate degree</i>	282,000	11.9%	280,500	11.3%	-1,500	-0.6
<i>Bachelor's degree or higher</i>	865,700	36.6%	988,500	40.0%	122,800	3.4
Industry Sector Analysis						
<i>Federal Government</i>	107,100	4.5%	132,100	5.3%	25,000	0.8
<i>State Government</i>	304,900	12.9%	360,100	14.6%	55,200	1.7
<i>Local Government</i>	813,200	34.4%	808,800	32.7%	-4,400	-1.7
<i>Private Sector</i>	1,137,900	48.2%	1,170,800	47.4%	32,900	0.8

Source: Current Population Survey of Households, 12-month moving average



State of California

Labor and Workforce Development Agency

Employment Development Department

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