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# Rising Number of U.S. Households Are Headed by Married Same-Sex Couples

Along with love and companionship, a majority of adults with a same-sex spouse cite legal rights and benefits as a reason for marrying

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## About this project

Pew Research Center conducted this study to understand the demographic characteristics and experiences of adults who are married to or living with a same-sex spouse or partner.

This analysis is part of a broader project focused on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer adults 10 years after the <u>Supreme Court's Obergefell v. Hodges ruling</u> legalized same-sex marriage nationwide.

The analysis in this report is based on three separate data sources. The number of same-sex married and cohabiting households comes from the U.S. Census Bureau's <u>characteristics of same-sex couple households</u>. Data is not provided for the year 2020 due to data collection issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of where couples live, education, employment, income and family characteristics comes from the American Community Survey (ACS).

The data on same-sex couples' relationship satisfaction and division of household tasks was collected as part of a larger Center survey of 3,959 LGBTQ U.S. adults conducted from Jan. 8 to Jan. 19, 2025. This analysis is based on responses from 1,154 of those LGBTQ adults who are married to or living with a same-sex spouse or partner. The sample for this survey includes respondents from three different sources: Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), SSRS's Opinion Panel (OP) and Ipsos' Knowledge Panel (KP). The ATP is a group of people recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses who have agreed to take surveys regularly.

The survey included oversamples of transgender adults and gay, lesbian or bisexual adults who are married or living with a partner from Ipsos' KnowledgePanel. Like the ATP, the Opinion Panel and KnowledgePanel are probability-based online survey web panels recruited primarily through national, random sampling of residential addresses.

Interviews were conducted either online or by telephone with a live interviewer. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. LGBTQ adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other factors.

Here are the <u>questions used for this analysis</u>, the <u>topline</u> and the <u>survey methodology</u>.

The Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder. This report was made possible with support from the Trusts and from the <u>People & Voices Initiative</u>.

## Terminology

References to **LGBTQ adults** include adults who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer.

Throughout this report, we use the term "different-sex" to refer to couples that consist of a man and a woman in keeping with <u>The Associated Press Stylebook</u>, a resource we use often.

In the secondary data findings, **same-sex couples** refer to those who are living with a spouse or unmarried partner of the same sex. **Different-sex couples** consist of a man and a woman who are married or unmarried and living in the same household.

In the survey findings, references to **same-sex couples** are based on those who indicated they are married or living with a partner. Additionally, only those who have one partner, or who have more than one partner but consider one to be their primary partner, of the same sex are included.

**Living with partner** and **cohabiting** are used interchangeably to refer to people who currently live with their partner but are not married.

References to **college graduates** or **people with a college degree** comprise those with a bachelor's degree or more education. "**Some college**" includes those with an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree. "**High school**" refers to those who have a high school diploma or its equivalent, such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.

References to **employed adults** include those who are working full or part time.

**Household income** is the sum of incomes of all household members age 15+ during the previous year.

## Rising Number of U.S. Households Are Headed by Married Same-Sex Couples

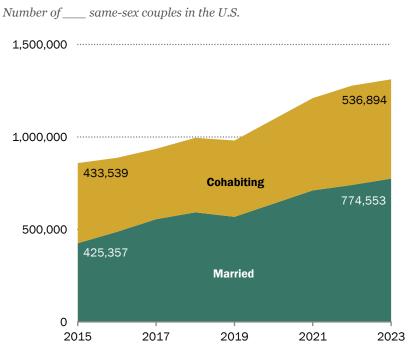
Along with love and companionship, a majority of adults with a same-sex spouse cite legal rights and benefits as a reason for marrying

Ten years after the Supreme Court's ruling in <u>Obergefell v.</u> <u>Hodges</u> legalized same-sex marriage nationwide, a <u>Pew</u> <u>Research Center survey</u> finds that two-thirds of LGBTQ adults say the decision made the country more accepting of same-sex couples.

Since 2015, the number of households headed by **samesex married couples** in the United States has risen steadily from 425,357 to 774,553 in 2023, according to U.S. Census Bureau data.<sup>1</sup>

The number of households headed by **same-sex cohabiting couples** has also risen over this period. It started at 433,539 in 2015 and increased to 536,894 by 2023.

## Number of households headed by same-sex couples in U.S. has risen steadily since 2015



Note: Based on couples living together in the same household. Values are labeled for 2015 and 2023.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 and 2021-2023. Data for 2020 is not available. "Rising Number of U.S. Households Are Headed by Married Same-Sex Couples"

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Despite these increases, same-sex married couples represent a very small share of all married couples – **just 1.3% in 2023.** Same-sex cohabiting couples account for 5.6% of all cohabiting couples. (<u>Read a demographic profile</u> of same-sex couples below.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Prior to the Supreme Court's ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges, same-sex marriage was legal in 36 states and the District of Columbia.

Our accompanying survey finds that while love and companionship are top reasons for same-sex couples to get married, a majority of adults with a same-sex spouse also say legal rights and benefits are a major reason.

In general, men and women in same-sex couples express a great deal of satisfaction with their relationship. Those who are married tend to be more satisfied with certain aspects than those who are living with a partner. (<u>Read more from our survey</u> about how same-sex couples describe their relationships.)

These findings come from a Pew Research Center survey and analysis of government data. The survey data is based on the responses of 1,154 adults who are married to or living with a same-sex spouse or partner as part of a larger, nationally representative survey of LGBTQ U.S. adults conducted Jan. 8-19, 2025. The analysis of government data about same-sex and different-sex couples is based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey.

**Related:** The Experiences of LGBTQ Americans Today

## A demographic profile of same-sex couples

The demographic characteristics of same-sex married couples vary somewhat from those of different-sex (sometimes referred to as opposite-sex) married couples. The patterns are largely similar when comparing same-sex and different-sex cohabiting couples.

## Learn more: Detailed tables on cohabiting couples

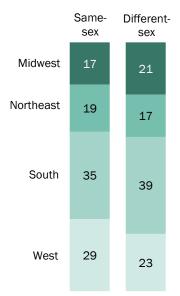
## Where do same-sex married couples live?

While substantial shares of same-sex married couples live in all four regions of the United States, there are some differences in where they live compared with different-sex couples.

- Same-sex couples are more likely than different-sex couples to live in the **West** (29%, compared with 23% of different-sex couples) and the **Northeast** (19% vs. 17%).
- Different-sex couples are more likely than same-sex couples to live in the South (39% vs. 35%) and the Midwest (21% vs. 17%).

## Modest regional differences in where same-sex and differentsex married couples live

% of same-sex and different-sex married couples living in the ...



Note: Based on married couples living together in the same household. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2023 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

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## **Economic characteristics**

The rest of this analysis looks separately at same-sex couples with two women and those with two men because the findings often vary between these two groups.

### Education

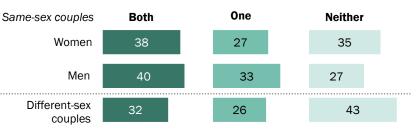
Same-sex married couples have higher levels of education than different-sex married couples. This

is especially true of couples where both spouses are men. (This analysis focuses on couples who have mostly completed their education – those in which the older spouse is age 25 to 64.)

 Both spouses have a bachelor's degree: This is the case in 40% of samesex married couples with two men and 38% of samesex couples with two women. The share is smaller for different-sex married couples (32%).

## Same-sex married couples have higher levels of education than different-sex married couples

% of married couples in which \_\_\_\_\_ spouse(s) hold(s) a bachelor's degree or more education



Note: Based on married couples living together in the same household in which the older spouse is age 25 to 64. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2023 American Community Survey (IPUMS). "Rising Number of U.S. Households Are Headed by Married Same-Sex Couples"

- **One spouse has a bachelor's degree:** This is the case in 33% of same-sex married couples with two men and smaller shares of same-sex couples with two women (27%) and different-sex couples (26%).
- Neither spouse has a bachelor's degree: 43% of different-sex couples fall into this category, compared with smaller shares among same-sex couples with two women (35%) and those with two men (27%).

## Employment

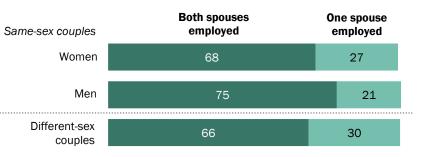
Same-sex and different-sex married couples also have different work arrangements. (This and the remaining analyses focus on working-age couples – those in which the older spouse is age 18 to 64.)

Three-quarters of same-sex married couples with two men have **both spouses employed** full- or part-time. The shares for same-sex married couples with two women and different-sex couples are smaller (68% and 66%, respectively).

Work arrangements vary somewhat depending on whether couples have minor children in their home. But even among married couples without children, those with two men are the most likely to

## Same-sex married couples with 2 men are most likely to live in dual-earner households

% of married couples in which ...



Note: Based on married couples living together in the same household in which the older spouse is age 18 to 64. Shares of households with neither spouse employed are not shown. Employed includes those working full or part time. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2023 American Community Survey (IPUMS). "Rising Number of U.S. Households Are Headed by Married Same-Sex Couples"

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have both partners working (75%). And among married couples without children, those with two women (69%) are more likely than different-sex couples (64%) to have both spouses employed.

### Income

Differences in education and employment may contribute to differences in married couples' household incomes. **Same-sex married couples with two men** have the highest household incomes – \$172,689 at the median. Incomes for other married couples are:

- \$121,900 among same-sex couples with two women
- \$121,000 among different-sex couples

## Same-sex married couples with 2 men have the highest household incomes

Median adjusted annual household income of married couples, by couple type



Note: Based on married couples living together in the same household in which the older spouse is age 18 to 64. Household incomes are adjusted by household size, scaled to reflect a threeperson household and reported based on the previous year. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2023 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

"Rising Number of U.S. Households Are Headed by Married Same-Sex Couples"

## **Family characteristics**

#### Raising children

Among different-sex married couples, just over half (53%) are raising children (defined here as having at least one child younger than 18 who lives with them). The shares are lower for samesex couples and vary widely by gender.

- 31% among same-sex married couples with two women
- 10% among same-sex couples with two men

### Remarriage

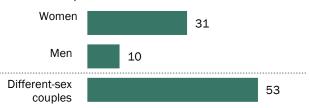
Roughly a third (34%) of same-sex married couples with two women include at least one spouse who is remarried. The shares are lower for other married couples.

- 27% among different-sex married couples
- 22% among same-sex married couples with two men

## About 3 in 10 same-sex married couples with two women are raising children

% of married couples who have at least one minor child who lives with them

Same-sex couples



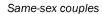
Note: Based on married couples living together in the same household in which the older spouse is age 18 to 64. Children may be biological, adopted or stepchildren and are younger than 18. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2023 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

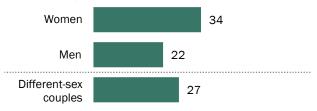
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## Same-sex married couples with 2 women are most likely to have a remarried spouse

% of married couples with at least one spouse who is remarried





Note: Based on married couples living together in the same household in which the older spouse is age 18 to 64. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2023 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

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## Key characteristics for same-sex and different-sex cohabiting couples

The table below compares key characteristics of same-sex and different-sex couples who are **living with an unmarried partner.** For example, the section on region shows that 23% of different-sex cohabiting couples live in the Midwest, as do 22% of same-sex cohabiting couples with two women and 18% of same-sex cohabiting couples with two men.

	Same-sex women	Same-sex men	Different-sex
Region			
Midwest	22%	18%	23%
Northeast	18	18	18
South	35	38	35
West	25	26	24
Education			
Both partners have bachelor's+	32%	35%	20%
One partner has bachelor's+	28	35	25
Neither partner has bachelor's+	40	30	55
Employment			
One partner working	19%	21%	25%
Both partners working	77	76	71
Household income (median)	\$101,654	\$141,000	\$93,700
Share raising children	18%	3%	37%

## Characteristics of different-sex and same-sex cohabiting couples

Note: All figures based on cohabiting couples living together in the same household. Subtotals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Region includes all couples. Education includes couples in which the older partner is age 25 to 64. Employment, income and raising children include couples in which the older partner is age 18 to 64. Employed includes those working full or part time. Household incomes are adjusted by household size, scaled to reflect a three-person household and reported based on the previous year. Children may be biological, adopted or stepchildren and are younger than 18. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2023 American Community Survey (IPUMS). "Rising Number of U.S. Households Are Headed by Married Same-Sex Couples"

## How same-sex couples describe their relationships

Our survey of LGBTQ adults in the U.S. found that most who are married to or living with a samesex spouse or partner (92%) say their relationship is going at least fairly well, including 63% who say it is going *very* well. Relatively few (8%) say it's not going too well or not going well at all.

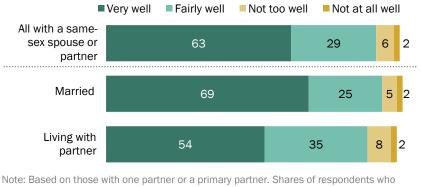
Those who are married are more likely than those who are living with their partner but not married to say things are going very well (69% vs. 54%).

A <u>2019 Pew Research Center</u> <u>survey of married or</u> <u>cohabiting U.S. adults</u> found a similar pattern. Among adults with a different-sex partner, those who were married were more likely than those who were cohabiting to say things were going very well in their relationship (58% vs. 42%).

In that survey, 55% of married or cohabiting adults with a different-sex partner said

## Married LGBTQ adults with a same-sex spouse or partner rate their relationship more highly than those living with a partner

Among LGBTQ adults who are married to or living with a same-sex spouse or partner, % saying that overall, things in their marriage/relationship are going ...



didn't offer an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of LGBTQ U.S. adults conducted Jan. 8-19, 2025. "Rising Number of U.S. Households Are Headed by Married Same-Sex Couples"

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things were going very well in their relationship. That's 8 percentage points lower than the share who said this in this year's survey of LGBTQ adults with a same-sex spouse or partner.

## Satisfaction with various parts of the relationship

Majorities of adults with a same-sex spouse or partner say they're at least somewhat satisfied with several aspects of their relationship and home life. But as was the case among adults with

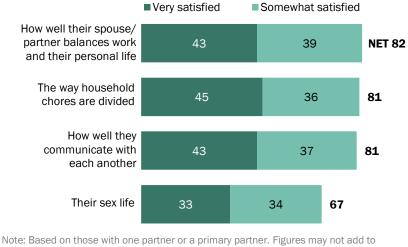
different-sex partners in 2019, fewer than half are *very* satisfied with:

- The way household chores are divided (45%)
- How well they and their spouse or partner communicate with each other (43%)
- How well their spouse or partner balances work and their personal life (43%)
- Their sex life (33%)

Men and women with samesex partners are equally satisfied with these aspects of their relationship.

For the most part, those who are married are more likely than those who are living with Most LGBTQ adults with a same-sex spouse or partner say they're satisfied with key aspects of their relationship

Among LGBTQ adults who are married to or living with a same-sex spouse or partner, % saying they feel \_\_\_\_\_ about each of the following



Note: Based on those with one partner or a primary partner. Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding. Other response options included "Somewhat dissatisfied" and "Very dissatisfied."

Source: Survey of LGBTQ U.S. adults conducted Jan. 8-19, 2025.

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a partner to say they are very satisfied with various aspects of their relationship. There is no difference between married and cohabiting couples saying they are very satisfied with their sex life.

## **Reasons for getting married**

Perhaps not surprisingly, large shares of married LGBTQ adults with a same-sex spouse say love, companionship and wanting to make a formal commitment were major reasons they got married.

But most (64%) also say legal rights and benefits were a major factor in their decision.

Smaller shares say it made sense financially (29%) or they wanted to have children someday (15%).

## There are significant differences by gender and age when it comes to legal rights and benefits and wanting to have children.

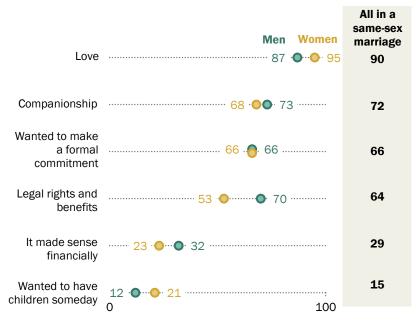
## Differences by gender

Among those with a same-sex spouse, men are more likely than women to say legal rights and benefits are a major reason they got married (70% vs. 53%).

Women are more likely than men to say wanting to have children someday is a major reason they got married (21% vs. 12%).

## Among those with a same-sex spouse, men are more likely than women to say legal rights and benefits were a major reason they got married

Among married LGBTQ adults with a same-sex spouse, % saying each of the following is a **major reason** they got married



Note: Based on those with one partner or a primary partner. Other response options included "Minor reason" and "Not a reason." Source: Survey of LGBTQ U.S. adults conducted Jan. 8-19, 2025. "Rising Number of U.S. Households Are Headed by Married Same-Sex Couples"

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## Differences by age

About three-quarters of those ages 50 and older (74%) say legal rights and benefits are a major reason they got married. Smaller shares of those under 50 (53%) say the same.

In turn, those younger than 50 are much more likely than those 50 and older to say a major reason is they wanted to have children someday (26% vs. 5%).

### **Reasons for moving in together**

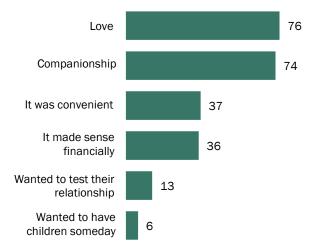
Love (76%) and companionship (74%) are also the top reasons adults living with a same-sex partner give for deciding to move in together.

Smaller shares say each of these is a major reason:

- It was convenient (37%)
- It made sense financially (36%)
- They wanted to test their relationship (13%)
- They wanted to have children someday (6%)

## About three-quarters of LGBTQ adults with a same-sex partner say love and companionship were reasons to cohabit

Among LGBTQ adults living with an unmarried samesex partner, % saying each of the following is a **major reason** they moved in with their partner



Note: Based on those with one partner or a primary partner. Other response options included "Minor reason" and "Not a reason." Source: Survey of LGBTQ U.S. adults conducted Jan. 8-19, 2025. "Rising Number of U.S. Households Are Headed by Married Same-Sex Couples"

### How same-sex couples split up household tasks

We also asked some questions to understand how same-sex couples divide certain household chores and who does more to support the household financially.

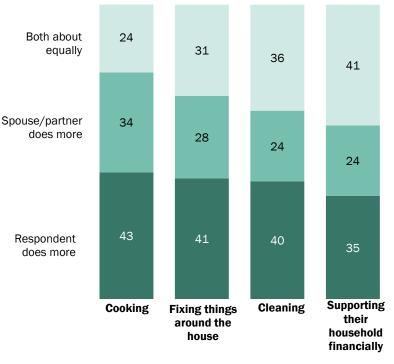
We find no clear-cut division of labor when it comes to cooking, cleaning, fixing things or financial contributions.

On each of these items, respondents are more likely to say they do more than their spouse or partner than to say their spouse or partner does more. Still, there is no item for which majorities say one does more than the other.

These responses don't differ much by gender of the couple or whether they're married or living together but not married.

## Most LGBTQ adults with a same-sex spouse or partner say 1 person takes the lead on key household chores

Among LGBTQ adults who are married to or living with a same-sex spouse or partner, % saying they or their spouse or partner does more, or both do each of the following about equally



Note: Based on those with one partner or a primary partner. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. LGBTQ adults conducted Jan. 8-19, 2025.

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When we've asked <u>men and women in different-sex couples</u> how they divide up household chores, we also find pluralities saying they are shared equally. However, perceptions of who does more differ widely by gender.

## Acknowledgments

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Kim Parker, Director of Social Trends Research Juliana Horowitz, Senior Associate Director, Research Jake Hays, Research Associate Rachel Minkin, Research Associate Luona Lin, Research Associate Dana Braga, Research Analyst Kiley Hurst, Research Analyst Isabel Goddard, Former Research Associate John Carlo Mandapat, Information Graphics Designer David Kent, Senior Copy Editor Julia O'Hanlon, Communications Manager Andrew Grant, Communications Associate

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## Methodology

## The American Trends Panel survey methodology

## **Overview**

Data in this report comes from Wave 160 of the American Trends Panel (ATP), Pew Research Center's nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. The survey was conducted Jan. 8-19, 2025, among a sample of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) U.S. adults. A total of 3,959 eligible, LGBTQ adults responded out of 8,951 who were sampled, for a survey-level response rate of 62% (AAPOR RR3).<sup>2</sup> This includes 585 respondents from the ATP, 2,297 from the SSRS Opinion Panel (OP) and 1,077 from the Ipsos Knowledge Panel (KP).

The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 1%. The break-off rate among eligible panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 2%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 3,959 respondents is plus or minus 2.2 percentage points.

SSRS and Ipsos conducted the surveys for Pew Research Center. SSRS conducted the ATP and OP surveys via online (n=2,821) and live telephone (n=62) interviewing. Ipsos conducted the KP survey online only. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.

To learn more about the ATP, read "About the American Trends Panel."3

## **Panel recruitment**

Since 2018, the ATP has used address-based sampling (ABS) for recruitment. A study cover letter and a pre-incentive are mailed to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Computerized Delivery Sequence File. This Postal Service file has been estimated to cover 90% to 98% of the population.<sup>4</sup> Within each sampled household, the adult with the next birthday is selected to participate. Other details of the ABS recruitment protocol have changed over time but are available upon request.<sup>5</sup> Prior to 2018, the ATP was recruited using landline and cellphone random-digit-dial surveys administered in English and Spanish.

 $<sup>^2</sup>$  The response rate is calculated as the number of eligible completes over the sum of eligible completes, break-offs and nonrespondents, where it is estimated that 71% of nonrespondents would have been eligible if they responded.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Learn more about the <u>SSRS Opinion Panel</u> and the <u>Ipsos KnowledgePanel</u>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Email <u>pewsurveys@pewresearch.org</u>.

A national sample of U.S. adults has been recruited to the ATP approximately once per year since 2014. In some years, the recruitment has included additional efforts (known as an "oversample") to improve the accuracy of data for underrepresented groups. For example, Hispanic adults, Black adults and Asian adults were oversampled in 2019, 2022 and 2023, respectively.

### Sample design

The overall target population for this survey is noninstitutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the United States who describe themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer. All active ATP members who had previously indicated that they were gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender were invited to participate in this wave.

The ATP was supplemented with samples from SSRS's Opinion Panel (OP) and Ipsos' Knowledge Panel (KP). For the OP sample, all active panel members who previously described themselves as any of the following were invited to participate: asexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian, intersex, nonbinary, pansexual, queer, same gender loving, transgender or two-spirit. For the KP sample, all panel members were invited who had previously indicated that they were gay, lesbian or bisexual and married or living with a partner, or who previously indicated that they were transgender, nonbinary or that their sex assigned at birth on their original birth certificate differed from their current gender identity.

At the start of the survey, potentially eligible respondents were asked a series of screening questions to confirm their eligibility to complete the survey. For the ATP and OP samples, respondents were considered eligible if they indicated they were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer. Respondents from the KP sample were considered eligible if they indicated that they were married or living with a partner and lesbian, gay or bisexual, or that they were transgender (regardless of marital status).

## Weighting

The survey was weighted in a process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the panel survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of recruitment into the panel. Base weights for OP and KP respondents were provided by SSRS and Ipsos respectively. Respondents from each sample were assigned to one of three sample groups and their base weights were combined and scaled to account for the sample design:

- 1. Transgender
- 2. Not transgender, and married or living with a partner and lesbian, gay or bisexual

3. All other lesbian, gay, bisexual or queer

The combined base weights were calibrated to align with the following estimated benchmarks for the population of U.S. LGBTQ adults: Sample group, lesbian/gay/bisexual status, gender, marital status, age, education, race/ethnicity, years living in the U.S. (among foreign born), volunteerism, voter registration, frequency of internet use, religious affiliation, party affiliation, census region and metropolitan status.

Because there are no official benchmarks for this population, weighting parameters were estimated using the eligible respondents to Wave 160 from the ATP sample. First, all ATP respondents who completed the screening questions were weighted to match the full set of ATP members who were sampled on the following dimensions: age, gender, education, race/ethnicity, years living in the U.S. (among foreign-born), volunteerism, voter registration, frequency of internet use, religious affiliation, party affiliation, census region and metropolitan status. These weights were then used to calculate weighting parameters based on ATP respondents to Wave 160 who were screened as eligible.

In a final step, the weights were trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus
All LGBTQ adults	3,959	2.2 percentage points
All with a same-sex spouse or partner	1,154	4.1 percentage points
Married	720	5.1 percentage points
Living with partner	434	6.9 percentage points

## Sample sizes and margins of error, ATP Wave 160

Note: This survey includes oversamples of transgender adults and gay, lesbian or bisexual adults who are married or living with a partner. Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. See the Sample design and Weighting sections above for details.

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

For detailed information about our survey methodology, refer to the full <u>survey methodology</u>.

## American Community Survey methodology

The analyses of couples' region of residence, education, employment, income and family characteristics come from the <u>American Community Survey</u> (ACS). The ACS is the largest household survey in the United States, with a sample of more than 3 million addresses. Collected by the U.S. Census Bureau since 2001, it covers the topics previously included in the long form of the decennial census. The ACS estimates the size and characteristics of the nation's resident population.

The ACS microdata files used for this analysis were provided by the <u>Integrated Public Use</u> <u>Microdata Series</u> (IPUMS) from the University of Minnesota. IPUMS standardizes variable names and coding across years as much as possible, making it easier to analyze the data over time.

In examining where couples live, we analyzed couples of all ages. In examining education, we analyzed couples where the older partner was age 25 to 64. In examining employment, income, and family characteristics, we analyzed couples where the older partner was age 18 to 64.

The ACS does not capture all cohabiting relationships. The ACS only identifies cohabiting partnerships that include the head of household. The household head is the person in whose name the home is owned, being bought or rented. Most cohabiting relationships do involve the household head. To remain consistent across married and cohabiting relationships, we focus on marriages and cohabitations that involve only the head and their spouse or unmarried partner.

Another census data product, the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC), does capture all cohabitors. In the 2024 ASEC, 93% of all cohabiting adults are either the household head or the unmarried partner of the head.

Adjusted household income for this report follows the methodology from <u>Pew Research Center's</u> <u>previous work on the American middle class</u>.

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