

How the Rulings Affect Gay Couples

The impact of the Supreme Court's decisions on Wednesday will vary by state.



If you are gay and ...

What has changed?

Live in and get married in a state that allows same-sex marriage

You will now be subject to more than 1,000 federal laws and programs and will start to receive the federal benefits of marriage. The ruling takes effect in about 25 days.

Live in and get married in a state that allows same-sex marriage, but later move to a state with a ban

Federal benefits will vary by agency. The I.R.S. and Social Security Administration, for example, look at where the couple live, not where they were married. Department of Defense benefits and immigration law consider where the couple were married, regardless of where they live.

Live in a state with a ban, but visit and get married in a state where it is legal

Federal benefits will vary by agency.

Live in a state with a ban, but visit and get married in a state where it is legal

Federal benefits will vary by agency.

Got married in California when it was legal for a period in 2008

Your marriage is still valid. You will receive federal benefits.

Live in California and want to have a same-sex marriage

After a few final legal steps are completed, county clerks may then resume issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Are a foreigner in a same-sex marriage with a U.S. citizen

Your spouse can apply for a permanent resident visa, known as a green card, for you. The Obama administration had held off on deporting foreigners in same-sex marriages during the past two years, but they were still in legal limbo.



Live in a state with a ban on marriage, but joined in a civil union in that state

Nothing changed, though some agencies may reassess their policies. For example, a February memo from Leon E. Panetta, the former defense secretary, said that, in the event the Defense of Marriage Act was overturned, the Pentagon would reassess "whether unmarried same-sex domestic partnerships should be a basis for eligibility for benefits in the future."