



Geographic Variation in Percentage of Mid-Life Never Married Adults, 2021

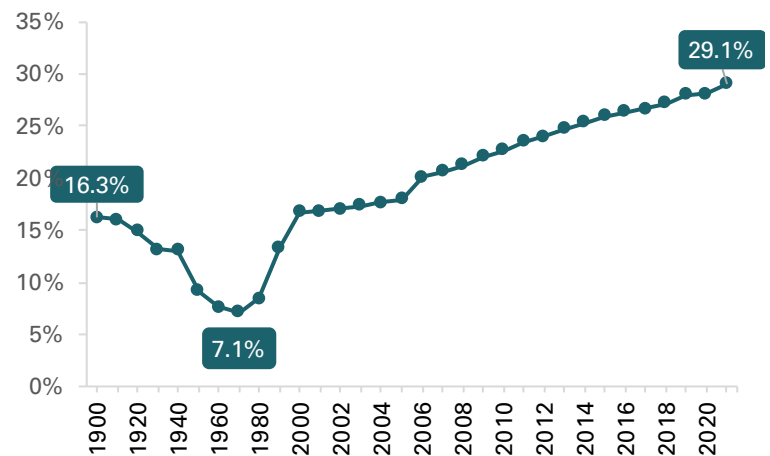
Author: Francesca A. Marino

Since 1960, the share of never married U.S. adults has doubled from 15% to 31% (Marino, 2023a). Likewise, the median age of never married adults has risen since 1970 (Marino, 2023b), and the percentage of never married middle-aged adults has increased drastically since 1970 (NCFMR analysis of 2021 American Community Survey 1-year estimates). These trends all point to a general pattern of an aging never married population. Using data from the 2021 American Community Survey 1-year estimates, this Family Profile details the percentage of mid-life never married adults (ages 30-49) in the United States and how these percentages vary across states.

Percentages of Mid-Life Never Married Adults, 1900-2021

- In 1900, the percentage of mid-life never married adults was 16.3%, dropping by over half to 7.1% in 1970.
- Since 1970, the percentage of never married mid-life adults increased rapidly to 16.8% in 2000--a two-fold increase within 30 years.
- Over the past two decades, the share of never married mid-life adults steadily increased, reaching 29.1% in 2021.
- Overall, since 1970, the percentage of never married middle-aged adults increased by over 300%. These trends suggest a general pattern of an aging never married population in the U.S.

Figure 1. Percentages of Mid-Life Never Married Adults, 1900-2021



Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 1900-1990, and American Community Survey, 1-year estimates 2000-2021 (IPUMS)

Five Highest and Lowest Share of Never Married Mid-Life Adults, 2021

Figure 2. Five Highest and Lowest Share of Never Married Mid-Life Adults, 2021

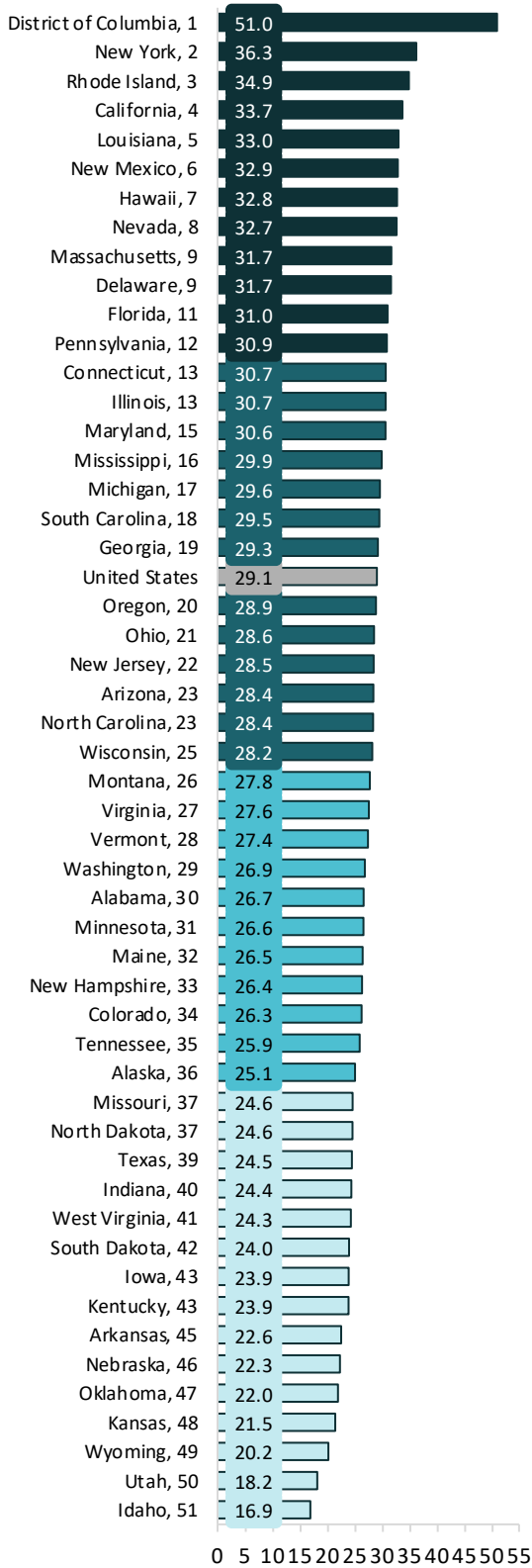
Rank	State	Percentage
1.	Washington, DC	51.0%
2.	New York	36.3%
3.	Rhode Island	34.9%
4.	California	33.7%
5.	Louisiana	33.0%
USA		29.1%
47.	Oklahoma	22.0%
48.	Kansas	21.5%
49.	Wyoming	20.2%
50.	Utah	18.2%
51.	Idaho	16.9%

- The District of Columbia had the highest share of never married middle-aged adults in 2021, at 51.0%. DC's share was quite a bit larger than the state with the second largest share, which was New York at 36.3%.
- The state with the lowest share of mid-life never married adults was Idaho, at 16.9%.

Source: NCFMR Analysis of American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, 2021 (IPUMS)

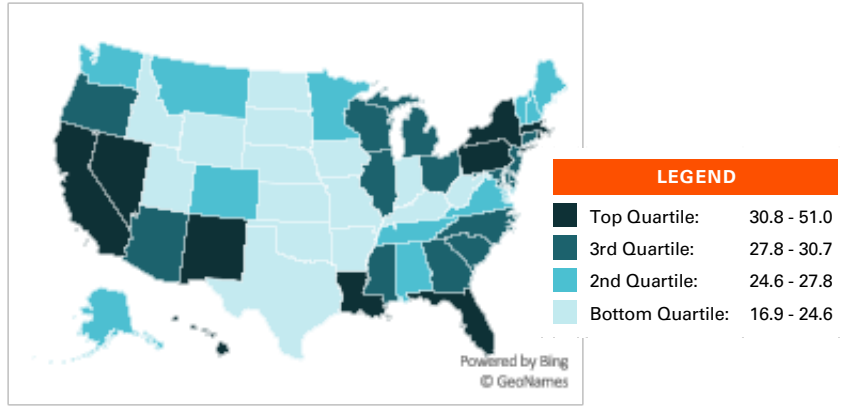
Geographic Variation of Percentages of Mid-Life Never Married Adults, 2021

Figure 3. State-Level Percentage of Mid-Life Never Married Adults by Quartile, 2021



Source: NCFMR Analysis of American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, 2021 (IPUMS)

Figure 4. Geographic Variation in Percentages of Mid-Life Never Married Adults Among States, 2021



Source: NCFMR Analysis of American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, 2021 (IPUMS)

- The states with the highest shares of never married mid-life adults (making up the top quartile) in 2021 present a noticeable cluster in the far West (California, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Nevada), as well as the Middle Atlantic states in the East (New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania) and the South (Louisiana, Delaware, and Florida).
- The states with the lowest share of never married mid-life adults (making up the bottom quartile) in 2021 also present noticeable clusters in the West (Wyoming, Utah, and Idaho), the Midwest (Indiana, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas) and the South (Texas, West Virginia, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Oklahoma).

Data Source:

Ruggles, S., Flood, S., Sobek, M., Brockman D., Cooper, G., Richards, S., Schouweiler, M. (2023). IPUMS USA: Version 13.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V12.0>

References:

Marino, F. A. (2023a). Unmarried adulthood: More than a century of change, 1900-2020. *Family Profiles, FP-23-04*. National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-23-04>

Marino, F. A. (2023b). Median age of never married adults in the U.S., 1940-2020. *Family Profiles, FP-23-10*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-23-10>

Suggested Citation:

Marino, F. A. (2023). Geographic variation in percentage of mid-life never married adults, 2021. *Family Profiles, FP-23-13*. National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-23-13>