

## Finally, a pay raise

In 2016, Vermont's lowest-paid workers saw the biggest wage gains of any group: 4 percent. When unemployment is low, workers are in short supply, so wages should increase. But Vermont's low jobless rate—5 percent or less since 2012—was having little effect, especially at the low end. For those workers wages increased less than 2 percent a year from 2009 to 2014. Last year's gains were due in part to Vermont's minimum wage increase of 45 cents an hour.

### Steady union rolls

While union membership has fallen in the rest of the country, the share of employed Vermonters who are in unions or are covered by union contracts has remained fairly steady. The percentage of union members in 2016 was up slightly from 2006. And the share of workers covered by union contracts, including non-union workers, was the same in 2016 as it was 10 years earlier. During that period, union membership declined in 38 states.

### Young, male, and jobless

Vermont's unemployment rate—the average for the entire working-age population—held steady last month at 3 percent. Meanwhile, newly released data from 2016 reveal variation among different groups of workers. For instance, the unemployment rate was lower among women than among men. And men ages

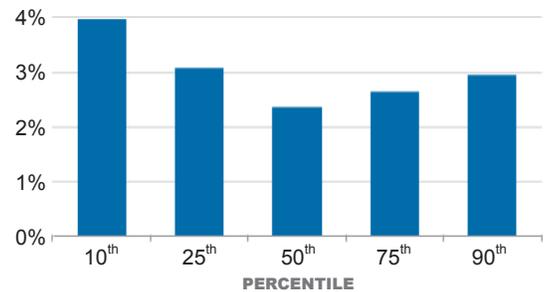
	MAR 2017	FEB 2017	MAR 2016
Labor Force	347,466	346,791	344,335
Employment	336,887	336,277	333,015
Unemployment	10,579	10,514	11,320
Unemployment Rate	3.0%	3.0%	3.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

16 to 24 had the highest rate last year: over 8 percent.

### Wage gains were best at the low end

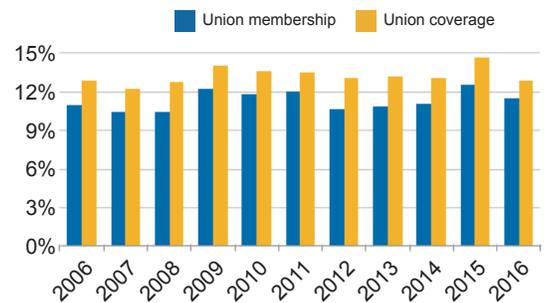
Growth in hourly wage for selected wage-earners, 2015-2016



Data source: Vermont Department of Labor

### Vermont unions maintained membership

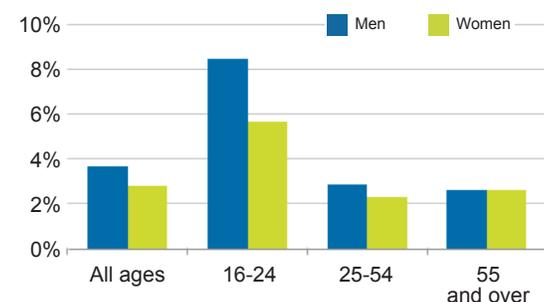
Percent of employed workers in unions and covered by union contracts, 2006-2016



Data source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Men's joblessness exceeded women's last year

Vermont average annual unemployment rate by sex and age, 2016



Data source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics