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Census Snapshot: Oklahoma

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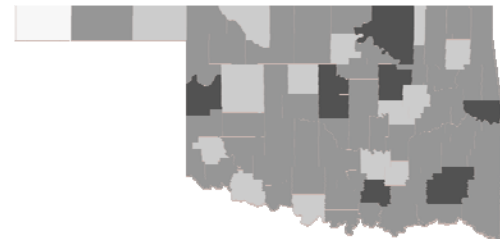
OKLAHOMA

JANUARY 2008

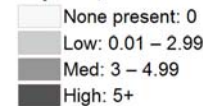
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Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, this report provides demographic and economic information about same-sex couples and same-sex couples raising children in Oklahoma. We compare same-sex “unmarried partners,” which the Census Bureau defines as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

In many ways, the almost 8,200 same-sex couples living in Oklahoma 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 Oklahoma’s economy. Census data also show that 26% of same-sex couples in Oklahoma 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 OKLAHOMA

- In 2000, there were 5,763 same-sex couples living in Oklahoma.²
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 8,159.³ This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 89,561 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Oklahoma.⁴

INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

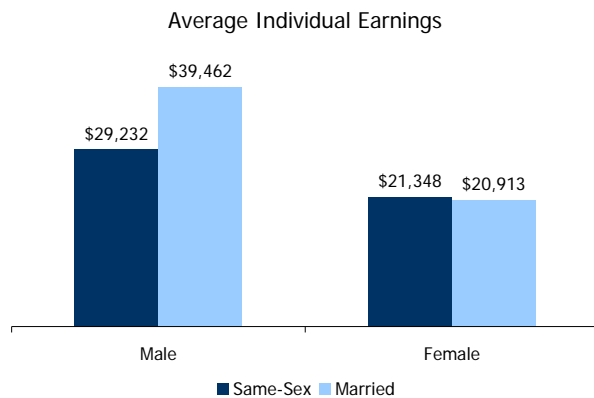
- There are more female same-sex couples (51%) than male same-sex couples (49%) in Oklahoma.⁵
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 38 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (47 years old) in Oklahoma.

- Same-sex couples live in all but 1 county in Oklahoma and constitute 0.7% of coupled households and 0.4% of all households in the state. Oklahoma County reported the most same-sex couples with 1,436 couples (0.54% of all county households), followed by Tulsa County with 1,112 couples (0.49%), and Cleveland County with 324 couples (0.41%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Roger Mills County (0.70% of all county households), Pushmataha County (0.65%), and Logan County (0.61%).⁶
- Oklahoma’s same-sex couples are more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 21% of same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 18% of married couples.

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

- Individuals in same-sex couples in Oklahoma are more likely to be employed than are married individuals: 67% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 64% 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 Oklahoma earn \$29,232 each year, significantly less than \$39,462 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Oklahoma is \$24,000, or 23% less than that of married men (\$31,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in Oklahoma earn an average of \$21,348 per year (with a median of \$18,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$20,913 (with a median of \$18,000). Women in same-sex couples earn less than married men as well as men in same-sex couples.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Oklahoma are more likely to work in the private sector: 70% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 66% of married individuals; 20% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 19% of married individuals; and 10% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 14% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are significantly more likely to have a college degree: 32% of individuals in same-sex couples, and 22% 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.

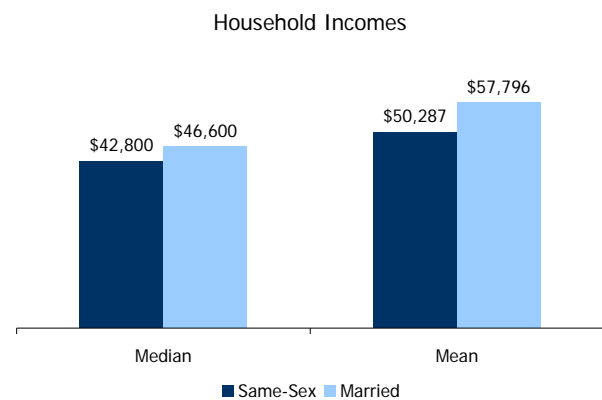
SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN OKLAHOMA DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

- 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 33% of married couples.

- The income gap between same-sex partners is \$15,772, compared to \$22,723 for married couples.
- 33% of same-sex and married couples have at least one partner who is disabled.
- 6% of same-sex couples have at least one partner who is age 65 or older, compared to 20% of married couples.

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

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Oklahoma is \$42,800, less than that of married couples (\$46,600). The average household income of same-sex couples is \$50,287, significantly less than \$57,796 for married couples.

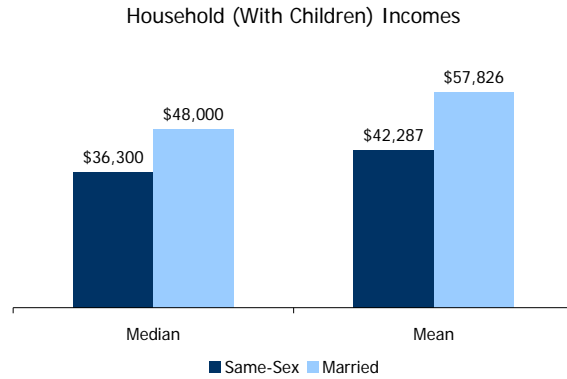


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 52% of same-sex couples in Oklahoma own their home, compared to 82% of married couples.

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

- 26% of same-sex couples in Oklahoma are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 4,075 of Oklahoma's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.⁷
- In Oklahoma, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- Roughly 1% of Oklahoma's adopted children (or 183 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.⁸
- 25% of same-sex couples with children have only one wage earner, compared to 36% of married parents.

- Same-sex parents have far fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Oklahoma. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$36,300, or 24% lower than that of married parents (\$48,000). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$42,287, significantly less than \$57,826 for married parents.
- While 34% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a significantly larger percentage of married parents (76%) own their home.



CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in Oklahoma. While in many respects Oklahoma'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.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity ⁹		
White	79.1%	81.9%
Black	4.3%	4.0%
Hispanic	2.3%	3.5%
Asian	1.9%	1.4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	8.8%	5.9%
Other	3.7%	3.4%
Average age	38.3	47.5*
Percent with a college degree or better	32.3%	22.1%*
Percent Employed	67.4%	63.7%
Employment ⁹		
Private employer	69.7%	66.4%
Public employer	20.3%	18.9%
Self-employed	10.0%	14.2%
Veteran Status	10.7%	18.1%*
Average individual salary		
Men	\$29,232	\$39,462*
Woman	\$21,348	\$20,913
Median individual salary		
Men	\$24,000	\$31,000
Woman	\$18,000	\$18,000

* 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	5.9%	19.5%*
Percent disabled	32.9%	33.2%
Average household income	\$50,287	\$57,796^
Median household income	\$42,800	\$46,600
Income gap between partners	\$15,772	\$22,723*
Single wage earner	24.6%	32.8%^
Homeownership	52.5%	81.5%*
Percent with children under 18	26.0%	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	1.9	1.9
Single wage earner (parents)	24.5%	36.2%
Average household income (parents)	\$42,287	\$57,826*
Median household income (parents)	\$36,300	\$48,000
Homeownership	34.3%	76.1%*

* 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
Adair	31	0.41%
Alfalfa	8	0.36%
Atoka	17	0.34%
Beaver	4	0.18%
Beckham	25	0.34%
Blaine	18	0.43%
Bryan	52	0.36%
Caddo	41	0.37%
Canadian	106	0.34%
Carter	70	0.39%
Cherokee	61	0.38%
Choctaw	24	0.39%
Cimarron	0	0.00%
Cleveland	324	0.41%
Coal	7	0.29%
Comanche	129	0.32%
Cotton	13	0.50%
Craig	17	0.30%
Creek	128	0.51%
Custer	23	0.23%
Delaware	67	0.45%
Dewey	4	0.20%
Ellis	6	0.34%
Garfield	78	0.34%
Garvin	33	0.30%
Grady	62	0.36%
Grant	9	0.43%
Greer	1	0.04%
Harmon	5	0.39%
Harper	6	0.40%
Haskell	21	0.45%
Hughes	22	0.41%
Jackson	36	0.34%
Jefferson	7	0.26%
Johnston	21	0.52%
Kay	62	0.32%
Kingfisher	15	0.29%
Kiowa	17	0.40%
Latimer	13	0.33%
Le Flore	74	0.41%
Lincoln	59	0.48%
Logan	76	0.61%
Love	12	0.35%
McClain	48	0.46%
McCurtain	63	0.48%
McIntosh	31	0.38%
Major	13	0.43%
Marshall	17	0.32%

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Mayes	37	0.25%
Murray	19	0.38%
Muskogee	97	0.37%
Noble	8	0.18%
Nowata	19	0.46%
Okfuskee	12	0.28%
Oklahoma	1436	0.54%
Okmulgee	45	0.29%
Osage	87	0.52%
Ottawa	61	0.47%
Pawnee	26	0.41%
Payne	113	0.42%
Pittsburg	63	0.37%
Pontotoc	40	0.29%
Pottawatomie	96	0.39%
Pushmataha	31	0.65%
Roger Mills	10	0.70%
Rogers	94	0.37%
Seminole	29	0.30%
Sequoyah	74	0.50%
Stephens	54	0.31%
Texas	27	0.38%
Tillman	8	0.22%
Tulsa	1112	0.49%
Wagoner	82	0.39%
Washington	54	0.27%
Washita	17	0.38%
Woods	7	0.19%
Woodward	29	0.41%

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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M.V. Lee Badgett is Research Director at the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law, and Director of the Center for Public Policy and Administration at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she is also on the faculty of the Department of Economics. She studies family policy and employment discrimination related to sexual orientation.

Gary J. Gates is Senior Research Fellow at the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. 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*, 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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