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Census Snapshot: Mississippi

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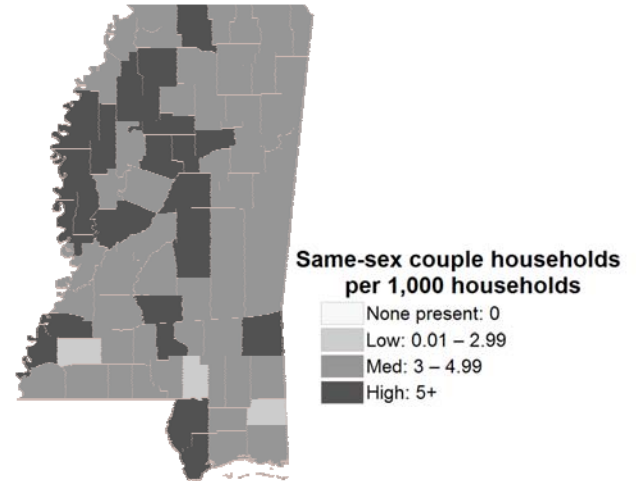
MISSISSIPPI

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Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, this report provides demographic and economic information about same-sex couples and same-sex couples raising children in Mississippi. We compare same-sex “unmarried partners,” which the Census Bureau defines as an unmarried couple who “shares living quarters and has a close personal relationship,” to different-sex married couples in Mississippi.¹

In many ways, the more than 4,700 same-sex couples living in Mississippi are similar to married couples. According to Census 2000, they live throughout the State, are racially and ethnically diverse, have partners that depend upon one another financially, and actively participate in Mississippi’s economy. Census data also show that 20% of same-sex couples in Mississippi are raising children. However, same-sex couples, especially those with children, have fewer economic resources to provide for their families than do their married counterparts: they have lower household incomes and lower rates of home ownership.



SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGBT POPULATION IN MISSISSIPPI

- In 2000, there were 4,774 same-sex couples living in Mississippi.²
- In 2005, there were almost 49,000 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Mississippi.³

INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

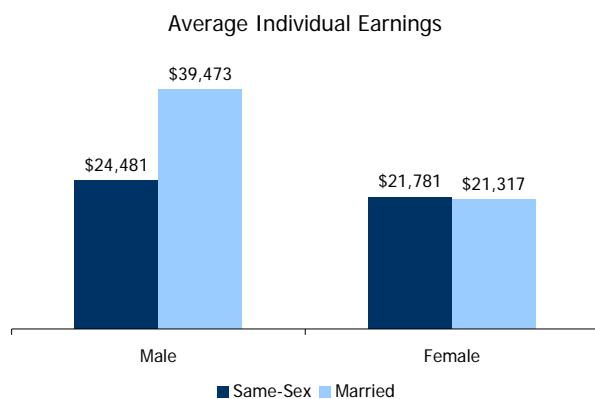
- There are more female same-sex couples (53%) than male same-sex couples (47%) living in Mississippi.⁴
- Mississippi’s same-sex couples are much more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 50% of same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 23% of married couples.

- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 44 years old, and significantly younger than married individuals (47 years old) in Mississippi.
- Same-sex couples live in every county in Mississippi and constitute 0.8% of coupled households and 0.5% of all households in the State. Hinds County reported the most same-sex couples with 441 couples (0.48% of all households in the county), followed by Harrison County with 352 couples (0.49%), Rankin County with 204 couples (0.48%), and Jackson County with 183 couples (0.38%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Tallahatchie County (0.82% of all county households), Marshall County (0.74%), Hancock County (0.70%), and Issaquena County (0.69%).⁵

PEOPLE IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE STATE ECONOMY

- Individuals in same-sex and married couples in Mississippi are about as likely to be employed: 57% of individuals in same-sex couples and 63% of married individuals are employed.

- Contrary to a popular stereotype, the annual earnings of men in same-sex couples are significantly lower than married men. On average, men in same-sex couples in Mississippi earn \$24,481 each year, significantly less than \$39,473 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Mississippi is \$20,000, or 35% less than that of married men (\$30,700).
- Women in same-sex couples in Mississippi earn an average of \$21,781 per year (with a median of \$16,000), slightly more than married women, whose earnings average \$21,317 (with a median of \$18,000). Women in same-sex couples earn, on average, less than both married men and men in same-sex couples in Mississippi.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Mississippi are more likely to work in the private sector: 79% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 69% of married individuals; 18% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 19% of married individuals; and 3% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 12% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are less likely to have a college degree: 13% of individuals in same-sex couples and 19% of married individuals have earned a college degree.
- Despite the military's historic policies of excluding gay men and lesbians from service, individuals in same-sex couples have served in the military: 12% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 16% of married individuals.

SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN MISSISSIPPI DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

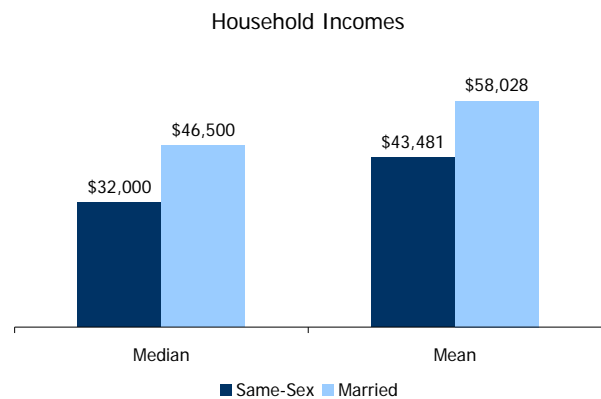
- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. Almost one in

three same-sex couples (30%) have only one wage earner, compared to more than one in three (34%) married couples.

- 50% of same-sex couples in Mississippi have at least one partner who is disabled, compared to 37% of married couples.
- 13% of same-sex couples in Mississippi have at least one partner over the age of 65, compared to 18% of married couples.

SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN MISSISSIPPI HAVE FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Mississippi is \$32,000, 31% less than that of married couples (\$46,500). The average household income of same-sex couples in Mississippi is \$43,481, significantly less than that of married couples (\$58,028).

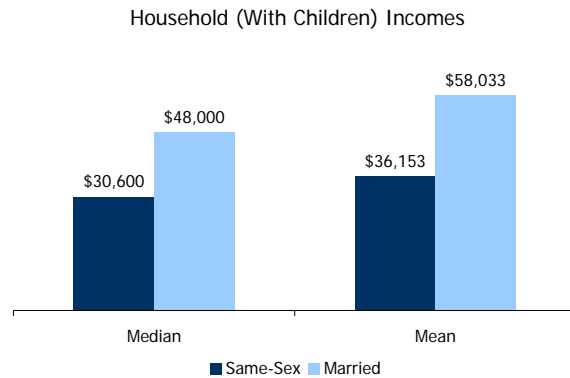


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 60% of same-sex couples in Mississippi own their home, compared to 85% of married couples.

SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE RAISING CHILDREN IN MISSISSIPPI, YET WITH FAR FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRIED PARENTS

- 35% of same-sex couples in Mississippi are raising children under the age of 18.
- An estimated 2,839 of Mississippi's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.⁶
- In Mississippi, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- Almost 2% of Mississippi's adopted children (or 286 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.⁷

- Same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Mississippi. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$30,600, 36% lower than that of married parents (\$48,000). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$36,153, significantly less than \$58,033 for married parents.
- While 62% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a much larger percentage of married parents (82%) own their home.



CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in Mississippi. While in many respects Mississippi's same-sex couples look like married couples, same-sex couples—especially those with children—have fewer economic resources than married couples to provide for their families and lower rates of home ownership.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity ⁸		
White	49.9%	77.0%*
Black	46.2%	20.5%*
Hispanic	2.8%	1.0% [^]
Asian	<.1%	0.7%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.5%	0.3%
Other	0.5%	0.5%
Average age	43.6	47.2*
Percent with a college degree or better	13.3%	19.4% [^]
Percent Employed	57.3%	63.2%
Employment ⁸		
Private employer	78.9%	69.0%*
Public employer	18.1%	18.6%
Self-employed	3.0%	12.0%*
Veteran Status	11.9%	15.8%
Average individual salary		
Men	\$24,481	\$39,473*
Woman	\$21,781	\$21,317
Median individual salary		
Men	\$20,000	\$30,700
Woman	\$16,000	\$18,000

* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).
[^] Difference significant at the 10% level or better (two-tailed tests).

	Same-Sex	Married
At least one partner over 65	13.2%	18.2%
Percent disabled	49.9%	36.5%*
Average household income	\$43,481	\$58,028*
Median household income	\$32,000	\$46,500
Income gap between partners	\$13,157	\$22,725
Single wage earner	29.0%	33.7%
Homeownership	59.6%	85.4%*
Percent with children under 18	34.8%	48.4%*

* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).
[^] Difference significant at the 10% level or better (two-tailed tests).

	Same-Sex parents	Married parents
Average number of children under 18 in the household	1.7	1.9
Single wage earner (parents)	29.7%	35.3%
Average household income (parents)	\$36,153	\$58,033*
Median household income (parents)	\$30,600	\$48,000
Homeownership	62.3%	81.5%

* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).
[^] Difference significant at the 10% level or better (two-tailed tests).

Appendix A: Counts and percent of same-sex couples by county

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Adams	78	0.57%
Alcorn	54	0.38%
Amite	26	0.49%
Attala	41	0.54%
Benton	9	0.30%
Bolivar	78	0.57%
Calhoun	22	0.37%
Carroll	21	0.52%
Chickasaw	26	0.36%
Choctaw	17	0.46%
Claiborne	17	0.46%
Clarke	32	0.46%
Clay	34	0.42%
Coahoma	48	0.45%
Copiah	41	0.40%
Covington	30	0.42%
DeSoto	168	0.43%
Forrest	101	0.37%
Franklin	7	0.22%
George	19	0.28%
Greene	20	0.48%
Grenada	45	0.51%
Hancock	118	0.70%
Harrison	352	0.49%
Hinds	441	0.48%
Holmes	29	0.40%
Humphreys	14	0.37%
Issaquena	5	0.69%
Itawamba	37	0.42%
Jackson	183	0.38%
Jasper	32	0.48%
Jefferson	18	0.54%
Jefferson Davis	29	0.56%
Jones	109	0.45%
Kemper	17	0.43%
Lafayette	52	0.36%
Lamar	38	0.26%
Lauderdale	144	0.48%
Lawrence	23	0.46%
Leake	40	0.53%
Lee	133	0.46%
Leflore	49	0.38%
Lincoln	42	0.33%
Lowndes	111	0.49%
Madison	104	0.38%
Marion	39	0.42%
Marshall	90	0.74%
Monroe	46	0.32%

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Montgomery	26	0.55%
Neshoba	40	0.37%
Newton	25	0.30%
Noxubee	16	0.36%
Oktibbeha	52	0.33%
Panola	79	0.65%
Pearl River	105	0.58%
Perry	18	0.41%
Pike	58	0.39%
Pontotoc	48	0.48%
Prentiss	35	0.36%
Quitman	23	0.65%
Rankin	204	0.48%
Scott	54	0.53%
Sharkey	14	0.65%
Simpson	53	0.53%
Smith	21	0.35%
Stone	22	0.46%
Sunflower	53	0.55%
Tallahatchie	43	0.82%
Tate	43	0.49%
Tippah	36	0.44%
Tishomingo	35	0.44%
Tunica	15	0.46%
Union	35	0.36%
Walthall	20	0.36%
Warren	73	0.39%
Washington	116	0.52%
Wayne	43	0.55%
Webster	23	0.59%
Wilkinson	17	0.48%
Winston	28	0.37%
Yalobusha	24	0.46%
Yazoo	48	0.52%

About the Authors

Adam P. Romero is Public Policy Fellow at the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. J.D. Yale Law School; A.B., *summa cum laude*, Cornell University. His current research examines the significance of family in society and law, especially as relevant to disabled adults without family.

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¹ Unless otherwise noted, we calculate the demographic characteristics from the Census 2000 Public Use Microdata Sample (5% file) available from the U.S. Census Bureau. For a detailed discussion of the Census 2000 methodology used in this report, see *Census Snapshot: Methods Note*, available at <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publications/MethodologicalDetailsForCensusSnapshots.pdf>. In estimating numbers of same-sex couples and children raised by same-sex couples, however, we use the total number of same-sex couples from 2005 and the proportion of couples with children from 2000 in order to provide a more up-to-date estimate.

² Tavia Simmons & Martin O'Connell, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, *Married-Couple and Unmarried-Partner Households*, Census 2000 Special Reports, CENSR-5, p. 4, tab. 2 (Feb. 2003).

³ Gary J. Gates, The Williams Institute, *Same-sex Couples and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Population: New Estimates from the American Community Survey*, p. 11, apx. 1, available at <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publications/SameSexCouplesandGLBpopACS.pdf>. Sample sizes for individual states in 2005 are not sufficiently large for the analyses presented in this report, we therefore use data from Census 2000 where samples are on average five times larger than 2005.

⁴ Simmons & O'Connell, *supra* note 2.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, *Unmarried Partner Households by Sex of Partners*, PCT14. Percentages of total households computed by dividing data in PCT14 by data in P15 (total households).

⁶ Computed by multiplying the number of same-sex couples times the percent of same-sex couples with children times the average number of children under 18 in the household.

⁷ Gary J. Gates, M.V. Lee Badgett, Kate Chambers, Jennifer Macomber, The Williams Institute & The Urban Institute, *Adoption and Foster Care by Gay and Lesbian Parents in the United States (2007)*, available at <http://www.law.ucla.edu/Williamsinstitute/publications/Policy-Adoption-index.html>.

⁸ Due to rounding, percent may not add to 100.

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