

**UCLA**

**Census Snapshots**

**Title**

Census Snapshot: New York

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/076463pz>

**Authors**

Romero, Adam P.  
Rosky, Clifford J  
Badgett, M.V. Lee  
et al.

**Publication Date**

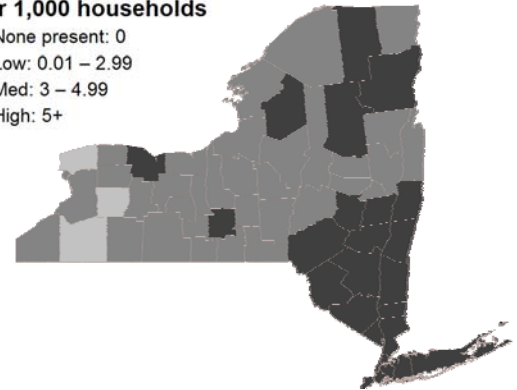
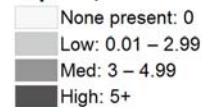
2008-04-01

**Adam P. Romero, *Public Policy Fellow***  
**Clifford J. Rosky, *Research Fellow***  
**M.V. Lee Badgett, *Research Director***  
**Gary J. Gates, *Senior Research Fellow***

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 New York. 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 New York.<sup>1</sup>

In many ways, the more than 50,000 same-sex couples living in New York 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 New York’s economy. Census data also show that 20% of same-sex couples in New York 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 home ownership.

Same-sex couple households  
per 1,000 households



### SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGB POPULATION IN NEW YORK

- In 2000, there were 46,490 same-sex couples living in New York.<sup>2</sup>
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 50,854.<sup>3</sup> This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 592,337 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in New York.<sup>4</sup>

### INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

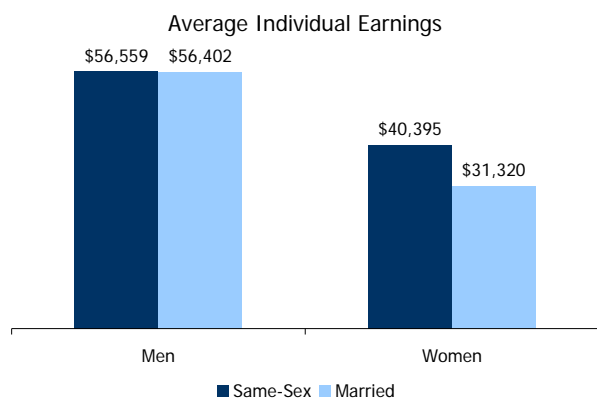
- There are more male same-sex couples (53%) than female same-sex couples (47%) in New York.<sup>5</sup>
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 41 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (49 years old) in New York.

- Same-sex couples live in every county in New York and constitute 1.3% of coupled households and 0.7% of all households in the state. New York County (Manhattan) reported the most same-sex couples with 9,886 couples (1.34% of all county households), followed by Kings County (Brooklyn) with 6,998 couples (0.79%), and Queens County with 5,180 couples (0.66%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are New York County (1.34% of all county households), Tompkins County (1.05%), and Ulster County (0.80%).<sup>6</sup>
- New York’s same-sex couples are significantly more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 32% of individuals in same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 27% of married individuals.

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

- Individuals in same-sex couples in New York are significantly more likely to be employed than married individuals: 77% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 63% of married individuals.

- Contrary to a popular stereotype, the annual earnings of men in same-sex couples are similar to those of married men. On average, men in same-sex couples in New York earn \$56,559 each year, compared to \$56,402 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex and married couples in New York is \$40,000.
- Women in same-sex couples in New York earn an average of \$40,395 per year (with a median of \$30,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$31,320 (with a median of \$24,000). 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 New York are most likely to work in the private sector: 71% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 69% of married individuals; 16% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 19% of married individuals; and 13% 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: 49% of individuals in same-sex couples and 30% 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: 5% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 13% of married individuals.

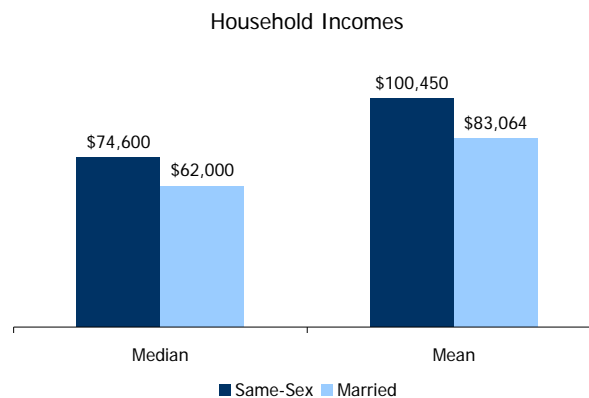
### SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN NEW YORK DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 23% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 33% of married couples.

- The average income gap between same-sex partners in New York is \$36,719, greater than \$34,194 for married spouses.
- 27% of same-sex and 29% of married couples in New York have at least one partner who is disabled.
- 7% of same-sex couples in New York have at least one partner who is age 65 or older, compared to 19% of married couples.

### SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN NEW YORK HAVE HIGHER INCOMES BUT LOWER HOME OWNERSHIP RATES THAN MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in New York is \$74,600, compared to \$62,000 for married couples. The average household income of same-sex couples is \$100,450, compared to \$83,064 for married couples.

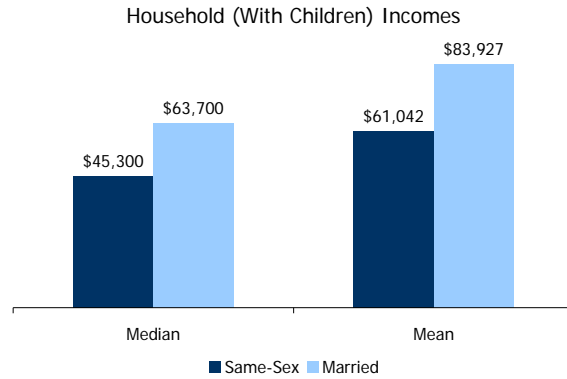


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 47% of same-sex couples in New York own their home, compared to 71% of married couples.

### SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE RAISING CHILDREN IN NEW YORK, YET WITH FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRIED PARENTS

- 20% of same-sex couples in New York are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 18,335 of New York's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.<sup>7</sup>
- In New York, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- 7% of New York's adopted children (or 7,042 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.<sup>8</sup>
- 34% of New York's same-sex parents have only one wage earner, compared to 37% of married parents.

- Same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in New York. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$45,300, or 29% lower than that of married parents (\$63,700). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$61,042, significantly less than \$83,927 for married parents.
- While 40% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a significantly larger percentage of married parents (68%) own their home.



## CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in New York. While in many respects New York'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 home ownership.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity <sup>9</sup>		
White*	67.9%	73.3%
Black*	11.7%	8.2%
Hispanic*	14.3%	10.3%
Asian*	3.0%	6.1%
American Indian/Alaskan Native*	0.4%	0.2%
Other*	2.7%	1.9%
Average age*	41.1	48.5
Percent with college degree or better*	48.8%	30.0%
Percent employed*	77.1%	63.2%
Employment <sup>9</sup>		
Private employer <sup>^</sup>	71.2%	69.0%
Public employer*	15.9%	18.8%
Self-employed	12.8%	11.9%
Veteran status*	5.1%	13.0%
Average individual salary		
Men	\$56,559	\$56,402
Women*	\$40,395	\$31,320
Median individual salary		
Men	\$40,000	\$40,000
Women	\$30,000	\$24,000

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).  
<sup>^</sup> Difference significant at the 10% level or better (two-tailed tests).

	Same-Sex	Married
At least one partner 65 or older*	7.1%	19.4%
Percent disabled <sup>^</sup>	27.0%	29.4%
Average household income*	\$100,450	\$83,064
Median household income	\$74,600	\$62,000
Average income gap	\$36,719	\$34,194
Single wage earner*	23.1%	32.5%
Homeownership*	47.4%	71.0%
Percent with children under 18*	20.1%	49.0%

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).  
<sup>^</sup> 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*	1.8	2.0
Single wage earner (parents)	33.6%	36.7%
Average household income (parents)*	\$61,042	\$83,927
Median household income (parents)	\$45,300	\$63,700
Homeownership (parents)*	40.2%	68.0%

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).  
<sup>^</sup> 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	758	0.63%
Allegany	59	0.33%
Bronx	2936	0.63%
Broome	304	0.38%
Cattaraugus	96	0.30%
Cayuga	114	0.37%
Chautauqua	211	0.39%
Chemung	129	0.37%
Chenango	79	0.40%
Clinton	103	0.35%
Columbia	185	0.75%
Cortland	86	0.47%
Delaware	99	0.51%
Dutchess	545	0.55%
Erie	1378	0.36%
Essex	83	0.55%
Franklin	92	0.51%
Fulton	91	0.42%
Genesee	72	0.32%
Greene	101	0.55%
Hamilton	14	0.59%
Herkimer	117	0.45%
Jefferson	150	0.37%
Kings (Brooklyn)	6998	0.79%
Lewis	55	0.55%
Livingston	83	0.37%
Madison	92	0.36%
Monroe	1647	0.57%
Montgomery	65	0.32%
Nassau	2293	0.51%
New York (Manhattan)	9886	1.34%
Niagara	248	0.28%
Oneida	373	0.41%
Onondaga	904	0.50%
Ontario	168	0.44%
Orange	667	0.58%
Orleans	49	0.32%
Oswego	172	0.38%
Otsego	90	0.39%
Putnam	220	0.67%
Queens	5180	0.66%
Rensselaer	307	0.51%
Richmond (Staten Island)	906	0.58%
Rockland	567	0.61%
St. Lawrence	185	0.46%
Saratoga	358	0.46%
Schenectady	254	0.43%
Schoharie	64	0.53%

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Schuyler	26	0.35%
Seneca	49	0.39%
Steuben	147	0.38%
Suffolk	2952	0.63%
Sullivan	175	0.63%
Tioga	68	0.34%
Tompkins	384	1.05%
Ulster	537	0.80%
Warren	105	0.41%
Washington	93	0.41%
Wayne	134	0.38%
Westchester	2112	0.63%
Wyoming	40	0.27%
Yates	35	0.39%

## 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.

**Clifford J. Rosky** is Research Fellow at the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. J.D. Yale Law School; B.A., *summa cum laude*, Amherst College. His current research examines the significance of gender in family law cases involving lesbian and gay parents.

**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. Ph.D UC Berkeley. 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. Ph.D Carnegie Mellon. He studies the demographic and economic characteristics of the lesbian and gay population.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Simmons & O'Connell, *supra* note 2.

<sup>6</sup> 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).

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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>.

<sup>9</sup> Due to rounding, percent may not add to 100.

For more information, contact:  
**The Williams Institute**  
UCLA School of Law  
Box 951476  
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1476  
T (310)267-4382  
F (310)825-7270  
[williamsinstitute@law.ucla.edu](mailto:williamsinstitute@law.ucla.edu)  
[www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute](http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute)