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Census Snapshot: California's Black LGB Population

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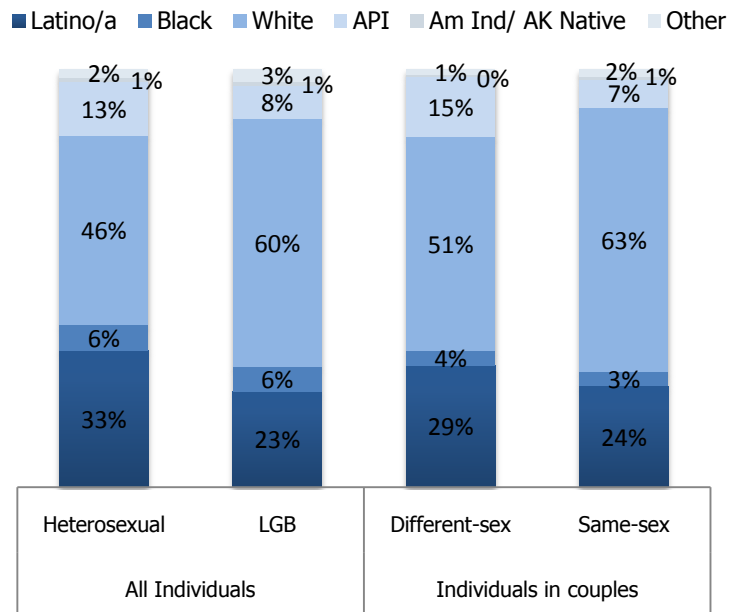
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This report provides a general overview of Black individuals in same-sex couples as well as the broader Black lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) population in California.¹

We use data from the 2005/2006 American Community Survey (ACS), conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, to compare the characteristics of Black people in same-sex couples to their different-sex married counterparts. In all cases, when this report describes characteristics of couples, the data source is the ACS. While the ACS provides an excellent source of information about those in same-sex couples, it cannot provide information about the larger Black LGB population since it includes no explicit question about sexual orientation.

The 2003 and 2005 California Health Interview Surveys (CHIS) ask respondents to disclose their sexual orientation and collect much of the same demographic information included in the ACS. We use data from the CHIS to compare demographic traits between Black LGB and heterosexual men and women (both single and coupled) in order to provide a more well-rounded demographic portrait of California's Black LGB community. In all cases where this report describes characteristics of the LGB community, the data source is the CHIS.²

Race/Ethnicity



Key Findings

- There are an estimated 55,000 Black lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals in California along with approximately 7,400 Black men and women in same-sex couples in the state.
- Just under 9% of all Black men and women in same-sex couples in the United States live in California, second only to New York as the state with the most Black people in same-sex couples.
- Just under 23% of Black men in same-sex couples are U.S. veterans, a rate greater than the 11% for all men in same-sex couples and the 20% for all men different-sex married couples.
- Women comprise a majority among Black people in same-sex couples (55%); the opposite is true for other racial/ethnic groups.
- Almost 55% of Black women and 11% of Black men in same-sex couples are raising children.
- Black same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than those in married couples, with a median household income of \$60,900 compared to \$76,000 for Black people in different-sex married couples.

MORE THAN 55,000 BLACK LESBIAN, GAY, AND BISEXUAL ADULTS LIVE IN CALIFORNIA; 7,394 BLACK INDIVIDUALS ARE IN SAME-SEX COUPLES

- There are an estimated 55,000 LGB Black adults in California, comprising 3.2% of Black adults in California.
- Black individuals make up 6.4% of the state's total LGB population versus 6.0% of the total heterosexual population.
- A similar percentage of those in same-sex couples and different-sex married couples are Black, 6.4% and 6.5% respectively.

LGB AND HETEROSEXUAL BLACK PEOPLE ARE SIMILAR IN AGE

- Approximately 38% of Black men and women in same-sex couples are aged 18-39 compared to 45% of Black men and women in different-sex marriages.
- Of LGB Black people, 47% are aged 18-39 compared to 45% of Black heterosexuals.

LGB BLACK INDIVIDUALS ARE MORE URBAN THAN THEIR HETEROSEXUAL COUNTERPARTS

- Almost 90% of LGB Black people live in urban areas compared to 81% of Black heterosexuals.
- Black heterosexuals are slightly more likely to live in a suburban area (15%) than their LGB (9%) counterparts; 4% of Black heterosexuals live in rural areas compared to 1% of LGB Black people.

BLACK INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE IN AN INTERRACIAL OR INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONSHIP

- About 80% of Black individuals in married different-sex couples are with another Black person, compared to only 49% of Black people in same-sex couples.

WOMEN COMPRISE A MAJORITY OF BLACK PEOPLE IN SAME-SEX COUPLES YET MEN ARE OVERLY REPRESENTED IN THE BLACK LGB POPULATION AT-LARGE

- A unique sex difference exists among Black men and women in same-sex couples; 55% are women and 45% are men; the reverse is true for all other racial/ethnic groups and the entire LGB population.
- Men make up a larger percentage of the overall Black LGB population, (57% to 43%).

LGB BLACK INDIVIDUALS ARE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN CALIFORNIA'S ECONOMY

- The percent employed among Black people in same-sex couples is 77%, significantly larger than the 66% for those in different-sex married couples.
- The percentage of LGB Black individuals who are employed (74%) also exceeds that of Black heterosexuals (64%).

LGB BLACK PEOPLE HAVE RELATIVELY HIGH LEVELS OF EDUCATION

- Black individuals in same-sex couples are significantly more likely to have a college degree (37% vs. 28%) than their different-sex married counterparts.
- Similarly, LGB Black people are more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to have a college degree (36% versus 25%).
- LGB Black men and women have lower rates of college education when compared to the 47% of all LGB Californians who hold at least a college degree.

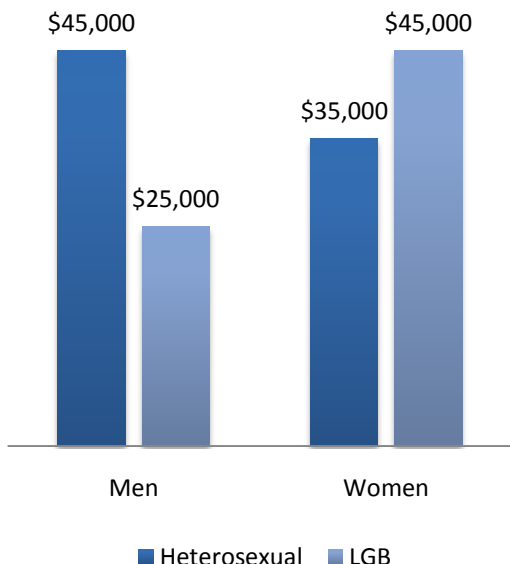
LGB BLACK INDIVIDUALS HAVE ACTIVELY SERVED IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY

- Despite the military's historic policies of excluding LGB people from service, 23% of Black men in same-sex couples are veterans, a rate greater than the 11% for all men in same-sex couples and the 20% for all men different-sex married couples; 5% of Black women in same-sex couples have served in the military, a larger percentage than the 3% of Black women in married heterosexual couples.
- Eleven percent of Black LGB males have served in the military along with 14% of Black LGB women.

BLACK PEOPLE IN SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THOSE IN MARRIED DIFFERENT-SEX COUPLES HAVE SIMILAR EARNINGS

- Black women in same-sex couples have median individual earnings of \$37,000 while the median earnings for Black women in different-sex married couples are \$35,000.
- Black men in same-sex couples have average individual earnings of \$53,421 versus \$52,252 for Black men in different-sex married couples; their median earnings are \$47,000 and \$44,000, respectively.

Median Household income: Black Population



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR HETEROSEXUAL BLACK MEN EXCEEDS THAT OF BLACK LGB MEN

- Gay/Bisexual Black men have a median household income of \$25,000 compared to the \$45,000 of heterosexual Black males.
- Lesbian/bisexual Black women have a median household income of \$45,000 versus \$35,000 of heterosexual Black females.
- LGB Black individuals have lower median household incomes than the larger gay/bisexual and heterosexual population, both at \$55,000.
- Average individual earnings show much more similarity; Gay/Bisexual Black men earn \$53,421 versus the \$52,452 of their heterosexual counterparts and Lesbian/Bisexual Black women earning \$40,985 versus \$41,772 for their heterosexual counterparts.

BLACK INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES AND WITHIN THE LARGER LGB POPULATION IN CALIFORNIA HAVE LOWER HOME OWNERSHIP RATES

- Black people in same-sex couples have a homeownership rate of 59% compared to 66% among Black people in different-sex married couples.

- The LGB Black homeownership rate is 30%, significantly less than the 44% home ownership rate for Black heterosexuals.
- Black people, regardless of sexual orientation, are all less likely to own their homes than the total heterosexual population, 57% of whom own their homes.

MANY BLACK MEN AND WOMEN WITHIN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE RAISING CHILDREN

- Approximately 11% of Black men within same-sex couples and 55% of Black women within same-sex couples are raising children under the age of 18, compared to the 55% of those in married different-sex couples.
- Among all Black LGB individuals, both single and coupled, 2% of men and 39% of women are raising children. The rate for Black women is much higher than that for the overall LGB population, in which 25% of women are raising children.

BLACK SAME-SEX PARENTS ARE RAISING CHILDREN WITH FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN DIFFERENT-SEX MARRIED PARENTS

- Black same-sex parents have limited financial resources to support their children with a median household income of \$60,900 compared to \$76,000 for Black married couples.
- Black parents are also less likely than Black different-sex married parents to own their homes (29% vs. 63%).

Household income: Blacks in couples raising children

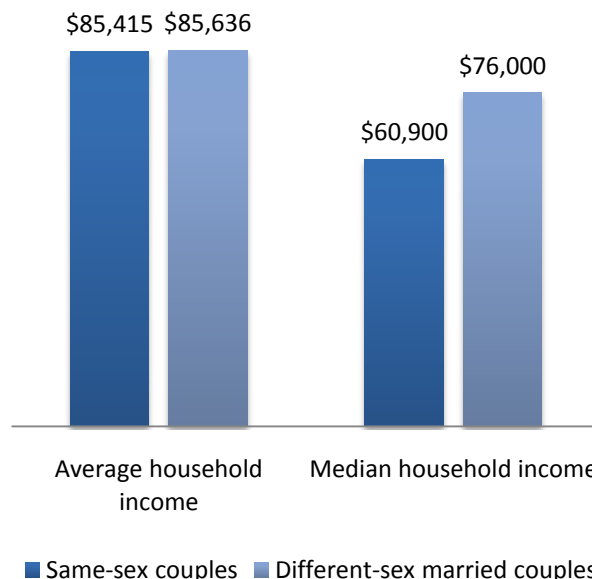


Table One: Characteristics of Black individuals in California

	California Health Interview Survey 2003/2005, Age 18-70		American Community Survey	
	LGB	Heterosexual	In a same-sex couple	In a different-sex married couple
Sex				
Male	57.3%	46.1%	44.8%	54.8%
Female	42.7%	53.9%	55.2%	45.2%
Average age				
18-24	11.9%	16.4%	1.0%^	17.9%
25-39	34.8%	28.8%	36.5%	27.0%
40-64	52.8%	50.2%	58.8%	57.4%
65+	-	4.6%	4.7%^	13.8%
Place of residence				
Urban	89.7%*	81.0%		
Suburban	9.2%	15.4%		
Rural	1.2%*	3.6%		
Percent with a college degree or better	36.1%	24.9%	37.1%^	28.2%
Percent Employed	73.9%	64.1%	76.5%^	66.3%
Median Household Income				
Men	\$25,000	\$45,000		
Women	\$45,000	\$35,000		
Average individual salary				
Men			\$53,421	\$52,252
Women			\$40,985	\$41,772
Median individual salary				
Men			\$47,000	\$44,000
Women			\$37,000	\$35,000
Veteran Status				
Men	11.0%*	27.9%	22.8%	30.4%
Women	14.3%	2.4%	4.6%	2.5 %
Homeownership	30.0%*	44.1%	59.0%	65.7%
Percent with children under 18				
Men	2.3%*	32.9%	10.8%^	55.0%
Women	39.0%*	41.8%	54.8%	55.0%

* Difference significant from heterosexuals at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).

^ Difference significant from different-sex married couples at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).

Table Two: Characteristics of Black individuals in couples with children, ACS only

	In a same-sex couple	In a different-sex couple
Average household income (parents)	\$85,415	\$85,636
Median household income (parents)	\$60,900	\$76,000
Homeownership	28.7%^	62.7%

* Difference significant from heterosexuals at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).

^ Difference significant from different-sex married couples at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).

¹Characteristics of California's gay/lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual population are derived from the 2003 and 2005 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). The CHIS is conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research in collaboration with the California Department of Public Health, the Department of Health Care Services and the Public Health Institute. It is funded by public agencies and private organizations. It is considered a representative sample of the California population. Adults aged 18-70 are asked their sexual orientation along with a variety of questions about their demographic, economic, and health characteristics. In most cases, we combine samples from 2003 and 2005 to increase sample sizes and accuracy for the lesbian, gay, and bisexual respondents. CHIS surveyed over 40,000 California households in each of those years. Estimates of demographic characteristics for individuals in couples are made using an average of the 2005 and 2006 data of the Census Bureau's American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). The American Community Survey contains detailed information about all members of the household, including citizenship, country of origin, and a variety of demographic and economic characteristics.

About the Authors

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