

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

Same-sex couples

Tabulations from Census 2010 show that there are 4,226 same-sex couples living in Arkansas. These couples were identified in all but four of Arkansas's counties. The majority of same-sex couples are female (55%).¹

Age

The average age of individuals in same-sex couples in Arkansas is nearly eight years younger than that of different-sex married couples—42.9 and 50.5 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 (8%) while the lowest percentage of different-sex married couples is in the youngest age group of those under age 30 (10%).

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

Age	Same-sex	Different-sex married
<30	18%	10%
30-49	51%	38%
50-64	24%	31%
65+	8%	21%

¹ Gates, GJ, Cooke, A (2011). *Arkansas Census Snapshot: 2010*. Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. Retrieved from: http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Census2010Snapshot_Arkansas_v2.pdf.

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 2. Individuals in couples, by race/ethnicity (2010-2012 ACS)

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

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.

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.

About the Institute

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