

Family Profile No. 25, 2022

Marriage Rate in the U.S.: Geographic Variation, 2021

Author: Gabrielle Juteau

This Family Profile, an update of previous profiles on the marriage rate (Hemez, 2016; Schweizer, 2018; Allred, 2019; Reynolds, 2020; Westrick-Payne, 2022), estimates adjusted marriage rates for the U.S. and each state for 2021. Using American Community Survey (ACS) data, we estimate the number of marriages occurring in the last year among unmarried women, calculate the margins of error, and describe geographic variation. For detailed information on the adjusted marriage rate from 2008-2020, see “Charting Marriage & Divorce in the U.S.: The Adjusted Marriage Rate” (Westrick-Payne, 2022).

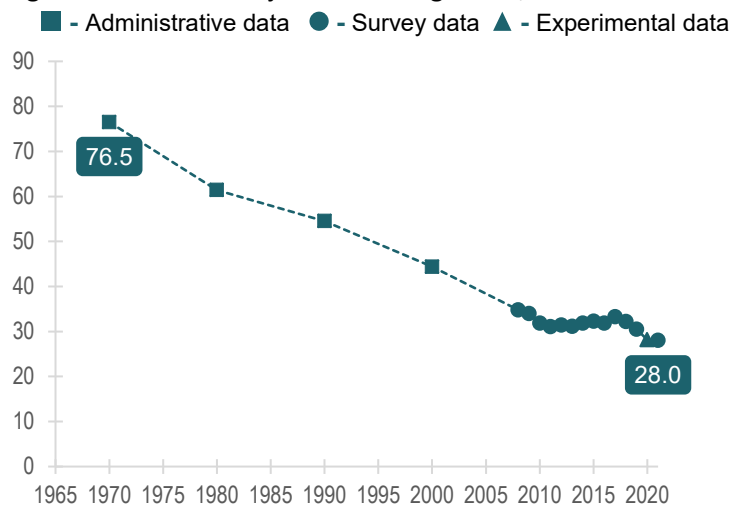
U.S. Adjusted Marriage Rate, 2021

- After the marriage rate hit a 50-year low in 2020 (i.e., 28.1 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women), the marriage rate dropped slightly lower in 2021 to 28.0 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women.
- More than 2 million women (2,052,806) married in 2021.

Five Highest and Lowest Marriage Rates, 2021

- Utah once again holds the top spot in terms of the marriage rate with nearly 49 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women in 2021.
- Massachusetts now holds the lowest marriage rate. In 2021, nearly 19 women married per 1,000 unmarried women in Massachusetts, representing about 2.5 times fewer marriages than among those living in Utah.

Figure 1. Women’s Adjusted Marriage Rate, 1970-2021



Source: NCFMR analyses of 1970-2000, National Center for Health Statistics; 2008-2019 and 2021, U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr est., and 2020 American Community Survey, 1-year Experimental PUMS

Figure 2. Women's Highest and Lowest Adjusted Marriage Rates, 2021

Rank	State	Rate	MOE
1.	Utah	48.8	+/- 4.8
2.	Alaska	47.0	+/- 9.7
3.	Wyoming	40.3	+/- 10.7
4.	Colorado	39.2	+/- 3.7
5.	North Dakota	39.1	+/- 9.0
USA		28.0	+/- 0.4
47.	New York	22.4	+/- 1.3
47.	Illinois	22.4	+/- 1.5
49.	Rhode Island	21.9	+/- 5.1
50.	Connecticut	21.7	+/- 2.6
51.	Massachusetts	18.9	+/- 2.0

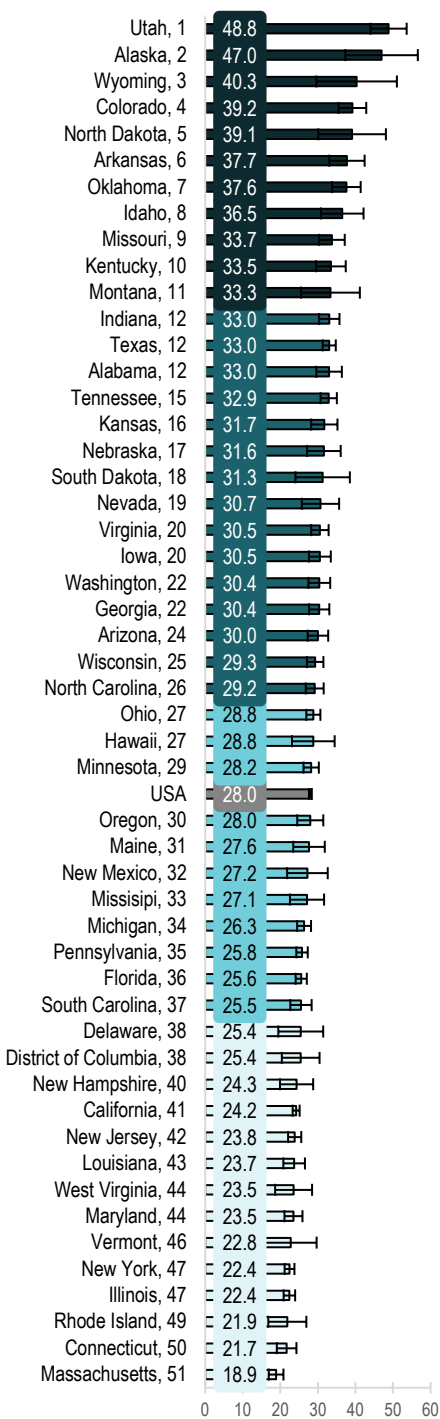
Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 1-yr est.

Data Sources:

- Clarke, S. C. (1995). Advanced report of final marriage statistics, 1989 and 1990. Monthly Vital Statistics Report, 42(12). National Center for Health Statistics. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/mvstr/supp/mv43_12s.pdf
- National Center for Health Statistics (1974). Summary report final marriage statistics, 1970. Monthly Vital Statistics Report, 23(2), Supp.1. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/mvstr/supp/mv23_02s1acc.pdf
- National Center for Health Statistics (1983). Advance report of final marriage statistics, 1980. Monthly Vital Statistics Report, 32(5), Supp. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/mvstr/supp/mv32_05s.pdf
- National Center for Health Statistics (2001). Births, marriages, divorces, and deaths: Provisional data for January-December 2000. National Vital Statistics Report, 49(6), Associated Table 3. Department of Health & Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr49/nvsr49_06.pdf
- U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey, 2021 1-Year Estimates [Table B12001]. Retrieved from: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B12001&tid=ACSDT1Y2021.B12001>
- U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey, 2021 1-Year Estimates [Table B12501]. Retrieved from: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B12501&tid=ACSDT1Y2021.B12501>
- U.S. Census Bureau (2021). American Community Survey, 2020 1-year Experimental PUMS

State Rankings and Geographic Variation in Marriage Rates, 2021

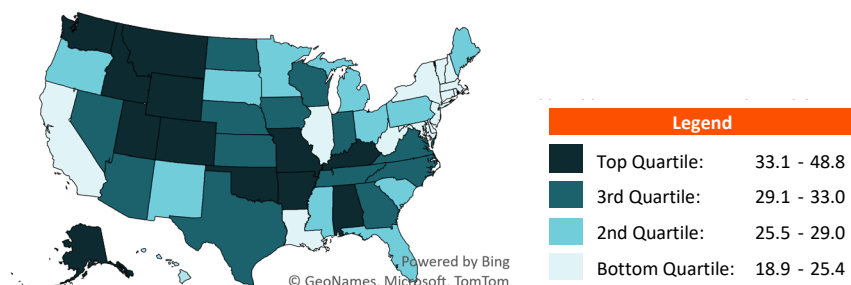
Figure 3. State-Level Women’s Adjusted Marriage Rate by Quartile, 2021



Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 1-yr est.

- The states with the highest marriage rates (making up the top/ fourth quartile) in 2021 had rates of at least 33.1 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15 and older. Among the states in the top quartile, all are substantially above the national average (28 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women).
- The states with the lowest marriage rates (making up the first/ bottom quartile) in 2021 had 21.4 or fewer marriages per 1,000 unmarried women.

Figure 4. Geographic Variation of Women’s Adjusted Marriage Rate Among States, 2021



Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 1-yr est.

- Most states in the Western region of the country had high marriage rates (third or fourth quartile).
 - Exceptions included New Mexico, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Arizona.
- Midwestern states exhibited marriage rates predominately in the middle two quartiles with the largest share found in the second quartile.
 - Illinois was the only midwestern state found in the first/ bottom quartile.
 - Missouri was the only midwestern state found in the fourth/ top quartile.
- Southern states are represented in each quartile. The largest shares were found in the third and fourth.
- Nearly all states in the Northeast exhibited low marriage rates (first quartile).
 - Exceptions included Pennsylvania and Maine (second quartile).

References:

- Allred, C. (2019). Marriage rate in the U.S.: Geographic variation, 2018. Family Profiles, FP-19-22. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-19-22>
- Hemez, P. (2017). Marriage rate in the U.S.: Geographic variation, 2016. Family Profiles, FP-17-25. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-17-25>
- Reynolds, L (2020). Marriage rate in the U.S.: Geographic variation, 2019. Family Profiles, FP-20-24. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-20-24>
- Schweizer, V. J. (2018). Marriage rate in the U.S.: Geographic variation, 2017. Family Profiles, FP-18-20. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-18-20>
- Westrick-Payne, K. K. (2022). Charting marriage and divorce in the U.S.: The adjusted divorce rate. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/college-of-arts-and-sciences/NCFMR/documents/RBT/charting-us-marriage-rate-2008-2020.pdf>

Suggested Citation:

Juteau, G. (2022). Marriage rate in the U.S.: Geographic variation, 2021. *Family Profiles*, FP-22-25. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-22-25>

This project is supported with assistance from Bowling Green State University. From 2007 to 2013, support was also provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the state or federal government.