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Census Snapshot: South Carolina

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SOUTH CAROLINA

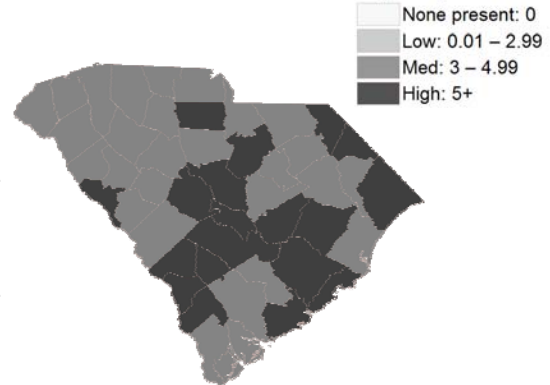
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Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, this report provides demographic and economic information about same-sex couples and same-sex couples raising children in South Carolina. We compare same-sex “unmarried partners,” which the Census Bureau defines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

In many ways, the more than 10,500 same-sex couples living in South 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 South Carolina’s economy. Census data also show that about 21% of same-sex couples in South Carolina 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 SOUTH CAROLINA

- In 2000, there were 7,609 same-sex couples living in South Carolina.²
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 10,563.³ This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 117,033 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in South Carolina.⁴

INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

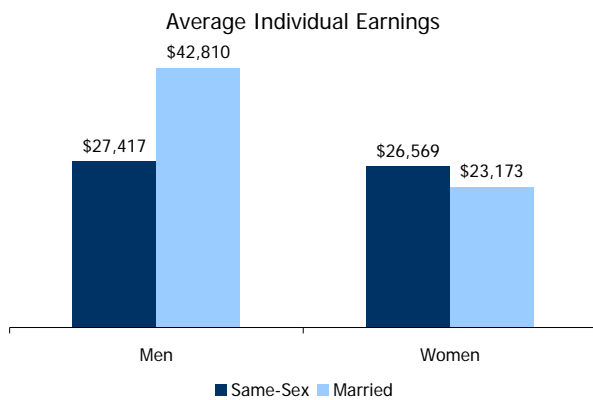
- There are more female same-sex couples (53%) than male same-sex couples (47%) in South Carolina.⁵
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 39 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (48 years old) in South Carolina.

- Same-sex couples live in every county in South Carolina and constitute 0.9% of coupled households and 0.5% of all households in the state. Charleston County reported the most same-sex couples with 799 couples (0.65% of all households in the county), followed by Greenville County with 707 couples (0.47%), and Richland County with 624 couples (0.52%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Allendale County (0.79% of all county households), Calhoun County (0.73%), and Williamsburg County (0.67%).⁶
- South Carolina’s same-sex couples are significantly more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 28% of individuals in same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 21% of married individuals.

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

- Individuals in same-sex couples in South Carolina are significantly more likely to be employed than married individuals: 73% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 65% 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 South Carolina earn \$27,417 each year, significantly less than the \$42,810 average earnings of married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in South Carolina is \$24,000, or 28% less than that of married men (\$33,500).
- Women in same-sex couples in South Carolina earn an average of \$26,569 per year (with a median of \$20,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$23,173 (with a median of \$20,000). Women in same-sex couples earn less than married men as well as men in same-sex couples.



- Individuals in same-sex and married couples in South Carolina are most likely to work in the private sector: 74% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 71% of married individuals; 15% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 17% of married individuals; and 11% of individuals in same-sex and married couples are self-employed.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are more likely to have a college degree: 26% of individuals in same-sex couples, and 24% 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: 12% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 18% of married individuals.

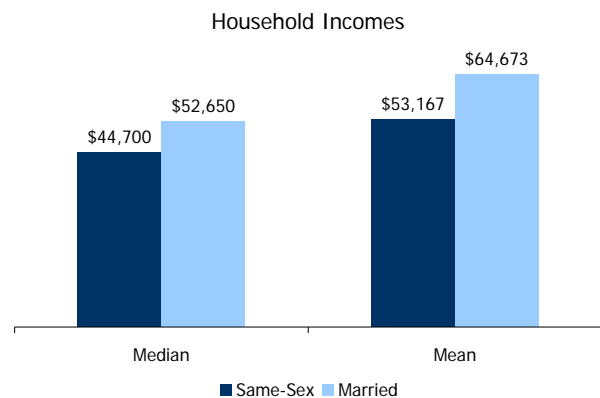
SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN SOUTH CAROLINA DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 25% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 31% of married couples.

- The mean income gap between same-sex partners is \$16,935, compared to \$24,756 for married spouses.
- A larger percentage of same-sex couples in South Carolina have at least one partner who is disabled: 37% of same-sex couples, compared to 33% of married couples.
- 8% 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 SOUTH CAROLINA HAVE FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in South Carolina is \$44,700, less than that of married couples (\$52,650). The average household income of same-sex couples is \$53,167, significantly less than that of married couples (\$64,673).

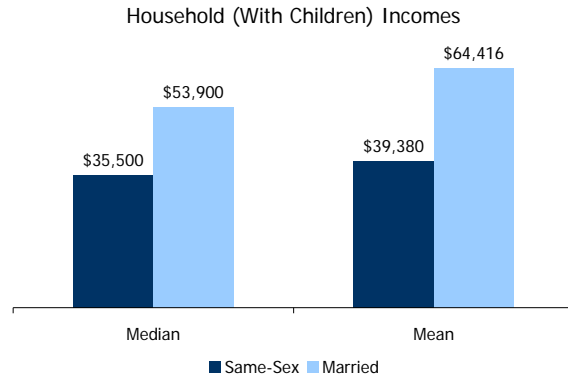


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 64% of same-sex couples in South Carolina own their home, compared to 85% of married couples.

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

- 21% of same-sex couples in South Carolina are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 3,770 of South Carolina's children were living in households headed by same-sex couples.⁷
- In South Carolina, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, two children.
- More than 1% of South Carolina's adopted children (or 279 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.⁸
- 37% of same-sex parents have only one wage earner, compared to 34% of married parents.

- Same-sex parents have far fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in South Carolina. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$35,500, or 34% lower than that of married parents (\$53,900). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$39,380, significantly less than that of married parents (\$64,416).
- While 64% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a significantly larger percentage of married parents (82%) own their home.



CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in South Carolina. While in many respects South Carolina'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* | 72.3% | 78.7% |
| Black | 19.6% | 17.7% |
| Hispanic [^] | 3.2% | 1.7% |
| Asian | 0.4% | 1.0% |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native [^] | 0.9% | 0.3% |
| Other* | 3.5% | 0.6% |
| Average age* | 38.6 | 47.6 |
| Percent with college degree or better | 26.3% | 23.6% |
| Percent employed* | 72.8% | 64.9% |
| Employment ⁹ | | |
| Private employer | 73.6% | 71.3% |
| Public employer | 14.7% | 17.4% |
| Self-employed | 10.8% | 11.1% |
| Veteran status* | 12.0% | 18.1% |
| Average individual salary | | |
| Men* | \$27,417 | \$42,810 |
| Women | \$26,569 | \$23,173 |
| Median individual salary | | |
| Men | \$24,000 | \$33,500 |
| Women | \$20,000 | \$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* | 8.1% | 18.2% |
| Percent disabled | 36.6% | 32.6% |
| Average household income* | \$53,167 | \$64,673 |
| Median household income | \$44,700 | \$52,650 |
| Income gap between partners* | \$16,935 | \$24,756 |
| Single wage earner | 24.5% | 31.4% |
| Homeownership* | 64.4% | 85.5% |
| Percent with children under 18* | 20.5% | 46.1% |

* 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% | 33.7% |
| Average household income (parents)* | \$39,380 | \$64,416 |
| Median household income (parents) | \$35,500 | \$53,900 |
| Homeownership (parents)* | 63.7% | 81.9% |

* 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 |
|--------------|----------------------------|---|
| Abbeville | 46 | 0.45% |
| Aiken | 254 | 0.46% |
| Allendale | 31 | 0.79% |
| Anderson | 284 | 0.43% |
| Bamberg | 33 | 0.54% |
| Barnwell | 52 | 0.58% |
| Beaufort | 222 | 0.49% |
| Berkeley | 286 | 0.57% |
| Calhoun | 43 | 0.73% |
| Charleston | 799 | 0.65% |
| Cherokee | 77 | 0.38% |
| Chester | 76 | 0.59% |
| Chesterfield | 72 | 0.43% |
| Clarendon | 77 | 0.65% |
| Colleton | 69 | 0.48% |
| Darlington | 119 | 0.46% |
| Dillon | 64 | 0.57% |
| Dorchester | 156 | 0.45% |
| Edgefield | 38 | 0.46% |
| Fairfield | 37 | 0.42% |
| Florence | 210 | 0.45% |
| Georgetown | 107 | 0.49% |
| Greenville | 707 | 0.47% |
| Greenwood | 114 | 0.44% |
| Hampton | 46 | 0.62% |
| Horry | 425 | 0.52% |
| Jasper | 33 | 0.47% |
| Kershaw | 112 | 0.55% |
| Lancaster | 114 | 0.49% |
| Laurens | 130 | 0.49% |
| Lee | 27 | 0.39% |
| Lexington | 435 | 0.52% |
| McCormick | 23 | 0.65% |
| Marion | 48 | 0.36% |
| Marlboro | 54 | 0.52% |
| Newberry | 58 | 0.41% |
| Oconee | 117 | 0.43% |
| Orangeburg | 177 | 0.52% |
| Pickens | 156 | 0.38% |
| Richland | 624 | 0.52% |
| Saluda | 26 | 0.36% |
| Spartanburg | 426 | 0.44% |
| Sumter | 167 | 0.44% |
| Union | 55 | 0.46% |
| Williamsburg | 92 | 0.67% |
| York | 291 | 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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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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