The LGBT Divide in California:
A look at the socioeconomic well-being of LGBT people in California

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of LGBT adults in California</th>
<th>Number of Same-sex Couples in California</th>
<th>Percent of Same-sex Couples Raising Children</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,334,000</td>
<td>98,150</td>
<td>16%</td>
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Within a rapidly changing landscape with respect to LGBT equality across the United States, regional differences persist in the social acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

In fact, the social and political climate toward LGB people and existing state-level legal protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity are highly intertwined. Our regional U.S. data interactive showed that states with protective laws for LGB people have social climate indices, a measure of public attitudes about LGBT people, that are much more LGB-supportive than the states that lack those protections.3

Our analysis suggests that more challenging legal and social climates decrease socioeconomic well-being of LGBT people.

Poverty gaps are at their highest in the Midwest and Mountain states, where LGBT individuals are almost 1.5 times more likely to have incomes below $24,000 than non-LGBT people.

According to our U.S. regional data interactive, The LGBT Divide, the Pacific states are generally doing well when looking at measures of well-being.

Data for the Pacific states are mainly driven by California’s numbers, as California accounts for 77% of all LGBT adults living in the Pacific states.

As a whole, LGBT people in California are doing better than the national estimates on indicators such as educational attainment, income and money for healthcare.
But what happens when we look at regional differences within California?

In terms of the percentage of LGBT residents living in the regions of California:

- Los Angeles County (31%)
- Southern California (not L.A.) (26%)
- Bay Area (22%)
- Southern/Central Farm (10%)
- Central Valley (6%)
- North and Mountain (4%)

Social Climate

San Francisco and Los Angeles are two large urban areas known to be particularly supportive environments for LGBT people.

But how does the LGBT social climate measure up outside of those areas?

Using support for same-sex marriage as a proxy for measuring LGBT acceptance in the state, social climate varies by region.

The Central/Southern Farm region reports the lowest level of acceptance (40%), while the Bay Area reports the highest (67%).
Education

The urban areas of San Francisco and Los Angeles are home to larger proportions of LGBT college graduates compared to the rest of the state.

However, the other four regions still have lower rates of educational attainment than the national estimate of 34%.

The LGBT population living in the Central/Southern Farm region reports the lowest rate of college completion (28%) in the state.

This proportion is even lower than the LGBT college completion rate in the Southern (33%) and Midwest (29%) regions of the U.S.

Income

The North and Mountain region has more than a third (34%) of the LGBT population earning less than $24,000 annually. This region is the only region in California that has a higher proportion of LGBT people with an income below $24,000 than the national LGBT estimate of 32%.

The proportion of LGBT people earning less than $24,000 per year in the North and Mountain region is comparable to the rate in the Southern (33%) and Midwest (35%) regions of the U.S.
10 Intersecting Dimensions of LGBT Poverty

The regional patterns of LGBT vulnerability in California mirror those for non-LGBT people. This suggests that broader demographic factors also play an important role in understanding LGBT vulnerability in California.

According to our 2013 report on patterns of poverty in the LGB community, as poverty rates for nearly all populations increased during the recession, LGB Americans remained more likely to be poor than non-LGB people.⁵

In the report, gender, race & ethnicity, education and geography all influence poverty rates among LGB populations, and children of same-sex couples are particularly vulnerable to poverty.

In addition to these factors, there are intersecting dimensions of LGBT poverty that must be considered in order to begin to address socioeconomic disparities and poverty within the LGBT community.

California Sub-populations

Gender

LGBT Females in California are doing worse than their male counterparts on socioeconomic indicators such as income and whether they have enough money for healthcare.
**Race & Ethnicity**

LGBT Latinos/as and LGBT African-Americans in California report similar rates of lower income compared to their non-LGBT counterparts. However, when compared to White LGBT people, there are significant disparities.

*Due to small sample sizes, we could only confidently report data for these three*

**Gender Identity**

Currently, the well-being of transgender individuals is not captured by any national population-based survey.

In a survey of over 6,000 transgender and gender non-conforming people, respondents experienced poverty, unemployment and health risks at much higher rates than the general population.6

**Immigration Status**

Non-citizen individuals in same-sex couples in California are about 3 times more likely to be uninsured than citizens, whether by birth or naturalization. Non-citizens are also more likely to have an income less than $24,000.
In California, there is a geography to socioeconomic disparities for individuals and families. This is evident in large coastal urban centers, as well.

This geography of disparities is also present for LGBT people and families. Addressing LGBT disparities in California means addressing disparities more widely throughout the state and local regions.

Citations:
2. Census 2010

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