July 2025 Bar Exam Results & Applicant Demographics Report

COVER MEMO

While the attached report offers meaningful insights and highlights important patterns in the data, several critical limitations should be noted:

1. Single-Cohort Dataset

This analysis is based on a single bar exam cohort (780 applicants, including 5 with missing demographic data) and represents the first time such comprehensive demographic information has been systematically gathered from applicants who are seeking admission to practice law. Results may reflect cohort-specific dynamics rather than long-term institutional trends. **Findings should be considered as preliminary and validated against multi-year data before informing policy or programmatic decisions.**

2. Small Sample Sizes in Subgroups

The most significant limitation involves insufficient group sizes in certain demographic categories, which limits the reliability of findings for those specific groups. Subgroups with fewer than 10 individuals present challenges such as:

- **High variability:** A single applicant outcome can shift pass rates by 10+ percentage points.
- **Privacy concerns:** Any subgroup with small number of applicants can increase the risk of individual identification.
- **Statistical instability:** Limited ability to distinguish true disparities from random variation.

Small-count aggregation (ethnicity): To strengthen privacy protections and avoid unstable statistics, any ethnicity subgroup with **20 or fewer examinees** is aggregated into **"Others"** in the summary tables. This aggregation is a **reporting convention** only, it does not imply substantive similarity across the combined groups, and it is applied consistently across top-line ethnicity displays. In intersectional breakouts (e.g., *Ethnicity × English First Language*), small-count cells are also combined into Others.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2025, for the first time, the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) began collecting demographic data from applicants seeking admission to practice law. Using this newly collected information, the WSBA analyzed demographic characteristics and bar examination outcomes for the 780 applicants who sat for the July 2025 bar exam to better understand how outcomes vary across different populations.

The analysis was guided by two primary objectives:

- Calculate and compare bar exam pass rates across individual demographic categories to identify patterns and disparities.
- Examine how combinations of demographic characteristics relate to bar exam outcomes.

Three key findings emerged from the analysis. First, bar exam pass rates vary across demographic categories, indicating a measurable relationship between demographic characteristics and exam outcomes. Second, certain factors, particularly parental education level, show a stronger association with bar exam performance than others. Third, when demographic characteristics are considered together, some combinations are associated with compounded effects on pass rates. For example, examinees who were first-generation college students, and for whom English was not a first language, consistently demonstrated lower pass rates than peers who shared only one of these characteristics.

1. OVERALL JULY 2025 BAR EXAM OUTCOME

Examinee Type	Pass	Fail	Total	Pass Rate
First-Time Taker	527	114	641	82.22%
Repeat Taker	31	108	139	22.30%
Total	558	222	780	71.54%

2. SINGLE DEMOGRAPHIC IDENTITY RELATIONSHIP WITH PASS RATE

Gender[1]

Gender Category	Passed	Failed	Total	Pass Rate
Man	195	68	263	74.14%
Woman	291	138	429	67.83%
Gender Diverse	22	5	27	81.48%
Did not disclose	47	14	61	77.05%

Ethnicity[2]

Race Category	Single-Race Passed	Single-Race Total	Single-Race Pass Rate	Multi-Race Passed	Multi-Race Total	Multi-Race Pass Rate
White	318	380	83.68%	45	60	75.00%
Asian	70	118	59.32%	18	27	66.67%
Black or African American	14	44	31.82%	6	13	46.15%
Hispanic or Latino	35	65	53.85%	20	30	66.67%
Others	15	23	65.22%	33	41	80.49%
Did not disclose	54	76	71.05%	0	0	0.00%

Disability Status

Disability Status	Passed	Failed	Total	Pass Rate (%)
Yes	65	38	103	63.11%
No	390	156	546	71.43%
Did not disclose	103	28	131	78.63%

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[1] *"Gender Diverse" includes examinees who selected a gender identity outside of "Man" and "Woman," such as transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, or gender non-conforming.*

[2] *"Single-Race" indicates respondents who identified with a single race category only. "Multi-Race" indicates respondents who identified with multiple race categories, including the one listed.*

"Did not disclose" represents examinees who selected "I choose not to respond" to the question and who left the question blank.

First Generation to Attend College

First Gen College	Passed	Failed	Total	Pass Rate (%)
Yes	84	53	137	61.31%
No	422	147	569	74.17%
Did not disclose	52	22	74	70.27%

First Generation to Obtain a Legal Education

First Gen Law School	Passed	Failed	Total	Pass Rate (%)
Yes	401	165	566	70.85%
No	107	42	149	71.81%
Did not disclose	50	15	65	76.92%

English as First Language

English First Language	Passed	Failed	Total	Pass Rate (%)
Yes	429	119	548	78.43%
No	90	85	175	51.43%
Did not disclose	39	18	57	68.42%

Parent Education Level (Highest Education Between Two Parents)

Parent Highest Education	Passed	Failed	Total	Pass Rate (%)
Doctoral or professional Degree	121	37	158	76.58%
Master's Degree	136	37	173	78.61%
Bachelor's Degree	148	47	195	75.90%
Associate's degree	18	12	30	60.00%
Some Colleges	27	33	60	45.00%
High School or GED	38	14	52	73.08%
Trade or vocational school	5	2	7	71.43%

Some high school	8	5	13	61.54%
8th grade or less	10	7	17	58.82%
Did not disclose	47	28	75	62.67%

The tables above examine bar examination outcomes for 780 examinees, across seven demographic characteristics, and identify meaningful differences in pass rates among different groups.

Parental education showed the strongest relationship with bar passage. Examinees whose parents attained a master's degree achieved the highest pass rate at 78.6%, followed closely by those whose parents held doctoral or professional degrees (76.6%) and bachelor's degrees (75.9%). In contrast, examinees whose parents completed some college without earning a degree exhibited the lowest pass rate at 45.0%, while other categories—such as high school graduates, vocational school completers, and those with limited formal education—generally ranged between 60% and 73%. These findings suggest a clear trend in which higher levels of parental education correlate with improved bar passage outcomes, although differences among the top three education levels are relatively modest compared to the gap observed for "some college."

English language background was also strongly associated with outcomes. Examinees who reported English as their first language passed at a rate of 78.4 percent, compared to 51.4 percent for examinees for whom English was a second language.

First-generation college students passed at a lower rate than their non-first-generation peers, 61.3 percent compared to 74.2 percent. In contrast, first-generation to obtain a legal education showed little relationship to bar passage.

Racial and ethnic disparities in bar passage were evident. Among examinees reporting a single racial identity, White examinees achieved the highest pass rate at **83.7%**, followed by Middle Eastern or North African examinees at **76.9%**. Pass rates were lower for Asian examinees (**59.3%**), Hispanic or Latino examinees (**53.9%**), and Black or African American examinees (**31.8%**). Outcomes for examinees reporting multiple racial identities were generally similar to those of single-identity examinees, though some variation was observed across groups.

Gender and disability status were associated with smaller differences. Men passed at a rate of 74.1 percent compared to 67.8 percent for women, while gender-diverse students had a pass rate of 81.5

percent. Examinees without disabilities passed at 71.4 percent, compared to 63.1 percent for examinees reporting a disability.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that socioeconomic factors, particularly parental education and English language background, are strongly associated with bar examination outcomes, while persistent racial disparities indicate that identity-related factors also remain influential.

3. INTERSECTIONALITY ANALYSIS

3.1 Bar Exam Outcomes by Race and English as a First Language Status

(Note: Students who selected multiple races are counted in EACH racial category)

Race	English First Language?	Total	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate
White	Yes	409	345	64	84.35%
	No	27	15	12	55.56%
Asian	Yes	66	44	21	66.67%
	No	74	40	34	54.05%
Black or African American	Yes	45	17	28	37.78%
	No	12	3	9	25.00%
Hispanic or Latino	Yes	40	29	11	72.50%
	No	53	25	28	47.17%
Others	Yes	53	41	11	77.36%
	No	9	6	2	66.67%

Bar exam pass rates varied by both race and English language background. Across all racial groups, examinees who reported English as their first language passed at higher rates than those who did not. The largest language-related gap occurred among White examinees, with a nearly 29 percentage point difference in pass rates. Hispanic or Latino examinees also showed a substantial gap, while smaller differences were observed among Asian and Black or African American examinees. Racial disparities remained evident even among English-first examinees, indicating that language background alone does not fully explain differences in bar exam outcomes.

3.2 Bar Exam Outcomes by Race and Parent Education Level *(Note: Using highest education level between two parents; students selecting multiple races are counted in EACH racial category.)*

Race	Parent Education	Total	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate
Asian	Bachelor's Degree	43	30	13	69.77%
	Graduate Degree	66	42	24	63.63%
	High School or Less	13	9	4	69.23%
	Some Colleges	15	5	10	35.71%
Black or African American	Bachelor's Degree	12	4	8	33.33%
	Graduate Degree	18	11	7	61.11%
	High School or Less	9	4	5	44.44%
	Some Colleges	15	1	14	6.66%
Hispanic or Latino	Bachelor's Degree	16	9	7	56.25%
	Graduate Degree	28	17	11	60.71%
	High School or Less	28	19	9	67.86%
	Some Colleges	17	8	9	47.06%
Others	Bachelor's Degree	14	13	1	92.86%
	Graduate Degree	35	26	9	74.29%
	High School or Less	10	6	4	60.00%
	Some Colleges	3	2	1	66.67%
White	Bachelor's Degree	131	113	18	86.30%
	Graduate Degree	222	188	34	84.68%
	High School or Less	29	22	7	75.86%
	Some Colleges	43	28	15	65.12%

Within most racial categories, examinees whose parents held bachelor's or graduate degrees generally passed at higher rates than those whose parents had some college or less. The lowest pass rates across multiple racial groups were consistently observed among examinees whose parents had completed some college but did not earn a degree. White examinees showed high pass rates across all parental education levels, though rates declined modestly among those with lower parental education. Racial disparities persisted within similar parental education levels, suggesting that parental education does not fully account for differences in bar exam outcomes.

3.3 Bar Exam Outcomes by Race and First-Generation College Status

Race	First-Gen Status	Total	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate
Asian	First-Gen College	24	13	11	54.17%
	Not First-Gen	115	73	42	63.48%
Black or African American	First-Gen College	14	4	10	28.57%
	Not First-Gen	42	16	26	38.10%
Hispanic or Latino	First-Gen College	45	27	18	60.00%
	Not First-Gen	44	26	18	59.09%
Others	First-Gen College	9	4	5	44.44%
	Not First-Gen	53	43	10	81.13%
White	First-Gen College	52	39	13	75.00%
	Not First-Gen	372	310	62	83.33%

Bar exam pass rates varied by race and first-generation college status. In most racial groups, non–first-generation examinees passed at higher rates than first-generation examinees. Differences were modest for most groups and minimal among Hispanic or Latino examinees. Black or African American examinees showed low pass rates regardless of first-generation status. While some groups showed larger differences, these results are based on small sample sizes and should be interpreted cautiously. Overall, first-generation status is associated with lower pass rates for many examinees, but racial disparities persist within both first-generation and non–first-generation groups.

3.4 Bar Exam Outcomes by Race and Gender

Race	Gender	Total	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate
Asian	Gender Diverse	4	4	0	100.0%
	Man	50	33	17	66.00%
	Woman	91	51	40	56.04%
Black or African American	Gender Diverse	1	1	0	100.00%
	Man	26	8	18	30.77%
	Woman	30	11	19	36.67%

Race	Gender	Total	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate
Hispanic or Latino	Gender Diverse	4	3	1	75.00%
	Man	23	16	7	69.57%
	Woman	68	36	32	52.94%
Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	Gender Diverse	3	3	0	100.00%
	Man	22	18	4	81.82%
	Woman	39	27	12	69.23%
White	Gender Diverse	21	18	3	85.71%
	Man	165	142	23	86.06%
	Woman	244	195	49	79.92%

The exam pass rates varied by race and gender, though gender differences were generally smaller than disparities observed by race. In several racial groups, men passed at slightly higher rates than women, including among White, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino examinees. Black or African American examinees showed low pass rates for both men and women, with limited gender variation. Gender-diverse examinees often showed high pass rates across racial groups; however, these results are based on small sample sizes and should be interpreted cautiously.

3.5 Bar Exam Outcomes by First-Generation College and First-Generation to Obtain a Legal Education

First-Gen College	First-Gen Law	Total	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate
First-Gen College	First-Gen Law	135	83	52	61.48%
	Not First-Gen Law	2	1	1	50.00%
Not First-Gen College	First-Gen Law	405	300	105	74.07%
	Not First-Gen Law	145	106	39	73.10%

Pass rates differed by first-generation college status but showed little variation by first-generation law school status. First-generation college examinees passed at lower rates than non–first-generation college examinees, regardless of law school background. Among non–first-generation college examinees, pass rates were nearly identical by first-generation examines to obtain a legal education.

3.6 Bar Exam Outcomes by Parent Education and English First Language

Parent Education	English Status	Total	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate
Graduate Degree	English FL	268	220	48	82.09%
	ESL	58	35	23	60.34%
Bachelor's Degree	English FL	149	124	25	83.22%
	ESL	46	24	22	52.17%

Some Colleges	English FL	69	40	29	57.97%
	ESL	21	5	16	23.81%
High School or Less	English FL	49	36	13	73.47%
	ESL	38	24	14	63.16%

Bar exam pass rates varied substantially by both parental education and English language background. Across all parental education levels, examinees who reported English as their first language passed at higher rates than English Second Language (ESL) examinees. The largest gaps appeared among those whose parents had some college or a bachelor's degree, where ESL pass rates were less than half those of English-first examinees. Differences were smaller among examinees whose parents had a high school education or less. Overall, the findings suggest that English language background is strongly associated with outcomes, particularly among examinees from families with moderate levels of parental education.