

2019

FP-19-23 Divorce Rate in the U.S.: Geographic Variation, 2018

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Divorce Rate in the U.S.: Geographic Variation, 2018

Author: Colette Allred

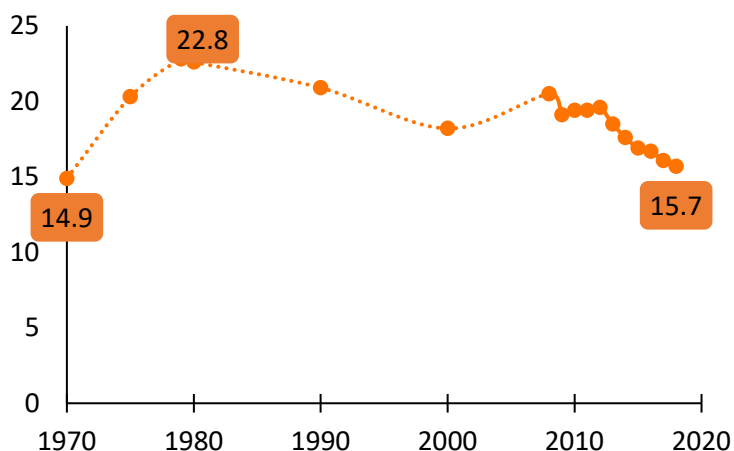
U.S. Divorce Rate, 2018*

- The divorce rate continued to decline in 2018, reaching a 40-year low.
- The divorce rate was 15.7 divorces per 1,000 married women in 2018, down from a divorce rate of 16.1 in 2017 (FP-18-21).
- Just over one million women (1,050,599) divorced in 2018.

Source: NCFMR analyses of 1970-2000, National Center for Health Statistics; 2008-2018, U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr est.

* The divorce rate = [(number of women divorced in the past 12 months) / (number of women divorced in the past 12 months + number of currently married women)]*1000

Figure 1. Women’s Adjusted Divorce Rate, 1990-2018



Five Highest and Lowest Divorce Rates, 2018

- Arkansas continued to hold the top ranking for the highest divorce rate, with about 26 divorces per 1,000 married women in 2018.
 - Arkansas also held the highest divorce rate in 2017, with a rate of 25.5 (FP-18-21).
- North Dakota had the lowest divorce rate, with less than 9 marriages per 1,000 ending in divorce.

Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018 1-yr est.

*MOE = Margin of Error. The MOE is a measure of sampling error and expresses the maximum range in which the rate is expected to differ from the actual proportion. The MOE is calculated for the derived estimates at the 90% confidence level.

Figure 2. Women's Highest and Lowest Divorce Rates

Rank & State	Divorce Rate	MOE*
1. Arkansas	25.9	+/- 3.3
2. South Dakota	23.0	+/- 5.6
3. Oklahoma	21.0	+/- 2.2
4. District of Columbia	20.4	+/- 7.5
5. Kentucky	20.3	+/- 2.3
USA	15.7	+/- 0.3
46. New York	12.4	+/- 1.1
47. Wisconsin	12.0	+/- 1.4
48. Rhode Island	11.4	+/- 4.0
49. New Jersey	11.3	+/- 1.4
50. North Dakota	8.7	+/- 3.6

Data Sources:

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State Rankings and Geographic Variation in Divorce Rates, 2018

Figure 3. State Variation in the Adjusted Divorce Rate per 1,000 Married Women Aged 15+ by Quartile, 2018

- The 12 states with the highest divorce rates (making up the first quartile) had rates of at least 18.0 divorces per 1,000 married women in 2018.
- The 13 states that experienced the lowest divorce rates (making up the fourth quartile) had fewer than 13.8 divorces per 1,000 married women in 2018.

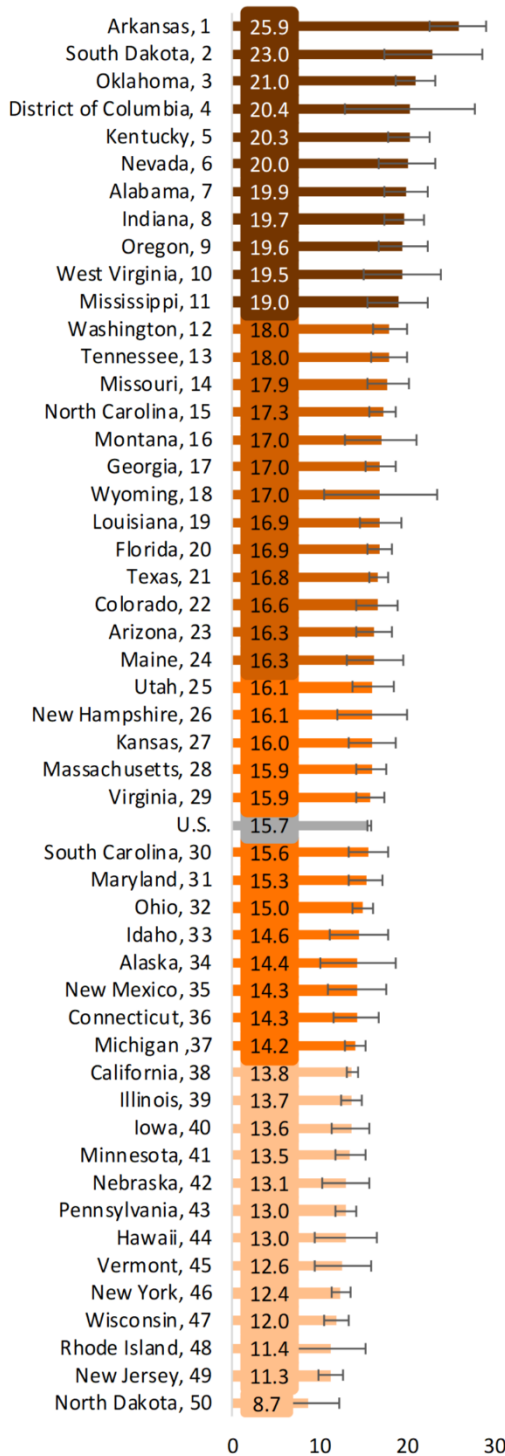
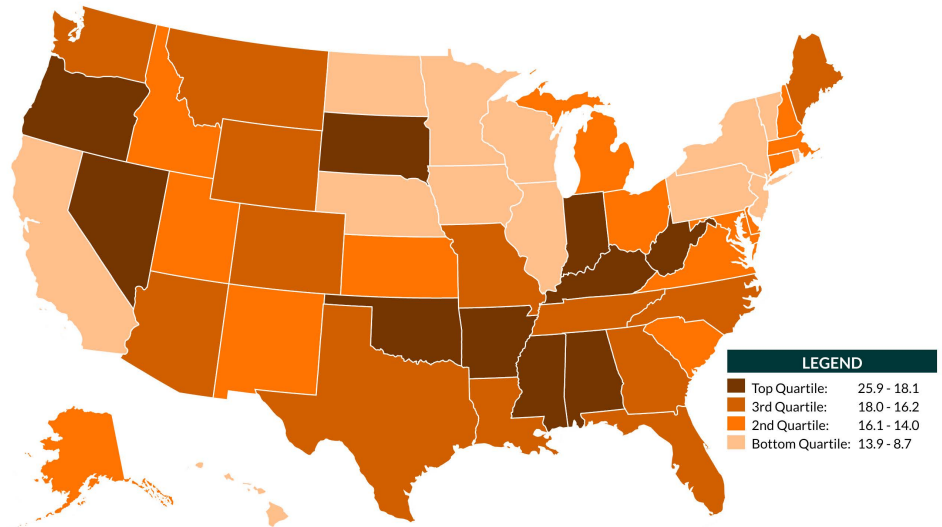


Figure 4. Geographic Variation of Women’s Adjusted Divorce Rate Among States, 2018



Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018 1-yr est.

- Most states in the South had high divorce rates (in the first or second quartiles).
 - Exceptions included Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina, all of which were in the third quartile.
- States with the lowest divorce rates (in the third or fourth quartiles) were located in the Midwest and Northeast regions of the U.S.
 - Exceptions included South Dakota, Missouri, Indiana, and Maine, which were in the first two quartiles of divorce rates.
- States in the Western region of the country exhibited divorce rates in all four quartiles, with the largest share found in the second quartile. California was the only Western state in the fourth quartile.

References:

Schweizer, V. (2018). Divorce rate in the U.S.: Geographic variation, 2017. *Family Profiles*, FP-18-21. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-18-21>

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