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## ALASKA

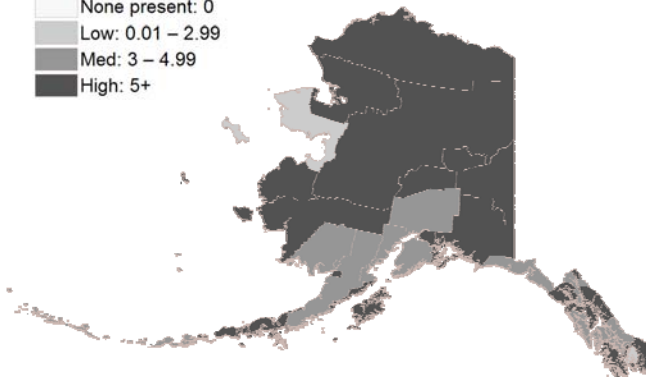
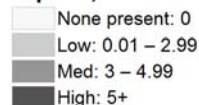
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Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, this report provides demographic and economic information about same-sex couples and same-sex couples raising children in Alaska. We compare same-sex “unmarried partners,” which the Census Bureau defines as an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

In many ways, the more than 1,600 same-sex couples living in Alaska are similar to married couples. According to Census 2000, they live throughout the State, are racially and ethnically diverse, have partners that depend upon one another financially, and actively participate in Alaska’s economy. Census data also show that more than 44% of same-sex couples in Alaska are raising children. However, same-sex couples, including those with children, have fewer economic resources to provide for their families than do their married counterparts: they have lower household incomes and lower rates of home ownership.

Same-sex couple households  
per 1,000 households



### SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGBT POPULATION IN ALASKA

- In 2000, there were 1,180 same-sex couples living in Alaska.<sup>2</sup>
- The number of same-sex couples increased to 1,644 by 2005.<sup>3</sup> This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were almost 19,000 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Alaska.<sup>4</sup>

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

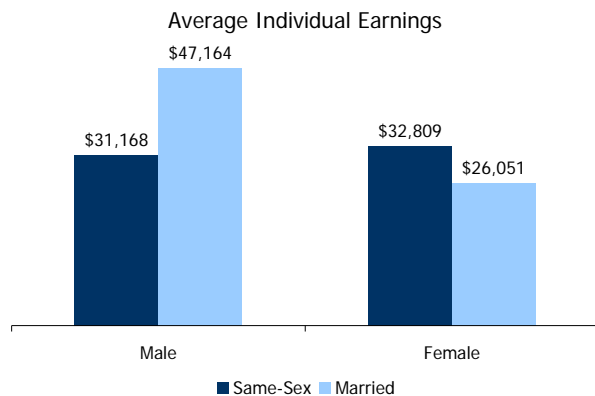
- There are more female same-sex couples (59%) than male same-sex couples (41%) in Alaska.<sup>5</sup>
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 37 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (44 years old) in Alaska.

- Same-sex couples live in every part of Alaska and constitute 0.9% of coupled households and 0.5% of all households in the state. Anchorage reported the most same-sex couples with 533 couples (0.6% of all households in the municipality), followed by Fairbanks North Star with 151 couples (0.5% of all households in the borough), and Matanuska-Susitna with 85 couples (0.4% of all households in the borough). The geographic areas with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Denali (0.9% of all households in the borough) and Bethel (0.8% of all households in the area).<sup>6</sup>
- Alaska’s same-sex couples are more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 34% of same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 22% of married couples.

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

- Individuals in same-sex couples in Alaska are more likely to be employed than are married individuals: 71% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 66% of married individuals.

- Contrary to a popular stereotype, the annual earnings of men in same-sex couples are significantly lower than married men. On average, men in same-sex couples in Alaska earn \$31,168 each year, significantly less than \$47,164 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Alaska is \$27,200, or 32% less than that of married men (\$40,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in Alaska earn an average of \$32,809 per year (with a median of \$30,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$26,051 (with a median of \$23,900). Women in same-sex couples earn less than married men.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Alaska are more likely to work in the private sector: 62% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 56% of married individuals; 37% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 31% of married individuals; and 1% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 12% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples in Alaska are more likely to have a college degree: 31% of individuals in same-sex couples and 27% 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 19% of married individuals.

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

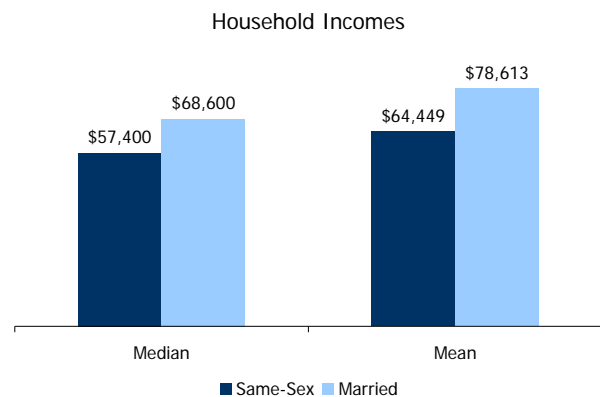
- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. Almost one in

four same-sex couples (23%) have only one wage earner, compared to about one in three (35%) of married couples.

- A larger percentage of same-sex couples in Alaska have at least one partner who is disabled: 34% of same-sex couples, compared to 23% of married couples.
- 3% of same-sex couples have at least one partner over the age of 65, compared to 9% of married couples.

### SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN ALASKA HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Alaska is \$57,400, less than that of married couples (\$68,600). The average household income of same-sex couples is \$64,449, significantly less than \$78,613 for married couples.

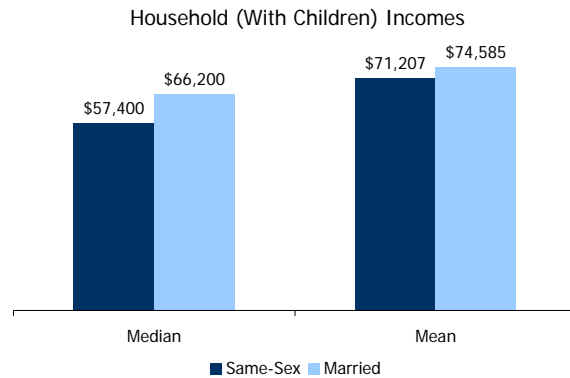


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 55% of same-sex couples in Alaska own their home, compared to 75% of married couples.

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

- More than 44% of same-sex couples in Alaska are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 1,335 of Alaska's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.<sup>7</sup>
- In Alaska, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- Roughly 9% of Alaska's adopted children (or 594 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.<sup>8</sup>

- Same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$57,400, or 13% lower than that of married parents (\$66,200). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$71,207, less than \$74,585 for married parents.
- While 61% of same-sex couples with children own a home, a larger percentage of married parents (71%) own a home.



## CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in Alaska. While in many respects Alaska's same-sex couples look like married couples, they—including those with children—have fewer economic resources than married couples to provide for their families and lower rates of home ownership.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity <sup>9</sup>		
White	65.7%	77.7% <sup>^</sup>
Black	7.4%	2.7% <sup>^</sup>
Hispanic	4.9%	3.2%
Asian	5.3%	4.5%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	12.0%	9.3%
Other	4.7%	2.7%
Average age	37.3	43.9*
Percent with a college degree or better	31.3%	27.1%
Percent Employed	71.0%	66.3%
Employment		
Private employer	61.7%	56.3%
Public employer	37.3%	30.9%
Self-employed	1%	12.4%*
Veteran Status	4.9%	18.9%*
Average individual salary		
Men	\$31,168	\$47,164*
Woman	\$32,809	\$26,051 <sup>^</sup>
Median individual salary		
Men	\$27,200	\$40,000
Woman	\$30,000	\$23,900

\* 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 over 65	2.8%	9.4%
Percent disabled	34.0%	22.9%
Average household income	\$64,449	\$78,613*
Median household income	\$57,400	\$68,600
Income gap between partners	\$14,093	\$29,386*
Single wage earner	23.1%	34.7%
Homeownership	55.3%	74.7%*
Percent with children under 18	44.2%	56.4%

\* 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	2.1
Single wage earner (parents)	13.3%	38.2%
Average household income (parents)	\$71,207	\$74,585
Median household income (parents)	\$57,400	\$66,200
Homeownership	60.6%	71.0%

\* 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 geographic area

Geographic Area	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Aleutians East Borough	4	0.76%
Aleutians West Census Area	5	0.39%
Anchorage Municipality	533	0.56%
Bethel Census Area	35	0.83%
Bristol Bay Borough	3	0.61%
Denali Borough	7	0.89%
Dillingham Census Area	6	0.39%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	151	0.51%
Haines Borough	3	0.30%
Juneau City and Borough	91	0.79%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	83	0.45%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	12	0.22%
Kodiak Island Borough	26	0.59%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	2	0.34%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	85	0.41%
Nome Census Area	7	0.26%
North Slope Borough	14	0.66%
Northwest Arctic Borough	10	0.56%
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area	13	0.57%
Sitka City and Borough	11	0.34%
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	8	0.58%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	15	0.71%
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	21	0.54%
Wade Hampton Census Area	11	0.69%
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area	10	0.39%
Yakutat City and Borough	1	0.38%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	13	0.56%

## About the Authors

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**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.

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<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.

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