Same-sex Couples in Arkansas: A demographic summary

by Gary J. Gates
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Introduction
This research brief offers analyses of data from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) to describe the characteristics of same-sex couples and their families in Arkansas compared to their different-sex married counterparts. Same-sex couples are identified in the ACS when an adult in the household is identified as either the “husband/wife” or “unmarried partner” of the person who filled out the survey, referred to as the householder, and both partners or spouses are of the same sex. These analyses combine ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files from 2010, 2011, and 2012, yielding sample sizes of:

- 62 same-sex couples
- 28 children under age 18 being raised by same-sex couples
- 18,338 different-sex married couples
- 12,421 children under age 18 being raised by different-sex married couples

Race/Ethnicity
A larger percentage of individuals in same-sex couples than in different-sex married couples are members of racial or ethnic minorities. Table 2 shows that, in Arkansas, 24% of individuals in same-sex couples and 16% of individuals in different-sex married couples are racial or ethnic minorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Same-sex</th>
<th>Different-sex married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am. Indian/AK Native</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Same-sex couples with children
Nearly than one in three same-sex couples in Arkansas (30%) are raising children under age 18 in their homes. An estimated 1,283 same-sex-couple households in the state are raising 3,315 children. Nearly seven in ten of the children being raised by same-sex couples in Arkansas are biologically related to one member of the couple (71%), 4% are adopted children, and 3% are stepchildren. This implies that same-sex couples in the state are raising an estimated 2,354 biological children, 132 adopted children, and 88 stepchildren. An additional 23% of children being raised by same-sex couples in Arkansas, or 741 children, are identified as grandchildren, siblings, or other children.

Among couples with children, same-sex couples in Arkansas are nearly three times more likely than their different-sex married counterparts to be raising an adopted child. Nearly 11% of same-sex couples with children have an adopted child, compared to 4% of different-sex married couples with children. Further, 4% of the children of same-sex couples in Arkansas are adopted, compared to 3% of the children of different-sex married couples.

While these Census Bureau data do not identify any same-sex couples fostering children in Arkansas, only 0.5% of different-sex couples with children include a foster child in the state.

Table 1. Individuals in couples, by age (2010-2012 ACS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Same-sex</th>
<th>Different-sex married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;30</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race/ethnicity
More than half of individuals in same-sex couples who are members of racial or ethnic minorities (56%) are raising a child under age 18, compared to 21% of their White counterparts.

Income
The median annual household income of same-sex couples with children under age 18 in the home is 33% lower than the median annual household income of comparable different-sex married couples ($42,429 versus $63,744).

About the author
Gary J. Gates, PhD is the Williams Distinguished Scholar and a national expert in the demographic, geographic, and economic characteristics of the LGBT population.

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