

Summary of State Welfare Time Limits

Under current Rhode Island law, families can receive RI Works benefits for no longer than 48 months in their lifetime (“lifetime limit”). They are also restricted to receiving benefits for only 24 months in any 60 month period (“periodic limit”).

The Urban Institute’s Welfare Rules Database for 2014 shows that Rhode Island’s time limits are some of the shortest in the country. The majority of states have a 60 month lifetime benefit limit. Only 14 states have less than a 60 month lifetime limit. Two states and DC have no time limit on benefits.

Lifetime Limits across the Country

Sixty Months: 37 states and DC have a 60 month lifetime limit¹

Forty-eight Months: 6 states including Rhode Island have a 48 month life time limit²

Thirty-six Months: 2 states have a 36 month life time limit

Twenty-four Months: 4 have a 24 month lifetime limit³

No Limit: 2 states have no life time limit (including Massachusetts and New York)

Periodic Time Limits across the County

Only nine states (including Rhode Island) have a periodic time limit in addition to the lifetime limit.

New England Comparison

Connecticut is the only New England state that has a shorter lifetime time limit than Rhode Island, and they allow extensions up to 60 months.

Connecticut	21 months (extensions up to 60 months)
Maine	60 months
Massachusetts	None
New Hampshire	60 months
Rhode Island	48 months
Vermont	60 months

¹ Connecticut has a 21 month limit but allows extension up to 60.

² California’s life-time limit applies only to adults, not to children

³ Indiana’s life-time limit applies only to adults