



Family Profile No. 24, 2025

# Age Variation in the Refined Divorce Rate, 1990 & 2023

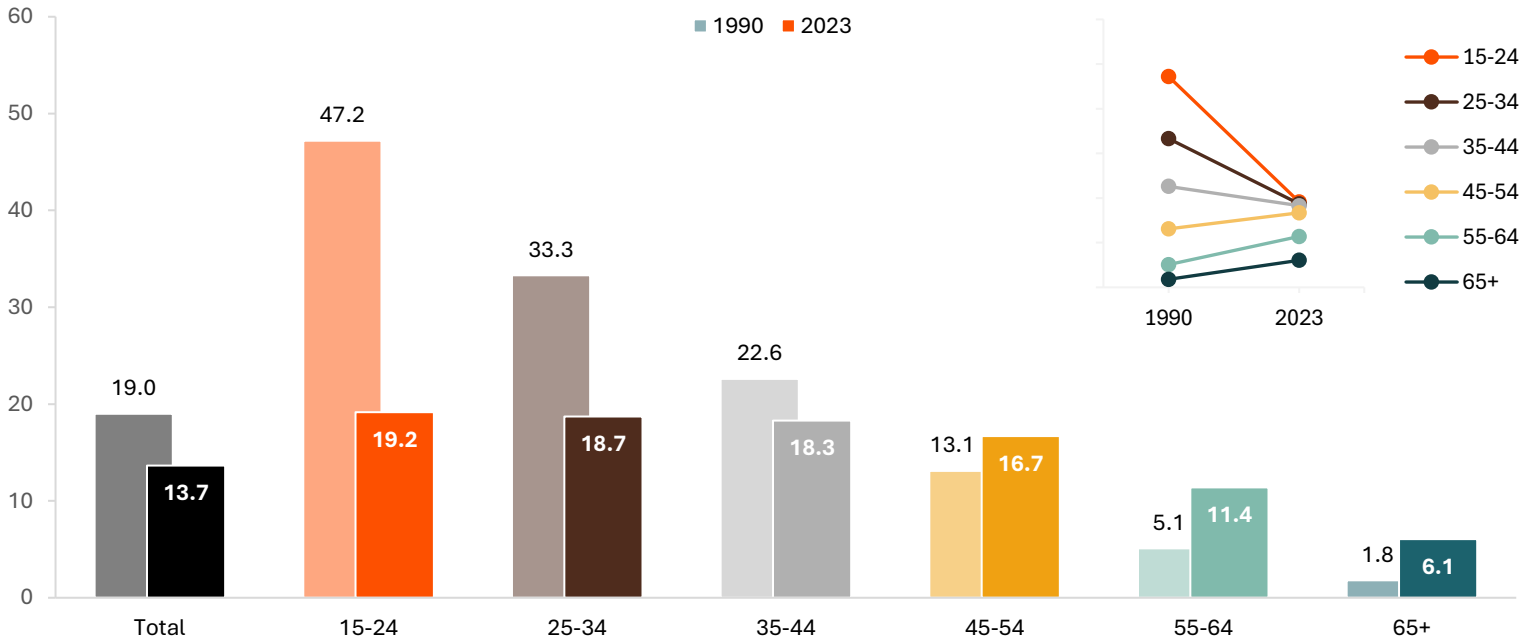
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The refined divorce rate in the U.S. has declined over recent decades. In 1990, 19 out of every 1,000 currently married individuals divorced, compared to just 13.7 per 1,000 in 2023. However, this overall downward trend masks substantial variation by age. The divorce rate among younger people has steadily decreased since the 1990s (Kennedy & Ruggles, 2014), while the rate for those aged 50 and older has more than doubled over the same period (Brown & Lin, 2012). This family profile updates FP-23-16 (Westrick-Payne & Lin, 2023) by charting refined divorce rates by age group in 1990 and 2023, using data from the National Center for Health Statistics, the U.S. Decennial Census, and the 2023 American Community Survey provided by IPUMS-USA.

## Refined Divorce Rates by Age Group

- In both 1990 and 2023 the refined divorce rate (the number of divorces per 1,000 currently married individuals) declined with age. However, the age variation in the divorce rate was much wider in 1990 than in 2023.
  - In 1990 the refined divorce rate for those aged 15 to 24 was 47.2 compared to 1.8 for those age 65 and older, a difference of 45.4 divorces per 1,000. In 2023 this difference was 13.1 divorces, a reduction of over two-thirds.
- Between 1990 and 2023, the refined divorce rate decreased for those aged 15-44 and increased for those aged 45 and older.
  - The greatest decrease in the refined divorce rate was among those aged 15 to 24 (from 47.2 per 1,000 to 19.2 per 1,000).
  - The greatest percentage increase was among those aged 65 and older in which the rate more than tripled.
  - These changes have resulted in near convergence in refined divorce rates among those aged 15 to 54.

Figure 1. Refined Divorce Rates by 10-Year Age Groups, 1990 & 2023

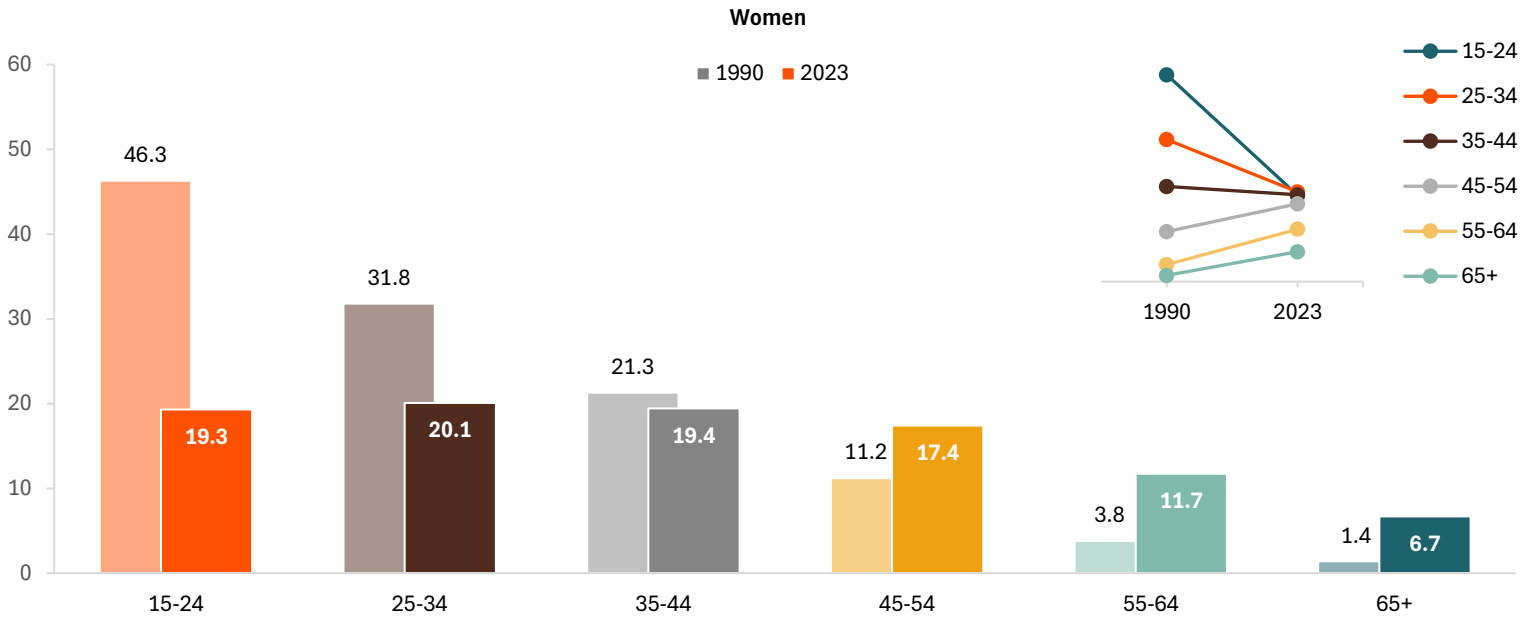


Source: NCFMR analyses of National Center for Health Statistics, 1990; American Community Survey, 2023, 1-yr. est. (IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org))

## Divorce Rates by Age Group for Women & Men

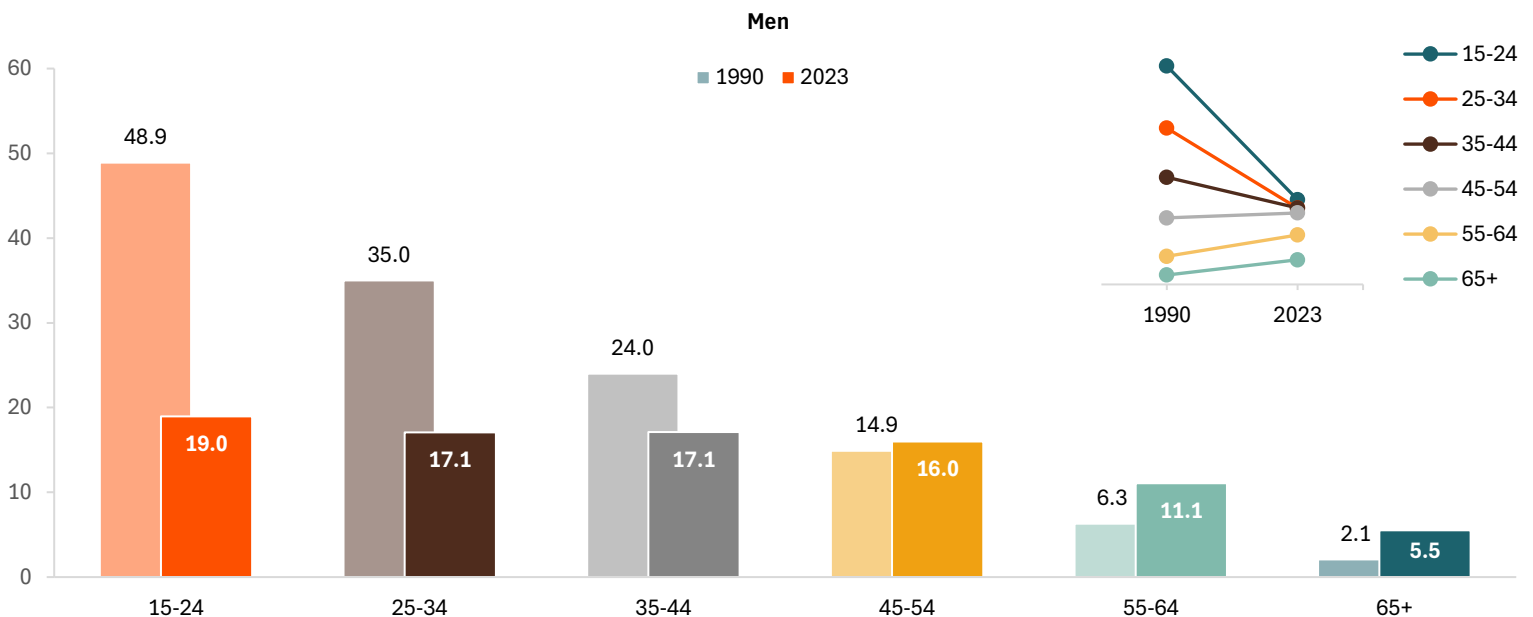
- For both women and men, refined divorce rates tended to decline with age, a pattern that has remained unchanged over time.
- Between 1990 and 2023, refined divorce rates decreased for women and men aged 15-44.
  - At younger ages, the divorce rates for men exhibited the largest average decreases, most notably among men aged 15 to 24 (from 46.3 per 1,000 to 19.0 per 1,000).
- Conversely, between 1990 and 2023 the divorce rates increased for both women and men aged 45 and older.
  - At older ages, the divorce rates for women exhibited the largest average increases. The biggest gain was for women aged 65 and older, rising over four-fold from 1.4 per 1,000 in 1990 to 6.7 per 1,000 in 2023.

Figure 2. Refined Divorce Rates by Age Group for Women, 1990 & 2023



Source: NCFMR analyses of National Center for Health Statistics, 1990; American Community Survey, 2023, 1-yr. est. (IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org))

Figure 3. Refined Divorce Rates by Age Group for Men, 1990 & 2023



Source: NCFMR analyses of National Center for Health Statistics, 1990; American Community Survey, 2023, 1-yr. est. (IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org))

## Data Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. (1990). *Vital statistics*.

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## References

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Kennedy, S., & Ruggles, S. (2014). Breaking up is hard to count: The rise of divorce in the United States, 1980-2010. *Demography*, 51(2), 587- 598. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-013-0270-9>

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## Suggested Citation

Westrick-Payne, K. K. (2025). Age variation in the refined divorce rate, 1990 & 2023. *Family Profiles*, FP-25-24. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-25-24>

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.