



Diversity Report

2021



2021 Lambda School Diversity Report

Letter from the CEO

Affordability, accessibility, and market-responsive training have always been foundational to Lambda School. Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is woven throughout these values.

We founded Lambda School to empower people of all backgrounds to pursue a career in technology in order to transform their financial future. In addition, we believe that entering a financially and personally rewarding field can reverse generational patterns of exclusion. We are passionate about increasing opportunity for people from identities underrepresented in the technology sector, which can impact not only their next job but all their jobs to come.

Broader inclusion clearly benefits people from communities that have historically been left out of economic opportunity. It also helps build better businesses. Research consistently shows that companies with greater diversity—in gender, race, and ability, among other factors—out-perform their peers. To cite just a few examples, companies with the greatest racial and gender diversity on executive boards are significantly more likely to earn higher-than-average profits¹, and companies with more diverse teams are most likely to develop innovative products and services².

We at Lambda School work to break down systemic barriers that make it harder for many people to contribute their skills, ideas, and creativity to the tech industry. We care deeply about leveraging education as a social mobility tool. We are a young company and are still fledgling in our organizational DEI journey, and publishing this report is one way we are striving to improve.

We have never been more committed to increasing the diversity of our learner community, our staff, and the technology industry at large.

-Austen Allred
Lambda School CEO & Cofounder

¹ [McKinsey & Company, 2020](#)

² [Harvard Business Review, 2016](#)

Why is diversity important?

Historically, employment in the technology sector has not reflected our country's diversity of backgrounds, abilities, and experiences. Systematic barriers have impeded access to the education, training, and connections that enable people to thrive in tech-based careers.

We firmly believe that talent is distributed across races, ethnicities, abilities, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, income, and countless other factors, and we work to ensure that the opportunity to pursue tech jobs is equally accessible.

Equity

Many people do not have opportunities that enable them to fulfill their potential. It will take concerted and steady efforts to disrupt systems that put some people at a disadvantage.

Addressing deep-rooted barriers to education and meaningful jobs begins to correct this imbalance. The technology industry has not only the opportunity but the responsibility to seek, recruit, support, and champion people of all backgrounds so that anyone can take advantage of opportunity.

Equity in opportunities to pursue a career in technology is more important than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic both highlighted and exacerbated the gaps between communities. People of color, people who have a disability, those who come from a lower socioeconomic background, women, and many other underrepresented groups were disproportionately affected by both the health-related and economic impacts of the pandemic. For example, Black / African American people have been nearly twice as likely as White people to test positive for COVID-19, according to the CDC³. Women in the U.S. have lost nearly 1 million more jobs than men have⁴. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that people who identify as Black / African American, Hispanic or Latinx were significantly more likely to be unemployed during the pandemic⁵.

What this means for Lambda School: To do our part to counter inequity, we are committed to expanding access to technology education, regardless of learners'⁶ background or identity, to provide a direct path to a rewarding career in tech.

Business needs

Just like a patented product or trade secret, diversity is an asset to both companies and employees. Research overwhelmingly shows that diverse companies outperform less-diverse peers and competitors. For example, companies in the top quartile for ethnic diversity are 35

³ [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020](#)

⁴ [Center for American Progress. 2021](#)

⁵ [Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2021](#)

⁶ Lambda School defines a learner as a student or alumnus of a Lambda School program

percent more likely than the lowest quartile to earn higher-than-average financial returns⁷. And the most gender-diverse companies are 48 percent more likely to financially outperform the least gender-diverse companies⁸.

When people of diverse backgrounds not only have a seat at the table but also drive business decisions, innovations are more likely to lead to business breakthroughs⁹. New ideas, products, services, and solutions are born of a company's unique combination of employee experience and perspective, so diversity makes organizations more resilient and competitive¹⁰.

Diversity is not a “nice-to-have.” It is critical to the success of businesses, and it improves the experience of technology for everyone.

What this means for Lambda School: We are closely aligned with partner businesses as well as the market's hiring needs and goals for growth. To best serve hiring companies, we actively work to provide an alternative, and largely untapped, talent pool of highly qualified graduates that reflects the country's diversity.

Why we publish a Diversity Report

We published our first Diversity Report in 2020. This report builds on that foundation and reflects demographic data from our learner population and full-time staff in 2021. Additionally, we are eager to share Outcomes data by gender and race for learners who were scheduled to complete or graduated from a Lambda School program between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020.

Transparency is important to us, and it helps keep us accountable for our goals. We remain committed to showing not only our growth but also opportunities to improve.

It is no easy task to break down barriers to education and open pathways to financial mobility, and progress requires ongoing effort. Sharing our successes and areas of improvement is an important part of the process.

Our hope is that this and similar reports encourage others, educational organizations and employers alike, to take a hard look at—and work to improve—their own practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

⁷ [McKinsey & Company, 2015](#)

⁸ [McKinsey & Company, 2020](#)

⁹ [Economic Geography, 2013](#)

¹⁰ [Economic Geography, 2013](#)

Executive Insights

This Diversity Report documents communities that are underrepresented in the technology sector, including people of color, women, people from the LGBTQIA+ community, and those who do not have a bachelor's degree. For the first time, we also share the Outcomes performance of different groups, highlighting graduation rates and placement rates of Lambda School learners by race and gender.

Representation at Lambda School still exceeds averages of the technology sector, especially on staff diversity. Roughly a quarter of our staff, in positions throughout the company from individual contributors to leadership, are from racially underrepresented communities, and about half our employees identify as women.

Despite our ongoing and growing efforts, we also witnessed slight decreases in some measures of learner diversity. We believe this reflects the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and recession on communities that already face multiple barriers, particularly people of color and women.

We remain committed to the sustained work required to empower people of all backgrounds to achieve financial mobility through a career in technology.

Our DEI Commitments

This report shares insights we have gained about the diversity of two parts of the Lambda School community: learners and staff.

We have defined DEI commitments for both staff and learners, and we will continue to regularly report on progress.

Learner DEI Commitments

Lambda School works to close the gap between potential and opportunity by removing barriers that stand in the way of a better education, a better career, and a higher income.

Lambda School was founded with the goal to make technology education available and accessible to people of any background so they can achieve financial mobility. We also recognize that there are continued systemic barriers and challenges that remain outside of Lambda School.

Our commitment to remove obstacles that stand in the way of a better, high paying career will expand opportunity for our current learners and those to come.

Staff DEI Commitments

Lambda School works to ensure our staff reflect the diversity of our learners and wider community so we are more equipped to make decisions that benefit learners, employers, and the technology industry at large.

Diversity of background and perspective helps us design programs to train and support learners, and we continue to work to expand diversity in Lambda School staff at all levels. As a result, Lambda School is better equipped to enable companies to hire just-right candidates for in-demand roles.

Lambda School also has DEI built into our leadership structure. We formed a DEI Council in 2021 because diversity, equity, and inclusion work is essential to the success of Lambda School. The Council's role is to add clarity, emphasis, accountability, and support to our work around DEI, and it guides leaders and teams to approach their work through a DEI lens. The DEI Council is made up of senior leaders and team members from across the organization.

The DEI Council's role is also to support our staff-led Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) team. The purpose of this group is to create a productive and educational space for staff to shape Lambda School's culture through the lens of justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. We believe that we serve learners and each other best when every person feels included and supported at work, and we believe that this is an area where we will always be improving.

The JEDI team supports our Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). ERGs are voluntary, employee-led groups whose aim is to foster a diverse and inclusive workplace. They are usually led and participated in by employees who share a common identity such as race, gender, or sexual orientation. The groups exist to provide support and help in personal and career development, and to create a safe space where employees can more fully express and explore their identities. ERGs are open to all Lambda School employees, inclusive of all identities or affinities.

Our Work Toward Progress

As you will read in the following pages, Lambda School has made gains in some areas of diversity. We also have room for improvement.

Our DEI efforts fall into five main components, each of which covers specific, targeted interventions.

- 1. Attracting and supporting a diverse group of learners.**

Example: Lambda School offers scholarships that support aspiring software engineers who come from identities that are underrepresented in the tech industry. Scholarships are another way Lambda School invests in future tech talent, making it more financially

feasible for aspiring engineers with leadership potential and technical aptitude to access new career opportunities.

2. **Building an equitable and representative experience for our learner community, from admissions to post-graduation outcomes.**

Example: Recent analysis of learner diversity data uncovered several target areas where Lambda School is doing well, and where we can improve. Areas for improvement include female learner representation and differences in persistence and in-school performance across ethnic groups. In response, each of Lambda School's three main Verticals—Admissions & Marketing, School, and Outcomes—set quarterly goals to explicitly work on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are analyzing the challenges, tracking and reporting on the data, and launching and learning from pilots to improve the experience of Lambda School for all groups.

3. **Providing a safe space and regular opportunities for learners to offer feedback.**

Example: Lambda School recently launched a DEI Survey to better understand the experiences, successes, and challenges of our learners. We are also inviting learners to participate in listening sessions so we can better understand their experience at Lambda School. Both sources of feedback will help us design and pilot targeted interventions aimed at closing gaps and creating an educational experience that works for all our learners.

4. **Creating an inclusive and equitable working environment for people of all backgrounds.**

Example: Lambda School has made significant strides in creating an inclusive work environment for all staff members. Our DEI Council; Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) team; and Employee Resource Groups work to create safe spaces for all employees and improve visibility of diversity, equity, and inclusion work. These groups regularly assess the state of DEI at Lambda School and recommend new initiatives to continually improve. One initiative is the Remote Buddy Experience, which pairs two employees over a six-month period and fosters a sense of connectedness. It was launched in response to staff feedback around feeling siloed in Lambda School's fully remote workplace.

There is no "finish line" for DEI work. It requires an ongoing commitment and willingness to own mistakes, learn, and do better.

Diversity at Lambda School

Identity is complex. It is comprised of many overlapping factors, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, education, and countless others. Our data looks at one factor at a time, but we recognize the intersectional and multifaceted nature of identity.

We are proud that Lambda School's learners, graduates, and staff bring a wide range of experiences, backgrounds, identities, and perspectives to our community. The following sections share data and insights on diversity, equity, and inclusion at Lambda School.

Lambda School Learner Diversity^{11,12}

Race

According to numbers from the 2019 U.S. Census, about 36 percent of the U.S. population self-identifies as a race or ethnicity that is underrepresented¹³ in the technology sector¹⁴. At 32.5 percent, Lambda School's learner population roughly mirrors national demographics and is significantly more diverse than the technology industry¹⁵.

In 2020, people of color were disproportionately impacted by the health-related and economic impacts of the pandemic and recession. Lambda School also saw uneven impacts on our learner community: Enrollment of learners of underrepresented races fell 3.5 percent from 2020 to 2021. Further, we saw inequities in graduation and placement rates for some Lambda School learners. These insights will guide our efforts to not only increase diversity but provide the resources and support to help all learners succeed.

¹¹ A snapshot of Lambda School's active learner population was taken on August 17, 2021. During their Lambda School experience, learners are asked to complete an optional diversity survey. The total addressable population for all measures of demographic representation is the 778 learners who completed the survey. Each question in the survey is optional, so response rates to each question varied.

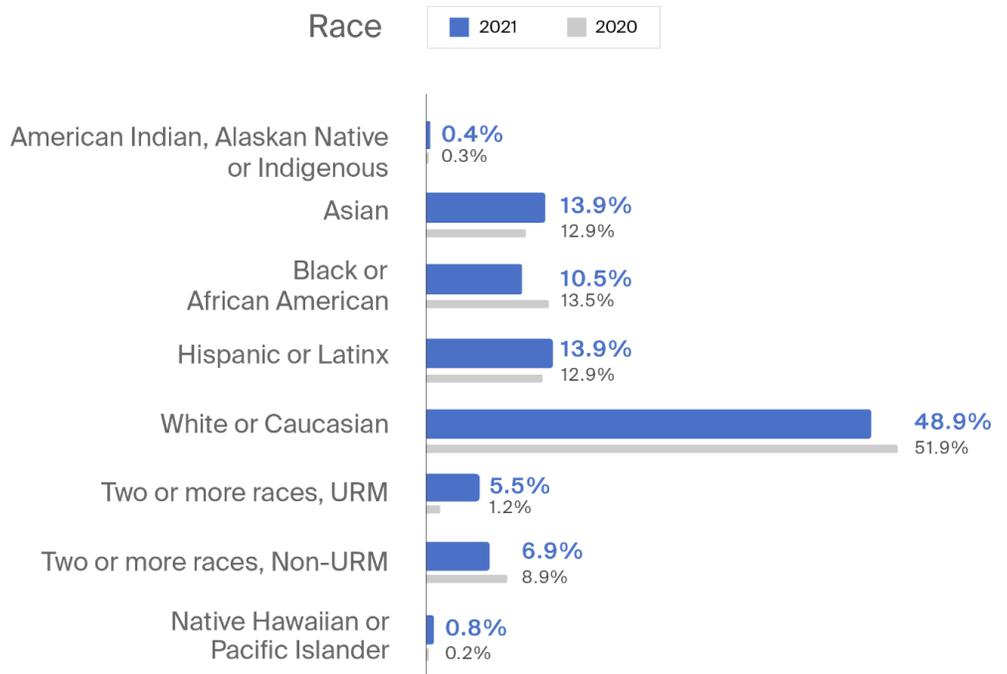
¹² In our diversity surveys, learners have the opportunity to self-identify. When reporting on outcomes - graduation rates and placement rates - by race or gender, we have excluded or combined certain groups due to small population sizes so as to avoid presenting potentially misleading data.

¹³ Underrepresented populations include Black or African American, American Indian, Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, and two or more races (at least one of which is underrepresented)

¹⁴ [US Census Bureau, 2019](#)

¹⁵ [US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)

Learner Representation by Race¹⁶



Learner Outcomes by Race¹⁷

Graduation Rate by Race

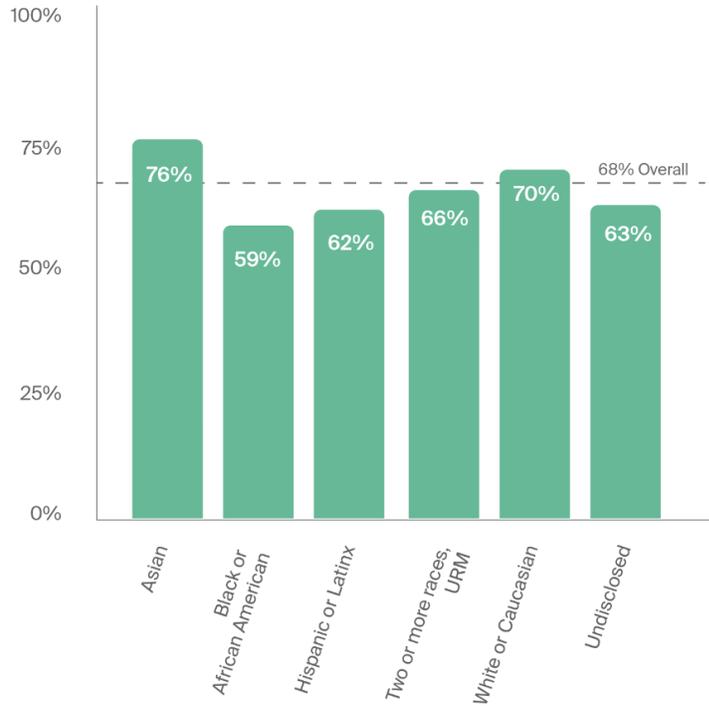
Graduation rate for each race is calculated by dividing the number of learners who graduated as of the Reporting Date for Lambda School's 2020 Outcomes Report¹⁸ by the number of Starting Learners¹⁹ whose Original Expected Graduation Date fell in 2020. Certain groups have been excluded due to small population sizes.

¹⁶ Learners who did not answer this survey question have been excluded. 56 learners, or 6.4% of the total addressable population did not answer this question.

¹⁷ Learner Outcomes are provided for the addressable population covered in Lambda School's 2020 Outcomes Report: learners who were scheduled to complete or graduated from a Lambda School program between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. Certain groups have been excluded due to small population sizes.

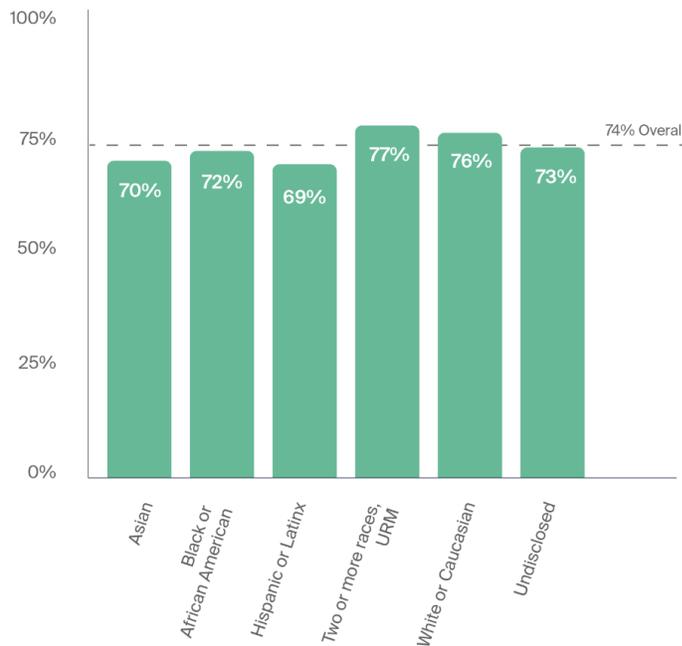
¹⁸ The Reporting Date for Lambda School's 2020 Outcomes Report is August 10, 2021.

¹⁹ A learner who attended day 1 of Unit 2 of the coursework



Placement Rate by Race

Placement rate for each race is calculated by dividing the number of Placed Learners²⁰ by the number of learners who graduated in 2020. Certain groups have been excluded due to small population sizes.



²⁰ A learner whose Actual Graduation Date was in 2020 and who was subsequently placed in a job as of the Reporting Date

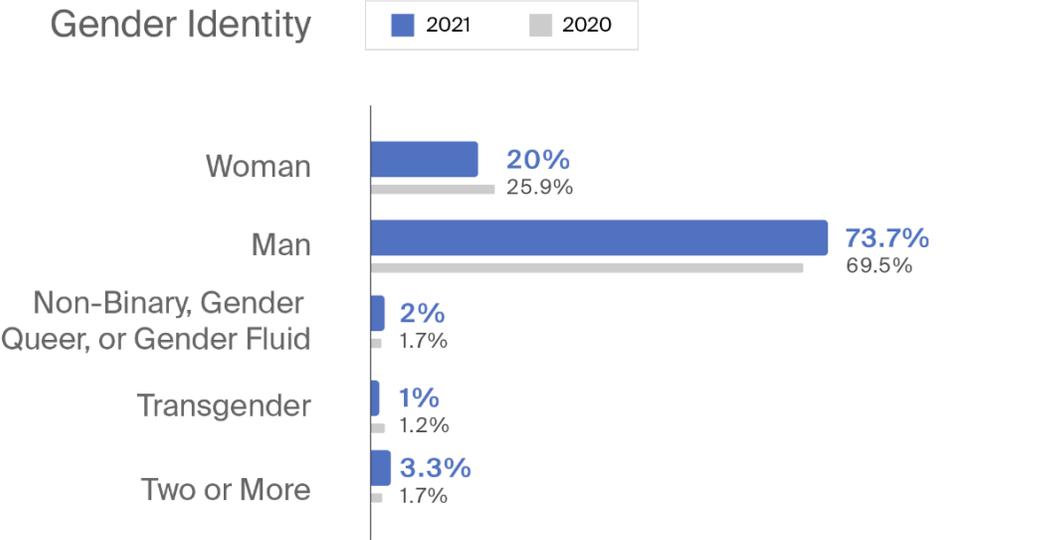
Gender Identity of Lambda School Learners

Unlike most other educational organizations and the tech sector at large, we collect gender identity data beyond the male/female binary. Our learners self select how they identify along the gender spectrum. Just over 6 percent of Lambda School learners identify as non-binary, gender queer, gender fluid, transgender, or more than one gender.

Pre-pandemic, our learner community was disproportionately male. The share of female learners dropped further in 2021, to 20 percent. These data mirror troubling trends of the pandemic, when roughly 2 million women left the workforce or scaled back their professional efforts²¹.

We are concerned about gender representation and are working for greater gender equity in Lambda School and beyond. Improvement begins with data and transparency, so we are sharing not only statistics on the gender identity of Lambda School learners but also the outcomes of learners by gender.

Learner Representation by Gender Identity (of those reporting)²²



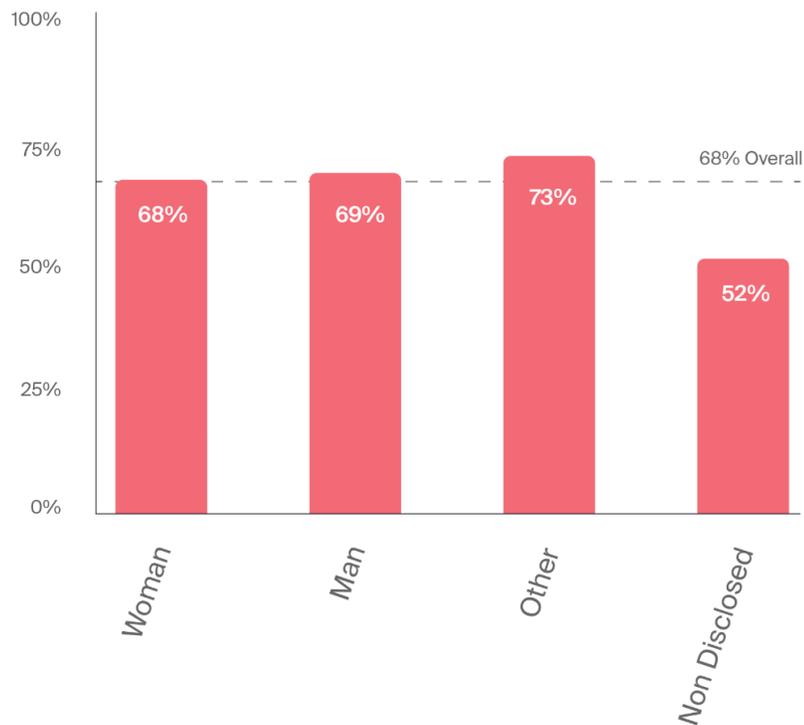
²¹ [McKinsey & Company](#)

²² Learners who did not answer this survey question have been excluded. 79 learners, or 10.2% of the total addressable population did not answer this question.

Learner Outcomes by Gender²³

Graduation Rate by Gender

Graduation rate for each gender category is calculated by dividing the number of learners who graduated as of the Reporting Date for Lambda School's 2020 Outcomes Report²⁴ by the number of Starting Learners²⁵ whose Original Expected Graduation Date fell in 2020. Due to small population sizes, non-binary, gender queer, or gender fluid, transgender, and two or more have been combined into the "Other" category.



Placement Rate by Gender

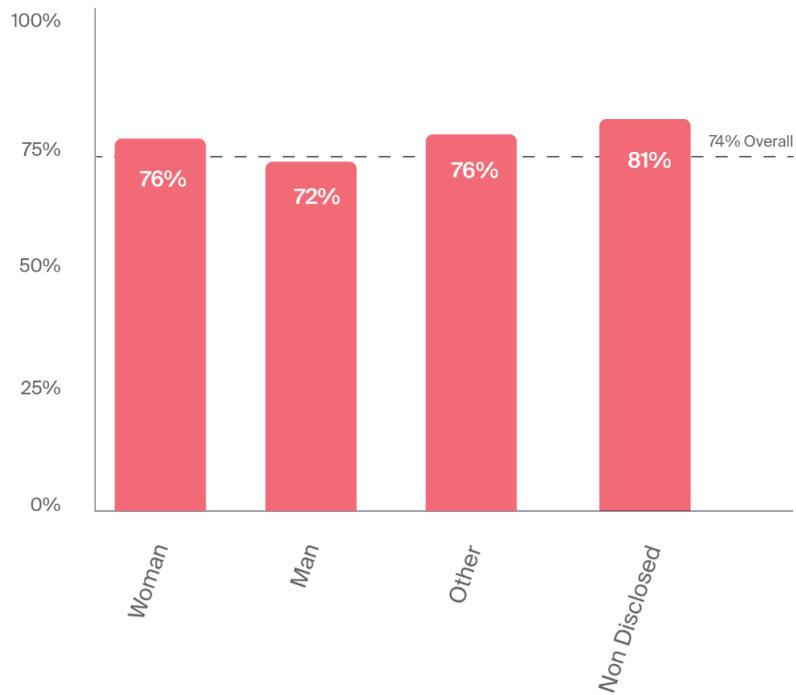
Placement rate for each gender category is calculated by dividing the number of Placed Learners²⁶ by the number of learners who graduated in 2020. Due to small population sizes, non-binary, gender queer, or gender fluid, transgender, and two or more have been combined into the "Other" category.

²³ Learner Outcomes are provided for the addressable population covered in Lambda School's 2020 Outcomes Report: learners who were scheduled to complete or graduated from a Lambda School program between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. Due to small population sizes, non-binary, gender queer, or gender fluid, transgender, and two or more have been combined into the "Other" category

²⁴ The Reporting Date for Lambda School's 2020 Outcomes Report is August 10, 2021.

²⁵ A learner who attended day 1 of Unit 2 of the coursework

²⁶ A learner whose Actual Graduation Date was in 2020 and who was subsequently placed in a job as of the Reporting Date



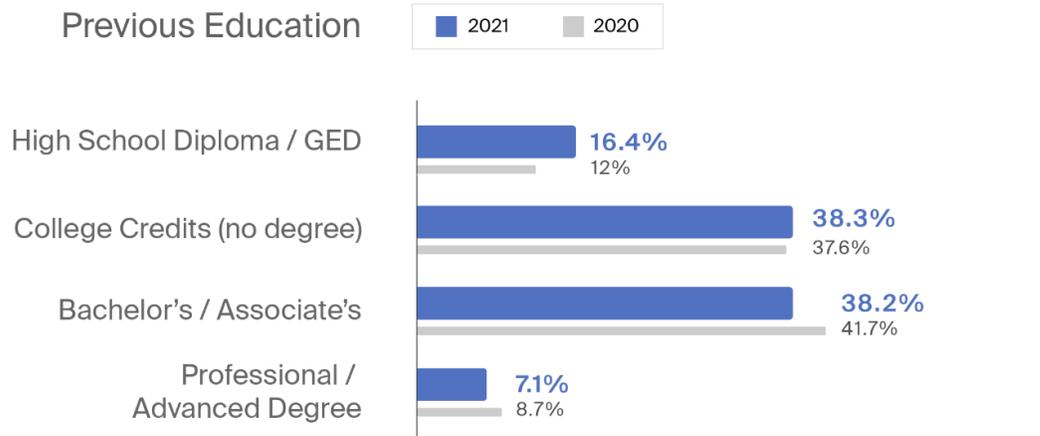
Previous Education Level of Lambda School Learners

Nationwide data from 2020 show decreased enrollment in four-year colleges, with steepest declines among Black and African American students²⁷. We believe that the pressures of the pandemic, including layoffs, underemployment, and loss of caregiving support, have lessened the feasibility of completing a four-year college degree on time for many people.

Our data reveal that an increasing proportion of Lambda School learners are turning to our model as an alternative to traditional education. 54.7 percent of our learners in 2020 had not earned a four-year degree. We believe this demonstrates that learners increasingly see our streamlined model as a more direct, and more attainable, route to a tech job.

²⁷ [Braven. 2021](#)

Learner Representation by Previous Education (of those reporting)²⁸



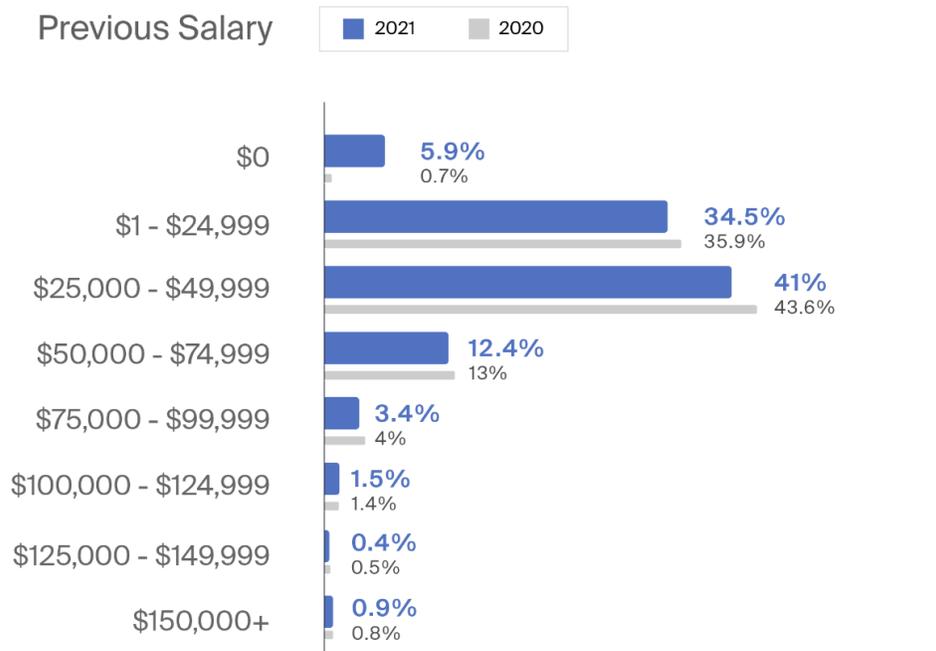
Previous Salary of Lambda School Learners

When analyzing the previous income of Lambda School learners, we found that a greater proportion of learners in 2021 earned no income before enrolling. This result was not surprising, given the pandemic-related spike in unemployment rates in 2020 and 2021.

We also found that the proportion of our learners who previously earned less than \$50,000 annually stayed relatively flat, compared to 2020 data. Of our 2021 learners, 81.4 percent previously earned less than \$50,000, compared to 80.3 percent in 2020.

²⁸ Learners who did not answer this survey question have been excluded. 102 learners, or 13.1% of the total addressable population did not answer this question.

Learner Representation by Previous Salary (of those reporting)²⁹



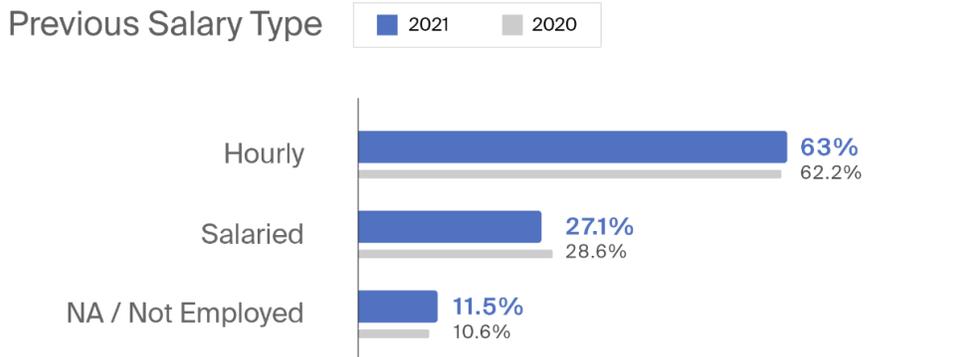
Previous Salary Type of Lambda School Learners

Overall, the composition of previous salary type among our learners has not changed greatly since 2020. The number of people who formerly earned an hourly wage increased slightly, to 63 percent, and those who were salaried decreased slightly, to 27.1 percent.

Surprisingly, the number of learners who were previously unemployed increased only by about one percent. This near-flat rate stood out to us because national unemployment rates skyrocketed at the beginning of the pandemic.

²⁹ Learners who did not answer this survey question have been excluded. 102 learners, or 13.1% of the total addressable population did not answer this question.

Learner Representation by Previous Salary Type (of those reporting)³⁰

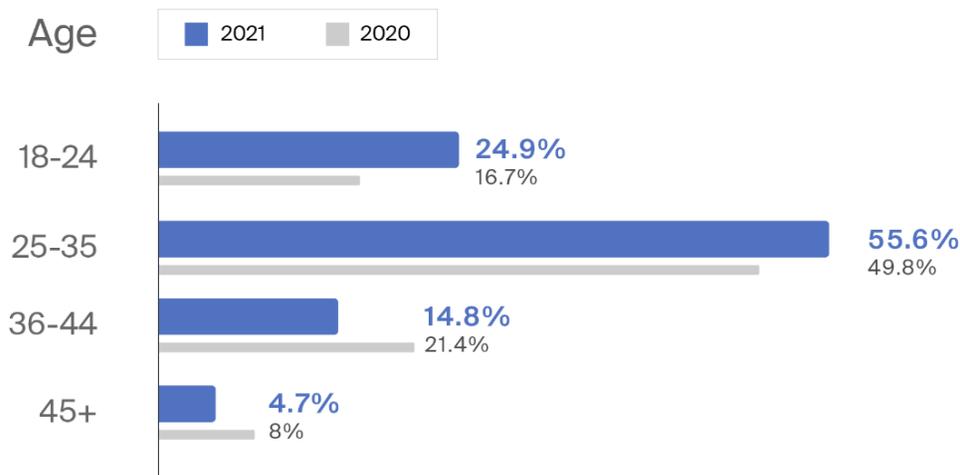


Age of Lambda School Learners

The median age of Lambda School learners decreased in 2021, to 29. A much greater proportion of our learners are 35 or younger than in 2020.

In contrast, the average age for a full-time student enrolled in a four-year college was 21.8³¹. The difference suggests that Lambda School provides a route to a professional career for adult learners. Lambda School also helps learners who want to transition careers, without the time and financial commitment of a four-year degree.

Learner Representation by Age (of those reporting)³²



³⁰ Learners who did not answer this survey question have been excluded. 99 learners, or 12.7% of the total addressable population did not answer this question.

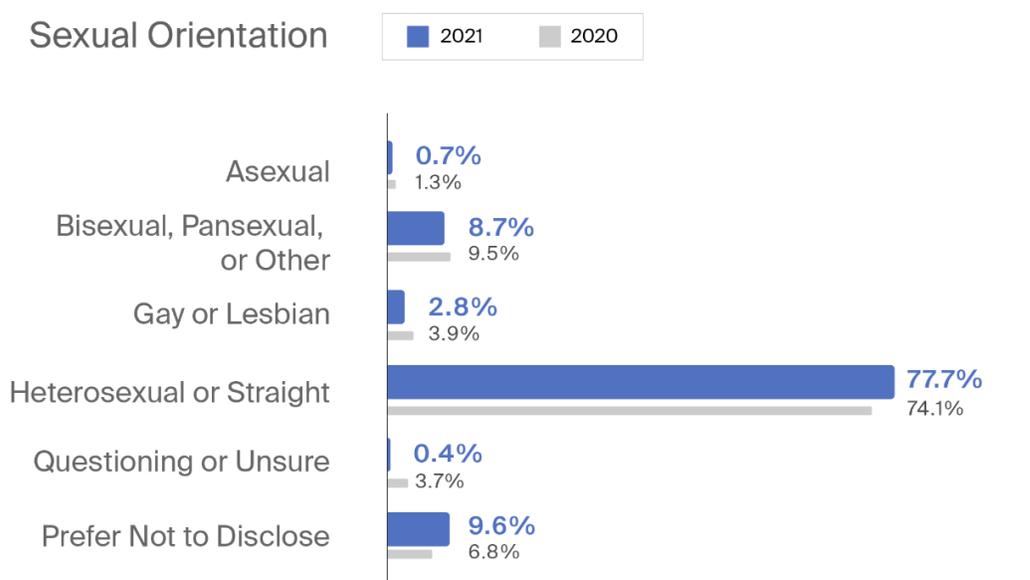
³¹ [Educationdata.org, 2021](https://educationdata.org/2021)

³² Learners who did not answer this survey question have been excluded. 102 learners, or 13.1% of the total addressable population did not answer this question.

Sexual Orientation of Lambda School Learners

The proportion of our learners who identify as LGBTQIA+ slightly decreased between 2020 and 2021, to 12.6 percent. While sexual orientation is not accounted for in the U.S. Census, an estimated 4.5 percent of adults in the US identify as LGBTQIA+³³. That estimate means that the proportion of Lambda School learners who identify as LGBTQIA+ is nearly three times higher than estimated national averages.

Learner Representation by Sexual Orientation (of those reporting)³⁴



³³ [Reuters, 2019](#)

³⁴ Learners who did not answer this survey question have been excluded. Since 'Prefer Not to Disclose' is an answer to this question, we included those who responded in this manner. 100 learners, or 12.9% of the total addressable population did not answer this question.

Lambda School Staff Diversity³⁵

Staff diversity is important in part because a variety of experiences and perspectives helps us as a company make better decisions for *all* our learners.

Staff diversity has been an organizational priority, and we are proud of our gains. These trends carry throughout the company: Individual contributor, management, leadership, technical, and non-technical jobs generally became more diverse in terms of race / ethnicity as well as gender.

We believe that increasing staff diversity will have a positive impact on the experience of learning at *and* working for Lambda School. We will continue to strive for greater diversity within our staff and a more inclusive workplace.

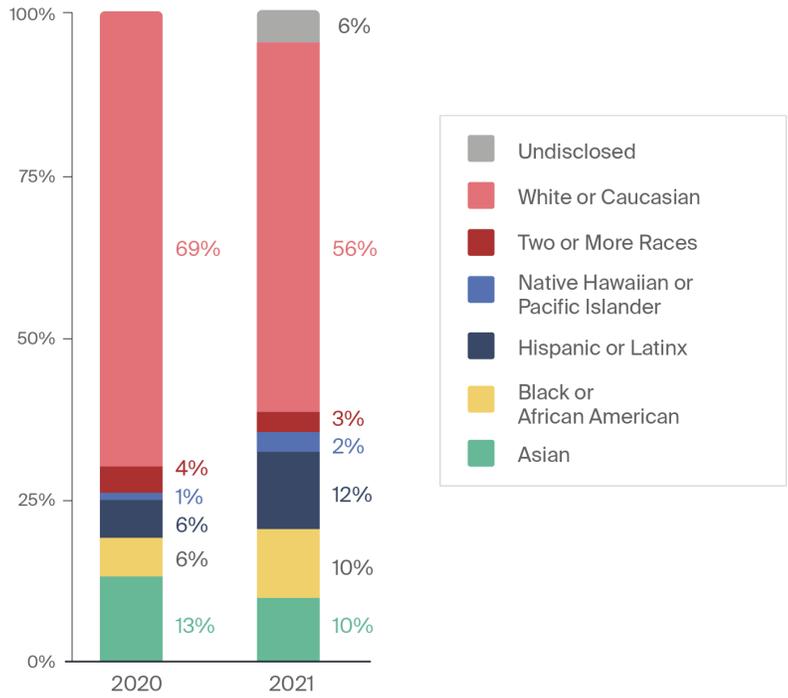
Race / Ethnicity of Lambda School Staff

Despite a smaller overall workforce, the proportion of underrepresented groups (Black or African American, Hispanic or Latinx, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander) nearly doubled among staff, increasing from 13 percent to 24 percent. While increases in representation varied, our staff became more diverse in all types of roles.

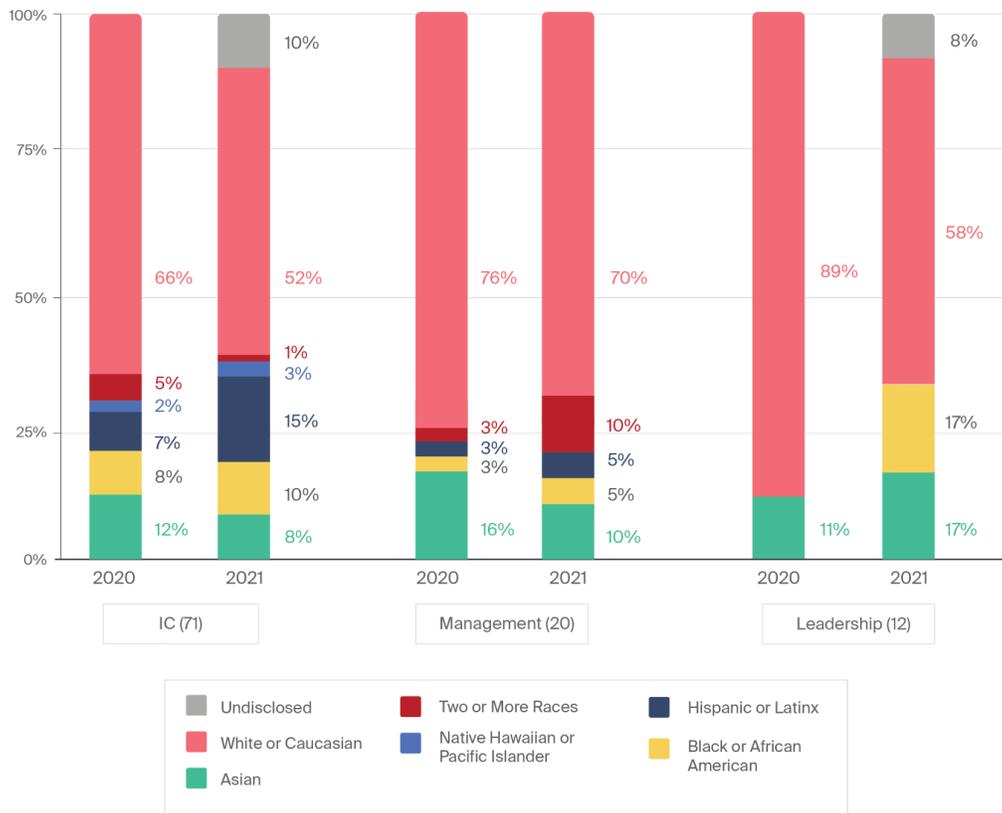
We see opportunities to increase the diversity of our staff, particularly in leadership and technical positions. Lambda School will continue to offer advancement opportunities to employees of all backgrounds and hire from diverse pools of candidates. We also provide many pathways for internal mobility, encouraging hiring managers to post roles internally that enable lateral and upward career advancement.

³⁵ Staff demographic data represents 103 full-time employees as of August 17, 2021 and was collected via self-identification in Lambda School's people management software.

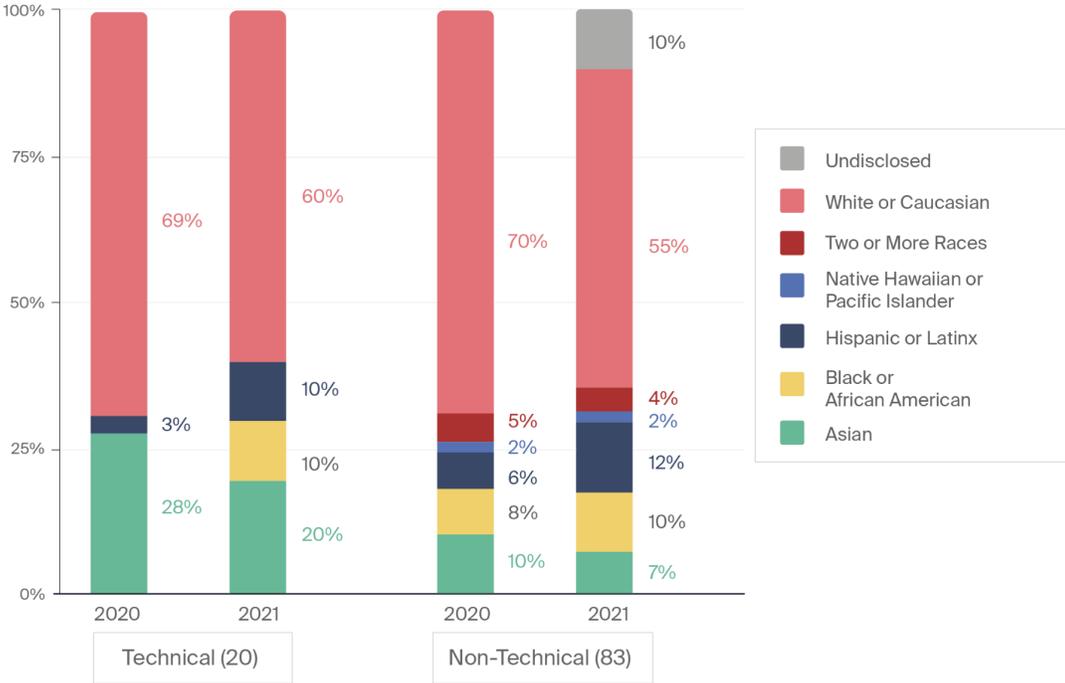
Staff Representation by Race - Overall



Staff Representation by Race - by Level



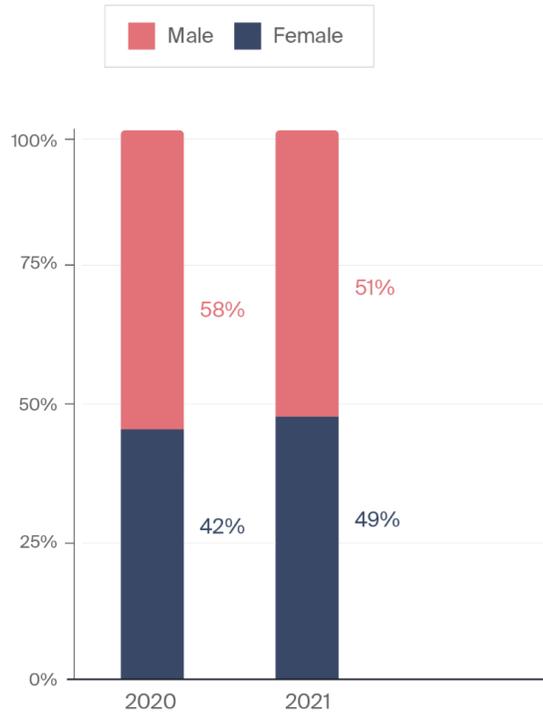
Staff Representation by Race - Technical vs. Non-Technical



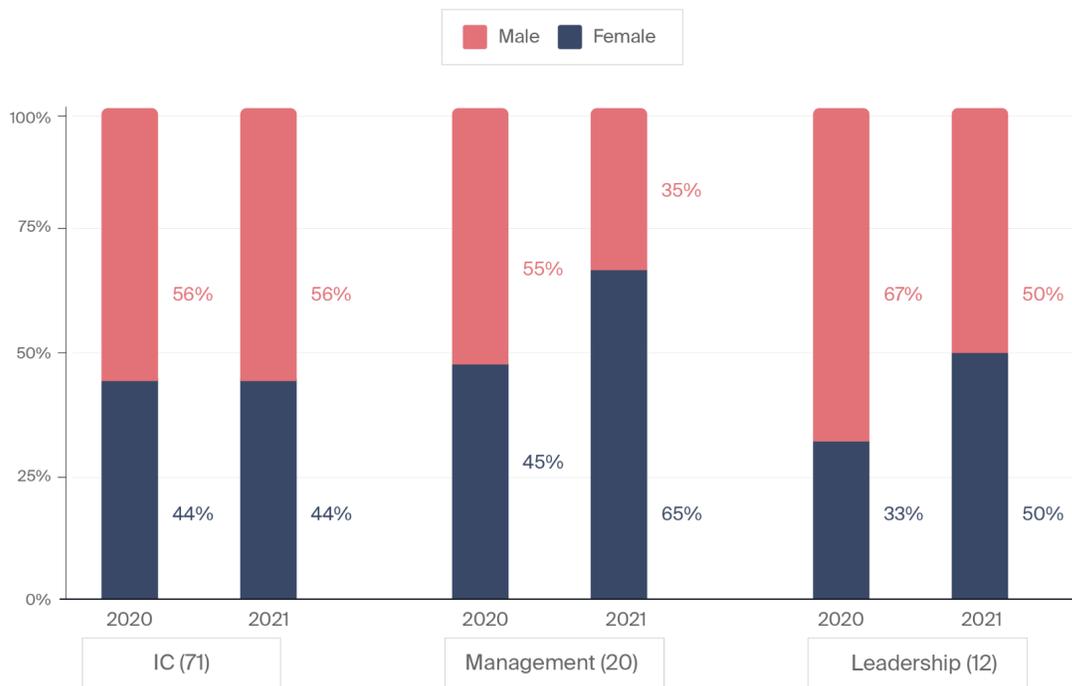
Gender of Lambda School Staff

Lambda School is close to achieving gender representation parity, with 49 percent of our staff identifying as female. While females are still significantly underrepresented in technical roles at our company, the 14 percent increase from 2020 represents significant progress. We are proud to report that at least 50 percent of Lambda School leadership and management are female.

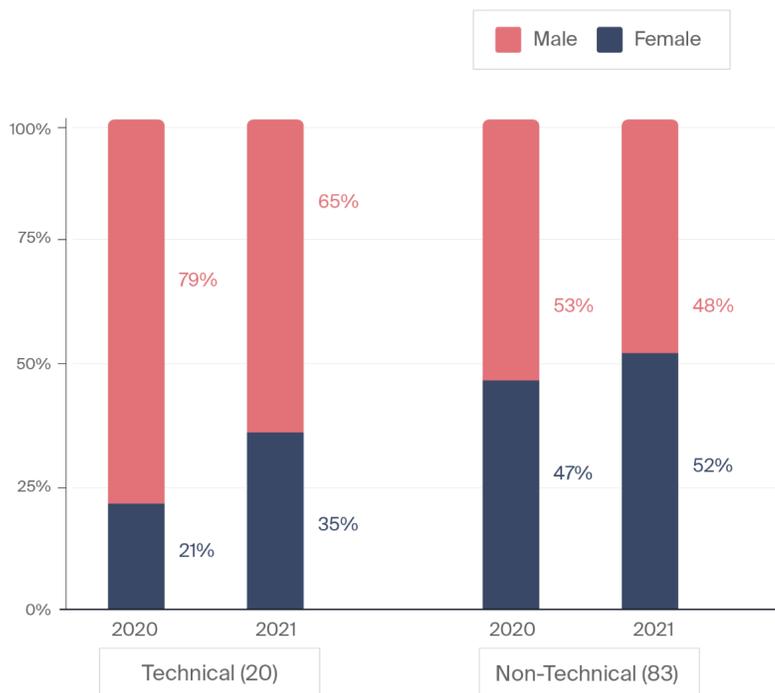
Staff Representation by Gender - Overall



Staff Representation by Gender - By Level



Staff Representation by Gender - Technical vs. Non-Technical



Conclusion

The report you just read reflects a company-wide commitment: We are working to further increase diversity of all kinds in our learner community and staff. It is critical to expand access and opportunity to communities underrepresented in technology education and careers—but that is not all. Our hope is to demonstrate that we can make consistent progress and fuel change across our industry. The field of technology as a whole has work to do to enable talent from all backgrounds to contribute their skills, ideas, passion, and point of view.

We invite you to join us, whether that involves signing up for a program, investigating your company's reporting of diversity data, or sharing your talents and skills with our active learner and alumni communities. Our commitment to diversity is an ongoing conversation and work in progress. There is no "finish line," and we are all-in for the long haul.

-Austen Allred
Lambda School CEO & Cofounder

Methodology

For clarity, we're including a few definitions of terms used in the report above.

Learner Data

Lambda School collects demographic data from learners through an optional-to-complete Diversity Survey. A snapshot of Lambda School's learner population was taken on August 17, 2021 for use in this report. As of that date there were 778 active learners enrolled in Lambda School programs who had completed the survey. Each question in the survey is optional, so response rates to each question varied. Distributions of responses are provided based on the number of learners who responded to each question; non-responses were excluded.

The language that we use and the categories offered in questions on gender and sexual identity come from the best practices and guidelines of The Consortium of Higher Education LGBTQ Resource Professionals and The Human Rights Campaign Guidelines, both known for their strong community advocacy. Language on ethnicity follows the terminology recommended by the National Center For Education Statistics.

Gender Identity: If an individual selected two or more gender identities, they were included in the "Two or More" category.

Sexual Orientation: "Gay," "Lesbian" responses were grouped into the "Gay or Lesbian" category. "Bisexual," "Pansexual," and "Queer" were included in the "Bisexual, Pansexual or Queer" category. If a learner selected more than one option or "Questioning or unsure," they were included in the "Questioning or unsure" category.

Underrepresented minority (URM): To report on the underrepresented minority category, we utilized guidelines from the EEOC and the NSF. We used the NSF's breakdown of the labor market particular to science and engineering fields to define this group. In our report, "Underrepresented Minority" includes:

- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latinx
- American Indian, Alaskan Native or Indigenous
- Two or More Races - URM

Two or More Races - URM: Learners were included in the "Two or More Races – URM" category when one of the selected races falls into an aforementioned URM category.

Staff Data

Staff demographic data represents 103 full-time employees as of August 17, 2021 and was collected via self-identification in Lambda School's people management software.

Leadership team: Lambda School currently defines leadership as any individual listed on our company website. This group of individuals contribute to material decisions that influence the

direction of our business. Leadership is a mix of our C-Suite, VPs, and Directors, although not all Directors are considered leadership.

Underrepresented minority: Similar to our learner data, we used the NSF's breakdown of the labor market particular to science and engineering fields to define this group, with one exception. Our staff data is not as granular as our learner data, so we're not able to parse out those who identify as "Two or More Races" into URM or non-URM subgroups. As a result, we chose to exclude all those who identify as "Two or More Races" in our calculation of underrepresented minorities.

Technical: In this breakdown of staff data, technical roles include those in engineering, product, and product design.

Non-Technical: This includes all roles not in engineering, product, or product design.