

**Ohio Population News:
MARRIAGE, COHABITATION &
DIVORCE**

Over the past thirty years, some of the most dramatic changes in the American family have been related to marriage and the family. These changes include delays in first marriage, a rising prevalence of cohabitation and increasing rates of divorce. Regardless of these changes, most adults eventually marry. **In Ohio, 90% of women and 87% of men ages 45 to 54 are currently married or had been married at least once.** This report uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau to examine the marriage, cohabitation and divorce patterns of Ohioans as well as the nation overall.

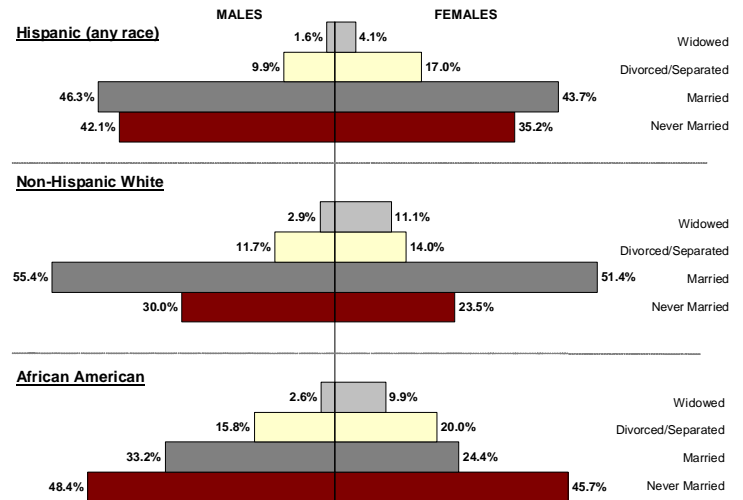
Men and women are marrying later in life. In 1970 the median age at first marriage in the United States was 23.2 for men and 20.8 for women—recent estimates from the American Community Survey show that these ages have increased to 27.5 for men and 25.9 for women. There is variation around the country—Idaho women marry the youngest at 22.5 while men in Utah marry the youngest at an estimated 24.9 years of age. Marrying the latest occurs in Massachusetts where men don't marry for the first time until the average age of 29.6 and women wait until an estimated age of 27.7. **Ohioans follow national averages with an estimated mean age at first marriage of 27.4 for men and 26.0 for women.**

Results from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) suggest that a third of men in the U.S. marry by age 25 and almost two-thirds marry by age 30. Among women, one-half are married by the time they are 25 and three-quarters by age 30.¹ A higher proportion of Ohioans ages 15 to 44 have never been married—45 percent of women and 52 percent of men had never married in 2006 compared with 36 percent (women) and 43 percent (men) in 1990, respectively. Sixty-eight percent of non-Hispanic black women in Ohio ages 15 to 44 have never been married compared with roughly 44 percent of non-Hispanic white women.

Couples in Ohio—married and unmarried. One way to measure couples are those who form a married couple household; another way is to include cohabiting couple households. The Census Bureau asks not only marital status of individuals living in the household but also whether an individual living in the household is an *unmarried partner* of the household head. **There were roughly 2.2 million married couples living in Ohio during 2006**, comprising roughly half of Ohio's household's. Recent American Community Survey (ACS) estimates suggest that there were **an additional 242,000 cohabiting couples residing in Ohio** comprising just over 5 percent of all households.

Increases in cohabitation. Cohabitation has increased around the nation over the past several decades. In 1970, unmarried couple households made up only one percent of all households in the United States, while in 2006, just over five percent of households included a cohabiting partner. Recent estimates suggest that about half of women ages 15 to 44 have cohabited at least once compared with 41 percent of women in 1995. In a national sample of adults, **about 70 percent of men and women who are currently cohabiting say that there is a pretty good or almost certain chance that they will marry their partners.**¹ A small but increasing proportion of the elderly is cohabiting—**about 3.9 (+/- .33) percent of Ohioans in their 50s and 2.3 (+/- .37) percent of Ohioans in 60s cohabit.**

Figure 1. Marital Status of Men and Women ages 15 and older, Ohio 2006. (percent distribution)

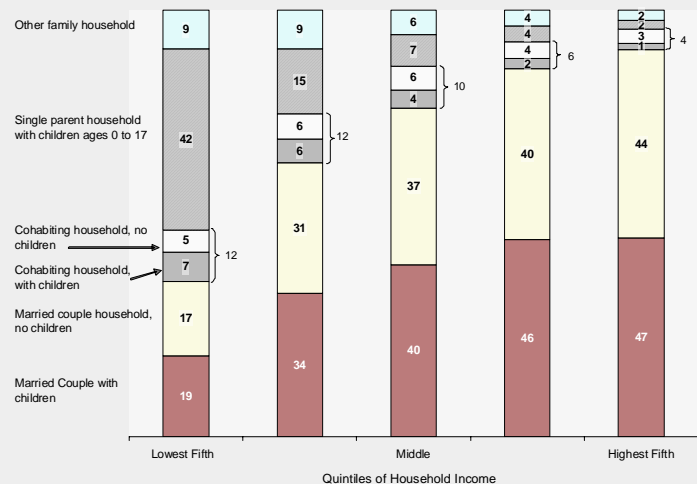


Source: American Community Survey, 2006. These are point estimates; associated standard errors are available upon request.

Among Ohioans ages 15 and older, 70 percent of non-Hispanic white men and 75 percent of non-Hispanic white women have ever been married, compared to 52 percent of African American men and 54 percent of African American women. Sixty-five percent of Hispanic women and 58 percent of Hispanic men have ever been married.

Variation across income level. The ACS collects information on the total amount of income earned by all household members ages 15 and over. The average household income in Ohio in inflation-adjusted 2006 dollars was estimated at \$58,356 but this masks variation by family household type. When family households are ranked according to income, the top fifth or quintile of the distribution is very different from the bottom fifth. Among the lowest tier, an estimated 42 percent of family households are composed of single women with children. Married couple households compose roughly a third of the lowest income households, but constitute 91 percent of the highest tier. At the lowest levels of income, over half of all cohabiting households have children present, whereas at the highest level of income only a quarter of cohabiting households include children.

Figure 2: Family Households by Ranked Income, Ohio 2006.



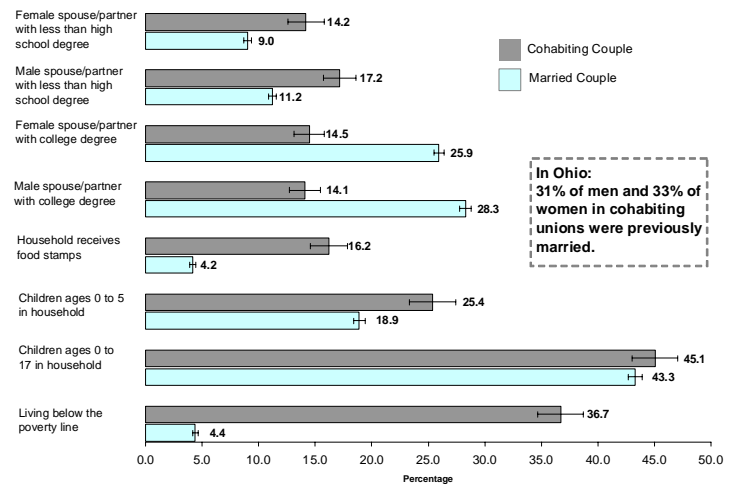
Source: 2006 Public Use Micro data, American Community Survey. Point estimates are represented in the graph above; associated standard errors are available on request. Bracketed amounts indicate total proportion composed of cohabiting households. Average household income by quintile is as follows: The lowest (1) \$10,337; (2) \$27,026; (3) \$44,696; (4) \$68,546; the highest (5) \$141,173 all in 2006 inflation adjusted dollars.

Childbirth & childrearing within marriage and cohabitation. Among recent births to Ohio women ages 15 to 50, an estimated 64 percent occurred within marriage, 10 percent within cohabiting unions, and 26 percent to women who were neither married nor cohabiting. **This indicates that among the recent births that were nonmarital, about 28 percent were to cohabiting women.** Across the nation, the total number of births to unmarried mothers rose nearly 8 percent—representing a 20 percent increase from 2002.

The proportion of children living with two biological, married parents has been steadily declining while the proportion of children living in stepfamilies, single parent families, and cohabiting families has been rising.² An estimated 40 percent of children born in the early 1990s will spend time in a cohabiting parent family and over three-quarters of children born to single mothers will likely move into a cohabiting household.³

In Ohio, **7.2 percent of all children ages 0 to 17 live in a cohabiting household while two-thirds live in a married couple household.** Among the children who live in families below the poverty line—nearly 18 percent reside in a cohabiting household compared with 25 percent living in a married couple family. Children are present in cohabiting and married couple households at roughly the same rate (Figure 3).

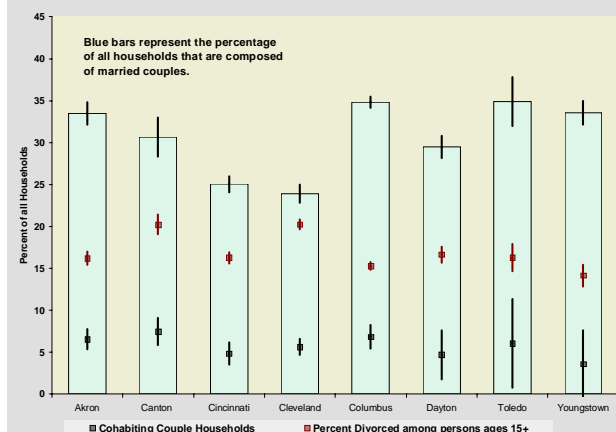
Figure 3: Characteristics of Married and Cohabiting Couples, Ohio 2006.



In Ohio: 31% of men and 33% of women in cohabiting unions were previously married.

Source: 2006 ACS PUMS data. Point estimates are represented with errors bars to illustrate the margin of sampling error around each point estimate, based on a 90 percent confidence interval.

Figure 4: Percentage of Households Composed of Married Couples, Cohabiting Couples and the Percent Divorced among ages 15 and up, Selected Ohio cities.



Source: American Community Survey 2006. The vertical lines illustrate the margin of sampling error around each point estimate, based on a 90 percent confidence interval.

The Ohio Department of Health reports that there were over 40,000 divorces in 2006, resulting in a rate of 3.5 divorces per 1,000 in population. **There were roughly 55 divorces for every 100 marriages that occurred around the state.** Slightly less than half (47%) of all Ohio divorces that occurred in 2006 involved children under age 18.

Divorce and Remarriage^{1,4}

Estimates from the NFGS suggest that the probability of a first marriage ending in separation or divorce within 5 years is 20 percent, but the probability of a premarital cohabitation breaking up within 5 years is 49 percent. After 10 years, the probability of a first marriage ending is 33 percent, compared with 62 percent for cohabitations.

Marital dissolution within the first 5 years of marriage is more common among those with lower levels of education and income. In fact, **recent estimates suggest that twice as many marriages dissolved within 5 years among low income women compared to women in the highest income group.** Among men who marry for the first time prior to age 20, half are divorced within 10 years compared with 17 percent of men who married at age 26 or higher.

Remarriage following divorce is common—over 50 percent of women remarry within 5 years of a first divorce, and three-quarters marry within 10 years. Yet second marriages are more likely to end in divorce than are first marriages. Women with no children at the start of a second marriage have lower rates of subsequent divorce than do women with children.

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Additional Sources used:

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