

What is The Union Difference?

Why Choose Union?

The Union
Difference
Explained.



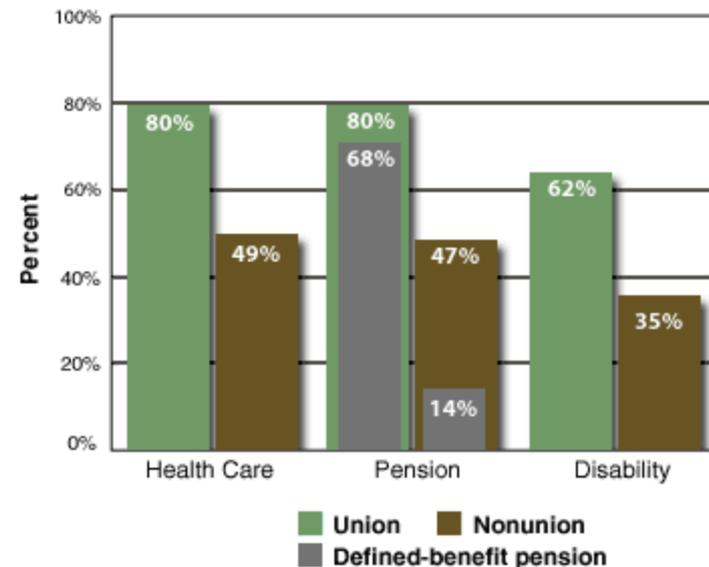
Union Workers Have Better Health Care and Pensions

Union workers are more likely than their non-union counterparts to receive health care and pension benefits, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. In March 2006, 80 percent of union workers in the private sector had jobs with employer-provided health insurance, compared with only 49 percent of non-union workers. Union workers also are more likely to have retirement and short-term disability benefits.

80 Percent of Union Workers Are Covered By Pension Plans

Sixty-eight percent of union workers have defined-benefit pension plans, compared with 14 percent of non-union workers. (Defined-benefit plans are federally insured and provide a guaranteed monthly pension amount. They are better for workers than defined-contribution plans, in which the benefit amount depends on how well the underlying investments perform.)

UNION WORKERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE HEALTH AND PENSION BENEFITS, 2006



Note: Defined-benefit pensions are a subset of all pensions. Disability refers to short-term disability benefits.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employee Benefits in Private Industry*, March 2006. August 2006.
Prepared by the AFL-CIO.

Better For Business and Productivity

According to Professor Harley Shaiken of the University of California-Berkeley, unions are associated with higher productivity, lower employee turnover, improved workplace communication, and a better-trained workforce.

Harley Shaiken, *The High Road to a Competitive Economy: A Labor Law Strategy*, Center for American Progress, June 25, 2004, pp. 7-8.

Productivity & Training

According to a recent survey of 73 independent studies on unions and productivity: “The available evidence points to a positive and statistically significant association between unions and productivity in the U.S. manufacturing and education sectors, of around 10 and 7 percent, respectively.”

Several studies in have found a positive association between unionization and the amount and quality of workforce training. Unionized establishments are more likely to offer formal training. This is especially true for small firms. There are a number of reasons for this: less turnover among union workers, making the employer more likely to offer training; collective bargaining agreements that require employers to provide training; and finally, unions often conduct their own training.

Economic Development

Unions also play a positive role in economic development. One good example is the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, “an association of 125 employers and unions dedicated to family-supporting jobs in a competitive business environment. WRTP members have stabilized manufacturing employment in the Milwaukee metro area, and contributed about 6,000 additional industrial jobs to it over the past five years. Among member firms, productivity is way up--exceeding productivity growth in nonmember firms.”

Annette Bernhardt, Laura Dresser, and Joel Rogers, “Taking the High Road in Milwaukee: The Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership.” *Working USA*, Vol. 5, Issue 3 (January 31, 2002).

Bringing Low-Wage Workers Out Of Poverty

Union members in low-wage occupations on average earn a great deal more than non-union workers in the same occupations, often lifting their earnings above the official poverty level. For example, union cashiers in 2006 earned an average of \$11.87—46 percent more than non-union workers in the same occupation. Over a year's time, having a union card could translate into more than \$7,800 in additional pay for such a low wage worker. While the non-union cashier's earnings, on average, leaves a worker \$3,746 **below** the poverty line for a family of four, the union cashier's earnings, on average, brings the worker \$4,075 **above** the poverty line for a family of four.