

Same-sex Couples in Michigan: 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 Michigan 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 to 2012, unless specifically noted otherwise.

Same-sex couples

Tabulations from Census 2010 show that there are 14,598 same-sex couples living in Michigan. These couples were identified in the vast majority of Michigan's counties. The majority of same-sex couples are female (57%).¹

Age

The average age of individuals in same-sex couples in Michigan is more than nine years younger than that of different-sex married couples—42.6 and 51.9 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 (5%) 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)

Age	Same-sex	Different-sex married
<30	21%	6%
30-49	46%	39%
50-64	28%	35%
65+	5%	20%

Nearly one fifth of individuals in same-sex couples in Michigan are members of racial or ethnic minorities. Table 2 shows that approximately 18.5% of individuals in same-sex couples and 13.7% of individuals in different-sex married couples are racial or ethnic minorities.

The portion of Latinas and Latinos is 4.3% among those in same-sex couples and 3.1% among those in different-sex married couples. The portion of African-Americans is 12.6% among those in same-sex couples and 6.3% among those in different-sex married couples. American Indians and Alaskan Natives comprise 0.7% of individuals in same-sex couples and 0.4% of those in different-sex married couples.

Table 2. Individuals in couples, by race/ethnicity (2011-2012 ACS)

Race/ethnicity	Same-sex	Different-sex married
White	81.5%	86.3%
African-American	12.6%	6.3%
Latino/a	4.3%	3.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	2.9%
Am. Indian/AK Native	0.7%	0.4%
Other	0.9%	1.0%

Same-sex couples with children

Census 2010 data show that there were approximately 2,650 same-sex couples raising children in Michigan.² 2011 ACS data indicate that, on average, same-sex couples in Michigan with children have two children under age 18 in the home, indicating that there are approximately 5,300 children in the state being raised by same sex couples.

2011-2012 ACS data indicate that more than two-thirds (66.8%) of children being raised by same-sex couples in Michigan are biological children, 16.4% are step children, 6.7% are adopted, and 10.1% are grandchildren or other relatives.

Among couples with children, same-sex couples in Michigan are more likely than their different-sex married counterparts to be raising an adopted child. 2008-2011 ACS data indicate that approximately 11% of same-sex couples with children have an adopted child, compared to 4% of different-sex married couples. The data suggest that there are approximately 290 same-sex couples in Michigan raising approximately 330 adopted children under age 18. Furthermore, 2011-12 ACS data indicate that approximately 6.7% of the children of same-sex couples in Michigan are adopted, compared to 3.0% of the children of different-sex married couples.

¹ Gates, GJ, Cooke, A (2011). *Michigan Census Snapshot: 2010*. Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. Retrieved from: http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Census2010Snapshot_Michigan_v2.pdf.

² *Id.*

While the most recent Census Bureau data do not identify any same-sex couples fostering children, only 0.5% of different-sex married couples are doing so in the state.

Race/ethnicity

More than half of individuals in same-sex couples who are members of racial or ethnic minorities (53%) are raising a child under age 18, compared to 23% of their White counterparts.

Income

The median annual household income of same-sex couples with children under age 18 in the home is 28% lower than the median annual household income of comparable different-sex married couples (\$56,089 versus \$78,129).

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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