# CENSUS SNAPSHOT 

## MISSISSI PPI

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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 Mississippi. 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 Mississippi. ${ }^{1}$


In many ways, the more than 4,700 same-sex couples living in Mississippi 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 Mississippi's economy. Census data also show that $20 \%$ of same-sex couples in Mississippi are raising children. However, same-sex couples, especially 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 COUPLES AND THE LGBT POPULATI ON IN MI SSI SSI PPI

- In 2000, there were 4,774 same-sex couples living in Mississippi. ${ }^{2}$
- In 2005, there were almost 49,000 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Mississippi. ${ }^{3}$


## I NDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHI CALLY AND GEOGRAPHI CALLY DIVERSE

- There are more female same-sex couples (53\%) than male same-sex couples (47\%) living in Mississippi. ${ }^{4}$
- Mississippi's same-sex couples are much more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: $50 \%$ of same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to $23 \%$ of married couples.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 44 years old, and significantly younger than married individuals (47 years old) in Mississippi.
- Same-sex couples live in every county in Mississippi and constitute $0.8 \%$ of coupled households and $0.5 \%$ of all households in the State. Hinds County reported the most same-sex couples with 441 couples ( $0.48 \%$ of all households in the county), followed by Harrison County with 352 couples ( $0.49 \%$ ), Rankin County with 204 couples ( $0.48 \%$ ), and Jackson County with 183 couples $(0.38 \%)$. The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Tallahatchie County ( $0.82 \%$ of all county households), Marshall County ( $0.74 \%$ ), Hancock County ( $0.70 \%$ ), and Issaquena County ( $0.69 \%$ ). ${ }^{5}$


## PEOPLE I N SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE ACTI VELY ENGAGED IN THE STATE ECONOMY

- Individuals in same-sex and married couples in Mississippi are about as likely to be employed: $57 \%$ of individuals in same-sex couples and 63\% of married individuals are employed.
- 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 Mississippi earn $\$ 24,481$ each year, significantly less than $\$ 39,473$ for married men. The median income of men in samesex couples in Mississippi is $\$ 20,000$, or $35 \%$ less than that of married men $(\$ 30,700)$.
- Women in same-sex couples in Mississippi earn an average of $\$ 21,781$ per year (with a median of $\$ 16,000$ ), slightly more than married women, whose earnings average $\$ 21,317$ (with a median of $\$ 18,000$ ). Women in same-sex couples earn, on average, less than both married men and men in same-sex couples in Mississippi.

- Individuals in same-sex couples in Mississippi are more likely to work in the private sector: 79\% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to $69 \%$ of married individuals; $18 \%$ of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to $19 \%$ of married individuals; and $3 \%$ of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to $12 \%$ of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are less likely to have a college degree: $13 \%$ of individuals in samesex couples and 19\% 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 $16 \%$ of married individuals.


## SAME-SEX PARTNERS I N MI SSI SSI PPI DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SI MI LAR TO MARRI ED COUPLES

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. Almost one in
three same-sex couples ( $30 \%$ ) have only one wage earner, compared to more than one in three (34\%) married couples.
- $50 \%$ of same-sex couples in Mississippi have at least one partner who is disabled, compared to $37 \%$ of married couples.
- $13 \%$ of same-sex couples in Mississippi have at least one partner over the age of 65 , compared to $18 \%$ of married couples.


## SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN MI SSISSI PPI HAVE FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Mississippi is $\$ 32,000,31 \%$ less than that of married couples ( $\$ 46,500$ ). The average household income of same-sex couples in Mississippi is $\$ 43,481$, significantly less than that of married couples ( $\$ 58,028$ ).

Household Incomes


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 60\% of samesex couples in Mississippi own their home, compared to $85 \%$ of married couples.


## SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE RAI SI NG CHI LDREN I N MI SSI SSI PPI , YET WI TH FAR FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRI ED PARENTS

- $35 \%$ of same-sex couples in Mississippi are raising children under the age of 18 .
- An estimated 2,839 of Mississippi's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples. ${ }^{6}$
- In Mississippi, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- Almost 2\% of Mississippi's adopted children (or 286 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent. ${ }^{7}$
- Same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Mississippi. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is $\$ 30,600,36 \%$ lower than that of married parents $(\$ 48,000)$. The average household income of same-sex couples with children is $\$ 36,153$, significantly less than $\$ 58,033$ for married parents.
- While $62 \%$ of same-sex couples with children own their home, a much larger percentage of married parents ( $82 \%$ ) own their home.

Household (With Children) Incomes


## CONCLUSI ON

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

| Table One: Characteristics of individuals in couples |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Same-Sex | Married |
| Race/Ethnicity ${ }^{8}$ |  |  |
| White | 49.9\% | 77.0\%* |
| Black | 46.2\% | 20.5\%* |
| Hispanic | 2.8\% | 1.0\% ${ }^{\wedge}$ |
| Asian | <.1\% | 0.7\% |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 0.5\% | 0.3\% |
| Other | 0.5\% | 0.5\% |
| Average age | 43.6 | 47.2* |
| Percent with a college degree or better | 13.3\% | 19.4\% ${ }^{\text {^ }}$ |
| Percent Employed | 57.3\% | 63.2\% |
| Employment ${ }^{8}$ |  |  |
| Private employer | 78.9\% | 69.0\%* |
| Public employer | 18.1\% | 18.6\% |
| Self-employed | 3.0\% | 12.0\%* |
| Veteran Status | 11.9\% | 15.8\% |
| Average individual salary |  |  |
| Men | \$24,481 | \$39,473* |
| Woman | \$21,781 | \$21,317 |
| Median individual salary |  |  |
| Men | \$20,000 | \$30,700 |
| Woman | \$16,000 | \$18,000 |
| * Difference significant at the $5 \%$ level or better (two-tailed tests). <br> ^ Difference significant at the $10 \%$ level or better (two-tailed tests). |  |  |


|  | Same-Sex | Married |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| At least one partner over 65 | 13.2\% | 18.2\% |
| Percent disabled | 49.9\% | 36.5\%* |
| Average household income | \$43,481 | \$58,028* |
| Median household income | \$32,000 | \$46,500 |
| Income gap between partners | \$13,157 | \$22,725 |
| Single wage earner | 29.0\% | 33.7\% |
| Homeownership | 59.6\% | 85.4\%* |
| Percent with children under 18 | 34.8\% | 48.4\%* |
| * Difference significant at the $5 \%$ level or better (two-tailed tests). <br> ^ Difference significant at the $10 \%$ level or better (two-tailed tests). |  |  |
| Table Three: Characteristics of couples with children |  |  |
|  | Same-Sex parents | Married parents |
| Average number of children under 18 in the household | 1.7 | 1.9 |
| Single wage earner (parents) | 29.7\% | 35.3\% |
| Average household income (parents) | \$36,153 | \$58,033* |
| Median household income (parents) | \$30,600 | \$48,000 |
| Homeownership | 62.3\% | 81.5\% |
| * Difference significant at the $5 \%$ level or better (two-tailed tests). <br> ^ 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 samesex couples | Percent of samesex couples out of all households | County | Number of samesex couples | Percent of samesex couples out of all households |
| Adams | 78 | 0.57\% | Montgomery | 26 | 0.55\% |
| Alcorn | 54 | 0.38\% | Neshoba | 40 | 0.37\% |
| Amite | 26 | 0.49\% | Newton | 25 | 0.30\% |
| Attala | 41 | 0.54\% | Noxubee | 16 | 0.36\% |
| Benton | 9 | 0.30\% | Oktibbeha | 52 | 0.33\% |
| Bolivar | 78 | 0.57\% | Panola | 79 | 0.65\% |
| Calhoun | 22 | 0.37\% | Pearl River | 105 | 0.58\% |
| Carroll | 21 | 0.52\% | Perry | 18 | 0.41\% |
| Chickasaw | 26 | 0.36\% | Pike | 58 | 0.39\% |
| Choctaw | 17 | 0.46\% | Pontotoc | 48 | 0.48\% |
| Claiborne | 17 | 0.46\% | Prentiss | 35 | 0.36\% |
| Clarke | 32 | 0.46\% | Quitman | 23 | 0.65\% |
| Clay | 34 | 0.42\% | Rankin | 204 | 0.48\% |
| Coahoma | 48 | 0.45\% | Scott | 54 | 0.53\% |
| Copiah | 41 | 0.40\% | Sharkey | 14 | 0.65\% |
| Covington | 30 | 0.42\% | Simpson | 53 | 0.53\% |
| DeSoto | 168 | 0.43\% | Smith | 21 | 0.35\% |
| Forrest | 101 | 0.37\% | Stone | 22 | 0.46\% |
| Franklin | 7 | 0.22\% | Sunflower | 53 | 0.55\% |
| George | 19 | 0.28\% | Tallahatchie | 43 | 0.82\% |
| Greene | 20 | 0.48\% | Tate | 43 | 0.49\% |
| Grenada | 45 | 0.51\% | Tippah | 36 | 0.44\% |
| Hancock | 118 | 0.70\% | Tishomingo | 35 | 0.44\% |
| Harrison | 352 | 0.49\% | Tunica | 15 | 0.46\% |
| Hinds | 441 | 0.48\% | Union | 35 | 0.36\% |
| Holmes | 29 | 0.40\% | Walthall | 20 | 0.36\% |
| Humphreys | 14 | 0.37\% | Warren | 73 | 0.39\% |
| Issaquena | 5 | 0.69\% | Washington | 116 | 0.52\% |
| Itawamba | 37 | 0.42\% | Wayne | 43 | 0.55\% |
| Jackson | 183 | 0.38\% | Webster | 23 | 0.59\% |
| J asper | 32 | 0.48\% | Wilkinson | 17 | 0.48\% |
| Jefferson | 18 | 0.54\% | Winston | 28 | 0.37\% |
| Jefferson Davis | 29 | 0.56\% | Yalobusha | 24 | 0.46\% |
| Jones | 109 | 0.45\% | Yazoo | 48 | 0.52\% |
| Kemper | 17 | 0.43\% |  |  |  |
| Lafayette | 52 | 0.36\% |  |  |  |
| Lamar | 38 | 0.26\% |  |  |  |
| Lauderdale | 144 | 0.48\% |  |  |  |
| Lawrence | 23 | 0.46\% |  |  |  |
| Leake | 40 | 0.53\% |  |  |  |
| Lee | 133 | 0.46\% |  |  |  |
| Leflore | 49 | 0.38\% |  |  |  |
| Lincoln | 42 | 0.33\% |  |  |  |
| Lowndes | 111 | 0.49\% |  |  |  |
| Madison | 104 | 0.38\% |  |  |  |
| Marion | 39 | 0.42\% |  |  |  |
| Marshall | 90 | 0.74\% |  |  |  |
| Monroe | 46 | 0.32\% |  |  |  |

## About the Authors

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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, p. 11, apx. 1, available at http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publicat ions/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.
${ }^{4}$ Simmons \& O'Connell, supra note 2.
${ }^{5}$ 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).
${ }^{6}$ 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.
${ }^{7}$ 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.
${ }^{8}$ Due to rounding, percent may not add to 100.

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