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Census Snapshot: North Carolina

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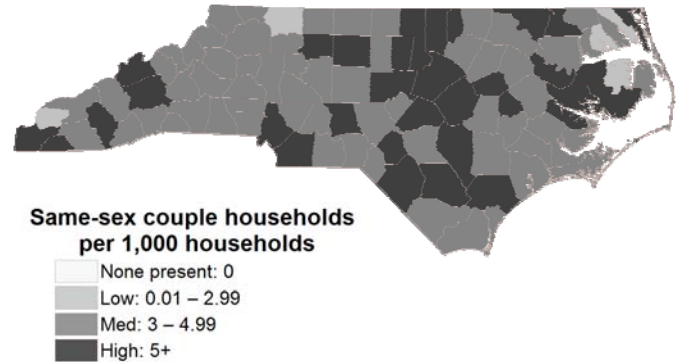
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NORTH CAROLINA

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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 North Carolina. 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 North Carolina.¹



In many ways, the nearly 20,000 same-sex couples living in North Carolina 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 North Carolina’s economy. Census data also show that 22% of same-sex couples in North Carolina are raising children. However, same-sex couples with children 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 NORTH CAROLINA

- In 2000, there were 16,198 same-sex couples living in North Carolina.²
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 19,648.³ This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 212,104 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in North Carolina.⁴

INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

- There are more female same-sex couples (52%) than male same-sex couples (48%) in North Carolina.⁵
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 39 years old, significantly younger than individuals in married couples (47 years old) in North Carolina.

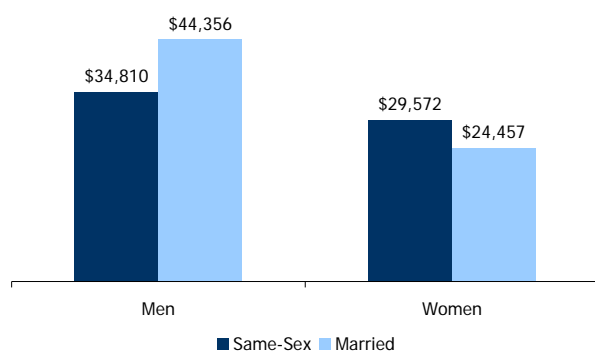
- Same-sex couples live in every county in North Carolina and constitute 0.9% of coupled households and 0.5% of all households in the state. Mecklenburg County reported the most same-sex couples with 1,777 couples (0.65% of all county households), followed by Wake County with 1,291 couples (0.53%), and Guilford County with 902 couples (0.53%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Durham County (0.85% of all county households), Buncombe County (0.79%), and Greene County (0.75%).⁶
- North Carolina’s same-sex couples are significantly more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 24% 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 North Carolina are significantly more likely to be employed than married individuals: 78% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 66% 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 North Carolina earn \$34,810 each year, significantly less than the \$44,356 average earnings of married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in North Carolina is \$28,000, or 16% less than that of married men (\$33,500).
- Women in same-sex couples in North Carolina earn an average of \$29,572 per year (with a median of \$24,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$24,457 (with a median of \$20,000). Women in same-sex couples earn less than married men as well as men in same-sex couples.

Average Individual Earnings



- Individuals in same-sex and married couples in North Carolina are most likely to work in the private sector: 73% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 72% 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 12% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are significantly more likely to have a college degree: 33% of individuals in same-sex couples, and 25% 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 17% of married individuals.

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

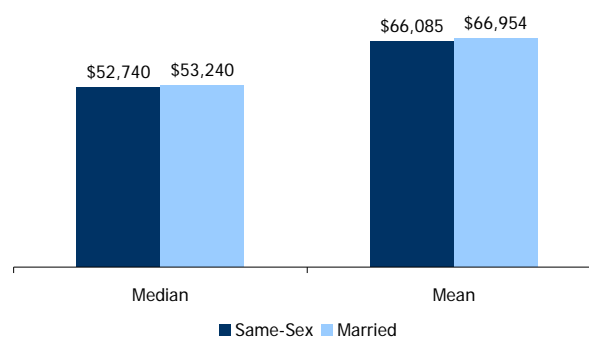
- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may be financially interdependent. 23% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 31% of married couples.

- The mean income gap between same-sex partners is \$19,491, compared to \$26,060 for married spouses.
- 33% of same-sex couples have at least one disabled partner, compared to 31% of married couples.
- 9% 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 NORTH CAROLINA HAVE SIMILAR ECONOMIC RESOURCES TO MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in North Carolina is \$52,740, compared to \$53,240 for married couples. The average household income of same-sex couples is \$66,085, compared to \$66,954 for married couples.

Household Incomes

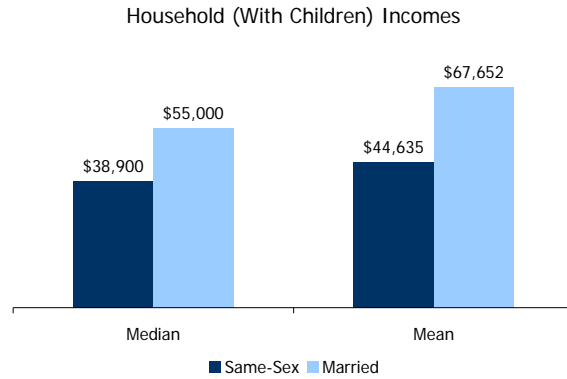


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 61% of same-sex couples in North Carolina own their home, compared to 83% of married couples.

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

- 22% of same-sex couples in North Carolina are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 7,437 of North Carolina's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.⁷
- In North Carolina, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, two children.
- More than 1% of North Carolina's adopted children (or 499 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.⁸
- 37% of North Carolina's same-sex parents have only one wage earner, compared to 33% of married parents.

- Same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in North Carolina. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$38,900, or 29% lower than that of married parents (\$55,000). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$44,635, significantly less than the \$67,652 average household income for married parents.
- While 52% 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 North Carolina. While in many respects North Carolina's same-sex couples look like married couples, same-sex couples with children have fewer economic resources to provide for their families than married parents and lower rates of homeownership.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity ⁹		
White*	76.0%	80.7%
Black*	16.3%	13.0%
Hispanic*	5.2%	3.1%
Asian*	0.6%	1.5%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.7%	1.0%
Other	1.1%	0.7%
Average age*	39.3	47.0
Percent with college degree or better*	32.8%	24.7%
Percent employed*	77.9%	66.0%
Employment ⁹		
Private employer	73.5%	71.8%
Public employer	15.8%	15.9%
Self-employed	10.8%	12.0%
Veteran status*	10.5%	16.7%
Average individual salary		
Men*	\$34,810	\$44,356
Women*	\$29,572	\$24,457
Median individual salary		
Men	\$28,000	\$33,500
Women	\$24,000	\$20,000

* 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*	9.0%	17.7%
Percent disabled	32.8%	31.4%
Average household income	\$66,085	\$66,954
Median household income	\$52,740	\$53,240
Income gap between partners*	\$19,491	\$26,060
Single wage earner*	23.1%	30.7%
Homeownership*	61.2%	83.0%
Percent with children under 18*	22.3%	45.7%

* 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	1.7	1.8
Single wage earner (parents)	37.5%	33.4%
Average household income (parents)*	\$44,635	\$67,652
Median household income (parents)	\$38,900	\$55,000
Homeownership (parents)*	51.9%	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
Alamance	252	0.49%
Alexander	62	0.47%
Alleghany	16	0.35%
Anson	43	0.47%
Ashe	34	0.33%
Avery	29	0.44%
Beaufort	100	0.55%
Bertie	31	0.40%
Bladen	68	0.53%
Brunswick	134	0.44%
Buncombe	676	0.79%
Burke	157	0.45%
Cabarrus	200	0.40%
Caldwell	126	0.41%
Camden	7	0.26%
Carteret	101	0.40%
Caswell	43	0.50%
Catawba	255	0.46%
Chatham	121	0.61%
Cherokee	54	0.52%
Chowan	21	0.38%
Clay	20	0.52%
Cleveland	170	0.46%
Columbus	102	0.48%
Craven	143	0.41%
Cumberland	442	0.41%
Currituck	38	0.55%
Dare	61	0.48%
Davidson	290	0.50%
Davie	43	0.31%
Duplin	91	0.50%
Durham	758	0.85%
Edgecombe	84	0.41%
Forsyth	687	0.55%
Franklin	88	0.49%
Gaston	369	0.50%
Gates	16	0.41%
Graham	10	0.30%
Granville	107	0.64%
Greene	50	0.75%
Guilford	902	0.53%
Halifax	102	0.46%
Harnett	198	0.59%
Haywood	102	0.44%
Henderson	161	0.43%
Hertford	47	0.52%
Hoke	58	0.51%
Hyde	13	0.59%

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Iredell	219	0.46%
Jackson	77	0.58%
Johnston	301	0.65%
Jones	18	0.44%
Lee	63	0.34%
Lenoir	96	0.40%
Lincoln	108	0.45%
McDowell	63	0.38%
Macon	62	0.48%
Madison	43	0.54%
Martin	56	0.56%
Mecklenburg	1777	0.65%
Mitchell	30	0.46%
Montgomery	58	0.59%
Moore	99	0.32%
Nash	147	0.44%
New Hanover	334	0.49%
Northampton	64	0.74%
Onslow	204	0.42%
Orange	332	0.72%
Pamlico	17	0.33%
Pasquotank	57	0.44%
Pender	86	0.54%
Perquimans	11	0.24%
Person	81	0.58%
Pitt	249	0.47%
Polk	25	0.32%
Randolph	238	0.47%
Richmond	71	0.40%
Robeson	250	0.57%
Rockingham	148	0.40%
Rowan	216	0.43%
Rutherford	96	0.38%
Sampson	112	0.50%
Scotland	60	0.45%
Stanly	91	0.41%
Stokes	70	0.40%
Surry	77	0.27%
Swain	25	0.49%
Transylvania	38	0.31%
Tyrrell	2	0.13%
Union	262	0.60%
Vance	92	0.57%
Wake	1291	0.53%
Warren	35	0.45%
Washington	36	0.67%
Watauga	75	0.45%
Wayne	198	0.46%

Appendix A: Counts and percent of same-sex couples by county (continued from previous page)

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Wilkes	116	0.44%
Wilson	146	0.51%
Yadkin	58	0.40%
Yancey	36	0.48%

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.

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* (2006), 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, percentages may not add to 100.

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