



TENESHIA HUDSPETH

HARRIS COUNTY CLERK

Recording the Major Events of Your Life



Love in the Time of a Pandemic: Has COVID Hurt Cupid?

MARRIAGE LICENSE APPLICATIONS IN HARRIS COUNTY, TX (2015-2020)

Message from the Harris County Clerk



This presentation initiates an effort to provide policymakers, stakeholders, and the public impartial information pertaining to important life impacting transactions that are recorded by the Harris County Clerk's Office.

The objective is to provide current and historical data regarding marriage license applications that may answer the following questions: Does St. Valentine's Day impact the submission of marriage license applications? What month is most popular among couples to apply for a marriage license? Has COVID hurt CUPID? How many marriage license applications were processed in 2020, compared to pre-COVID years? Has the 2015 landmark Supreme Court decision on matrimony impacted the number of applications for a marriage license? And, what business day is most popular among couples to apply for a marriage license?

As Harris County Clerk of the third largest County in the nation, I am responsible for recording the major events of your life, from the beginning to the end. Thus, I am pleased to share facts that may answer queries, enhance transparency, guide policy, and help us ensure all county residents are served well.



ABOUT

The charts in this presentation are based on the information collected in the marriage application process in Harris County. The statistics reflect the parameters of the data currently maintained by the County Clerk's Office.

As Harris County Clerk Teneshia Hudspeth continues to enhance the administrative processes to carry out all services and transactions, the scope of the available statistics may also be enhanced.

NOTE: This type of research is generally sorted at five year intervals. In this instance, the period covered is six years. It starts in 2015, the year of the landmark civil rights case in which the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples. To provide a uniform assessment of how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the number of marriage license applications, the covered period ends in 2020.

This goal of this presentation is to inform. To obtain a copy of this presentation, contact the Harris County Clerk's Communications Office at countyclerk@cco.hctx.net or 713.274.8600.



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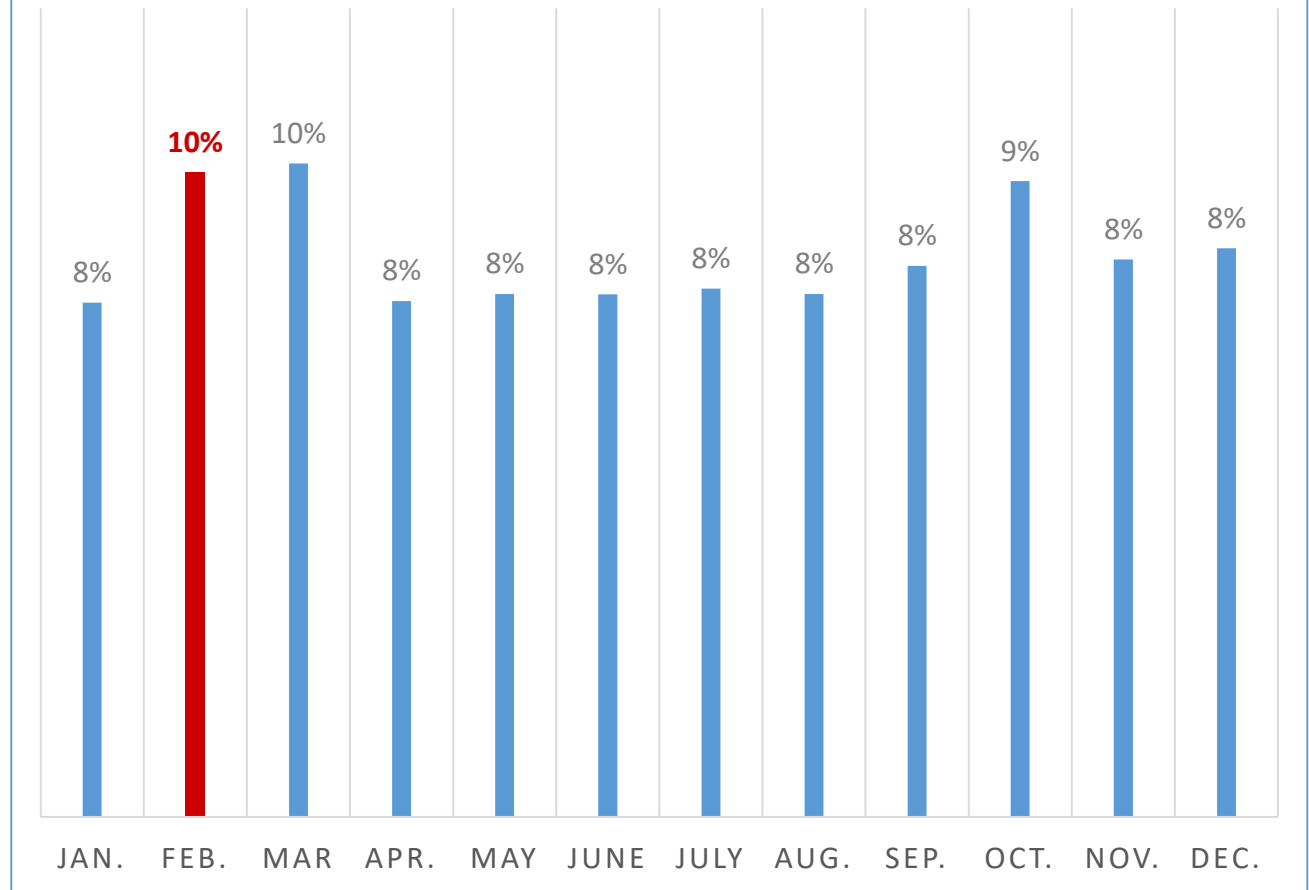


When Do Couples Apply for a Many Marriage License? By Month (2015-2020)?

Overall, February and March are the most popular months to submit a marriage license application, during the calendar year. The statistics suggest there may be something to the notion that couples like Valentine's Day or Spring marriages.

In the Northern Hemisphere, St. Valentines Day occurs in the winter. Based on the meteorological definition, winter begins on December 1 and ends February 28.

PERCENT OF MARRIAGE LICENSE APPLICATIONS
SUBMITTED BY MONTH IN HARRIS COUNTY, TX (2015-2020)



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When Do Couples Apply for a Many Marriage License? By Meteorological Seasons (2015 To 2020)?

Winter – In the winter, February is the most popular month to submit a marriage license application.

Spring – In the spring, March is the most popular month to submit a marriage license application.

Summer – In the summer, July is the most popular month to submit a marriage license application by a nose.

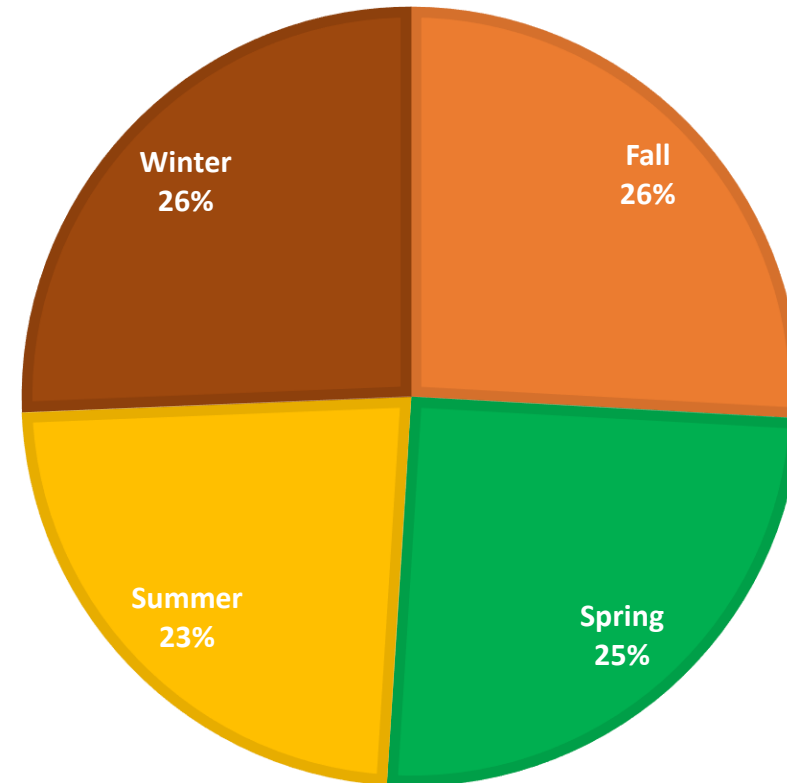
Fall – In the Fall, October is the most popular month to submit a marriage license application.

According to the meteorological definition, the seasons begin on the *first* day of the months that include the equinoxes and solstices. In the Northern Hemisphere, for example,

- **Spring** runs from March 1 to May 31;
- **Summer** runs from June 1 to August 31;
- **Fall** (autumn) runs from September 1 to November 30; and
- **Winter** runs from December 1 to February 28.

MARRIAGE LICENSE APPLICATIONS BY METEOROLOGICAL SEASONS IN HARRIS COUNTY, TX (2015-2020)

■ Fall ■ Spring ■ Summer ■ Winter



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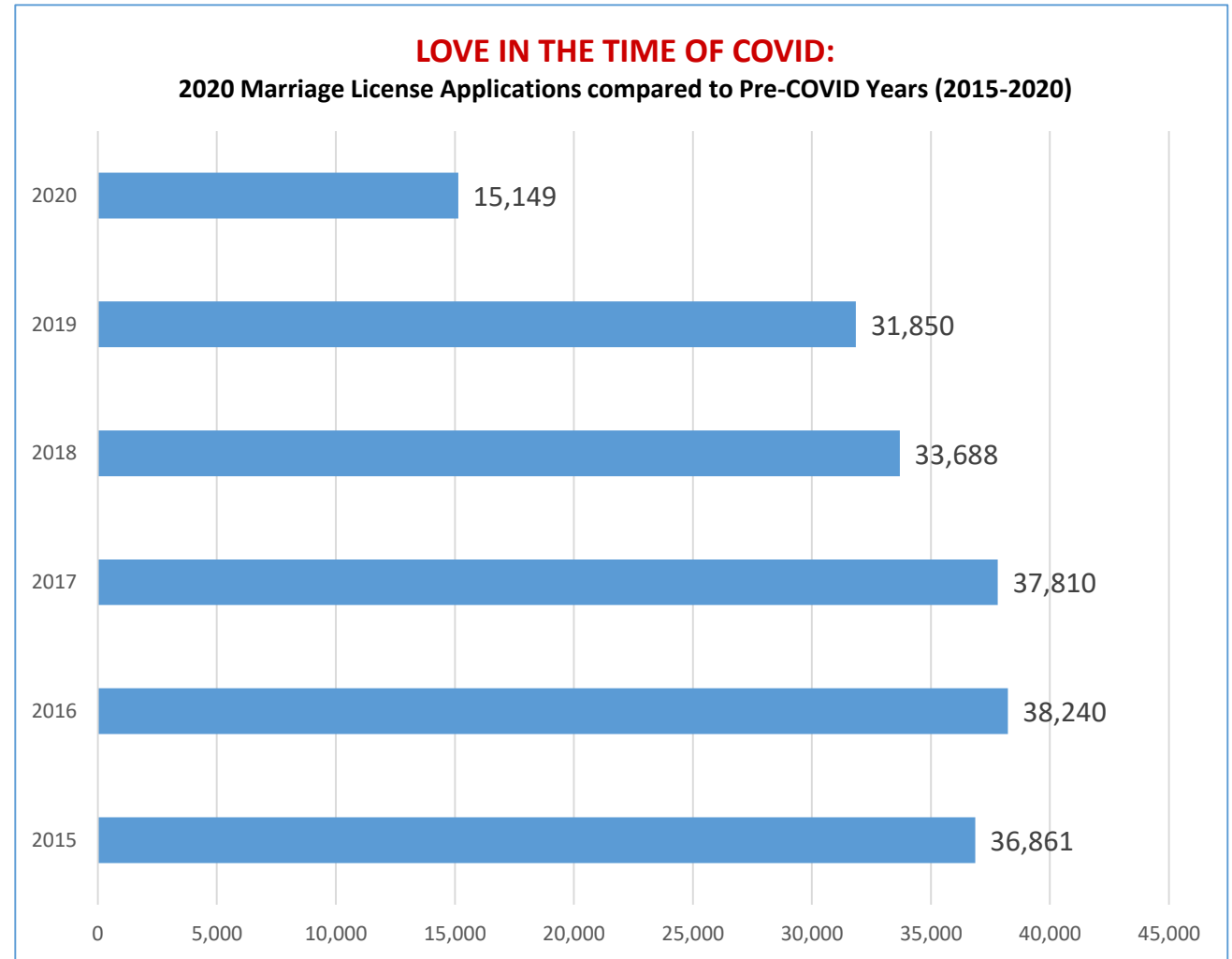
Love in the time of a Pandemic: Has COVID Hurt Cupid? Marriage License Applications (2015-2020)

Marriage License Application in 2020 compared to Pre-COVID Years (2015-2020)

In the last 6 years, the highest total of marriage license applications processed occurred in 2016. Since, the number of marriage license applications processed on a yearly basis has fallen short of each preceding year's total:

The 2020 total of 15,149 failed short of the 2019 total of 31,850 by 110%. That is, for the 2020 total to match the 2019 total, it needed to more than double. (In other words, from 2019 to 2020, the decrease of marriage license applications was 52%.)

The records indicate that regardless of the metric employed to analyze the data, the COVID 19 Pandemic had a great impact on the total number of marriage license applications processed in 2020.



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Love in the Time of a Pandemic: Has COVID Hurt Cupid? Common Law Marriages (2016-2020)

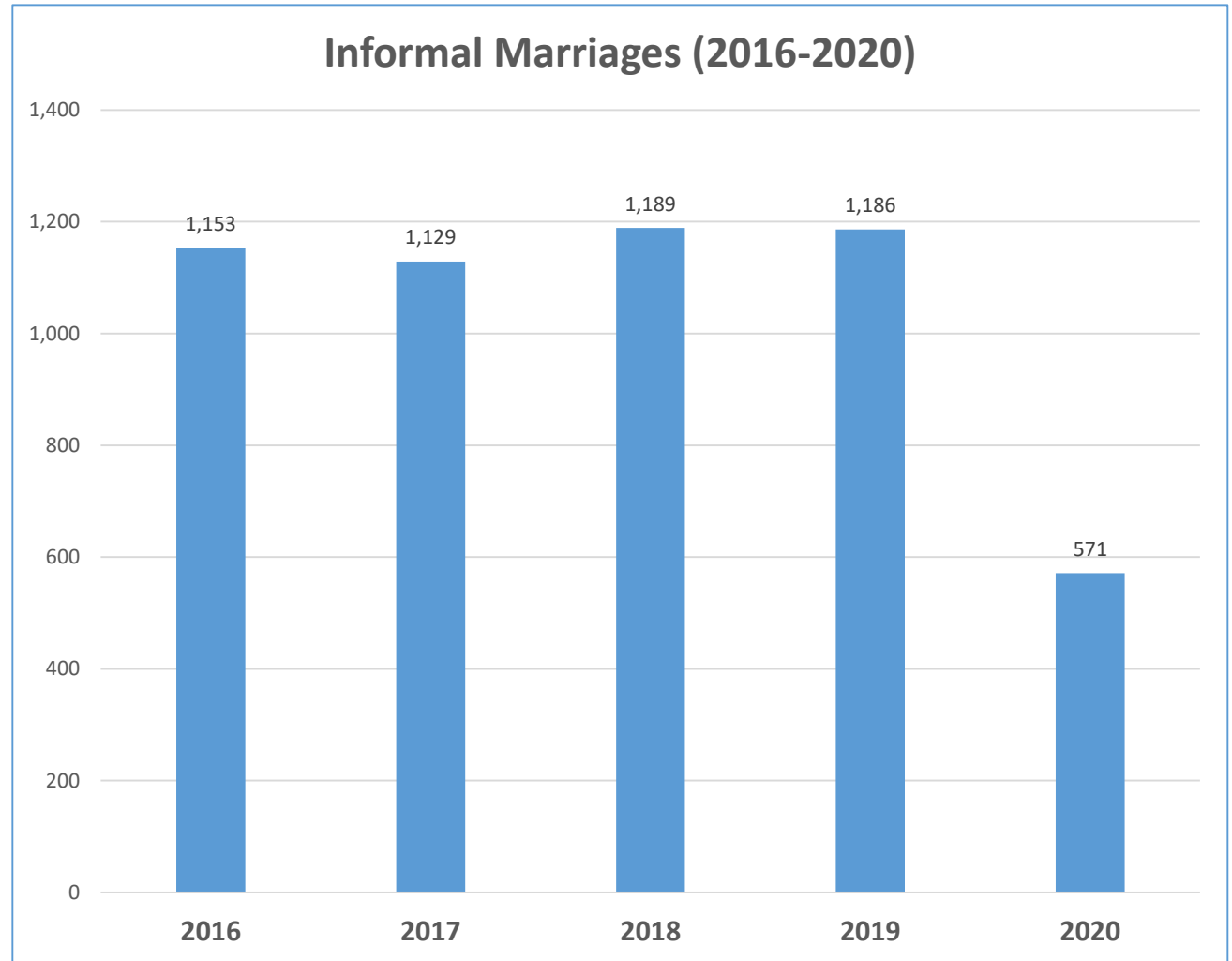
Declarations of Informal Marriages (2016-2020)

The 2020 total of 571 informal marriage declarations failed short of the 2019 total of 1,186 by 108%. That is, for the 2020 total to match the 2019 total, it needed to more than double. (In other words, from 2019 to 2020, the decrease of informal marriage declarations was 52%.)

The records indicate that regardless of the metric employed to analyze the data, the COVID 19 Pandemic had a great impact on the total number of informal marriage declarations processed in 2020.

An Informal Marriage, or common-law marriage, is legal in Texas. An informal marriage, which is also known as "common-law marriage" occurs when a couple lives together for a certain period of time, and holds themselves out during that time as husband and wife.

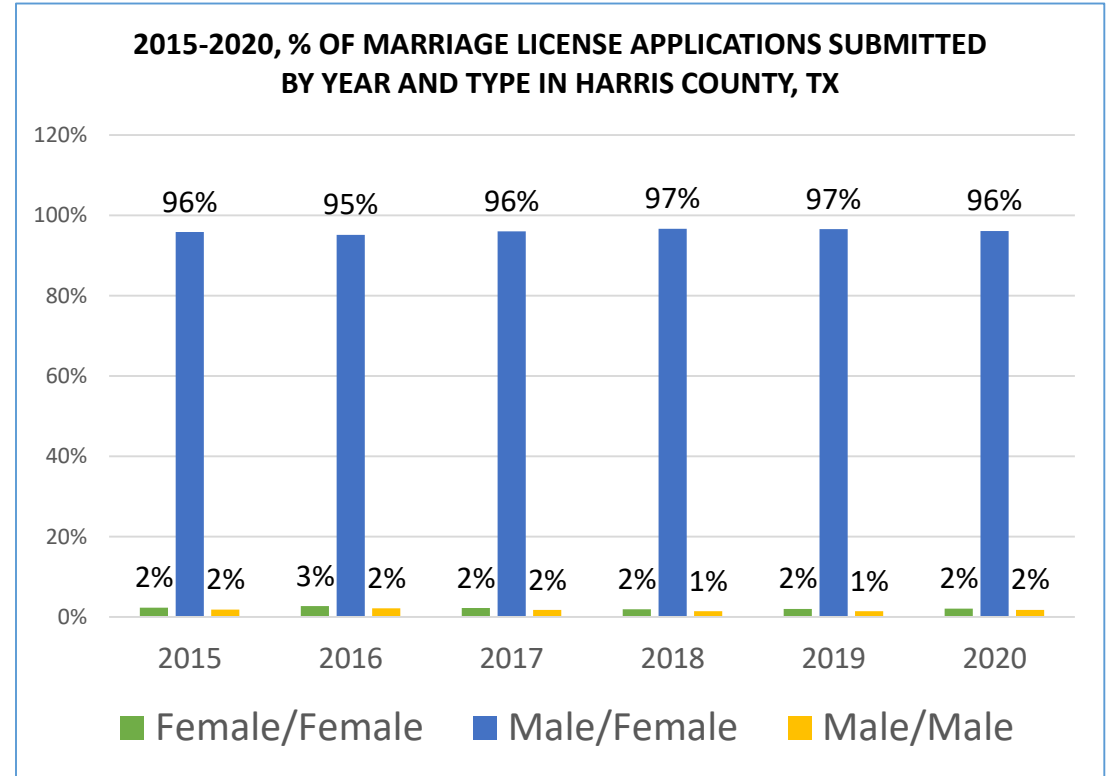
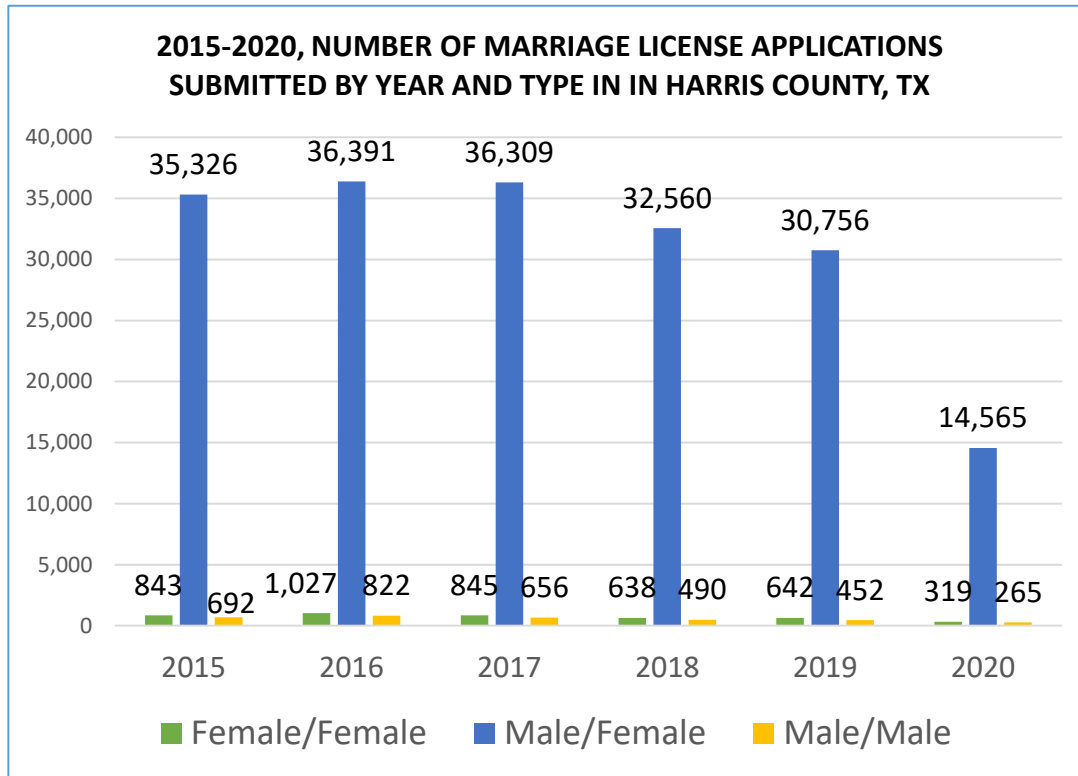
The institution is formally recognized by filing a Declaration of Informal Marriage. The couple must list the date on the declaration from which they have considered themselves married.



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Has the 2015 Landmark Supreme Court Decision on Marriage Impacted Who is Submitting Marriage License Applications?



In Harris County, from 2015 to 2020, since same-sex couples were guaranteed the fundamental right to marry by a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision, 96% of the marriage license application, have been submitted by couples who are not covered by the ruling.

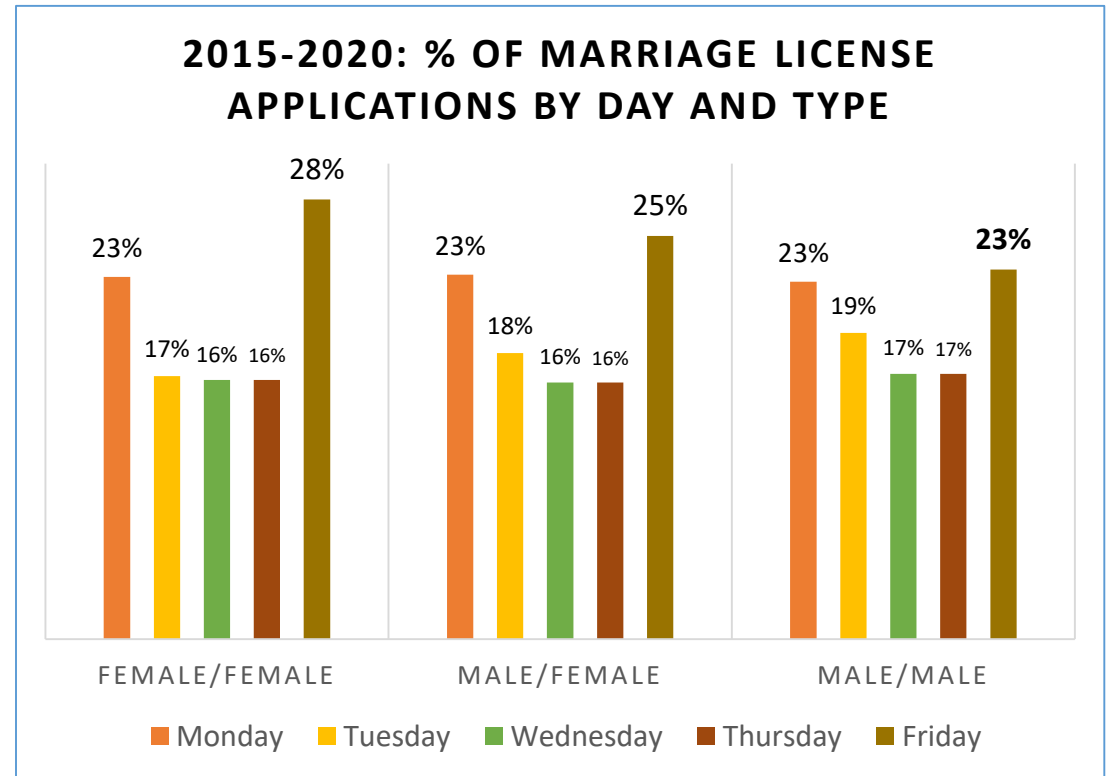
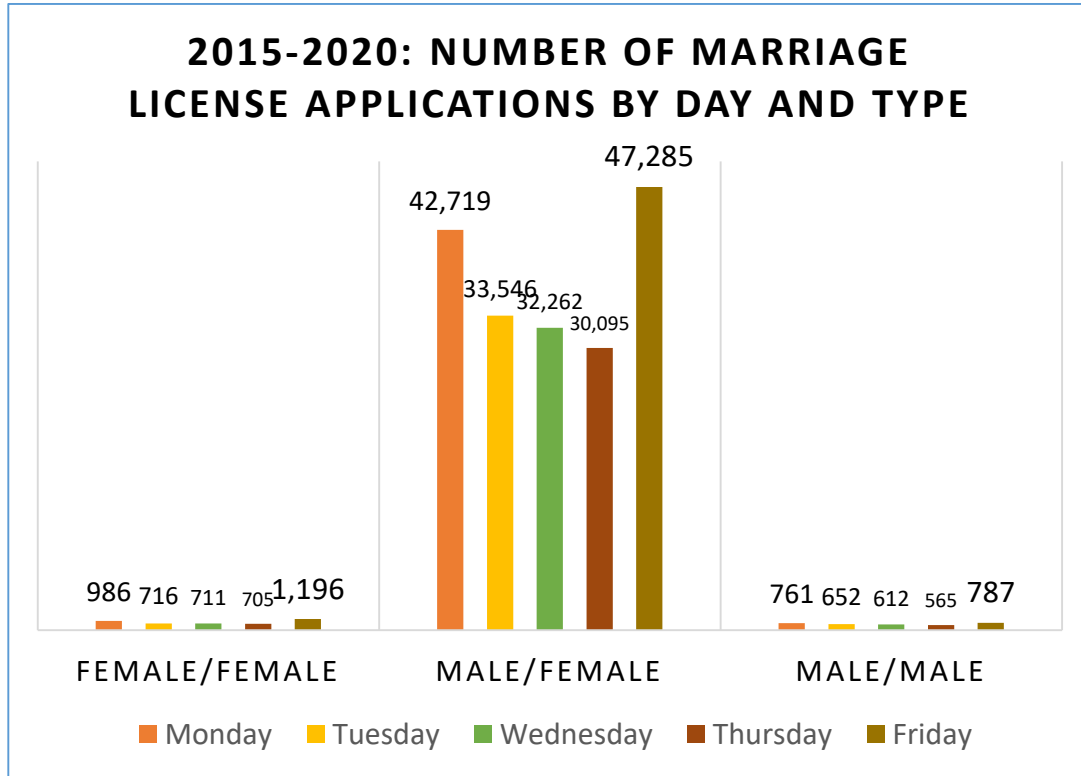
In Harris County, from 2015 to 2020, since same-sex couples were guaranteed the fundamental right to marry by a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision, 4% of the marriage license application have been submitted by couples covered by the ruling.



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What Day Do Couples Prefer to Apply for a Marriage License (2015-2020)?



Friday is the most popular day to apply for a marriage license; then, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Interestingly, the days couples choose to apply for a marriage license is the same for all applicants.



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