



INSTITUTE  
FOR  
AMERICAN  
VALUES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

David Lapp: 212-246-3942 or [dlapp@americanvalues.org](mailto:dlapp@americanvalues.org)

## First-Ever “Index of Leading Marriage Indicators”

*Bipartisan Group of Scholars Argues Marriage as Important  
as the Economy to Nation’s Overall Health*

**NEW YORK, October 2, 2009.** Family scholars from six major universities and four leading research institutes have launched a U.S. Marriage Index, the first attempt to track, with a clear, accessible measure, the health of marriage in America. The full report—including a special index focused on the African American community—is available at [www.americanvalues.org](http://www.americanvalues.org).

Released by the Institute for American Values, a non-partisan research institute in New York City, and the new National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting (NCAAMP) at Hampton University, a historically black university in Hampton, Va., the Index—based on five indicators—shows a dramatic decline in the health of marriage in recent decades, especially among African Americans.

From 76.2 in 1970, the U.S. Marriage Index has fallen to 60.3. In the African American community, the index has fallen from 64.0 to 39.6. But as Professor Linda Malone-Colón of NCAAMP insists, “There’s nothing inevitable about this trend. We absolutely can take positive steps to improve this number, and we have to.” The report offers 101 recommendations.

### *Questions for the Principal Contributors*

- Why does the U.S. need a Marriage Index right now?
- What are the five leading marriage indicators? How and why were they chosen?
- Has the health of marriage really declined, or are families simply more diverse?
- Why has the African American community been disproportionately affected?
- How—and why—should we try to improve the current score?

### *Principal Contributors*

**Linda Malone-Colón** is professor of psychology and founding executive director of The National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting at Hampton University.

**David Blankenhorn** is founder and president of the Institute for American Values and the author of *Fatherless America* (Harper Perennial) and *The Future of Marriage* (Encounter).

**Elizabeth Marquardt** is vice president for family studies at the Institute for American Values and the author of *Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce* (Crown) and *My Daddy’s Name Is Donor* (Harcourt, Spring 2010).