

## Women Who Gave Birth Within the Past 12 Months, 2020

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The substantial share of births to unmarried women (FP-21-17), as well as the older median age at first marriage than at first birth (FP-21-12; FP-20-06), provide evidence of the decoupling of marriage and childbearing in recent decades. This profile uses data from the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS)\* to examine the demographic characteristics of currently married and unmarried women aged 15-50 who had a birth within the past 12 months. This profile updates previous profiles using the most recent data available (FP-20-17; FP-13-10).

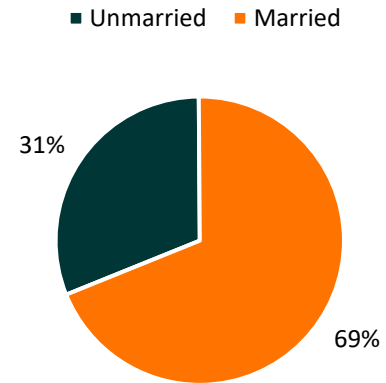
\* ACS data is collected year-round and respondents were asked about births which occurred within 12 months prior to the date of their interview; therefore, the births captured in this profile could have taken place as early as January 2019 and as late as December 2020, depending on the month of the interview. For most women, these births would have occurred or been conceived prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, it is important to note that the standard 2020 ACS 1-year data will not be released due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection and quality. As such, this profile uses ACS 1-year experimental data. The same analyses presented in this profile were completed using 2019 ACS data for comparison; results varied only minimally.

### Marital Status and Marital Histories

Approximately 5% of women aged 15-50 gave birth in the past year (not shown).

- Of births that occurred in the past year, 31% were to unmarried mothers.
  - 82% of these recent unmarried mothers have never been married (not shown).
- Among currently married women with a recent birth, the majority (92%) were in first marriages, and only 4% had both married and given birth within the past year (not shown).

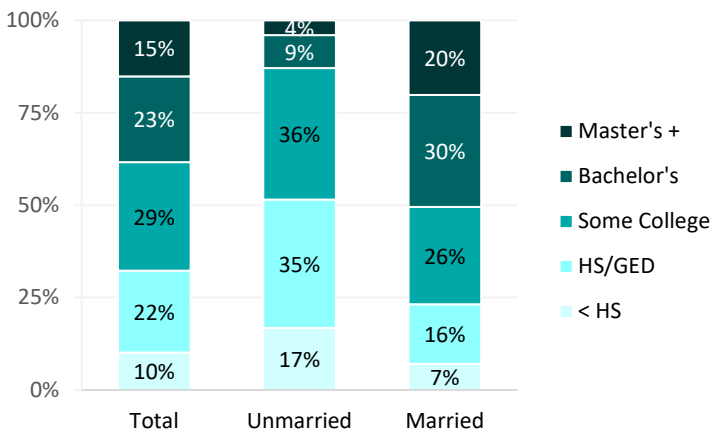
Figure 1. Marital Status of Women Who Gave Birth Within the Past 12 Months, 2020



Source: NCFMR analyses of the 2020 American Community Survey 1-year Experimental data file from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org).

### Educational Attainment and Marital Status

Figure 2. Marital Status by Educational Attainment, 2020



Unmarried women who had a birth in the past 12 months tended to have lower levels of educational attainment than their married counterparts.

- Among recent unmarried mothers, 9% held a bachelor's degree and 4% held a master's degree or more, while 30% and 20% of married mothers held these degrees, respectively.
- 17% of unmarried women who had given birth in the past year had less than a high school education compared to 7% of married women.

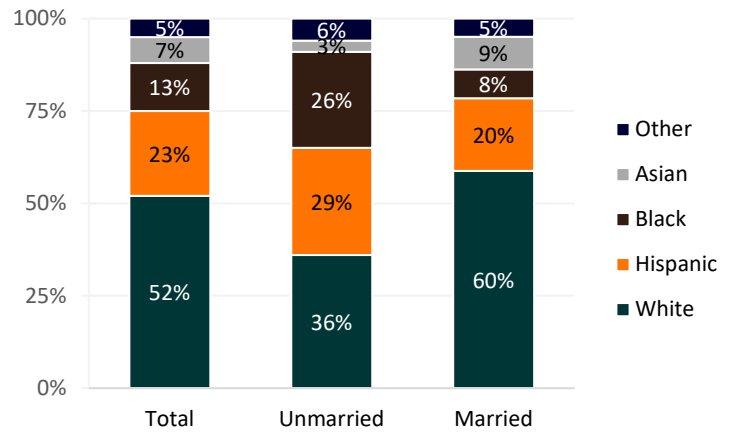
Source: NCFMR analyses of the 2020 American Community Survey 1-year Experimental data file from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org).

## Race/Ethnicity and Marital Status

There is notable racial/ethnic variation between unmarried and married women who had a birth in the last year.

- Among unmarried women with a birth in the past year, 36% were White compared to 60% among married women.
- Hispanics comprised 29% of unmarried mothers and 20% of married mothers with recent births.
- Among unmarried women who had a birth in the past year, over a quarter (26%) were Black compared to just 8% among married women.
- Asian women accounted for 3% of unmarried and 9% of married women who gave birth in the past 12 months.

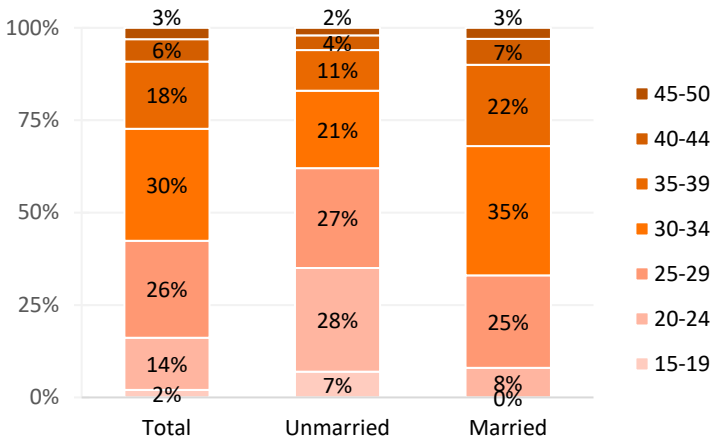
Figure 3. Marital Status by Race/Ethnicity, 2020



Source: NCFMR analyses of the 2020 American Community Survey 1-year Experimental data file from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org).

## Age Group and Marital Status

Figure 4. Marital Status by Age Group, 2020



Source: NCFMR analyses of the 2020 American Community Survey 1-year Experimental data file from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org).

Overall, unmarried women with a birth in the past 12 months were typically younger than their married counterparts.

- Among unmarried women who gave birth in the last year, 62% were under age 30 compared to 33% among married women.
- The most common age group for unmarried mothers with a recent birth was 20-24, while the most common age group for married mothers was 30-34.

### Data Sources:

Ruggles, S. Flood, S., Foster, S., Goeken, R., Pacas, J., Schouweiler, M., & Sobek, M. (2021). IPUMS USA: Version 11.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V11.0>

### References:

- Guzzo, K. B. (2021). Trends in births to single and cohabiting mothers under 40, 1980-2018. *Family Profiles, FP-21-17*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-21-17>
- Payne, K. K. (2019). Median age at first marriage, 2019. *Family Profiles, FP-21-12*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-21-12>
- Schweizer, V. & Guzzo, K. B. (2020). Age at first birth among mothers 40-44, 1990 & 2018. *Family Profiles, FP-20-06*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-20-06>

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