2018

FP-18-15 First Divorce Rate in the U.S., 2016

Krista K. Payne
Bowling Green State University, kristaw@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles

Part of the Family, Life Course, and Society Commons

Repository Citation
https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles/160

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Sociology at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.
Over the past forty years, the overall divorce rate has declined to the lowest level since 1970, dropping to 16.7 in 2016 (FP-17-24). Americans often marry more than one time; 24% of ever-married women in 2016 were in a second or higher marriage (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 1-yr est., 2016). We examine the first divorce rate, because first marriages are less likely to end through divorce than are remarriages (Cohen, 2016). The first divorce rate is defined as the number of first marriages that ended in divorce per 1,000 first marriages for women 18 years and older in 2014 using data from the American Community Survey. First Divorce Rate, 2016 (FP-18-15) is an update to FP-16-19, FP-14-09, FP-11-09, and FP-10-06.

**Trends in the First Divorce Rate**

- The first divorce rate generally decreased from 2008 to 2015.
- From 2009 to 2012, the divorce rate plateaued at around 17.5.
- After 2012, the first divorce rate declined, reaching a seven-year low in 2015 of 15.0 divorces per 1,000 married women before rising slightly in 2016 to 15.4.
- There were 781,398 first divorces in 2016.

**First Divorce Rate by Race and Ethnicity**

In 2016, Black women had the highest first divorce rate (26.1).

Asian women experienced the lowest first divorce rate (9.2).

There is a nativity gap among Hispanics with foreign-born Hispanics having a lower first divorce rate (12.1) than native-born Hispanics (21.4).
First Divorce Rate by Educational Attainment

- There continues to be a curvilinear relationship between education and the first divorce rate. Women with the least education (less than high school) and the most education (a bachelor’s degree or higher) have the lowest divorce rates.

- The first divorce rate is highest for women with some college education.

![Figure 3. First Divorce Rate for Women 18 and Older by Educational Attainment, 2016](image)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr. est., 2016

There were... 781,398 First Divorces in 2016.

References:


Suggested Citation:

Family Profiles: Original reports summarizing and analyzing nationally representative data with the goal to provide the latest analysis of U.S. families. These profiles examine topics related to the NCFMR’s core research themes.

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.