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Census Snapshot: Massachusetts

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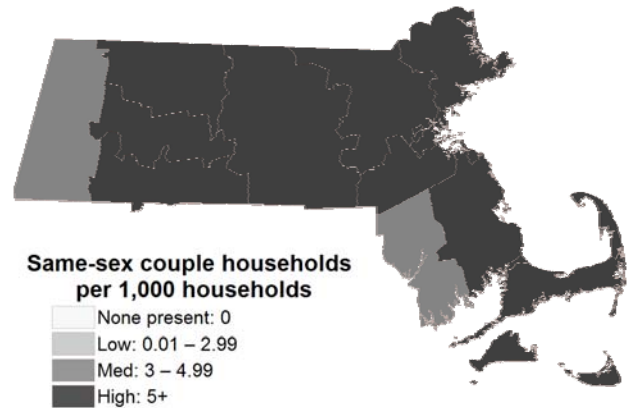
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MASSACHUSETTS

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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 Massachusetts. 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 Massachusetts.¹



In many ways, the nearly 24,000 same-sex couples living in Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts’s economy. Census data also show that 18% of same-sex couples in Massachusetts are raising children, and they have similar economic resources to provide for their families as married couples.

SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGB POPULATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

- In 2000, there were 17,099 same-sex couples living in Massachusetts.²
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 23,774.³ This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 269,074 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Massachusetts.⁴

INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

- There are more female same-sex couples (54%) than male same-sex couples (46%) in Massachusetts.⁵
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 40 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (49 years old) in Massachusetts.

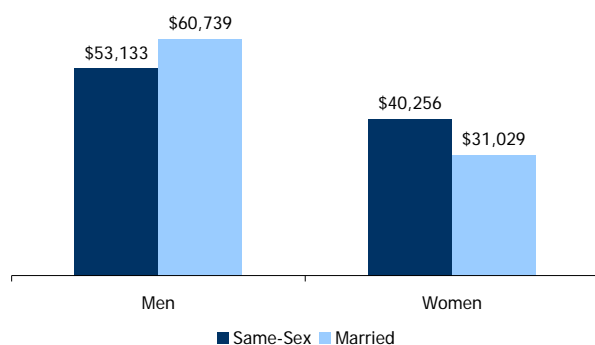
- Same-sex couples live in every county in Massachusetts and constitute 1.3% of coupled households and 0.7% of all households in the state. Middlesex County reported the most same-sex couples with 3,931 couples (0.70% of all households in the county), followed by Suffolk County with 3,505 couples (1.26%), and Essex County with 1,664 couples (0.60%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Hampshire County (1.53% of all county households), Suffolk County (1.26%), Franklin County (1.16%), and Nantucket County (1.05%).⁶
- Massachusetts’s same-sex couples are significantly more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 15% of individuals in same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 12% of married individuals.

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

- Individuals in same-sex couples in Massachusetts are significantly more likely to be employed than married individuals: 83% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 69% 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 Massachusetts earn \$53,133 each year, significantly less than \$60,739 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Massachusetts is \$40,000, or 12% less than that of married men (\$45,200).
- Women in same-sex couples in Massachusetts earn an average of \$40,256 per year (with a median of \$33,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$31,029 (with a median of \$25,000). Women in same-sex couples earn less than men in same-sex or married couples.

Average Individual Earnings



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Massachusetts are more likely to work in the private sector: 78% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 73% of married individuals; 12% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 15% of married individuals; and 9% 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: 57% of individuals in same-sex couples and 37% 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: 6% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 15% of married individuals.

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

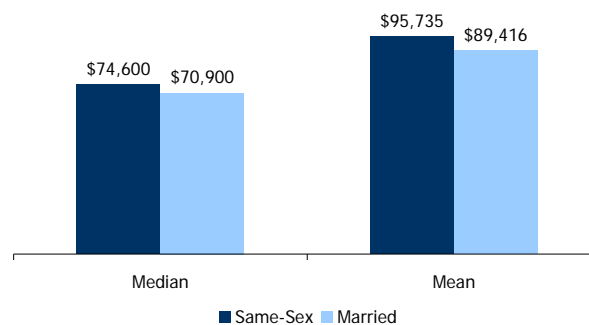
- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 20% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 28% of married couples.

- The mean income gap between same-sex partners is \$32,221, compared to \$36,778 for married spouses.
- 23% of same-sex couples in Massachusetts have at least one partner who is disabled, compared to 26% of married couples.
- 4% of same-sex couples in Massachusetts have at least one partner who is age 65 or older, compared to 19% of married couples.

SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN MASSACHUSETTS HAVE SIMILAR ECONOMIC RESOURCES AS MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Massachusetts is \$74,600, compared to \$70,900 for married couples. The average household income of same-sex couples is \$95,735, compared to \$89,416 for married couples.

Household Incomes

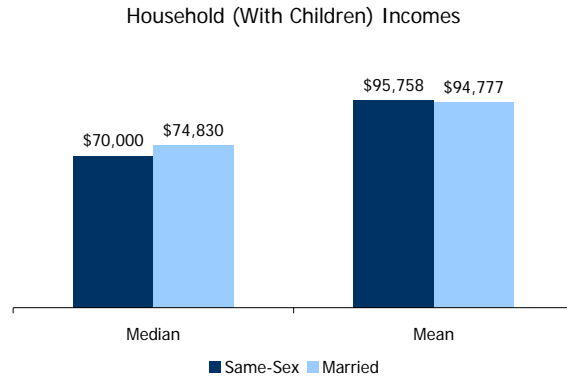


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 60% of same-sex couples in Massachusetts own their home, compared to 81% of married couples.

SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE RAISING CHILDREN IN MASSACHUSETTS WITH SIMILAR ECONOMIC RESOURCES AS MARRIED PARENTS

- 18% of same-sex couples in Massachusetts are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 7,184 of Massachusetts's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.⁷
- In Massachusetts, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, two children.
- More than 16% of Massachusetts's adopted children (or 5,828 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.⁸
- 30% of Massachusetts's same-sex parents have only one wage earner, compared to 31% of married parents.

- Same-sex parents in Massachusetts have similar financial resources to support their children as married parents. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$70,000, compared to \$74,830 for married parents. The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$95,758, compared to \$94,777 for married parents.
- While 64% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a significantly larger percentage of married parents (80%) own their home.



CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in Massachusetts. In many respects, Massachusetts's same-sex couples are similar to married couples. Many same-sex couples in Massachusetts are raising children, and they have similar economic resources as married couples to provide for their families.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity ⁹		
White*	84.9%	88.0%
Black	2.5%	2.7%
Hispanic*	7.5%	3.8%
Asian*	2.5%	3.7%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.2%
Other	2.3%	1.7%
Average age*	40.1	48.5
Percent with college degree or better*	57.2%	36.7%
Percent employed*	83.1%	68.8%
Employment ⁹		
Private employer*	78.3%	73.2%
Public employer*	12.3%	14.9%
Self-employed*	9.4%	11.7%
Veteran status*	5.9%	15.0%
Average individual salary		
Men*	\$53,133	\$60,739
Women*	\$40,256	\$31,029
Median individual salary		
Men	\$40,000	\$45,200
Women	\$33,000	\$25,000

* 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*	4.5%	19.0%
Percent disabled	23.4%	26.0%
Average household income [^]	\$95,735	\$89,416
Median household income	\$74,600	\$70,900
Income gap between partners*	\$32,221	\$36,778
Single wage earner*	20.1%	28.3%
Homeownership*	60.1%	80.6%
Percent with children under 18*	18.3%	47.7%

* 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*	1.7	1.9
Single wage earner (parents)	30.3%	31.0%
Average household income (parents)	\$95,758	\$94,777
Median household income (parents)	\$70,000	\$74,830
Homeownership (parents)*	64.2%	79.9%

* 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
Barnstable	895	0.94%
Berkshire	250	0.45%
Bristol	1011	0.49%
Dukes	41	0.64%
Essex	1664	0.60%
Franklin	341	1.16%
Hampden	900	0.51%
Hampshire	855	1.53%
Middlesex	3931	0.70%
Nantucket	39	1.05%
Norfolk	1287	0.52%
Plymouth	911	0.54%
Suffolk	3505	1.26%
Worcester	1469	0.52%

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* (2006), 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, percentages may not add to 100.

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