

New Report Analyzes Gender, Race, and Financial Backgrounds of Law School Admissions



In a recent report titled “Legal Education Data Deck: Key trends on access, affordability, and value,” released by the AccessLex Institute, notable findings regarding law school admissions, gender representation, race and ethnicity, and financial aspects were revealed. The report utilized data from reputable sources such as the Law School Admission Council, the National Conference of Bar Examiners, and the U.S. Department of Education.

One of the significant highlights from the report was the increase in law school admissions rates in 2022, marking the first rise in seven years. Among the applicants, 56% were women, 42% were men, and the remaining 2% identified with another gender identity. However, it is worth noting that men continued to have higher admission rates compared to women. The acceptance rate for women stood at 68%, while men had a slightly higher acceptance rate of 71%. Unfortunately, the report did not provide specific data on the admission rates for individuals with another gender identity.

The report also examined admission rates based on race and ethnicity. Among white applicants, 78% received at least one law school admission offer. Other groups that had high acceptance rates included Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders (70%), multiracial applicants (67%), and Asian applicants (67%). Hispanic, Latino, or Puerto Rican applicants had a 58% acceptance rate, while American Indian or Alaskan Native applicants and Black or African American applicants had acceptance rates of 52% and 48%, respectively.

Financial factors, including law school grants and student loans, were also analyzed in the report. The median grant award for full-time students receiving aid increased from \$13,500 in 2013 to \$23,000 in 2021. Notably, the percentage of law school graduates using loans to finance their education decreased from 87% in 2004 to 71% in 2016. However, the average cumulative amount of graduate debt rose from \$101,400 in 2004 to \$141,400 in 2016. Although there was a slight decrease in the average debt amount between 2012 and 2016, with figures dropping from \$152,400 to \$141,400, student debt remains a significant concern for many law school graduates.

The report also shed light on median salaries for individuals in different types of legal jobs. Bar-pass-required jobs had a median salary of \$80,000, while JD-advantage jobs had a median salary of \$70,000. The salary data presented in the report was from 2021.

Overall, the report provided valuable insights into the demographics of law school admissions, highlighting disparities in gender representation and varying acceptance rates based on race and ethnicity. The analysis of financial aspects, including grants and student loans, offered a glimpse into the financial challenges law school students and graduates face. As legal education continues to evolve, understanding these trends is crucial for addressing the gaps and promoting equal opportunities within the legal profession.