



Women’s Earnings in the Ocean State 1998-2021

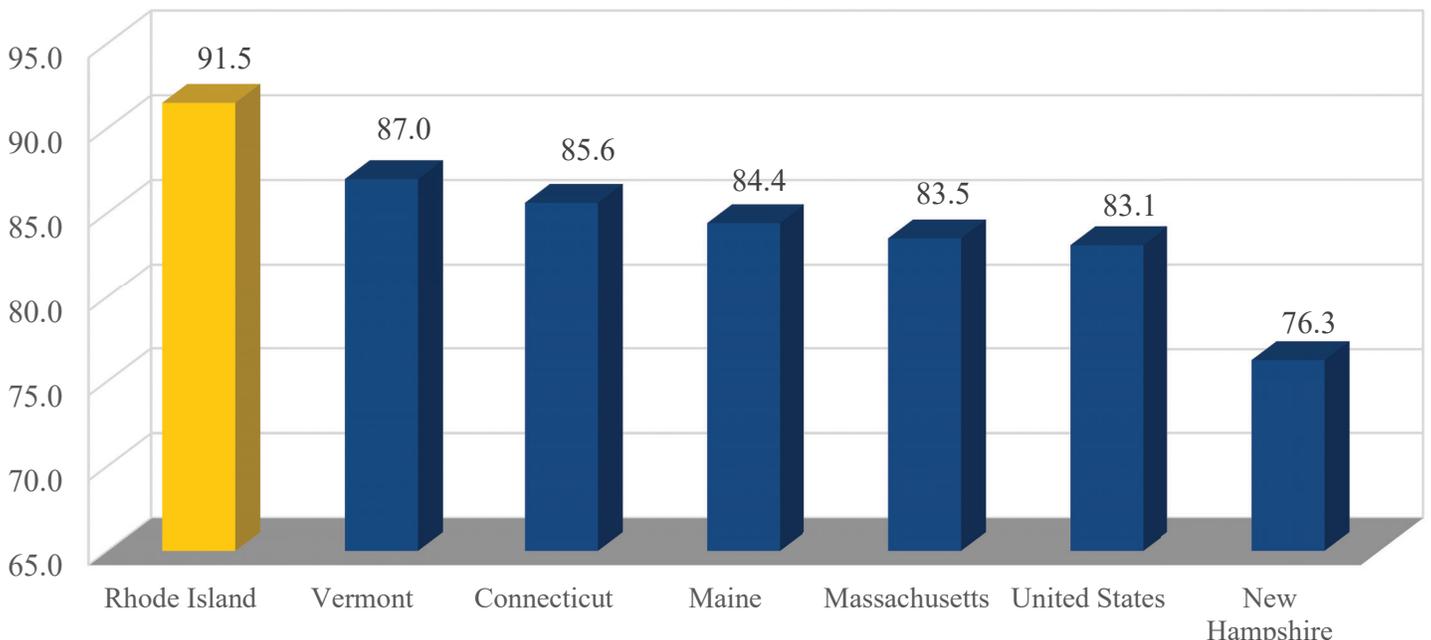
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Rhode Island women working full-time earned a median weekly wage of \$1,058 in 2021. This was 91.5 percent of what full-time working males earned that year - among the highest earnings ratio in the country. Over the past twenty-four years, Rhode Island has seen its female-to-male earnings ratio grow from a low of 71.2 percent in 1998 to a high of 91.5 percent in 2021. This past year, Rhode Island posted an increase of 6.0 percentage points, increasing from 85.5 percent in 2020 to 91.5 percent in 2021.

Regionally, New Hampshire (76.3%) reported the largest earnings differential between women and men. Rhode Island (91.5%) had the smallest differential between men’s and women’s earnings in 2021, followed by Vermont (87.0%), Connecticut (85.6%), Maine (84.4%) and Massachusetts (83.5%). Throughout the country, female-to-male earnings ratios ranged from a high of 91.5 percent in Rhode Island to just 74.6 percent in Utah. Nationwide, women earned 83.1 percent of what men did in 2021. New Hampshire (76.3%) was the only New England state to report earnings ratios below 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.

The earnings ratio between Ocean State women and men working full-time has reached it’s highest level in 2021. Whereas Rhode Island women had earned 71.2 percent of what men did in 1998, the ratio has improved to 91.5 percent in 2021. Rhode Island is currently up 4.4 percentage points from the previous peak in 2017 and is up 6.0 percentage points over the year. This increase was the ninth largest reported in the nation. Delaware (+12.7 percentage points) reported the largest increase in the nation, followed by Kentucky (+11.6 percentage points) and Nevada (+8.6 percentage points). The United States as a whole increased by 0.8 percentage points. Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia saw their earnings ratio decrease, with Connecticut (-11.4 percentage points) decreasing the most, followed by New Mexico (-6.6 percentage points).

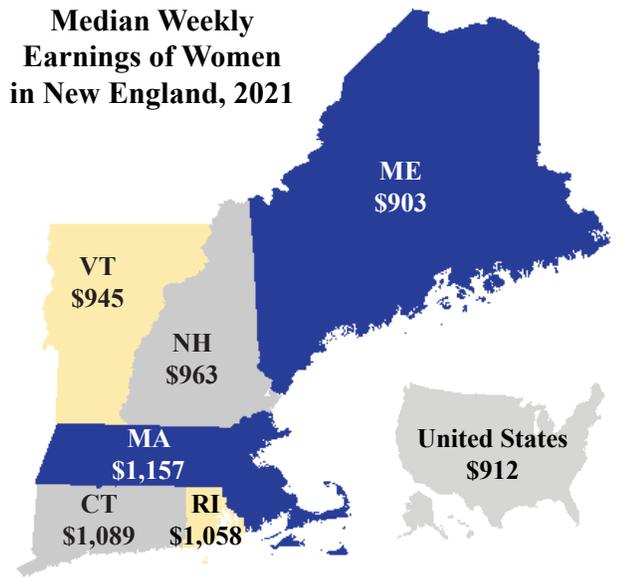
Between 1998 and 2021, Rhode Island women experienced a much faster growth in median weekly earnings than men. In 1998, females earned a median weekly wage of \$455 compared to \$638 earned by males. By 2021, women’s median weekly earnings had increased by 132.5 percent (+\$603) to \$1,058. In contrast, the median weekly earnings of Ocean State males rose to \$1,156, a 81.2 percent (+\$518) increase. In Rhode Island, women (\$1,058) in 2021 earn what men did in 2019 (\$1,057).

**Women’s Earnings as a Percent of Men’s Earnings
United States and New England States, 2021**



At \$1,058, women in the Ocean State earned the third highest median weekly earnings in the region in 2021. Women in Massachusetts earned the highest weekly earnings at \$1,157, followed by Connecticut (\$1,089). Regionally, New Hampshire (\$963), Vermont (\$945) and Maine (\$903) had lower weekly median earnings for women than Rhode Island, while only Maine had lower weekly median earnings than the nation (\$912).

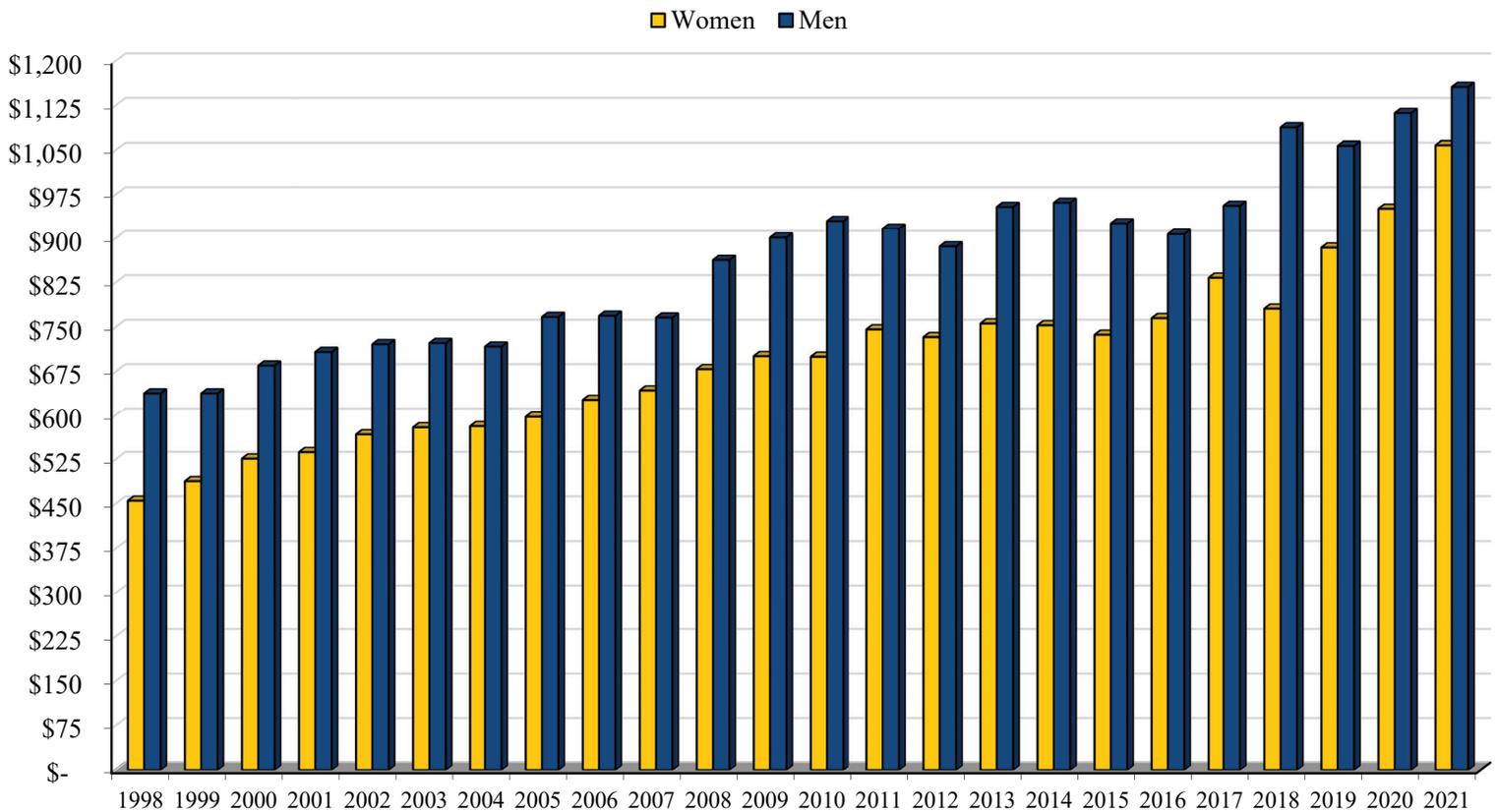
Median Weekly Earnings of Women in New England, 2021



The median weekly earnings of Ocean State women increased by 11.3 percent (+\$107) between 2020 and 2021. In 2021, Rhode Island men saw their median weekly earnings increase by 4.0 percent (+\$44). In New England, Maine (+13.7%) and Rhode Island (+11.3%) posted the largest percentage growth in women’s median weekly earnings from 2020 to 2021. Nationally, the median weekly earnings of women increased by 2.4 percent (+\$21), from \$891 in 2020 to \$912 in 2021. Of all states, Maine posted the largest percentage increase in women’s earnings (+13.7%) over the year while Connecticut had the largest percentage loss (-6.6%). Twelve states’ women’s weekly earnings decreased from 2020 to 2021.

In 2021, women workers in Rhode Island earned the sixth highest median weekly wage (\$1,058) in the United States. Women’s median weekly earnings ranged from a high of \$1,565 in the District of Columbia to a low of \$722 in Mississippi.

Median Weekly Earnings of Rhode Island Women and Men, 1998-2021



Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics’ *Highlights of Women’s Earnings* series, 1998-2021. 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.