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Census Snapshot: Arkansas

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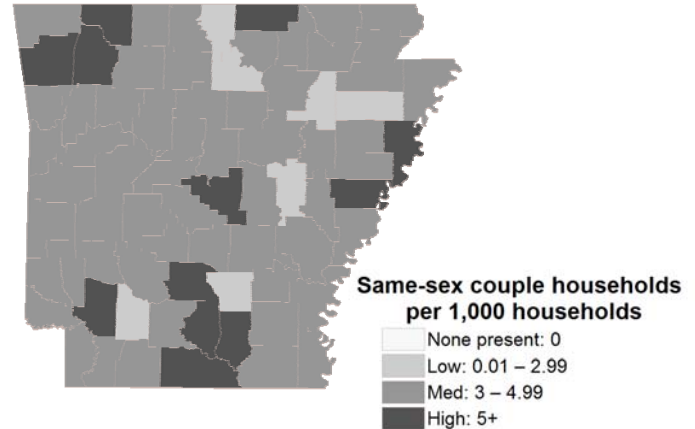
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Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, this report provides demographic and economic information about same-sex couples and same-sex couples raising children in Arkansas. We compare same-sex “unmarried partners,” which the Census Bureau defines as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



In many ways, the almost 5,900 same-sex couples living in Arkansas are similar to married couples. 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 Arkansas’s economy. Census data also show that 30% of same-sex couples in Arkansas are raising children. However, same-sex couples, especially those with children, have fewer economic resources to provide for their families than do their married counterparts: they have lower household incomes and lower rates of home ownership.

### SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGBT POPULATION IN ARKANSAS

- In 2000, there were 4,423 same-sex couples living in Arkansas.<sup>2</sup>
- The number of same-sex couples increased to 5,890 by 2005.<sup>3</sup> This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were almost 64,500 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Arkansas.<sup>4</sup>

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

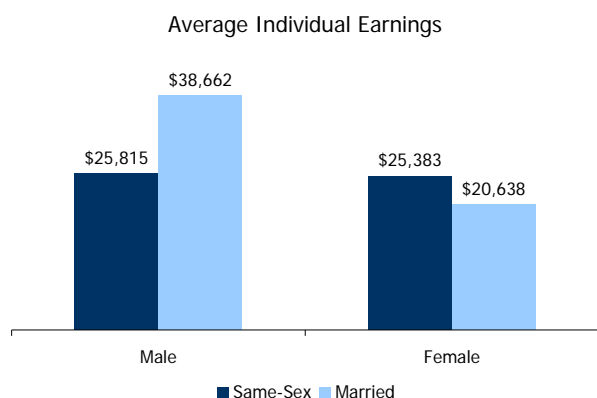
- There are slightly more female same-sex couples (51%) than male same-sex couples (49%) living in Arkansas.<sup>5</sup>
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 40 years old, and significantly younger than married individuals (48 years old) in Arkansas.

- Same-sex couples live in every county in Arkansas and constitute 0.7% of coupled households and 0.4% of all households in the State. Pulaski County reported the most same-sex couples with 770 couples (0.52% of all county households), followed by Washington County with 327 couples (0.54%), Benton County with 239 couples (0.48%), and Sebastian County with 181 couples (0.40%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Carroll County (0.77% of all county households) and Madison County (0.59%).<sup>6</sup>
- Arkansas’s same-sex couples are more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 18% of same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 13% of married couples.

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

- Individuals in same-sex and married couples in Arkansas are equally likely to be employed: 64% of individuals in same-sex couples and 63% of married individuals are employed.

- Contrary to a popular stereotype, the annual earnings of men in same-sex couples are significantly lower than married men. On average, men in same-sex couples in Arkansas earn \$25,815 each year, significantly less than \$38,662 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Arkansas is \$22,800, or 24% less than that of married men (\$30,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in Arkansas earn an average of \$25,383 per year (with a median of \$15,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$20,638 (with a median of \$17,200). Women in same-sex couples earn less than both married men and men in same-sex couples in Arkansas.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Arkansas most likely work in the private sector: 72% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 69% of married individuals; 12% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 16% of married individuals; and 15% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 14% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are more likely to have a college degree: 26% of individuals in same-sex couples and 19% 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: 11% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 18% of married individuals.

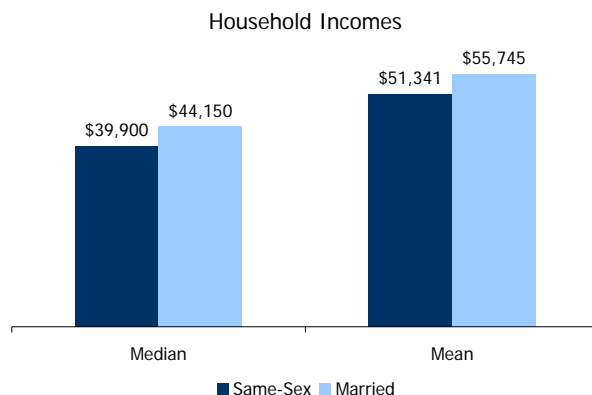
### SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN ARKANSAS DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 29% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 32% of married couples.

- The average income gap between same-sex couples is sizeable at \$17,196, though less than \$21,290 for married couples.
- 46% of same-sex couples in Arkansas have at least one partner who is disabled, compared to 36% of married couples.
- 16% of same-sex couples in Arkansas have at least one partner over the age of 65, compared to 20% of married couples.

### SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN ARKANSAS HAVE FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Arkansas is \$39,900, 10% less than that of married couples (\$44,150). The average household income of same-sex couples in Arkansas is \$51,341, significantly less than that of married couples (\$55,745).

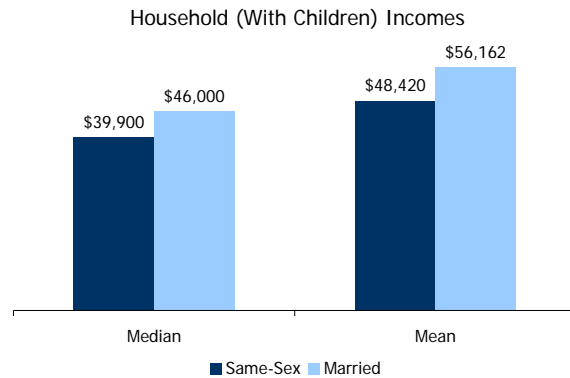


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 57% of same-sex couples in Arkansas own their home, compared to 82% of married couples.

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

- 30% of same-sex couples in Arkansas are raising children under the age of 18.
- An estimated 2,778 of Arkansas's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.<sup>7</sup>
- In Arkansas, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- Almost 7% of Arkansas's adopted children (or 1,040 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.<sup>8</sup>

- Same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Arkansas. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$39,900, 13% lower than that of married parents (\$46,000). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$48,420, less than \$56,162 for married parents.
- While 46% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a much larger percentage of married parents (76%) own their home.



## CONCLUSION

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

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity <sup>9</sup>		
White	82.5%	87.4%
Black	14.1%	8.1%*
Hispanic	3.4%	2.1%
Asian	0.0%	0.8%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.0%	0.6%
Other	0.0%	1.1%
Average age	40.3	47.8*
Percent with a college degree or better	26.0%	18.7% <sup>^</sup>
Percent Employed	57.3%	63.2%
Employment <sup>9</sup>		
Private employer	72.2%	69.1%
Public employer	12.4%	16.4%
Self-employed	15.4%	14.2%
Veteran Status	10.7%	17.6%*
Average individual salary		
Men	\$25,815	\$38,662*
Woman	\$25,383	\$20,638
Median individual salary		
Men	\$22,800	\$30,000
Woman	\$15,000	\$17,200

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).  
<sup>^</sup> Difference significant at the 10% level or better (two-tailed tests).

	Same-Sex	Married
At least one partner over 65	16.0%	20.3%
Percent disabled	45.8%	36.0%
Average household income	\$51,341	\$55,744
Median household income	\$39,900	\$44,150
Income gap between partners	\$17,196	\$21,290
Single wage earner	28.5%	31.9%
Homeownership	56.8%	82.1%*
Percent with children under 18	30.4%	45.0%*

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).  
<sup>^</sup> 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	1.6	1.8 <sup>^</sup>
Single wage earner (parents)	27.9%	34.7%
Average household income (parents)	\$48,420	\$56,162
Median household income (parents)	\$39,900	\$46,000
Homeownership	46.0%	75.8%*

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).  
<sup>^</sup> 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
Arkansas	31	0.37%
Ashley	33	0.35%
Baxter	46	0.27%
Benton	239	0.41%
Boone	65	0.47%
Bradley	25	0.52%
Calhoun	12	0.52%
Carroll	78	0.77%
Chicot	21	0.40%
Clark	35	0.39%
Clay	27	0.36%
Cleburne	39	0.38%
Cleveland	9	0.27%
Columbia	33	0.33%
Conway	29	0.36%
Craighead	118	0.37%
Crawford	78	0.40%
Crittenden	98	0.53%
Cross	27	0.37%
Dallas	19	0.54%
Desha	26	0.44%
Drew	32	0.44%
Faulkner	139	0.44%
Franklin	21	0.31%
Fulton	25	0.52%
Garland	152	0.40%
Grant	22	0.35%
Greene	46	0.31%
Hempstead	48	0.54%
Hot Spring	57	0.47%
Howard	21	0.38%
Independence	43	0.32%
Izard	18	0.33%
Jackson	19	0.27%
Jefferson	108	0.35%
Johnson	28	0.32%
Lafayette	14	0.41%
Lawrence	29	0.41%
Lee	21	0.50%
Lincoln	19	0.45%
Little River	23	0.42%
Logan	42	0.48%
Lonoke	65	0.34%
Madison	32	0.59%
Marion	23	0.34%
Miller	59	0.38%
Mississippi	95	0.49%
Monroe	15	0.37%

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Montgomery	16	0.42%
Nevada	10	0.26%
Newton	12	0.34%
Ouachita	44	0.38%
Perry	16	0.40%
Phillips	48	0.49%
Pike	20	0.44%
Poinsett	28	0.28%
Polk	25	0.31%
Pope	70	0.34%
Prairie	9	0.23%
Pulaski	770	0.52%
Randolph	24	0.33%
St. Francis	45	0.45%
Saline	122	0.38%
Scott	19	0.44%
Searcy	15	0.43%
Sebastian	181	0.40%
Sevier	23	0.40%
Sharp	31	0.43%
Stone	14	0.29%
Union	91	0.51%
Van Buren	26	0.38%
Washington	327	0.54%
White	89	0.35%
Woodruff	12	0.34%
Yell	32	0.40%

## 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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<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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