



LGBT YOUTH POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

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FACT SHEET / SEPTEMBER 2020

Table 1. Estimated number of LGBT youth ages 13-17 in the US and by state

	LGBT (Total)	LGB (Total)	LGB (Cisgender)	LGB (Trans)	TRANSGENDER (Total)	TRANSGENDER (Straight/Other)	TRANSGENDER (LGB)
US	1,994,000*	1,924,000	1,844,000	80,000	149,750	69,000	80,000
Alabama	30,000	29,000	28,000	1,300	2,500	1,200	1,300
Alaska	5,000	4,000	4,000	200	350	200	200
Arizona	44,000	43,000	41,000	2,000	3,650	1,700	2,000
Arkansas	19,000	18,000	17,000	800	1,450	700	800
California	244,000	234,000	222,000	11,900	22,200	10,300	11,900
Colorado	34,000	33,000	32,000	1,000	1,800	800	1,000
Connecticut	22,000	21,000	21,000	500	950	400	500
Delaware	6,000	5,000	5,000	200	400	200	200
D.C.	3,000	2,000	2,000	200	300	100	200
Florida	114,000	110,000	105,000	4,900	9,050	4,200	4,900
Georgia	69,000	67,000	64,000	2,700	4,950	2,300	2,700
Hawaii	8,000	7,000	7,000	500	850	400	500
Idaho	12,000	12,000	11,000	400	700	300	400
Illinois	80,000	77,000	74,000	3,100	5,700	2,600	3,100
Indiana	43,000	42,000	40,000	1,800	3,350	1,600	1,800
Iowa	19,000	19,000	18,000	400	800	400	400
Kansas	19,000	18,000	18,000	700	1,300	600	700
Kentucky	27,000	26,000	25,000	1,000	1,850	900	1,000
Louisiana	29,000	28,000	27,000	1,300	2,350	1,100	1,300

	LGBT (Total)	LGB (Total)	LGB (Cisgender)	LGB (Trans)	TRANSGENDER (Total)	TRANSGENDER (Straight/Other)	TRANSGENDER (LGB)
Maine	7,000	7,000	7,000	200	450	200	200
Maryland	36,000	35,000	34,000	1,200	2,300	1,100	1,200
Massachusetts	39,000	38,000	36,000	1,200	2,150	1,000	1,200
Michigan	61,000	59,000	57,000	2,100	3,950	1,800	2,100
Minnesota	35,000	33,000	32,000	1,600	3,000	1,400	1,600
Mississippi	19,000	19,000	18,000	900	1,600	700	900
Missouri	37,000	36,000	35,000	1,300	2,500	1,200	1,300
Montana	6,000	6,000	6,000	200	300	100	200
Nebraska	12,000	12,000	12,000	400	750	300	400
Nevada	18,000	18,000	17,000	700	1,300	600	700
New Hampshire	8,000	7,000	7,000	200	450	200	200
New Jersey	55,000	53,000	51,000	2,100	3,850	1,800	2,100
New Mexico	13,000	13,000	12,000	600	1,200	600	600
New York	113,000	108,000	103,000	5,200	9,750	4,500	5,200
North Carolina	63,000	61,000	58,000	2,500	4,650	2,200	2,500
North Dakota	4,000	4,000	4,000	100	200	100	100
Ohio	72,000	70,000	66,000	3,200	5,900	2,700	3,200
Oklahoma	25,000	24,000	23,000	1,100	2,100	1,000	1,100
Oregon	23,000	23,000	22,000	900	1,700	800	900
Pennsylvania	74,000	71,000	69,000	2,800	5,250	2,400	2,800
Rhode Island	6,000	6,000	5,000	200	400	200	200
South Carolina	30,000	29,000	28,000	1,200	2,150	1,000	1,200
South Dakota	5,000	5,000	5,000	200	300	100	200
Tennessee	41,000	39,000	38,000	1,700	3,150	1,500	1,700
Texas	195,000	188,000	181,000	7,400	13,800	6,400	7,400
Utah	24,000	23,000	23,000	800	1,400	600	800
Vermont	3,000	3,000	3,000	100	250	100	100
Virginia	50,000	49,000	46,000	2,200	4,150	1,900	2,200
Washington	43,000	41,000	40,000	1,700	3,100	1,400	1,700
West Virginia	10,000	10,000	9,000	600	1,150	500	600
Wisconsin	35,000	34,000	33,000	1,000	1,850	900	1,000
Wyoming	3,000	3,000	3,000	100	200	100	100

* This estimate represents 9.5% of the population of youth ages 13-17 in the United States.

Note: Due to rounding, estimates for subgroups (i.e., LGB cisgender, LGB transgender) will not always add up to the total (i.e., all LGB youth). Similarly, due to rounding, the sum of state estimates do not equal the total estimated number of LGBT youth in the US.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

To estimate the number of youth ages 13-17 that identify as LGBT, we used information from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, estimates from the Williams Institute reported in [Age of Individuals Who Identify as Transgender](#) in the United States, and 2017 population estimates produced by the US Census Bureau. Estimates derived from different measures of sexual orientation and gender identity will yield different results.

LGBT (Total): To estimate the number of LGBT youth ages 13-17 (column 1), nationally and by state, the estimated number of LGB youth ages 13-17 (column 2) and transgender youth ages 13-17 who are straight/other (column 7) was added together. Estimates are rounded to the nearest 1,000. This approach avoids double-counting transgender youth who are not LGB-identified in estimates of the total number of LGBT-identified youth. Estimates were rounded to the nearest 1,000.

% LGB: To estimate the percentage of youth age 13-17 who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) (9.2%; 95% confidence interval 8.3%, 10.1%), in response to the question, "which of the following best describes you?," we averaged estimates from the national 2015 (8.0%) and 2017 (10.4%) Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBS), a nationally representative sample of school-enrolled high school students in grades 9-12. See Kahn et al. 2016 and 2018 at <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/ss/pdfs/ss6509.pdf> and <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2017/ss6708.pdf>.

We used national percentages versus state-specific percentages because state-level information about youth sexuality is not uniformly available. Some states do not include a sexual orientation identity question on their YRBS. In addition, state specific LGB percentages, where available, often have wide confidence intervals due to small sample sizes in many states (e.g., in 2017, Michigan n=1,626, South Carolina n=1,501, Texas n=2,113), and thus, are somewhat unstable. In contrast, the national YRBS sample size is large (approximately 15,000 students) which makes the percentage LGB estimate is more stable. The US percentage LGB is similar to the median (9.6%, 10.7%) percentage LGB across the 25-30 states that have collected sexual orientation identity data in 2015 or 2017, respectively. See <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/ss/pdfs/ss6509.pdf> and <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2017/ss6708.pdf>.

LGB (Total): To estimate the number of LGB youth ages 13-17, nationally and by state, the estimated percentage of high school youth who identify as LGB (column 2) was applied to 2017 population estimates produced by the US Census Bureau (based on projections from the 2010 Census) for youth ages 13-17 and rounded to the nearest 1,000. Census estimates were obtained via American FactFinder Table PEPSYASEX, "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017."

LGB range: To provide lower and upper bound estimates of the number of LGB youth, nationally and by state, the lower and upper 95% confidence intervals for the weighted percentage LGB was applied to the population estimates produced by the US Census Bureau as described above. 95% confidence interval = % LGB \pm (1.96 * % LGB_{STANDARD ERROR}). Ranges reflect the natural imprecision (due to sampling error) in percentages and estimates that are based upon survey samples rather than a census count.

LGB (Cisgender): To estimate the number of LGB youth ages 13-17 who are cisgender (i.e., do not identify as transgender), the estimated number of transgender youth ages 13-17 who identify as LGB (column 8) was subtracted from the estimated number of LGB youth ages 13-17 (column 2). Estimates were rounded to the nearest 1,000. This estimate excludes all transgender youth—including those who identify as LGB.

Table 2. Upper and lower bound estimates of the number of LGB youth, national and by state

	LGB (Total)	RANGE
US	1,924,000	1,736,000, 2,113,000
Alabama	29,000	26,000, 32,000
Alaska	4,000	4,000, 5,000
Arizona	43,000	38,000, 47,000
Arkansas	18,000	16,000, 20,000
California	234,000	211,000, 256,000
Colorado	33,000	30,000, 36,000
Connecticut	21,000	19,000, 23,000
Delaware	5,000	5,000, 6,000
D.C.	2,000	2,000, 3,000
Florida	110,000	99,000, 121,000
Georgia	67,000	60,000, 73,000
Hawaii	7,000	7,000, 8,000
Idaho	12,000	10,000, 13,000
Illinois	77,000	70,000, 85,000
Indiana	42,000	38,000, 46,000
Iowa	19,000	17,000, 21,000
Kansas	18,000	17,000, 20,000
Kentucky	26,000	24,000, 29,000
Louisiana	28,000	25,000, 31,000
Maine	7,000	6,000, 8,000
Maryland	35,000	32,000, 38,000
Massachusetts	38,000	34,000, 41,000
Michigan	59,000	54,000, 65,000
Minnesota	33,000	30,000, 37,000
Mississippi	19,000	17,000, 21,000
Missouri	36,000	33,000, 40,000
Montana	6,000	5,000, 6,000
Nebraska	12,000	11,000, 13,000
Nevada	18,000	16,000, 19,000
New Hampshire	7,000	7,000, 8,000
New Jersey	53,000	48,000, 58,000
New Mexico	13,000	12,000, 14,000
New York	108,000	98,000, 119,000
North Carolina	61,000	55,000, 67,000
North Dakota	4,000	4,000, 4,000
Ohio	70,000	63,000, 76,000
Oklahoma	24,000	22,000, 27,000
Oregon	23,000	20,000, 25,000
Pennsylvania	71,000	64,000, 78,000
Rhode Island	6,000	5,000, 6,000
South Carolina	29,000	26,000, 32,000
South Dakota	5,000	5,000, 6,000

	LGB (Total)	RANGE
Tennessee	39,000	36,000, 43,000
Texas	188,000	170,000, 207,000
Utah	23,000	21,000, 26,000
Vermont	3,000	3,000, 4,000
Virginia	49,000	44,000, 53,000
Washington	41,000	37,000, 45,000
West Virginia	10,000	9,000, 11,000
Wisconsin	34,000	31,000, 38,000
Wyoming	3,000	3,000, 4,000

LGB (Trans): To estimate the number of LGB youth who are transgender, the estimated number of transgender youth (column 6), was multiplied by the percentage of transgender youth estimated to identify as LGB (53.7%). The US estimate was rounded to the nearest 1,000; state estimates were rounded to the nearest 100.

The percentages of transgender youth ages 13-17 who identify as LGB and those who do not identify as LGB are derived from unpublished analyses of the 2015-2017 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data conducted by the Williams Institute. See www.cdc.gov/brfss for more information about the BRFSS; the optional sexual orientation and transgender status (SOGI) module was included on the BRFSS survey conducted by 34 states and the territory of Guam in 2015 or 2017.

BRFSS respondents who selected “yes, transgender, male-to-female”, “yes, transgender, female-to-male,” or “yes, transgender, gender-nonconforming” as responses to the question “Do you consider yourself to be transgender?” were categorized as transgender; those answering “no” were categorized as non-transgender (i.e., cisgender). Transgender respondents ages 18-24 (the youngest age group in the BRFSS sample) who selected “lesbian or gay” or “bisexual” in response to the question “Do you consider yourself to be...?” were categorized as LGB (53.7%). Respondents who selected “straight” or who told the interviewer “other” were categorized as straight/other (46.3%).

Transgender (Total): The estimated number of youth ages 13-17 who identify as transgender, nationally and by state, as reported in Herman et al., 2017, Age of Individuals Who Identify as Transgender in the United States. The estimated national percentage of youth ages 13-17 who identify as transgender is 0.73% (95% confidence interval; 0.54%, 1.00%); percentages by state can be found in tables 1 and A1 of the Herman et al. report.

Transgender (Straight/Other): To estimate the number of transgender youth ages 13-17 who do not identify as LGB, the estimated number of transgender youth ages 13-17 reported in Herman et al. (2017) (column 6) was multiplied by the estimated percentage of transgender youth ages 13-17 who did not identify as LGB (i.e., identified as “straight” or “other”) in unpublished analyses of 2015-2017 BRFSS data (46.3%). See # LGB (Trans) above for more details. For example, the estimated percentage of US youth who are transgender (0.73%) and identify as straight/ other (46.3% * 0.73%) is 0.34%. The US estimate was rounded to the nearest 1,000; state estimates were rounded to the nearest 100.

Transgender (LGB): See LGB (Trans) above, which details calculations used to determine the estimated number of youth who identify as both LGB and transgender.

% LGBT Youth (US) (not shown in table): The estimated percentage of US youth who are LGB (9.2%) or transgender (straight/other) (0.34%) is 9.54%.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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