



# The Composition of the First-Year Law School Class and Enrollment 2021-2025 Trends

## KNOWLEDGE REPORT

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# Executive Summary

The 2024-25 admission cycle came during a time of rapid and significant political, economic, and social changes in the U.S. Amid this shifting landscape, more than 76,000 aspiring law students submitted applications to law school, marking the highest volume of applicants since 2011 and an 18% increase from the 2023-24 cycle. As a result of this highly competitive admission cycle, law schools welcomed their largest first-year class in recent years. In other words, a record application year resulted in a record enrollment year.

The future of the legal profession and public trust in the legal system depend in part on who enrolls in law school and their development throughout their time there. Those lived experiences are central to LSAC's mission to advance law and justice by promoting access, equity, and fairness in law school — and those experiences can be better understood through data. Therefore, understanding who is in the first-year class and where they enroll is critical, particularly amid ongoing changes to the landscape of higher education and legal education.

Building on LSAC's multi-year trends, this report examines the 2025 1L class<sup>1</sup> — the second full 1L class cycle to be admitted after the June 2023 United States Supreme Court's *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. Harvard* decision — to identify nuanced trends<sup>2</sup> about who enrolled in law school between 2021 and 2025<sup>3</sup> and who will be the future of the legal profession. Specifically, this report highlights:

1. Who is enrolling in law school.
2. Where they enrolled.
3. How class sizes have changed at the law school level over the years.

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<sup>1</sup> An in-depth 2025 1L profile report is forthcoming at the time of this report's publication.

<sup>2</sup> Table 1 provides the demographic data about each 1L cohort for academic years 2021 through 2025. The final two (rightmost) columns of the table provide the five-year trends, comparing the composition estimates of 2025 with 2021 by absolute difference and percent change.

<sup>3</sup> The year refers to the year the academic calendar starts. For example, 2021 refers to the 2021-22 academic year.

The report provides details on the composition of the classes entering law school<sup>4</sup> and how individual class sizes have changed. Its key insights include:

- **Gender and sexual orientation representation have steadily increased.**
  - Since 2015, the majority of each first-year class has been women, but representation of gender-diverse students<sup>5</sup> has slightly increased over the years. In 2021, 0.8% of the incoming 1L class identified as gender diverse; that number rose to 1.1% for the 2025 1L class.
  - Among the 2025 class, 14.4% of 1Ls identify as LGBTQ+,<sup>6</sup> up from 12% in 2021.
- **First-generation college graduate enrollment decreased for the second year.**
  - Less than a quarter of incoming 1Ls in each year studied were first-generation college graduates,<sup>7</sup> and their rate has continued to decline. In 2021, 23.2% of the incoming 1L class were the first in their family to graduate with a bachelor's degree; that number fell to 21.6% of the 2025 1L class.
  - However, the rate of first-year students who received an LSAC Fee Waiver has more than doubled, from 5.4% in 2021 to 11.4% in 2025.<sup>8</sup>
  - Consistently, slightly more than a quarter of 1L students are Pell Grant recipients.<sup>9</sup> In 2021, 25% of 1Ls reported receiving Pell Grants; in 2025, that number was up slightly, to 25.8%.
  - While 11.4% of the 2025 1L class received an LSAC Fee Waiver, 26.4% of first-generation college graduates in the 2025 1L class are LSAC Fee Waiver recipients.

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<sup>4</sup> Table 1 provides the demographic data about each 1L cohort for academic years 2021 through 2025. The final two (rightmost) columns of the table provide the five-year trends, comparing the composition estimates of 2025 with 2021 by absolute difference and percent change.

<sup>5</sup> "Gender-diverse students" include anyone who identifies as nonbinary, transgender, and/or another gender identity other than cisgender man or woman.

<sup>6</sup> "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.

<sup>7</sup> "First-generation college graduates" include individuals with parents or guardians with an associate degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

<sup>8</sup> The growth in representation of LSAC Fee Waiver recipients between 2021 and 2024 should be considered in the context of the significant [changes to the program LSAC made in 2021](#), which expanded income eligibility.

<sup>9</sup> Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported.

- **The rising enrollment of racially and ethnically minoritized 1L students between 2021 and 2023 leveled off by 2024, with a slight decline in 2025.**
  - Racial and ethnic diversity of the 1L class grew by 3 percentage points (38.5% to 41.8%) between 2021 and 2023, then remained stable in 2024 (41.8%), but there was a slight decrease for the 2025 cohort (to 41.4%).
  - Asian 1L representation decreased from 9.5% in 2024 to 9.1% in 2025. Notably, there has been a decrease in international student enrollment across higher education.<sup>10</sup> Many international law students are Asian; therefore, this decrease may be a result of many factors, including the aforementioned decrease in international enrollment.
  - Black or African American 1L student representation continued to decline each year by an average of a tenth of a percentage point, from 7.9% in 2021 to 7.4% in 2025.
  - However, the rate of 1L students choosing not to disclose their race or ethnicity has increased, from 5.8% in 2021 to 7.5% in 2025. Therefore, all results in this report that describe racial and ethnic enrollment trends must be interpreted with caution, given the rising number of students for whom racial or ethnic identity is unknown.
- **Between 2021 and 2025, enrollment rates at various law schools differed across racially and ethnically minoritized communities.**
  - Highly selective (top 25% in terms of selectivity) law schools continue to be less racially and ethnically diverse than other law schools.<sup>11</sup>
  - Enrollment rates of Asian 1Ls at highly selective law schools are higher than any other groups but decreased by 5 percentage points (or 10.8%) from 2024 to 2025. Notably, there has been a decrease in international student enrollment across higher education. Many international law students are Asian; therefore, this decrease may be a result of many factors, including the aforementioned decrease in international enrollment.
  - Black, Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x, and first-generation college graduate 1L enrollment at highly selective law schools continue to decrease, and those groups' enrollment in law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4) continue to increase, for a second year.

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<sup>10</sup> See [United States Hosts 1.2 Million International Students at Colleges and Universities, Totaling 6% of U.S. Higher Education | IIE](#) and [Fewer International Students Came to the U.S. This Fall](#).

<sup>11</sup> Each school is assigned a selectivity index score to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25%, considered highly selective law schools, are in the first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

- Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x<sup>12</sup> 1Ls and 1Ls who are first-generation college graduate continue to be the least represented at highly selective law schools.
- **For most law schools, the 2025 1L class is the largest in the past five years.**
  - In 2025, 80% of law schools increased their entering 1L class compared with 2024.
  - While many law schools increased their first-year class size in 2025, only 29 saw a large (more than 20%) increase in their class size compared with 2024. In contrast, 85 law schools saw a class size increase of 10% or less.
  - Of the law schools with decreased class sizes in 2025, only one had a decrease in class size of more than 20%.

The 2024-25 admission cycle saw a record-breaking number of applicants, which in turn resulted in a record-breaking first-year enrollment — a class 8% larger than the 2024 1L class. However, while most law schools brought in slightly larger classes, the increase did not keep pace with the 18% increase in applicant demand. There are many reasons why enrollment may not grow with the growing interest in law (as reflected in applicant volumes), including budget cuts, limited physical space, changes in sources of available financing options, and cautious monitoring of the legal employment market.

Overall, the 2025 1L class, much like their peers before them, continues to be composed of students from various racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, for the second year, first-generation college graduate enrollment decreased. Additionally, when we zoom into first-year classes, the composition of classes varies. The most highly selective (top 25%) law schools continue to be less racially and ethnically diverse than other law schools.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, and decreasing from 19% in 2024, only 17% of 2025 1Ls who are first-generation college graduates are enrolled in a top 25% (highly selective) law school, compared with 32% of their continuing-generation college peers. Students decide where to enroll based on many factors, including their personal, professional, and academic needs.<sup>14</sup> However, the differences in enrollment by first-generation college status warrants examination to understand who has access to the resources and opportunities to enroll in law school.

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<sup>12</sup> “Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x” includes those who identify as only Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x and/or Puerto Rican. This category is not Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x of any race. Ethnoracial Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x individuals are included in the “Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more)” category.

<sup>13</sup> Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

<sup>14</sup> Refer to [LSAC’s Knowledge Report: The 2024 1L Profile](#) to learn more about what factors informed enrollment decisions.

Together, these trends are critical to monitor in the coming years, as they have implications for the future of the profession. Financing law school is important for schools and students alike; however, the impact of the changes to federal loan caps may vary across schools and student populations.<sup>15</sup> For example, first-generation college graduates and students from racially and ethnically minoritized communities typically carry the largest law school debt loads.<sup>16</sup> Will these federal loan cap changes affect whether someone can afford law school and where they can enroll? Subsequently, where students enroll affects employment outcomes, especially in terms of access to positions in big law, clerkships, and other sought-after placements. And employment placement is often tied to increased initial power or influence. Overall, these trends are critical for informing how law schools and legal stakeholders can work together to address barriers, intervene, advocate, and provide reliable and effective support to all aspiring law students.

During a time of constant change and uncertainty, we will continue to monitor what trends develop in the coming years. LSAC will continue to collaborate with law schools and other stakeholders to support all aspiring lawyers as they navigate their individual journeys to and through law school.

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<sup>15</sup> Refer to [LSAC's Knowledge Report: 2024-2025 Test Takers](#) to learn more about how test takers are viewing financing legal education as a barrier to enrollment.

<sup>16</sup> Refer to [Funding the First Year: How 2024 1Ls Paid for Law School](#) to learn more.

**Table 1. 1L Composition: Demographics Summary, 2021–2025**

Socio-Demographic Category	Socio-Demographic Group	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	5-Year Trends (2021 v 2025)	
							Absolute Difference <sup>1</sup>	Percent Change <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total Enrolled (Count)</b>		41,820	38,013	37,750	39,558	42,723	903	2.16%
<b>Race/Ethnicity: Summary</b>	White	55.63%	53.68%	51.63%	50.77%	51.06%	-4.57	-8.22%
	Racially or Ethnically Minoritized <sup>3</sup>	38.55%	40.57%	41.83%	41.83%	41.39%	2.84	7.35%
	Did Not Indicate	5.82%	5.75%	6.54%	7.40%	7.56%	1.74	29.80%
<b>Race/Ethnicity: Detail</b>	American Indian or Alaska Native <sup>4</sup>	1.30%	1.37%	1.33%	1.20%	1.26%	-0.04	-3.38%
	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian <sup>5</sup>	0.01%	—	0.01%	—	0.01%	0.00	40.00%
	Asian	8.11%	8.88%	9.64%	9.51%	9.05%	0.94	11.63%
	Black or African American	7.93%	7.80%	7.70%	7.56%	7.43%	-0.51	-6.37%
	Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x <sup>6</sup>	8.91%	9.37%	9.41%	9.68%	9.31%	0.40	4.51%
	Indigenous Person of Canada <sup>7</sup>	0.05%	0.04%	0.06%	0.05%	0.08%	0.03	56.25%
	Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	2.30%	2.57%	2.89%	2.88%	2.66%	0.37	16.03%
	Multiracial/Ethnoracial <sup>8</sup>	9.65%	10.25%	10.49%	10.65%	11.32%	1.67	17.29%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <sup>9</sup>	0.30%	0.29%	0.30%	0.31%	0.28%	-0.03	-9.21%
	White	55.63%	53.68%	51.63%	50.77%	51.06%	-4.57	-8.22%
	Did Not Indicate	5.82%	5.75%	6.54%	7.40%	7.56%	1.74	29.80%
<b>Age at Start of Academic Year<sup>10</sup></b>	22 or Younger	34.82%	34.53%	35.54%	34.11%	33.26%	-1.57	-4.49%
	23 to 26	43.72%	44.29%	44.69%	45.78%	45.62%	1.90	4.34%
	27 to 30	11.85%	11.40%	10.56%	10.76%	11.23%	-0.62	-5.24%
	31 to 39	7.18%	7.29%	6.74%	6.71%	7.03%	-0.15	-2.07%
	40 or Older	2.43%	2.50%	2.47%	2.64%	2.87%	0.44	18.05%
<b>Gender Identity: Summary<sup>11</sup></b>	Gender Diverse <sup>12</sup>	0.81%	1.03%	1.14%	1.22%	1.13%	0.32	39.78
	Cisgender Woman	55.73%	55.28%	55.82%	55.54%	54.56%	-1.17	39.78%
	Cisgender Man	42.23%	42.17%	41.28%	40.66%	41.02%	-1.22	-2.10%
	Did Not Indicate	1.23%	1.53%	1.76%	2.59%	3.29%	2.07	-2.88%

Socio-Demographic Category	Socio-Demographic Group	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	5-Year Trends (2021 v 2025)	
							Absolute Difference <sup>1</sup>	Percent Change <sup>2</sup>
<b>Gender Identity: Detail</b>	Cisgender Woman	55.73%	55.28%	55.82%	55.54%	54.56%	-1.17	-2.10%
	Cisgender Man	42.23%	42.17%	41.28%	40.66%	41.02%	-1.22	-2.88%
	Transgender Woman	0.06%	0.07%	0.08%	0.13%	0.18%	0.12	215.79%
	Transgender Man	0.08%	0.10%	0.09%	0.12%	0.13%	0.05	65.82%
	Transgender and Nonbinary	0.01%	0.02%	0.01%	0.21%	0.28%	0.28	5,520.00%
	Nonbinary	0.01%	‡	0.01%	0.24%	0.29%	0.29	4,085.71%
	Another Gender Identity <sup>13</sup>	0.66%	0.83%	0.95%	0.52%	0.24%	-0.42	-63.13%
	Did Not Indicate	1.23%	1.53%	1.76%	2.59%	3.29%	2.07	168.52%
<b>Sexual Orientation<sup>14</sup></b>	Bisexual	4.44%	5.49%	5.98%	7.13%	7.66%	3.22	72.50%
	Gay or Lesbian	3.00%	3.11%	3.09%	3.66%	4.19%	1.18	39.36%
	Questioning or Unsure	0.32%	0.46%	0.51%	0.68%	0.78%	0.46	143.71%
	Sexual Orientation Not Listed	4.15%	4.69%	5.11%	3.25%	1.70%	-2.45	-59.12%
	Straight/Heterosexual	76.37%	74.69%	72.81%	71.88%	71.33%	-5.04	-6.59%
	Did Not Indicate	9.61%	10.19%	11.22%	13.07%	14.26%	4.65	48.34%
	Missing	2.11%	1.37%	1.29%	0.34%	0.10%	-2.01	-95.22%
<b>LGBTQ+<sup>15</sup></b>	Not LGBTQ+	76.13%	74.38%	72.54%	71.60%	71.09%	-5.04	-6.62%
	LGBTQ+	12.03%	13.92%	14.87%	14.89%	14.48%	2.45	20.32%
	Did Not Indicate	9.75%	10.35%	11.35%	13.18%	14.33%	4.58	46.93%
	Missing	2.08%	1.36%	1.25%	0.32%	0.10%	-1.98	-95.15%

Socio-Demographic Category	Socio-Demographic Group	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	5-Year Trends (2021 v 2025)	
							Absolute Difference <sup>1</sup>	Percent Change <sup>2</sup>
<b>Highest Level of Education Attainment of Any Parent/Guardian<sup>16</sup></b>	Less Than High School	2.65%	2.90%	3.20%	2.98%	2.87%	0.23	8.49%
	High School or Equivalent	9.11%	9.52%	9.87%	9.37%	8.90%	-0.20	-2.22%
	Some College	7.62%	7.39%	7.35%	6.89%	6.36%	-1.26	-16.49%
	Associate's Degree	3.83%	3.67%	3.76%	3.71%	3.53%	-0.30	-7.85%
	Bachelor's Degree	28.31%	29.22%	28.72%	28.42%	27.69%	-0.63	-2.22%
	Master's Degree	21.71%	21.99%	21.84%	22.64%	23.56%	1.85	8.53%
	Juris Doctor (JD) or Equivalent	11.25%	10.63%	10.78%	11.47%	12.31%	1.06	9.41%
	Doctoral Degree	6.27%	6.14%	6.04%	6.51%	6.72%	0.45	7.17%
	Doctor of Medicine (MD) or Equivalent	5.65%	5.45%	5.40%	5.62%	6.10%	0.45	7.91%
	Did Not Indicate	1.75%	1.90%	1.92%	2.06%	1.87%	0.12	6.87%
Missing	1.85%	1.19%	1.12%	0.33%	0.09%	-1.76	-95.20%	
<b>First Generation College Graduate Status<sup>17</sup></b>	Continuing-Generation College Graduate	73.20%	73.44%	72.78%	74.66%	76.38%	3.18	4.34%
	First-Generation College Graduate	23.20%	23.48%	24.18%	22.95%	21.67%	-1.53	-6.61%
	Did Not Indicate	1.75%	1.90%	1.92%	2.06%	1.87%	0.12	6.87%
	Missing	1.85%	1.19%	1.12%	0.33%	0.09%	-1.76	-95.20%
<b>First Generation JD Student Status<sup>18</sup></b>	Continuing-Generation JD Student	25.28%	23.61%	23.31%	23.55%	23.83%	-1.45	-5.74%
	First-Generation JD Student	69.77%	72.07%	72.27%	72.14%	72.07%	2.30	3.30%
	Did Not Indicate	1.75%	1.90%	1.92%	2.06%	1.87%	0.12	6.87%
	Missing	3.21%	2.43%	2.50%	2.26%	2.24%	-0.97	-30.31%
<b>Pell Grant Recipient Status<sup>19</sup></b>	Pell Grant Non-Recipient	64.03%	63.62%	64.12%	65.21%	66.17%	2.14	3.34%
	Pell Grant Recipient	25.04%	26.24%	26.27%	26.38%	25.88%	0.84	3.35%
	Did Not Disclose/Don't Know	9.03%	8.91%	8.43%	7.40%	7.08%	-1.95	-21.59%
	Missing	1.90%	1.23%	1.18%	1.01%	0.87%	-1.03	-54.22%

Socio-Demographic Category	Socio-Demographic Group	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	5-Year Trends (2021 v 2025)	
							Absolute Difference <sup>1</sup>	Percent Change <sup>2</sup>
LSAC Fee Waiver Recipient Status <sup>20</sup>	Fee Waiver Non-Recipient	94.51%	93.09%	90.37%	88.98%	88.58%	-5.93	-6.28%
	Fee Waiver Recipient	5.49%	6.91%	9.63%	11.02%	11.42%	5.93	108.09%

Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students, both non-deferrals and deferrals. Missing values are reported when the missingness rate for the variable is 0.5 or greater; otherwise, missing values are suppressed.

<sup>1</sup> Absolute difference measures the absolute difference of two values; for percent values, this is also sometimes referred to as “percentage point change.” Throughout this report, the phrase “absolute difference” is used to describe this comparison. For example, if LSAC Fee Waiver recipients went from 5.49% in 2021 to 11.42% in 2025, that represents an *absolute* increase of 5.93 (11.42 – 5.49 = 5.93). Absolute difference describes the numeric difference between values, without relation to magnitude of change.

<sup>2</sup> Percent change measures the relative increase or decrease of a value, which describes how much a new value has changed in relation to the original value. For example, if LSAC Fee Waiver recipients went from 5.49% in 2021 to 11.42% in 2025, that represents a 108.09 *percent* increase ( $(11.42 - 5.49) / 5.49 = 108.09$ ). Percent change describes the percent difference between two values, in relation to the magnitude of change.

<sup>3</sup> “Racially or Ethnically Minoritized” is derived using the race and ethnicity information collected in the LSAC JD Account profile and includes anyone who identifies as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x, Indigenous Person of Canada, Middle Eastern or North African/Arab, multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more), or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

<sup>4</sup> “American Indian or Alaska Native” includes those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting American Indian or Alaska Native and one or more other racial or ethnic category) as American Indian or Alaska Native, given conversations with community leaders and advocates.

<sup>5</sup> “Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian” include those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian and one or more other racial or ethnic categories) as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian.

– No data available.

<sup>6</sup> “Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x” includes those who identify as only Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x and/or Puerto Rican. This category is not Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x of any race. Ethnoracial Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x individuals are included in the “Multiracial or Ethnoracial (two or more)” category.

<sup>7</sup> “Indigenous Person of Canada” includes those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Indigenous person of Canada and one or more other racial or ethnic categories) as Indigenous Persons of Canada.

<sup>8</sup> “Multiracial/Ethnoracial” identities represent a diverse group of people constituting more than 100 different identities. Non-Indigenous individuals who selected two or more races and/or ethnicities, or Indigenous individuals who selected three or more races, are considered multiracial.

<sup>9</sup> “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander” includes those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and one or more other racial or ethnic categories) as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

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<sup>10</sup> Age is derived based on the date of birth reported in the LSAC JD Account profile and August 1 of the matriculation year.

<sup>11</sup> “Gender Identity” is derived from responses from a required two-question sequence in the LSAC JD Account profile. First, individuals report their gender identity, a single-choice radio button list with the options “Gender nonbinary,” “Man,” “Woman,” “Prefer not to disclose,” and “Gender identity not listed (please specify).” Next, individuals are asked, “Do you consider yourself to be transgender?” with the single-choice options of “Yes” and “No.”

<sup>12</sup> “Gender Diverse” includes all individuals whose derived gender identity is not Cisgender Woman or Cisgender Man, which may include transgender and/or nonbinary individuals, and all individuals who selected “Gender identity not listed.”

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

<sup>13</sup> “Another Gender Identity” includes all individuals who selected “Gender identity not listed” in their LSAC JD Account profile.

<sup>14</sup> “Sexual Orientation” is derived from the LSAC JD Account profile, via a required field with a single-choice radio button list of the options “Bisexual,” “Gay or Lesbian,” “Straight/heterosexual, that is, not gay, lesbian, or bisexual,” “Questioning or unsure,” “Prefer not to disclose,” and “Sexual orientation not listed (please specify).”

<sup>15</sup> “LGBTQ+” is derived using the Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation variables. LGBTQ+ 1Ls include all gender-diverse individuals (e.g., not derived as Cisgender Woman, Cisgender Man, or Did Not Indicate), along with all individuals who selected a sexual orientation other than “Straight (heterosexual), that is, not gay, lesbian, or bisexual” or “Prefer not to answer.”

<sup>16</sup> Education level is derived based on the required LSAC JD Account profile question “What is the highest level of formal education attained by your most highly educated parent (including birth parents, stepparents, and guardians with whom you lived at least 50% of the time through the age of 18)?” which provides a drop-down list to select a single response.

<sup>17</sup> “First-Generation College Graduate” status is derived based on parent education reported from the LSAC JD Account profile question. First-Generation College Graduates include individuals with parents or guardians with an associate degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

<sup>18</sup> “First-Generation JD Student” status is derived based on parent education reported from the LSAC JD Account profile question and an optional question that asks, “Has any close family member earned a law degree?” which provides a drop-down list to select a single response of “No,” “Yes,” or “Prefer not to answer or don’t know.” Only those who indicated “No” for this optional question, along with a parent education that is not a JD are considered First-Generation JD Students.

<sup>19</sup> Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported in the LSAC JD Account profile with the optional question “Have you ever received a Federal Pell Grant?” with drop-down selections of “No,” “Yes,” “I don’t know,” and “Prefer not to answer.”

<sup>20</sup> If an individual applied and qualified for a LSAC Fee Waiver, then this variable is “Yes”; otherwise, the variable is “No.” For more information about LSAC’s Fee Waiver program, see <https://www.lsac.org/lsat/register-lsat/lsat-cas-fees/fee-waiver>.

# Introduction

Amid continual political, economic, and social changes in the U.S. — including major changes to federal Grad PLUS loans — since the 2023 Supreme Court’s *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. Harvard* decision, interest in law has grown. There were more than 76,000 applicants to law school during the 2024-25 admission cycle, a 18% jump from the prior year. As a result, more than 42,000 students started law school during the 2025-26 academic year.

How will all the changes of the past two years affect who goes to law school and where they enroll? This is an important question, given that the future of the legal profession and public trust in the legal system depend in part on who enrolls in law school and how they develop while in law school. The lived experiences of everyone on this journey are central to LSAC’s mission of advancing law and justice by promoting access, equity, and fairness in law school, and we come to understand those experiences through a thorough analysis of available data. Therefore, this report dives into enrollment trends over the last five years, focusing on:

1. Who is enrolling in law school.
2. Where they enrolled.
3. How class sizes have changed at the law school level over the years.

Since the Supreme Court’s *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. Harvard* decision, much has been speculated about that decision’s impact on the racial and ethnic composition of the entering class. Concerns about the composition of law school classes has since heightened amid abrupt changes in standards, policies, and legal practices, from anti-DEI legislation and executive orders to major changes to federal Grad PLUS loans. Overall, the 2025 1L class, much like classes before it, continues to be composed of students from various racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Women continue to make up most of the first-year class, as they have for nearly a decade. LGBTQ+ student representation has increased in the past five years, but concerns remain, given the recent increase in policies and rhetoric targeting trans people.

The steady racial and ethnic diversification of the incoming class between 2021 and 2023 experienced disruption in 2024 and 2025: The racial and ethnic diversity of the 1L class grew by 3 percentage points (38.5% to 41.8%) between 2021 and 2023, then remained stable (41.8%) in 2024. Despite a larger class and a more diverse applicant pool, for the first time in recent years, there was a slight decrease (41.4%) in the racial and ethnic diversity of the 2025 class. Finally, for over five years LSAC has been collecting parent/guardian education attainment data; for the second year in a row, first-generation college graduate 1L representation decreased, constituting 21.7% of the 2025 1L class.

These changes in class composition are reflected in enrollment trends across various law schools based on selectivity. For the second year in a row, the highly selective (top 25%) law schools continue to be less racially and ethnically diverse than other law schools. Black, Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x, and first-generation college graduate 1L enrollment at these highly selective law schools continue to decrease, and those groups' enrollment in law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4) continues to increase, for a second year. And Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1Ls and first-generation college graduate 1Ls continue to be the least represented at highly selective law schools.

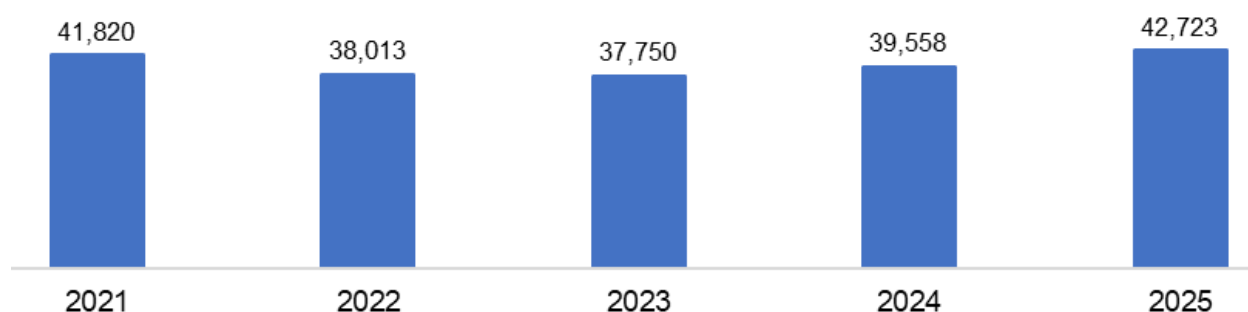
While the 2025 1L class is 8% larger than the 2024 1L class and most law schools brought in slightly larger classes, the increase did not keep pace with an 18% increase in applicant demand, resulting in a highly competitive admission cycle. There are many reasons why legal education enrollment may not grow with the growing interest in law that these applicant volumes reflect; those reasons may include budget cuts, limited physical space, changes in sources of available financing options, and cautious monitoring of the legal employment market — despite a growing need for attorneys in lower-resources areas across the country. Similar factors may be on the minds of many aspiring law students, as they face financial challenges their predecessors did not.

As changes unfold, these trends illustrate that the legal community must continue its efforts along the legal education pathway to support and provide resources and opportunities to usher in the next generation of legal leaders. The insights in this report about who is enrolling, and where, are critical to informing how, when, and where legal stakeholders — from pathway programs to prelaw advisors to law schools — can address barriers, intervene, guide, advocate, and provide reliable and effective support for all aspiring lawyers.

# **The First-Year Class: 2021 to 2025 Trends**

Tens of thousands of students start law school each year, but the incoming 2025 class was largest by current standards (Figure 1), with a total of 42,723 first-year law students. This coincides with increased postsecondary enrollment nationally. According to National Student Clearinghouse fall 2025 enrollment trends, total postsecondary enrollment increased by 1%, though that increase was mostly driven by undergraduate enrollment; graduate program enrollment in legal profession and studies (not limited to JD programs) was one of the few graduate major groups with increased enrollment, at 3.8%.<sup>17</sup> Focusing on JD programs only, based on LSAC data, the 2025 1L class is 8% larger than the 2024 1L class (Figure 2). After the large class growth in 2021, the class size decreased by 9.1% from 2021 to 2022; today, though, the 2025 1L class is 2% larger than the 2021 1L class (Figure 2).

**Figure 1. 1L Composition: Class Size, 2021–2025**



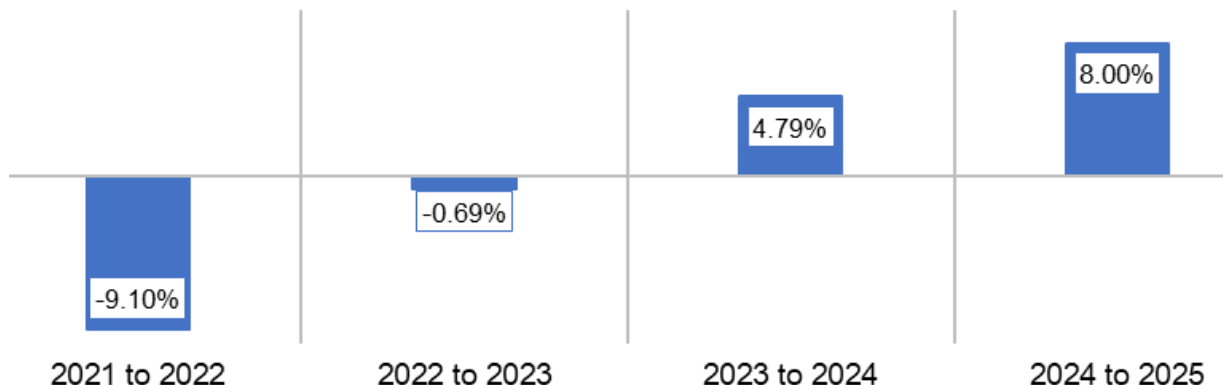
*Source:* LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

*Note:* 1Ls are students who applied and matriculated in the given academic year, or students who matriculated after having accepted an offer of admission in a previous cycle and receiving an approved deferral from the law school.

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<sup>17</sup> Refer to the [Clearinghouse Enrollment Insights Series: Clearinghouse Final Fall Enrollment Trends](#)

**Figure 2. 1L Composition: Percent Change in Enrollment from Previous Year, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

Note: Percent change measures the relative increase or decrease of a value, which describes how much a new value has changed in relation to the original value. For example, if the 1L cohort went from 39,558 in 2024 to 42,723 in 2025, that represents an 8.0 percent increase ( $[42,723 - 39,558] / 39,558 = 8.0$ ). Percent Change describes the percent difference between two values, in relation to the magnitude of change.

This report seeks a deeper understanding of who enrolls in law school by examining the 1L student composition based on race and ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background.

## Racial and Ethnic Composition

Racial and ethnic diversity among the first-year class steadily increased between 2021 and 2023, then leveled off in 2024 and saw a slight decline in 2025 (Table 2). The increase in the enrollment of students from racially and ethnically minoritized groups between 2021 and 2023 was largely driven by Asian, multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more), and, to a lesser extent, Middle Eastern or North African/Arab and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1Ls. On the other hand, Black or African American law student representation declined each year. White enrollment consistently decreased each year, though 1Ls who did not disclose their race and/or ethnicity consistently increased between 2021 and 2025.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The rate of not disclosing one's racial or ethnic identity has increased in recent years (from 5.82% in 2021 to 7.56% in 2025); predictive modeling indicates that racial and ethnic groups do not disclose at similar rates. Therefore, all estimates by race and ethnicity should be interpreted with this in mind, as some racial groups may have actual estimates that are higher or lower than what is reported. However, the estimates produced in this report are reflective of the known, *observable* information for any given 1L cohort. For example, of all 2025 1L students for which racial and ethnic identity is known, 1.26% are American Indian or Alaska Native.

**Table 2. 1L Composition: Race and Ethnicity, 2021–2025**

Race and Ethnicity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
American Indian or Alaska Native <sup>1</sup>	1.30%	1.37%	1.33%	1.20%	1.26%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian <sup>2</sup>	0.01%	—	0.01%	—	0.01%
Asian	8.11%	8.88%	9.64%	9.51%	9.05%
Black or African American	7.93%	7.80%	7.70%	7.56%	7.43%
Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x <sup>3</sup>	8.91%	9.37%	9.41%	9.68%	9.31%
Indigenous Person of Canada <sup>4</sup>	0.05%	0.04%	0.06%	0.05%	0.08%
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	2.30%	2.57%	2.89%	2.88%	2.66%
Multiracial/Ethnoracial <sup>5</sup>	9.65%	10.25%	10.49%	10.65%	11.32%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <sup>6</sup>	0.30%	0.29%	0.30%	0.31%	0.28%
White	55.63%	53.68%	51.63%	50.77%	51.06%
Did Not Indicate	5.82%	5.75%	6.54%	7.40%	7.56%

Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

<sup>1</sup> “American Indian or Alaska Native” includes those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting American Indian or Alaska Native and one or more other racial or ethnic category) as American Indian or Alaska Native, given conversations with community leaders and advocates.

<sup>2</sup> “Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian” includes those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian and one or more other racial or ethnic categories) as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian.

— No data available.

<sup>3</sup> “Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x” includes those who identify as only Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x and/or Puerto Rican. This category is not Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x of any race. Ethnoracial Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x individuals are included in the “Multiracial or Ethnoracial” (two or more) category.

<sup>4</sup> “Indigenous Person of Canada” includes those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Indigenous Person of Canada and one or more other racial or ethnic categories) as an Indigenous Person of Canada.

<sup>5</sup> Multiracial and ethnoracial Identities represent a diverse group of people constituting more than 100 different identities. Non-Indigenous individuals who selected two or more races and/or ethnicities, or Indigenous individuals who selected three or more races, are considered multiracial.

<sup>6</sup> “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander” includes those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and one or more other racial or ethnic categories) as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

Comparing the absolute difference in racial and ethnic representation year over year reveals that many of the racial and ethnic groups represented in each 1L class fluctuate over the academic years, with both increases and decreases to enrollment.<sup>19</sup> However, two groups had persistent patterns each year. Specifically:

<sup>19</sup> Figure 3 provides the absolute difference for each racial/ethnic identity with sufficient data to report changes to the distributions between each year from 2021 through 2025, along with a five-year comparison.

- Unlike all other racial and ethnic groups, multiracial or ethnoracial 1L students had a steady yearly increase in representation. Students who identify with more than one racial or ethnic group represented 9.65% of the 2021 1L class; that number rose to 11.32% of the 2025 1L class, an absolute increase of 1.6% across five years.
- Conversely, Black or African American 1L students experienced a consistent yearly decrease in representation between 2021 and 2025, dropping between 0.10 and 0.15 percent each year. In 2024, 7.56% of all 1L students identified as Black or African American; that number was down to 7.43% in 2025, a 0.13% absolute decrease. Between 2021 and 2025, Black or African American representation saw an absolute decrease of 0.51%.

There has been a persistent decrease in enrollment for white 1L students, though this changed in the 2025 academic year:

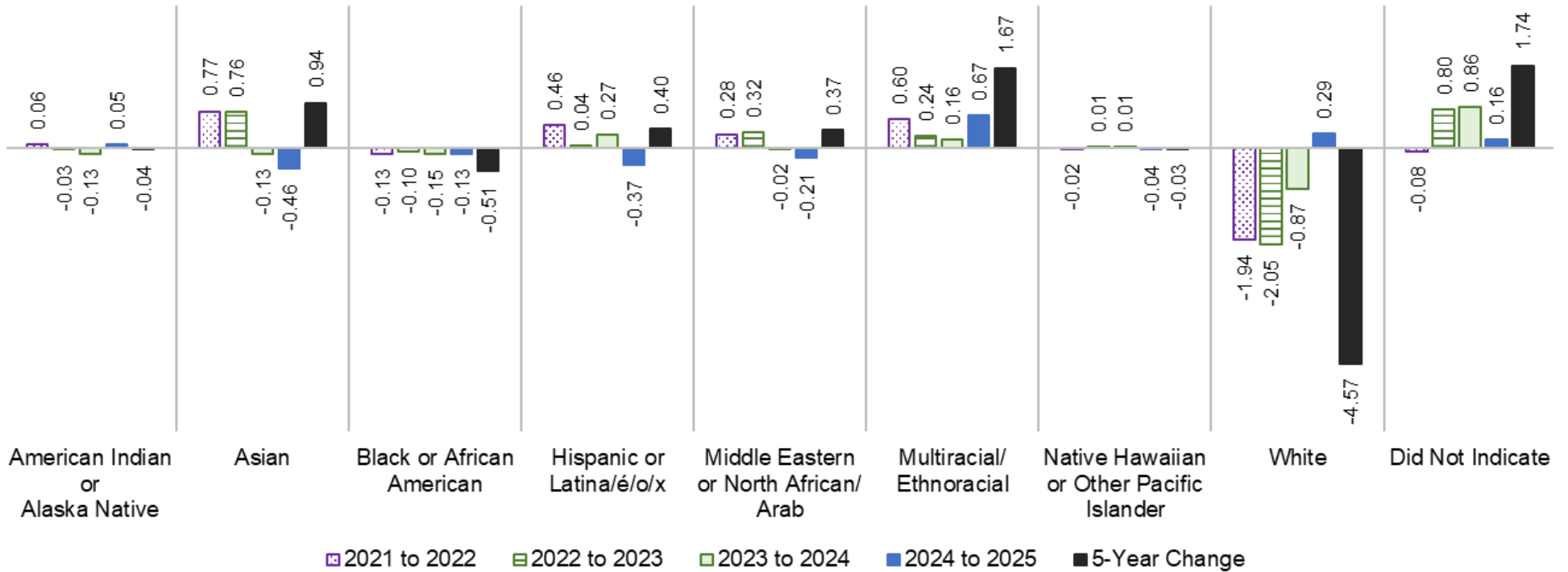
- White 1L enrollment saw a consistent yearly decrease between 2021 and 2024, dropping between 0.87 and 2.05 percent. White 1L students represented 55.63% of the 2021 1L class but were down to 51.05% of the 2025 1L cohort (an absolute decrease of 4.57%). However, 2025 white 1L enrollment increased 0.29% compared with the 2024 1L class.

Three racial and ethnic groups increased enrollment between 2021 and 2025, despite declining enrollment in the 2025 academic year:

- Asian 1L representation increased by 0.94% between 2021 and 2025, mostly driven by enrollment shifts in the 2021 and 2022 academic years. Compared with the 2024 1L class, Asian 1L representation decreased by 0.46% in the 2025 academic year.
- Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1L representation increased by 0.4% between 2021 and 2025, mostly due to rising enrollment between 2021 and 2022 (0.46%). Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1L students represent 9.31% of the 2025 1L class, a decrease of 0.37% compared with 2024.
- Middle Eastern or North African/Arab 1L representation increased 0.37% between 2021 and 2025, mostly due to increased enrollment between 2021 and 2023. In 2025, 2.66% of all 1L students identified as Middle Eastern or North African/Arab, a decrease of 0.21% compared with 2024.

Finally, the rate of not disclosing racial and ethnic identity has increased over the years. Of students not reporting their race and/or ethnicity between 2021 and 2025, 1Ls who did not indicate their race and/or ethnicity increased by 1.74%, from 5.82% in 2021 to 7.56% of the 2025 1L class who did not provide this information. While the rate of not disclosing has increased over the years, the increase was greater right before and right after the Supreme Court's 2023 *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. Harvard* decision; the increase then slowed down with the 2025 1L class.

**Figure 3. 1L Composition: Absolute Difference in Racial and Ethnic Representation, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

Note: Absolute difference measures the absolute difference of two values; for percent values, this is also sometimes referred to as “percentage point change.” Throughout this report, the phrase “absolute difference” is used to describe this comparison. For example, if Asian 1L enrollment went from 8.11 percent in 2021 to 9.05 percent in 2025, that represents an *absolute* increase of 0.94 (9.05 – 8.11 = 0.94). Absolute difference describes the numeric difference between values, without relation to magnitude of change.

Note: Data are not presented for the following racial and ethnic groups: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian and Indigenous Person of Canada.

Between 2021 and 2025, about 10 percent of 1L students identified as multiracial or ethnoracial (two or more), meaning the student identifies with multiple racial or ethnic backgrounds. The term “ethnoracial” refers to a combination of racial and ethnic identities and thereby offers a more accurate representation of the lived experiences of individuals with those combined identities (Goldberg, 1993). For example, Black or African American. African American people are not a monolithic group, and describing someone who is Afro-Latina/é/o/x or Afro-Caribbean only as “African American” obscures key ethnic aspects of their identities. Different ethnic identities often imply distinctly different experiences due, in part, to different immigration histories and the political and economic circumstances of each group. Therefore, it is important to examine who they are in detail.

For the most recent 1L classes, the five largest multiracial or ethnoracial groups have remained the same (Table 3). In any given year, just under 35 percent are white Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x students, with the next largest multiracial or ethnoracial group being students who identify as Asian and white (Table 3).

**Table 3. 1L Composition: Largest Multiracial or Ethnoracial Groups, 2021–2025**

Race and Ethnicity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Asian and White	18.01%	17.37%	16.64%	16.69%	17.97%
Black or African American and Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x	6.47%	7.08%	6.94%	6.31%	6.78%
Black or African American and White	8.35%	7.31%	8.03%	7.43%	7.61%
Hispanic or Latina/e/o/x and White	34.99%	34.12%	34.54%	34.23%	34.66%
Middle Eastern or North African/Arab and White	14.72%	14.08%	14.01%	16.09%	14.66%
Additional Multiracial and Ethnoracial Identities <sup>1</sup>	17.47%	20.04%	19.84%	19.25%	18.32%

Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all multiracial/ethnoracial 1L students.

Note: Non-Indigenous individuals who selected two or more races and/or ethnicities or Indigenous individuals who selected three or more races are considered multiracial/ethnoracial.

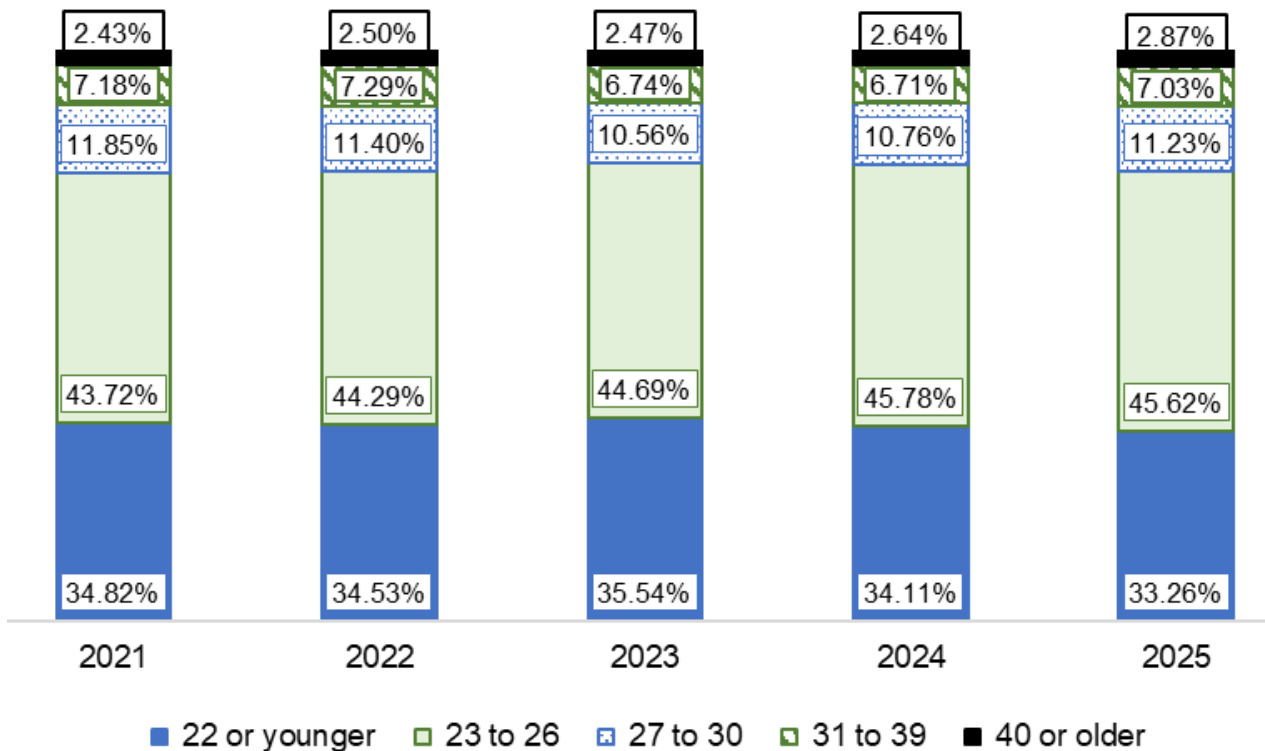
<sup>1</sup> “Additional Multiracial and Ethnoracial Identities” is a collapsed category that represents the remaining multiracial/ethnoracial individuals who selected two or more races and/or ethnicities, a diverse group of people constituting more than 100 different identities.

## Age

Despite the popular assumption that law school students are mostly young recent college graduates, LSAC data reveal that the majority of students are older. Over the past five years, 1L students enrolled in full-time programs have a median age of 23, while 1L students enrolled in part-time programs have a median age of 28. The age distributions have remained relatively stable in each class (Figure 4).

Over the years, more than a third of 1Ls have consistently been 22 years old or younger, about two in five have been between 23 and 26, and about one in five has been 27 or older. LSAC will continue to monitor who is entering law school, as age may affect how prospective students decide and plan for this journey. Examining how age and time before law school affect who applies and enters law school will be informative for the legal community in supporting these students' legal education journeys.

**Figure 4. 1L Composition: Age Distribution, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students, both non-deferrals and deferrals.  
 Note: Age is as of August 1 of the enrollment academic year.

## Gender and LGBTQ+ Communities

### Gender Identity

Overall, the majority of 1Ls consistently identify as cisgender (Table 4). That said, representation of different gender identities has steadily increased between 2021 and 2025.

Women consistently make up more than half of the 1L class each year from 2021 to 2025 (Table 4). There has been an increase in the representation of gender-diverse students, from 0.81% of the 2021 1L class to 1.13% of the 2025 1L class. All estimates related to gender identity should be interpreted with caution, as the rate of 1Ls who choose not to disclose their gender identities has also increased over time, from 1.5% in 2021 to 3.29% in 2025 (Table 4 and Figure 5). This is important to consider in the current context of increased anti-transgender legislation and policies across the U.S.

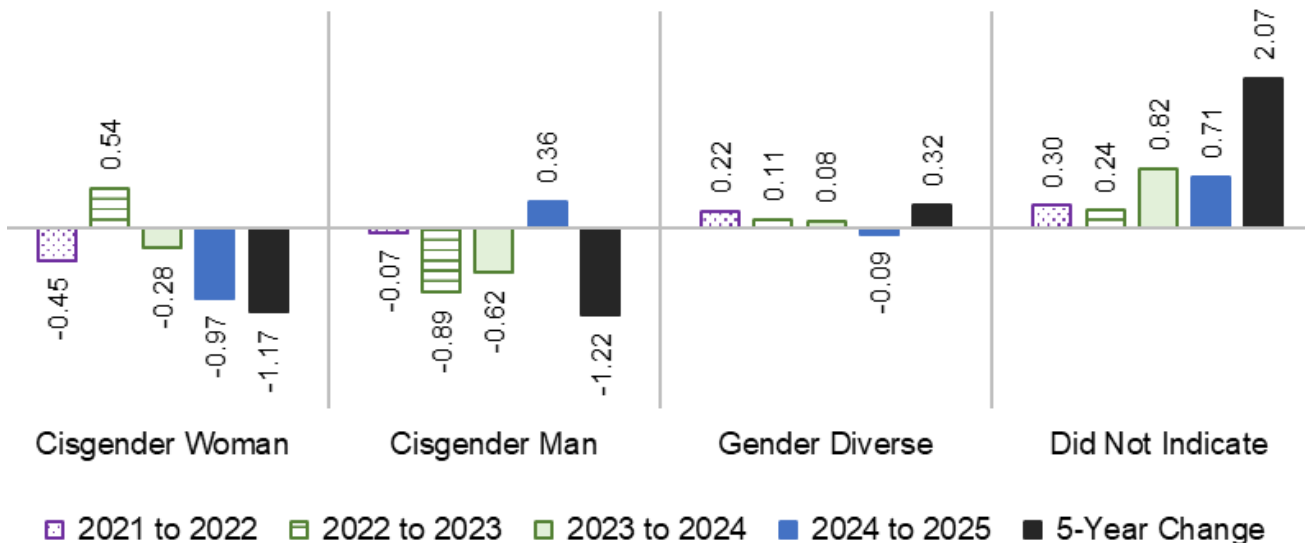
**Table 4. 1L Composition: Gender Identity, 2021–2025**

Gender Identity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Cisgender Woman	55.73%	55.28%	55.82%	55.54%	54.56%
Cisgender Man	42.23%	42.17%	41.28%	40.66%	41.02%
Gender Diverse <sup>1</sup>	0.81%	1.03%	1.14%	1.22%	1.13%
Did Not Indicate	1.23%	1.53%	1.76%	2.59%	3.29%

Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

<sup>1</sup> “Gender Diverse” includes all students who identify as a gender other than cisgender woman or cisgender man. This includes transgender men and women, nonbinary individuals who may or may not identify as transgender, and any other gender identity aside from cisgender. More details about gender-diverse students are found in the 1L profile reports.

**Figure 5. 1L Composition: Absolute Difference in Gender Identity Representation, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

Note: Absolute difference measures the absolute difference of two values; for percent values, this is also sometimes referred to as “percentage point change.” Throughout this report, the phrase “absolute difference” is used to describe this comparison. For example, if gender-diverse 1L enrollment went from 0.81 percent in 2021 to 1.13 percent in 2025, that represents an *absolute* increase of 0.32 (1.13 – 0.81 = 0.32). Absolute difference describes the numeric difference between values without relation to magnitude of change.

Note: Gender diverse includes all students who identify as a gender other than cisgender woman or cisgender man. This includes transgender men and women, nonbinary individuals who may or may not identify as transgender, and any other gender identity aside from cisgender.

While gender-diverse students make up a small percentage of the entire 1L class, it is important to examine the multitude of identities and experiences within this broad category. Gender-diverse individuals are defined as any gender that is not cisgender (Table 5). About half of all gender-diverse students identify as nonbinary alone (25.93%) or transgender and nonbinary (24.9%). The 2025 class saw the greatest increase in transgender women, representing 15.98% of all gender-diverse student enrollment for the year.

**Table 5. 1L: Gender-Diverse 1Ls, 2021–2025**

Gender Diverse	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Transgender Woman	7.12%	6.94%	7.01%	10.40%	15.98%
Transgender Man	9.79%	9.51%	7.94%	10.19%	11.62%
Transgender and Nonbinary	0.59%	2.31%	0.94%	16.84%	24.90%
Nonbinary	0.89%	0.26%	0.47%	19.75%	25.93%
Another Gender Identity <sup>1</sup>	81.60%	80.98%	83.65%	42.83%	21.58%

*Source:* LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students, non-deferrals and deferrals who identify as a gender other than a cisgender woman or cisgender man. More details about gender-diverse students are found in the 1L Profile reports and LGBTQ+ Law School Survey reports.

<sup>1</sup> Includes all other gender-diverse identities aside from transgender and/or nonbinary.

The LSAC data collection of gender was modified in recent years to include nonbinary (previously available only as a write-in option), and this change is reflected in the increase in nonbinary-identifying students; in other words, while nonbinary 1L enrollment increased from 0.47% in 2023 to 19.75% in 2024, this is due to the change in data collection, not observable enrollment shifts. Therefore, changes in enrollment for gender-diverse 1L students across years should be interpreted with caution, particularly prior to 2024. However, as improvements are made to the collection of social identity data, the accuracy of LSAC data will continue to improve.

## Sexual Orientation

Representation of diverse sexual orientation identities in the 1L classes increased between 2021 and 2025 (Table 6). In 2021, 11.91% of 1Ls identified as something other than straight or heterosexual; this number increased to 14.32% for the 2025 1L class. However, the rate of not disclosing sexual orientation has also increased, from 9.61% in 2021 to 14.25% in 2025. As such, sexual orientation estimates should be interpreted with caution, given that the rate of not disclosing is not likely to be equally distributed among all orientations.

**Table 6. 1L Composition: Sexual Orientation, 2021–2025**

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Bisexual	4.44%	5.49%	5.98%	7.13%	7.66%
Gay or Lesbian	3.00%	3.11%	3.09%	3.66%	4.19%
Questioning or Unsure	0.32%	0.46%	0.51%	0.68%	0.78%
Straight/Heterosexual	4.15%	4.69%	5.11%	3.25%	1.70%
Sexual Orientation Not Listed	76.37%	74.69%	72.81%	71.88%	71.33%
Did Not Indicate	9.61%	10.19%	11.22%	13.07%	14.26%
Missing	2.11%	1.37%	1.29%	0.34%	0.10%

Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

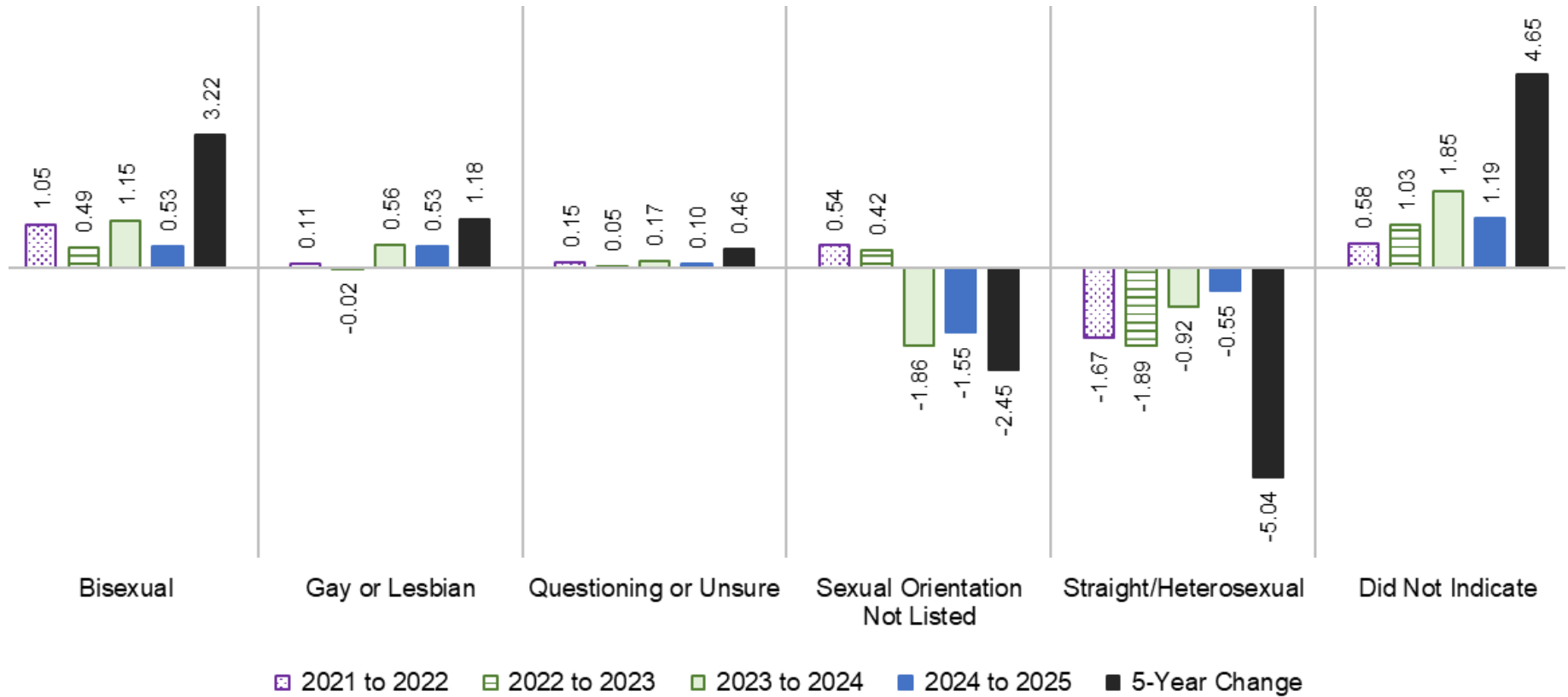
In 2025, 14.32% of 1Ls in the class identify as bisexual, gay or lesbian, questioning, or identifying with another sexual orientation, with the largest proportion identifying as bisexual (7.66%), followed by gay or lesbian (4.19%).

Between 2021 and 2024, the representation of heterosexual/straight 1Ls consistently decreased in absolute terms each year by 0.55% to 1.89%, while the representation of bisexual 1Ls increased in absolute terms each year by 0.49% to 1.15% (Figure 6). In total, 14.47% of the 2025 1L class identified as being a member of an LGBTQ+ community,<sup>20</sup> up from 12.03% in the 2021 1L class. According to a [2022 Gallup report](#), LGBTQ+ populations in the U.S. have been increasing, with about one in five Gen Z adults identifying as LGBTQ+. This trend must be contextualized within the changes in policies, legislation, and executive orders that are likely to affect the rate of non-disclosure in self-reported data collections.

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<sup>20</sup> “LGBTQ+” refers to people who identify with any sexual orientation other than heterosexual and/or people with any gender identity other than cisgender woman or cisgender man.

**Figure 6. 1L Composition: Absolute Difference in Sexual Orientation Representation, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

Note: Absolute difference measures the absolute difference of two values; for percent values, this is also sometimes referred to as “percentage point change”. Throughout this report, the phrase “absolute difference” is used to describe this comparison. For example, if bisexual 1L enrollment went from 4.44 percent in 2021 to 7.66 percent in 2025, that represents an *absolute* increase of 3.22 (7.66 – 4.44 = 3.22). Absolute difference describes the numeric difference between values, without relation to magnitude of change.

## Socioeconomic Status: First-Generation College Graduate and Pell Grant Recipient Status

Opportunities are unevenly distributed in the United States, so it is important to understand how and why people from divergent backgrounds vary in their access to opportunities that affect the journey to legal education. Researchers across various disciplines measure socioeconomic status (SES) by considering several factors. In addition to income and assets, researchers consider factors such as where individuals grew up, citizenship status, attendance at private or public schools, cultural background, occupation, geographic location, educational attainment, and the income and assets of parents or guardians. These factors have the potential to influence quality of life and the ability to access opportunities. For the purposes of this composition report, parent/guardian educational attainment, first-generation college graduate status, first-generation law student status, Pell Grant recipient status, and LSAC Fee Waiver recipient status are important indicators of SES.

While most of the 2025 first-year class are the first in their families to go to law school, the vast majority of the class are not first-generation college graduates. Around half of all 1Ls each year consistently come from backgrounds in which at least one parent or guardian has earned a bachelor's degree or higher (Table 7). In fact, in 2025, 46.2% of all 1Ls have at least one parent or guardian with a post-graduate degree.

**Table 7: 1L Composition: Highest Educational Attainment of Any Parent or Guardian, 2021–2025**

Education Level	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Less Than High School	2.65%	2.90%	3.20%	2.98%	2.87%
High School or Equivalent	9.11%	9.52%	9.87%	9.37%	8.90%
Some College	7.62%	7.39%	7.35%	6.89%	6.36%
Associate's Degree	3.83%	3.67%	3.76%	3.71%	3.53%
Bachelor's Degree	28.31%	29.22%	28.72%	28.42%	27.69%
Master's Degree	21.71%	21.99%	21.84%	22.64%	23.56%
Juris Doctor (JD) or Equivalent	11.25%	10.63%	10.78%	11.47%	12.31%
Doctoral Degree	6.27%	6.14%	6.04%	6.51%	6.72%
Doctor of Medicine (MD) or Equivalent <sup>1</sup>	5.65%	5.45%	5.40%	5.62%	6.10%
Did Not Indicate	1.75%	1.90%	1.92%	2.06%	1.87%
Missing	1.85%	1.19%	1.12%	0.33%	0.09%

Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students

<sup>1</sup> Includes Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), or equivalent professional-level physician's degree.

First-generation college graduates, Pell Grant recipients, and LSAC Fee Waiver recipients represent a small proportion of the 1L class each year (Table 8). Consistently less than a quarter of 1Ls each year are first-generation college graduates, and the 2025 entering 1L class has the smallest representation (21.6%) of this group in the past five years (Table 8).

**Table 8. 1L Composition: Socioeconomic Status (SES) Indicators, 2021–2025**

Socioeconomic Category	Socioeconomic Group	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>First-Generation College Graduate Status<sup>1</sup></b>	First-Generation College Graduate	23.20%	23.48%	24.18%	22.95%	21.67%
	Continuing-Generation College Graduate	73.20%	73.44%	72.78%	74.66%	76.38%
	Did Not Disclose	1.75%	1.90%	1.92%	2.06%	1.87%
	Missing	1.85%	1.19%	1.12%	0.33%	0.09%
<b>Pell Grant Recipient Status<sup>2</sup></b>	Pell Grant Recipient	25.04%	26.24%	26.27%	26.38%	25.88%
	Pell Grant Non-Recipient	64.03%	63.62%	64.12%	65.21%	66.17%
	Did Not Disclose/Don't Know	9.03%	8.91%	8.43%	7.40%	7.08%
	Missing	1.90%	1.23%	1.18%	1.01%	0.87%
<b>LSAC Fee Waiver Recipient Status<sup>3</sup></b>	Fee Waiver Recipient	5.49%	6.91%	9.63%	11.02%	11.42%
	Fee Waiver Non-Recipient	94.51%	93.09%	90.37%	88.98%	88.58%

Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

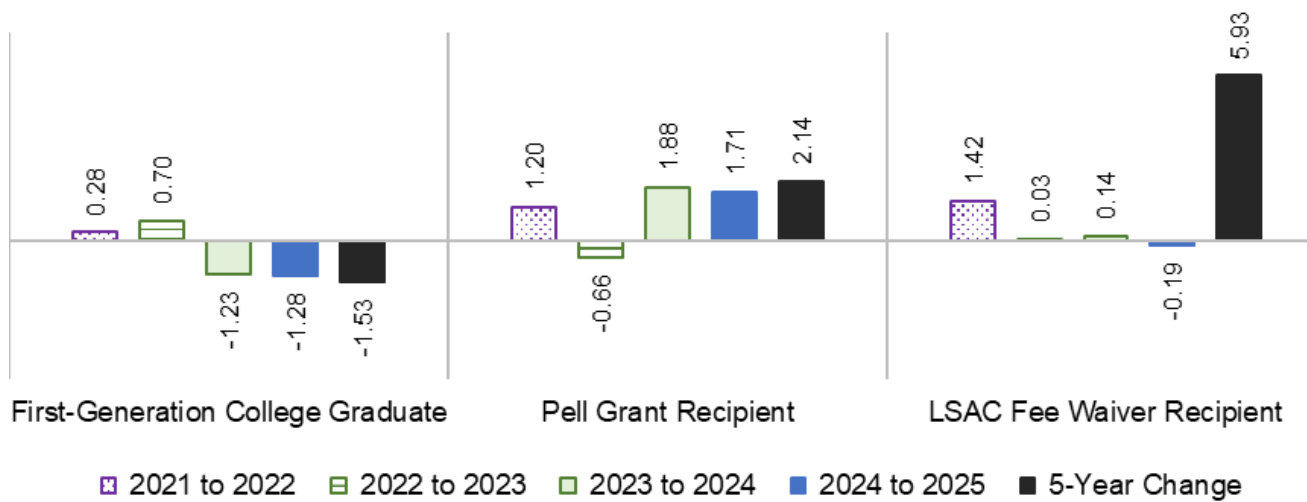
<sup>1</sup> First-generation college graduate status is derived based on parent education reported from the LSAC JD Account profile question. “First-Generation College Graduate” includes individuals with parents or guardians with an associate degree, some college, high school completion, or less than high school completion.

<sup>2</sup> Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported in the JD Account profile with the optional question “Have you ever received a federal Pell Grant?” with drop-down selections of “No,” “Yes,” “I don’t know,” and “Prefer not to answer.”

<sup>3</sup> If an individual applied and qualified for a LSAC Fee Waiver, then this variable is “Yes”; otherwise, “No.” For more information about LSAC’s Fee Waiver program, see <https://www.lsac.org/lSAT/register-lsat/lSAT-cas-fees/fee-waiver>.

The representation of first-generation college graduates among each 1L class has steadily declined for the last two years, with 2025 being the lowest in the past five years. Compared to the 2021 1L class, the 2025 1L class saw an absolute reduction of 1.53% in first-generation college graduates with only 21.7% of the class being first-generation college graduates (Table 8 and Figure 7). Comparatively, while there was a slight decrease in Pell Grant recipients for 2025 compared to 2024, those that reported receiving a Pell Grant rose in absolute terms by 2.14% between the years 2021 and 2025.

**Figure 7. 1L Composition: Absolute Difference in First-Generation College Graduate, Pell Grant Recipient and LSAC Fee Waiver Recipient Representation, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

Note: Absolute difference measures the absolute difference of two values; for percent values, this is also sometimes referred to as “percentage point change”. Throughout this report, the phrase “absolute difference” is used to describe this comparison. For example, if first-generation college graduate 1L enrollment went from 23.30 percent in 2021 to 21.67 percent in 2025, that represents an *absolute* decrease of 1.53 (21.67 – 23.30 = -1.53). Absolute difference describes the numeric difference between values, without relation to magnitude of change.

Pell Grants and LSAC Fee Waivers<sup>21</sup> are provided to students with demonstrated financial need. Consistently between 2021 and 2025, a little more than a quarter of 1Ls reported they were Pell Grant recipients (Table 8). While Pell Grant status has remained relatively stable from 2021 to 2025, LSAC Fee Waiver recipients doubled, increasing from 5.4% in 2021 to 11.4% in 2025 (Table 8), representing an absolute increase of 5.93% (Figure 7). The growth in representation of LSAC Fee Waiver recipients between 2021 and 2025 should be considered in the context of the significant changes to the program that LSAC made in 2021, which expanded income eligibility.

Overall, the first-year class remains predominantly continuing-generation college graduates with access to financial support. The downward trend of first-generation college graduates should give the legal community pause as schools, candidates, students, and stakeholders contend with ongoing changes, including to federal loan caps — a source of funding that, in the past, has made legal education possible for many law students, especially those who are first-generation college graduates and Pell Grant recipients.

<sup>21</sup> To be eligible for an LSAC Fee Waiver, applicants must demonstrate financial need supported by tax forms and other documentation. For more information about LSAC’s Fee Waiver program, see <https://www.lsat.org/lsat/register-lsat/lsat-cas-fees/fee-waiver>.

## A Focus on 2025 First-Generation College Graduate 1Ls

The decline of first-generation college graduates in the 1L class warrants further consideration. The lived experiences of first-generation college graduates are not a monolith; students from all backgrounds and communities are forging an educational path no one in their family has traveled before. These students face barriers and the unknown, given their limited access to networking, resources, and opportunities — the realities of being the first in their family to embark on the journey.<sup>22</sup>

Diving into the 2025 1L class, 59.2% of first-generation college graduates in the first-year class are from racially and ethnically minoritized groups, while 36.2% of continuing-generation college graduates in the class are from racially and ethnically minoritized groups (Figure 8, Figure 9, Figure 10, and Figure 11). One in five first-generation college graduate 1Ls is Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x, and a little more than a third of first-generation college graduate 1Ls are white. While 7.8% of continuing-generation college graduates are older than 30, 16.7% of all first-generation college graduate 1Ls are older than 30. And while 11.4% of all first-year law students received an LSAC Fee Waiver, 26.4% of all first-generation college graduate 1Ls received one. Similarly, 56.6% of all first-generation college graduate 1Ls received a Pell Grant, compared with about 26% of the entire 2025 1L class.

As with prior generations, the next generation of legal leaders needs access to resources, networks, and opportunities to and through law school and into the profession. However, this is not the lived reality for many, especially those who are first-generation college graduates. Given the decline in enrollment of such students over the past two years, it is critical to examine barriers to law school, which often are compounded at the intersection of first-generation college status and other identities.

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<sup>22</sup> There is a rich literature on first-generation students and graduates. To learn more, check out [What It Means to Be a First-Generation College Student | ACE Blog](#), [ABA's Educating Pioneers: The Plight and Promise of Today's First-gen Law Students](#), [LSSSE's Focus on First-Generation Students](#), and [NALP's First-Gen College Students Face Challenges in the Entry-Level Legal Employment Market](#) for a general understanding of the experiences and need for structural support to ensure everyone has access to resources, opportunities, and skills development to and through law school.

**Table 9. 1L Composition: Demographics by First-Generation College Graduate Status, 2025**

Socio-Demographic Category	Socio-Demographic Group	Continuing-Generation College Graduate	First-Generation College Graduate	Comparison	
				Absolute Difference <sup>1</sup>	Percent Change <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total Enrolled (Count)</b>		32,508	9,236	-23,272	-71.59
<b>Race/Ethnicity: Summary</b>	White	56.25%	35.67%	-20.58	-36.59%
	Racially or Ethnically Minoritized <sup>3</sup>	36.20%	59.18%	22.98	63.48%
	Did Not Indicate	7.55%	5.15%	-2.40	-31.77%
<b>Race/Ethnicity: Detail</b>	American Indian or Alaska Native <sup>4</sup>	1.12%	1.76%	0.65	57.80%
	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian <sup>5</sup>	0.01%	0.01%	0.01	83.33%
	Asian	8.84%	9.48%	0.64	7.26%
	Black or African American	6.05%	12.28%	6.23	103.09%
	Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x <sup>6</sup>	6.20%	20.15%	13.94	224.76%
	Indigenous Person of Canada <sup>7</sup>	0.06%	0.11%	0.04	68.75%
	Middle Eastern or North African/Arab	2.38%	3.58%	1.19	49.96%
	Multiracial/Ethnoracial <sup>8</sup>	11.28%	11.47%	0.19	1.66%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <sup>9</sup>	0.25%	0.35%	0.09	36.22%
	White	56.25%	35.67%	-20.58	-36.59%
	Did Not Indicate	7.55%	5.15%	-2.40	-31.77%
<b>Age at Start of Academic Year<sup>10</sup></b>	22 or Younger	35.30%	26.66%	-8.64	-24.47%
	23 to 26	46.63%	42.58%	-4.05	-8.69%
	27 to 30	10.28%	14.09%	3.80	36.99%
	31 to 39	5.79%	11.05%	5.26	90.98%
	40 or Older	2.01%	5.63%	3.62	180.42%
<b>Gender Identity: Summary<sup>11</sup></b>	Gender Diverse <sup>12</sup>	1.16%	1.06%	-0.10	-8.86%
	Cisgender Woman	53.61%	59.33%	5.72	10.66%
	Cisgender Man	42.24%	37.26%	-4.98	-11.79%
	Did Not Indicate	2.99%	2.36%	-0.63	-21.21%
<b>Gender Identity: Detail</b>	Cisgender Woman	53.61%	59.33%	5.72	10.66%
	Cisgender Man	42.24%	37.26%	-4.98	-11.79%
	Transgender Woman	0.19%	0.15%	-0.04	-20.53%
	Transgender Man	0.13%	0.15%	0.02	17.05%
	Transgender and Nonbinary	0.32%	0.17%	-0.15	-45.77%
	Nonbinary	0.31%	0.24%	-0.07	-23.23%
	Another Gender Identity <sup>13</sup>	0.22%	0.35%	0.13	60.93%
Did Not Indicate	2.99%	2.36%	-0.63	-21.21%	

Socio-Demographic Category	Socio-Demographic Group	Continuing-Generation College Graduate	First-Generation College Graduate	Comparison	
				Absolute Difference <sup>1</sup>	Percent Change <sup>2</sup>
Sexual Orientation <sup>14</sup>	Bisexual	7.82%	7.31%	-0.51	-6.53%
	Gay or Lesbian	4.02%	4.85%	0.83	20.62%
	Questioning or Unsure	0.79%	0.71%	-0.08	-10.20%
	Sexual Orientation Not Listed	1.54%	2.23%	0.68	44.29%
	Straight/Heterosexual	71.77%	72.91%	1.15	1.60%
	Did Not Indicate	14.04%	11.99%	-2.05	-14.60%
	Missing	0.02%	—	—	—
LGBTQ+ <sup>15</sup>	Not LGBTQ+	71.54%	72.64%	1.11	1.54%
	LGBTQ+	14.33%	15.30%	0.96	6.71%
	Did Not Indicate	14.12%	12.07%	-2.05	-14.53%
	Missing	0.02%	—	—	—
Pell Grant Recipient Status <sup>16</sup>	Pell Grant Non-Recipient	75.60%	35.03%	-40.57	-53.67%
	Pell Grant Recipient	17.16%	56.57%	39.41	229.72%
	Did Not Disclose/Don't Know	6.41%	7.83%	1.42	22.09%
	Missing	0.83%	0.57%	-0.26	-30.83%
LSAC Fee Waiver Recipient Status <sup>17</sup>	Fee Waiver Non-Recipient	92.98%	73.58%	-19.40	-20.86%
	Fee Waiver Recipient	7.02%	26.42%	19.40	276.14%

Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2025). Includes all continuing-generation and first-generation college graduate 1L students.

Note: Missing values are reported when the missingness rate for the variable is 0.5 or greater; otherwise, missing values are suppressed.

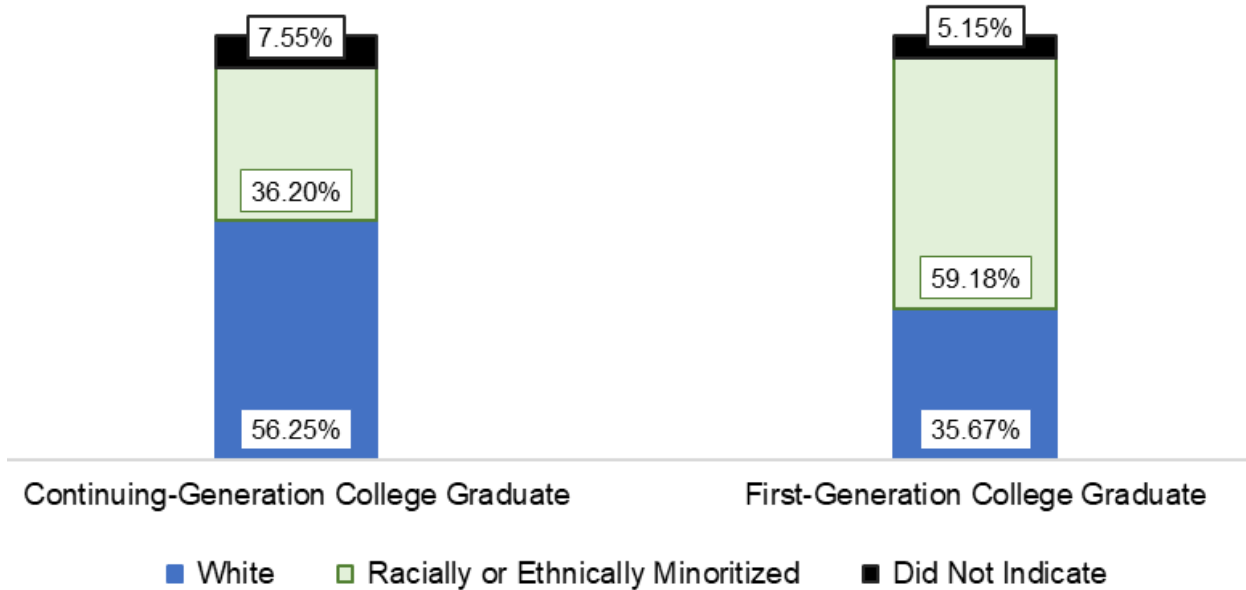
<sup>1</sup> Absolute difference measures the absolute difference of two values; for percent values, this is also sometimes referred to as “percentage point change.” Throughout this report, the phrase “absolute difference” is used to describe this comparison. For example, if 26.42 percent of first-generation college graduates are LSAC Fee Waiver recipients, compared with 7.02 percent of continuing-generation college graduates, that represents an *absolute* difference of 19.40 (26.42 – 7.02 = 19.40). Absolute difference describes the numeric difference between values, without relation to magnitude of change.

<sup>2</sup> Percent change measures the relative increase or decrease of a value, which describes how much a new value has changed in relation to the original value. For example, if 26.42 percent of first-generation college graduates are LSAC Fee Waiver recipients, compared with 7.02 percent of continuing-generation college graduates, that represents a 276.14 *percent* change ( $[26.42 - 7.02] / 7.02 = 276.14$ ). Percent change describes the percent difference between two values, in relation to the magnitude of change.

<sup>3</sup> “Racially or Ethnically Minoritized” is derived using the race and ethnicity information collected in the LSAC JD Account profile and includes anyone who identifies as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x, Indigenous Person of Canada, Middle Eastern or North African/Arab, multiracial/ethnoracial (two or more), or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

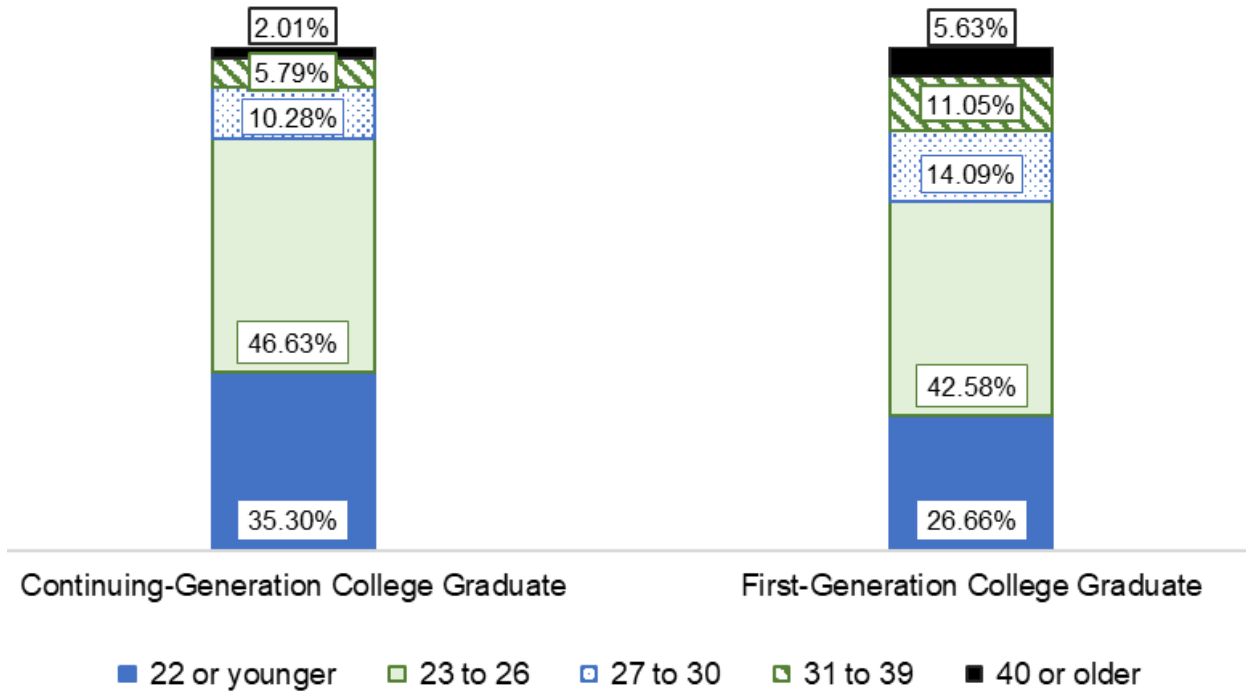
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- <sup>4</sup> “American Indian or Alaska Native” includes those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting American Indian or Alaska Native and one or more other racial or ethnic category) as American Indian or Alaska Native, given conversations with community leaders and advocates.
- <sup>5</sup> “Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian” includes those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian and one or more other racial or ethnic categories) as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian.
- <sup>6</sup> “Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x” includes those who identify as only Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x and/or Puerto Rican. This category is not Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x of any race. Ethnoracial Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x individuals are included in the “Multiracial/Ethnoracial” (two or more) category.
- <sup>7</sup> “Indigenous Person of Canada” includes those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Indigenous person of Canada and one or more other racial or ethnic categories) as Indigenous persons of Canada.
- <sup>8</sup> Multiracial and ethnoracial identities represent a diverse group of people constituting more than 100 different identities. Non-Indigenous individuals who selected two or more races and/or ethnicities, or Indigenous individuals who selected three or more races, are considered multiracial.
- <sup>9</sup> “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander” includes those who identify exclusively or in part (multiracial or ethnoracial by selecting Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and one or more other racial or ethnic categories) as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.
- <sup>10</sup> Age is derived based on the date of birth reported in the LSAC JD Account profile and August 1 of the matriculation year.
- <sup>11</sup> Gender identity is derived from responses from a required two-question sequence in the LSAC JD Account profile. First, individuals report their gender identity, a single-choice radio button list with the options “Gender nonbinary,” “Man,” “Woman,” “Prefer not to disclose” or “Gender identity not listed (please specify)”. Next, individuals are asked, “Do you consider yourself to be transgender?” with the single-choice options of “Yes” or “No.”
- <sup>12</sup> “Gender Diverse” includes all individuals whose derived gender identity is not cisgender woman or cisgender Man, which may include transgender and/or nonbinary individuals, and all individuals who selected “Gender identity not listed.”
- <sup>13</sup> “Another Gender Identity” includes all individuals who selected “Gender identity not listed” in their LSAC JD Account profile.
- <sup>14</sup> Sexual orientation is derived from the LSAC JD Account profile, via a required field with a single-choice radio button list of the options “Bisexual,” “Gay or Lesbian,” “Straight (heterosexual), that is, not gay, lesbian, or bisexual,” “Questioning or unsure,” “Prefer not to disclose,” and “Sexual orientation not listed (please specify).”
- No data available.
- <sup>15</sup> LGBTQ+ is derived using the gender identity and sexual orientation variables, LGBTQ+ 1Ls includes all gender-diverse individuals (e.g., not derived as cisgender woman, cisgender man, or did not indicate) and all individuals who selected a sexual orientation other than “Straight (heterosexual), that is, not gay, lesbian, or bisexual” or “Prefer not to answer.”
- <sup>16</sup> Pell Grant recipient status is self-reported in the JD Account profile with the optional question “Have you ever received a federal Pell Grant?” with drop-down selections of “No,” “Yes,” “I don’t know” and “Prefer not to answer.”
- <sup>17</sup> If an individual applied and qualified for a LSAC Fee Waiver, then this variable is “Yes”; otherwise, “No.” For more information about LSAC’s Fee Waiver program, see <https://www.lsac.org/lsat/register-lsat/lsat-cas-fees/fee-waiver>.

**Figure 8. 1L Composition: Race and Ethnicity by First-Generation College Graduate Status, 2025**



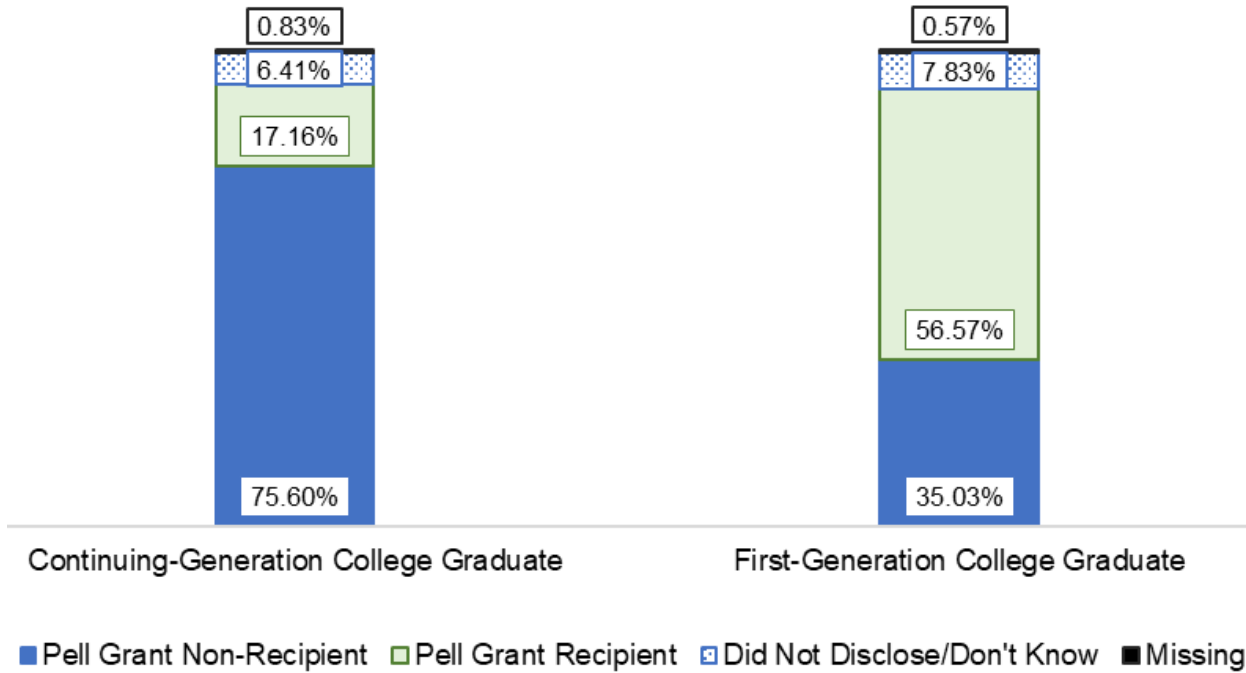
Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2025). Includes all continuing-generation and first-generation college graduate 1L students.

**Figure 9. 1L Composition: Age by First-Generation College Graduate Status, 2025**



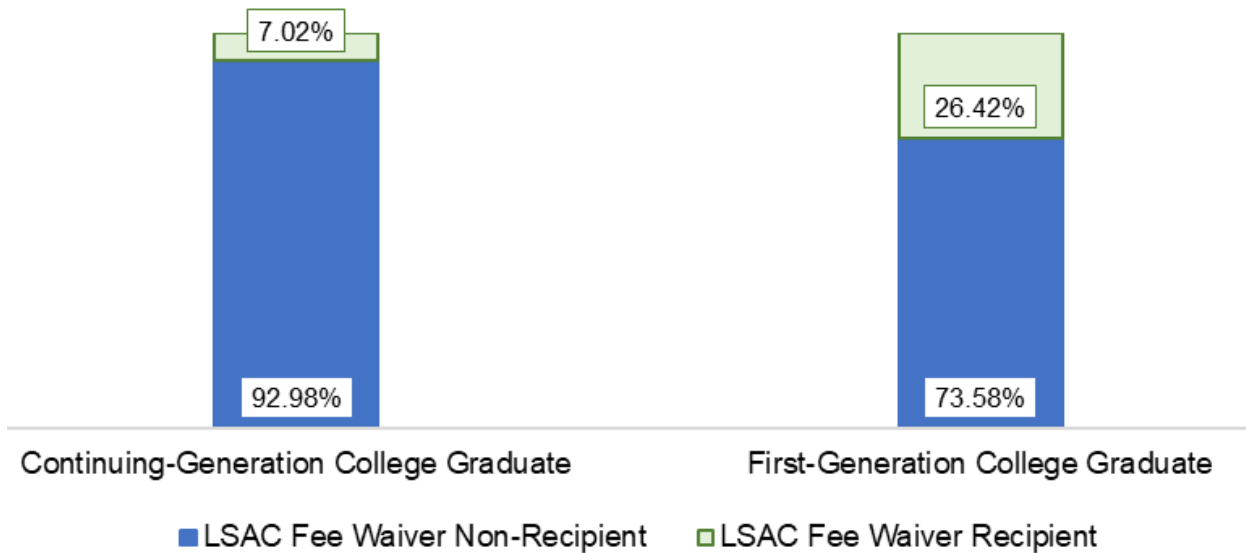
Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2025). Includes all continuing-generation and first-generation college graduate 1L students.

**Figure 10. 1L Composition: Pell Grant Recipient Status by First-Generation College Graduate Status, 2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2025). Includes all continuing-generation and first-generation college graduate 1L students.

**Figure 11. 1L Composition: LSAC Fee Waiver Recipient Status by First-Generation College Graduate Status, 2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2025). Includes all continuing-generation and first-generation college graduate 1L students.

As seen in this section, the composition of the 1L class by race and ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status reveals the array of experiences entering the law school classroom. While legal education experienced a reported increase in racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation diversity in recent years, the first-year class remains predominantly white, cisgender, continuing-generation college graduates, with most students never having received Pell Grants or qualifying for LSAC Fee Waivers. In particular, enrollment by first-generation college graduates has declined since 2021. These trends are critical to monitor as the legal community continues efforts to intervene and open access to resources and opportunities to help prospective law students develop the skills and strategies needed to succeed to and through law school.

# **2021-2025 Enrollment Trends: Where Are They Enrolled?**

While the first-year curriculum is similar from law school to law school, each school offers a unique experience depending on the personal, professional, and academic needs of its students. Law schools differ in how their admission offices function, the composition of their admission committees, and how their institutional structures govern holistic admission reviews. Therefore, the composition of the first-year class often is not homogenous across law schools, both at the individual level and when schools are aggregated into selectivity quartiles.<sup>23</sup> This section examines law school enrollment based on law school selectivity across various groups of students based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

## Enrollment Rates by Law School Selectivity

### Overall Enrollment

Deciding where to go to law school is one of the biggest decisions candidates make each year. Where students enroll not only affects the candidates but also carries implications on whether the legal profession reflects the society it represents, especially as it relates to employment recruitment. We examine this dynamic in the 2025 1L class, the largest in the past five years.

For the purposes of this research, we use each law school’s annual admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students to create a law school selectivity index score. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” in a given year are in the first quartile (Q1); the next 25% of schools by selectivity are in the second quartile (Q2); and so on. Given the variation in class sizes among the schools that make up each quartile, 28-30% of 1Ls annually enroll in Q1 (highly selective) law schools, 24-26% enroll in Q2 schools, 21-23% enroll in Q3 schools, and 20-22% enroll in Q4 schools (Table 10 and Figure 12).

**Table 10. 1L Composition: Law School Characteristics, 2021–2025**

Law School Characteristic	Category	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	5 - Year Trends (2021 v 2025)	
							Absolute Difference <sup>1</sup>	Percent Change <sup>2</sup>
School Type <sup>3</sup>	Private	63.29%	63.28%	63.64%	63.81%	63.90%	0.61	0.96%
	Public	36.71%	36.72%	36.36%	36.19%	36.10%	-0.61	-1.66%
Selectivity Quartile <sup>4</sup>	Q1	29.89%	28.85%	30.47%	29.76%	28.88%	-1.01	-3.39%
	Q2	24.35%	26.52%	25.76%	26.08%	25.97%	1.62	6.64%
	Q3	23.73%	22.17%	23.14%	21.91%	22.56%	-1.16	-4.89%
	Q4	22.03%	22.47%	20.63%	22.25%	22.59%	0.56	2.53%

<sup>23</sup> Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

Law School Characteristic	Category	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	5 - Year Trends (2021 v 2025)	
							Absolute Difference <sup>1</sup>	Percent Change <sup>2</sup>
Enrollment Intensity <sup>5</sup>	Full Time	92.06%	91.61%	91.71%	90.92%	90.72%	-1.33	-1.45%
	Part Time	7.94%	8.39%	8.29%	9.08%	9.28%	1.34	16.81%
Region	Far-West	11.42%	10.88%	11.15%	11.15%	10.85%	-0.57	-4.96%
	Great Lakes	15.09%	15.16%	15.09%	15.00%	15.09%	0.00	-0.02%
	Mid-South	15.26%	15.66%	15.69%	15.42%	15.65%	0.39	2.55%
	Mountain West	3.56%	3.89%	3.69%	3.71%	3.66%	0.09	2.67%
	Midwest	4.14%	4.30%	4.29%	4.37%	4.25%	0.11	2.75%
	Northeast	16.96%	16.62%	16.93%	16.84%	16.54%	-0.42	-2.50%
	Northwest	2.61%	2.71%	2.73%	2.63%	2.62%	0.02	0.69%
	New England	8.88%	8.79%	8.74%	8.83%	8.98%	0.10	1.07%
	South-Central	10.01%	10.00%	9.60%	9.85%	9.73%	-0.28	-2.84%
	Southeast	12.07%	12.00%	12.11%	12.22%	12.63%	0.57	4.70%

Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

<sup>1</sup> Absolute difference measures the absolute difference of two values; for percent values, this is also sometimes referred to as “percentage point change.” Throughout this report, the phrase “absolute difference” is used to describe this comparison. For example, if 29.89% of the 2021 1L cohort enrolled at a Q1 law school, compared with 28.88 percent of the 2025 1L cohort, that represents an *absolute* difference of -1.01 (28.88 – 29.89 = -1.01). Absolute difference describes the numeric difference between values, without relation to magnitude of change.

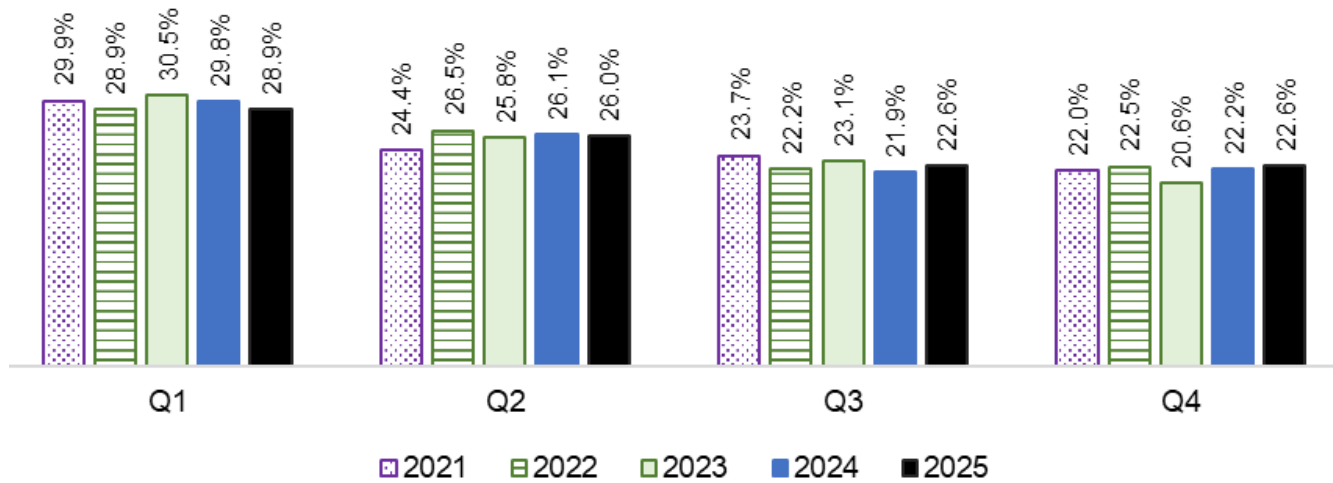
<sup>2</sup> Percent change measures the relative increase or decrease of a value, which describes how much a new value has changed in relation to the original value. For example, if 29.89 percent of the 2021 1L cohort enrolled at a Q1 law school, compared with 28.88 percent of the 2025 1L cohort, that represents a 3.39 *percent* decrease ( $[28.88 - 29.89] / 28.88 = -3.39$ ). Percent change describes the percent difference between two values, in relation to the magnitude of change.

<sup>3</sup> A classification of whether an institution is operated by publicly elected or appointed officials, or by privately elected or appointed officials and derives its major source of funds from private sources. A public institution is an educational institution whose programs and activities are operated by publicly elected or appointed school officials, and which is supported primarily by public funds. Private institutions include both private not-for-profit institutions (a private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives no compensation, other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk; these include both independent not-for-profit schools and those affiliated with a religious organization) and private for-profit institutions (a private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives compensation other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk).

<sup>4</sup> Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

<sup>5</sup> Program intensity is categorized by each law school’s classification of the program when the applicant applies.

**Figure 12. 1L Composition: Enrollment Rates by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

Racial and ethnic representation and socioeconomic diversity (defined by Pell Grant recipient status and first-generation college graduate status) has consistently remained unequally distributed across law school selectivity quartiles from 2021 to 2025. Across the years, there is an underrepresentation of students from racially and ethnically minoritized groups and students who are Pell Grant recipients and first-generation college graduates at highly selective (top 25%; Q1) law schools.

### Racial and Ethnic Enrollment

Generally, the top highly selective law schools (Q1) continue to be less racially and ethnically diverse than other law schools.<sup>24</sup> In the past two years, the racial and ethnic diversity of first-year classes has increased only at law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4). In 2024, racially and ethnically minoritized 1Ls made up 51.09% of the students enrolled at schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4); that total increased to 52.68% in 2025, an absolute increase of 1.58% (Table 11, Figure 14).

<sup>24</sup> Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

**Table 11. 1L Composition: Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021-2025**

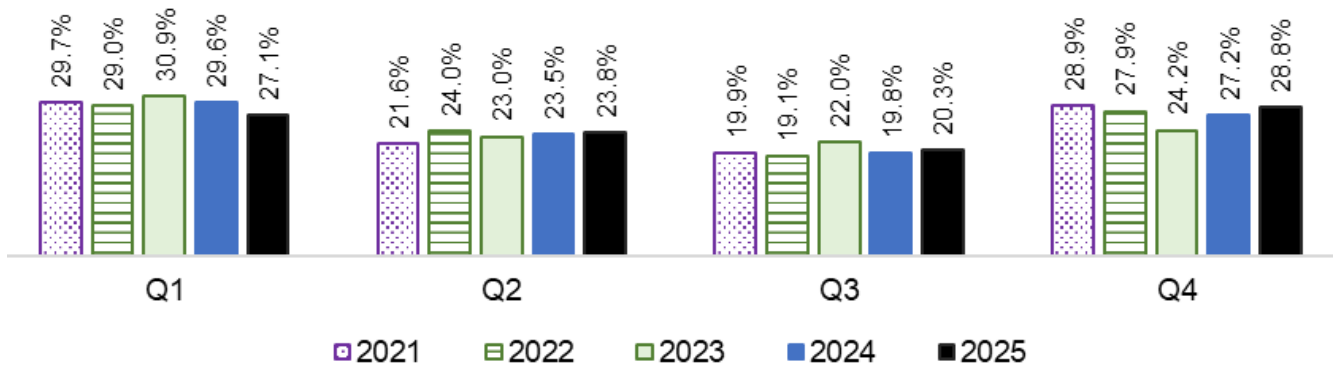
Law School Selectivity Quartile <sup>1</sup>	Race/Ethnicity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Q1</b>	Racially and Ethnically Minoritized <sup>2</sup>	38.26%	40.76%	42.40%	41.56%	38.80%
	White	55.89%	53.53%	51.18%	50.94%	53.10%
	Did Not Indicate	5.85%	5.71%	6.43%	7.50%	8.10%
<b>Q2</b>	Racially and Ethnically Minoritized	34.18%	36.66%	37.33%	37.68%	37.98%
	White	59.77%	57.22%	55.93%	54.53%	54.42%
	Did Not Indicate	6.05%	6.12%	6.74%	7.79%	7.61%
<b>Q3</b>	Racially and Ethnically Minoritized	32.27%	35.02%	39.68%	37.74%	37.31%
	White	61.39%	58.60%	53.29%	54.18%	54.91%
	Did Not Indicate	6.34%	6.37%	7.04%	8.09%	7.78%
<b>Q4</b>	Racially and Ethnically Minoritized	50.54%	50.41%	49.01%	51.09%	52.68%
	White	44.48%	44.86%	45.09%	42.77%	40.73%
	Did Not Indicate	4.98%	4.73%	5.91%	6.14%	6.59%

Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students.

<sup>1</sup> Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

<sup>2</sup> “Racially or Ethnically Minoritized” is derived using the race and ethnicity information collected in the LSAC JD Account profile and includes anyone who identifies as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x, Indigenous Person of Canada, Middle Eastern or North African/Arab, multiracial/ethnoracial (two or more), or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

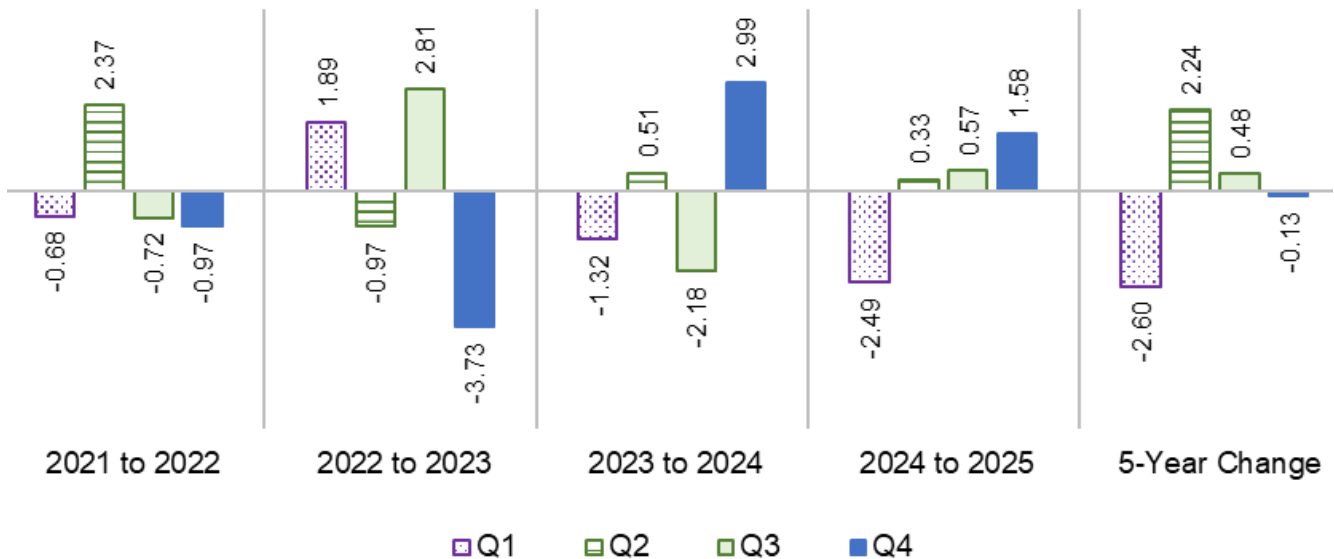
**Figure 13. 1L Composition: Racially and Ethnically Minoritized 1L Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all racially and ethnically minoritized 1L students.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

**Figure 14. 1L Composition: Absolute Difference in Racially and Ethnically Minoritized 1L Student Representation by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all racially and ethnically minoritized 1L students.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

Enrollment at highly selective law schools (top 25%) decreased for most racially and ethnically minoritized students for the second year in a row. Enrollment at highly selective law schools (Q1) for racially and ethnically minoritized students had an absolute decrease of 2.49 percent between 2024 and 2025, corresponding with an increase in fourth selectivity quartile (Q4) enrollment of 1.58% (Figure 14).

- Asian 1L enrollment at highly selective law schools (Q1) decreased from 48.6% in 2024 to 43.6% in 2025, an absolute decrease of 5% (Figure 16). There has been a decrease in international student enrollment across higher education. Many international law students are Asian; therefore, this decrease may be a result of many factors, including the overall decrease in international student enrollment in higher education.<sup>25</sup> More research is needed about changes to international student enrollment at law schools to understand other related trends, including enrollment by race and ethnicity.
- Black or African American 1L enrollment at highly selective law schools has been decreasing for the past two years, from 26.8% in 2023 to 20.9% in 2025, an absolute decrease of 5.9%. This coincides with an increase in fourth selectivity quartile enrollment (Figure 12). Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1L enrollment at highly selective law schools has also been decreasing for the past two years, from 19.1% in 2023 to 14.5% in 2025, an absolute decrease of 4.6% (Figure 18). Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1Ls are the least represented group at highly selective law schools, compared with other groups.<sup>26</sup>
- Middle Eastern or North African/Arab 1L enrollment at highly selective law schools decreased for the first time in 2025, from 27.6% in 2023 and 2024 to 26.6% in 2025, an absolute decrease of 1% (Figure 19).
- Multiracial or ethnoracial 1L enrollment at highly selective law schools also decreased, from 30.2% in 2024 to 29.4% in 2025, an absolute decrease of 0.8% (Figure 20).
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 1L enrollment at highly selective law schools decreased as well, from 31.7% in 2024 to 22% in 2025, an absolute decrease of 9.7% (Figure 21). This group's enrollment at law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4) increased from 26.8% in 2024 to 37.3% in 2025, an absolute increase of 12.5%. However, this is a small population, which means a slight change in the number of students can result in a sizable absolute difference.

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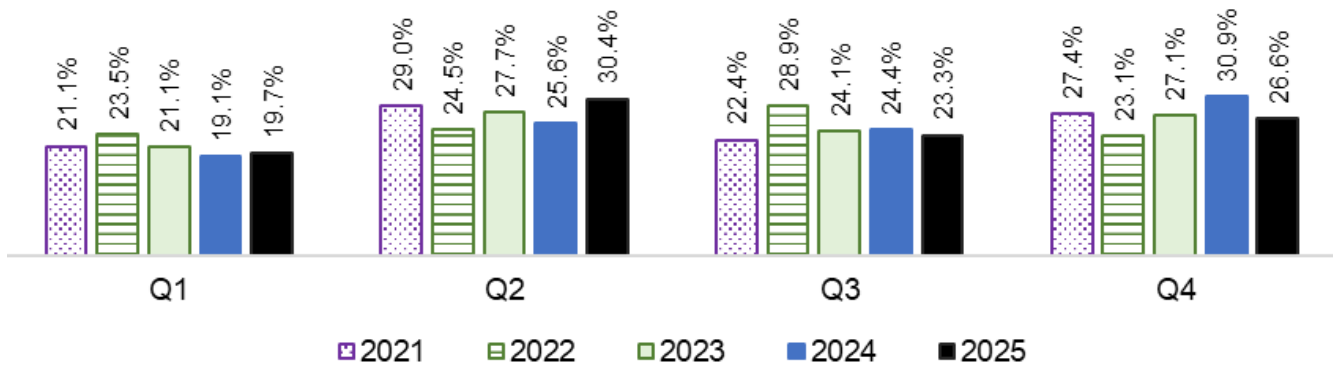
<sup>25</sup> See [United States Hosts 1.2 Million International Students at Colleges and Universities, Totaling 6% of U.S. Higher Education | IIE](#) and [Fewer International Students Came to the U.S. This Fall](#).

<sup>26</sup> 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/Ethnoracial" (two or more). As the trends reveal, enrollment varies within the Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x community by the race they disclose. To learn more about the diversity of Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x communities and education outcomes, check out research such as 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>

On the other hand, American Indian or Alaska Native 1Ls and white 1Ls saw similar enrollment trends between 2024 and 2025. For example, American Indian or Alaska Native 1L enrollment at highly selective law schools (Q1) has remained steady at about 19% in the past two years (Figure 15). However, American Indian or Alaska Native 1L enrollment at law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4) decreased from 30.9% in 2024 to 26.6% in 2025, while enrollment at law schools in the second selectivity quartile (Q2) increased from 25.6% in 2024 to 30.4% in 2025. Lastly, white 1L enrollment remained steady across selectivity quartiles over the past five years, with 1L enrollment at highly selective law schools (Q1) staying at about 30% and at law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4) remaining at about 18% (Figure 22). Those who did not indicate their race or ethnicity show rates of enrollment by selectivity quartile that are similar to those of white 1Ls (Figure 23).

Enrollment across law schools as it relates to selectivity is important to understand and monitor, given how legal employers recruit law students and law graduates. Who enters the profession and where they start their legal career is often related to where they attended law school; therefore, in thinking about access, it is useful to understand where students from various groups and communities are enrolled to inform recruitment efforts. Moreover, in the context of law school affordability, enrollment trends will be important to follow, as candidates may enroll in different law schools because of what they can and cannot afford. LSAC will continue to examine these trends in the future.

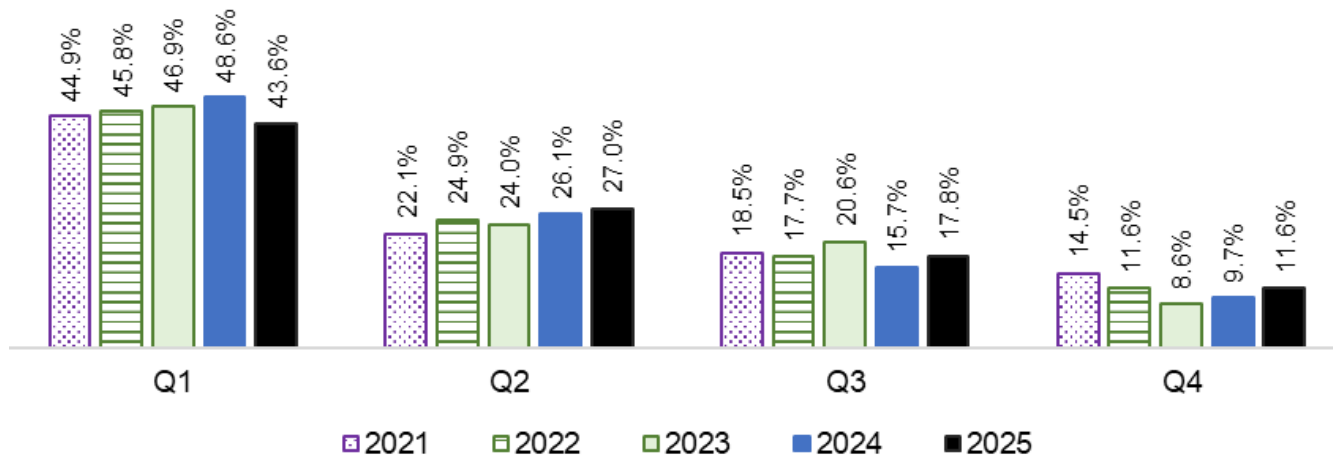
**Figure 15. 1L Composition: American Indian or Alaska Native Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all American Indian or Alaska Native 1L students.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

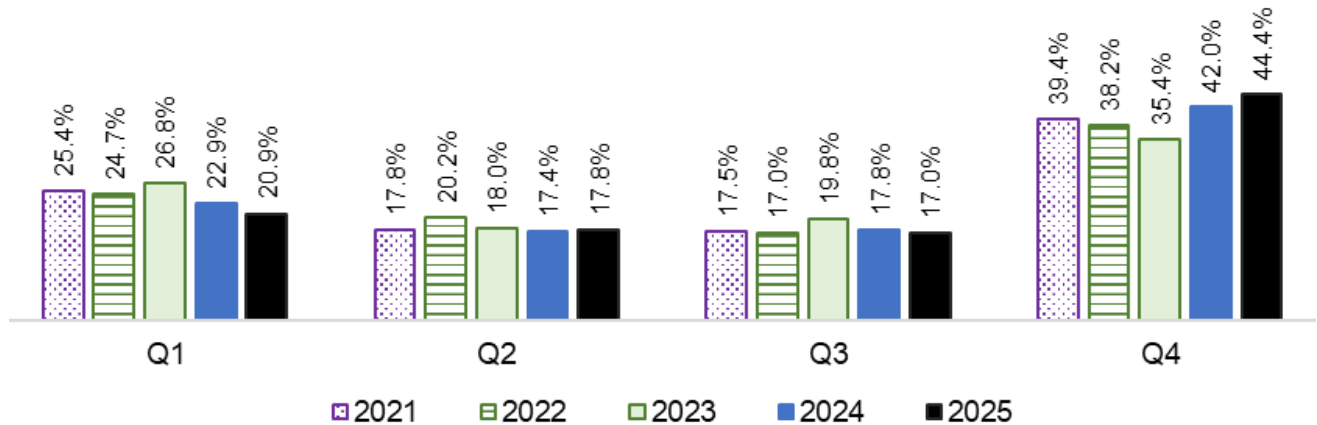
**Figure 16. 1L Composition: Asian Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all Asian 1L students.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

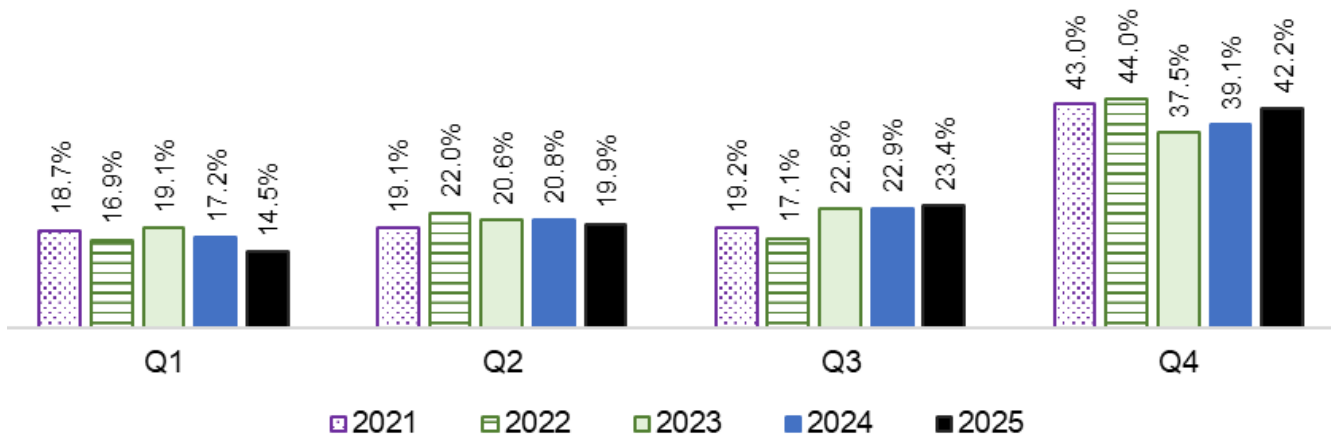
**Figure 17. Black or African American Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all Black or African American 1L students.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

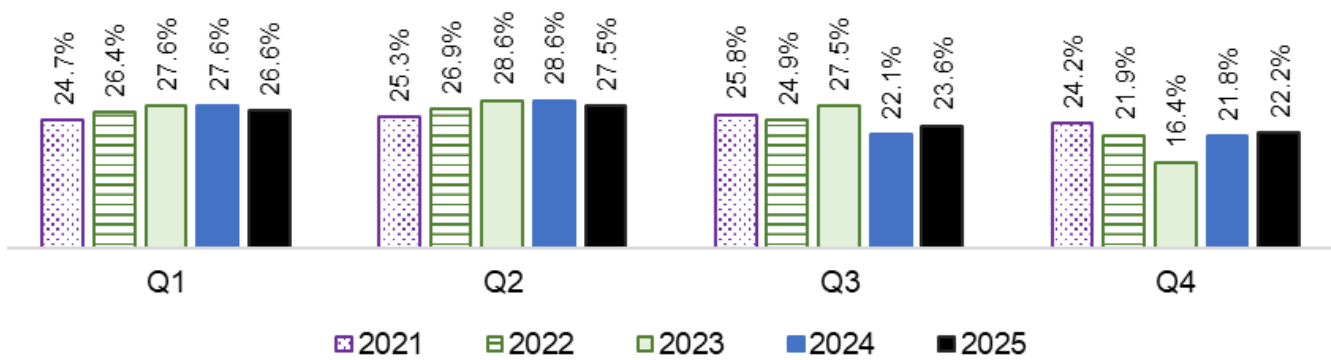
**Figure 18. 1L Composition: Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x 1L students.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

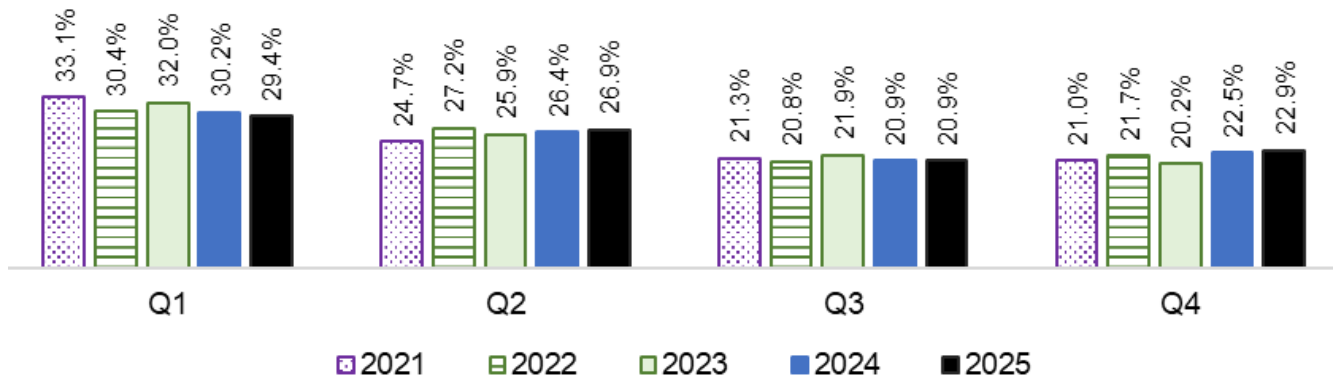
**Figure 19. 1L Composition: Middle Eastern or North African/Arab Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all Middle Eastern or North African/ Arab 1L students.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

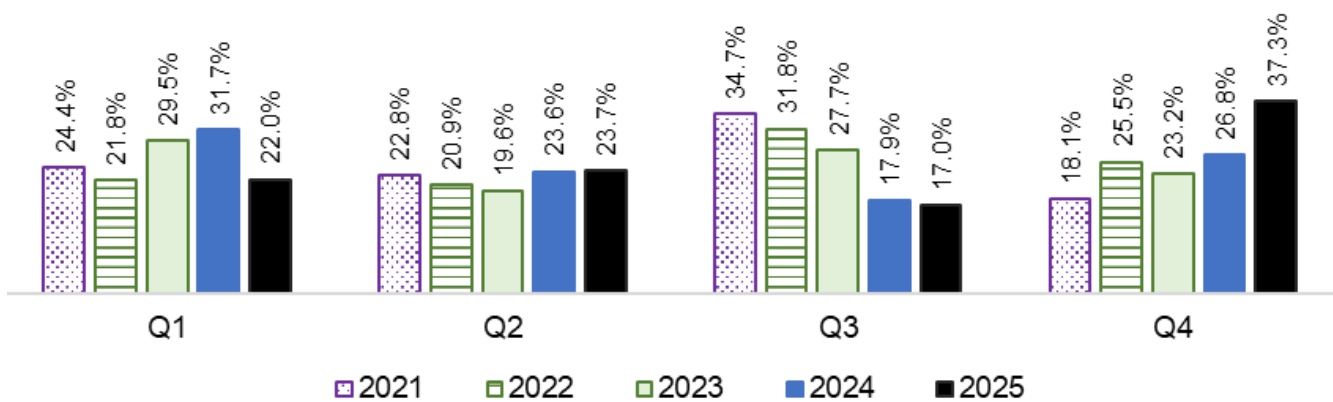
**Figure 20. 1L Composition: Multiracial or Ethnoracial Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all multiracial or ethnoracial 1L students.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

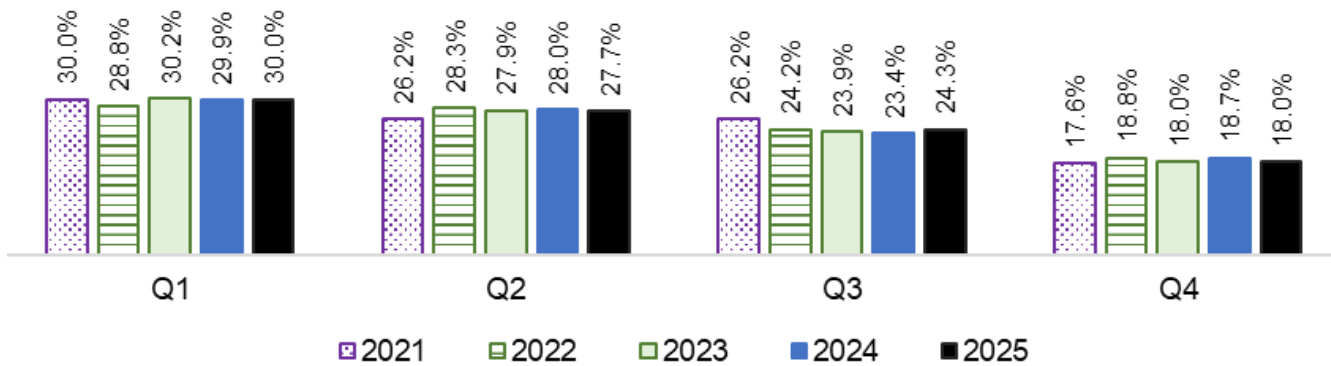
**Figure 21. 1L Composition: Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 1L students.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

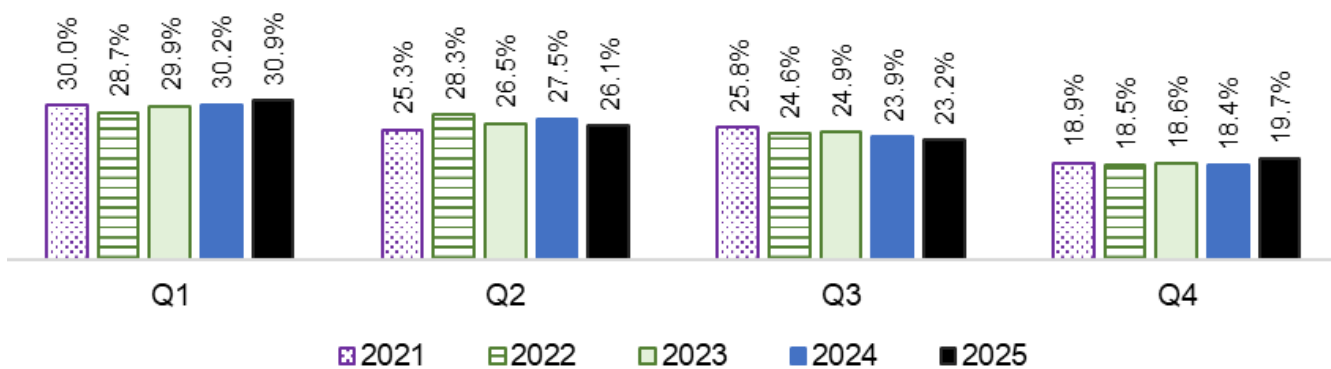
**Figure 22. 1L Composition: White Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all white 1L students.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

**Figure 23. 1L Composition: Did Not Indicate Race Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



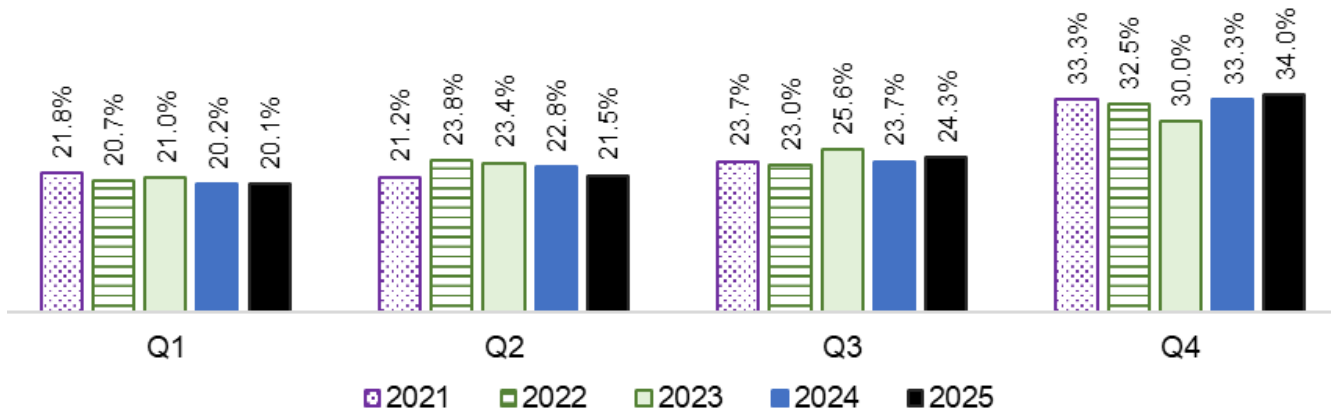
Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all 1L students who did not indicate race/ethnicity.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

## Pell Grant Recipient Enrollment

Students who report ever receiving a Pell Grant are least represented in highly selective law schools (top 25%; Q1). While 28.9% of the 2025 1L class enrolled at a highly selective law school (Figure 12), only 20% of Pell Grant recipients did (Figure 24). Over the past five years, at rates holding steady around 33-35%, Pell Grant non-recipients enrolled at highly selective law schools at higher rates than Pell Grant recipients. On the other hand, more than a third of Pell Grant recipients in 2025 enrolled in a law school in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4), at a rate that was double that of their peers who did not receive a Pell Grant (Figure 25).

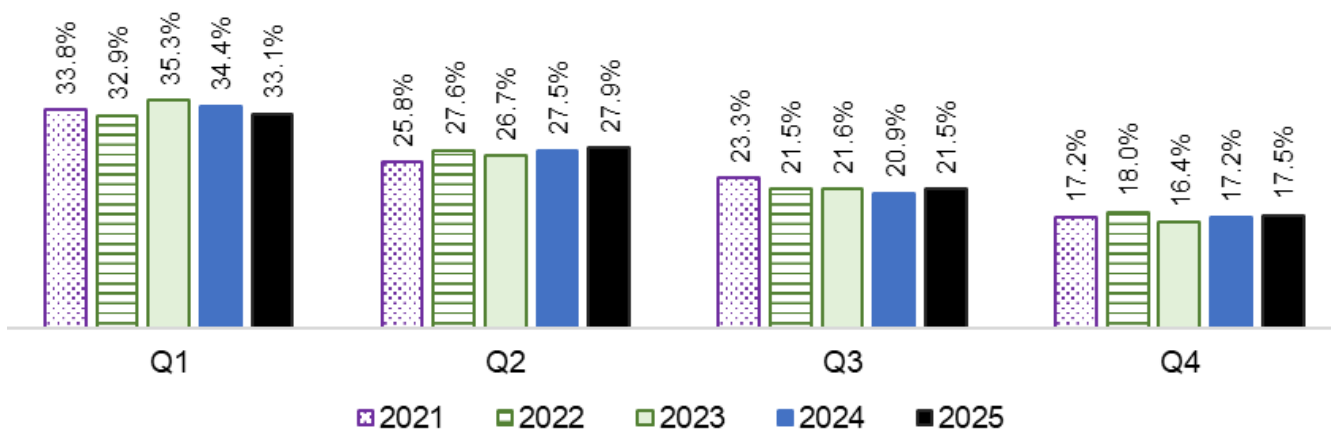
**Figure 24. 1L Composition: Pell Grant Recipient Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes 1L students who reported ever receiving a Pell Grant.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

**Figure 25. 1L Composition: Pell Grant Non-Recipient Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



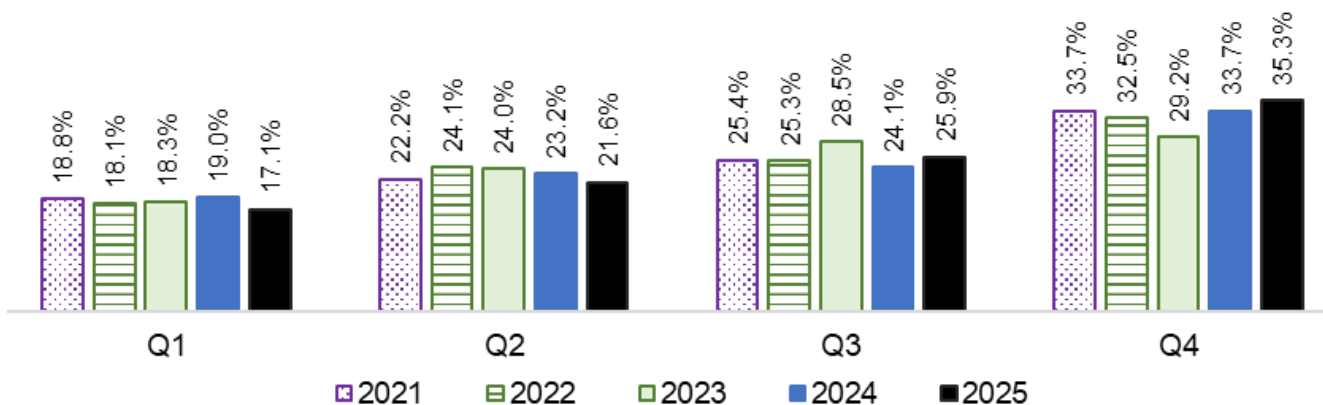
Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes 1L students who reported never receiving a Pell Grant.

Note: Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

## First-Generation College Graduate Enrollment

Students who report being the first in their family to graduate from college are least represented at highly selective law schools (top 25%; Q1). While 28.9% of the entire 2025 1L class entered a highly selective law school (Figure 12), only 17.1% of first-generation college graduate 1Ls did (Figure 26). Consistently, first-generation college graduates are most likely to enroll in a school in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4), with a persistent gap between first-generation students and their continuing-generation peers. Over the past five years, about a third of continuing-generation college graduates enrolled in a highly selective law school, while less than 20% of first-generation college graduates did. For example, in 2025, 17% of first-generation college graduate 1Ls enrolled in a highly selective law school (Q1; Figure 26), compared with 32% of continuing-generation college graduate 1Ls. Moreover, in 2025, more than a third (35.3%) of first-generation college graduates entered a school in the fourth selectivity quartile (Q4; Figure 26), while only 19% of continuing-generation college graduates did.

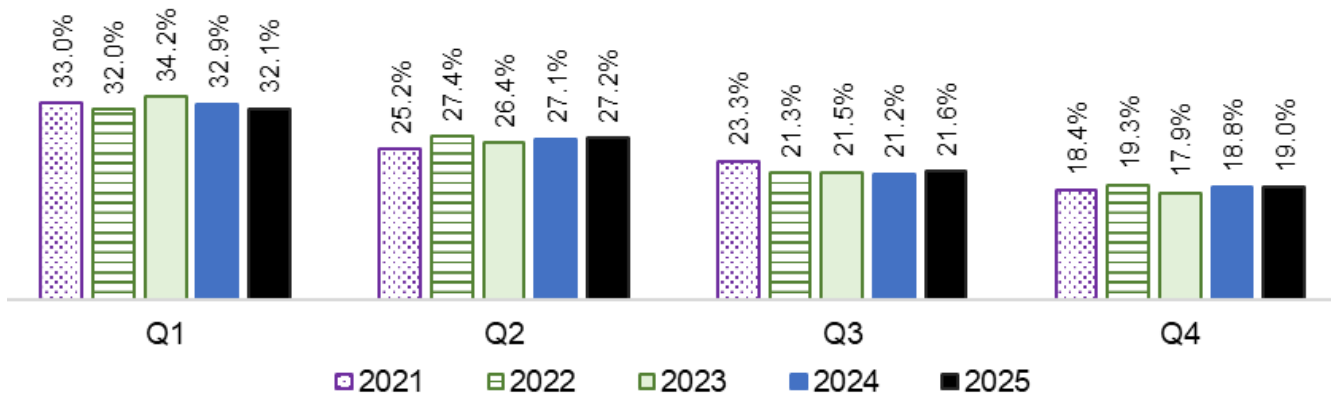
**Figure 26. 1L Composition: First-Generation College Graduate Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



*Source:* LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes 1L students who reported being a first-generation college graduate.

*Note:* Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

**Figure 27. 1L Composition: Continuing-Generation College Graduate Enrollment by Law School Selectivity Quartile, 2021–2025**



*Source:* LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes 1L students who reported being a continuing-generation college graduate.

*Note:* Each school is assigned a selectivity index score used to create quartiles of law school selectivity. Selectivity is based on the admission rate, median LSAT score of admitted students, and median UGPA of admitted students of a given year. The top 25% of law schools by selectivity, considered “highly selective,” are in the first quartile (Q1). Each quartile holds about 49 or 50 law schools.

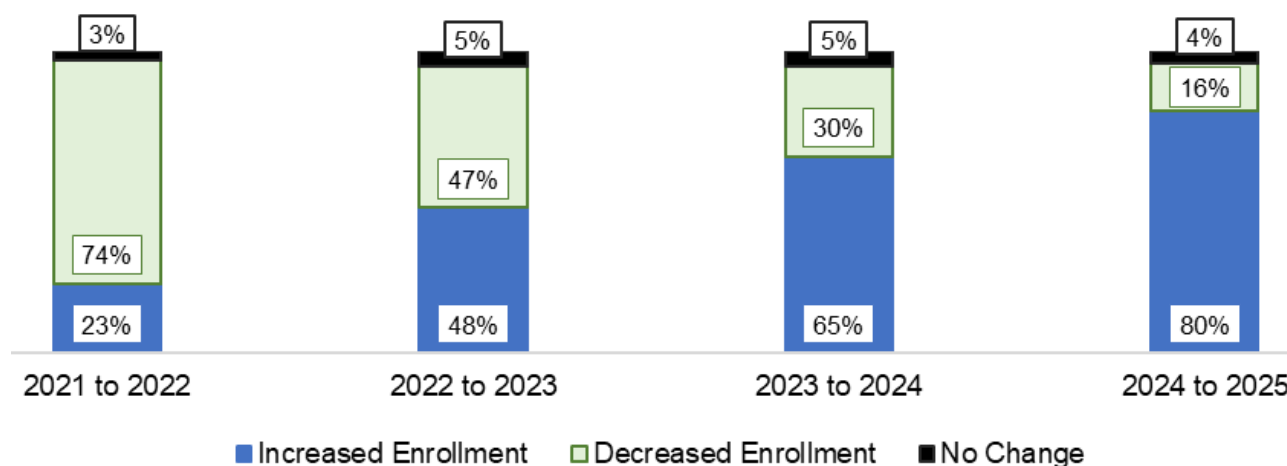
While these enrollment trends by law school selectivity are nuanced, the enrollment rates of the past five years point to persistent underlying structural mechanisms of differing opportunity and resource access; these differences influence where aspiring lawyers across various communities and socioeconomic backgrounds enroll. Where people enroll has implications for who has access to positions across the legal profession, including clerkships, big law, and other coveted jobs; who will be making future major legal decisions, and who makes up the profession itself.

# **2021-2025 Law School Class Size Trends**

The 2024-25 admission cycle saw a record-breaking number of applicants, which in turn resulted in a record-breaking first-year enrollment — a class that is 8% larger than the 2024 1L class (Figure 2). However, while most law schools brought in slightly larger classes, the increase did not keep pace with an 18% increase in applicant demand. This disparity may be a result of how individual law schools built their class sizes in the context of budget cuts, limited physical space, changes in available financing options, and a cautious monitoring of the legal employment market. In other words, there can be several reasons, known and unknown, for this trend.

In 2025, 80% of law schools increased the size of their entering 1L class compared with 2024 (Figure 28). After the large increase in the first-year class in 2021, 74% of law schools decreased their class sizes in 2022; since then, more schools have been increasing their first-year class size each year, while fewer than 10 schools each year have made no change to class size.

**Figure 28. Law Schools: Changes to Class Size, 2021–2025**



Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all law schools.

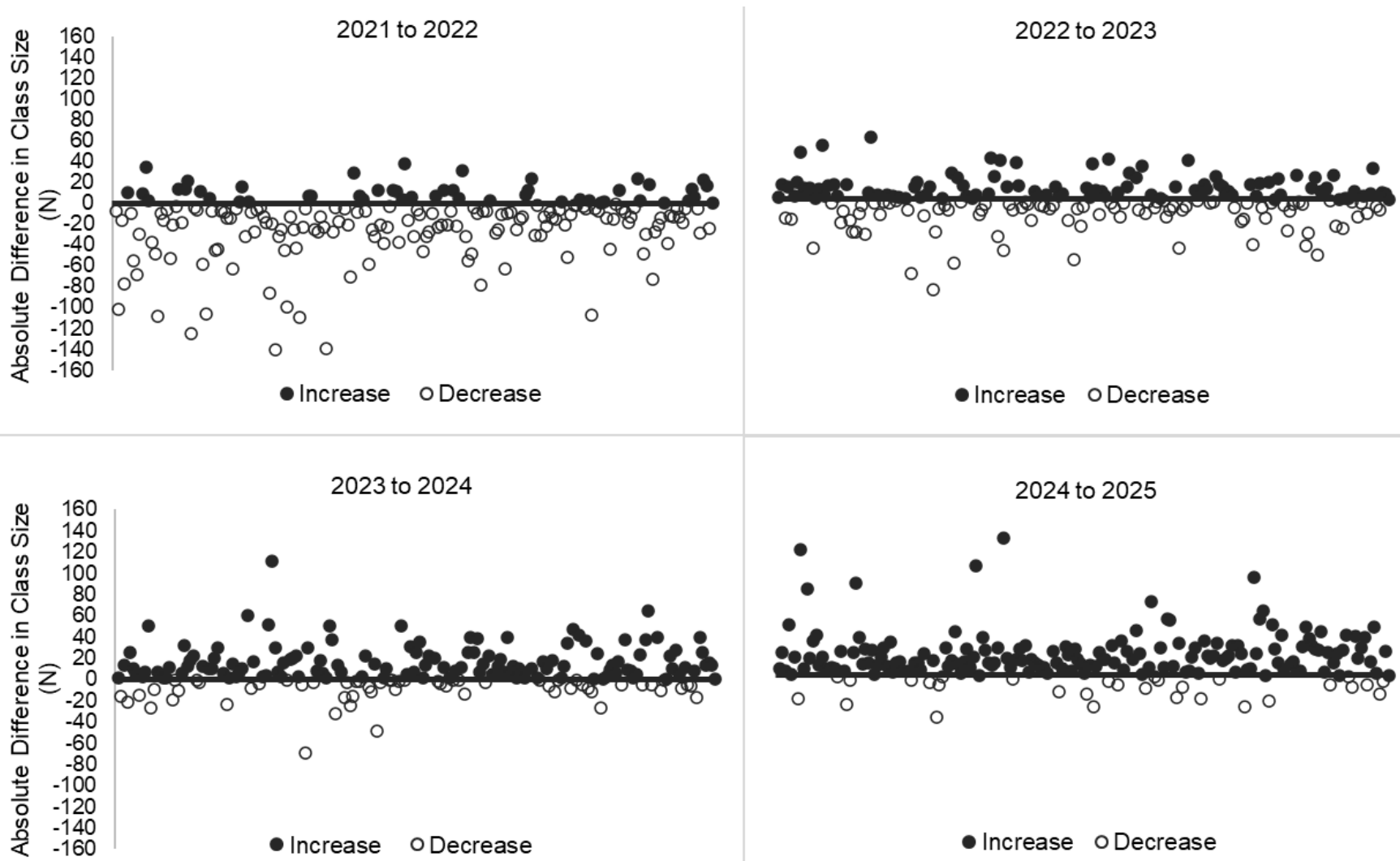
Note: A law school is considered to have increased student enrollment if the law school’s cohort size increased between the two academic years, and a law school is considered to have decreased student enrollment if the law school’s class size decreased between the two academic years.

One way to understand how schools increased class sizes can be done by examining the absolute difference in class size for each law school (Figure 29). In other words, we can count how many more or fewer students were in each first-year class over time.

The majority of schools had smaller class sizes in 2022 compared with 2021, with some schools having more than 100 fewer students in the 2022 1L class compared with the 2021 1L class (Figure 29). While most of the increased enrollment for 2025 was fewer than 40 students per law school, the spread is greater than prior years. Some law schools increased enrollment by more than 80 students; on average for all schools that increased enrollment in 2025, the increase was 23 students.

Law schools that decreased class size in 2025 tended to drop enrollment by 20 students or fewer — far fewer than the decreases seen in years prior. But examining these numeric shifts does not necessarily reveal the entire story. Law school classes vary from school to school; some schools have first-year classes of more than 1,000 students, while others have classes of fewer than 200. Therefore, percent change comparison can reveal the magnitude of enrollment shifts over time to better understand the impact of law school first-year enrollment trends (Figure 30).

**Figure 29. Law Schools: Absolute Difference in Class Size by Law School, 2021–2025**

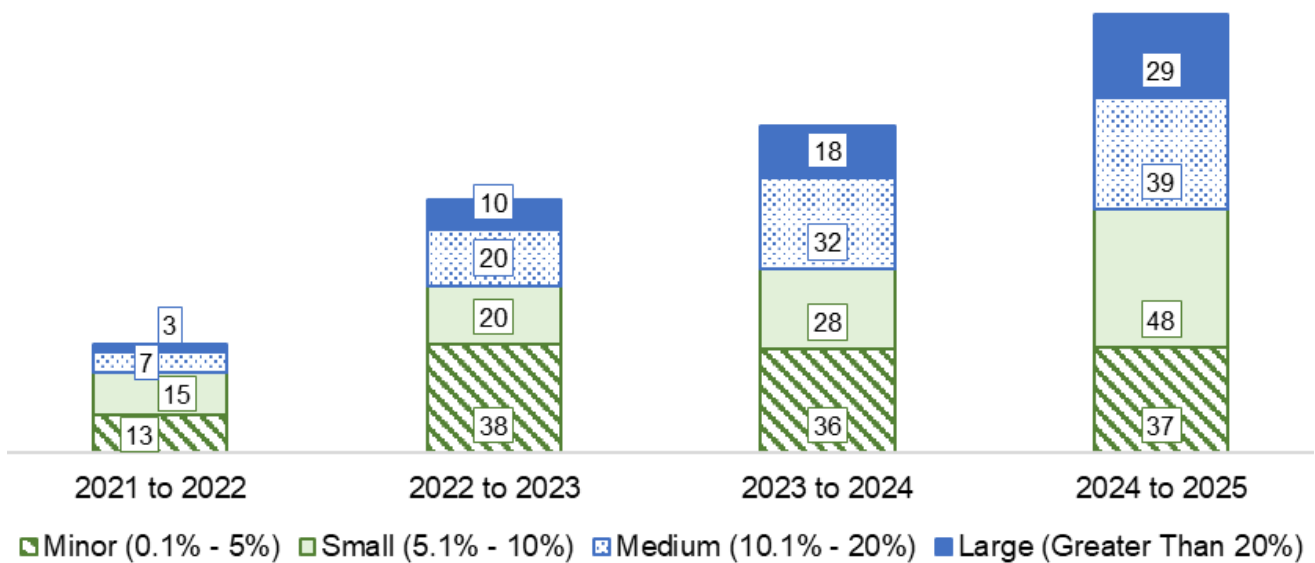


Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all law schools.

Notes: Absolute difference in cohort size is the numeric difference between years. For example, if Law School ABC’s cohort was 250 students in 2021 and increased to 260 in 2022, the absolute difference for 2021–2022 would be 10 students, which are plotted on the graph with a black dot to indicate an increase. Schools with a decrease in cohort size across years are plotted on the graph with a white dot. Schools with no change in cohort size are not plotted.

In the past five years, most law schools with increased enrollment in any given year are driven by minor or small enrollment shifts of 10% or less, with only three law schools in 2022 seeing a large (more than 20%) increase in their class size compared with 2021 (Figure 30). In 2025, 29 law schools saw a large (more than 20%) increase in their class size, while 37 law schools saw their class size increase by 5% or less compared with 2024. Overall, of the 153 law schools that increased their class size in 2025 compared with 2024, the majority (85 schools) had class sizes grow by 10% or less. Thus, while class sizes are increasing, these changes have not translated to substantively different class sizes for most schools. This may be changing given the trends seen in 2025, in which more law schools than in recent years increased enrollment by larger magnitudes. However, there are number of factors beyond applicant volume that schools consider when building a class.

**Figure 30. Law Schools: Number of Schools with Increased Enrolled by Percent Change in Class Size, 2021–2025**

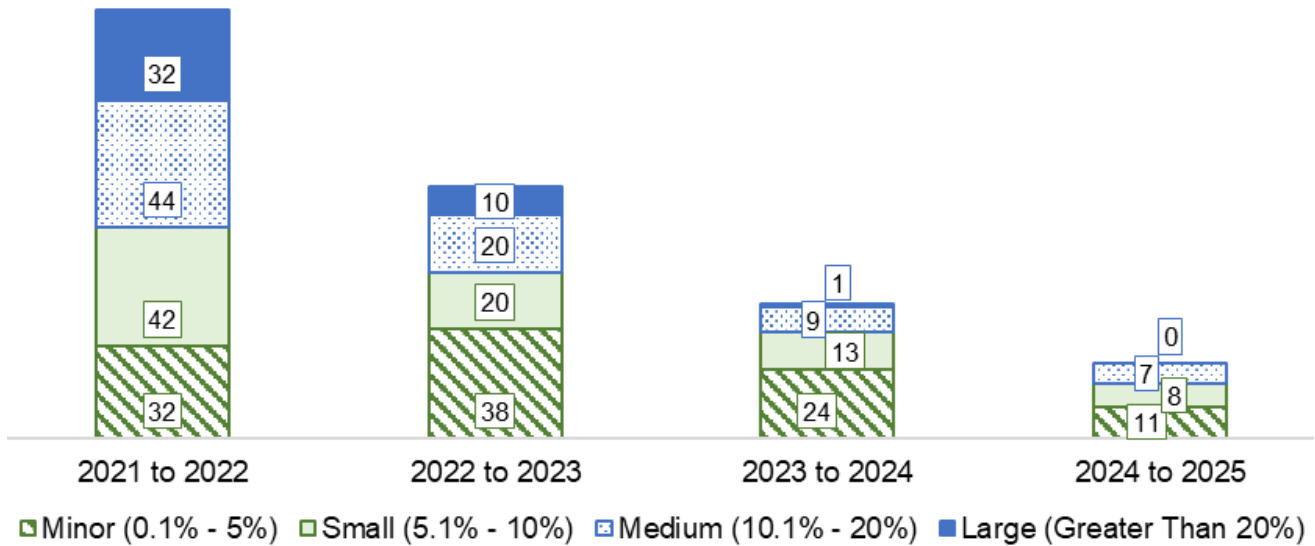


Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all law schools with increased enrollment across academic years.

Note: Percent change measures the relative increase or decrease of a value, which describes how much a new value has changed in relation to the original value. For example, if Law School ABC’s cohort was 250 students in 2021 and increased to 260 in 2022, the percent change for 2021–2022 would be 4 percent ( $[(260 - 250) / 250 = 0.04]$ ), categorized as a “Minor (0.1 – 5%)” change.

In the past five years, fewer schools have decreased their class sizes. Between 2024 and 2025, no law school decreased its cohort size by more than 20% — a contrast with 2022, which saw 25 law schools decrease their cohorts by more than 20% (Figure 31). So, while most schools are increasing their class sizes by larger counts, the schools that are retracting class size tend to do so in smaller magnitude, particularly in 2025. Of the 26 law schools that decreased their class size in 2025 compared with 2024, 11 were minor decreases of 5% or less.

**Figure 31. Law Schools: Number of Schools with Decreased Enrolled by Percent Change in Class Size, 2021–2025**



*Source:* LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025). Includes all law schools with decreased enrollment across academic years.

*Note:* Percent change measures the relative increase or decrease of a value, which describes how much a new value has changed in relation to the original value. For example, if Law School ABC’s cohort was 250 students in 2021, and increased to 260 in 2022, the percent change for 2021–2022 would be 4 percent ( $(260 - 250) / 250 = 0.04$ ).

Generally, law school classes have grown — but, as reflected in the trends, not enough to meet the increased interest in law. As a result, it is not surprising that the 2024-25 law school admission cycle was highly competitive compared with prior years, and as of the publication of this report, applicant volumes for the 2025-26 cycle remain high. The five-year enrollment trends in this report indicate the need for the legal community to examine how the current context, including the changes in federal loan caps, may affect who enrolls in law school, and where they enroll, in the coming years.

# **Conclusion: The 1L Profile and the Future of the Profession**

During a time of rapid and significant political, economic, and social changes in the U.S. — including major changes to federal Grad PLUS loans — more than 76,000 aspiring law students submitted applications to law schools in the 2024-25 admission cycle, marking the highest volume of applicants since 2011 and an 18% increase over the 2023-24 cycle. Through this highly competitive admission cycle, legal education enrolled its largest first-year class in recent years. A record application year, then, resulted in a record enrollment year — one that sees more than 42,000 first-year students enrolled in law school today.

**However, enrollment by first-generation college graduates has declined for the second year in a row.** While legal education at large experienced a reported increase in racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation diversity in recent years, the first-year class remains predominantly white, cisgender, continuing-generation college graduates, with the majority of students never receiving Pell Grants nor an LSAC Fee Waiver — both indicators of low economic means. In an equitable society in which access and opportunity are equally available across the population, higher education as a whole and legal education specifically would not replicate such disparities.

A systematic understanding of enrollment trends is important for ensuring access to the profession. However, the prelaw-through-practice journey does not end at enrollment. Who enrolls in law school today directly affects who is represented in law tomorrow. Where students go to law school, the type of support they receive, and their access to resources in their first year and beyond all affect how those students advance and enter the legal profession. This is particularly true for job placement outcomes, especially for larger law firms, clerkships, and other routes to leadership in the legal profession. Additionally, representation in law school translates to representation in the profession and is foundational to access to justice, a key component of LSAC's mission.

LSAC will continue to monitor these trends over time to support the legal community, along with students at all stages of the prelaw-through-practice journey.

# Methodology

This section summarizes the sources, inclusion criteria, variable definitions, and reporting approach, along with data quality and suppression techniques, used for the 1L Composition Report. The 2026 1L Composition Report summarizes the composition of the entering 1L class for academic years 2021 through 2025, using administrative data sources maintained by LSAC.

## Data Sources

This report used data maintained by LSAC, consisting of data for first-year law students who enrolled in 196 or 197 U.S. law schools between 2021 and 2025. Student demographic data is self-reported at the time of LSAC account creation; some data (e.g., gender identity and sexual orientation) may be updated by the user at any time, while other elements (e.g., race/ethnicity) are available to report only once.

## Reporting and Analytic Procedures

Two forms of trend comparisons are reported throughout this report to describe changes across academic years in the composition or size of the 1L cohort.

**Absolute difference** measures the absolute difference of two values; for percent values, this is also sometimes referred to as “percentage point change.” Throughout this report, the phrase “absolute difference” is used to describe this comparison.

For example, if LSAC Fee Waiver recipients went from 5.49 percent in 2021 to 11.42 percent in 2025, that represents an absolute increase of 5.93 ( $11.42 - 5.49 = 5.93$ ). Absolute difference describes the numeric difference between values, without relation to magnitude of change.

**Percent change** measures the relative increase or decrease of a value, which describes how much a new value has changed in relation to the original value. This is used in this report to demonstrate magnitude of change, which provides more context than the numeric (absolute) difference.

For example, if LSAC Fee Waiver recipients went from 5.49 percent in 2021 to 11.42 percent in 2025, that represents a 108.09 percent increase ( $[(11.42 - 5.49) / 5.49] = 108.09$ ). Percent change describes the percent difference between two values, in relation to the magnitude of change.

Results are described as either absolute difference or percent change, depending on the substantive interpretation desired. For example, if we need to know only about the numeric shift in LSAC Fee Waiver qualification, absolute difference (5.93 change) would be sufficient. However, this does not contextualize how large (magnitude) this change has been since 2021; therefore, percent change (108.09% change) is reported.

## Data Quality, Missingness, and Suppression

### Revision to Race/Ethnicity Variables

Race and ethnicity are derived using the race and ethnicity information collected by LSAC at the time of account creation. Individuals are able to self-report one or more of the following identities:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latina/é/o/x
- Indigenous Person of Canada
- Middle Eastern or North African/Arab
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

Beginning in 2026, LSAC Knowledge Reports revised how certain individuals are categorized; therefore, population estimates will differ compared with prior reporting. The following changes were made:

- Non-Indigenous individuals who select two or more races and/or ethnicities, or Indigenous individuals who select three or more races, are considered multiracial. Previously, individuals were categorized as multiracial when they endorsed two or more identities, regardless of indigeneity. Indigenous individuals are those who identify with one or more of the following communities:
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian
  - Indigenous Person of Canada
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Individuals with multiple Indigenous identities are categorized according to the population with the smallest cell size in order to prioritize their representation in reporting. For example, if an individual identifies as both American Indian or Alaska Native and Indigenous Person of Canada, they now are categorized as Indigenous Person of Canada. Previously, the top-line identity was preserved.

These changes to race and ethnicity were conducted via consultation with community members to better enable representation and visibility of Indigenous populations.

## Missing Data

Variables are considered “missing” if:

- The 1L student did not provide the information in their JD Account Profile, or
- One or more of the required inputs for the derived variable were unavailable.

Table A provides missing counts and percentages for all analysis variables used in this report. Rates are generally low (often less than 1 percent), with higher missingness for the optional SES indicators or those that utilized multiple inputs. For example, the highest missing rate is for First-Generation JD Student, which required three inputs for derivation.

## Suppression

**Small Cell Sizes:** To ensure individual privacy, exact percentage is suppressed when cell sizes are smaller than 0.01. This is marked with a double dagger (‡) in tables. The group is still present in totals throughout the report.

**Missing Data:** To ensure full data representation, when missingness exceeds 0.5% for any analysis variable, it is reported as a valid row of data in the table with the label “{Missing}”. If the variable missingness does not exceed 0.5%, the missing data is suppressed.

**Non-Substantive Values:** “Did Not Indicate,” “Prefer Not to Disclose,” and “Don’t Know” are reported as valid rows of data in the tables, with the appropriate labels applied when they reflect the true response by the 1L student. This is to ensure full data representation and not artificially alter distributions. (For example, if the response of “Prefer Not to Disclose” were excluded from results, then it would shift the averages for all substantive categories, as the denominator would decrease.)

**Table A. Missingness Count and Percent for 1L Composition Report Analysis Variables**

Missing Count and Percent	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025		Total	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
<b>Total Observations</b>	<b>41,820</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>38,013</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>37,750</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>39,558</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>42,723</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>199,864</b>	<b>100</b>
Race/Ethnicity: Summary	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
Race/Ethnicity: Detail	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
Age at Start of Academic Year	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Gender Identity: Summary	66	0.2	104	0.3	98	0.3	41	0.1	9	0.0	318	0.2
Gender Identity: Detail	66	0.2	104	0.3	98	0.3	41	0.1	9	0.0	318	0.2
Sexual Orientation	883	2.1	519	1.4	488	1.3	134	0.3	43	0.1	2,067	1.0
LGBTQ+	871	2.1	515	1.4	470	1.2	128	0.3	43	0.1	2,027	1.0
Highest Level of Education Attainment of Any Parent/Guardian	775	1.9	451	1.2	422	1.1	130	0.3	38	0.1	1,816	0.9
First-Generation College Graduate Status	775	1.9	451	1.2	422	1.1	130	0.3	38	0.1	1,816	0.9
First-Generation JD Student Status	1,341	3.2	923	2.4	944	2.5	892	2.3	955	2.2	5,055	2.5
Pell Grant Recipient Status	793	1.9	469	1.2	447	1.2	400	1.0	371	0.9	2,480	1.2
LSAC Fee Waiver Recipient Status	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Law School: Control	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Law School: Selectivity Quartile	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Law School: Enrollment Intensity	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Law School: Program Start Term	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Law School: Region	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Source: LSAC 1L Class Data (2021–2025).

Note: An analysis variable is considered missing when the data are unavailable from any source, particularly when the 1L candidate did not provide the information in their LSAC JD Account profile, or when the variable is derived from multiple inputs and one or more are missing.

## Limitations

Some demographic attributes remain voluntary and are subject to social desirability bias or stigma; these may differ systematically by subpopulation. For example, the rate of not disclosing one's racial or ethnic identity has increased in recent years (from 5.82% in 2021 to 7.56% in 2025); predictive modeling indicates that racial and ethnic groups do not disclose at similar rates. Therefore, all estimates by race and ethnicity should be interpreted with this in mind, as some racial groups may have actual estimates that are higher or lower than what is reported. However, the estimates produced in this report are reflective of the known, *observable* information for any given 1L cohort. For example, of all 2025 1L students for which racial and ethnic identity is known, 1.26% are American Indian or Alaska Native.

Selectivity quartiles depend on annual admissions metrics and may shift slightly from year to year.

Enrollment shifts across law schools reflect both supply (school capacity) and demand (student choice) but are only reported descriptively. No causation is assumed or modeled.

## Reproducibility

All analyses were conducted using standardized LSAC data pipelines.

Derived variables, suppression rules, and selectivity assignments follow documented procedures and are applied consistently across years.