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Census Snapshot: South Dakota

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Authors

Romero, Adam P
Rosky, Clifford J
Badgett, M.V. Lee
et al.

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SOUTH DAKOTA

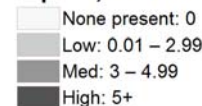
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Adam P. Romero, *Public Policy Fellow*
Clifford J. Rosky, *Research Fellow*
M.V. Lee Badgett, *Research Director*
Gary J. Gates, *Senior Research Fellow*

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 South Dakota. 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 South Dakota.¹



**Same-sex couple households
per 1,000 households**



In many ways, the nearly 1,000 same-sex couples living in South Dakota are similar to married couples. According to Census 2000, they live throughout the State, are racially and ethnically diverse, have partners who depend upon one another financially, and actively participate in South Dakota’s economy. Census data also show that 41% of same-sex couples in South Dakota are raising children. However, same-sex couples, especially those with children, have fewer economic resources to provide for their families than their married counterparts: they have lower household incomes and lower rates of homeownership.

SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGB POPULATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA

- In 2000, there were 826 same-sex couples living in South Dakota.²
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 998.³ This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 10,554 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in South Dakota.⁴

INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

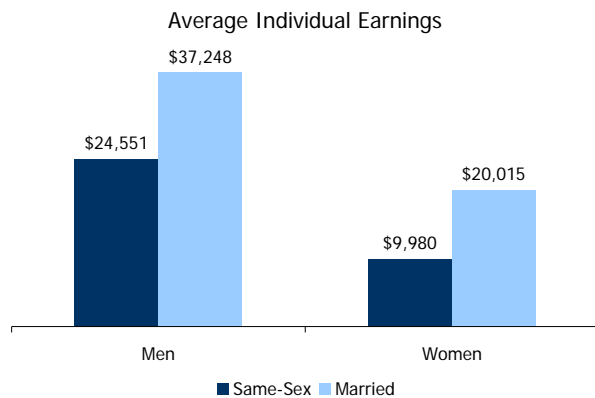
- There are more female same-sex couples (53%) than male same-sex couples (47%) in South Dakota.⁵
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 35 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (49 years old) in South Dakota.

- Same-sex couples live in all but one of the counties in South Dakota and constitute 0.5% of coupled households and 0.3% of all households in the state. Minnehaha County reported the most same-sex couples with 184 couples (0.32% of all households in the county), followed by Pennington County with 82 couples (0.24%), and Brown County with 33 couples (0.23%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Shannon County (0.90% of all county households), Dewey County (0.86%), and Bennett County (0.80%).⁶
- South Dakota’s same-sex couples are significantly more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 27% of individuals in same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 6% of married individuals.

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

- 62% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 71% of married individuals.

- Contrary to a popular stereotype, the annual earnings of individuals in same-sex couples are significantly lower than those of married individuals. On average, men in same-sex couples in South Dakota earn \$24,551 each year, significantly less than the \$37,248 average earnings for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in South Dakota is \$24,000, or 20% less than that of married men (\$30,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in South Dakota earn an average of \$9,980 per year, significantly less than \$20,015 for married women. The median income of women in same-sex couples is \$6,000, or 66% less than that of women in married couples (\$17,600).



- Individuals in same-sex couples in South Dakota are more likely to work in the private sector: 79% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 65% of married individuals; 18% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 16% of married individuals; and 4% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 18% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are more likely to have a college degree: 26% of individuals in same-sex couples and 24% 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: 9% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 17% of married individuals.

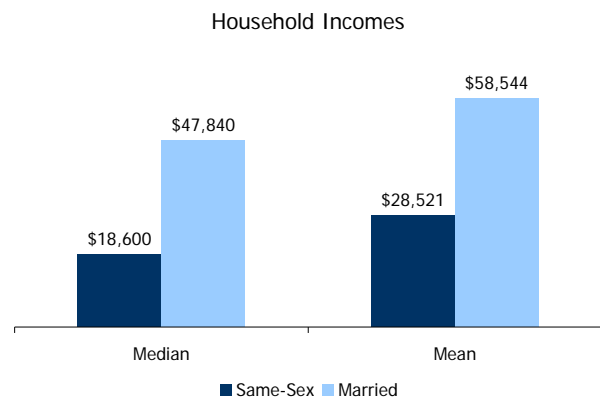
SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN SOUTH DAKOTA DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 38% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 24% of married couples.

- The mean income gap between same-sex partners is \$14,900, compared to \$20,338 for married spouses.
- A significantly larger percentage of same-sex couples in South Dakota have at least one partner who is disabled: 52% of same-sex couples, compared to 26% of married couples.
- 10% of same-sex couples have at least one partner who is age 65 or older, compared to 21% of married couples.

SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN SOUTH DAKOTA HAVE FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in South Dakota is \$18,600, or 61% less than that of married couples (\$47,840). The average household income of same-sex couples is \$28,521, significantly less than \$58,544 for married couples.

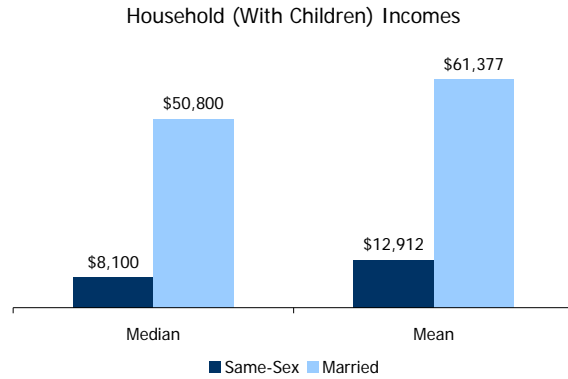


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 29% of same-sex couples in South Dakota own their home, compared to 84% of married couples.

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

- 41% of same-sex couples in South Dakota are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 898 of South Dakota's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.⁷
- In South Dakota, same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2.2 children, compared to 2.1 children for married parents.
- 45% of same-sex couples with children have only one wage earner in South Dakota, compared to 23% of married parents.

- Same-sex parents have far fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in South Dakota. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$8,100, or 84% lower than that of married parents (\$50,800). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$12,912, significantly less than the \$61,377 average household income of married parents.
- While 45% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a significantly larger percentage of married parents (82%) own their home.



CONCLUSION

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

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity ⁸		
White*	72.8%	94.5%
Black	0.0%	0.4%
Hispanic	1.0%	0.9%
Asian	0.0%	0.6%
American Indian/Alaskan Native*	15.0%	3.0%
Other*	11.2%	0.7%
Average age*	35.4	48.7
Percent with college degree or better	25.6%	24.0%
Percent employed	61.7%	70.9%
Employment ⁸		
Private employer	78.7%	65.0%
Public employer	17.8%	16.2%
Self-employed*	3.5%	18.2%
Veteran status	9.2%	17.5%
Average individual salary		
Men [^]	\$24,551	\$37,248
Women*	\$9,980	\$20,015
Median individual salary		
Men	\$24,000	\$30,000
Women	\$6,000	\$17,600

* 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 65 or older	10.2%	21.2%
Percent disabled*	52.2%	25.7%
Average household income*	\$28,521	\$58,544
Median household income	\$18,600	\$47,840
Income gap between partners	\$14,900	\$20,338
Single wage earner	37.8%	23.9%
Homeownership*	28.7%	84.4%
Percent with children under 18	41.0%	46.6%

* 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	2.2	2.1
Single wage earner (parents)	45.2%	22.7%
Average household income (parents)*	\$12,912	\$61,377
Median household income (parents)	\$8,100	\$50,800
Homeownership (parents)*	45.2%	81.8%

* 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
Aurora	1	0.09%
Beadle	24	0.33%
Bennett	9	0.80%
Bon Homme	6	0.23%
Brookings	25	0.23%
Brown	33	0.23%
Brule	8	0.40%
Buffalo	0	0.00%
Butte	17	0.48%
Campbell	2	0.28%
Charles Mix	20	0.60%
Clark	6	0.38%
Clay	13	0.27%
Codington	32	0.31%
Corson	2	0.16%
Custer	7	0.24%
Davison	23	0.30%
Day	8	0.31%
Deuel	7	0.38%
Dewey	16	0.86%
Douglas	2	0.15%
Edmunds	3	0.18%
Fall River	7	0.22%
Faulk	2	0.20%
Grant	5	0.16%
Gregory	3	0.15%
Haakon	4	0.46%
Hamlin	3	0.15%
Hand	3	0.19%
Hanson	2	0.18%
Harding	1	0.19%
Hughes	12	0.18%
Hutchinson	3	0.09%
Hyde	2	0.29%
Jackson	3	0.32%
Jerauld	1	0.10%
Jones	1	0.20%
Kingsbury	7	0.29%
Lake	13	0.30%
Lawrence	20	0.23%
Lincoln	16	0.18%
Lyman	8	0.57%
McCook	6	0.27%
McPherson	2	0.16%
Marshall	6	0.33%
Meade	20	0.23%
Mellette	5	0.72%
Miner	1	0.08%

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Minnehaha	184	0.32%
Moody	9	0.36%
Pennington	82	0.24%
Perkins	7	0.49%
Potter	1	0.09%
Roberts	16	0.43%
Sanborn	2	0.19%
Shannon	25	0.90%
Spink	7	0.25%
Stanley	7	0.63%
Sully	2	0.32%
Todd	13	0.53%
Tripp	8	0.31%
Turner	8	0.23%
Union	12	0.24%
Walworth	9	0.36%
Yankton	13	0.16%
Ziebach	1	0.13%

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.

Clifford J. Rosky is Research Fellow at the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. J.D. Yale Law School; B.A., *summa cum laude*, Amherst College. His current research examines the significance of gender in family law cases involving lesbian and gay parents.

M.V. Lee Badgett is Research Director at the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law, and Director of the Center for Public Policy and Administration at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she is also on the faculty of the Department of Economics. Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley. She studies family policy and employment discrimination related to sexual orientation.

Gary J. Gates is Senior Research Fellow at the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. Ph.D. Carnegie Mellon. He studies the demographic and economic characteristics of the lesbian and gay population.

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* (2006), 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 *Id.*

⁵ Simmons & O'Connell, *supra* note 2.

⁶ 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).

⁷ 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.

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

For more information, contact:
The Williams Institute
UCLA School of Law
Box 951476
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1476
T (310)267-4382
F (310)825-7270
williamsinstitute@law.ucla.edu
www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute