



Same-sex couple Rocky Galloway, left, and Reggie Stanley celebrate after applying for a marriage license at the D.C. Superior Court in Washington  
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(WASHINGTON) — It's a day of wedding bells for some gay couples in Washington.

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Tuesday is the first day same-sex couples can pick up marriage licenses and tie the knot in the city. Some couples planned quick ceremonies at a church or gay rights group's office while others said they'll wait and have more elaborate celebrations.

[\(See a history of gay rights.\)](#)

About 150 couples could pick up their marriage licenses beginning at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday. Those are the couples that applied on the first day the licenses were made available. Many of them stood in line for four or more hours last Wednesday.

The District of Columbia is the sixth place in the country permitting same-sex unions. Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont also issue same-sex couples licenses. Once couples pick up their license, they have to have the person who performs their marriage sign it and then return it to the marriage bureau to be recorded.

[\(See a TIME video on gay marriage.\)](#)

Three morning weddings were planned at the office of the Human Rights Campaign, which does advocacy work on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. In the afternoon, a couple had a ceremony planned at All Souls Church — the same place where DC Mayor Adrian Fenty in December signed the bill legalizing the unions.

Another couple, district residents Eva Townsend and Shana McDavis-Conway, said they were planning a wedding by their plot in a community garden, where they have grown carrots and potatoes.

Other couples said they already had ceremonies and would simply wed at the courthouse, which has space for about 15 people in a ceremony room. Most of those celebrations will take place during the weeks of March 22 and March 29, courthouse spokeswoman Leah Gurowitz.

Normally, the courthouse has four to six weddings a day, but over the next several weeks they are expecting 10 to 12 per day. Some courtrooms and judge's chambers may be used for the ceremonies, with the couple's OK. The court's official marriage booklet has been updated so that the ceremony will end by pronouncing the couple "legally married" as opposed to "husband and wife."

More than 300 people applied for marriage licenses from Wednesday to Friday, almost all same-sex couples, Gurowitz said.