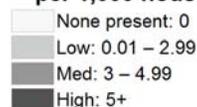


**Adam P. Romero, *Public Policy Fellow***  
**Amanda K. Baumle, *Public Policy Fellow***  
**M.V. Lee Badgett, *Research Director***  
**Gary J. Gates, *Senior Policy Fellow***

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 the District of Columbia.<sup>1</sup> 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 the District.<sup>2</sup>

Same-sex couple households  
per 1,000 households



In many ways, the almost 4,000 same-sex couples living in the District are similar to married couples. According to Census 2000, they comprise 5.1% of all coupled households in the District, are racially and ethnically diverse, have partners that depend upon one another financially, and actively participate in the District’s economy. Census data also show that 8% of same-sex couples in the District are raising children. However, same-sex couples with children have lower household incomes, on average, and lower rates of home ownership, compared to married couples.

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

- In 2000, there were 3,678 same-sex couples living in the District.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2005, the almost 33,000 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in the District constituted approximately 8.1% of the total adult population there.<sup>4</sup>

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

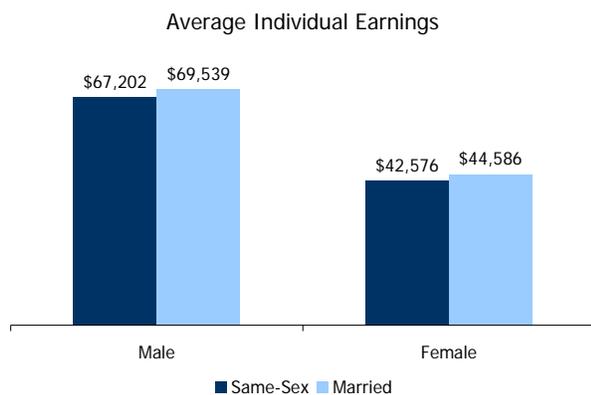
- There are more male same-sex couples than female in the District: 73% of same-sex couples are male, 27% are female.<sup>5</sup>
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 42 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (49 years old) in the District.

- Same-sex couples live in every part of the District, where they constitute 1.5% of all households and 5.1% of all coupled households.<sup>6</sup>
- The District’s same-sex couples are racially and ethnically diverse: 33% of same-sex couples are nonwhite. Specifically, 26% of same-sex couples are Black, 4% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 2% identify as other nonwhite.

### PEOPLE IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE DISTRICT’S ECONOMY

- Individuals in same-sex couples in the District are more likely to be employed than are married individuals: 84% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 63% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples in the District are more likely to have a college degree: 64% of individuals in same-sex couples and 48% of married individuals have earned a college degree.

- Contrary to a popular stereotype, the annual earnings of men in same-sex couples are lower than married men. On average, men in same-sex couples in the District earn \$67,202 each year, less than the \$69,539 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in the District is \$52,000, more than that of married men (\$41,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in the District earn an average of \$42,576 per year (with a median of \$31,200), less than married women, whose earnings average \$44,586 (with a median of \$32,000). Women in same-sex and married couples earn less than men in same-sex and married couples.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in the District are more likely to work in the private sector and less likely to be self-employed: 69% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 63% of married individuals; 22% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 25% of married individuals; and 9% individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 13% of married individuals.
- 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 15% of married individuals.

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

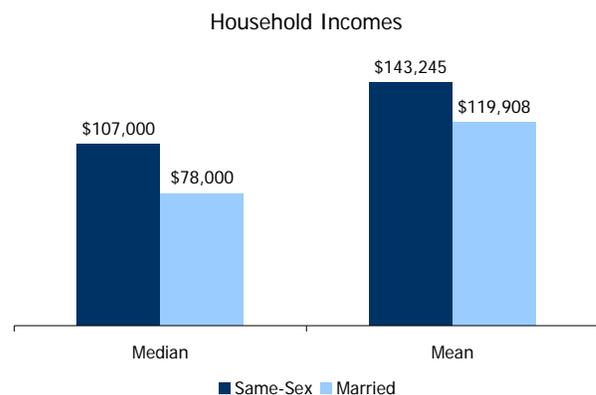
- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 17% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 30% of married couples.
- The average income gap between same-sex and married couples in the District is roughly the same:

\$43,948 for same-sex couples and \$43,308 for married couples.

- 17% of same-sex couples in the District have at least one partner who is disabled, compared to 32% of married couples.
- 5% of same-sex couples in the District contain at least one partner over the age of 65, compared to 22% of married couples.

### SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN THE DISTRICT HAVE SIMILAR ECONOMIC RESOURCES TO MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in the District is \$107,000, more than that of married couples (\$78,000). The average household income of same-sex couples is \$143,245, more than that of married couples (\$119,908).

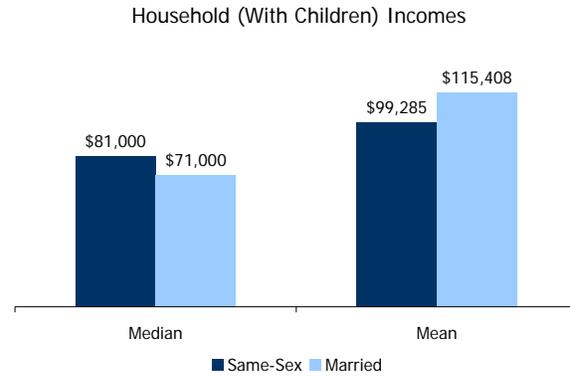


- About 64% of same-sex and married couples own their homes.

### SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE RAISING CHILDREN IN THE DISTRICT, YET, ON AVERAGE, WITH FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRIED PARENTS

- About 8% of same-sex couples in the District are raising children under the age of 18.
- Approximately 441 of the District's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.<sup>7</sup>
- In the District, married couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children, and same-sex couples with children have, on average, 1.5 children.
- About 758 of the District's 2649 adopted children (or 28.6%) live with a lesbian or gay parent, making the District the highest ranked U.S. state or territory in this category.<sup>8</sup>

- The average household income of same-sex couples with children in the District is \$99,285, less than \$115,408 for married parents. The median household income of same-sex couples with children in the District is \$81,000, more than that of married parents (\$71,000).
- While 51% of same-sex couples with children in the District own their home, a larger percentage of married parents (59%) own their home.



## CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in the District of Columbia. In many respects, the District's same-sex couples look like married couples: they have similar household incomes, own their homes at similar rates, and depend upon one another. However, same-sex couples with children have lower annual incomes, on average, and lower rates of homeownership than do married parents.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity <sup>9</sup>		
White	67.1%	38.2%*
Black	25.6%	47%*
Hispanic	4.0%	8.8%*
Asian	0.7%	4.0%*
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.0%	0.2%
Other	2.5%	1.9%
Average age	41.7	48.9*
Percent with a college degree or better	64.1%	47.8%*
Percent Employed	84.5%	63.3%*
Employment <sup>9</sup>		
Private employer	68.9%	62.8% ^
Public employer	22.1%	24.6%
Self-employed	9.0%	12.5%
Veteran Status	8.3%	14.8%*
Average individual salary		
Men	\$67,202	\$69,539
Woman	\$42,576	\$44,586
Median individual salary		
Men	\$52,000	\$41,000
Woman	\$31,200	\$32,000

\* 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	4.9%	21.5%*
Percent disabled	16.8%	31.8%*
Average household income	\$143,245	\$119,908*
Median household income	\$107,000	\$78,000
Income gap between partners	\$43,948	\$43,308
Single wage earner	16.9%	30%*
Homeownership	63.7%	64.4%
Percent with children under 18	7.6%	41.6%*

\* 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)	33.8%	33.3%
Average household income (parents)	\$99,285	\$115,408
Median household income (parents)	\$81,000	\$71,000
Homeownership	50.7%	59.3%

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).  
 ^ Difference significant at the 10% level or better (two-tailed tests).

## 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.

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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> In keeping with the series of state-level reports (of which this present report is part), we compare unmarried same-sex couples to married different-sex couples. However, data from the District are typical of a metropolitan center, where same-sex couples tend to be whiter and to have higher incomes, rather than of an entire state, where same-sex couples tend to be as, if not more, racially and ethnically diverse than married couples. For this reason, it is to be expected that our findings in the District will be dissimilar from those contained in our other census reports. Indeed, when nonwhite same-sex couples are compared with nonwhite married couples in the District, and when white same-sex couples are compared with white married couples in the District, patterns observed across the states not only hold, but are pronounced. For example, when nonwhite same-sex couples are compared with nonwhite married couples, and whites are compared with whites, same-sex couples have significantly lower household incomes and lower rates of homeownership than married couples. These patterns are obscured when looking at the city-level data as whole—as we have presented the results here—given that the proportion of same-sex couples in the District that are white with higher incomes is much greater than that of married couples.

<sup>3</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>4</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>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.

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](mailto:williamsinstitute@law.ucla.edu)  
[www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute](http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute)