

# WHERE DO YOUR UNION DUES GO?

## A LOOK AT NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS (NYSUT) IN 2021-2022



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The New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) represents 675,671 teachers in New York. As a union that represents public and private sector employees, NYSUT files a LM-2 financial disclosure form with the United States Department of Labor. So, what does this filing reveal about the union?

Firstly, the union is deeply in debt. Despite improving its net financial position by over \$160 million dollars last year, NYSUT remains in the red by nearly \$180 million. This poor fiscal position is mainly caused by union employee pension obligations. Currently, NYSUT has a \$394 million pension liability, which accounts for about 96 percent of the union's total liabilities. NYSUT also has a habit of spending more than it takes in, operating at an \$11 million dollar deficit in 2020-21 and a \$38 million dollar deficit this year.

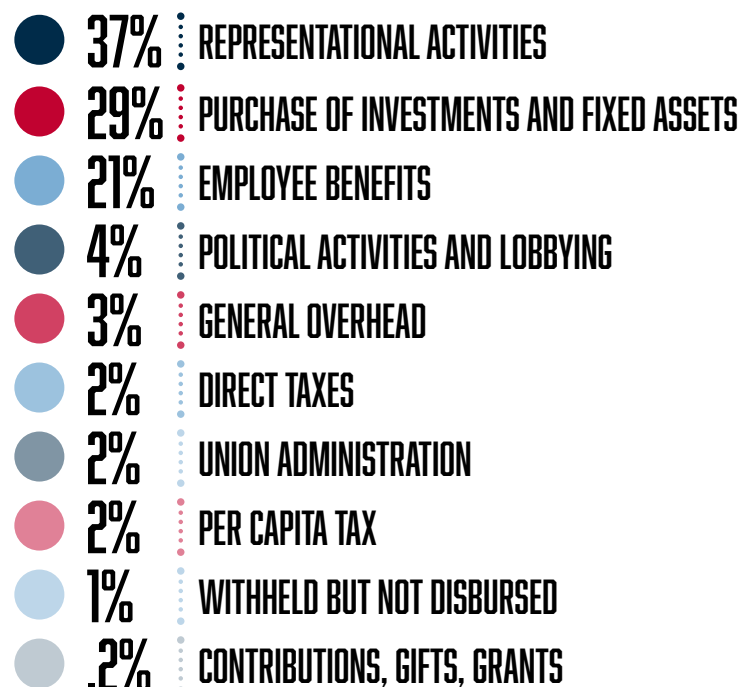
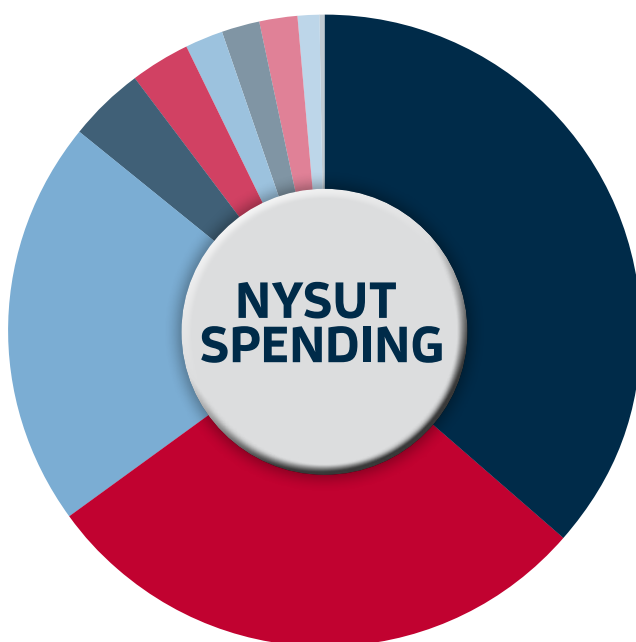
To improve its financial position, NYSUT must increase revenue. Currently, membership dues are the biggest source of revenue, accounting for about 75 percent of total revenue, or \$138 million. Despite the union's dire financial situation, NYSUT did not raise dues between 2019 and 2022. Rather, membership increased by approximately 3,000 during

this time span. NYSUT has to continue to aggressively recruit more members or increase membership dues to prevent going even further in the red.



How does NYSUT spend the money it gets? In 2021-2022, representational activities accounted for only 37 percent of total expenditures. The second largest expense was the purchase of investments and fixed assets. This category accounted for 29 percent of all expenditures. During the reporting period, NYSUT spent \$93.7 million on investments into mutual funds, corporate bonds, and government bonds. Also included in this category was just shy of \$1 million spent on automobiles. In total, net purchases of investments and fixed assets totaled nearly \$65 million. This is a significant increase from last year's total of \$26.8 million. The third largest expense category was employee benefits, totaling \$47.4 million or 21 percent of total expenditures. Of this \$47.4 million, \$21.5 million went to union employee pension costs. Union President Andrew Pallotta received \$311,615 in compensation during the reporting period. This is about 4.5 times the state's average teacher salary of \$68,235.

## NYSUT SPENDING 2021-2022



**NYSUT also spends money on political activities and lobbying.** The union reported spending \$8.2 million of members' dues on political activities and lobbying, compared to \$10.1 million last year. \$3.4 million went directly to union employees and officers for their political and lobbying efforts while on the clock. The union paid an additional \$3.024 million to local affiliates supporting their local political activities. Of note, \$1.166 million of this went to the United Federation of Teachers, which represents teachers in New York City. NYSUT also gave generously to a host of progressive organizations:

**\$3.474M** NYSUT union staff payments for political activity conducted during their workdays.

**\$3.024M** Contributions to local unions used to influence school board and municipal elections – approximately \$1.1 million of this spending went to the United Federation of Teachers in New York City.

**\$203K** Red Horse Strategies, a public relations and political advocacy firm that runs ads and issue advocacy campaigns for progressive candidates and organizations, including disgraced former Governor Andrew Cuomo.

**\$121K** Visuality, a media strategy and production team that developed NYSUT's Member Action Center.

**\$78K** Tulchin Research, a progressive, San Francisco based polling firm that worked with Bernie Sanders' 2020 Presidential Campaign.

**\$50K** To Fiscal Policy Institute, a left-leaning think tank in Albany, connected to a national network of progressive research organizations.

**\$45K** NYS Labor-Religion Coalition, a Democratic organization that unites faith, labor, and community leaders in a statewide movement for social, racial, and economic justice.

**\$42K** Hart Research Associates, a political research firm that works with organized labor and progressive organizations and candidates.

**\$36K** To Catalyst, a data-management organization that works exclusively with Democrat and progressive candidates.

**\$25K** To New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness, a non-profit organization that advocates for higher taxes.

NYSUT is politically active in other ways too. In the 2022 election cycle, the union endorsed all four Democratic candidates for statewide office. The union also endorsed 179 Democrats out of the 212 state legislature seats up for election. The union also makes recommendations for federal races, recommending members vote for Chuck Schumer in the United States Senate race and all 26 Democratic candidates running for the United States House of Representatives.



NYSUT also makes direct campaign contributions through their affiliated Political Action Committee (PAC). During the 2021-2022 election cycle, the NYSUT's PAC gave \$4,136,538 to candidates and committees for state, county, and local political offices. This giving was mostly directed to Democrats. NYSUT's PAC gave a combined \$376,900 to Democratic legislative campaign committees, compared to \$8,500 to Republican legislative campaign committees.

The NYSUT is uniquely affiliated with both the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), meaning that NYSUT members also pay dues to the two large national unions. For more information on NYSUT's affiliates, see the below links:

**NEA: [Where do your union dues go?](#)**

**AFT: [Where do your union dues go?](#)**

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