

Some 4.5 Percent of U.S. Adults Identify as LGBT: Study

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BY DANIEL TROTTA – MARCH 5, 2019

(Reuters) - An estimated 4.5 percent of U.S. adults identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, and they tend to be younger and poorer than the population at large, according to an analysis of polling data released on Tuesday.

The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law examined previously released results from the Gallup Daily Tracking survey and went deeper into the data, enabling a more detailed demographic picture of the adult U.S. LGBT population of roughly 11.3 million people.

The institute found Washington, D.C., had the highest percentage of LGBT people at 9.8 percent and North Dakota had the lowest at 2.7 percent.

The self-identifying LGBT population also skews younger. Only 23 percent are age 50 or older, compared with 47 percent of non-LGBT adults, and 56 percent of LGBT adults are under age 35 compared with 28 percent for the non-LGBT population.

"Younger people are more likely to actually live as LGBT and to identify that way because they are growing up in a time when it's more acceptable to acknowledge those feelings and to act on them," said Kerith Conron, research director at the Williams Institute.

The LGBT population is also economically disadvantaged: more likely to lack access to a sufficient nutrition or to have household incomes below \$24,000, the analysis found.

Although LGBT people come from all ethnic groups, people of color represent a slightly higher percentage than they do in the general population for reasons that require more research, Conron said.

The Williams Institute, which specializes in LGBT research for law and public policy, also confirmed its previous estimate of the transgender population at 0.6 percent, or roughly 1.4 million U.S. adults.

Conron said an apparent one-percentage-point increase in the LGBT population from 2011 was likely the result of more people feeling comfortable responding to questions about their sexual orientation.

In 2011, the Williams Institute estimated the U.S. LGBT population at 3.5 percent based on other survey data.

Modern polls and surveys estimate the LGBT population well below a common but unattributed figure of 10 percent that sexologists link to an oversimplification of Alfred Kinsey's work some 70 years ago.

However, in surveys that are more anonymous and private, closer to 10 percent of respondents say they have some level of same-sex attraction even if they stop short of identifying themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual, Conron said.

(Reporting by Daniel Trotta; editing by Jonathan Oatis)