

The Impact of Sexual and Racial Harassment and Violence on Working New Yorkers

Worker Institute Data Snapshot

August 2024

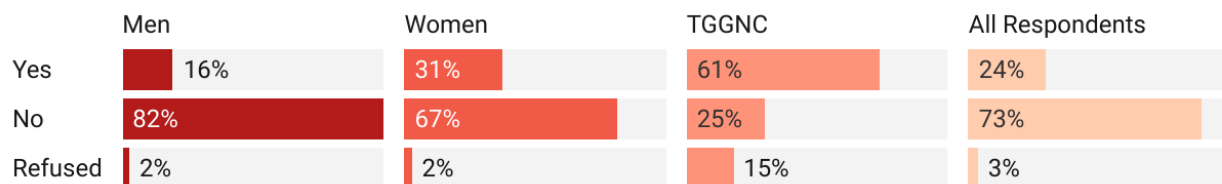
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Building on last year’s policy brief, [The Impact of Sexual Harassment and Gendered Violence on Working New Yorkers](#), this policy snapshot reports findings on workplace sexual harassment, racial/ethnic harassment, and intimate partner violence in New York State from the 2023 Empire State Poll (ESP), carried out by the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR). The 2023 Empire State Poll had a total of 2593 respondents in the final weighted dataset.¹

WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Rates of sexual harassment differ by gender and race. Overall, 703 or 24% of ESP respondents have experienced sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual behavior in the workplace. However, cisgender women and transgender and gender non-conforming (TGGNC) people experience sexual harassment at higher rates compared to cisgender men. Further, Hispanic or Latina/o/x respondents and respondents who identified as more than one race or ethnicity experience sexual harassment at higher rates compared to other racial/ethnic groups.

Workplace sexual harassment by gender



"Yes" includes respondents who have experienced sexual harassment at a current and/or a previous job.

Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

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Workplace sexual harassment by race/ethnicity

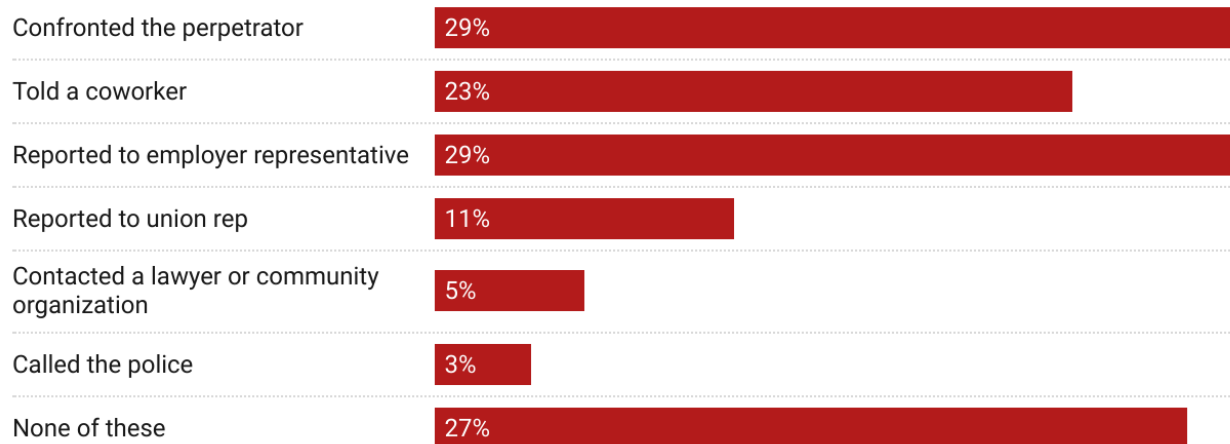
	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Other Race	Two or More Races
Yes	21%	20%	33%	22%	30%	37%
No	79%	79%	64%	75%	69%	62%
Refused	1%	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%

"Yes" includes respondents who have experienced sexual harassment at a current and/or a previous job.

Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Of the 703 ESP respondents who have experienced workplace sexual harassment, 29% confronted the perpetrator directly, 29% reported to an employer representative, and 23% told a coworker. Only 11% reported the incident(s) to a union representative; it is worth noting that the ability to report an incident to a union representative is limited to those respondents who are union members. 56% of respondents only took a single listed action in response to harassment, while 17% took two or more actions and 27% took no action.

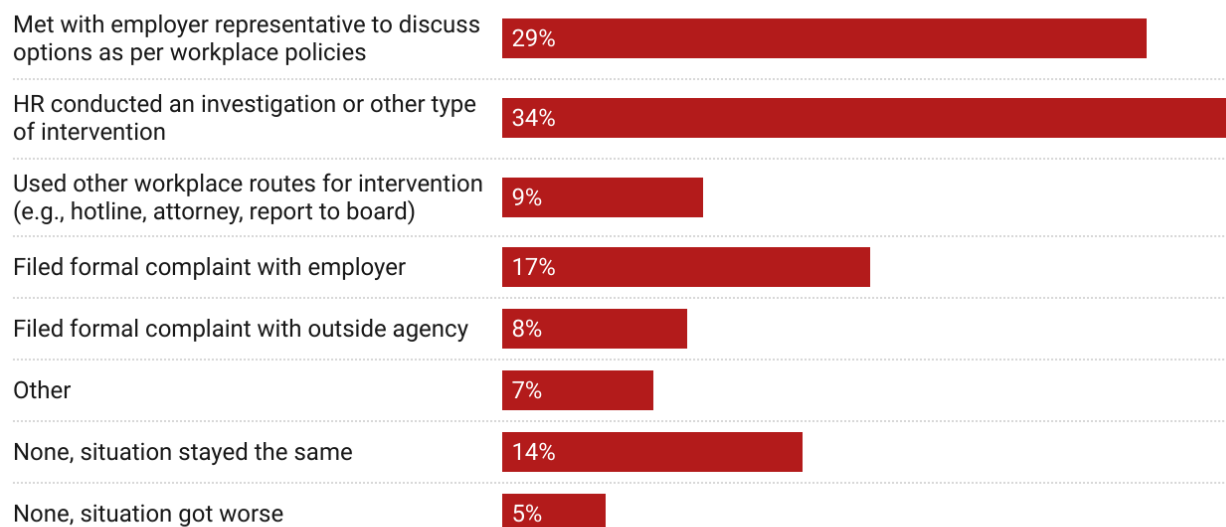
Responses to workplace sexual harassment



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Respondents who reported sexual harassment to an employer representative were most likely to indicate that they told their own supervisor (38%), while 19% reported to Human Resources (HR) and 15% reported to their department head. Reporting to an employer representative led to a range of outcomes, including HR conducting an investigation (43%), a meeting with the employer representative to discuss options (36%), filing a formal complaint (25%), and other workplace means to seek intervention (19%). When asked which of those actions improved the sexual harassment situation, respondents reported that HR investigations, employer meetings, and formal complaints with the employer were the most effective responses. However, 14% of respondents who reported to an employer representative said there was no improvement and 5% reported that the situation got worse.

Actions that improved the sexual harassment situation at work

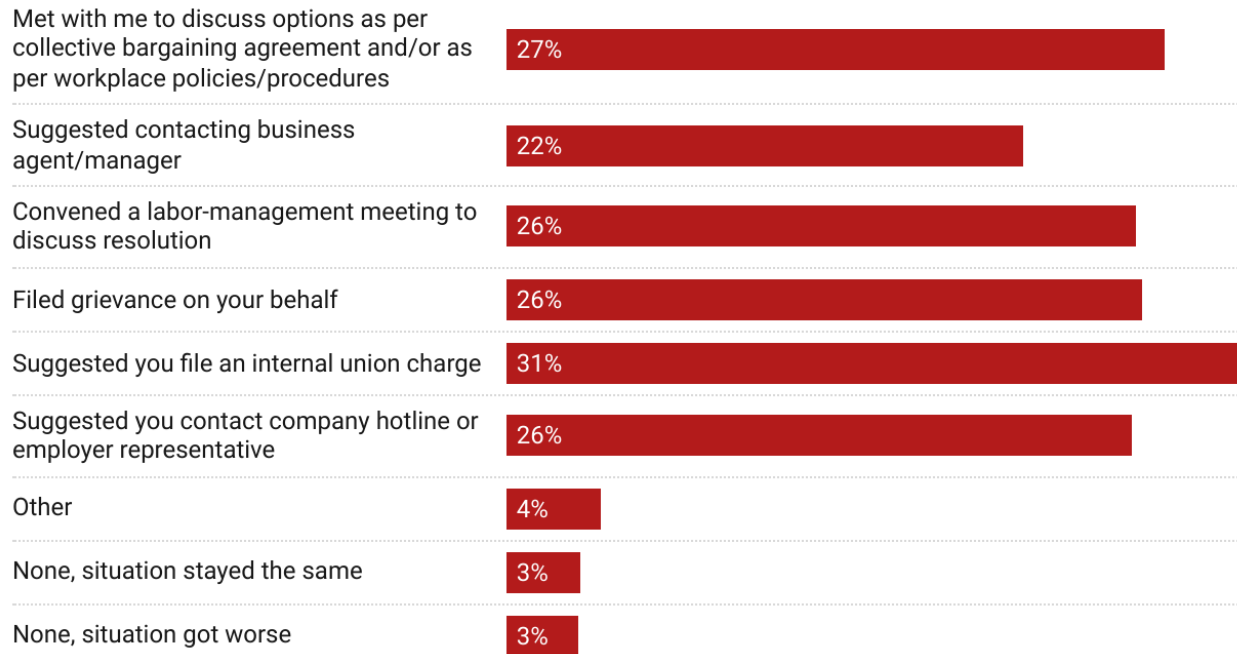


Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Labor unions may provide members with internal means of addressing sexual harassment and other workplace issues, such as including provisions in their collective bargaining agreements that address harassment by supervisors and member-to-member harassment, mandating training, and providing support services from member assistance programs. Among the 170 ESP respondents who are current union members and have experienced workplace sexual harassment at their current job,² 22% reported it to a union representative; of this same group of union members, 29% reported it to an employer representative. When cross-tabulated together, 15% reported to **only** their union representative, 22% reported to **only** their employer representative, and 8% reported to both, while 56% did not report to either.

Respondents who reported the experience to a union representative did so to a business manager (27%), a business representative (24%), or a delegate (23%). Reporting to a union representative led to various outcomes, including a referral to the business agent/manager (39%), a meeting to discuss options (39%), a labor-management meeting (27%), filing a grievance (26%), or suggesting an internal union charge (22%). The suggestion to file an internal union charge was most likely to be reported as improving the sexual harassment situation (31%), followed by a meeting to discuss options available through the collective bargaining agreement and/or workplace policies (28%), filing a grievance (26%), convening a labor-management meeting (26%), and the suggestion to contact a company hotline or employer representative (26%).

Union-specific actions that improved the sexual harassment situation at work



Only includes union members who reported the sexual harassment to their union.

Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

WORKPLACE RACIAL/ETHNIC HARASSMENT

14% of ESP respondents have experienced racial/ethnic harassment in the workplace. People of color reported experiences of racial/ethnic harassment at higher rates compared to white respondents. Respondents who identified with two or more races (30%) and respondents with an “other” race experienced the highest rates,³ followed by Hispanic and Latino/a/x, Black, and Asian respondents.

Workplace racial/ethnic harassment by race/ethnicity

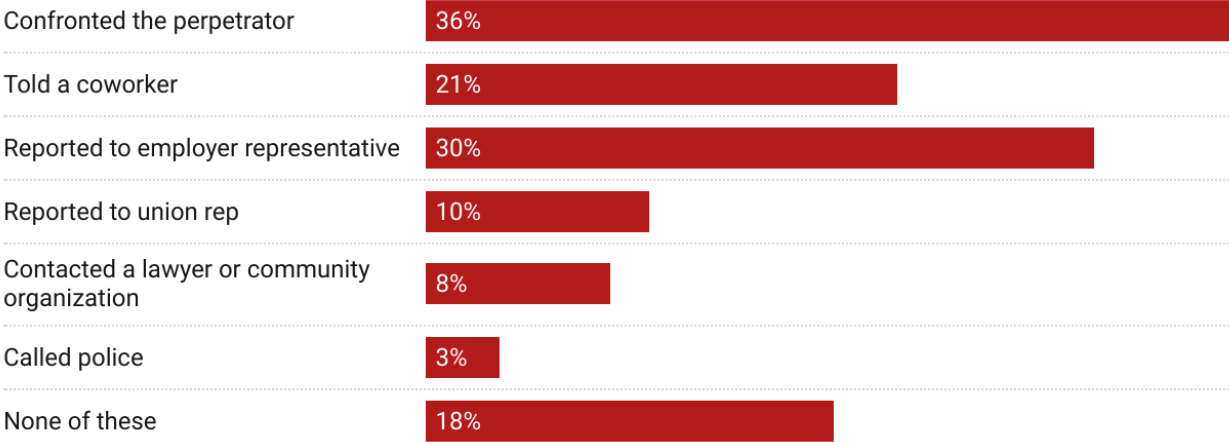
	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Other Race	Two or More Races	All Respondents
Yes	14%	21%	25%	7%	28%	30%	14%
No	86%	76%	72%	90%	67%	69%	83%
Refused	0%	3%	3%	3%	5%	2%	3%

"Yes" includes respondents who have experienced workplace racial/ethnic harassment at a current and/or a previous job.

Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

The most commonly reported response to experiences of racial/ethnic harassment was confronting the perpetrator (36%), followed by reporting to an employer representative (30%), and telling a coworker (21%). Out of the 140 respondents who reported the racial/ethnic workplace harassment to an employer representative, 37% reported to their own supervisor while 23% reported it to a department head and 20% reported it to HR. Overall, 63% of respondents took a single listed action in response to the racial/ethnic harassment, while 18% took two or more and 18% took none of the listed actions.

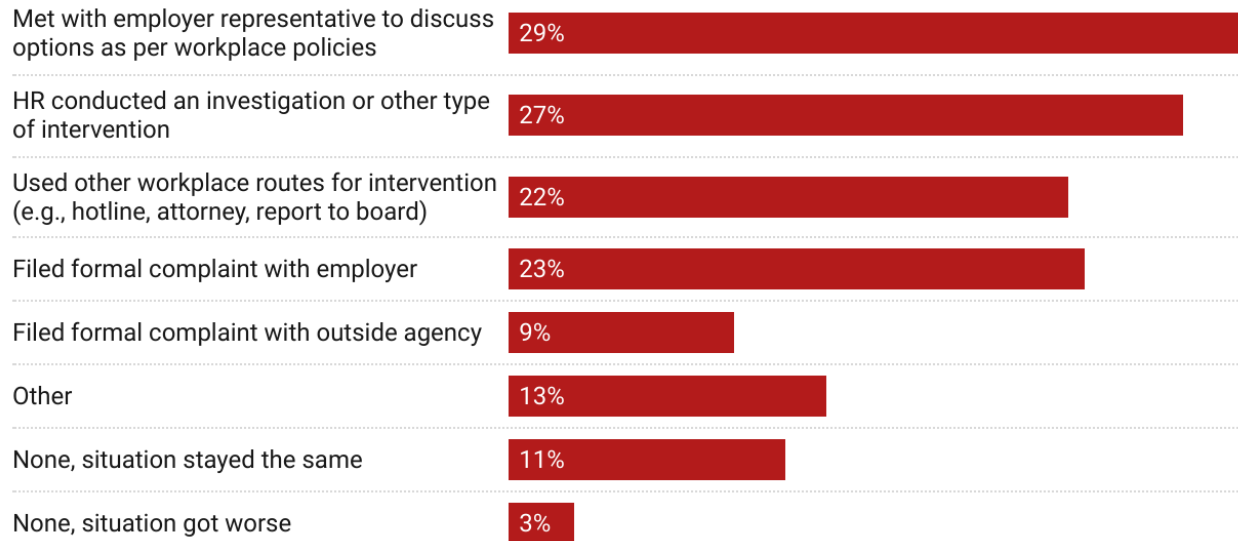
Responses to workplace racial/ethnic harassment



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Reporting to an employer representative led to HR investigations (37%), meeting with the rep to discuss options (36%), using other routes for interventions (27%), and filing a formal complaint with the employer (14%). When asked which of those actions improved the racial/ethnic harassment situation, respondents reported that meeting with an employer representative to discuss options, HR investigations, and formal complaints were the most effective. However, 11% indicated that the situation stayed the same and 3% indicated that the situation got worse.

Actions that improved the racial/ethnic harassment situation at work

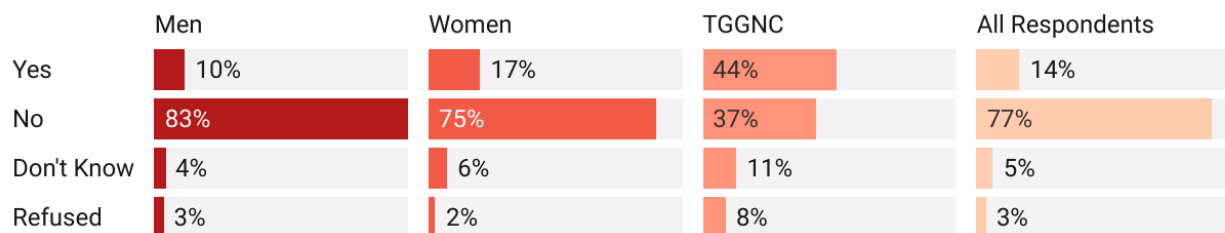


Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WORKPLACE

While intimate partner violence often occurs in the privacy of one’s home, the effects of such abuse can permeate into the workplace. People who have experienced IPV may have to miss work due to injuries and resulting medical/counseling treatment, can become less focused due to the psychological consequences of abuse, or may fear that their partners or ex-partners may find them at work. 14% of ESP respondents have experienced intimate partner violence or controlling behavior by an intimate partner (IPV). Additionally, 57% of respondents who have experienced IPV have also experienced workplace sexual harassment at a current and/or previous job. Cisgender women and TGGNC people experience IPV at higher rates compared to cisgender men. Respondents who identified as having two or more races, Hispanic and Latino/a/x respondents, and respondents with an “other” race reported the highest rates of IPV compared to other racial groups.

Intimate partner violence by gender



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

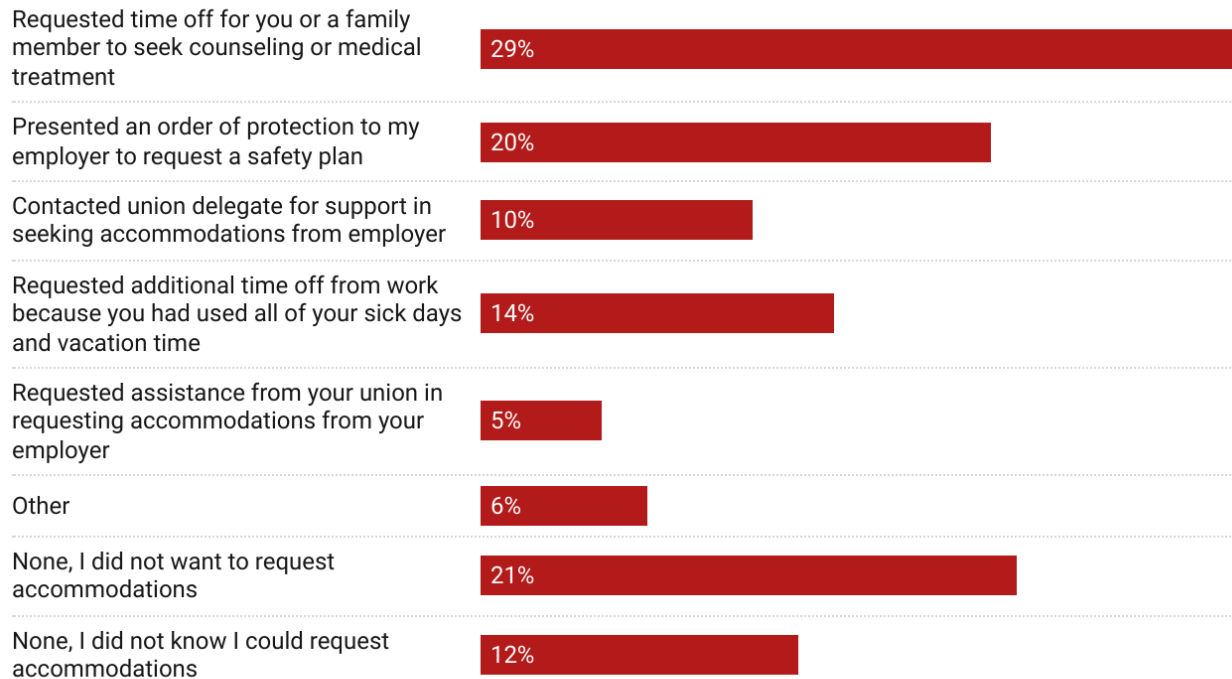
Intimate partner violence by race/ethnicity

	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Other Race	Two or More Races
Yes	7%	12%	20%	13%	17%	24%
No	85%	80%	70%	80%	73%	66%
Don't Know	7%	6%	7%	4%	8%	8%
Refused	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%

Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Nearly half of ESP respondents (47%) who have experienced IPV report that it impacted their employment. Of these respondents who said it impacted their employment, 29% requested time off for counseling or medical treatment, 20% requested a workplace safety plan, and 14% requested additional time off. However, 21% of these respondents did not want to request accommodations and 12% did not know that they could do so.

Accommodations requested for the workplace impacts of IPV



Source: Empire State Poll 2023 • Created with Datawrapper

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of those who requested accommodations found them to be acceptable. However, 11% did not get sufficient accommodations and 15% did not get any accommodations at all. Additionally, 6% experienced negative consequences for requesting accommodations. These results suggest that more work is necessary to ensure that all survivors of IPV are informed about the kinds of accommodations they can seek and that their needs are met sufficiently to keep them safe in the workplace.

Endnotes

- 1 Weighting is a statistical technique used in survey research to improve the representativeness of survey data on key indicators, including gender, age, race, education, income, and marital status.
- 2 ESP respondents were asked “Which of the following best describes your participation in a workplace organization? Respondents could select one of the following: member of a private sector union, member of a public sector union, not unionized but part of a worker association, or not part of a union or any other worker association.
- 3 For the purposes of this memo, respondents were coded as having an “other” race if they self-identified as having a race of “other.” Respondents who self-identified as being Native American or Native Hawaiian were also included in the category of “other” due to low observed frequencies.