

# EMPLOYMENT

## Union Membership is Critical for Women's Wage Equality

Updated February 2015

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*Union membership boosts wages for all workers—but women see especially large advantages from being in a union. The wage gap among union members is 40 percent smaller than the wage gap among non-union workers and female union members earn over \$200 per week more than women who are not represented by unions—a larger union premium than men receive. To promote equal pay for women, workers' rights to organize must be strengthened.*

### The gender wage gap for union members is 40 percent smaller than for non-union workers.

- Among union members, women working full time typically make 89.1 percent of what their male counterparts make weekly—a wage gap of 10.9 cents.
- Among non-union workers, women working full time typically make 81.8 percent of what their male counterparts make weekly—a wage gap of 18.2 cents.
- The gender wage gap is even wider for African American women and Latinas compared to white men—especially among non-union workers.
  - Among full-time workers, the wage gap between African American women and white men who are union workers is 24 cents, compared to 32 cents among non-union workers.
  - Among full-time workers, the wage gap between Latinas and white men who are union workers is 27 cents, compared to 40 cents among non-union workers.

### Wage Gap for Median Weekly Earnings by Union Membership, 2014



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Union Members Summary (Jan. 2015), Table 2, available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm>. Figures are for full-time workers.

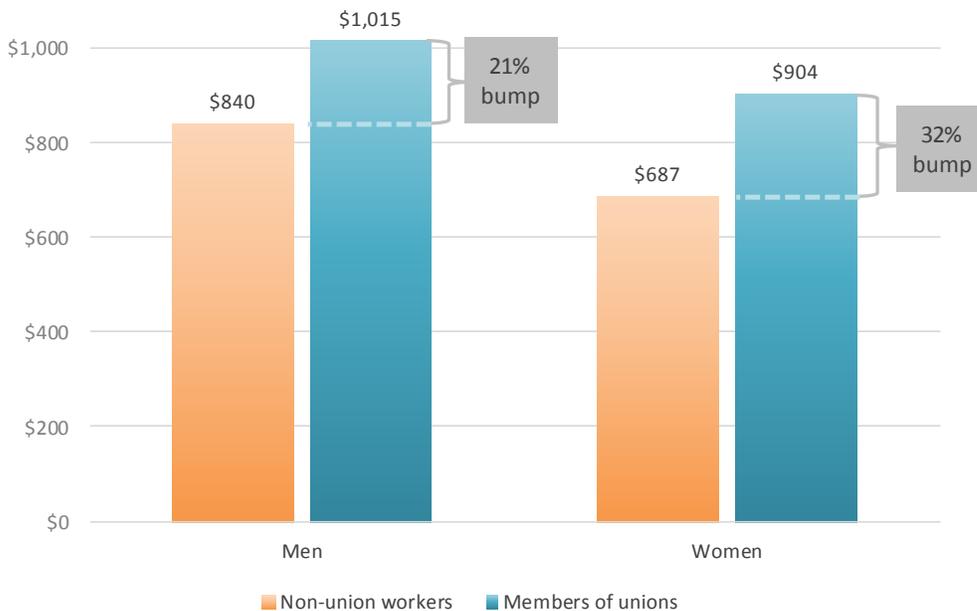
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- For every racial and ethnic group, the gender wage gap among union members is smaller than the gender wage gap among non-union workers.
  - o Among African Americans who are union members, the gender wage gap is 42.5 percent smaller than non-union members (5.1 cents compared to 9 cents).
  - o Among Latino union members, the gender wage gap is 6.1 percent smaller than non-union members (12.0 cents compared to 12.8 cents).
  - o Among Asian Americans who are union members, the gender wage gap is 64.4 percent smaller than non-union members (8.7 cents compared to 24.3 cents).
  - o Among whites who are union members, the gender wage gap is 41.9 percent smaller than non-union members (10.9 cents compared to 18.8 cents).

**Women’s union wage premium is 1.2 times as large as men’s.**

- Union members typically make more per week than non-union workers—but the bonus is larger for women, and is especially large for some women of color.
  - o Female union members who work full time typically make \$904 per week—32 percent (\$217) more than female non-union workers who typically make \$687 per week. In contrast, male union members who work full time typically make \$1,015 per week—21 percent (\$175) more than male non-union workers who typically make \$840 per week.
  - o Among women, Latina workers experience particularly high financial benefits from union membership. Among full-time workers, Latina union members typically make 46 percent more (\$237 per week) than Latina non-union workers.
  - o Among full-time workers, African American women union members typically make 34 percent more (\$202 per week) than African American women non-union workers.
  - o Among full-time workers, Asian American women union members typically make 14 percent more (\$116 per week), than Asian American women non-union workers.
  - o Among full-time workers white women union members typically make 32 percent more (\$225 per week), than white women non-union workers.

**Median Weekly Earnings and the Union Premium, 2015**



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**The rate of union membership remained flat for women between 2013 and 2014.**

- The number of union members increased by 48,000 workers between 2013 and 2014 but the rate of union membership—the percentage of employees who were members of unions—declined 0.2 of a percentage point to 11.1 percent.
- The percentage of employed women who were union members remained constant between 2013 and 2014 at 10.5 percent, while the rate for men dropped by 0.2 of a percentage point to 11.7 percent.

**Technical note:**

Unless otherwise noted, all data come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Union Members 2015 release (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm>). BLS data on union membership include all employed wage and salary workers 16 and older. Figures are annual averages. Data are not available broken down by gender and sector. Data on union representation (workers represented by unions include both workers who are union members as well as those who do not members but whose jobs are covered by a union contract) are not reported here but are similar to those for union membership. Wage gaps in this analysis are calculated based on median weekly earnings. These data differ slightly from the often-used measure of median annual earnings for full-time, year-round workers. Using that measure, the typical woman makes 78 percent of what the typical man makes (see National Women's Law Center, The Wage Gap is Stagnant for Nearly a Decade (September 2014) *available at* <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-stagnant-nearly-decade>).