

# Women Who Gave Birth Within the Past 12 Months, 2011

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Historically, marriage has been the primary context for childbearing. However, the share of births that are to unmarried women has been increasing. Nonmarital births have doubled in the past three decades to 41% of all U.S. births (Martin et al., 2011). This profile uses the 2011 American Community Survey 1-year population records to examine the demographic characteristics of currently unmarried and married women in the U.S., aged 15 to 44, **who reported having given birth within the past 12 months.**

## Marital Status and Marital Histories

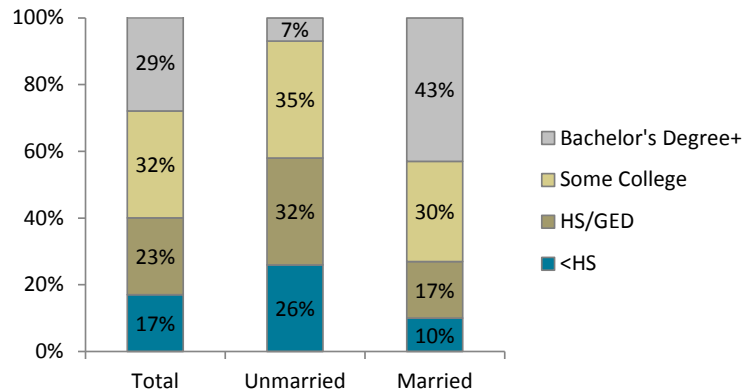
- Among women who gave birth in the last year, nearly 2 in 5 (38%) are currently unmarried (figure not shown).
- Approximately 17% of currently unmarried women who had a child in the last year have been previously married. Among currently married women who gave birth in the last year, 10% are in a remarriage (figures not shown).
- Among currently married women who experienced a birth in the past 12 months, 8.3% also married in the past 12 months (figure not shown).

## Educational Attainment

Married women who had a child in the last year have typically achieved higher levels of education than their unmarried counterparts.

- Only 7% of unmarried women who gave birth in the last year have at least a Bachelor's degree compared with 43% of their married counterparts.
- A quarter (26%) of unmarried women who had a child in the last year have less than a high school diploma versus 10% of married women who had a child in the last year.

Figure 1. Marital Status by Educational Attainment, 2011



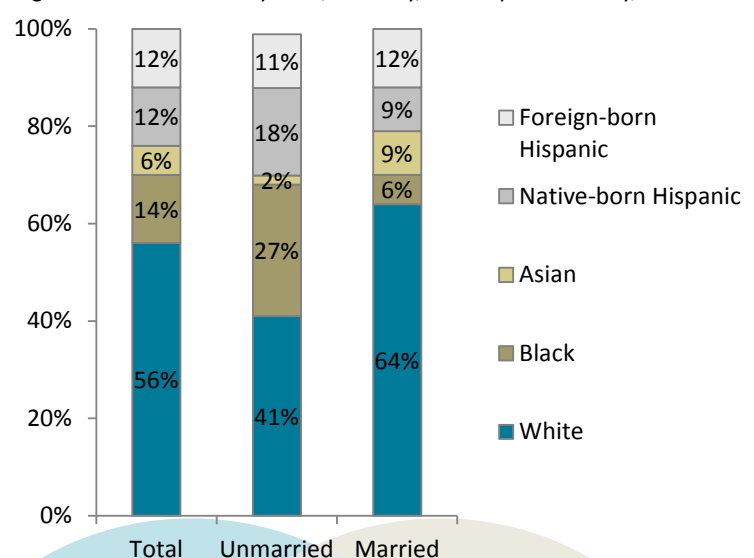
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2011

## Race, Ethnicity, and Hispanic Nativity

There are racial, ethnic, and nativity differences in the marital statuses of women who gave birth in the last year.

- Among unmarried women who gave birth in the last year, 41% are White. Yet White women make up 64% of married women with births in the last year.
- Asians comprise 2% of unmarried women and 9% of married women with births in the last year.
- Unmarried women who gave birth in the last year are disproportionately Black. Black women make up over a quarter (27%) of unmarried women, but only 6% of married women with births in the past year.
- Among unmarried women who gave birth in the last year, 18% are native-born Hispanic and 11% are foreign-born Hispanic. Among married women with births in the last year, 9% are native-born Hispanic, and 12% are foreign-born Hispanic.

Figure 2. Marital Status by Race, Ethnicity, and Hispanic Nativity, 2011



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2011

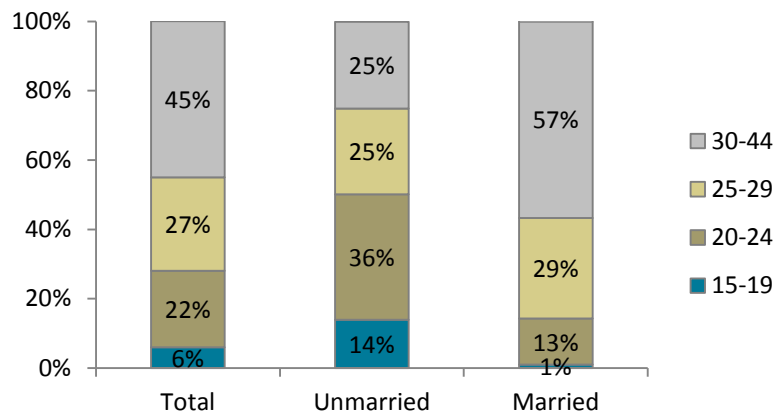
*Family Profiles examine topics related to NCFMR's core research themes. Data are presented at both the national and state levels using new data sources. Written for both researchers and broad communities, these profiles summarize the latest statistics on U.S. families.*

## Age Distribution

Married women who gave birth in the last year are much older than their unmarried counterparts, on average.

- One quarter (25%) of unmarried women with births in the past year are between the ages of 30 and 44. In contrast, over half (57%) of married women with births in the past year are between the ages of 30 and 44.

Figure 3. Marital Status by Age, 2011

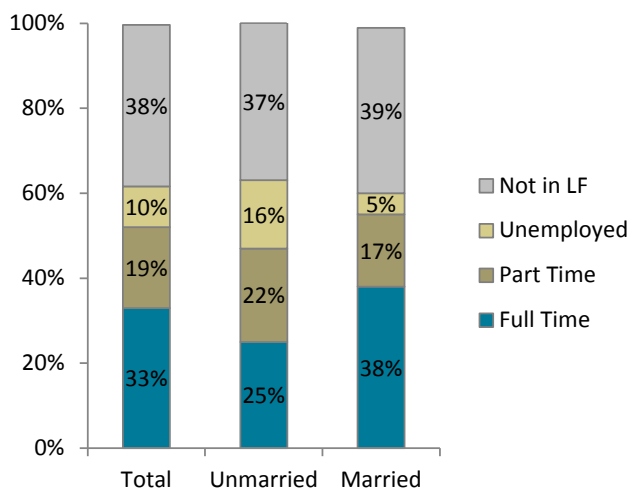


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2011

## Employment<sup>1</sup> and Poverty Status

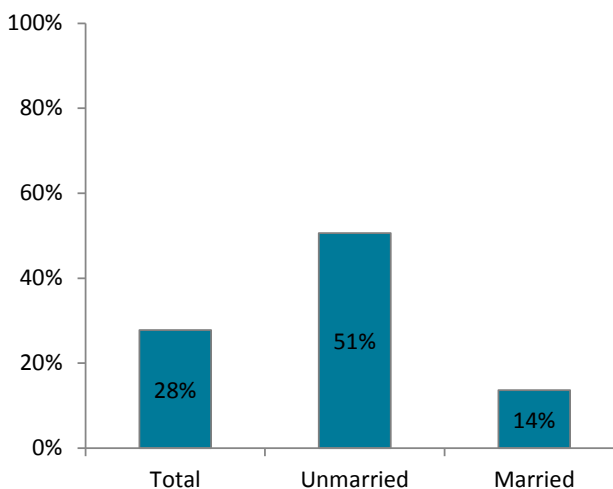
- Unmarried women who gave birth in the last year are less likely to have been employed full time (25%) than married women who gave birth in the last year (38%) and more likely to have been unemployed (16% vs. 5%) in the last year.
- Similar percentages of unmarried and married women who gave birth in the last year were not in the labor force (37% and 39%, respectively) in the past year.
- Unmarried mother families are much more likely to be living in poverty than married mother families (51% vs. 14%, respectively).

Figure 4. Marital Status by Employment, 2011



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2011

Figure 5. Marital Status by Poverty, 2011



## References

1. Martin J.A., Hamilton, B.E., Ventura, S.J., et al. (2011). Births: Final data for 2009. National vital statistics reports; vol. 60 no. 1. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

<sup>1</sup>Employment was only asked of individuals 16 years and older. However, as only .31% of the sample includes 15-year-old women who gave birth in the past year, this does not preclude meaningful analysis.

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