

LSAC's Knowledge Report

The 2024-25 Law School Applicant Profile



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Executive Summary

Amid a time of rapid and significant political, economic, and social changes in the U.S. — including major changes to federal Grad PLUS loans — more than 76,000 aspiring law students submitted applications to law school in the 2024-25 admission cycle, marking the highest volume of applicants since 2011 and an 18% increase from the 2023-24 cycle. In this highly competitive admission cycle, the core questions — Who applied? Why law school? How did applicants make the decision to apply? — are more important than ever. The answers to these questions provide insights into how today's aspiring law students are approaching the application process in a time of disruption, change, and uncertainty. Understanding the who, when, why, and how at the application stage provides the legal community with the insights to support access, equity, and fairness in law school admission through tailored and evidence-based interventions, effective guidance, and resources for all aspiring lawyers on the learning journey from prelaw through practice.

Building on LSAC's [2023-24 Test Takers](#), [2024-25 Test Takers](#), and [2024 1L Profile](#) reports, this Applicant Profile report focuses on 2024-25 applicants to contribute to the legal community's collective understanding of:

1. Who applied to law school?
2. When did applicants first think about law school?
3. Why did they decide to apply to law school?
4. How did they approach the application process? What resources and support did they use, and how confident were they in their decision-making process?
5. What were the most important factors that informed their decisions on where to apply?

This report provides several important insights that may help law schools recruit and support future applicants along the prelaw-through-practice journey. Overall, using real-time data collected through the 2025 LSAC Applicant Survey and LSAC's 2024-25 applicant data, this report reveals that 2024-25 applicants:

- **Are widely diverse.** Half of the applicants are from racially and ethnically minoritized¹ groups, 56% are women, 13% are LGBTQ+,² 29% are first-generation college graduates, and 77% are the first in their families to go to law school.

¹ The term "minoritized" refers to populations that have been treated as less important than dominant populations in terms of access, power, and other aspects of social processes. Minoritized incorporates an understanding of social structures rather than being numerically/statistically smaller/fewer. Minoritized can be used to describe various populations and is not synonymous with or limited to racially/ethnically underrepresented populations. This term is used interchangeably with marginalized in this report.

² LGBTQ+ refers to people who identify with any sexual orientation other than heterosexual and/or people with any gender identity other than cisgender man or woman.

- **Thought about law school years before applying.** Almost half of applicants first thought about law school before college. About one in five Pell Grant recipients and first-generation college graduates first thought about law school as early as elementary school, and almost a quarter of Black applicants report they first thought about law school in elementary school. The journey to law school is intentional, spanning years for most applicants.
- **Are motivated to go to law school both to do good and for financial security.** The top reported primary motivations for attending law school are financial security, to be helpful to others, and to advocate for social justice.
- **Spent a significant amount of time working on application materials.** The median time spent on six core components of their application was 46 hours. Over half of applicant respondents spent more than 20 hours working on their personal statements, and almost 40% spent more than 30 hours researching to determine which law schools to which they should apply.
- **Consulted their networks to inform decisions.** The top three kinds of people consulted while applicants decided where to apply were (1) family, (2) an attorney, and (3) friends. However, 11% of applicants report they did not consult anyone for advice about where to apply to law school. There may be several reasons for this, including not having the time or lacking access to a support network.
- **Reviewed several online sources to decide where to apply to law school.** Most applicants used (1) law school ranking resources, (2) the official law school websites, and (3) LSAC's website. About two out of five applicant respondents report using Reddit to gather information to decide where to apply.
- **Are generally confident when working on application components (personal statements, acquiring transcripts and letters of recommendation, etc.).** However, less than half of applicant respondents report feeling confident when filling out financial aid forms.
- **Are multidimensional decision-makers but increasingly concerned about cost and their ability to afford law school.** The factors that drove 2024-25 applicants' final decision on where to apply are multidimensional and varied based on respondents' needs and goals. Nonetheless, the total cost of attendance is the leading factor that influenced most applicants' decision about where to apply.

Aspiring law students spend hours preparing their application materials to ensure they convey a compelling story about who they are and how they are ready to embark on the law school journey. This remains true even in times of change, as evidenced by the 2024-25 applicants. Overall, applicants have been thinking about law school for years, are motivated to do good, and are using a wide range of information sources and networks to gather information to help them make their individual decisions on how and where to apply. Like the 2024-25 [test taker respondents](#), applicant respondents echoed

that law school cost was top of mind for many, especially applicants who are Pell Grant recipients.³

The insights from this report can help inform a collective effort, from prelaw through admission, to make legal education attainable for future aspiring lawyers, especially when the financial feasibility of law school may appear uncertain for many. LSAC will continue to collect data, providing and sharing snapshots of the journey to support the legal community.

Introduction

More than 76,000 people applied to law school during the 2024-25 application cycle, a time of rapid and significant change in the U.S. political landscape. While many observers speculated on why people were applying and whether they would continue to apply (especially in light of federal loan changes), respondents to the 2025 LSAC Applicant Survey reveal that applicants approached the process motivated by the idea that law can be used to help others, and that they invested a median 46 hours gathering and crafting their applications to law schools.

Building on LSAC's [2023-24 Test Takers](#), [2024-25 Test Takers](#), and [2024 1L Profile](#) reports, this Applicant Profile report focuses on 2024-25 applicants to contribute to the legal community's collective understanding of:

1. Who applied to law school?
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In accordance with LSAC's mission to advance law and justice by promoting access, equity, and fairness in law school admission, this report provides the legal community with an understanding of who the applicants are, what they are doing, and why they are applying to law school, helping to better inform efforts across the community to support and guide aspiring lawyers through the application journey and beyond. Concretely, the broad understanding of who applied in the 2024-25 cycle and insights shared by the LSAC Applicant Survey respondents are critical for law schools and prelaw stakeholders who support aspiring lawyers coming through the process, as well as for individuals navigating this competitive application process themselves.

³ Refer to LSAC's knowledge report: [2024-25 Test Takers](#).

- For law schools, the insights in this report can help them better understand the needs and goals of today's applicants, provide information and services that help meet applicants where they are, and better communicate their programs and strength.
- For prelaw stakeholders, such as pathway programs and prelaw advisors, this report can be a vital roadmap as they guide applicants through hours of research, helping them discern how to effectively use data and information about law schools to better meet applicants' needs and goals.
- For applicants, these trends can serve as a collective voice revealing how they approach applications and their decision-making processes, putting into focus what they need and what is right for them.

As schools and candidates work through how the future availability of federal loans will affect who applies to which law schools and who ultimately enrolls, the insights in this report are critical in informing how, when, and where legal stakeholders — from pathway programs to prelaw advisors to law schools — can address barriers, intervene, guide, advocate, and provide reliable and effective support to all applying to law school in the years to come.

Who Applied During the 2024-25 Application Cycle?

The 2024-25 Applicant Profile report is designed to provide a broader and deeper understanding of who applied to law school and how they approached doing so. Overall, the 2024-25 applicants came from a wide range of backgrounds, displaying diversity based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic backgrounds such as first-generation college, Pell Grant recipient status, and LSAC fee waiver status.

Knowing who is applying to law school each year helps inform efforts that expand access to legal education for anyone aspiring to be a part of the legal profession. Those who ended up applying to law school in the 2024-25 admission cycle reflect the efforts of countless individuals committed to supporting, guiding, teaching, mentoring, recruiting, and welcoming these future legal leaders. This research provides an opportunity to evaluate our efforts and to continue innovating and collaborating in how we create opportunities for skills development, encourage growth, and provide guidance starting long before law school admission.

Racial and Ethnic Composition

According to LSAC's data, 76,619 people applied to one or more of the 196 U.S. law schools in the 2024-25 admission cycle.⁴ Half of the 2024-25 applicants are from racially and ethnically minoritized groups (Table 1). Racial and ethnic diversity has been steadily increasing for the past several years: by 1.8 percentage points from 2021 to 2022, 1.7 percentage points from 2022 to 2023, 0.9 percentage points from 2023 to 2024, and now 0.5 percentage points from 2024 to 2025.

Table 1. 2024-25 Applicants: Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native ¹	1.5%
Asian	9.9%
Black/African American	12.3%
Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x ²	11.7%
Indigenous Person of Canada	‡
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	2.9%
Multiracial or Ethnoracial (Two or more)	11.3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ³	0.3%
White	42.8%
Did Not Indicate	7.2%

Source: LSAC 2024-25 Applicant Data.

¹ American Indian or Alaska Native include those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting American Indian or Alaska Native and one or more other racial or ethnic category) as American Indian or Alaska Native, given conversations with community leaders and advocates. LSAC is committed to improving how data is collected and reported. Santos, J., & Tachine, A. R. (2024). Layers of Identity: Rethinking American Indian and Alaska Native Data Collection in Higher Education. *Institute for Higher Education Policy*. <https://www.ihep.org/publication/layers-of-identity-rethinking-american-indian-alaska-native-data-collection/>

² Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x include those who identify as only Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x and/or Puerto Rican. This category is not Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x of any race. Ethnoracial Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x individuals are included in the Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more) category.

‡ Exact percent is suppressed to ensure individual privacy; group is present in totals throughout the report.

³ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander include those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and one or more other racial or ethnic categories) as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

Applicants who identify as multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more) are diverse, and it is important to examine who they are within this large umbrella group. Of the 11% of applicants who identify as multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more), a third identified as

⁴ As of August 28, 2025. LSAC 2024-25 Applicant Data will be finalized in December 2025.

white Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x (Table 2). Ten percent of multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more) applicants identified as Afro-Latina/é/o/x (Black/African American and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x). When these individuals are all categorized as Hispanic or Latino of any race, it obscures the diversity within the community and the variety of lived experiences and educational outcomes.⁵ It is established that there are intragroup differential outcomes observed between Afro-Latina/é/o/x (Black/African American and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x) compared to their other Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x or Black/African American peers.⁶ Visibility of who is multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more), an underexamined population, is the first step to understanding who is on the prelaw-to-practice path. LSAC will explore this group in the future to understand its members' journeys.

Table 2. 2024-25 Applicants: Largest Multiracial or Ethnoracial Groups

Race and Ethnicity	Percent
White and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	33%
Asian and White	15%
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab and White	14%
Black/African American and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	10%
Black/African American and White	8%
Additional Multiracial and Ethnoracial Identities ¹	20%

Source: LSAC 2024-25 Applicant Data. Gender and Sexual Orientation

¹ Additional Multiracial and Ethnoracial Identities is a collapsed category that represents the remaining multiracial/ethnoracial individuals who selected two or more races and/or ethnicities, a diverse group of people comprising over 100 different identities.

⁵ Golash-Boza, T., & Darity, W. (2008). Latino racial choices: The effects of skin colour and discrimination on Latinos' and Latinas' racial self-identifications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31(5), 899-934. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870701568858>

⁶ Hernández, T. K. (2021). Latino antiblack bias and the census categorization of Latinos: Race, ethnicity, or other? In M.-K. Jung & J. H. Costa Vargas (Eds.), *Antiblackness* (pp. 283-296). Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1grbbwr>

López, N., Vargas, E., Juarez, M., Cacari-Stone, L., & Bettez, S. (2018). What's your "street race"? Leveraging multidimensional measures of race and intersectionality for examining physical and mental health status among Latinxs. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 4(1), 49-66. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2332649217708798>

Overall, most of the 2024-25 applicant pool identifies as cisgender (Table 3) and straight/heterosexual (Table 4). Women represent 56% of the applicant class

Table 3. 2024-25 Applicants: Gender Identity

Gender Identity	Percent
Man ¹	39.7%
Woman	56.1%
Gender Diverse ²	1.3%
Did Not Disclose	2.9%

Source: LSAC 2024-25 Applicant Data.

¹ Men and women include those who identify as cisgender.

² Gender diverse includes anyone who identify as nonbinary, transgender, and/or another gender identity.

LSAC collects additional details about LGBTQ+ communities, including sexual orientation. Overall, 13% of all applicants do not identify as straight/heterosexual, with the largest proportion identifying as bisexual, followed by gay or lesbian. The percentage of applicants not reporting their sexual orientation increased from 13.2% in 2023-24 to 13.9% in the 2024-25 application cycle.

Table 4. 2024-25 Applicants: Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Percent
Bisexual	6.6%
Gay or Lesbian	4.0%
Questioning or Unsure	0.7%
Sexual Orientation Not Listed	1.7%
Straight/Heterosexual	73.0%
Did Not Disclose	13.9%

Source: LSAC 2024-25 Applicant Data.

Bringing together gender identity and sexual orientation, 13.3% of the 2024-25 applicants identified as LGBTQ+,⁷ which is on par with the 2023-24 application cycle and an increase from the 12% who identified as LGBTQ+ in the 2020-21 applicant pool. According to a 2022 Gallup report, LGBTQ+ populations in the U.S. have been increasing, with about one in five Gen Z adults identifying as LGBTQ+. This trend must be contextualized within the changes in policies, legislation, and executive orders that likely affect the rate of non-disclosure in self-reported data collections.

⁷ LGBTQ+ refers to people who identify with any sexual orientation other than heterosexual and/or people with any gender identity other than cisgender man or woman.

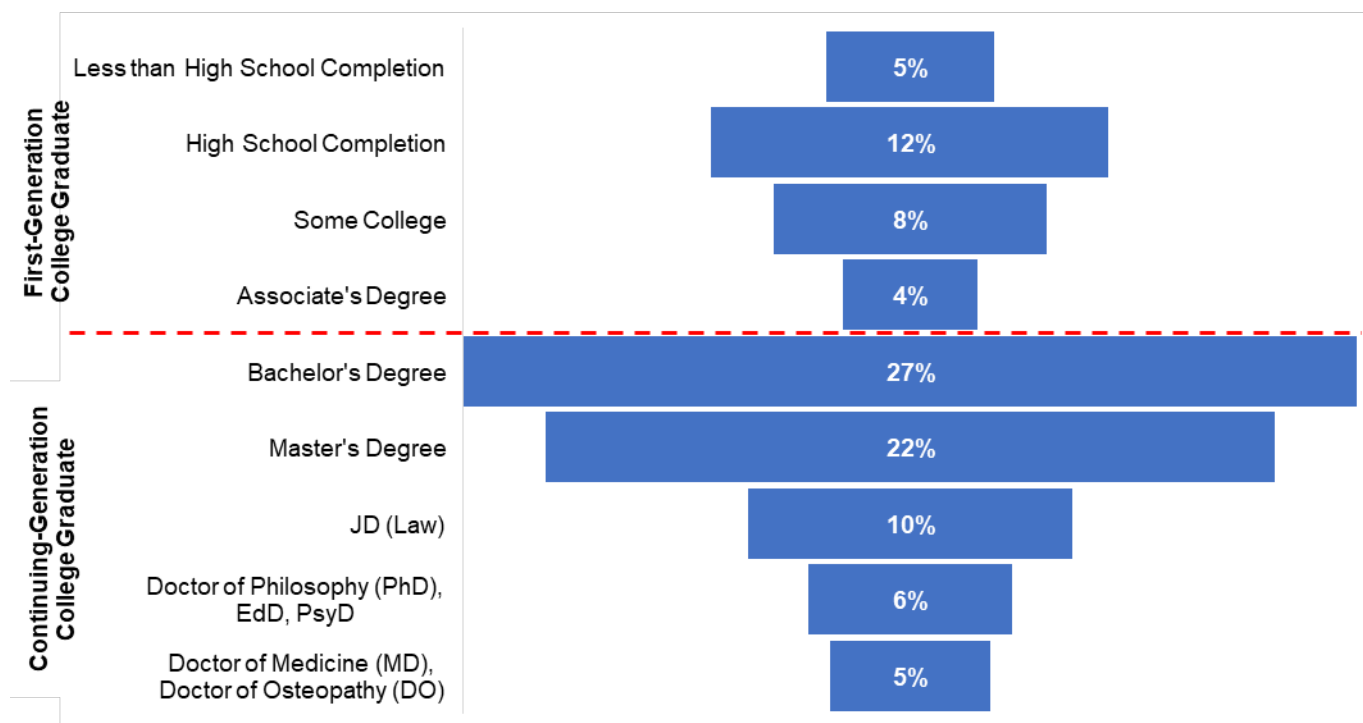
Socioeconomic Background

Researchers across various disciplines measure socioeconomic status (SES) by considering a number of factors. In addition to income and assets, researchers consider factors like where someone grew up, citizenship status, whether a person went to private or public schools, cultural background, occupation, geographic location, and the education attainment, occupation, and financial assets of parents or guardians. These factors have the potential to influence quality of life and ability to access opportunities in life. Because opportunity is unevenly distributed in the United States, SES is important to understanding how and why people from different backgrounds vary by access to opportunities and education. In LSAC's work, first-generation college graduate status, Pell Grant recipient status, and LSAC fee waiver recipient status are important examples of SES factors.

Overall, most applicants are continuing-generation college graduates (Figures 1 and 2), not Pell Grant recipients (Figure 3), did not receive an LSAC fee waiver (Figure 3), and are the first in their families to attend law school.

Most applicants are not first-generation college graduates; indeed, 43% report that at least one parent or guardian had a post-graduate degree (Figure 1). That said, almost a third (29%) of applicants are first-generation college graduates (Figure 2). At the intersection, two in five racially and ethnically minoritized applicants (39%) are the first in their families to graduate college compared to less than one in five (19%) of white applicants. Future LSAC reports will examine the diversity within the first-generation college graduate population where experiences and diversity vary at intersecting identities.

Figure 1. 2024-25 Applicants: Highest Level of Education Attained by Any Parent/Guardian



Note: First-generation college graduates include students with parents or guardians with an associate degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion. The parent or guardian education level is unknown, or not disclosed, for 2.6% of 2024-25 applicants.

Source: LSAC 2024-25 Applicant Data.

Figure 2. 2024-25 Applicants: First-Generation College Graduate Status



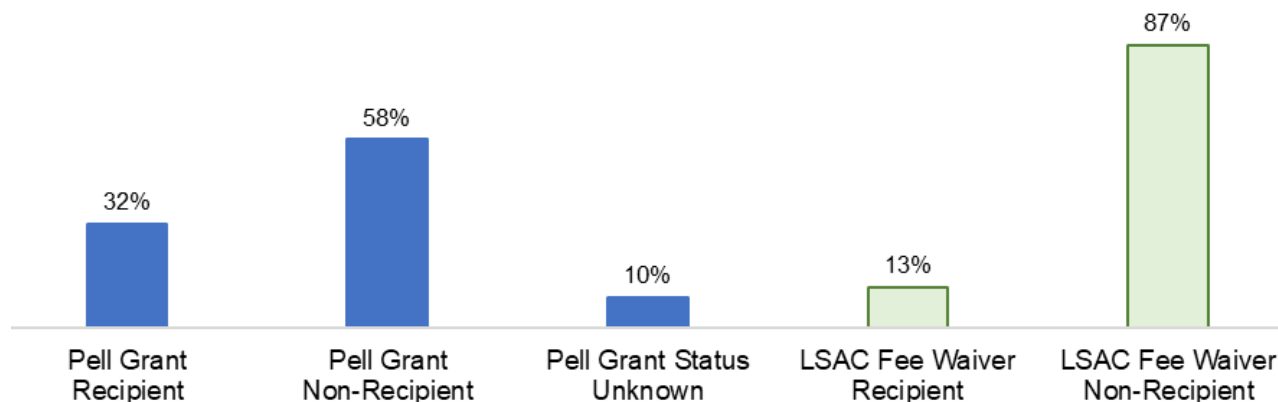
Note: First-generation college graduates include students with parents or guardians with an associate degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion. The parent or guardian education level is unknown, or not disclosed, for 2.6% of 2024-25 applicants.

Source: LSAC 2024-25 Applicant Data.

While 10% of applicants report that at least one of their parents or guardians holds a JD as their highest level of education attainment (Figure 1), 21% reported they have a close family member who holds a JD and are thus defined as continuing-generation law students. Like the 2023-24 applicants, 77% of the 2024-25 applicants are first-generation law students.

Pell Grants and LSAC fee waivers⁹ are provided to students with demonstrated financial need. In the applicant class, a little less than a third of applicants report they were Pell Grant recipients, and more than 10% of applicants received an LSAC fee waiver (Figure 3).

Figure 3. 2024-25 Applicants: LSAC Fee Waiver and Pell Grant Recipient Status



Note: Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported, and 10% did not indicate.

Source: LSAC 2024-25 Applicant Data.

Overall, amid the increase in applicant volume during the 2024-25 admission cycle, applicants to law school remain predominantly continuing-generation college graduates with access to financial support. These insights illustrate the importance of data to inform outreach and efforts to increase access to resources and opportunities for students who are first-generation college graduates and/or lack financial support. These trends will be important to follow in the coming years to examine how changes to federal loans may affect who will apply to and enroll at law school.

Age During the 2024-25 Application Cycle

Law school applicants come from a wide range of backgrounds, including life experience based on age. Contrary to popular belief, most law applicants do not go straight to law school from undergraduate study. Less than 40% of applicants were 22 years old or younger when they submitted their first application during the 2024-25 application cycle. Almost 30% of applicants were 27 or older, with 12% being in their 30s. Aspiring law students and lawyers converge on the path to law school at different points in their lives, and insights in the following section reveal that most applicants first thought about law school years before they submitted their first application.

⁹ To be eligible for an LSAC fee waiver, applicants must demonstrate financial need supported by tax forms and other documentation.

Table 5. 2024-25 Applicants: Age Ranges

Age (years) ¹	Percent
22 or Younger	36%
23	14%
24	10%
25	7%
26	5%
27	4%
28	3%
29	3%
30-39	12%
40 or older	6%

Source: LSAC 2024-25 Applicant Data.

¹ Age as of first application submission date.

What Were Applicants Thinking, Feeling, and Doing?

Who applies to law school, and where they apply, shapes the future of the legal profession. To understand the full picture of the prelaw-to-practice journey, we must also understand where applicants began, what motivated them to pursue law, and how they approached the application process. Learning how applicants felt and what they considered when applying provides valuable insight for recruitment and advising. To capture this, LSAC conducts an annual Applicant Survey, with current applicants, in real time. The following sections focus on how applicants experienced the recent application cycle by answering:

1. Who were the respondents to LSAC's Applicant Survey?
2. When did applicants first think about law school?
3. Why did they decide to apply to law school?
4. How did they approach the application process?
 - a. What resources and support did they use to make their decision?
 - b. How confident were they in their decision-making process?
 - c. How did they decide when to submit their first application?
5. What were the most important factors that informed their decisions on where to apply?

Who Responded to the 2025 Applicant Survey?

In March 2025, LSAC distributed a survey to a random subsample of all students who had applied to law school during the 2024-25 admission cycle (as of March 2025) to understand their law school application experience. A total of 3,340 people responded to the survey; the 2024-25 Applicant Survey estimates in this report are weighted¹⁰ to be representative of the 2024-25 applicant pool at the time the survey was administered (Table 6). About half of respondents were from racially and ethnically minoritized groups, and 40% were white. Most respondents were women, and men made up 43.6% of the responding pool. A total of 13.5% of respondents identified as LGBTQ+ (Table 6).

Twenty-eight percent of respondents were first-generation college graduates (Table 6). Adding nuance to the applicant experience, a closer examination reveals that first-generation status varied by racial and ethnic groups. More than half (62%) of Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x respondents were first-generation college graduates. Forty-six percent of Black/African-American respondents, 26% of Asian respondents, and 20% of white respondents were first-generation college graduates.

Three-quarters of all respondents were first-generation law students. One-third (33%) of respondents received Pell Grants to help fund their undergraduate education. Most respondents were 26 years old or younger when they submitted their first law school application this cycle, 35% were 22 years old or younger, and another 35.8% were between 23 and 26 years old (Table 6). Together, the voices and insights in this report represent the varied experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives of aspiring law students in the most recent admission cycle.

¹⁰ Andrew Mercer, A. L. and C. K. (2018, January 26). How different weighting methods work. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2018/01/26/how-different-weighting-methods-work/>

Table 6. 2024-25 Applicant Profile: Socio-Demographic Characteristics Across 2024-25 Applicant Survey Respondents and 2024-25 Applicant Pool Estimates

Category	Group	2024-25 Applicant Survey Respondents ¹ (n = 3,340)	2024-25 Applicant Pool ² (as of survey administration)	2024-25 Applicant Pool ³ (preliminary)
Race/Ethnicity	American Indian or Alaska Native ⁴	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%
	Asian	10.5%	10.1%	9.9%
	Black/African American	10.2%	11.9%	12.3%
	Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x ⁵	11.3%	11.3%	11.7%
	Indigenous Person of Canada	0.0%	‡	‡
	Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	1.8%	2.9%	2.9%
	Multiracial or Ethnoracial (2 or more) ⁶	13.1%	11.4%	11.3%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ⁷	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%
	White	43.6%	43.5%	42.8%
	Not Indicated	7.6%	7.2%	7.2%
Gender Identity	Man (Cisgender) ⁸	40.2%	39.5%	39.7%
	Woman (Cisgender) ⁸	55.6%	56.4%	56.1%
	Gender Diverse ⁹	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%
	Not Indicated	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%
Sexual Orientation	Not Straight/Not Heterosexual	13.4%	13.3%	13.2%
	Straight/Heterosexual	72.1%	72.7%	72.8%
	Not Indicated	14.5%	13.9%	14.0%
Total LGBTQ+ ¹⁰		13.5%	13.6%	13.4%
First-Generation College Graduate Status ¹¹	First-Generation College Graduate	28.5%	28.1%	28.9%
	Continuing-Generation College Graduate	69.4%	69.4%	68.6%
	Not Indicated	2.1%	2.5%	2.6%
First-Generation Law School Status ¹²	First-Generation Law Student	78.3%	77.3%	77.4%
	Continuing-Generation Law Student	20.4%	21.1%	21.0%
	Not Indicated	1.3%	1.6%	1.6%
Pell Grant Status ¹³	Recipient	33.0%	31.5%	32.3%
	Non-Recipient	58.9%	59.2%	58.2%
	Not Indicated	8.1%	9.3%	9.5%
Age ¹⁴	22 or younger	35.0%	37.7%	36.5%
	23-26	35.8%	36.6%	36.5%
	27-30	10.1%	9.3%	9.6%
	31-39	12.1%	11.3%	11.9%
	40 or older	7.0%	5.0%	5.5%

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Data (as of August 28, 2025) and 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey data.

¹ 2024-25 Applicant Survey estimates are weighted to reflect characteristics of the 2024-25 applicant pool.

² Based on the 2024-25 applicant pool as of March 25, 2025, which aligns to the start of the 2024-25 Applicant Survey data collection.

³ Final LSAC applicant data will be finalized by the end of the calendar year, and this report will be updated accordingly.

⁴ American Indian or Alaska Native include those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting American Indian or Alaska Native and one or more other racial or ethnic category) as American Indian or Alaska Native, given conversations with community leaders and advocates. LSAC is committed to improving how data is collected and reported. Santos, J., & Tachine, A. R. (2024). Layers of Identity: Rethinking American Indian and Alaska Native Data Collection in Higher Education. *Institute for Higher Education Policy*. <https://www.ihep.org/publication/layers-of-identity-rethinking-american-indian-alaska-native-data-collection/>

⁵ Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x include those who identify as only Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x and/or Puerto Rican. This category is not Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x of any race. Ethnoracial Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x individuals are included in the Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more) category.

⁶ Multiracial and Ethnoracial Identities represent individuals who selected two or more races and/or ethnicities, a diverse group of people comprising over 100 different identities.

⁷ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander include those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and one or more other racial or ethnic categories) as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

⁸ Men and women include those who identify as cisgender.

⁹ Gender Diverse includes anyone who identify as nonbinary, transgender, and/or another gender identity.

¹⁰ LGBTQ+ refers to people who identify with any sexual orientation other than heterosexual and/or people with any gender identity other than cisgender man or woman.

¹¹ First-Generation College Graduate include individuals with parents or guardians with an associate's degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

¹² First-Generation Law School Student include those who report not having a close family member who holds a JD.

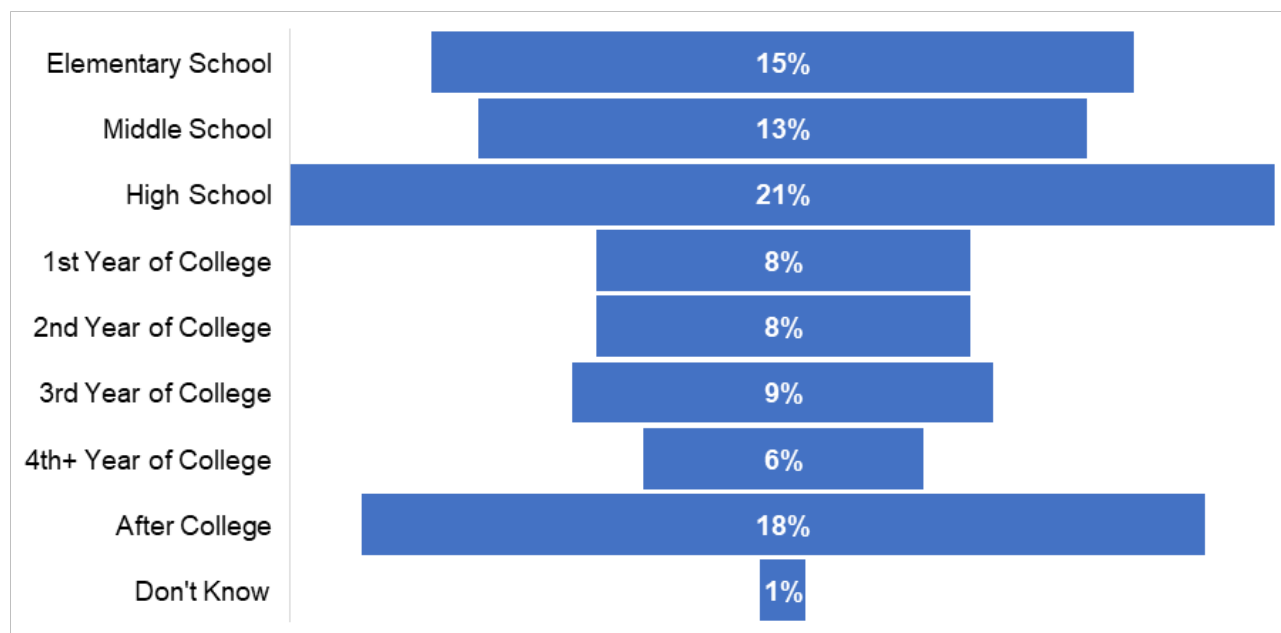
¹³ Pell Grant Recipient status is self-reported.

¹⁴ Age as of first application submission date.

When Did They First Think About Law School?

The journey to law school can start long before someone takes the LSAT and applies to law school. For many, it is a multi-year or lifetime aspiration. Half of applicant respondents first thought about law school before college (Figure 4). About a third of applicants first thought about it during college, and almost one in five applicants (18%) first thought of going to law school after graduating from college.

Figure 4. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: When First Thought About Law School



Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

When someone first thought about law school varied by racial and ethnic groups, parental education, and age (Figures 5). For years, many have assumed that underrepresentation in the legal profession is due to lack of exposure to law at an early age. The survey responses from test takers and first-year law students challenge this assumption,¹¹ and the 2024-25 applicant respondents do the same, reporting that many of them first thought about law school as early as before high school. While the sample size of the Applicant Survey is small for some group-based analyses, preliminary trends reveal that:

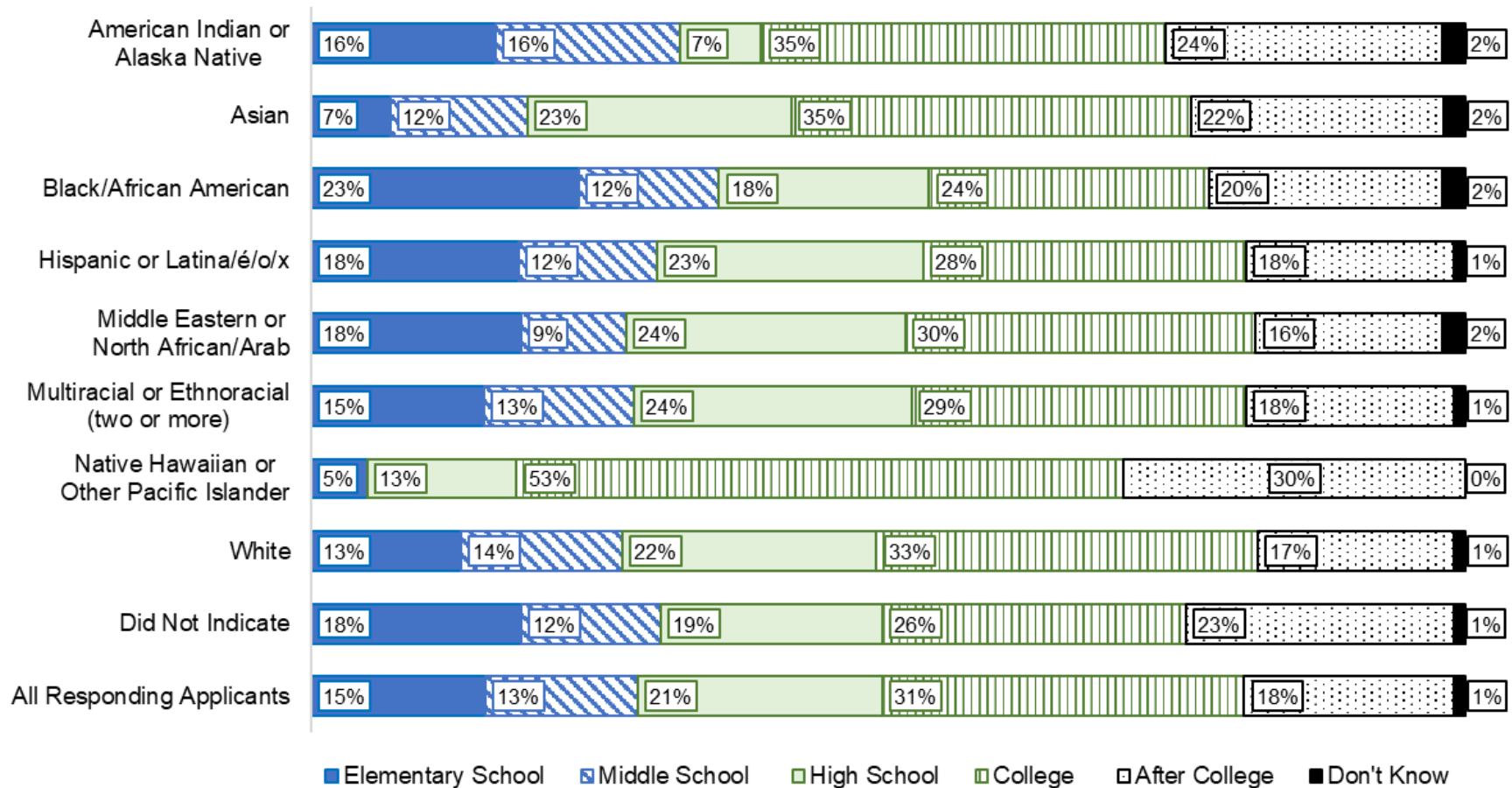
- Almost a quarter of applicant respondents identifying as Black or African-American report first contemplating law school in elementary school, much earlier than their peers of other races and ethnicities (Figure 5).
- Black or African-American, Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x, Middle Eastern or North African/Arab, and multiracial or ethnoracial applicants thought about law school in high school or earlier at a rate higher than all their peers (Figure 5).

¹¹ Refer to LSAC's knowledge reports: [2023-2024 Test-Takers](#) and [The 2024 1L Profile](#).

- Women reported first thinking about law school in high school or earlier at a rate almost 30% higher than male and gender-diverse peers (Figure 6).
- First-generation college graduates reported first thinking about law school in elementary school at a rate 67% (or 8 percentage points) higher than their continuing-generation college graduate peers (Figure 7).
- Pell Grant recipients reported first thinking about law school in elementary school at a rate 67% (or 7 percentage points) higher than their non-Pell Grant recipient peers (Figure 7).
- While 56% of applicants who were 27 years old or older first thought about law school in college or earlier, 90% of applicants who were 26 years old or younger first thought about law school during college or earlier (Figure 8).

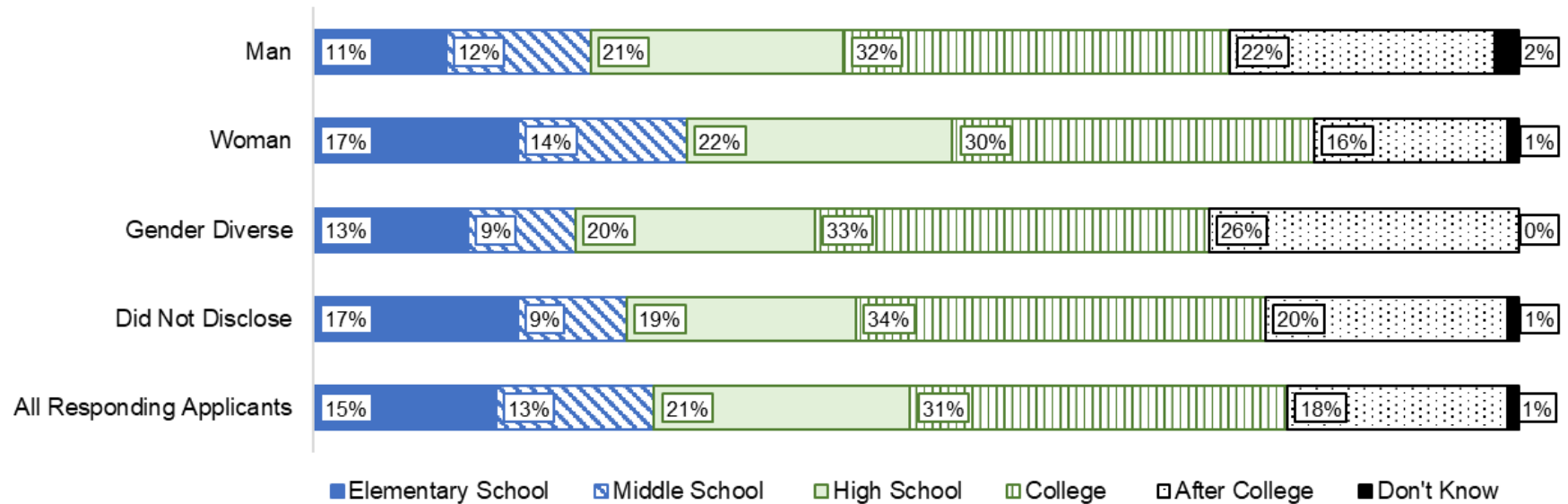
Embarking on the journey to law school starts years before candidates submit their applications, and when applicants first thought about law school varied based on who they are and their lived experiences. These insights are critical to ensure programming, resources, and support efforts are data-informed, meeting candidates where they are with what they need when applying to law school.

Figure 5. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: When First Thought About Law School by Race and Ethnicity



Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

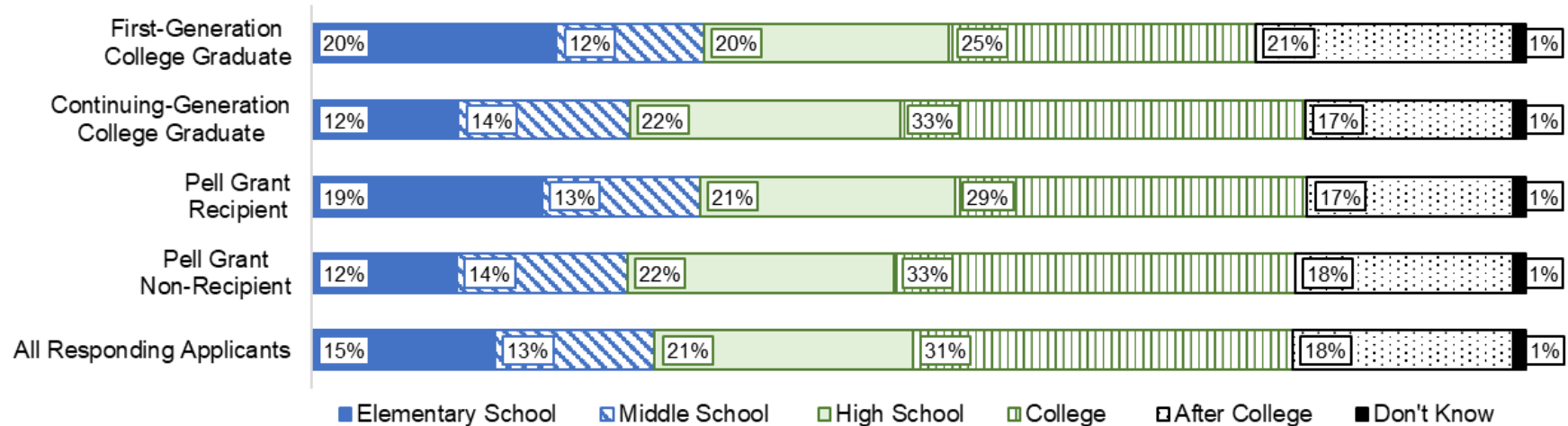
Figure 6. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: When First Thought About Law School by Gender



Note: Men and women include those who identify as cisgender. Gender-diverse applicants include anyone who identifies as nonbinary, transgender, and/or another gender identity.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

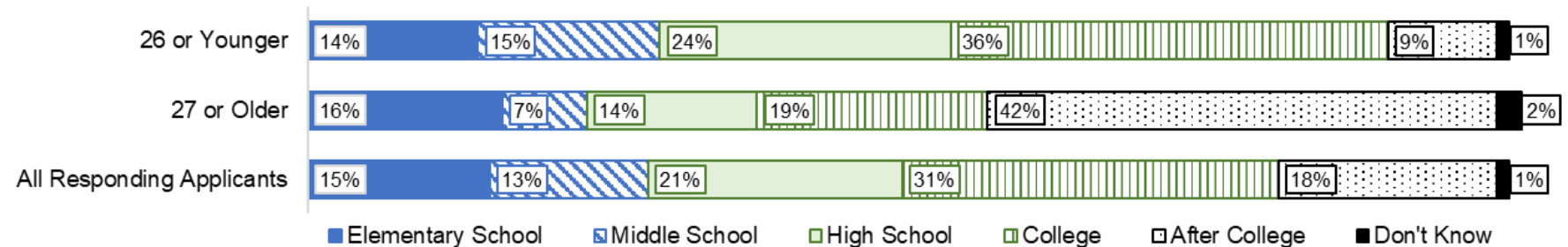
Figure 7. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: When First Thought About Law School by First-Generation College Graduate Status and Pell Grant Recipient Status



Note: “First-Generation College Graduate” includes individuals with parents or guardians with an associate degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion. Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Figure 8. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: When First Thought About Law School by Age



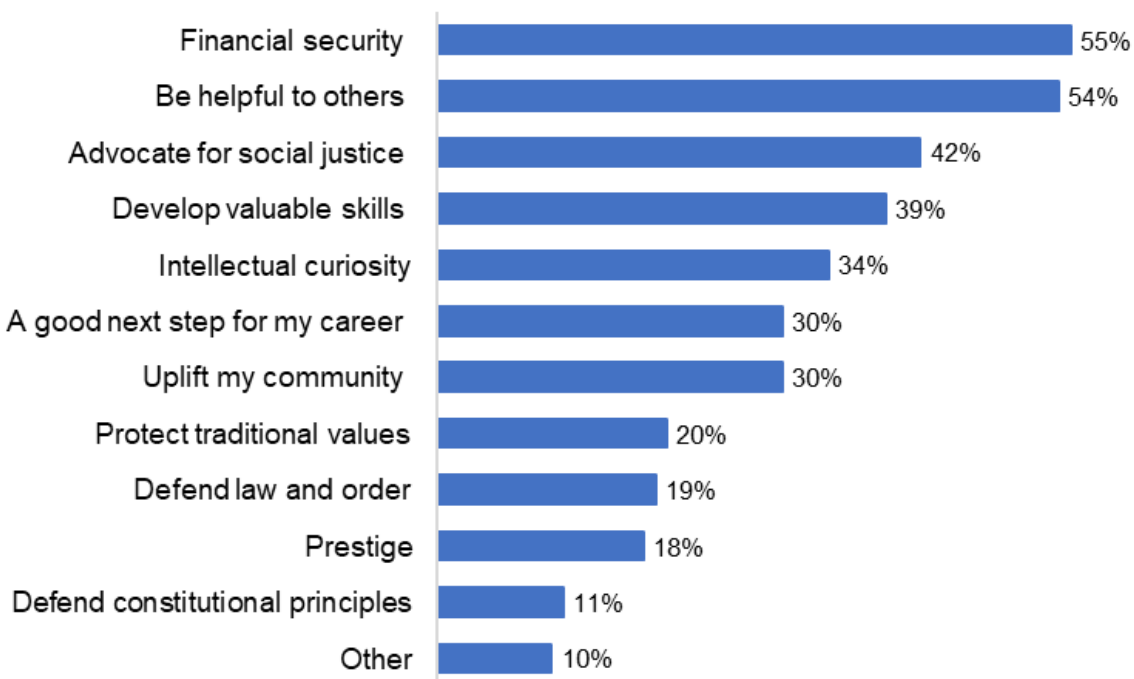
Note: Age as of first application submission date.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Why Were They Motivated to Go to Law School?

Overall, the 2024-25 applicant respondents viewed law as a vehicle for doing good, promoting justice, and personal development — in pursuit of a promising, stable, long-term career. The top reported motivations for attending law school were financial security (55%), being helpful to others (54%), advocating for social justice (42%), developing valuable skills (39%), and intellectual curiosity (34%; Figure 9). It appears that law school motivations shift between the time a prospective applicant takes the LSAT and when they submit their first application. While being helpful to others is the top motivation for test takers, financial security rises to the top for applicants as the financial reality of this journey comes to the forefront. Nonetheless, being helpful and generally doing good continue to be a top motivation for applicants.

Figure 9. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Ranked Motivations to Attend Law School



Note: Data in this figure are distributions of the top three ranked motivation statements.

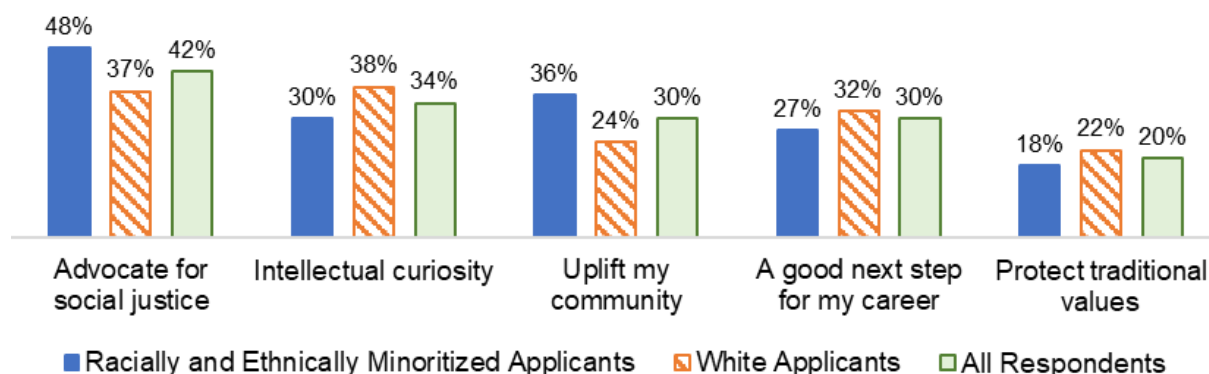
Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

The “why” for applicants varied by their lived experiences and backgrounds, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and age.

Racially and ethnically minoritized applicants are driven to do good through advocating for social justice and uplifting their community. Advocating for social justice, in fact, is a top motivation for racially and ethnically minoritized applicants at a rate 30% (or 11 percentage points) higher than their white peers. Similarly, uplifting one’s community is a top motivation for racially and ethnically minoritized applicants at a rate 50% (or 12 percentage points) higher than their white peers (Figure 10), while intellectual curiosity

is a top motivation for white applicants at a rate 13% (or 4 percentage points) higher than their racially and ethnically minoritized peers. Similarly, white applicants reported that a legal degree is a good next step in their career at a rate 19% (or 5 percentage points) higher than their racially and ethnically minoritized peers (Figure 10). Lastly, going to law school to protect traditional values is a top reported motivation for white applicants at a rate 22% (or 4 percentage points) higher than their racially and ethnically minoritized peers.

Figure 10. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Select Top Ranked Motivations to Attend Law School by Race and Ethnicity

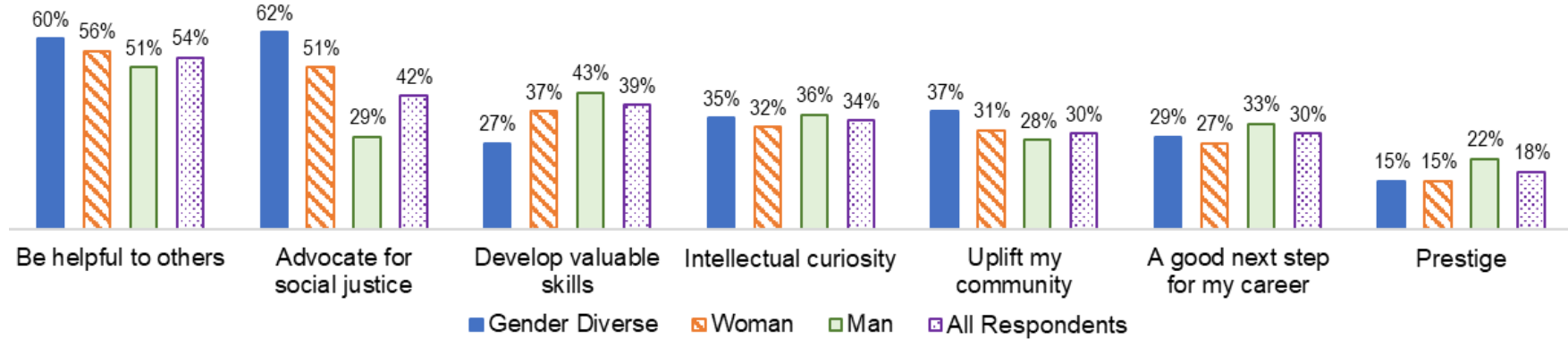


Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Women and gender-diverse applicants are motivated to help others and to advocate for social justice at rates higher than men. For example, gender-diverse applicants report they are motivated to help others at a rate 18% (or 9 percentage points) higher than men, and women report the same at a rate 10% (or 5 percentage points) higher than men (Figure 11). Gender-diverse applicants report that uplifting one's community is a law school motivation at a rate 32% (or 9 percentage points) higher than men. Meanwhile, men report that they are motivated to go to law to develop valuable skills at a rate 59% (or 16 percentage points) higher than gender-diverse applicants and 16% (6 percentage points) higher than women (Figure 11).

LGBTQ+ applicants are also intrinsically motivated at higher rates than their peers. For example, applicants who are not straight/heterosexual report they are motivated to go to law school to advocate for social justice at a rate 33% (or 14 percentage points) higher than respondents as a whole (Figure 12). On the other hand, applicants who do identify as straight/heterosexual report that developing valuable skills is a top motivation at a rate 24% (or 8 percentage points) higher than applicants who are not straight/heterosexual (Figure 12).

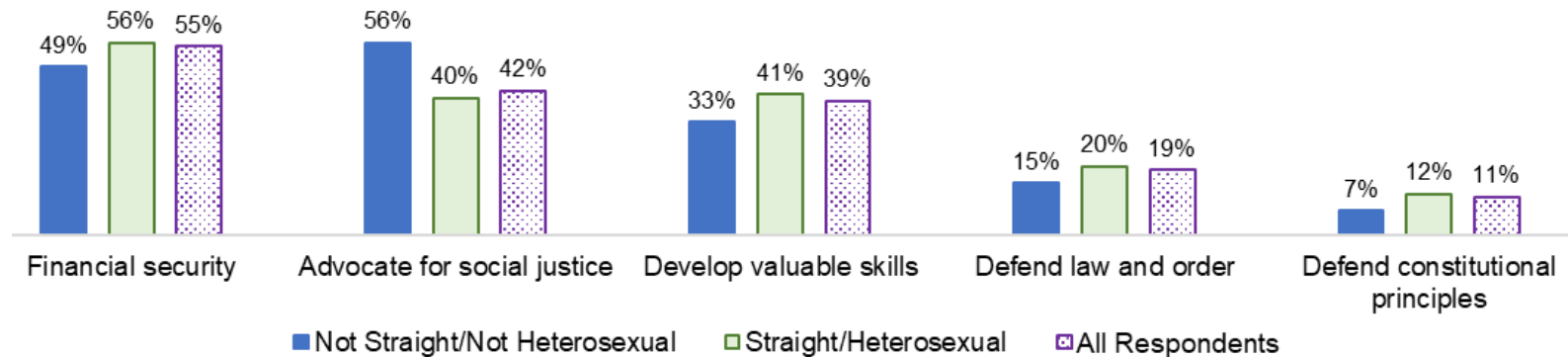
Figure 11. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Select Top Ranked Motivations to Attend Law School by Gender



Note: Men and women include those who identify as cisgender. Gender diverse includes anyone who identifies as nonbinary, transgender, and/or another gender identity.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Figure 12. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Select Top Ranked Motivations to Attend Law School by Sexual Orientation



Note: LGBTQ+ refers to people who identify with any sexual orientation other than heterosexual and/or people with any gender identity other than cisgender man or woman.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

First-generation college graduates and Pell Grant recipients are significantly¹² more motivated by social justice advocacy and the ability to uplift their communities than their peers (Figures 13 and 14). First-generation college graduates report that advocating for social justice is a key law school motivation at a rate 20% (or 8 percentage points) higher than continuing-generation college graduates (Figure 13). Additionally, first-generation college graduates report that uplifting their communities is a top law school motivation at a rate 33% (or 9 percentage points) higher than continuing-generation college graduates. These patterns are the same for Pell Grant recipients (Figure 14).

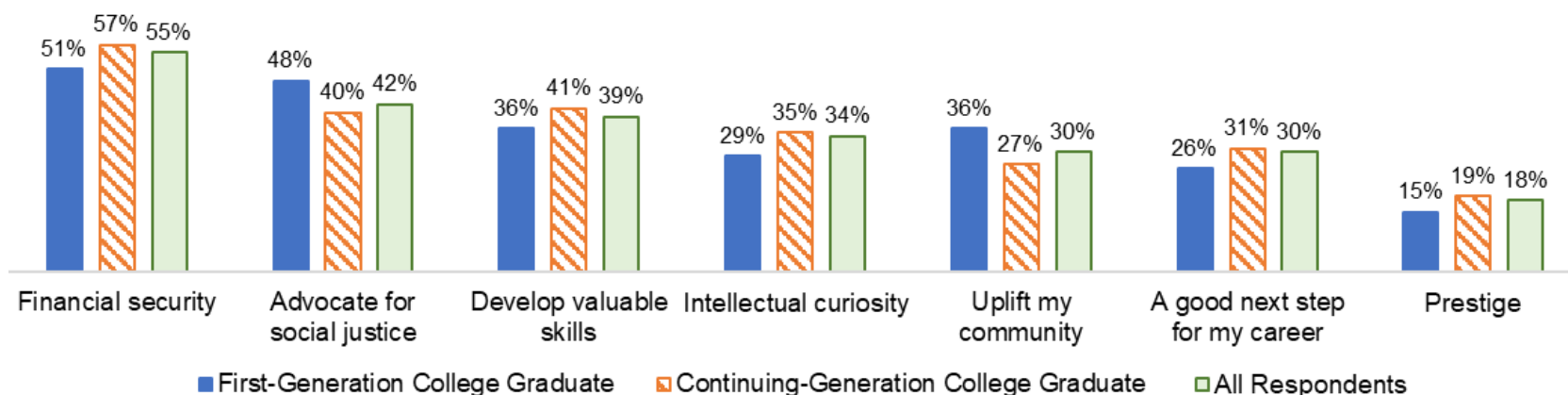
Meanwhile, continuing-generation college graduates report that developing valuable skills is a motivation at a rate 14% (or 5 percentage points) higher than first-generation college graduates (Figure 13). Moreover, compared to their peers who are first-generation college graduates, continuing-generation college graduates report prestige as a top law school motivator at a rate 27% (or 4 percentage points) higher, cite intellectual curiosity as a top law school motivator at a rate 21% (or 6 percentage points) higher, and cite law school being a good next step as a top reason for going at a rate 19% (or 5 percentage points) higher (Figure 13). While first-generation college graduates reveal that cost and financial feasibility of law school is a barrier,¹³ applicants who are continuing-generation college graduates report being motivated to go to law school for financial security at a rate 12% (or 6 percentage points) higher than first-generation college graduates (Figure 13).

Similarly, based on Pell Grant status, applicants who did not receive a Pell Grant report that developing valuable skills is a motivation at a rate 14% (or 5 percentage points) higher than their peers who received a Pell Grant (Figure 14). Compared to applicants who received a Pell Grant, applicants who did not receive a Pell Grant report prestige as a top law school motivator at a rate 36% (or 5 percentage points) higher, report intellectual curiosity as a top law school motivator at a rate 29% (or 8 percentage points) higher, and cite law school being a good next step as a top reason for going at a rate 28% (or 7 percentage points) higher (Figure 14).

¹² In this report, “significantly” indicates that the mean values between two groups are significantly different from one another at the $p < 0.05$ level meaning there is less than a 5% chance the differences observed between the two groups are random.

¹³ Refer to the LSAC *Law:Fully* post: [“I Want to Be the Good.” Introducing the 2024-25 LSAT Test Taker Voices About Motivation, Plans, and Financial Feasibility | The Law School Admission Council.](#)

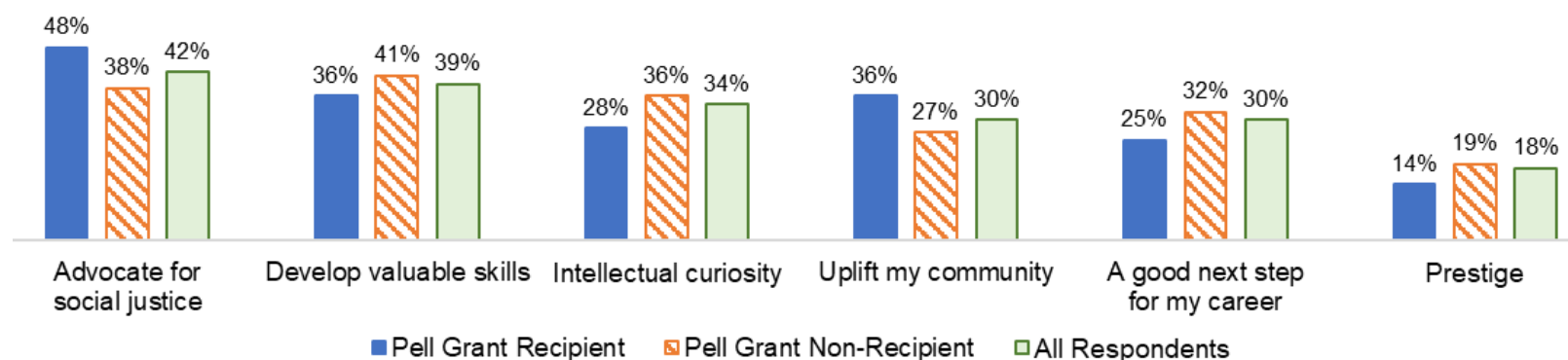
Figure 13. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Select Top Ranked Motivations to Attend Law School by First-Generation College Graduate Status



Note: First-Generation college graduates include individuals with parents or guardians with an associate degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Figure 14. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Select Top Ranked Motivations to Attend Law School by Pell Grant Recipient Status

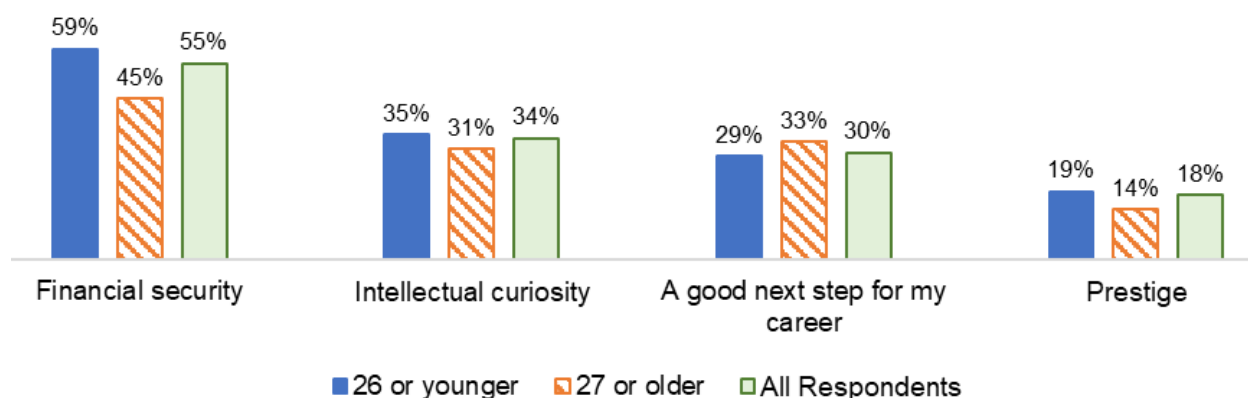


Note: Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Lastly, law school motivation varies by age group. Younger applicants (26 or younger) report at significantly higher rates financial security, intellectual curiosity, and prestige as top motivators for applying to law school compared to their older peers who are 27 or older. In fact, applicants 26 or younger said financial security is a top motivator at a rate 30% (or 14 percentage points) higher than that of applicants 27 or older (59% vs. 45%; Figure 15).

Figure 15. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Select Top Ranked Motivations to Attend Law School by Age



Note: Age as of first application submission date.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Overall, applicants reveal a wide range of law school motivations, varying based on lived experiences and their communities. In the end, during a highly competitive cycle, most applicants, like test takers and first-year law students,¹⁴ are driven to do good, however they define it. For these applicants, law is viewed as a vehicle for good, change, and stability.

How Did They Approach the Application Process?

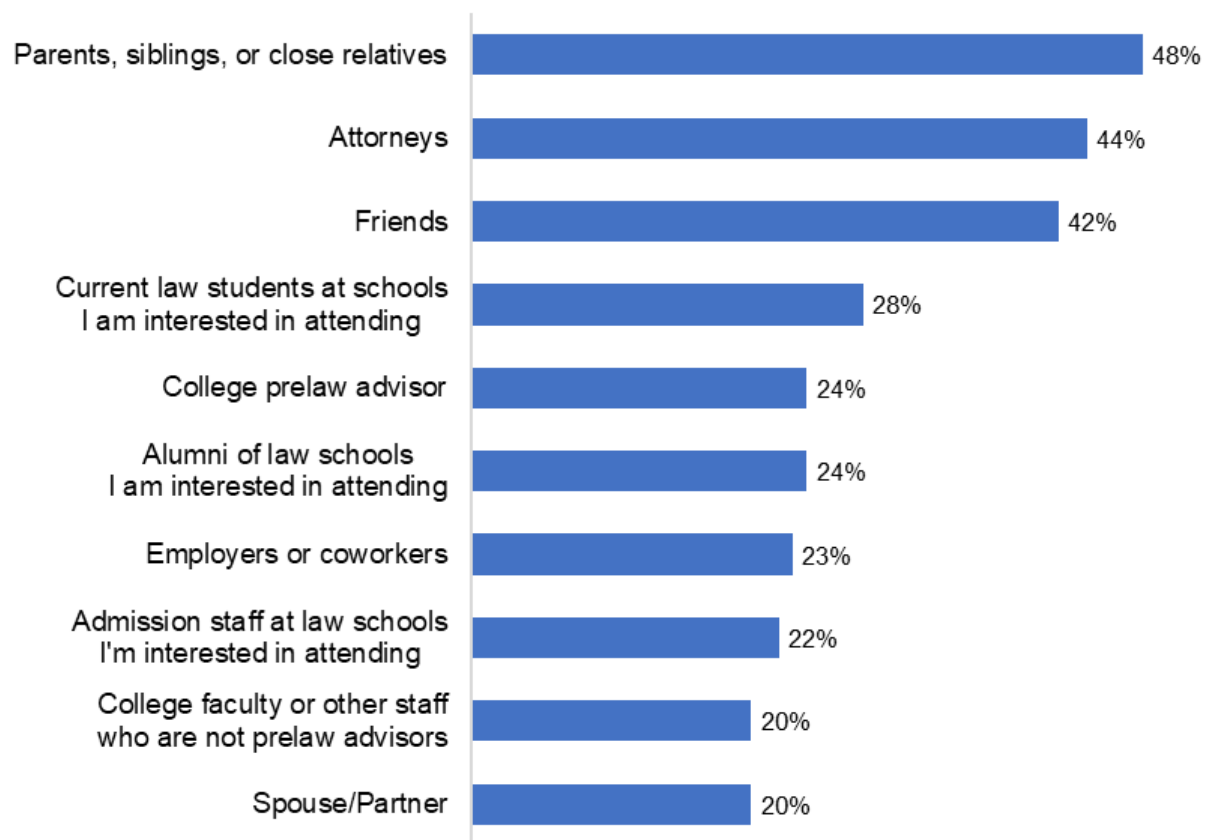
Law school applicants approach and navigate the admission process with a wide range of strategies, resources, levels of preparation, and confidence in that preparation. The application process is a commitment in itself: it involves balancing competing demands such as gathering application materials, preparing for standardized test, and meeting application deadlines — along with making decisions about where to apply and how to present oneself to admission committees. As the following section shows, applicants begin this process with varying levels of access to strategies, resources, and support systems.

¹⁴ To learn more about what candidates are thinking, feeling, and doing at different points on the journey, [check out](#) the various LSAC Applied Research reports.

Who Did They Consult?

When navigating the application process, especially in deciding where to apply, applicants draw from a range of people and networks for advice. Some applicants seek advice from family or peers, others rely more heavily on academic mentors, and some consult with no one at all. Among 2024-25 applicants, almost half relied on family for advice. Specifically, the most often consulted influential sources of information are parents, siblings, or close relatives (48%); attorneys (44%); and friends (42%; Figure 16). Slightly more than a quarter of applicants sought advice from current law students at schools of interest (28%). Meanwhile, almost one in four applicants sought advice from a college prelaw advisor (24%), alumni of a law school of interest (24%), or employers or co-workers (23%). About one in five applicants consulted admission staff at a law school of interest (22%), college faculty or staff who are not prelaw advisers (20%), or a spouse/partner (20%; Figure 16).

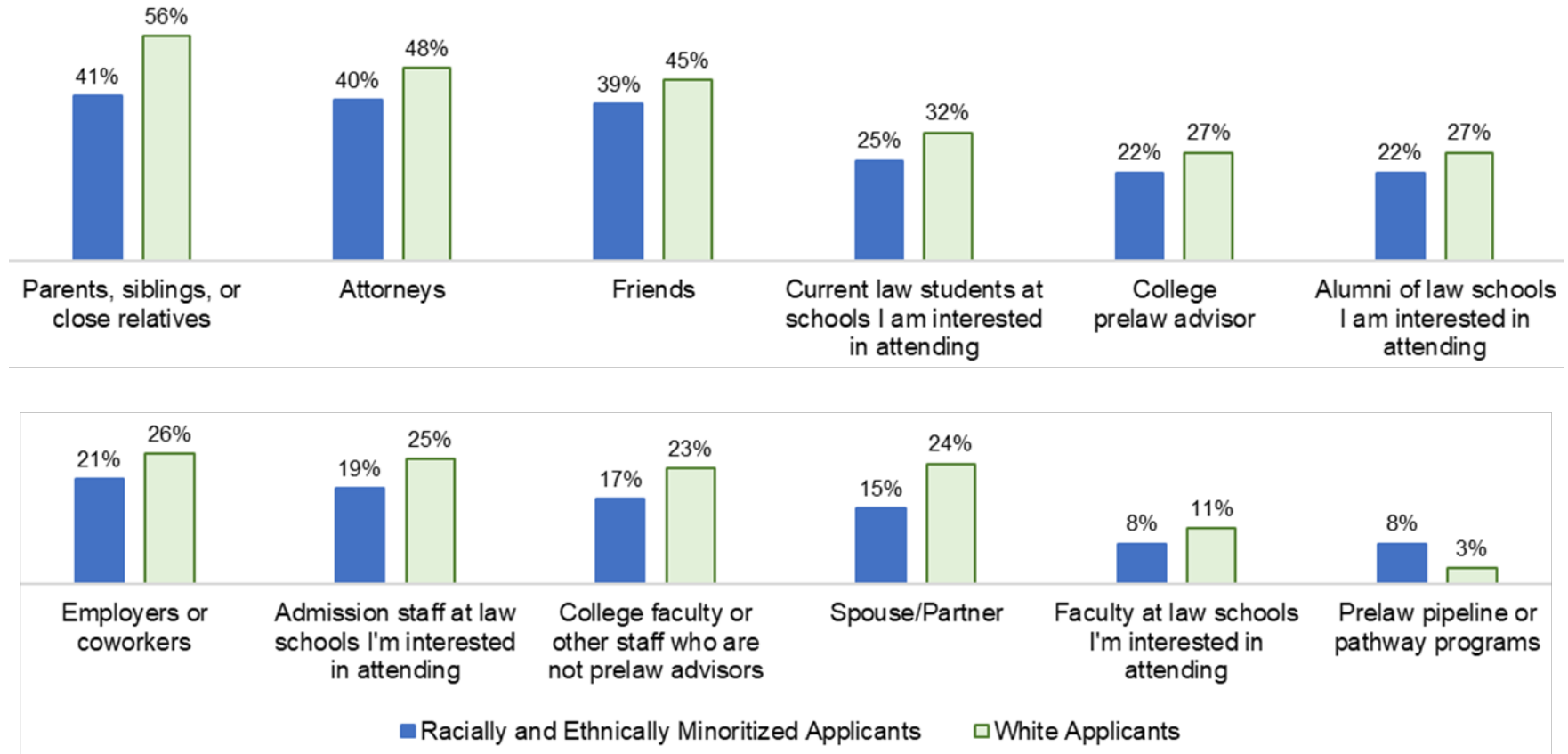
Figure 16. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Sources Consulted for Law School Application Advice



Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

While applicants from all backgrounds generally consulted similar sources for information, applicants from racially and ethnically minoritized groups significantly rely on programs (Figure 17). For example, significantly fewer racially and ethnically minoritized applicants report consulting with all the various people and networks than their white peers. However, applicants from racially and ethnically minoritized groups were much more likely to report that they consulted pathway/pipeline programs (8%) than their white peers (3%), a rate 167% (or 5 percentage points) higher (Figure 17). This difference echoes the importance of legal stakeholders who are committed to supporting aspiring law students throughout the process.

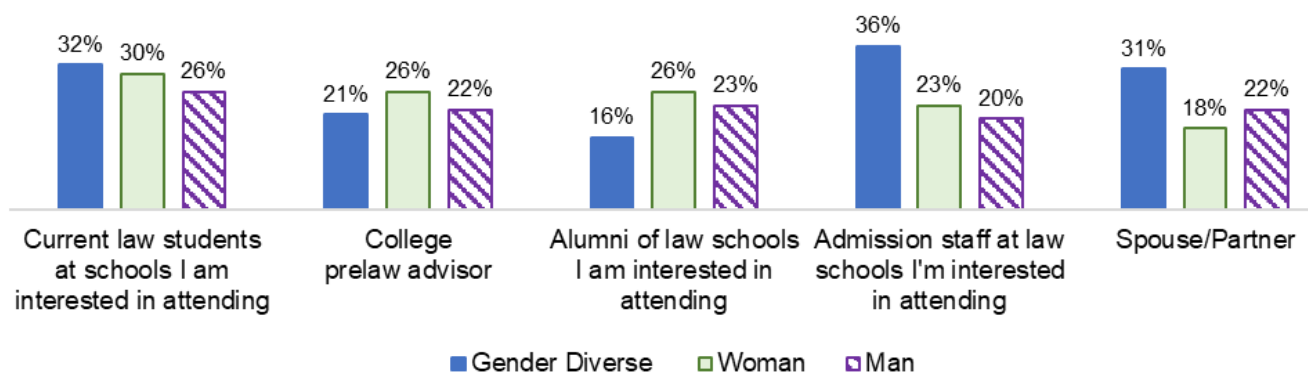
Figure 17. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Sources Consulted for Law School Application Advice by White and Racially and Ethnically Minoritized Applicants



Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Who applicants consult for support and advice about where to apply to law school varies by gender as well (Figure 18). Specifically, gender diverse applicants report turning to admission staff at law schools they are interested in and turning to their spouse or partner at significantly higher rates than men and women (Figure 18). Research out to current law students at law school they are interested in is important for women and gender diverse applicants, as they report turning to them for advice and information when deciding where to apply at rates higher than men (Figure 18). These trends underscore that when deciding where to apply, it is critical for applicants to hear from current students about the actual student experience in a school and the support networks that exist, which is particularly true for applicants from marginalized groups.

Figure 18. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Sources Consulted for Law School Application Advice by Gender

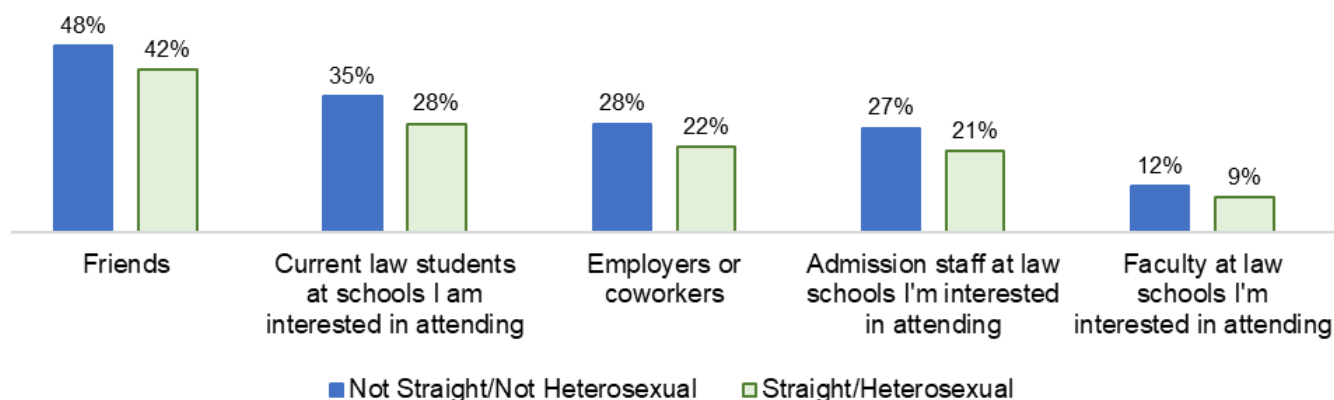


Note: Men and women include those who identify as cisgender. Gender diverse includes anyone who identifies as nonbinary, transgender, and/or another gender identity.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

LGBTQ+ applicants who are not straight/heterosexual are significantly more likely to consult friends; employers and co-workers; and current law students, staff, and faculty at schools of interest than their straight/heterosexual peers (Figure 19). For instance, compared to their straight/heterosexual peers, applicants who are not straight/heterosexual report they consult with friends at a rate 14% (or 6 percentage points) higher, and that they consult with current law students at a rate 25% (or 7 percentage points) higher (Figure 19). Similar to gender-diverse applicants and women, LGBTQ+ applicants who are not straight/heterosexual reveal the importance of hearing from people at law schools to decide which school will meet their personal, academic, and professional needs.

Figure 19. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Sources Consulted for Law School Application Advice by Sexual Orientation

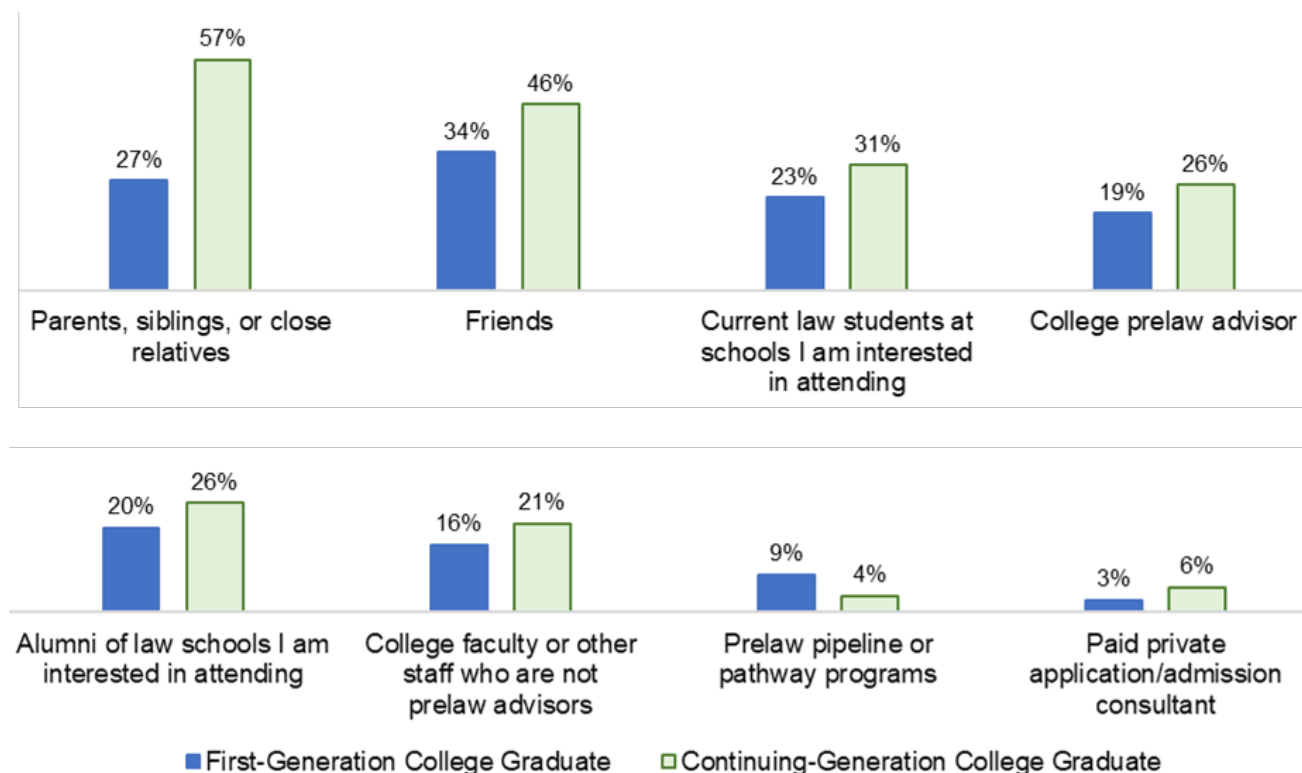


Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Who one consults for support and advice about where to apply to law school varies by an applicant's network. Therefore, it is not surprising that first-generation college graduate applicants have lower rates of relying on their personal networks than their continuing-generation graduate peers (Figure 20). For example, while 27% of first-generation college graduates report consulting their parents, siblings, or close relatives to decide where to apply, the majority of continuing-generation college graduates (57%) report doing so — a rate 111% (or 30 percentage points) higher than first-generation college graduates.

A similar trend is found when examining Pell Grant status (Figure 21). Applicants who did not receive a Pell Grant report consulting their parents, siblings, or close relatives to decide where to apply at a rate 56% (or 20 percentage points) higher than their peers who are Pell Grant recipients. Overall, the ability to turn to personal networks, such as parents, siblings, or close relatives or friends, is not the same for all applicants, as highlighted by the differences based on first-generation college graduate and Pell Grant status.

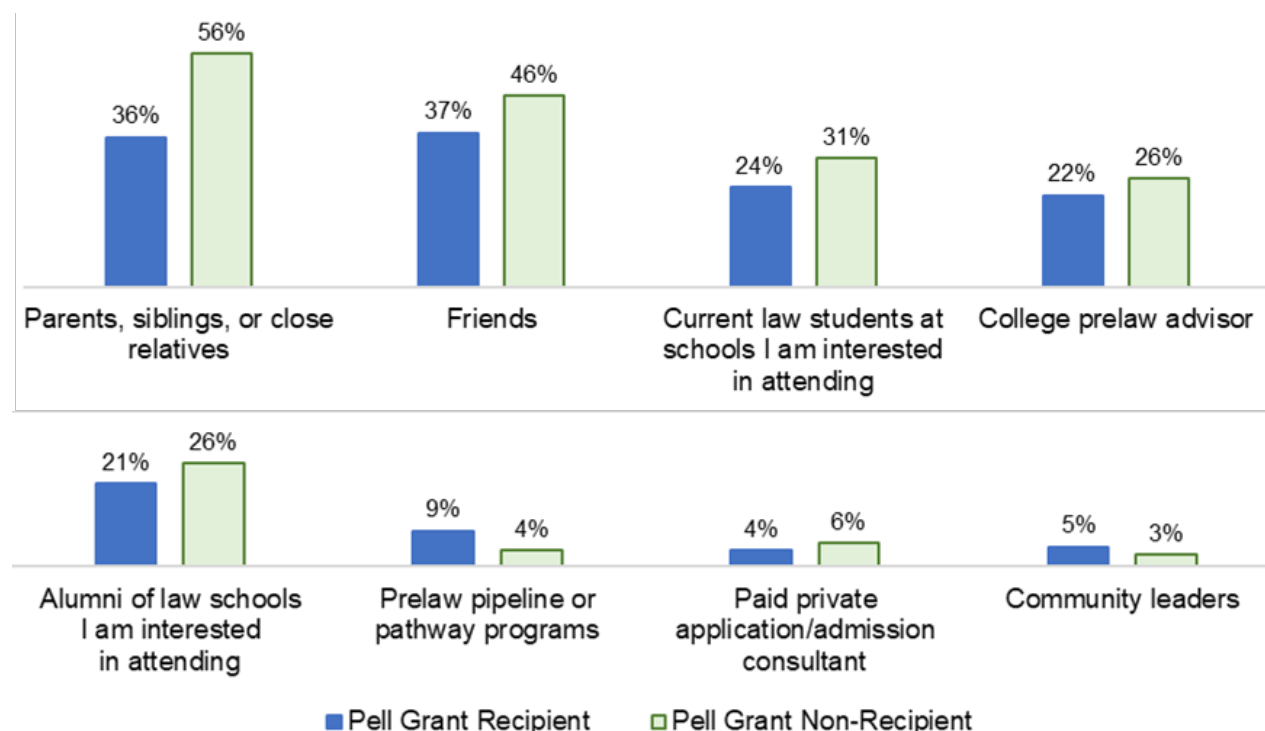
Figure 20. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Sources Consulted for Law School Application Advice by First-Generation College Graduate Status



Note: First-generation college graduates include individuals with parents or guardians with an associate degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Figure 21. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Sources Consulted for Law School Application Advice by Pell Grant Recipient Status

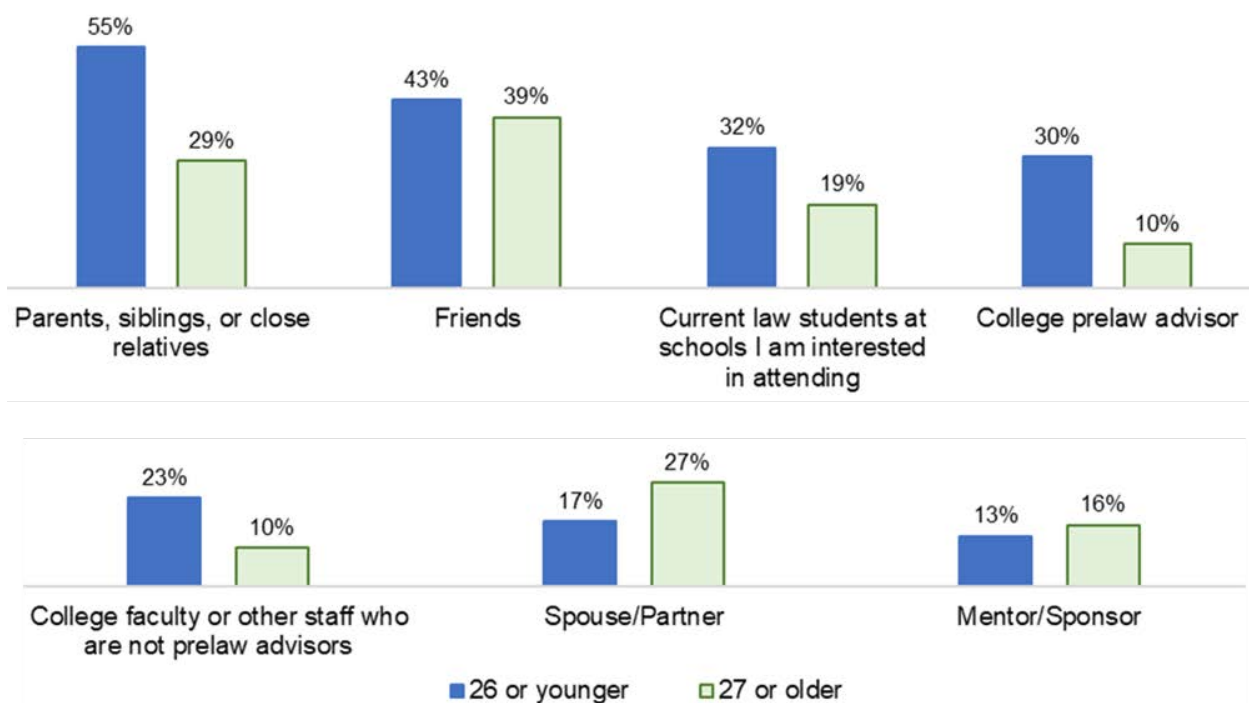


Note: Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

The types of networks varied for applicants by age (Figure 22). Younger applicants are more likely to consult parents, siblings, close relatives, or friends, and have connections with higher education institutions than older applicants because most are close to, if not still in, college. For example, over half of applicants who are 26 or younger consulted with parents, siblings, or close relatives, while only 29% of applicants ages 27 or older did so, a 26-percentage point difference (Figure 22). On the other hand, older applicants who are 27 years old or older reported consulting a spouse or partner at a rate almost 60% (or 10 percentage points) higher than their younger peers who are 26 years old or younger (Figure 22). Older applicants report turning to their mentor or sponsor at a rate 23% (or 3 percentage points) higher than younger applicants (Figure 22).

Figure 22. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Sources Consulted for Law School Application Advice by Age

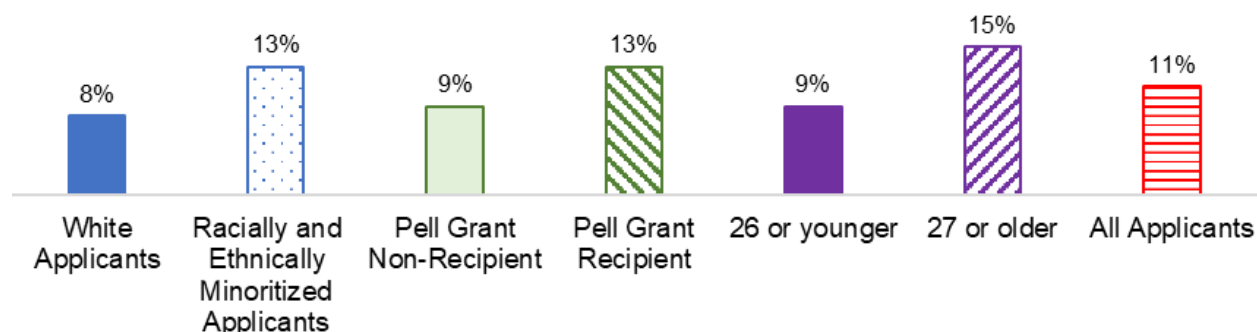


Note: Age as of first application submission date.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Lastly, while only 11% of applicant respondents said they did not consult anyone for advice or information about where to apply to law school, this rate varies by race, ethnicity, Pell Grant status, and age. Racially and ethnically minoritized applicants, Pell Grant recipients, and applicants who are 27 years old or older said they did not consult others for advice at significantly higher rates than their white, non-Pell Grant recipient, and younger peers (Figure 23). Specifically, 13% of racially and ethnically minoritized applicants reported they did not consult anyone for advice or information about where to apply, a rate 5 percentage points higher than their white peers. Similarly, 13% of Pell Grant recipients reported they did not consult anyone for advice or information about where to apply, a rate 4 percentage points higher than their peers who did not receive a Pell Grant. Applicant respondents who are 27 years old or older said they did not consult anyone for advice or information about where to apply at a rate 67% (or 6 percentage points) higher than their younger peers (Figure 23).

Figure 23. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Did Not Consult Anyone for Law School Application Advice by Race and Ethnicity, Pell Grant Recipient Status, and Age



Note: Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported. Age as of first application submission date.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

There may be a number of reasons why some applicants reported not consulting anyone for advice when deciding where to apply, including not having access to a knowledgeable support network or the time to consult with others. However, it should be noted that the percentage of applicants who report not turning to anyone for advice about deciding where to apply is 50% lower than the percentage of test takers who reported not turning to anyone for advice or information about the application process.¹⁵ As test takers are surveyed earlier in the process than applicants, the two data snapshots show how candidates' practices are not stagnant during the admission journey. While many start this journey as test takers with a limited network, those who continue reach out to individuals who can help at higher rates. It is clear that central to how candidates think about, plan, and experience the journey to law school is their access to effective guidance, support systems, and resources. Inequality and inequity in access to reliable and trusted support persists, as revealed by the varying differences in who applicants consulted based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and age.

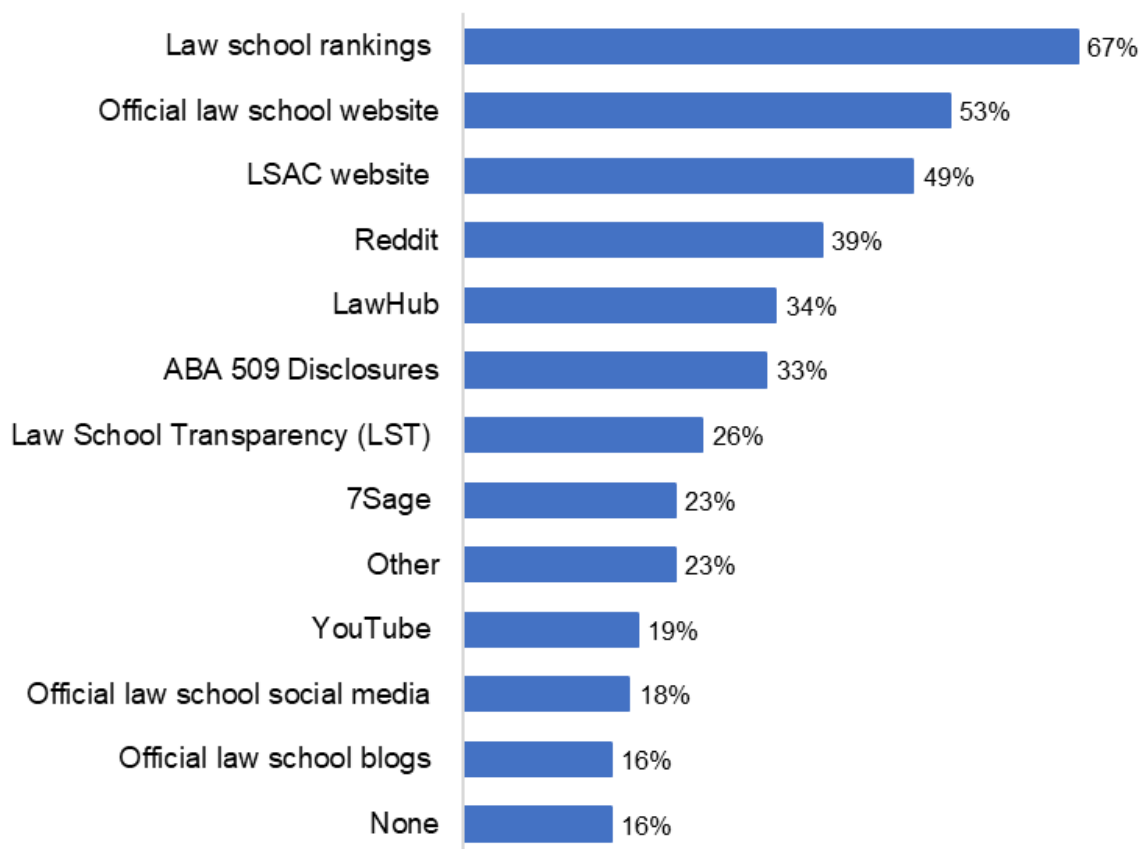
What Online Resources Did They Use?

While people and networks play a role in informing applicants' decisions about where to apply, most applicants also use online resources when deciding where to apply to law school (Figure 24). The top three online resources applicants reported using are (1) law school ranking resources, (2) official law school websites, and (3) LSAC's website (Figure 24). Almost 40% of applicant respondents consulted Reddit, while a third of all applicants used LawHub or ABA Standard 509 required disclosures. About a quarter of applicants used Law School Transparency, which is a part of LawHub, or 7Sage. While

¹⁵ Refer to LSAC's *Law:Fully* post: ["I Want to Be the Good." Introducing the 2024-25 LSAT Test Taker Voices About Motivation, Plans, and Financial Feasibility | The Law School Admission Council.](#)

most applicants used online resources, 16% of applicant respondents said they did not (Figure 24).

Figure 24. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Online Sources Consulted for Law School Application Advice



Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Overall, who and what people consulted for advice when deciding where to apply is related to access to resources and networks. The trends above reveal that applicants from many minoritized groups have limited access to friends and family to consult for advice about where to go to law school. Stakeholders, such as prelaw advisors, pathway programs, and law schools, can use these insights to inform how they proactively reach out to and guide their admitted applicants on finding reliable sources of information on which to base their decision-making.

How Much Time Did They Spend Applying?

Applying to law school requires a significant investment of time. The process involves more than taking the LSAT; it also entails researching and deciding where to apply, gathering transcripts, requesting letters of recommendations, writing essays, and completing application forms. Given the numerous components of a law school application, time is a luxury. To understand how applicants are using their time and

preparing their application, the 2025 LSAC Applicant Survey asked applicants how much time they spent on six core aspects of the application:

1. Writing and completing personal statement(s).
2. Researching and deciding which schools to which to apply.
3. Acquiring transcripts.
4. Acquiring letters of recommendation.
5. Filling out law school applications.
6. Filling out financial aid forms.

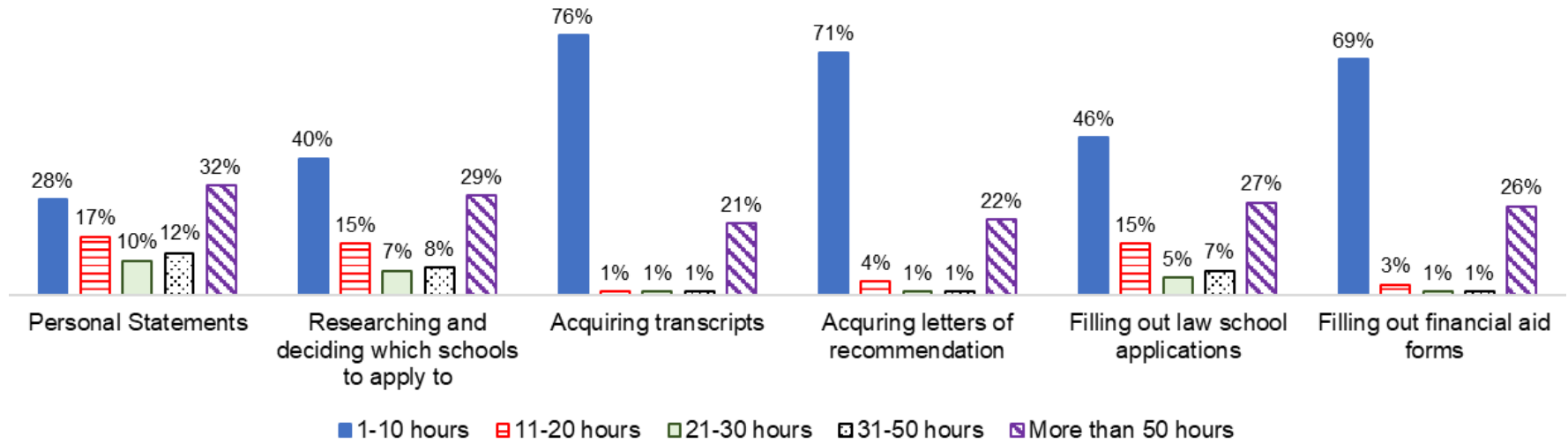
The median reported amount of time spent on these six components is 46 hours. Most respondents spent the bulk of that time writing and completing their personal statements, researching and deciding where to apply, and filling out applications (Table 7; Figure 25). For example, more than half of applicant respondents spent more than 20 hours working on their personal statements. Application components that require asking others to produce them predictably took up less of applicants' time. In fact, more than 70% spent 10 hours or less acquiring transcripts or letters of recommendation (Figure 25). Similarly, most applicants report spending 10 hours or less filling out financial aid forms (Figure 25). Nonetheless, how applicants spent their time on each component of the application varies by group and access to resources and support systems.

Table 7. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Median Hours Spent on Application Process

Application Component	Median Number of Hours Spent
Writing and completing personal statement(s)	20
Researching and deciding which schools to apply to	10
Acquiring transcripts	1
Acquiring letters of recommendation	3
Filling out law school applications	10
Filling out financial aid forms	2

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

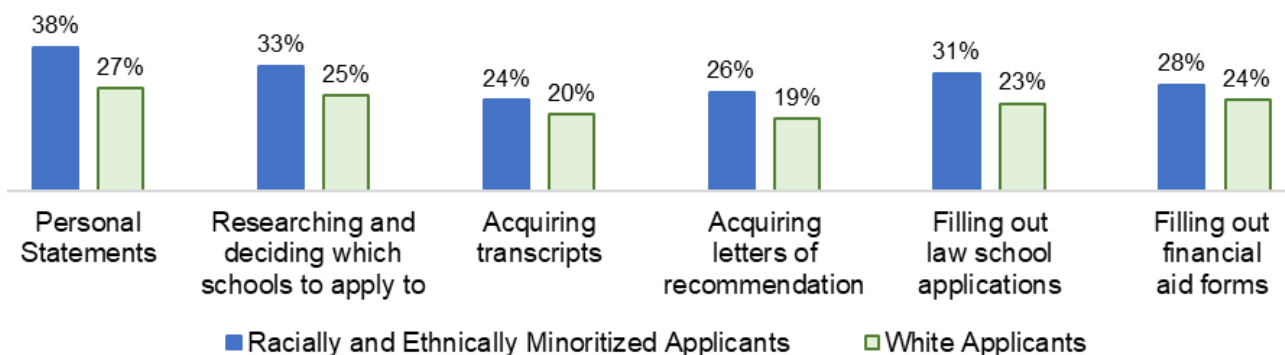
Figure 25. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Median Time Spent Completing Application Materials by Activity



Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

While all applicants generally took similar amounts of time to complete their application materials, racially and ethnically minoritized applicants report spending significantly more time on all of these components than their white peers (Figure 26). For example, 38% of racially and ethnically minoritized applicants said they spent more than 50 hours working on their personal statements, compared with only 27% of white applicants — an 11-percentage point difference. While a quarter of white applicants report spending more than 50 hours researching and deciding where to apply, a third of racially and ethnically minoritized applicants report spending more than 50 hours doing so (Figure 26).

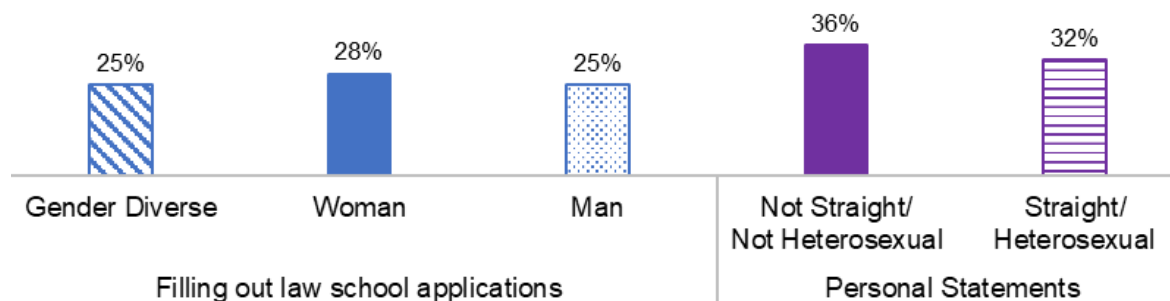
Figure 26. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: More Than 50 Hours Spent on Select Application Materials by White and Racially and Ethnically Minoritized Applicants



Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Similar group-based trends are found by gender and sexual orientation. For example, women report spending more than 50 hours filling out law school applications 12% (or 3 percentage points) more than their male peers (Figure 27). Meanwhile, LGBTQ+ applicants who are not straight/heterosexual report spending more than 50 hours working on their personal statements 12% (or 4 percentage points) more than their straight/heterosexual peers (Figure 27).

Figure 27. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: More Than 50 Hours Spent on Select Application Materials by Gender and Sexual Orientation

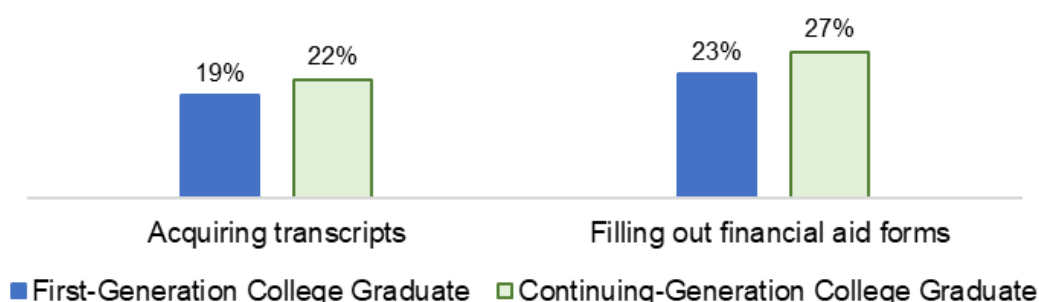


Note: Men and women include those who identify as cisgender. Gender diverse includes anyone who identifies as nonbinary, transgender, and/or another gender identity. Applicants categorized as women or men self-reported being cisgender.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Time spent completing various aspects of the application materials varies by first-generation college status. For example, first-generation college graduates and Pell Grant recipients report spending significantly less time filling out financial aid forms than their continuing-generation and non-recipient peers (Figure 28 and Figure 29). While it is unknown why first-generation college graduates and Pell Grant recipients spend less time filling out financial-aid-related forms, it is not unexpected, given that these groups are more likely to have prior experience filling out such forms. While 27% of continuing-generation college graduates and applicants who did not receive Pell Grants report spending more than 50 hours completing financial aid related forms, 23% of first-generation college graduates and Pell Grant recipients did (Figure 28 and Figure 29).

Figure 28. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: More Than 50 Hours Spent on Select Application Materials by First-Generation College Graduate Status

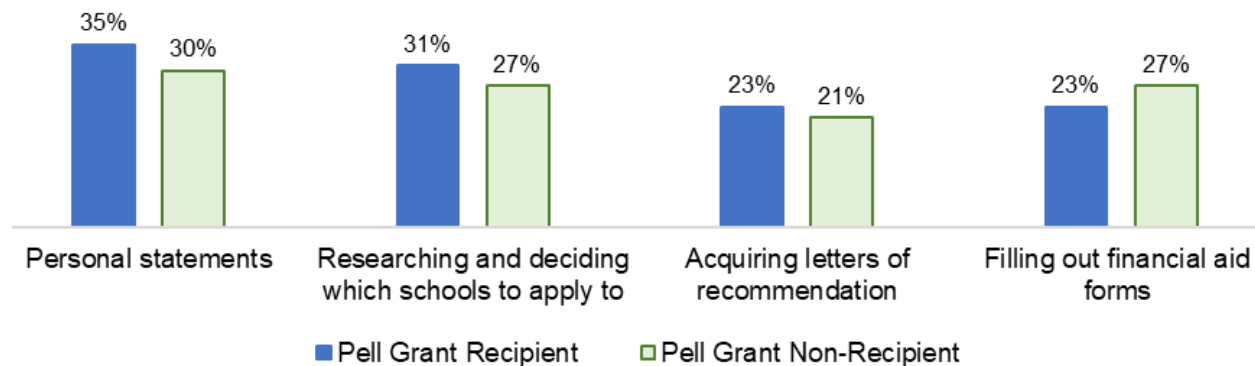


Note: First-generation college graduates include individuals with parents or guardians with an associate degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Applicants who are Pell Grant recipients also report spending more time on their personal statements, researching law schools, and acquiring their transcripts compared to their peers (Figure 29). Most notably, more than a third of applicants who are Pell Grant recipients report spending more than 50 hours on their personal statements; 30% of their peers who are not Pell Grant recipients did, a 5-percentage-point difference (Figure 29).

Figure 29. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: More Than 50 Hours Spent on Select Application Materials by Pell Grant Recipient Status



Note: Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

In addition to time spent preparing for the LSAT, applicant respondents spent a median of 46 hours preparing application materials, including writing and completing personal statement(s), researching and deciding which schools to apply to, acquiring letters of recommendation, filling out law school applications, and filling out financial aid forms. The amount of time spent on each component varies by applicant and their access to resources and support. Overall, crafting and compiling application materials to present one's best self to schools takes time, and in some cases, applicants from underserved and under-resourced communities spend more time on this process. Those approaching the application process with limited support need to spend additional time understanding processes and best practices, as opposed to those who receive these insights directly from trusted sources. Furthermore, the additional time spent by applicants from underserved communities echoes their commitment to their law school motivation and goals.

Adding to the disparity of time spent on materials is the subjective availability or value of time. To individuals with low resources and limited unaccounted time due to economic or caretaking obligations, every hour spent on a law school application takes them away from mandatory responsibilities. The additional time spent "figuring out" the process puts them at an increased disadvantage from their peers and can lead to incomplete processes or applications. Therefore, as a community, insights about the time applicants invest in the application process is critical for developing effective and timely support systems that streamline the process and help applicants discern what information and data is helpful to them, and what is not, as they decide where to submit their applications.

How Confident Were They About Their Application Materials?

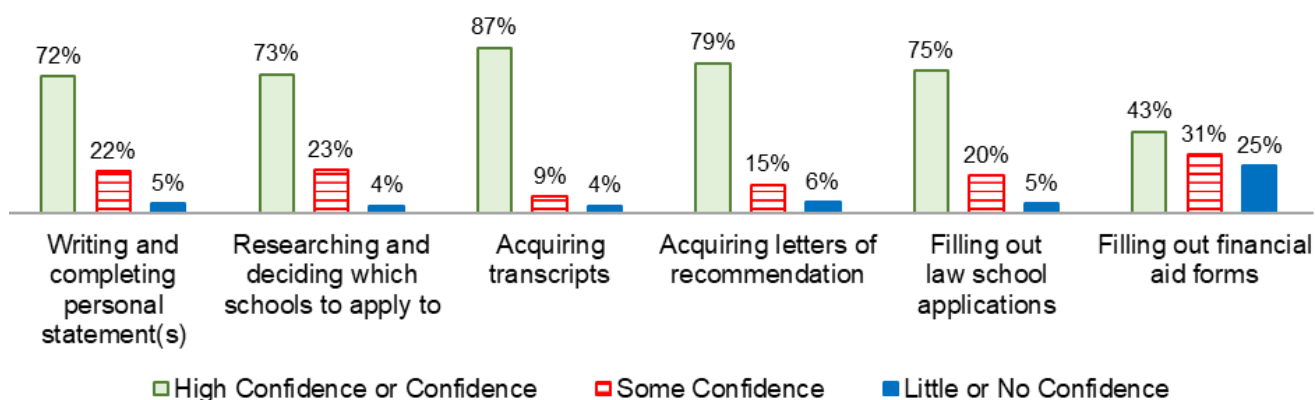
Applying to law school requires time and resources — two things not accessed equally by everyone. Lack of access to these resources can affect applicants' confidence in their ability to successfully apply to law school. Confidence directly affects agency in the application process: When applicants feel secure in how they approach applying to law school, they may experience less stress and more optimism. However, when applicants lack confidence, they may second-guess their qualifications, choose not to apply to certain schools for which they are qualified, or even choose not to apply at all. As the next section shows, applicants with less access to networks, resources, and time to devote to the application process feel less prepared and less confident in their applications. Understanding applicant confidence provides insight into who feels prepared, who does not, and where additional guidance can effectively support applicants through the application process.

Overall, applicants felt most confident working on most of the six application components, with the one exception being filling out financial aid forms (Figure 30). Around three-quarters of applicant respondents report they felt confident or highly confident in:

1. Acquiring letters of recommendation (79%).
2. Filling out law school applications (75%).
3. Researching and deciding which schools to apply to (73%).
4. Writing and completing personal statements (72%; Figure 30).

More than 90% of applicants report they felt confident or highly confident in acquiring transcripts; however, less than half (42%) of respondents said they felt confident in filling out financial aid forms. While the process for acquiring transcripts is more streamlined today at undergraduate institutions, which makes it simpler for applicants to do, completing any kind of financing form can be challenging, confusing, and stressful. The low confidence rate in completing financial aid forms underscores the critical need for guidance, clarity, and education about financing law school and what is required when securing funding.

Figure 30. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Confidence in the Application Process



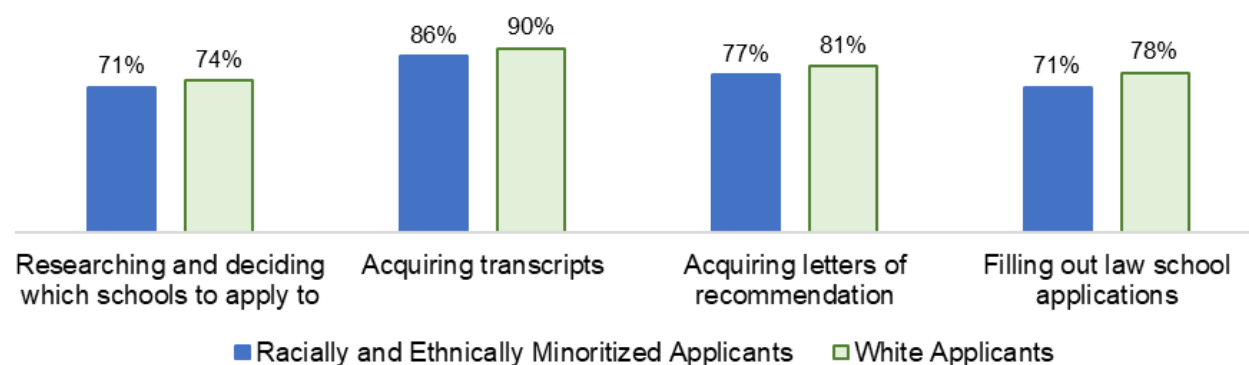
Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

While most applicants felt confident in the application process, confidence rates vary by race and ethnicity, first-generation college graduate status, and Pell Grant status (Figure 31, Figure 32, and Figure 33). Specifically:

- Racially and ethnically minoritized applicants report feeling significantly less confident than their white peers in researching and deciding which law schools to which to apply, acquiring transcripts and letters of recommendation, and filling out law school applications (Figure 31).
- First-generation college graduates report feeling confident in acquiring transcripts and filling out financial aid forms at rates higher than their continuing-generation peers (Figure 32).
- Pell Grant recipients report feeling significantly less confident than their peers who did not receive a Pell Grant in writing and completing personal statement(s) and filling out law school applications (Figure 33). On the other hand, Pell Grant recipients report that they were confident in filling out financial aid forms at a rate 42% higher than their peers who did not receive a Pell Grant (Figure 33).

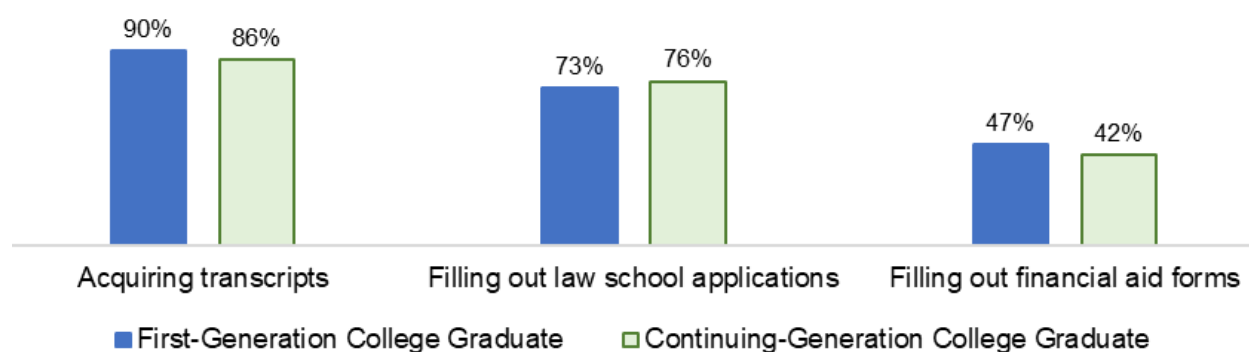
These group-based trends reveal a need for clarity and support on how to complete law school application forms, which can be daunting or confusing for applicants. Interestingly, as observed with time spent on application materials, applicants who are more likely to have prior experience with filling out financial aid forms report higher rates of confidence in doing the same for law school compared to their peers. The law school application process is new to most applicants, but prior experience with various components may not be, as is the case with financial aid forms. Overall, confidence and self-efficacy are critical for persistence in education, and examining confidence is useful for understanding who persists and applies to law school and who does not. While confidence levels are high for law school applicants overall, these trends, especially group-based differences, reveal the need for continued efforts to demystify the application process and provide clarity and support.

Figure 31. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Highly Confident or Confident About Select Application Materials by Race and Ethnicity



Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

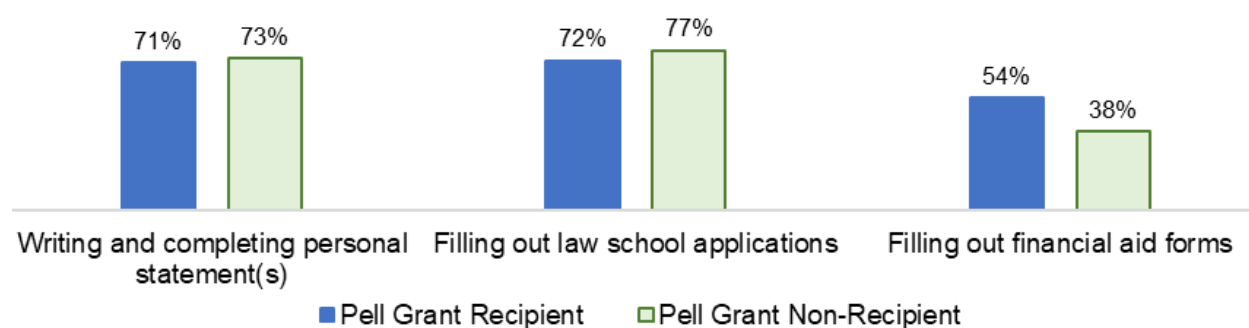
Figure 32. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Highly Confident or Confident About Select Application Materials by First-Generation College Graduate Status



Note: First-generation college graduates include individuals with parents or guardians with an associate degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Figure 33. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Highly Confident or Confident About Select Application Materials by Pell Grant Recipient Status



Note: Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported.

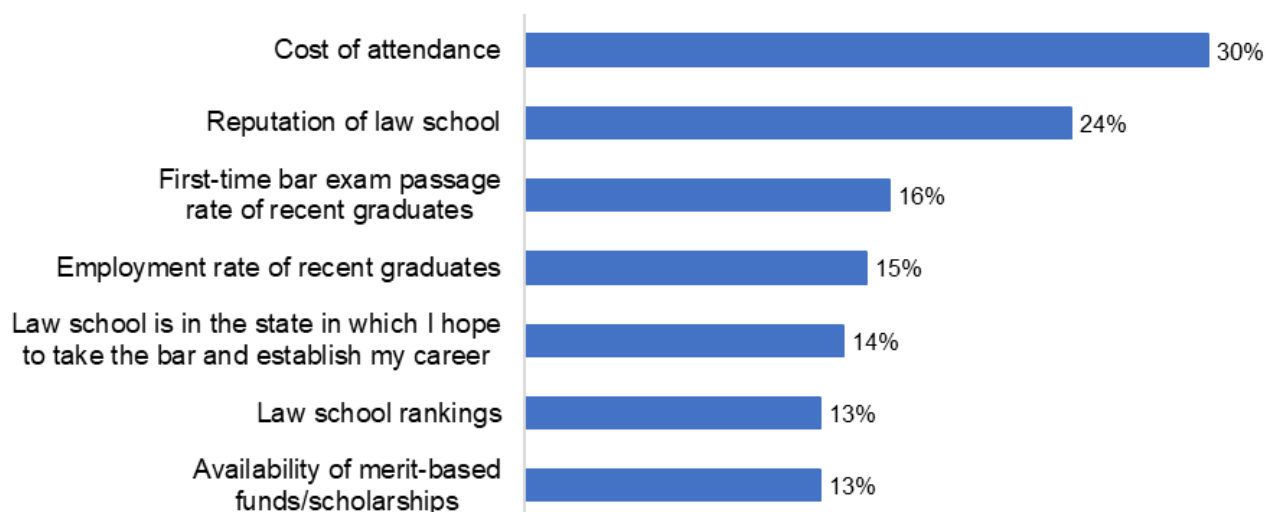
Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

How Did They Decide Where to Apply?

Choosing where to apply to law school is a complex process that requires applicants to weigh many factors beyond the advice and resources already touched on in this report. Understanding these factors can help prelaw advisors and other stakeholders better support applicants from the start of their law school journey. Likewise, law school representatives and admissions professionals can use the following insights to tailor recruitment strategies that highlight resources, opportunities, and experiences applicants report they value most in their decision-making process.

The top three most important factors applicant respondents considered when deciding where to apply to law school are (1) cost of attendance (30%), (2) law school reputation (24%), and (3) first-time bar exam passage rate of a law school's recent graduates (16%; Figure 34). Recent graduate employment rate (15%), law school location relative to where applicants want to practice law (14%), law school rankings (13%), and the availability of merit-based funds/scholarships (13%) are other top factors considered in deciding where to apply. Overall, these factors reflect applicants' awareness of and need for a law school experience that both is financially feasible and will prepare them for successful entry into their legal careers.

Figure 34. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Factors Ranked "Very Important" in Determining Where to Apply



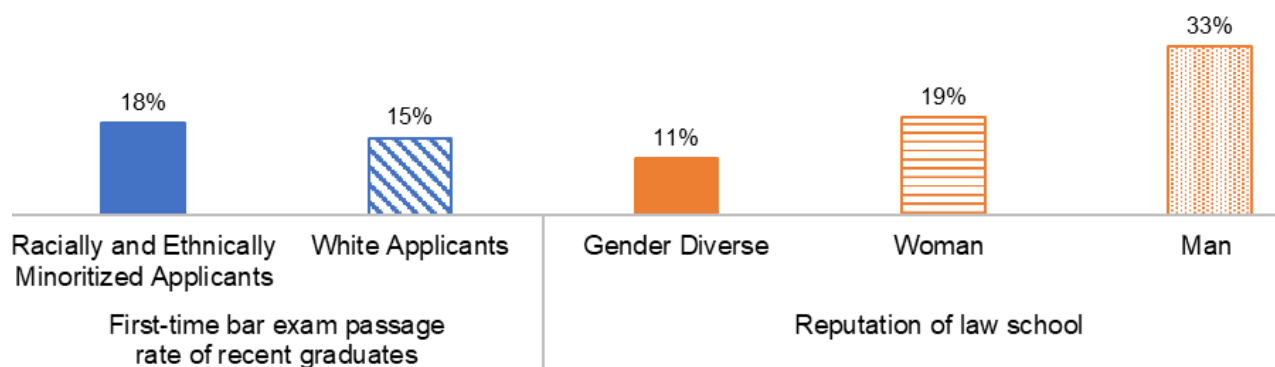
Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

The most important factors in applicants' decision-making processes vary significantly by race, ethnicity, gender, first-generation college graduate status, Pell Grant recipient status, and age. Specifically:

- Racially and ethnically minoritized applicant respondents said first-time bar exam passage rate of recent law school graduates is a top factor in deciding where to apply to law school at a rate 17% (or 3 percentage points) lower than their white peers (Figure 35).

- Men report that law school reputation is a top factor in deciding where to apply at a whopping rate of 200% (or 22 percentage points) higher than gender-diverse applicant respondents and 74% (or 14 percentage points) higher than women (Figure 35).
- First-generation college graduates said cost of attendance is a top factor in deciding where to apply at a rate 17% (or 5 percentage points) higher than continuing-generation graduates (Figure 36).
- Continuing-generation college graduates said law school reputation is a top factor in deciding where to apply at a rate 65% (or 11 percentage points) higher than first-generation college graduates (Figure 36).
- Pell Grant recipients report cost of attendance is a top factor in deciding where to apply at a rate 14% (or 4 percentage points) higher than their non-recipient peers (Figure 37).
- Pell Grant recipients report that first-time bar passage rates of recent graduates are a top factor in deciding where to apply at a rate 43% (or 6 percentage points) higher than their non-recipient peers (Figure 37).
- Respondents who did not receive a Pell Grant report that a law school's reputation is a top factor in deciding where to apply at a rate 35% (or 7 percentage points) higher than their Pell Grant recipient peers (Figure 37).
- Younger applicants, ages 26 or younger, indicate that cost of attendance, law school reputation, first-time bar passage rates of recent grads, and employment rates of recent grads are top factors in deciding where to apply at significantly higher rates than their older peers (Figure 38). For instance, applicants who are 26 or younger said law school reputation was a top factor at a rate 42% (or 8 percentage points) higher than applicants 27 or older (Figure 38).

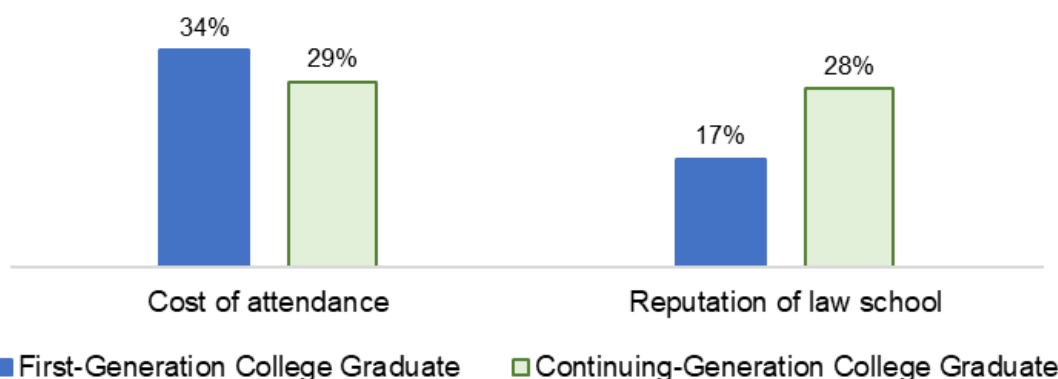
Figure 35. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Factors Ranked "Very Important" in Determining Where to Apply by Race and Ethnicity, and by Gender



Note: Men and women include those who identify as cisgender. Gender diverse includes anyone who identifies as nonbinary, transgender, and/or another gender identity.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

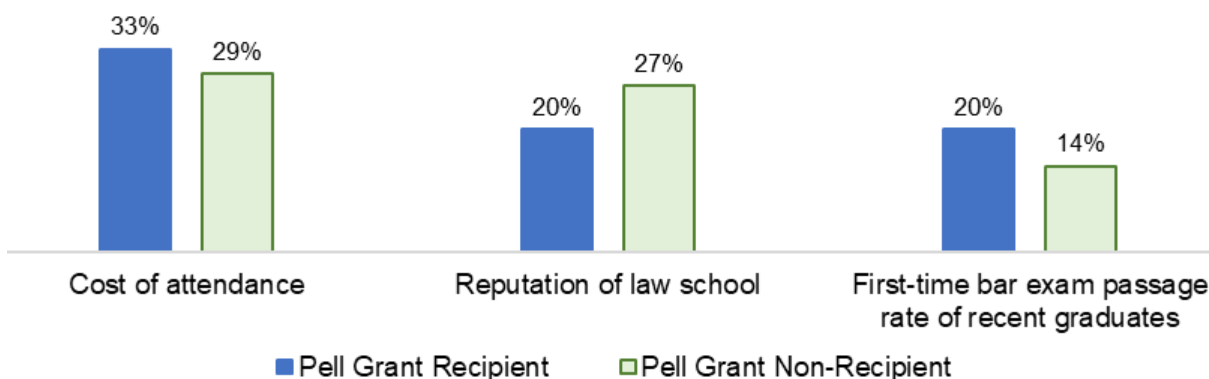
Figure 36. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Factors Ranked "Very Important" in Determining Where to Apply by First-Generation College Graduate Status



Note: First-Generation college graduates include individuals with parents or guardians with an associate degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

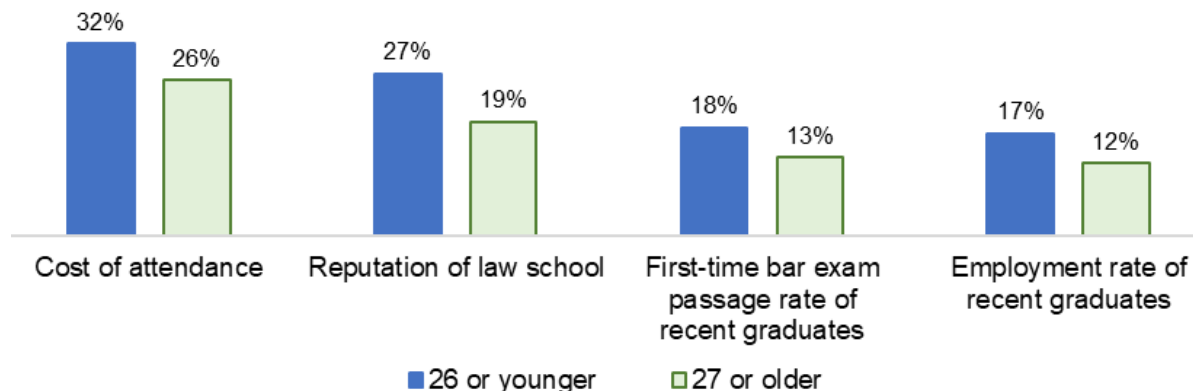
Figure 37. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Factors Ranked "Very Important" in Determining Where to Apply by Pell Grant Recipient Status



Note: Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Figure 38. 2024-25 Applicant Survey: Top Factors Ranked "Very Important" in Determining Where to Apply by Age



Note: Age as of first application submission date.

Source: 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey.

Overall, the 2024-25 applicant respondents weigh and balance several factors when deciding where to apply, making it clear that they are multidimensional consumers of information and decision makers.¹⁶ Their process is not all about rankings or prestige. Applicant respondents underscored foresight into life after law school as driving their decisions; in particular, first-generation college graduates and Pell Grant recipients are significantly more focused than their peers on how they will pay for law school and their career prospects. In the context of new federal loan caps, these group-based trends echo the importance of considering how to finance law school when deciding whether and where to apply.¹⁷

Conclusion and Advancing Mission

Advancing law and justice by promoting access, equity, and fairness in law school admission and beyond is done by creating and delivering effective guidance, support, and interventions that center on how individuals are experiencing the journey from prelaw through practice. This report is a snapshot of the journey, zooming in on how applicants to law school are experiencing and approaching the application process.

The 2024-25 application cycle unfolded during a time when legal education encountered abrupt changes in standards, policies, and legal practices, from anti-DEI legislation and executive orders to major changes to federal Grad PLUS loans. Despite these changes, which have given way to financial uncertainty for many aspiring lawyers, the 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey reveals that applicants were highly motivated to do good and thus remained focused, investing hours into researching law schools, deciding where to apply, and compiling their materials.

Applying to law school is a major milestone that requires time, resources, confidence, and a system of support. Yet, as this report shows, the application process does not unfold equally for everyone. Differences in access to guidance, social networks, financial stability, and resources (including time) can affect not simply how and when individuals apply, but also the confidence they have when making important application decisions. These differences in how applicants approach the application process reveal intervention opportunities that address inequities and support prospective law students as they seek to:

- Learn about what schools offer.
- Reflect on what matters the most to them.
- Build an informed understanding about financing law school.
- Expand the scope of their decision-making to consider all their academic, professional, and personal needs in the journey through law school and beyond.

¹⁶ Refer to LSAC's knowledge report: [The 2024 1L Profile](#).

¹⁷ Refer to LSAC's knowledge report: [2024-2025 Test Takers](#).

Applying to law schools that meet an applicant's needs is about more than availability of information; it is about the time the applicant has to dedicate to the process, along with access to resources and networks that help them discern what is relevant and applicable to their goals and needs. LSAC will continue to collaborate and collect data to illuminate what is happening on the ground throughout the prelaw-through-practice journey, in alignment with the LSAC mission to support the future of the legal profession.

Data Sources and Methodology

This report relies on two data sources: first, a dataset consisting of data for all applicants during the 2024-25 application cycle; and second, the 2025 LSAC Applicant Survey, conducted in March 2025. The purpose of this survey is to understand who the 2024-25 law school applicants were and what factors they considered when deciding where to apply to law school. A random subsample of the applicant pool was invited to participate in the 2025 LSAC Applicant Survey, and more than 3,340 applicants responded.

Post-stratification survey weights were added to more accurately reflect the demographic distribution of the 2024-25 applicant population at the time of the survey administration. The weighting method of raking¹⁸ was used to construct weights for demographic variables that exceeded 5% difference from the population to ensure the respondents from the 2024-25 LSAC Applicant Survey are representative of the 2024-25 applicant pool at the time the survey was administered.

¹⁸ Raking is a weighting method. Andrew Mercer, A. L. and C. K. (2018, January 26). *How different weighting methods work*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2018/01/26/how-different-weighting-methods-work/>