LSAC's Knowledge Report
The 2024 1L Profile

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Executive Summary

Building on LSAC's [2023 1L Profile](#) and [The Composition of the First-Year Law School Class and Enrollment Trends](#) reports, this 1L Profile report focuses on the 2024 first-year (1L) class, adding details about the first class admitted mostly after the June 2023 SFFA v. Harvard decision. This report contributes to the collective legal community understanding of:

1. who is enrolling in law school,
2. where they enrolled, and
3. how they made their enrollment decision.

This report provides several important insights that may help law schools recruit and support future law students along the prelaw through practice journey. The overall 2024 1L class enrollment data and data from the 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey reveal that the 2024 1L class:

- **Was as racially and ethnically diverse as the 2023 1L class.** 41.8% of the 1L class were from racially and ethnically minoritized[1] groups, 57% were women, 13.9% were LGBTQ+,[2] 23% were first-generation college graduates, and 75% were the first in their families to go to law school.

- **Enrolled differently based on identity and background.** 91% of the 1L class enrolled in a full-time program. Students who enrolled in part-time programs were more racially and ethnically diverse and were more economically under-resourced than their peers in full-time programs. While the class was almost equally distributed across all law schools based on law school selectivity, the top 25% highly selective law schools were less racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse than other law schools.[3]

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[1] The term "minoritized" refers to populations that have been treated as less important than the dominant population 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.

[3] Using LSAC data, law schools are each assigned a selectivity index based on each school's 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students. The top 25% highly selective law schools are in the first quartile (Q1), and they are the first 49 law schools with the highest index score.

- **Were multidimensional enrollment decision-makers.** Like their 2023 peers, the factors that drove 2024 1Ls' final decision on where to attend — their current law school — were multidimensional and varied based on respondents' needs and goals. Cost of attendance was the leading factor that informed most 1Ls' decision-making process.

- **Were confident they enrolled in the right law school for them.** Leveraging effective guidance and resources has resulted in eight out of ten 1L respondents reporting they were confident they are attending the right law school for them. However, confidence and access to effective guidance and resources were experienced differently in the enrollment process for students from marginalized groups.

- **Enrolled in their preferred law school.** 96% of the 2024 1Ls respondents indicated they enrolled in a preferred law school.

- **Sought support for law school success.** Similar to their 2023 peers, about one in five 2024 1L respondents (20%) reported they participated in 0L/bridge programs.

The 2024 1L class was as diverse as the 2023 1L class based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background. Therefore, it is not surprising that the factors important to this class when deciding where to enroll varied. The 2024 1L class utilized a wide range of information sources, spaces, tools, and opportunities to gather law school information to help them make their individual decisions on where to attend and how to prepare for the first semester of law school. As a result, most reported they were at a law school today that was right for them.

This report provides reliable data to inform how, as a community, we can address barriers in a consistent manner, work toward concrete outcomes, and learn from what works and what does not. The insights in this report can continue to help inform a collective effort from prelaw through admission as we usher in the next generation of legal leaders.

Introduction

Central to LSAC's mission is our commitment to supporting the legal community in having a comprehensive, data-informed understanding of who is entering law school and how they made their decision. Building on [LSAC's 2023 1L Profile](#) and [The Composition of the First-Year Law School Class and Enrollment Trends](#) reports, this report focuses on the 2024 first-year (1L) class, adding details about the first class admitted mostly after the June 2023 SFFA v. Harvard decision.

The purpose of this report is to provide the legal community with a consistent and detailed profile of the first-year class, specifically about who the 2024 1L class was, where they enrolled, and how they made their decisions on where to attend. Understanding who is going to law school — and why — is useful for informing how future classes are recruited and supported as they make their way to and through law school and beyond.

The 2024 1L class was as racially and ethnically diverse as the 2023 class, but the class was the most diverse based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Therefore, it is not surprising that the factors important to this class when deciding where to enroll varied. Law students are not unidimensional in their decision-making. Once admitted to law school, the factors that drove their final decision as to where to attend — their current law school — were multidimensional and varied based on respondents' needs and goals.

Similar to their 2023 1L peers, 2024 1Ls demonstrate a degree of self-reflection as they look back on their decision-making process. Many students reported that the factor they viewed as most important at the time they were making their decision on where to attend would not be the most important factor now, after experiencing the first couple of months of law school. When asked what are the most important factors they would advise current candidates to consider when deciding where to go to law school compared to when they made their own decision, many students now cite cost as a more important factor than law school reputation.

The needs and goals of 1Ls on this journey varied, as did their experiences. In addition to weighing multiple factors to inform their final enrollment decisions, 1Ls relied on a number of sources of information, both their networks and online resources. Overall, three out of four of the 2024 1Ls agreed or strongly agreed they had access to effective guidance and resources when deciding about where to go to law school, but this rate is lower for students from marginalized groups, underscoring that the journey is not experienced the same by everyone.

Overall, eight out of ten 1Ls reported they were at the right law school for them, and over 90% reported they were attending a preferred law school. This report builds on valuable insights about the journey to law school for admission professionals, prelaw

advisors, and prospective law students as they consider the many factors that go into their final decision on where to attend law school.

- For law schools, this research can help them market their strengths and programs by understanding the needs and goals of prospective applicants, or to build more effective recruitment strategies to promote a diverse applicant pool.

- For prelaw stakeholders, such as advisors and pathway programs, this report can be a vital roadmap as they guide prospective applicants.

- And for prospective applicants, these trends and findings can serve as a collective voice of the lessons learned by recent first-year law students, and as invaluable insights and advice on how they would make their enrollment decisions today.

Who Was in the 2024 First-Year Class?

The 2024 1L profile report is designed to provide a broader and deeper understanding of the diversity in legal education. Specifically, this section provides diversity breakdowns based on race; ethnicity; gender identity; sexual orientation; socioeconomic status based on first-generation college, Pell Grant recipient, and LSAC fee waiver status; and age at enrollment. Overall, the 2024 1L class was as racially and ethnically diverse as the 2023 class,[4] but the class was the most diverse based on sexual orientation and gender identity. However, the 2024 1L class was less diverse based on socioeconomic factors such as first-generation college, Pell Grant recipient, and LSAC fee waiver status.

Knowing who is entering law school each year provides a snapshot of who is enrolling and how to ensure access to legal education. Who is in the 2024 1L class reflects the efforts of countless individuals committed to supporting, guiding, teaching, mentoring, recruiting, and welcoming these future legal leaders. The research provides an opportunity to evaluate our efforts and to continue innovating and collaborating in how we address inequality, including opportunities for skills development, growth, and guidance that start long before law school admission.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

The 2024 1L class was as racially and ethnically diverse as the 2023 1L class (Table 1), with 41.8% of students from racially and ethnically minoritized groups. According to LSAC's data, 39,558 individuals enrolled in 196 U.S. law schools in the 2024-2025 academic year. Racial and ethnic diversity had been steadily increasing for the prior several years, increasing by two percentage points between 2021 and 2022 and by 1.8 percentage points from 2022 to 2023, and remained stagnant from 2023 to 2024.

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[4] For a comparison of the 2024 1L class with other recent classes, check out LSAC's Knowledge Report: The Composition of the First-Year Law School Class and Enrollment Trends.

Table 1: Racial and Ethnic Diversity of the 2024 1L Class

Race and Ethnicity	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native[5]	1.64%
Asian	9.51%
Black/African American	7.56%
Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x[6]	9.68%
Indigenous Person of Canada	0.01%
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	2.88%
Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more)	10.10%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander[7]	0.46%
White	50.77%
Did Not Indicate	7.40%

Source: LSAC

Multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more) identifying 2024 1Ls are diverse, and it is important to examine who they are within this large umbrella group. The largest share of multiracial 1Ls continue to come from the same race/ethnicity groups as the 2023 1L class. Of the 10% of 1Ls who identify as multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more), about one in three identified as white Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x (31%; Table 2). About 6% of multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more) 1Ls identified as Afro-Latina/é/o/x (Black/African American and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x). When individuals are all categorized as Hispanic or Latino of any race, the diversity within the community and the variety of lived experiences and educational outcomes are lost.[8] 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

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[5] LSAC is committed to improving how data is collected and reported. Given conversations with community leaders and advocates, American Indian or Alaska Native students include those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting American Indian or Alaska Native and one other racial or ethnic category) as American Indian or Alaska Native. 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*.

[6] Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x students counted here are 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 students are counted under multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more).

[7] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander includes anyone who identifies exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and one other racial or ethnic category) as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

[8] 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

or Black/African American peers.[9] Therefore, 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 their journey.

Table 2: 2024 Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more) Identifying 1Ls

Race and Ethnicity	n	Percent
White and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	1,442	31%
Asian and White	703	15%
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab and White	678	15%
Black/African American and White	313	7%
Black/African American and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	266	6%

Source: LSAC

Gender and LGBTQ+ Diversity

Overall, the majority of the 2024 1L class identify as cisgender (Table 3) and straight/heterosexual (Table 4).

In 2024, women made up 57% of the 1L class; by comparison, women represented less than 50% of the 1L class in 2015.

Table 3: Gender Identities Reported by the 1L Class

Gender Identity	Percent
Man (Cisgender)	39.5%
Woman (Cisgender)	56.7%
Gender Diverse	1.4%
Nonbinary	0.7%
Transgender	0.5%
Gender Queer or Gender Fluid	0.03%
Another Gender Diverse Identity	0.4%
Did Not Indicate	2.4%

Source: LSAC

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[9] 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

LSAC collects additional details about the LGBTQ+ community, including sexual orientation diversity. 13.7% of all 1Ls do not identify as straight/heterosexual, with the largest proportion identifying as bisexual, followed by gay or lesbian.

Table 4: Sexual Orientation Reported by the 1L Class

Sexual Orientation	Percent
Bisexual	6.3%
Gay or Lesbian	3.6%
Questioning or Unsure	0.6%
Sexual Orientation Not Listed	3.1%
Straight/Heterosexual	73.1%
Did Not Indicate	13.3%

Source: LSAC

Bringing together gender diversity and sexual orientation diversity, a total of 13.9% of the 1L class identified as LGBTQ+,[10] an increase from 11.8% in the 2021 1L class.[11] It is likely that this number will continue to grow, according to the 2022 Gallup report that found that about one in five Gen Z adults identify as LGBTQ+.[12]

Socioeconomic Diversity

Researchers across various disciplines measure socioeconomic status (SES) by considering a number of factors. In addition to our income and assets, researchers consider factors like where we grew up, our citizenship status, whether we went to private or public schools, our cultural background, our occupation, our geographic location, and the education attainment, occupation, and financial assets of our parents or guardians. These factors have the potential to influence quality of life and our 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, the majority of the 1L class are continuing-generation college graduates (Figures 1 and 2) who were not Pell Grant recipients (Figure 3), who did not receive an LSAC fee waiver (Figure 3), and who are the first in their families to attend law school.

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[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] See The 2023 LGBTQ+ Law School Survey: LGBTQ+ Representation in Legal Education.

[12] Jones, J. M. (2022, February 17). LGBT Identification in U.S. Ticks Up to 7.1%. Gallup.

The majority of the 1L class are not first-generation college graduates; indeed, 47% reported that at least one parent or guardian had a post-graduate degree (Figure 1). That said, almost a quarter (23%) of the 1L class are first-generation college graduates (Figure 2). At the intersection, one in three racially and ethnically minoritized 1Ls (33%) are the first in their families to graduate college compared to less than one in five (16%) of white 1Ls. Future LSAC reports will examine the diversity within the first-generation college graduate population where experiences and diversity vary at intersecting identities.

Figure 1: Highest Level of Education Attainment of Any Parent/Guardian
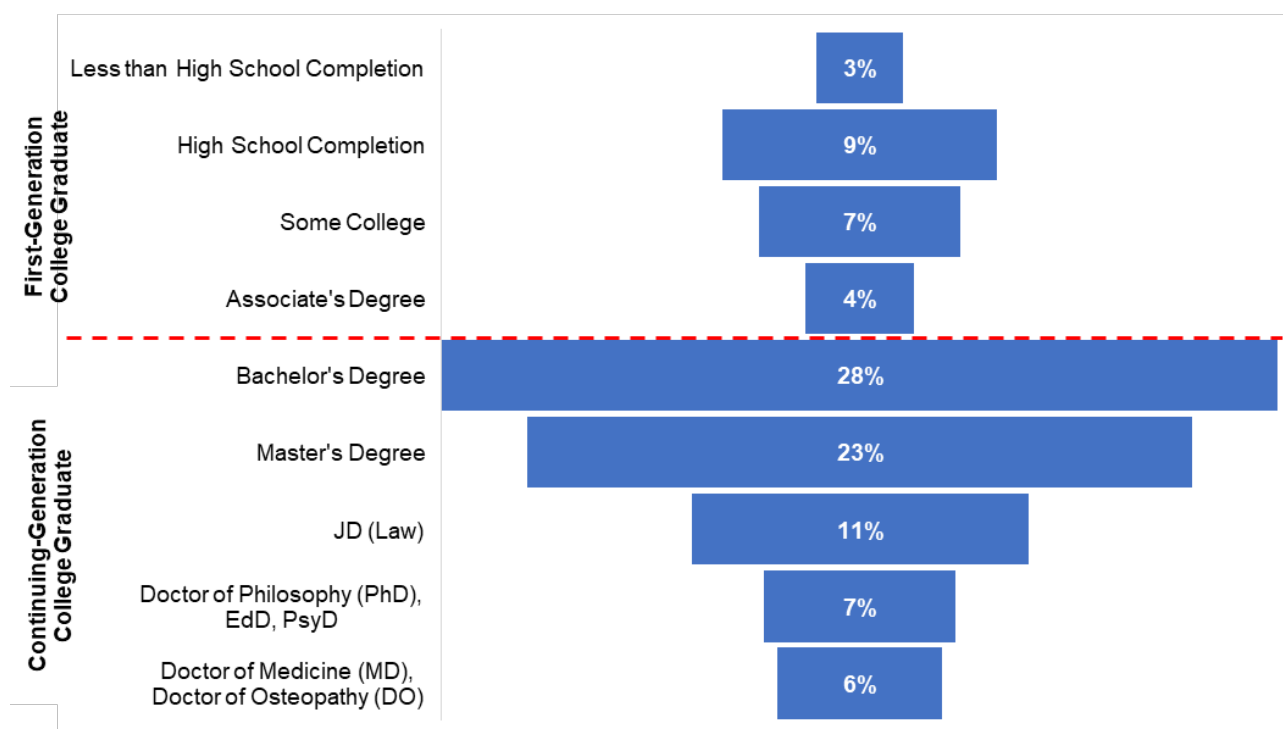
Source: LSAC. Note: For 2.4% of matriculants/1Ls, their parent or guardian education level is unknown, or they chose not to disclose. First-generation college graduates include students with parents or guardians with an associate's degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

Figure 2: First-Generation College Status of the 1L Class

First-Generation College Graduate: 23%
Continuing-Generation College Graduate: 75%

Source: LSAC. For 2.4% of 1Ls, their parent or guardian education level is unknown, or they chose not to disclose. First-generation college graduates include students with parents or guardians with an associate's degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

While 11% of 1Ls reported that at least one of their parents or guardians holds a JD as their highest level of education attainment (Figure 1), 24% reported they have a close family member who holds a JD and are thus defined as continuing-generation law students.[13] Similar to the 2023 1L class, 75% of the 2024 1L class are first-generation law students.

Pell Grants and LSAC fee waivers[14] are provided to students with demonstrated financial need. In the 1L class, a little more than one in four 1Ls reported they were Pell Grant recipients, and about one in ten 1Ls received an LSAC fee waiver (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Percent of LSAC Fee Waiver and Pell Grant Recipients in the 1L Class

Pell Grant Recipient: 26%
Pell Grant Non-Recipient: 65%
Pell Grant Status Unknown: 8%
LSAC Fee Waiver Recipient: 11%
LSAC Fee Waiver Non-Recipient: 89%
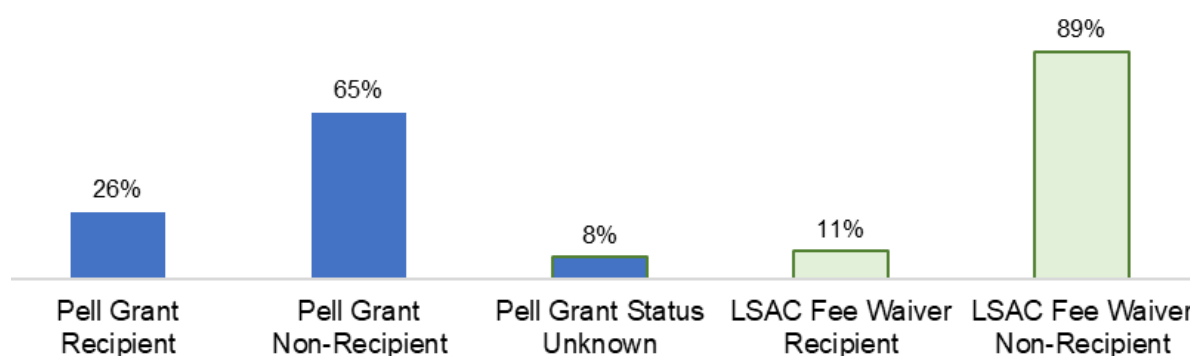
Source: LSAC. Pell Grant data is self-reported, and 10% did not indicate.

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[13] LSAC asks if they have a close family member who holds a JD/law degree. This data point is based on this question.

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

Overall, the first-year class remains predominantly continuing-generation college graduates with access to financial support. These insights illustrate the importance of outreach to open access to resources and opportunities for students who are first-generation college graduates and/or who lack financial support.

Age at Enrollment

As recent research reveals, only about a third of 1Ls are 22 years old or younger, straight out of undergrad. The largest proportion of 1Ls in 2024 started law school between 23 and 26 years old. One in five 1Ls began their law school journey at 27 years or older (Table 5).

Table 5: Age Ranges of the 1L Class

Age (years)	Percent
22 or Younger	34%
23 to 26	46%
27 to 30	11%
31 to 39	7%
40 or Older	3%

Source: LSAC. Age for all 1Ls is as of August 1, 2024.

Where Did They Enroll?

Knowing who is going to law school is one part of the story. Where students enrolled is another critical aspect, as it carries implications for whether the legal profession reflects the society it represents, especially as it relates to employment recruitment.

Law schools provide different types of support, program structures, and access to local experiential opportunities. Deciding where to attend is a big decision for law school candidates each year. In this section, LSAC data reveal patterns of where the 2024 1L class enrolled based on law school selectivity, school type (private v. public), geographic region, and program type (full-time v. part-time). When examining the future composition of the legal profession, it is important to note not only the racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, and SES diversity in any given first-year class, but also to examine where students attend. This analysis is informative for prospective employers and stakeholders committed to attracting future professionals from various backgrounds from across the U.S.

Enrollment by Law School Selectivity

For the purposes of this research, we have used each law school's 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students to create a selectivity index score. The top 25% of highly selective law schools are in quartile 1 (Q1), the next 25% of selective schools are in quartile 2 (Q2), and so on. Given the variation in class sizes among the schools that make up each quartile, 29% of 1Ls enrolled in Q1 (top 25% highly selective) law schools, 26% enrolled in Q2 schools, 22% enrolled in Q3 schools, and 22% enrolled in Q4 schools (Figure 4). This quartile analysis allows us to understand how racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic diversity enrollment rates vary across law schools based on selectivity.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Racial and ethnic diversity and group enrollment rates vary widely across law schools based on selectivity. Law schools in the fourth quartile (Q4) are more racially and ethnically diverse than the top 25% highly selective law schools in the first quartile (Q1; Table 6). For example, 51% of 1Ls enrolled in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1) are white compared to the 43% of 1Ls enrolled in law schools within the fourth quartile who are white. As law school selectivity decreases, the representation of white 1L students and Asian 1L students decreases, while the representation of other racial and ethnic groups increases. Black 1L enrollment, in particular, increased in representation in schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4) compared to 2023 and decreased across all other law schools.[15]

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[15] For an in-depth trends analysis, refer to LSAC's Knowledge Report: The Composition of the First-Year Law School Class and Enrollment Trends.

Table 6: Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Law Schools by Selectivity

Race and Ethnicity	Q1 (Top 25% Highly Selective Law Schools)	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 1L Class
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.08%	1.52%	1.96%	2.20%	1.64%
Asian	15.59%	9.95%	6.27%	4.16%	9.51%
Black/African American	5.79%	5.28%	5.76%	14.29%	7.56%
Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	5.61%	7.94%	9.86%	16.88%	9.68%
Indigenous Person of Canada	0.01%	0.03%	0%	0.01%	0.01%
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	2.70%	3.16%	2.86%	2.79%	2.88%
Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more)	10.34%	10.43%	9.40%	10.06%	10.10%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.52%	0.40%	0.39%	0.52%	0.46%
White	50.91%	53.63%	55.19%	42.92%	50.77%
Did Not Indicate	7.46%	7.65%	8.29%	6.16%	7.40%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: LSAC. Using LSAC data, law schools are each assigned a selectivity index based on each school's 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students. The top 25% highly selective law schools are in the first quartile (Q1), and they are the first 49 law schools with the highest index score.

While the 2024 1L class is relatively evenly distributed between the four law school selectivity quartiles, analysis examining each racial and ethnic group found that Asian 1Ls are overrepresented in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1), and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x and Black/African American 1Ls are overrepresented at law schools in the fourth quartile (Q4; Figure 4). Almost half (48%) of all Asian 1L students enrolled in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1); by contrast, only 19% of American Indian or Alaska Native and 17% of Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1L students enrolled in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1). Many racially and ethnically minoritized 1Ls are overrepresented in law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4). 30% of all American Indian or Alaska Native 1Ls, 42% of all Black/African American 1Ls, 39% of all Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1Ls, and 25% of all Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 1Ls enrolled in law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4). Akin to the 2023 first-year class, the racial and ethnic diversity of the 2024 first-year class is not equally distributed across law schools based on selectivity.

Figure 4: Law School Selectivity Enrollment Within Each Racial and Ethnic Group
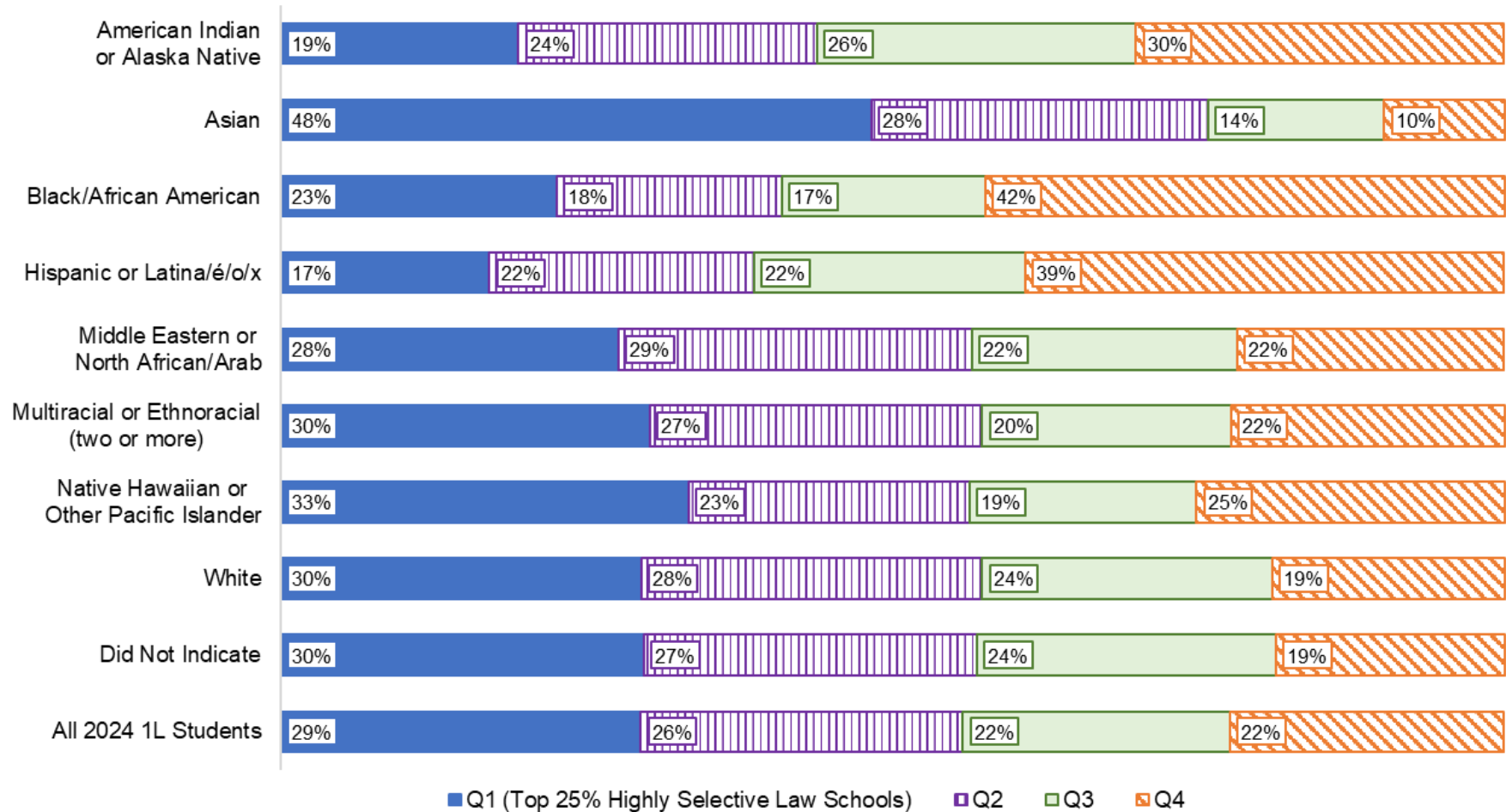
Racial/Ethnic Group	Q1 (Top 25% Highly Selective Law Schools)	Q2	Q3	Q4
American Indian or Alaska Native	19%	24%	26%	30%
Asian	48%	28%	14%	10%
Black/African American	23%	18%	17%	42%
Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	17%	22%	22%	39%
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	28%	29%	22%	22%
Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more)	30%	27%	20%	22%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	33%	23%	19%	25%
White	30%	28%	24%	19%
Did Not Indicate	30%	27%	24%	19%
All 2024 1L Students	29%	26%	22%	22%

■ Q1 (Top 25% Highly Selective Law Schools) ▥ Q2 ▢ Q3 ▨ Q4

Source: LSAC. Using LSAC data, law schools are each assigned a selectivity index based on each school's 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students. The top 25% highly selective law schools are in the first quartile (Q1), and they are the first 49 law schools with the highest index score.

Gender and Sexual Orientation Diversity

Examining enrollment rates across the law school selectivity quartiles through the lenses of gender identity and sexual orientation, we find the following:

- Men have greater representation than women in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1), while women have slightly greater representation than men in law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4) (Figure 5).

- Overall, LGBTQ+ 1Ls are enrolled in the top 25% highly selective law schools at higher rates compared to their peers.

- The enrollment rate of gender diverse 1Ls in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1) is higher than their peers (Figure 5). Over 40% (42%) of all gender diverse 1Ls enrolled in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1), an enrollment rate more than 35% higher than all 1Ls.

- Similarly, 1Ls who identified as not straight/not heterosexual enrolled in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1) at a rate over 40% higher than their straight/heterosexual peers (39% compared to 27%, respectively). And not straight/not heterosexual 1Ls have lower representation in Q4 schools, where only 17% enrolled, compared to 24% of their straight/heterosexual peers.

Figure 5: Law School Selectivity Enrollment by Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Category	Q1 (Top 25% Highly Selective Law Schools)	Q2	Q3	Q4
Gender Diverse	42%	24%	19%	15%
Man (Cisgender)	30%	26%	22%	22%
Woman (Cisgender)	29%	27%	21%	23%
LGBTQ+	39%	26%	18%	17%
Not Straight/Not Heterosexual	39%	26%	18%	17%
Straight/Heterosexual	27%	26%	22%	24%
All 2024 1L Students	29%	26%	22%	23%

■ Q1 (Top 25% Highly Selective Law Schools)　▥ Q2　▢ Q3　▨ Q4

Source: LSAC. 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. Using LSAC data, law schools are each assigned a selectivity index based on each school's 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students. The top 25% highly selective law schools are in the first quartile (Q1), and they are the first 49 law schools with the highest index score.

Socioeconomic Diversity

A larger and significant gap persists in enrollment by law school selectivity based on students' socioeconomic backgrounds (Figure 6). Pell Grant non-recipients (34%) enrolled in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1) at a rate 70% higher than their Pell Grant recipient peers (20%).[16] About one in three Pell Grant recipients (33%) enrolled in law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4), a rate almost double that of their Pell Grant non-recipient peers (17%). A similar pattern exists when examining first-generation college graduate status. Continuing-generation college graduates enrolled in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1) at a rate more than 70% higher than their first-generation college graduate peers. And about one in three first-generation college graduates enrolled in law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4), a rate that was almost 80% higher than their continuing-generation college graduate peers (19%).

Similar to the 2023 1L class, the 2024 first-year class was by many measures as diverse, but the representation of students from different racial, ethnic, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic backgrounds was not evenly distributed throughout the law schools based on selectivity. Understanding how the class composition varies across law schools based on selectivity has implications for job placement outcomes, in particular for larger law firms, clerkships, and other pathways to leadership in the legal profession.

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[16] The percent difference is calculated by dividing the difference (34-20=14) by the Pell Grant rate of 20, which is 14/20=70.

Figure 6: Law School Selectivity Enrollment by Pell Grant and First-Generation College Graduate Status

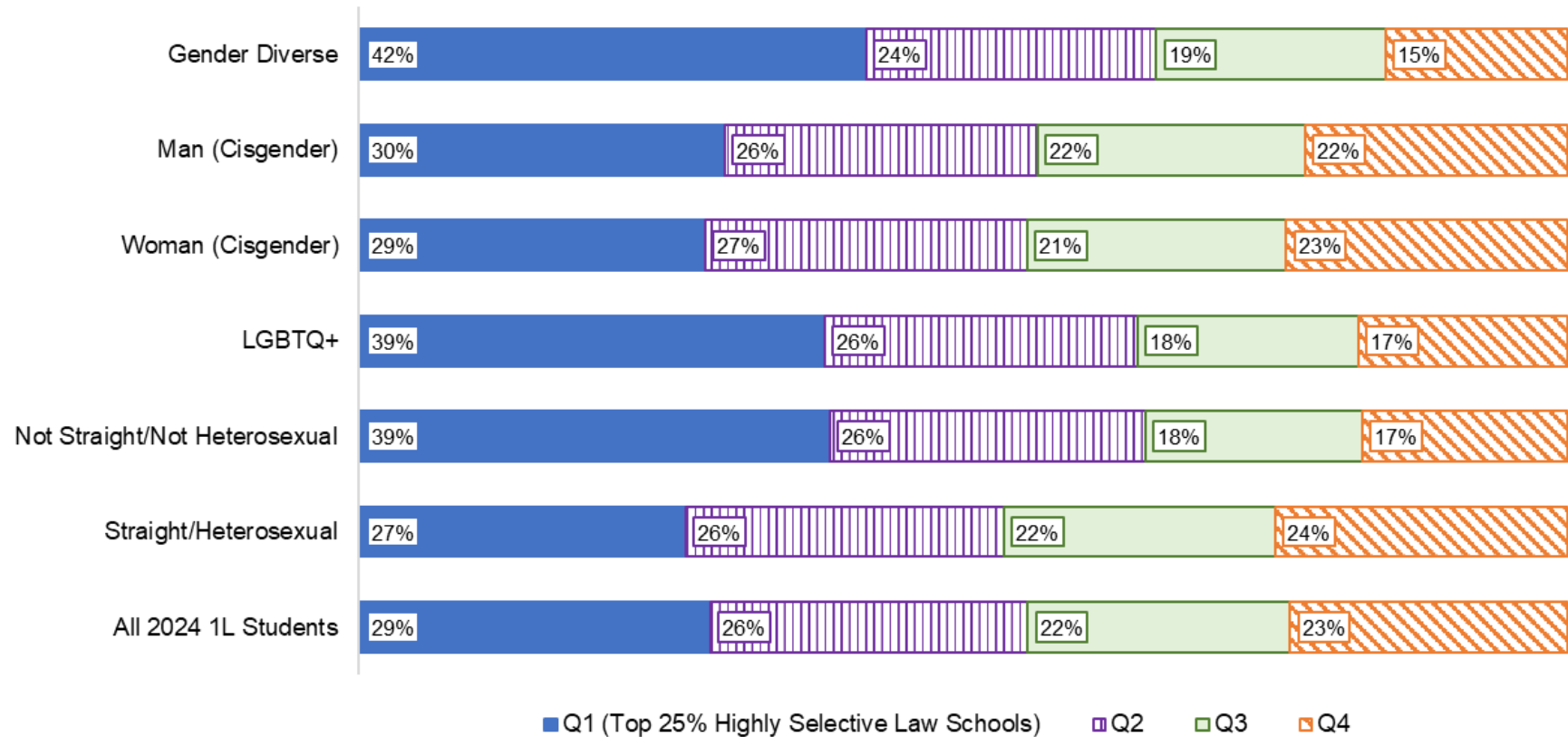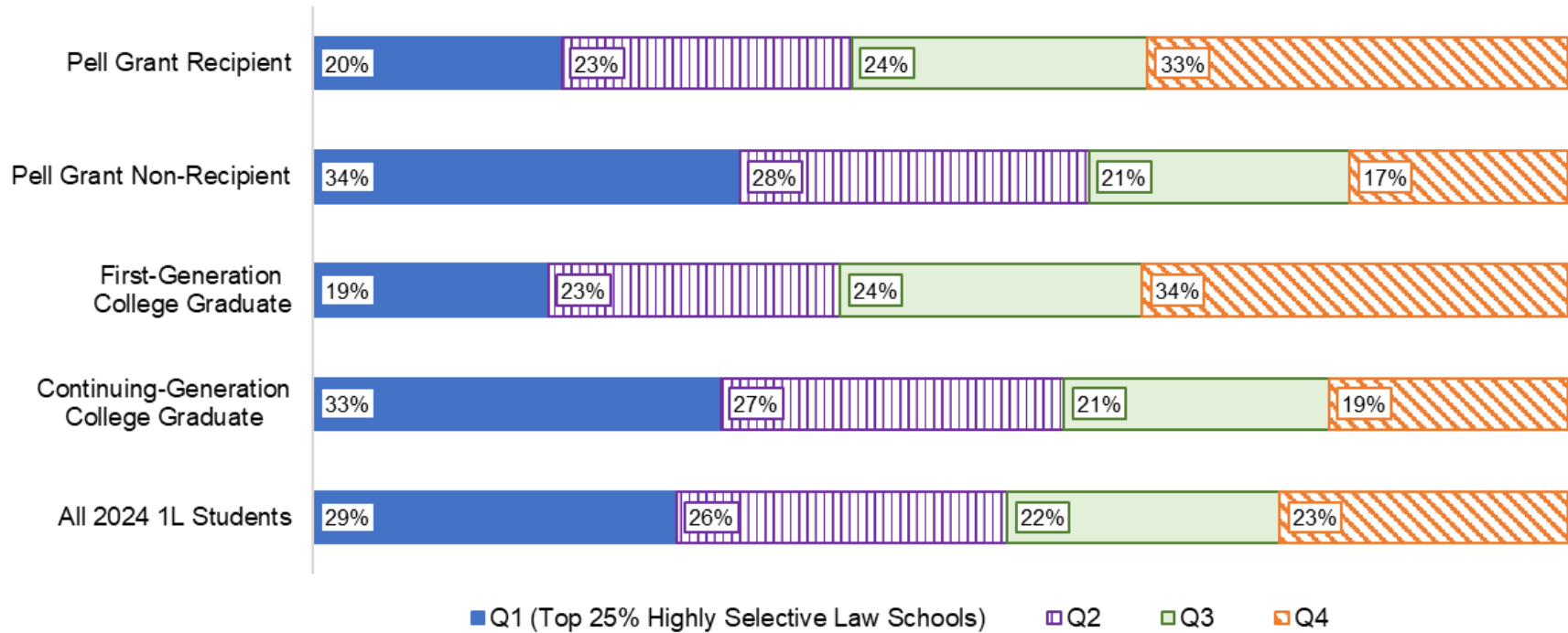|	Q1 (Top 25% Highly Selective Law Schools)	Q2	Q3	Q4
Pell Grant Recipient	20%	23%	24%	33%
Pell Grant Non-Recipient	34%	28%	21%	17%
First-Generation College Graduate	19%	23%	24%	34%
Continuing-Generation College Graduate	33%	27%	21%	19%
All 2024 1L Students	29%	26%	22%	23%

Source: LSAC. Using LSAC data, law schools are each assigned a selectivity index based on each school's 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students. The top 25% highly selective law schools are in the first quartile (Q1), and they are the first 49 law schools with the highest index score.

Age at Enrollment

Exploring enrollment across the law school selectivity quartiles by age at enrollment, we find some additional trends (Figure 7):

- Younger 1Ls enrolled in top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1) at higher rates than their older peers, while older 1Ls enrolled in law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4) at significantly higher rates than their younger peers.

- About a third of 1Ls ages 30 or younger enrolled in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1), while only 8% of 1Ls 40 years old or older and 16% of 1Ls between 31 and 39 years old did.

- Half of 1Ls 40 years old or older and almost 40% of 1Ls between ages 30 and 39 enrolled in law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4), while less than a quarter of 1Ls who were 26 years old or younger did.

Figure 7: Law School Selectivity Enrollment by Age at Enrollment

Age	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
22 or Younger	28%	29%	25%	19%
23 to 26	34%	26%	20%	21%
27 to 30	28%	25%	20%	27%
31 to 39	16%	23%	24%	36%
40 or Older	8%	15%	27%	50%
All 2024 1L Students	29%	26%	22%	23%

Q1 (Top 25% Highly Selective Law Schools)   Q2   Q3   Q4
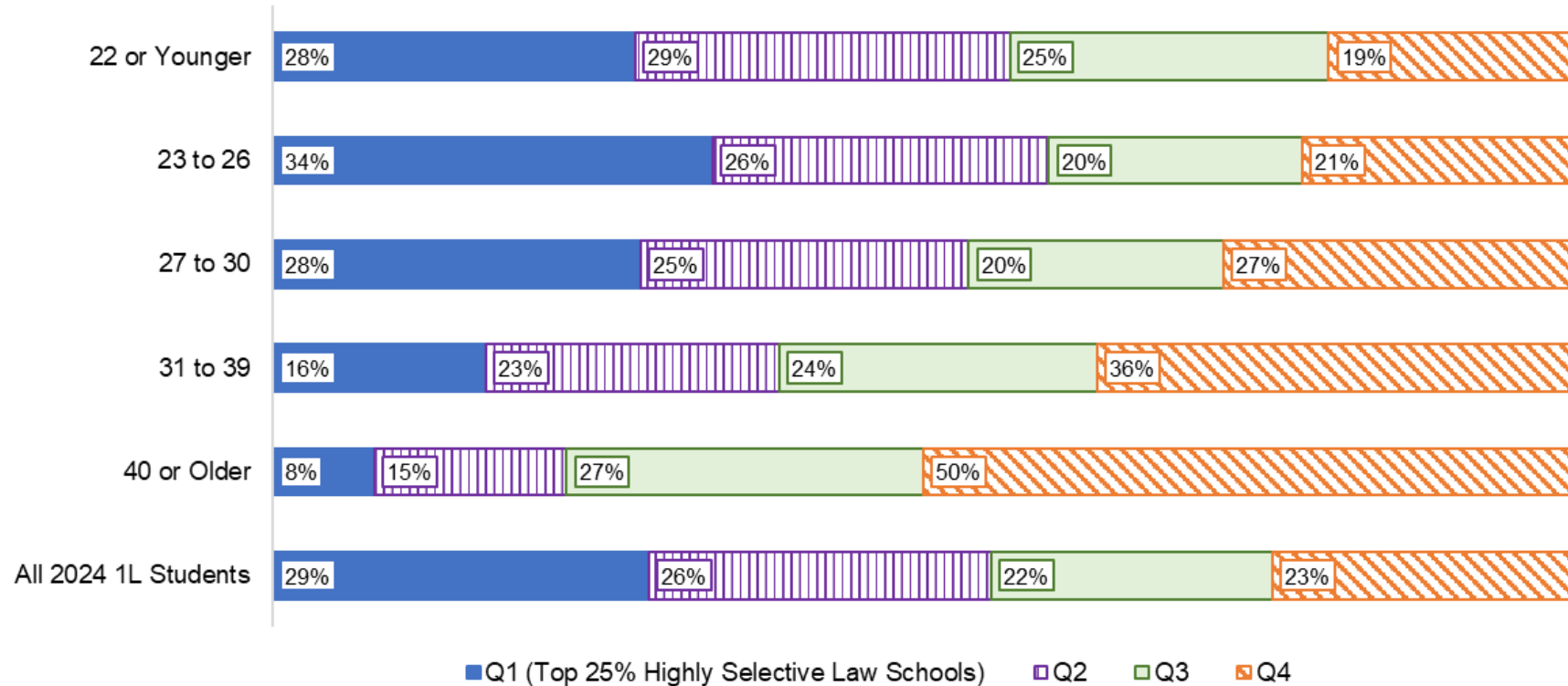
Source: LSAC. Age at enrollment refers to matriculant's age as of August 1, 2024. Using LSAC data, law schools are each assigned a selectivity index based on each school's 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students. The top 25% highly selective law schools are in the first quartile (Q1), and they are the first 49 law schools with the highest index score.

Enrollment by Type of School: Public v. Private Status

While the majority of 1Ls in 2024 attended private law schools (64% vs. 36%), enrollment by law school type varied by race and ethnicity (Figure 8). There were higher enrollment rates in public law schools for American Indian or Alaska Native (43%), Black/African American (42%), and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (43%) first-year law students. On the other hand, there were higher enrollment rates in private law schools for Asian (68%), Middle Eastern or North African/Arab (70%), and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x (69%) first-year law students.

Figure 8: Enrollment by Private and Public Law School Type
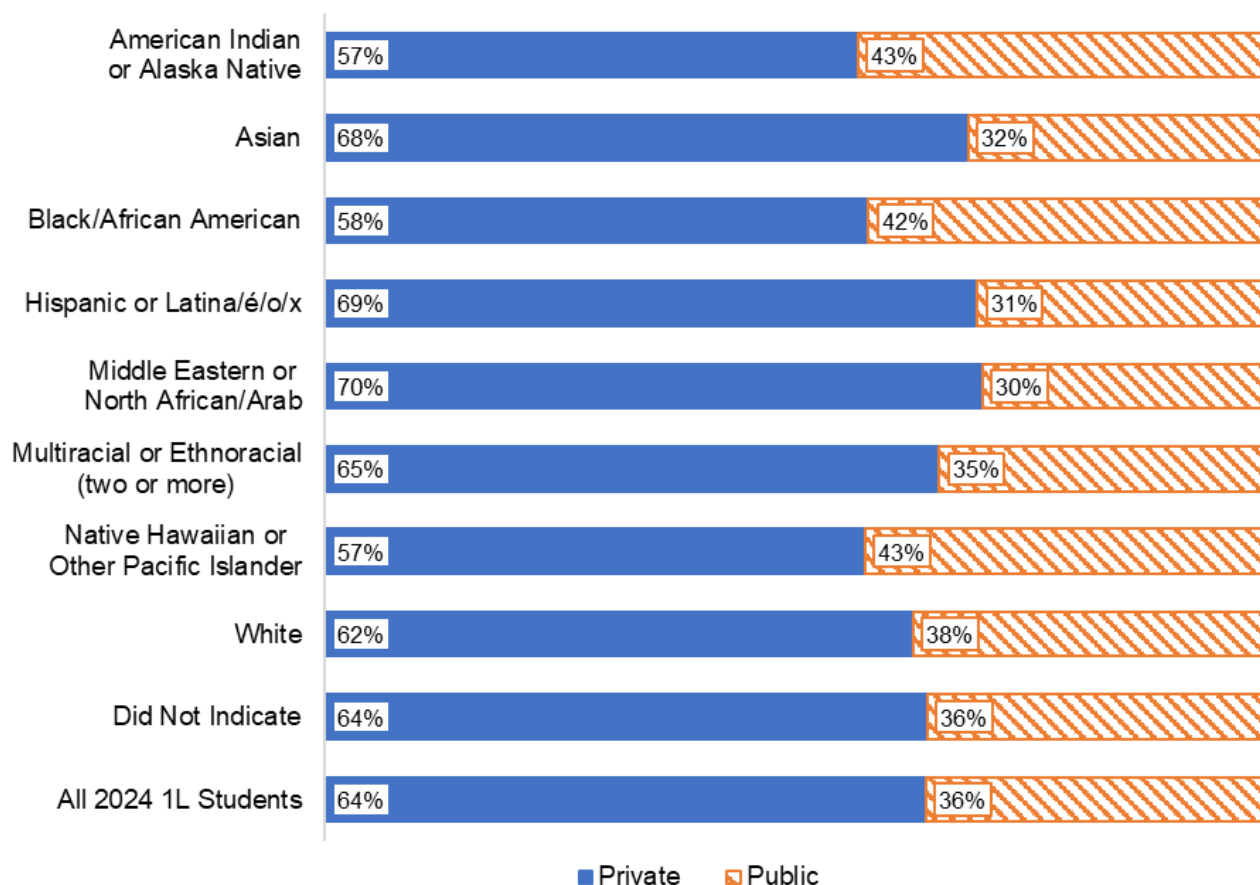
Source: LSAC. There were 84 public schools and 112 private schools.

Enrollment by Geographic Region

The concentration of law schools — and therefore first-year law students — varies across the geographic regions that comprise the U.S. Three regions represent nearly half of all entering law students — the Northeast (17%), the Mid-South (15%), and the Great Lakes (15%). By contrast, three other regions make up barely 10% of the total — the Midwest (4%), Mountain West (4%), and Northwest (3%; Figure 9). Where students enrolled varied by race, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Examining the top three regional concentrations (Figure 10), enrollment rates varied between racially and ethnically minoritized 1Ls, while the majority of white 1Ls were enrolled in law schools in the Great Lakes, Northeast, or Mid-South (17% each). One in three Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 1Ls (33%) and almost one in three Middle Eastern or North African/Arab 1Ls (28%) attended law school in the Far West. Almost a third of Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1Ls attended law school in the Southeast region (27%). Almost 60% of Asian students enrolled in a law school in the Northeast (24%), Far West (21%), or Mid-South (14%). Most American Indian or Alaska Native 1Ls enrolled in a school located in the South Central (19%), Great Lakes (15%), Far West (13%), or Mid-South (14%) regions. More than one in five Black/African American 1Ls attended law school in the Mid-South (23%) region. And most multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more) 1Ls attended schools in the Northeast (17%), Far West (16%), or Mid-South (14%) regions. These trends underscore the concentration of racial and ethnic diversity across the U.S. For many 1Ls, location was an important factor they considered when they enrolled in law school, covered later in this report.

Distribution of LGBTQ+ 1Ls also varies significantly by region. LGBTQ+ 1Ls are represented at higher rates in the Northeast, Far West, and New England regions and at lower rates in the South Central and Southeast regions (Figure 11). While 10% of all 1Ls enrolled in a school in the South Central region and 12% enrolled in the Southeast region, only 7% of LGBTQ+ 1Ls enrolled in a school in those regions. This pattern runs parallel with expectations given that the South Central and Southeast regions include jurisdictions with anti-DEI legislation and anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. More research is needed to examine how state and local level climates impact LGBTQ+ enrollment in law schools across the country.

Figure 9: Enrollment by Geographic Location

NORTHWEST
WA — 3% / 3%
OR

MOUNTAIN WEST
MT
ID
WY — 4% / 5%
UT
CO
AZ
NM

MIDWEST
ND
SD — 4% / 6%
NE
IA
KS
MO

GREAT LAKES
MN — 15% / 16%
WI
MI
IL
IN
OH

NEW ENGLAND
NH — 9% / 8%
VT
ME
MA
CT
RI

NORTHEAST
NY — 17% / 13%
PA
NJ

FAR WEST
CA — 11% / 10%
NV
HI

MID-SOUTH
KY — 15% / 16%
WV
VA
TN
NC
MD
DE
Washington, D.C.

SOUTH CENTRAL
TX — 10% / 10%
OK
AR
LA

SOUTHEAST
GA — 12% / 13%
MS
AL
SC
FL

AK

PR

Legend:
○ 2024 1L Students
○ 2024 U.S. Member Law Schools
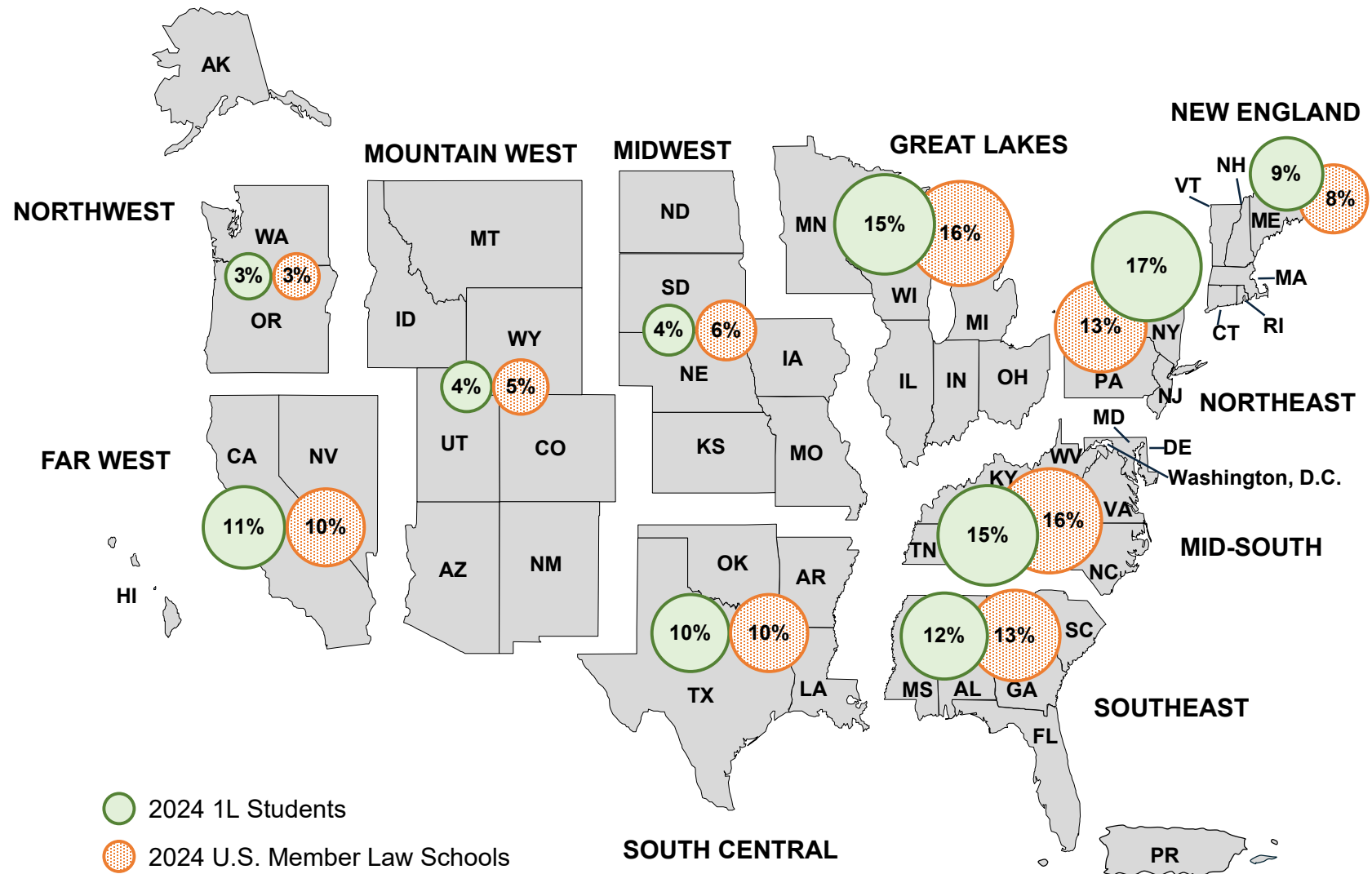
Source: LSAC

Figure 10: Top Three Enrollment Regions by Race and Ethnicity

American Indian or Alaska Native: 19%, 15%, 14%

Asian 1Ls: 24%, 21%, 14%

Black/African American 1Ls: 23%, 17%, 15%

Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1Ls: 27%, 15%, 14%

Middle Eastern or North African/Arab 1Ls: 28%, 19%, 18%

Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more) 1Ls: 17%, 16%, 14%

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 1Ls: 33%, 17%, 16%

White 1Ls: 17%, 17%, 17%

Legend:
- South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX)
- Far West (CA, HI, NV)
- Mid-South (Washington, D.C.; DE; KY; MD; NC; TN; VA; WV)
- Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI)
- Northeast (NJ, NY, PA)
- Southeast (AL, FL, GA, MS, SC, PR)

Source: LSAC

Figure 11: LGBTQ+ 1L Enrollment by Geographic Location
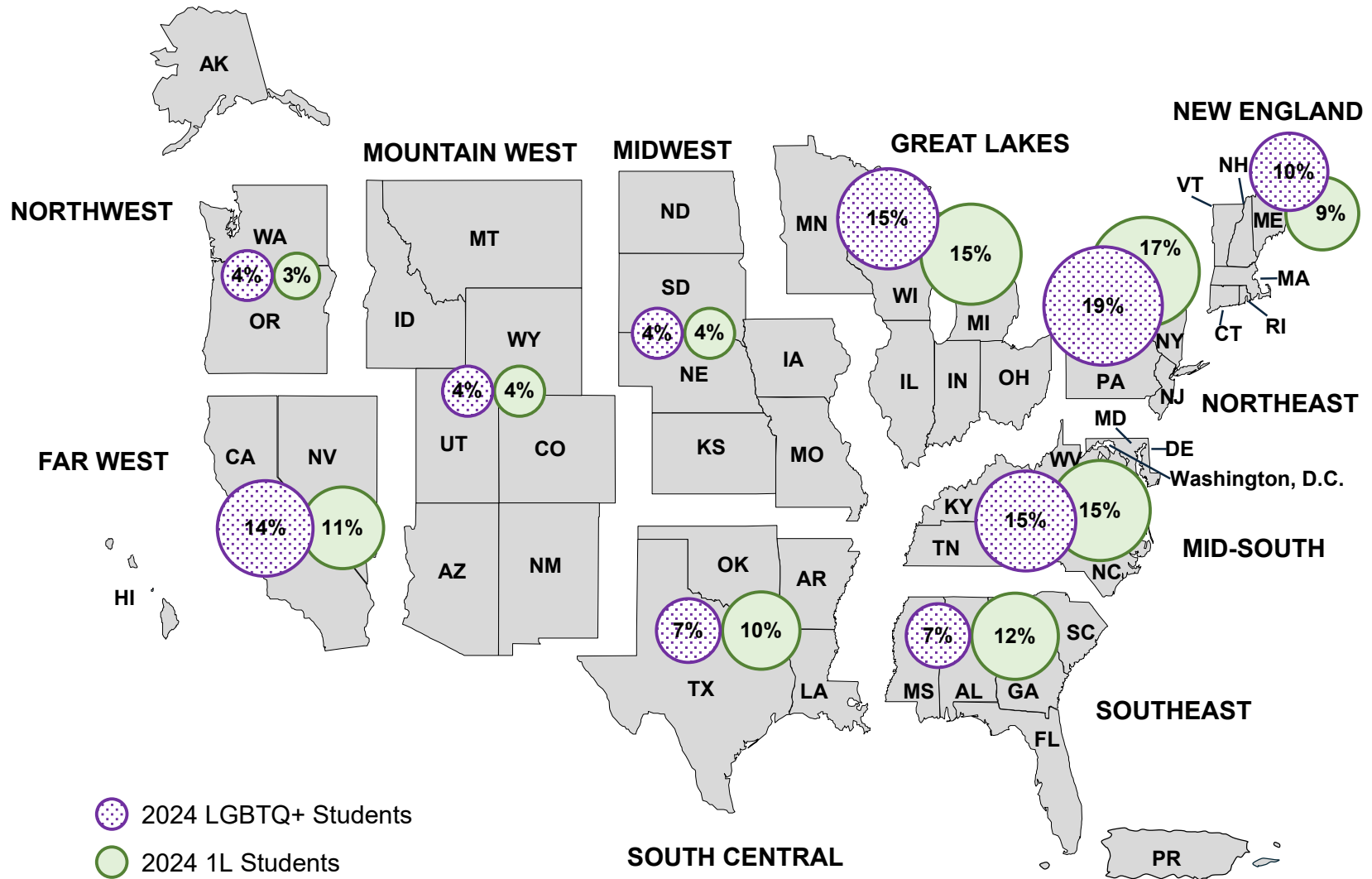
NORTHWEST

MOUNTAIN WEST

MIDWEST

GREAT LAKES

NEW ENGLAND

FAR WEST

NORTHEAST

MID-SOUTH

SOUTH CENTRAL

SOUTHEAST

NORTHWEST (WA/OR): 4% / 3%
MOUNTAIN WEST (UT/CO): 4% / 4%
MIDWEST (SD/NE): 4% / 4%
FAR WEST (CA/NV): 14% / 11%
GREAT LAKES (MN/WI/MI): 15% / 15%
NORTHEAST (NY/PA): 19% / 17%
NEW ENGLAND (ME): 10% / 9%
MID-SOUTH (NC): 15% / 15%
SOUTH CENTRAL (TX): 7% / 10%
SOUTHEAST (GA): 7% / 12%

States labeled: AK, WA, OR, CA, NV, HI, MT, ID, WY, UT, CO, AZ, NM, ND, SD, NE, IA, KS, MO, OK, AR, LA, MN, WI, IL, IN, OH, MI, KY, TN, WV, MD, DE, Washington, D.C., VA, PA, NY, NJ, VT, NH, ME, MA, CT, RI, MS, AL, GA, SC, FL, NC, TX, PR

Legend:
- 2024 LGBTQ+ Students
- 2024 1L Students

Source: LSAC. 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.

Enrollment by Program Type: Full-Time or Part-Time

An overwhelming majority of 1Ls enrolled in full-time programs (91%; part-time program 1Ls represent 9% of the class) and programs that begin in the fall term (98%; less than 2% of 1Ls enrolled in programs starting in the spring, summer, or winter terms).

However, enrollment by program type varied by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, resulting in part-time programs being more

> *91% of the 1L class are in a full-time program.*

diverse than full-time programs (Table 7).[17] For example, while 7.3% of all 1Ls in a full-time program were Black/African American, 10.7% of all part-time 1Ls identified as Black/African American. Similarly, while 9.2% of all 1Ls in full-time programs identified as Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x, 14.1% of all 1Ls in part-time programs were Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x (Table 7).

American Indian or Alaska Native, Black/African American, and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1Ls, and Pell Grant recipients enrolled in part-time programs at higher rates than their peers (Figure 12 and Figure 13). While 9% of all 1Ls are enrolled in a part-time program, 13.6% of American Indian or Alaska Native 1Ls, 12.8% of Black 1Ls, and 13.3% of Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1Ls enrolled in a part-time program (Figure 12). Pell Grant recipients enrolled in part-time programs at double the rate of their Pell Grant non-recipient peers (Figure 13). Older 1Ls enrolled in part-time programs at higher rates than younger 1Ls, with almost half of 1Ls who were 40 years old or older enrolled in a part-time program (Figure 14).

Overall, law schools vary in location, program structure, student support resources, and opportunities that meet the needs for different students. Understanding who attends law school and where they enrolled provides a high-level overview of the legal education landscape that can be used by potential employers and stakeholders in recruiting and supporting law students in the prelaw through practice journey. The first half of this report has provided the "who" — a profile of the 2024 1L class; in the next section, we explore how this 1L class made the decision about where to enroll — the "why" — using LSAC's 2024 Matriculant Survey data.

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[17] There are no differences in rates of enrollment between gender or sexual orientation groups when it comes to law school program types and semester starting term.

Table 7: Racial and Ethnic Diversity by Program Type

Race and Ethnicity	Full-Time JD Program	Part-Time JD Program	Total 1L Class
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.6%	2.5%	1.6%
Asian	9.7%	7.3%	9.5%
Black/African American	7.3%	10.7%	7.6%
Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	9.2%	14.1%	9.7%
Indigenous Person of Canada	0.01%	0.0%	0.01%
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	3.0%	2.1%	2.9%
Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more)	10.2%	9.3%	10.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%
White	51.3%	45.1%	50.8%
Did Not Indicate	7.3%	8.3%	7.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: LSAC

Figure 12: Program Type Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity
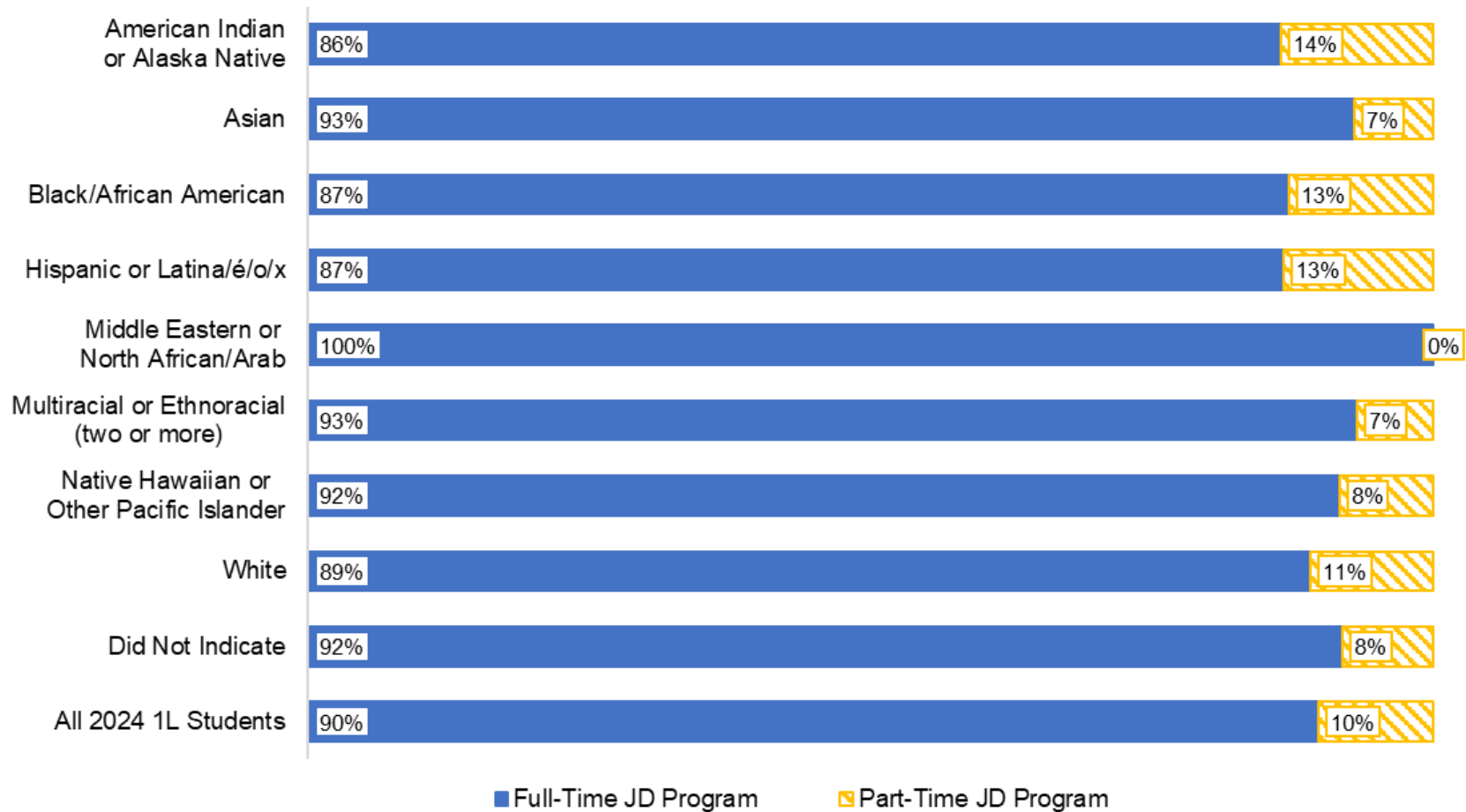
Source: LSAC

Figure 13: Program Enrollment by Pell Grant Recipient and First-Generation College Graduate Status

Category	Full-Time JD Program	Part-Time JD Program
Pell Grant Recipient	87%	13%
Pell Grant Non-Recipient	93%	7%
First-Generation College Graduate	85%	15%
Continuing-Generation College Graduate	93%	7%
All 2024 1L Students	91%	9%

■ Full-Time JD Program   ▨ Part-Time JD Program
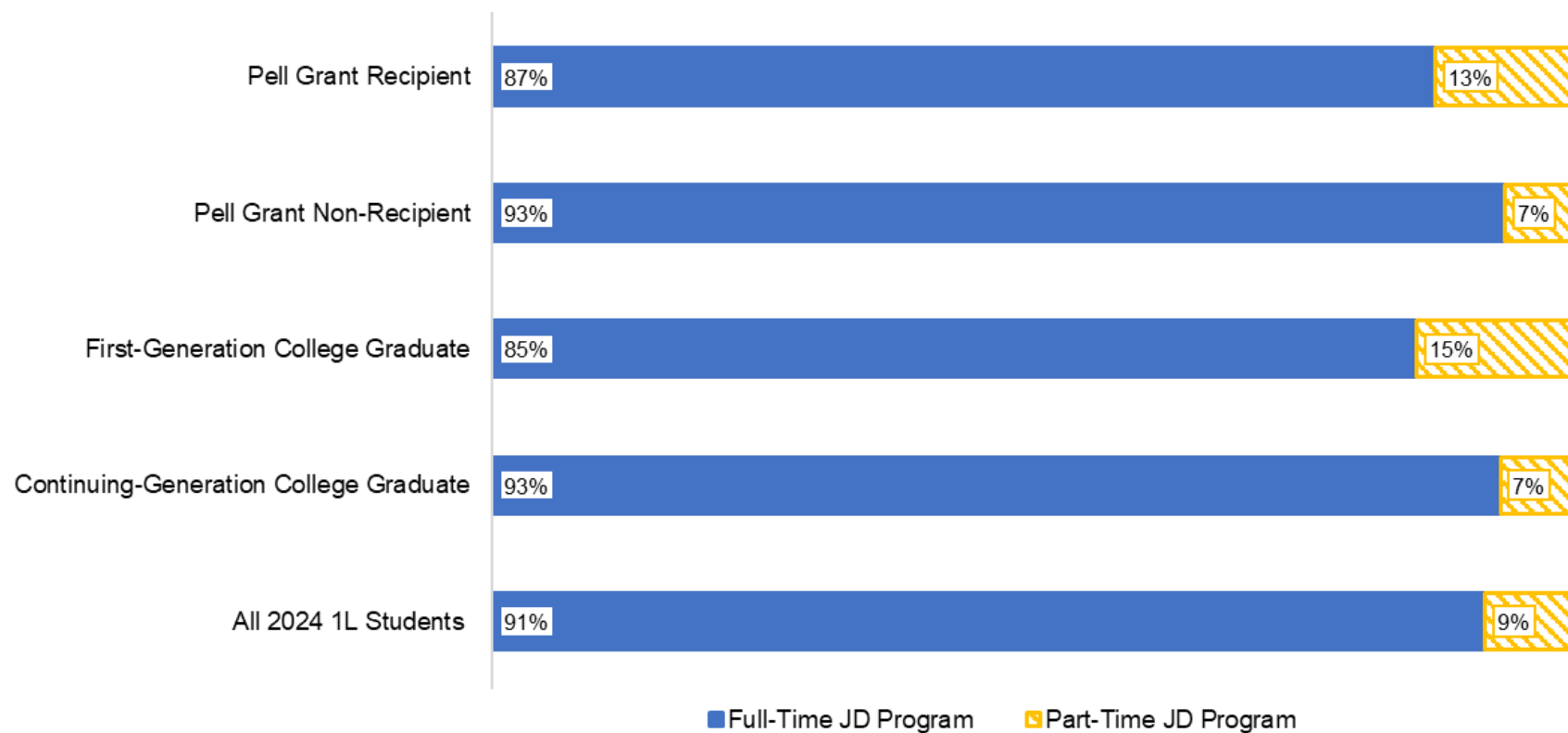
Source: LSAC

Figure 14: Program Enrollment by Age at Enrollment

Age at Enrollment	Full-Time JD Program	Part-Time JD Program
22 or Younger	98%	2%
23 to 26	94%	6%
27 to 30	83%	17%
31 to 39	66%	34%
40 or Older	47%	53%
All 2024 1L Students	91%	9%

■ Full-Time JD Program ▨ Part-Time JD Program
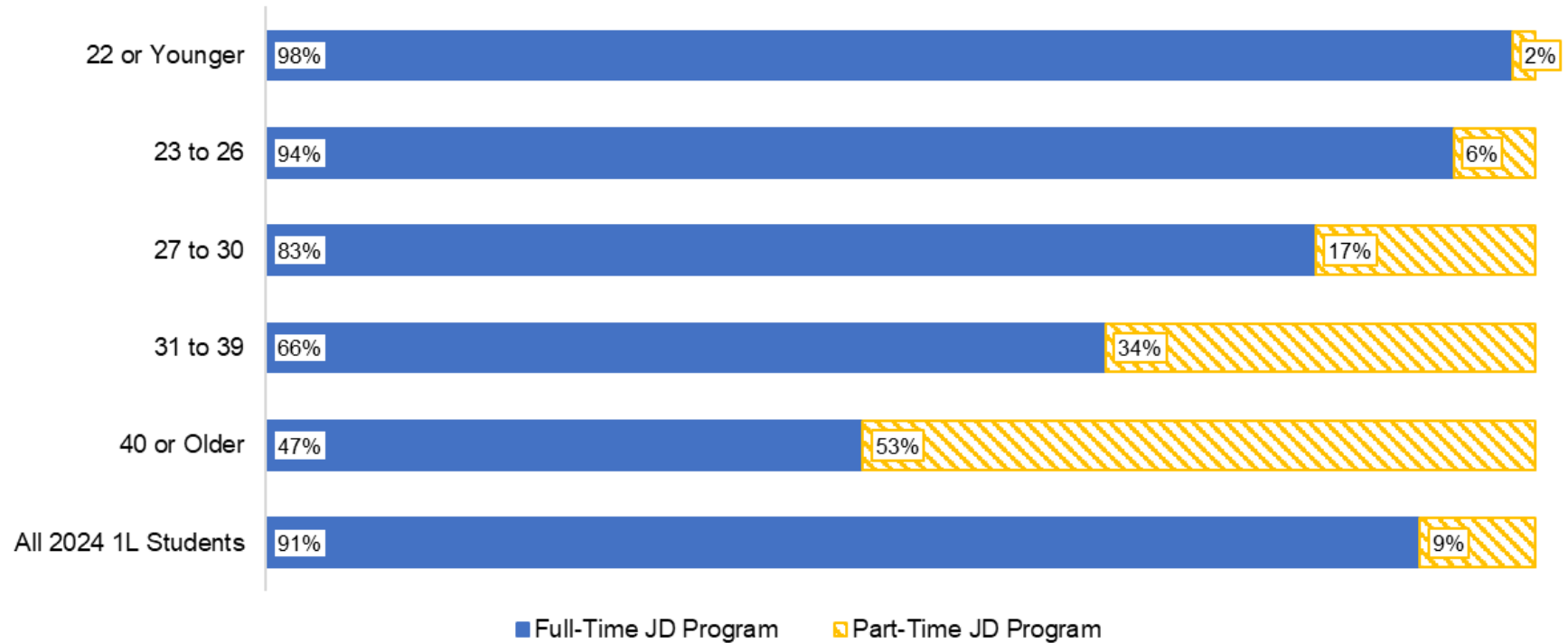
Source: LSAC

How Did They Decide Where to Enroll?

Who law students are and where they enrolled are important for understanding the future generation of the legal profession. However, the picture is not complete without information about where they started, their motivations, and what factors were pivotal to their final enrollment decision. Understanding what 1Ls were feeling, thinking, and considering at the enrollment point of the prelaw to practice journey is useful for informing effective recruitment and advising strategies. To this end, LSAC administers an annual matriculant survey to understand why, when, and how first-year law students made their decisions on where to enroll once they were admitted. Focused on understanding the journey to enrollment, the following sections address:

1. Who were the 1L respondents to LSAC's matriculant survey?

2. When did 1Ls first think about law school?

3. Why did they go to law school?

4. How confident were 1Ls in their decision-making process? What resources and support did they use to make their decision?

5. What were the most important factors that informed their final decisions?

6. Knowing what they do now, after about three months at their chosen law school, what are the most important factors 1Ls would advise today's candidates use to inform their final enrollment decision?

Overall, similar to their 2023 peers, the 2024 1L respondents revealed that they are not unidimensional in how they consumed information and made their enrollment decisions. Once admitted to law school, the factors that drove their final decisions as to where to attend — their current law school — were multidimensional and varied based on respondents' needs and goals.

The survey reveals a degree of self-reflection: what was important to 1Ls during their decision-making process would be different after experiencing their first few months of law school. When asked what are the most important factors they would advise current candidates when deciding where to go to law school compared to when they made their decision, today they reported at a higher rate that cost was the most important factor to consider.

A person's decision on where to attend law school is life-changing and will impact their quality of life, growth, and education both in the short term as a law student and in the long term as a legal professional. Therefore, how this decision is made is nuanced and carefully tailored to students' personal and academic needs and professional goals. The insights from this survey have implications for how law schools leverage their strengths and programs to market the ways that their schools can and will meet the needs and goals of prospective applicants. The information can be used by prelaw stakeholders, such as advisors, to guide prospective applicants. And for prospective applicants, these

findings serve as a collective voice of the lessons learned by recent first-year law students as to how they would make their enrollment decisions today.

Who Responded to the 2024 Fall Matriculant Survey?

In November 2024, LSAC distributed a survey to all students who matriculated to law school for the 2024-2025 academic year to understand who current law school matriculants are and what factors they considered to determine which law school(s) would meet their academic, professional, and personal needs.

Respondents to the 2024 survey were representative of the 2024 first-year law school class (Table 8). More than half of respondents were white (51%), and slightly more than two-fifths (42%) were from racially and ethnically marginalized[18] populations (Table 8). More cisgender women than cisgender men answered the survey (56% and 41%, respectively), and only a small portion identified as gender diverse (2%). While the sexual orientation of the respondent population was largely straight/heterosexual (72%), a sizeable proportion identified as not straight/not heterosexual (14.7%). A total of 15% of respondents identified as LGBTQ+.[19] Roughly one-tenth of respondents identified as an individual with a disability, while about three-fifths indicated they did not have a disability.[20] Close to 40% did not identify whether they have a disability or not.

Almost one-quarter (24%) of respondents were first-generation college graduates (Table 8).[21] 75% were first-generation law students. 26% were Pell Grant recipients. Most (80%) respondents were 26 years old or younger when they began law school (Table 8).

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[18] The term "marginalized" refers to populations that historically have been excluded, disempowered, disenfranchised, or otherwise treated as being insignificant, unimportant, or peripheral. Marginalized 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 minoritized in this report.

[19] The term LGBTQ+ refers to anyone who identifies with a gender identity other than cisgender man or woman and/or anyone who identifies with a sexual orientation other than straight/heterosexual.

[20] Information about students with disabilities is not presented in this report. For information about 2022 and 2023 1Ls with disabilities, see 2022 First Year Law School Class: A Focus on Students with Disabilities and First-Year Law School Class: A Focus on Students with Disabilities, 2023 Update.

[21] First-generation college graduates include 1Ls with parents or guardians with an associate's degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

Table 8: Percent of 2024 Matriculant Survey Respondents by Socio-Demographic Group (n=2,138)

Category	Group	Percent of 1L Respondents	2024 1Ls
By Race/Ethnicity	American Indian or Alaska Native	1.8%	1.6%
	Asian	8.7%	9.5%
	Black/African American	6.7%	7.6%
	Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	9.8%	9.7%
	Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	2.4%	2.9%
	Multiracial or Ethnoracial (2 or more)	11.9%	10.1%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.5%
	White	50.8%	50.8%
	Did Not Indicate	7.4%	7.4%
By Gender Identity	Man (Cisgender)	40.6%	39.5%
	Woman (Cisgender)	55.5%	56.7%
	Gender Diverse	2.1%	1.4%
	Did Not Indicate	1.8%	2.4%
By Sexual Orientation	Not Straight/Not Heterosexual	14.7%	13.6%
	Straight/Heterosexual	71.9%	73.1%
	Did Not Indicate	13.4%	13.3%
Total LGBTQ+		15.2%	13.9%
By Disability Status	Students With Disabilities	8.3%	N/A
	Students Without Disabilities	55.5%	N/A
	Did Not Indicate	36.2%	N/A
By First-Generation College Graduate Status	First-Generation Graduate	22.9%	22.9%
	Continuing-Generation Graduate	74.7%	74.7%
	Did Not Indicate	2.4%	2.4%
By First-Generation Law School Status	First-Generation Student	75.3%	75.3%
	Continuing-Generation Student	23.8%	23.8%
	Did Not Indicate	0.9%	0.9%
By Pell Grant Status	Recipient	26.4%	26.4%
	Non-Recipient	65.2%	65.2%
	Did Not Indicate	8.4%	8.4%
By Age at Enrollment	22 or Younger	36.6%	34.1%
	23 to 26	43.7%	45.8%
	27 to 30	10.3%	10.8%
	31 to 39	6.7%	6.7%
	40 or Older	2.7%	2.6%

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

In addition to representation based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and age, the survey respondents came from all types of law schools, representative of all 196 law school programs across the U.S. In the 2024 Matriculant Survey, almost one in ten (9%) of 1Ls were part-time students (Table 9). Consistent with the previous section in this report about the entire 2024 first-year class, 1Ls enrolled in part-time programs who responded to this survey were more racially and ethnically diverse and included a higher proportion of women as well as a higher proportion of first-generation college graduates.[22]

Based on where respondents were enrolled, how and why they made their decisions is tied to what they needed from a law school. Survey respondents varied by where they were enrolled. By law school selectivity,[23] the majority of respondents were enrolled in the top 50% of highly selective law schools (Q1 and Q2), and 37% were enrolled in law schools in the third and fourth selectivity quartiles (Q3 and Q4; Table 9). There is a slight overrepresentation of 1L respondents from law schools in the first law school selectivity quartile to be noted when analyzing the trends in this report.

Table 9: Percentage of 2024 Matriculant Survey Respondents by Program Type and School Selectivity Quartile (n=2,138)

Category	Group	Percentage of 1L Respondents	2024 1Ls
By Program Type	Full-Time	91.3%	90.9%
	Part-Time	8.7%	9.1%
By Law School Selectivity Quartile	Q1 (Top 25% Highly Selective Law Schools)	36.4%	29.4%
	Q2	26.2%	26.3%
	Q3	18.6%	21.8%
	Q4	18.8%	22.4%

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey. Each law school is assigned a selectivity index based on each school's 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students. The top 25% highly selective law schools are in the first quartile (Q1), and they are the first 49 law schools with the highest index score.

When It All Started

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 1L respondents first thought about law school before college (Figure 15). About one in three 1Ls first thought about law school during college, and only one-sixth of 1Ls (16%) first thought of going

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[22] Learn more about part-time students with the Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE). (2024). Part 2: Part-time students & the law school experience. https://lssse.indiana.edu/tag/part-time-students/

[23] As explained earlier in this report, each law school is assigned a selectivity index based on each school's 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students. The top 25% highly selective law schools are in the first quartile (Q1), and they are the first 49 law schools with the highest index score.

to law school after graduating college. The 2024 1L trends are similar to their peers in the 2023 1L class.[24]

Figure 15: When 1Ls First Thought About Law School (n=2,138)
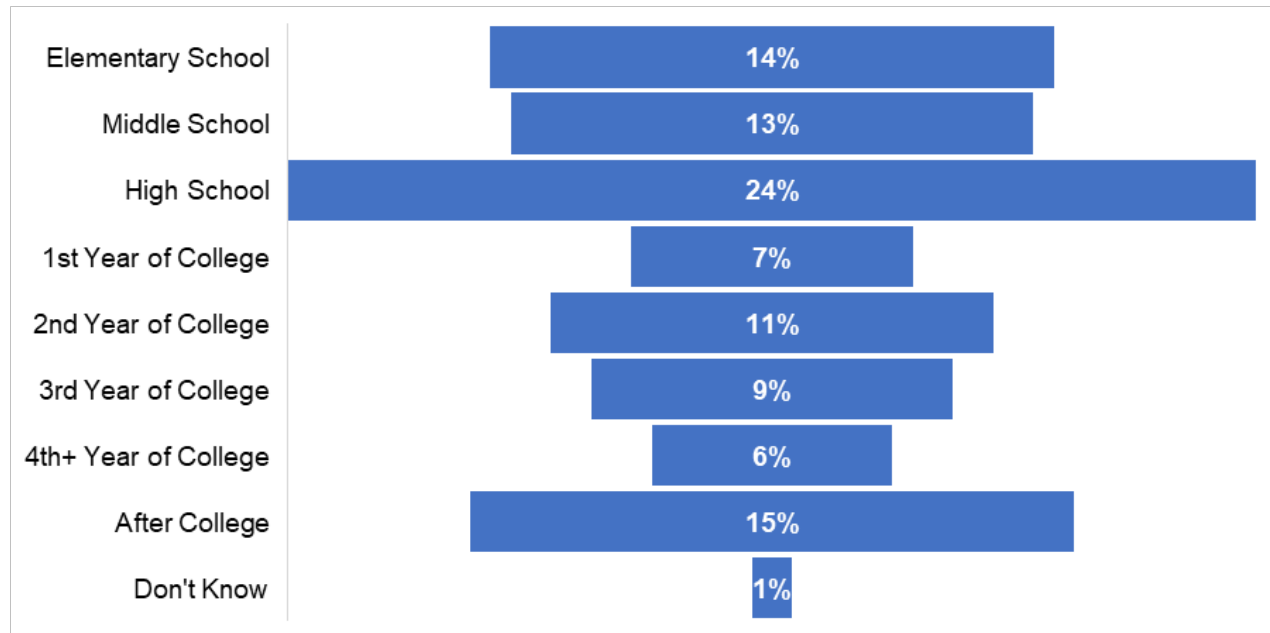
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

When someone first thought about law school varied by racial and ethnic groups, parental education, and age (Figures 16-18). For years, many have assumed that underrepresentation in the legal profession is due to the lack of exposure to law at an early age. As revealed by the 2023-2024 test takers and the 2023 1L class,[25] the 2024 1L respondents also challenge this assumption. While the sample size of the matriculant survey is small for some group-based analyses, preliminary trends begin to reveal that:

- About one-quarter of 1L respondents identifying as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (25%) and Black/African American (27%) reported first contemplating law school in elementary school, much earlier than their peers of other races and ethnicities (Figure 16).

- Overall, Black/African American 1Ls thought about law school in high school or earlier at a rate higher than all their peers (62%; Figure 16).

- First-generation college graduates reported first thinking about law school in elementary school at a rate (18%) almost 40% higher than their continuing-generation college graduate peers (13%; Figure 17).

- More than one in three 1Ls who were 27 years old or older first thought about law school after college. Over two-thirds of 1Ls who were 26 years old or younger first thought about law school during college or earlier (Figure 18).

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[24] Check out LSAC's Knowledge Report: The 2023 1L Profile for more details.

[25] Kirchoff, A., Bodamer, E., Langer, D., & Russian, A. LSAC's Knowledge Report: 2023-2024 Test-Takers. LSAC: Newtown, PA. Also check out LSAC's Knowledge Report: The 2023 1L Profile for more details.

Figure 16: When 1Ls First Thought About Law School by Race and Ethnicity (n=2,138)
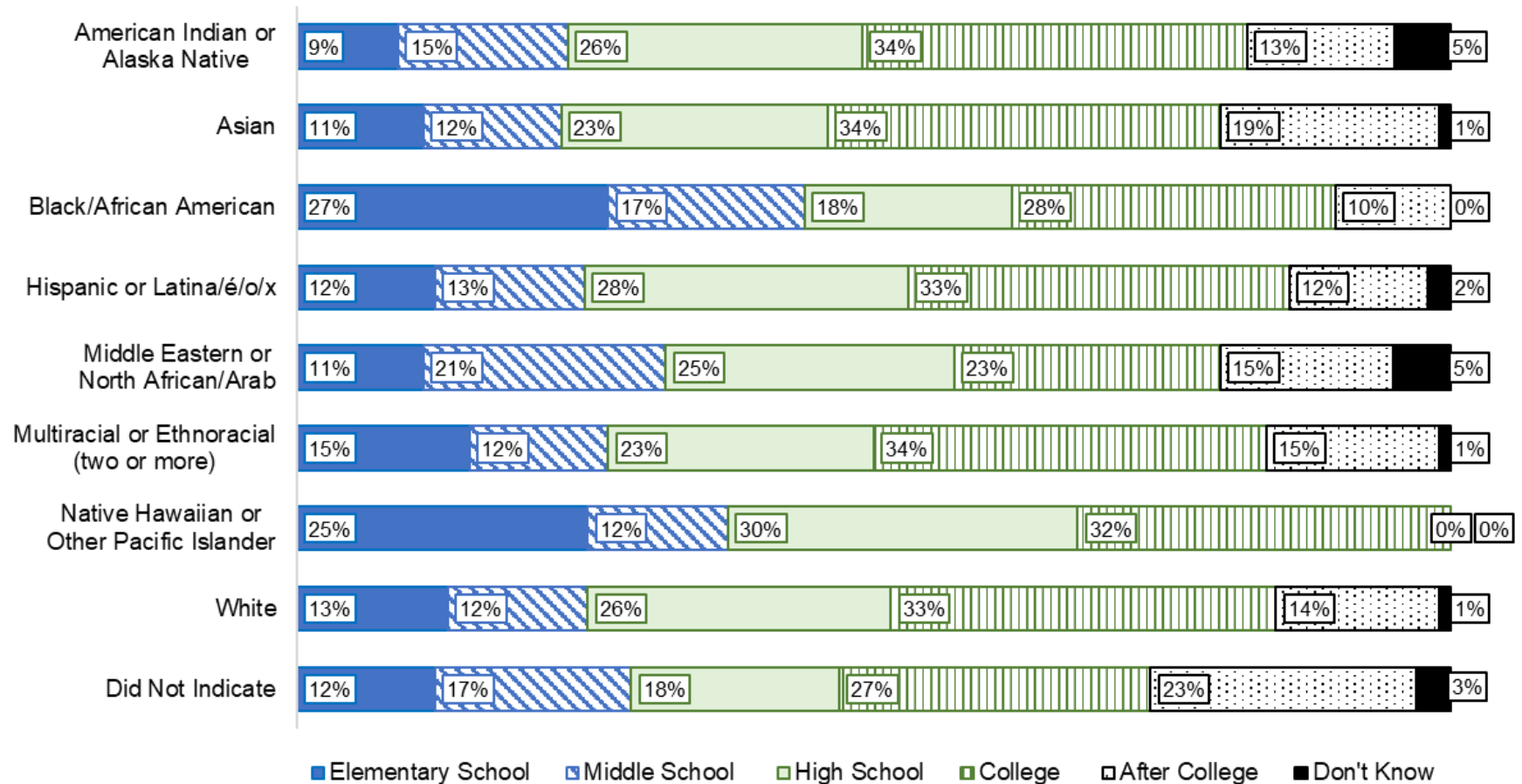
Race/Ethnicity	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	College	After College	Don't Know
American Indian or Alaska Native	9%	15%	26%	34%	13%	5%
Asian	11%	12%	23%	34%	19%	1%
Black/African American	27%	17%	18%	28%	10%	0%
Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	12%	13%	28%	33%	12%	2%
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	11%	21%	25%	23%	15%	5%
Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more)	15%	12%	23%	34%	15%	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	25%	12%	30%	32%	0%	0%
White	13%	12%	26%	33%	14%	1%
Did Not Indicate	12%	17%	18%	27%	23%	3%

■ Elementary School ▨ Middle School ▢ High School ▢ College ▢ After College ■ Don't Know

Figure 17: When First-Generation College Graduates First Thought About Law School (n=2,087)

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	College	After College	Don't Know
First-Generation College Graduate	13%	13%	24%	34%	14%	1%
Continuing-Generation College Graduate	18%	13%	24%	28%	16%	2%
All Responding 1Ls	14%	13%	24%	32%	15%	1%

■ Elementary School ⊠ Middle School ▨ High School ▯ College ▢ After College ■ Don't Know
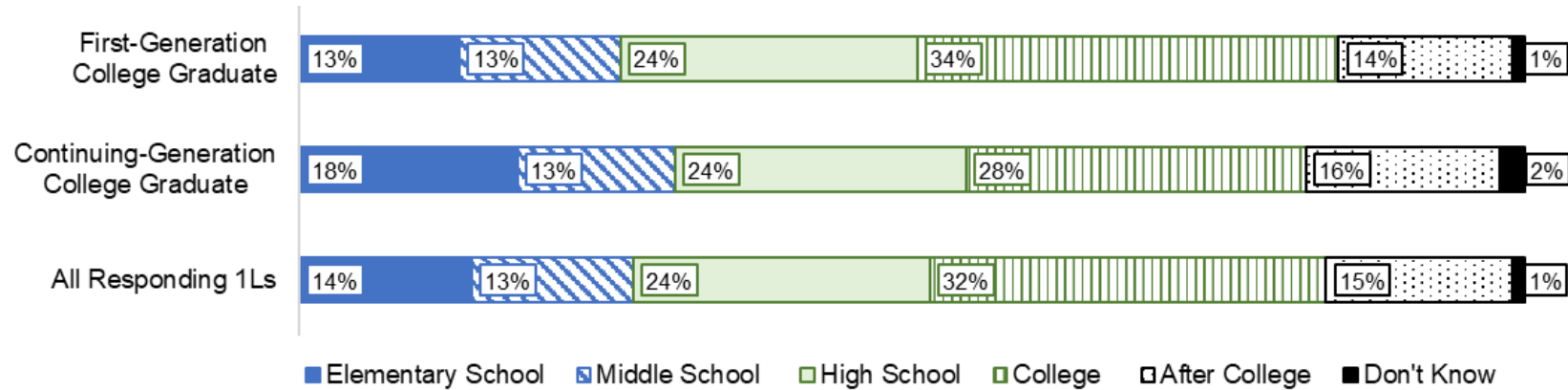
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Figure 18: When 1Ls First Thought About Law School by Age at Enrollment (n=2,087)

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	College	After College	Don't Know
22 or Younger	15%	19%	33%	32%	1%	0%
23 to 26	13%	11%	22%	37%	15%	2%
27 to 30	14%	6%	14%	26%	39%	2%
31 to 39	12%	15%	12%	18%	40%	2%
40 or Older	16%	9%	14%	15%	36%	9%

■ Elementary School ⊠ Middle School ▨ High School ▯ College ▢ After College ■ Don't Know
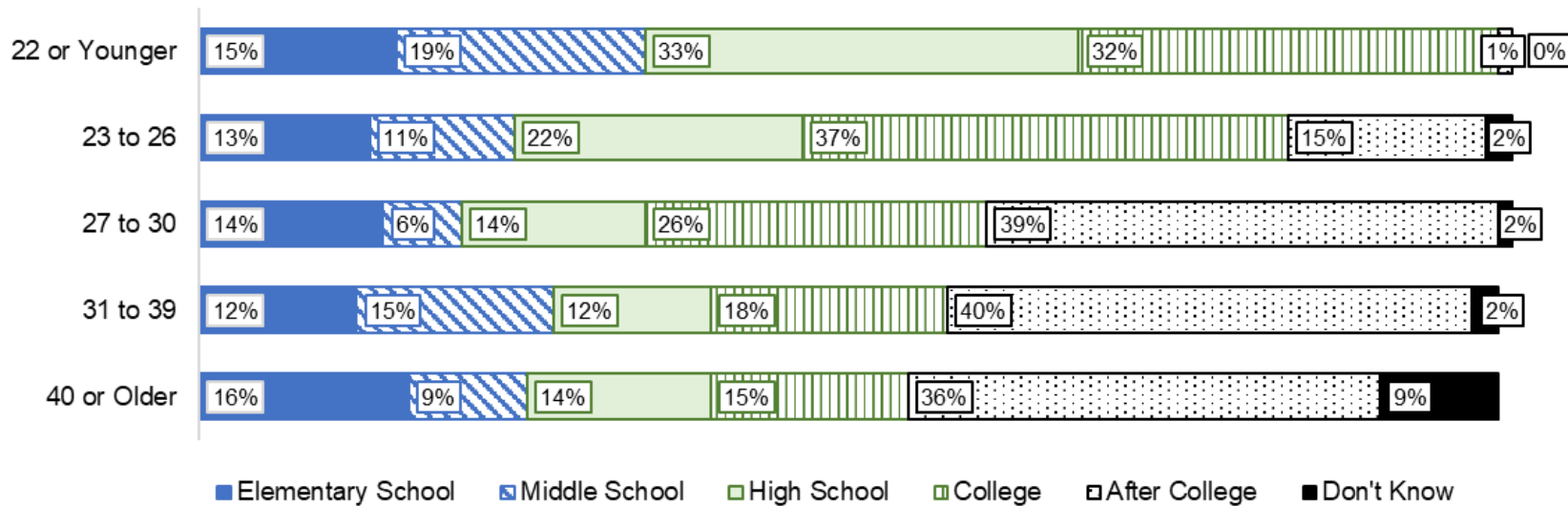
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Why It All Started

Overall, the 2024 1L respondents viewed law as a vehicle for good, justice, impact, and stability. They are in pursuit of a promising, stable, long-term career. The top reported primary motivations for attending law school were financial security (24%), being helpful to others (21%), advocating for social justice (14%), developing valuable skills (13%), and career advancement (8%; Figure 19).[26]

Figure 19: Five Most Common Top-Ranked Motivations for Attending Law School (n=1,797)
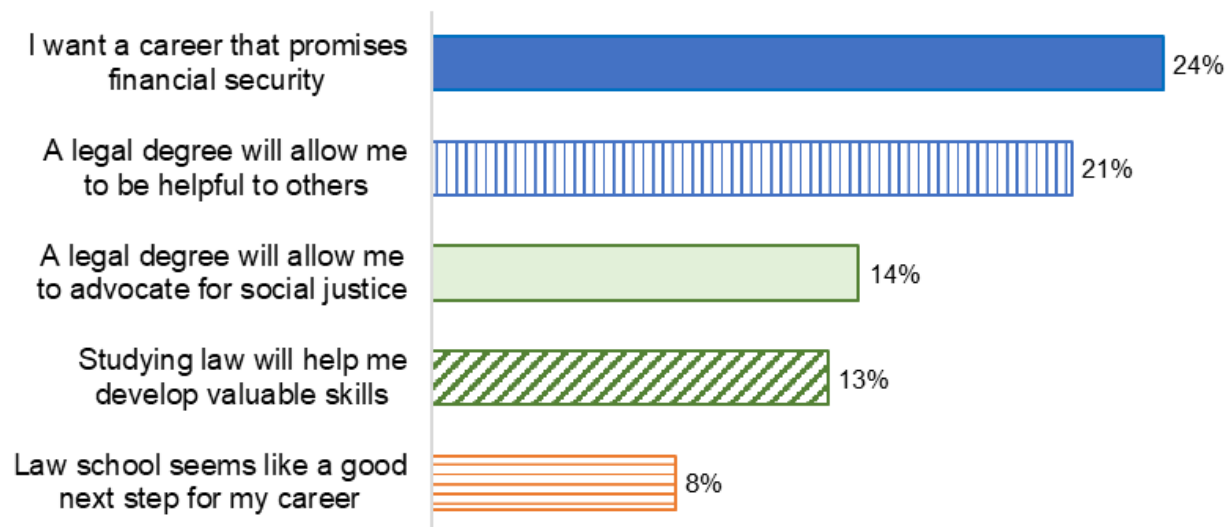
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

The "why" for 1Ls varied by their lived experiences and backgrounds. Every racial and ethnic group ranked helping others among their top three reasons for attending law school (Figure 20). Financial stability was the most important law school motivation factor for Asian (25%), Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x (27%), Multiracial or Ethnoracial (23%), and white (24%) 1Ls. The most important law school motivation for Black/African American 1Ls was helping others (24%), and for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 1Ls, it was uplifting their community (39%).

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[26] The motivation question was modified in 2024 to include financial security, and it no longer asks about expectations to earn a high income. Therefore, there is no 2023 data trend to compare to the top-rated motivation reported by 2024 1Ls.

Figure 20: Three Most Common Top-Ranked Motivations for Attending Law School by Race and Ethnicity (n=1,666)
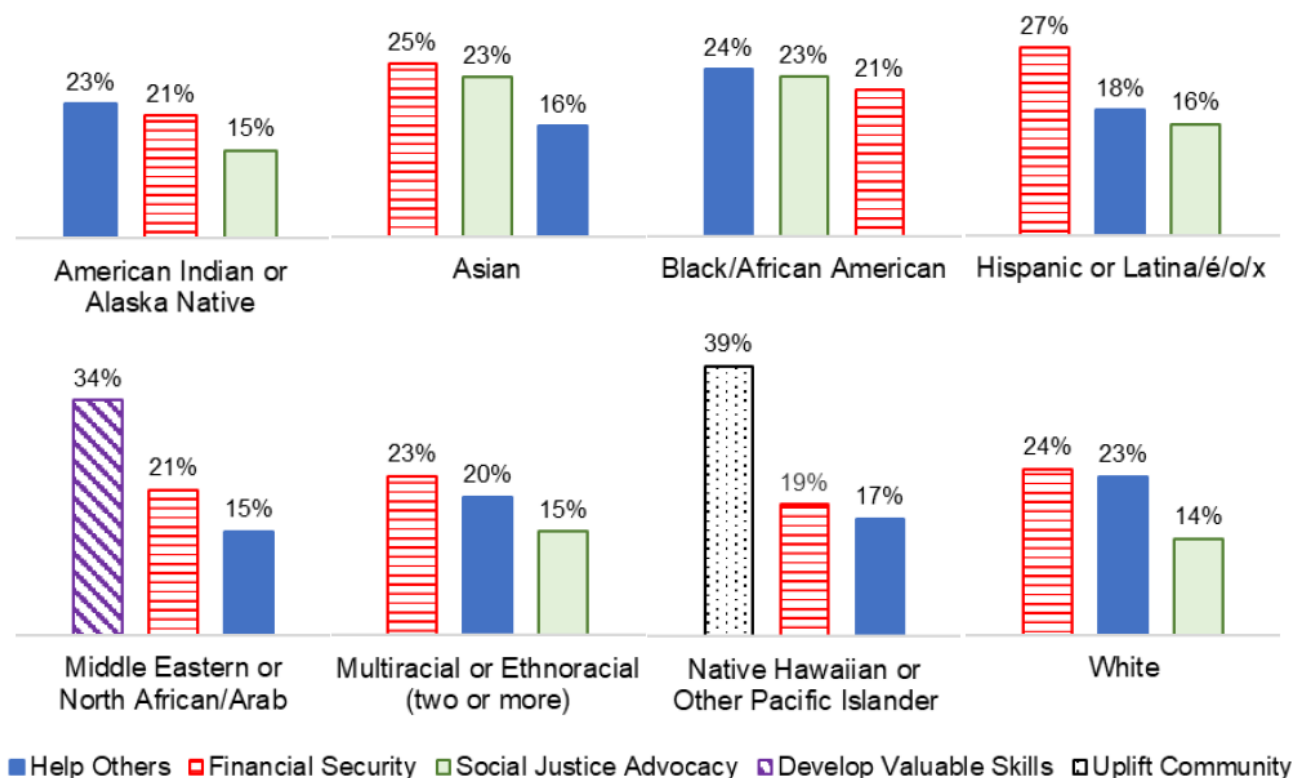
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey. Due to the low number of American Indian or Alaska Native, Middle Eastern or North African/Arab, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander respondents, data should not be used to make strong generalizations about the entire population based on the small sample size.

Social advocacy was a strong motivator for women and gender diverse 1Ls and for 1Ls who do not identify as straight/heterosexual, compared to men and their straight/heterosexual peers (Figure 21). As compared to women and gender diverse 1Ls, significantly more men were motivated to go to law school by the prospect of financial security (27%) and to develop valuable skills (17%). In contrast, gender diverse 1Ls were primarily motivated to go to law school to help others (25%) or to advocate for social justice (23%). This was also true for 1Ls who were not straight/not heterosexual, where slightly less than a quarter cited helping others as their primary motivating factor in pursuing a legal degree, almost double the proportion of their straight peers (13%).

Figure 21: Four Most Common Top-Ranked Motivations for Attending Law School by Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Figure 21 shows bar chart data:

Gender Diverse: Help Others 25%, Financial Security 18%, Social Justice Advocacy 23%, Develop Valuable Skills 8%

Woman (cisgender): Help Others 24%, Financial Security 22%, Social Justice Advocacy 19%, Develop Valuable Skills 10%

Man (cisgender): Help Others 18%, Financial Security 27%, Social Justice Advocacy 7%, Develop Valuable Skills 17%

Not Straight/Not Heterosexual: Help Others 20%, Financial Security 22%, Social Justice Advocacy 20%, Develop Valuable Skills 13%

Straight/Heterosexual: Help Others 22%, Financial Security 24%, Social Justice Advocacy 13%, Develop Valuable Skills 13%

Gender Identity (n=1,773) | Sexual Orientation (n=1,562)

■ Help Others ▤ Financial Security ▥ Social Justice Advocacy ▨ Develop Valuable Skills

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey. Due to the low number of gender diverse respondents, data insights for this group should be interpreted with caution not to make strong generalizations about the entire population based on the small sample size.

Younger 1Ls reported at higher rates that financial security was a driving motivator compared to their older peers (Figure 22). For instance, roughly a quarter of 1Ls 30 years old or younger indicated financial security (23%-25%) was a top motivator, while only 16%-19% of 1Ls 31 years old and older reported this as their top motivation.

Figure 22: Four Most Common Top-Ranked Motivations for Attending Law School by Age at Enrollment (n=1,791)

Figure 22 shows bar chart data:

22 or Younger: Help Others 23%, Financial Security 25%, Social Justice Advocacy 11%, Develop Valuable Skills 14%

23 to 26: Help Others 19%, Financial Security 24%, Social Justice Advocacy 16%, Develop Valuable Skills 13%

27 to 30: Help Others 26%, Financial Security 23%, Social Justice Advocacy 13%, Develop Valuable Skills 8%

31 to 39: Help Others 19%, Financial Security 19%, Social Justice Advocacy 15%, Develop Valuable Skills 10%

40 or Older: Help Others 19%, Financial Security 16%, Social Justice Advocacy 19%, Develop Valuable Skills 14%

■ Help Others ▤ Financial Security ▥ Social Justice Advocacy ▨ Develop Valuable Skills

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Overall, these motivational trends highlight that for many students, a law degree is viewed as a vehicle for social change and doing good in society, and this is particularly salient for students from marginalized groups.

Confidence and Access to Resources and Support

Navigating the admission process is a major undertaking. Access to a network of support and resources is critical during the decision-making process. Overall, the 2024 1L respondents reported having access to effective guidance and resources to help them decide where to enroll. As a result, most reported being highly confident that they

were attending the right law school for them. However, confidence and access to effective guidance and resources were experienced differently in the enrollment process for students from marginalized groups. These insights are useful to inform how stakeholders along the journey can provide effective support and increase access to resources for anyone making the life-changing decision of where to go to law school.

Confidence and Access to Resources

It is important for anyone interested in pursuing legal education to have effective guidance, access to resources, and confidence in the enrollment decision they are making. Without effective guidance and resources, students might not apply to or confidently enroll in programs that meet their goals and needs. Overall, three out of four of the 2024 1Ls agreed or strongly agreed they had access to effective guidance and resources when deciding about where to go to law school (Figure 23). Half of all 1Ls agreed or strongly agreed they knew exactly how to decide where to attend law school, and eight out of ten agreed or strongly agreed they were confident they are attending the right law school for them.

Figure 23: Confidence and Support in the Enrollment Decision-Making Process (n=1,706)

Legend: Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

Access to Effective Guidance: 25%, 43%, 18%, 10%, 3%
Access to Information and Resources: 28%, 51%, 13%, 6%, 2%
Knew How to Decide Where to Enroll: 20%, 30%, 22%, 22%, 6%
Confident Attending Right Law School Now: 51%, 33%, 11%, 3%, 1%
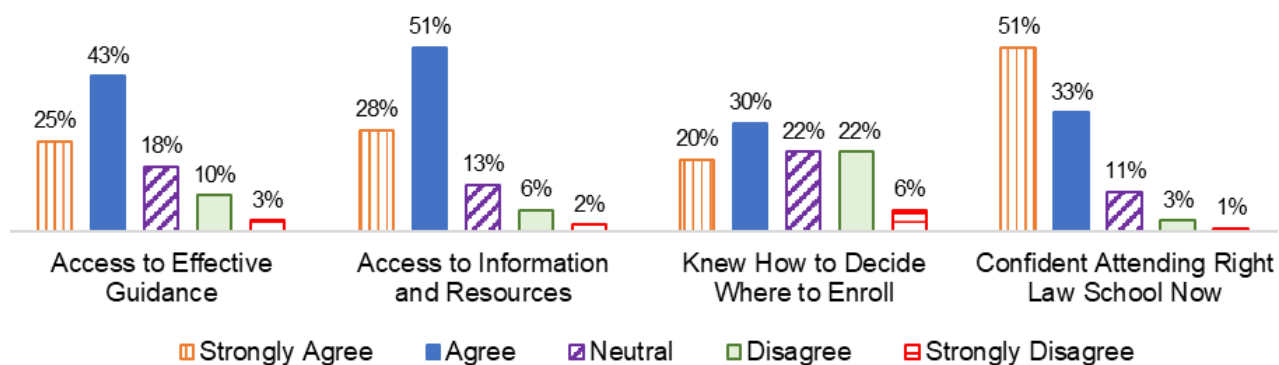
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

While all 1Ls expressed experiencing similar degrees of access to guidance, resources, and support in the enrollment process generally, racially and ethnically marginalized 1Ls reported lower levels of access to effective guidance (64% vs. 73%) and resources (74% vs. 83%) when deciding where to enroll compared to their white peers (Figures 24 and 25). These datapoints reflect about a ten percentage-point difference, implying that the journey to law school is not experienced the same for everyone.

Figure 24: Access to Effective Guidance in the Enrollment Decision-Making Process by Race and Ethnicity (n=1,579)

White 1Ls: Strongly Agree 27%, Agree 46%, Neutral 16%, Disagree 9%, Strongly Disagree 2%

Racially and Ethnically Marginalized 1Ls: Strongly Agree 24%, Agree 40%, Neutral 20%, Disagree 12%, Strongly Disagree 3%

☐ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
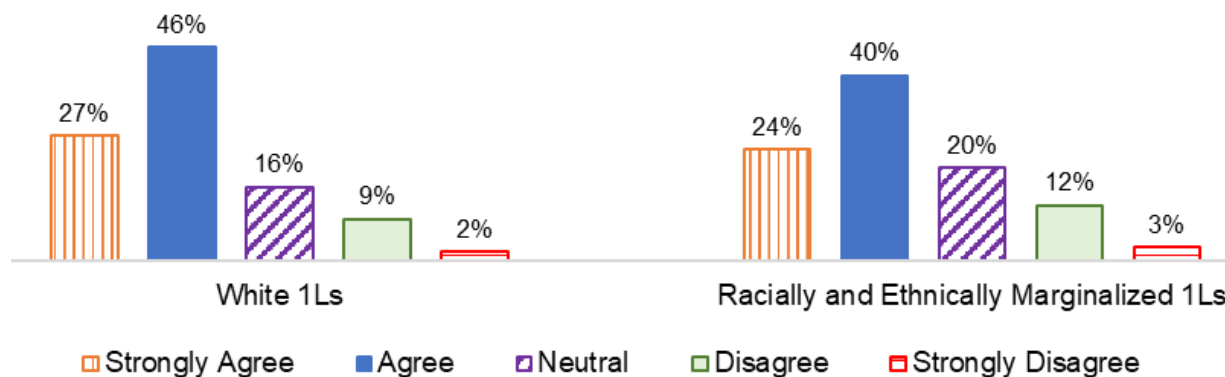
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Figure 25: Access to Information and Resources in the Enrollment Decision-Making Process by Race and Ethnicity (n=1,579)

White 1Ls: Strongly Agree 28%, Agree 55%, Neutral 11%, Disagree 4%, Strongly Disagree 1%

Racially and Ethnically Marginalized 1Ls: Strongly Agree 27%, Agree 47%, Neutral 17%, Disagree 7%, Strongly Disagree 2%

☐ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
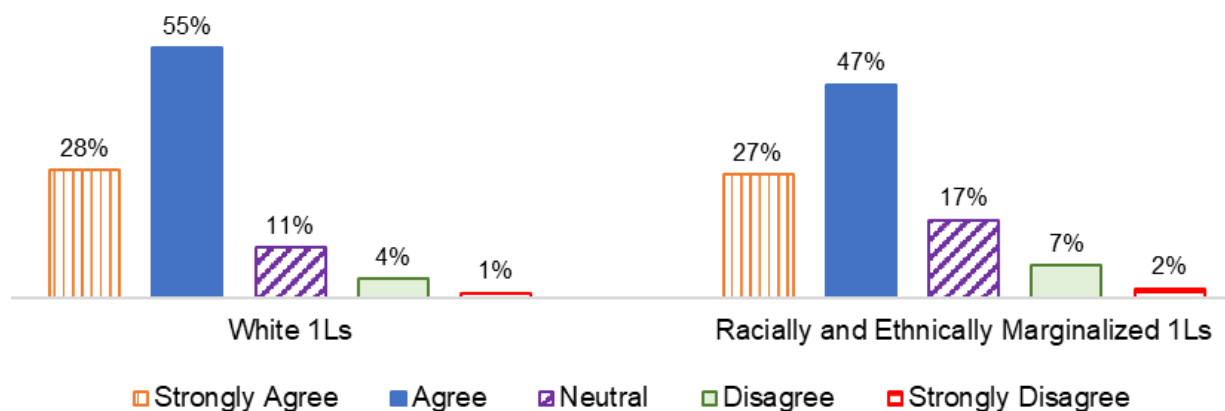
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Confidence in knowing how to decide where to enroll differed significantly based on gender identity. Gender diverse 1Ls felt less confident in knowing exactly how to decide where to attend law school compared to their cisgender peers. In fact, over half of the cisgender men surveyed said they agreed or strongly agreed they knew how to decide where to go to law school, compared with 47% of cisgender women (a 14% difference) and 40% of gender diverse 1Ls (a more than 25% difference; Figure 26). This difference in confidence, especially for gender diverse 1Ls, is critical to understand given current anti-transgender legislations.

Figure 26: Confidence in Knowing How to Decide Where to Enroll in Law School by Gender (n=1,682)

Legend: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Gender Diverse: 23%, 17%, 32%, 19%, 9%
Woman (Cisgender): 19%, 28%, 22%, 25%, 7%
Man (Cisgender): 25%, 17%, 28%, 22%, 8%
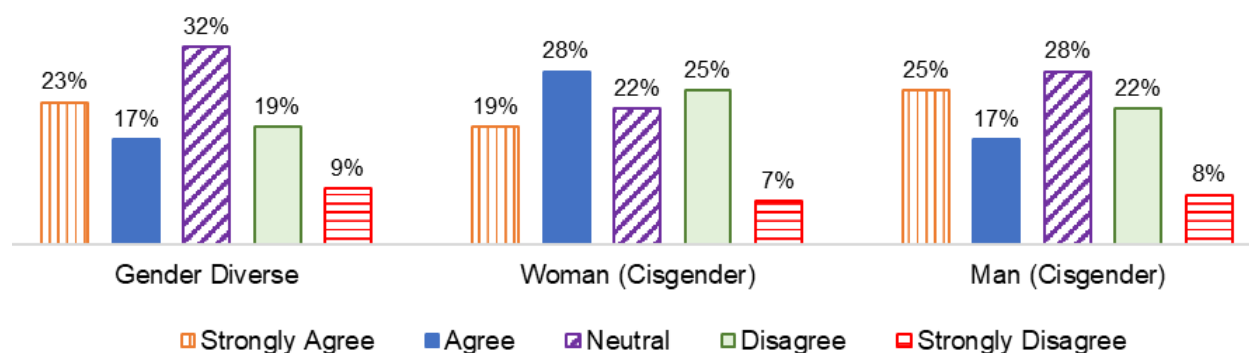
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Lastly, access to effective guidance was significantly different for first-generation college graduates. First-generation college graduate 1Ls reported that they agreed or strongly agreed they had access to effective guidance or resources in deciding where to enroll at a rate about 10% lower than their continuing-generation college peers (Figures 27 and 28).

Figure 27: Access to Effective Guidance in Deciding Where to Enroll in Law School by First-Generation College Graduate Status (n=1,665)

Legend: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

First-Generation College Graduate: 24%, 37%, 20%, 14%, 5%
Continuing-Generation College Graduate: 25%, 46%, 18%, 9%, 2%
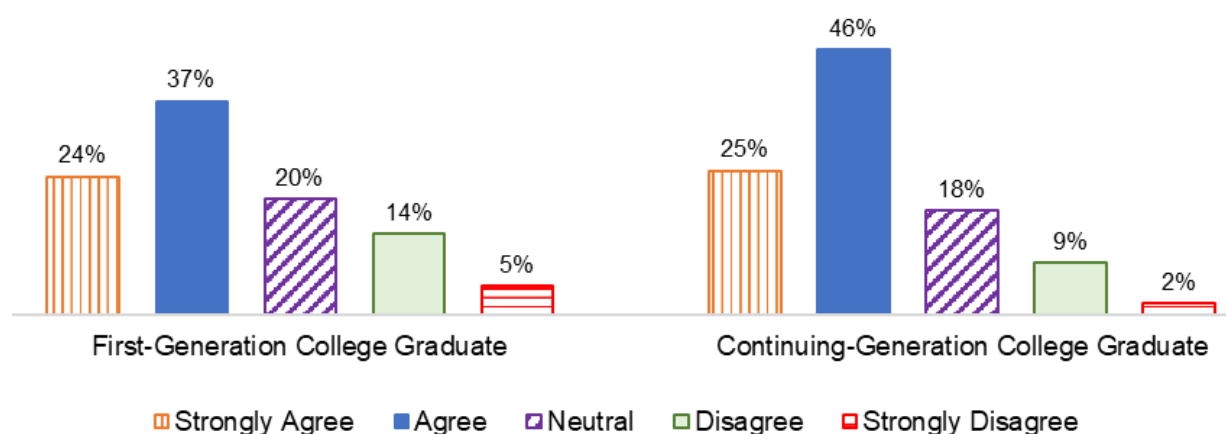
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Figure 28: Access to Resources and Information in Deciding Where to Enroll in Law School by First-Generation College Graduate Status (n=1,665)
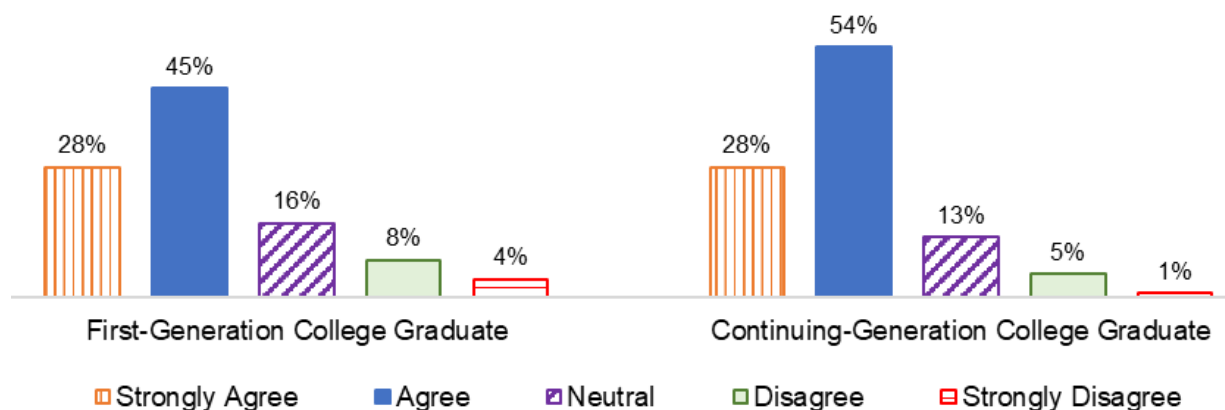
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Overall, most 1Ls reported they had access to resources and guidance that led them to feeling confident in their enrollment decision. Nonetheless, 1Ls from backgrounds that have historically experienced greater access to resources and social support were, unsurprisingly, more likely to agree they had the support they needed in the enrollment process. It is important for anyone on the journey to law school to have access to resources and social support throughout the enrollment process because it gives students confidence in their decisions.

Who They Consulted for Information (People and Online)

While it can be beneficial to consult with others to learn more about law schools of interest, the help these sources provide can vary widely depending on the source's own experiences or professional position. For example, unless friends have been to law school, and even if they have, they may not be able to help a candidate decide which law school will best meet their personal, academic, and professional needs. Even those who are in the legal field, such as attorneys, may give advice based on their own law school experiences, which may have been many years ago, or based on their chosen areas of practice. This research can assist law schools and others who guide prospective students on how to use advice from different sources and what to consider and/or avoid when deciding which law school will holistically meet a candidate's goals and needs.

Among 2024 1Ls, almost half relied on family for advice. Specifically, the most often consulted influential sources of information were parents, siblings, or close relatives (49%), friends (44%), and attorneys (43%; Figure 29). Slightly more than a quarter of 1Ls sought advice from a college prelaw advisor (28%) or current law students at schools of interest (28%), while roughly a quarter of 1Ls consulted admission staff at law schools of interest (25%), college faculty or staff who were not prelaw advisors (24%), or employers or coworkers (24%). A similar proportion of 1Ls consulted alumni at law schools of interest (18%) or a spouse/partner (17%). Notably, one in eight 1Ls

indicated they did not consult anyone when deciding where to go to law school. There may be a number of reasons for why 1Ls reported not consulting anyone for advice when deciding where to attend, including that they may have consulted various individuals when they were actively applying to law school, or it may be because they lack access to a support network.

Figure 29: Top Sources Consulted for Advice When Deciding Where to Go to Law School (n=1,774)
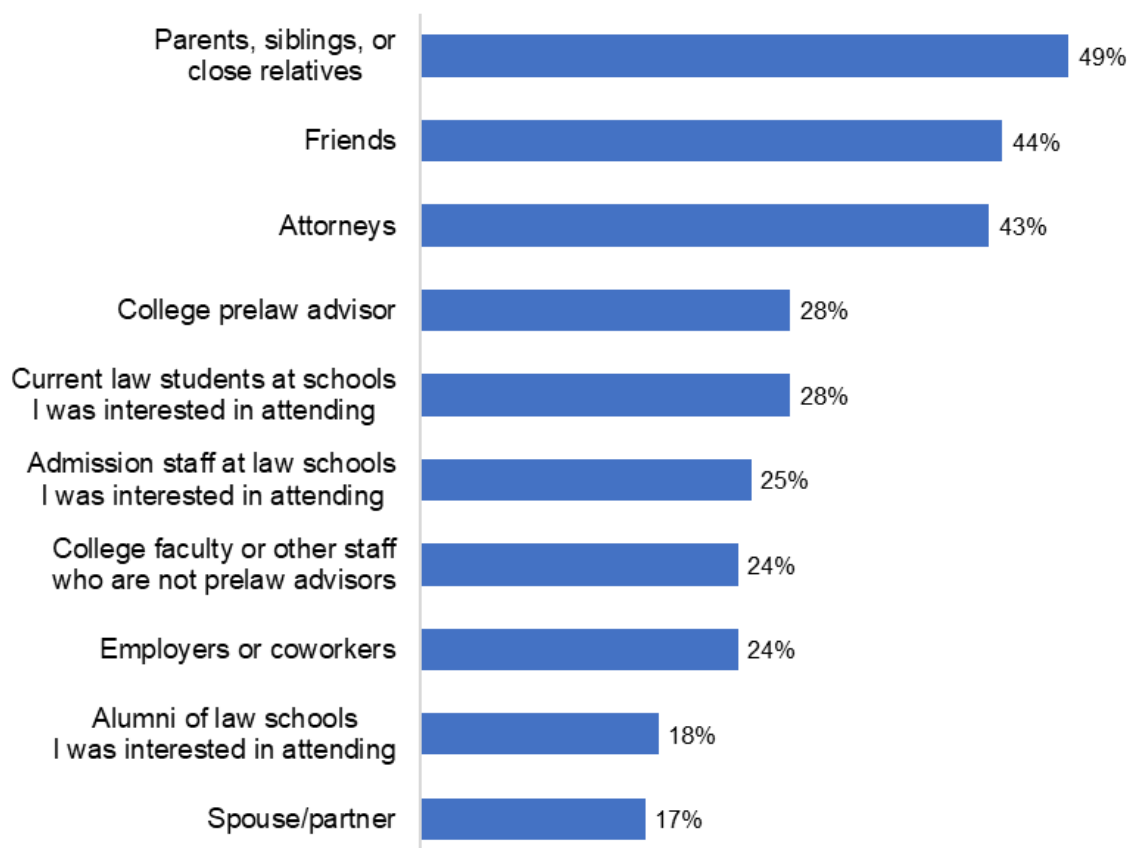
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

While all 1Ls from all backgrounds generally used similar sources to consult for information, significantly fewer 1Ls from marginalized racial and ethnic groups consulted parents, siblings, or close relatives (43% vs. 53%) and staff from higher education institutions (22% vs. 27%; Figure 30). More 1Ls from racially and ethnically minorized groups reported they consulted a mentor or sponsor (18% vs. 12%) than their white peers, at a 50% higher rate. Similarly, more 1Ls from racially and ethnically minorized groups reported they consulted pathway/pipeline programs (12% vs. 5%) than their white peers, at a 140% higher rate.

Figure 30: Top Sources Consulted for Advice When Deciding Where to Go to Law School by Race and Ethnicity (n=1,645)

	Parents, siblings, or close relatives	Admission staff at law schools I was interested in attending	College faculty or other staff who are not prelaw advisors	Mentor/sponsor	Prelaw pipeline or pathway programs
White 1Ls	53%	27%	27%	12%	5%
Racially and Ethnically Marginalized 1Ls	43%	22%	22%	18%	12%
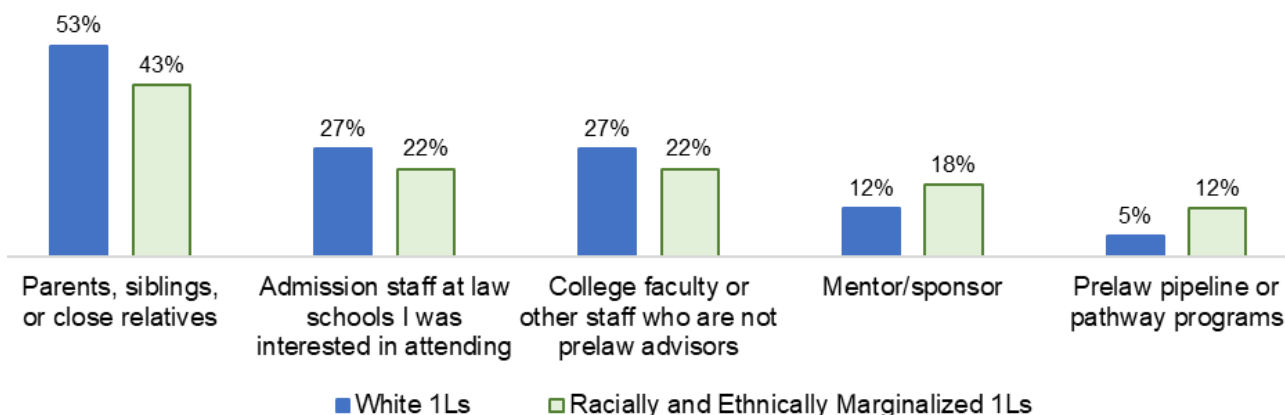
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Who one consults for support and advice about law school enrollment will vary based on students' networks. Therefore, it is not surprising that first-generation college graduate 1Ls had lower rates of relying on their networks than their continuing-generation graduate peers (Figure 31). There is a significant difference between the 30% of first-generation college graduates who got influential advice from their parents, siblings, or close relatives compared to the over half of continuing-generation college graduates who did the same (54%). What is unknown is the kind of advice and what specific influential advice 1Ls were seeking from their networks. A similar trend is found when examining Pell Grant recipients.

Figure 31: Selected Sources Consulted for Advice by First-Generation College Graduate Status (n=1,733)

	Parents, siblings, or close relatives	Friends	Attorneys	Prelaw pipeline or pathway programs	None
First-Generation College Graduate	30%	37%	38%	12%	14%
Continuing-Generation College Graduate	54%	46%	45%	6%	6%
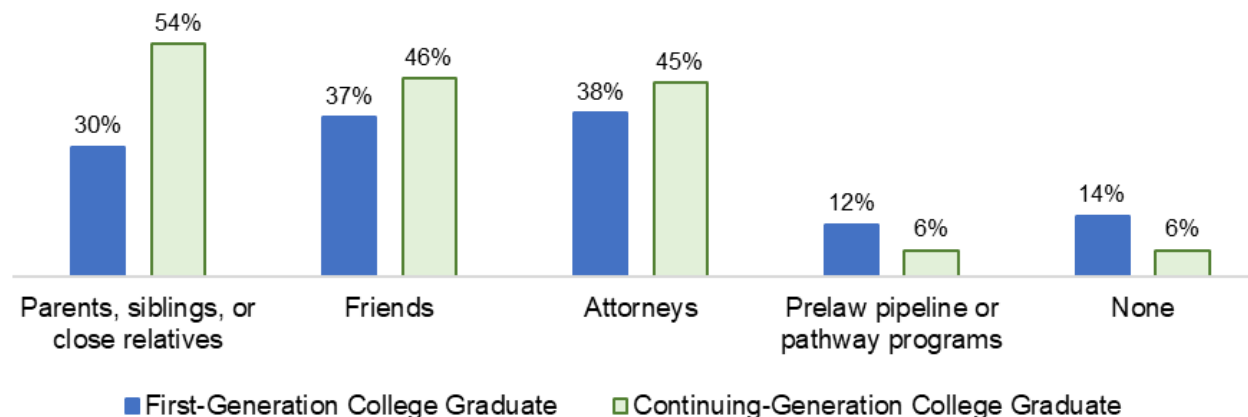
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

The types of networks individuals have varied by age as well. Younger 1Ls are more likely to consult parents, siblings, or close relatives, and have connections with higher education institutions than older 1Ls because most are close to, if not still in, undergrad. Over half of 1Ls ages 26 or younger consulted with parents, siblings, or close relatives,

while only 35% of 1Ls ages 27 or older did so (Figure 32). About one out of three 1Ls ages 26 or younger consulted a college prelaw advisor (32%), current law students (29%), or college faculty or staff who are not prelaw advisors (28%), compared to less than two in ten older 1Ls. Older 1Ls, in contrast, reported consulting a spouse/partner (27% vs. 15%), no one (15% vs. 6%), or "other" (8% vs. 4%) at higher rates than their younger peers.

Figure 32: Selected Sources Consulted for Advice by Age at Enrollment (n=1,774)
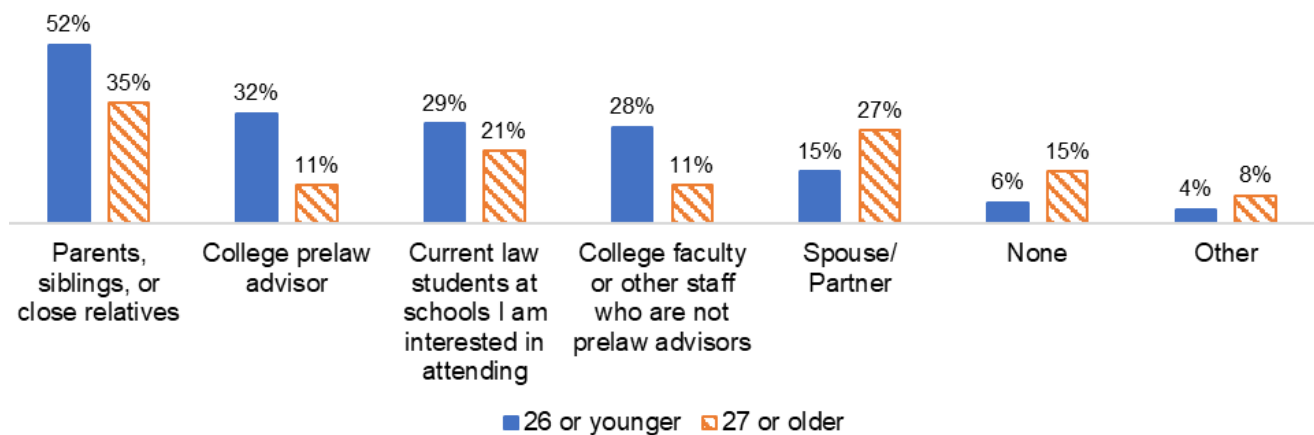
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

In addition to people, most 1Ls relied on various online resources when deciding where to enroll in law school. Two out of three 1Ls relied on law school rankings (66%) as one of their top three online resources consulted, followed by official law school websites (46%), and LSAC's website (43%; Figure 33). One out of three 1Ls relied on Reddit as a top online resource, while slightly less than a quarter of all 1Ls used ABA 509 Disclosures (19%), Law School Transparency (17%), or 7Sage (14%). 5% of all 1Ls said they did not seek online resources.

Figure 33: Top Online Sources Consulted for Advice When Deciding Where to Go to Law School (n=1,725)
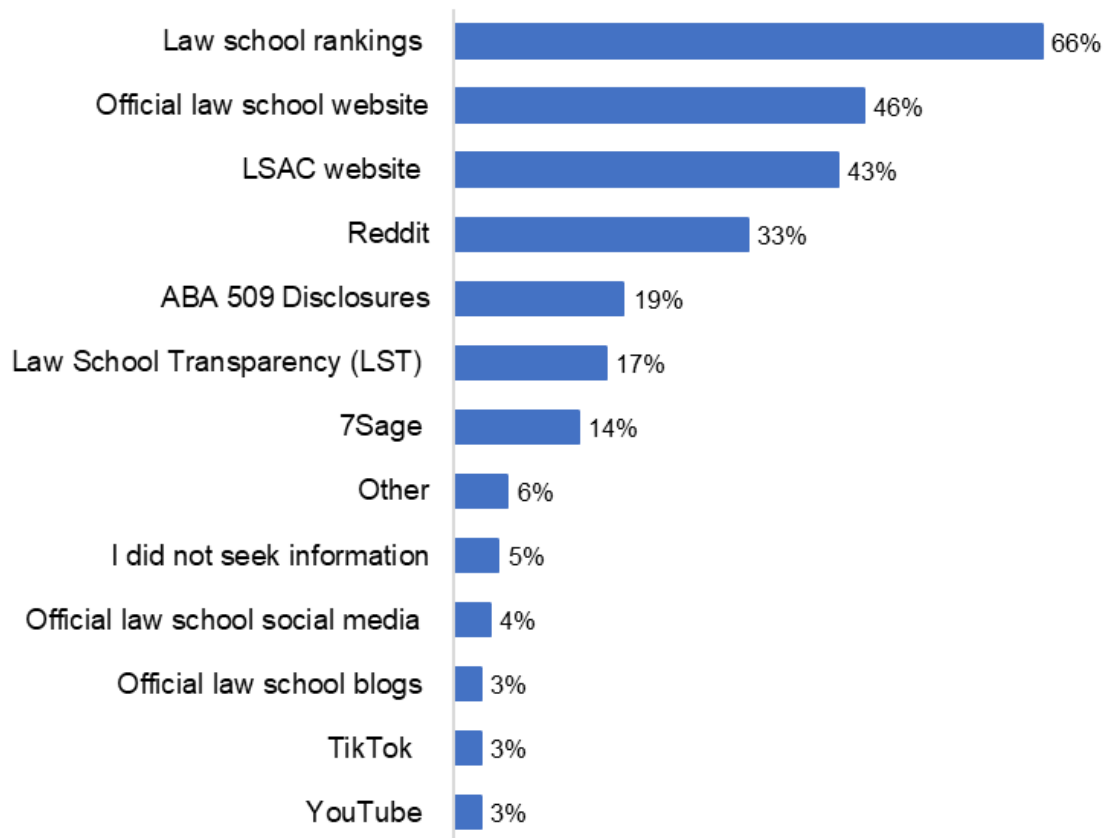
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Overall, who and what people consulted for advice on deciding where to enroll is related to access to resources and networks. The trends above reveal that 1Ls from many marginalized 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.

Pathway Participation

Pathway (pipeline) programs to law school encourage and expand access to legal education. While specific pathway programs work at differing times across the legal education journey, collectively they allow for early exposure and preparation and can bridge systemic gaps in resources and experiences that impact successful navigation of the law school application process and the legal profession. These gaps are mostly experienced by individuals who are economically under-resourced, attended under-resourced education institutions, are underrepresented within the profession, or lack direct support or connections from within the profession.

Only 6% of the 1Ls surveyed said they participated in a pathway program prior to enrolling in law school. Notably, pathway programs played a role in the enrollment journey for students who were the first to graduate from college in their families. In particular, of this 6%, more than half of pathway program participants were first-generation college graduates (56%), and more than double the amount of first-generation college graduate 1Ls (11%) said they participated in a pathway program compared to only 4% of their continuing-generation college peers. Overall, the 2024 1L class reveals that pathway programs play a key role in providing access to resources and opportunities for many 1Ls from marginalized and under-resourced communities. These programs play a role in not just the journey to and through law school, but also in addressing various barriers for many individuals, especially those from communities that lack access to legal representation.

Making the Enrollment Decision

Deciding where to go to law school is a multidimensional process during which accepted law school applicants have to weigh numerous factors beyond the sources of advice and resources discussed above. Prelaw stakeholders can use information about decision-making factors to guide students on their journey to law school from the very beginning. And law school representatives and admission staff can use the information to design more targeted recruitment based on which resources, opportunities, and experiences prospective law students will look for in a school.

The 2024 Matriculant Survey participants were asked to indicate what factors they considered when deciding where to go to law school. They were then asked to indicate how important they thought these factors were when they were deciding where to attend law school. The following sections detail the importance of factors organized into six broad categories: 1) law school reputation factors, 2) employment factors, 3) financial factors, 4) location factors, 5) academic program factors, 6) academic services availability, and 7) social factors.

In addition to the multiple factors that are considered in a decision, this section ends with an examination of how 1Ls would advise candidates now, given that they had been in law school for about three months at the time of the survey administration. Experiencing law school reorients what factors matter to 1Ls, revealing how they would advise candidates today to weigh factors like cost more than the reputation and ranking of a law school. Overall, this section provides useful information for everyone from prelaw stakeholders to law schools to law school candidates about the factors driving enrollment decisions.

Reputation Factors

Reputation is comprised of four factors, including reputation of the law school, reputation of law school faculty, reputation of law school alumni, and law school rankings. When dissecting these various factors, similar to the 2023 1L class, the 2024 1L respondents show that the reputation of a law school goes beyond rankings, despite

the outsized focus on rankings by many in the law space. The majority (80%) of 1Ls said they considered a law school's reputation when deciding where to enroll. Of these 1Ls, 80% reported that a law school's reputation was an extremely or very important factor when deciding where to enroll. 65% said they considered law school rankings when deciding where to attend law school. This also means that more than one in three 1Ls did not rely on rankings when making their decision (Figure 34). Of the 1L s who considered law school rankings, 65% reported that rankings were extremely or very important in their decision-making process (Figure 35).

Slightly less than half of the 1Ls surveyed said they considered the reputation of the law school alumni when deciding where to apply to law school (Figure 34). Of these students, 72% said the reputation of law school alumni was extremely or very important in determining where to enroll (Figure 35), while almost one in ten 1Ls did not consider any of these reputation factors when making their enrollment decision.

Figure 34: Law School Reputation Factors Considered (n=1,703)
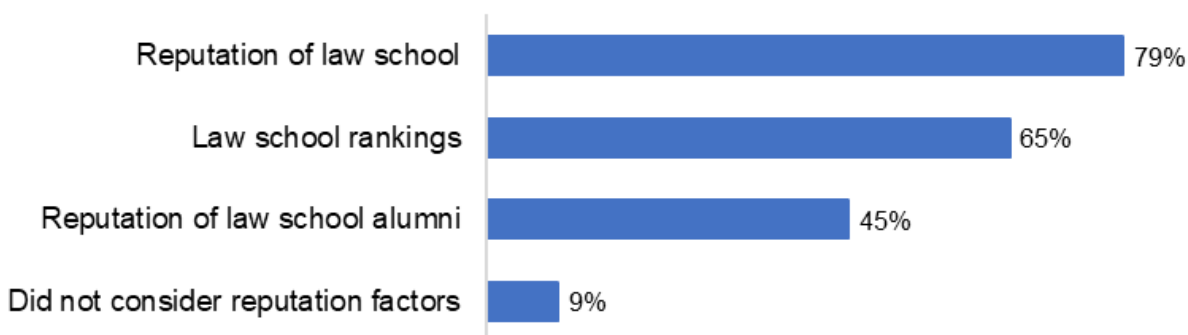
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Figure 35: Importance of Reputation Factors in Deciding Where to Enroll
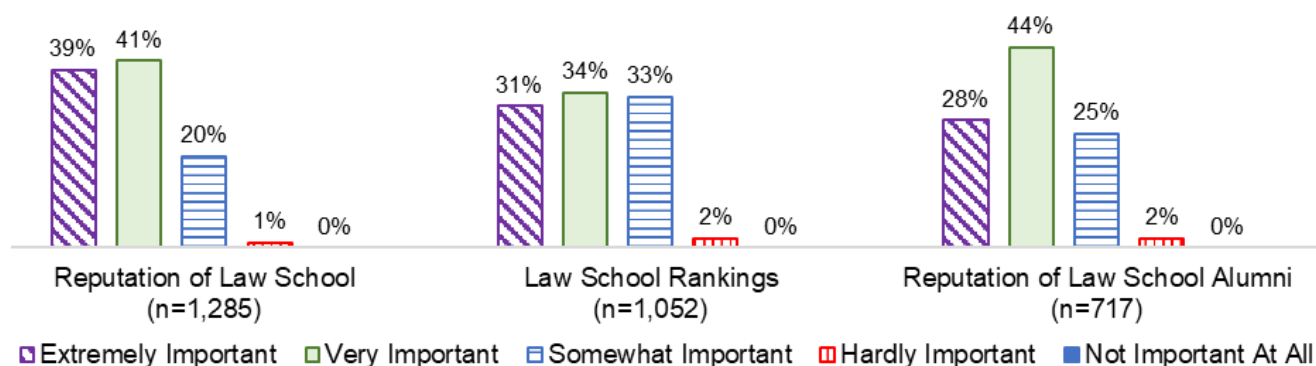
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

The overall reputation of a law school continues to play a substantial role in determining where 1Ls attend law school. While rankings remain an important part of the decision-making process, the reputation of law school alumni is just as important, if not more so

than other reputational factors. This suggests, and as the next topic supports, 2024 1Ls heavily weigh post-graduation networks and prospects when deciding where to enroll.

Job Prospects Matter: The Role of Post-Graduation Employment

1Ls balance several factors when deciding where to enroll, in particular post-graduation outcomes. Three out of five 1Ls reported they considered the employment rate of a law school's recent graduates when deciding where to enroll (Figure 36). Of these students, more than half said employment rates were extremely important to consider in their decision (Figure 37). 62% of 1Ls said they considered a law school's first-time bar passage rate when deciding where to enroll. First-time bar passage rates of a law school's recent graduates were almost equally important, with 42% of 1Ls saying this factor was extremely important.

Post-graduation outcomes were extremely important to 1Ls in their decision-making process. Two out of three 1Ls considered salaries of recently graduated law students or sector-specific employment rates of recent graduates in their decision-making process (Figure 37). Of these students, half said these two factors were extremely important in deciding where to enroll. Just under a quarter of 1Ls considered the proportion of law schools' recent graduates employed in different areas of practice (e.g., family law, criminal law, contract law, etc.). Of these, just under a quarter reported this factor was extremely important. One in ten 1Ls did not consider any post-graduate employment factors in their decision-making process (Figure 36). Overall, as with their 2023 peers, 2024 1L respondents are thinking well beyond their law school years, focusing on their potential work opportunities.

Figure 36: Post-Graduate Employment Factors Considered (n=1,697)

Factor	Percentage
Employment rate of recent graduates	67%
First-time bar exam passage rate of recent graduates	62%
Salaries of recent graduates	41%
Sector-specific employment rates of recent graduates	36%
Proportion of recent graduates employed in different areas of practice	22%
Did not consider post-grad employment factors	12%
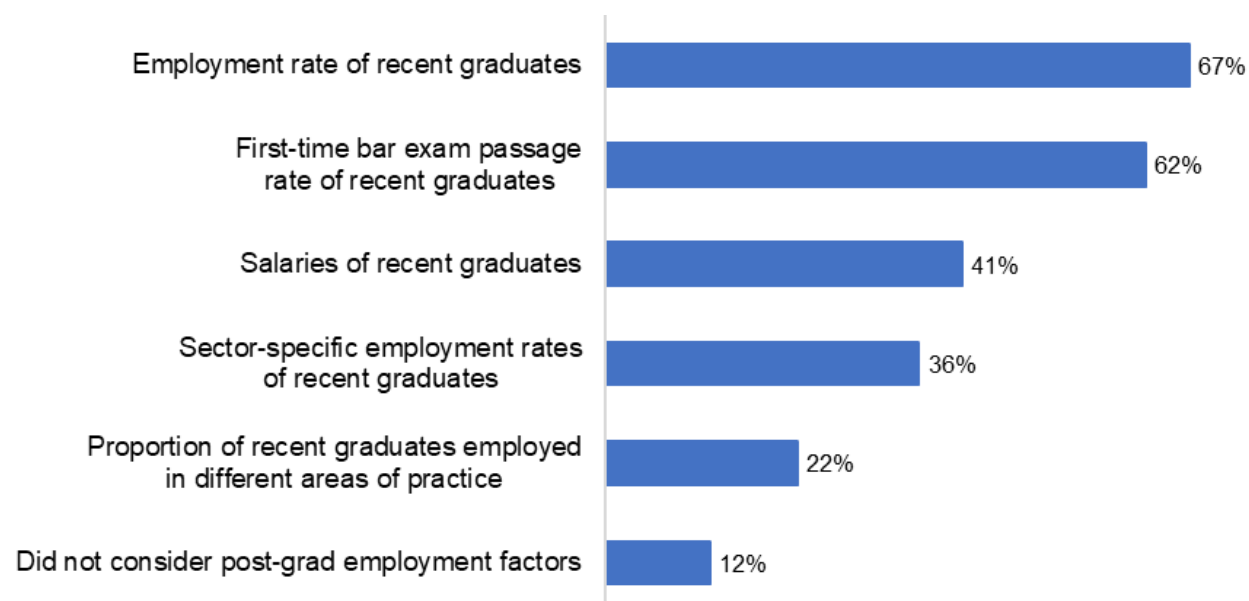
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Figure 37: Importance of Post-Graduate Employment Factors in Deciding Where to Enroll

Employment rate of law school's recent graduates (n=1,085): 52% Extremely Important, 38% Very Important, 10% Somewhat Important, 0% Hardly Important, 0% Not Important At All

First-time bar exam passage rate of law school's recent graduates (n=996): 48%, 41%, 11%, 0%, 0%

Salaries of law school's recent graduates (n=647): 44%, 38%, 16%, 1%, 0%

Sector-specific employment rates of law school's recent graduates (n=576): 33%, 41%, 23%, 3%, 1%

Proportion of law school's recent graduates employed in different areas of practice (n=362): 27%, 37%, 32%, 3%, 1%

Extremely Important · Very Important · Somewhat Important · Hardly Important · Not Important At All

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Money Matters: Financial Factors and Undergraduate Debt

The cost of law school and the increase in debt levels for law school graduates have been concerns for more than two decades.[27] An increasing percentage of recent lawyers are negatively impacted by law school debt. Recent studies have found that educational debt loads affect the personal lives of young lawyers, causing them to postpone or not get married, buy a house, and/or have children; choose legal jobs they do not really want; leave the legal profession; or not enter the legal profession at all; and these educational debt loads are cited as the cause of stress, anxiety, depression, and anger, among other negative mental health effects.[28]

To determine how financial factors affected law school enrollment decisions for 2024 1Ls, the survey included a number of questions about undergraduate debt and financial factors candidates weighed to make their enrollment decisions. 1Ls were asked about

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[27] Scott, G. A. (2009). Higher Education: Issues Related to Law School Cost and Access. Report to Congressional Committees. GAO-10-20. *U.S. Government Accountability Office*; Webber, K., & Burns, R. (2018). Law Student Debt: Changes from 2008 to 2012 and Implications for the Future. *Available at SSRN 3262772.*

[28] American Bar Association. (2020). 2020 Law School Student Loan Debt: Survey Report; American Bar Association. (2021). Student Debt: The Holistic Impact on Today's Young Lawyer.

12 financial factors which included: the cost of attendance, availability of merit-based funds, availability of application fee waivers, availability of need-based grants/funds, the law school's possibility of scholarship reconsideration, availability of a law school loan repayment program, availability of financial aid for marginalized populations, the amount of the school's seat deposit, availability of financial aid for part-time students, acceptance of GI benefits or the availability of a Yellow Ribbon Program, and the availability of financial aid for international students.

Before starting law school, on average, 1L respondents reported having $12,802 in undergraduate debt.[29] This debt load is not held similarly across racial and ethnic groups and by first-generation college status. Black/African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x, and multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more) 1Ls held the highest undergraduate debt load, with Black/African American 1Ls reporting a debt load more than double the average undergraduate debt reported by all respondents (Figure 38).

Figure 38: Average Undergraduate Debt by Race and Ethnicity (n=1,442)
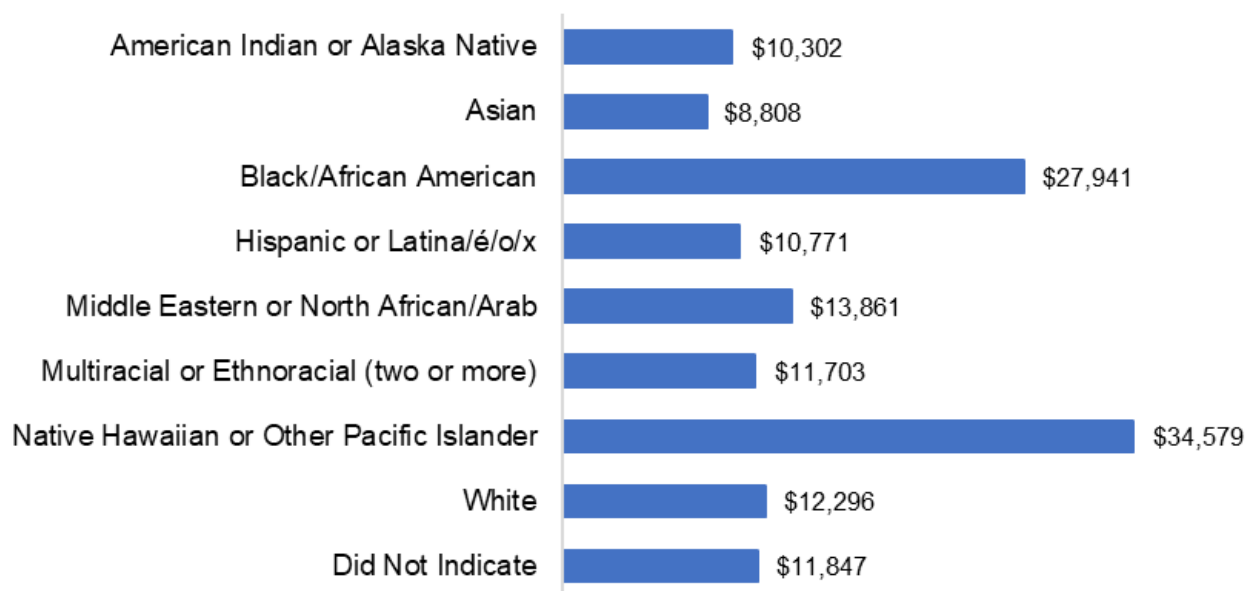
Race/Ethnicity	Average Debt
American Indian or Alaska Native	$10,302
Asian	$8,808
Black/African American	$27,941
Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	$10,771
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	$13,861
Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more)	$11,703
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	$34,579
White	$12,296
Did Not Indicate	$11,847

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey. Due to the low number of American Indian or Alaska Native, Middle Eastern or North African/Arab, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander respondents, data insights for this group should be interpreted with caution not to make strong generalizations about the entire population based on the small sample size.

Similarly, first-generation college graduates reported carrying, on average, an undergraduate debt load significantly higher (almost 40% higher) compared to their continuing-generation college graduate peers ($18,466 and $13,228, respectively). Older (27 or older) 1Ls carried, on average, almost double the amount of debt as their

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[29] Average undergraduate debt is based on 1,560 respondents who reported their undergraduate debt total.

younger (26 or younger) peers ($19,883 and $10,878, respectively). These insights are helpful to contextualize the importance of financial factors in how 1Ls reported deciding where to enroll and how they reported financing their first year of law school.[30]

Overall, 1L respondents from marginalized communities entered law school with higher undergraduate debt than their peers (Figure 38). And across groups, when deciding where to go, the cost of attendance and various scholarships were the financial factors most often considered (Figure 39). For example, four out of five 1Ls said they considered cost of attendance, with over half of these students reporting this factor was extremely important in deciding where to enroll (Figure 40). Two out of three 1Ls considered the availability of merit-based funds or scholarships, and of these students, half reported this factor was extremely important. Although a third of 1Ls considered the availability of an application fee waiver, the majority only found it somewhat of an important factor. In contrast, the majority of the roughly a quarter 1Ls who considered the availability of need-based grants/funds or the possibility of scholarship reconsideration said these two factors were extremely important in their enrollment decision. The vast majority of 1Ls who considered the availability of various types of financial aid indicated all these factors were extremely important.

Figure 39: Financial Factors Considered (n=1,686)

Financial Factor	Percentage
Cost of attendance	84%
Availability of merit-based funds/scholarships	66%
Application fee waiver offered	29%
Availability of need-based grants/funds	27%
Possibility of scholarship reconsideration	26%
Availability of law school loan repayment program	12%
Availability of financial aid for marginalized populations	12%
Amount of seat deposit	10%
Availability of financial aid for part-time students	6%
Did not consider financial factors	5%
Acceptance of GI benefits or Yellow Ribbon Program	3%
Availability of financial aid for international students	2%

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

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[30] Check out LSAC's report titled, "Funding the First Year: How 2024 1Ls Paid for Law School."

Figure 40: Importance of Financial Factors in Deciding Where to Enroll

Cost of attendance (n=1,354): Extremely Important 53%, Very Important 28%, Somewhat Important 17%, Hardly Important 1%, Not Important At All 0%

Availability of merit-based funds/scholarships (n=1,063): Extremely Important 58%, Very Important 29%, Somewhat Important 13%, Hardly Important 0%, Not Important At All 0%

Application fee waiver offered (n=471): Extremely Important 24%, Very Important 23%, Somewhat Important 35%, Hardly Important 16%, Not Important At All 2%

Availability of need-based grants/funds (n=594): Extremely Important 53%, Very Important 31%, Somewhat Important 14%, Hardly Important 1%, Not Important At All 1%

Possibility of scholarship reconsideration (n=413): Extremely Important 43%, Very Important 29%, Somewhat Important 23%, Hardly Important 4%, Not Important At All 0%

Availability of law school loan repayment program (n=194): Extremely Important 34%, Very Important 39%, Somewhat Important 24%, Hardly Important 2%, Not Important At All 1%

Availability of financial aid for marginalized populations (n=190): Extremely Important 54%, Very Important 30%, Somewhat Important 14%, Hardly Important 0%, Not Important At All 1%

Amount of seat deposit (n=166): Extremely Important 30%, Very Important 17%, Somewhat Important 39%, Hardly Important 11%, Not Important At All 3%

Availability of financial aid for part-time students (n=95): Extremely Important 65%, Very Important 24%, Somewhat Important 8%, Hardly Important 3%, Not Important At All 1%

Acceptance of GI benefits or availability of Yellow Ribbon Program (n=57): Extremely Important 74%, Very Important 21%, Somewhat Important 3%, Hardly Important 2%, Not Important At All 0%

Availability of financial aid for international students (n=32): Extremely Important 62%, Very Important 18%, Somewhat Important 11%, Hardly Important 4%, Not Important At All 5%

Legend: Extremely Important, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Hardly Important, Not Important At All

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Where You Are Matters: The Role of Location Factors

Many prospective law students will consider a number of geographic factors in making their choice. In deciding where to attend law school, location factors include:

- Law school is in the state in which I hope to take the bar and establish my career.

- Law school location did not require me to move a long distance to attend.

- Law school is close to my primary personal support system.

- Law school location provides an opportunity to try out living in a place that interests me.

- Law school offers opportunities for externships and applied experiences that aren't available in other locations.

- Law school is geographically close to my undergraduate institution.

- Law school location allows me to continue working at my current job outside of law school.

- Law school is affiliated with my undergraduate institution.

- Law school location allows me to continue my caregiving responsibilities.

Location can matter for a number of reasons, including family obligations and cost of living, and, for some 1Ls, location matters for their future careers and the jurisdiction they want to practice in (Figure 41). The three location factors most important to their decision-making for the 2024 1L respondents included (1) wanting to stay where they plan to practice, (2) not requiring them to move a long distance, and (3) living close to their primary support system. Just under half of all 1Ls considered whether the law school was located in a state where they plan on taking the bar exam and establishing their career (45%), if the law school location didn't require them to move a long distance (44%), or if the law school was close to their primary support system (38%). Of these 1Ls, roughly half or more considered these three factors as extremely important in deciding where to enroll (Figure 42).

In addition to the top three factors, 1Ls reported they wanted to live somewhere new and were seeking locations close to externship and internship opportunities. One in three 1Ls reported they considered if the law school location provided an opportunity to try out living in a different place (Figure 41). This factor was not of extreme importance for most 1Ls (Figure 42). And almost 30% of 1L respondents indicated that they considered if the law school was located somewhere that offered opportunities for externships and internships, with about one in three indicating this factor was extremely important in their decision-making. Overall, these trends reinforce the importance of 1Ls' professional goals and personal needs as the main drivers for the importance of law school location.

Figure 41: Location Factors Considered (n=1,674)

Factor	Percentage
Law school is in the state in which I hope to take the bar and establish my career	45%
Law school location did not require me to move a long distance to attend	44%
Law school is close to my primary personal support system	38%
Law school location provides an opportunity to try out living in a place that interests me	35%
Law school offers opportunities for externships and applied experiences that aren't available in other locations	27%
Law school is geographically close to my undergraduate institution	16%
Law school location allows me to continue working at my current job outside of law school	12%
Law school is affiliated with my undergraduate institution	10%
Did not consider location factors	10%
Law school location allows me to continue my caregiving responsibilities	8%

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Figure 42: Importance of Location Factors in Deciding Where to Enroll

Law school location did not require me to move a long distance to attend (n=704): 50%, 23%, 22%, 4%, 1%

Law school is geographically close to my undergraduate institution (n=252): 23%, 20%, 34%, 15%, 8%

Law school is affiliated with my undergraduate institution (n=154): 24%, 16%, 33%, 17%, 10%

Law school offers opportunities for externships and applied experiences (n=425): 34%, 41%, 23%, 2%, 0%

Law school location provides an opportunity to try out living elsewhere (n=562): 29%, 31%, 34%, 5%, 0%

Law school is close to my primary personal support system (n=618): 48%, 30%, 20%, 2%, 0%

Law school location allows me to continue my caregiving responsibilities (n=125): 63%, 25%, 11%, 1%, 0%

Law school location allows me to continue working at my current job (n=200): 65%, 16%, 15%, 4%, 1%

Law school is in the state in which I hope to take the bar and establish my career (n=727): 55%, 27%, 16%, 2%, 0%

Legend: Extremely Important, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Hardly Important, Not Important At All

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

The Academic Experience: Academic, Faculty, and Program Factors

While schools are often thought of in terms of their rank or reputation, prospective law students may focus on choosing a school that meets their specific academic interests or one that provides program structure options that meet the needs of individuals who are working their way through law school. The academic experience is measured by two sets of factors. First, academic and faculty factors include experiential offerings, course offerings in the student's areas of interest, class size, faculty who are leading experts in their fields, diverse course offerings, curriculum-based bar passage prep, dual degree programs offered, and certificate offerings. Separately, programmatic factors include part-time program options, evening program options, and online class offerings. Overall, academic factors were cited as important factors in students' enrollment decisions.

Half of all 1Ls considered experiential learning offerings, course offerings in the student's areas of interest, or class size in deciding where to attend law school (Figure 43). Of these 1Ls, more than one in three reported that experiential offerings and course offerings in the student's areas of interest were very important to their decision (Figure 44). More than 40% of 1Ls reported considering class size in their decisions, but the majority indicated that this was somewhat or hardly important to the decision making (Figure 43 and Figure 44). While more than one in five 1Ls considered diverse course offerings in their decision, one in three reported that it was extremely important to their decision (Figure 43 and Figure 44).

While 15% or less 1Ls considered curriculum-based bar passage prep offerings or faculty expertise, more than one in three reported them to be very important factors in their decision making (Figure 43 and Figure 44).

Figure 43: Academic Program Factors Considered (n=1,658)

Factor	Percentage
Experiential offerings	53%
Course offerings in my areas of interest	51%
Class size	46%
Faculty who are leading experts in the fields of study I am interested in	27%
Diverse course offerings that incorporate topics like race, ethnicity, gender, etc.	21%
Curriculum-based bar passage preparation	15%
Part-time program options	13%
Dual degree programs offered	12%
Certificates offered	10%
Did not consider academic program factors	9%
Evening program options	8%
Fully online program option	8%
Online class offerings	6%

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Figure 44: Importance of Academic Factors in Deciding Where to Enroll
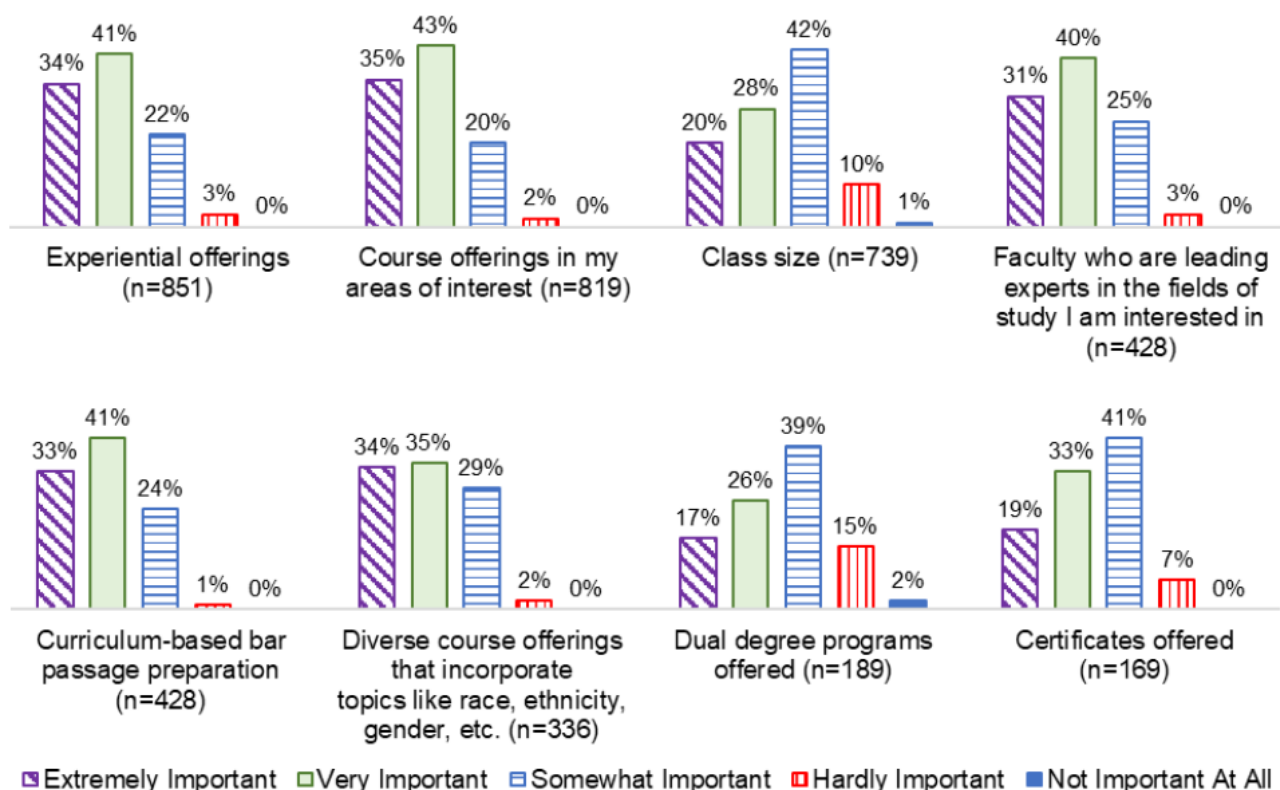
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Slightly more than one in ten 1Ls considered academic program factors when deciding where to matriculate (Figure 43). Of these 1Ls, three out of four considered these factors very or extremely important (Figure 45). For example, roughly 60% of 1Ls who considered part-time program options, evening program options, or online class offerings reported these factors were extremely important to their decision. These programmatic factors were critical to 1Ls who were looking for schools that would provide them with the flexibility they need.

Figure 45: Importance of Program Factors in Deciding Where to Enroll
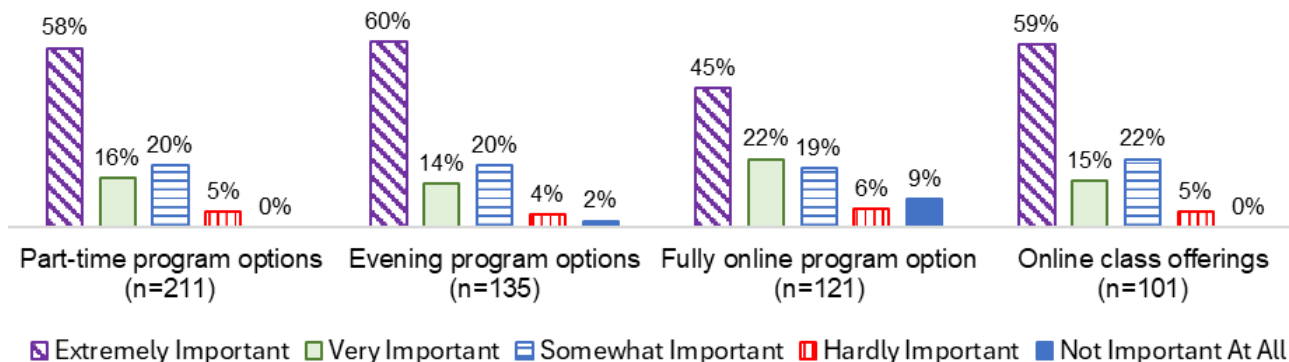
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Overall, like their 2023 peers, 2024 1Ls reported that academic, faculty, and program factors specifically related to their day-to-day experience as law students, including what they want to learn and the diversity of who they would be engaging with as peers and with instructors, were most important to their final decision as to where to enroll. This insight is helpful for law schools as they strategically position themselves for candidates as the best place to learn and grow based on what they have to offer in courses and their community of peers and faculty.

The Law School Environment: Law School Culture and Social Factors

The law school environment plays a role in facilitating or hindering a student's sense of belonging, and a strong sense of belonging is linked to greater likelihood of achieving academic and professional success.[31] As shown by the key academic, faculty, and program factors important to 1Ls in the section above, across the board, 1Ls reported they were looking for a school where they can belong and be supported. For law school culture and social factors, respondents were asked to weigh the following factors in making their decisions as to where to enroll:

- Classmates are friendly, supportive, and inclusive.

- Faculty are available, helpful, and sympathetic.

- Law school has active student interest groups and student-led organizations.

- Law school provides opportunities to network with senior law students, alumni, and/or legal professionals.

- Administrative staff is helpful, considerate, and flexible.

- Law school provides an environment where I can bring my authentic self.

- Law school's mission reflects the values that matter to me.

- Student body diversity

- Law school provides opportunities to be socially, civically, or politically active.

- Law school provides an environment where people like me are valued.

- Law school provides mentorship opportunities with senior law students.

- Faculty diversity

Overall, each of these factors were key to the 1Ls' decision-making process. Almost three out of five 1Ls considered whether classmates were friendly, supportive, and inclusive (Figure 46). Of these 1Ls, 81% considered this factor to be very or extremely

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[31] Deo, M.E., & Christensen, C. (2020, September). Diversity & Exclusion. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. Also refer to LSSSE's guest post titled, A LSSSE Collaboration on the Role of Belonging in Law School Experience and Performance.

important (Figure 47). Just under half of all 1Ls considered if faculty were available, helpful, and sympathetic or if the law school had active student interest groups and organizations. Of these 1Ls, 40% considered each of these factors, 80% and 65% respectively, to be very or extremely important. About two out of five 1Ls considered if the law school had networking opportunities with senior law students and alumni. Of these 1Ls, 77% indicated this factor was extremely or very important.

More than one in three 1Ls considered at least one of the following factors in their enrollment decision (Figure 46):

- Administrative staff is helpful, considerate, and flexible.

- Law school provides an environment where I can bring my authentic self.

- Law school's mission reflects the values that matter to me.

- Student body diversity

- Law school provides opportunities to be socially, civically, or politically active.

- Law school provides an environment where people like me are valued.

- Law school provides mentorship opportunities with senior law students.

For each of these factors, the majority of 1Ls (between 60% and 80%) reported they were very or extremely important in their decision (Figure 47).

About one out of five 1Ls considered faculty diversity, with 77% reporting this was extremely or very important in their decision making (Figures 46 and 47). And only 13% of all 1Ls reported they did not factor in law school culture into their decision-making process.

Figure 46: Law School Culture and Social Factors Considered

Factor	Percentage
Classmates are friendly, supportive, and inclusive	57%
Faculty are available, helpful, and sympathetic	45%
Law school has active student interest groups and student-led organizations	42%
Law school provides opportunities to network with senior law students, alumni, and/or legal professionals	39%
Administrative staff is helpful, considerate, and flexible	36%
Law school provides an environment where I can bring my authentic self	36%
Law school's mission reflects the values that matter to me	34%
Student body diversity	34%
Law school provides opportunities to be socially, civically, or politically active	33%
Law school provides an environment where people like me are valued	30%
Law school provides mentorship opportunities with senior law students	28%
Faculty diversity	18%
Did not consider school culture or social factors	13%

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Figure 47: Importance of School Culture and Social Factors in Deciding Where to Enroll

Classmates are friendly, supportive, and inclusive (n=914): Extremely Important 41%, Very Important 40%, Somewhat Important 17%, Hardly Important 2%, Not Important At All 0%

Faculty are available, helpful, and sympathetic (n=712): Extremely Important 40%, Very Important 40%, Somewhat Important 19%, Hardly Important 1%, Not Important At All 0%

Law school has active student interest groups and student-led organizations (n=87): Extremely Important 25%, Very Important 40%, Somewhat Important 30%, Hardly Important 4%, Not Important At All 1%

Law school provides opportunities to network with senior law students, alumni, etc. (n=279): Extremely Important 32%, Very Important 45%, Somewhat Important 21%, Hardly Important 2%, Not Important At All 0%

Administrative staff is helpful, considerate, and flexible (n=319): Extremely Important 30%, Very Important 43%, Somewhat Important 23%, Hardly Important 3%, Not Important At All 0%

Law school provides an environment where I can bring my authentic self (n=222): Extremely Important 41%, Very Important 40%, Somewhat Important 17%, Hardly Important 2%, Not Important At All 0%

Law school's mission reflects the values that matter to me (n=537): Extremely Important 36%, Very Important 40%, Somewhat Important 21%, Hardly Important 2%, Not Important At All 0%

Student body diversity (n=536): Extremely Important 31%, Very Important 44%, Somewhat Important 22%, Hardly Important 3%, Not Important At All 0%

Law school provides opportunities to be socially, civically, or politically engaged (n=754): Extremely Important 32%, Very Important 38%, Somewhat Important 27%, Hardly Important 3%, Not Important At All 0%

Law school provides an environment where people like me are valued (n=48): Extremely Important 42%, Very Important 36%, Somewhat Important 19%, Hardly Important 2%, Not Important At All 0%

Law school provides mentorship opportunities with senior law students (n=483): Extremely Important 24%, Very Important 38%, Somewhat Important 33%, Hardly Important 5%, Not Important At All 0%

Faculty diversity (n=281): Extremely Important 34%, Very Important 43%, Somewhat Important 19%, Hardly Important 3%, Not Important At All 0%

Legend: Extremely Important, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Hardly Important, Not Important At All

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Overall, these factors underscore that the enrollment decisions made by the 2024 1Ls, similar to their 2023 peers, included consideration of their relationships with peers, faculty, and staff. As Meera Deo, director of the Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE), wrote, "Belonging is a function of relationships; thus, every interaction can contribute — in either positive or negative ways."[32] Therefore, as schools and other stakeholders recruit and advise admitted applicants on their enrollment decision, it is important to reflect on who will be a part of their law school experience and what kind of a culture they can thrive in.

Meeting Students Where They Are: School-Provided Support Factors
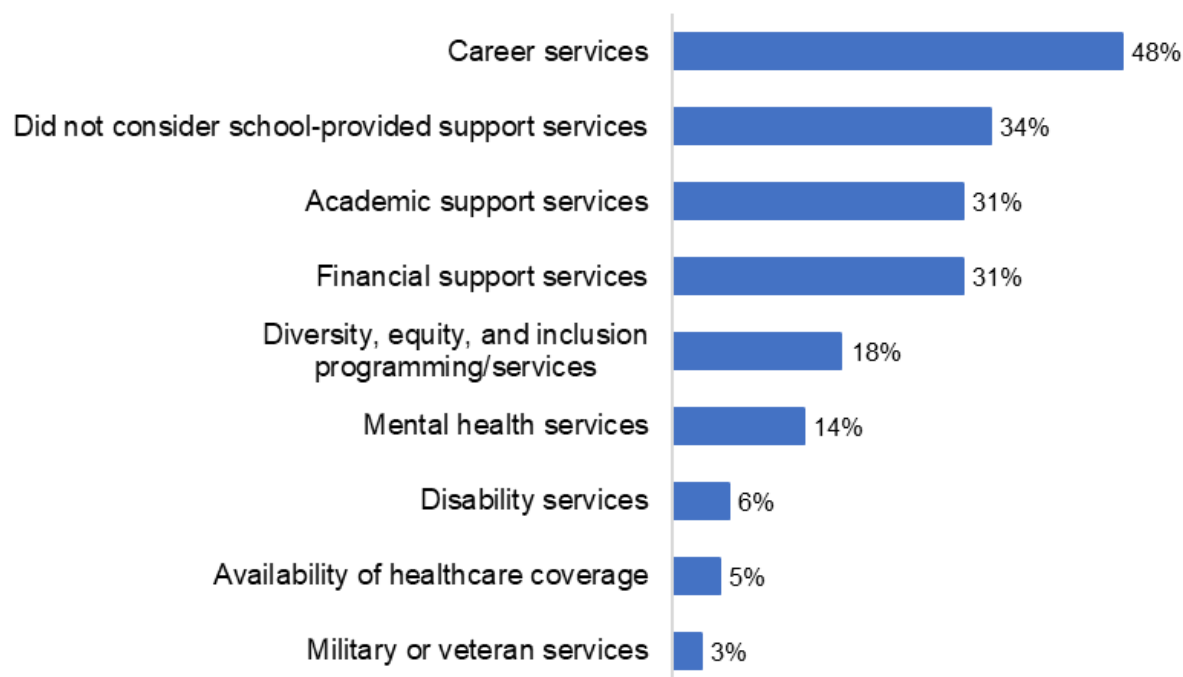
Law school staff play a critical role in the law school experience because they provide a wide range of support important to students' academic success, employment, and graduation.[33] 2024 1L respondents weighed eight school-provided support factors, including career services, academic support services, financial services, DEI programming and services, mental health services, disability services, healthcare coverage, and military or veteran services. Almost half of all 1Ls reported they considered the availability of career services in their decision of where to enroll, and about one out of three 1Ls considered the availability of academic support services or financial services in their decision making (Figure 48). Of these 1Ls, four out of five considered these factors as very or extremely important (Figure 49). About one in five 1Ls considered the availability of DEI programming or services, with 84% of these 1Ls reporting this factor was of very or extreme importance in deciding where to enroll. 15% or less of 1Ls considered mental health services, disability services, healthcare coverage, and military or veteran services. While fewer 1Ls considered the availability of these services, for those who did, over half reported these factors (with the exception of healthcare coverage) as extremely important in their decision making.

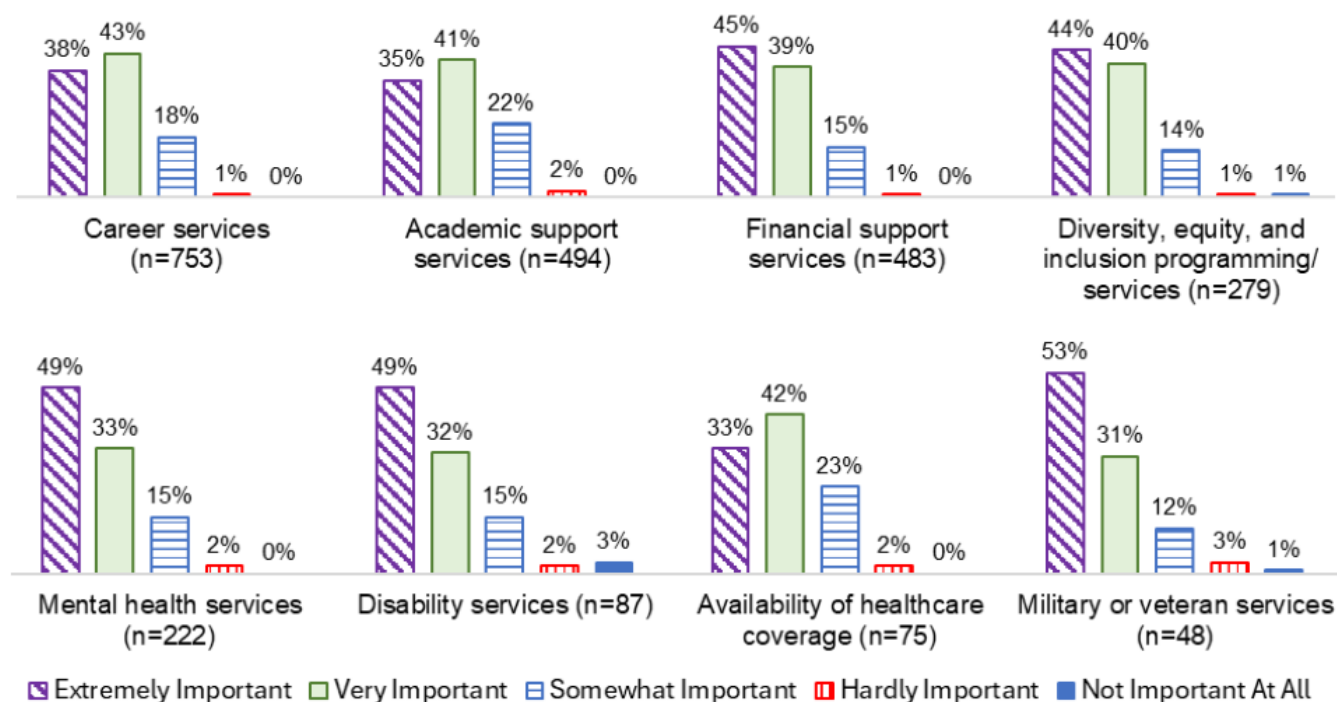[32] Deo, Meera E., Building Belonging (August 01, 2024). Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4986788 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4986788

[33] Robbins, A. (2020). Preventing attrition: Critical interventions to close the racial gap in non-transfer attrition. *Widener L. Rev.*, *26*, 143.

Figure 48: Importance of School-Provided Support Factors in Deciding Where to Enroll

Factor	Percentage
Career services	48%
Did not consider school-provided support services	34%
Academic support services	31%
Financial support services	31%
Diversity, equity, and inclusion programming/services	18%
Mental health services	14%
Disability services	6%
Availability of healthcare coverage	5%
Military or veteran services	3%

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Figure 49: School-Provided Support Factors Considered

Factor	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Hardly Important	Not Important At All
Career services (n=753)	38%	43%	18%	1%	0%
Academic support services (n=494)	35%	41%	22%	2%	0%
Financial support services (n=483)	45%	39%	15%	1%	0%
Diversity, equity, and inclusion programming/services (n=279)	44%	40%	14%	1%	1%
Mental health services (n=222)	49%	33%	15%	2%	0%
Disability services (n=87)	49%	32%	15%	2%	3%
Availability of healthcare coverage (n=75)	33%	42%	23%	2%	0%
Military or veteran services (n=48)	53%	31%	12%	3%	1%

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Overall, the 2024 1L respondents, like their 2023 peers, weighed and balanced a number of factors when deciding where to enroll, making it clear that they are multidimensional consumers of information and decision makers. It is not all about rankings or prestige. 1L respondents underscored the importance of their law school experience in how they pay for it, what they learn, what support is available, and who they will engage with and be in relationships with during their legal education journey. Therefore, law schools and prelaw stakeholders supporting admitted applicants on the journey should translate these insights into ways they recruit and advise students in their decision. Each student has a unique story, set of goals, and needs. Therefore, it is critical for each student to weigh the various factors important to them and what they need in a legal education. As the following section reveals, self-reflection and introspection are important when deciding which law school will meet them where they are and help them get to where they want to go.

Then and Now: Top Factors When They Decided Where to Enroll and What They Would Now Advise Current Candidates

Experiencing law school, even for about three months, gave 1L respondents new perspective on what factors they view as most important in making the decision of where to enroll. After respondents reported the importance of each individual factor within the overarching factor categories, they were presented with a list of every factor that they indicated was very important when they were deciding where to enroll in law school ("then") and were asked to rank, in order of importance, their top three factors. They were then asked to rank the same factors from one to three, but rather than thinking about what they had based their actual choice on months earlier, to instead think about what they would advise current candidates to consider as top factors based on their perspective as 1Ls ("now").

Overall, like their 2023 peers, 2024 1L respondents would advise candidates today to consider the cost of law school and post-graduation outcomes more, deemphasizing law school reputation factors. These insights hold across groups, but notable differences arise based on where they are enrolled. Movement between what 1Ls reported they considered as extremely important when they made their decision and what they would advise candidates now was particularly salient for respondents at highly selective law schools.[34]

Top-Ranked Factors Then and Now

The top eight items ranked as the single most important factor to consider when deciding where to enroll include: cost of attendance, first-time bar exam passage rate of the law school's recent graduates, employment rate of the law school's recent

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[34] Based on the 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and mean UGPA of admitted students, each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. The top 25% of highly selective law schools are in quartile 1 (Q1).

graduates, the availability of merit-based funds/scholarships, the reputation of the law school, the law school being located in the state in which the student hopes to take the bar exam and establish their career, law school rankings, and the salaries of recent graduates. Between then and now, 1Ls reported that the importance of the cost of attendance increased by two percentage points, or by more than 5%, from when they made their decision and what they would advise candidates now (Figure 50). 1Ls deemphasized the importance of law school reputation by four percentage points, close to a 30% decrease from when they made their decision and what they would advise candidates now. And the importance of student outcomes, like employment rate and bar passage rate, increased by three to four percentage points, about 20% between then and now.

Figure 50: Most Common Top-Ranked Extremely Important Factors Then and Now
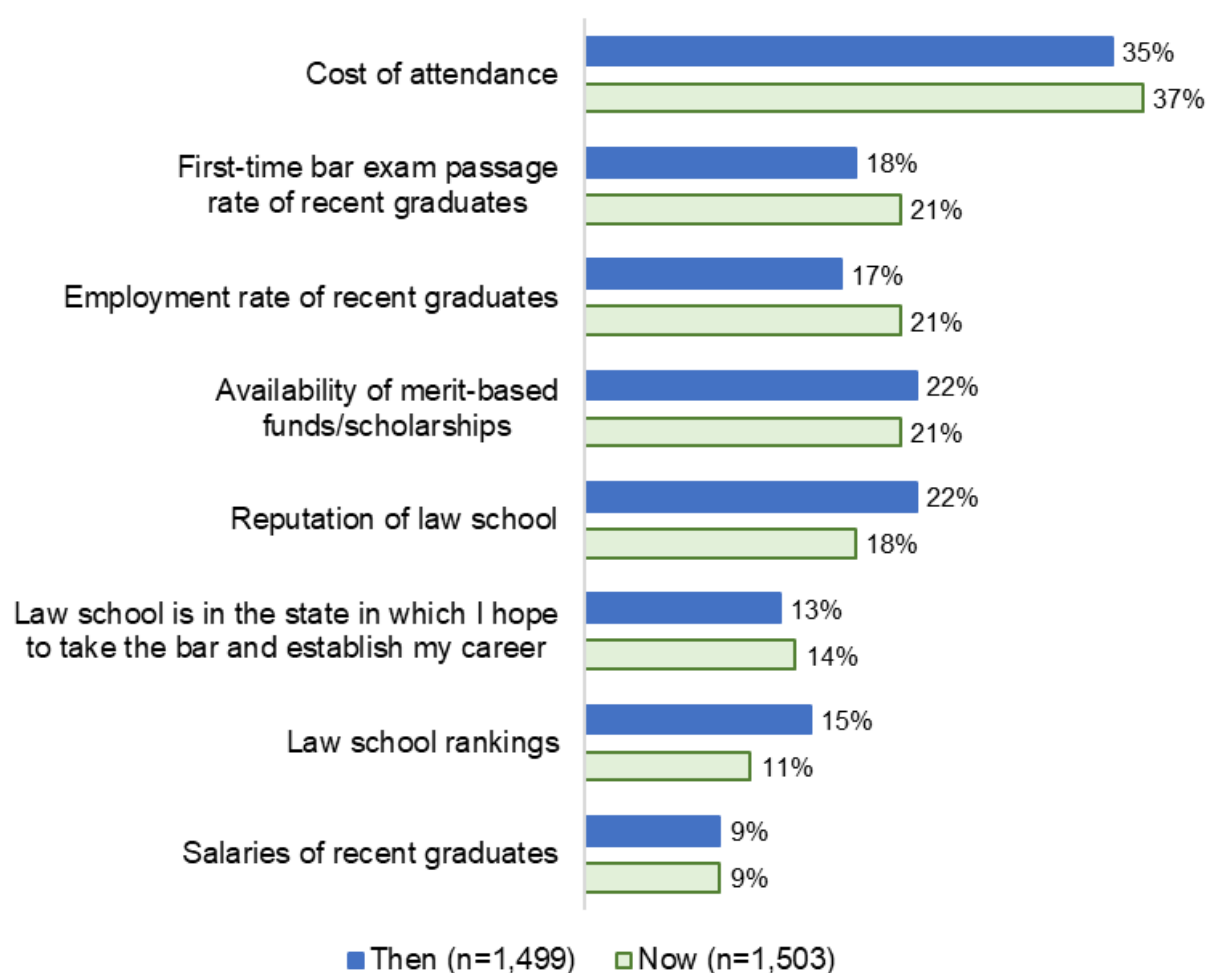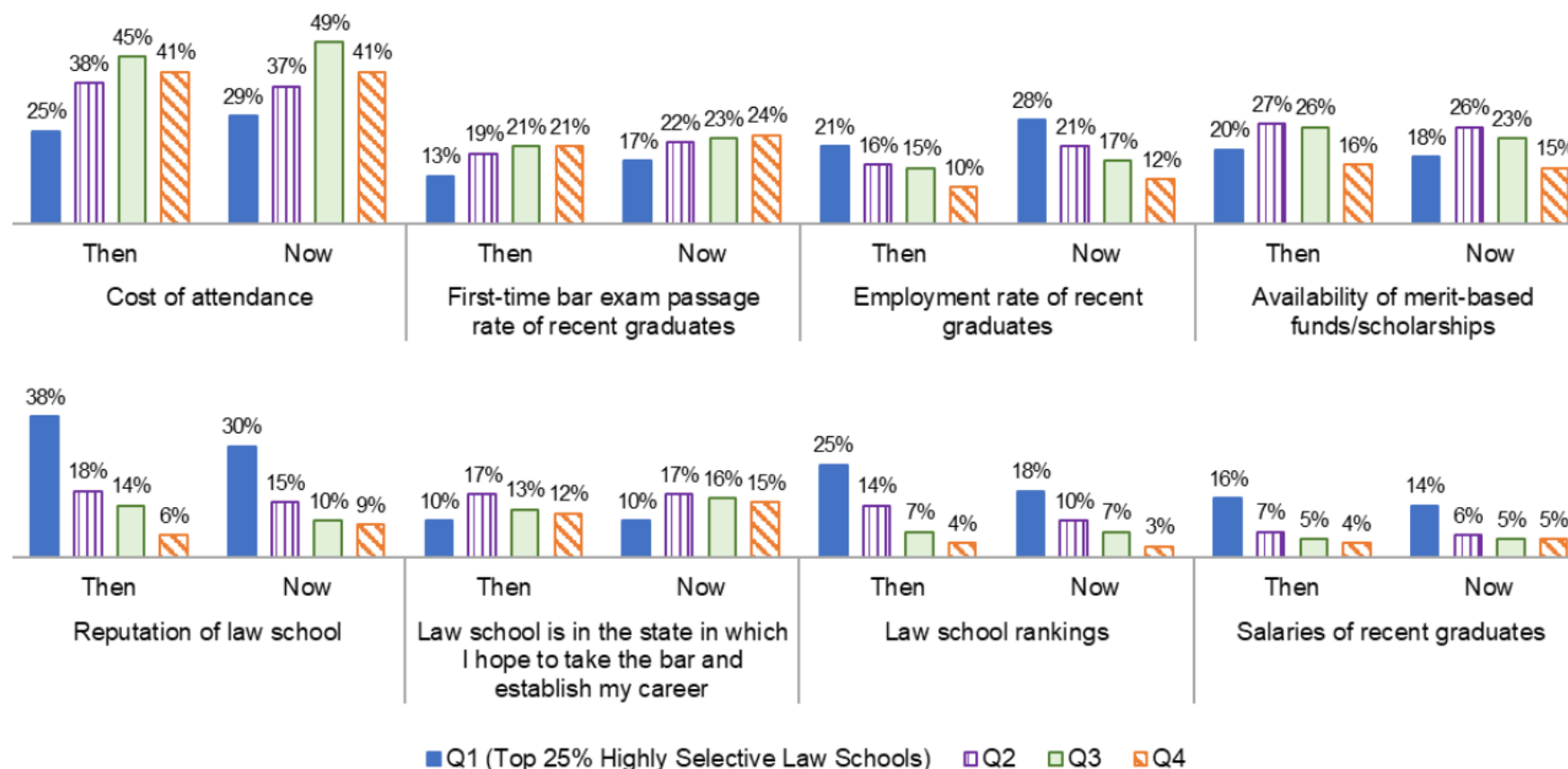

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Cost remained the top factor rated as critical to 1Ls' enrollment decisions, similar to last year's class. Law school reputation and rankings decreased in importance, while first-time bar passage rates and employment rates of law school's recent grads increased in importance. These insights imply how the experience of the first few months in law school gave 1L respondents a new perspective on what matters to them and their legal education — what they are paying and what their outcomes will be.

Top-Ranked Factors by Law School Selectivity

The importance of law school reputation as a top-ranked factor decreased overall between the time 1L respondents decided where to enroll and once they were in law school. This is true across race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic diversity. However, the largest change in the importance of reputation factors was found based on where 1L respondents were attending law school, specifically based on law school selectivity.

A law school's reputation was the most important to 1Ls who eventually enrolled in the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1), with almost two out of five (38%) reporting that it was a top-ranked factor (Figure 51). Respondents from the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1) deemphasized the importance of law school reputation between the time they made their decision and what they would advise candidates now by a larger amount than any of their peers enrolled in other schools. Only 30% of 1Ls in a highly selective law school (Q1) would advise candidates now to heavily weigh the reputation of the law school in their enrollment decision-making process, a 27% drop from what they reported when they made their decision.

Figure 51: Most Common Top-Ranked Extremely Important Factors Then and Now by Law School Selectivity (Then n=1,499; Now n=1,503)


■ Q1 (Top 25% Highly Selective Law Schools) ▯ Q2 ▯ Q3 ◩ Q4

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey. Due to small sample sizes, data insights based on law school selectivity quartiles should be interpreted with caution. Using LSAC data, law schools are each assigned a selectivity index based on each school's 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students. The top 25% highly selective law schools are in the first quartile (Q1), and they are the first 49 law schools with the highest index score.

Changes in the most important factors from when a respondent was making their enrollment decision to what they would now advise current candidates are useful to prospective law students currently deciding where to enroll. In reflecting on what matters, it is helpful to know how the views of current law students have shifted with the benefit of their first few months of law school. And for law schools and other prelaw stakeholders, these insights reveal how multidimensional students are when deciding where to enroll, which can inform how law schools present what they have to offer to prospective candidates and how prelaw stakeholders help guide candidates to use reliable sources of information in making their decisions.

Enrollment Decision: Their Preferred Law School

2024 1L respondents considered several factors when deciding where to enroll. One factor never examined is if students ended up enrolling in their preferred school. A preferred law school may be a school that is highly ranked, or it can be the school closest to home. 95% of 1L respondents reported they were admitted to at least one of their preferred law schools.[35] Of these 1Ls, 96% indicated they went on and enrolled in a preferred law school. This finding is consistent with the overall insight that eight out of ten 1Ls reported they were at a law school that is right for them. The only significant group-specific differences were found based on students' race and ethnicity. White 1Ls were significantly more likely than 1Ls from racially or ethnically marginalized groups to indicate they were admitted (96% vs. 94%) and/or enrolled (97% vs. 94%) in a preferred law school (Figure 52). Overall, the vast majority of 1Ls were admitted and/or enrolled in a preferred law school.

Figure 52: Admitted and Enrolled in a Preferred Law School by Race and Ethnicity
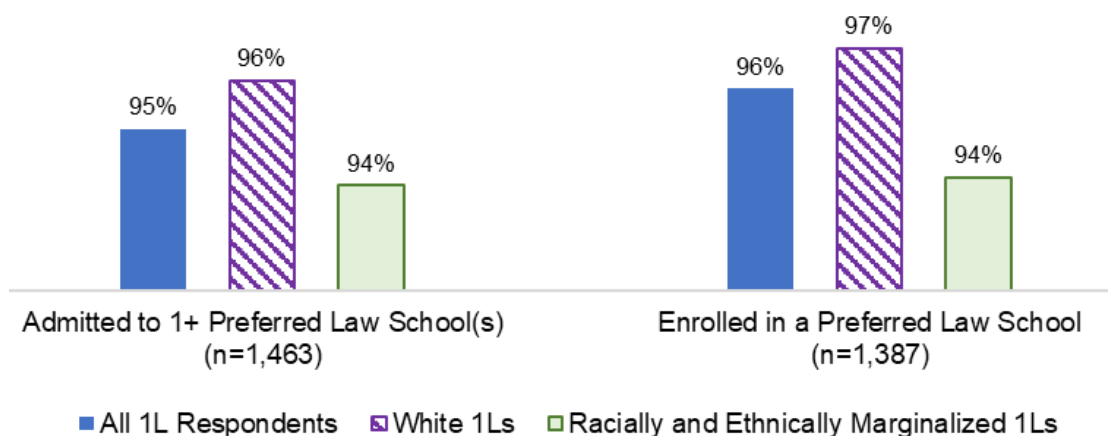
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey. 1,584 total 1Ls responded to Admitted to 1+ Preferred Law Schools; 1,502 total 1Ls responded to Enrolled in a Preferred Law School. Respondent numbers in the figure are lower based on who disclosed their race and/or ethnicity.

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[35] Additional analysis found that 1Ls who enrolled in a law school in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4) were significantly less likely to have been admitted to a preferred law school than their peers who enrolled in other selective law schools (91% compared to 95%-96%).

Preparing for the First Year of Law School

An increasing number of law schools, nonprofit organizations, and others offer 0L or "bridge" programs for law students, typically held during the summer before beginning the 1L year. There is no standardized undergraduate curriculum for aspiring law students, and entering 1Ls will come to law school with vastly different background knowledge and skills. Bridge programs are designed to provide opportunities for students to develop the skills and knowledge they need, so they can reach their academic, personal, and professional goals. Research suggests that bridge programs in higher education help reduce non-transfer student attrition[36] and prepare students for the academic rigor of graduate school while easing the social transition with an opportunity to build community,[37] among other benefits. This 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey reveals that, like their 2023 peers, 1Ls are informed help seekers, as evidenced by their 0L/bridge program participation.

0L/Bridge Program Participation

Programs often known as 0L or bridge programs provide incoming law students with an opportunity to learn about the law school experience, test drive the skills they will be using in the first year, and preview doctrinal courses to ease the transition into law school. One in five 2024 1L respondents (20%) indicated they participated in some kind of 0L/bridge program to prepare them for 1L success after enrolling in law school. Who participated in these programs varied by who they are, how they performed on the LSAT, and where they attend law school.[38]

Racially and ethnically minoritized 1Ls had the highest 0L/bridge program participation rates among survey respondents. Specifically, more Black/African American (35%) and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x (24%) 1Ls participated in this type of programming compared to 1Ls of all other races and ethnicities (Figure 53).
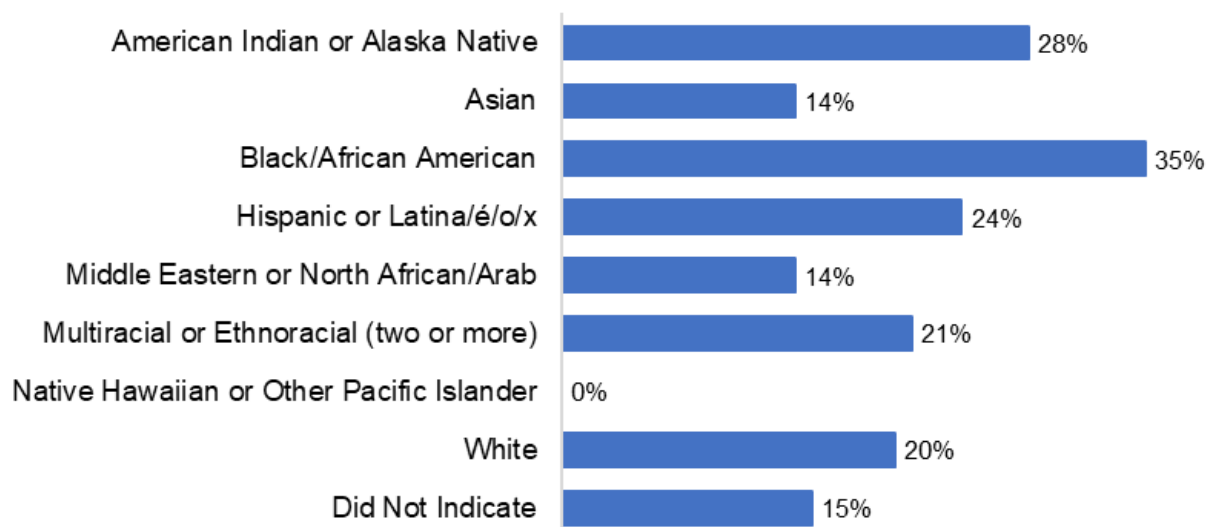
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[36] Robbins, A. (2020). Preventing attrition: Critical interventions to close the racial gap in non-transfer attrition. *Widener L. Rev.*, *26*, 143.

[37] Hodapp, T., & Woodle, K. S. (2017). A bridge between undergraduate and doctoral degrees. *Physics Today*, *70*(2), 50-56.

[38] There were no significant differences in rates of participation in 0L/bridge programs by gender identity or sexual orientation.

Figure 53: 0L/Bridge Program Participants by Race and Ethnicity (n=1,474)

Category	Percentage
American Indian or Alaska Native	28%
Asian	14%
Black/African American	35%
Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	24%
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	14%
Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more)	21%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%
White	20%
Did Not Indicate	15%

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey. Due to the low number of American Indian or Alaska Native, Middle Eastern or North African/Arab, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander respondents, data should not be used to make strong generalizations about the entire population based on the small sample size

Both first-generation college graduates and Pell Grant recipients participated in 0L/bridge programs at higher rates. First-generation college graduates participated in 0L/bridge programs at a rate 40% higher than their continuing-generation peers (26% compared to 18%; Figure 54). Similarly, Pell Grant recipients took part in 0L/bridge programs significantly more than non-recipients, at a 21% higher rate (23% compared to 19%; Figure 54). Considering that a larger segment of both first-generation college graduates and Pell Grant recipients were from racially and ethnically marginalized groups, and rates of participation are higher among these groups, it is not surprising that these trends coincide.

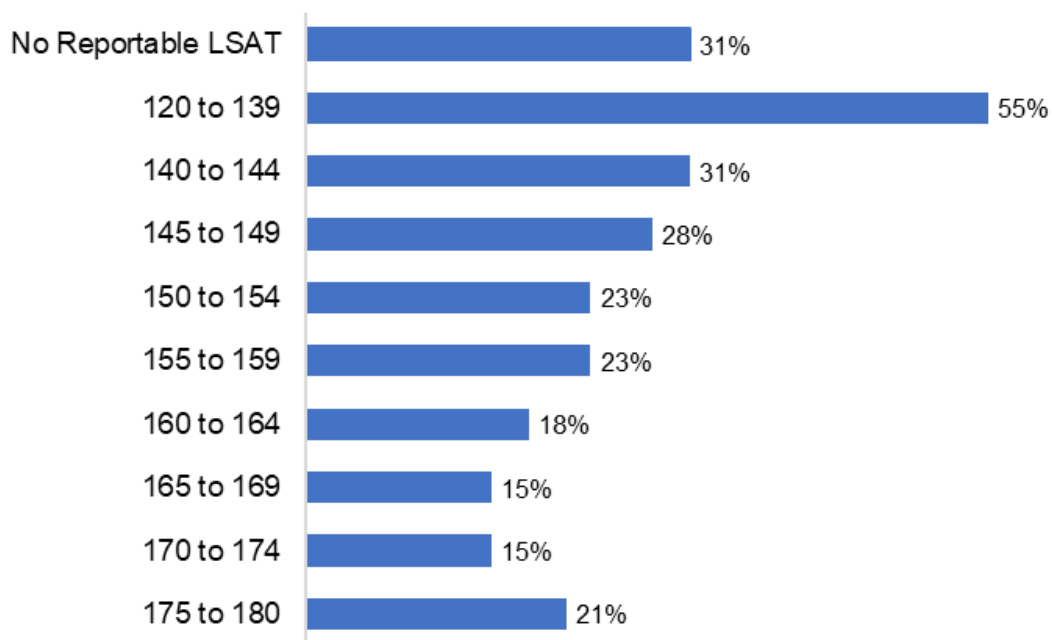**Figure 54: 0L/Bridge Program Participants by First-Generation and Pell Grant Status**

	First-Generation Status (n=1,439)		Pell Grant Status (n=1,353)	
	First-Generation College Graduate	Continuing-Generation College Graduate	Pell Grant Recipient	Pell Grant Non-Recipient
Percentage	26%	18%	23%	19%
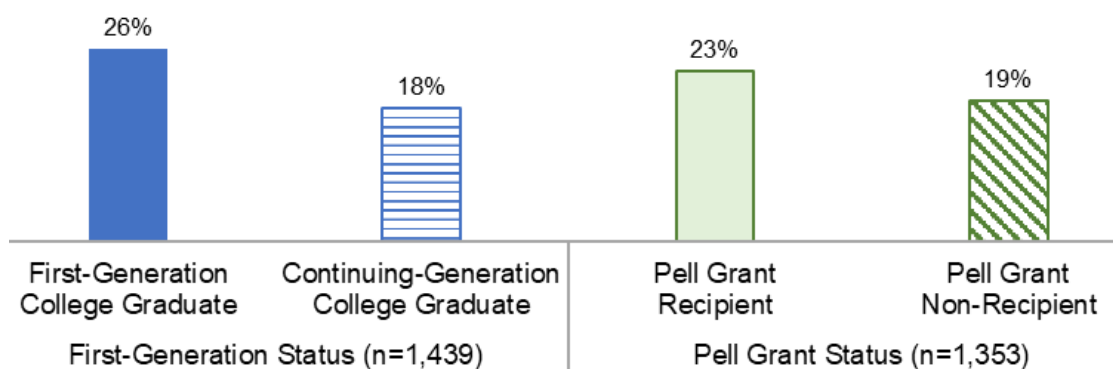
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

Participation rates also varied significantly by age, program type, LSAT score, and law school selectivity. Significantly more 1Ls who were 27 or older participated in 0L/bridge programs compared to 1Ls who were 26 years old or younger (31% vs. 18%, respectively). Significantly more 1Ls enrolled in part-time programs reported participating in 0L/bridge programs compared to 1Ls enrolled in full-time programs, at double the rate (39% and 18%, respectively).

1L respondents reveal that they are self-aware and help seeking, using tools, like the LSAT, to help them prepare for 1L success. As LSAT scores decreased, 0L/bridge program participation rates increased. Over half of 1Ls who scored between 120 and 139, roughly one in three of 1Ls who scored between 140 and 144 or between 145 and 149, and almost a quarter of 1Ls who scored between 150 and 154 or 155 and 159 participated in 0L/bridge programs, while 21% or less scoring 160 or above participated in these programs (Figure 55).

Figure 55: 0L/Bridge Program Participants by LSAT Score Bands (n=1,474)

LSAT Score Band	Participation
No Reportable LSAT	31%
120 to 139	55%
140 to 144	31%
145 to 149	28%
150 to 154	23%
155 to 159	23%
160 to 164	18%
165 to 169	15%
170 to 174	15%
175 to 180	21%

Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey

0L/bridge program participation also varied by law school selectivity. Those who attended the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1) had the lowest participation rates compared to their peers at other schools (Figure 56). Specifically, 1Ls at schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4) had a 0L/bridge program participation rate more than double that of their peers at the top 25% highly selective law schools (Q1). Nonetheless, even at highly selective law schools, 14% of 1Ls reported participating in a 0L/bridge program before starting law school. Across the board, 1Ls in the 2024 class, like their 2023 peers, were help seekers regardless of where they enrolled. Students are proactively seeking ways to transition into their first year of law school.

Figure 56: 0L/Bridge Program Participants by Law School Selectivity (n=1,474)
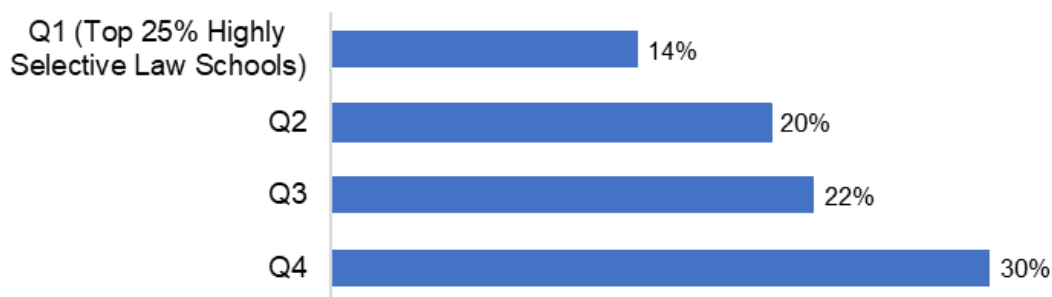
Source: 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey. Using LSAC data, law schools are each assigned a selectivity index based on each school's 2024 admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students. The top 25% highly selective law schools are in the first quartile (Q1), and they are the first 49 law schools with the highest index score. Refer to the "Enrollment by Law School Selectivity" section in this report to learn more.

Taken together, these trends reveal that 0L/bridge programs play a role in preparing incoming 1Ls, especially students with less access to resources and opportunities. The variation by LSAT score and school selectivity reveal that students are aware of their needs and are actively seeking help to transition into the first year of law school. This time is critical given that 1L academic performance is strongly predictive of bar passage. Therefore, these insights are useful for all stakeholders investing in opportunities to develop and cultivate the growth of incoming law students.

Conclusion and Advancing Mission

The 2024 1L class was the first law class mostly admitted after the June 2023 Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. Harvard decision. It was as racially and ethnically diverse as the 2023 1L class, in addition to being the most diverse based on gender identity and sexual orientation. However, not all law schools and law school programs experienced this kind of diverse representation in their classrooms.

The 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey provides a snapshot of how and why people enrolled in the law school they did. The insights identified here can inform how prelaw stakeholders and law schools reflect and build on their recruitment strategies in future admission cycles. Overall, deciding where to go to law school is a multidimensional process during which accepted law applicants must weigh numerous factors while they take in various sources of advice. Cost, bar passage rates, and employment rates continue to be the overall leading factors that informed this class of 1Ls' enrollment decisions, as they did for their 2023 peers. Leveraging various sources of information, from people to online resources, most 2024 1L respondents were confident that they enrolled in the law school right for them.

Supporting admitted applicants to make an informed decision as to where to enroll requires a collective effort across the community. We need to provide opportunities for prospective law students to learn about what schools offer, to reflect on what matters the most to them, and to expand the scope of their decision-making to consider all their academic, professional, and personal needs in the journey through law school and beyond. LSAC will continue to collect data to illuminate how 1Ls make their enrollment decisions, in addition to other snapshots along the prelaw through practice journey, to share with the legal community.

Data Sources and Methodology

This report relies on two data sources: first, a dataset consisting of data for all first-year law students who enrolled in 196 U.S. law schools during the 2024-2025 academic calendar; second, the 2024 LSAC Matriculant Survey, conducted from October through November 2024. The purpose of this survey was to understand who the 2024 first-year law students were and what factors they considered to determine which law school(s) would meet their academic, professional, and personal needs. More than 2,000 1Ls participated in the 2024 Matriculant Survey; post-stratification survey weights were added to more accurately reflect the demographic distribution of the 2024 matriculant population. Weights were constructed by raking[39] on demographic variables that exceeded 5% difference from the population to ensure the sample from the matriculant survey is representative of the 2024 first-year class.

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[39] 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/