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Census Snapshot: Tennessee

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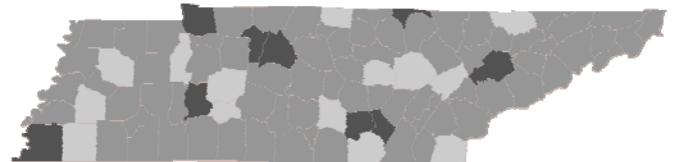
2008

TENNESSEE

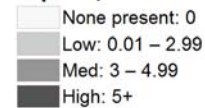
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Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, this report provides demographic and economic information about same-sex couples and same-sex couples raising children in Tennessee. We compare same-sex “unmarried partners,” which the Census Bureau defines as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



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



In many ways, the more than 13,500 same-sex couples living in Tennessee 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 Tennessee’s economy. Census data also show that 16% of same-sex couples in Tennessee are raising children. However, same-sex couples have fewer economic resources to provide for their families than married parents: they have lower household incomes and lower rates of homeownership.

SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGB POPULATION IN TENNESSEE

- In 2000, there were 10,189 same-sex couples living in Tennessee.²
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 13,570.³ This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were more than 148,868 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Tennessee.⁴

INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

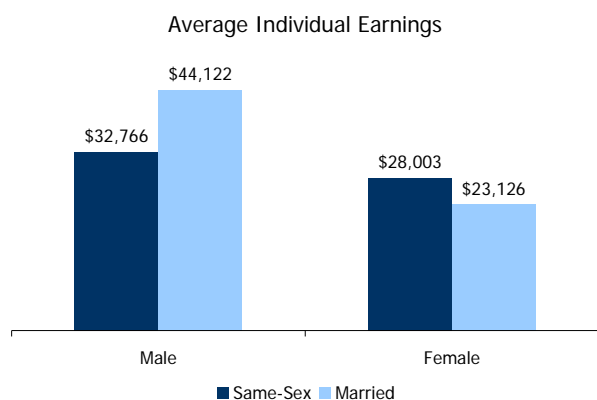
- There are about equal numbers of female and male same-sex couples in Tennessee.⁵
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 39 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (47 years old) in Tennessee.

- Same-sex couples live in every county in Tennessee and constitute 0.8% of coupled households and 0.5% of all households in the state. Shelby County reported the most same-sex couples with 1,821 couples (0.54% of all households in the county), followed by Davidson County with 1,659 couples (0.70%), and Knox County with 857 couples (0.54%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Davidson County (0.70% of all county households), Cheatham County (0.64%), and Grundy County (0.58%).⁶
- Tennessee’s same-sex couples are more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 17% of same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 12% of married couples.

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

- Individuals in same-sex couples in Tennessee are significantly more likely to be employed than are married individuals: 76% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 65% of married individuals.

- Contrary to a popular stereotype, the annual earnings of men in same-sex couples are significantly lower than those of married men. On average, men in same-sex couples in Tennessee earn \$32,766 each year, significantly less than \$44,122 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Tennessee is \$28,000, or 15% less than that of married men (\$33,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in Tennessee earn an average of \$28,003 per year (with a median of \$25,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$23,126 (with a median of \$19,800). Women in same-sex couples earn less than married men as well as men in same-sex couples.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Tennessee are more likely to work in the private sector: 79% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 72% of married individuals; 14% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 16% of married individuals; and 7% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 12% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are more likely to have a college degree: 29% of individuals in same-sex couples and 22% 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: 14% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 16% of married individuals.

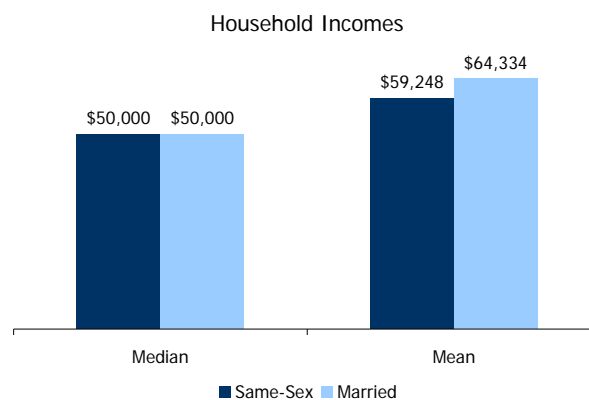
SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN TENNESSEE DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 22% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 33% of married couples.

- The income gap between same-sex partners is \$17,517, compared to \$25,962 for married couples.
- 31% of same-sex couples have at least one partner who is disabled, compared to 33% of married couples.
- 7% of same-sex couples have at least one partner who is age 65 or older, compared to 18% of married couples.

SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN TENNESSEE HAVE SIMILAR ECONOMIC RESOURCES TO MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex and married coupled households in Tennessee is \$50,000. The average household income of same-sex couples is \$59,248, less than \$64,334 for married couples.

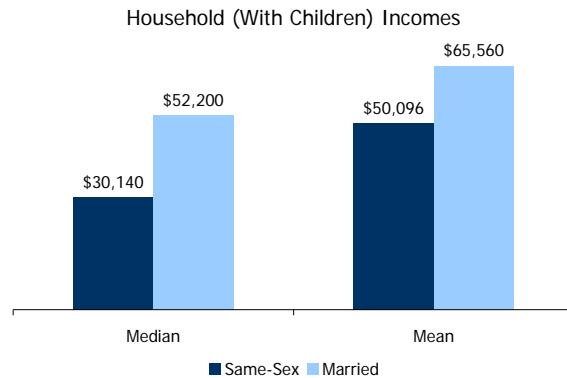


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 58% of same-sex couples in Tennessee own their home, compared to 84% of married couples.

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

- 16% of same-sex couples in Tennessee are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 4,233 of Tennessee's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.⁷
- In Tennessee, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- More than 1% of Tennessee's adopted children (or 384 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.⁸
- 39% of same-sex couples with children have only one wage earner, compared to 36% of married parents.

- Same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Tennessee. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$30,140, or 42% lower than that of married parents (\$52,200). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$50,096, less than \$65,560 for married parents.
- While 45% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a significantly larger percentage of married parents (80%) own their home.



CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in Tennessee. While in many respects Tennessee's same-sex couples look like married couples, same-sex couples with children have fewer economic resources than married parents to provide for their families.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity ⁹		
White	82.6%	87.9%*
Black	12.3%	8.6%*
Hispanic	3.5%	1.4%*
Asian	0.6%	1.1%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.6%	0.2%
Other	0.4%	0.7%
Average age	38.9	47.1*
Percent with a college degree or better	28.8%	21.9%*
Percent Employed	75.7%	65.1%*
Employment ⁹		
Private employer	78.7%	72.2%*
Public employer	14.3%	15.5%
Self-employed	6.9%	11.9%*
Veteran Status	13.8%	16.4%
Average individual salary		
Men	\$32,766	\$44,122*
Woman	\$28,003	\$23,126*
Median individual salary		
Men	\$28,000	\$33,000
Woman	\$25,000	\$19,800

* 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	6.6%	17.8%*
Percent disabled	31.4%	32.9%
Average household income	\$59,248	\$64,334
Median household income	\$50,000	\$50,000
Income gap between partners	\$17,517	\$25,962*
Single wage earner	21.6%	32.5%*
Homeownership	58.3%	83.9%*
Percent with children under 18	15.9%	45.6%*

* 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	1.9	1.8
Single wage earner (parents)	38.6%	35.7%
Average household income (parents)	\$50,096	\$65,560
Median household income (parents)	\$30,140	\$52,200
Homeownership	45.0%	79.8%*

* 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
Anderson	106	0.36%
Bedford	50	0.36%
Benton	20	0.29%
Bledsoe	20	0.45%
Blount	165	0.39%
Bradley	146	0.43%
Campbell	53	0.33%
Cannon	24	0.48%
Carroll	43	0.37%
Carter	96	0.41%
Cheatham	82	0.64%
Chester	27	0.48%
Claiborne	34	0.29%
Clay	14	0.41%
Cocke	48	0.35%
Coffee	44	0.23%
Crockett	25	0.44%
Cumberland	54	0.28%
Davidson	1659	0.70%
Decatur	15	0.31%
DeKalb	28	0.40%
Dickson	64	0.39%
Dyer	47	0.32%
Fayette	27	0.26%
Fentress	25	0.37%
Franklin	68	0.45%
Gibson	53	0.27%
Giles	45	0.38%
Grainger	34	0.41%
Greene	123	0.48%
Grundy	32	0.58%
Hamblen	78	0.34%
Hamilton	589	0.47%
Hancock	12	0.43%
Hardeman	40	0.42%
Hardin	42	0.40%
Hawkins	84	0.38%
Haywood	22	0.29%
Henderson	33	0.32%
Henry	46	0.35%
Hickman	24	0.30%
Houston	15	0.47%
Humphreys	33	0.46%
Jackson	21	0.47%
Jefferson	61	0.36%
Johnson	25	0.37%
Knox	857	0.54%
Lake	9	0.37%

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Lauderdale	32	0.33%
Lawrence	51	0.33%
Lewis	10	0.23%
Lincoln	48	0.38%
Loudon	56	0.35%
McMinn	62	0.31%
McNairy	43	0.43%
Macon	22	0.28%
Madison	145	0.41%
Marion	33	0.30%
Marshall	36	0.35%
Maury	101	0.38%
Meigs	17	0.39%
Monroe	54	0.35%
Montgomery	178	0.37%
Moore	8	0.36%
Morgan	29	0.41%
Obion	59	0.45%
Overton	34	0.42%
Perry	16	0.53%
Pickett	12	0.57%
Polk	19	0.29%
Putnam	86	0.35%
Rhea	44	0.39%
Roane	62	0.29%
Robertson	86	0.43%
Rutherford	305	0.46%
Scott	27	0.33%
Sequatchie	24	0.54%
Sevier	142	0.50%
Shelby	1821	0.54%
Smith	26	0.38%
Stewart	27	0.55%
Sullivan	206	0.32%
Sumner	209	0.43%
Tipton	87	0.48%
Trousdale	12	0.43%
Unicoi	27	0.36%
Union	27	0.40%
Van Buren	7	0.32%
Warren	50	0.33%
Washington	205	0.46%
Wayne	27	0.45%
Weakley	49	0.36%
White	25	0.27%
Williamson	137	0.31%
Wilson	144	0.44%

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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Gary J. Gates is Senior Research Fellow at the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. 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*, 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 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>.

⁹ Due to rounding, percent may not add to 100.

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