



A PORTRAIT OF ASIAN AMERICANS IN THE LAW 2.0

IDENTITY AND ACTION IN CHALLENGING TIMES

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AMERICAN BAR FOUNDATION · NATIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION



Acknowledgments

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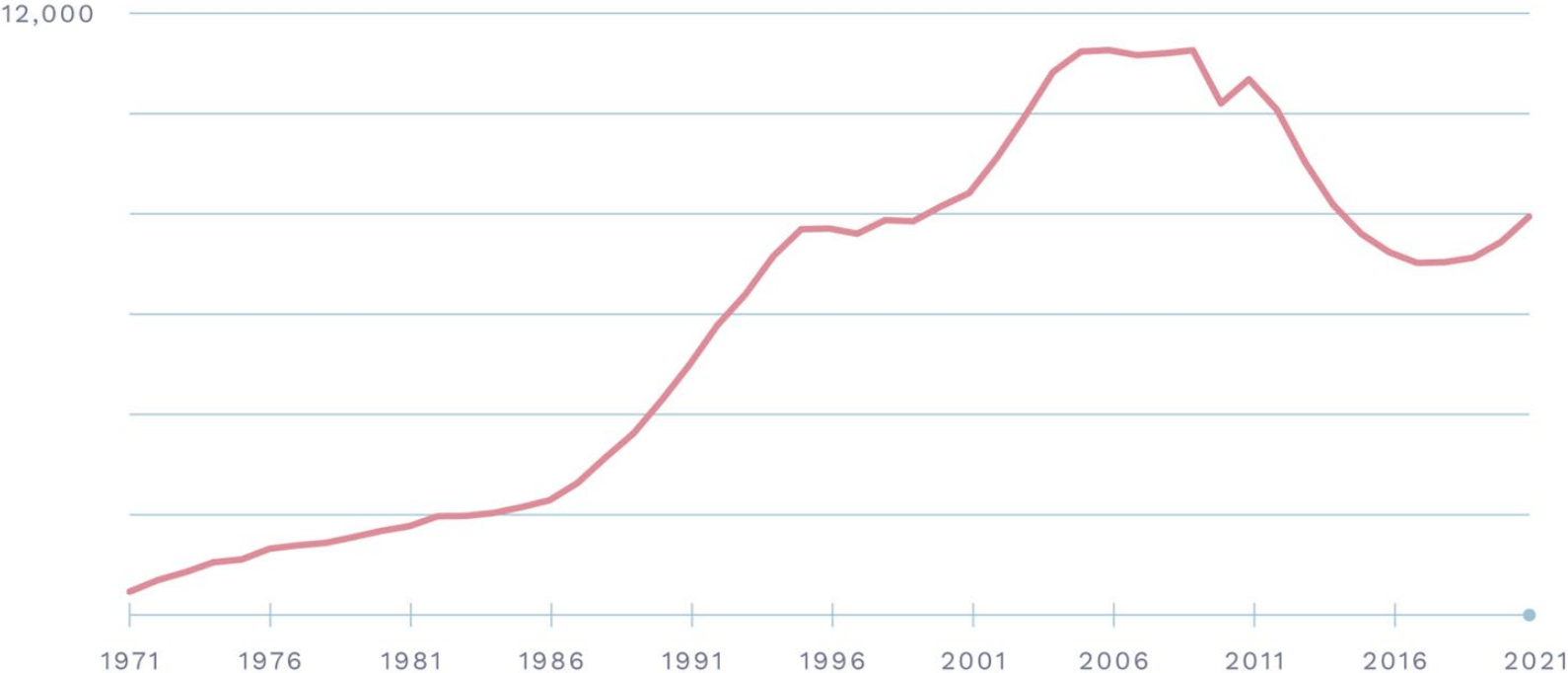
The project also received financial support from the Asian American Bar Association–Bay Area, Asian American Bar Association of New York, Asian American Law Fund of New York, Asian Pacific American Bar Association–Silicon Valley, Arnold & Porter, Davis Polk, Davis Wright Tremaine, Haynes & Boone, Latham & Watkins, Silvia Chin, Carol F. Lee, and an anonymous donor.

Main findings

- Asian American attorneys indicated greater engagement with social and political issues, along with a desire to change and improve society.
- Underrepresentation of Asian Americans in the top ranks of the legal profession persists. But there has been progress among federal judges and general counsel, and law school enrollment has rebounded somewhat from a 20-year low.
- Greater institutional support would likely reduce barriers to advancement and improve the professional lives of Asian American attorneys.

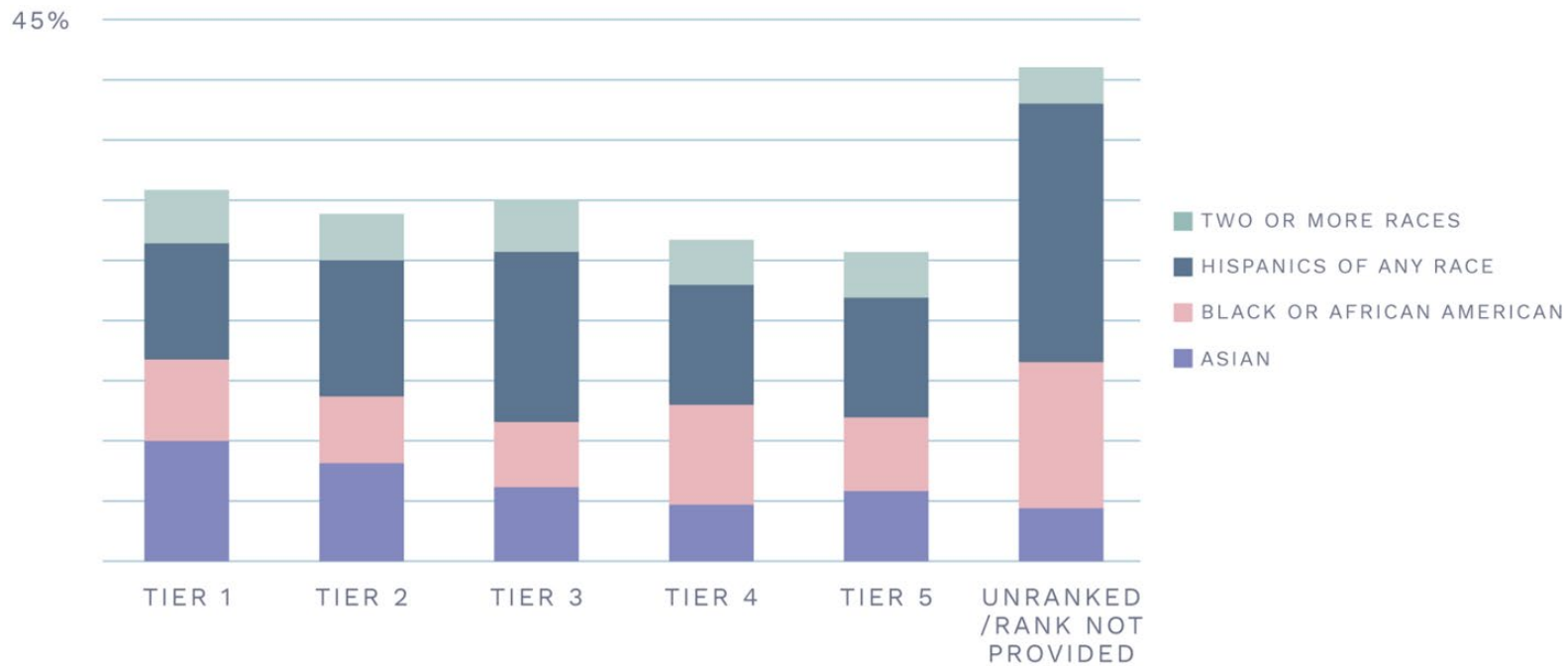
Asian or Pacific Islander JD Enrollment, 1971–2021

SOURCE: American Bar Association



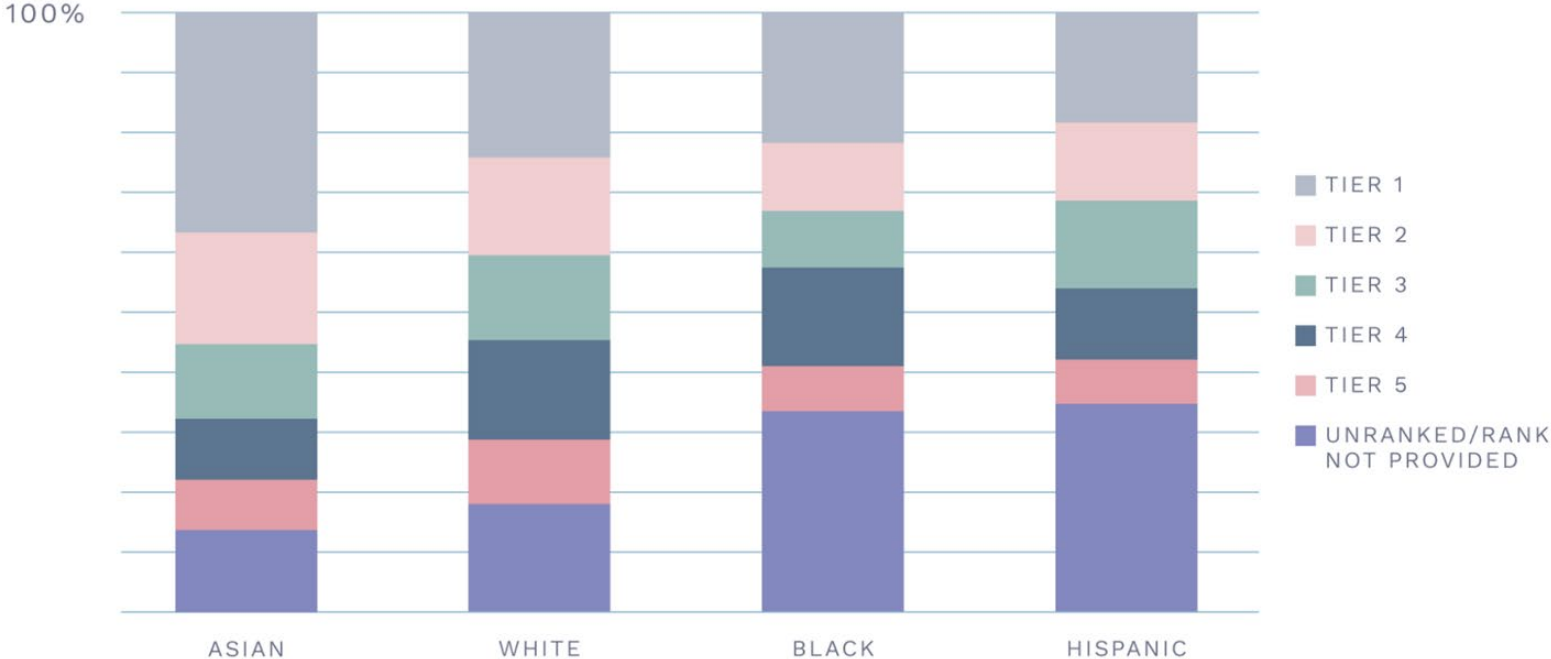
Minority Percentage of Total JD Enrollment by Tier, 2021

SOURCE: American Bar Association; *U.S. News & World Report*



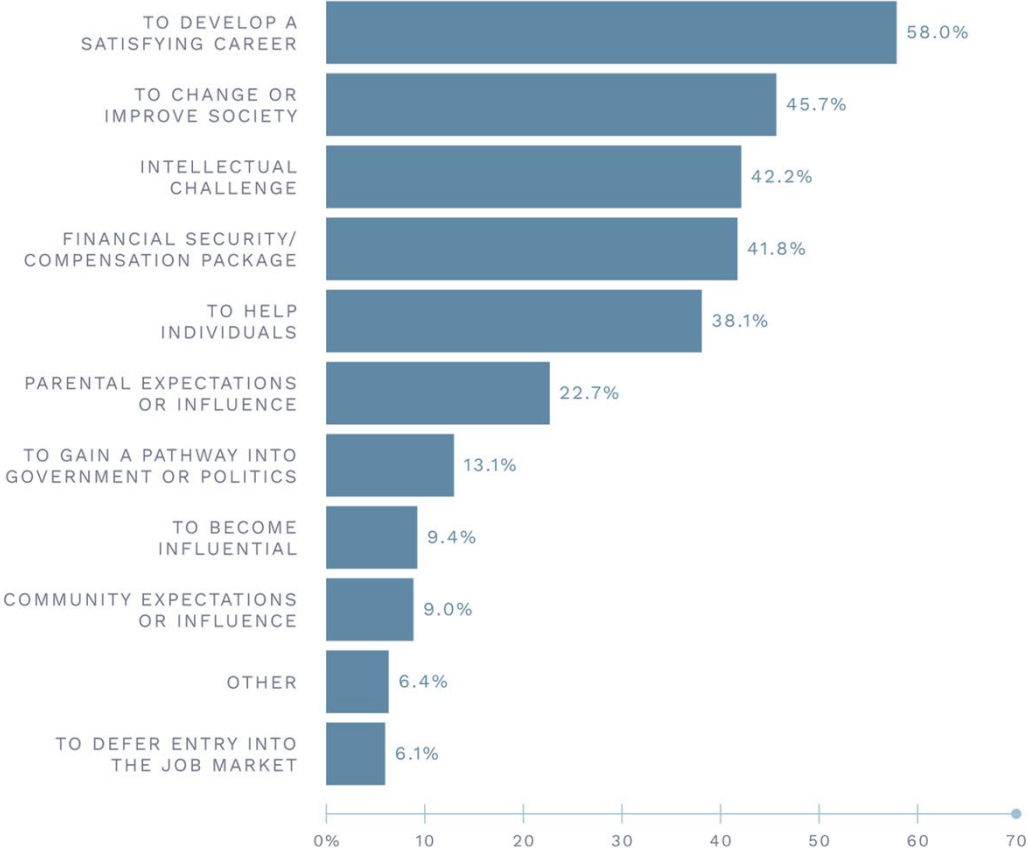
Distribution of Each Racial or Ethnic Group Across Tiers, 2021

SOURCE: American Bar Association; *U.S. News & World Report*



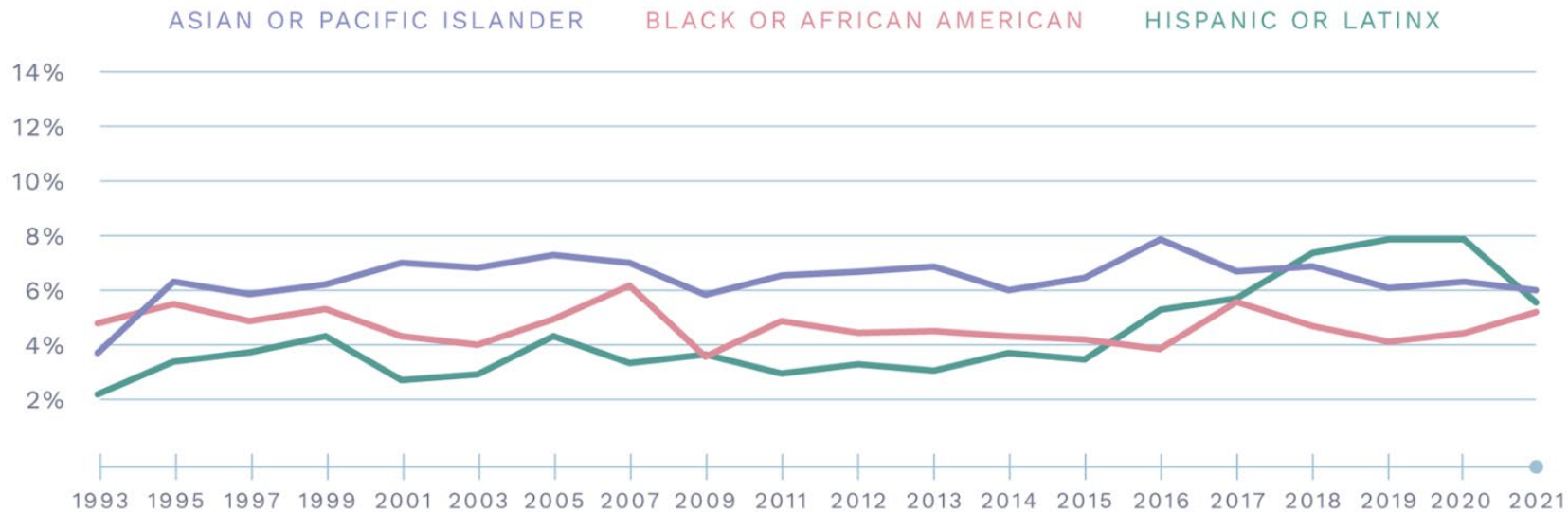
Top Three Reasons for Attending Law School

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



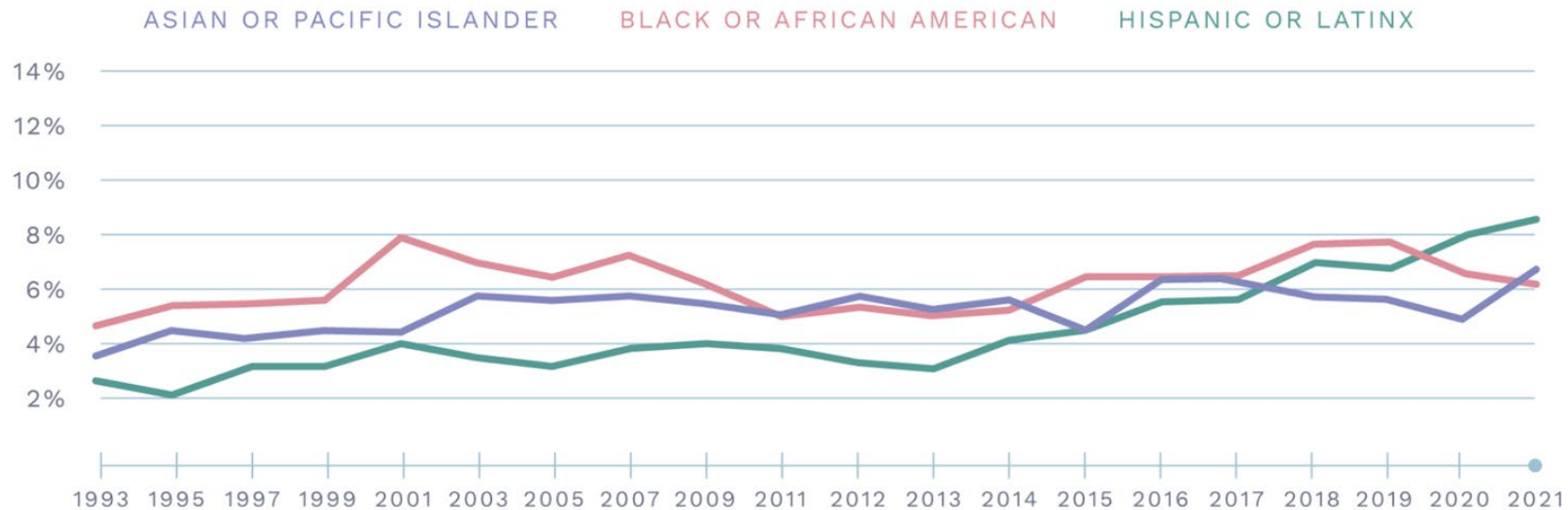
Minority Law Clerks in Federal Courts, 1993–2021

SOURCE: National Association for Law Placement



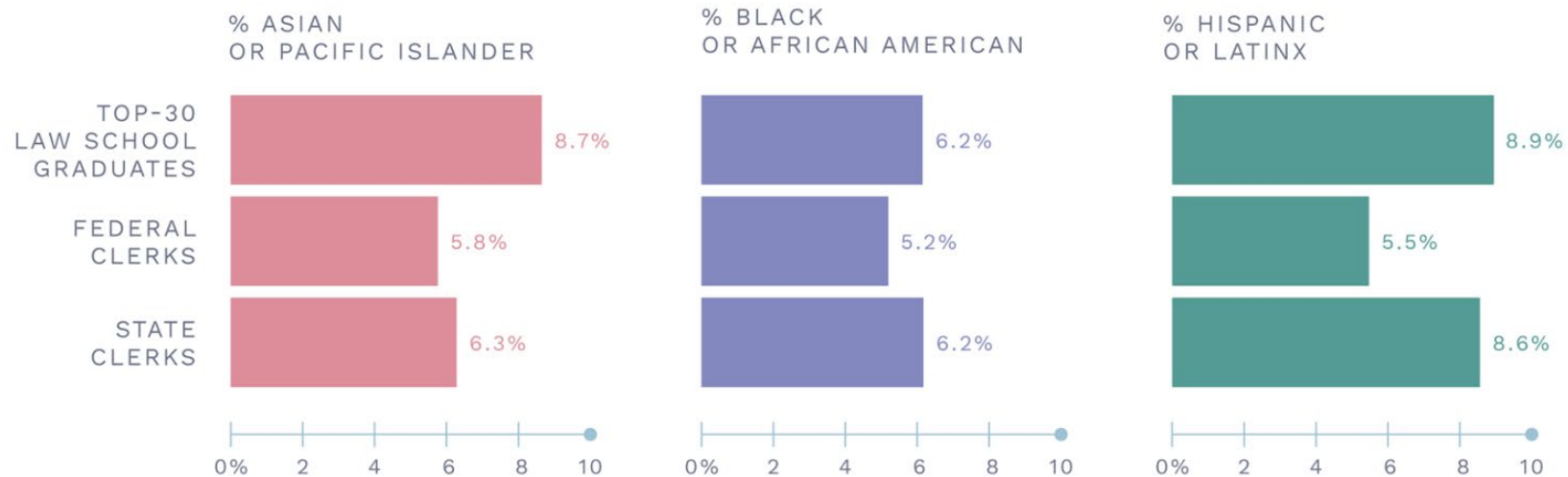
Minority Law Clerks in State Courts, 1993–2021

SOURCE: National Association for Law Placement



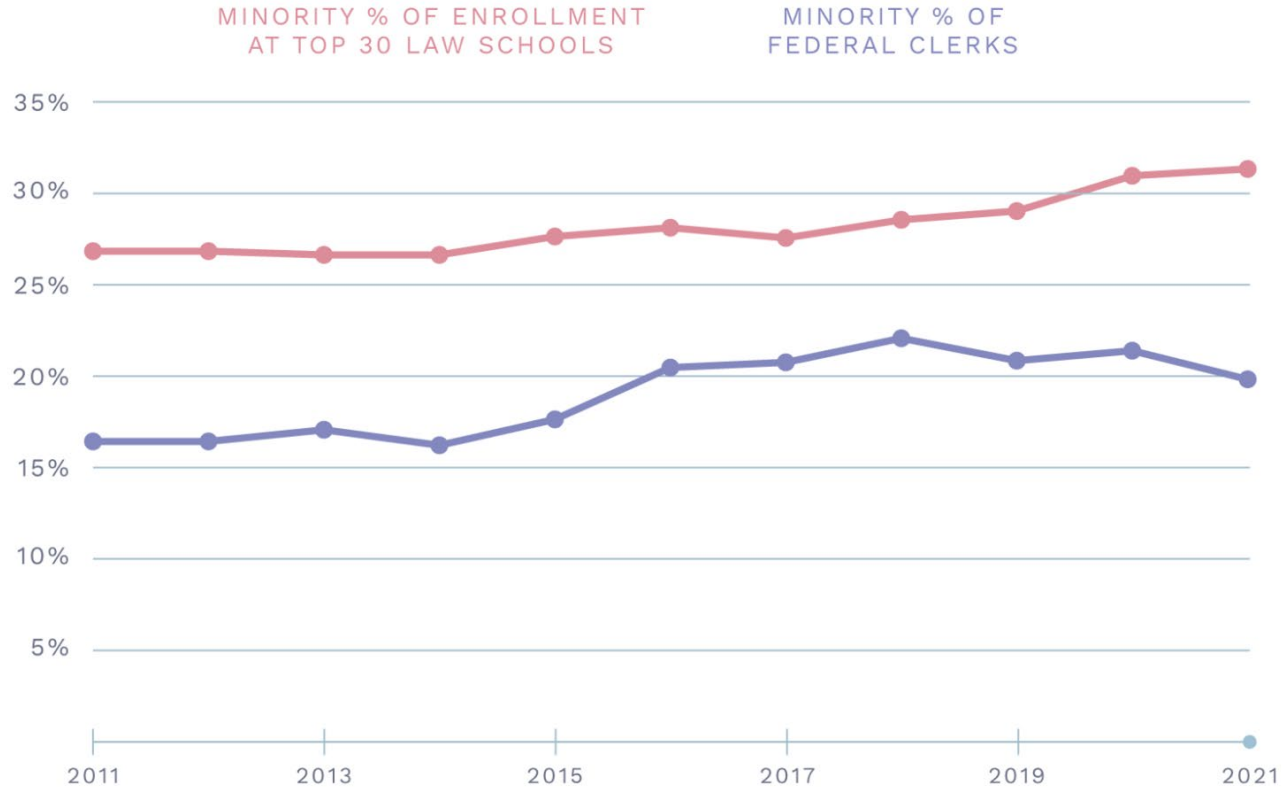
Top-30 Law School Graduates and Judicial Clerkships, 2021

SOURCE: American Bar Association; National Association for Law Placement; *U.S. News & World Report*



Minority Enrollment at Top 30 Law Schools of Respective Year vs. Percentage of Federal Clerks, 2011–21

SOURCE: American Bar Association; National Association for Law Placement; *U.S. News & World Report*



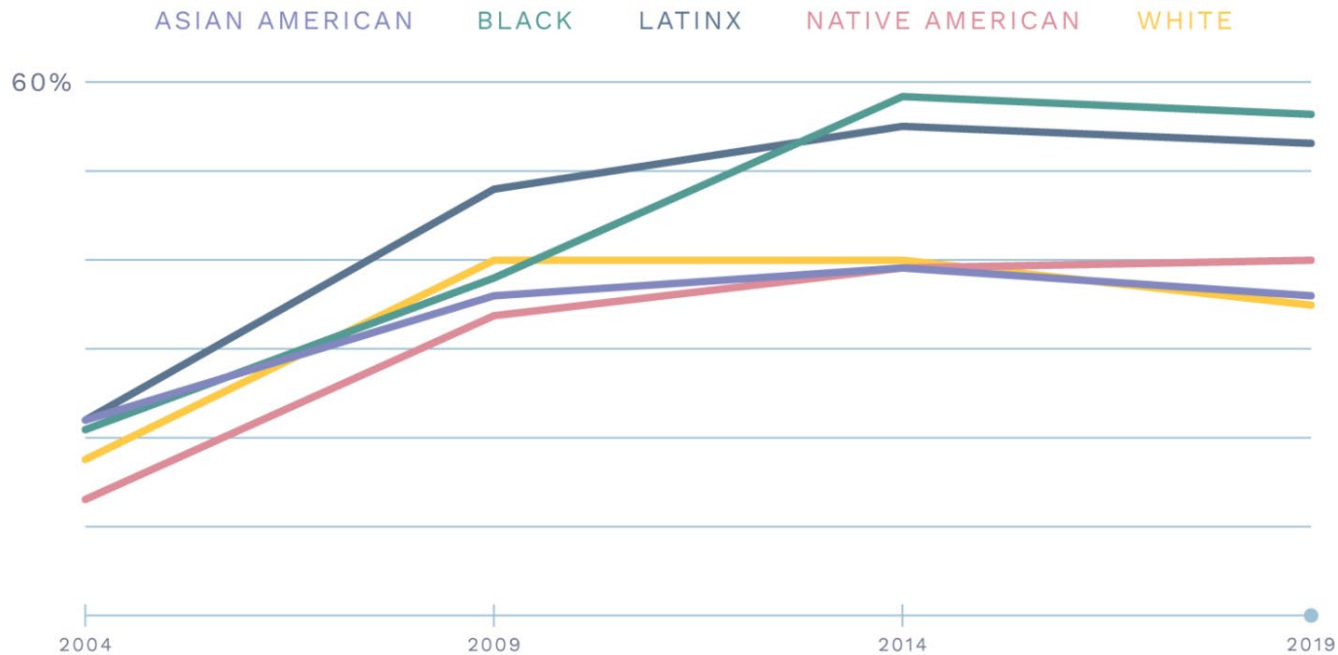
Satisfaction with Mentorship Received in Law School

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey

VERY DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED
11%	9%	20%	35%	24%

Students Expected to Owe Over \$100k, by Year and Race

SOURCE: Law Student Survey of Student Engagement



Employer Types by Race/Ethnicity, 2020

SOURCE: National Association for Law Placement

	PRIVATE PRACTICE	GOVERNMENT	PUBLIC INTEREST	CLERKSHIPS	BUSINESS
ASIAN (n=2,120)	65.0%	7.5%	6.4%	7.2%	12.3%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN (n=2,050)	45.9%	16.1%	11.8%	8.8%	14.8%
LATINX (n=2,867)	57.9%	11.4%	12.5%	8.1%	8.5%
WHITE (n=17,903)	56.6%	11.4%	8.1%	12.9%	9.7%

Demographics of Law Firms, 2020

SOURCE: Minority Corporate Counsel Association Diversity Survey Report

	ALL ATTORNEYS	ASSOCIATES	EQUITY PARTNERS	ASSOCIATES/ EQUITY PARTNERS RATIO
ASIAN AMERICAN	8.6%	12.6%	4.3%	2.9
AFRICAN AMERICAN/ BLACK	4.2%	5.3%	2.2%	2.4
HISPANIC/ LATINX	4.7%	6.2%	2.8%	2.2
WHITE	79.8%	72.2%	89.6%	0.8

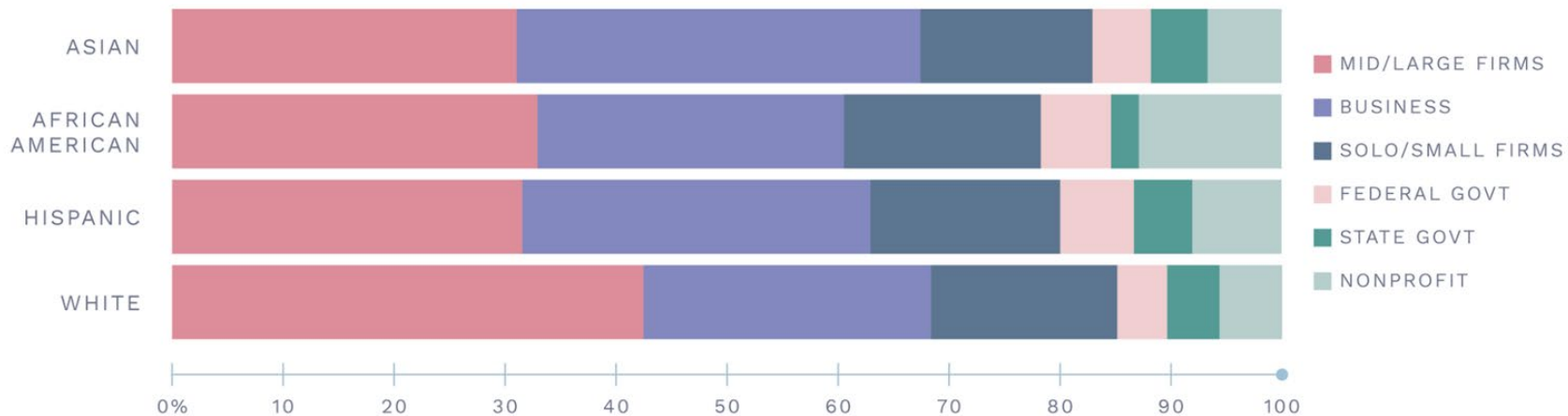
Percentage of Lawyers in Business Sector by Race/Ethnicity, 2012-13

SOURCE: American Bar Foundation; NALP Foundation for Law Career Research and Education

	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE
2 YEARS AFTER BAR ADMISSION	14.5%	7.6%	8.4%	8.5%
12 YEARS AFTER BAR ADMISSION	27.5%	19.5%	15.3%	19.9%

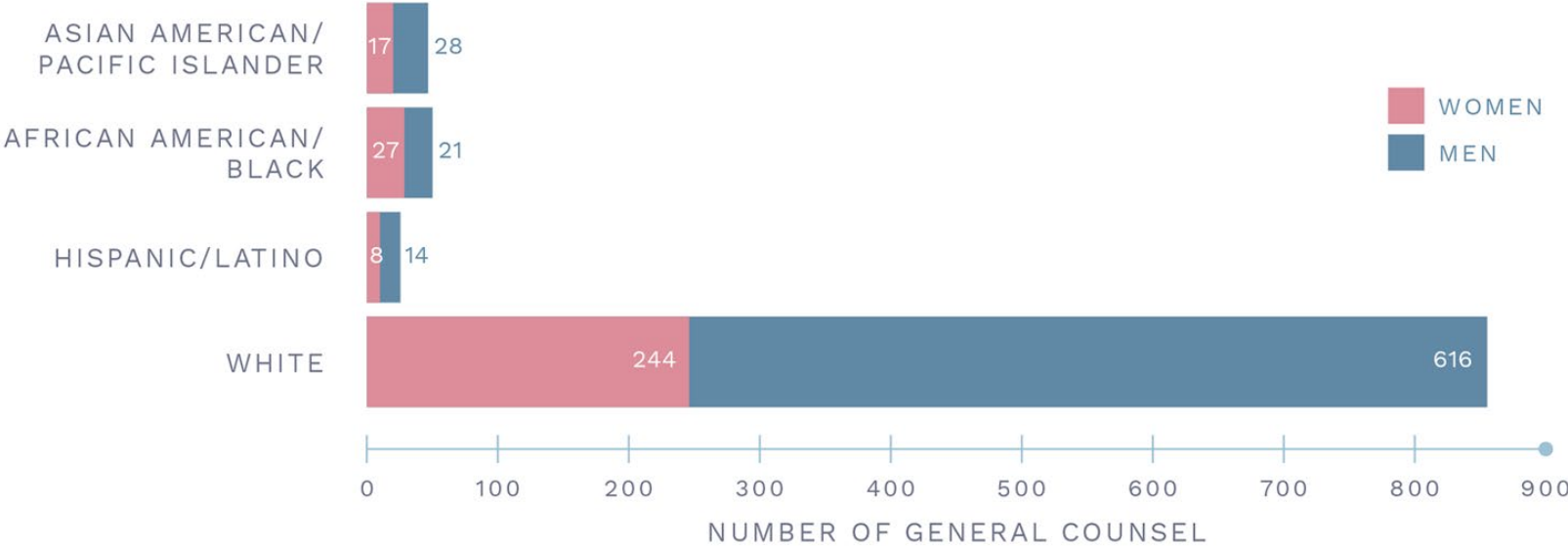
Employment Settings 12 Years into Practice Among Lawyers Who Were at Midsize to Large Firms in Second Year of Practice, by Race/Ethnicity, 2012-13

SOURCE: American Bar Foundation



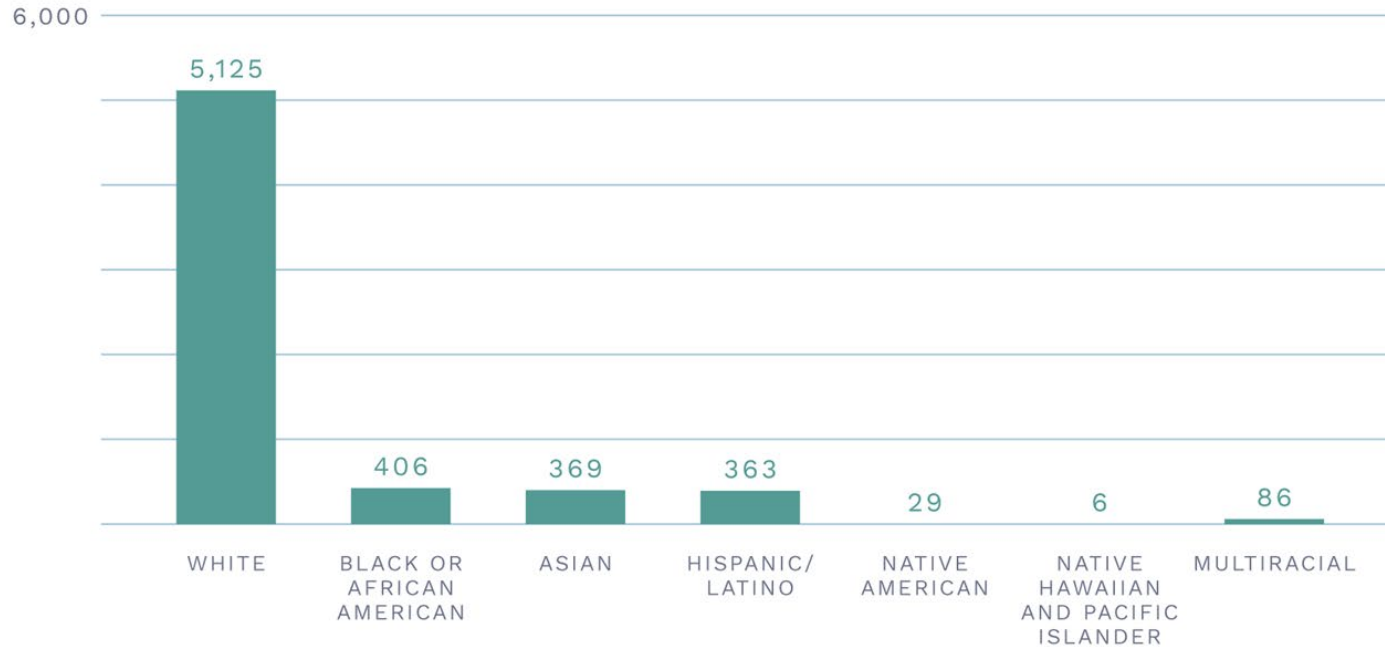
Demographics of Fortune 1000 General Counsels, 2020

SOURCE: Minority Corporate Counsel Association



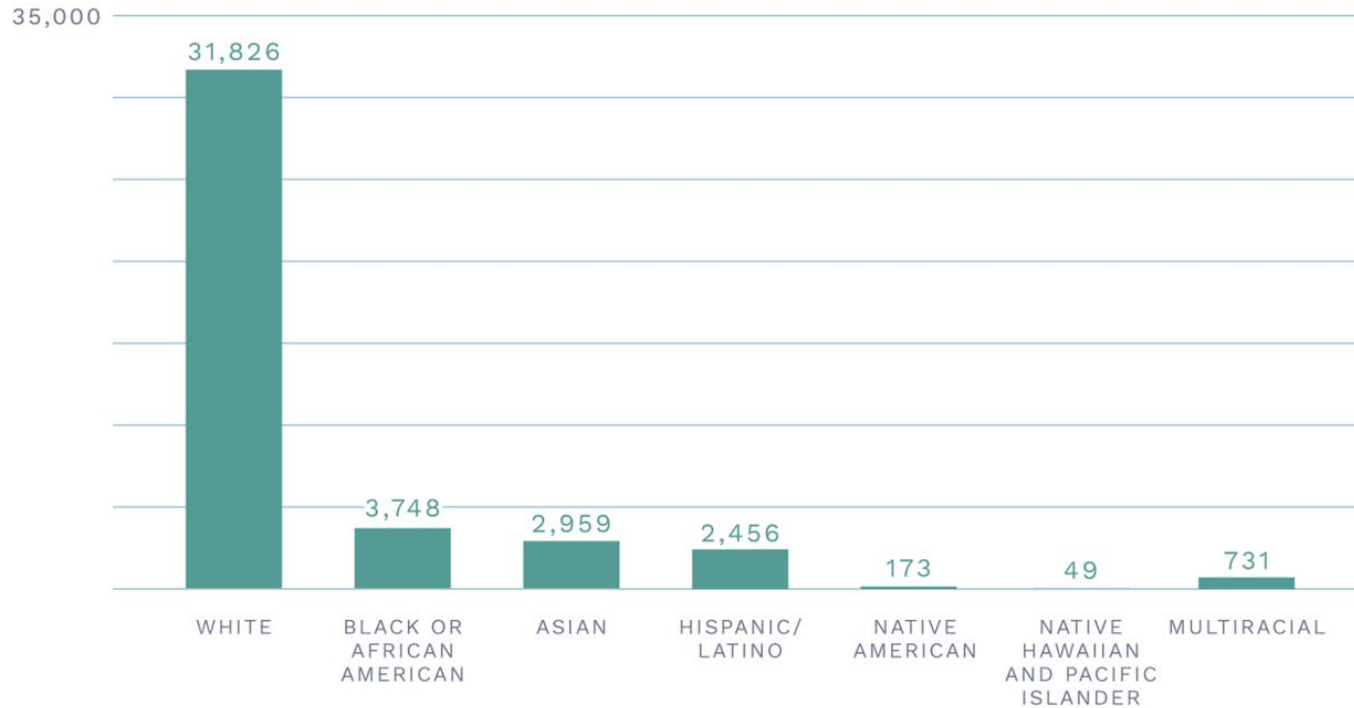
Demographics of Assistant U.S. Attorneys, 2021

SOURCE: Office of Personnel Management, Federal Workforce Data, Diversity Cubes Dec. 2021



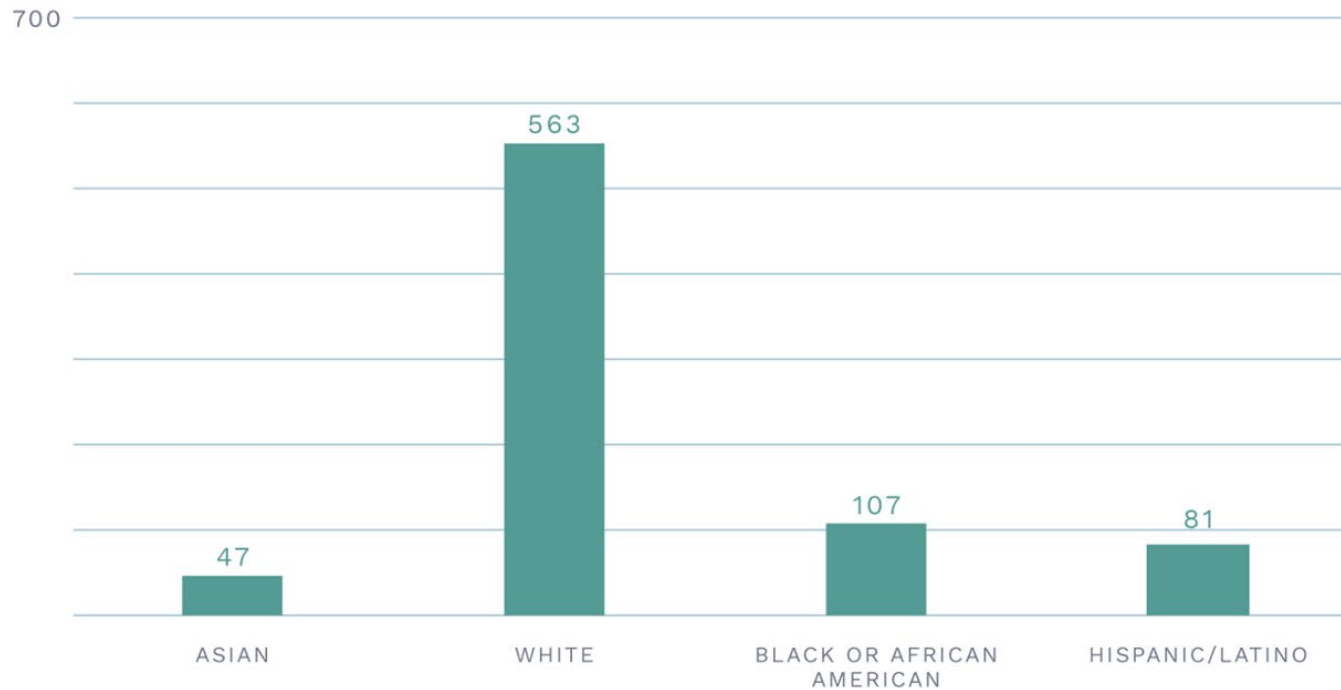
Demographics of “General Attorneys” in the U.S. Government, 2021

SOURCE: Office of Personnel Management, Federal Workforce Data, Diversity Cubes Dec. 2021



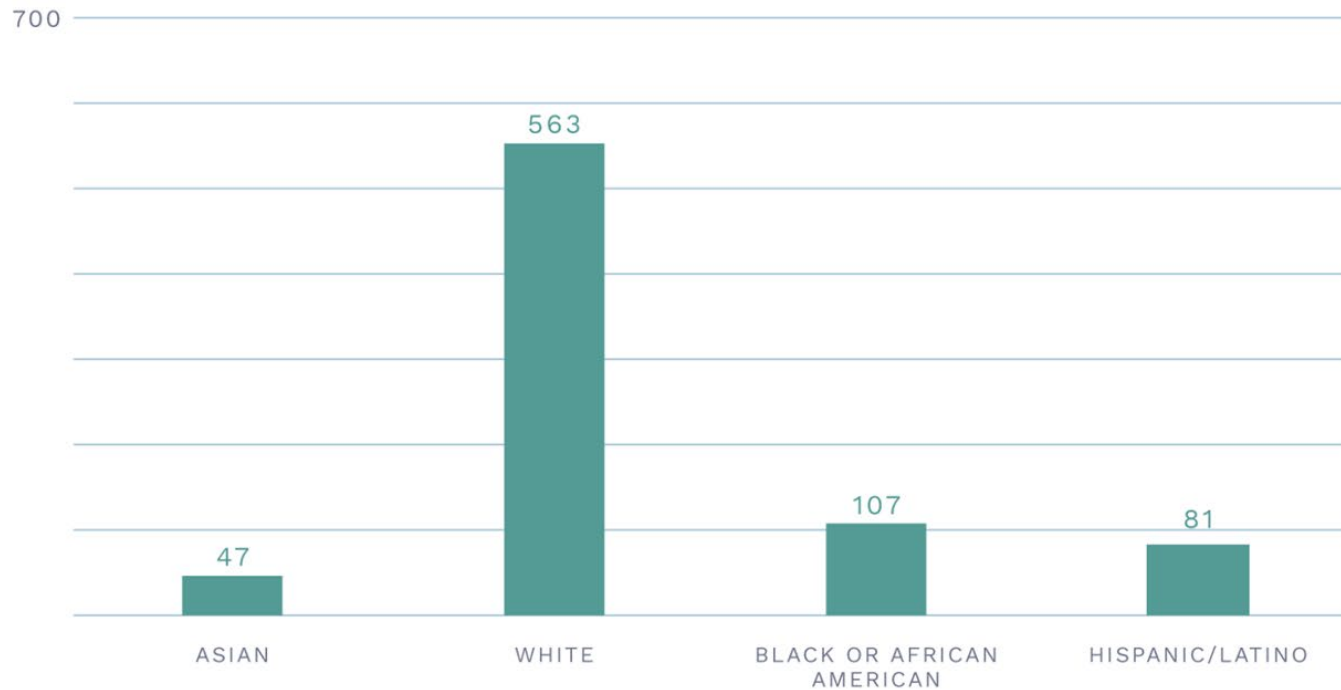
Federal Judges, 2022

SOURCE: Federal Judicial Center



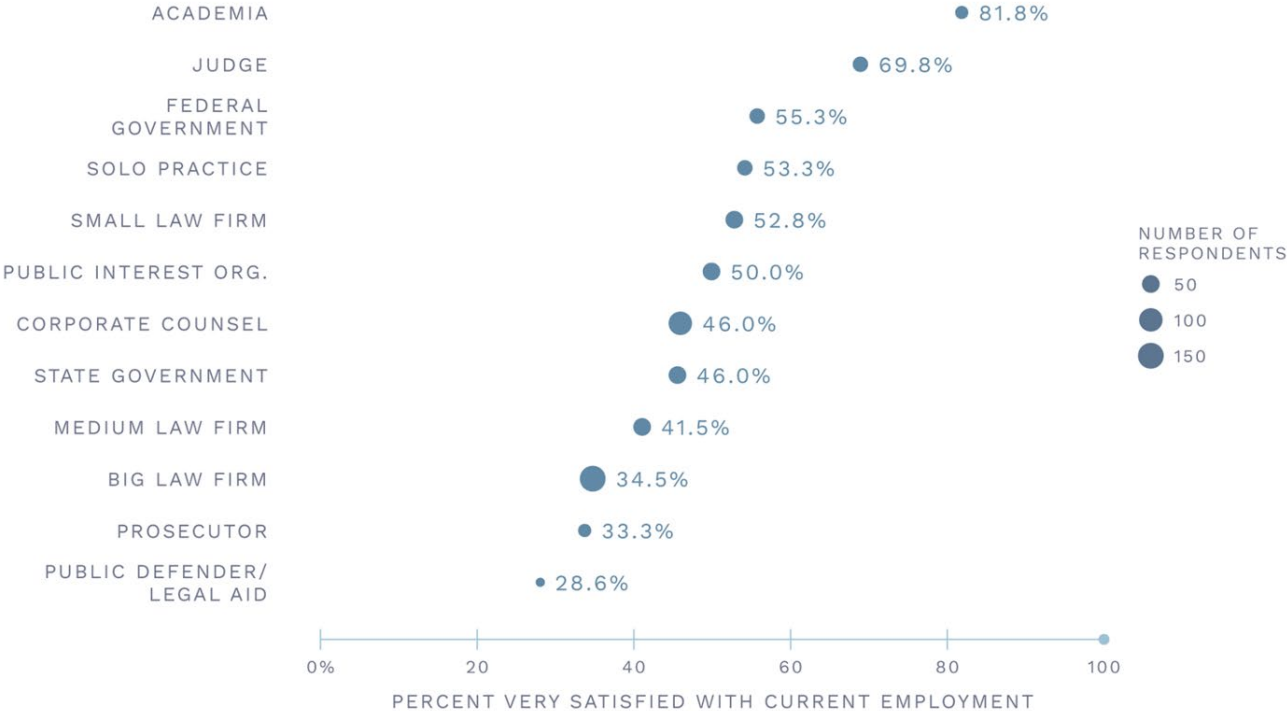
Federal Judges, 2022

SOURCE: Federal Judicial Center



Satisfaction with Current Employment by Practice Setting

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



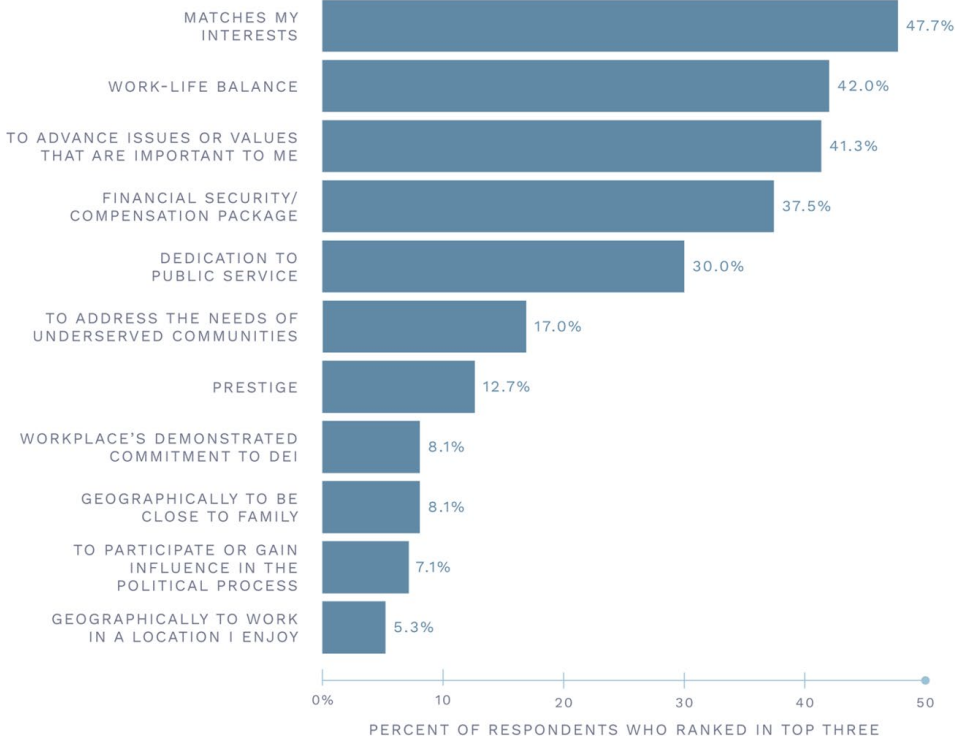
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of 2,396 elected prosecutors
in the United States in 2019
were Asian Americans

SOURCE: Women's Donor Network, PP 2.0

Motivations for Changing Practice Settings

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



Motivations for Changing to Specific Practice Settings

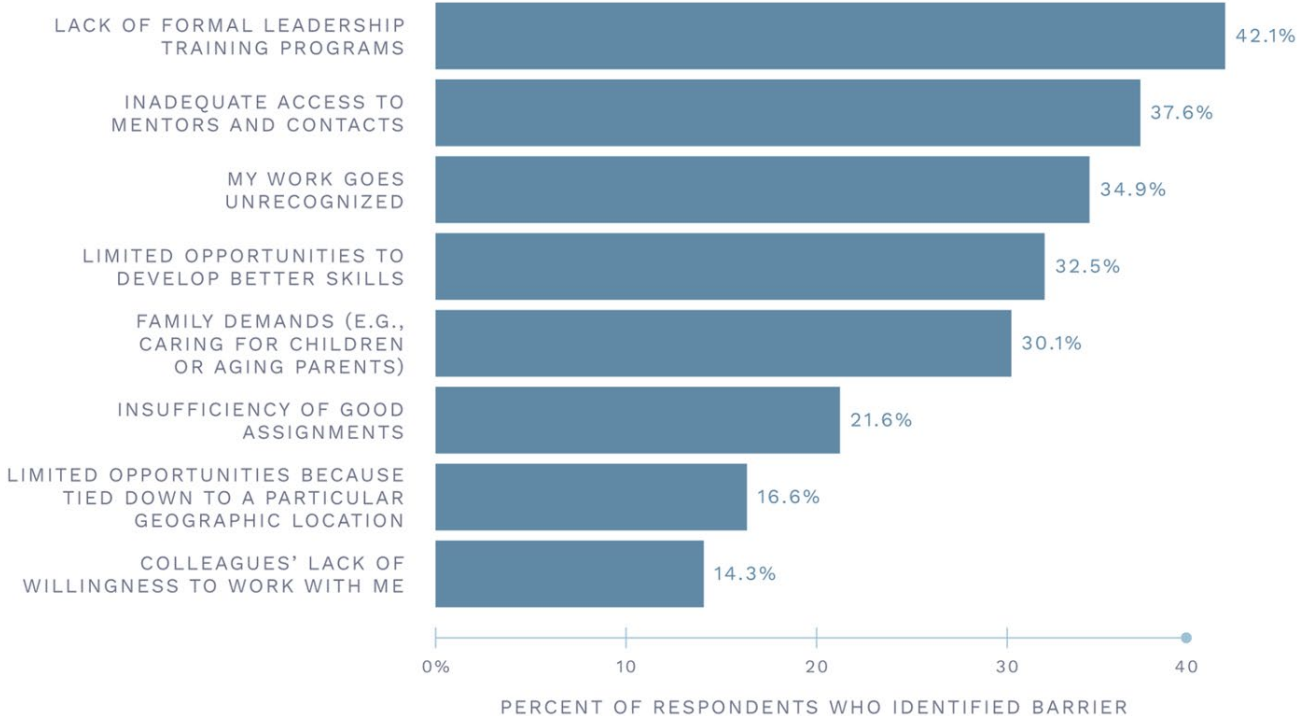
This figure shows, for each practice setting and reason for changing settings, the percentage of respondents desiring that practice setting who cited the reason among their three most significant.

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey

	BIG LAW AND CORPORATE COUNSEL	GOVERNMENT AND JUDICIARY	NONPROFIT/ PUBLIC INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS	ACADEMIA
TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES	6%	17%	29%	26%
PRESTIGE	16%	18%	6%	5%
FINANCIAL SECURITY/ COMPENSATION PACKAGE	57%	33%	26%	33%
TO ADVANCE ISSUES OR VALUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO ME	28%	52%	58%	53%
DEDICATION TO PUBLIC SERVICE	16%	43%	35%	26%

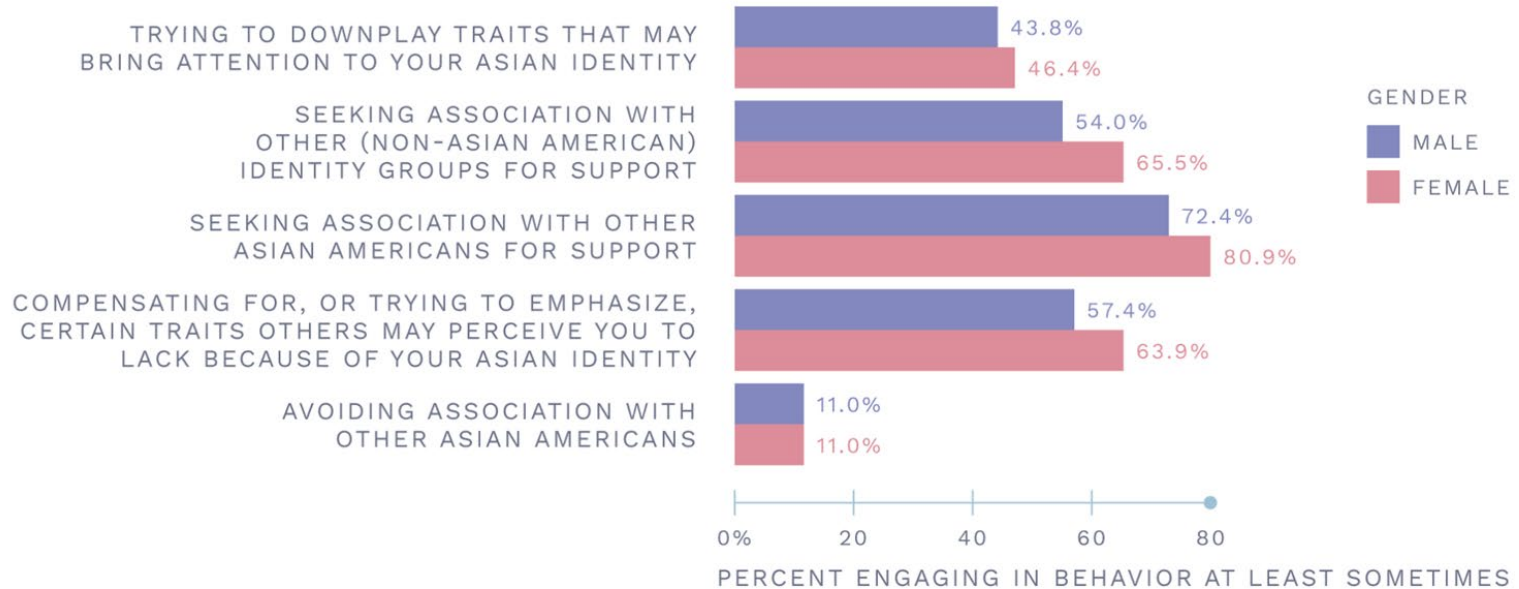
Perceived Barriers to Career Advancement

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



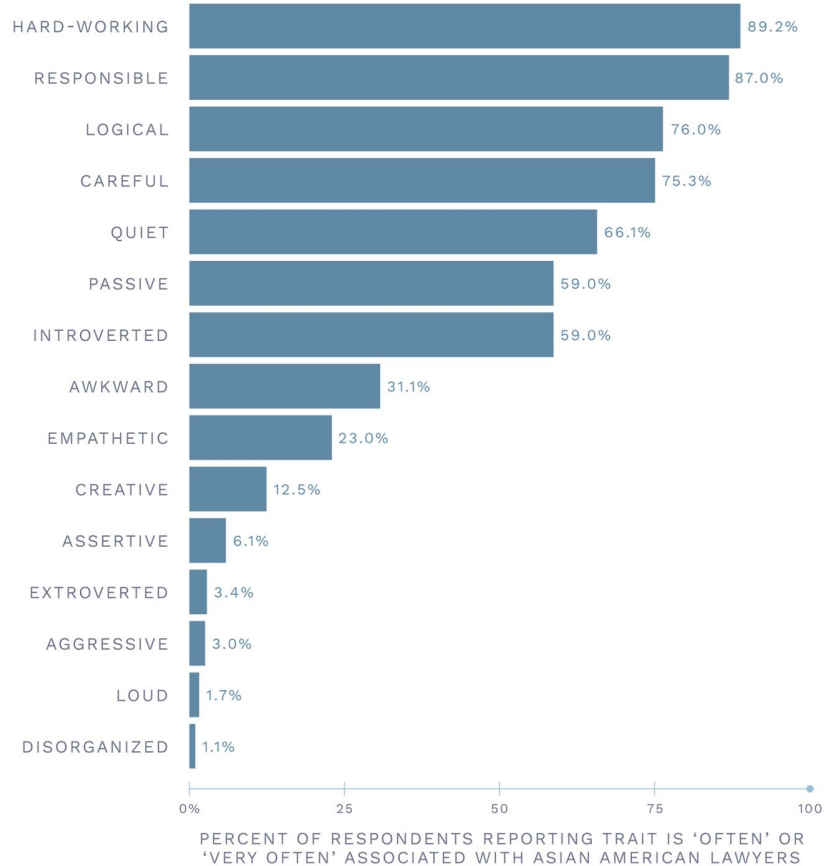
Workplace Behaviors

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



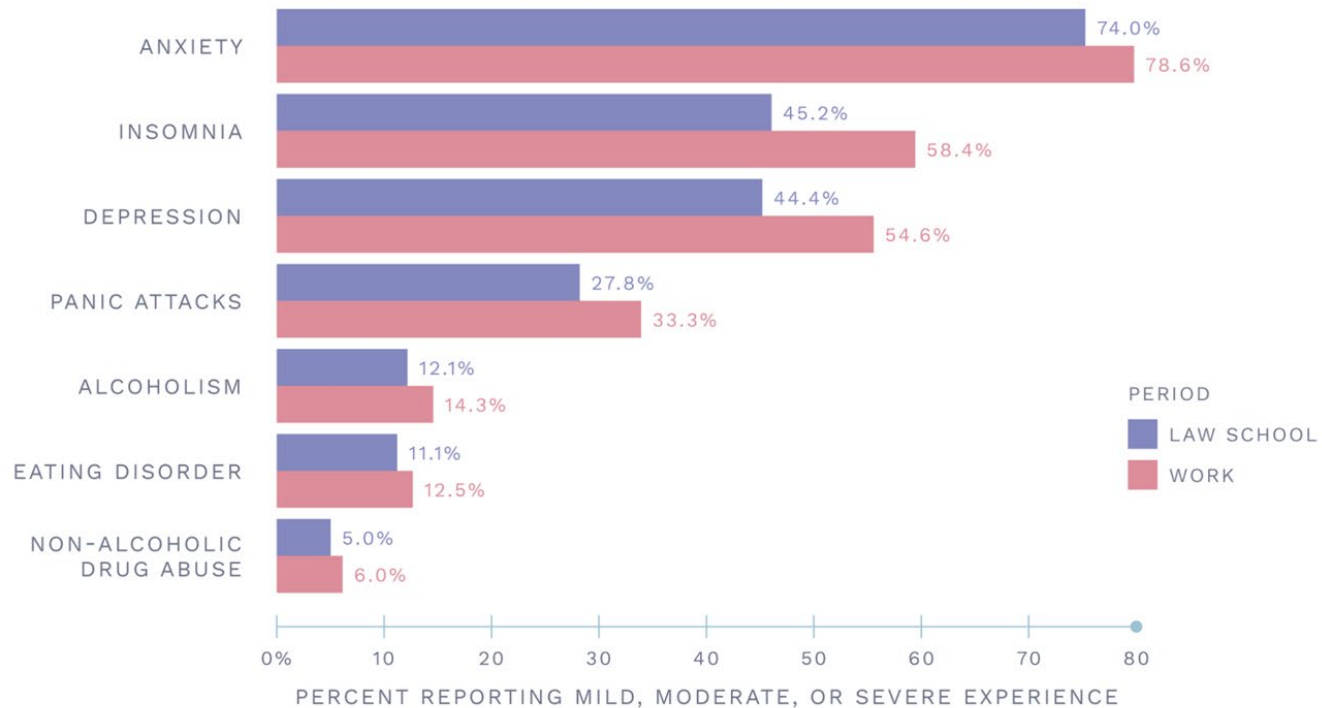
Traits Associated with Asian American Lawyers

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



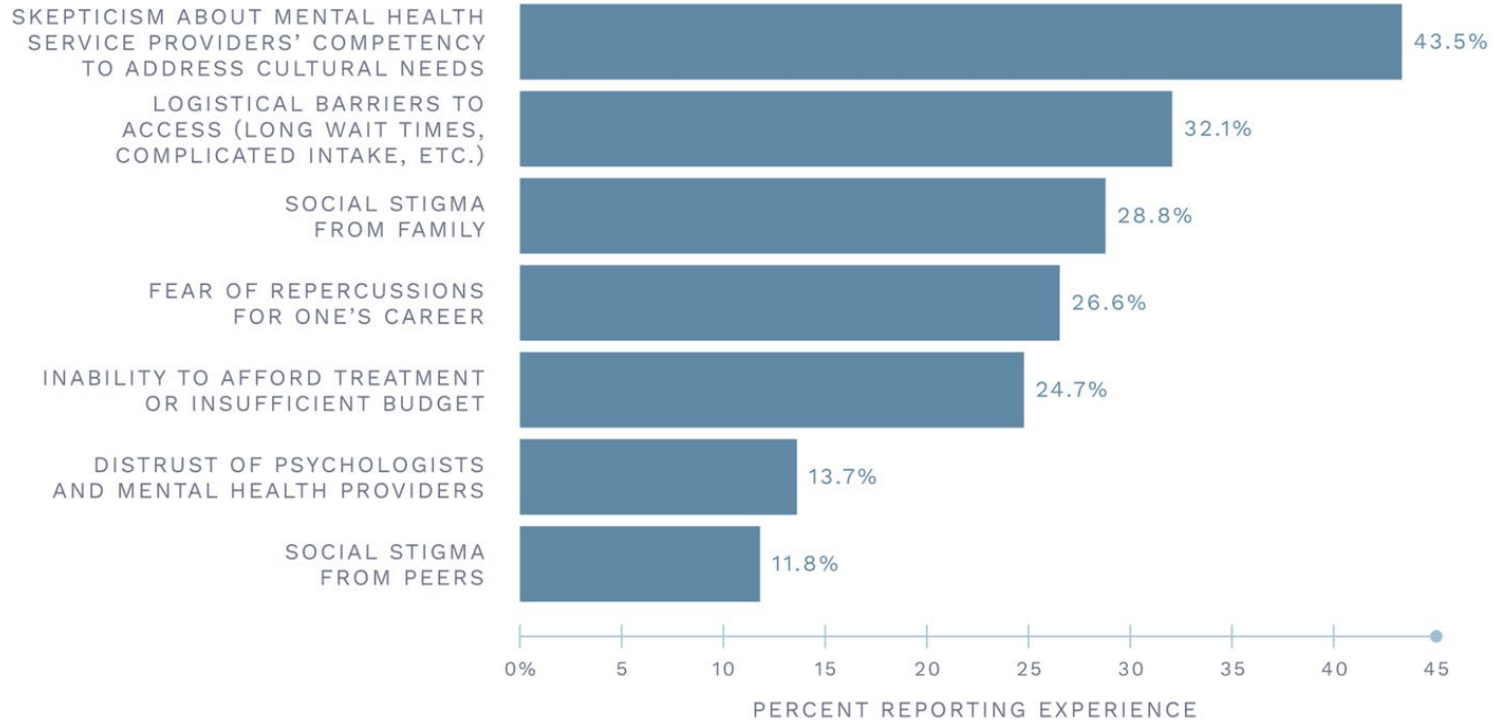
Mental Health Challenges

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



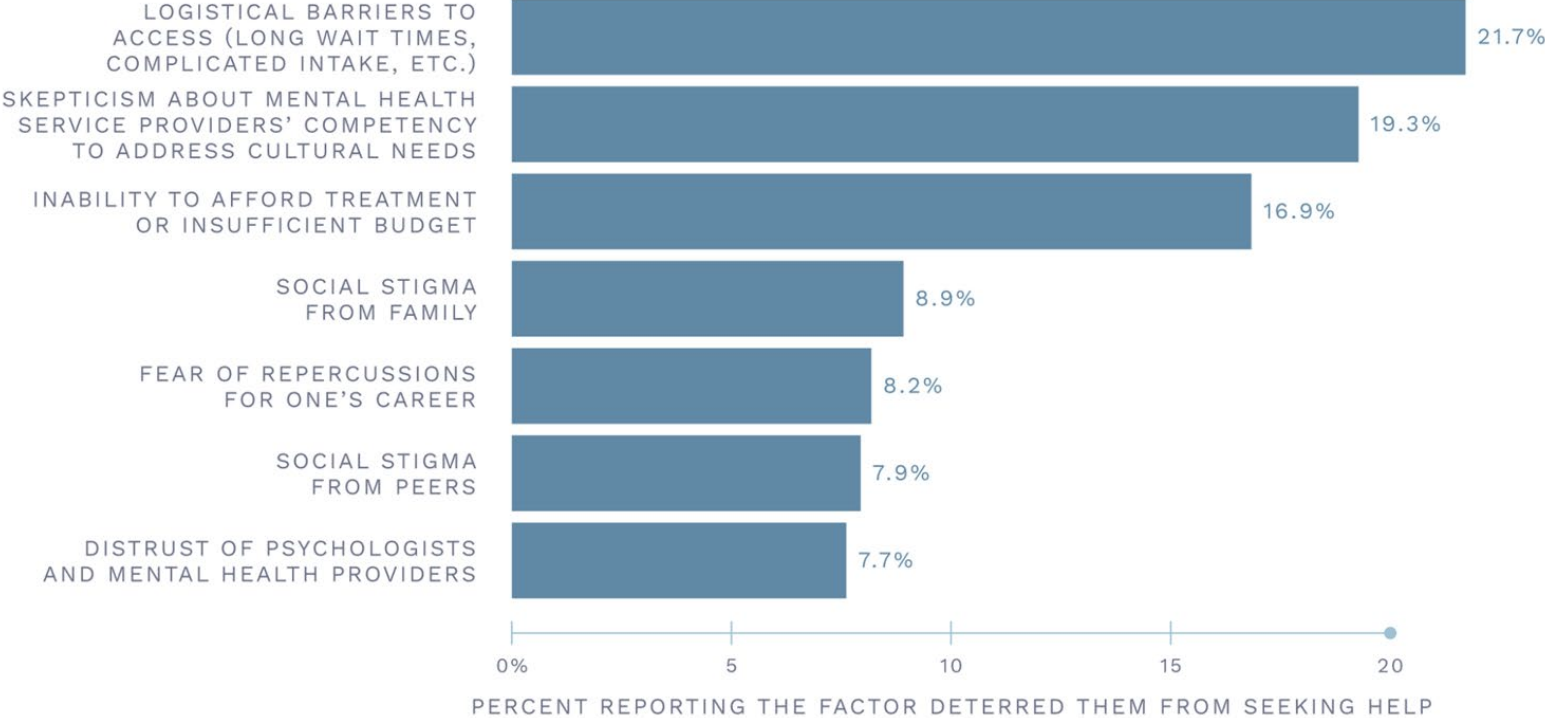
Experiences While or as a Result of Seeking Mental Health Treatment

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



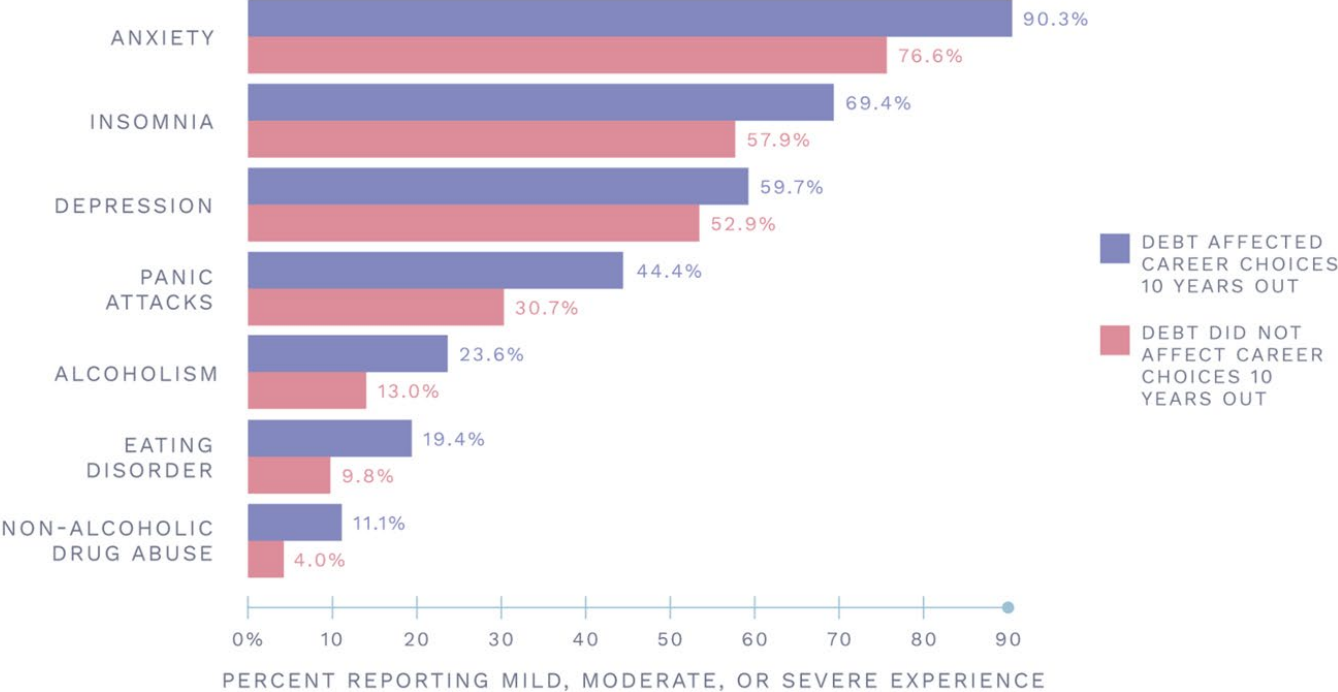
Reasons for Not Seeking Mental Health Treatment

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



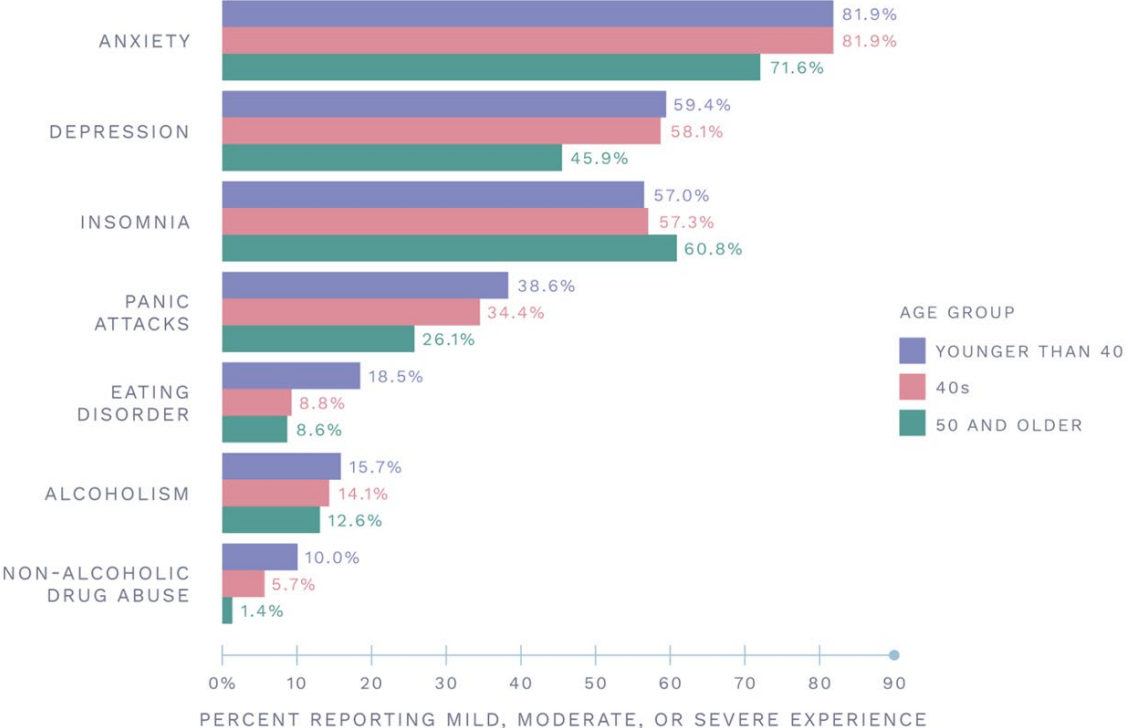
Mental Health Challenges by Debt Burden

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



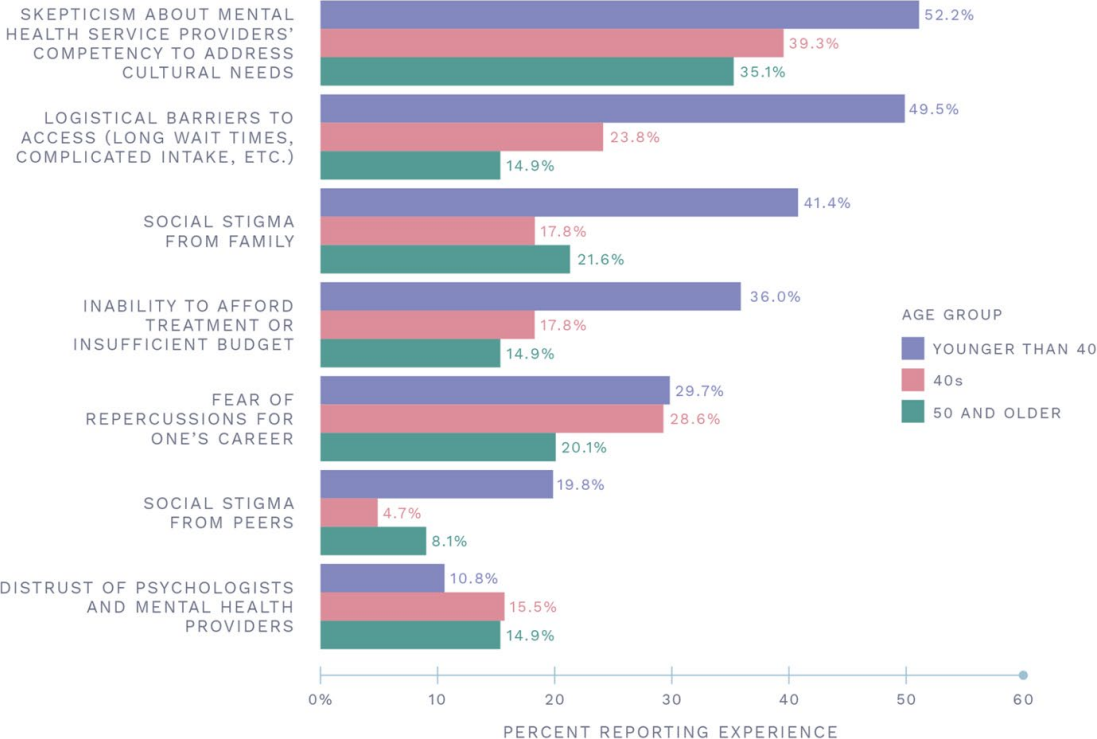
Mental Health Challenges by Age

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



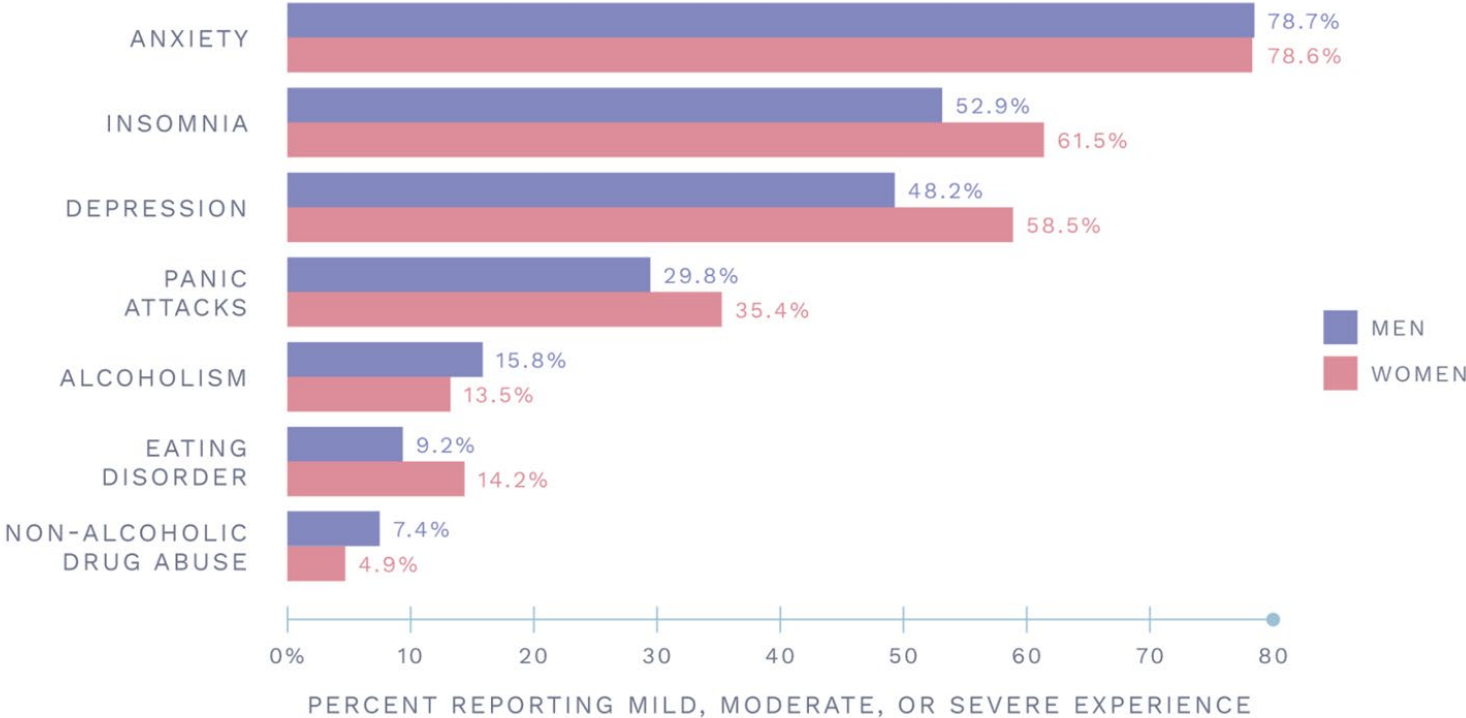
Experiences While or as a Result of Seeking Mental Health Treatment by Age

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



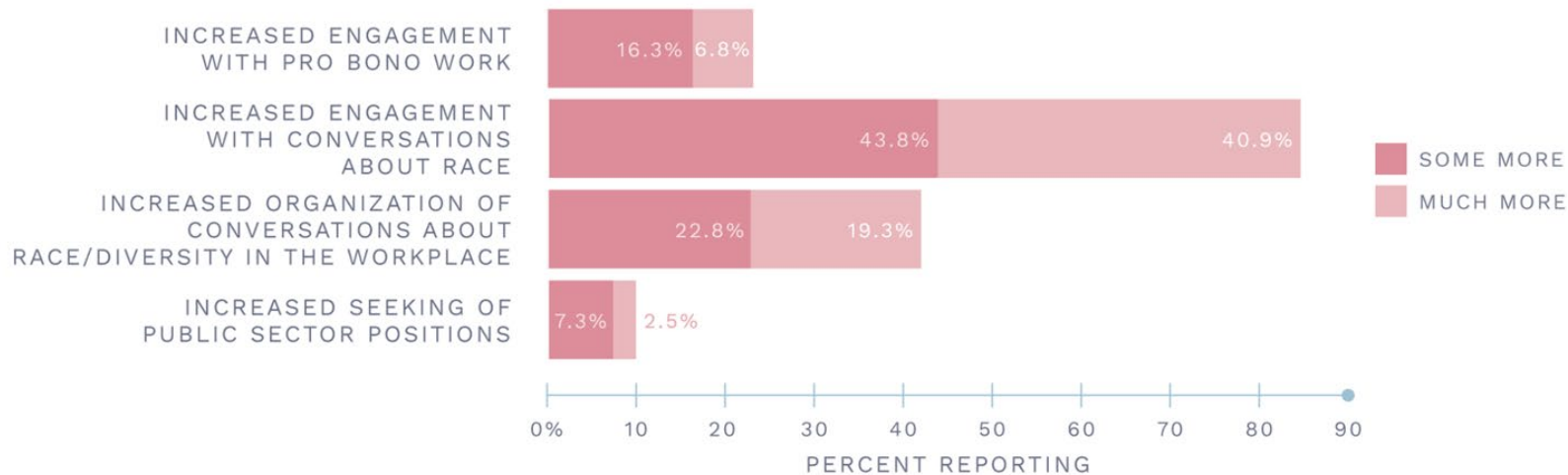
Mental Health Challenges by Gender

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



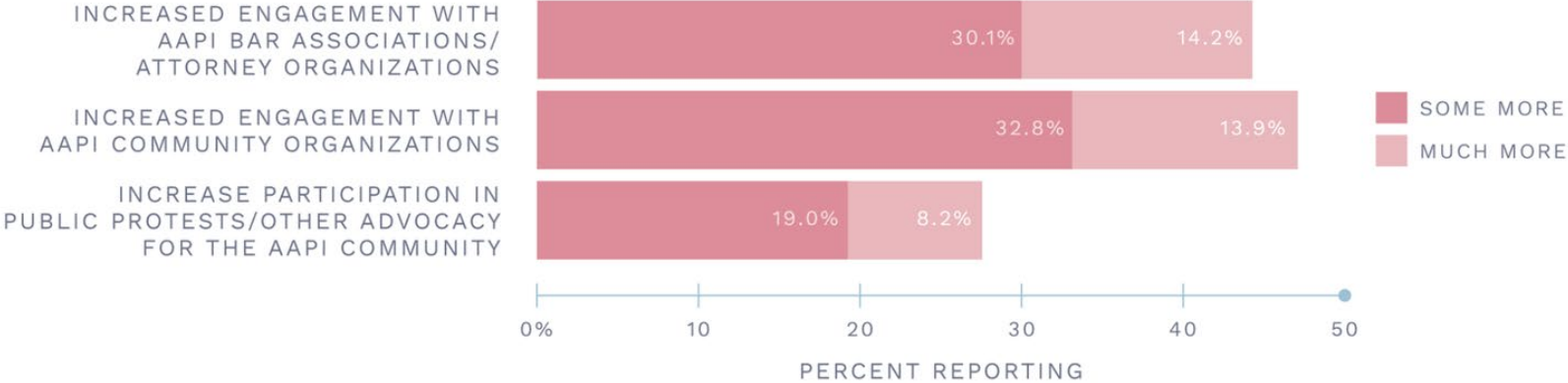
Change in Professional Activities from March 2020

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



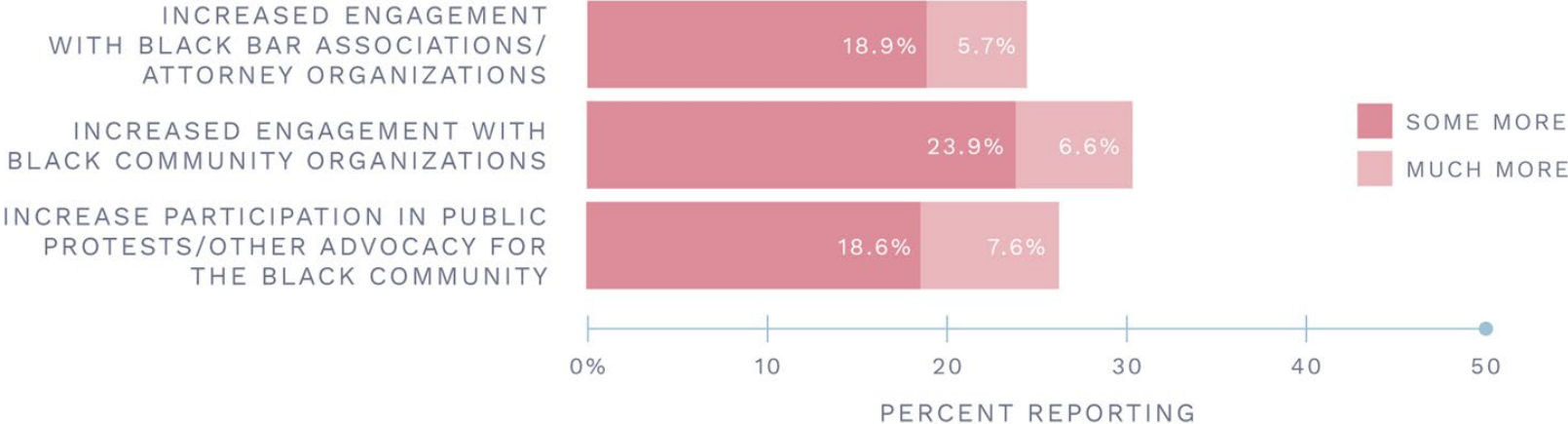
Change in AAPI Activities from March 2020

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



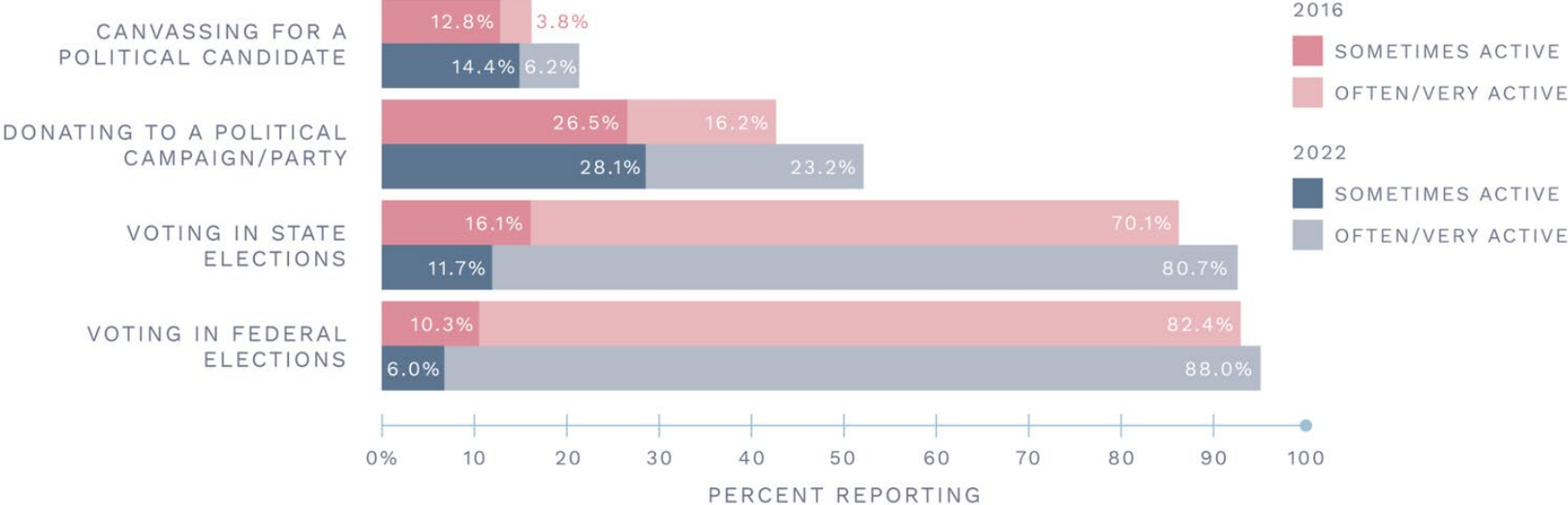
Change in Advocacy or Support for Black Community Since March 2020

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



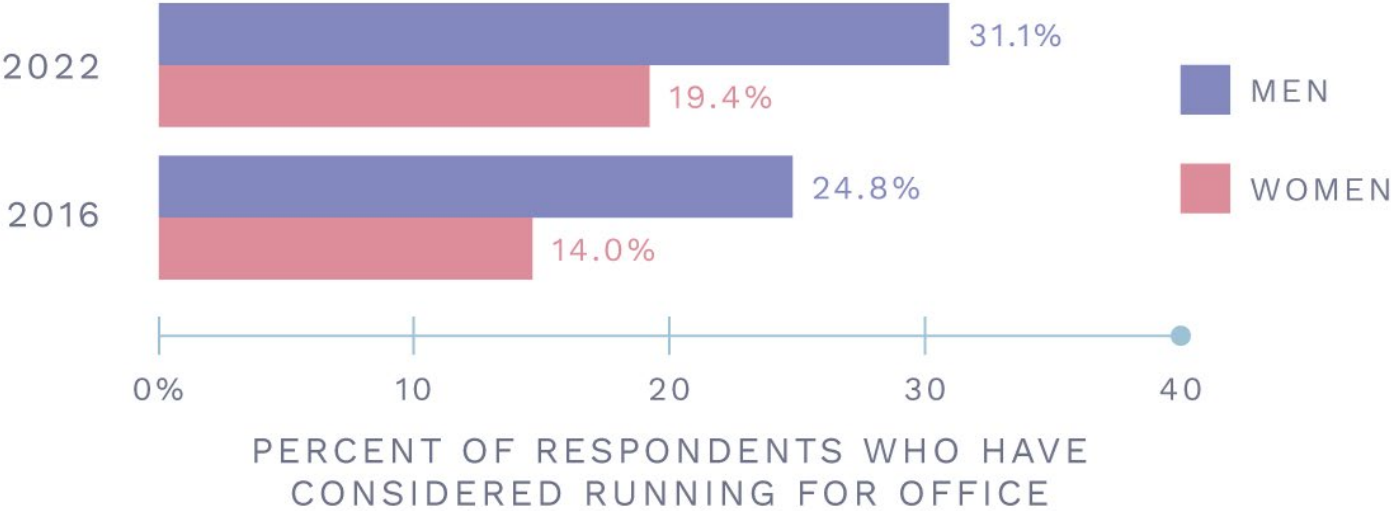
Political Activity

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



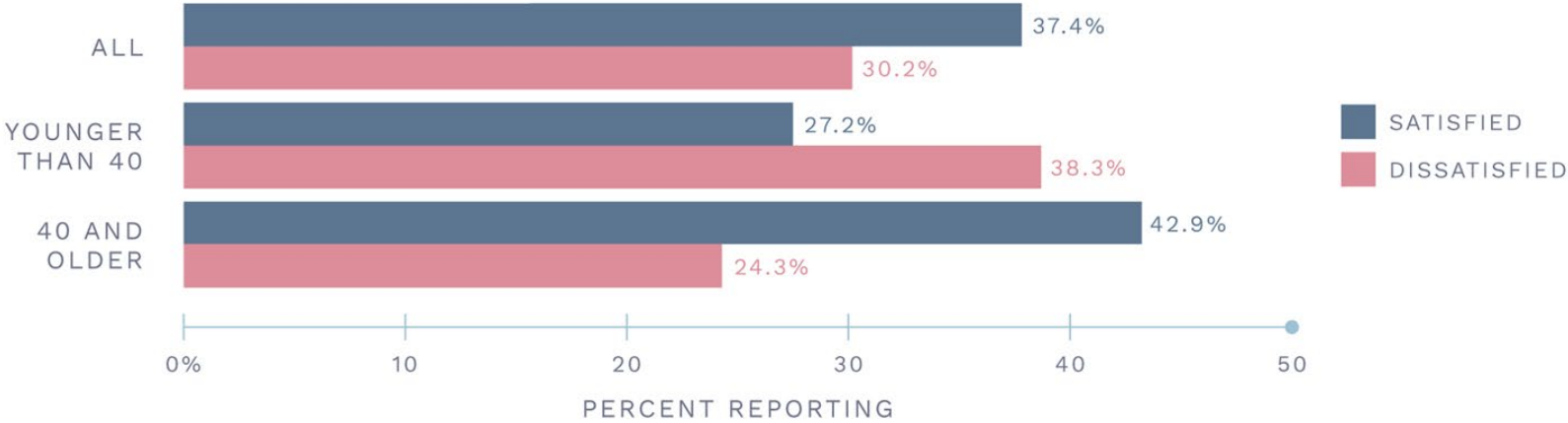
Thoughts About Running for Office

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



Satisfaction with Workplace Support

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey



Perceptions of Physical Safety

SOURCE: 2022 Portrait Project Survey

