

The S E S C O management consultants

Report

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Your “Human” Resource Since 1945

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Unionization Scorecard for 2025

Unions won **78 percent of representation elections**, exactly in line with 2023 and 2024. That number is easy to cite. It fits comfortably inside the broader narrative of the sustained labor momentum. This included a total of **66,137 workers** through representation elections.

When you study the past several years of the numbers, the 2025 results is a **38 percent decline from 2024**, when unions organized **106,857 workers**. It is also **lower than 2022**, despite higher union win rates in 2025.

This is not a marginal dip. It is a sharp break from the trajectory of the past several years.

From 2021 through 2024, organizing expanded steadily and dramatically. The number of workers organized through NLRB elections more than tripled during that period, rising from roughly 33,000 to more than 106,000. Total voters increased every year. Election volume increased every year. The system was adding both activity and scale.

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Then 2025 arrived, and the bottom fell out of the headcount.

Election volume declined, but not nearly enough to explain the drop in workers organized. Representation elections were down **22 percent** year over year. Total voters were down **30 percent**. But workers organized fell by nearly **40 percent**.

That gap is the story.

Same Win Rate, Lower Yield

Nothing in the data suggests unions suddenly became worse at winning elections.

They did not.

The union win rate held steady at **78 percent**. Month by month, the win-loss pattern in representation elections looks familiar. There is no collapse in performance. There is no surge in employer victories.

Stable Win Rates

What changed was the yield.

The average number of workers organized per union win fell by roughly **20 percent** year over year. Unions won just as often, but each victory delivered fewer people. Wins accumulated. Impact did not.

If you are tracking labor momentum solely by election outcomes, 2025 looks stable. If you are tracking it by the number of workers actual-

ly added to bargaining units, 2025 looks fundamentally different.

SESCO’s Warning to Small and Midsize Companies

In 2025, **34 percent of all representation elections** involved bargaining units of **11 to 25 employees**, the largest single category. Fully **60 percent of elections** involved units of **25 employees or fewer**. Only **2 percent** of elections involved units with **500 or more employees**.

Unit Size Distribution

Smaller units mean fewer voters. Fewer voters mean fewer workers organized, even when unions win at high rates. The system can stay busy while producing far less aggregate impact.

Organizing in 2025 was not about scale. It was about volume.

Healthcare Is Carrying the Averages

Healthcare and social assistance dominated representation election activity in 2025.

There were **306 healthcare representation elections**, more than any other industry by a wide margin. Unions won **88 percent** of those elections, one of the highest success rates in the dataset. Healthcare alone

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accounted for **22 percent** of all representation elections.

Unions with strong healthcare portfolios, including the Steelworkers and healthcare-focused affiliates, performed exceptionally well in this space. That success matters, but it also distorts the overall picture.

Outside healthcare, win rates were lower and outcomes more mixed. The strong healthcare numbers help prop up the aggregate success rate, even as organizing elsewhere delivers smaller, more fragmented gains.

What 2025 Actually Represents

In 2025, the system stayed busy. Win rates stayed high. But the **organizing footprint shrank materially**.

That makes 2025 neither a surge nor a collapse. It is a **structural shift**.

Organizing moved:

- from large units to small ones,
- from headcount growth to election count growth,
- from scale to fragmentation.

Those distinctions matter, especially for employers, policymakers, and analysts trying to understand what union momentum actually looks like on the ground.

SESCO is the oldest Labor Relations firm in the US. We specialize in union avoidance, union campaigns (98% win rate), labor negotiations and union decertification. Call SESCO should you wish to discuss your current labor relations.

Younger Employees Place a Very High Value on Communication and Company Culture

Younger employees (especially **Millennials and Gen Z**) tend to place a **very high value on communication and company culture**, often even more than previous generations.

Here's why:

1. Clear & Frequent Communication

Younger employees value:

- Transparent leadership
- Regular feedback (not just annual reviews)
- Clear expectations and goals
- Open-door policies
- Honest conversations about company direction

They grew up in a world of constant communication (social media, messaging apps), so silence from leadership can feel like disengagement.

They don't just want instructions — they want context.

2. Strong Company Culture

Culture matters because younger employees often look for:

- A sense of belonging
- Shared values
- Inclusive environments
- Purpose-driven work
- Psychological safety

They want to feel like they're part of something meaningful — not just collecting a paycheck.

3. Purpose Over Just Pay

While salary is still important, many younger professionals prioritize:

- Impact
- Work-life balance
- Mental health support
- Ethical leadership

If the culture feels toxic or communication is poor, they're more willing to leave — even quickly.

4. Collaboration & Feedback

They tend to prefer:

- Team-based environments
- Brainstorming and collaboration
- Ongoing coaching instead of top-down management
- Managers who act as mentors

They respond well to leaders who are approachable and emotionally intelligent.

What This Means for Employers

Organizations that attract and retain younger talent typically:

- Communicate vision clearly and often
- Encourage two-way feedback
- Invest in culture intentionally
- Align actions with stated values
- Develop managers' soft skills

What Employees Need and Want to Perform Profitably

We have to know what managers and employees need and want from their jobs before we can properly meet their motivational needs. After conducting, evaluating, and listening to several hundred thousand employees and supervisors among our clients over the past 80 years with our supervisory/employee job satisfaction surveys, we have found ten (10) major on-the-job needs that motivate employees and managers to perform their best. Think about yourself and your job as you review these important needs of working people regardless of the type of work or industry where you are employed.

1. **EMPLOYEES WANT** to do interesting, challenging work in which they can assume some responsibility.
2. **EMPLOYEES WANT** recognition for good work.
3. **EMPLOYEES WANT** to work with managers and supervisors who treat them with respect.
4. **EMPLOYEES WANT** to have more employer-sponsored education/training programs to develop new skills.
5. **EMPLOYEES WANT** to work with managers who listen and appreciate employee ideas on how a job can be done better, more productively or more safely.
6. **EMPLOYEES WANT** a chance to have a voice and offer their opinions about their workplace concerns rather than just carrying out rigid instructions from their boss.
7. **EMPLOYEES LIKE** to see or know the end results of their work.



8. **EMPLOYEES WANT** to work with managers and supervisors that are committed, dedicated, and supportive.
9. **EMPLOYEES WANT** job security and to know how their company is doing.
10. **EMPLOYEES WANT** to “feel good” about working for their employer.

SESCO Client Feedback

"Bill, thank you! Jamie, your response is what I was hoping for...right up to and including your close, re: SESCO can be of knowledgeable support in this space for crafting policy AND programming. Thank you both very much!" ~ Chris Murin, Director, Member Engagement - Technology and Manufacturing Association (TMA) - Schaumburg, IL

"Some of the finest, most knowledgeable people I ever worked with. They always gave good, solid employment advice while I served as Human Resources Manager at Pepsi-Cola of Corbin, KY. Congratulations on 80 years of service to employers." ~ Sharon Gant

"Thank you, Bill, for your grace with me today and my inability to calculate time zones properly. We greatly appreciate your counsel and encouragement." ~ Lori Cox - Express Automotive Service - Blanco, TX

"Bill, thank you so much for coming to Westmoreland to assist with the BH investigation. Your presence was truly reassuring, and your calm, steady approach brought clarity in what could have been a very difficult situation. I appreciate your professionalism, wisdom, and the way you guide challenging processes with both confidence and compassion. You really are a calm in the storm, and we are grateful for your support." ~ Miranda Gooch, Director of Human Resources – HOPE Family Health, Westmoreland, TN

Special Thanks to New SESCO Clients!

Denver Firefighters Museum
Denver, CO

Empire Mechancial LLC
Mechanicsville, VA

Erwin Utilities Authority
Erwin, TN

By the Book Diesel and Auto Repair
Albuquerque, NM

Mandate Machinery Tire Pros
Hazen, ND

Open Door Service Center, Inc.
Sedalia, MO

Accel Automotive
Vandalia, OH

Leapolds Automotive
Kalispell, MT

Big Sky Tire and Repair LLC
Deming, NM

Hazzard Electrical
Ashland, VA

Orlando Import Auto Specialists, Inc.
Orlando, FL



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2026 SESCO Webinar Series (Part 1)

- **March 10: Supervisor Core Competencies: Back to Basics**
- **March 24: The Basics of HR Systems: Master your Personnel Files and Compliance**
- **April 7: Navigating Wage & Hour Compliance: Avoid Risk and Stay Ahead**
- **April 21: Background Checks & Ban-the-Box Compliance: Hire Smart, Stay Compliant**
- **May 5: Recruitment & Retention: HR Best Practices for the 2026 Workforce**
- **May 19: Eliminating the Confusion on FMLA: Administer with Confidence**

Tuition:

\$65.00 per person, per webinar

Tuition includes a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and live recording emailed to registered individuals.

Schedule:

Every Other Tuesday, beginning March 10, 2026 - November 3, 2026

1:00 pm-2:30 pm EST

Please click [HERE](#) to register for SESCO's 2026 Webinars.
For more information or registration, contact tonya@sescomgt.com.

**Note: The Zoom information will be sent to participants a week prior to each scheduled webinar, via email.
A reminder email will be sent to participants the day prior to each scheduled webinar.**