



# New York Empire State Poll 2003 ESP Report 3: Executive Summary Part Two

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## Introduction

This report is an executive summary of the key findings from the Empire State Poll (ESP) 2003, a general survey of New York State residents who are at least 18 years of age. The School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR) Survey Research Institute (SRI) conducted the poll. The ESP 2003 marks the inauguration of an ongoing survey series that will probe residents' views on a wide-range of issues. The data derived from this poll will be of particular interest to government officials, business and labor leaders, journalists, academics, and representatives from special interest groups. The data can also guide policymaking, raise issues for civic dialogue, and suggest avenues of future research.

The poll was conducted between March 10 and July 1, 2003 and consists of 888 interviews with residents from both upstate and downstate New York. The response rate was 26.7% and the cooperation rate was 57.0% according to AAPOR standards. "Downstate" was defined as New York, Rockland, Kings, Richmond, Westchester, Suffolk, Queens, Nassau, and Bronx counties, with the remaining counties of the state defined as "upstate." All results presented in this report have been weighted based upon geographic (upstate vs. downstate), racial (white vs. non-white), and household income population distributions. The margin of error for reported statewide results is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. For more detail on the background of the ESP 2003 and how the data were collected, see *ESP Report #1: Introduction and Methodology* available at [www.sri.cornell.edu](http://www.sri.cornell.edu).

## A Portrait of New York

The ESP 2003 includes a wide-range of issues and topics facing New York State residents. The primary goal of the ESP is to provide a yearly portrait of New York that includes a snapshot of social, economic, political, and workplace trends. The core of the ESP survey remains constant, which allows for the collection of trend data over time. This executive summary report provides topline results for selected workplace and labor topics included within the ESP 2003.

### ESP 2003 Workplace Topics

- Resources used by New York residents to find work
- Job security
- Perceptions & impact of technology
- Workplace satisfaction & promotion
- Workplace environment & efficacy
- Union Membership
- Workplace benefits

## Resources To Find Work

How do New York State residents find jobs? The ESP 2003 asked both employed respondents and unemployed respondents currently looking for work what resources they use to find jobs. Table 1 provides the results.

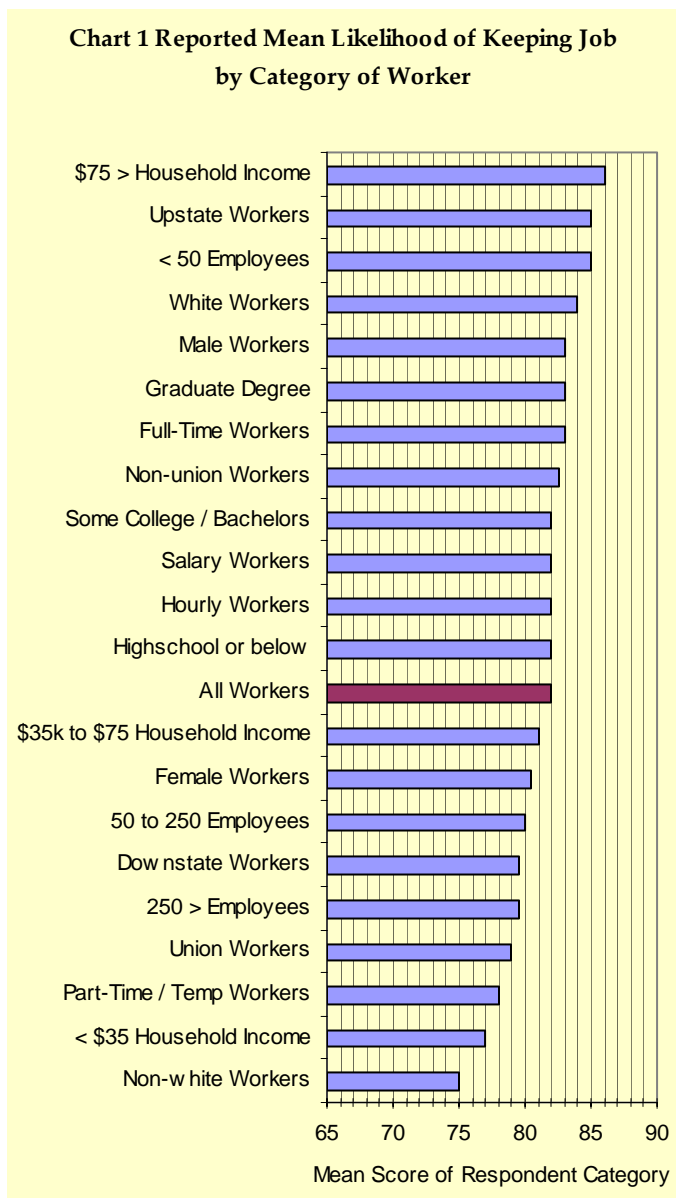
**Table 1** Percentage of respondents who use the following resources to find a job:

Resource	Employed	Unemployed
Spouse	15	32
Other Family Member	36	67
Friend	57	88
Business contact	54	52
Former employer	33	33
Employment Agency	30	32
Professional	24	23
Newspaper ad	55	80
Internet/online listings	31	68
One Stop Center (NYS employment service)	12	28

As the results demonstrate, unemployed respondents primarily use friends and newspaper ads, followed by other family members and the Internet. Employed respondents also utilize friends and newspaper ads as their primary resources for finding work, however they use business contacts more frequently in comparison to unemployed respondents.

## Job Security

Job security is an important topic for New Yorkers considering the current economic challenges facing New York State. The ESP 2003 asked employed New Yorkers to evaluate the likelihood of keeping their current job for the next year on a scale of 0 to 100%. The average score for all respondents to the ESP was 82%. Looking beyond the statewide average, we examined variances in perceived security between differing work and demographic contexts. Chart 1 provides the reported mean likelihood of respondents' keeping their jobs across different types of workers.



The most secure workers were those from households with over \$75k in annual income, upstate workers, workers at locations with less than 50 employees, and white workers. The least secure workers were non-white workers, those with

annual household incomes less than \$35k, part-time workers, and union workers.

## Perceptions & Impact of Technology

The ESP 2003 measured both respondents' use of key technologies and their perceptions regarding the impact of technology within the workplace and on their lives. As may be expected, employed respondents had a much higher level of technology use than non-working respondents. The percentage of workers who reported frequently using computers, email, and the Internet were 68%, 62%, and 57% respectively. In comparison, only 32%, 35%, and 40% of non-workers reported frequently using computers, email, and the Internet.

Of greater interest were workers' perceptions regarding the positive or negative impact of technology on their workplace and daily lives. Using respondents scores on five questions asking frequency of technology use (computers, email, Internet, cellular phone, pager or beeper, and PDA), we split working respondents into two categories, high and low users of technology, based upon a median split in their cumulative score. High users of technology accounted for 55% of the working respondents and low users accounted for 45%. Examining how these two categories of workers may perceive technology differently, Table 2 provides the percent of employed respondents within each category that agreed with various statements regarding technology's impact.

**Table 2** Percentage of respondents who agree with the following statements by high and low users of technology.

Because of technology:	High Users	Low Users
My job is easier	80	55
I have had to learn new skills	76	56
New jobs created at my workplace	44	29
I am more productive in my job	79	42
My pace of life has accelerated	71	44
More work is less satisfying	11	11
I was able to get higher paying job	35	16
Jobs were eliminated at workplace	20	16
Overall, technology has improved the quality of my life	69	44

Overall, technology is perceived as having a positive impact across several dimensions of the workplace, especially in the areas of making the job easier, increasing productivity, and quality of life. Few respondents, in either category, report having a less satisfying job or losing jobs within the workplace due to technology.

## Workplace Satisfaction & Promotion

How satisfied are New Yorkers with their jobs? Overall workplace satisfaction and satisfaction within specific job areas was asked of all employed respondents to the ESP 2003. Table 3 provides the percentage of satisfied respondents, split between union, non-union, and all workers.

**Table 3** Percentage of union, non-union, and all workers that are satisfied with:

Job Area	Union	Non-union	All Workers
Overall job	74	79	77
Hours worked	78	73	74
Healthcare benefits	74	60	64
Retirement or pension	69	46	52
Advancement	45	57	54

Overall, three-fourths of all workers are satisfied with their jobs and the number of hours they work. However, only roughly half of all workers are satisfied with either their retirement benefits or opportunity for advancement in the workplace. Comparatively, union workers have much higher levels of satisfaction regarding healthcare and retirement benefits than non-union workers. Conversely, union workers are less satisfied regarding opportunities for advancement within the workplace as compared to non-union workers.

Beyond satisfaction, what factors either promote or hinder advancement in the workplace? Table 4 provides the percentage of employed respondents that selected each factor.

**Table 4** Percentage of employed respondents who cited:

Key Factor for Promotion	%	%	Key Barrier to Promotion
Skills & Talent	38	25	Not having needed skills
Knowing right people	20	17	Not knowing right people
Working hard	15	11	Not trying hard enough
Seniority	13	35	No higher openings
Other reason	11	13	Other reason

The results above suggest a perception gap between workers' beliefs regarding what promotes and prevents advancement within the workplace. Two in five workers selected skills and talent as the key factor in promotion, but an almost equal number selected the lack of openings in the higher ranks as the key barrier to promotion. In comparison only one-quarter selected the lack of skills as a key barrier.

## Workplace Environment & Efficacy

Do New Yorkers feel safe in the workplace? How much influence do they have over work decision that impact them? The ESP 2003 included a series of questions to employed respondents that probed these important workplace environment issues and more.

**Table 5** Percentage of respondents who agree with each statement split by location size (# of employees):

Statement	≤ 50	51 - 249	250 ≥
Reasonable workload to do job	79	76	70
Opportunities learn new skills	58	58	59
Job allows me to be creative	52	56	54
Employer treats me w/ respect	78	69	59
Opportunity to influence decisions	55	59	57
I am informed about decisions	48	45	45
My work environment is safe	85	78	68

Table 5 above provides the percentage of employed respondents that agreed with each statement, split by workplace location size. Employees at small workplace locations are more likely to feel they have a reasonable workload, feel that their employer treats them with respect, and believe their work environment is safe, than employees at larger locations. In addition, for all employed respondents, less than half felt they were informed when decisions were made that affected their job and only half of felt their job allowed them to be creative.

## Union Membership

New York has one of the highest levels of union density in the nation, with approximately 25% of all workers within the state a member of a labor union. This is mirrored in the ESP 2003, with 24% of employed respondents belonging to a labor union. The ESP 2003 asked all workers, regardless of whether they belonged to a union or not, how likely they would be to join a union if given the option.

Chart 2 below provides the results for several different categories and demographics of workers within New York State. Overall, according to the to the ESP 2003 results, 46% of employed respondents would likely join a union if provided the option. This is over 20 points higher than current union membership density within New York State.

As Chart 2 also illustrates, the likelihood of joining a union varies across differing categories of workers. The groups of workers most likely to join a union are current union

members, female workers, non-white workers, part-time or temp workers, workers with a high school education or less, workers with an annual household income less than \$35,000, hourly workers, and workers from downstate New York. Male workers, white workers, workers from households with an annual income greater than \$75,000, workers with a graduate degree, and upstate New York workers are less likely to join a union.

**Table 6** Percentage of union and non-union workers who have the following job benefits available to them:

Job Benefit	Union	Non-union
Health insurance	95	76
401k / pension plan	89	70
Paid time off (vacation / sick)	87	73
Paid family leave	56	44
Flextime	43	52
Child care subsidy / onsite center	27	23
Pre-tax spending account	49	40
Long-term care insurance	48	38
Time off for volunteering	29	27

Union workers clearly have greater access to a wide-range of job benefits than non-union workers, especially in the areas of health benefits, retirement, and paid-time off, and to a lesser degree with pre-tax spending accounts and long-term care insurance. Flextime is the only job benefit in which non-union workers have a clear advantage over union workers.

### For More Information

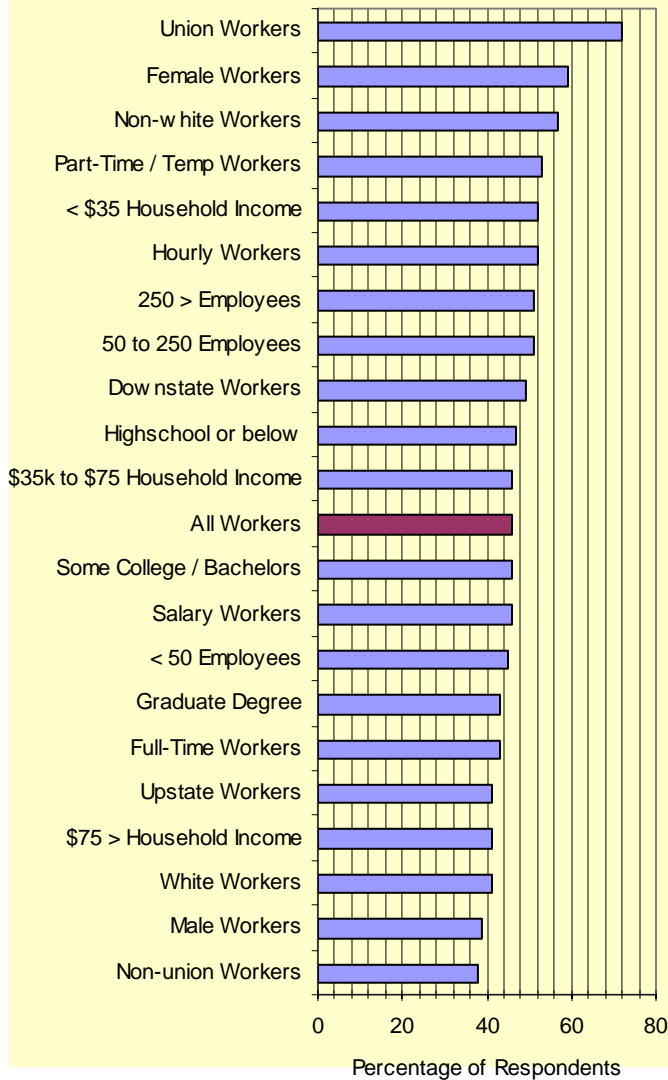
If you are interested in directly accessing data from the ESP 2003 or have questions regarding the methodology, please contact the ESP representative listed below or go to [www.sri.cornell.edu](http://www.sri.cornell.edu). In addition, the ESP 2004 is also currently in development with a launch date of February 2004. If you are interested in participating the next ESP, please contact the representative listed below immediately.

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### Citing Results from the ESP

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**Chart 2: Percentage of Respondents Likely To Join a Union by Category of Worker**



### Workplace Benefits

The availability of job benefits is an important concern for all workers. The ESP queried New York workers whether nine differing types of job benefits were available to them through their employer. Table 6 provides the results, split between union and non-union workers.