

Charting Marriage & Divorce in the U.S.: The Adjusted Divorce Rate, 2008-2020

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Beginning in 2008, the U.S. Census Bureau began asking respondents of the American Community Survey about events experienced in the past 12 months including marriages and divorces. In the same year, they also began asking respondents to report on the number of times they had been married. In conjunction with information on respondents' marital status, the NCFMR has been calculating and reporting on marriage and divorce rates in the U.S. since these variables were first made available to the public. In a special release series, we provide single year estimates charting marriage and divorce rates spanning the years 2008-2020. In this release, we focus on the adjusted divorce rate. Please note, the standard 2020 ACS 1-year data products will not be released due to the impact from the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection and data quality (for more information click [here](#)). As such, the estimates in this report for the year 2020 were derived from NCFMR analyses of ACS 1-year Experimental PUMS data.

Adjusted Divorce Rate

The adjusted divorce rate is computed using the following equation:

[

number divorced in the past 12 months

(number divorced in the past 12 months + the currently married population aged 15 or older)

]

X 1,000

Table 1. Divorces in the Last Year and Divorce Rates: United States, 2008-2020

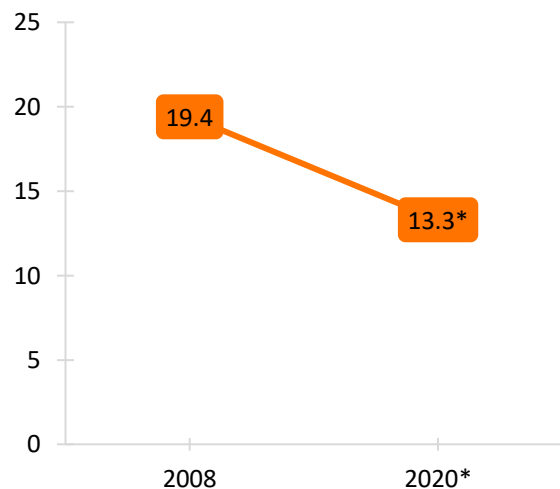
| Year | Number of Women ¹ | Rate per 1,000 married women 15 years of age and over ² | MOE | Number of Men ¹ | Rate per 1,000 married men 15 years of age and over ² | MOE | Total Number ¹ | Rate per 1,000 married men and women 15 years of age and over ² | MOE |
|------------|------------------------------|--|----------|----------------------------|--|----------|---------------------------|--|----------|
| 2020 | 960,014 ³ | 14.0 ³ | N.C. | 855,427 ³ | 12.6 ³ | | 1,815,441 ³ | 13.3 ³ | |
| 2019 | 1,042,174 | 15.5 | +/- 0.28 | 933,988 | 13.9 | +/- 0.23 | 1,976,162 | 14.7 | +/- 0.19 |
| 2018 | 1,052,151 | 15.7 | +/- 0.28 | 945,533 | 14.1 | +/- 0.23 | 1,997,684 | 14.9 | +/- 0.17 |
| 2017 | 1,075,500 | 16.1 | +/- 0.28 | 974,618 | 14.6 | +/- 0.23 | 2,050,118 | 15.3 | +/- 0.18 |
| 2016 | 1,098,805 | 16.7 | +/- 0.26 | 994,183 | 15.1 | +/- 0.24 | 2,092,988 | 15.9 | +/- 0.18 |
| 2015 | 1,110,579 | 16.9 | +/- 0.26 | 1,008,778 | 15.3 | +/- 0.24 | 2,119,357 | 16.1 | +/- 0.18 |
| 2014 | 1,145,110 | 17.6 | +/- 0.26 | 1,017,815 | 15.6 | +/- 0.26 | 2,162,925 | 16.6 | +/- 0.19 |
| 2013 | 1,197,095 | 18.5 | +/- 0.28 | 1,071,278 | 16.5 | +/- 0.28 | 2,268,373 | 17.5 | +/- 0.20 |
| 2012 | 1,265,277 | 19.6 | +/- 0.30 | 1,141,769 | 17.6 | +/- 0.26 | 2,407,046 | 18.6 | +/- 0.20 |
| 2011 | 1,251,239 | 19.4 | +/- 0.34 | 1,143,621 | 17.7 | +/- 0.27 | 2,394,860 | 18.6 | +/- 0.21 |
| 2010 | 1,250,086 | 19.4 | +/- 0.30 | 1,108,188 | 17.2 | +/- 0.29 | 2,358,274 | 18.3 | +/- 0.21 |
| 2009 | 1,219,656 | 19.1 | +/- 0.28 | 1,098,959 | 17.0 | +/- 0.25 | 2,318,615 | 18.0 | +/- 0.19 |
| 2008 | 1,309,921 | 20.5 | +/- 0.32 | 1,178,915 | 18.2 | +/- 0.29 | 2,488,836 | 19.4 | +/- 0.22 |

Note: 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 population. The MOE is calculated for the derived estimates at the 90% confidence level.
Sources: ¹The numerator is from table B12503. DIVORCES IN THE LAST YEAR BY SEX BY MARITAL STATUS FOR THE POPULATION 15 YEARS AND OVER. Universe: Population 15 years and over. 2008-2019 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates. ²The denominator is from table B12001. SEX BY MARITAL STATUS FOR THE POPULATION 15 YEARS AND OVER. Universe: Population 15 years and over. 2008-2019 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates. ³All estimates related to the year 2020 were drawn from NCFMR analyses of American Community Survey, 1-year Experimental PUMS data, as such MOEs are not reported because comparable estimation to prior years is not possible.

Adjusted Divorce Rate

- The divorce rate has declined since 2008 for men and women aged 15 and older in the U.S.—a drop of 31.4% overall.

Figure 1. Adjusted Divorce Rate, 2008 & 2020



Source: American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, 2008 & 2020

Data Citation:

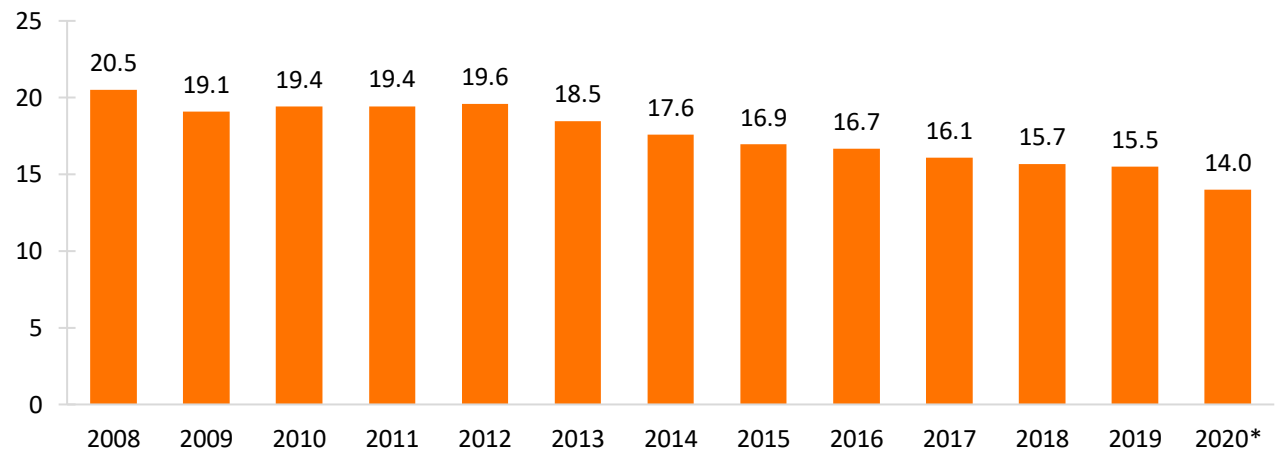
1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2008- 2019 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, Table B12503. Divorces in the Last Year by Sex by Marital Status for the Population 15 Years and Over.
2. U.S. Census Bureau, 2008- 2019 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, Table B12001. Sex by Marital Status for the Population 15 Years and Over.
3. U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey, 1-year Experimental PUMS

Suggested Citation:

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Women's Adjusted Divorce Rate

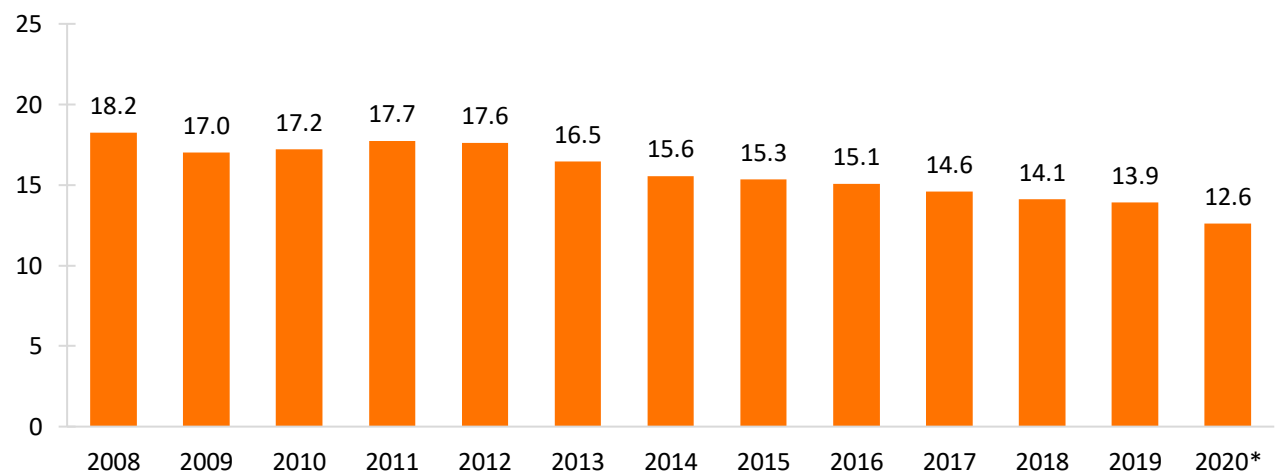
Figure 2. Women's Adjusted Divorce Rate, 2008-2020



Source: American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, 2008-2020; American Community Survey, 1-year Experimental PUMS, 2020

Men's Adjusted Divorce Rate

Figure 3. Men's Adjusted Divorce Rate, 2008-2020



Source: American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, 2008-2020; American Community Survey, 1-year Experimental PUMS, 2020