

## VIRGINIA

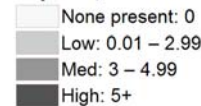
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Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, this report provides demographic and economic information about same-sex couples and same-sex couples raising children in Virginia. We compare same-sex “unmarried partners,” which the Census Bureau defines as an unmarried couple who “shares living quarters and has a close personal relationship,” to different-sex married couples in Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

In many ways, the almost 20,000 same-sex couples living in Virginia are similar to married couples. According to Census 2000, they live throughout the State, are racially and ethnically diverse, have partners who depend upon one another financially, and actively participate in Virginia’s economy. Census data also show that 20% of same-sex couples in Virginia are raising children. However, same-sex couples with children have fewer economic resources to provide for their families than married parents: they have lower household incomes and lower rates of homeownership.

Same-sex couple households  
per 1,000 households



### SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGB POPULATION IN VIRGINIA

- In 2000, there were 13,802 same-sex couples living in Virginia.<sup>2</sup>
- By 2005, the number of same-sex couples increased to 19,673.<sup>3</sup> This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 220,309 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Virginia.<sup>4</sup>

### INDIVIDUALS IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE DEMOGRAPHICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE

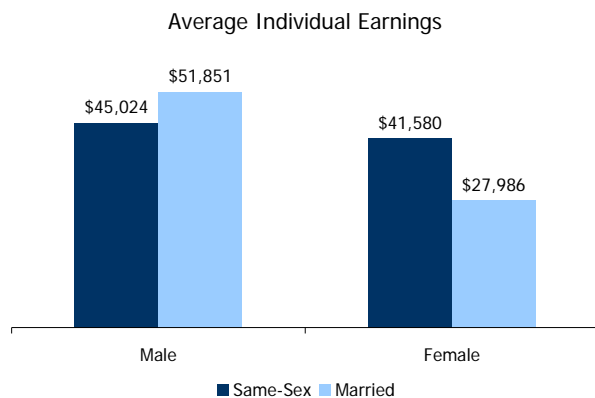
- There are more male same-sex couples (51%) than female same-sex couples (49%) in Virginia.<sup>5</sup>
- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 41 years old, and significantly younger than individuals in married couples (47 years old) in Virginia.

- Same-sex couples live in every county and independent city in Virginia and constitute 0.9% of coupled households and 0.5% of all households in the state.<sup>6</sup> Fairfax City reported the most same-sex couples with 2,088 couples (0.60% of all households in the county), followed by Arlington City with 1,095 couples (1.27%), and Alexandria City with 687 couples (1.11%). The localities with the highest percentage of same-sex couples are Arlington City (1.27% of all county households), Alexandria City (1.11%), Manassas City (0.89%), Falls Church City (0.83%), and Richmond City (0.77%).<sup>7</sup>
- Virginia’s same-sex couples are as racially and ethnically diverse as their married counterparts: 21% of same-sex and married couples are nonwhite.

### PEOPLE IN SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE STATE ECONOMY

- Individuals in same-sex couples in Virginia are significantly more likely to be employed than are married individuals: 81% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 67% of married individuals.

- Contrary to a popular stereotype, the annual earnings of men in same-sex couples are significantly lower than those of married men. On average, men in same-sex couples in Virginia earn \$45,024 each year, significantly less than \$51,851 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Virginia is \$36,000, or 10% less than that of married men (\$40,000).
- Women in same-sex couples in Virginia earn an average of \$41,580 per year (with a median of \$34,000), more than married women, whose earnings average \$27,986 (with a median of \$22,400). Women in same-sex couples earn less than married men as well as men in same-sex couples.



- Individuals in same-sex couples in Virginia are more likely to work in the private sector: 71% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 67% of married individuals; 22% of individuals in same-sex and married couples work in the public sector; and 7% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 11% of married individuals.
- Individuals in same-sex couples are significantly more likely to have a college degree: 45% of individuals in same-sex couples, and 33% of married individuals have earned a college degree.
- Despite the military's historic policies of excluding gay men and lesbians from service, individuals in same-sex couples have served in the military: 15% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 18% of married individuals.

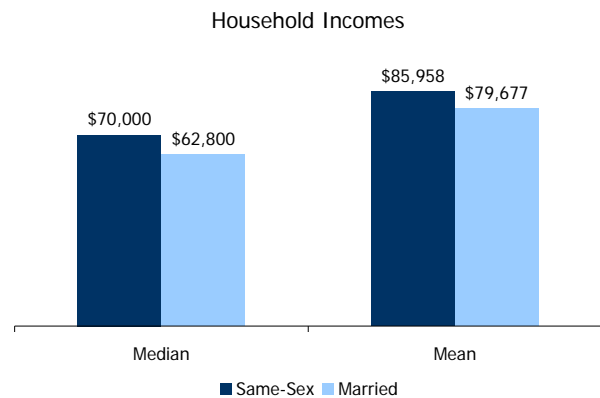
### SAME-SEX PARTNERS IN VIRGINIA DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER IN WAYS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO MARRIED COUPLES

- Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. 20% of same-sex couples have only one wage earner, compared to 31% of married couples.

- The income gap between same-sex partners is \$25,198, compared to \$31,623 for married couples.
- 22% of same-sex couples have at least one partner who is disabled, compared to 27% of married couples.
- 7% of same-sex couples have at least one partner who is age 65 or older, compared to 16% of married couples.

### SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN VIRGINIA HAVE SIMILAR ECONOMIC RESOURCES TO MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

- The median income of same-sex coupled households in Virginia is \$70,000, more than that of married couples (\$62,800). The average household income of same-sex couples is \$85,958, more than \$79,677 for married couples.

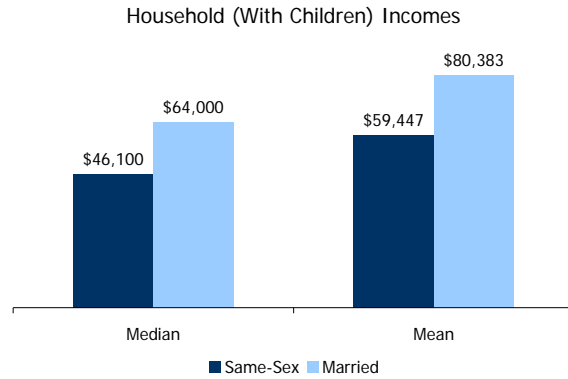


- Same-sex couples are significantly less likely than married couples to own their homes: 70% of same-sex couples in Virginia own their home, compared to 82% of married couples.

### SAME-SEX COUPLES ARE RAISING CHILDREN IN VIRGINIA, YET WITH FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES THAN MARRIED PARENTS

- 20% of same-sex couples in Virginia are raising children under the age of 18.
- As of 2005, an estimated 6,503 of Virginia's children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.<sup>8</sup>
- In Virginia, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.
- 3% of Virginia's adopted children (or 1,143 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.<sup>9</sup>
- 37% of same-sex parents have only one wage earner, compared to 34% of married parents.

- Same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Virginia. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is \$46,100, or 28% lower than that of married parents (\$64,000). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is \$59,447, significantly less than \$80,383 for married parents.
- While 50% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a significantly larger percentage of married parents (78%) own their home.



## CONCLUSION

Census data provide valuable information about gay and lesbian couples in Virginia. While in many respects Virginia's same-sex couples look like married couples, same-sex couples with children have fewer economic resources to provide for their families than married parents and lower rates of homeownership.

	Same-Sex	Married
Race/Ethnicity <sup>10</sup>		
White	79.0%	78.7%
Black	13.9%	12.4%
Hispanic	4.7%	3.6%
Asian	0.7%	3.9%*
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.3%	0.3%
Other	1.4%	1.2%
Average age	40.7	47.2*
Percent with a college degree or better	45.0%	32.6%*
Percent Employed	81.0%	66.8%*
Employment <sup>10</sup>		
Private employer	71.0%	67.2% ^
Public employer	21.7%	21.7%
Self-employed	7.3%	10.9%*
Veteran Status	14.7%	18.4%*
Average individual salary		
Men	\$45,024	\$51,851*
Woman	\$41,580	\$27,986*
Median individual salary		
Men	\$36,000	\$40,000
Woman	\$34,000	\$22,400

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).  
^ Difference significant at the 10% level or better (two-tailed tests).

	Same-Sex	Married
At least one partner 65 or older	7.2%	16.3%*
Percent disabled	21.5%	26.7%*
Average household income	\$85,958	\$79,677 ^
Median household income	\$70,000	\$62,800
Income gap between partners	\$25,198	\$31,623*
Single wage earner	19.9%	30.9%*
Homeownership	69.8%	82.0%*
Percent with children under 18	19.9%	47.8%*

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).  
^ Difference significant at the 10% level or better (two-tailed tests).

	Same-Sex parents	Married parents
Average number of children under 18 in the household	1.7	1.8
Single wage earner (parents)	37.0%	33.6%
Average household income (parents)	\$59,447	\$80,383*
Median household income (parents)	\$46,100	\$64,000
Homeownership	49.7%	78.4%*

\* Difference significant at the 5% level or better (two-tailed tests).  
^ Difference significant at the 10% level or better (two-tailed tests).

**Appendix A: Counts and percent of same-sex couples by county/independent city<sup>11</sup>**

County/City	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Accomack County	58	0.38%
Albemarle County	154	0.48%
Alexandria City	687	1.11%
Alleghany County	20	0.39%
Amelia County	26	0.61%
Amherst County	40	0.33%
Appomattox County	19	0.36%
Arlington County	1095	1.27%
Augusta County	104	0.42%
Bath County	5	0.24%
Bedford City	10	0.40%
Bedford County	92	0.39%
Bland County	8	0.31%
Botetourt County	45	0.38%
Bristol City	24	0.31%
Brunswick County	43	0.69%
Buchanan County	45	0.43%
Buckingham County	23	0.43%
Buena Vista City	10	0.39%
Campbell County	76	0.37%
Caroline County	42	0.52%
Carroll County	52	0.43%
Charles City County	5	0.19%
Charlotte County	16	0.32%
Charlottesville City	116	0.69%
Chesapeake City	275	0.39%
Chesterfield County	388	0.41%
Clarke County	24	0.49%
Clifton Forge City	4	0.22%
Colonial Heights City	30	0.43%
Covington City	10	0.35%
Craig County	5	0.24%
Culpeper County	53	0.44%
Cumberland County	17	0.48%
Danville City	80	0.39%
Dickenson County	15	0.22%
Dinwiddie County	35	0.38%
Emporia City	15	0.67%
Essex County	14	0.35%
Fairfax City	55	0.68%
Fairfax County	2088	0.60%
Falls Church City	37	0.83%
Fauquier County	108	0.54%
Floyd County	20	0.35%
Fluvanna County	37	0.50%
Franklin City	8	0.24%
Franklin County	64	0.34%
Frederick County	90	0.41%

County/City	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Fredericksburg City	38	0.47%
Galax City	14	0.47%
Giles County	35	0.50%
Gloucester County	43	0.33%
Goochland County	23	0.37%
Grayson County	26	0.36%
Greene County	24	0.43%
Greensville County	17	0.50%
Halifax County	56	0.37%
Hampton City	205	0.38%
Hanover County	112	0.36%
Harrisonburg City	47	0.36%
Henrico County	464	0.43%
Henry County	99	0.41%
Highland County	4	0.35%
Hopewell City	62	0.68%
Isle of Wight County	48	0.42%
James City County	56	0.29%
King and Queen County	8	0.30%
King George County	30	0.49%
King William County	14	0.29%
Lancaster County	22	0.44%
Lee County	36	0.37%
Lexington City	4	0.18%
Loudoun County	324	0.54%
Louisa County	40	0.40%
Lunenburg County	31	0.62%
Lynchburg City	97	0.38%
Madison County	26	0.55%
Manassas City	50	0.43%
Manassas Park City	29	0.89%
Martinsville City	37	0.57%
Mathews County	8	0.20%
Mecklenburg County	48	0.37%
Middlesex County	19	0.45%
Montgomery County	150	0.48%
Nelson County	43	0.73%
New Kent County	19	0.39%
Newport News City	268	0.38%
Norfolk City	584	0.68%
Northampton County	33	0.62%
Northumberland County	16	0.29%
Norton City	3	0.17%
Nottoway County	19	0.34%
Orange County	49	0.48%
Page County	25	0.27%
Patrick County	34	0.42%
Petersburg City	63	0.46%

**Appendix A: Counts and percent of same-sex couples by county/independent city (continued from previous page)<sup>11</sup>**

County/City	Number of same-sex couples	Percent of same-sex couples out of all households
Pittsylvania County	97	0.39%
Poquoson City	14	0.34%
Portsmouth City	200	0.52%
Powhatan County	33	0.45%
Prince Edward County	23	0.35%
Prince George County	50	0.49%
Prince William County	506	0.54%
Pulaski County	60	0.41%
Radford City	19	0.33%
Rappahannock County	17	0.61%
Richmond City	647	0.77%
Richmond County	10	0.34%
Roanoke City	235	0.56%
Roanoke County	142	0.41%
Rockbridge County	45	0.53%
Rockingham County	112	0.44%
Russell County	35	0.30%
Salem City	24	0.24%
Scott County	26	0.27%
Shenandoah County	60	0.42%
Smyth County	40	0.30%
Southampton County	34	0.54%
Spotsylvania County	154	0.49%
Stafford County	121	0.40%
Staunton City	48	0.50%
Suffolk City	109	0.47%
Surry County	9	0.34%
Sussex County	17	0.41%
Tazewell County	66	0.36%
Virginia Beach City	616	0.40%
Warren County	69	0.57%
Washington County	81	0.38%
Waynesboro City	27	0.32%
Westmoreland County	34	0.50%
Williamsburg City	18	0.50%
Winchester City	55	0.55%
Wise County	55	0.34%
Wythe County	40	0.35%
York County	65	0.33%

## About the Authors

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, we calculate the demographic characteristics from the Census 2000 Public Use Microdata Sample (5% file) available from the U.S. Census Bureau. For a detailed discussion of the Census 2000 methodology used in this report, see *Census Snapshot: Methods Note*, available at <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publications/MethodologicalDetailsForCensusSnapshots.pdf>. In estimating numbers of same-sex couples and children raised by same-sex couples, however, we use the total number of same-sex couples from 2005 and the proportion of couples with children from 2000 in order to provide a more up-to-date estimate.

<sup>2</sup> Tavia Simmons & Martin O'Connell, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, *Married-Couple and Unmarried-Partner Households*, Census 2000 Special Reports, CENSR-5, p. 4, tab. 2 (Feb. 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Gary J. Gates, The Williams Institute, *Same-sex Couples and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Population: New Estimates from the American Community Survey*, p. 11, apx. 1, available at <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publications/SameSexCouplesandGLBpopACS.pdf>. Sample sizes for individual states in 2005 are not sufficiently large for the analyses presented in this report, we therefore use data from Census 2000 where samples are on average five times larger than 2005.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Simmons & O'Connell, *supra* note 2.

<sup>6</sup> In Virginia, there are incorporated places, known as "independent cities," that are independent of any county organization and thus constitute primary divisions of the state. These incorporated places are treated as equivalent to counties for census purposes. See U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 County & County Equivalent Areas, available at [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/cob/co\\_metadata.html](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/cob/co_metadata.html).

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Unmarried Partner Households by Sex of Partners*, PCT14. Percentages of total households computed by dividing data in PCT14 by data in P15 (total households).

<sup>8</sup> Computed by multiplying the number of same-sex couples times the percent of same-sex couples with children times the average number of children under 18 in the household.

<sup>9</sup> Gary J. Gates, M.V. Lee Badgett, Kate Chambers, Jennifer Macomber, The Williams Institute & The Urban Institute, *Adoption and Foster Care by Gay and Lesbian Parents in the United States (2007)*, available at <http://www.law.ucla.edu/Williamsinstitute/publications/Policy-Adoption-index.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Due to rounding, percent may not add to 100.

<sup>11</sup> See *supra* note 6.

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