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Census Snapshot: Vermont

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Authors

Romero, Adam P
Baumle, Amanda K
Badgett, M.V. Lee
et al.

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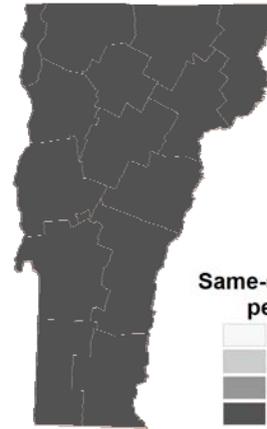
VERMONT

DECEMBER 2007

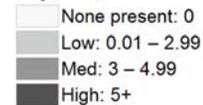
Adam P. Romero, *Public Policy Fellow*
Amanda K. Baumle, *Public Policy Fellow*
M.V. Lee Badgett, *Research Director*
Gary J. Gates, *Senior Policy Fellow*

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 Vermont. 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 Vermont.¹

In many ways, the almost 2,200 same-sex couples living in Vermont 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 Vermont’s economy. Census data also show that 20% of same-sex couples in Vermont are raising children. However, same-sex parents 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 VERMONT

- In 2000, there were 1,933 same-sex couples living in Vermont.²
- The number of same-sex couples increased to 2,157 by 2005.³ This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were almost 24,000 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Vermont.⁴

INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

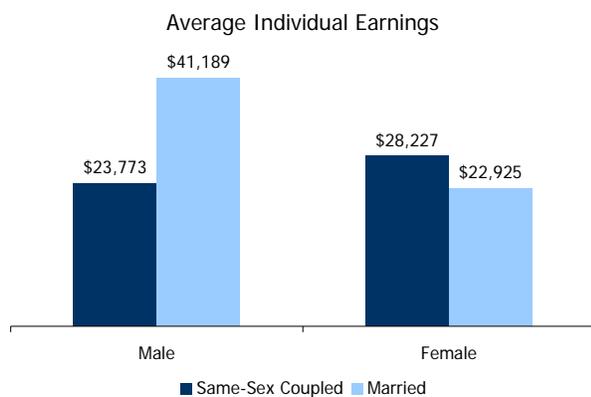
- There are more female same-sex couples (61%) than male same-sex couples (39%) in Vermont.⁵
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 45 years old, and significantly younger than married individuals (49 years old) in Vermont.

- Same-sex couples live in every county in Vermont and constitute 1.3% of coupled households and 0.8% of all households in the state. Chittenden County reported the most same-sex couples with 537 couples (0.95% of all households in the county), followed by Washington County with 190 couples (0.80%), and Windham County with 186 couples (1.01%). The county with the highest percentage of same-sex couples is Orange County (1.04% of all county households).⁶
- Vermont’s same-sex couples are as racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 3% of same-sex and married couples are nonwhite.

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

- Individuals in same-sex couples in Vermont are significantly more likely to be employed than are married individuals: 82% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 73% 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 Vermont earn \$23,773 each year, significantly less than \$41,189 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Vermont is \$24,000, or 27% less than that of married men (\$33,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in Vermont earn an average of \$28,227 per year (with a median of \$22,300), more than married women, whose earnings average \$22,925 (with a median of \$20,000). Women in same-sex couples earn, on average, less than married men but more than men in same-sex couples in Vermont.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Vermont are more likely to work in the private sector: 74% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 67% of married individuals; 14% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 16% of married individuals; and 13% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 17% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are more likely to have a college degree: 45% of individuals in same-sex couples and 31% 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: 8% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 16% of married individuals.

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

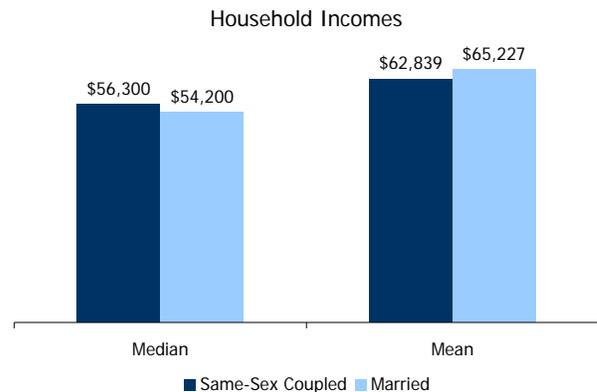
- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. Almost one in

five same-sex couples (16%) have only one wage earner, compared to almost one in four (24%) married couples.

- The same percentage (25%) of same-sex and married couples in Vermont have at least one partner who is disabled.
- 17% of same-sex couples have at least one partner over the age of 65, compared to 18% of married couples.

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

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Vermont is \$56,300, more than that of married couples (\$54,200). The average household income of same-sex couples is \$62,839, less than \$65,227 for married couples.

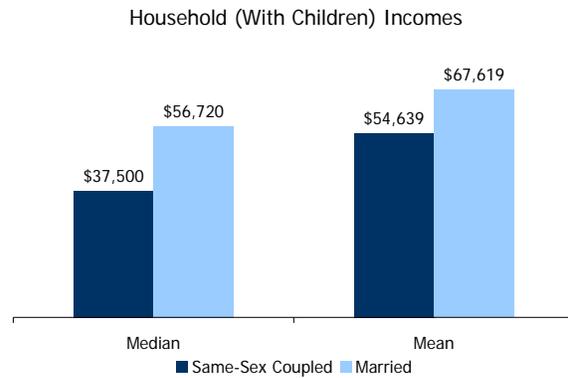


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 78% of same-sex couples in Vermont own their home, compared to 86% of married couples.

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

- 20% of same-sex couples in Vermont are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 643 of Vermont's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.⁷
- In Vermont, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- Roughly 6% of Vermont's adopted children (or 235 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.⁸

- Same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Vermont. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$37,500, or 34% lower than that of married parents (\$56,720). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$54,639, significantly less than \$67,619 for married parents.
- While 73% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a much larger percentage of married parents (84%) own their home.



CONCLUSION

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

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity ⁹		
White	97.4%	97.4%
Black	0.0%	0.2%
Hispanic	1.1%	0.6%
Asian	0.7%	0.7%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.9%	0.3%
Other	0.0%	0.8%
Average age	45.2	48.5*
Percent with a college degree or better	45.0%	31.0%*
Percent Employed	81.5%	62.1% [^]
Employment ⁹		
Private employer	73.7%	66.8%
Public employer	13.7%	15.7%
Self-employed	12.6%	17.2%
Veteran Status	7.5%	16.3%*
Average individual salary		
Men	\$23,773	\$41,189*
Woman	\$28,227	\$22,925*
Median individual salary		
Men	\$24,000	\$33,000
Woman	\$22,300	\$20,000

* 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 over 65	17.2%	18.0%
Percent disabled	25.1%	25.0%
Average household income	\$62,839	\$65,227
Median household income	\$56,300	\$54,200
Income gap between partners	\$14,947	\$23,175
Single wage earner	15.5%	24.3%
Homeownership	77.6%	86.1%
Percent with children under 18	19.6%	45.2%*

* 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	1.9*
Single wage earner (parents)	0.0%	25.4%*
Average household income (parents)	\$54,639	\$67,619
Median household income (parents)	\$37,500	\$56,720
Homeownership	73.4%	84.0%*

* 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
Addison	88	0.67%
Bennington	96	0.65%
Caledonia	88	0.75%
Chittenden	537	0.95%
Essex	23	0.88%
Franklin	103	0.61%
Grand Isle	23	0.83%
Lamoille	75	0.81%
Orange	114	1.04%
Orleans	87	0.83%
Rutland	169	0.66%
Washington	190	0.80%
Windham	186	1.01%
Windsor	154	0.64%

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.

Amanda K. Baumle is Public Policy Fellow at the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law as well as Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Houston. Ph.D Texas A&M; J.D. University of Texas. She specializes in demography, social inequality, and the sociology of law.

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.

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
www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute