Same-sex Couples in Ohio: 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 Ohio 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 2011 and 2012, yielding sample sizes of:

- 323 same-sex couples
- 103 children under age 18 being raised by same-sex couples
- 46,868 different-sex married couples
- 33,283 children under age 18 being raised by different-sex couples

Same-sex couples
Tabulations from Census 2010 show that there are 19,684 same-sex couples living in Ohio. These couples were identified in all but three of Ohio’s counties. The majority of same-sex couples are female (54%).

Age
The average age of individuals in same-sex couples in Ohio is nine years younger than that of different-sex married couples—42.7 and 51.7 years old, respectively. Table 1 shows the percentages of adults in same-sex and different-sex married couples by age group. The lowest percentage of same-sex couples is in the 65 and over group (6%) while the lowest percentage of different-sex married couples is in the youngest age group of those under age 30 (6%).

Table 1. Individuals in couples, by age (2011-2012 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>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Same-sex couples with children
Nearly one in five same-sex couples in Ohio (19%) are raising children under age 18 in their homes. More than 3,760 same-sex-couple households in the state are raising nearly 6,800 children.

More than half (53%) of children being raised by same-sex couples in Ohio are biological children, 6% are stepchildren, 13% are adopted, and 0.1% are foster children. This implies that same-sex couples in the state are raising an estimated 3,600 biological children, 400 stepchildren, and 900 adopted children. More than a quarter (28%) of children being raised by same-sex couples in Ohio, approximately 1,900 children, are identified as grandchildren, other relatives, or other children who are not relatives.

Same-sex couples in Ohio are more likely than their different-sex married counterparts to be raising an adopted child. Approximately 13% of the children of same-sex couples in Ohio are adopted, compared to 2% of the children of different-sex married couples. 15% of same-sex couples with children have an adopted child, compared to 3% of different-sex married couples.

Same-sex couples in Ohio are somewhat less likely to be fostering children than different-sex married couples. Approximately 0.1% of the children of same-sex couples in Ohio are fostered, compared to 0.2% of the children of different-sex married couples.

Race/ethnicity
Nearly three in ten individuals in same-sex couples who are members of racial or ethnic minorities (29%) are raising a child under age 18, compared to 18% of their White counterparts.

Income
The median annual household income of same-sex couples with children under age 18 in the home is 31% lower than the median annual household income of comparable different-sex married couples ($53,339 versus $77,786).

This may in part be because, compared to different-sex married couples raising children, same-sex couples with children include a higher portion of female couples, who tend to have lower earnings than different-sex married couples.

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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