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Census Snapshot: Wyoming

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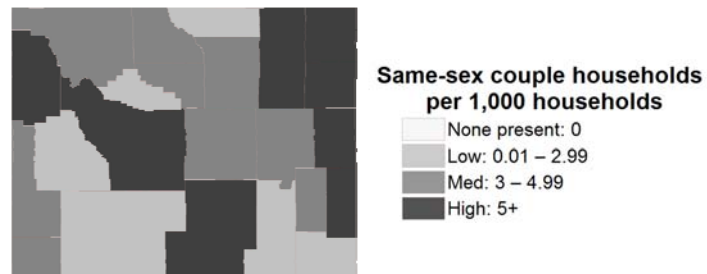
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WYOMING

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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 Wyoming. 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 Wyoming.¹



In many ways, the more than 1,000 same-sex couples living in Wyoming 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 Wyoming’s economy. Census data also show that about 20% of same-sex couples in Wyoming 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 COUPLES AND THE LGB POPULATION IN WYOMING

- In 2000, there were 807 same-sex couples living in Wyoming.²
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 1,044.³ This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 11,419 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Wyoming.⁴

INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

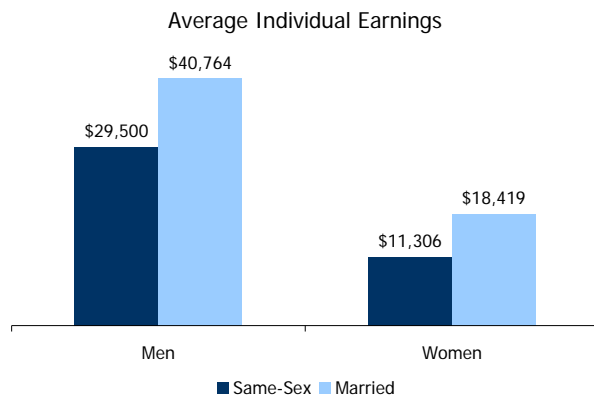
- There are more male same-sex couples (51%) than female same-sex couples (49%) in Wyoming.⁵
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 41 years old, younger than individuals in married couples (48 years old) in Wyoming.

- Same-sex couples live in every county in Wyoming and constitute 0.7% of coupled households and 0.4% of all households in the state. Natrona County reported the most same-sex couples with 132 couples (0.49% of all households in the county), followed by Laramie County with 94 couples (0.29%), and Fremont County with 88 couples (0.65%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Niobrara County (0.69% of all county households), Fremont County (0.65%), Carbon County (0.62%), and Crook County (0.61%).⁶
- Wyoming’s same-sex couples are more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 18% of individuals in same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 8% of married individuals.

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

- 60% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 68% of married individuals.

- Contrary to a popular stereotype, the annual earnings of individuals in same-sex couples are significantly lower than those of married individuals. On average, men in same-sex couples in Wyoming earn \$29,500 each year, significantly less than \$40,764 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Wyoming is \$29,500, or 16% less than that of married men (\$35,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in Wyoming earn an average of \$11,306 per year, significantly less than \$18,419 for married women. The median income of women in same-sex couples is \$10,000, or 33% less than that of married women (\$15,000).



- Individuals in same-sex and married couples in Wyoming are most likely to work in the private sector: 58% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 61% of married individuals; 37% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 23% of married individuals; and 5% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 16% of married individuals.
- 14% of individuals in same-sex couples in Wyoming have earned a college degree, compared to 22% 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 18% of married individuals.

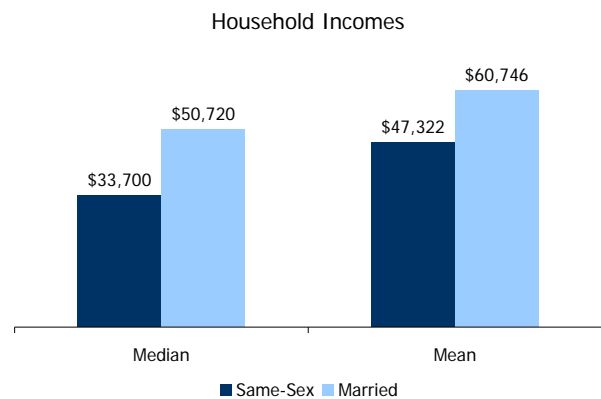
SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN WYOMING DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 20% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 30% of married couples.

- The mean income gap between same-sex partners is \$5,411, compared to \$24,552 for married spouses.
- A significantly larger percentage of same-sex couples in Wyoming have at least one partner who is disabled: 55% of same-sex couples, compared to 27% of married couples.
- A larger percentage of same-sex couples in Wyoming have at least one partner who is age 65 or older: 23% of same-sex couples, compared to 17% of married couples.

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

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Wyoming is \$33,700, less than that of married couples (\$50,720). The average household income of same-sex couples is \$47,322, less than that of married couples (\$60,746).

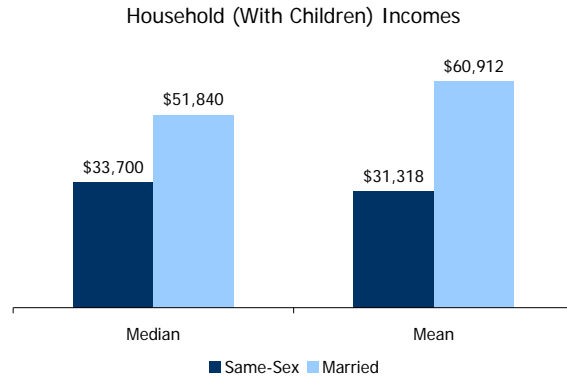


- Same-sex couples are less likely than married couples to own their homes: 63% of same-sex couples in Wyoming own their home, compared to 83% of married couples.

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

- 20% of same-sex couples in Wyoming are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 501 of Wyoming's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.⁷
- In Wyoming, same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2.4 children, compared to 2.0 children for married parents.
- 15% of same-sex parents have only wage earner, compared to 33% of married parents.

- Same-sex parents have far fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Wyoming. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$33,700, or 35% lower than that of married parents (\$51,840). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$31,318, significantly less than \$60,912 for married parents.



CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in Wyoming. While in many respects Wyoming’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	82.4%	92.2%
Black	0.0%	0.4%
Hispanic	8.9%	4.4%
Asian	0.0%	0.6%
American Indian/Alaskan Native*	8.7%	1.2%
Other	0.0%	1.2%
Average age	40.9	47.7
Percent with college degree or better	14.3%	21.8%
Percent employed	60.1%	67.9%
Employment ⁹		
Private employer	57.7%	60.5%
Public employer	37.5%	23.2%
Self-employed [^]	4.8%	15.8%
Veteran status	7.6%	18.5%
Average individual salary		
Men*	\$29,500	\$40,764
Women*	\$11,306	\$18,419
Median individual salary		
Men	\$29,500	\$35,000
Women	\$10,000	\$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	22.8%	17.2%
Percent disabled [^]	54.9%	27.2%
Average household income	\$47,322	\$60,746
Median household income	\$33,700	\$50,720
Income gap between partners*	\$5,411	\$24,552
Single wage earner	19.5%	30.5%
Homeownership	63.0%	82.7%
Percent with children under 18 [^]	19.5%	46.3%

* 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	2.4	2.0
Single wage earner (parents)	14.6%	32.9%
Average household income (parents)*	\$31,318	\$60,912
Median household income (parents)	\$33,700	\$51,840
Homeownership (parents)	100.0%	77.6%

* 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
Albany	37	0.28%
Big Horn	15	0.35%
Campbell	71	0.58%
Carbon	38	0.62%
Converse	20	0.43%
Crook	14	0.61%
Fremont	88	0.65%
Goshen	27	0.53%
Hot Springs	5	0.24%
Johnson	13	0.44%
Laramie	94	0.29%
Lincoln	17	0.32%
Natrona	132	0.49%
Niobrara	7	0.69%
Park	31	0.30%
Platte	14	0.39%
Sheridan	32	0.29%
Sublette	7	0.30%
Sweetwater	39	0.28%
Teton	46	0.60%
Uinta	34	0.50%
Washakie	11	0.34%
Weston	15	0.57%

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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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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