



# **ASIANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES IN CALIFORNIA**

**Data from Census 2000**

**September 2005**

by Gary Gates, PhD and R. Bradley Sears, Esq.

The Williams Project  
on Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy  
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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Using data from Census 2000, this report provides demographic and socio-economic information about Asians and Pacific Islanders in same-sex couples in California. In this report, the category “API couples” means couples where both members are Asian or Pacific Islander; “inter-ethnic couples” means couples where only one member is Asian or Pacific Islander; and “non-API couples” indicates couples where neither member is Asian or Pacific Islander.

### **ASIANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES IN CALIFORNIA**

- In California, more than 13,000 Asian/Pacific Islanders identified themselves as living with a same-sex partner in Census 2000. They constitute over one-third of the 38,200 Asian/Pacific Islanders in same-sex couples identified in the U.S., more than in any other state.
- Over seven percent of the individuals in same-sex couples in California are Asian/Pacific Islander and nearly one out of ten of California's same-sex couples include at least one API individual (due to inter-ethnic couples).
- San Francisco County has the highest rate of API same-sex couples (API householder) (2.2 per 1,000 households), while Los Angeles County has the largest number of API same-sex couples (1,929).
- Twenty-eight percent of California API same-sex partners report Filipino heritage. Sizable proportions of API same-sex partners are also of Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, Asian Indian, Cambodian, and Taiwanese origin.
- In California, API same-sex couples are more likely to live in counties with high percentages of Asian/Pacific Islanders in the population than in counties with high percentages of same-sex couples in the population.
- The demographic and socio-economic profile of Asian/Pacific Islanders in same-sex couples is more similar to Asian/Pacific Islanders in different-sex couples than it is to non-APIs in same-sex couples. They differ little from Asian/Pacific Islanders in different-sex couples in terms of citizenship, military service, income, education, rates of public assistance, and rates of employment.
- Compared with non-APIs in same-sex couples in California, Asian/Pacific Islanders are less likely to be employed (67% v. 71%) and to be U.S. citizens (73% v. 86%). In

addition, they have annual individual incomes that are more than \$7,500 less than non-APIs in same-sex couples.

- Thirty-seven percent of Asian/Pacific Islanders in same-sex couples in California are in inter-ethnic couples. When API same-sex couples (those where both partners are Asian/Pacific Islander) are analyzed separately, their socio-economic situation is worse than both non-API same-sex couples and inter-ethnic same-sex couples. For example, compared with non-API same-sex couples, partners in API same-sex couples have higher rates of disability (27% v. 21%) and lower rates of employment (60% v. 71%).
- In California, the average household income of API same-sex couples is \$16,000 less than that of non-API same-sex couples and almost \$9,000 less than that of API different-sex couples.

### **ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER SAME-SEX PARENTS IN CALIFORNIA, AGED 22-55**

In analyzing API same-sex parents in California, we looked at the population aged 25-55, since this is the group most likely to be raising children.

- Fifty-five percent (55%) of API same-sex couples aged 25-55 are raising their own children in California. Although this percentage may be high due to measurement error in the Census, even when adjusting for such error it is still probable that over a third of these couples are raising their own children.
- API same-sex couples are much more likely to be raising their own children than both inter-ethnic same-sex couples (19%) and non-API same-sex couples (32%).
- Inter- and intra-ethnic API same-sex couples (i.e. same-sex couples with one or more Asian/Pacific Islander partner) in California are raising almost 5,000 of their own children and more than 5,600 children under 18 (related and unrelated children).
- There are more than 4,000 API children being raised by same-sex couples in California. Seventy-seven percent are being raised by two API parents and 94% have at least one API parent.
- Asian/Pacific Islander same-sex parents are raising their children with fewer resources than different-sex parents (both API and non-API) in California. Parents in API same-sex couples have annual household incomes that are, on average, more than \$10,000 less than non-API parents in different-sex couples.
- In addition, while 61% of non-API parents in different-sex couples in California own a home, only 55% of parents in API same-sex couples do.

Data from Census 2000 demonstrate that there are a large number of API same-sex couples and families with children in California, and that without the support and protections provided by marriage, they are more vulnerable than other California families.