

Same-sex Couples in Hawaii: 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 Hawaii compared to their different-sex 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 2008 through 2011, yielding sample sizes of:

- 87 same-sex couples
- 45 children under age 18 being raised by same-sex couples
- 10,917 different-sex couples
- 8,924 children under age 18 being raised by different-sex couples

Same-sex couples

Tabulations from Census 2010 show that there are 3,239 same-sex couples living in Hawaii. These couples were identified in all of Hawaii's counties. The majority of same-sex couples are male (53%), accounting for 1,715 couples. There are 1,524 female couples.¹

Age

The average age of individuals in couples in Hawaii is nearly the same for those in same-sex and different-sex couples (51.6 and 50.2 years old, respectively).

Table 1 shows the percentages of adults in same-sex and different-sex couples by age group. The distribution across age categories is nearly the same in both couple types.

Table 1. Individuals in couples, by age (2008-2011 ACS)

Age	Same-sex	Different-sex
<30	9%	10%
30-49	39%	39%
50-64	34%	32%
65+	18%	19%

Race/ethnicity

More than half of individuals in same-sex couples in Hawaii are members of racial or ethnic minorities. Table 2 shows that 54% of individuals in same-sex couples are members of racial or ethnic minorities compared to 71% of individuals in different-sex couples.

Table 2. Individuals in couples, by race/ethnicity (2008-2011 ACS)

Age	Same-sex	Different-sex
White	46%	29%
African-American	<1%	1%
Latino/a	13%	6%
Native HI/ Pacific Islander	4%	8%
Asian	15%	41%
Am. Indian/ AK native	<1%	<1%
Other/ multiracial	21%	14%

Asians comprise 15% of individuals in same-sex couples and 41% of those in different-sex couples. The portion of Latinos and Latinas is 13% among those in same-sex couples and 6% among those in different-sex couples. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders comprise 4% of individuals in same-sex couples and 8% of those in different-sex couples. More than one in five individuals in same-sex couples identifies as multiracial or not in one of the racial/ethnic categories shown in Table 2. This compares to 14% of individuals in different-sex couples.

¹ Gates, GJ, Cooke, A. 2011. [Hawaii Census Snapshot: 2010](#), Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.

Same-sex couples with children

Data from Census 2010 suggest that 513 same-sex couples in Hawaii (16%) are raising biological, step, or adopted children under age 18. ACS data suggest that an additional 750 same-sex couples are raising grandchildren under age 18.

Approximately a third of children under age 18 being raised by same-sex couples in Hawaii are biological children (31%), 2% are stepchildren, and 0.4% are adopted.

The ACS data imply that approximately 1,200 same-sex couples in Hawaii are raising children nearly 3,000 children. These children include an estimated 1,000 biological children, adopted, or step children, 1,100 grandchildren, and 900 children who are have some other type of relationship with the couple (e.g., cousin) or are described as unrelated.

Sex and Race/ethnicity

In Hawaii, about half of same-sex couples raising children under age 18 are female (51%) while 49% are male.

More than three-quarters of individuals in both same-sex and different-sex couples raising children under age 18 are members of racial or ethnic minorities (see Table 3).

Table 3. Individuals in couples raising children under age 18, by race/ethnicity (2008-2011 ACS)

Age	Same-sex	Different-sex
White	24%	24%
African-American	<1%	2%
Latino/a	17%	8%
Native HI/ Pacific Islander	7%	11%
Asian	18%	38%
Am. Indian/ AK native	<1%	<1%
Other	33%	17%

Income

The median annual household income of same-sex couples with children under age 18 in the home is higher than the median annual household income of comparable different-sex couples (\$125,000 versus \$91,000).

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.

About the Institute

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