

# Same-sex Couples in Mississippi: 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 Mississippi 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 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012, yielding sample sizes of:

- 82 same-sex couples
- 27 children under age 18 being raised by same-sex couples
- 27,164 different-sex married couples
- 19,093 children under age 18 being raised by different-sex married couples

## Same-sex couples

Tabulations from Census 2000 show that there are 3,484 same-sex couples living in Mississippi. The majority of same-sex couples are female (58%).<sup>1</sup>

## Age

The average age of individuals in same-sex couples in Mississippi is over six years younger than that of different-sex married couples—43.9 and 50.4 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 (4%) while the lowest percentage of different-sex married couples is in the youngest age group of those under age 30 (9%).

**Table 1. Individuals in couples, by age (2008-2012 ACS)**

Age	Same-sex	Different-sex married
<30	13%	9%
30-49	54%	40%
50-64	29%	33%
65+	4%	19%

<sup>1</sup> Gates, GJ, Cooke, A. (2011). Mississippi Census Snapshot: 2010. Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. Retrieved from: [http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Census2010Snapshot\\_Mississippi\\_v2.pdf](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Census2010Snapshot_Mississippi_v2.pdf).

## Race/ethnicity

A higher percentage of individuals in same-sex couples than in different-sex married couples in Mississippi are members of racial or ethnic minorities. Table 2 shows that, in Mississippi, 31.3% of individuals in same-sex couples and 25.3% of individuals in different-sex married couples are racial or ethnic minorities.

**Table 2. Individuals in couples, by race/ethnicity (2008-2012 ACS)**

Race/ethnicity	Same-sex	Different-sex married
White	68.7%	74.7%
African-American	25.9%	21.3%
Latino/a	4.5%	2.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.9%	1.1%
Am. Indian/AK Native	0%	0.3%
Other	0%	0.5%

## Same-sex couples with children

29% of same-sex couples in Mississippi are raising children under age 18 in their homes. 996 same-sex-couple households in the state are raising 1,401 children.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the children being raised by same-sex couples in Mississippi are biological children, 15% are stepchildren, and 3% are adopted children. This implies that same-sex couples in the state are raising an estimated 876 biological children, 208 stepchildren, and 46 adopted children. An additional 19% of children being raised by same-sex couples in Mississippi are identified as grandchildren, other relatives, and non-relatives.

While these Census Bureau data do not identify any same-sex couples fostering children in Mississippi, only 0.4% of different-sex married couples with children include a foster child.

## Race/ethnicity

Approximately one in three individuals in same-sex couples who are members of racial or ethnic minorities (33%) are raising a child under age 18, compared to 26% of their White counterparts.

## Income

The median annual household income of same-sex couples with children under age 18 in the home is

slightly less than the median annual household income of comparable different-sex married couples (66,775 versus 67,381).

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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#### **For more information**

The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law  
Box 951476  
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1476  
(310)267-4382  
williamsinstitute@law.ucla.edu  
www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute

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