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Census Snapshot: Colorado

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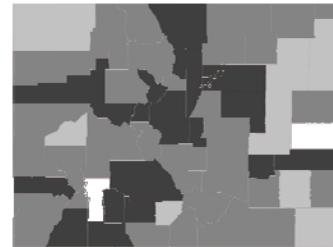
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## COLORADO

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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 Colorado. 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 Colorado.<sup>1</sup>



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

None present: 0  
Low: 0.01 – 2.99  
Med: 3 – 4.99  
High: 5+

In many ways, the almost 16,000 same-sex couples living in Colorado 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 Colorado’s economy. Census data also show that 14% of same-sex couples in Colorado are raising children. Same-sex couples in Colorado have household incomes similar to those of married couples but lower rates of home ownership.

### **SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGB POPULATION IN COLORADO**

- In 2000, there were 10,045 same-sex couples living in Colorado.<sup>2</sup>
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 15,915.<sup>3</sup> This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 173,674 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Colorado.<sup>4</sup>

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

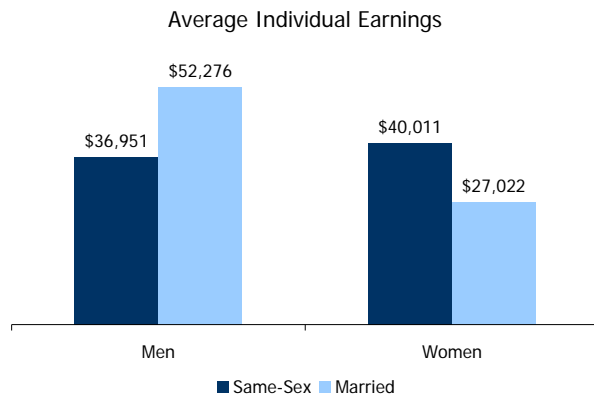
- There are more female same-sex couples (54%) than male same-sex couples (46%) in Colorado.<sup>5</sup>
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 39 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (46 years old) in Colorado.

- Same-sex couples live in almost every county in Colorado and constitute 1.1% of coupled households and 0.6% of all households in the state. Denver County reported the most same-sex couples with 2,916 couples (1.22% of all households in the county), followed by Jefferson County with 1,051 couples (0.51%), and Arapahoe County with 995 couples (0.52%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Denver County (1.22% of all county households), Gilpin County (1.13%), Park County (0.98%), and Summit County (0.72%).<sup>6</sup>
- Colorado’s same-sex couples are as racially and ethnically diverse as their married counterparts: 18% of individuals in same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 19% of married individuals.

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

- Individuals in same-sex couples in Colorado are significantly more likely to be employed than married individuals: 87% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 69% 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 Colorado earn \$36,951 each year, significantly less than \$52,276 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Colorado is \$32,000, or 20% less than that of married men (\$40,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in Colorado earn an average of \$40,011 per year (with a median of \$30,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$27,022 (with a median of \$22,000). Women in same-sex couples earn less than married men.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Colorado are most likely to work in the private sector: 73% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 69% of married individuals; 16% of individuals in same-sex and married couples work in the public sector; and 11% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 15% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are significantly more likely to have a college degree: 45% of individuals in same-sex couples and 34% 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.

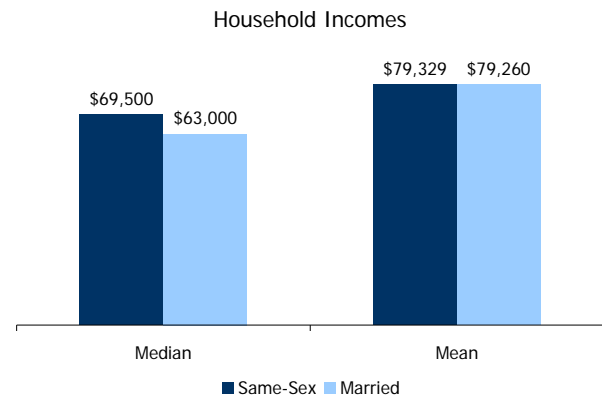
### **SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN COLORADO DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES**

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 17% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 30% of married couples.

- The average income gap between same-sex partners in Colorado is \$26,495, compared to \$32,792 for married spouses.
- 22% of same-sex and 25% of married couples in Colorado have at least one partner who is disabled.
- 19% of same-sex couples in Colorado have at least one partner who is age 65 or older, compared to 15% of married couples.

### **SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN COLORADO HAVE SIMILAR ECONOMIC RESOURCES TO MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS**

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Colorado is \$69,500, compared to \$63,000 for married couples. The average household income of same-sex couples is \$79,329, compared to \$79,260 for married couples.

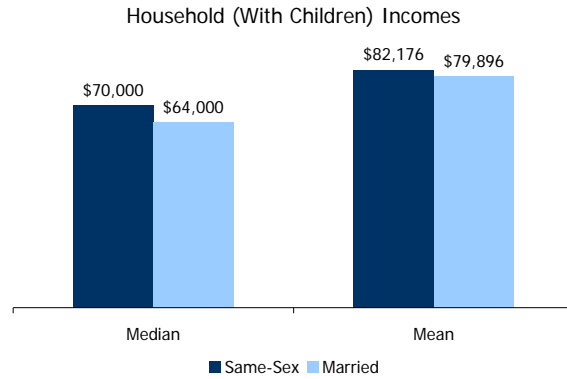


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 64% of same-sex couples in Colorado own their home, compared to 82% of married couples.

### **SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE RAISING CHILDREN IN COLORADO WITH ECONOMIC RESOURCES SIMILAR TO THOSE OF MARRIED PARENTS**

- 14% of same-sex couples in Colorado are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 4,091 of Colorado's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.<sup>7</sup>
- In Colorado, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- More than 2% of Colorado's adopted children (or 616 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.<sup>8</sup>
- 28% of Colorado's same-sex parents have only one wage earner, compared to 33% of married parents.

- Same-sex and married parents in Colorado have similar financial resources to support their children. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$70,000, compared to \$64,000 for married parents. The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$82,176, compared to \$79,896 for married parents.
- While 63% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a significantly larger percentage of married parents (79%) own their home.



## CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in Colorado. In many respects, Colorado's same-sex couples are similar to married couples. Many same-sex couples in Colorado are raising children, and their economic resources are similar to those of married couples.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity <sup>9</sup>		
White	82.0%	80.5%
Black	3.1%	2.4%
Hispanic	12.3%	12.9%
Asian*	0.6%	2.4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native*	1.3%	0.5%
Other	0.8%	1.3%
Average age*	38.7	46.2
Percent with college degree or better*	44.6%	34.4%
Percent employed*	86.7%	69.3%
Employment <sup>9</sup>		
Private employer*	73.4%	68.7%
Public employer	15.6%	15.6%
Self-employed*	10.6%	15.3%
Veteran status*	8.8%	17.3%
Average individual salary		
Men*	\$36,951	\$52,276
Women*	\$40,011	\$27,022
Median individual salary		
Men	\$32,000	\$40,000
Women	\$30,000	\$22,000

\* 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*	18.5%	15.2%
Percent disabled	22.1%	24.7%
Average household income	\$79,329	\$79,260
Median household income	\$69,500	\$63,000
Average income gap*	\$26,495	\$32,792
Single wage earner*	17.3%	29.5%
Homeownership*	63.8%	82.0%
Percent with children under 18*	14.1%	49.5%

\* 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	1.8	1.9
Single wage earner (parents)	27.8%	33.4%
Average household income (parents)	\$82,176	\$79,896
Median household income (parents)	\$70,000	\$64,000
Homeownership (parents)*	62.6%	78.6%

\* 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	759	0.59%
Alamosa	14	0.26%
Arapahoe	995	0.52%
Archuleta	21	0.53%
Baca	2	0.10%
Bent	5	0.25%
Boulder	816	0.71%
Chaffee	29	0.44%
Cheyenne	0	0.00%
Clear Creek	19	0.47%
Conejos	12	0.40%
Costilla	5	0.33%
Crowley	7	0.52%
Custer	5	0.34%
Delta	30	0.27%
Denver	2916	1.22%
Dolores	3	0.38%
Douglas	272	0.45%
Eagle	67	0.44%
Elbert	41	0.61%
El Paso	860	0.45%
Fremont	47	0.31%
Garfield	84	0.52%
Gilpin	23	1.13%
Grand	25	0.49%
Gunnison	27	0.48%
Hinsdale	0	0.00%
Huerfano	14	0.45%
Jackson	2	0.30%
Jefferson	1051	0.51%
Kiowa	4	0.60%
Kit Carson	12	0.40%
Lake	17	0.57%
La Plata	92	0.53%
Larimer	491	0.51%
Las Animas	25	0.40%
Lincoln	5	0.24%
Logan	29	0.38%
Mesa	202	0.44%
Mineral	2	0.53%
Moffat	14	0.28%
Montezuma	39	0.42%
Montrose	44	0.34%
Morgan	40	0.42%
Otero	24	0.30%
Ouray	6	0.38%
Park	58	0.98%
Phillips	3	0.17%

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Pitkin	44	0.65%
Prowers	20	0.38%
Pueblo	198	0.36%
Rio Blanco	7	0.30%
Rio Grande	24	0.51%
Routt	26	0.33%
Saguache	12	0.52%
San Juan	1	0.37%
San Miguel	19	0.63%
Sedgwick	4	0.34%
Summit	66	0.72%
Teller	44	0.55%
Washington	4	0.20%
Weld	312	0.49%
Yuma	6	0.16%

## 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. Ph.D Carnegie Mellon. He studies the demographic and economic characteristics of the lesbian and gay population.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</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>3</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, 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.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Simmons & O'Connell, *supra* note 2.

<sup>6</sup> 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).

<sup>7</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>8</sup> 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>.

<sup>9</sup> Due to rounding, percent may not add to 100.

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