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Census Snapshot: New Jersey

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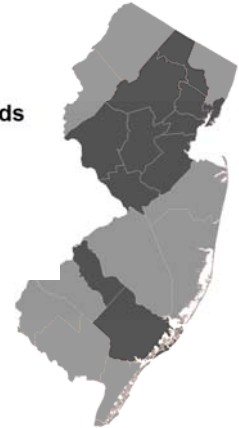
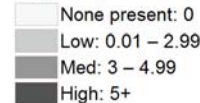
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Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, this report provides demographic and economic information about same-sex couples and same-sex couples raising children in New Jersey. We compare same-sex “unmarried partners,” which the Census Bureau defines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

In many ways, the almost 21,000 same-sex couples living in New Jersey are similar to married couples.<sup>2</sup> 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 New Jersey’s economy. Census data also show that 21% of same-sex couples in New Jersey are raising children. However, same-sex couples with children in New Jersey have fewer economic resources to provide for their families than do their married counterparts: same-couples with children have substantially lower household incomes, on average, and substantially lower rates of home ownership.

Same-sex couple households  
per 1,000 households



### SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGBT POPULATION IN NEW JERSEY

- In 2000, there were 16,604 same-sex couples living in New Jersey.<sup>3</sup>
- As of 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 20,677.<sup>4</sup> This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, approximately 245,628 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) were living in New Jersey.<sup>5</sup>

### INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

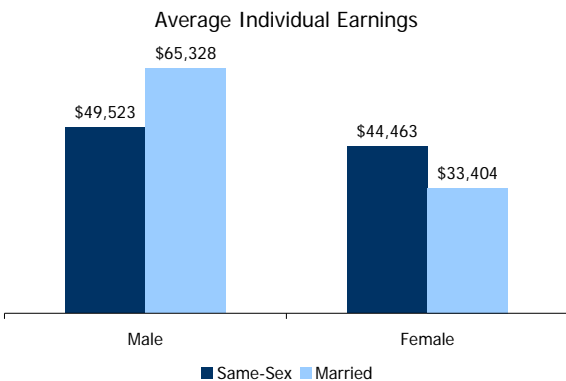
- In 2000, about equal numbers of same-sex couples were female (50.3%) and male (49.7%) in New Jersey.<sup>6</sup> The 2005 data indicate that there are 12,125 male same-sex couples (58.6%) and 8,552 female same-sex couples (41.4%).

- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 41 years old, and significantly younger than married individuals (48 years old).
- Same-sex couples live in every county in New Jersey and constitute 0.54% of all households and 0.9% of all coupled households in the State. In 2000, Essex County reported the most couples at 1,928 (0.68% of all county households), followed by Hudson County with 1,795 couples (0.78%), and Bergen County with 1,512 couples (0.46%).<sup>7</sup>
- New Jersey’s same-sex couples are more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 29% of same-sex couples in New Jersey are nonwhite, compared to 25% of married couples.

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

- Individuals in same-sex couples in New Jersey have higher rates of employment than married couples: 75% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 66% of married individuals.

- Contrary to a popular stereotype, men in same-sex couples have significantly lower incomes than married men. On average, men in same-sex couples in New Jersey earn \$49,523 per year, significantly less than \$65,328 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in New Jersey is \$36,500, or 27% less than that of married men (\$50,000).
- Women in same-sex couples earn an average of \$44,463 per year (with a median of \$35,000), significantly more than married women, whose earnings average \$33,404 (with a median of \$27,000). Women in same-sex couples earn less, on average, than married men and men in same-sex couples.



- Individuals in same-sex couples are more likely to work in the private sector and less likely to be self-employed, compared to married individuals: 78% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 73% of married individuals; 16% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 15% of married individuals; and 6% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 12% of married individuals.
- Despite the military's historic policies restricting service by gays and lesbians, individuals in same-sex couples have served in the military: 9% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 14% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are significantly more likely to have a college degree: 43% of individuals in same-sex couples and 35% of married individuals have earned a college degree.

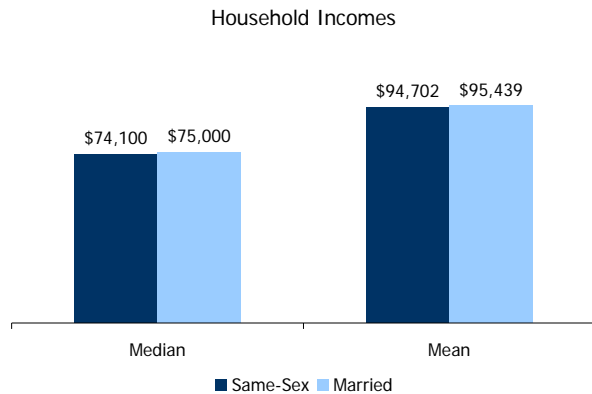
**SAME-SEX COUPLES IN NEW JERSEY DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES**

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 21% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 33% of married couples.

- The average income gap between same-sex partners is sizeable (\$33,281), though smaller than that of married couples (\$41,108).
- The presence of a senior or disabled partner in a couple may indicate interdependence: 7% of same-sex couples include a partner over age 65, compared to 19% of married couples.
- A similar percentage of same-sex and married couples in New Jersey have at least one partner who is disabled: 27% of same-sex couples, compared to 26% of married couples.

**SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN NEW JERSEY HAVE SIMILAR INCOMES TO MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS BUT LOWER RATES OF HOME OWNERSHIP**

- The median income of same-sex couples in New Jersey is \$74,100, less than the \$75,000 median for married couples. The average household income of same-sex couples is \$94,702, less than \$95,439 for married couples.

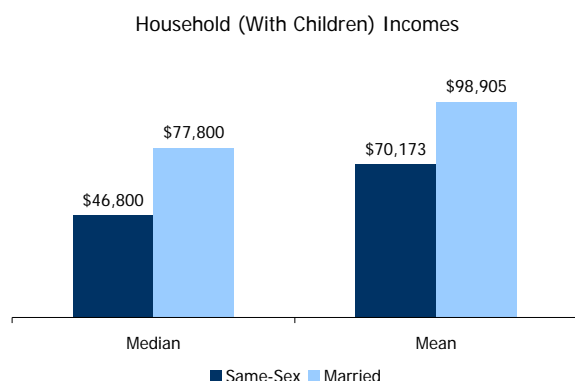


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely to own their homes: 60% of same-sex couples in New Jersey own their home, compared to 80% of married couples.

**SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE RAISING CHILDREN IN NEW JERSEY BUT WITH FEWER RESOURCES THAN MARRIED PARENTS**

- 21% of same-sex couples in New Jersey are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 8,337 of New Jersey's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.<sup>8</sup>
- In New Jersey, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- Roughly 2,344 adopted children, or 6% of New Jersey's adopted children, live with a lesbian or gay parent.<sup>9</sup>

- Same-sex parents have significantly lower household incomes than married parents in New Jersey. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$46,800, or 40% lower than that of married parents (\$77,800). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$70,173, compared to \$98,905 for married parents.



- Same-sex couples with children are significantly less likely to own their home than are married couples with children: 51% for same-sex parents, compared with 78% for married parents.

## CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in New Jersey. While in many respects New Jersey's same-sex couples look like married couples, on average, those with children have fewer economic resources to provide for their families: same-sex parents have significantly lower household incomes and lower rates of home ownership compared to married parents.

Table One: Characteristics of individuals in couples

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity <sup>10</sup>		
White	70.6%	74.8%*
Black	13.2%	7.3%*
Hispanic	12.2%	9.8%*
Asian	2.7%	6.6%*
American Indian/Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%*
Other	1.3%	1.5% ^
Average age	41	48*
Veteran Status	8.6%	13.7%*
Percent Employed	75.1%	65.9%*
Type of Employment <sup>10</sup>		
Private employer	77.5%	72.9%*
Public employer	16.4%	15.3%*
Self-employed	6%	11.6%*
Average individual salary		
Men	\$49,523	\$65,327*
Women	\$44,463	\$33,404*
Median individual salary		
Men	\$36,500	\$50,000
Women	\$35,000	\$27,000

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).

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

Table Two: Characteristics of couples

	Same-Sex	Married
At least one partner over 65	6.5%	18.5%*
Percent disabled	26.8%	25.6% ^
Average household income	\$94,702	\$95,439
Median household income	\$74,100	\$75,000
Income gap between partners	\$33,281	\$41,108*
Single wage earner	21.1%	32.5%*
Homeownership	60%	80.2%*
Percent with children under 18	20.7%	49.7%*

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).

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

Table Three: Characteristics of couples with children

	Same-Sex parents	Married parents
Average number of children under 18 in the household	1.92	1.90
Single wage earner (parents)	23%	36.8%*
Average household income (parents)	\$70,173	\$98,905*
Median household income (parents)	\$46,800	\$77,800
Homeownership	50.6%	78.1%*

\* Difference significant at the 5% 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
Atlantic	560	.59%
Bergen	1512	.46%
Burlington	680	.44%
Camden	1017	.55%
Cape May	188	.45%
Cumberland	230	.47%
Essex	1928	.68%
Gloucester	408	.45%
Hudson	1795	.78%
Hunterdon	275	.63%
Mercer	728	.58%
Middlesex	1332	.50%
Monmouth	1104	.49%
Morris	849	.50%
Ocean	842	.42%
Passaic	965	.59%
Salem	105	.43%
Somerset	581	.53%
Sussex	237	.47%
Union	1090	.59%
Warren	178	.46%

## About the Authors

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, we calculate these figures from the Public Use Microdata Sample (5% file) available from the Bureau of the Census. For a detailed discussion of the methodology used in this report, see *Census Snapshot: Methods Note*, available at <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publications/MethodologicalDetailsForCensusSnapshots.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> However, in legal terms, same-sex couples are treated differently from married couples. In October 2006, the New Jersey Supreme Court unanimously ruled that same-sex couples of that state must have equal protection under the law and be granted the rights and responsibilities of marriage. See *Lewis v. Harris*, 188 N.J. 415 (2006). While a minority of the Court would have required the state to permit same-sex couples to civilly marry, the majority reserved for the state legislature the question of how to remedy the constitutional violation and administer equality. The New Jersey Legislature, in turn, established a system of civil unions that parallels but is different from civil marriage, effective February 2007. N.J. Stat. Ann. §§ 37:1-28 to 1-36 (West 2002 & Supp. 2007). New Jersey accordingly joined California, Connecticut, and Vermont in their treatment of same-sex couples. Massachusetts remains the only state that permits same-sex couples to marry.

<sup>3</sup> 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).

<sup>4</sup> 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. 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.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Simmons & O'Connell, *supra* note 3.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Unmarried Partner Households by Sex of Partners*, PCT014.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> Gary J. Gates, M.V. Lee Badgett, Kate Chambers, & Jennifer Macomber, The Williams Institute and the Urban Institute, *Adoption and Foster Care by Gay and Lesbian Parents in the United States*, p. 10, tab. 5 (2007).

<sup>10</sup> Due to rounding, percents may not add to 100.

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