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# Labor Market Digest, December 2009

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information

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the

**MAINE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**  
Center for Workforce  
Research and Information

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## Union Membership in 2009

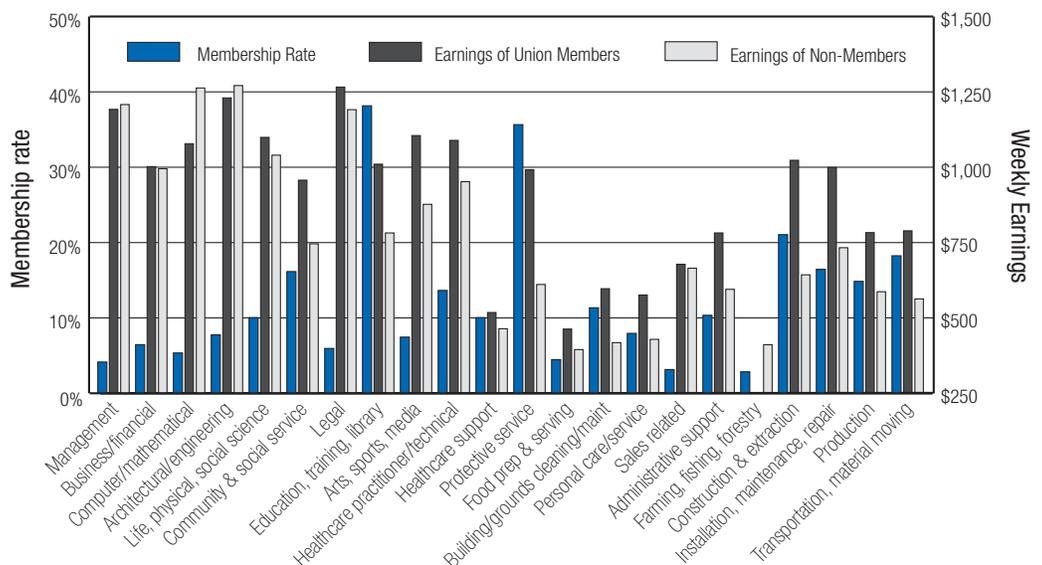
Union members accounted for 11.7 percent of employed wage and salary workers in Maine in 2009, down from 12.3 percent in 2008 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nationally, union membership was 12.3 percent in 2009, down from 12.4 percent. Union membership totaled 63,000 in Maine and 15.3 million in the U.S. Since 1983, union membership has declined from 20.1 percent in the U.S.

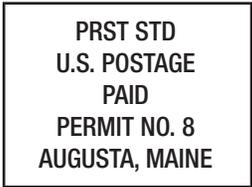
Data on union membership is collected through the Current Population Survey, a monthly survey of 60,000 households that obtains information on employment and unemployment. The following detail is based on 2009 national data; detail for states is not published.

### Membership by Industry, Occupation, and Earnings

The union membership rate for public sector workers was five times that of private sector workers (37.4 percent compared to 7.2 percent). In the public sector, local government workers had the highest union membership rate at 43.3 percent. Local governments generally have high concentrations of workers in heavily unionized occupations, including teachers, police officers, and fire fighters. Private sector industries with high unionization rates include transportation and utilities (22.2 percent), telecommunications (16.0 percent), and construction (14.5 percent). Unionization rates were relatively low in financial activities (1.8 percent) and professional and business services (2.3 percent).

Union membership rates and earnings of members and non-members by occupational group





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Among occupational groups, education, training, and library occupations (38.1 percent) and protective service occupations (35.6 percent) had the highest unionization rates. Sales related occupations (3.1 percent) and farming, fishing, and forestry occupations (2.8 percent) had the lowest unionization rates.

Among full-time wage and salary workers, union members had median usual weekly earnings of \$908, while those who were not represented by unions had median weekly earnings of \$710. The difference reflects a variety of influences in addition to coverage by collective bargaining agreements, including variations in the distributions of union membership by occupation, industry, firm size, or geographic region. Membership rates were generally lowest in occupations with higher than average earnings that generally require post-secondary education or training, and earnings differentials between members and non-members were generally lower in those occupations.

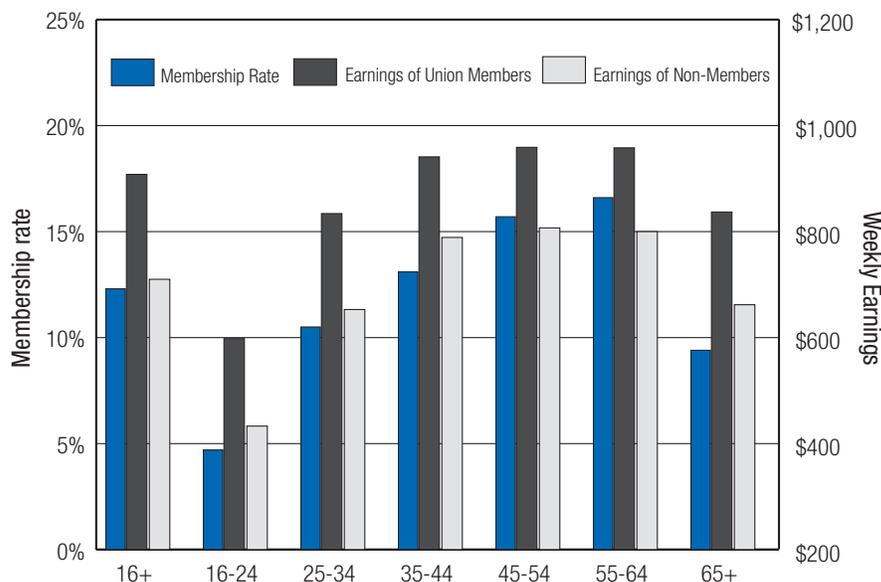
### Demographic and Regional Characteristics

Union membership rates were highest among workers age 55 to 64 (16.6 percent) and 45 to 54 (15.7 percent), and lowest among those 16 to 24 (4.7 percent). Membership rates of full-time workers were nearly twice that of part-time workers (13.6 percent compared to 7.0 percent).

Union membership was higher for men (13.3 percent) than women (11.3 percent), though the gap in membership has narrowed considerably since 1983 when there was a 10 percentage point differential. Between 1983 and 2009 the union membership rate declined 11.4 points among men and 3.3 points among women.

The highest rates of union membership were generally in the Pacific, industrial Mid-West, and Mid-Atlantic regions, and the lowest rates in the South, Plains, and Rocky Mountain regions. More detail is available at [www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf).

Union membership rates and earnings of members and non-members by age group



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