

THE STATE OF THE STATES FOR YOUNG WOMEN

By Pam Shane

The Institute for Women's Policy Research releases a report on state-by-state differences in life in America for young women, 35 and under. Since many radio stations target these women and have advertisers who sell to them, it's important that you know what these differences are.

Heidi Hartmann, Ph.D., president of IWPR, notes that "Our data show that where you live matters a great deal: Your state can affect how much it costs to go to college, how much you will earn, how much child care will cost, your overall health and much, much more."

SALARY

The average salary annually for full-time work for a young woman is \$31,000. In D.C., it reaches \$53,900, the highest. Massachusetts comes in at #2 with an average of \$40,000 a year.

Earnings are lowest in these states:

Idaho	\$24,900
Mississippi	\$25,400
Arkansas	\$25,000
New Mexico and Nebraska	\$26,000

Solid education and the major industries in state have major impact on these salary levels.

The gap in pay between men and women has improved some, average 89 cents for a young woman to her male counterpart's dollar. Women do best in New York state where they earn \$1.02 on average to a man's dollar. Vermont, D.C., California and North Carolina, where it's 97 cents for a woman, are all close to parity. The pay gap is widest in Wyoming – 72 cents for the women; Louisiana, 78 cents.

HOURS

The average is 42 hours per week. In D.C., the workweek is 45 hours; 44 in Wyoming; 43 hours in Alaska, New York and Hawaii. It's shortest in West Virginia, Alabama, Utah, Nevada and Arkansas at 41 hours.

Unfortunately, this isn't a good trend. David Cooper at the Economic Policy Institute points out that, "Growth of household income over the past 35 years has come from workers spending more time on the job, not from them getting paid more."

HEALTH

Only 15% of young women eat five servings of fruit and vegetables per day. The states where they do better are Oregon and New Hampshire where 20% eat at least 5 servings. Vermont and Maine average 19% who eat better. The least healthy diets are in Oklahoma, West Virginia and Mississippi.



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Drinking

On average 20% of young women have had four or more drinks on one occasion in the past month. This fits the definition of binge-drinking.

Binge-drinking is least common in Utah, West Virginia and Tennessee. Researchers feel that the Mormon Church reduces the drinking in Utah, as does religion generally in Tennessee.

HAPPINESS

Among women under 35 in America, 20% have been diagnosed with depression. Rates average 13% in California and Hawaii, which is the lowest number. Depression rates are highest in Vermont and Maine at 33%, followed by New Hampshire and Oregon at 30%.

The sun or its absence has a big effect on depression, as the above states reveal. Interestingly, New Jersey has only 14% of young women diagnosed with depression. The University of North Carolina's Samantha Meltzer-Brody, M.D., says the high population density of New Jersey probably helps because there is so much opportunity for social interaction.

Other Notes

Young moms with small children who work are most common in the Dakotas, Minnesota, Iowa and Rhode Island. Maybe this is climate related, too, since it's so cold for so long in these places!

Childcare is most expensive in Minnesota where women spend 35% of their earnings on baby care. It's most affordable in Alabama and Louisiana, where the average is 17.5% of earnings.

West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio have the highest percentages of young women who smoke. California, Utah and Texas are the states where there are the smallest number of young women smokers.

Health insurance is strongest in Massachusetts where 95% of young women have coverage. 86% are covered in Delaware and 85% in Pennsylvania. Women in New Mexico and Texas are the least likely to be covered.

Virginia ranks #1 for being the state where the largest number of young women hold managerial or professional jobs – 39%.

If more data is released, we'll share it. The Institute for Women's Policy Research has been collecting data on American life for 28 years, so it's a rich resource.

