



Union Membership in Canada: A 2009 Update

Each year Statistics Canada publishes a review of unionization in “*Perspectives on Labour and Income*” just in time for Labour Day. The August 2009 review compares the first half of 2009 with the first half of 2008.

The numbers show union membership has fallen – but not as fast as employment fell. Since unionized workers have a larger share of all employment, “unionization” rates have grown slightly.

For the First Half of 2009 ...

- **Employment averaged 14.1 million** during the first half of 2009 - a loss of 317,000 jobs over the same time a year ago when employment was 14.4 million.
- **For the first time in Canadian history, there are more employed women than employed men.** During the first half of 2009 an average 7.123 million women were employed compared with 6.963 million men. This reflects job losses in the manufacturing and resource sectors as well as job growth in the service sector.
- **4.16 million workers are union members** down from 4.23 million in 2008.
- **Canada’s unionization rate is 29.5%** up slightly from 29.4% in 2008.
- **Another 296,000 are covered by a contract** but aren’t members - for a “union density” of 4.45 million workers (31.6% of all employees).
- **Unionization rose for young workers** (age15-24) to 14.7% (from13.5% in 2008).
- **Unionization rose for public sector workers** to 71.3%.
- **Unionization fell for private sector workers** to 16.1% (from 16.3%).
- **Since 2006, women are the majority of union members.** 2.19 million women and 1.96 million men belong to a union. Women’s unionization rate (30.8%) exceeds men’s (28.2%) with the gap increasing since 2008.
- **24.2% of manufacturing workers are unionized** (down from 26.8% last year).
- **30.3% of service workers** are unionized (from 29.6% in 2008). It’s lowest in private services like accommodation & food (7%).
- **The most unionized provinces** remain Nfld/Lab and Quebec. Alberta remains the least unionized. Unionization increased significantly in Nova Scotia but fell in B.C., N.B. and Ontario.
- **Unionization rose in health care.** It declined most in manufacturing and the primary resources sector.
- **Unionization rose to 23.3% in part-time jobs.** Full-time is a stable 31%.
- **A Cautionary Tale:** Only 12.4% of American workers were union members in 2008 (up from 12.1% in 2007). Private sector rates were 7.6% and public sector 36.8%. Men 13.4%; women 11.4% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

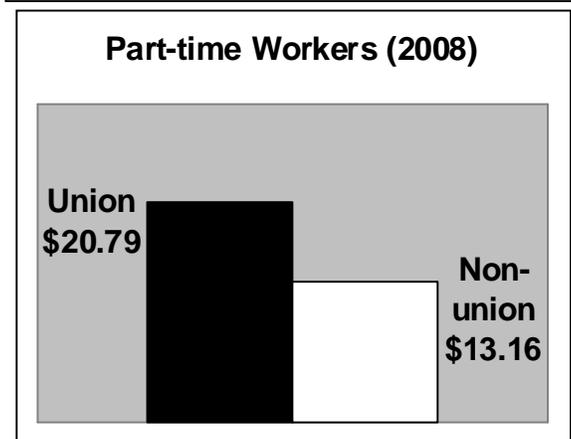
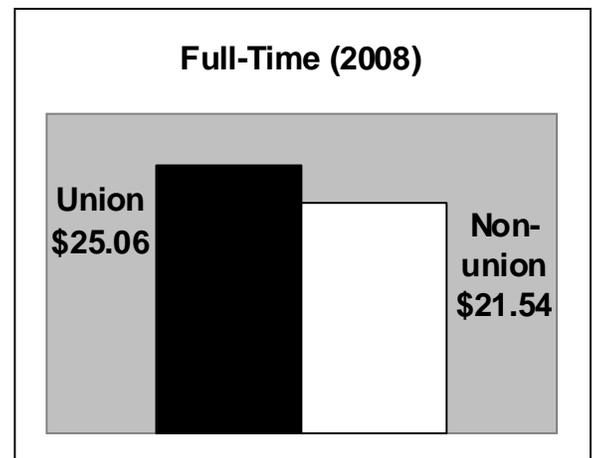
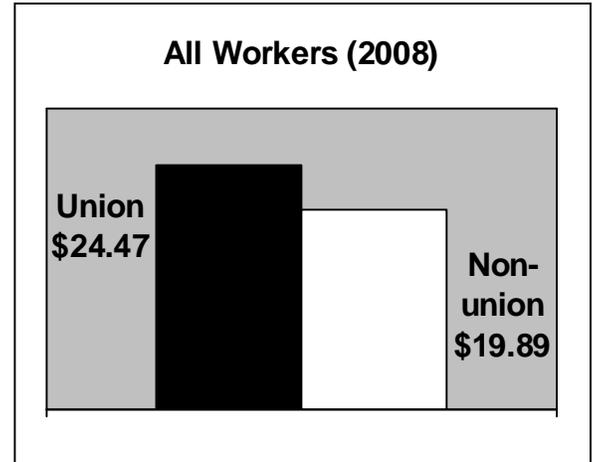
Just the Facts: The “Union Advantage”

Statistics Canada’s August 2009 review of unionization in *Perspectives on Labour and Income* looks at **2008 average earnings and usual hours** by union and job status.

Statistics Canada found that **unionized workers continue to get average hourly earnings that are much higher** than those of non-union workers.

For the year 2008 ...

- **The average unionized worker was paid \$24.47 an hour** while the average non-union worker earned only \$19.89.
- **Full-time union workers averaged \$25.06** but non-union full-timers averaged \$21.54.
- **Part-time union workers averaged \$20.79** but non-union part-timers **earned dramatically lower pay** of \$13.16 hourly.
- **Unionized part-timers had access to more schedule hours** (19.2 hours) than non-union part-timers (16.8 hours).
- Statistics Canada says “Unionized part-time employees not only had **higher weekly earnings**, but they also worked more (19.2 hours vs. 16.8). This led to a larger gap in weekly earnings (\$405.97 versus \$225.94)”.
- **Union women are closer to achieving pay equity.** Women in unionized full time jobs averaged **94%** of union full-time men’s average (\$24.27 versus \$25.76). The wage gap was much bigger for non-union full-time women who earned **only 81%** of their male counterparts (\$19.01 versus \$23.60).



The “union advantage” continues in 2009. The latest Labour Force Survey (July 2009) shows unionized workers now earn an average \$24.84 hourly. That’s **22% more than unorganized workers** who average only \$20.35 hourly.

StatsCan “Unionization” study and tables: www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/75-001-x2009108-eng.htm