



Same-Sex Couple Households

BPDA Research Division



**boston planning &
development agency**

Same-Sex Couple Households

- 1 **Context and History**
- 2 **Massachusetts**
- 3 **Boston**
- 4 **Future Looking**
- 5 **Discussion**

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Historical Context

Massachusetts has long been at the forefront of LGBTQ+ rights in the U.S.

The first state to legalize same-sex marriage in 2004



1974

Elaine Noble (MA) is the first openly gay candidate elected to a state office

1983

Gerry Studds, a Ma. Representative becomes the first openly gay congressman, after a sex scandal

1987

Ma. Representative Barney Frank is the first member of congress to come out voluntarily

1989

Massachusetts is the second state to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation

1992

Massachusetts voters elect the first openly LGBT state senator, Cheryl Jacques

1992

Boston elects Althea Garrison, the first openly transgender member of a state legislature

2003

Goodridge v. Dept. Of Public Health rules same-sex couples in Massachusetts can marry

This site takes into account state level legislation on many topics relevant to the safety, comfort, and material well-being of the LGBTQ+ community

SNAPSHOT: LGBTQ EQUALITY BY STATE

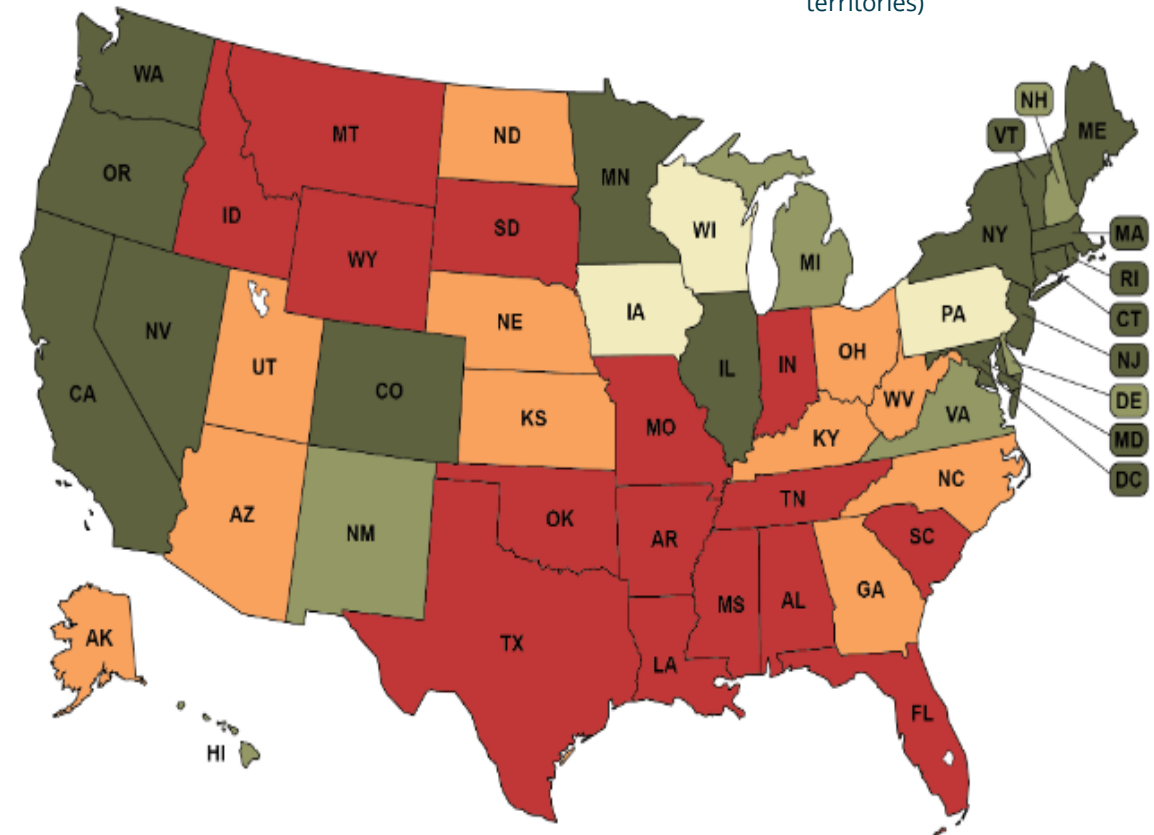
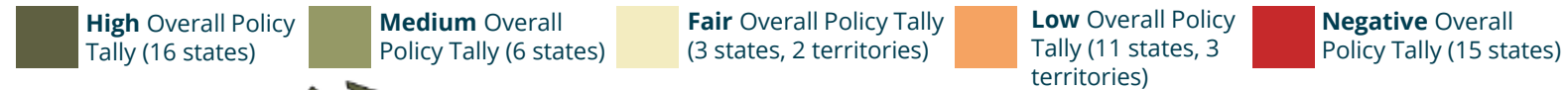
OVERALL POLICY TALLY

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

GENDER IDENTITY

STATE DATA TABLE

The Movement Advancement Project (MAP) tracks over 50 different LGBTQ-related laws and policies. This map shows the sexual orientation policy tallies for each state, the District of Columbia, and the five populated U.S. territories. A state's policy tally scores the laws and policies within each state that shape LGBTQ people's lives, experiences, and equality. The major categories of laws covered by the policy tally include: Relationship & Parental Recognition, Nondiscrimination, Religious Exemptions, LGBTQ Youth, Health Care, Criminal Justice, and Identity Documents.



- Overall, Mass ranks 15th by their metrics
- Received perfect scores for Non-Discrimination Laws
- Fell short in Gender Identity, Parental Recognition, and Criminal Justice categories
- Mass still remains ranked in the safest states for both sexual orientation and gender identity metrics

Census Limitations

The census does not currently ask any questions regarding either sexual orientation or gender identity

Because of this, the only census data we have acknowledging the LGBTQ+ community comes from individual's Household living situation

Household categories

Married Couple Households

- Opposite Sex Married Couple
- Same-Sex Married Couple

Unmarried-Partner Households

- Male householder and male partner
- Male householder and female partner
- Female householder and female partner
- Female householder and male partner

States with the highest rates of same sex couple households

11% of Couple Households in D.C. are same sex, and 76% of these couples are male-male

The states with the lowest rates are primarily in the middle and south of the country.

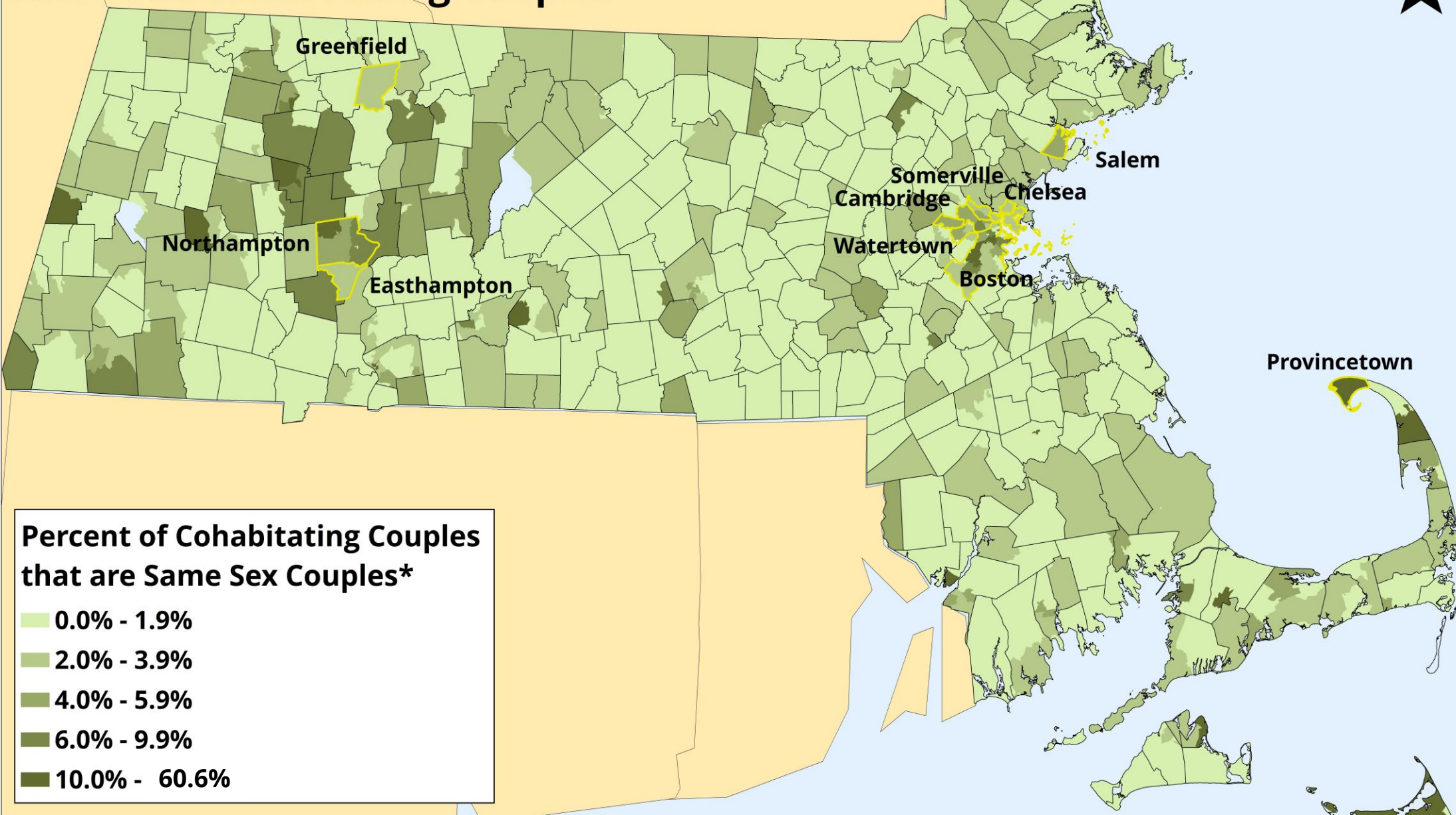
South Dakota, Nebraska, Montana, West Virginia, and Alabama all have rates <1% of couple households

State	% of all couple households that are same sex
Vermont	3.1%
Massachusetts	2.8%
Rhode Island	2.6%
New Mexico	2.6%
Oregon	2.5%
Nevada	2.5%
Hawaii	2.4%
New York	2.4%
Washington	2.4%
Delaware	2.4%
New Hampshire	2.2%
California	2.1%
Florida	2.0%
Maine	2.0%
Connecticut	1.9%

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Massachusetts Towns with the highest proportion of Same-Sex Cohabiting Couples



The top towns were calculated from towns with at least 1,000 households and at least 100 same-sex cohabiting couples

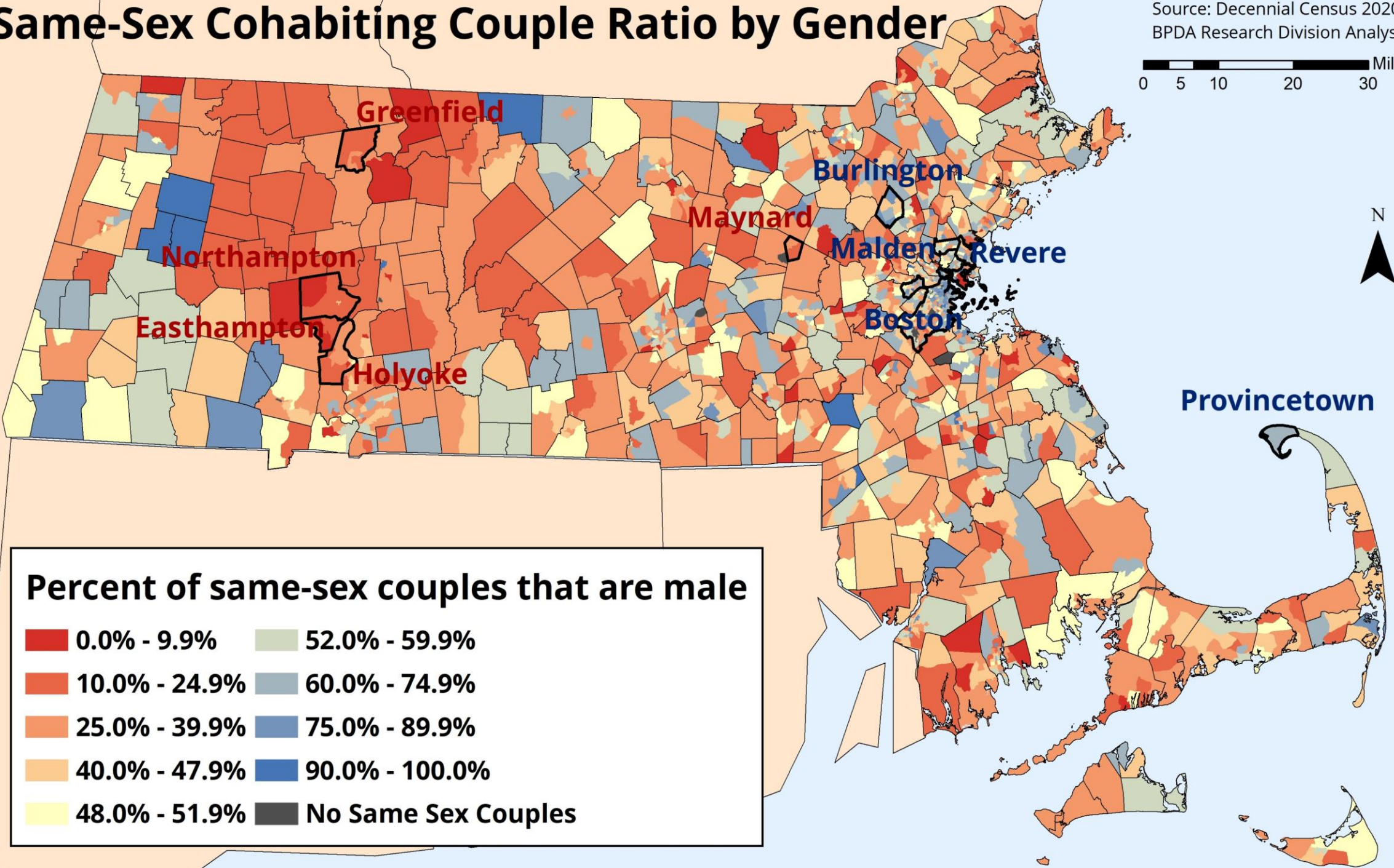
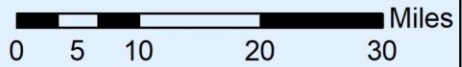
Percent of Cohabiting Couples that are Same Sex Couples*

- 0.0% - 1.9%
- 2.0% - 3.9%
- 4.0% - 5.9%
- 6.0% - 9.9%
- 10.0% - 60.6%

*Data calculated at the ZipCode level

Same-Sex Cohabiting Couple Ratio by Gender

Source: Decennial Census 2020, BPDA Research Division Analysis



Percent of same-sex couples that are male

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 0.0% - 9.9% | 52.0% - 59.9% |
| 10.0% - 24.9% | 60.0% - 74.9% |
| 25.0% - 39.9% | 75.0% - 89.9% |
| 40.0% - 47.9% | 90.0% - 100.0% |
| 48.0% - 51.9% | No Same Sex Couples |

The top towns were selected from towns that had 50+ same-sex couple households

55% of same-sex cohabiting couples in Massachusetts are female-female

Towns with High Female-Female Couple Share	Percentage of Couple Households that are Same-Sex	% of Same-Sex Households that are Female
Easthampton	6.8%	87.1%
Northampton	10.9%	82.2%
Maynard	3.1%	76.9%
Greenfield	5.4%	76.8%
Holyoke	3.9%	71.2%
Amherst	4.1%	68.6%
Leominster	1.8%	68.5%
Hudson	1.5%	67.9%
Longmeadow	1.3%	67.3%
Arlington	3.3%	67.1%
Chicopee	2.3%	66.8%
Newburyport	2.8%	66.7%
Milton	1.8%	66.7%

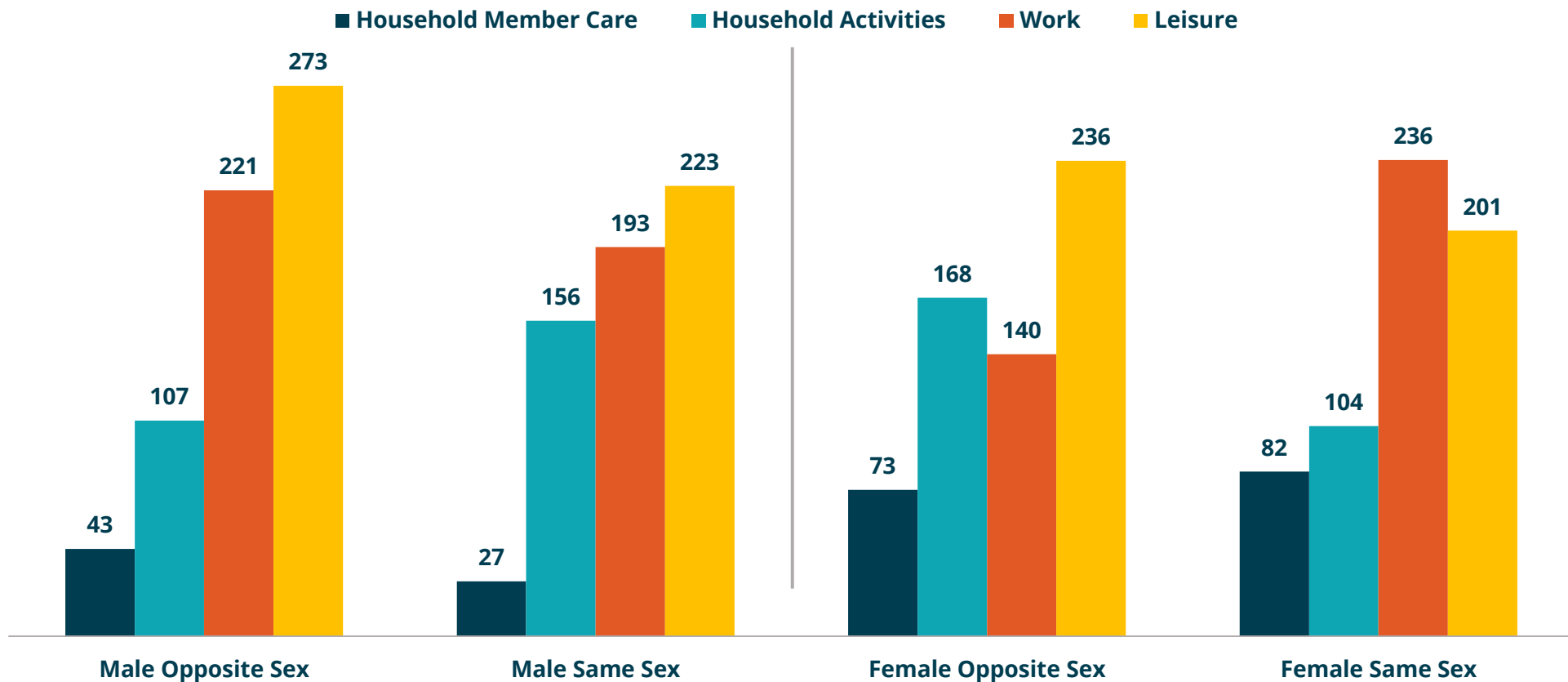
Towns with High Male-Male Couple Share	Percentage of Couple Households that are Same-Sex	% of Same-Sex Households that are Male
Provincetown	60.1%	68.1%
Boston	6.0%	61.2%
Burlington	1.0%	60.0%
Revere	2.9%	56.9%
Malden	3.2%	56.4%
North Adams	2.5%	55.7%
Everett	2.3%	54.8%
Chelsea	4.3%	54.8%
Quincy	2.7%	54.2%
Winthrop	2.8%	52.7%
Cambridge	4.7%	52.1%
Framingham	2.4%	50.6%
Stoneham	1.8%	50.5%

Source: Decennial Census 2020, BPDA Research Division Analysis

Men in same-sex couples seem to exhibit more similar time use patterns to their counterparts than women in same-sex couples

Time Allocation per Activity by Sex of Individual in Cohabiting Couple

Average Minutes per Day Spent for each Activity

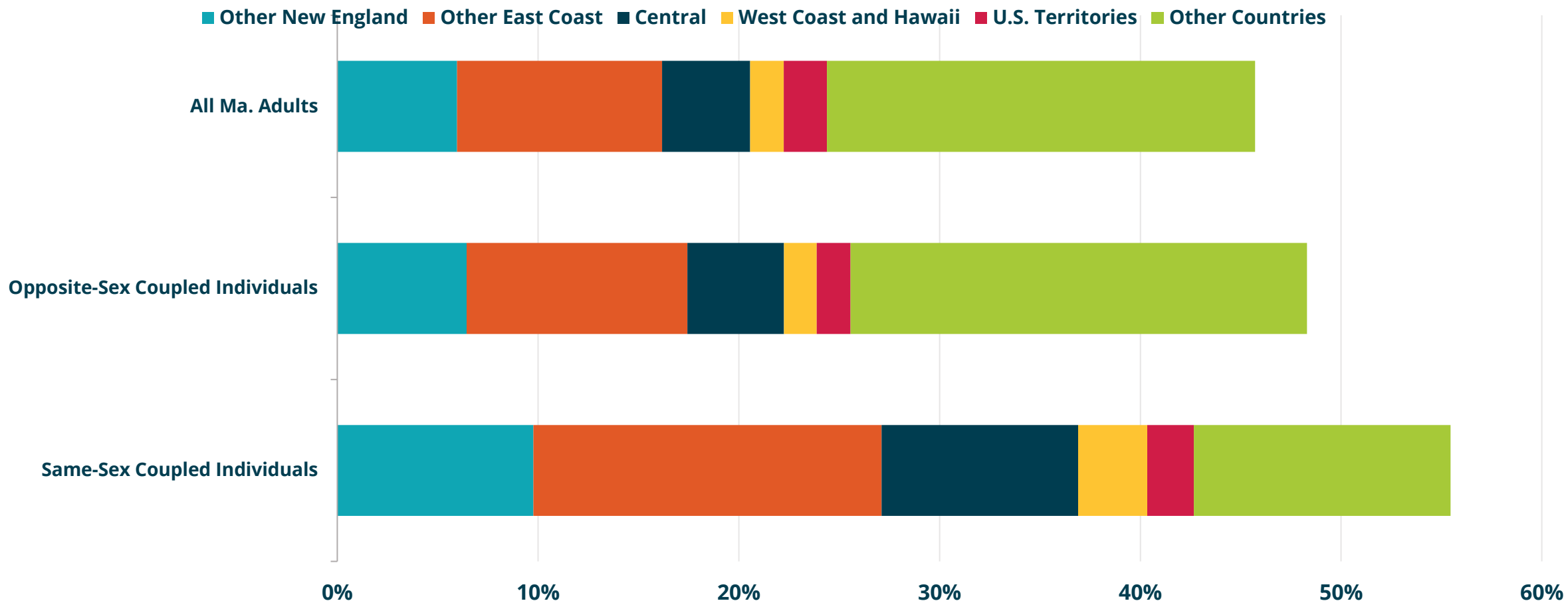


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003-2022 American Time Use Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis

Individuals in same-sex couple households are more likely to have been born in another state

Area of Birth of Massachusetts* Individuals 2017-2021

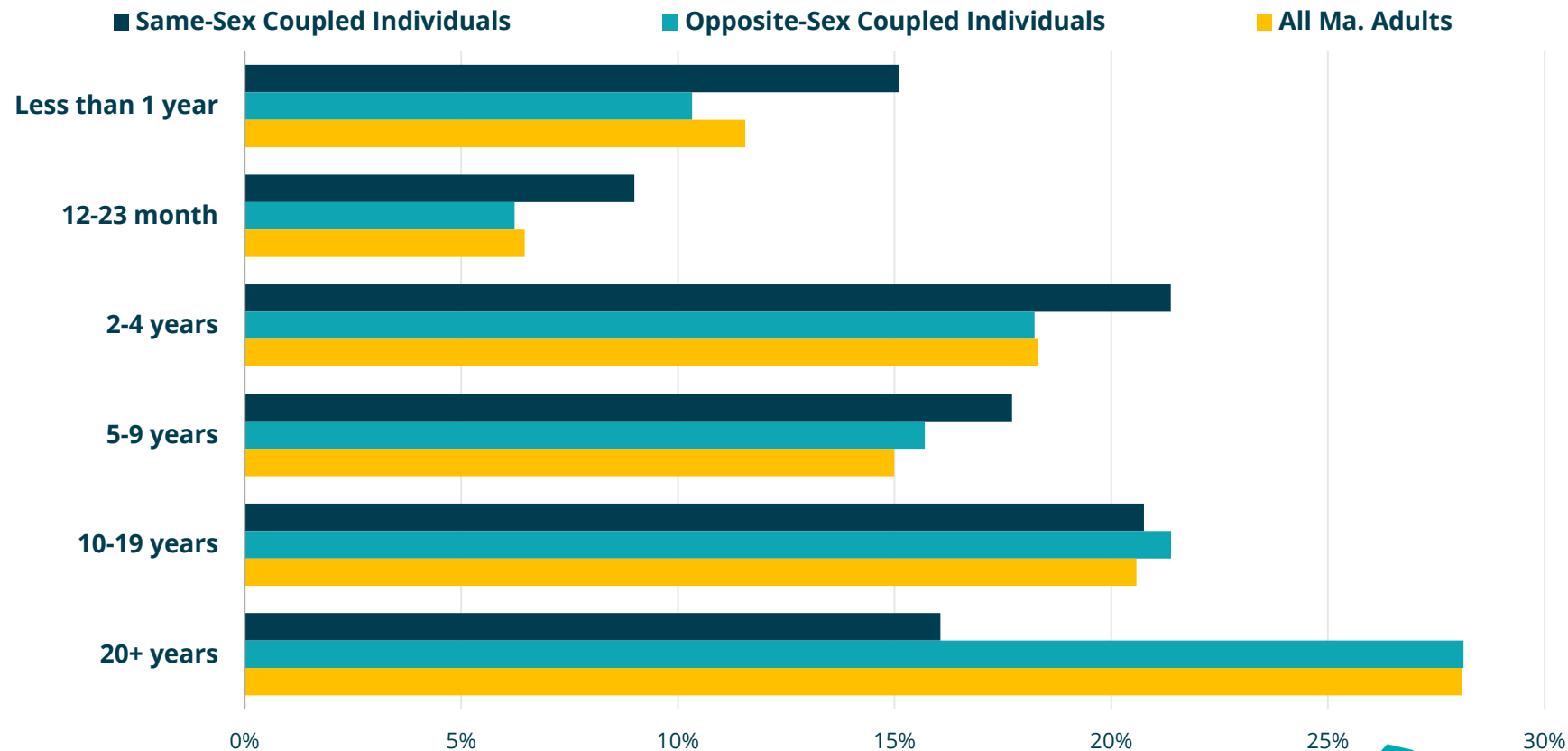
*Excluding those born in Massachusetts



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5Y PUMS ACS (2017-2021), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Same-Sex Couple Households appear to be more mobile

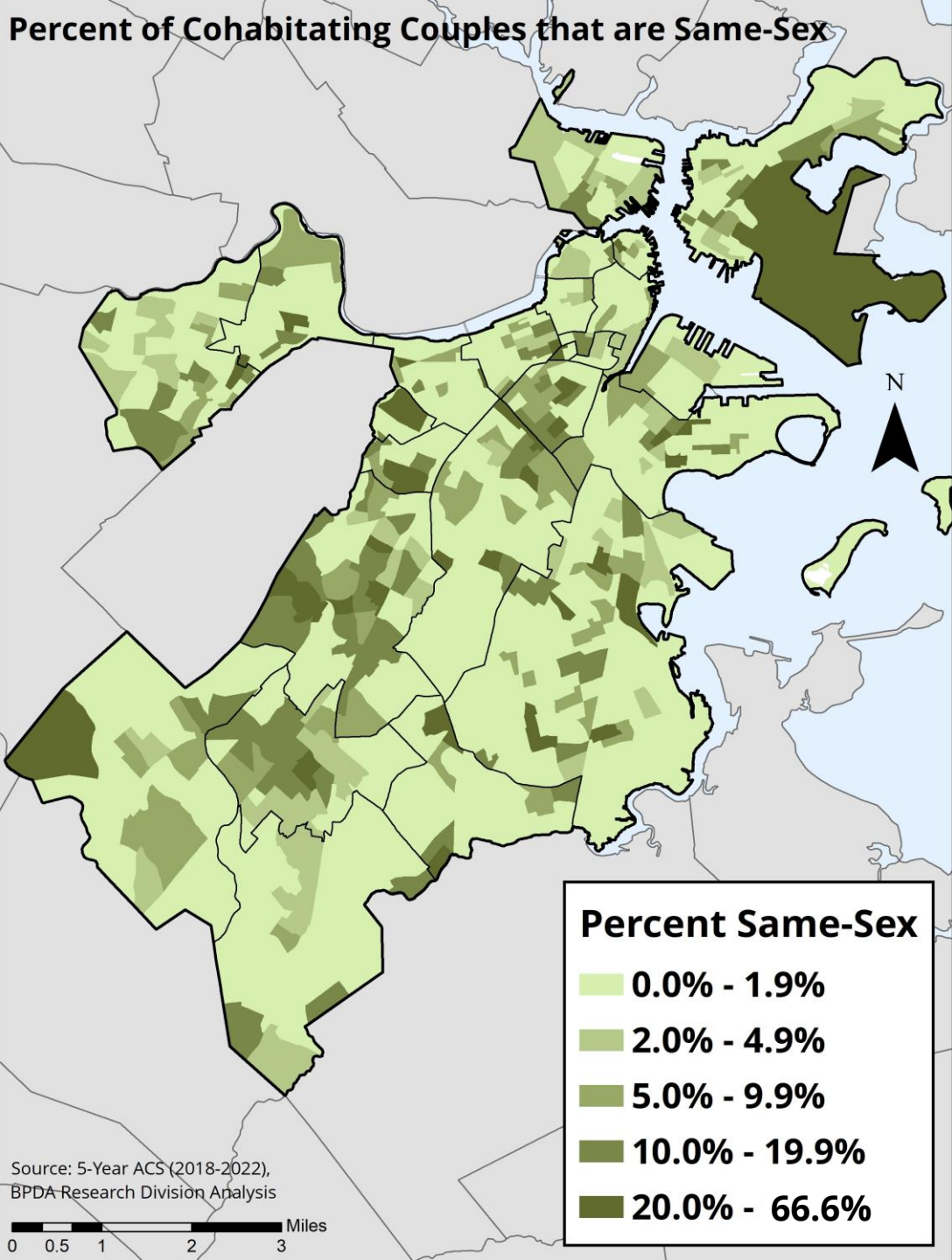
Time Lived in Current Housing Unit by Relationship Type of Cohabiting Couples in Massachusetts (2017-2021)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

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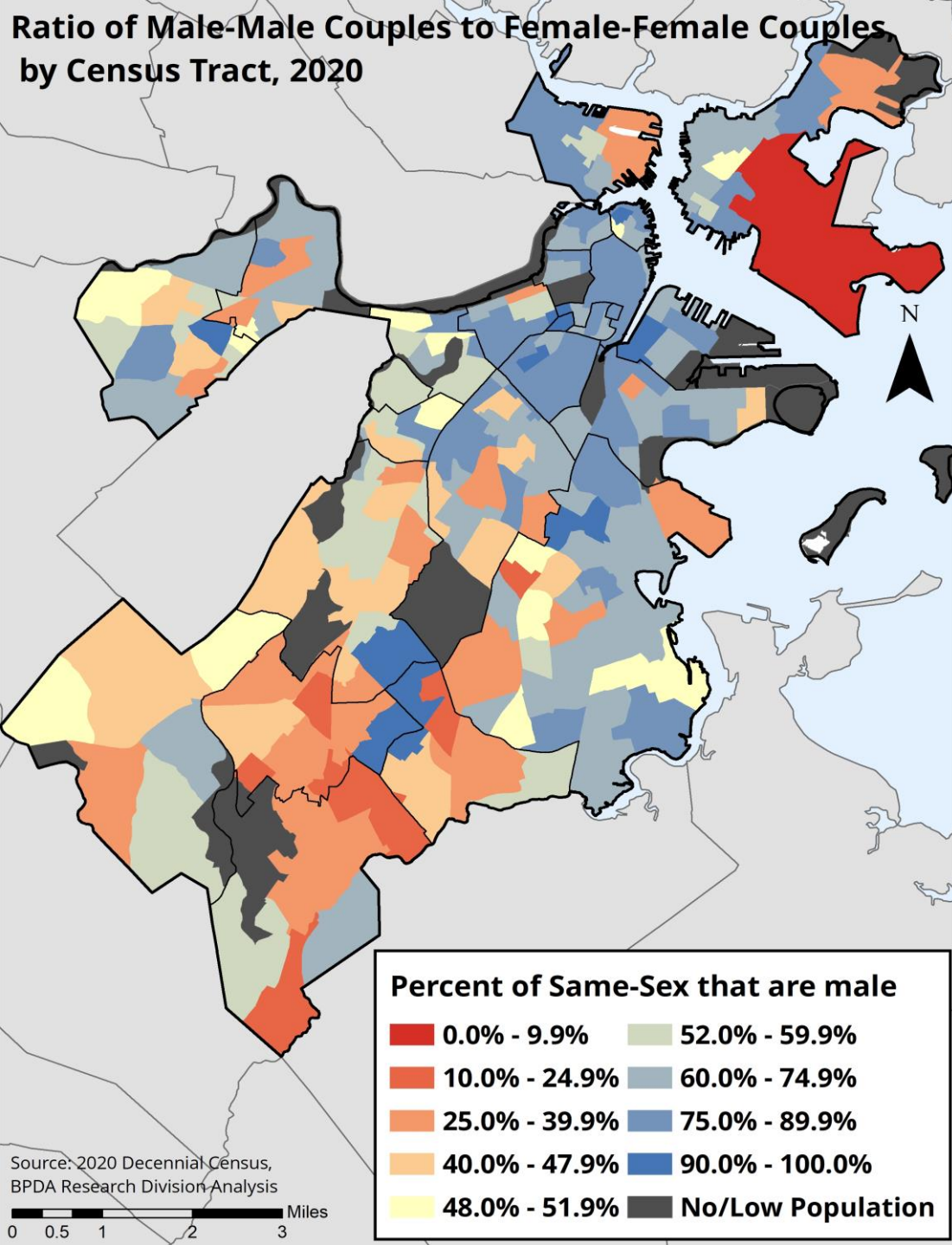
Mission Hill, South End, and Jamaica Plain have the highest rates of Cohabiting Couples that are same-sex

- Mission Hill - 12%
- South End - 9.9%
- Jamaica Plain 9.5%

Beacon Hill, Seaport, and Chinatown have the lowest rates, all remaining under 2% of cohabiting couples

Source: Decennial Census 2020, BPDA Research Division Analysis

Ratio of Male-Male Couples to Female-Female Couples by Census Tract, 2020



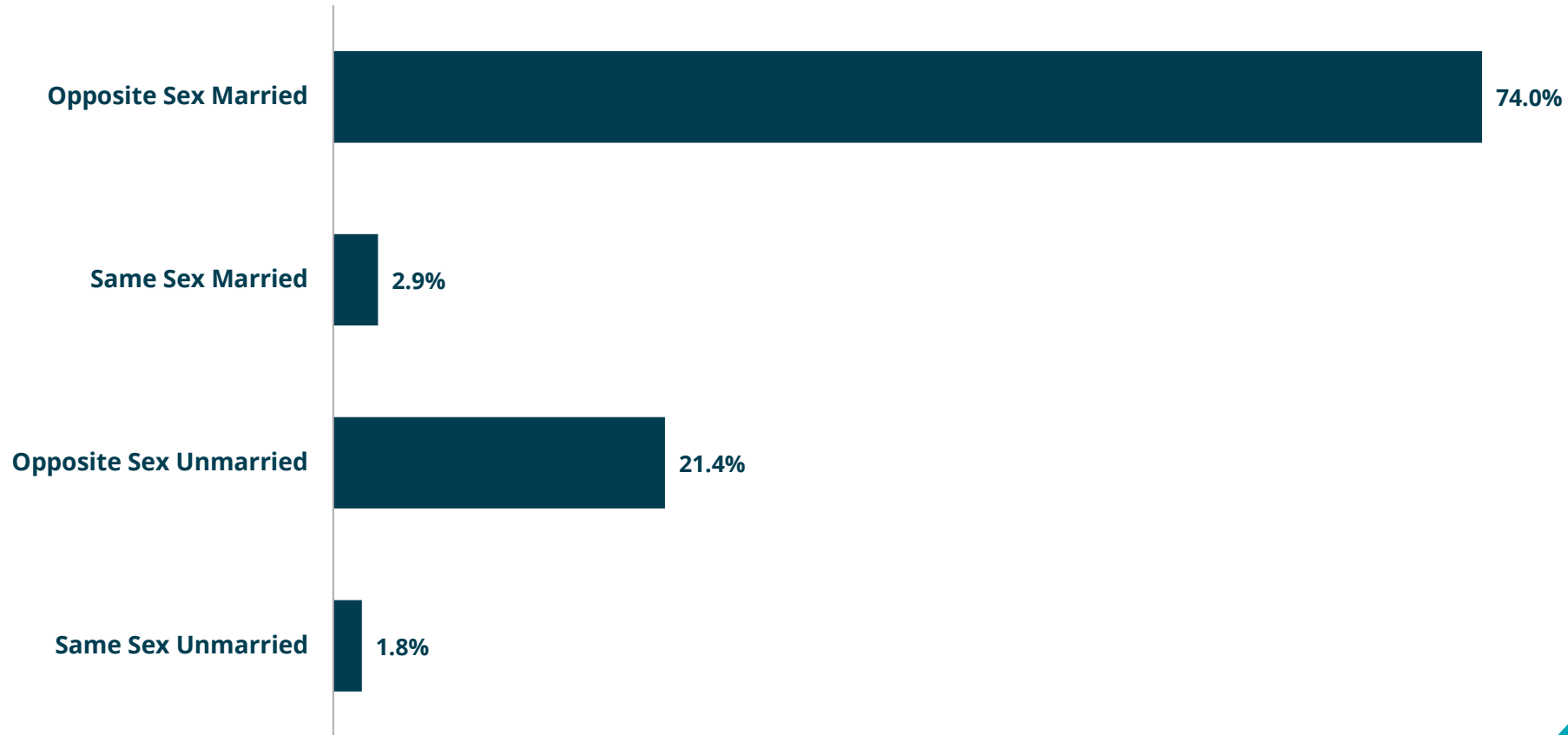
Most Neighborhoods appear stratified across male-male or female-female lines for their LGBTQ+ cohabiting couple population

Male same-sex couples seem to live closer into downtown while female same-sex couples are more likely to live further out

4.7% of Boston's cohabitating couples are same sex*

Cohabitating Couples by Relationship Type

2018-2022

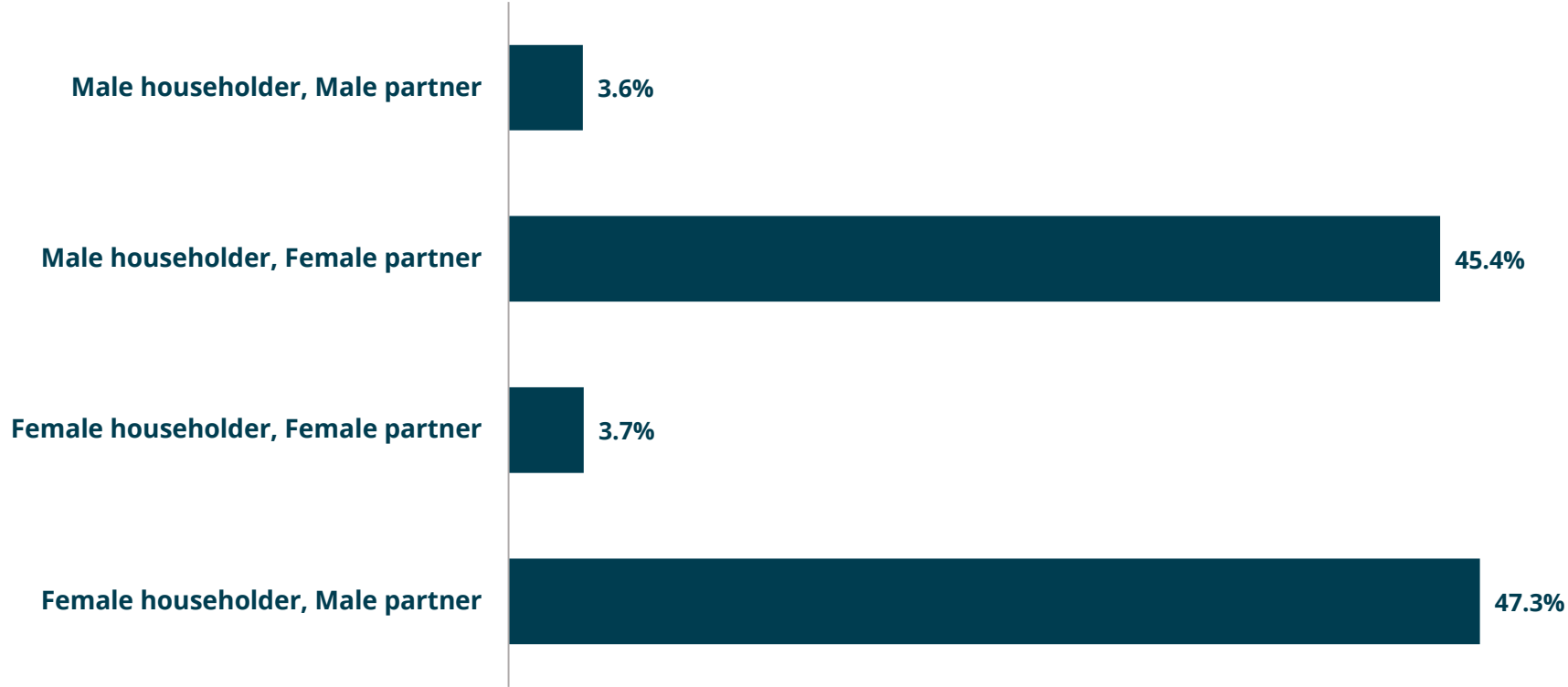


*this uses a different census than earlier estimates and thus has a different ratio for the city

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

7.9% of unmarried partner households in Boston are same-sex

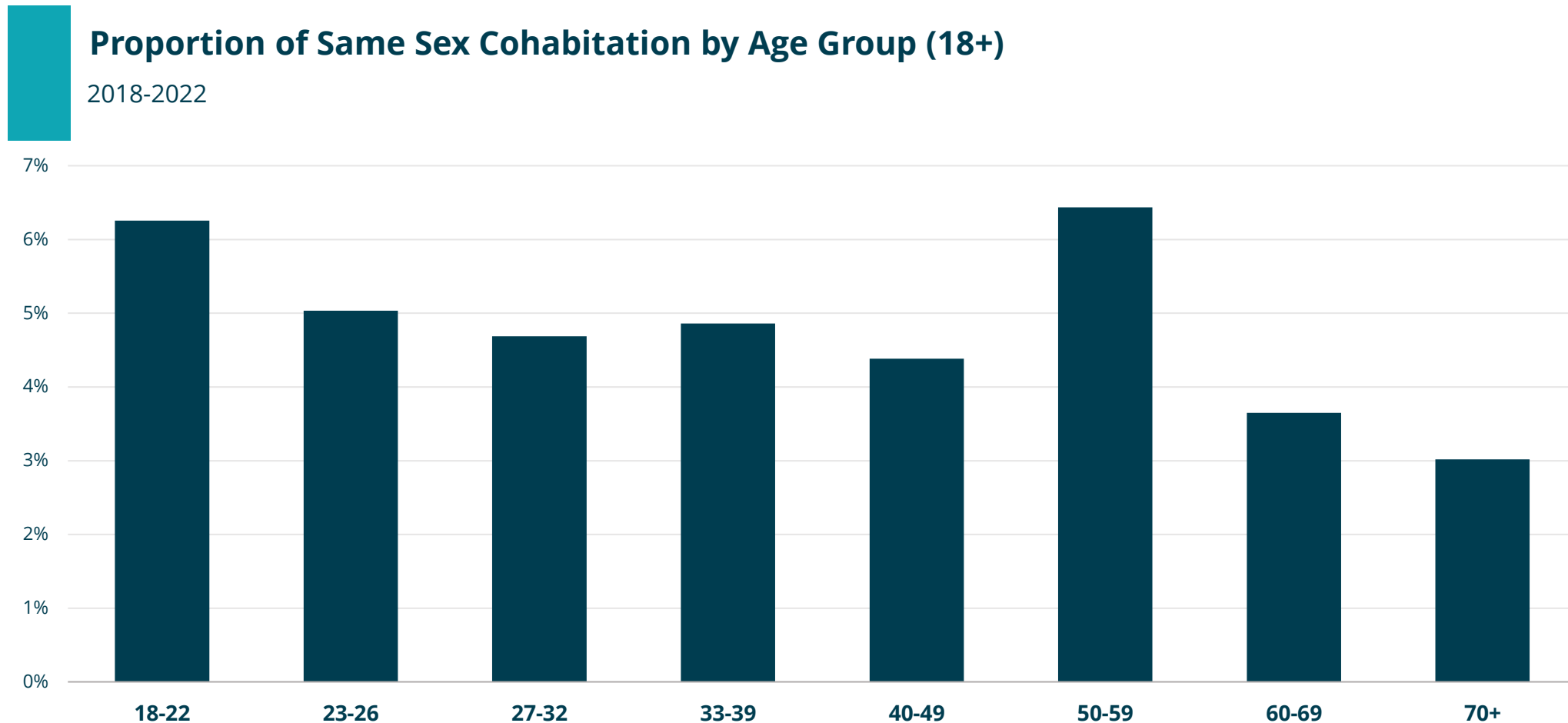
Share of Unmarried Partner Households by Householder and Partner Sex
2018-2022



As opposed to only 3.8% of Boston's married couples

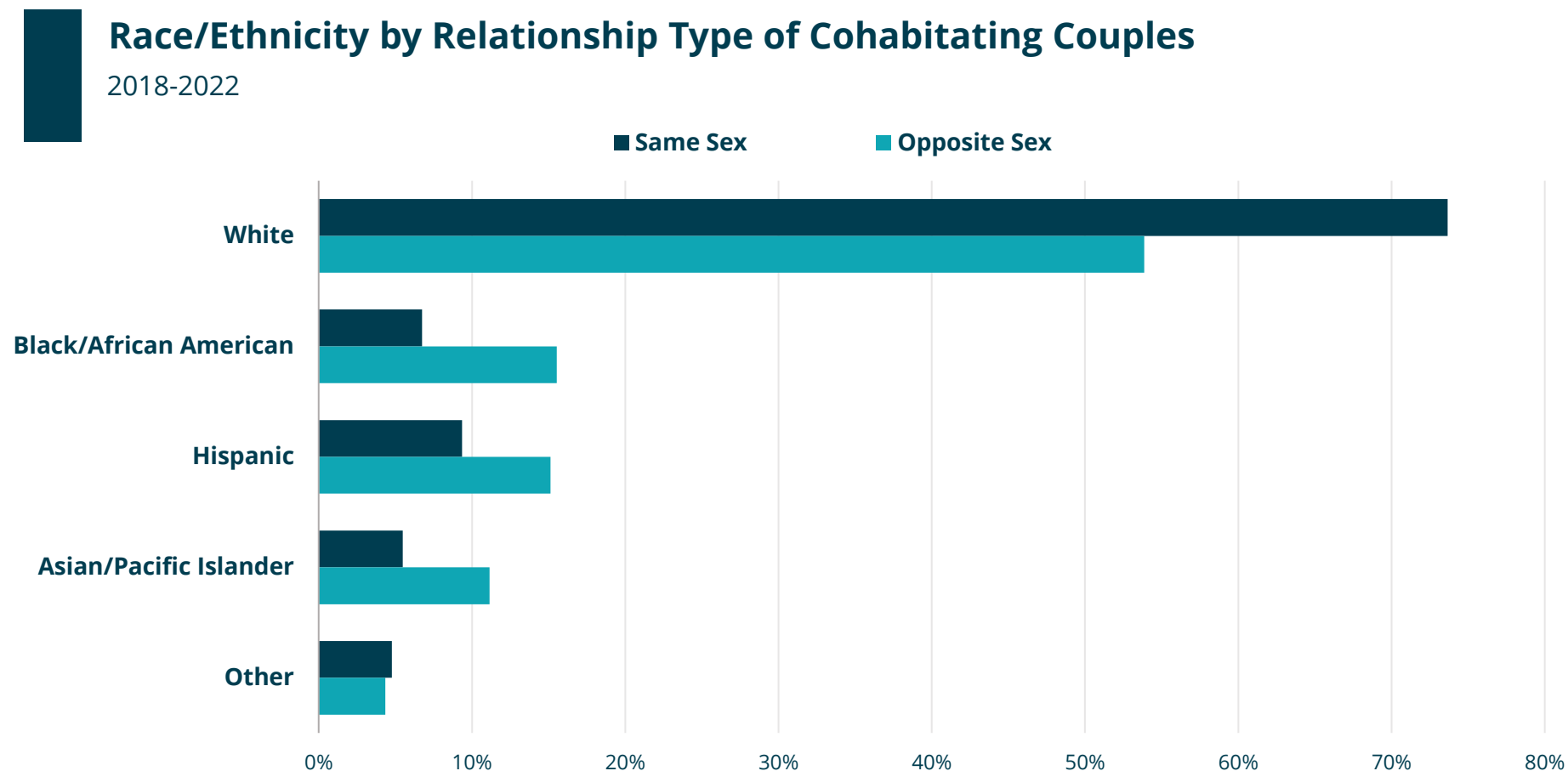
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

The 50-59-year-old age group has the highest proportion of same sex cohabitation



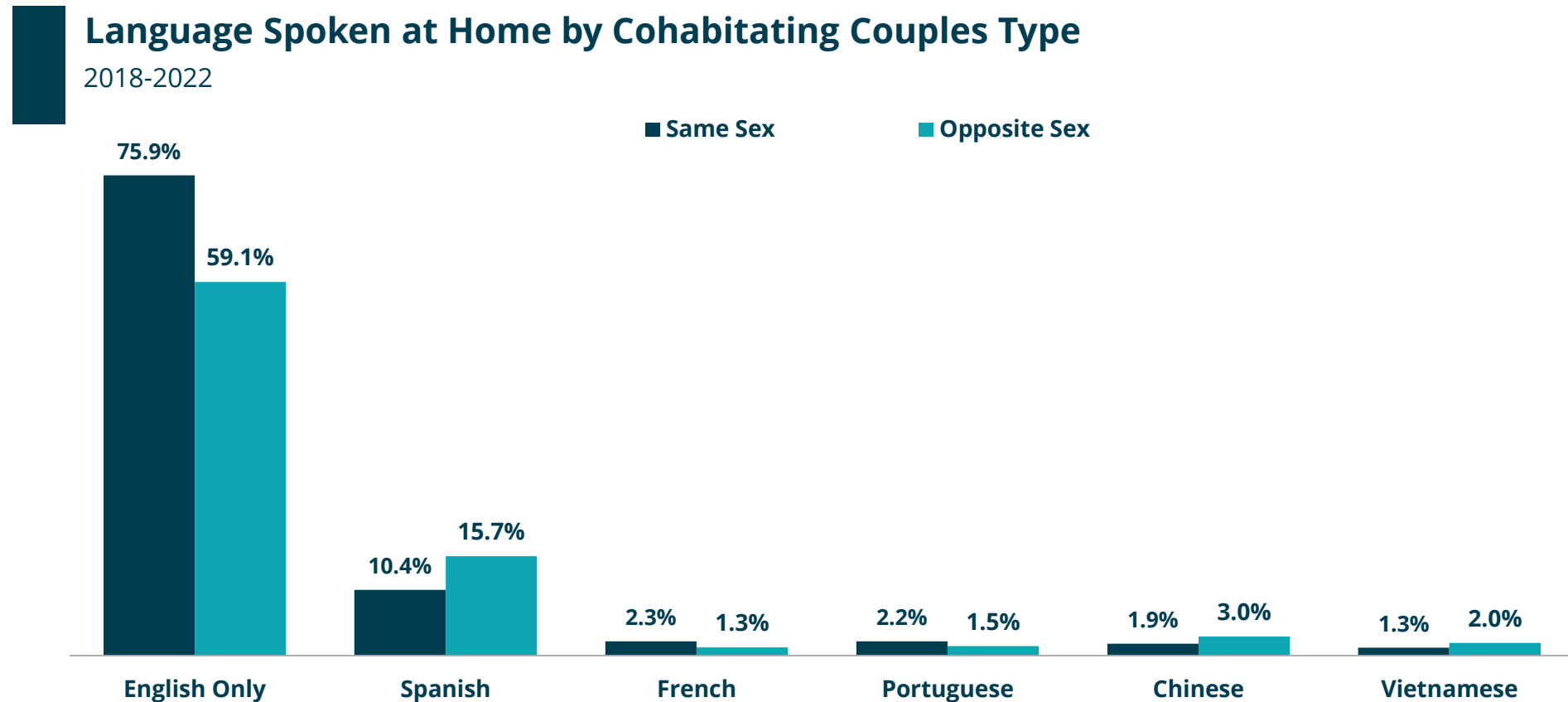
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

A larger proportion of same sex cohabitating couples are white, relative to opposite sex couples



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

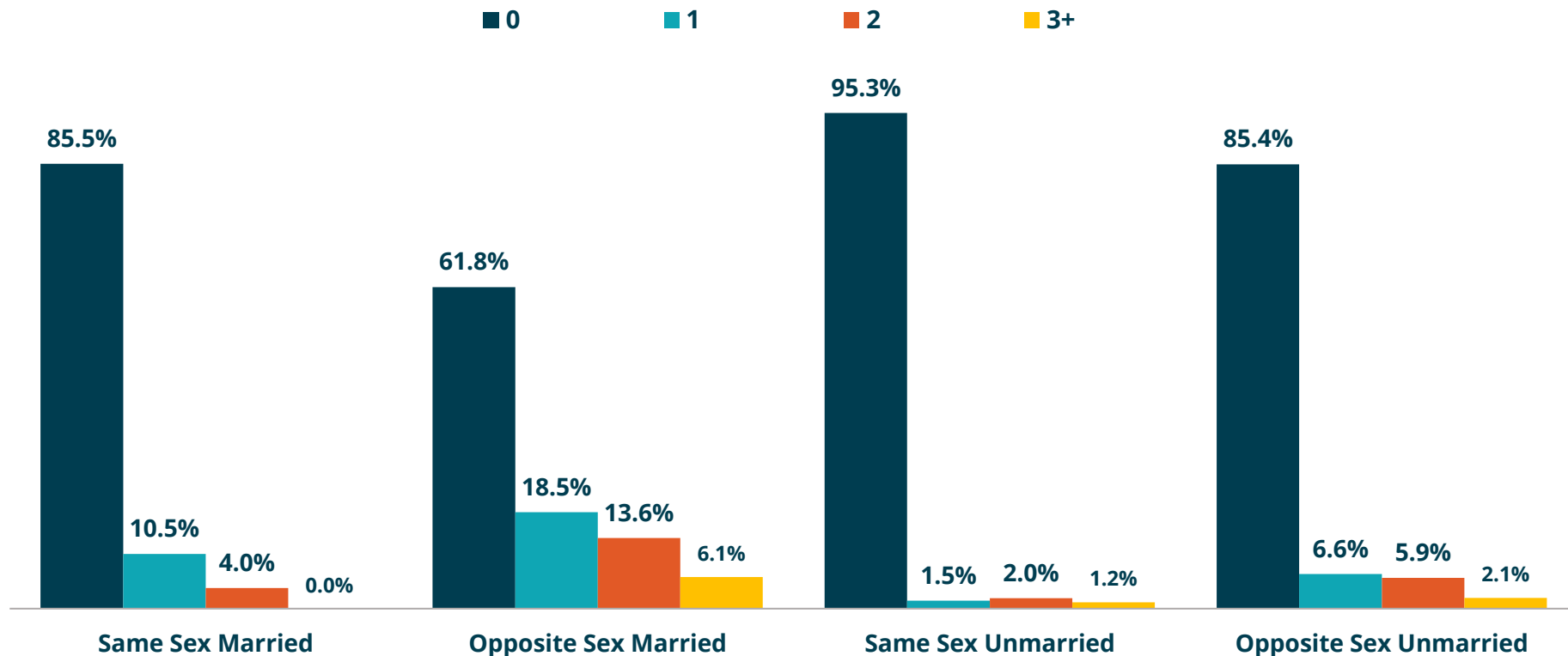
Compared to opposite sex couples, a higher proportion of same sex households speak only English



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

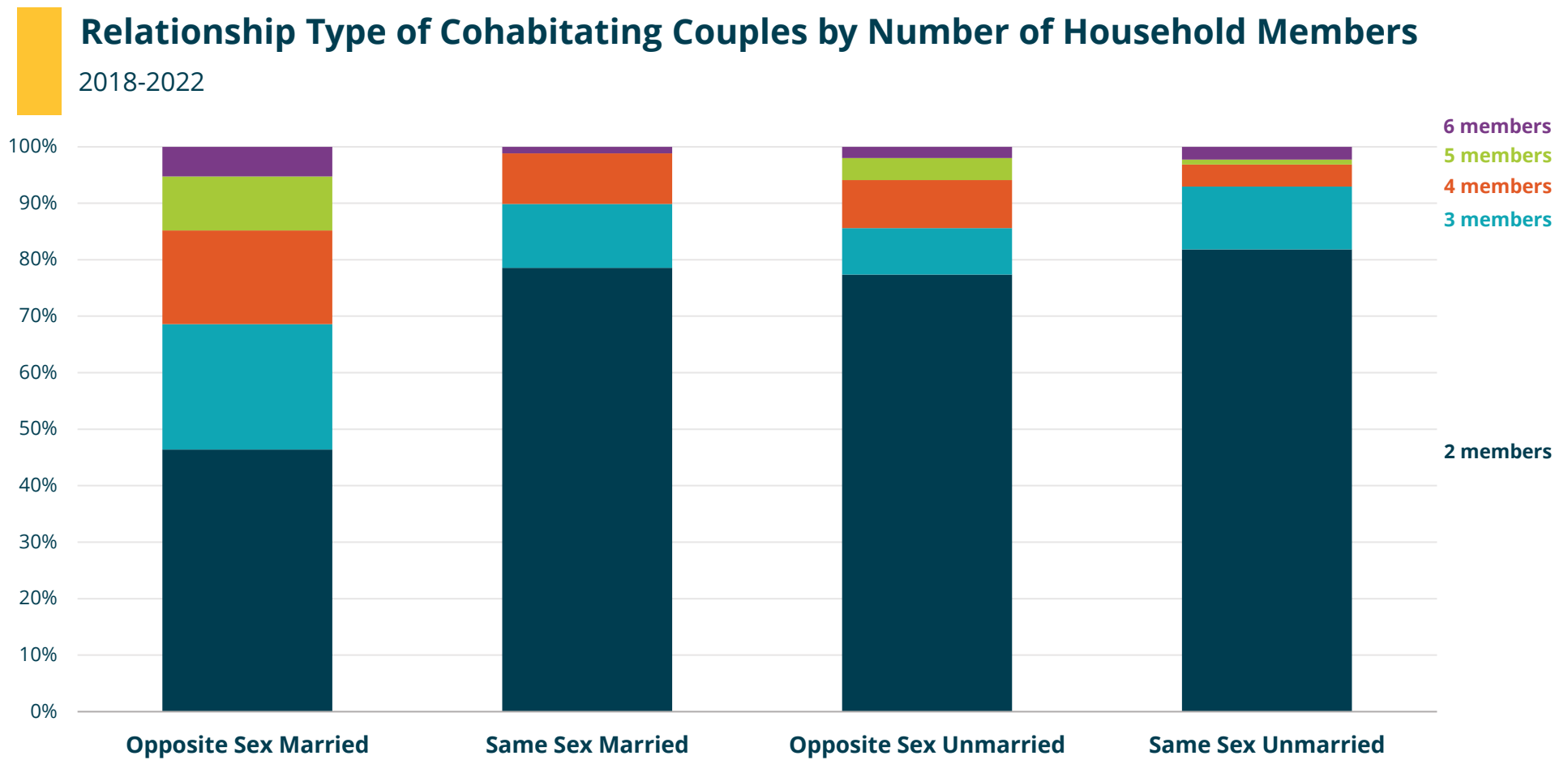
Same sex cohabitating couples are more likely to be child-free

Relationship Type of Cohabitating Couples by Number of Related Children in Household (2018-2022)



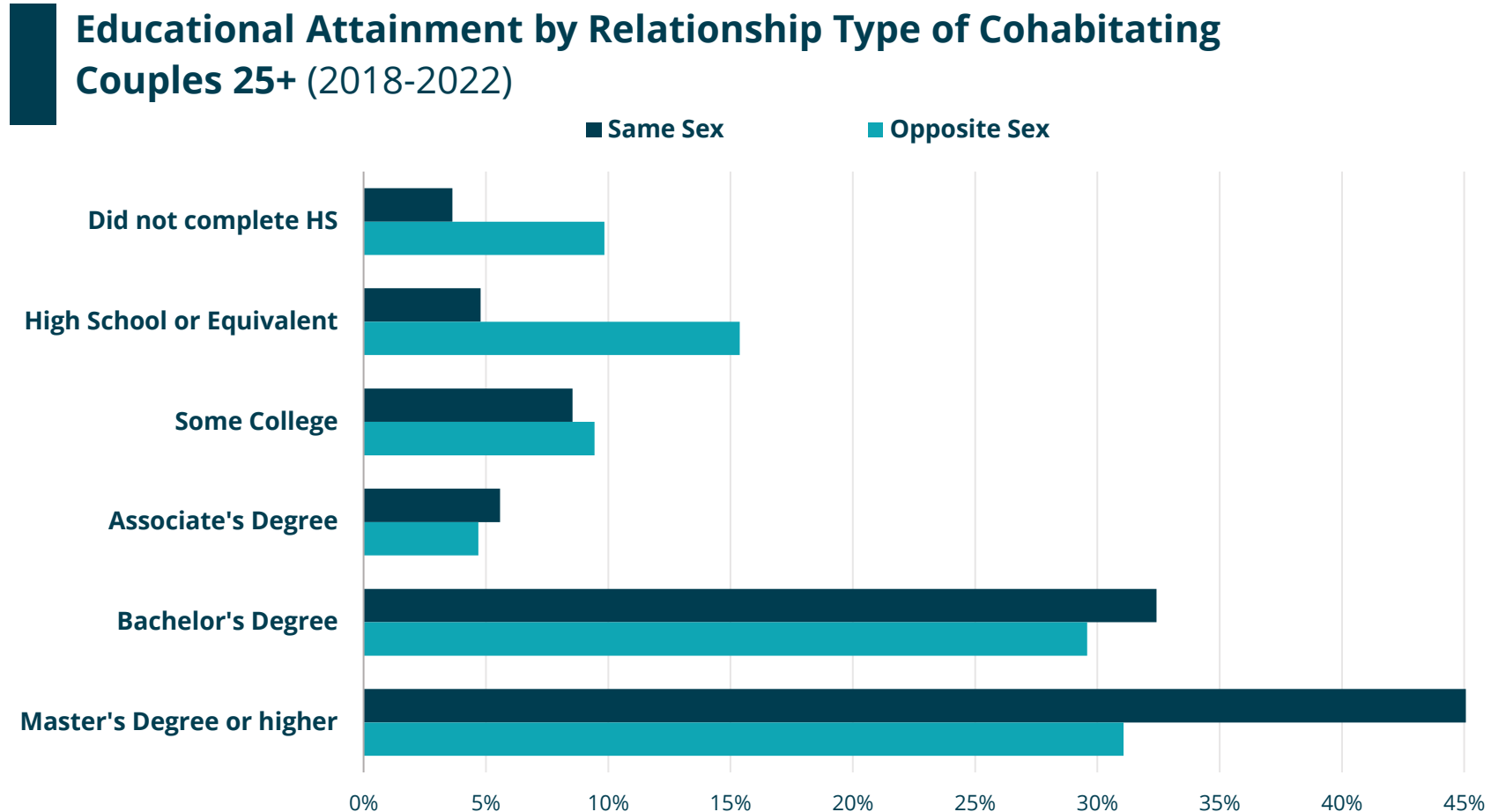
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Relative to opposite sex married couples, same sex married couples tend to have fewer household members



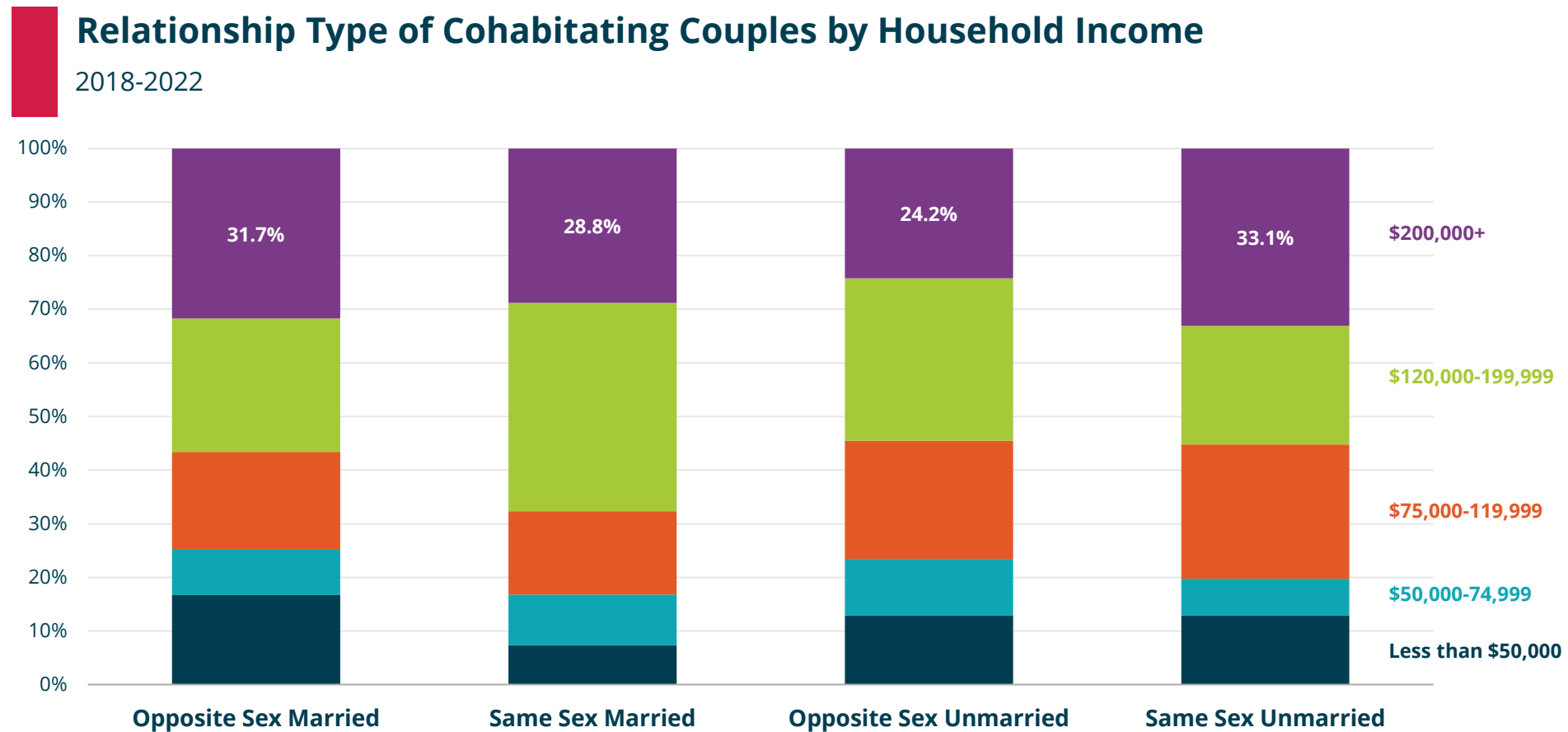
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Individuals in same sex cohabitating couples tend to have higher levels of educational attainment



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

For opposite sex couples, married couples have a higher share of households earning more than \$200k, while the opposite is true for same sex couples

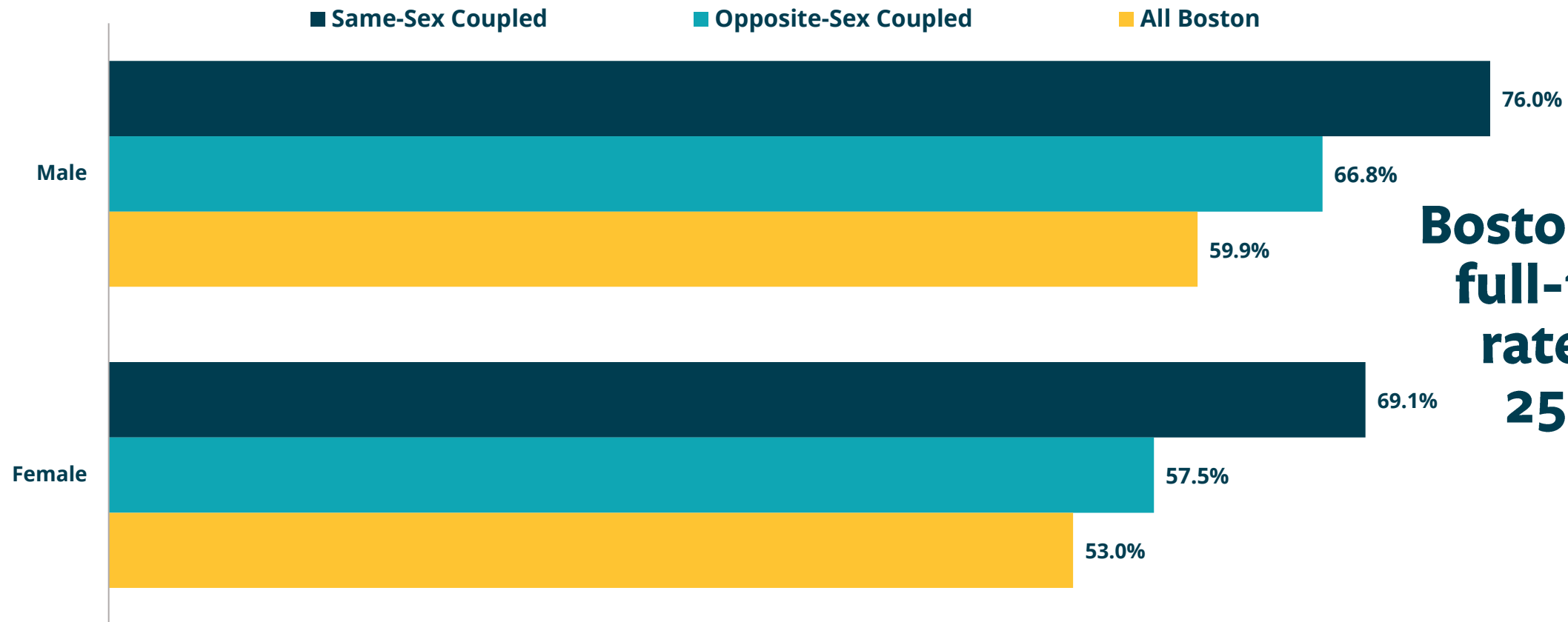


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Same-sex coupled individuals have higher rates of full-time work regardless of sex

Rate of Full-time Work by Couple Type for those 25+

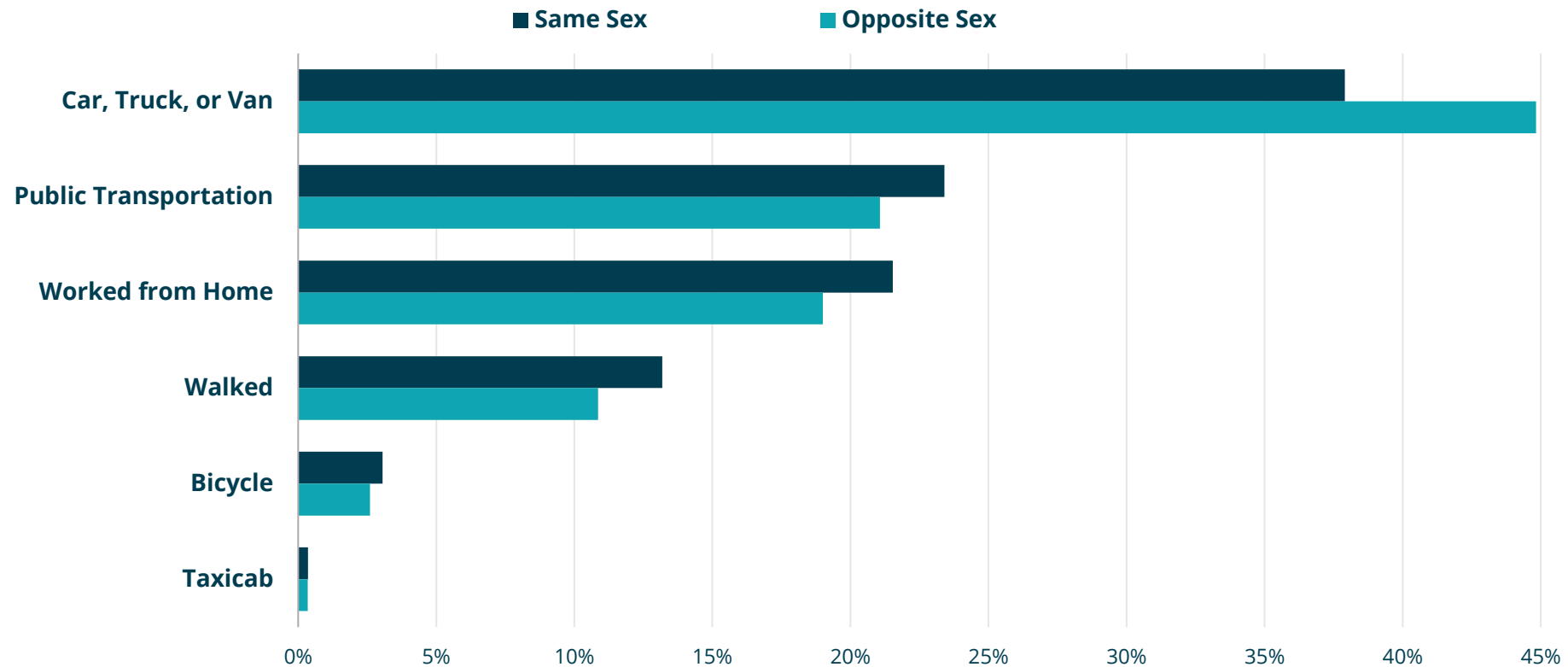
Full-time work defined as at least 30 hour weeks and at least 48 weeks per year



Boston's overall full-time work rate for those 25+ is 56.3%

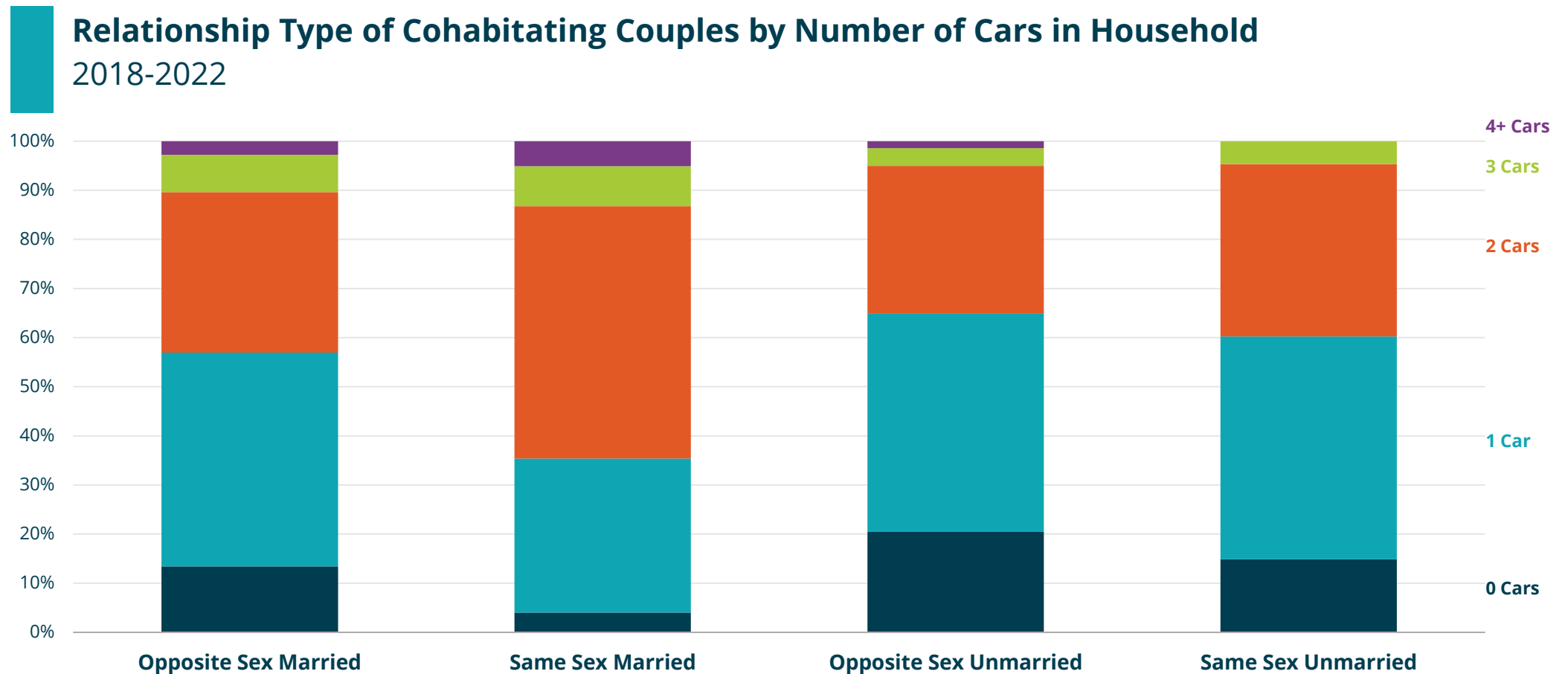
A lower share of individuals in same sex couples use cars to get to work

Transportation to Work by Relationship Type of Cohabiting Couples (2018-2022)



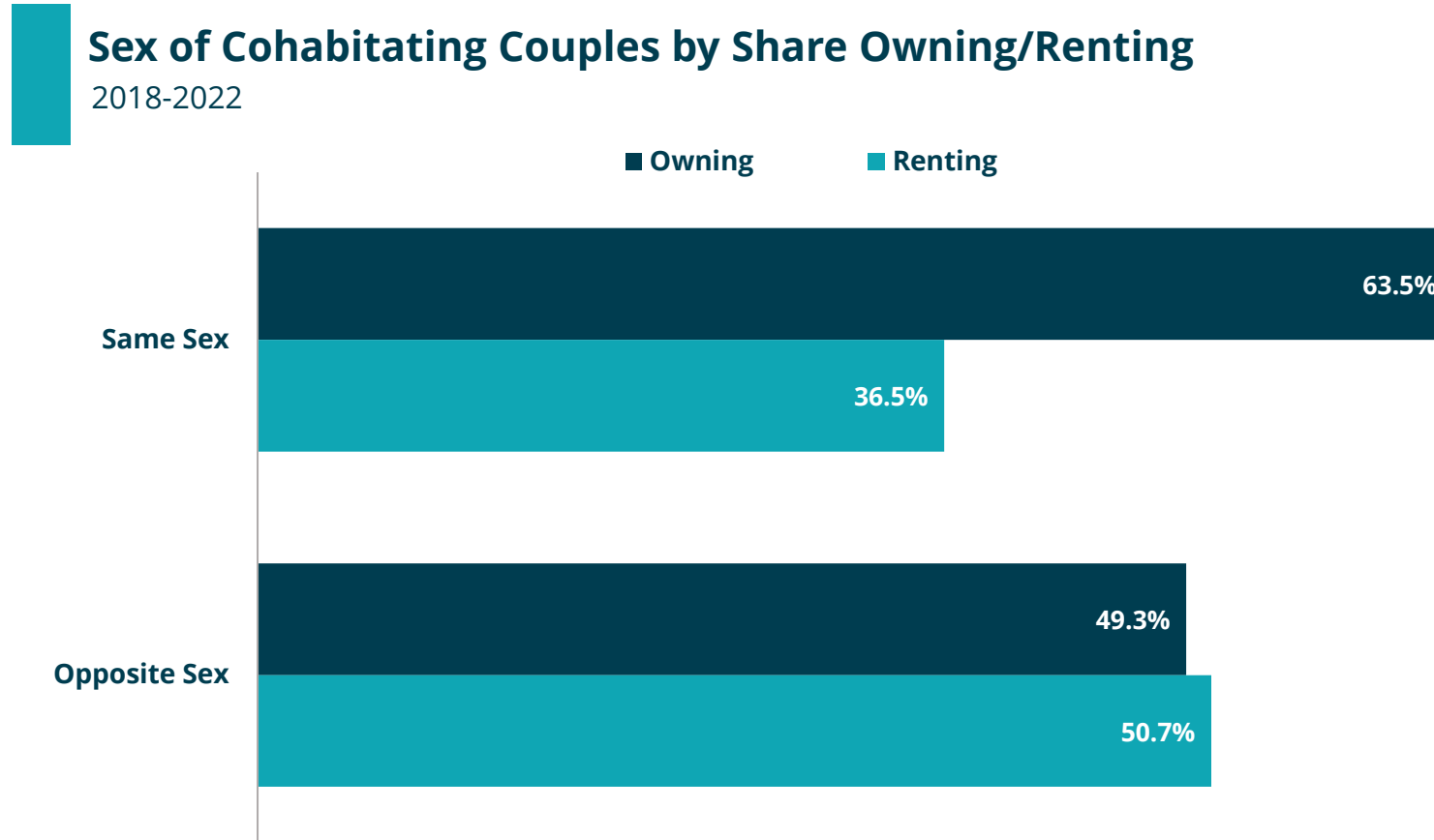
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Relative to married and unmarried opposite sex couples, respective same sex households are more likely to have at least one car



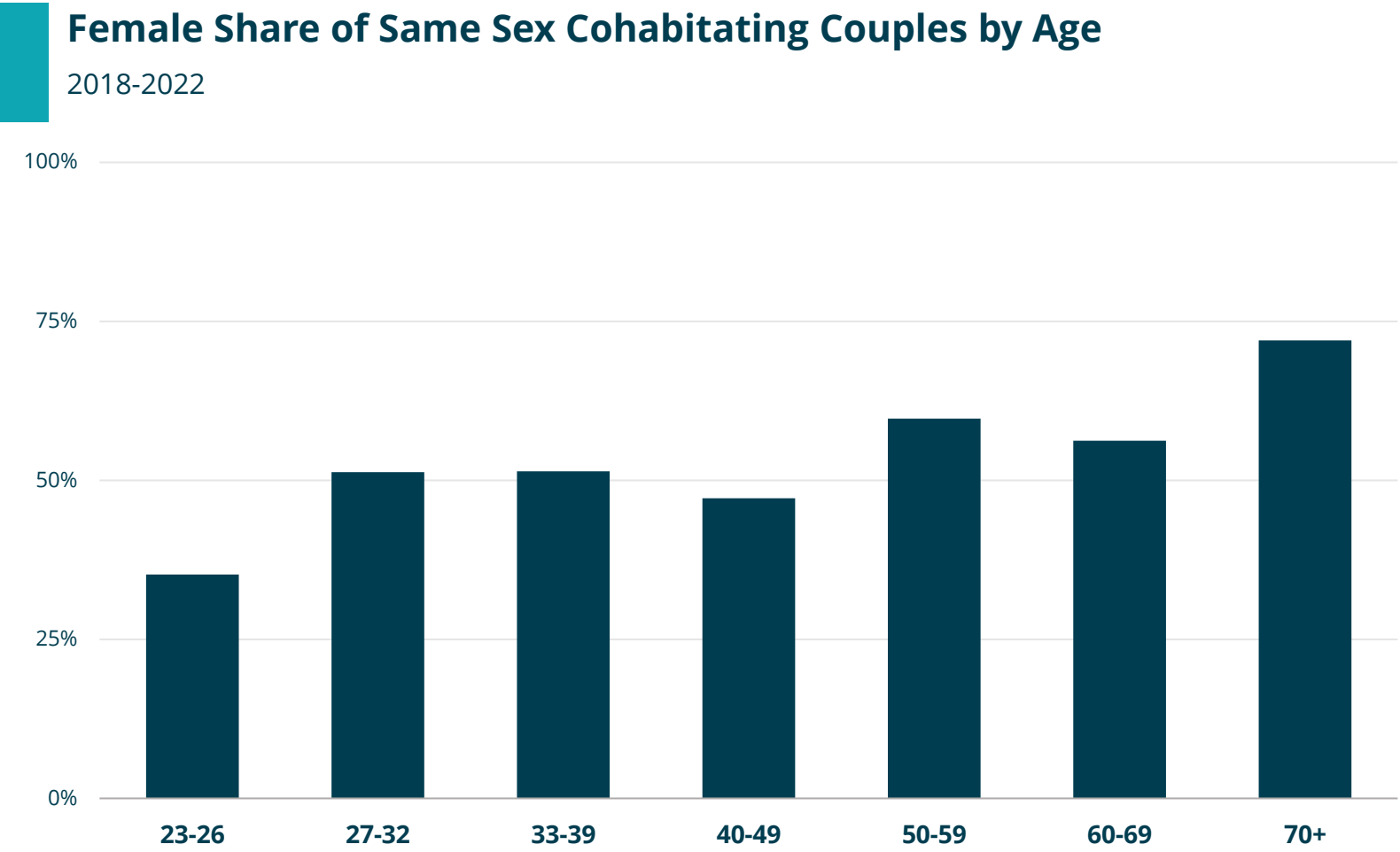
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

A larger proportion of same sex cohabitating couples own their homes



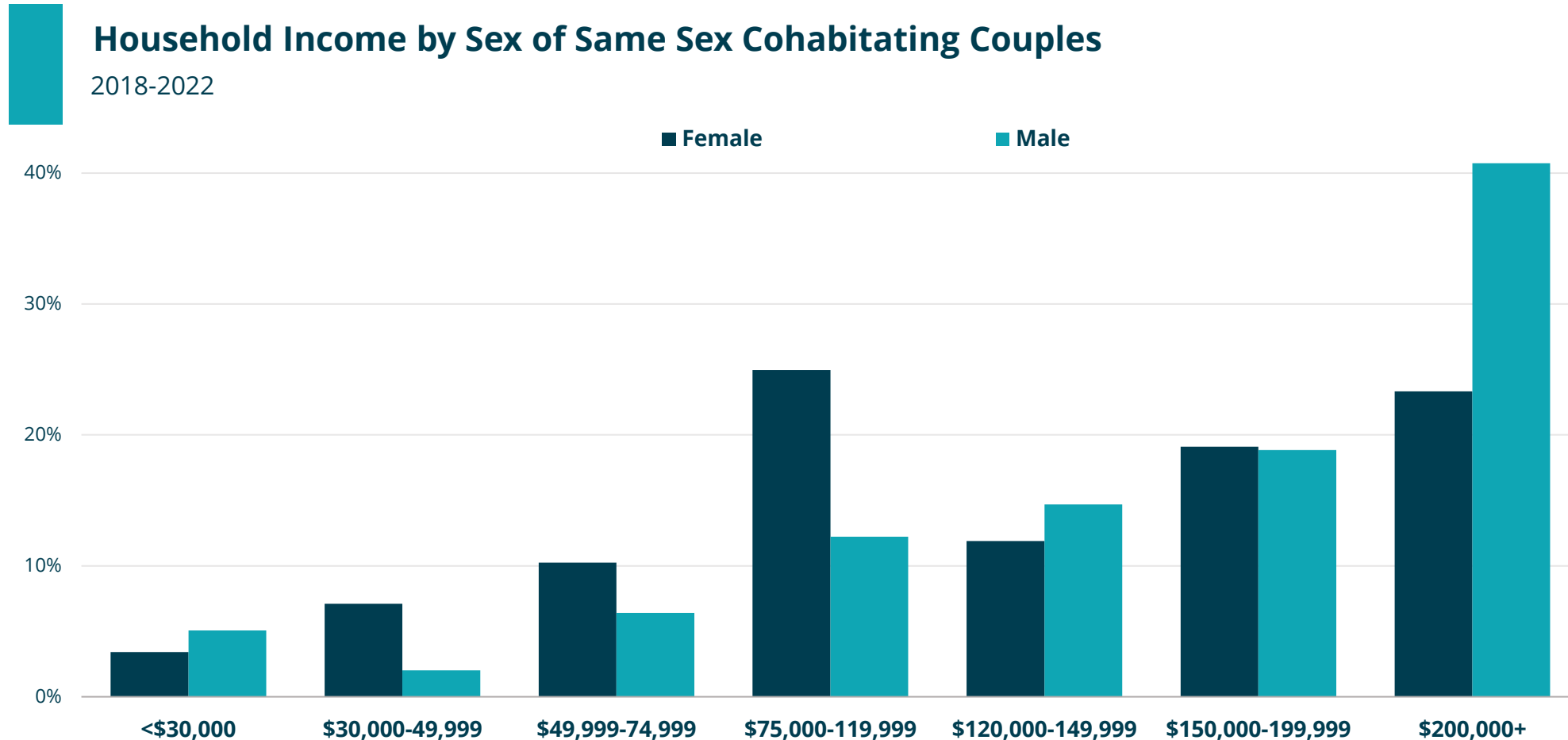
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

The 23-26 age group has the lowest share of female-female among same sex couples



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

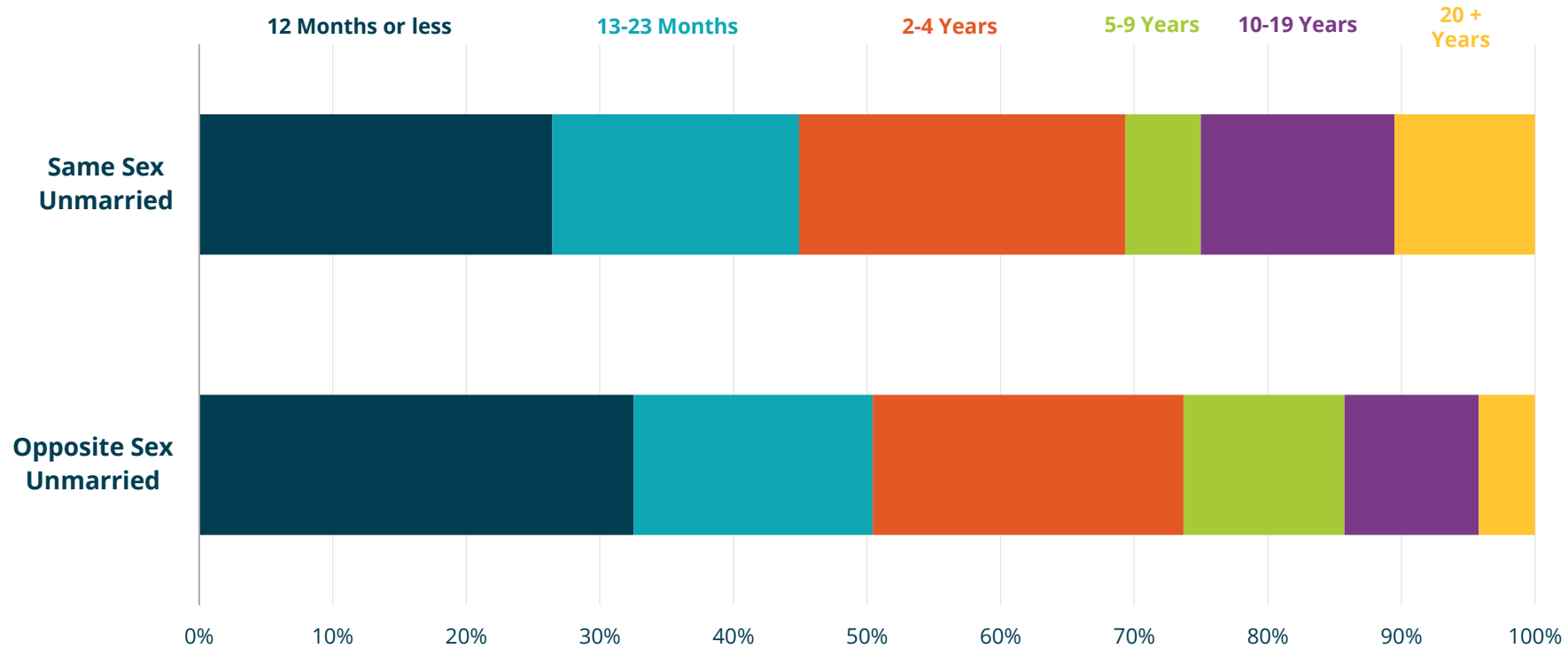
A higher share of male same sex households earn more than \$200,000 compared to females



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

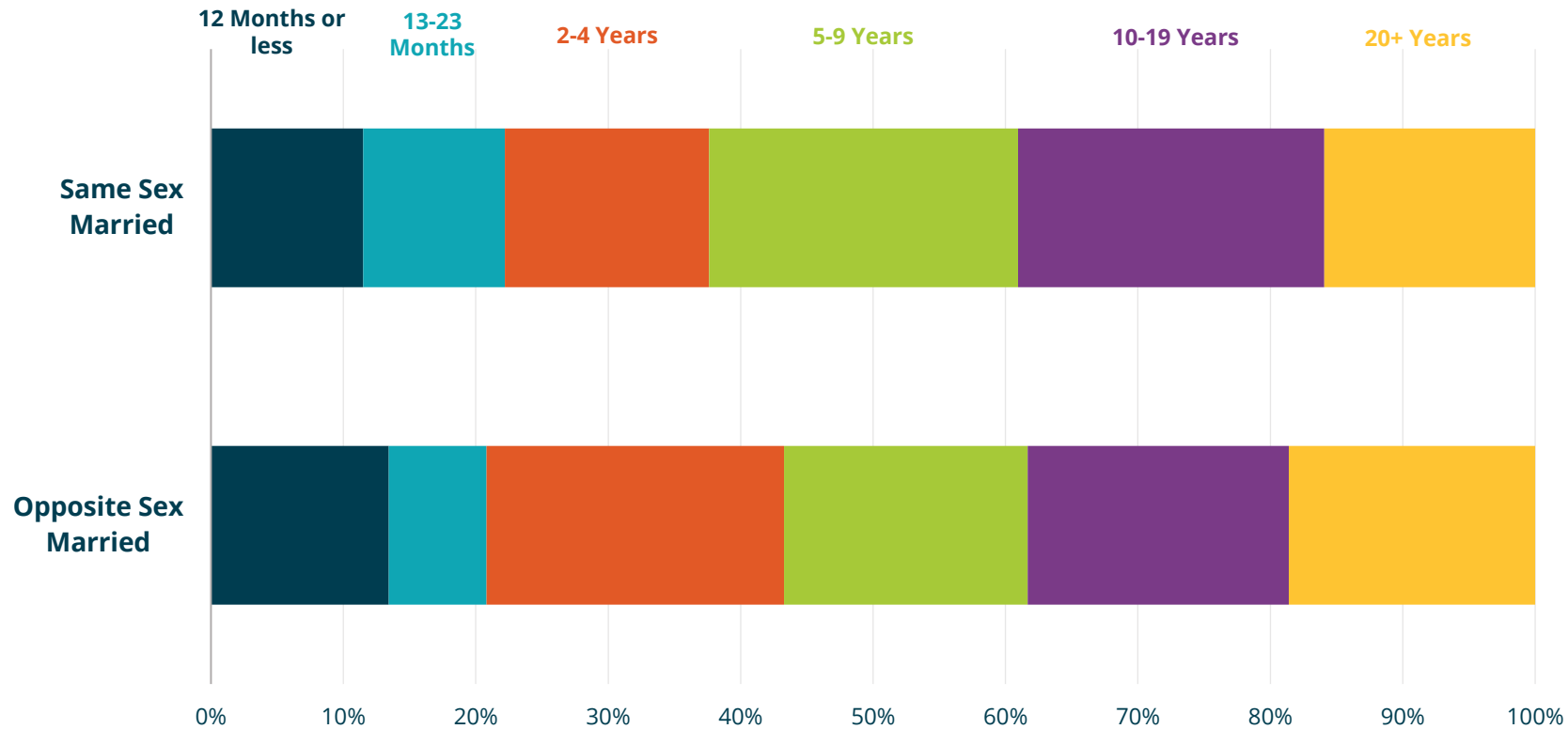
Same sex unmarried couples have a higher proportion of couples having lived in their current housing unit for 5+ years

Relationship Type of Unmarried Cohabiting Couples by Time Lived in Current Housing Unit (2018-2022)



Same sex married couples have a higher proportion of couples having lived in their current housing unit for 5+ years

Relationship Type of Married Cohabiting Couples by Time Lived in Current Housing Unit (2018-2022)

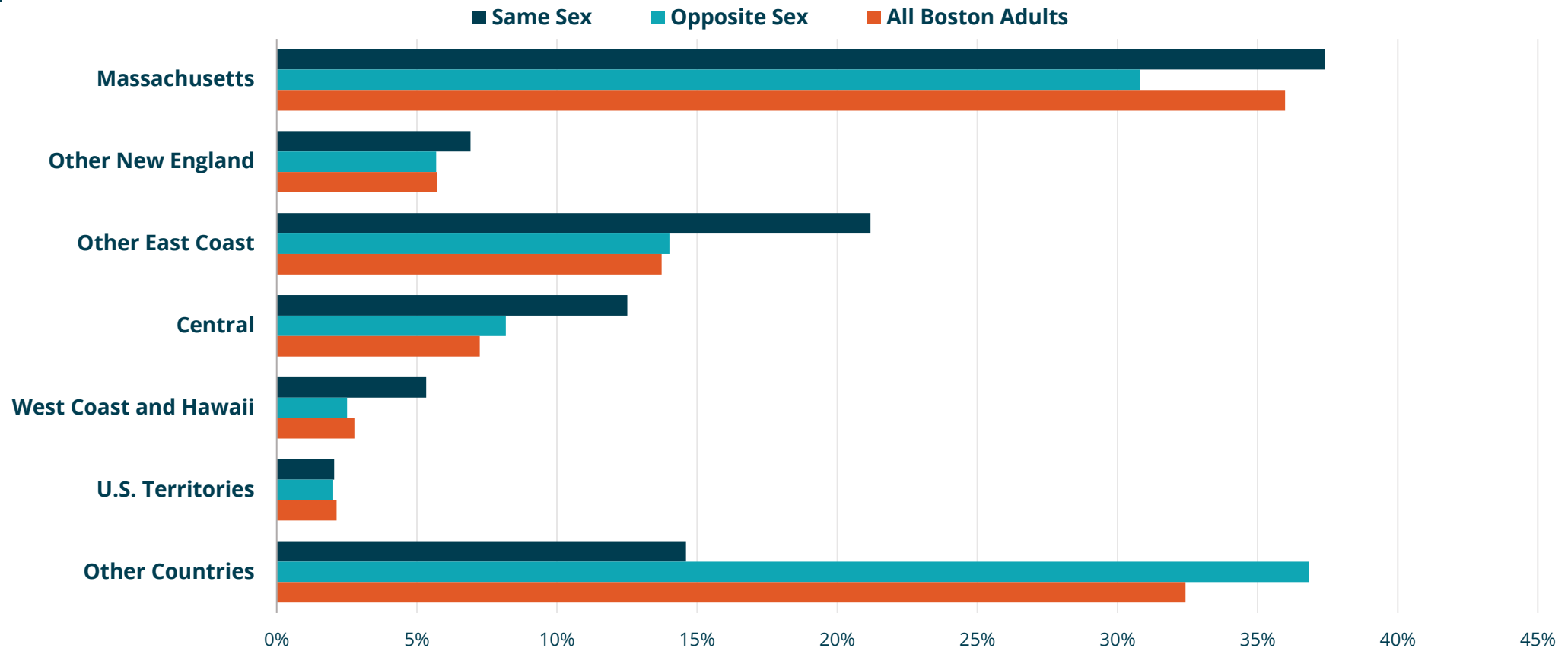


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

The share of individuals in same sex couples born in other countries is significantly smaller than for opposite sex couples

Place of Birth by Sex of Cohabiting Couples

2018-2022

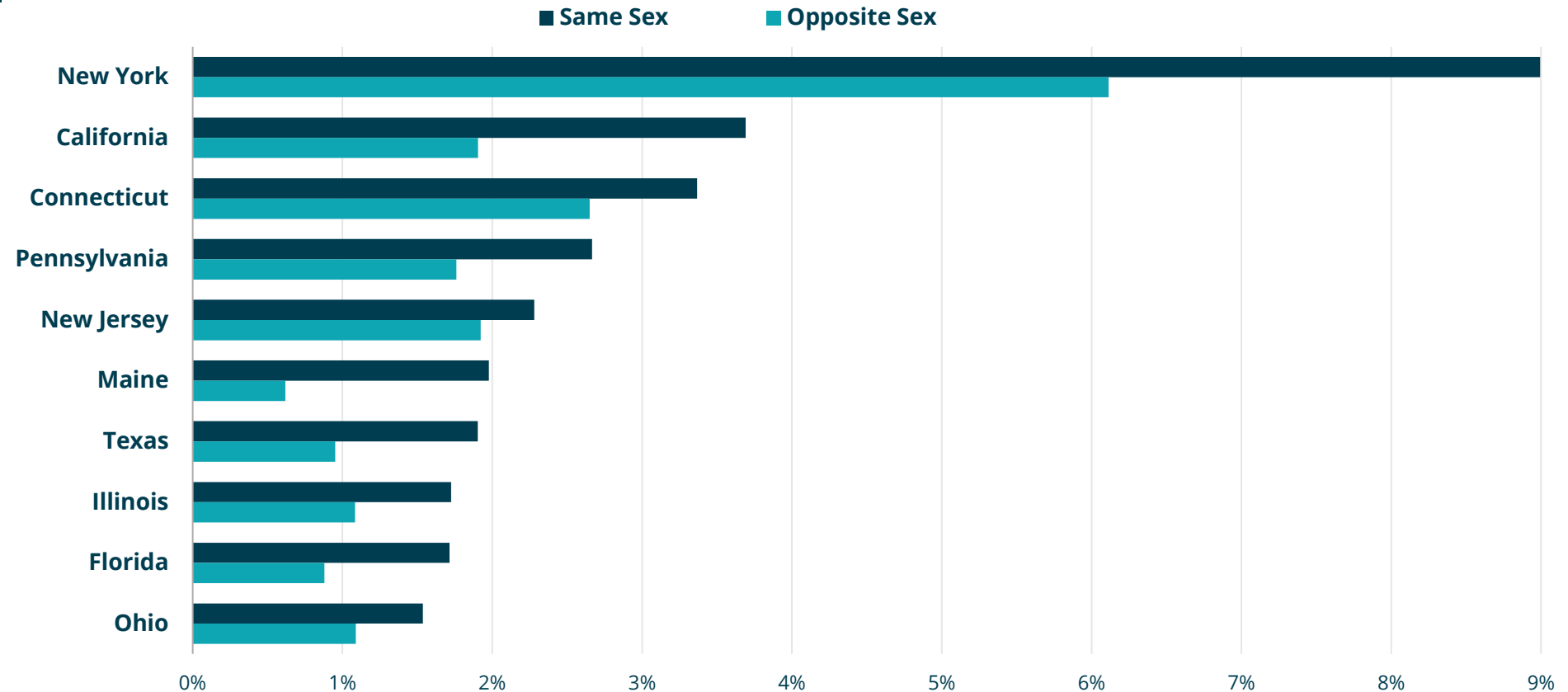


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

9% of individuals in same sex couples in Boston were born in New York, compared to 6% of people from opposite sex couples

Top 10 States of Birth for Same Sex Couples by Sex of Cohabiting Couples

2018-2022

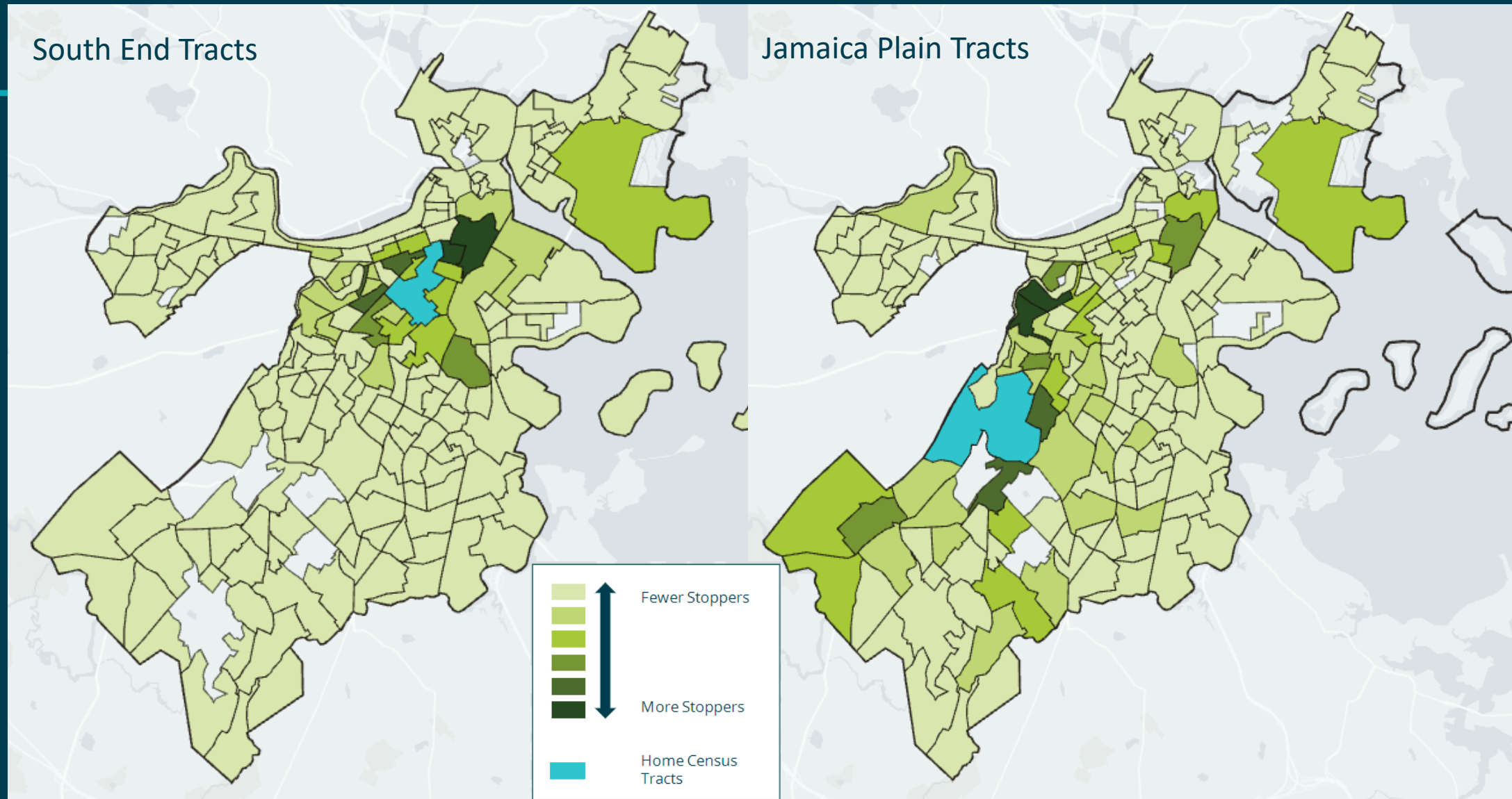


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

Mobility by home Census Tract

Cell phone mobility data for 12 of the top 15 tracts for same-sex cohabiting couples

- 6 in South End
- 6 in Jamaica Plain

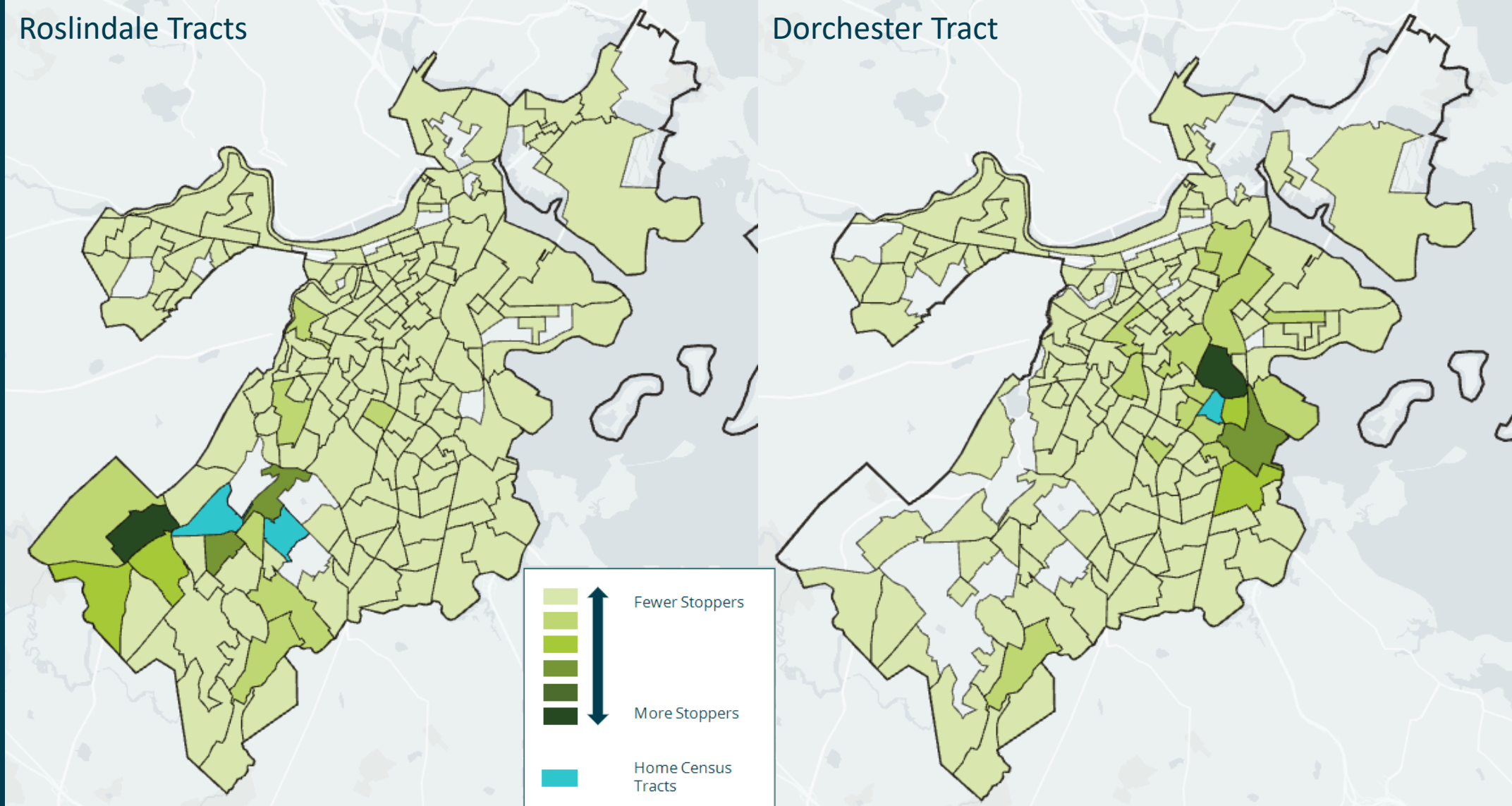


Source: Cuebiq mobility data 2022, BPDA Research Division analysis. Cuebiq collects first-party data from anonymized users who have opted-in to provide access to their location data anonymously through a GDPR-compliant framework.

Mobility by home Census Tract pt. 2

Cell phone mobility data for the other 3 of the top 15 tracts for same-sex cohabiting couples

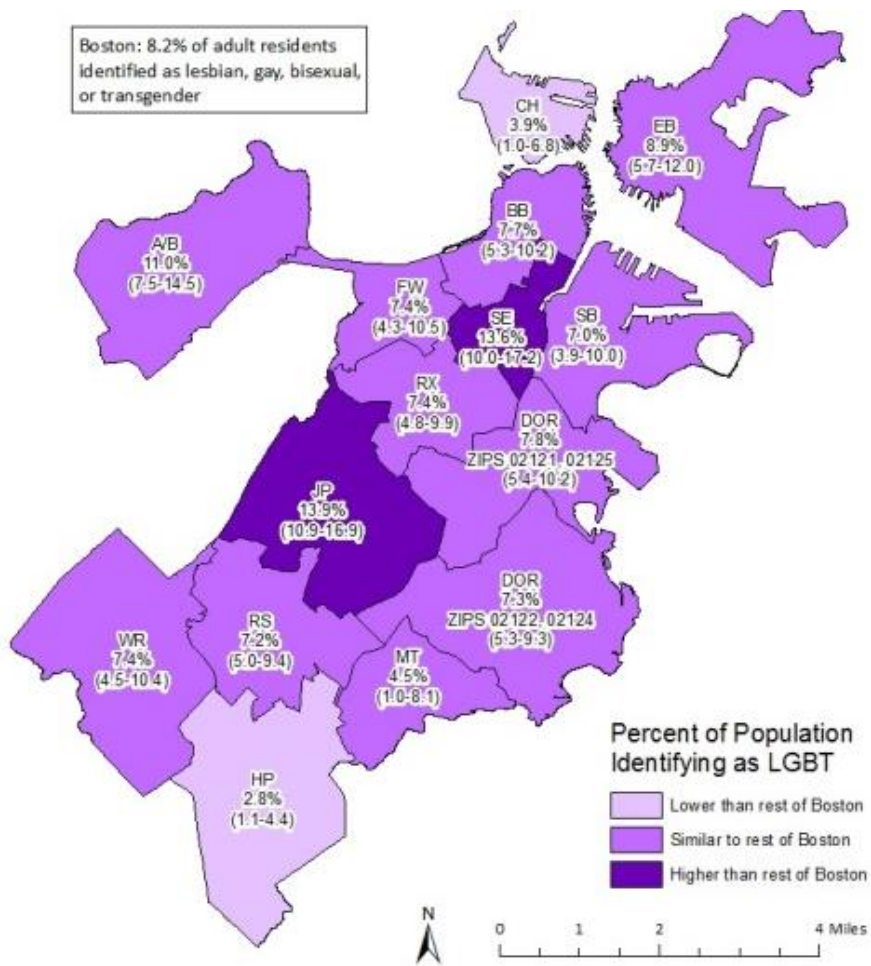
- 2 in Roslindale
- 1 in Dorchester



Source: Cuebiq mobility data 2022, BPDA Research Division analysis. Cuebiq collects first-party data from anonymized users who have opted-in to provide access to their location data anonymously through a GDPR-compliant framework.

Jamaica Plain had the highest proportion of adults identifying as LGBT and of same-sex couples

BPHC Survey 2010-2017



BPHC neighborhoods with 2022 same-sex cohabiting couples rates (from tract data)

Neighborhood	Rate
Jamaica Plain	9.5%
South End + Chinatown	8.9%
Roxbury + Mission Hill	7.6%
Roslindale	7.3%
South Boston + Seaport	6.3%
Fenway Longwood	5.0%
Mattapan	4.0%
Allston-Brighton	4.0%
East Boston	3.5%
Downtown (BB)	3.3%
Dorchester	3.1%
West Roxbury	2.8%
Charlestown	2.3%
Hyde Park	2.2%
Boston Total	4.9%

Map Source: Boston Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (2010, 2013, 2015, 2017), Boston Public Health Commission

Table Source: Boston Public Health Commission "DATA BRIEF: Demographic Characteristics and Social Determinants of Health Among Boston's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Adult Residents, 2010 - 2017"

Note: "BB" includes the Back Bay, Beacon Hill, Downtown, the North End, and the West End; "SE" includes the South End and Chinatown. Estimates for Charlestown, Hyde Park, and Mattapan should be interpreted with caution due to coefficient of variation greater than 0.3



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Historical overview of same-sex household questions in Census Bureau surveys

- **“Unmarried partners” is added as a relationship category to 1995 Current Population Survey (CPS) and 1996 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)**
- **Same-sex status is determined based on the sex of the two individuals**
- **The ACS reported on the sex of unmarried partners of the householder starting in 2005**
- **Starting in 2013 and continuing to the present the ACS retains same-sex spouses in the data**

Proposed additional ACS questions

- **The Census Bureau proposes to test a two-step gender identity question: first asking about sex assigned at birth and then asking about current gender. These questions will replace the existing question on sex.**
- **The proposed gender question will be asked only of people who are 15 and older. The proposed question is: What is <Name's> current gender? The response categories will be Male, Female, Transgender, Nonbinary, and “This person uses a different term” (with a space to write in a response).**

Proposed Sexual Orientation Question

- **The ‘sexual orientation’ question will be asked only of people who are 15 and older. The proposed question is: Which of the following best represents how <Name> thinks of themselves? With response categories of: Gay or lesbian, Straight—that is not gay or lesbian, Bisexual, and This person uses a different term (with space to write-in a response).**

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RESOURCES

- [Mayor's Office of LGBTQ+ Advancement](#)
- [The History Project](#)
- [BPL Pride Month Resources](#)
- [BAGLY: The Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth](#)
- [City of Boston - LGBTQ Employee Resource Group](#)