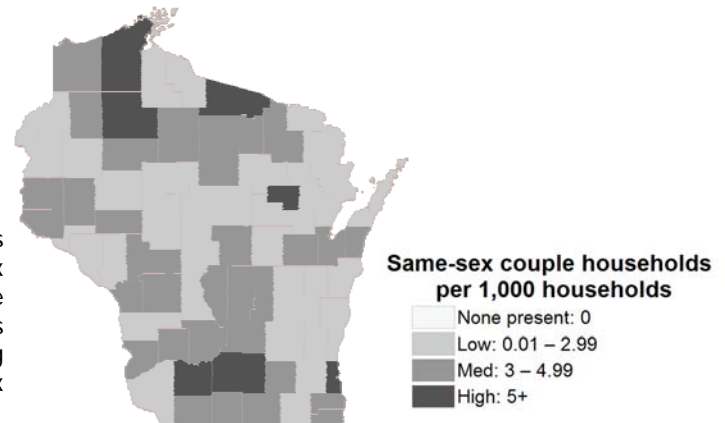


**Adam P. Romero, *Public Policy Fellow***  
**Amanda K. Baumle, *Public Policy Fellow***  
**M.V. Lee Badgett, *Research Director***  
**Gary J. Gates, *Senior Policy Fellow***

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 Wisconsin. 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 Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup>



In many ways, the almost 15,000 same-sex couples living in Wisconsin 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 Wisconsin’s economy. Census data also show that 16% of same-sex couples in Wisconsin 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 POPULATION IN WISCONSIN**

- In 2000, there were 8,232 same-sex couples living in Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup>
- The number of same-sex couples increased to 14,894 by 2005.<sup>3</sup> This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were more than 160,698 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Wisconsin.<sup>4</sup>

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

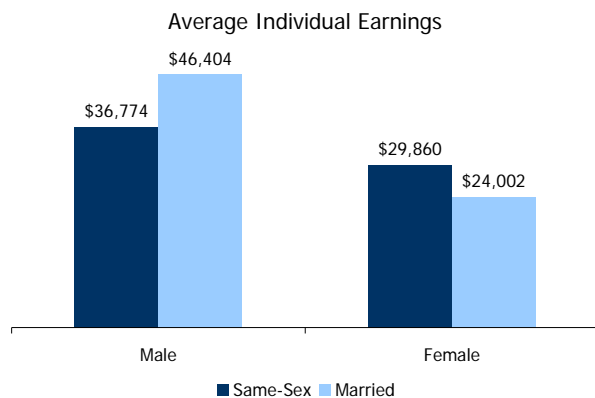
- There are more female same-sex couples (53%) than male same-sex couples (47%) in Wisconsin.<sup>5</sup>
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 39 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (48 years old) in Wisconsin.

- Same-sex couples live in every county in Wisconsin and constitute 0.7% of coupled households and 0.4% of all households in the state. Milwaukee County reported the most same-sex couples with 1,951 couples (0.52% of all households in the county), followed by Dane County with 1,382 couples (0.80%), and Waukesha County with 360 couples (0.27%). The counties with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Dane County (0.80% of all county households), Sawyer County (0.78%), and Menominee County (0.74%).<sup>6</sup>
- Wisconsin’s same-sex couples are more racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 10% of same-sex couples are nonwhite, compared to 7% of married couples.

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

- Individuals in same-sex couples in Wisconsin are significantly more likely to be employed than are married individuals: 83% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 71% 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 Wisconsin earn \$36,774 each year, significantly less than \$46,404 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Wisconsin is \$30,400, or 20% less than that of married men (\$38,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in Wisconsin earn an average of \$29,860 per year (with a median of \$26,600), more than married women, whose earnings average \$24,002 (with a median of \$20,300). Women in same-sex couples earn less than married men as well as men in same-sex couples.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Wisconsin are more likely to work in the private sector: 78% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 74% of married individuals; 14% of individuals in same-sex and married couples work in the public sector; 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: 35% of individuals in same-sex couples and 24% 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 16% of married individuals.

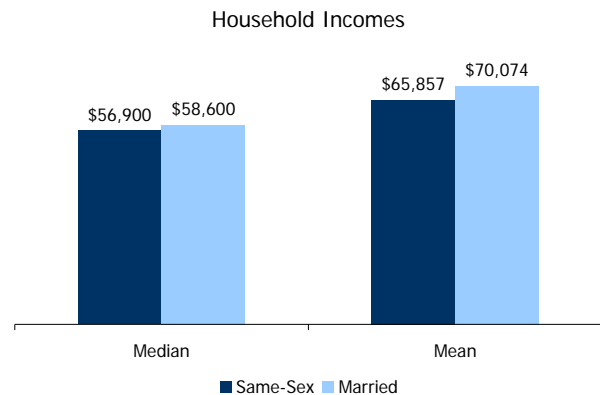
### SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN WISCONSIN DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 22% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 24% of married couples.

- The income gap between same-sex partners is \$21,375, compared to \$26,551 for married spouses.
- A larger percentage of same-sex couples in Wisconsin have at least one partner who is disabled: 29% of same-sex couples, compared to 23% of married couples.
- 4% of same-sex couples have at least one partner over the age of 65, compared to 19% of married couples.

### SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN WISCONSIN HAVE FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Wisconsin is \$56,900, less than that of married couples (\$58,600). The average household income of same-sex couples is \$65,857, less than \$70,074 for married couples.

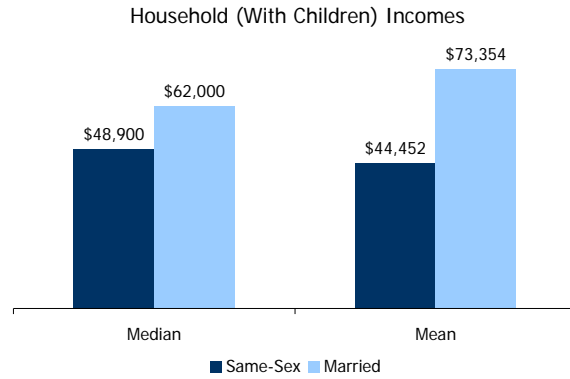


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 62% of same-sex couples in Wisconsin own their home, compared to 86% of married couples.

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

- About 16% of same-sex couples in Wisconsin are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 3,783 of Wisconsin's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.<sup>7</sup>
- In Wisconsin, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- Roughly 1% of Wisconsin's adopted children (or 257 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.<sup>8</sup>

- Same-sex parents have far fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Wisconsin. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$48,900, or 21% lower than that of married parents (\$62,000). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$44,452, significantly less than \$73,354 for married parents.
- While 44% 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 Wisconsin. While in many respects Wisconsin'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.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity <sup>9</sup>		
White	89.7%	93.3%*
Black	5.2%	2.1%*
Hispanic	2.1%	2.3%
Asian	0.8%	1.3%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.3%	0.5%*
Other	1.0%	0.5%
Average age	38.9	48.3*
Percent with a college degree or better	34.7%	24.4%*
Percent Employed	82.5%	70.5%*
Employment <sup>9</sup>		
Private employer	77.8%	74.2%
Public employer	14.4%	13.8%
Self-employed	7.8%	11.6%*
Veteran Status	7.1%	16.2%*
Average individual salary		
Men	\$36,774	\$46,404*
Woman	\$29,860	\$24,002*
Median individual salary		
Men	\$30,400	\$38,000
Woman	\$26,600	\$20,300

\* 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	3.8%	19.0%*
Percent disabled	28.5%	23.0%^
Average household income	\$65,857	\$70,074
Median household income	\$56,900	\$58,600
Income gap between partners	\$21,375	\$26,551*
Single wage earner	22.4%	24.4%
Homeownership	62.3%	86.0%*
Percent with children under 18	15.7%	45.9%*

\* 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	1.6	2.0*
Single wage earner (parents)	21.5%	25.5%
Average household income (parents)	\$44,452	\$73,354*
Median household income (parents)	\$48,900	\$62,000
Homeownership	43.7%	83.9%*

\* 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
Adams	30	0.38%
Ashland	17	0.25%
Barron	37	0.21%
Bayfield	35	0.56%
Brown	327	0.37%
Buffalo	14	0.25%
Burnett	17	0.26%
Calumet	37	0.25%
Chippewa	57	0.27%
Clark	36	0.30%
Columbia	62	0.30%
Crawford	22	0.33%
Dane	1382	0.80%
Dodge	76	0.24%
Door	26	0.22%
Douglas	76	0.43%
Dunn	50	0.35%
Eau Claire	127	0.35%
Florence	5	0.23%
Fond du Lac	105	0.28%
Forest	15	0.37%
Grant	54	0.29%
Green	51	0.39%
Green Lake	27	0.35%
Iowa	45	0.51%
Iron	9	0.29%
Jackson	23	0.33%
Jefferson	100	0.35%
Juneau	27	0.28%
Kenosha	228	0.41%
Kewaunee	23	0.30%
La Crosse	151	0.36%
Lafayette	22	0.35%
Langlade	23	0.27%
Lincoln	38	0.32%
Manitowoc	67	0.20%
Marathon	140	0.29%
Marinette	36	0.20%
Marquette	24	0.40%
Menominee	10	0.74%
Milwaukee	1951	0.52%
Monroe	47	0.31%
Oconto	33	0.24%
Oneida	75	0.49%
Outagamie	209	0.35%
Ozaukee	90	0.29%
Pepin	7	0.25%
Pierce	49	0.38%

County	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Polk	46	0.28%
Portage	89	0.36%
Price	20	0.30%
Racine	272	0.38%
Richland	24	0.34%
Rock	204	0.35%
Rusk	21	0.34%
St. Croix	92	0.39%
Sauk	75	0.35%
Sawyer	52	0.78%
Shawano	31	0.20%
Sheboygan	122	0.28%
Taylor	14	0.19%
Trempealeau	27	0.25%
Vernon	31	0.29%
Vilas	50	0.55%
Walworth	93	0.27%
Washburn	32	0.48%
Washington	127	0.29%
Waukesha	360	0.27%
Waupaca	50	0.25%
Waushara	35	0.37%
Winnebago	180	0.29%
Wood	73	0.24%

## 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.

---

<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> 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>3</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>4</sup> *Id.*

<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)