

# New report shows surge in marriages for same-sex couples

12 March 2015, by Lauren Jow

The number of legally married same-sex couples in the United States has nearly tripled in the last year, according to data from Gallup analyzed by researchers at the UCLA School of Law's Williams Institute. The new figures suggest that, as of February 2015, there are about 350,000 married same-sex couples in the country.

Williams Institute Research Director Gary Gates reviewed new preliminary data from Gallup, which showed that more than 700,000 Americans are part of a married same-sex couple, compared to estimates from the [2013 National Health Interview Survey](#), which had the number at about 260,000.

"These new figures showing a surge in same-sex couples marrying across the country highlight the historic nature of the past year for LGBT individuals and their families," said Gates, who is the Blachford-Cooper Distinguished Scholar at the Williams Institute.

Two new research reports authored by Gates show that same-sex couples, particularly married ones, are more likely to be raising adopted or foster children than their different-sex counterparts. The reports also found that same-sex couples with children have a lower median annual income than different-sex couples with kids. Similarly to different-sex couples, same-sex couples that are married are more economically secure.

"The debates about marriage and same-sex couples have focused substantial attention on the idea that marriage is a great environment for [raising children](#)," Gates said. "Same-sex couples seem to agree. Married same-sex couples are much more likely than their unmarried counterparts to have kids, particularly adopted and foster children."

Findings from the two Williams Institute reports will be included in a friend-of-the-court brief that were submitted March 6 to the Supreme Court of the

United States as part of the same-sex marriage cases in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee.

Key findings of the reports include:

- Nearly one in five same-sex couples (18%) are raising children. An estimated 122,000 same-sex couples are raising 210,000 children under age 18, of whom 58,000 are adopted or foster children. Among married same-sex couples, more than one in four (27%) are raising children.
- Married same-sex couples have a median household income that is approximately 27% higher than the median income of unmarried same-sex couples. Poverty is substantially less common among married same-sex couples (4%) than among unmarried same-sex couples (18%).
- Nearly 1 in 5 children being raised by same-sex couples is living in poverty. But among married same-sex couples, that figure is less than 1 in 10.
- In Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee, 19% (nearly 11,000) of the 56,000 same-sex couples are raising children under 18 years old. Perhaps due to more restrictive policies regarding adoption and fostering among [same-sex couples](#), same-sex [couples](#) with children in those states are less likely to have adopted or foster children (14%).

The first study, titled "[Demographics of Married and Unmarried Same-sex Couples: Analyses of the 2013 American Community Survey](#)," analyzes nationwide data. The second study, "[Demographics of Same-sex Couples in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee: Analyses of 2013 American Community Survey](#)," focuses on the four states whose same-sex marriage cases will be considered by the Supreme Court in June.

**More information:** The 2013 National Health

Interview Survey is available online:

[williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu ... es-nhis-sep-2014.pdf](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/es-nhis-sep-2014.pdf)

Provided by University of California, Los Angeles

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