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Census Snapshot: Montana

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Publication Date

2008-04-01

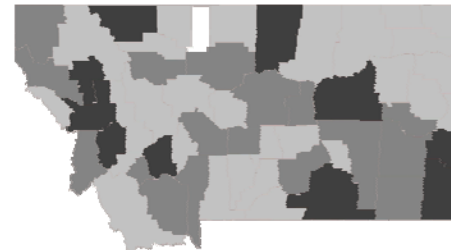
MONTANA

APRIL 2008

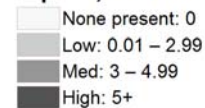
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Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, this report provides demographic and economic information about same-sex couples and same-sex couples raising children in Montana. We compare same-sex “unmarried partners,” which the Census Bureau defines as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

In many ways, the more than 1,600 same-sex couples living in Montana 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 Montana’s economy. Census data also show that 35% of same-sex couples in Montana 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 couple households per 1,000 households



SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGB POPULATION IN MONTANA

- In 2000, there were 1,218 same-sex couples living in Montana.²
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 1,662.³ This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 18,703 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Montana.⁴

INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

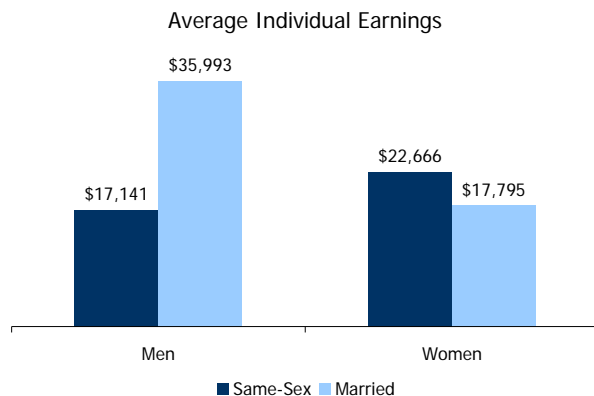
- There are more female same-sex couples (55%) than male same-sex couples (45%) in Montana.⁵
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 39 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (49 years old) in Montana.

- Same-sex couples live in all but one of the counties in Montana and constitute 0.6% of coupled households and 0.3% of all households in the state. Missoula County reported the most same-sex couples with 200 couples (0.52% of all households in the county), followed by Yellowstone County with 165 couples (0.32%), and Cascade County with 95 couples (0.29%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Big Horn County (0.82% of all county households), Garfield County (0.75%), and Jefferson County (0.67%).⁶
- Montana’s same-sex couples are as racially and ethnically diverse as their married counterparts: 7% of individuals in same-sex and married couples are nonwhite.

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

- Individuals in same-sex couples in Montana are more likely to be employed than married individuals: 77% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 67% of married individuals.

- Contrary to a popular stereotype, the annual earnings of men in same-sex couples are far lower than those of married men. On average, men in same-sex couples in Montana earn \$17,141 each year, much less than \$35,993 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Montana is \$11,750, or 61% less than that of married men (\$30,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in Montana earn an average of \$22,666 per year (with a median of \$18,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$17,795 (with a median of \$15,000). Women in same-sex couples earn less than men in married couples.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Montana are more likely to work in the private sector: 67% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 59% of married individuals; 18% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 20% of married individuals; and 15% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 21% of married individuals.
- 24% of individuals in same-sex couples have earned a college degree, compared to 26% of married individuals.
- Despite the military's historic policies of excluding gay men and lesbians from service, individuals in same-sex couples have served in the military: 8% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 19% of married individuals.

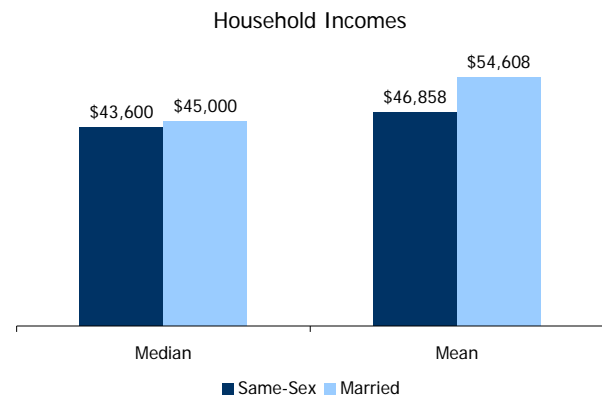
SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN MONTANA DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 18% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 28% of married couples.

- The mean income gap between same-sex partners is \$11,505, compared to \$20,144 for married spouses.
- A larger percentage of same-sex couples in Montana have at least one partner who is disabled: 31% of same-sex couples, compared to 27% of married couples.
- 8% of same-sex couples have at least one partner who is age 65 or older, compared to 19% of married couples.

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

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Montana is \$43,600, less than that of married couples (\$45,000). The average household income of same-sex couples is \$46,858, less than that of married couples (\$54,608).

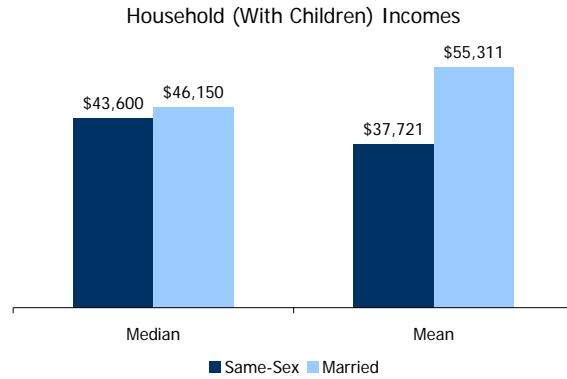


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 54% of same-sex couples in Montana own their home, compared to 83% of married couples.

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

- 35% of same-sex couples in Montana are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 762 of Montana's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.⁷
- In Montana, same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 1.3 children, compared to 2.0 children for married parents.
- More than 1% of Montana's adopted children (or 95 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.⁸

- Same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Montana. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$43,600, or 6% lower than that of married parents (\$46,150). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$37,721, significantly less than \$55,311 for married parents.
- While 65% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a larger percentage of married parents (79%) own their home.



CONCLUSION

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

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity ⁹		
White	92.6%	93.2%
Black	0.0%	0.1%
Hispanic	1.2%	1.5%
Asian	0.0%	0.6%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3.4%	3.6%
Other	2.8%	1.0%
Average age*	39.2	48.7
Percent with college degree or better	24.1%	26.2%
Percent employed	76.9%	66.6%
Employment ⁹		
Private employer	67.0%	58.6%
Public employer	18.2%	19.7%
Self-employed	14.8%	21.0%
Veteran status [^]	8.5%	19.0%
Average individual salary		
Men*	\$17,141	\$35,993
Women	\$22,666	\$17,795
Median individual salary		
Men	\$11,750	\$30,000
Women	\$18,000	\$15,000

* 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 65 or older	8.3%	19.3%
Percent disabled	31.1%	27.3%
Average household income	\$46,858	\$54,608
Median household income	\$43,600	\$45,000
Income gap between partners*	\$11,505	\$20,144
Single wage earner	18.4%	27.8%
Homeownership*	53.8%	83.4%
Percent with children under 18	35.1%	44.9%

* 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*	1.3	2.0
Single wage earner (parents) [^]	0.0%	29.4%
Average household income (parents)*	\$37,721	\$55,311
Median household income (parents)	\$43,600	\$46,150
Homeownership (parents)	65.1%	78.8%

* 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
Beaverhead	7	0.19%
Big Horn	32	0.82%
Blaine	13	0.52%
Broadwater	3	0.17%
Carbon	10	0.25%
Carter	3	0.55%
Cascade	95	0.29%
Chouteau	10	0.45%
Custer	21	0.44%
Daniels	2	0.22%
Dawson	9	0.25%
Deer Lodge	3	0.08%
Fallon	6	0.53%
Fergus	15	0.31%
Flathead	67	0.23%
Gallatin	88	0.33%
Garfield	4	0.75%
Glacier	22	0.51%
Golden Valley	1	0.27%
Granite	7	0.58%
Hill	17	0.26%
Jefferson	25	0.67%
Judith Basin	1	0.11%
Lake	67	0.66%
Lewis and Clark	66	0.29%
Liberty	0	0.00%
Lincoln	24	0.31%
McCone	1	0.12%
Madison	11	0.37%
Meagher	3	0.37%
Mineral	4	0.25%
Missoula	200	0.52%
Musselshell	4	0.21%
Park	19	0.28%
Petroleum	1	0.47%
Phillips	5	0.27%
Pondera	3	0.12%
Powder River	3	0.41%
Powell	6	0.25%
Prairie	2	0.37%
Ravalli	47	0.33%
Richland	8	0.21%
Roosevelt	8	0.22%
Rosebud	10	0.30%
Sanders	15	0.35%
Sheridan	2	0.11%
Silver Bow	49	0.34%
Stillwater	7	0.22%

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Sweet Grass	4	0.27%
Teton	8	0.32%
Toole	1	0.05%
Treasure	1	0.28%
Valley	8	0.25%
Wheatland	4	0.47%
Wibaux	1	0.24%
Yellowstone	165	0.32%

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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