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 Vermont. 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 Vermont.\(^1\)

In many ways, the almost 2,200 same-sex couples living in Vermont are similar to married couples. According to Census 2000, they live throughout the state, are racially and ethnically diverse, have partners that depend upon one another financially, and actively participate in Vermont’s economy. Census data also show that 20% of same-sex couples in Vermont are raising children. However, same-sex parents have fewer economic resources to provide for their families than do their married counterparts: they have lower household incomes and lower rates of home ownership.

### SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE LGBT POPULATION IN VERMONT

- In 2000, there were 1,933 same-sex couples living in Vermont.\(^2\)

- The number of same-sex couples increased to 2,157 by 2005.\(^3\) This increase likely reflects same-sex couples’ growing willingness to disclose their partnerships on government surveys.

- In 2005, there were almost 24,000 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (single and coupled) living in Vermont.\(^4\)

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

- There are more female same-sex couples (61%) than male same-sex couples (39%) in Vermont.\(^5\)

- Individuals in same-sex couples are, on average, 45 years old, and significantly younger than married individuals (49 years old) in Vermont.

- Same-sex couples live in every county in Vermont and constitute 1.3% of coupled households and 0.8% of all households in the state. Chittenden County reported the most same-sex couples with 537 couples (0.95% of all households in the county), followed by Washington County with 190 couples (0.80%), and Windham County with 186 couples (1.01%). The county with the highest percentage of same-sex couples is Orange County (1.04% of all county households).\(^6\)

- Vermont’s same-sex couples are as racially and ethnically diverse than their married counterparts: 3% 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 Vermont are significantly more likely to be employed than are married individuals: 82% of individuals in same-sex couples are employed, compared to 73% of married individuals.
Contrary to a popular stereotype, the annual earnings of men in same-sex couples are significantly lower than married men. On average, men in same-sex couples in Vermont earn $23,773 each year, significantly less than $41,189 for married men. The median income of men in same-sex couples in Vermont is $24,000, or 27% less than that of married men ($33,000).

Women in same-sex couples in Vermont earn an average of $28,227 per year (with a median of $22,300), more than married women, whose earnings average $22,925 (with a median of $20,000). Women in same-sex couples earn, on average, less than married men but more than men in same-sex couples in Vermont.

Individuals in same-sex couples in Vermont are more likely to work in the private sector: 74% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the private sector, compared to 67% of married individuals; 14% of individuals in same-sex couples work in the public sector, compared to 16% of married individuals; and 13% of individuals in same-sex couples are self-employed, compared to 17% of married individuals.

Individuals in same-sex couples are more likely to have a college degree: 45% of individuals in same-sex couples and 31% 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: 8% of individuals in same-sex couples are veterans, compared to 16% of married individuals.

Couples in which one partner does not work or earns significantly less than the other partner may indicate financial interdependence. Almost one in five same-sex couples (16%) have only one wage earner, compared to almost one in four (24%) married couples.

The same percentage (25%) of same-sex and married couples in Vermont have at least one partner who is disabled.

17% of same-sex couples have at least one partner over the age of 65, compared to 18% of married couples.

SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLDS IN VERMONT HAVE SIMILAR ECONOMIC RESOURCES AS MARRIED HOUSEHOLDS

The median income of same-sex coupled households in Vermont is $56,300, more than that of married couples ($54,200). The average household income of same-sex couples is $62,839, less than $65,227 for married couples.

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

20% of same-sex couples in Vermont are raising children under the age of 18.

As of 2005, an estimated 643 of Vermont’s children are living in households headed by same-sex couples.7

In Vermont, married and same-sex couples with children under 18 in the home have, on average, 2 children.

Roughly 6% of Vermont’s adopted children (or 235 children) live with a lesbian or gay parent.8
• Same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to support their children than married parents in Vermont. The median household income of same-sex couples with children is $37,500, or 34% lower than that of married parents ($56,720). The average household income of same-sex couples with children is $54,639, significantly less than $67,619 for married parents.

• While 73% of same-sex couples with children own their home, a much larger percentage of married parents (84%) own their home.

CONCLUSION

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

| Table One: Characteristics of individuals in couples |  |  
| Race/Ethnicity | Same-Sex | Married |
| White | 97.4% | 97.4% |
| Black | 0.0% | 0.2% |
| Hispanic | 1.1% | 0.6% |
| Asian | 0.7% | 0.7% |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 0.9% | 0.3% |
| Other | 0.0% | 0.3% |
| Average age | 45.2 | 48.5* |
| Percent with a college degree or better | 45.0% | 31.0%* |
| Percent Employed | 81.5% | 62.1%^ |
| Employment |  |  
| Private employer | 73.7% | 66.8% |
| Public employer | 13.7% | 15.7% |
| Self-employed | 12.6% | 17.2% |
| Veteran Status | 7.5% | 16.3%* |
| Average individual salary |  |  
| Men | $23,773 | $41,189* |
| Woman | $28,227 | $22,925* |
| Median individual salary |  |  
| Men | $24,000 | $33,000 |
| Woman | $22,300 | $20,000 |

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

| Table Two: Characteristics of couples |  |  
| At least one partner over 65 | Same-Sex | Married |
| Percent disabled | 25.1% | 25.0% |
| Average household income | $62,839 | $65,227 |
| Median household income | $56,300 | $54,200 |
| Income gap between partners | $14,947 | $23,175 |
| Single wage earner | 15.5% | 24.3% |
| Homeownership | 77.6% | 86.1% |
| Percent with children under 18 | 19.6% | 45.2%* |

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

| Table Three: Characteristics of couples with children |  |  
| Average number of children under 18 in the household | Same-Sex parents | Married parents |
| Single wage earner (parents) | 0.0% | 25.4%^ |
| Average household income (parents) | $54,639 | $67,619 |
| Median household income (parents) | $37,500 | $56,720 |
| Homeownership | 73.4% | 84.0%^ |

* 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number of same-sex couples</th>
<th>Percent of same-sex couples out of all households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addison</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennington</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caledonia</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittenden</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>0.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Isle</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamoille</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orleans</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutland</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windham</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>1.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>0.64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About the Authors

Adam P. Romero is Public Policy Fellow at the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. J.D. Yale Law School; A.B., summa cum laude, Cornell University. His current research examines the significance of family in society and law, especially as relevant to disabled adults without family.

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1 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.


3 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.

4 Id.

5 Simmons & O’Connell, supra note 2.

6 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).

7 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.


9 Due to rounding, percent may not add to 100.

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