

# NALP FOUNDATION

RESEARCH | RESOURCES | RESULTS

## Study of U.S. Law School Alumni Employment and Satisfaction

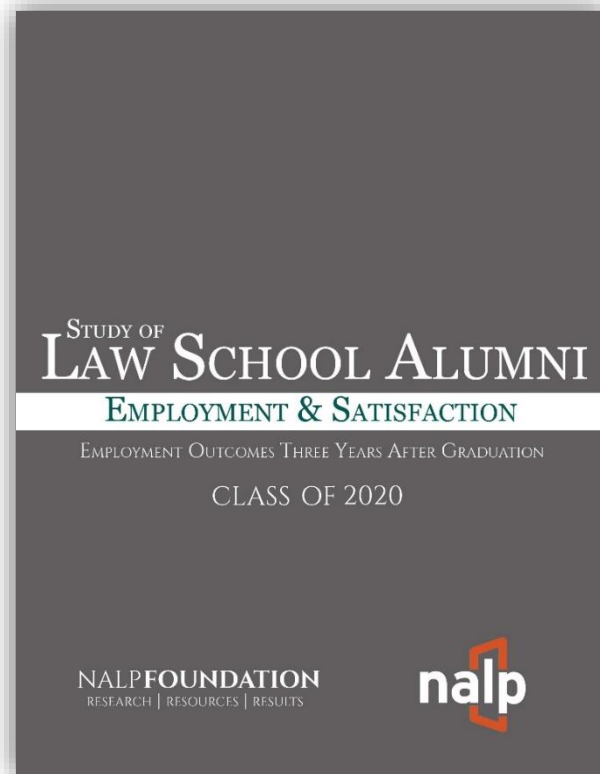


Association of  
American Law Schools

AALS Institutional Advancement Presentation  
September 25, 2024

# Law School Alumni Employment & Satisfaction

## Classes of 2010 - 2020



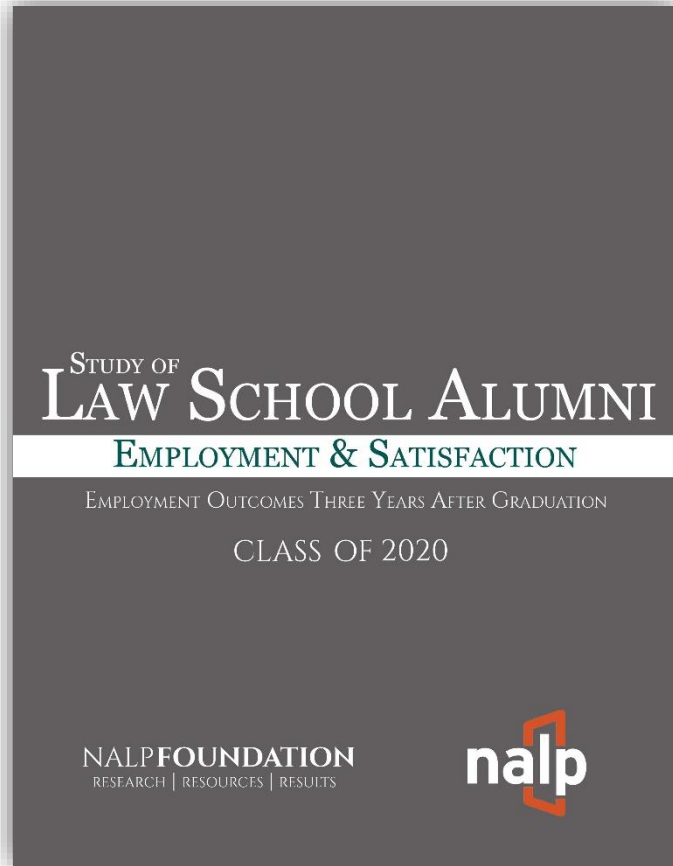
# Background & Methodology

- Study developed by The NALP Foundation and NALP to obtain data beyond the ABA/NALP 10-month post-graduation reporting mark on:
  - Employment
  - Career satisfaction
  - Return on investment in legal education
- Frequency and scope:
  - Class of 2010 Beta study
  - Conducted annually since then
  - Expanded in 2017 to include Canadian law schools
- All ABA accredited law schools invited to participate via their Deans each year.
- Each school's primary contact receives a unique survey link to share with their alumni, as well as a study distribution guide.
- Aggregate results from over 25,000 alumni.

# Report Coverage

- Part I: Employment Status
- Part II: Annual Compensation
- Part III: Mobility
- Part IV: Reasons for Job Change
- Part V: Work Setting and Career Trajectory
- Part VI: Dimensions of Satisfaction
- Part VII: Experiential Learning Opportunities
- Part VIII: Post-Graduate Engagement
- Part IX: Professional Identity Formation
- Part X: Educational Debt and Impact
- Part XI: Ongoing Pandemic Impacts

# Class of 2020 Study



- Aggregate information from 1,581 alumni:
  - 1,415 alumni from 35 U.S. law schools
  - 166 alumni from four Canadian law schools
- Generous grant from AccessLex Institute:
  - Supporting participation of 6 HBCU law schools
  - Additional law schools with significant levels of students and alumni from groups underrepresented in the legal profession
- New questions added to address:
  - Required in office days
  - Leadership transparency and communication
- Continued to examine:
  - Pandemic's impact on alumni careers
  - Alumni preferences re engagement with law schools
  - Educational debt
  - Professional Identity Formation
  - Remote work

# Class of 2020 In Review

## Aligned with Prior Studies

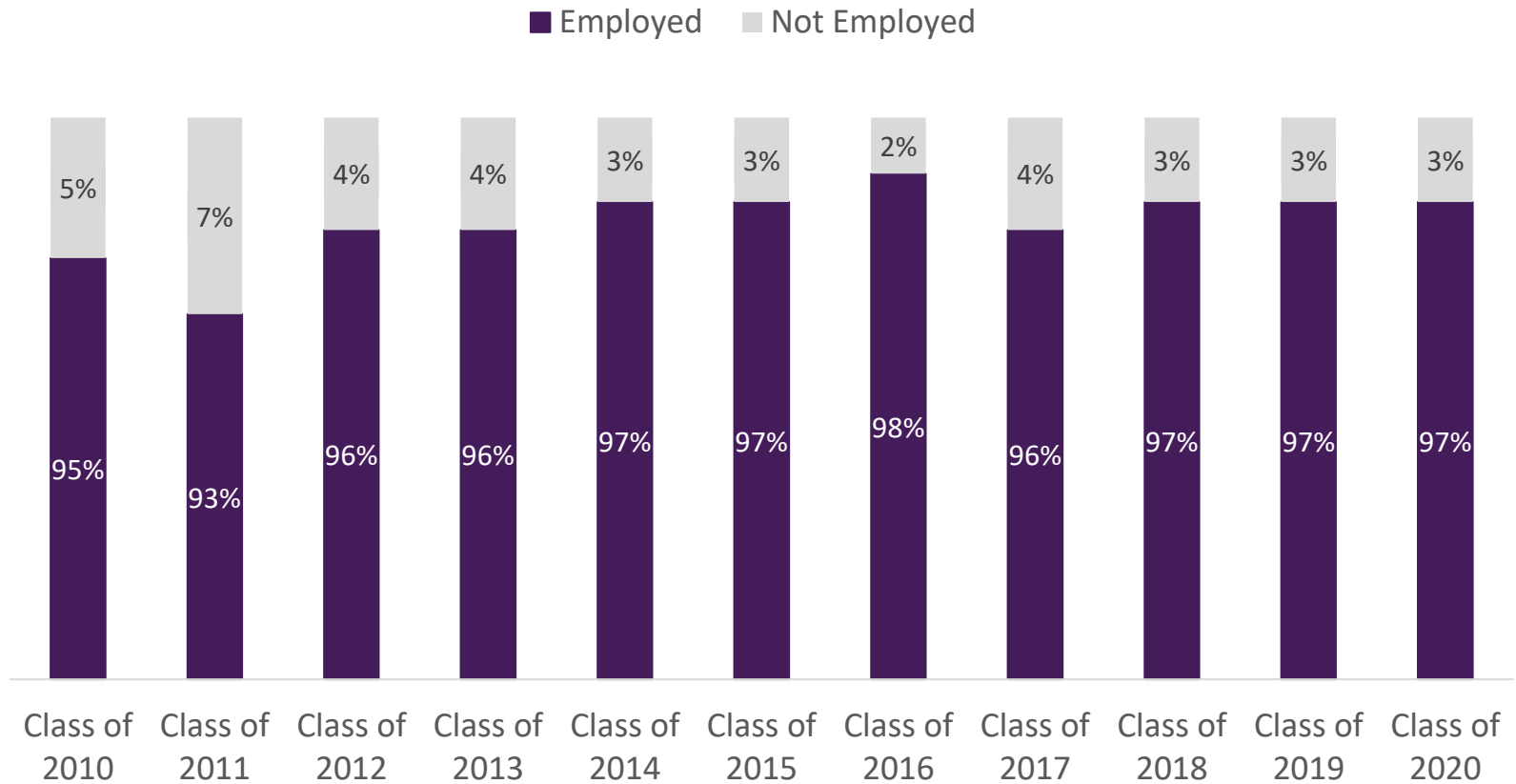
- ✓ Number of jobs held
- ✓ High overall job satisfaction
- ✓ Compensation more than \$300,000

## Shifts

- ↓ Associates of color mobility
- ↓ Intention to seek a new job
- ↓ Graduates working fully remotely
- ↑ Female average educational debt
- ↑ Graduates working completely in office

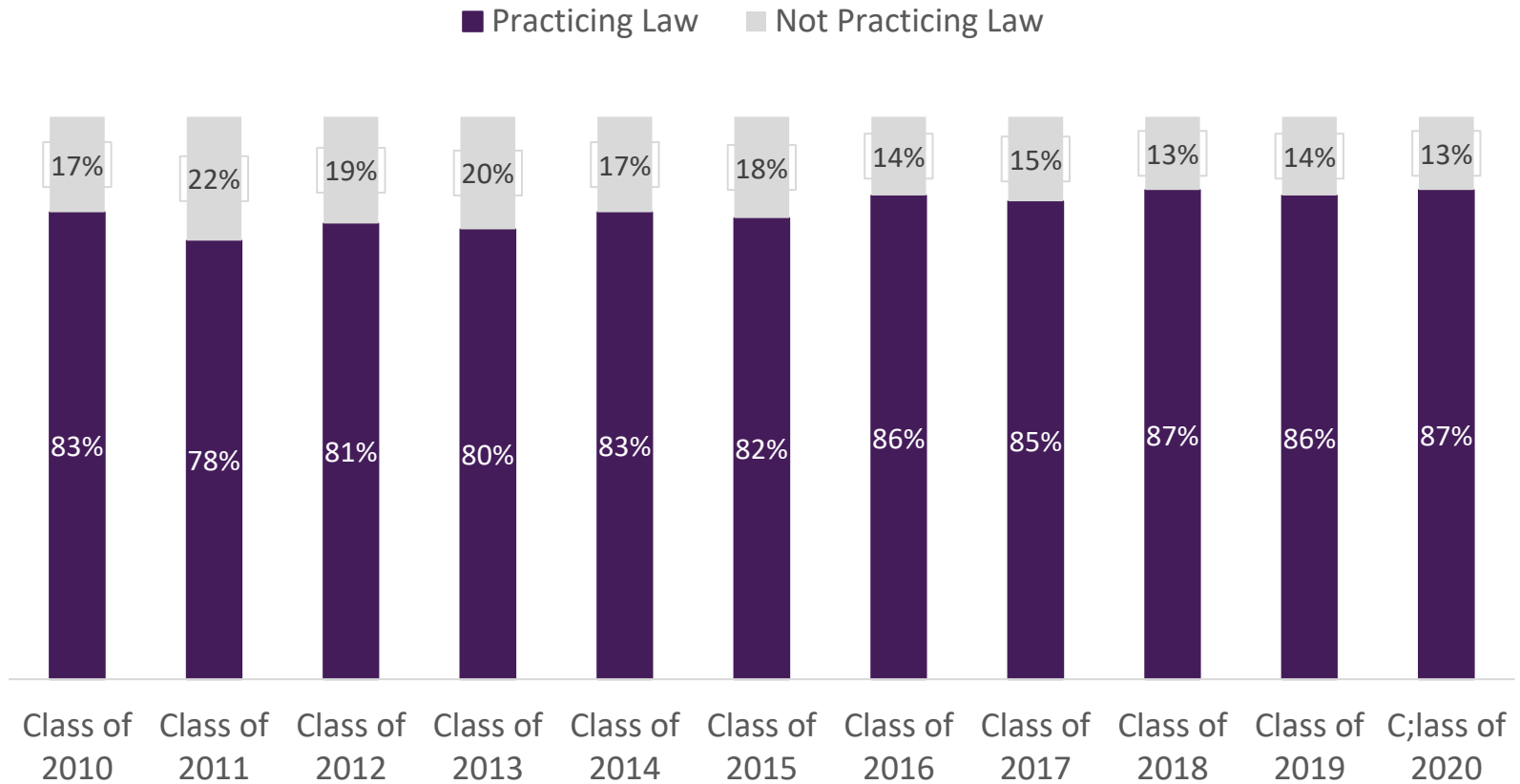
# **Where Are Graduates Today?**

# Employment Status Three Years After Graduation Classes of 2010-2020

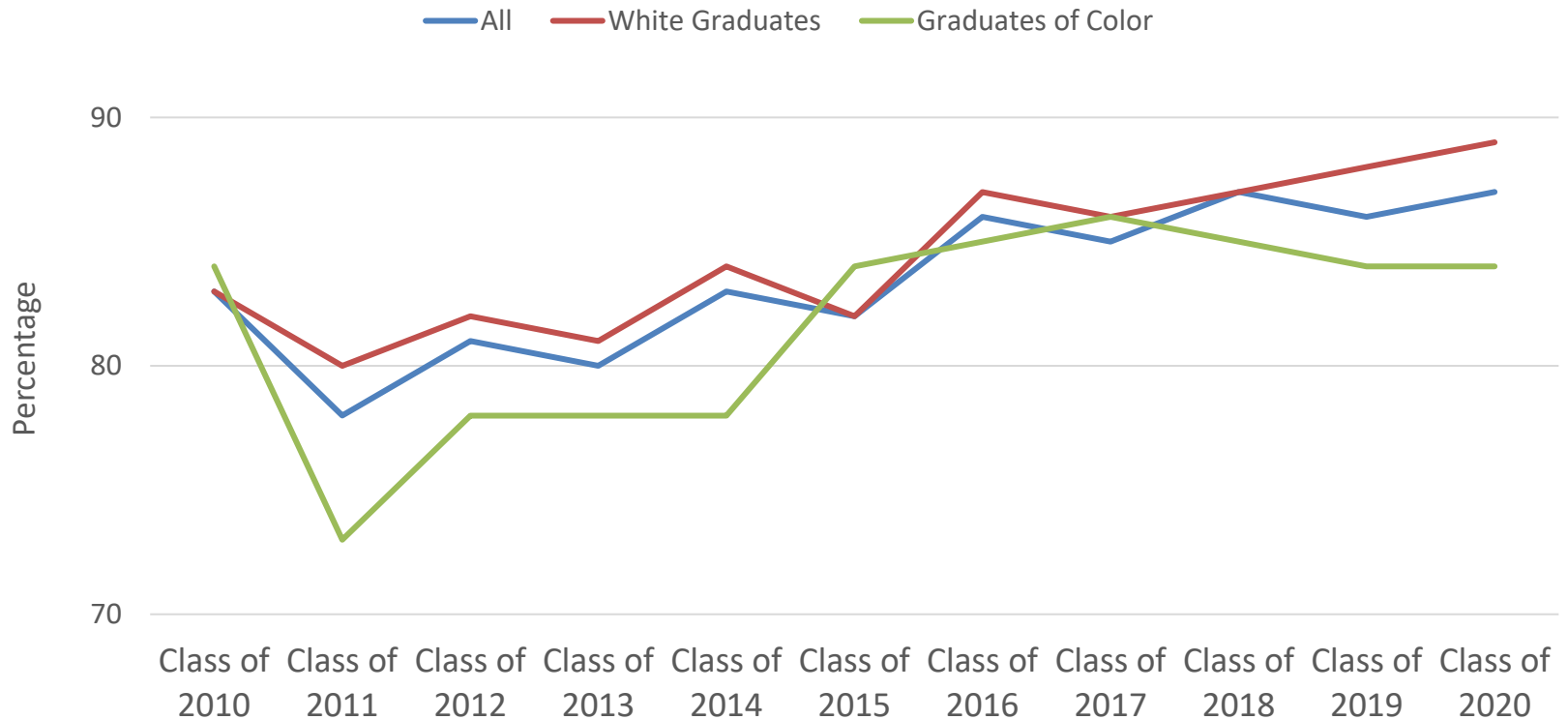




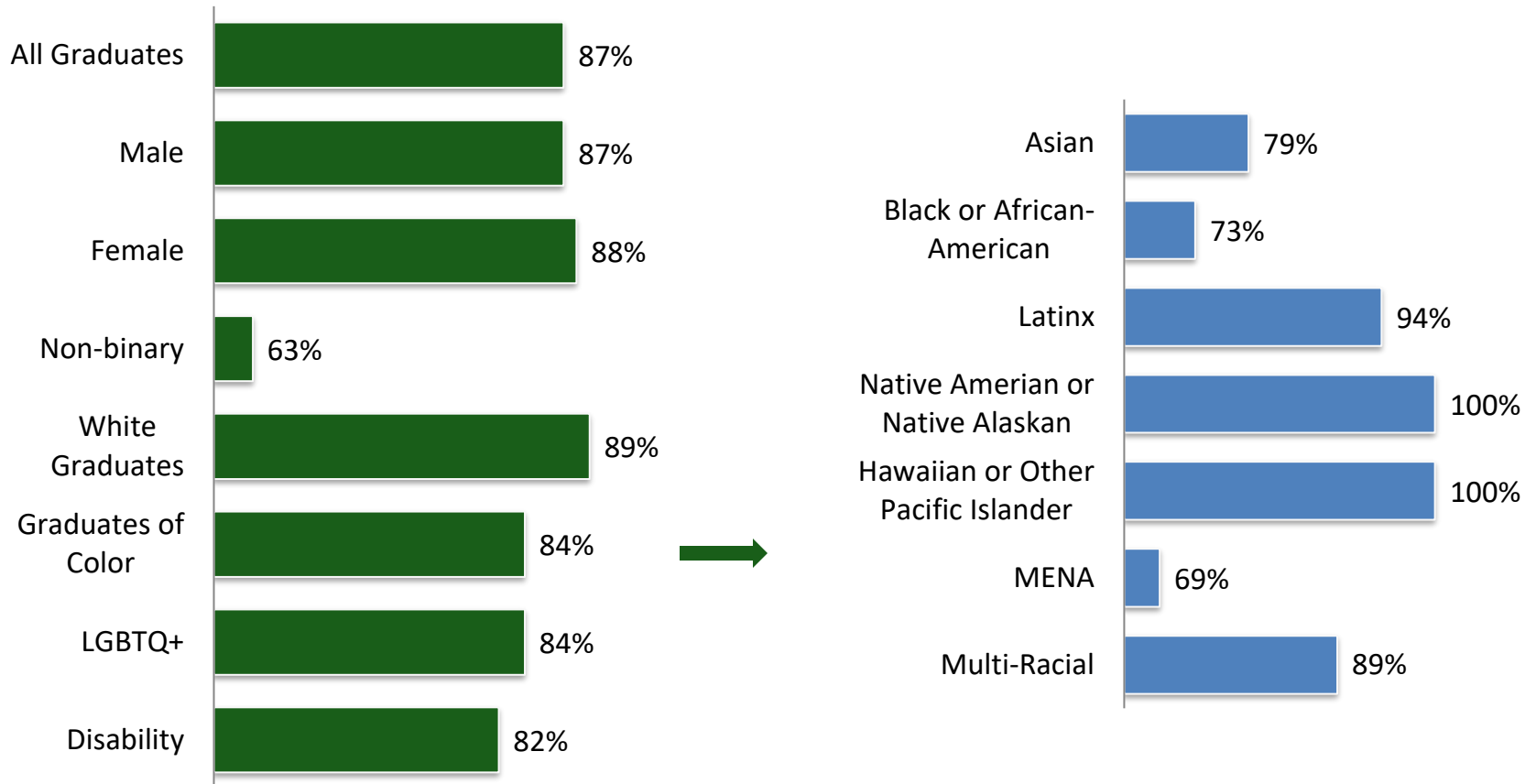
# Whether Practicing Law Classes of 2010-2020



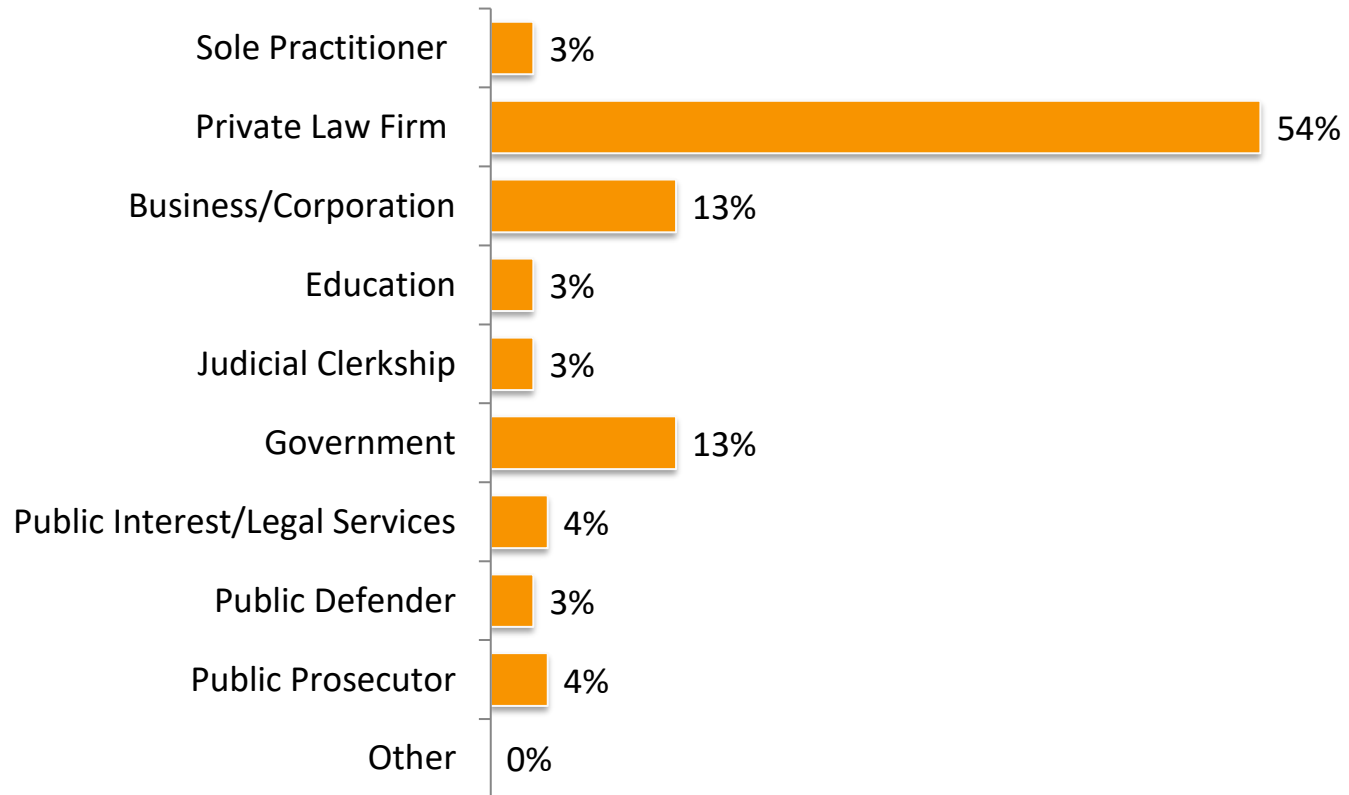
# Practicing Law Classes of 2010-2020



# Practicing Law Class of 2020



# Current Work Setting Class of 2020



*All percentages have been rounded.*

# Current Work Setting Class of 2020

	Male	Female	Non-Binary	White Graduates	Graduates of Color
Sole Practitioner	4%	2%	0%	2%	2%
Law Firm	54%	54%	13%	54%	53%
Business/Corporation	15%	11%	13%	11%	17%
Education	3%	3%	12%	3%	2%
Judicial Clerkship	3%	3%	0%	3%	3%
Government	12%	15%	50%	13%	13%
Public Defender	3%	2%	3%	12%	4%
Public Interest/Legal Services	4%	3%	7%	0%	5%
Public Prosecutor	4%	5%	4%	0%	5%

*All percentages have been rounded.*

# Current Work Setting Class of 2020

	Asian	Black or African-American	Latinx	Native American or Alaskan Native	Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Multi-racial	MENA
Sole Practitioner	0%	1%	4%	0%	0%	3%	0%
Law Firm	54%	44%	59%	0%	33%	57%	46%
Business/Corporation	21%	23%	11%	0%	0%	11%	46%
Education	9%	4%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Judicial Clerkship	8%	1%	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%
Government	8%	18%	13%	100%	0%	13%	8%
Public Defender	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	3%	0%
Public Interest/Legal Services	0%	4%	8%	0%	0%	9%	0%
Public Prosecutor	0%	5%	2%	0%	67%	1%	0%

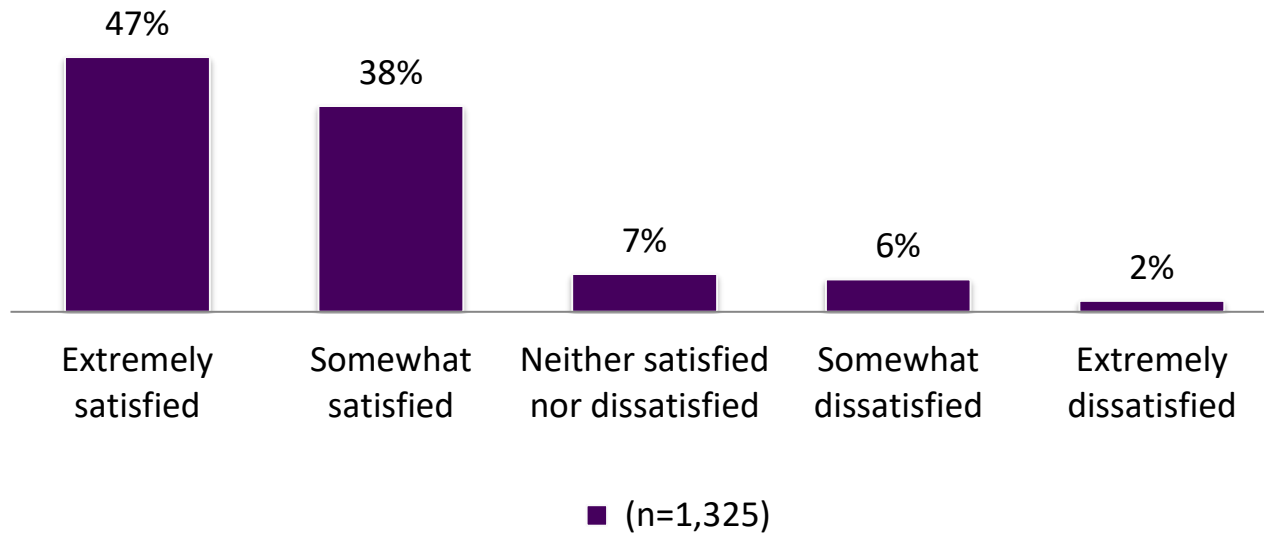
*All percentages have been rounded.*

# Current Work Setting Class of 2020

	LGBTQ+	Disability
Sole Practitioner	1%	4%
Law Firm	47%	37%
Business/Corporation	12%	12%
Education	3%	3%
Judicial Clerkship	5%	4%
Government	15%	19%
Public Defender	5%	4%
Public Interest/Legal Services	9%	12%
Public Prosecutor	4%	4%

*All percentages have been rounded.*

# Overall Satisfaction with Current Job Class of 2020





# In Their Own Words

**Bar exam preparation:** *The fundamental 1L classes were really helpful for the bar exam, however, the classes that helped most for the actual practice of law were the upper-level writing and practice courses.*

**Broad skills:** *[My law school] helped me immensely in achieving my career goals. They opened up a professional network that runs deep and helps me to this day. They taught me how to critically think and examine legal issues from multiple angles. They taught me how to interact with law firm partners and hiring staff.*

**Experiential education:** *All the experiential learning experiences throughout law school (clinics, research) really allowed me to forge substantive lawyering skills and real work experience before working full-time as a lawyer.*

**Key role of faculty:** *I can draw a direct line to my current position from [a specific professor's] assistance in my legal career.*

**Networking:** *Law school provided me with professional relationship[s], with both professors and fellow classmates, that I have been able to utilize throughout my legal career.*

“

”

# In Their Own Words

## COVID Impact

*They didn't even follow through in providing us a graduation ceremony since we graduated in the middle of the Covid Pandemic.*

*People are PISSED we never got an official graduation and that a make up graduation has never been discussed.*

*[U]nfortunately we graduated in the beginning of the pandemic so it was hard finding a job during that time.*

*I felt abandoned as soon as Covid happened and they did not provide further resources to help me pass the Bar Exam.*

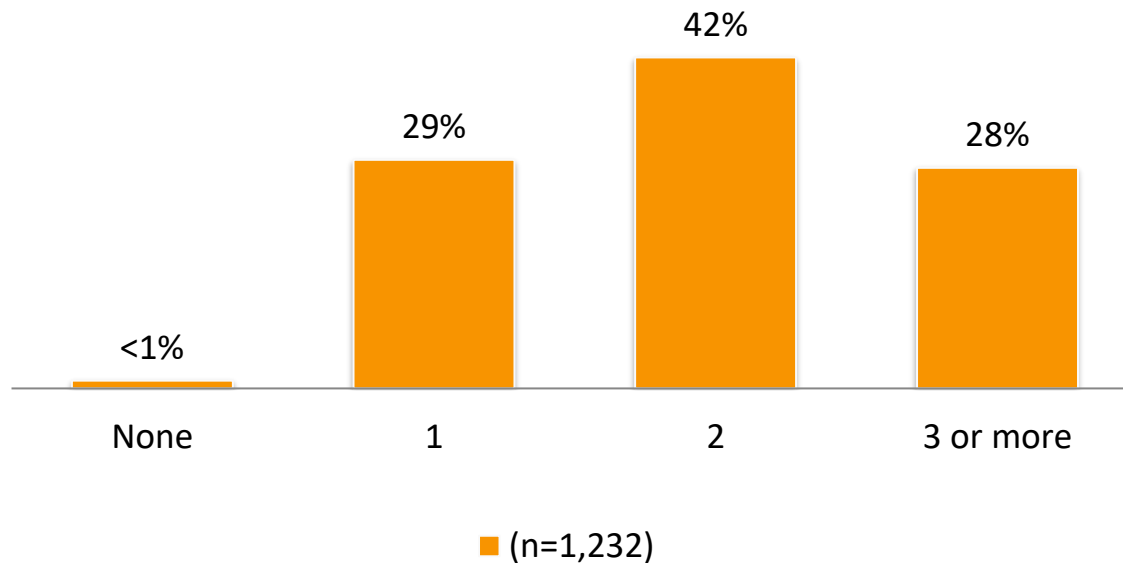
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# Mobility

# Mobility: Number of Jobs Class of 2020

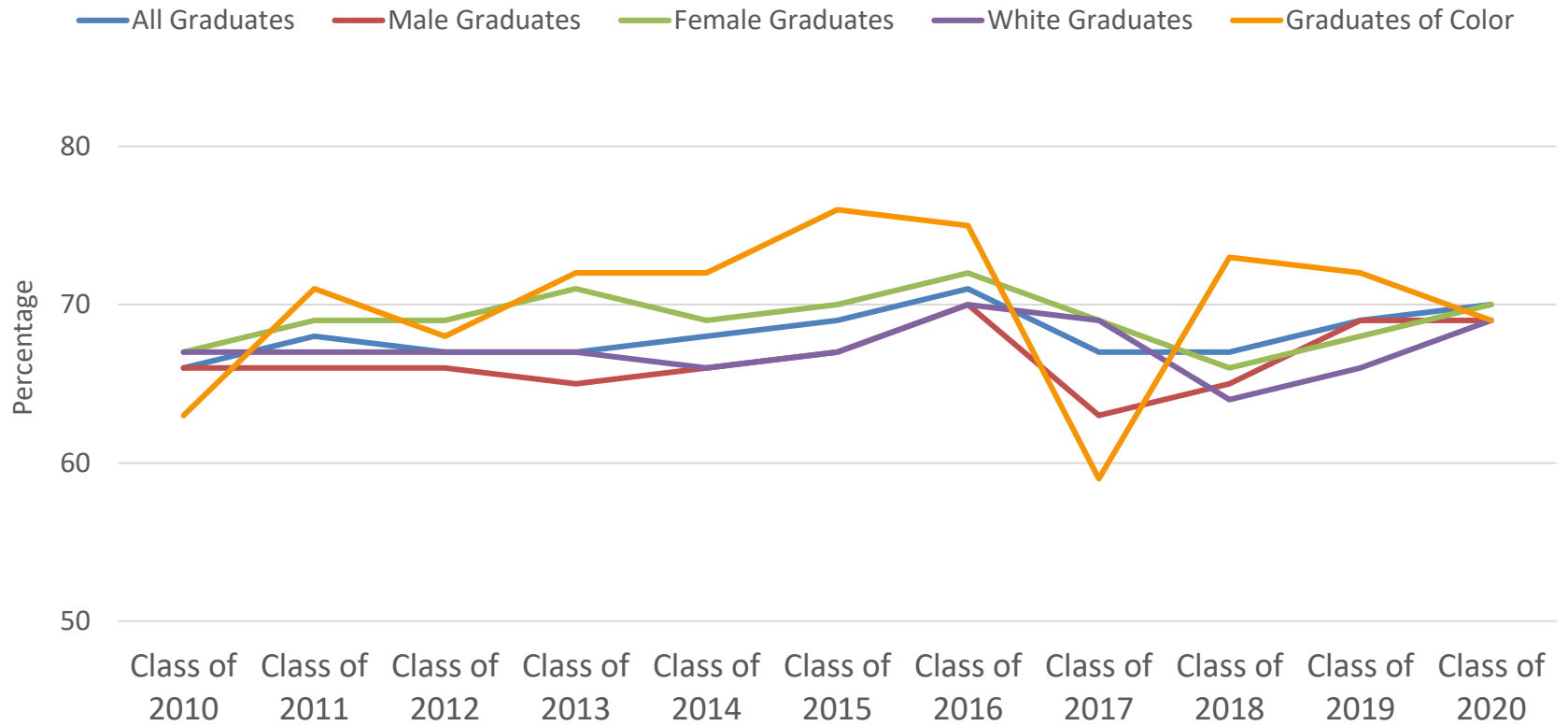
## Total Number of Jobs Held Since Graduation



*All percentages have been rounded.*

# Mobility: Number of Jobs Since Law School Graduation Classes of 2010-2020

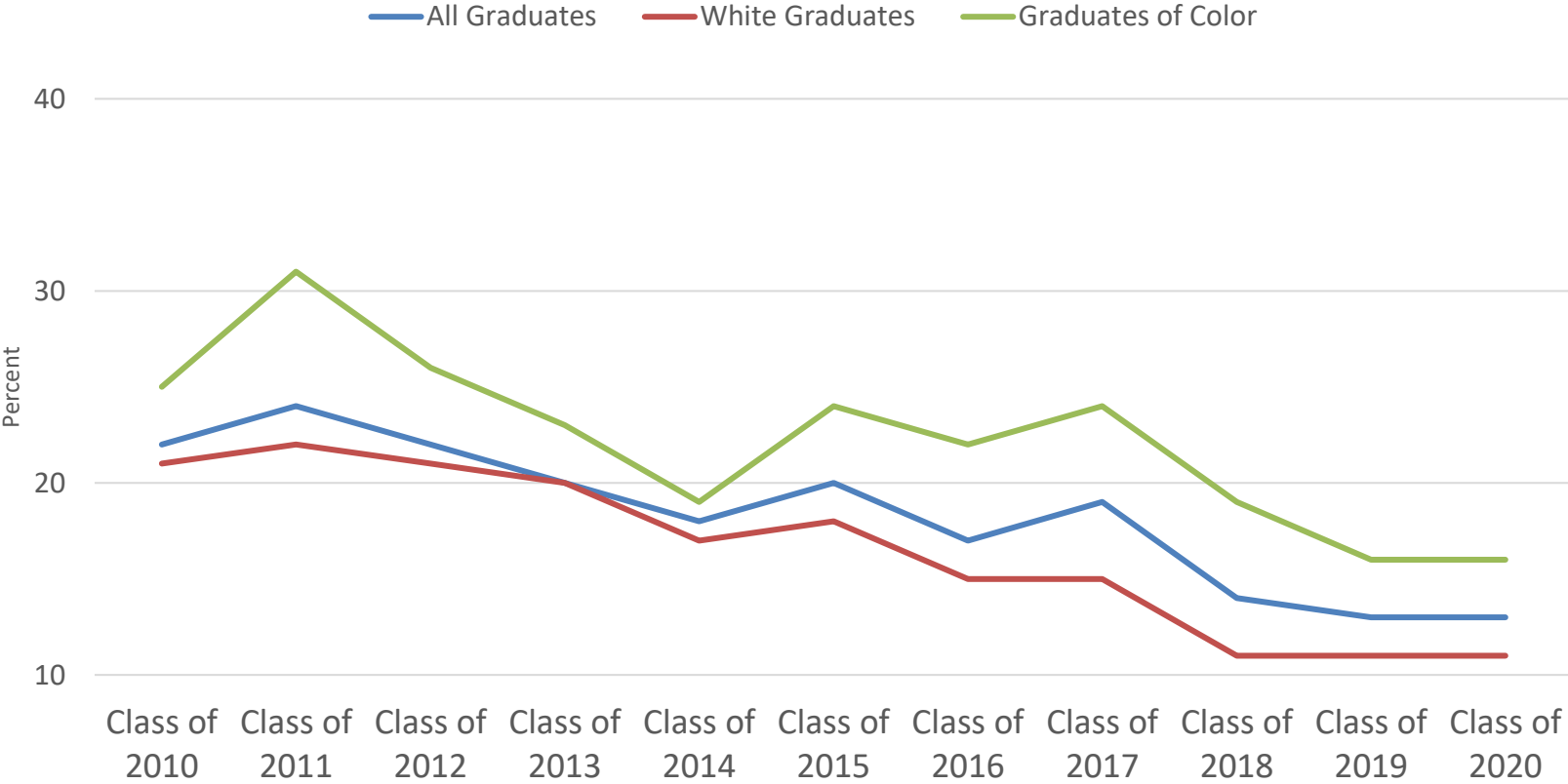
## Held Two or More Jobs



# Mobility: Intentions to Change Jobs

## Classes of 2010-2020

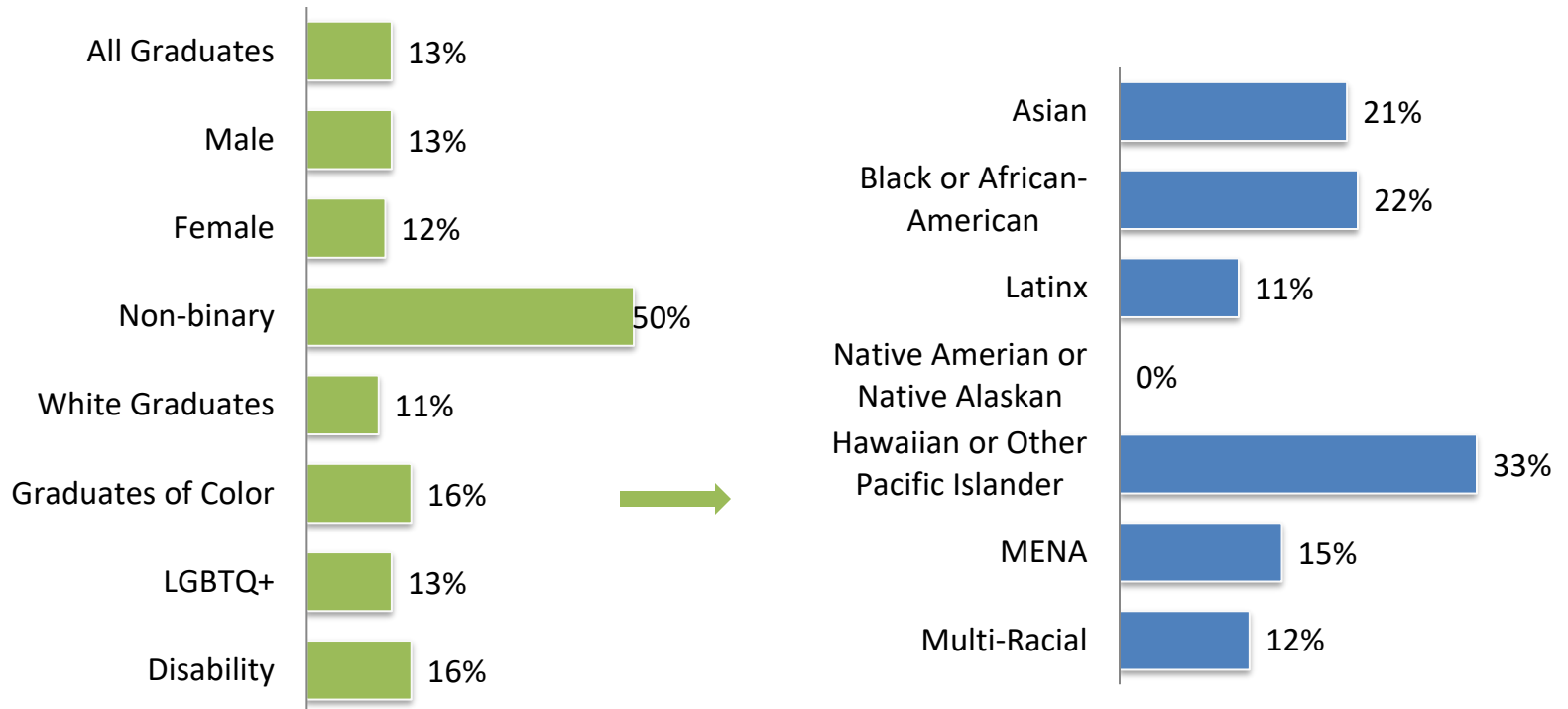
### Actively Seeking New Job



# Mobility: Intentions to Change Jobs

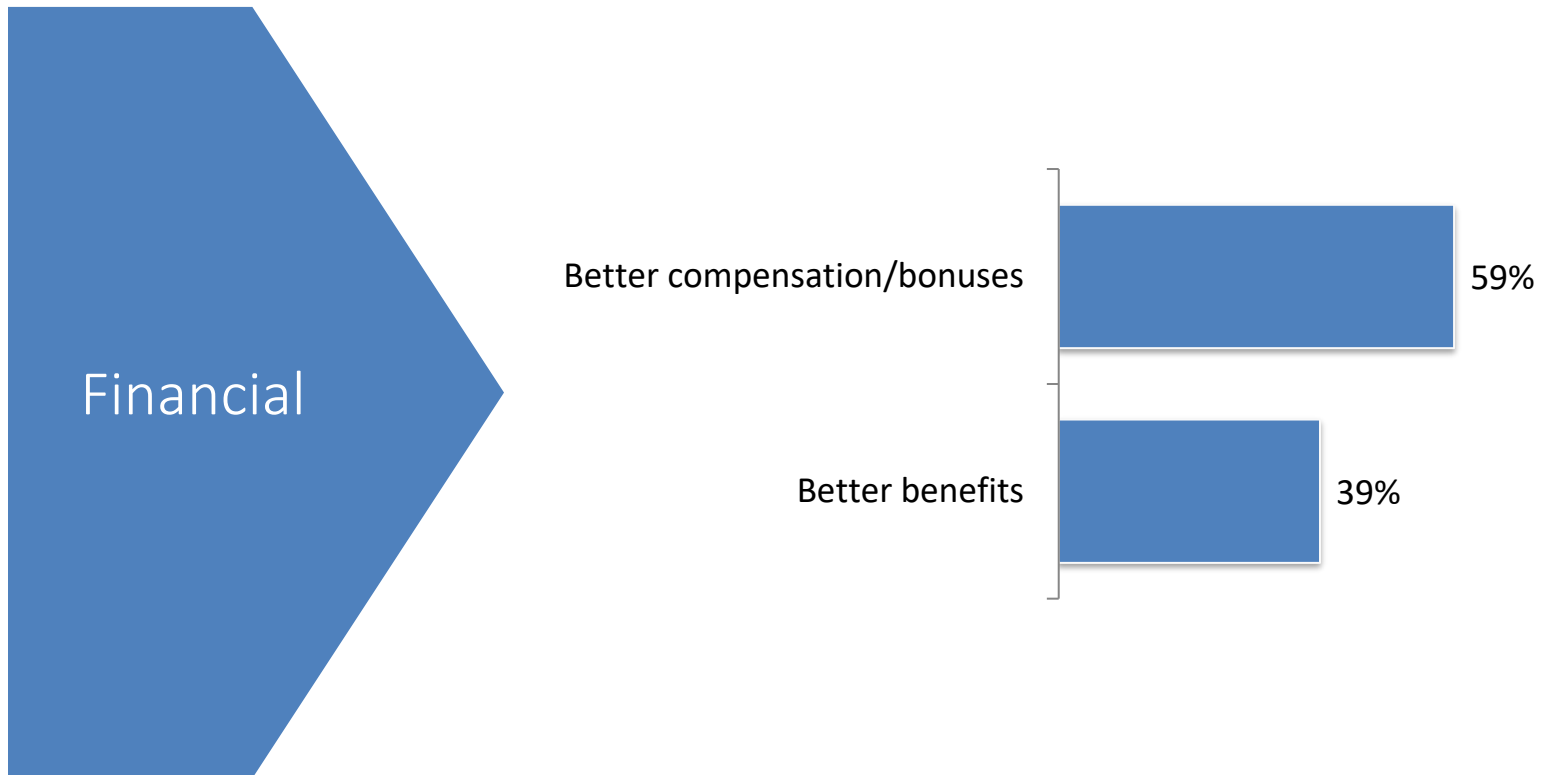
## Class of 2020

### Actively Seeking Another Job



# Alumni Study: Reasons for Job Change

**Reported by Class of 2020 Graduates**

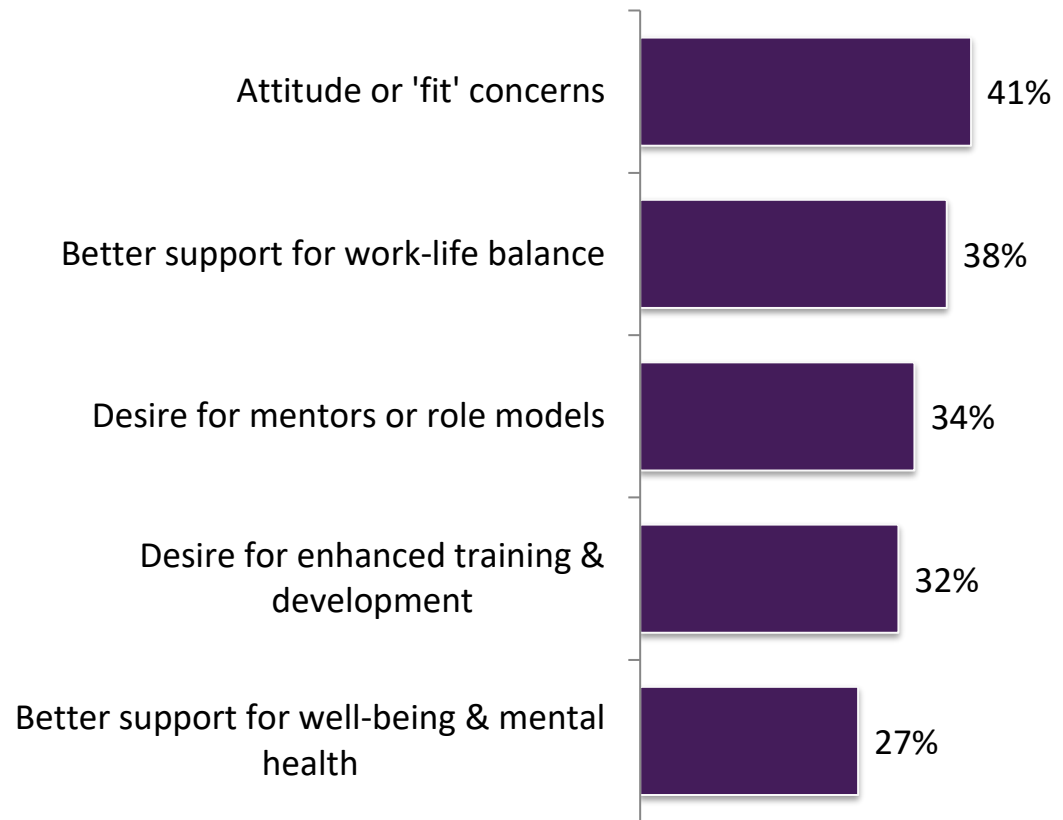




# Alumni Study: Reasons for Job Change

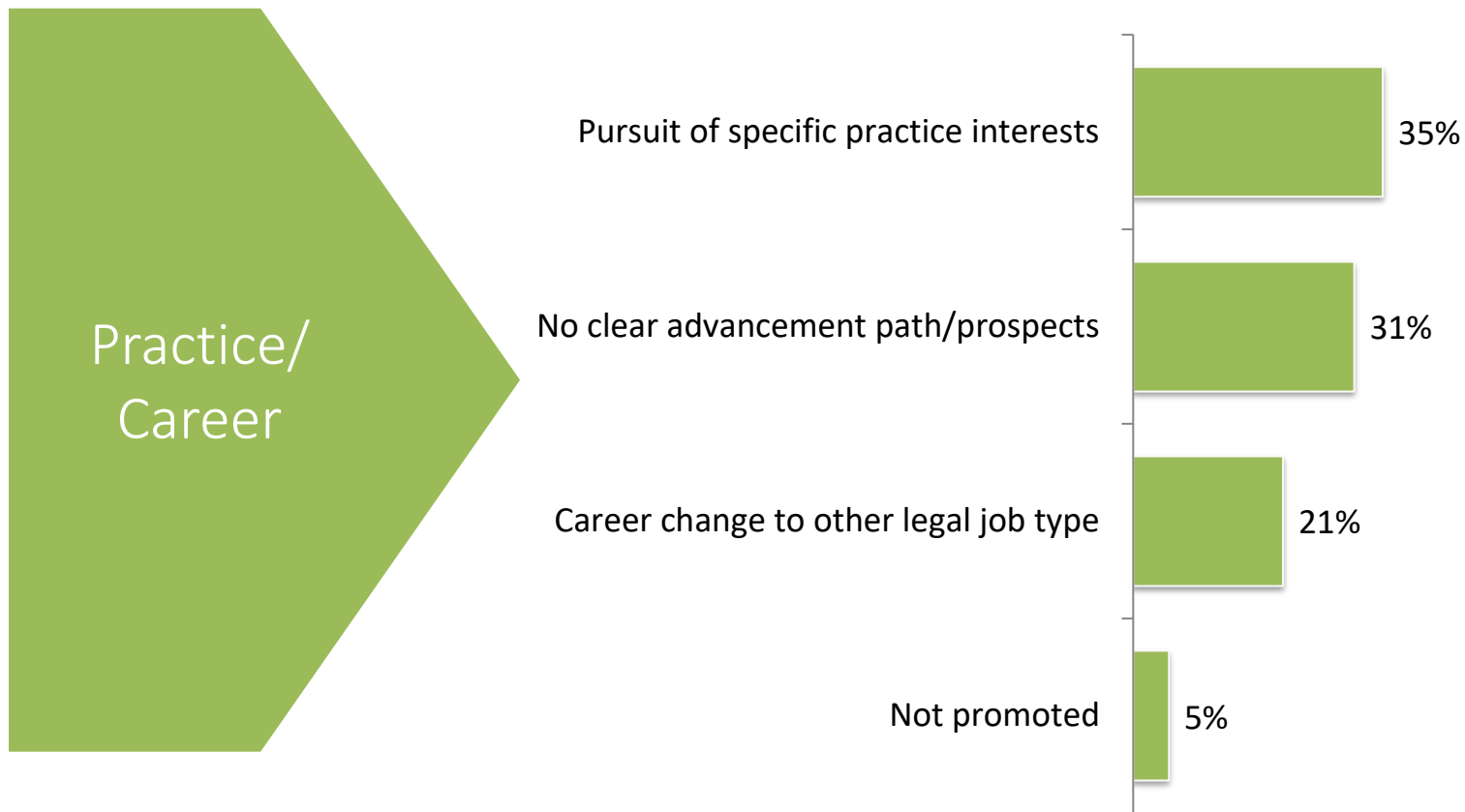
## Reported by Class of 2020 Graduates

Community  
&  
Development



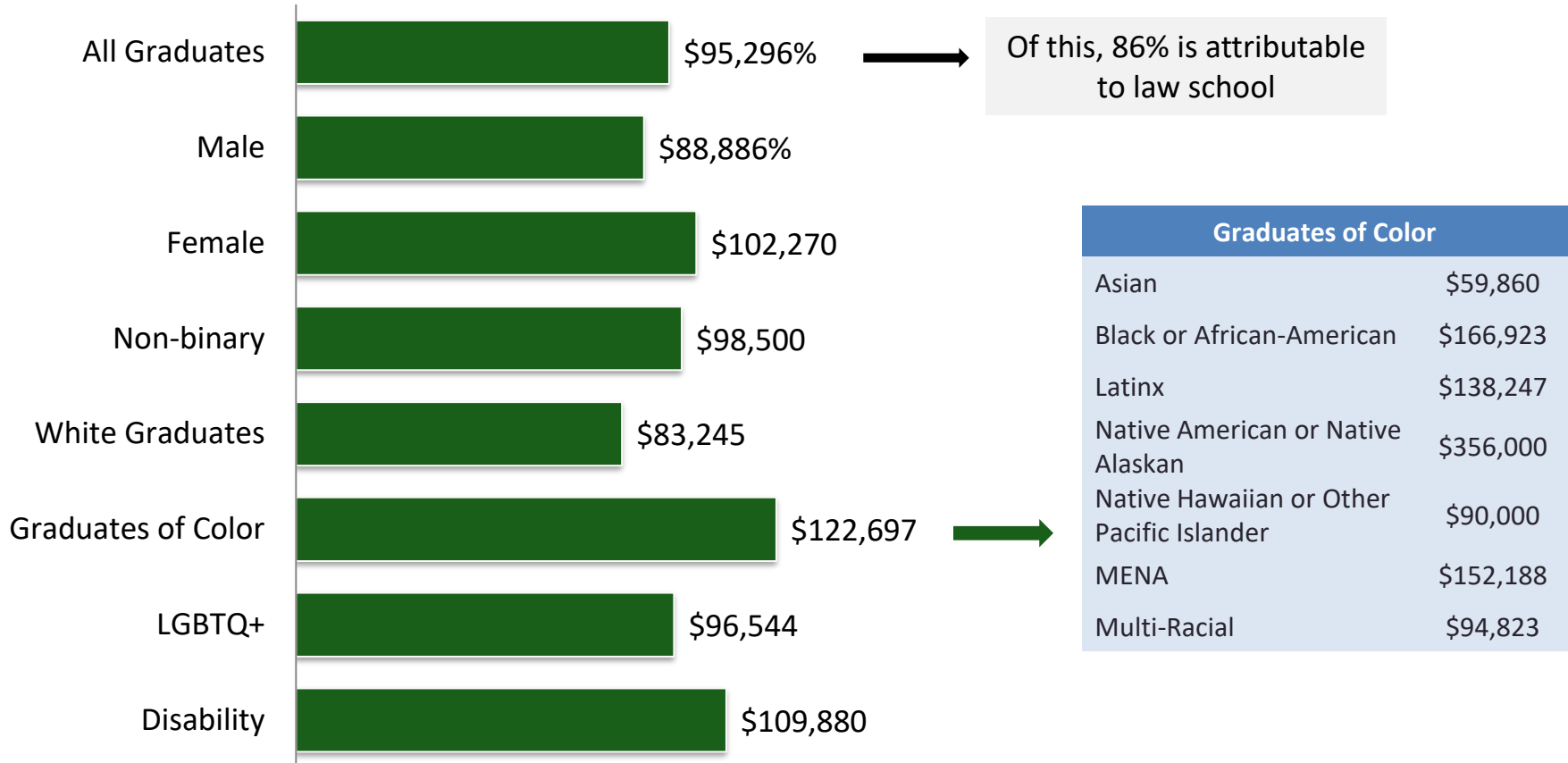
# Alumni Study: Reasons for Job Change

## Reported by Class of 2020 Graduates

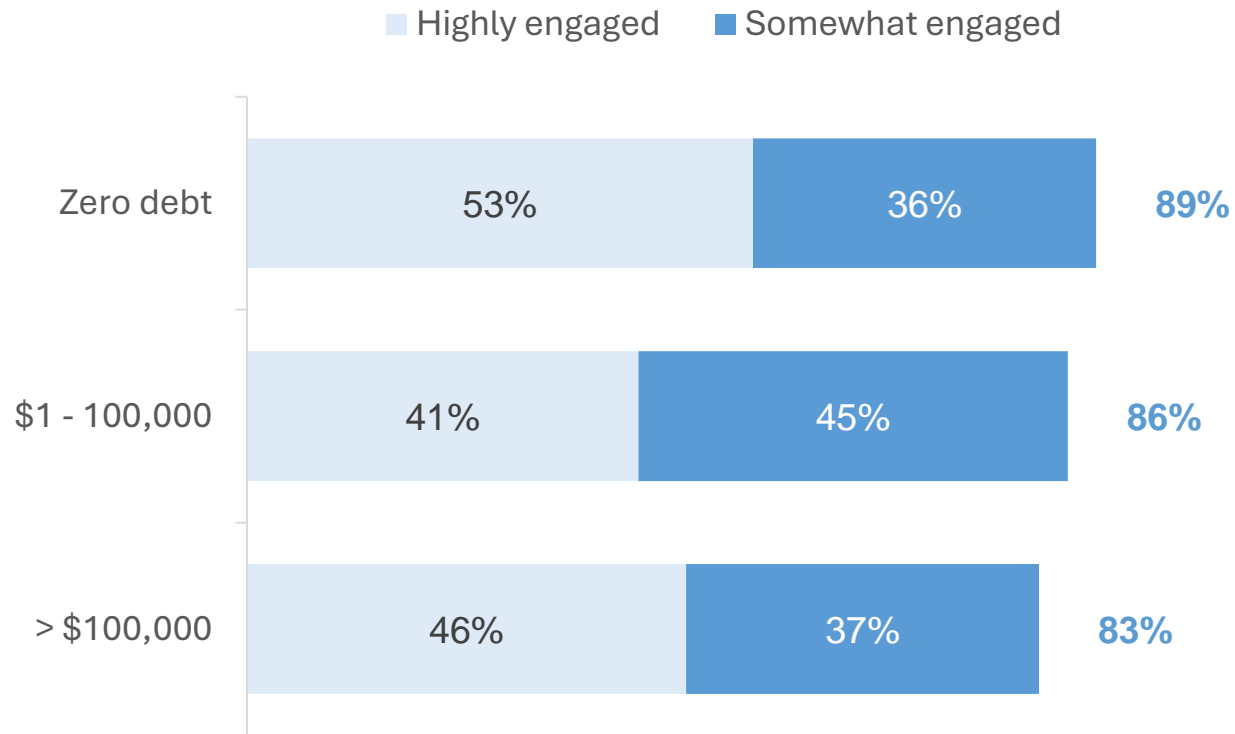


# Drivers for Graduates

# Educational Debt Remaining (Mean) Class of 2020



# Impact of Debt on Job Satisfaction Class of 2020



# Debt: Personal and Professional Impacts

## Class of 2020



	Zero Debt	\$1-\$100,000	>\$100,000
Job choice	3%	48%	50%
Limited professional mobility	1%	19%	24%
Left the legal profession	0%	2%	2%
What sector to work in	1%	28%	29%



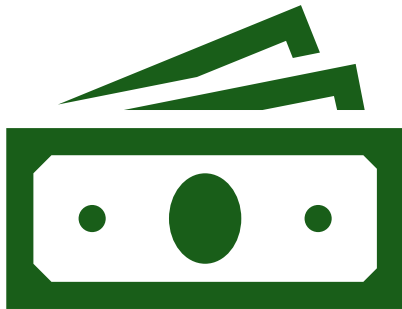
Delayed home ownership	3%	48%	56%
When to have children	2%	37%	47%
Where to live	2%	45%	49%
Negative impact on mental health and well-being	2%	44%	56%
Reduced credit score	<1%	14%	34%
Ability to obtain a loan at a favorable interest rate	<1%	16%	30%



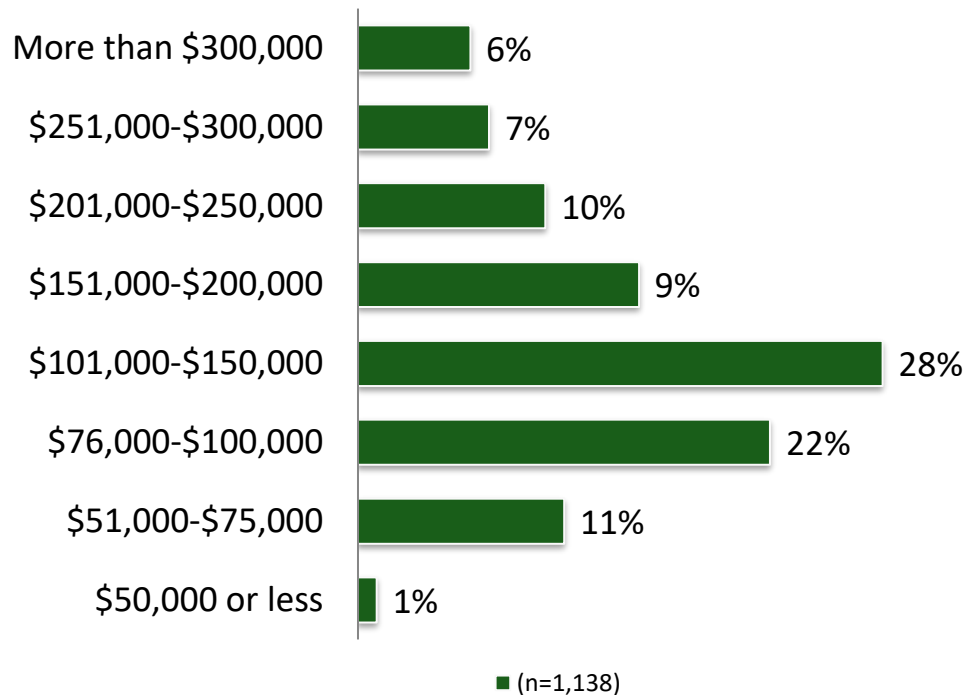
No impact	4%	15%	9%
Other	2%	6%	5%

*More than one response could be provided. All percentages have been rounded.*

# Total Annual Compensation Class of 2020

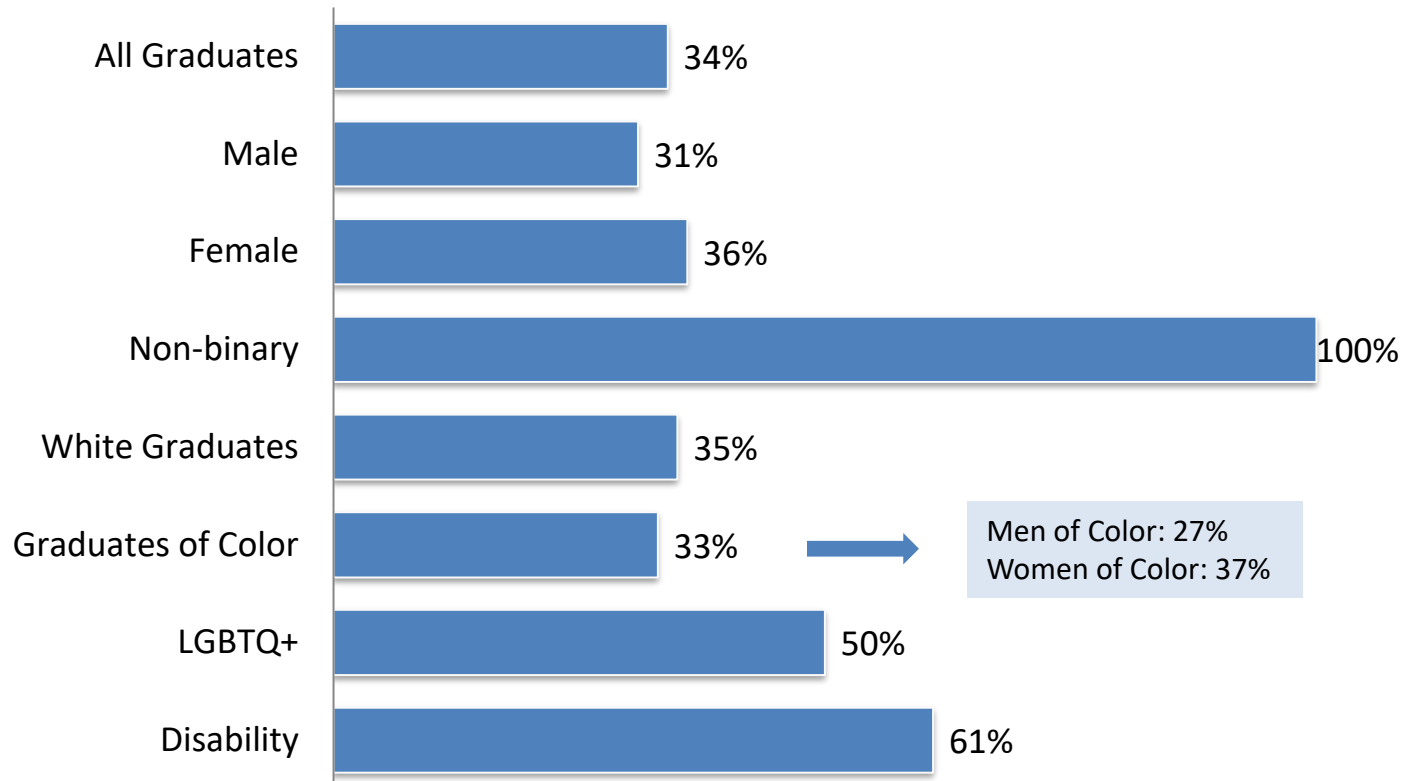


## Employed Respondents



*\*Note: Figures are for full-time, long-term jobs lasting more than one year, and includes salary, bonus, and profit sharing. All percentages have been rounded.*

# Pandemic Effect on Mental Health & Well-Being Class of 2020





# Law School Differentiators

## Class of 2020



Number of jobs



Current work setting



Whether practice law



Compensation



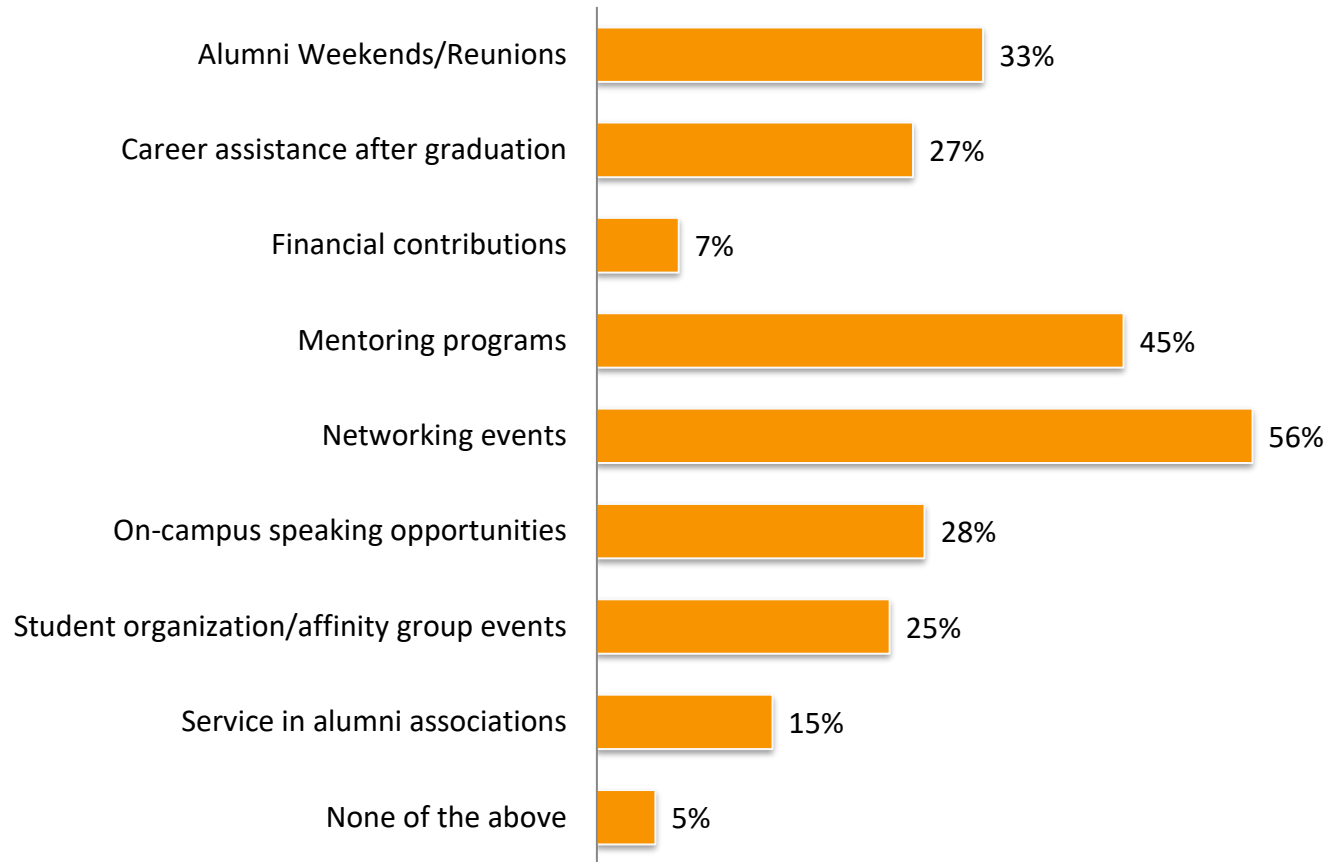
Participation in experiential opportunities



Level of educational debt remaining

# **Post-Graduate Law School Engagement**

# Preferred Post-Graduate Engagement Methods Class of 2020



*More than one response could be provided.*

# Preferred Post-Graduate Engagement Methods

## Class of 2020

	Male	Female	Non-Binary	White Graduates	Graduates of Color
Alumni Weekends/Reunions	39%	30%	0%	34%	33%
Career assistance after graduation	28%	26%	33%	26%	29%
Financial contributions	9%	6%	0%	8%	6%
Mentoring programs	42%	48%	67%	47%	42%
Networking events	56%	57%	33%	53%	63%
On-campus speaking opportunities	28%	28%	0%	28%	28%
Student organization/affinity group events	22%	27%	67%	21%	32%
Service in alumni associations	13%	16%	0%	14%	17%
None of the above	5%	3%	0%	5%	3%

*More than one response could be provided.*

# Preferred Post-Graduate Engagement Methods

## Class of 2020

	Asian	Black or African-American	Latinx	Native American or Alaskan Native	Multi-racial	MENA
Alumni Weekends/Reunions	33%	39%	32%	0%	31%	15%
Career assistance after graduation	35%	31%	32%	0%	16%	39%
Financial contributions	2%	11%	1%	0%	9%	0%
Mentoring programs	41%	44%	43%	100%	39%	31%
Networking events	68%	58%	66%	0%	64%	46%
On-campus speaking opportunities	17%	38%	25%	0%	28%	39%
Student organization/affinity group events	26%	31%	29%	100%	43%	15%
Service in alumni associations	7%	20%	21%	0%	16%	15%
None of the above	9%	5%	0%	0%	2%	0%

*More than one response could be provided.*

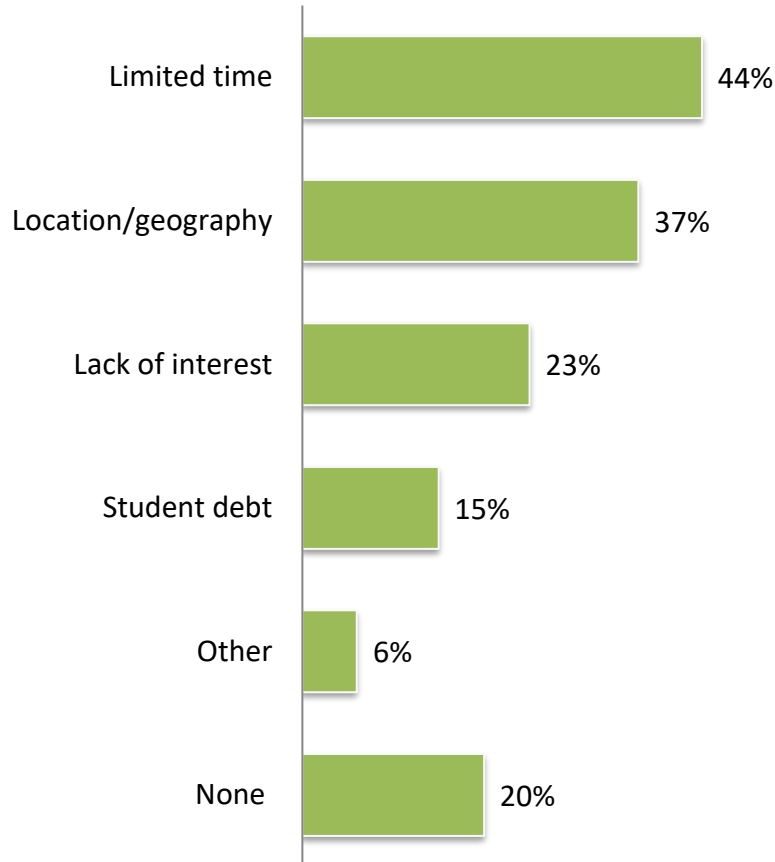
# Preferred Post-Graduate Engagement Methods Class of 2020

	LGBTQ+	Disability
Alumni Weekends/Reunions	29%	23%
Career assistance after graduation	30%	28%
Financial contributions	8%	7%
Mentoring programs	51%	48%
Networking events	51%	43%
On-campus speaking opportunities	25%	27%
Student organization/affinity group events	34%	22%
Service in alumni associations	12%	17%
None of the above	4%	5%

*More than one response could be provided.*

# Barriers to Engagement After Graduation

## Class of 2020



*The law school has made no effort to engage with me other than asking for donations.*

*Reached out and received no response.*

*[My law school] was actually a very traumatic experience for me - so I tend not to engage.*

*Our school did not do a lot to aid us in that and the alumni association started asking us for money without even congratulating or acknowledging our accomplishments.*

*School does little to connect to alum outside of [immediate city].*

*Feeling unwanted.*

*More than one response could be provided.*

# Barriers to Engagement After Graduation

## Class of 2020

	Male	Female	Non-Binary	White Graduates	Graduates of Color
Limited time	44%	43%	43%	47%	40%
Location/geography	34%	39%	43%	37%	38%
Lack of interest	25%	24%	57%	27%	22%
Student debt	13%	15%	14%	15%	14%
Other	5%	6%	43%	6%	7%
None	24%	18%	0%	19%	24%

*More than one response could be provided.*



# Barriers to Engagement After Graduation

## Class of 2020

	Asian	Black or African-American	Latinx	Native American or Alaskan Native	Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Multi-racial	MENA
Limited time	50%	35%	43%	100%	33%	40%	0%
Location/geography	44%	31%	35%	100%	0%	45%	33%
Lack of interest	28%	25%	17%	0%	67%	22%	7%
Student debt	4%	23%	16%	0%	0%	11%	7%
Other	6%	9%	4%	0%	0%	7%	7%
None	22%	24%	24%	0%	33%	18%	53%

*More than one response could be provided.*

# Barriers to Engagement After Graduation

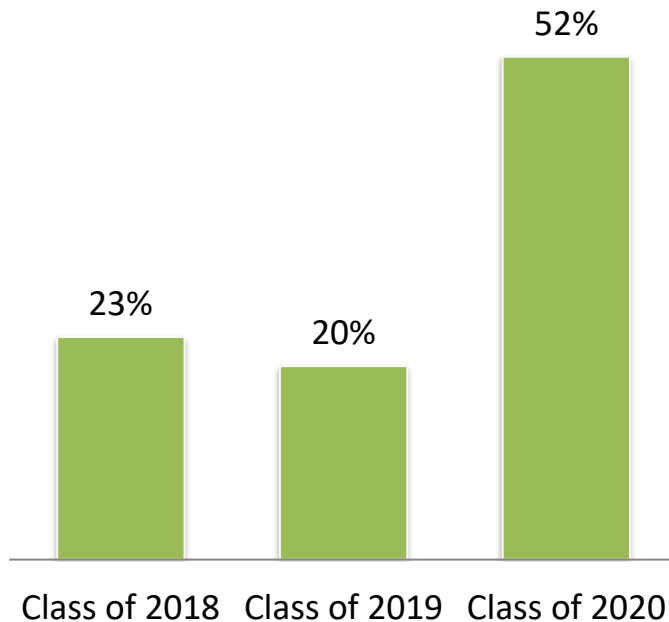
## Class of 2020

	LGBTQ+	Disability
Limited time	46%	42%
Location/geography	45%	38%
Lack of interest	30%	29%
Student debt	17%	18%
Other	11%	14%
None	0%	0%

*More than one response could be provided.*

# Post-Graduate Career Assistance Sources Classes of 2018 - 2020

## Have Reached Out for Post-Graduate Career Assistance



## Post-Graduate Career Assistance Sources

	Class of 2018	Class of 2019	Class of 2020
Alumni Office	4%	3%	10%
Career Service Office	21%	17%	27%
Faculty Members	13%	9%	34%
Other Administrative Offices	3%	2%	8%
Other	1%	2%	10%

*More than one response could be provided.*

# Post-Graduate Career Assistance Sources Class of 2020

	Male	Female	Non-Binary	White Graduates	Graduates of Color
Alumni Office	11%	9%	13%	10%	11%
Career Service Office	28%	27%	25%	25%	31%
Faculty Members	37%	32%	38%	33%	35%
Other Administrative Offices	8%	8%	13%	7%	10%
Other	12%	8%	25%	8%	13%

*More than one response could be provided.*

# Post-Graduate Career Assistance Sources Class of 2020

	Asian	Black or African-American	Latinx	Native American or Alaskan Native	Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Multi-racial	MENA
Alumni Office	14%	9%	11%	0%	33%	9%	13%
Career Service Office	35%	32%	33%	0%	0%	22%	50%
Faculty Members	35%	39%	35%	0%	44%	33%	31%
Other Administrative Offices	8%	13%	10%	0%	0%	6%	19%
Other	8%	20%	11%	0%	0%	9%	25%

*More than one response could be provided.*

# Post-Graduate Career Assistance Sources Class of 2020

	LGBTQ+	Disability
Alumni Office	14%	9%
Career Service Office	33%	33%
Faculty Members	35%	40%
Other Administrative Offices	6%	8%
Other	11%	17%

*More than one response could be provided.*

# Using Alumni Study Data

**FACULTY**



Curricular planning for doctrinal, skills-based, and experiential offerings

**ADMINISTRATION**



Benchmarking against other schools, nationally and locally

**ALUMNI/DEVELOPMENT**



Non-financial engagement opportunity for building connectivity with alumni

**ADMISSIONS**



Empiric data to support unique or highly regarded aspects of the law school experience

**MARKETING**



Narrative responses and survey statistics can be used in marketing efforts

# Sample Participant Report

Current Employment Status - All Respondents		
	All Participating U.S. Schools (n=x)	Your School (n=y)
Employed		
Not Currently Employed		
<i>All percentages have been rounded.</i>		

Reasons for Not Working Cited — Unemployed Respondents		
	All Participating U.S. Schools (n=x)	Your School (n=y)
Intentional hiatus		
Pursuit of additional education		
Family or dependent responsibilities		
Desire for a new geographic locale/geographic shift		
Relocation of spouse or partner		
Actively seeking employment at this time		
Job loss due to economic downsizing of firm/organization		
Disability/illness		
Mental health		
Other		
<i>More than one reason could be provided. *Low number of responses; view with caution.</i>		

Employment Classification — Employed Respondents		
	All Participating U.S. Schools (n=x)	Your School (n=y)
Full-time		
Part-time		
<i>All percentages have been rounded.</i>		

Employment Classification — Employed Respondents		
	All Participating U.S. Schools (n=x)	Your School (n=y)
Permanent or long-term/no fixed duration		
Of fixed or known duration		
<i>All percentages have been rounded.</i>		

Aggregate data

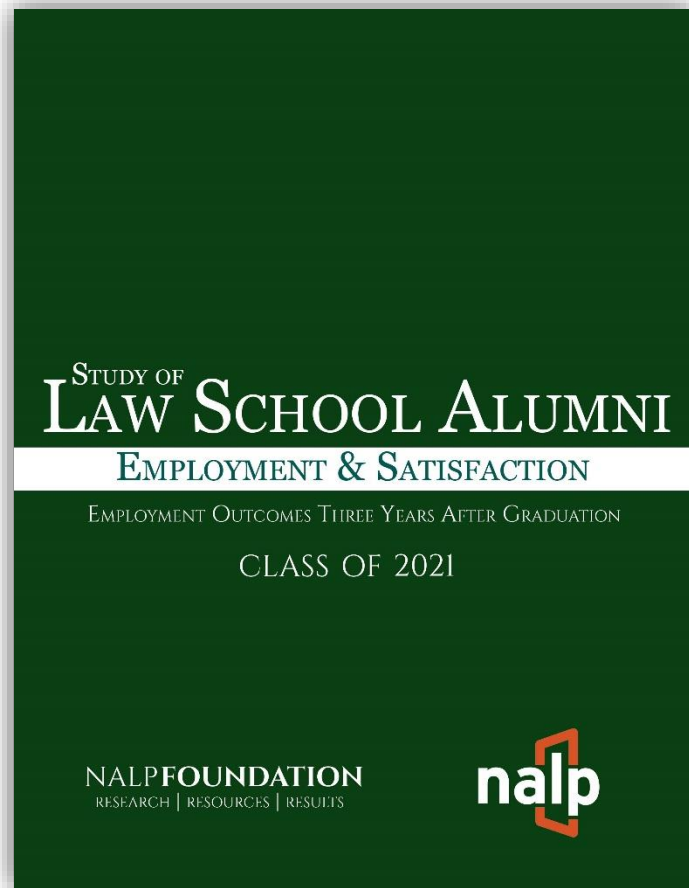
Tailored report

Competitive benchmarking

Empirical and narrative responses

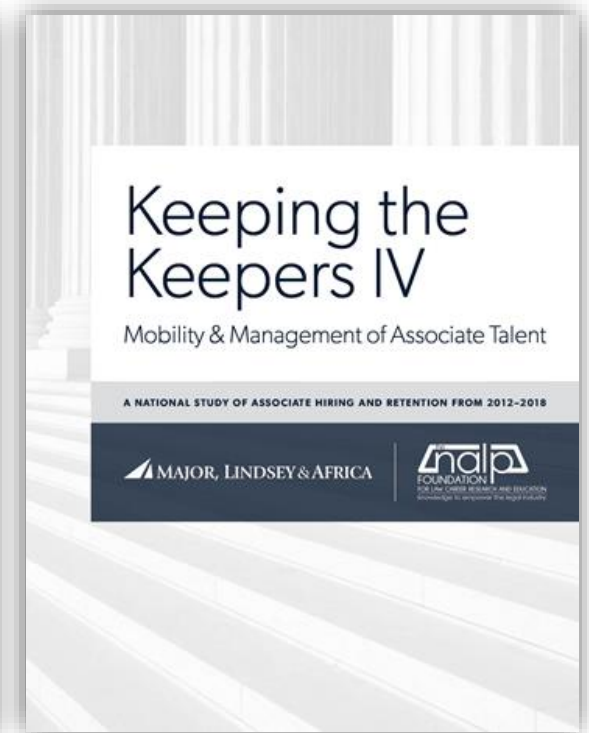
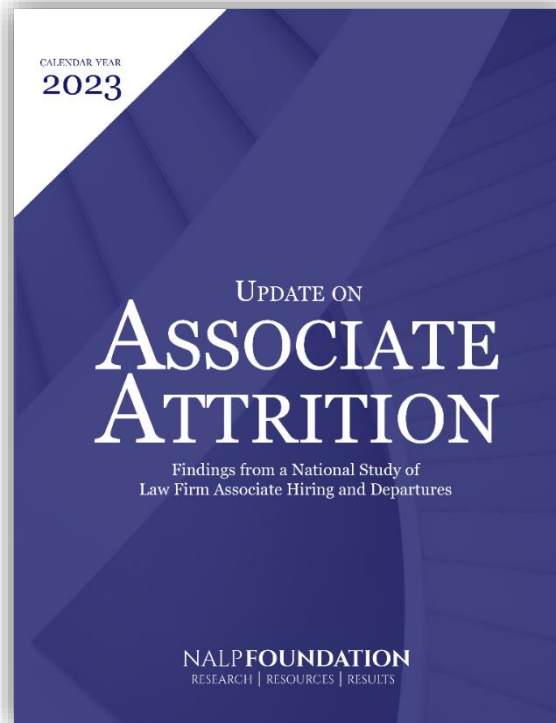
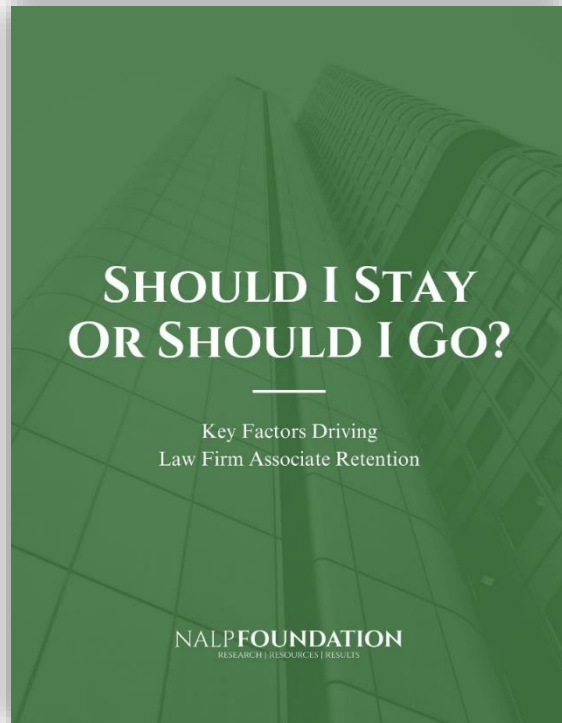


# Next Study: Class of 2021



- Invitations will launch in October/November 2024.
- Will continue to examine:
  - Alumni preferences re engagement with law schools
  - Professional identity formation
  - Educational debt
  - Pandemic’s ongoing effect on alumni careers
- Participating schools will receive:
  - Confidential school-specific report with proprietary data.
  - Full report with aggregated data from all participating schools.
  - Individual school data is confidential and will only be reported to each school.

# Additional NALP Foundation Resources



All NALP Foundation research publications can be found at:  
<https://www.nalpfoundation.org/bookstore>.

# Questions

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