

Women's Earnings in the Ocean State

1998-2014

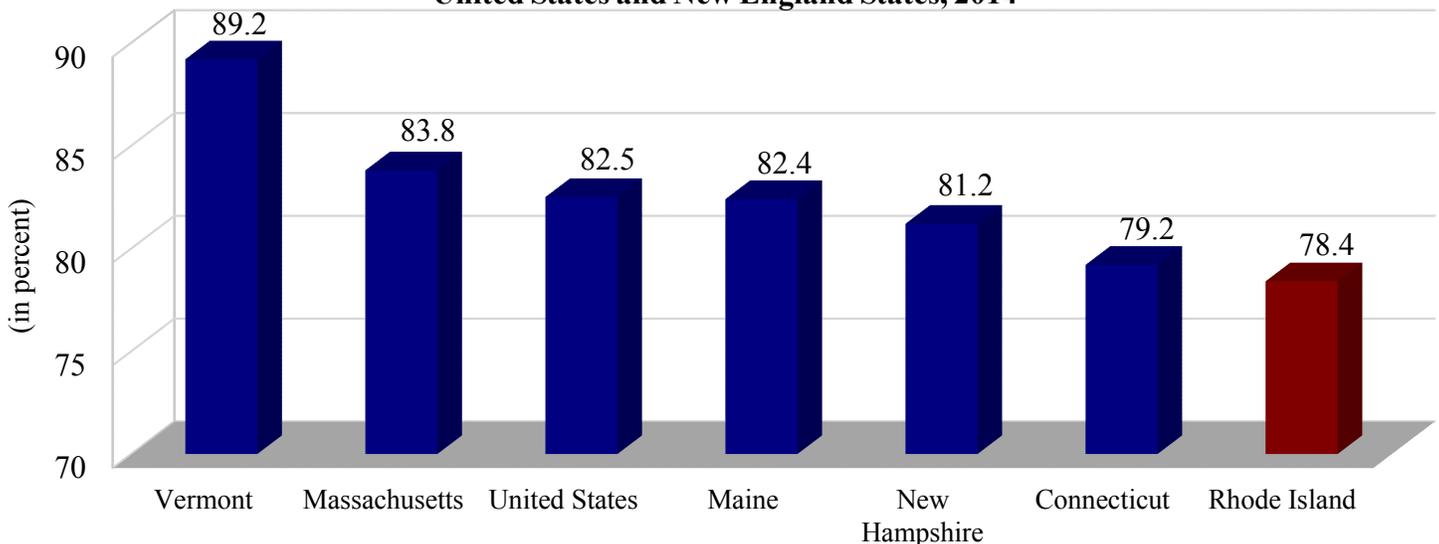
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Rhode Island women working full-time earned a median weekly wage of \$753 in 2014. This was 78.4 percent of what full-time working males earned that year - the lowest earnings ratio in New England and tied for the 13th lowest in the country. Over the past seventeen years, Rhode Island has seen its female-to-male earnings ratio grow from a low of 71.2 percent in 1998 to a high of 83.9 percent in 2007. This past year, Rhode Island posted a decrease of 0.8 of a percentage point, dropping from 79.2 percent in 2013 to 78.4 percent in 2014.

Regionally, Rhode Island (78.4%) reported the largest earnings differential between women and men. Vermont (89.2%) had the smallest differential between men's and women's earnings in 2014, followed by Massachusetts (83.8%), Maine (82.4%), New Hampshire (81.2%) and Connecticut (79.2%). Throughout the country, female-to-male earnings ratios ranged from a high of 96.0 percent in the District of Columbia to just 67.7 percent in Wyoming. Nationwide, women earned 82.5 percent of what men did in 2014. Vermont and Massachusetts were the only New England states to report earnings ratios above the national average. The reasons for these earnings differentials between women and men vary. Although job discrimination is most often cited as the main reason women earn less than men, female worker earnings can also be impacted by breaks in or changes to their labor force participation (i.e. due to family responsibilities) and occupational mix due to physical differences between the sexes. For example, men generally have more natural physical strength than women and therefore may be better suited to well-paying heavy construction jobs.

The earnings ratio between Ocean State women and men working full-time peaked in 2007. Whereas Rhode Island women had earned 71.2 percent of what men did in 1998, the ratio had improved to 83.9 percent by 2007. This increase of 12.7 percentage points was the highest reported in the nation, followed by North Dakota (+10.4 percentage points) and Connecticut (+10.0 percentage points). The United States as a whole increased by 3.9 percentage points, while five states, including Massachusetts, saw their earnings ratio decrease. However, between 2007 and 2014, Rhode Island women saw their earnings fall in comparison to their male counterparts by 5.5 percentage points, from 83.9 in 2007 to 78.4 in 2014. Nationally, the female-to-male earnings ratio improved by 2.3 percentage points during this period, from 80.2 percent in 2007 to 82.5 percent in 2014.

Between 1998 and 2014, Rhode Island women experienced a faster growth in median weekly earnings than men did. In 1998, females earned a median weekly wage of \$455 compared to \$638 earned by males. By 2014, women's median weekly earnings had increased by 65.5 percent (+\$298) to \$753. In contrast, the median weekly earnings of Ocean State males rose to \$961, a 50.6 percent (+\$323) increase. In Rhode Island, women (\$753) in 2014 earn slightly less than men (\$766) did in 2007.

Women's Earnings as a Percent of Men's Earnings
United States and New England States, 2014



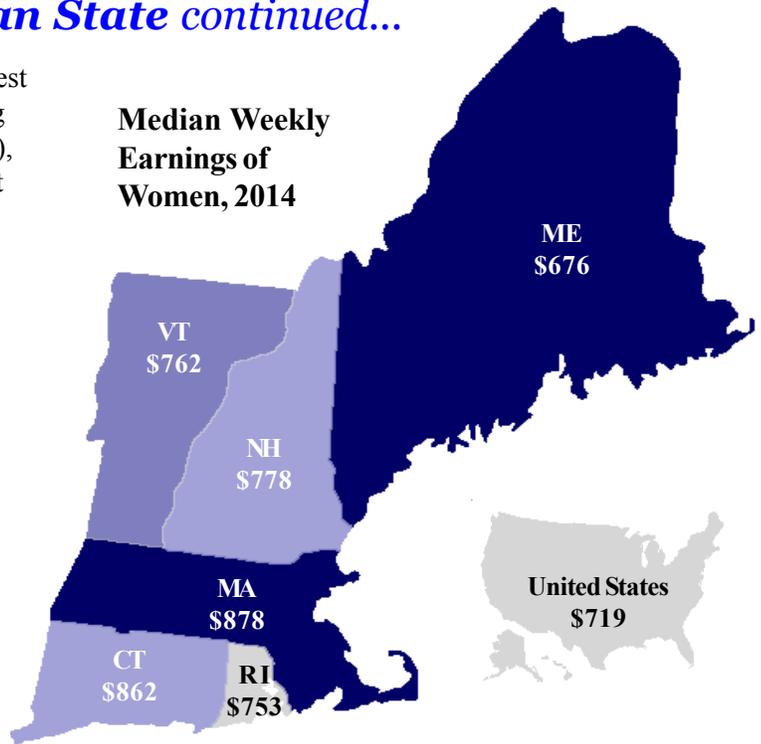
Women's Earnings in the Ocean State continued...

At \$753, women in the Ocean State earned the fifth highest median weekly earnings total in the region in 2014, trailing female wage and salary workers in Massachusetts (\$878), Connecticut (\$862), New Hampshire (\$778) and Vermont (\$762).

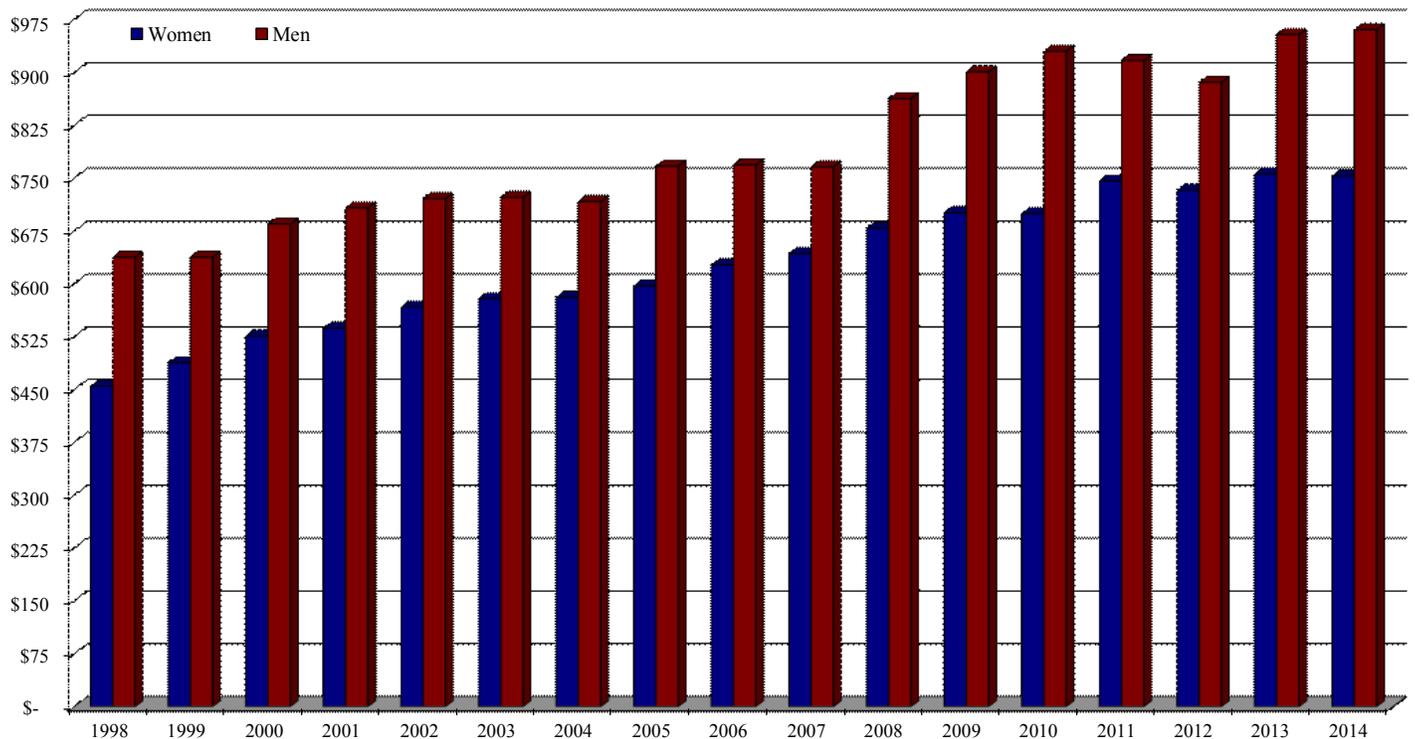
The median weekly earnings of Ocean State women decreased by 0.4 percent (-\$3) between 2013 and 2014. Conversely, in 2014, Rhode Island men saw their median weekly earnings rise by 0.7 percent (+\$7). In New England, only Vermont (+2.3%) posted growth in women's median weekly earnings from 2013 to 2014. Nationally, the median weekly earnings of women increased by 1.8 percent (+\$13), from \$706 in 2013 to \$719 in 2014.

In 2014, women workers in Rhode Island, along with Illinois, earned the 15th highest median weekly wage (\$753) in the United States, above the national median of \$719. Women's median weekly earnings ranged from a high of \$1,115 in the District of Columbia to a low of \$597 in Montana.

Median Weekly Earnings of Women, 2014



Median Weekly Earnings of Rhode Island Women and Men, 1998-2014



Data is taken from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Highlights of Women's Earnings* series, 1998-2014. Earnings data refers to the median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, 16 years and over, as measured by the CPS. Data has not been adjusted for inflation.

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