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Census Snapshot: Alabama

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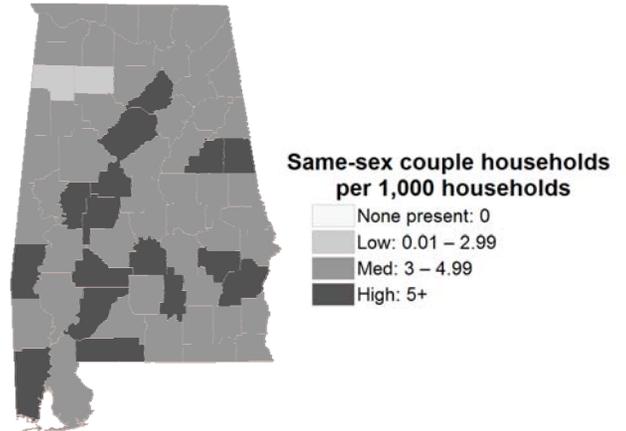
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Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, this report provides demographic and economic information about same-sex couples and same-sex couples raising children in Alabama. We compare same-sex “unmarried partners,” which the Census Bureau defines as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



In many ways, the more than 8,500 same-sex couples living in Alabama 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 Alabama’s economy. Census data also show that 25% of same-sex couples in Alabama 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 COUPLES AND THE LGB POPULATION IN ALABAMA

- In 2000, there were 8,109 same-sex couples living in Alabama.²
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 8,602.³ This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 94,639 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Alabama.⁴

INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

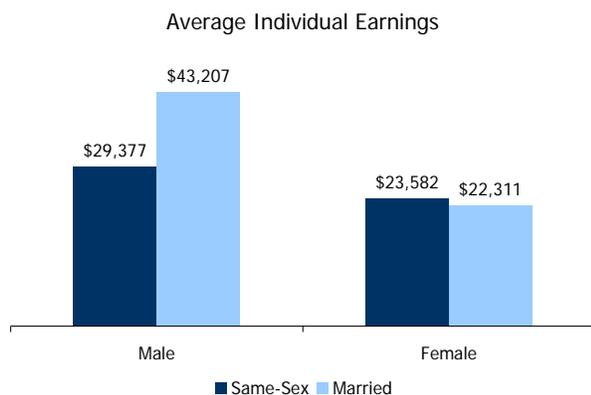
- There are more female same-sex couples (51%) than male same-sex couples (49%) in Alabama.⁵
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 41 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (47 years old) in Alabama.

- Same-sex couples live in every county in Alabama and constitute 0.8% of coupled households and 0.5% of all households in the state. Jefferson County reported the most same-sex couples with 1,488 couples (0.57% of all households in the county), followed by Mobile County with 800 couples (0.53%), and Madison County with 430 couples (0.39%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Perry County (0.72% of all county households), Hale County (0.64%), Choctaw County (0.63%), and Bullock County (0.63%).⁶
- Alabama’s same-sex couples are more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 30% 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 Alabama are more likely to be employed than are married individuals: 66% 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 significantly lower than those of married men. On average, men in same-sex couples in Alabama earn \$29,377 each year, significantly less than \$43,207 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Alabama is \$25,000, or 26% less than that of married men (\$34,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in Alabama earn an average of \$23,582 per year (with a median of \$18,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$22,311 (with a median of \$18,500). Women in same-sex couples earn less than married men as well as men in same-sex couples.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Alabama are more likely to work in the private sector: 80% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 72% of married individuals; 11% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 17% of married individuals; and 8% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 12% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are more likely to have a college degree: 23% of individuals in same-sex couples and 21% 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: 7% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 17% of married individuals.

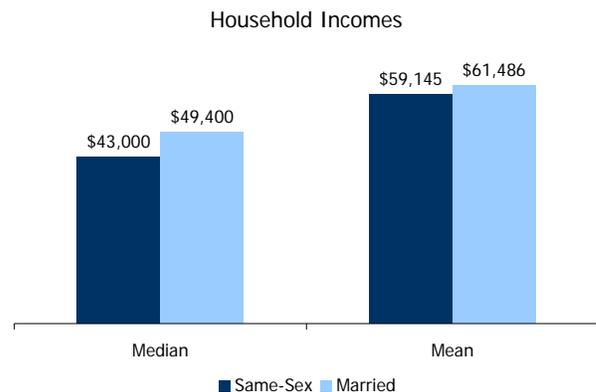
SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN ALABAMA DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 29% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 34% of married couples.

- The income gap between same-sex partners is \$15,283, compared to \$25,118 for married spouses.
- A larger percentage of same-sex couples in Alabama have at least one partner who is disabled: 39% of same-sex couples, compared to 34% of married couples.
- 15% of same-sex couples have at least one partner who is age 65 or older, compared to 19% of married couples.

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

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Alabama is \$43,000, less than that of married couples (\$49,400). The average household income of same-sex couples is \$59,145, less than \$61,486 for married couples.

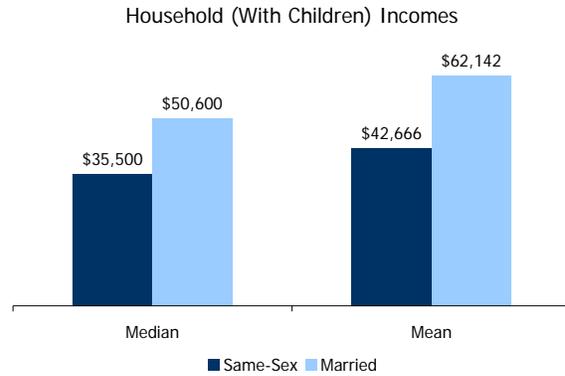


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 58% of same-sex couples in Alabama own their home, compared to 86% of married couples.

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

- About 25% of same-sex couples in Alabama are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 3,309 of Alabama's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.⁷
- In Alabama, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- More than 1% of Alabama's adopted children (or 301 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.⁸

- Same-sex parents have far fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Alabama. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$35,500, or 30% lower than that of married parents (\$50,600). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$42,666, significantly less than \$62,142 for married parents.
- While 56% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a significantly larger percentage of married parents (82%) own their home.



CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in Alabama. While in many respects Alabama'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 and lower rates of homeownership.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity ⁹		
White	69.7%	82.0%*
Black	27.9%	14.7%*
Hispanic	1.4%	1.3%
Asian	0.0%	1.0%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.4%	0.5%
Other	0.6%	0.8%
Average age	40.7	47.4*
Percent with a college degree or better	22.9%	21.4%
Percent Employed	65.5%	62.5%
Employment ⁹		
Private employer	79.9%	71.6%*
Public employer	10.8%	16.5% [^]
Self-employed	8.3%	11.5%
Veteran Status	7.1%	17.1%*
Average individual salary		
Men	\$29,377	\$43,207*
Woman	\$23,582	\$22,311
Median individual salary		
Men	\$25,000	\$34,000
Woman	\$18,000	\$18,500

* 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	15.4%	18.8%
Percent disabled	38.8%	34.4%
Average household income	\$59,145	\$61,486
Median household income	\$43,000	\$49,400
Income gap between partners	\$15,283	\$25,118*
Single wage earner	29.1%	33.8%
Homeownership	57.9%	86.0%*
Percent with children under 18	25.1%	46.4%*

* 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	1.5	1.8*
Single wage earner (parents)	31.6%	37.2%
Average household income (parents)	\$42,666	\$62,142*
Median household income (parents)	\$35,500	\$50,600
Homeownership	55.8%	82.3%*

* 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
Autauga	67	0.42%
Baldwin	255	0.46%
Barbour	63	0.61%
Bibb	42	0.57%
Blount	105	0.55%
Bullock	25	0.63%
Butler	38	0.45%
Calhoun	183	0.40%
Chambers	71	0.49%
Cherokee	43	0.44%
Chilton	63	0.41%
Choctaw	40	0.63%
Clarke	51	0.48%
Clay	29	0.50%
Cleburne	25	0.45%
Coffee	69	0.40%
Colbert	81	0.36%
Conecuh	19	0.33%
Coosa	21	0.45%
Covington	62	0.40%
Crenshaw	31	0.56%
Cullman	123	0.40%
Dale	81	0.43%
Dallas	86	0.48%
DeKalb	116	0.46%
Elmore	88	0.39%
Escambia	79	0.55%
Etowah	178	0.43%
Fayette	23	0.31%
Franklin	37	0.30%
Geneva	52	0.50%
Greene	14	0.36%
Hale	41	0.64%
Henry	32	0.49%
Houston	175	0.49%
Jackson	88	0.41%
Jefferson	1488	0.57%
Lamar	23	0.36%
Lauderdale	126	0.35%
Lawrence	50	0.37%
Lee	191	0.42%
Limestone	106	0.43%
Lowndes	28	0.57%
Macon	35	0.39%
Madison	430	0.39%
Marengo	41	0.47%
Marion	37	0.29%
Marshall	112	0.34%

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Mobile	800	0.53%
Monroe	53	0.56%
Montgomery	399	0.46%
Morgan	203	0.47%
Perry	31	0.72%
Pickens	38	0.47%
Pike	46	0.39%
Randolph	48	0.56%
Russell	93	0.47%
Shelby	264	0.48%
St. Clair	118	0.49%
Sumter	27	0.47%
Talladega	148	0.48%
Tallapoosa	71	0.43%
Tuscaloosa	297	0.46%
Walker	123	0.43%
Washington	31	0.46%
Wilcox	28	0.59%
Winston	28	0.28%

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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