

AccessLex INSTITUTE®

Legal Education **Data Deck**

Key trends on access, affordability, and value

Foreword

The 2026 Legal Education Data Deck utilizes publicly available datasets to offer a snapshot of national trends relevant to the three guiding principles of AccessLex Institute's research agenda: access, affordability, and value in legal education. This is a living document that is updated periodically. AccessLex welcomes comments, criticisms, and suggestions to ensure its utility and value for all those we serve.

The data presented herein exists thanks to the work of the Law School Admission Council, the National Conference of Bar Examiners, the National Association for Law Placement, the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Labor. We thank these and other organizations for making such data available.

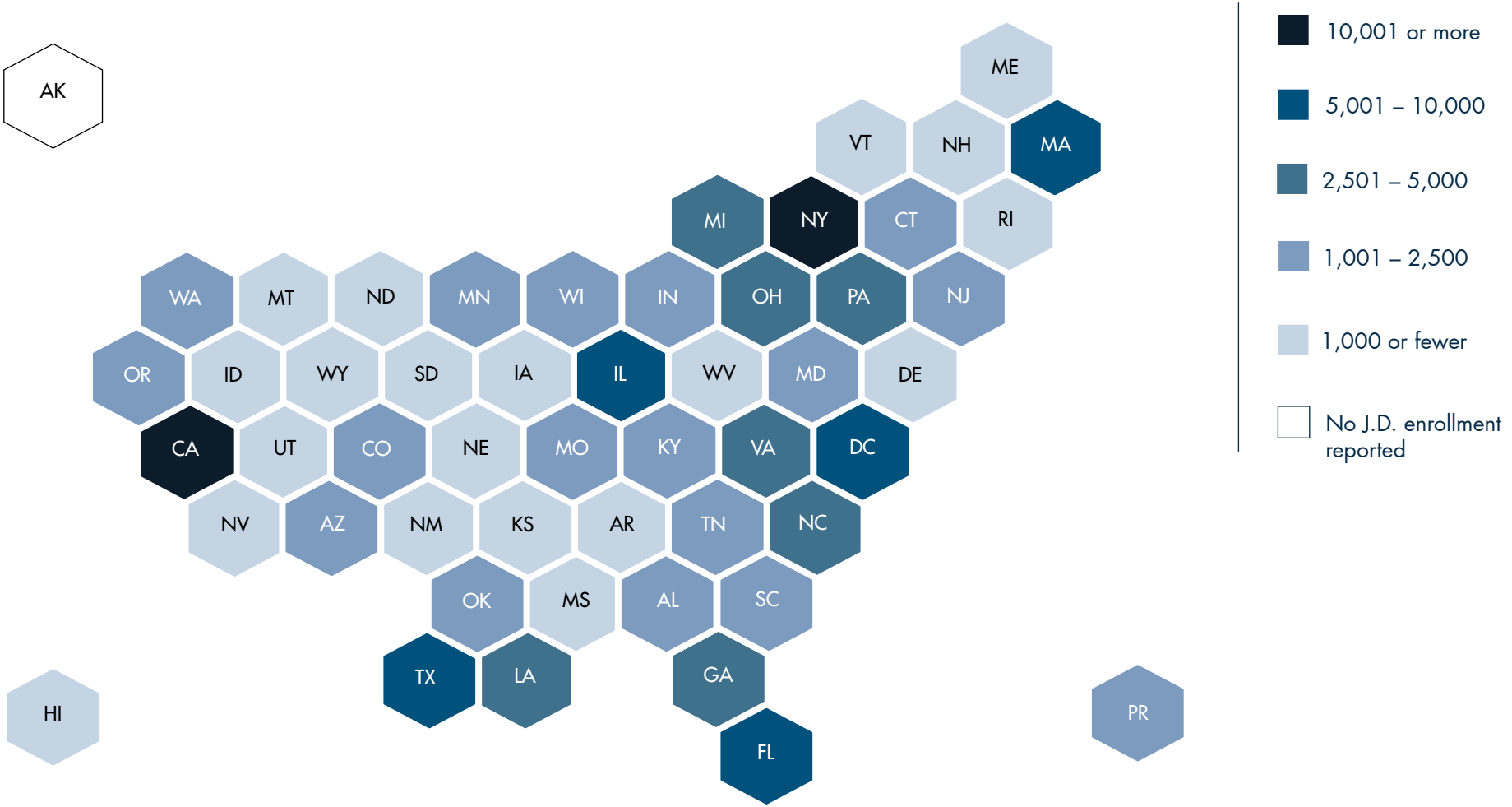
AccessLex Institute uses these data as the basis for the presentation, analysis, and commentary contained herein and takes sole responsibility for the quality and accuracy of such presentation, analysis, and commentary.

About AccessLex Institute®

AccessLex Institute, in partnership with its nearly 200 nonprofit and state-affiliated ABA-approved member law schools, has been committed to improving access to legal education and to maximizing the affordability and value of a law degree since 1983. The AccessLex Center for Legal Education Excellence® advocates for policies that make legal education work better for students and society alike and conducts research on the most critical issues facing legal education today. The AccessLex Center for Education and Financial Capability® offers on-campus and online financial education programming and resources to help students confidently manage their finances on their way to achieving personal and professional success. AccessLex Institute is a nonprofit organization headquartered in West Chester, PA.

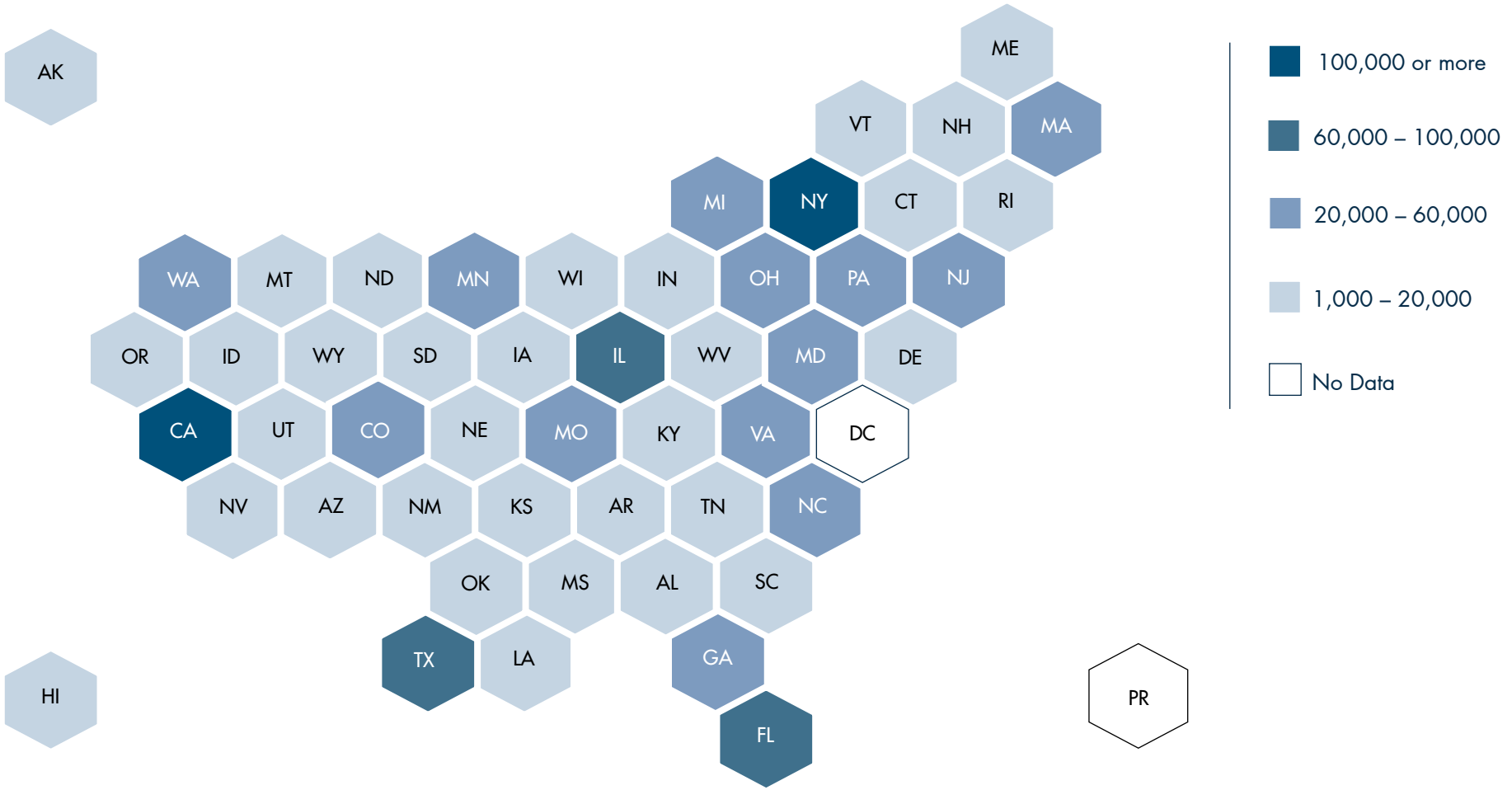
Law Students in the United States

Fall 2025 J.D. Enrollment, by State.



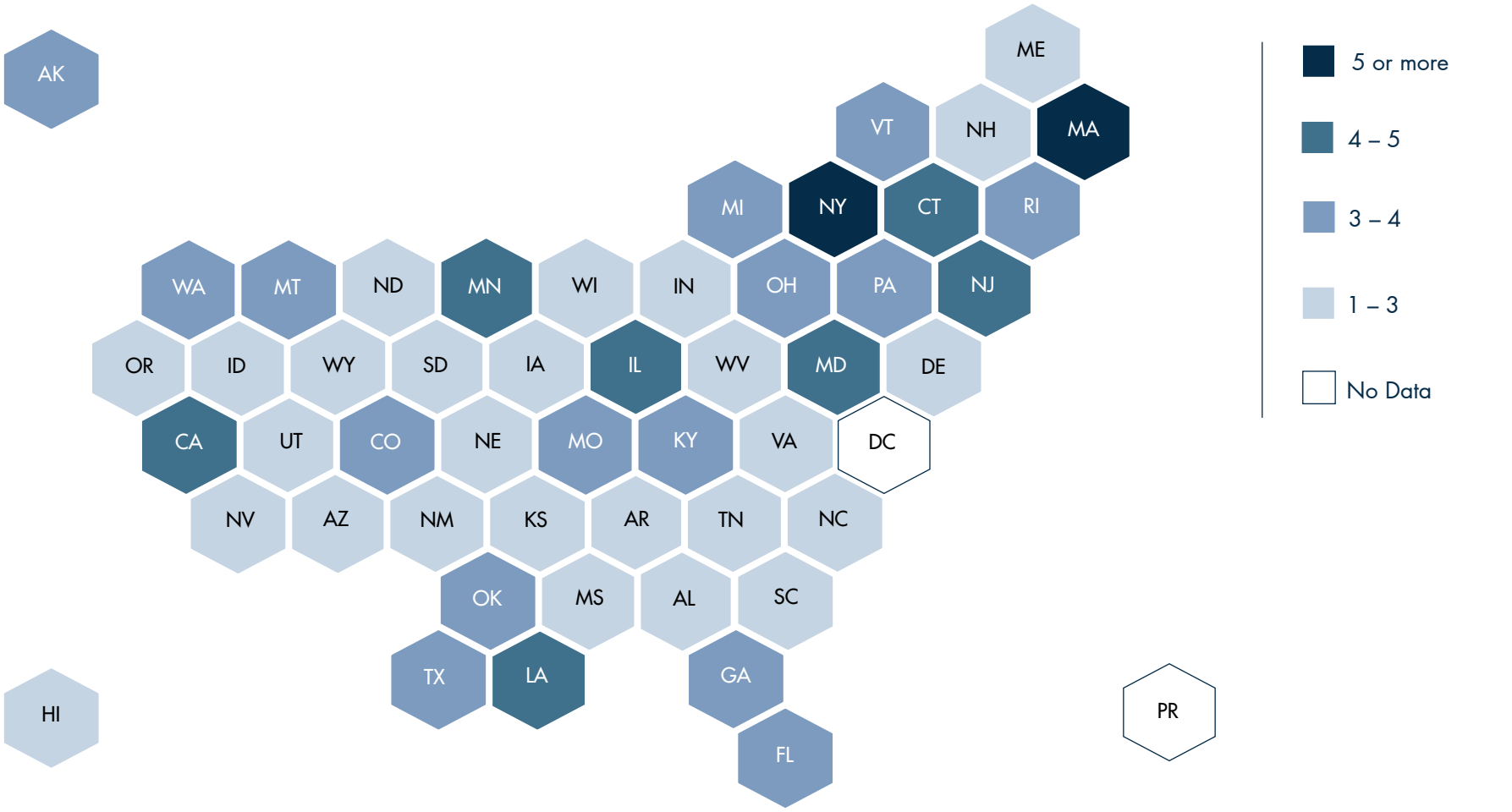
Note: *This map includes the 196 ABA-approved AccessLex Institute member schools reporting enrollment as of 2025.*
Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025a. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 29, 2025.*

Total Lawyers by Jurisdiction, 2025



Note: *The ABA did not provide data for the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, or other U.S. territories.*
Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 17, 2025.*

Lawyers Per Capita by Jurisdiction, 2025



Note: *The ABA did not provide data for the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, or other U.S. territories.*
Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 17, 2025.*

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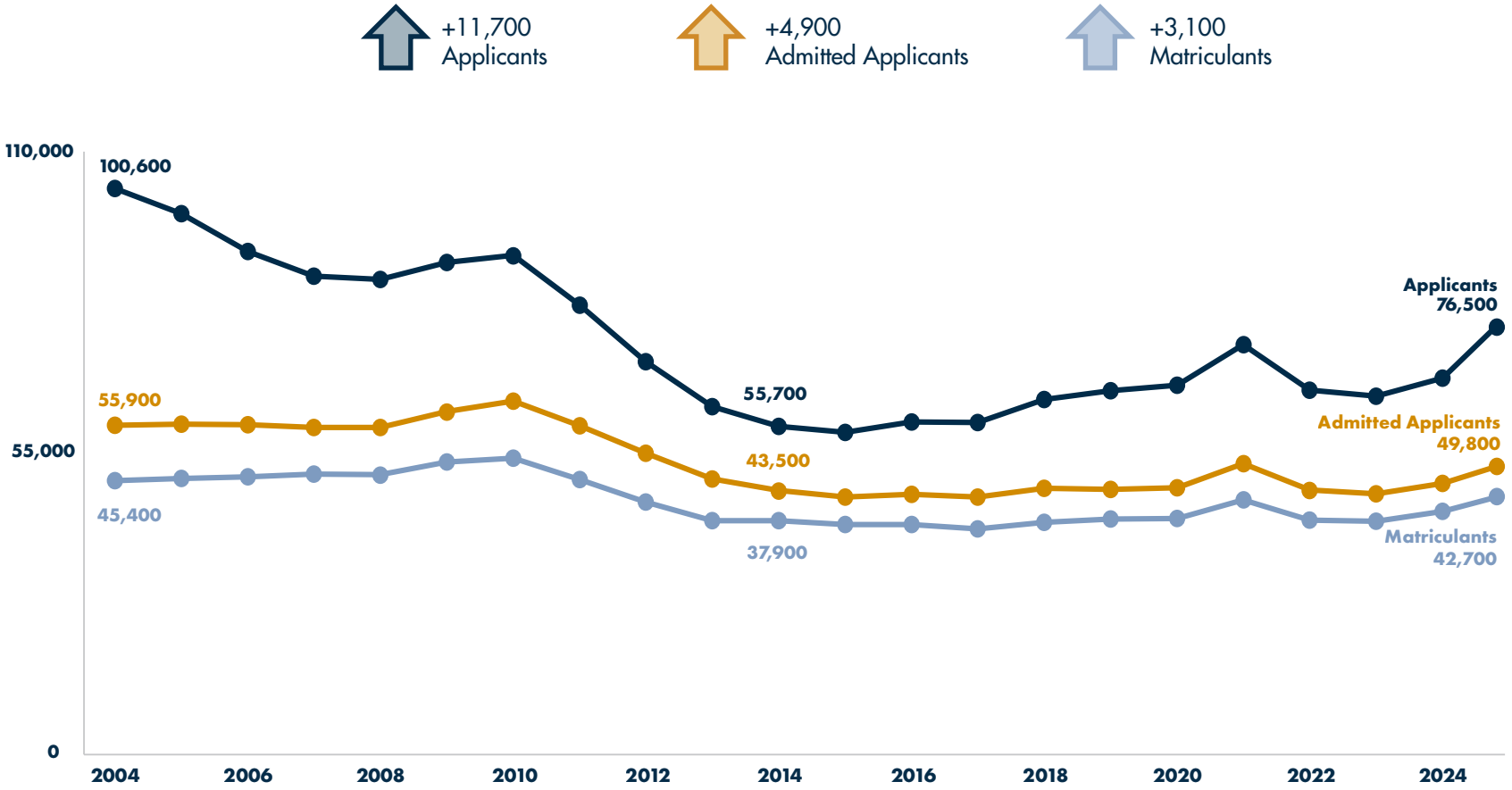
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Access

Law School Applicants, Admits, and Matriculants, 2004-2025

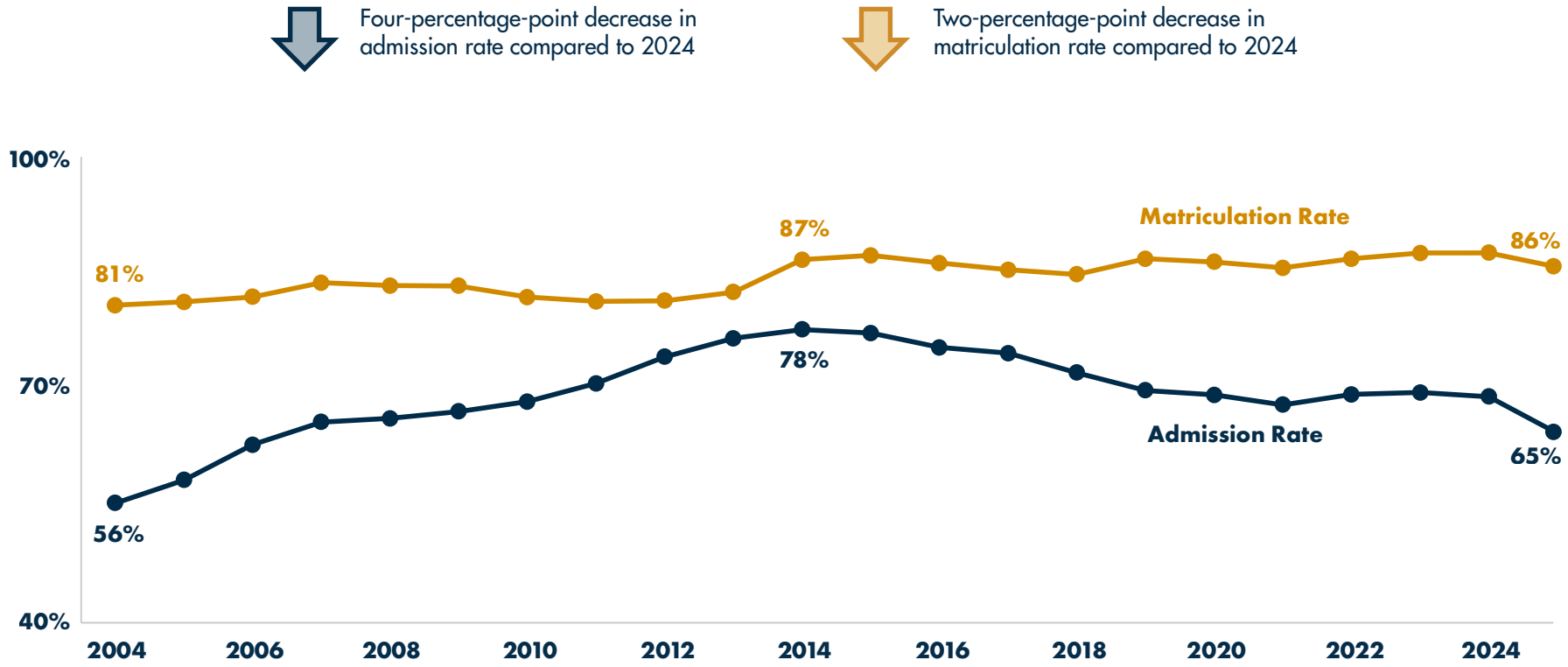
At 76,500, the number of law school applicants in 2025 increased by 11,700 (18%) compared to 2024, the single greatest year-over-year increase since 2004. The counts of admitted applicants and matriculants increased by considerably smaller margins (11% and 8%, respectively), suggesting that 2025 may have been an especially competitive application cycle.



Note: *Data from 2004-2015 only includes applicants seeking admission for the Fall term; from 2016 on, data reflects applicants seeking admission for all terms in the academic year indicated.*
Data Source: *Law School Admission Council, 2025. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on February 23, 2026.*

Law School Admission and Matriculation Rates, 2004-2025

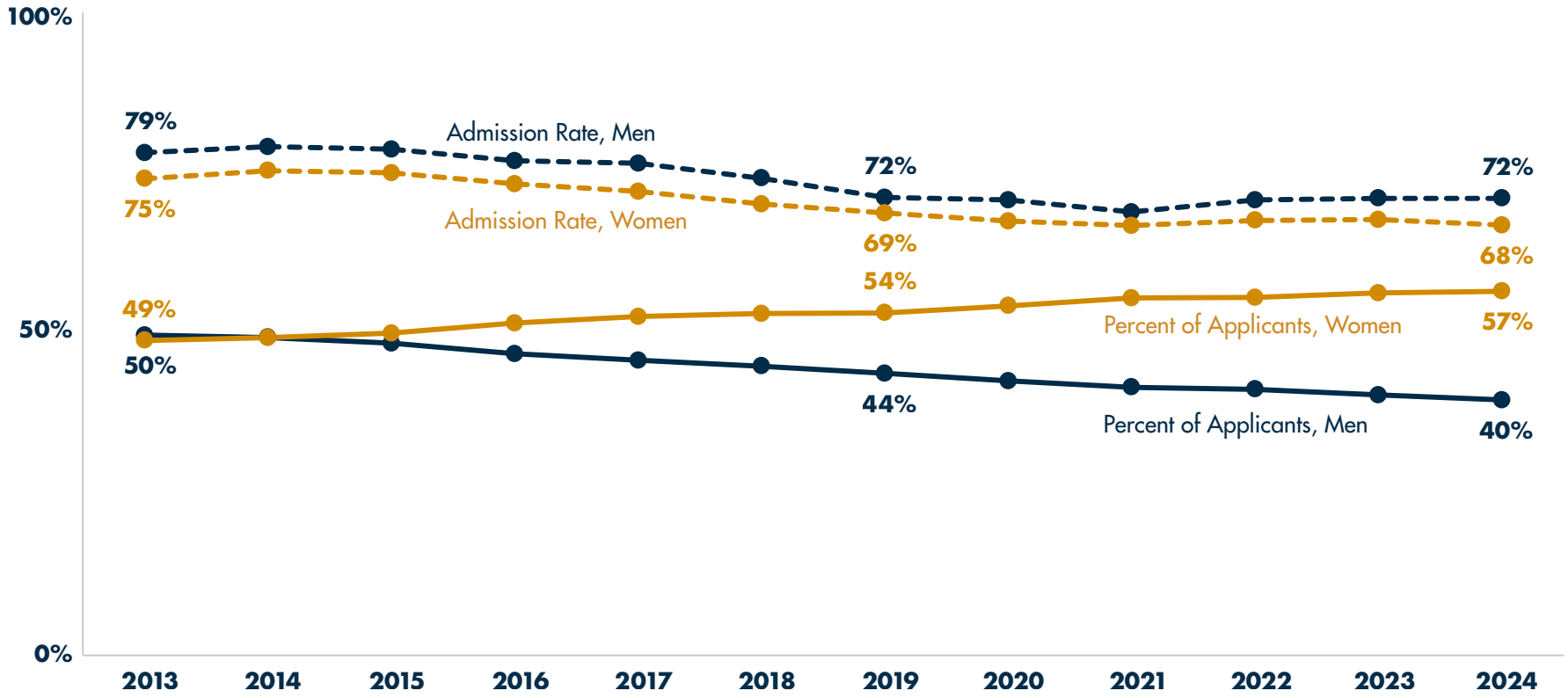
In 2025, the law school admission rate fell by four percentage points, reaching 65% — the lowest rate observed in any application cycle since 2006. The rate had previously hovered around 69% for a period of approximately five years.



Note: *Data from 2004-2015 only includes applicants seeking admission for the Fall term; from 2016 on, data reflects applicants seeking admission for all terms in the academic year indicated.*
Data Source: *Law School Admission Council, 2025. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on February 23, 2026.*

Percent of Applicants and Admission Rate by Gender, 2013-2024

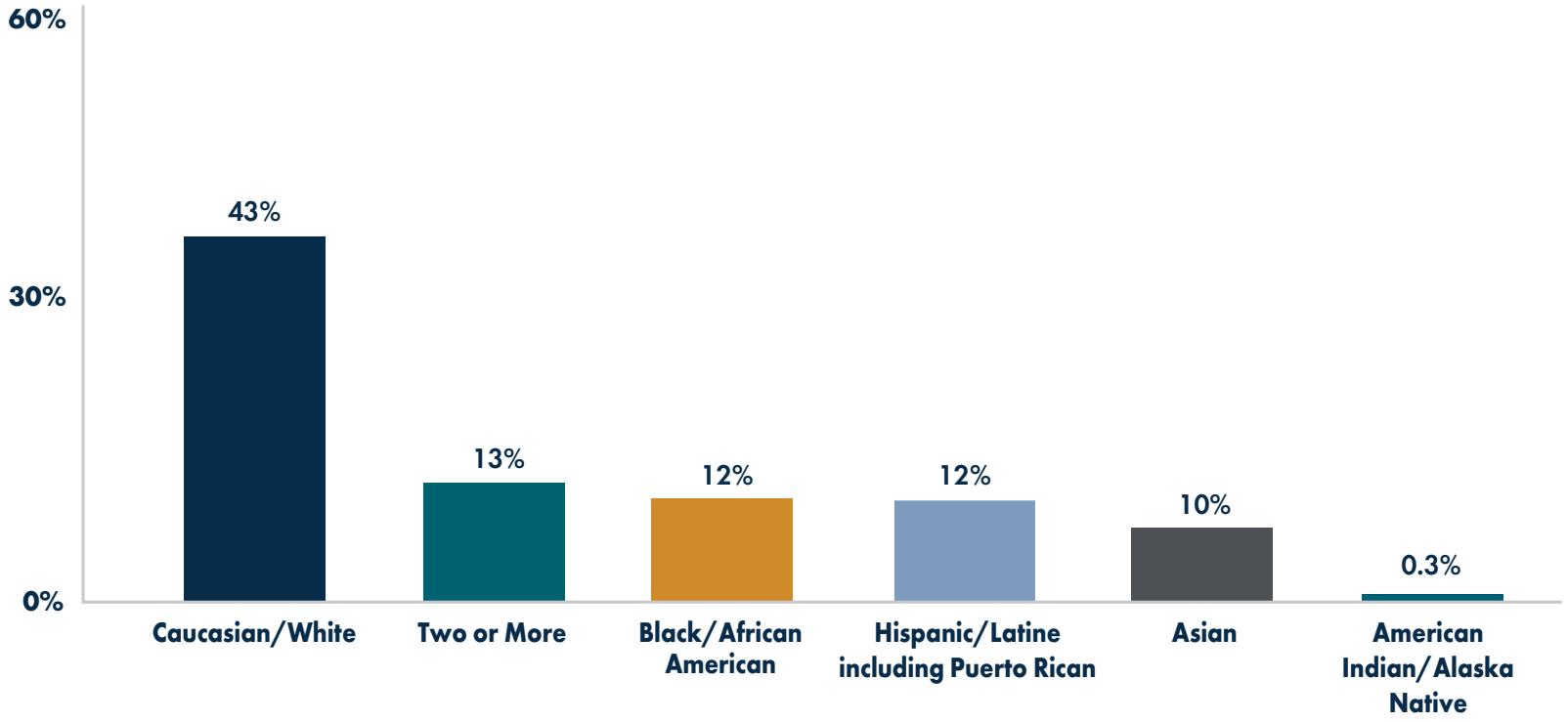
Women have comprised a growing majority of law school applicants for the past ten years. However, during the same period, the admission rate among men has remained higher than that for women. As a result, in 2024, women comprised 56% of admitted applicants compared to 57% of applicants.



Note: *Publicly available data on law school applicants and admitted applicants do not report the percentage of applicants who prefer not to disclose their gender or who self-identify as transgender, gender nonbinary, or genderqueer/gender fluid. As a result, data for these applicants cannot be displayed and percentages of applicants by gender do not sum to 100%.*
Data Source: *Law School Admission Council, 2024. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 20, 2024.*

Racial and Ethnic Diversity of Law School Applicants, 2025

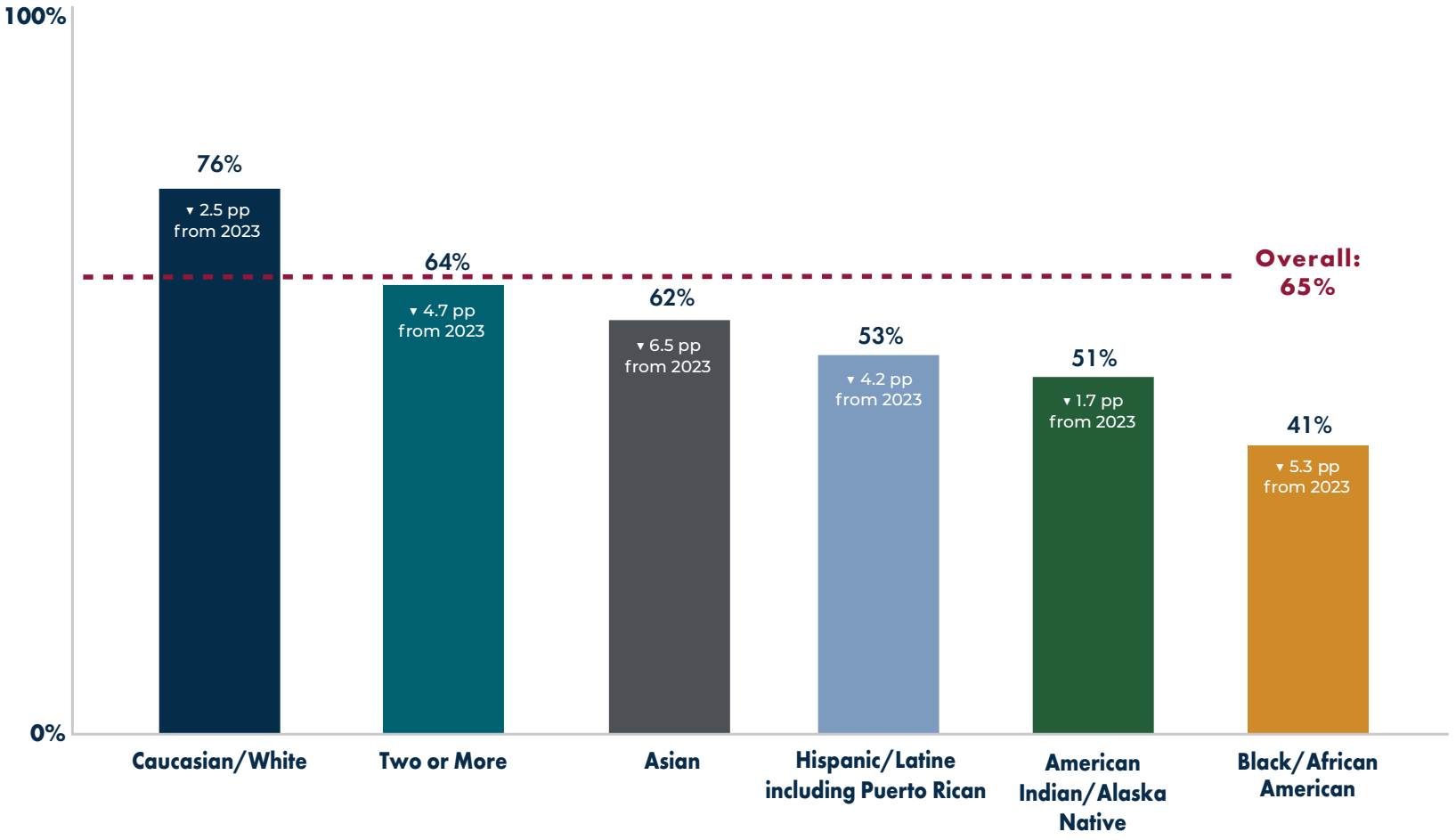
The racial and ethnic composition of law school applicants has remained relatively steady in recent years. In 2025, White applicants comprised roughly four-tenths of the applicant pool, while Black, Asian, and Hispanic/Latine applicants collectively comprised one-third.



Note: *Percentages do not sum to 100% because students whose race is not indicated are omitted from figure.*
Data Source: *Law School Admission Council, 2025. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 25, 2026.*

Admission Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Overall, 2025

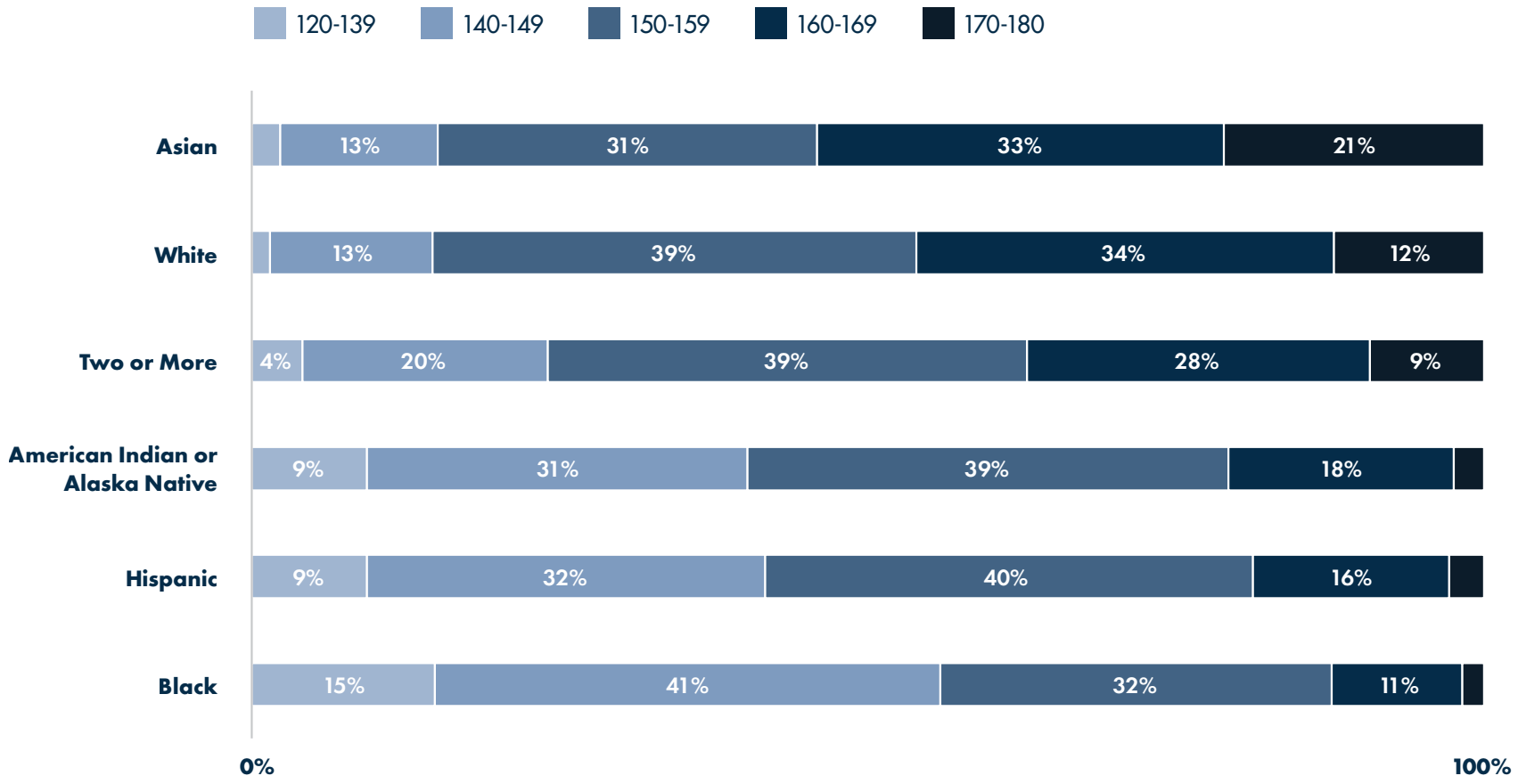
Admissions rates differ markedly by applicants' race and ethnicity. Seventy-six percent of White applicants received at least one law school admission offer compared to 41% of Black applicants. Admission rates for Asian and Black/African American applicants have decreased by the largest percentage-point (pp) margin since 2023, the year of the *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* decision.



Data Source: *Law School Admission Council, 2025. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 25, 2026.*

LSAT Score Distribution by Race/Ethnicity, 2025

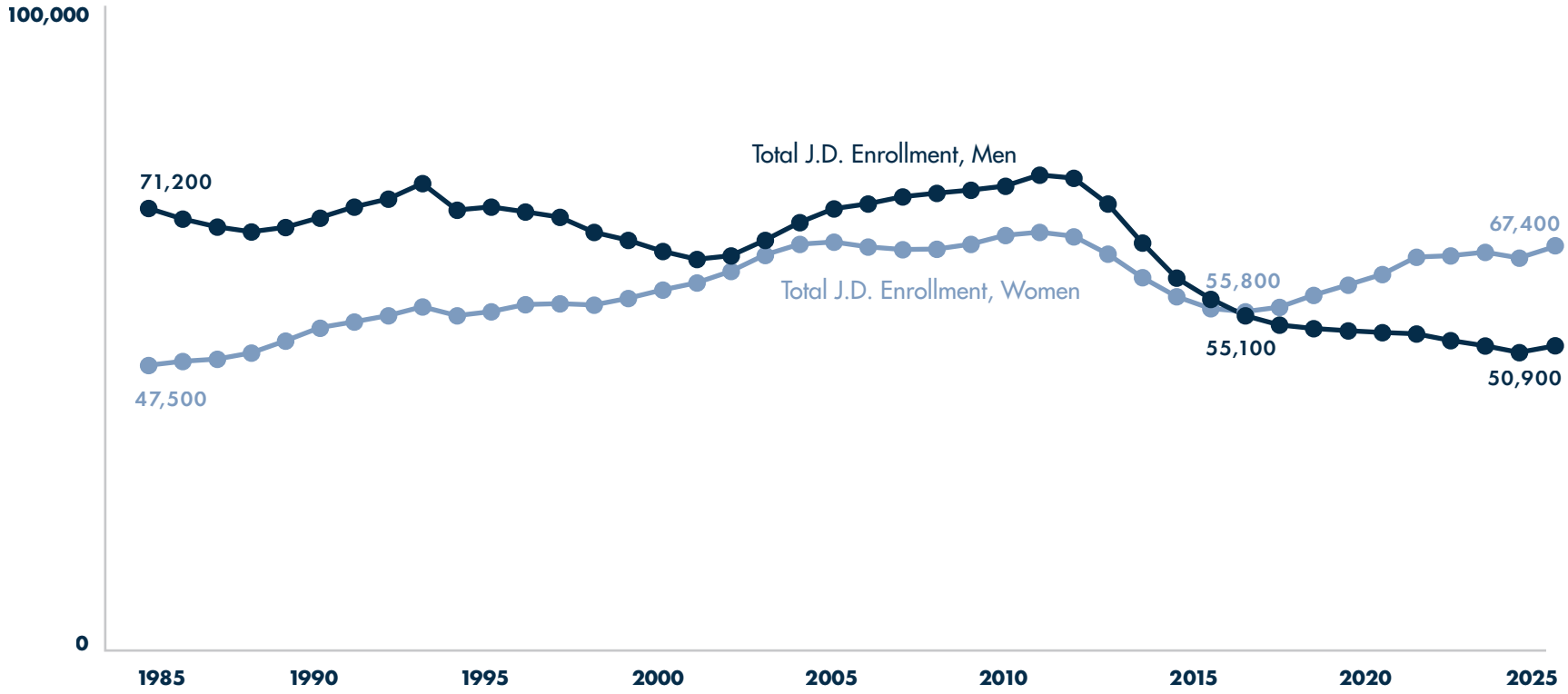
While more than 40% of White and Asian applicants attain LSAT scores of 160 or higher, less than 20% of Black and Hispanic applicants do the same. Overreliance on LSAT score in admissions may exacerbate the underrepresentation of these students in law school.



Data Source: *Law School Admission Council, 2025. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 25, 2026.*

Total J.D. Enrollment by Gender, 1985-2025

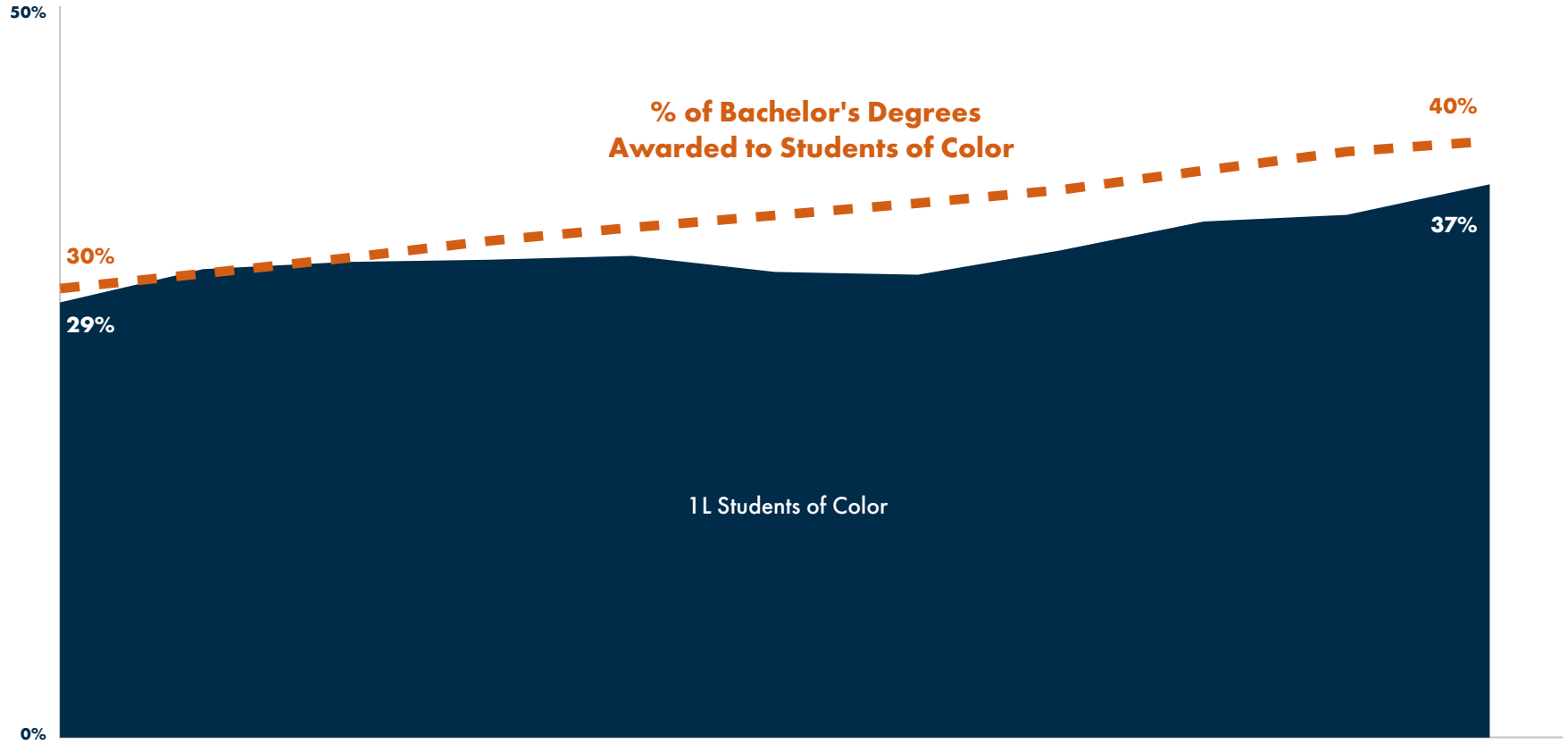
2025 saw the first increase in the number of J.D.-enrolled men since 2010 and the largest increase in the number of J.D.-enrolled women since 2021. Despite the increase in enrolled men, women continue to outnumber men, with women comprising 56% of J.D. enrollees.



Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025a. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 29, 2025.*

Percentage of First-Year Enrolled J.D. Students of Color Relative to Percentage of Bachelor's Degrees Awarded to Students of Color in Prior Year, 2014-2024

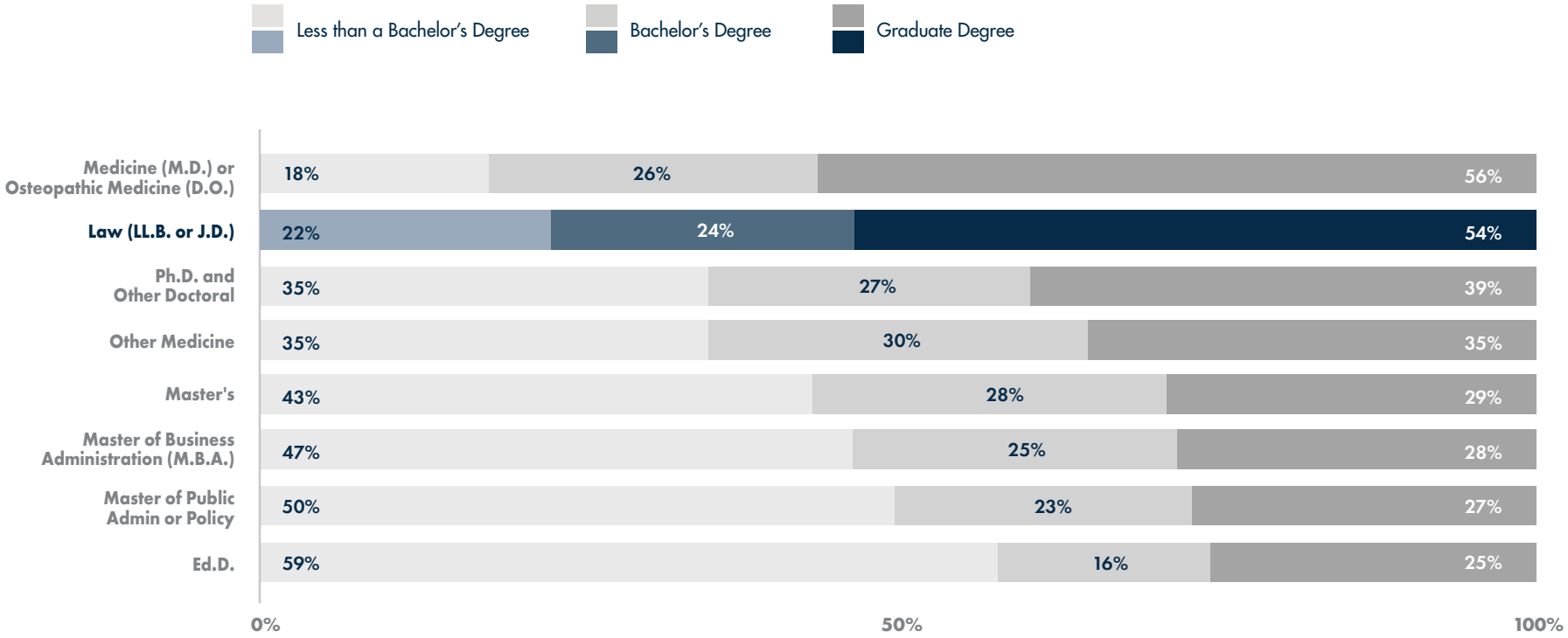
The increase in the proportion of students of color among first-year law school students mirrors the change in the proportion among bachelor's degree recipients over the period shown.



Note: *"Students of color" includes students who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latine, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or Multiracial. As of 2026, the ABA re-classified "Two or More Races" as "Multiracial."*
Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2024. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 14, 2025.*

Highest Level of Parent Education Among Graduate Students by Program Type, 2019-2020

Among law students in 2019-2020, 22% had a parent whose highest educational attainment was less than a bachelor's degree. Relative to other graduate programs, only medical school students were less likely to have a parent who had not attained a bachelor's degree.

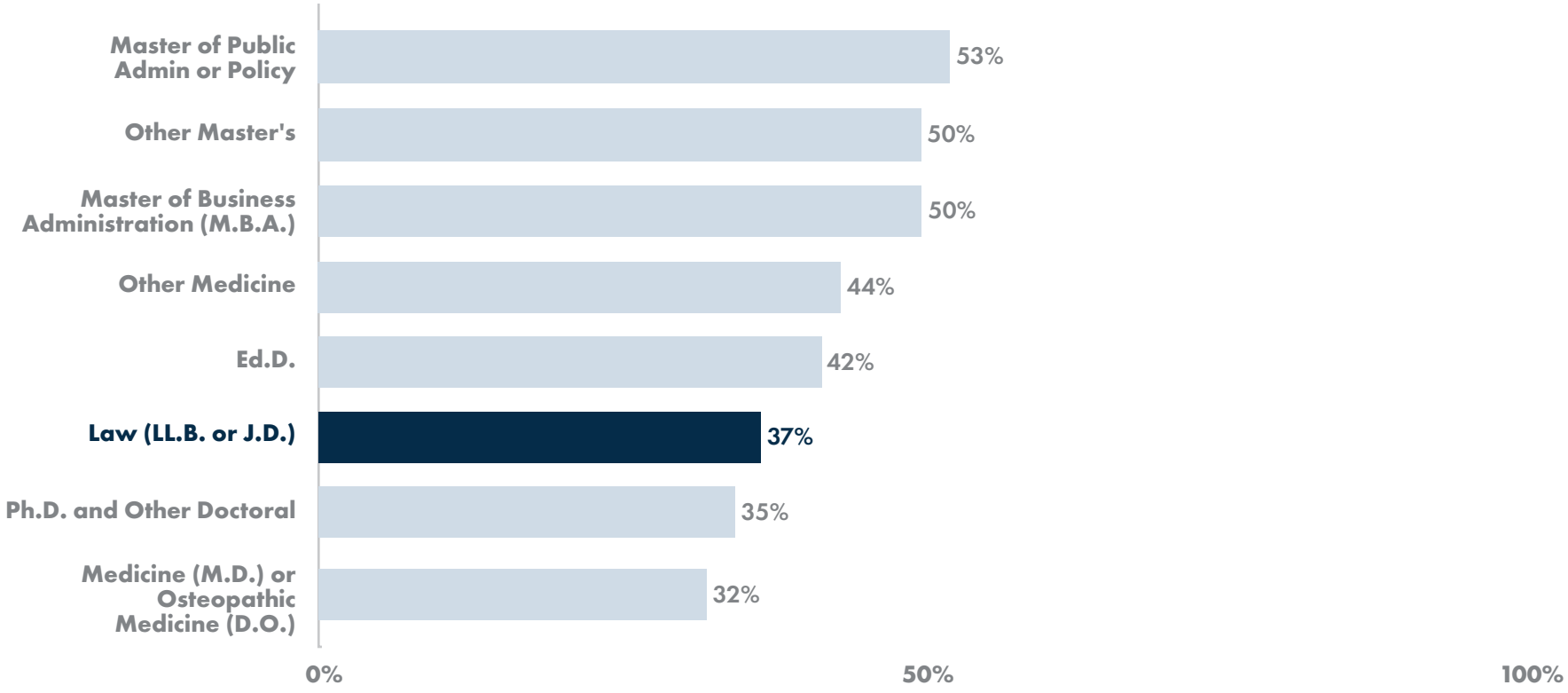


Note: *Data presented reflects only U.S. citizens and permanent residents. International students are excluded from analysis due to differences in financial eligibility. "Other Master's" includes any master's credential other than an M.B.A. or an M.P.P./M.P.A. "Ph.D. and Other Doctoral" includes all nonmedical doctorates other than a Doctor of Education. "Other Medicine" includes medical doctoral degrees other than an M.D. or a D.O., in disciplines like dentistry (D.D.S.), pharmacy (Pharm.D.), and veterinary medicine (D.V.M.).*

Data Source: *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019-20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20). Data presentation, analysis, and commentary provided by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on January 28, 2025.*

Percentage of Students Enrolled in Graduate and Professional Programs Who Received Pell Grants as Undergrads, 2019-2020

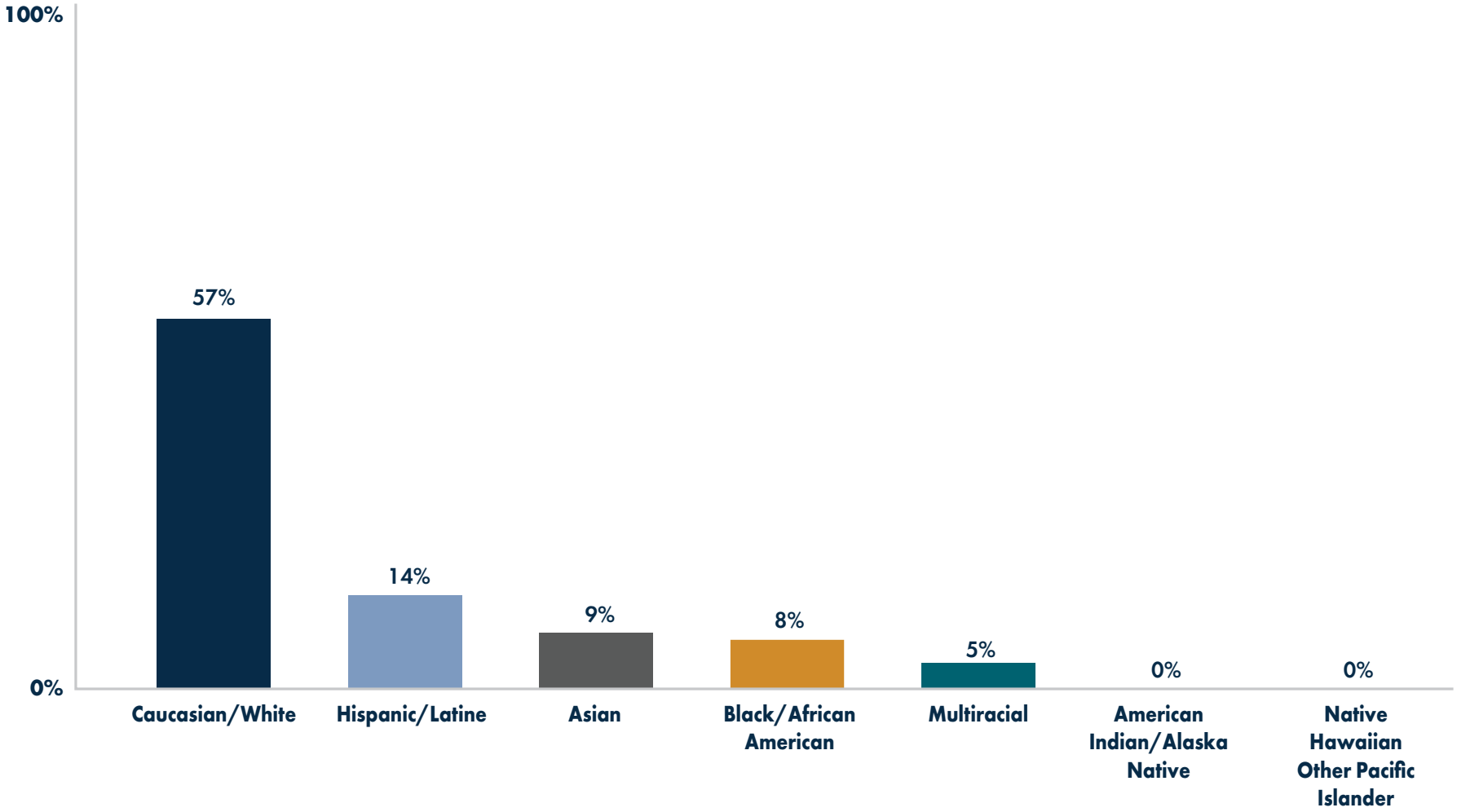
The proportion of students enrolled in graduate and professional programs who received Pell Grants as undergraduate students varies by discipline. Among law students in 2019-2020, 37% received a Pell Grant during their undergraduate studies. Relative to other graduate programs, this proportion was only higher than M.D., D.O., and non-Ed.D. doctoral students.



Note: *"Other Master's" includes any master's credential other than an M.B.A. or an M.P.P./M.P.A. "Ph.D. and Other Doctoral" includes all nonmedical doctorates other than a Doctor of Education. "Other Medicine" includes medical doctoral degrees other than an M.D. or a D.O., in disciplines like dentistry (D.D.S.), pharmacy (Pharm.D.), and veterinary medicine (D.V.M.).*
Data Source: *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019-20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20). Data presentation, analysis, and commentary provided by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on January 28, 2025.*

1L Enrollment Share by Race and Ethnicity, 2025

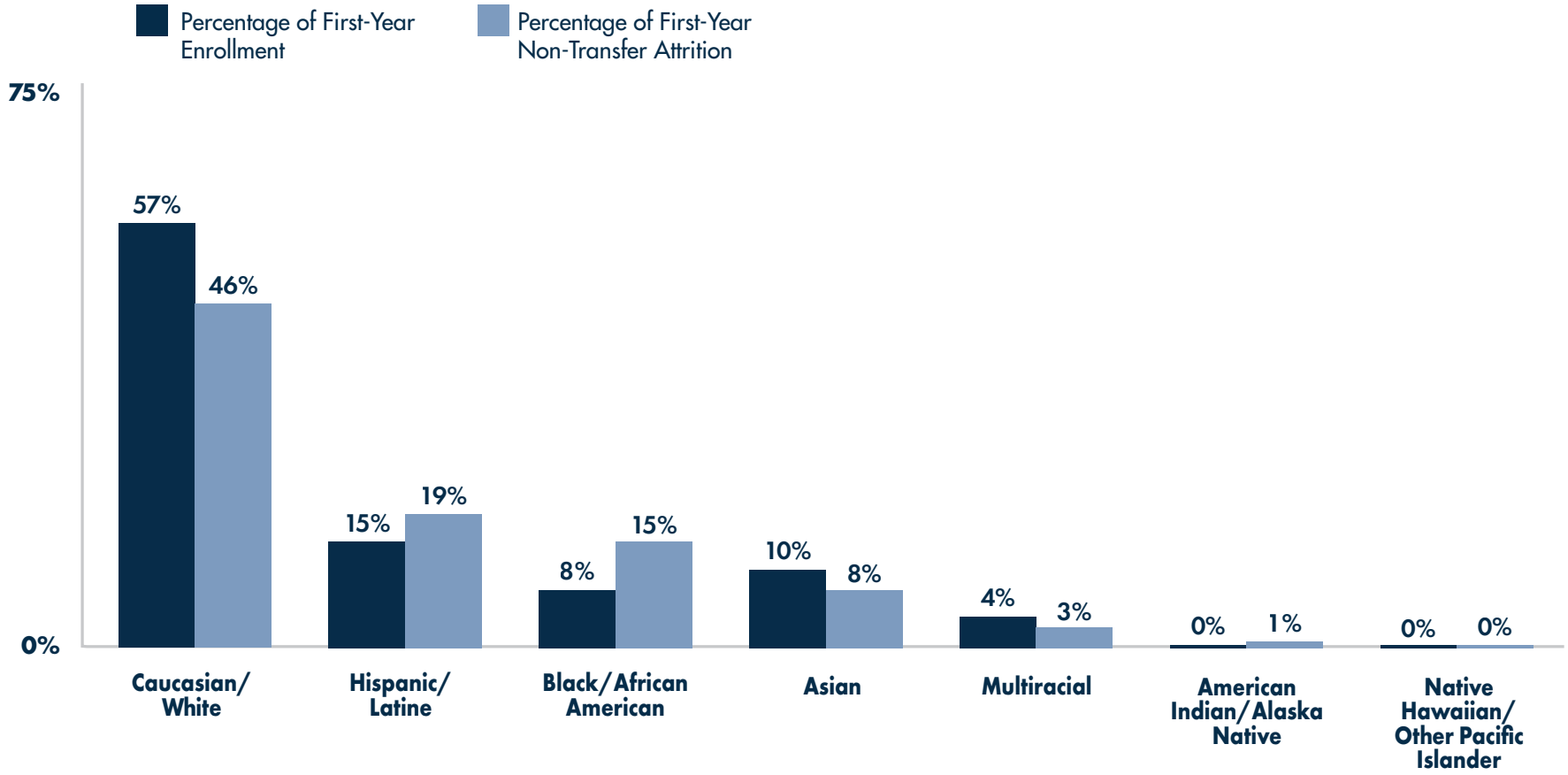
In 2025, White students comprised about 57% of first-year law students. Meanwhile, Hispanic, Asian, and Black students collectively comprised about one-third of first-year students.



Note: *As of 2026, the ABA re-classified "Two or More Races" as "Multiracial." Percentages do not sum to 100% because students whose race is unknown are omitted from figure.*
Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025a. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 29, 2025.*

Percent of First-Year Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity Compared to First-Year Non-Transfer Attrition by Race/Ethnicity, 2024-2025

In the entering class of 2024-2025, students of color comprised 37% of first-year enrollees and 46% of non-transfer withdrawals after the 1L year. In contrast, White students comprised 57% of first-year enrollees but the same percentage of non-transfer withdrawals (46%).

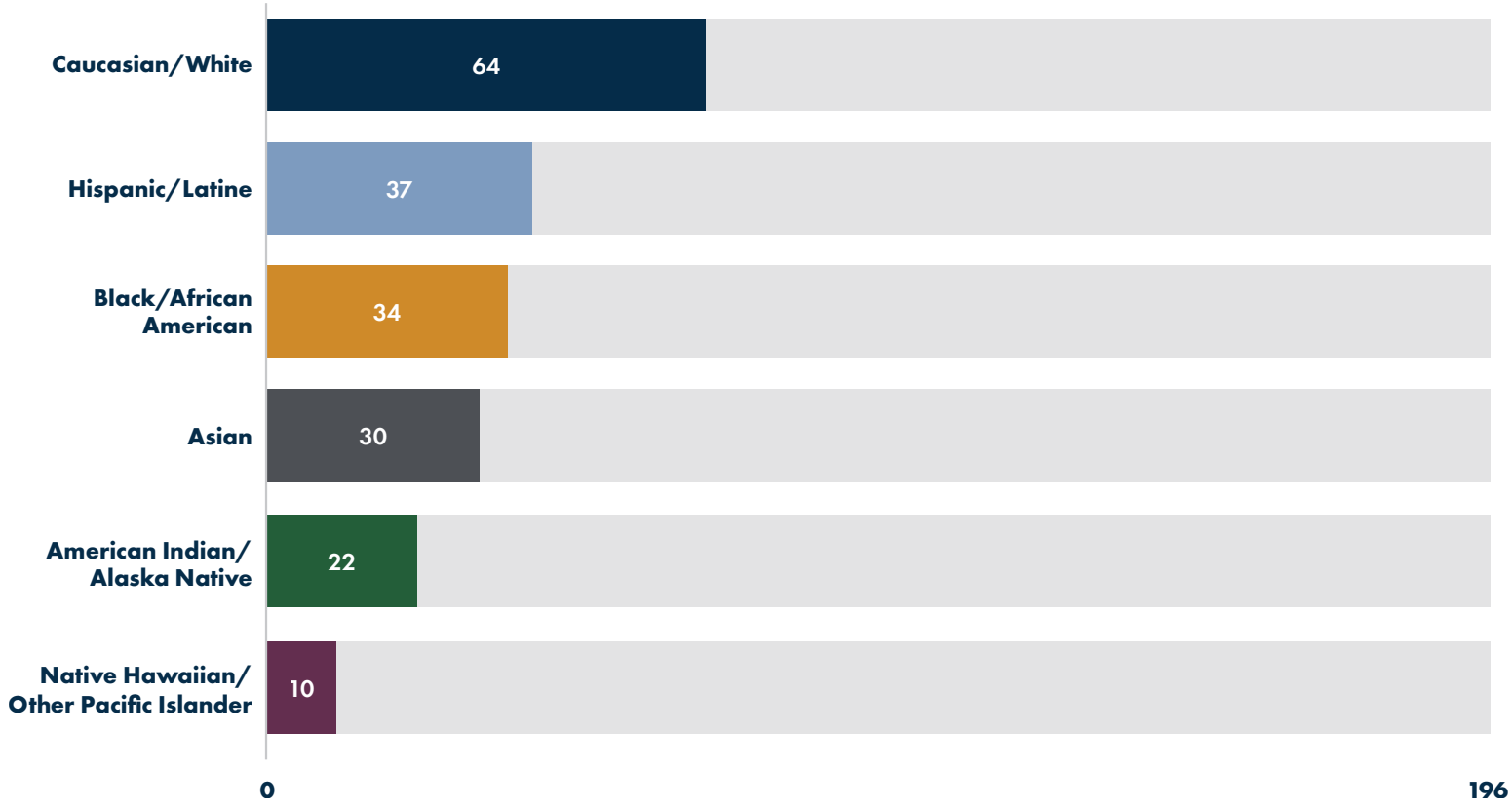


Note: *"Students of color" includes students who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latine, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or Multiracial. As of 2026, the ABA re-classified "Two or More Races" as "Multiracial." Percentages do not sum to 100% because students whose race is unknown are omitted from figure.*

Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025a. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 31, 2025.*

Number of ABA-Approved Law Schools Accounting for Half or More of Law Students of Each Race/Ethnicity, 2025

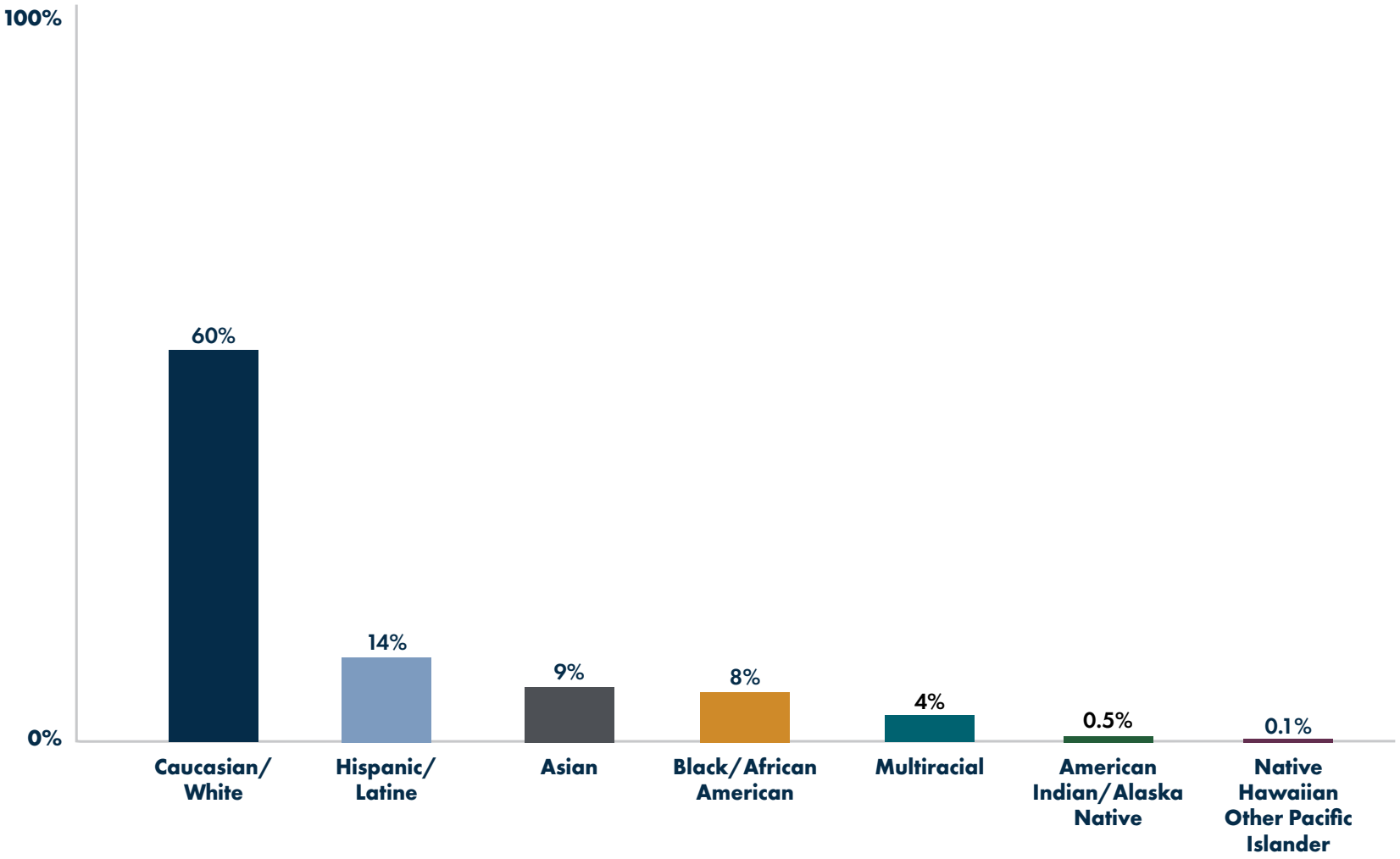
The chart displays the minimum number of ABA-approved schools whose combined enrollments make up half or more of each racial/ethnic group. For instance, half of all Hispanic/Latine law students are enrolled at just 37 of the 196 ABA-approved law schools in 2025. Overall, this chart indicates that students of color are concentrated within a relatively small number of law schools.



Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025a. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 29, 2025.*

Share of J.D. Degrees Awarded by Race and Ethnicity, 2025

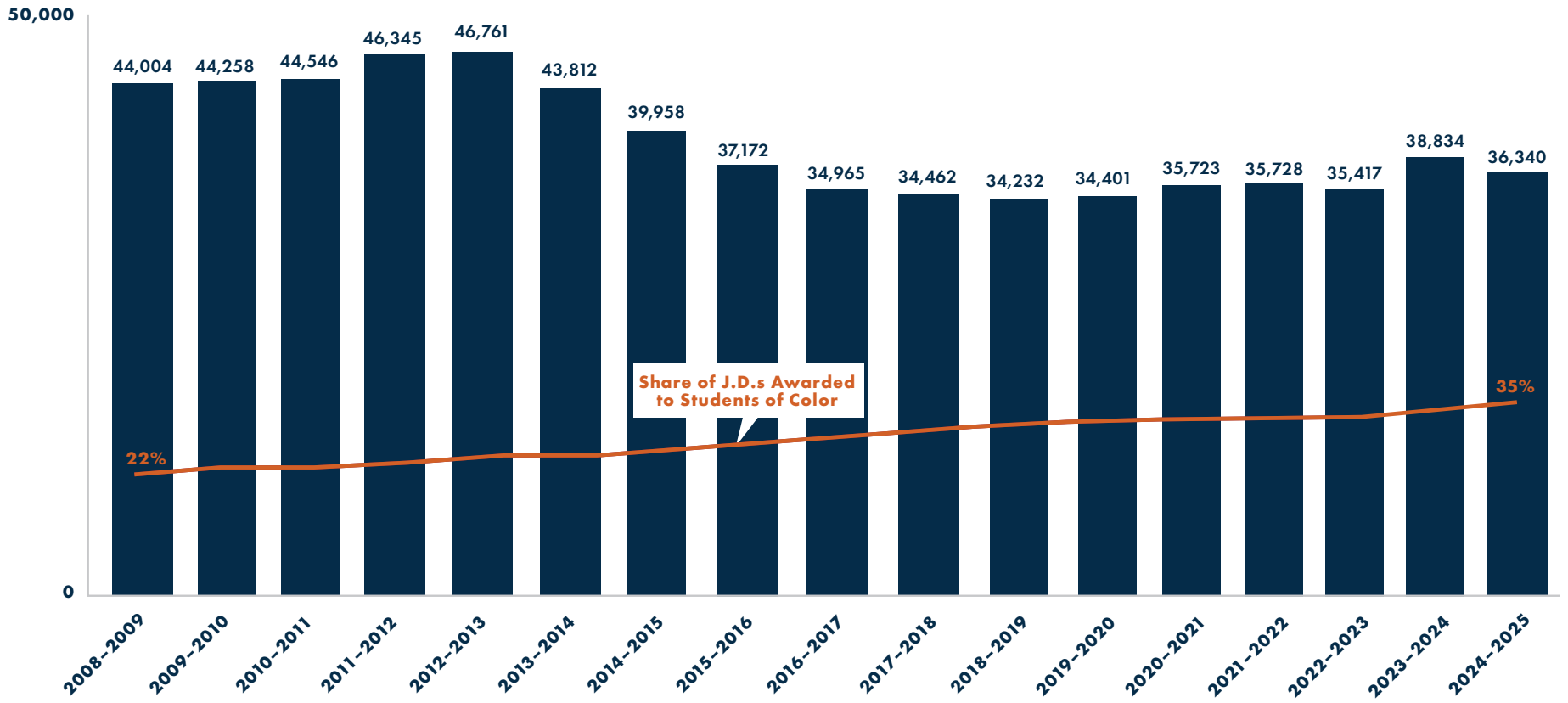
In 2025, White students comprised 60% of law school graduates. Asian, Black, and Hispanic/Latine applicants collectively comprised roughly one-third.



Note: *As of 2026, the ABA re-classified "Two or More Races" as "Multiracial." Percentages do not sum to 100% because students whose race is unknown are omitted from figure.*
Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025a. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 17, 2025.*

Total J.D. Degrees Awarded and Percentage of J.D. Degrees Awarded to Students of Color at ABA-Approved Law Schools, 2008-2025

The proportion of J.D. degrees awarded to students of color continued to increase in 2024-25, reaching a new high of 35%. At the same time, the total number of J.D. degrees awarded decreased by 2,500 compared to 2023-24.



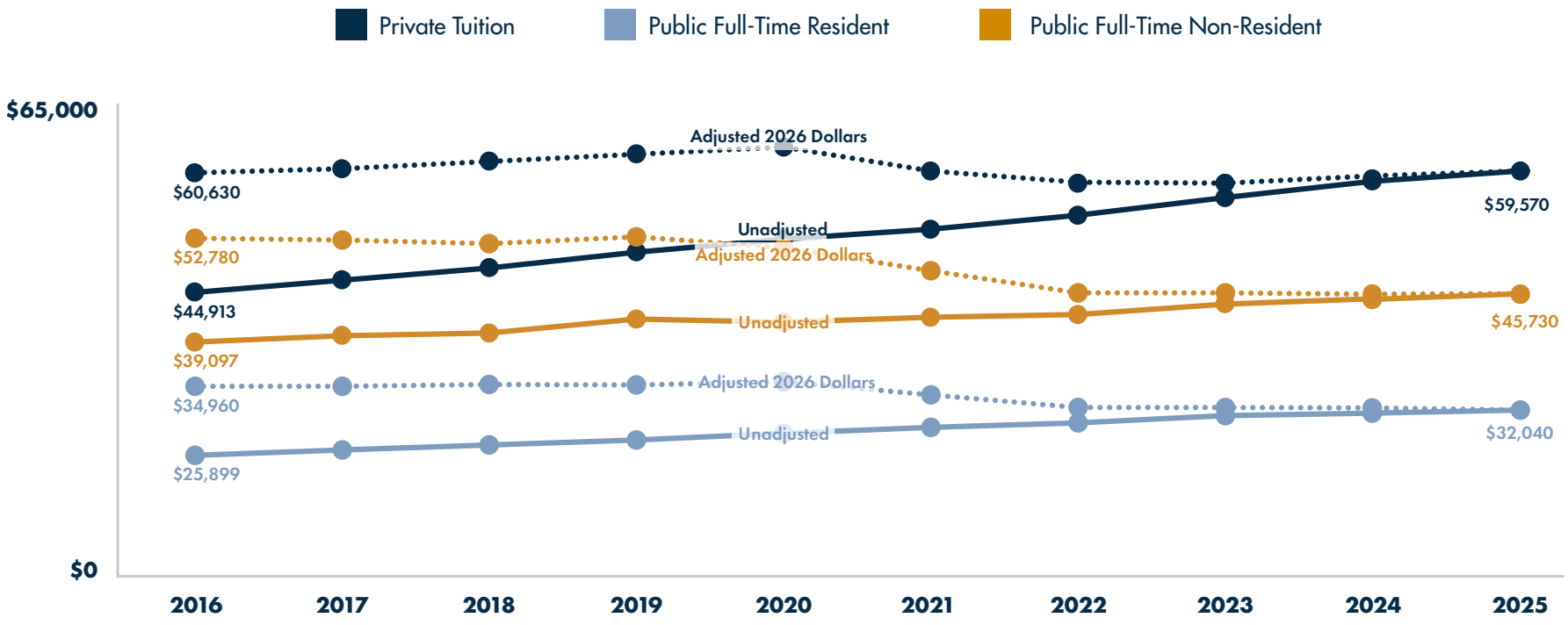
Note: *"Students of color" includes students who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latine, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or Multiracial. As of 2026, the ABA re-classified "Two or More Races" as "Multiracial."*
Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025a and 2025b. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 17, 2025.*



Affordability

Average Full-Time Tuition and Fees (in 2026 Dollars) by School Type and Residency, 2016-2025

Although average law school tuition and fees have increased in nominal dollars since 2016, these costs have decreased or remained relatively unchanged when accounting for high inflation rates observed in recent years.

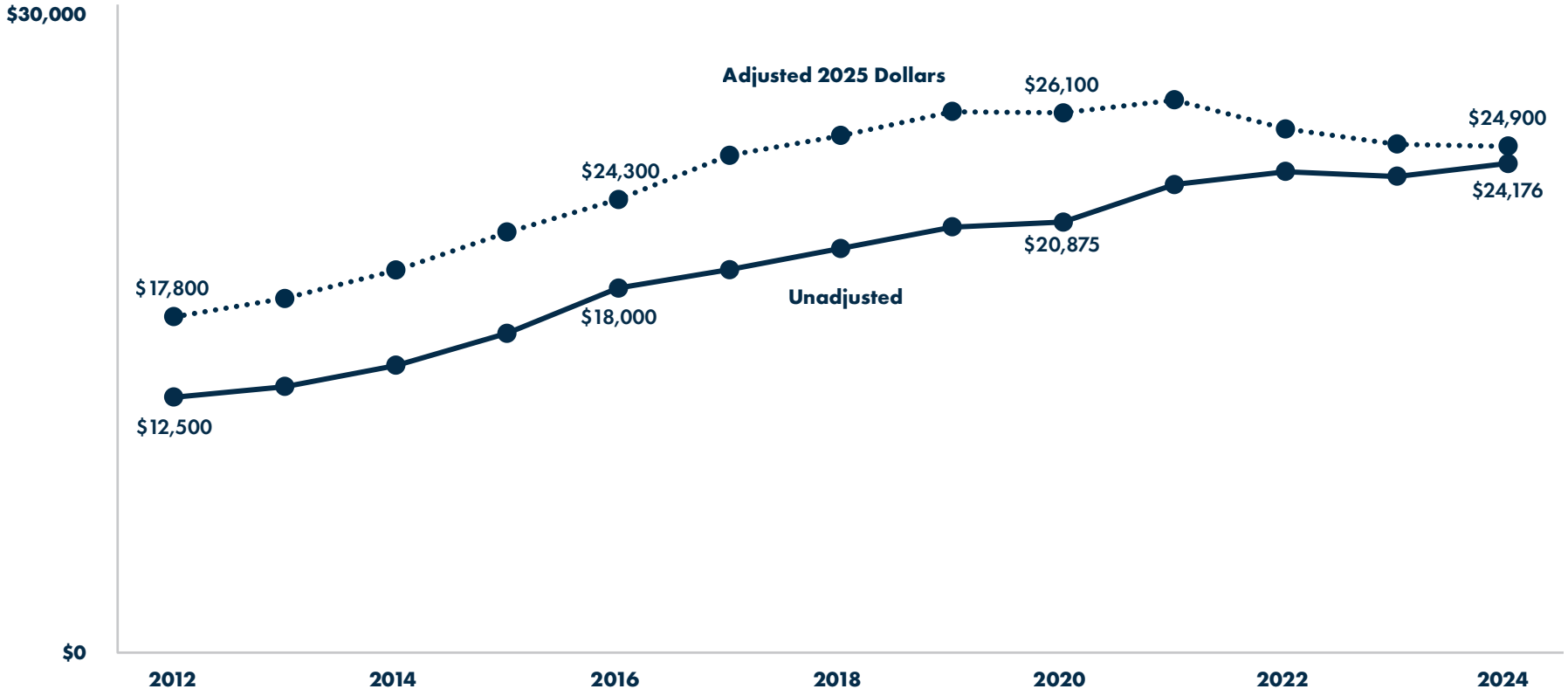


Note: *The following schools are excluded due to missing tuition data during the period shown: Creighton University, Florida State University, Inter American University of Puerto Rico, and Atlanta's John Marshall Law School. Schools that closed or lost accreditation during the period shown are included in the annual averages for the years they were open and accredited.*

Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025a. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on February 25, 2026.*

Median Grant Amount Awarded to Full-Time Students, 2012-2024

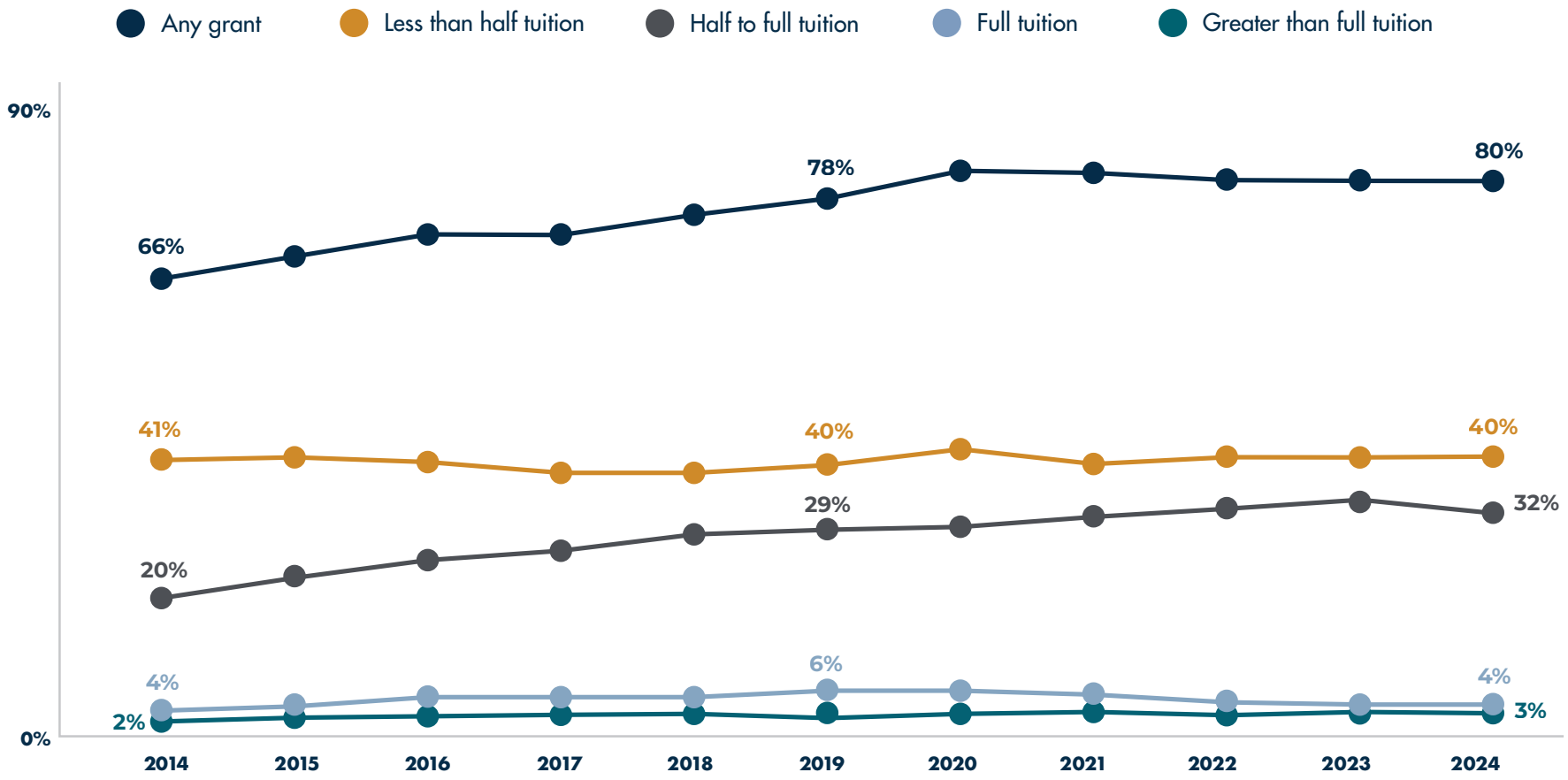
The nominal median grant amount awarded to full-time students receiving aid has nearly doubled since 2012, increasing steadily each year. Adjusting for inflation, however, the median grant award has hovered around $25,000 since 2017.



Note: *The median value displayed here is the median of all school level median grant amounts.*
Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025a. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 17, 2025.*

Share of Full-Time Students Receiving Institutional Grants, 2014-2024

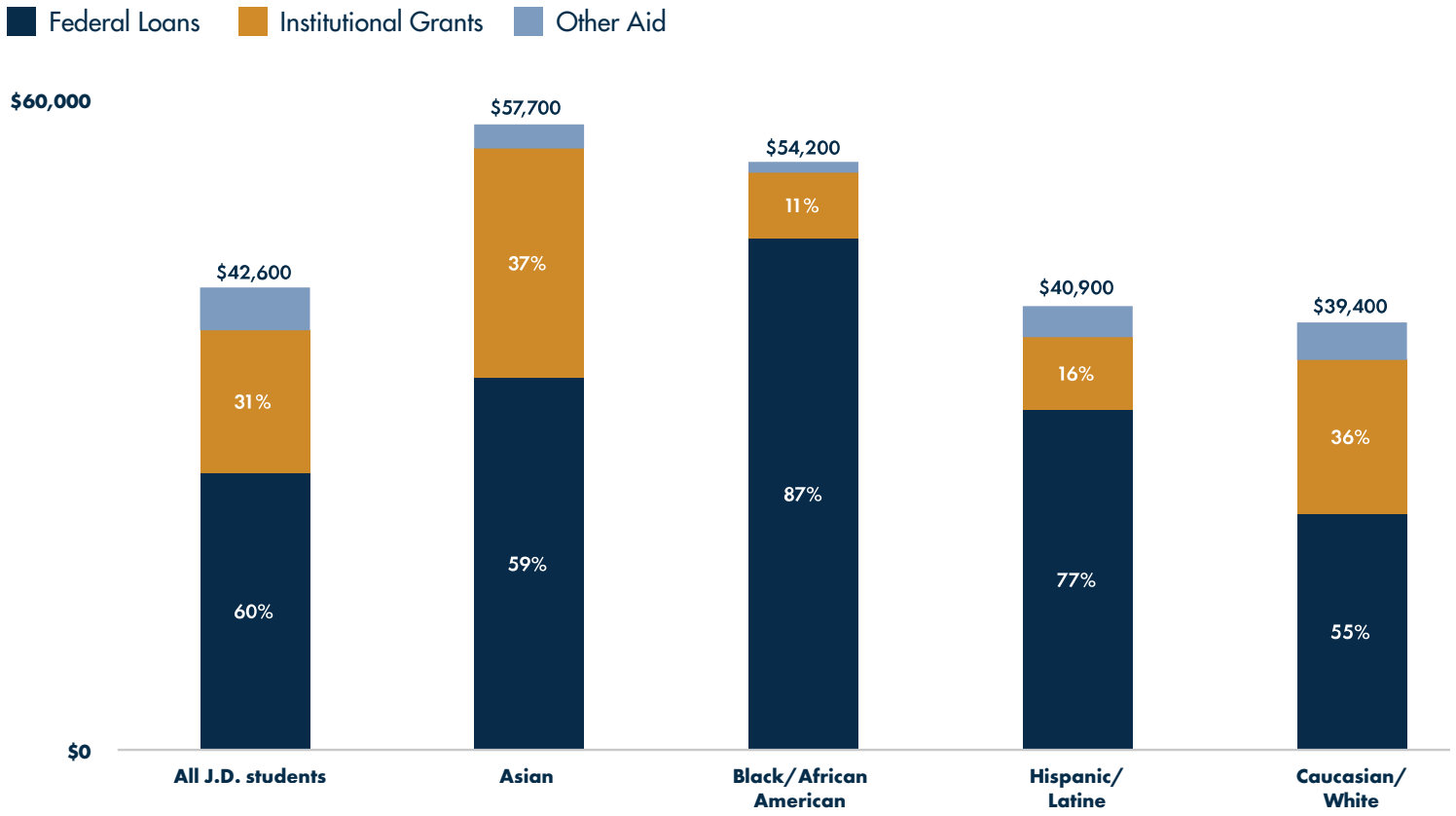
The share of full-time students who received a grant of any amount increased from 66% in 2014 to 82% in 2020, but has remained stagnant in the past five years.



Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025a. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 17, 2025.*

Average Financial Aid Packages by Race/Ethnicity, 2020

Black and Hispanic/Latine law students are awarded aid packages with higher proportions of loans and lower proportions of grants than their White and Asian peers. Although Black students receive higher average aid amounts than law students overall, 87% of the average financial aid package awarded to a typical Black law student comprises federal loans, compared to the overall average of 60%.

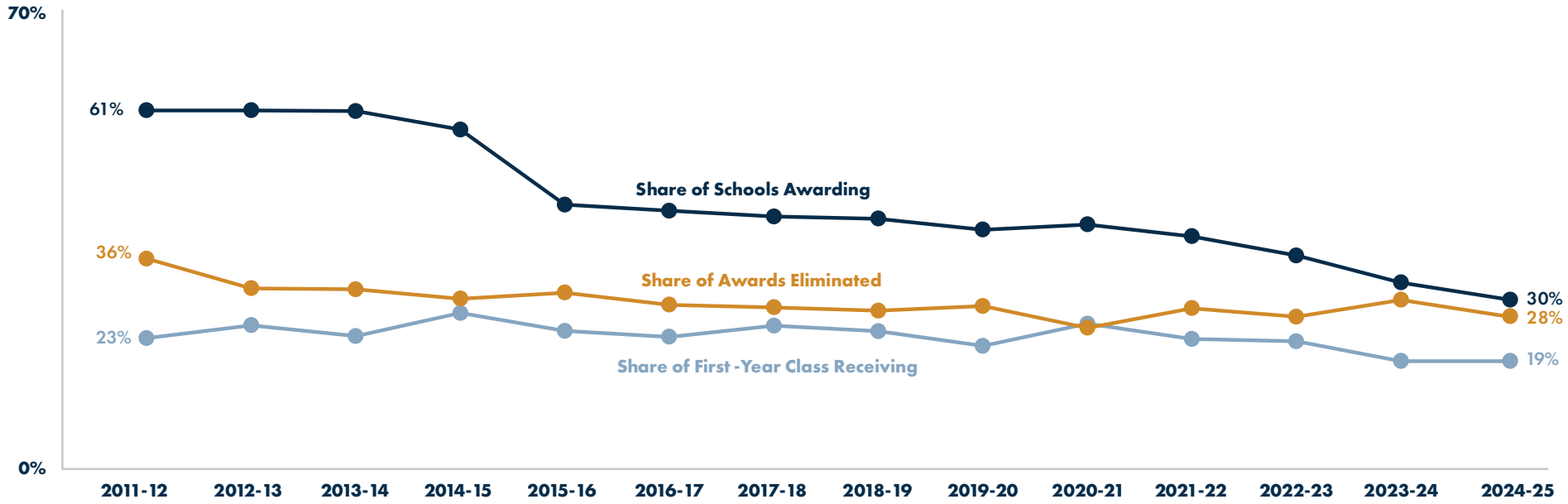


Note: *Other racial/ethnic categories did not meet NPSAS reporting standards. "Other Aid" refers to all aid types other than federal loans and institutional grants. This includes federal grants, institutional loans, state grants and loans, private grants and loans, work-study opportunities, assistantships, federal Veterans' education benefits, and Department of Defense military tuition grants.*

Data Source: *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Aid Study, NPSAS:20. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved September 6, 2024.*

Trends in Awarding and Eliminating Conditional Scholarships at ABA-Approved Law Schools, 2011-2024

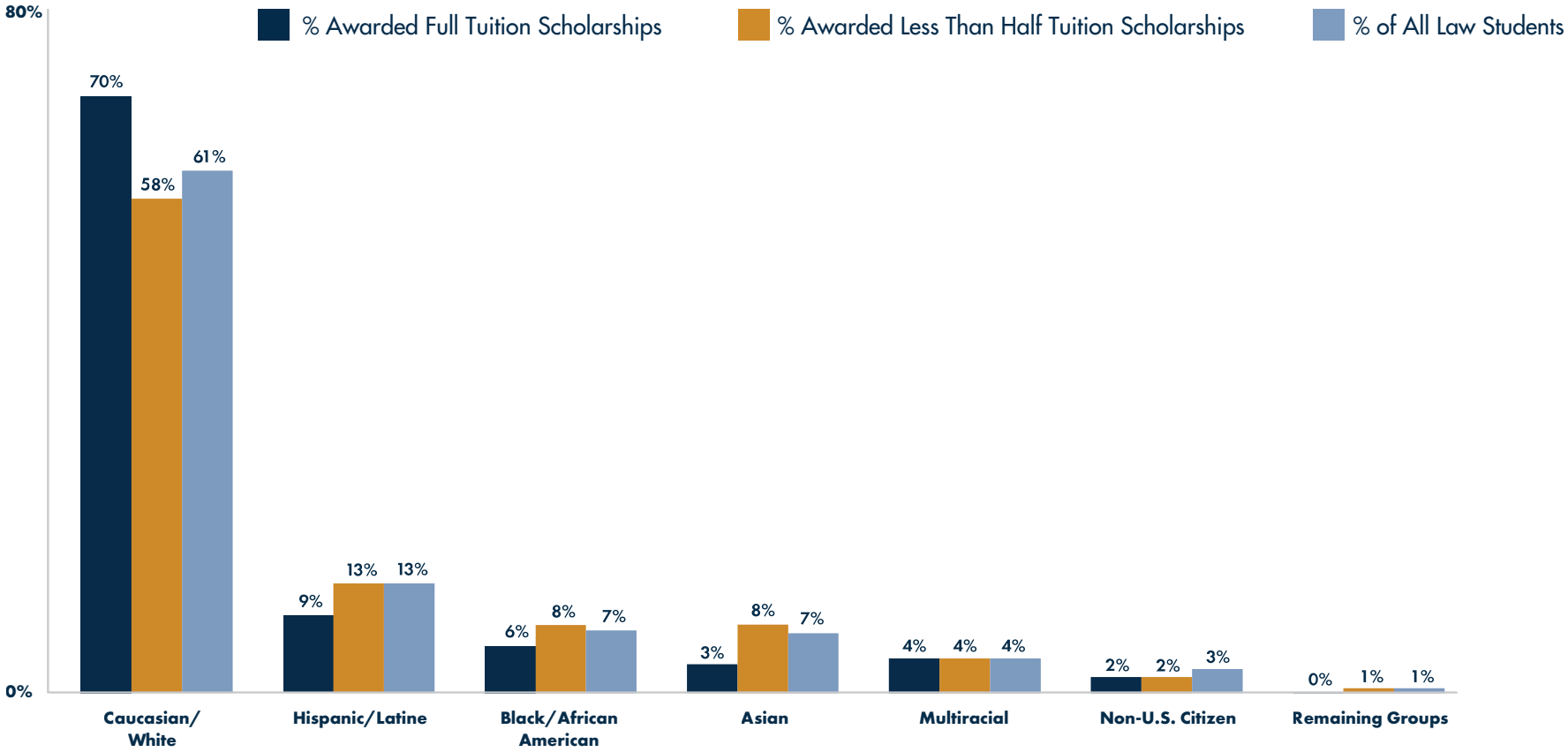
From 2011 to 2024, the share of schools awarding conditional scholarships decreased by about half, from 61% to 30%. Nearly half of that change occurred between 2014 and 2015, where the share of schools awarding decreased by 13 percentage points. Since 2023, 19% of all first-year law students received conditional scholarships, the lowest share since 2011.



Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2025a. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on December 17, 2025.*

Percentage of Scholarships Awarded by ABA-Approved Law Schools by Race, 2023

Students of color receive a slightly higher percentage of scholarships covering less than half of the cost of law school tuition (yellow) compared to their percentage of the overall law school population (light blue). However, students of color also consistently receive a disproportionately lower percentage of full-tuition scholarships (dark blue). Overall, students of color receive 23% of full-tuition scholarships despite representing 32% of the law student population.

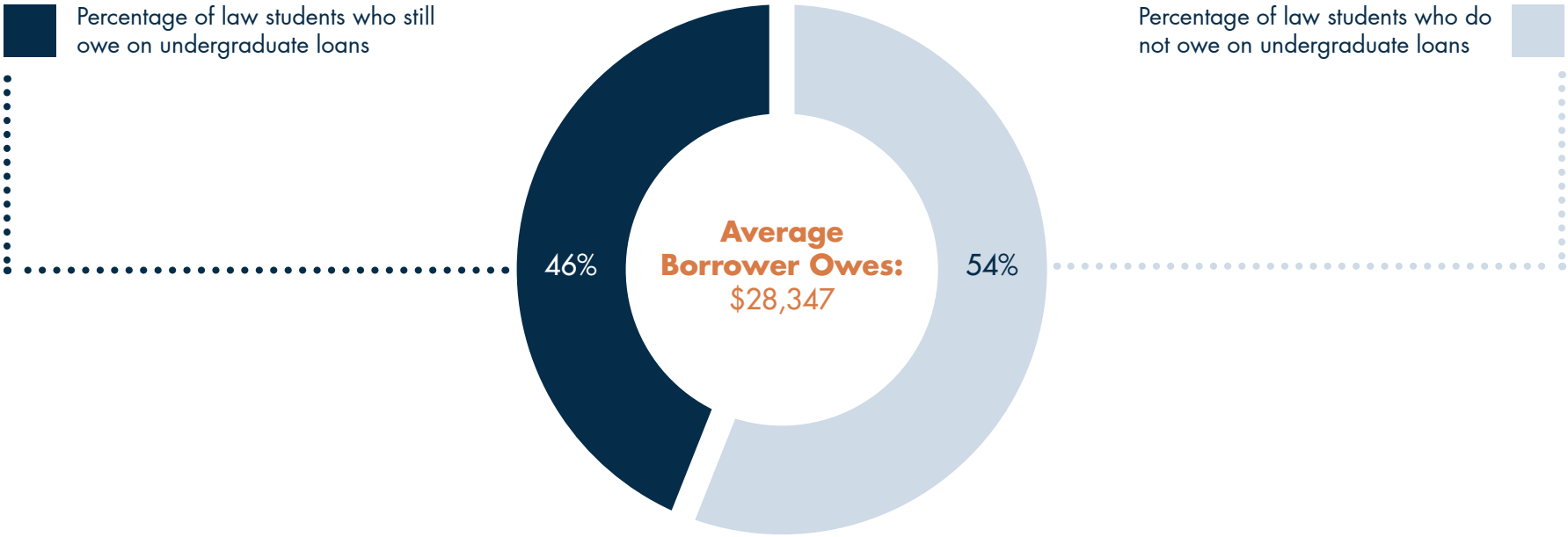


Note: *"Students of color" includes students who identified as Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latine, Multiracial, or Remaining Groups. "Remaining Groups" includes students who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. As of 2026, the ABA re-classified "Two or More Races" as "Multiracial." Percentages do not sum to 100% because students whose race is unknown are omitted from figure.*

Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2024. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on June 14, 2024.*

Percentage of Law Students Who Still Owe on Undergraduate Loans, 2019-2020

Nearly half of enrolled law school students are carrying undergraduate debt. Of those who still owe balances on their undergraduate loans, the average amount of debt owed is more than $28,000.

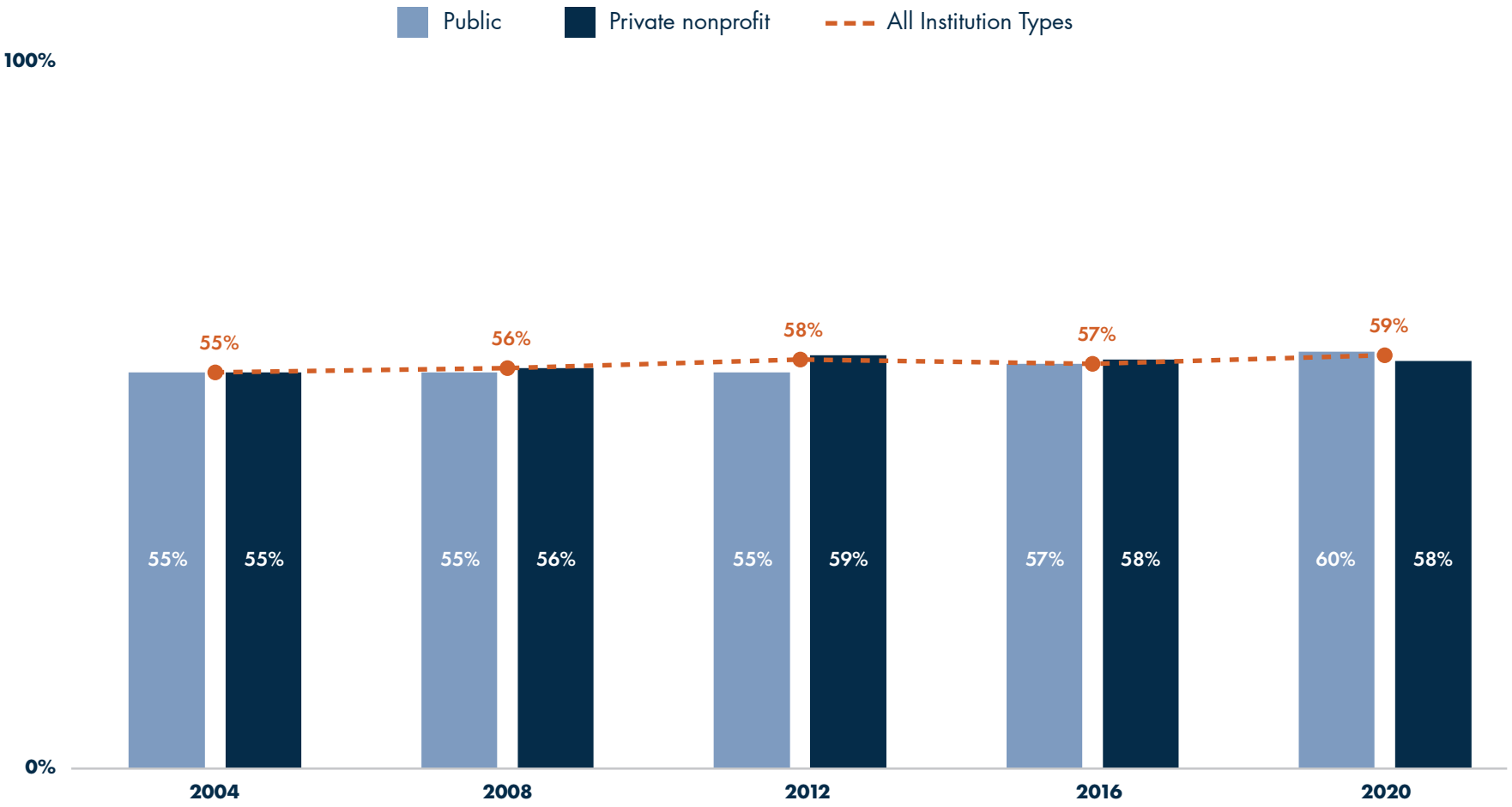


Note: *The amount owed includes the principal amount of the loan plus interest. Data presented reflects only U.S. citizens and permanent residents. International students are excluded from analysis due to differences in financial eligibility.*

Data Source: *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019-20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20). Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on February 27, 2024.*

Percentage of Law Students Who Worked While Enrolled, by Year and Institution Type, 2004-2020

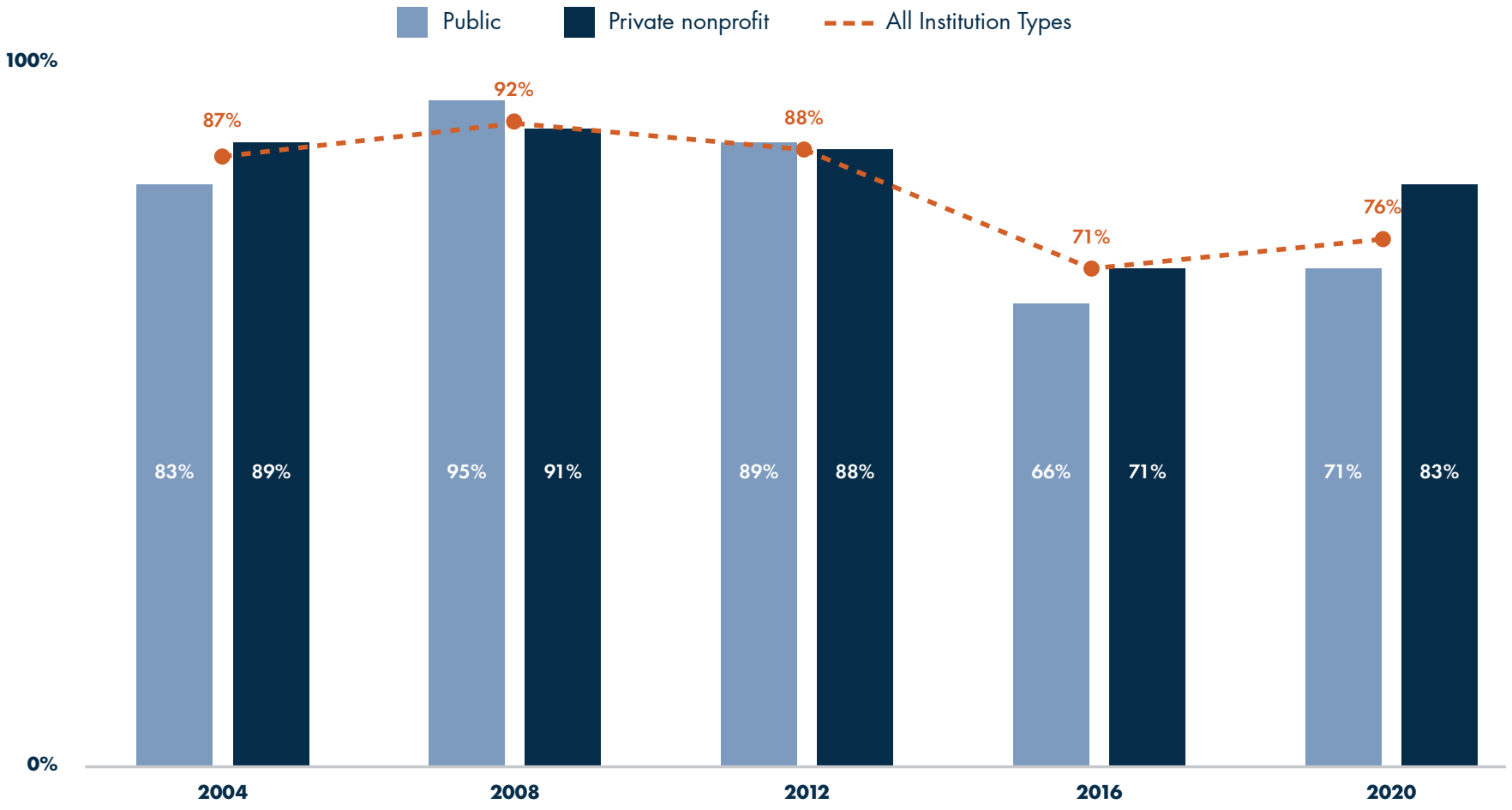
More than half of enrolled law students reported earnings from off-campus employment at both public and private nonprofit schools.



Data Source: *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, NPSAS:04, NPSAS:08, NPSAS:12, NPSAS:16, and NPSAS:20. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary provided by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 22, 2023.*

Percentage of Law Graduates Who Borrowed for Graduate Education, by Year and Institution Type, 2004-2020

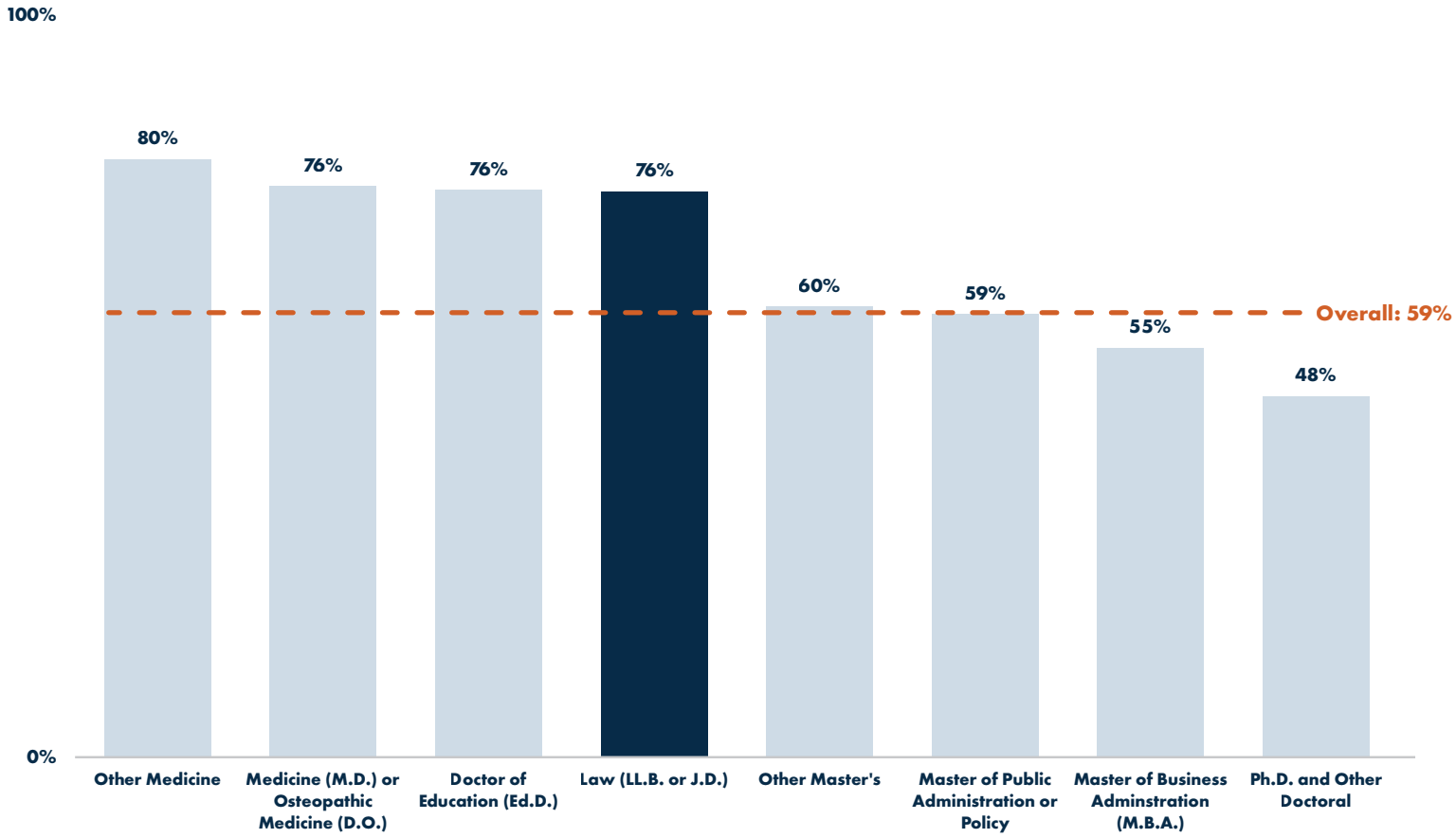
A majority of law graduates use loans to fund their graduate education, and the overall proportion who borrowed increased by five percentage points between 2016 and 2020.



Data Source: *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, NPSAS:04, NPSAS:08, NPSAS:12, NPSAS:16, and NPSAS:20. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary provided by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 6, 2023.*

Percentage of Graduate or Professional Program Students Who Borrowed While Enrolled by Program Type, 2020

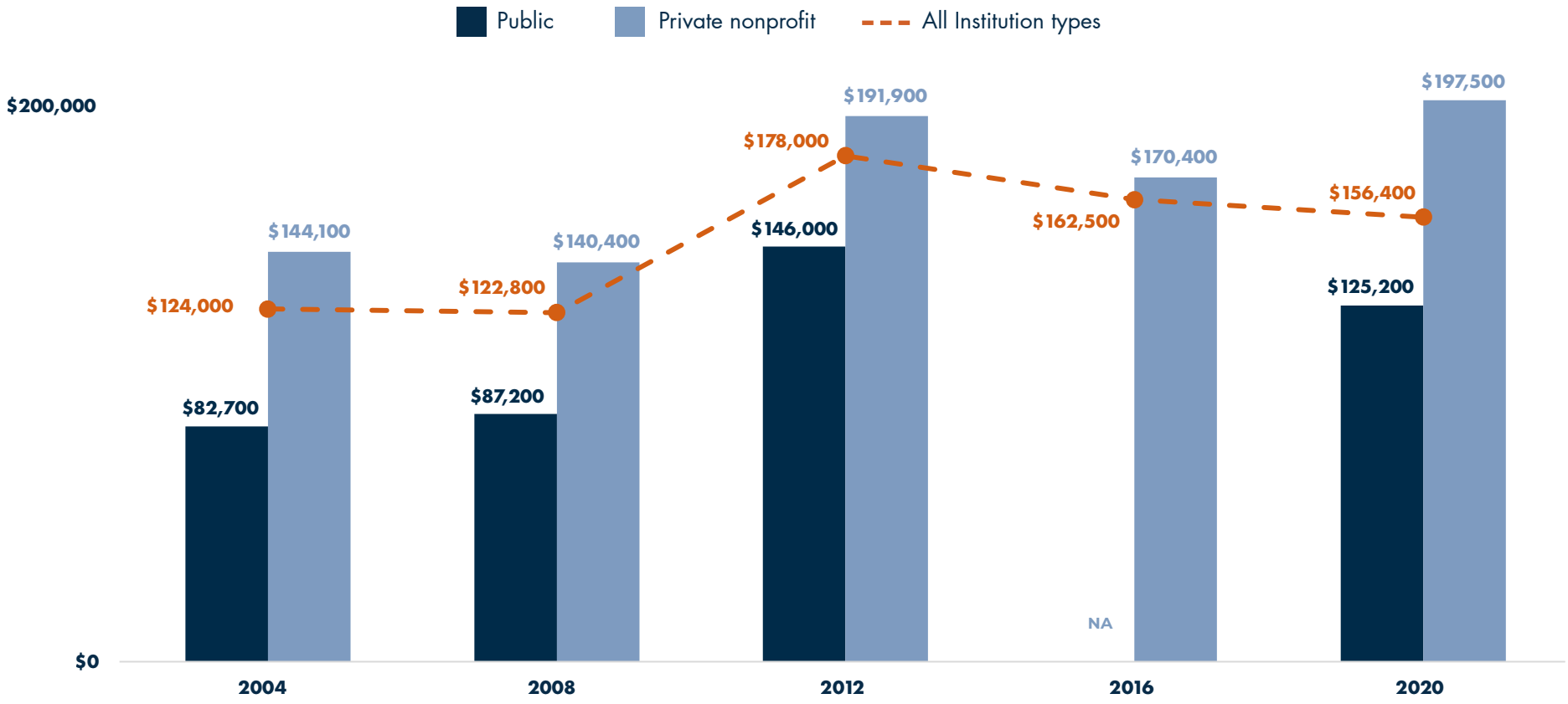
A higher percentage of law students used loans to finance their legal education compared to students in other graduate and professional education programs. Fifty-nine percent of all 2020 graduate or professional program students borrowed to pay for their education, a markedly lower proportion than the 76% of law students who borrowed.



Note: *"Other Master's" includes any master's credential other than an M.B.A. or an M.P.P./M.P.A. "Ph.D. and Other Doctoral" includes all nonmedical doctorates other than a Doctor of Education. "Other Medicine" includes medical doctoral degrees other than an M.D. or a D.O., in disciplines like dentistry (D.D.S.), pharmacy (Pharm.D.), and veterinary medicine (D.V.M.).*
Data Source: *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Aid Study, NPSAS:20. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on January 28, 2025.*

Cumulative Amount Borrowed (in 2026 Dollars) Among Law Students Who Borrowed While Enrolled, by Year and Institution Type, 2004-2020

Although the percentage of law graduates who borrowed **increased** between 2016 and 2020, the average cumulative amount of graduate debt among those who borrowed decreased by more than $6,000.

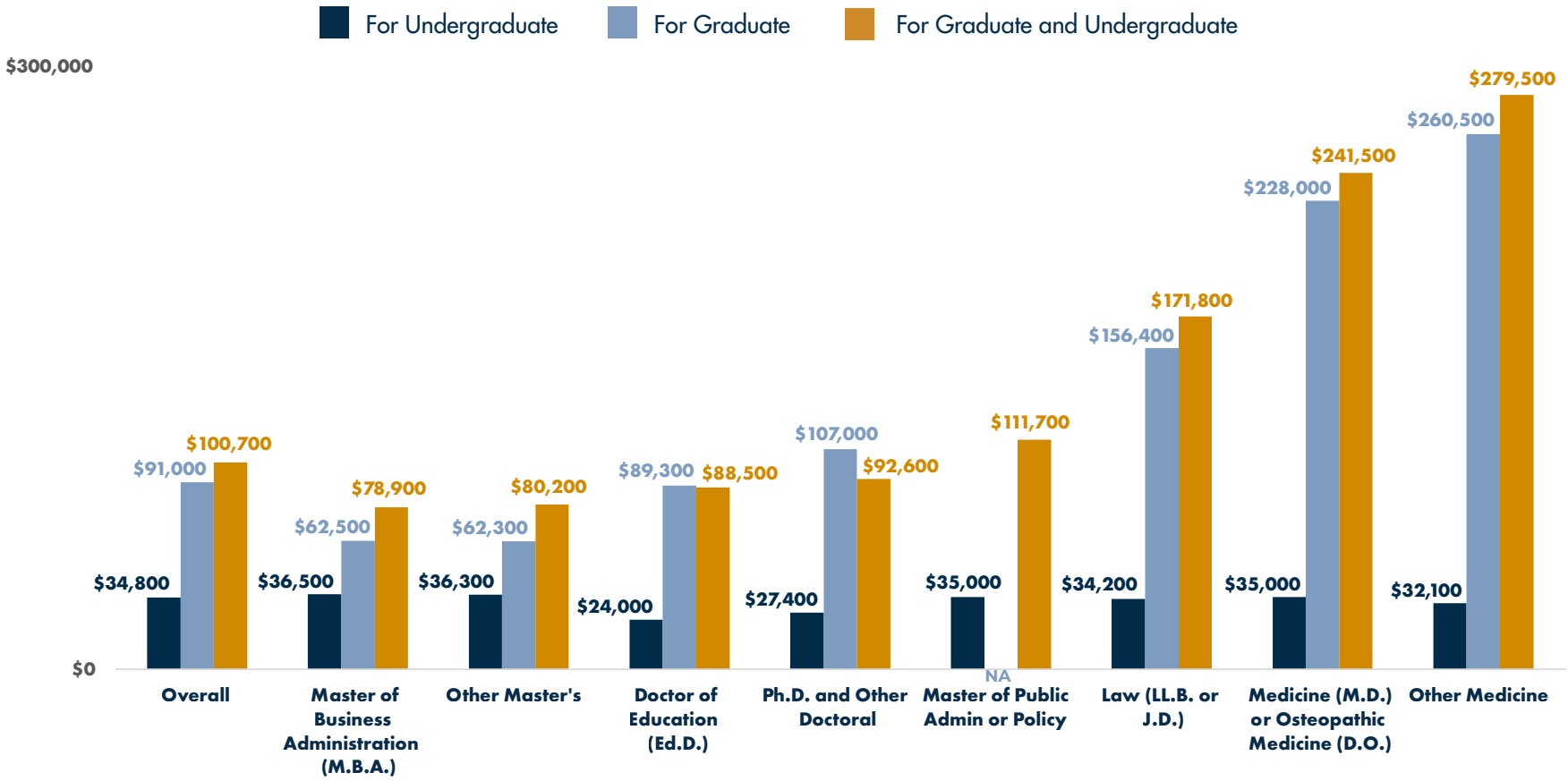


Note: *Minimum reporting standards were not met for law school graduates who attended public institutions in 2016. Data presented reflects only U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Foreign/international students are excluded from analysis due to differences in financial aid eligibility.*

Data Source: *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, NPSAS:04, NPSAS:08, NPSAS:12, NPSAS:16, and NPSAS:20. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 11, 2025.*

Average Amounts Borrowed (in 2026 Dollars) by 2020 Graduates by Program Type and Overall Among Those Who Borrowed

On average, 2020 law graduates borrowed more for their graduate education than all other graduate and professional degree recipients who borrowed, except those in medicine and other health professions.



Note: *Cumulative amount borrowed for graduate education is unavailable for Master of Public Administration or Policy degree recipients in 2020. Data presented reflects only U.S. citizens and permanent residents. International students are excluded from analysis due to differences in financial eligibility. "Other Master's" includes any master's credential other than an M.B.A. or an M.P.P./M.P.A. "Ph.D. and Other Doctoral" includes all nonmedical doctorates other than a Doctor of Education. "Other Medicine" includes medical doctoral degrees other than an M.D. or a D.O., in disciplines like dentistry (D.D.S.), pharmacy (Pharm.D.), and veterinary medicine (D.V.M.).*

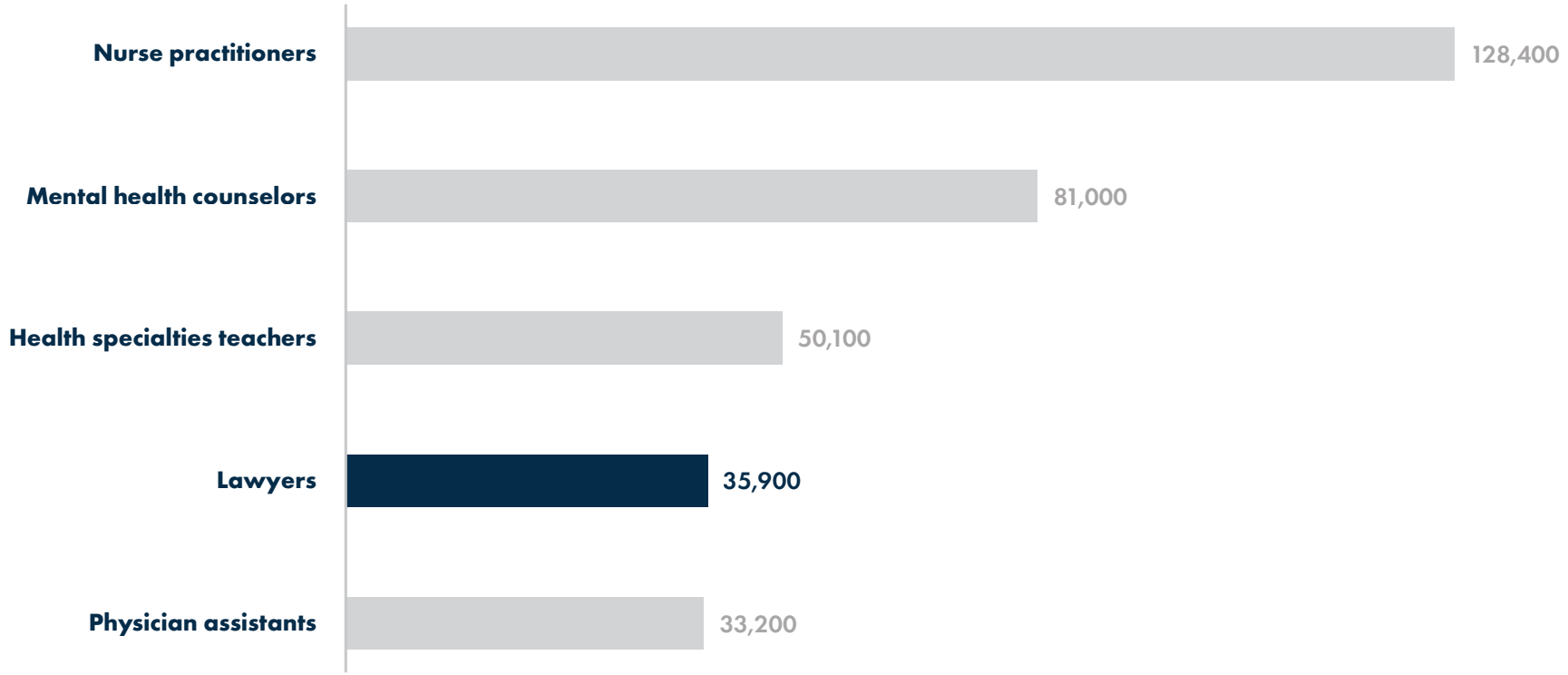
Data Source: *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, NPSAS:04, NPSAS:08, NPSAS:12, NPSAS:16, and NPSAS:20. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 11, 2025.*



Value

Occupations Requiring Graduate or Professional Degree with Five Largest Projected Increases in Employment, 2024-2034

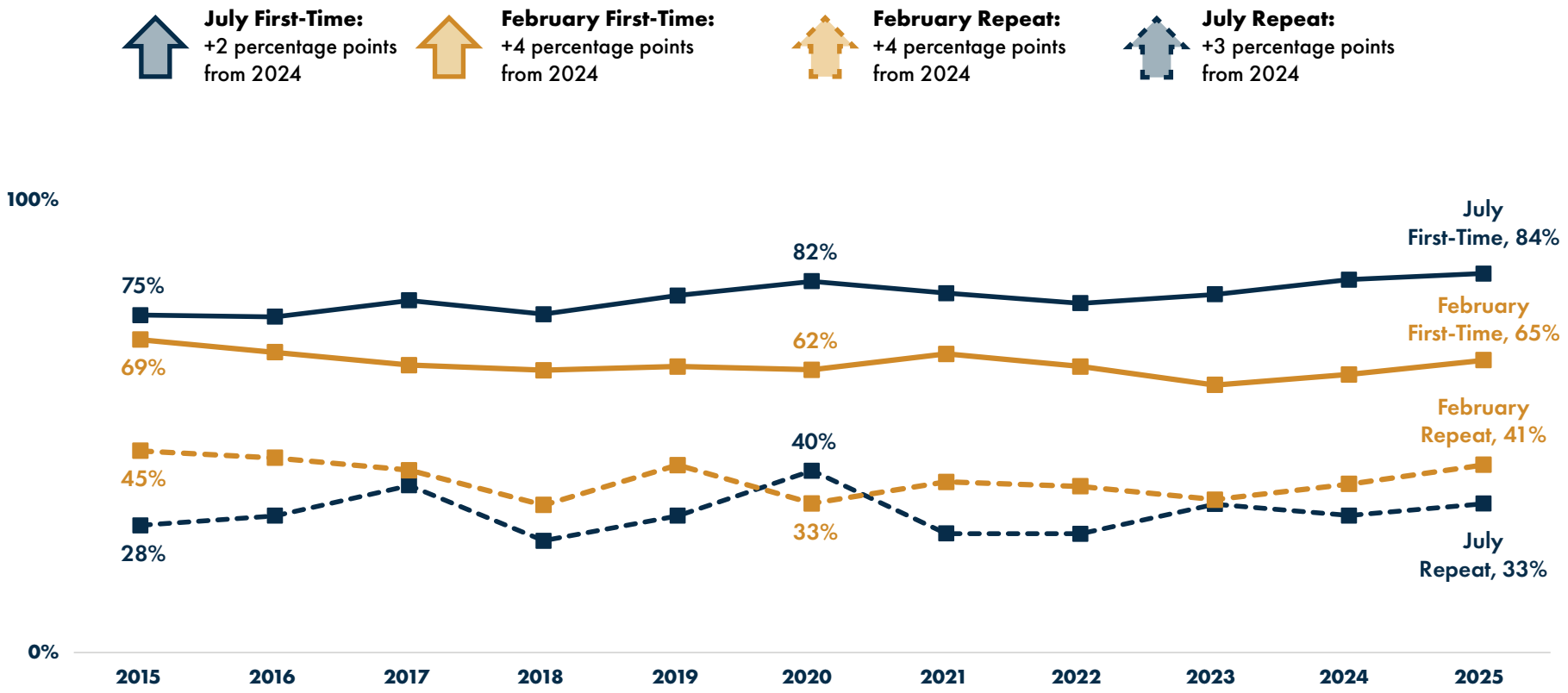
The latest occupational outlook from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects lawyer positions will have the fourth largest increase in openings among positions requiring a graduate or professional degree.



Data Source: *U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Projections, 2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on February 23, 2026.*

Percentage of ABA-Approved Law School Graduates Passing the Bar by Attempt and Administration, 2015-2025

Bar passage rates increased from 2024 to 2025 among first-time and repeat takers, regardless of administration. The pass rate among July first-time takers reached 84%, which represents a new high.

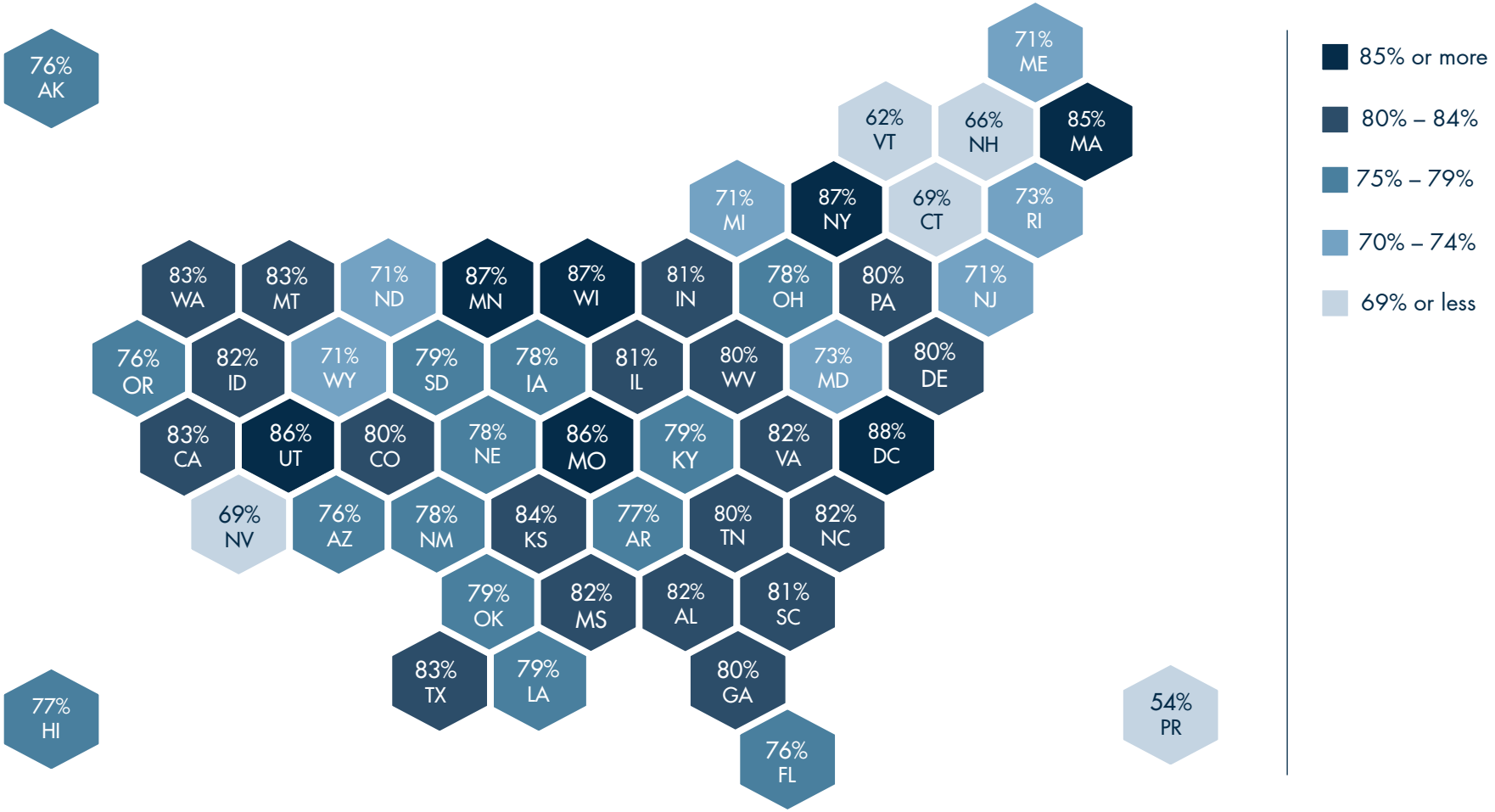


Note: *2020 bar passage rates include data from states which adopted the use of diploma privilege in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Those graduating with diploma privilege are counted as successfully passing the bar exam.*

Data Source: *National Conference of Bar Examiners, 2016-2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 10, 2026.*

First-Time Bar Passage Rates for Graduates of ABA-Approved Law Schools by State, 2025

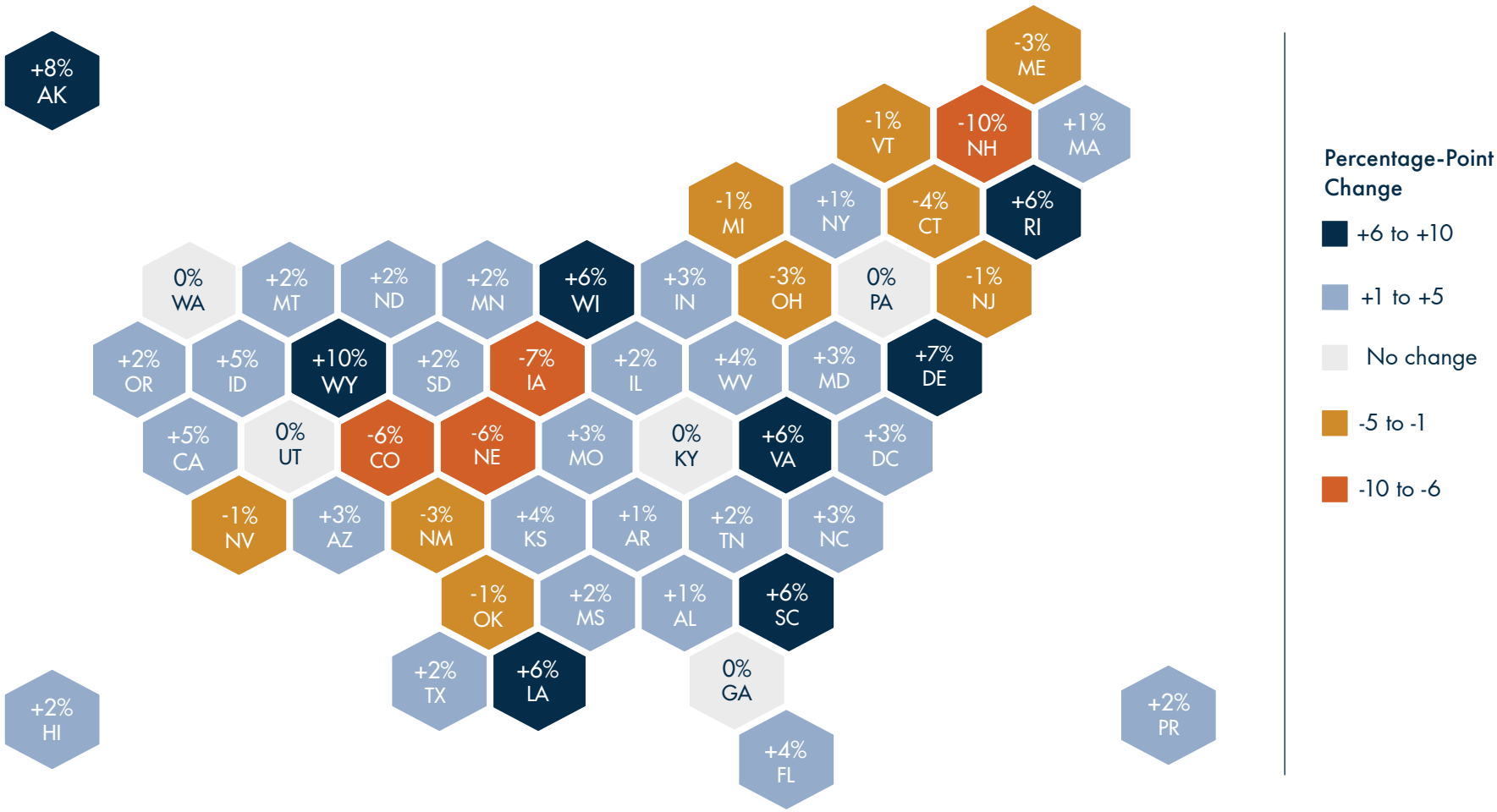
In 2025, 81% of all first-time exam takers from ABA-approved law schools passed the bar. However, bar passage rates vary among jurisdictions, ranging from 54% to 88%.



Note: *Bar passage is shown by the state of bar administration, not the location of the exam taker's law school.*
Data Source: *National Conference of Bar Examiners, 2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 10, 2026.*

Change in First-Time Bar Passage Rates for Graduates of ABA-Approved Law Schools, by Exam Jurisdiction, 2024-2025

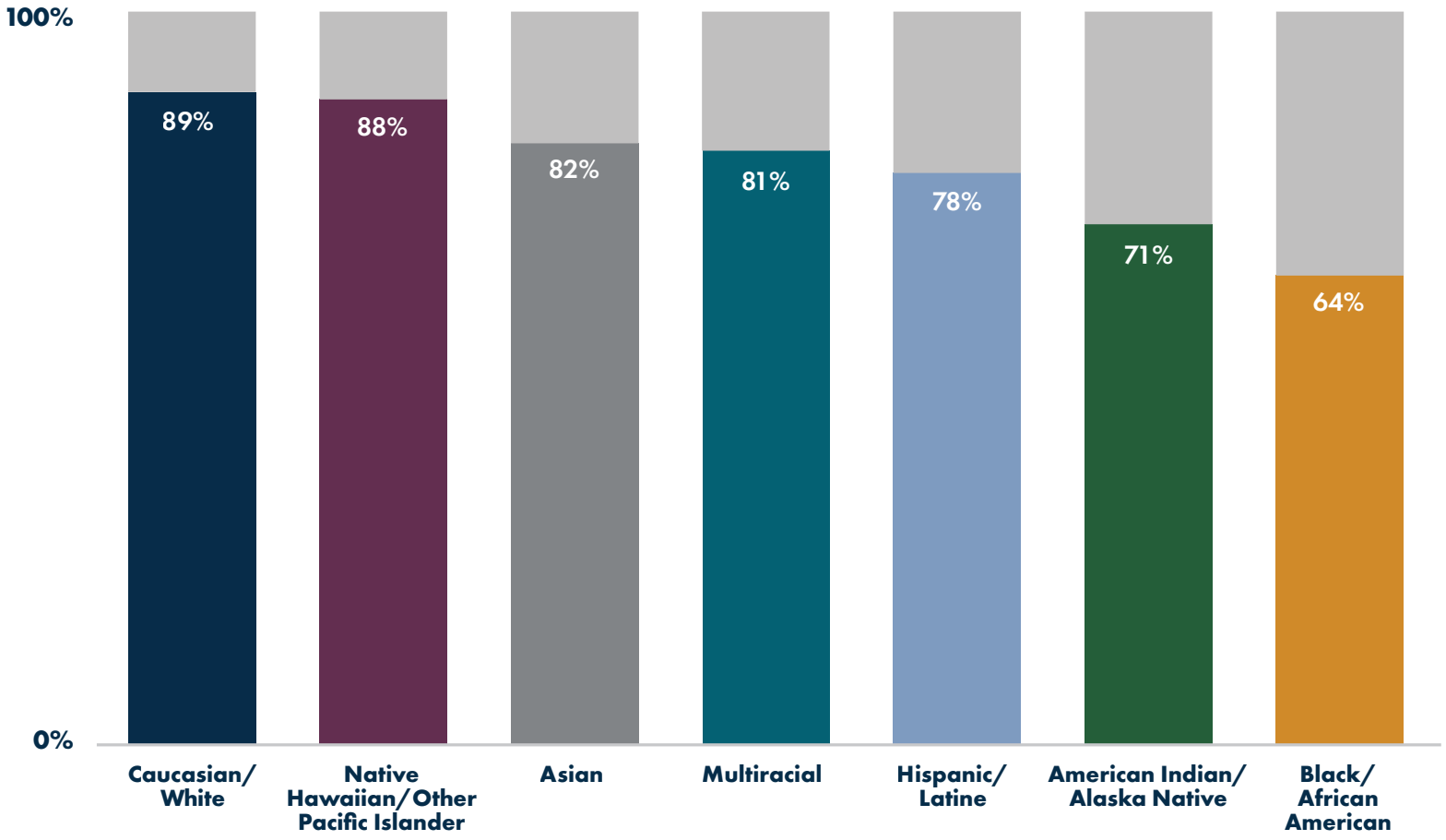
Between 2024 and 2025, a majority of states reported increases in first-time bar passage rates among graduates of ABA-approved law schools. Of the 34 jurisdictions where pass rates increased, 8 reported increases greater than five percentage points.



Note: *Bar passage is shown by the state of bar administration, not the location of the exam taker's law school.*
Data Source: *National Conference of Bar Examiners, 2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 10, 2026.*

First-Time Bar Passage by Race and Ethnicity, 2025

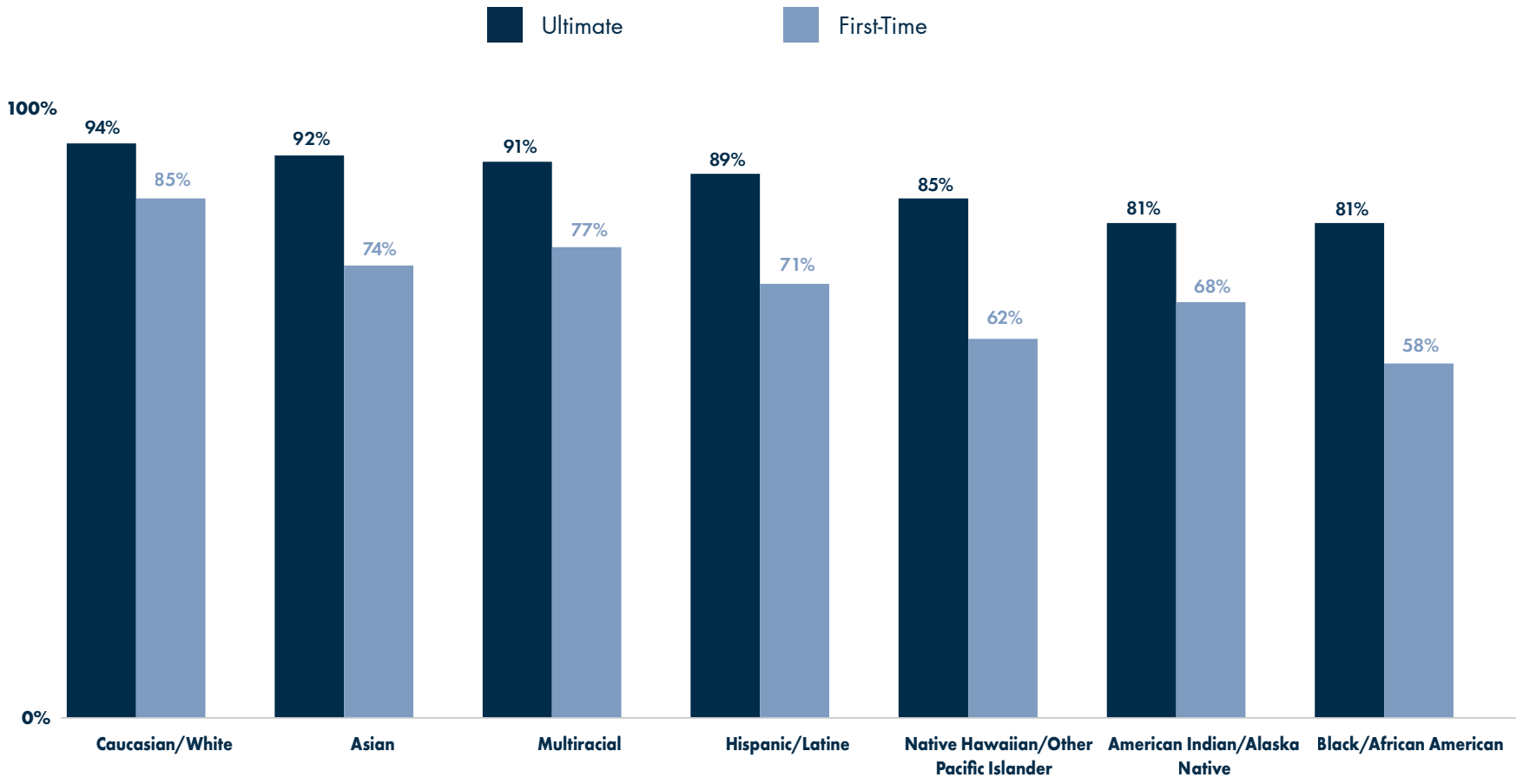
Bar exam outcomes for first-time takers vary across racial/ethnic groups. Of the seven groups reported, two have bar passage rates that fall below 75%.



Notes: *As of 2026, the ABA re-classified "Two or More Races" as "Multiracial."*
Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 10, 2026.*

First-Time and Ultimate Bar Passage by Race and Ethnicity, Class of 2023

Disparities in ultimate bar passage rates by race/ethnicity are less pronounced than first-time bar passage among 2023 law graduates, and the ultimate pass rate for all groups is above 80%.



Notes: *As of 2026, the ABA re-classified "Two or More Races" as "Multiracial."*
Data Source: *American Bar Association, 2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 10, 2026.*

Recent J.D. Graduates by Employment Status, 2014-2025

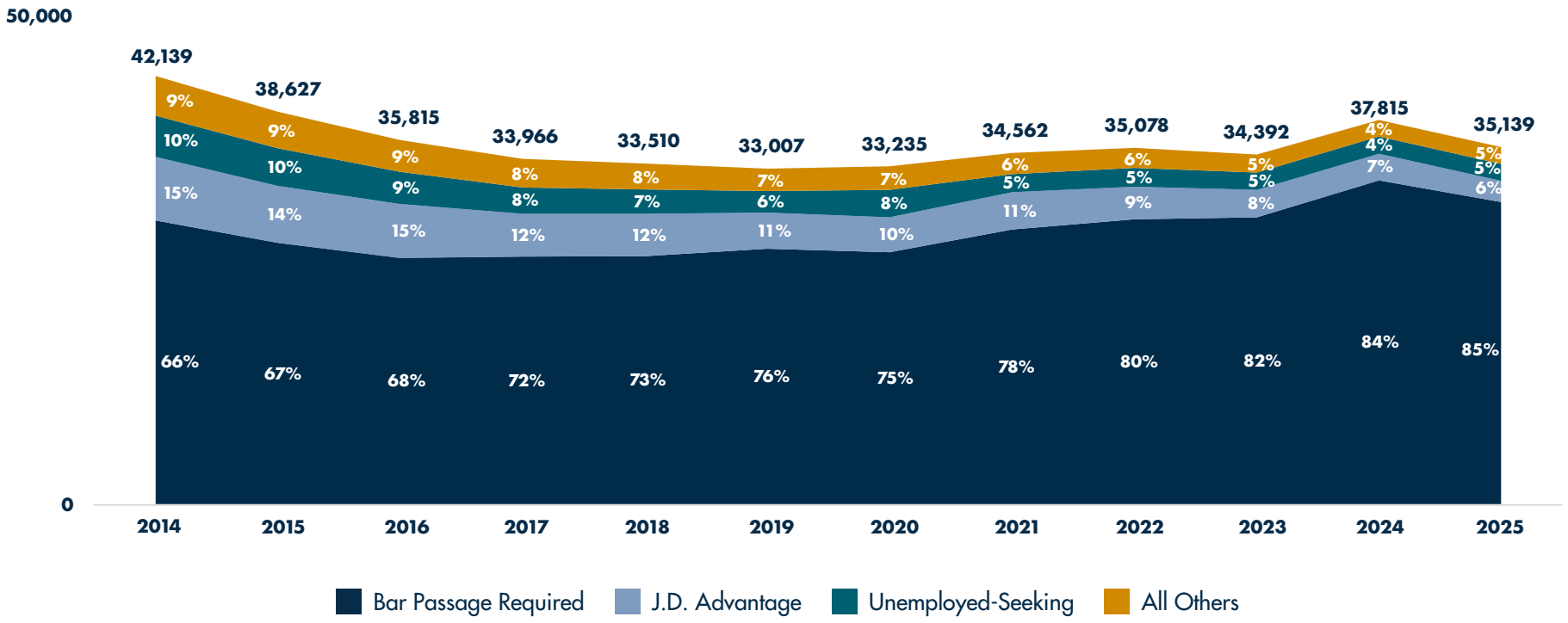
Eighty-five percent of the class of 2025 was employed in bar passage required positions, continuing a year-over-year increase in bar passage required employment rate since 2020. This trend corresponds to an overall decline in the J.D. advantage employment rate over the same period.

Bar Passage Required:
+1 percentage points from 2024

J.D. Advantage:
-1 percentage point from 2024

Unemployed and Seeking:
+1 percentage point from 2024

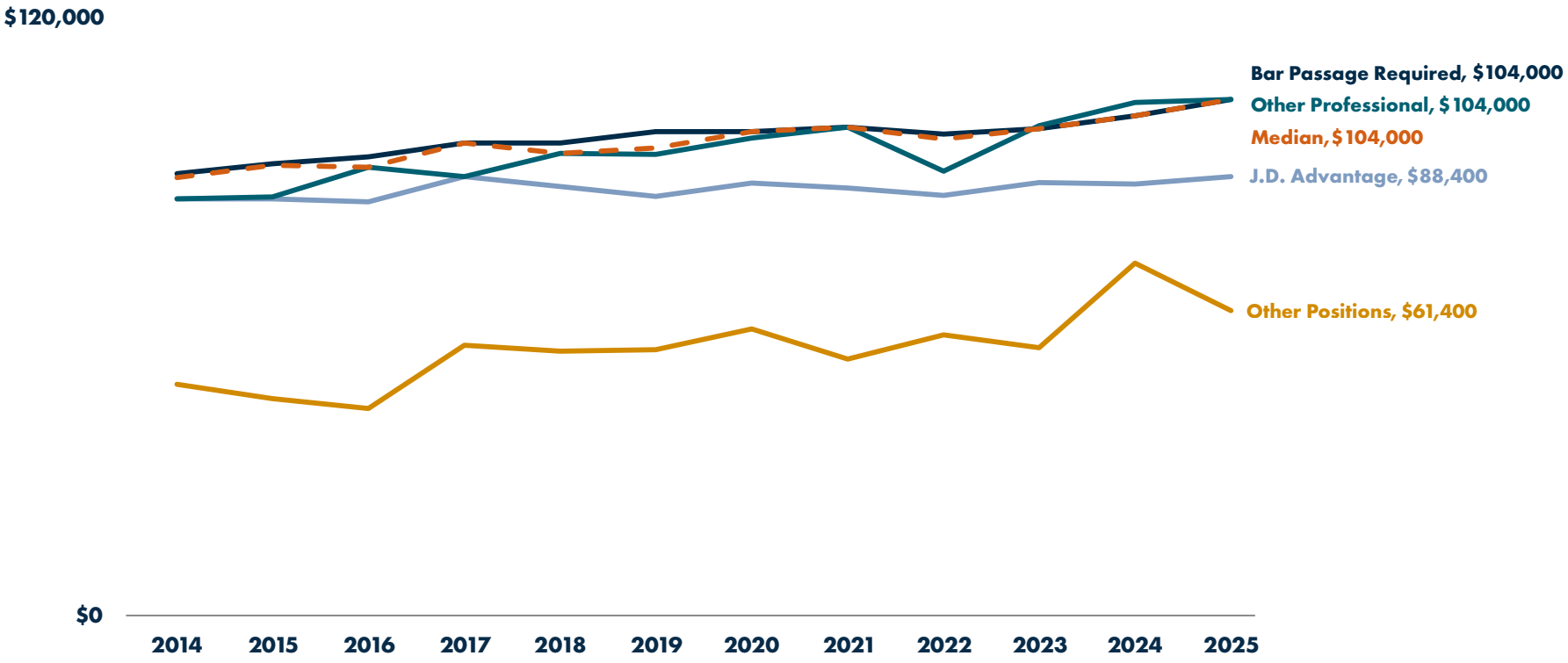
All Others:
+1 percentage point from 2024



Note: *"All Others" includes the following employment categories: Other Professional, Other Positions, Employed - Job Type Unknown, Pursuing Degree Full-Time, Start Date After March 16 2026, and Unemployed - Not Seeking. These data are based on law school graduates whose employment status was reported to NALP and may not be fully representative of the total law school graduating class indicated. Yearly totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.*
Data Source: *National Association for Law Placement, 2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 10, 2026.*

Median Salary (in 2026 Dollars) of Recent J.D. Graduates by Employment Type, 2014-2025

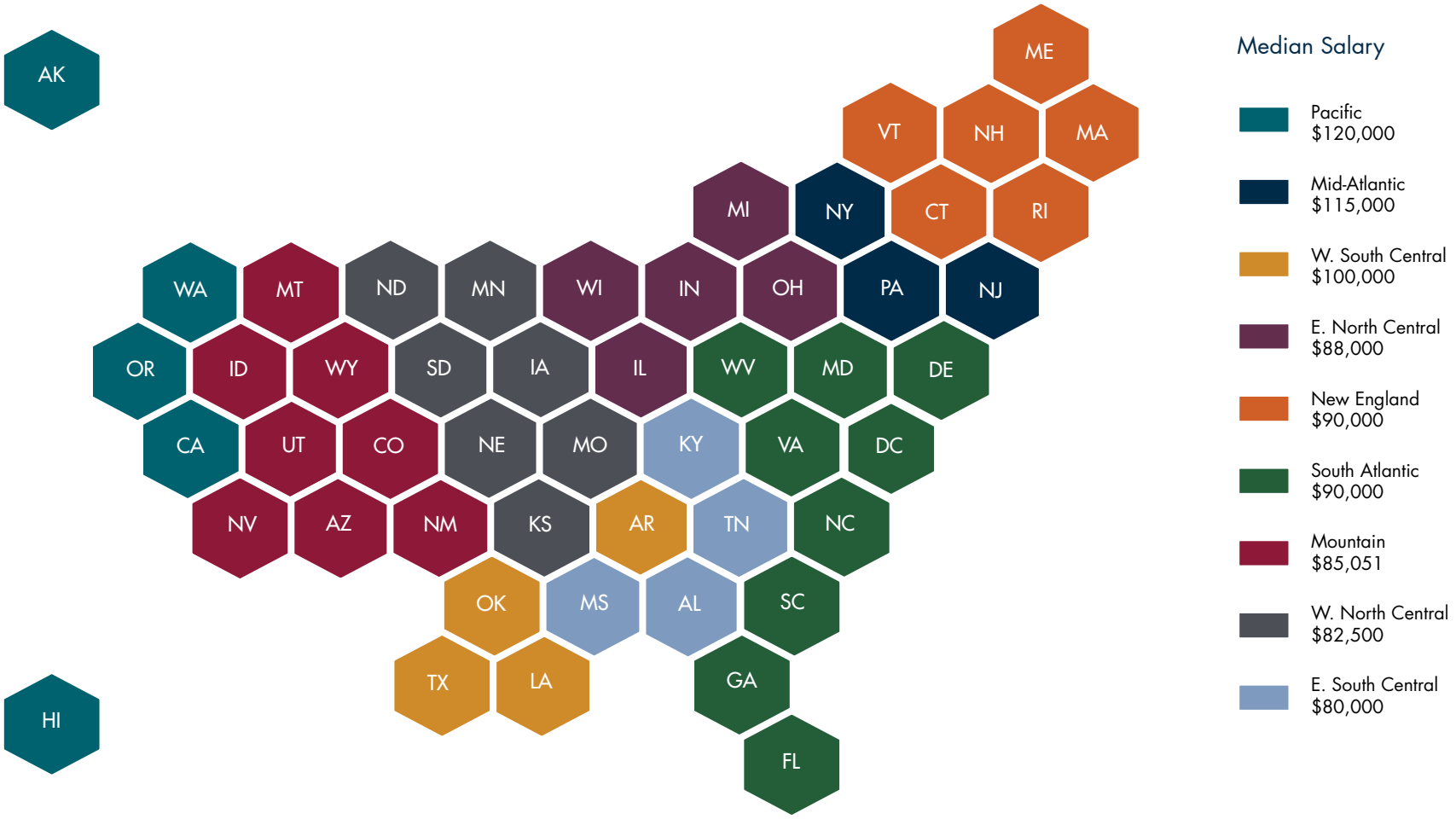
Adjusting for inflation, the median salaries for overall, bar-passage required, and other professional employment modestly increased among new graduates in 2025. The median salary for other (non-professional) positions decreased by $9,600 (13%), following a prior-year increase of $16,500.



Note: *These data are based on law school graduates whose salaries and employment type were reported to NALP and may not be fully representative of the total law school graduating class indicated.*
Data Source: *National Association for Law Placement, 2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 10, 2026.*

Median Salary of Recent J.D. Graduates by Region, 2025

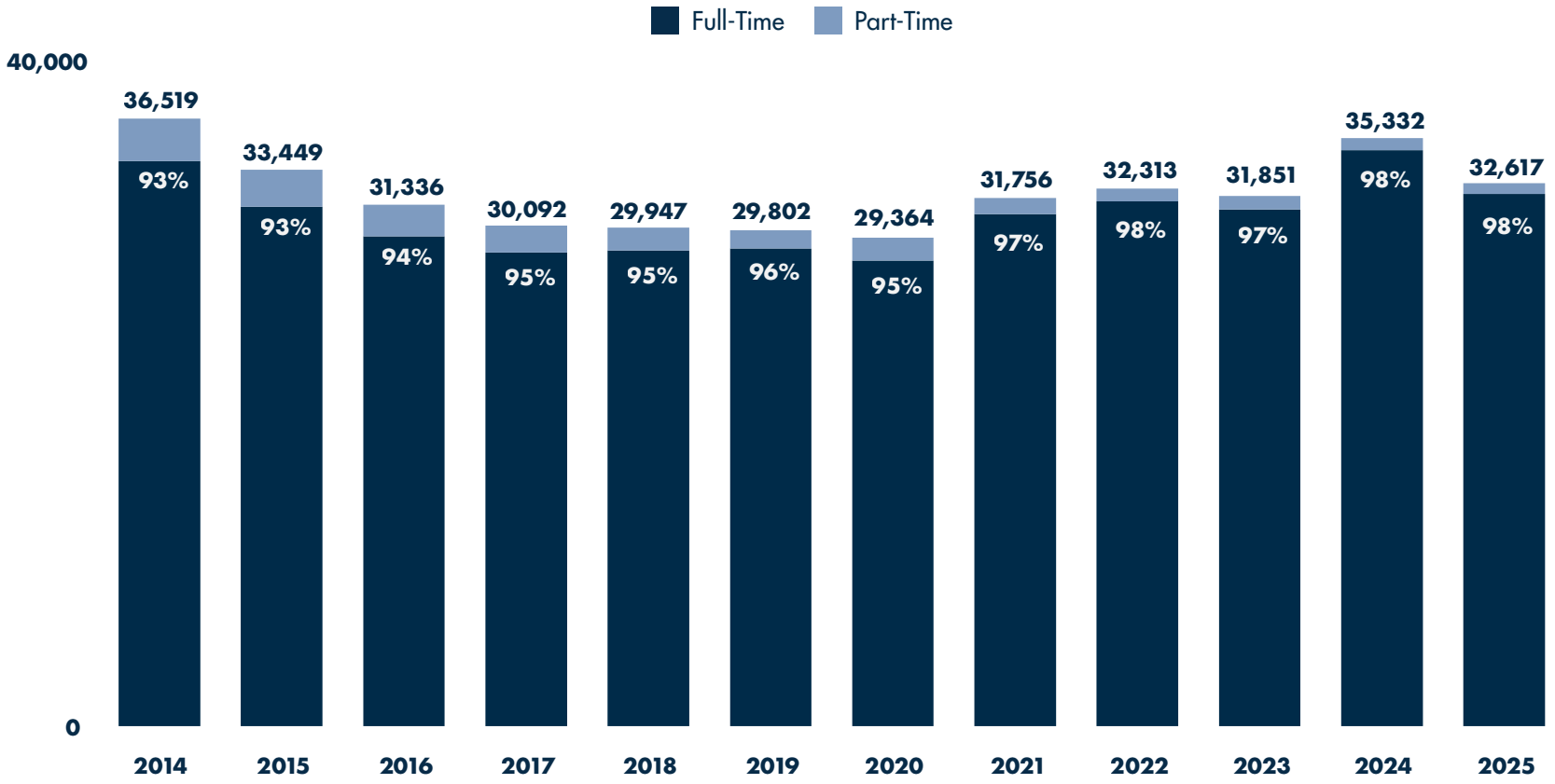
Median salaries for recent graduates were highest in the Pacific (AK, CA, HI, OR, and WA) and Mid-Atlantic (NJ, NY, and PA) regions in 2025. The lowest median salary belonged to the East South Central region (AL, KY, MS, and TN).



Note: *Regions are defined by NALP. TThese data are based on law school graduates whose salaries and employment region were reported to NALP and may not be fully representative of the total law school graduating class indicated. Earnings are reported 10 months post-graduation. Use caution when interpreting data and comparing from year to year.*
Data Source: *National Association for Law Placement, 2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 10, 2026.*

Full-Time and Part-Time Status of Employed Recent J.D. Graduates, 2014-2025

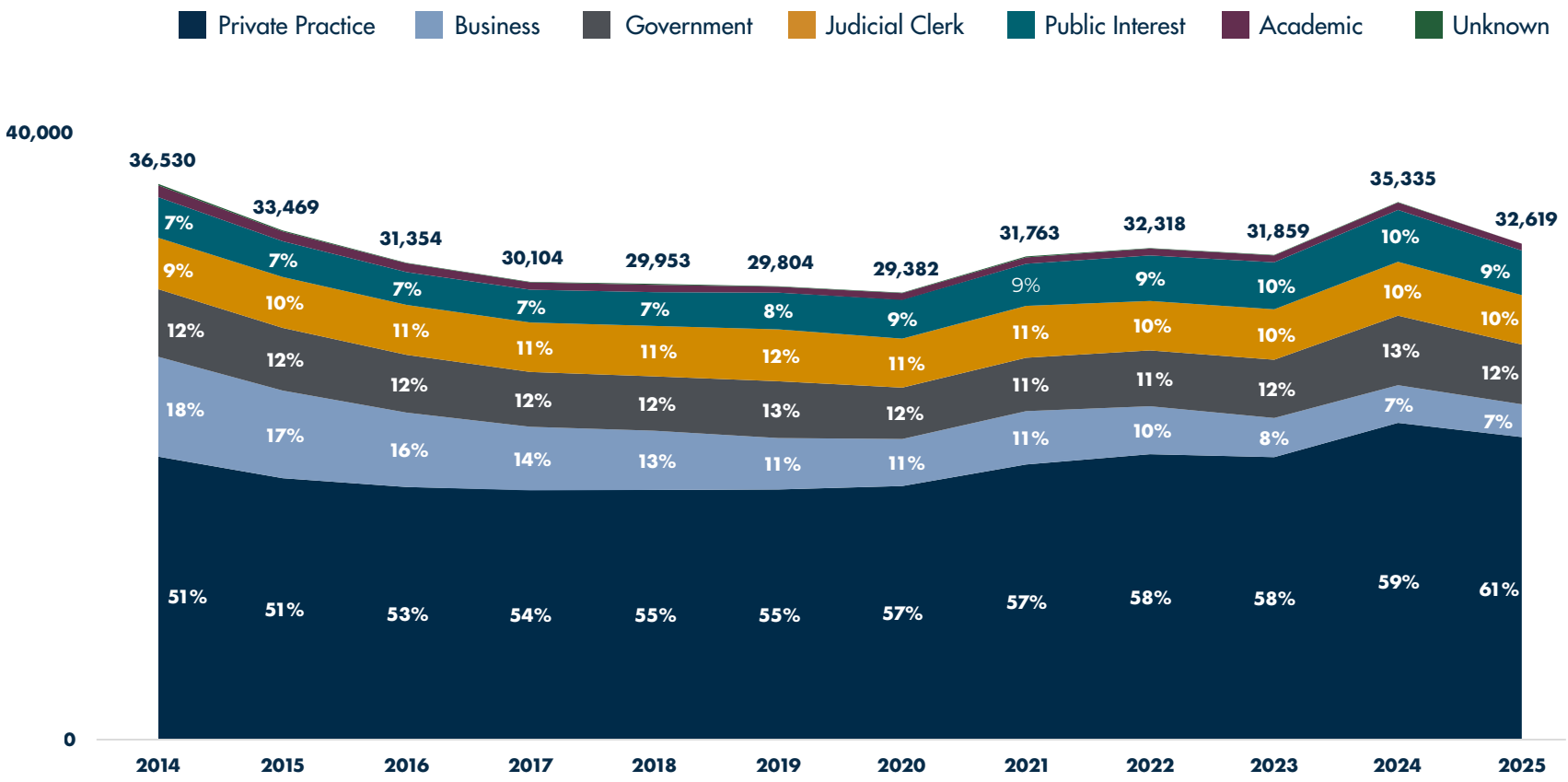
The percentage of employed recent J.D. graduates who had a full-time job has remained relatively unchanged since 2021, hovering from 97% to 98%.



Note: *These data are based on law school graduates whose full-time/part-time employment status was reported to NALP and may not be fully representative of the total law school graduating class indicated. Total counts of employed graduates may differ from slide to slide, due to variations in respondent count between NALP survey components.*
Data Source: *National Association for Law Placement, 2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 10, 2026.*

Recent J.D. Graduate Employment by Sector, 2014-2025

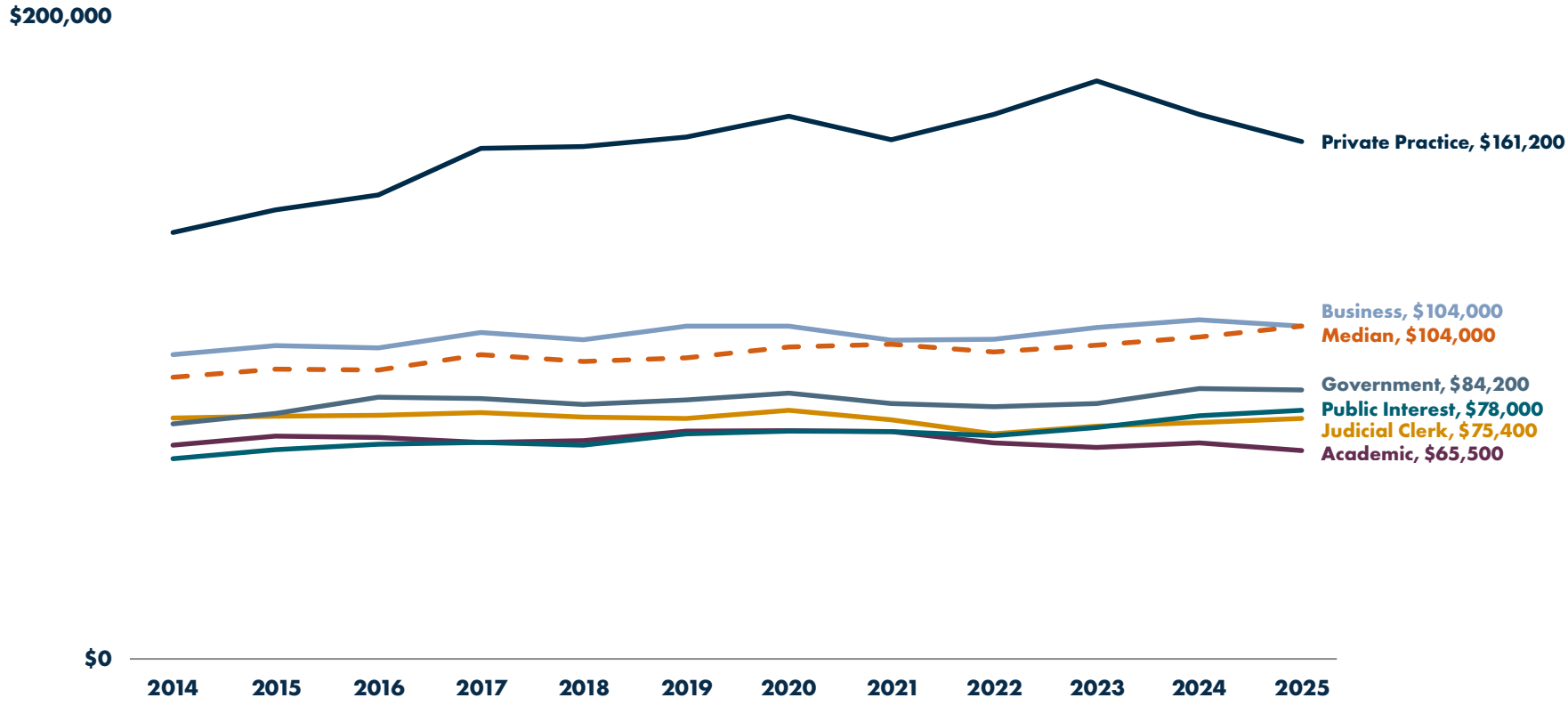
The distribution of employment across sectors remained relatively unchanged between 2024 and 2025, with a two-percentage-point increase in the share of graduates entering private practice employment, and one-percentage-point decreases in the share of graduates entering the public interest and government sectors.



Note: *These data are based on law school graduates whose employment sector was reported to NALP and may not be fully representative of the total law school graduating class indicated. Total counts of employed graduates may differ from slide to slide, due to variations in respondent count between NALP survey components.*
Data Source: *National Association for Law Placement, 2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 10, 2026.*

Median Salary (in 2026 Dollars) of Recent J.D. Graduates by Sector, 2014-2025

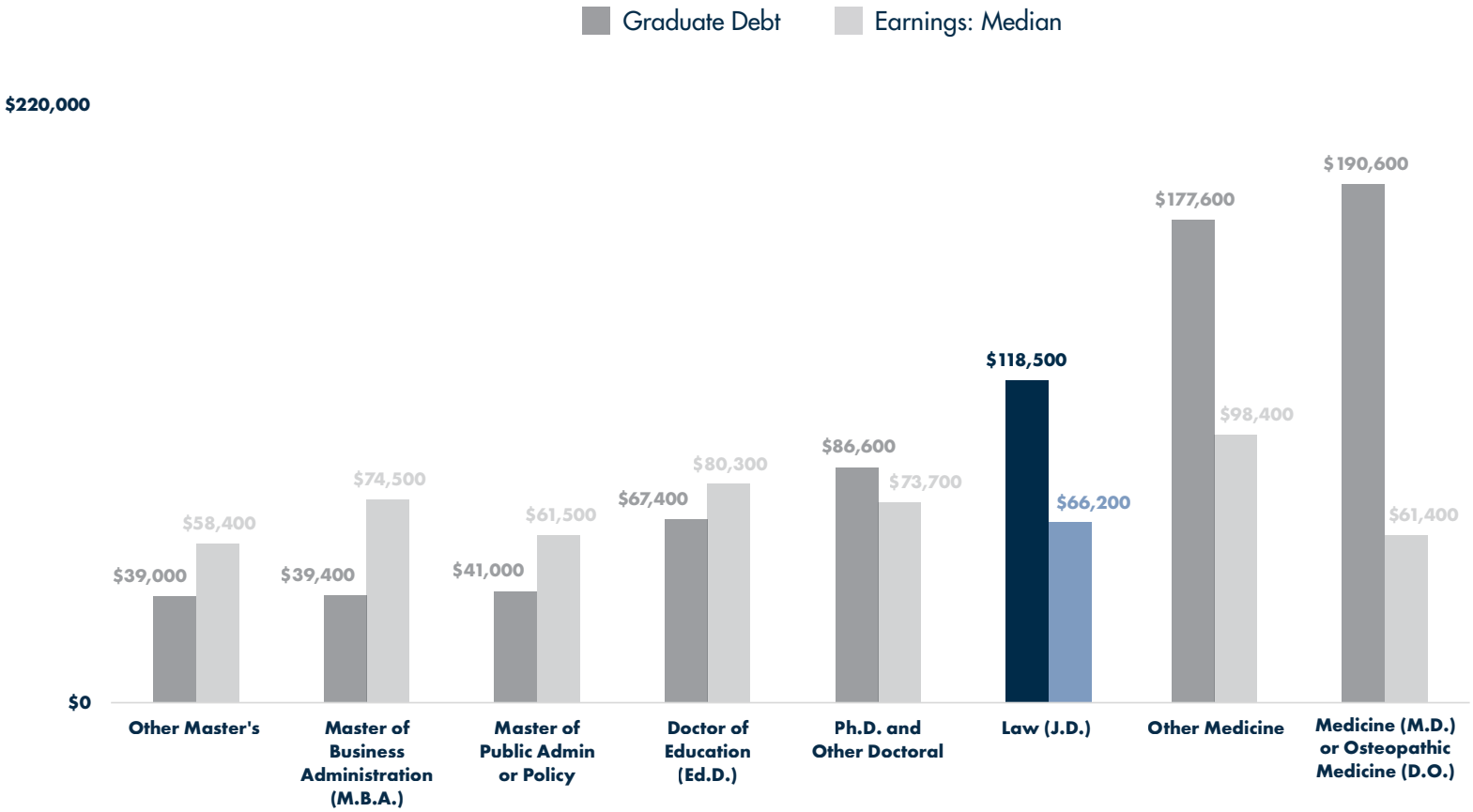
Adjusting for inflation, the median salary among new graduates entering private practice continued to trend downward, declining by around $8,000 from 2024 to 2025. The adjusted median salaries changed modestly in other sectors, with increases of around $1,000 in judicial clerkships and public interest, and decreases not exceeding $2,500 in business, academia, and government.



Note: *These data are based on law school graduates whose salaries and employment sector were reported to NALP and may not be fully representative of the total law school graduating class indicated.*
Data Source: *National Association for Law Placement, 2026. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 10, 2026.*

Median Amount Borrowed for Graduate Education and Median Earnings of Recent Graduates by Program Type, 2019 and 2020

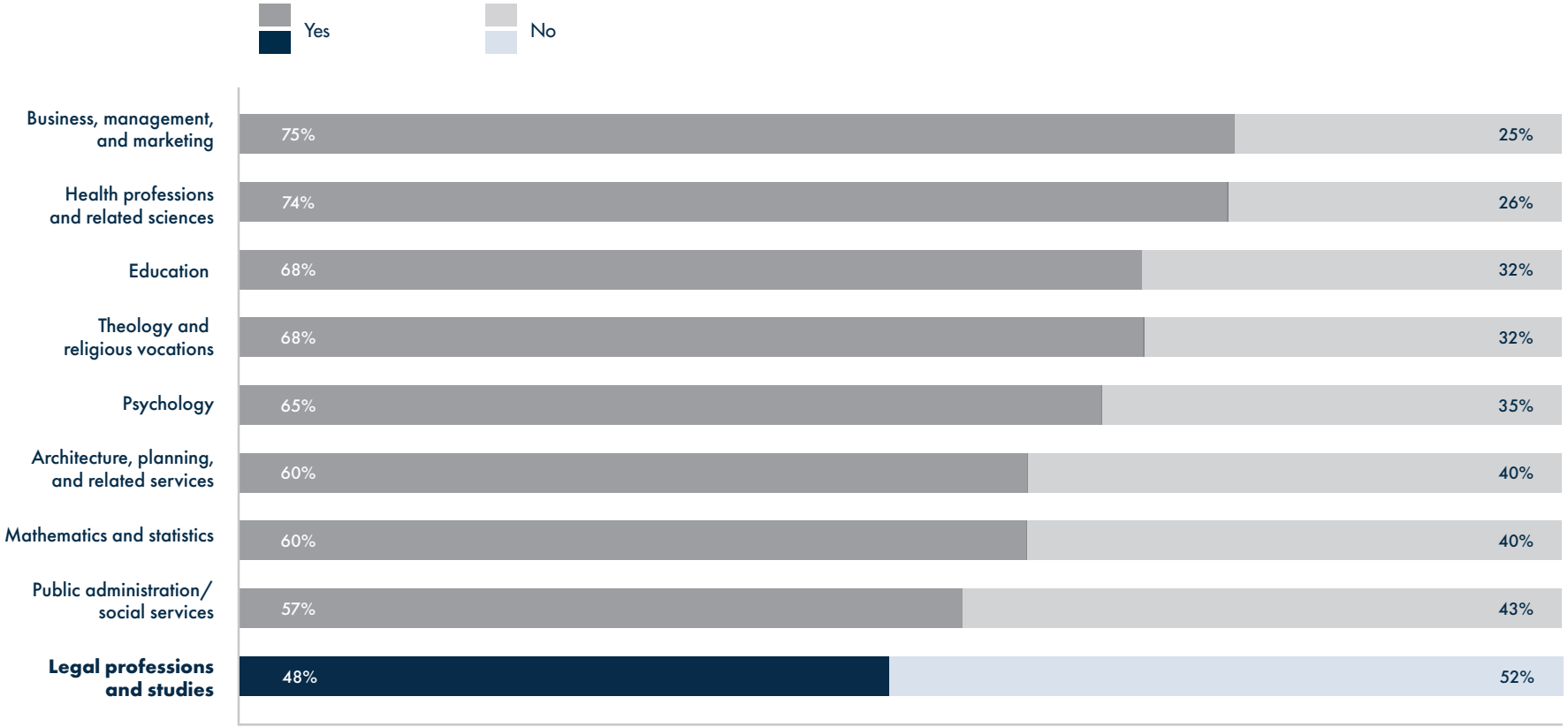
Students who completed law school in 2019 or 2020 accumulated a median of $118,500 in debt towards their legal education.



Note: *College Scorecard reports data in pooled cohorts of two graduation years, representing earnings one year after graduation. College Scorecard values are based on institutions who reported median debt and earnings values to College Scorecard. The resulting medians may not be fully representative of the total graduating class indicated. "Other Master's" includes any master's credential other than an M.B.A. or an M.P.P./M.P.A. "Ph.D. and Other Doctoral" includes all nonmedical doctorates other than a Doctor of Education. "Other Medicine" includes medical doctoral degrees other than an M.D. or a D.O., in disciplines like dentistry (D.D.S.), pharmacy (Pharm.D.), and veterinary medicine (D.V.M.).*
Data Source: *U.S. Department of Education, College Scorecard Field of Study Data, 2024 (2019-2020 Cohort). Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute. Retrieved on August 13, 2025.*

Percentage of Advanced Degree Recipients Who Believe Their Graduate Degree Was Worth the Cost

A longitudinal study of class of 2008 college graduates found that, among those who earned an advanced degree, a majority agreed their graduate education was worth the cost. However, those who earned an advanced degree in legal professions and studies (including J.D. recipients) were the exception — just under half (48%) agreed their graduate education was worth the cost.



Data Source: *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B:08/18): First Look at the 2018 Employment and Educational Experiences of 2007–08 College Graduates. Data presentation, analysis, and commentary by AccessLex Institute.*

Detailed Data Sources

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