

NEW ENGLAND BOARD  
*of* HIGHER EDUCATION



**MAGUIRE**  
**ASSOCIATES**

**Adult Learner Study**  
**October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

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# **METHODOLOGY AND GENERAL RESPONDENT INFO**

# Survey Methodology

- ◆ Maguire Associates and NEBHE engaged survey takers who met each of the following criteria;
  - ◆ Currently living in one of the six New England states;
  - ◆ Over the age of 25; and
  - ◆ Have achieved a minimum educational level of a High School diploma or GED, but do not hold a Bachelor's degree.
- ◆ Survey deployed beginning 5/7/20 and closed on 5/18/20
- ◆ Total valid responses: 2,031; margin of error at 95% confidence is 2%
- ◆ Median survey completion time: 12 minutes

# Current Course-taking Behavior of Respondents

Are you currently taking classes as part of a degree, certificate, or diploma program?	Number of Respondents (%)	Are you taking those courses as part of a full-time or part-time program?
Yes, taking courses for a degree program	135 (6.6%)	54.1% Full-Time
Yes, taking courses for a certificate program	74 (3.6%)	16.2% Full-Time
Yes, taking courses for a diploma program	24 (1.2%)	20.8% Full-Time
Yes, taking courses, but not for a degree certificate or diploma program	55 (2.7%)	10.9% Full-Time
No, not taking courses	1743 (85.8%)	N/A

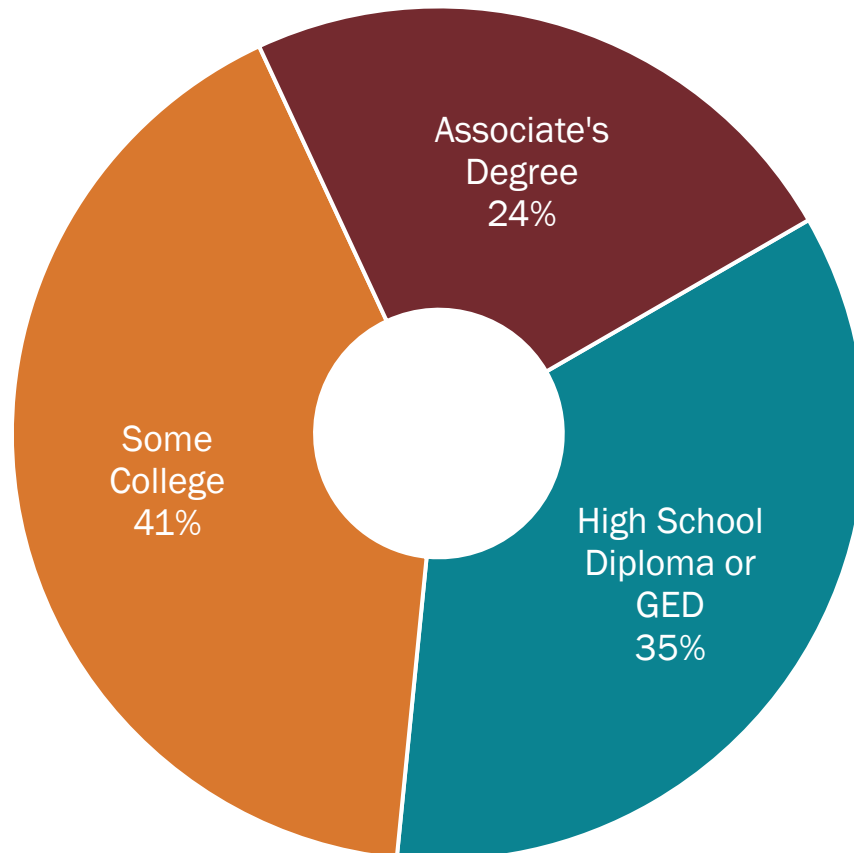
Total of 288 (14.2%) respondents currently taking courses

A large, stylized number '2' graphic in a light blue color, positioned on the right side of the slide. The '2' is composed of two main parts: a top curve and a bottom horizontal bar, both with rounded ends. The top curve is slightly offset to the right, creating a sense of depth or a 3D effect.

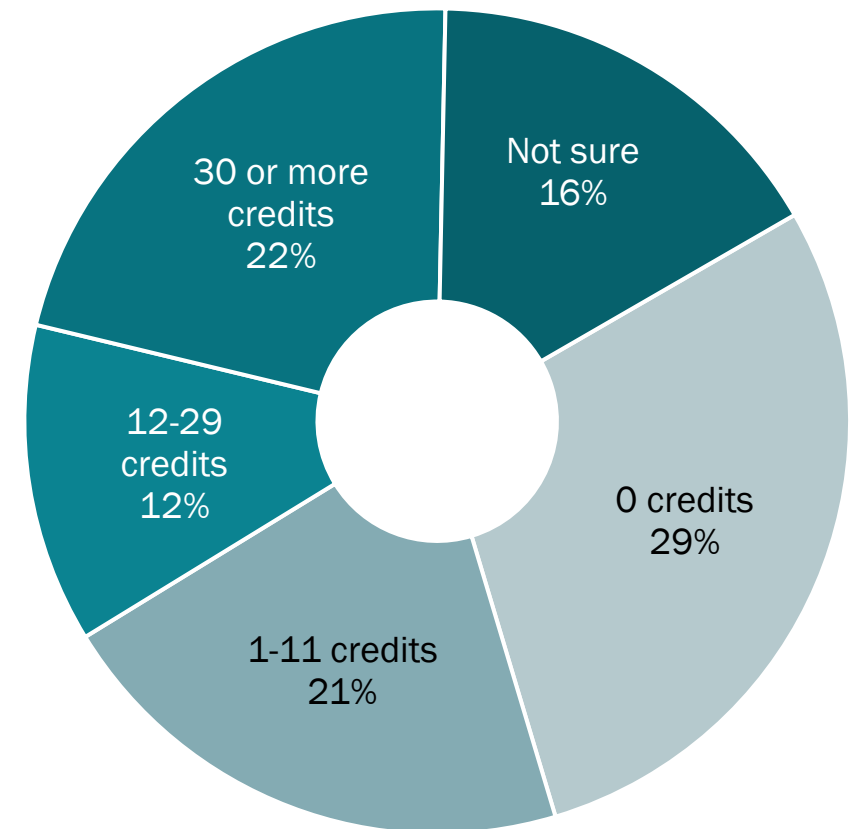
# **AWARENESS AND ACCESS TO CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING**

# Respondent Experience in Higher Education

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

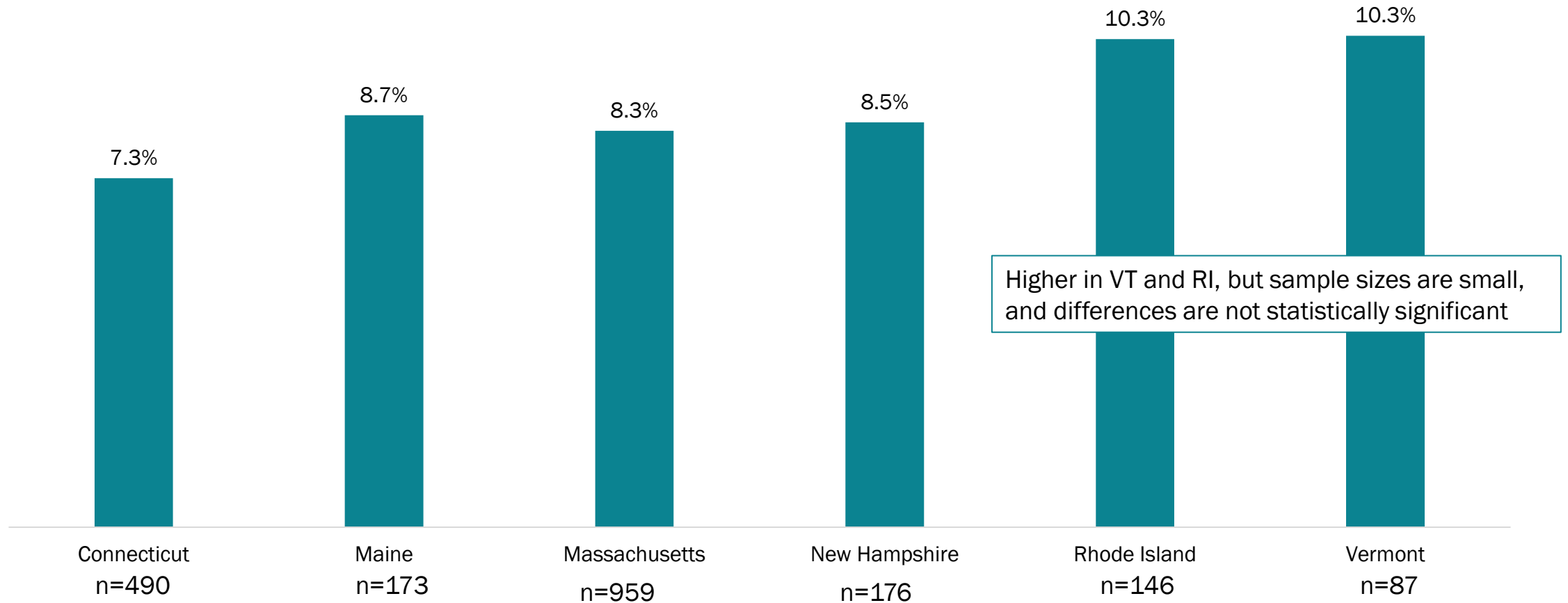


How many prior college or university credits have you earned?



# Respondent Experience with Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) by State

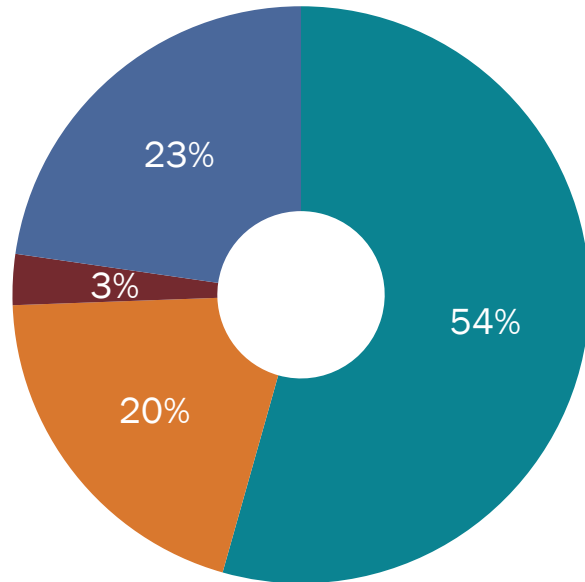
Have you ever received credit from a college or university through PLA?  
% Answering Yes by State





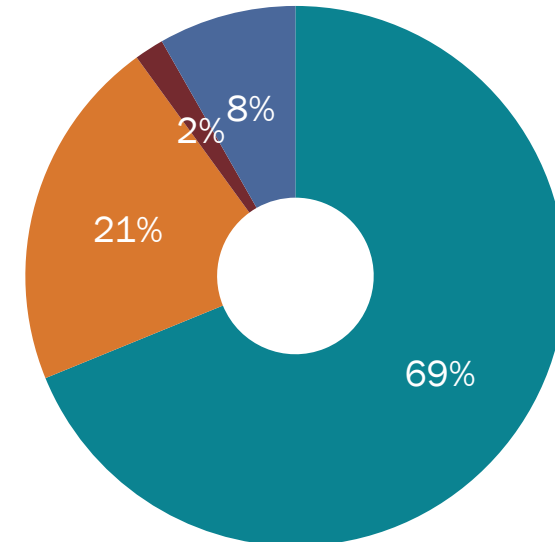
# Participants without PLA experience still place value on schools offering Recognition of Learning (ROL) (though people with PLA value this more)

Based on what you read, if a college or university in your state offered Recognition of Learning (ROL), how would that influence your future college decision? (n=1861)



■ I would be more likely to consider a college or university in my state  
■ I would be less likely to consider a college or university in my state

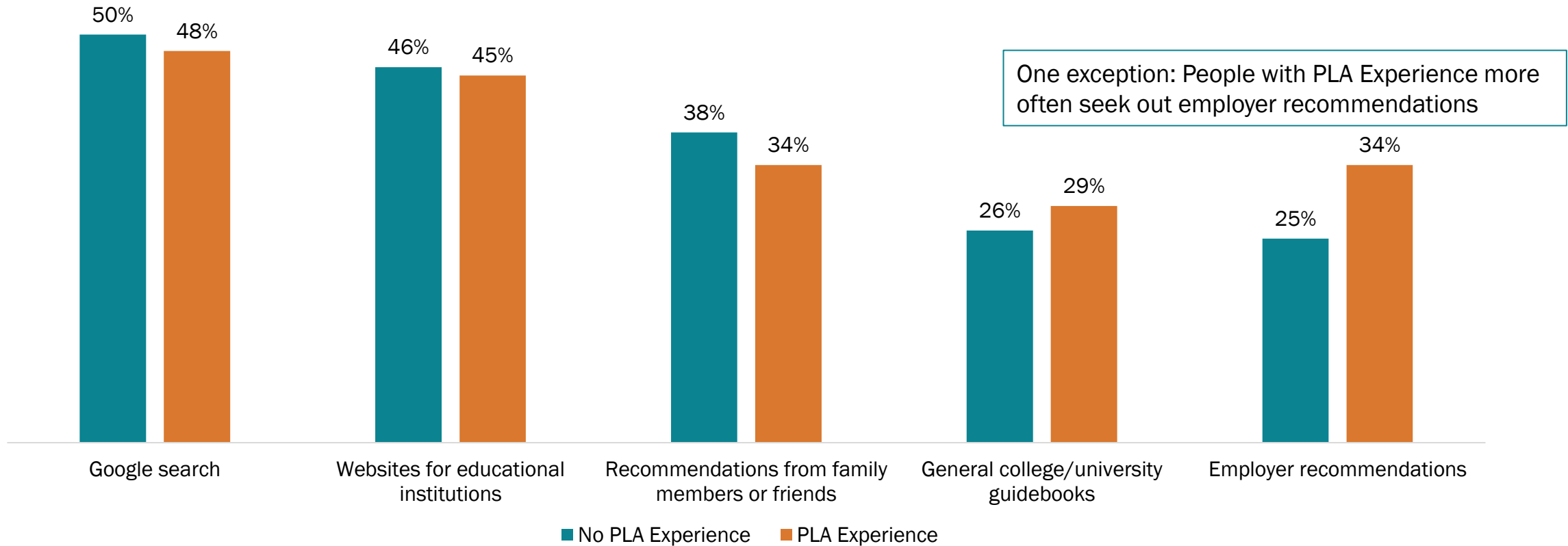
Based on your experience with Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), if a college or university in your state offered Recognition of Learning (ROL), how would that influence your future college decision? (n=170)



■ It would have no impact on my interest in a college or university in my state  
■ I'm not sure

# People with PLA Experience leverage the same resources as those without

What types of resources do you or would you use to gather information about your educational options? You may select all that apply. (Top 5 are listed)

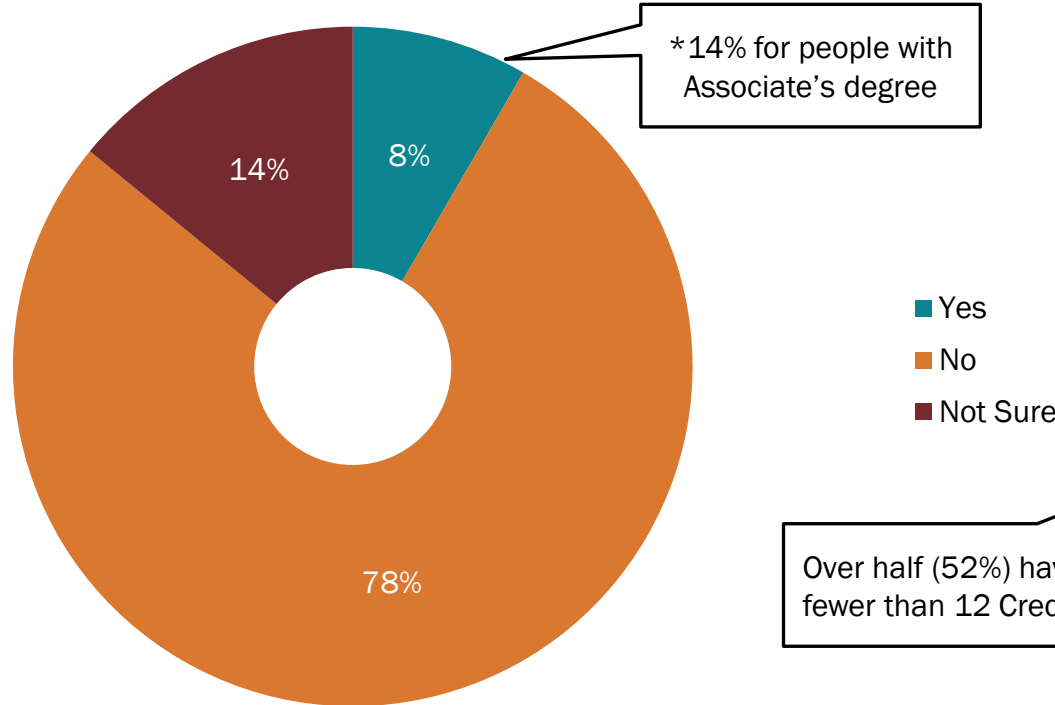




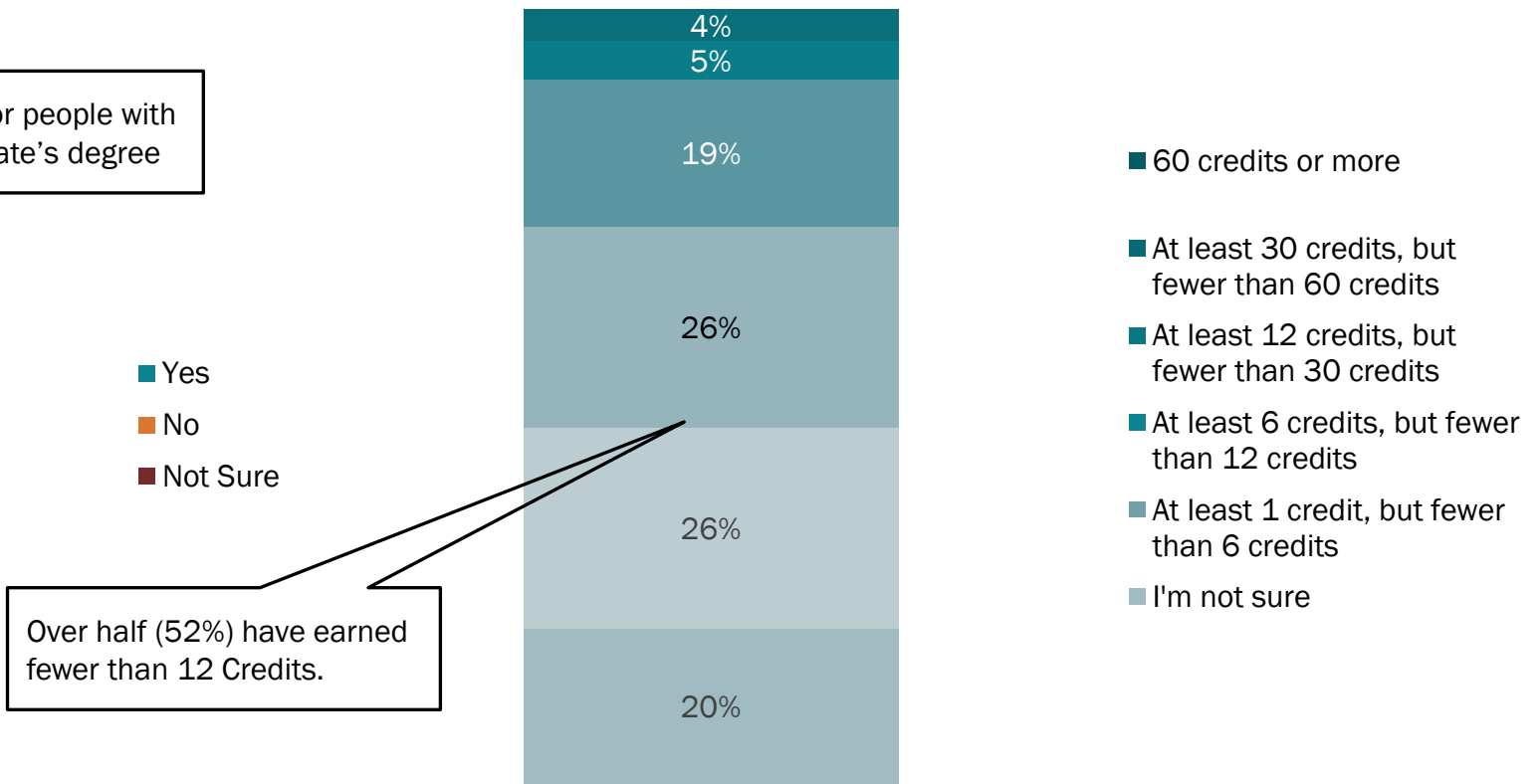
**PRIOR LEARNING  
ASSESSMENT (PLA) AS A  
COMPLETION STRATEGY**

# Less than 10% of respondents reported experience with PLA. Over half of those with experience report fewer than 12 Credits.

Have you ever received credit from a college or university through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)? (n=2031)

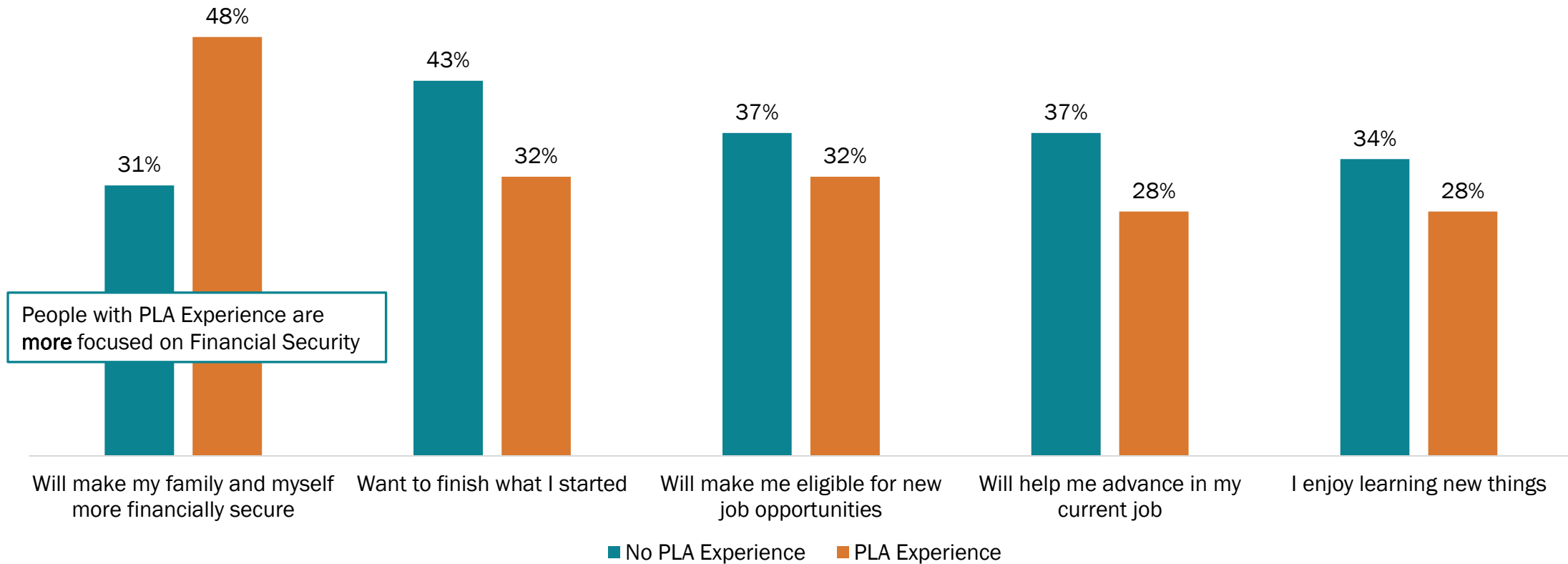


How many credits have you received through Prior Learning Assessment? (n=170)



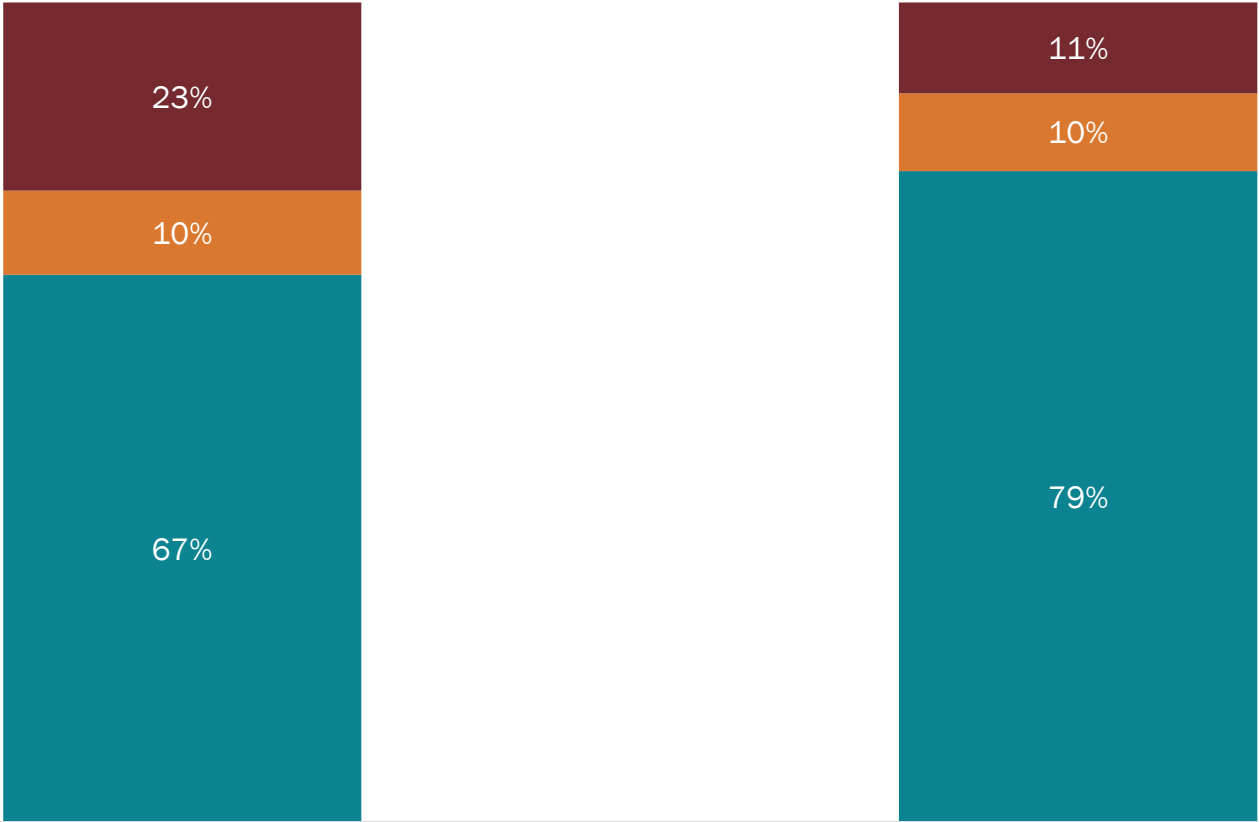
# People with PLA Experience have different reasons for pursuing a degree in the future

What are the main reasons why you are considering taking college courses in the future?  
You may select all that apply. Top 5 are listed.



# Need for Financial Aid Differs by PLA Experience

In pursuing your college program, will you need financial aid to help pay for your college studies?



32% of people with PLA Experience will pursue financial aid from their employer, compared to 25% for people with no PLA Experience.

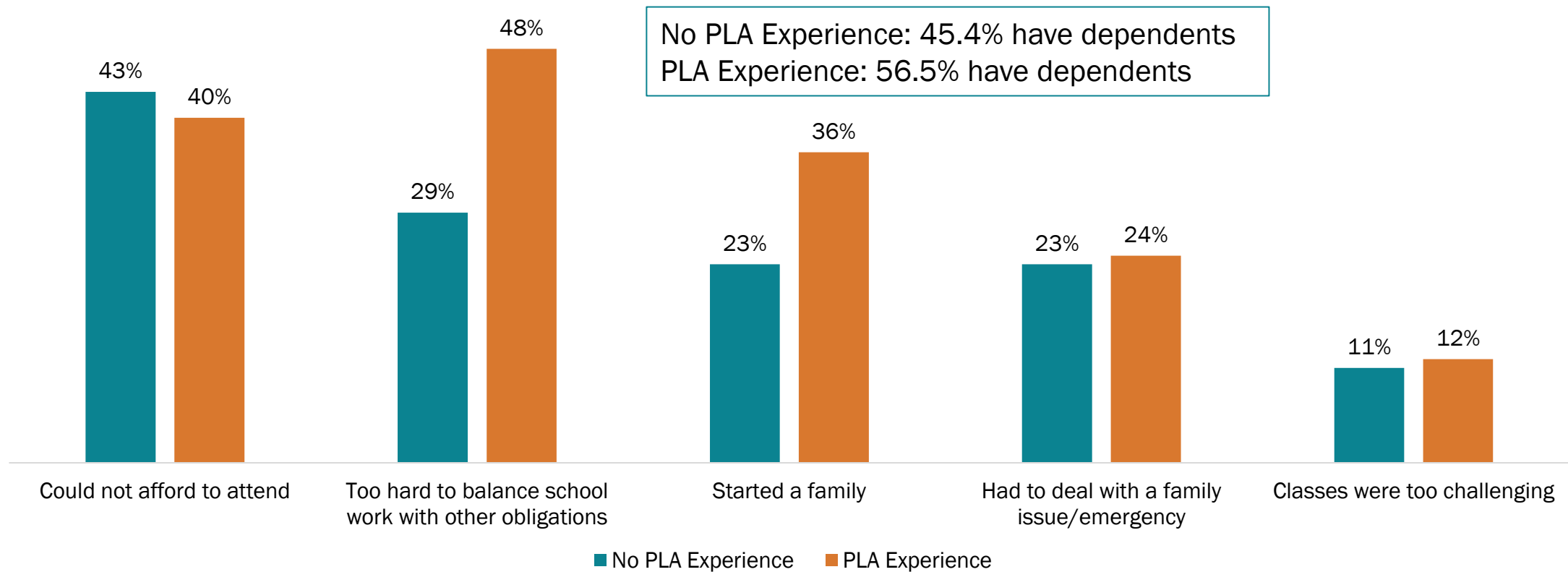
- I'm not sure
- No
- Yes

No PLA Experience

PLA Experience

# People with PLA Experience had different reasons for stopping out of school

What were the main reasons you decided to stop taking college courses in the past?  
You may select all that apply. (Top 5 are listed)

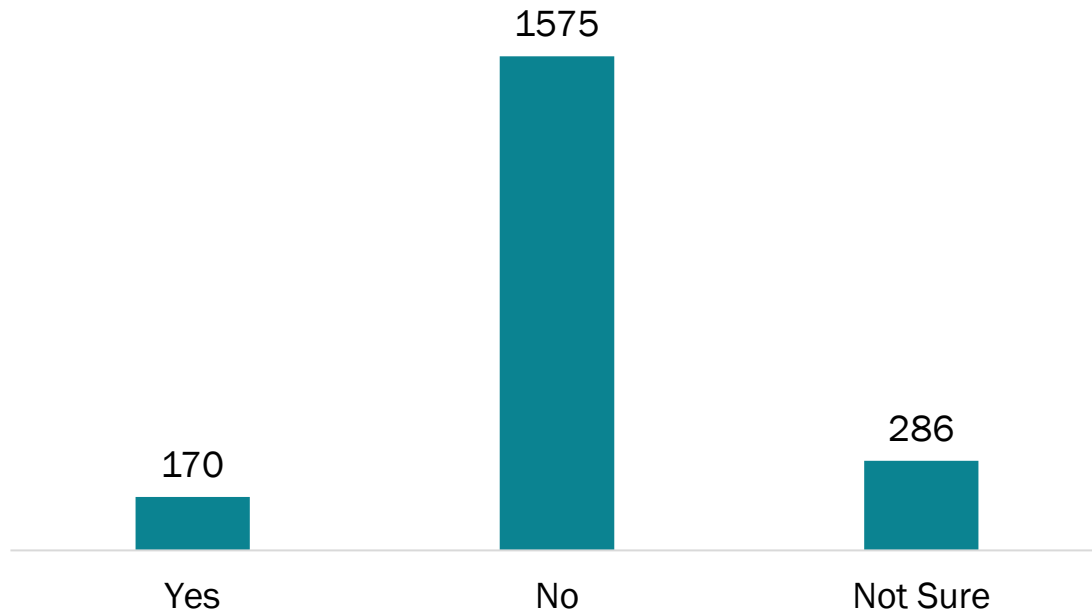


# PLA Experience – Profile

**170**

Respondents have PLA experience

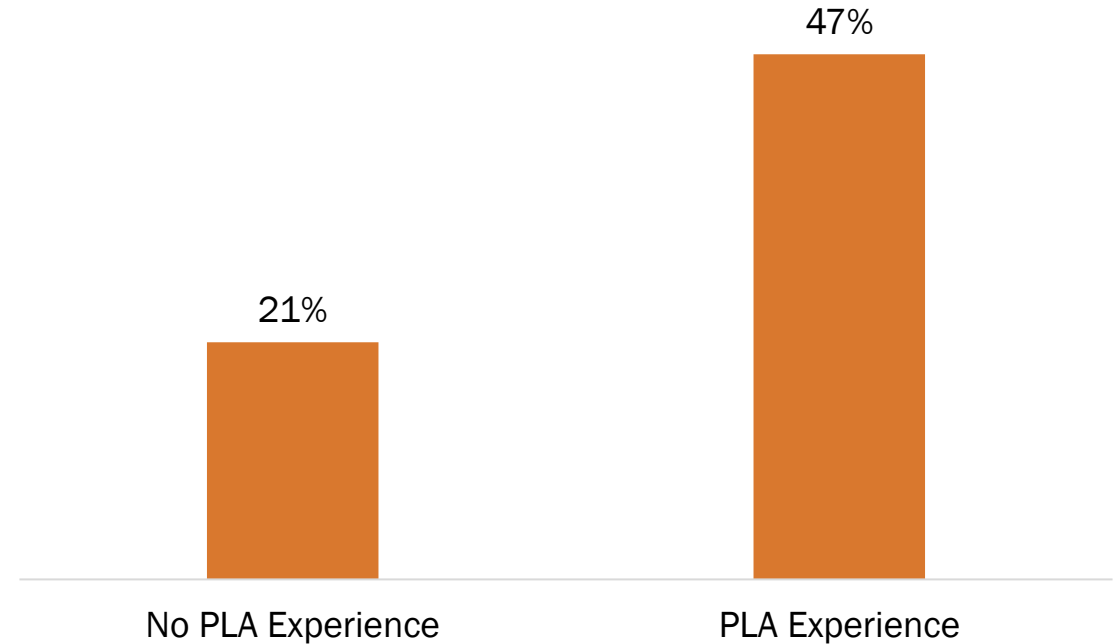
Have you ever received credit from a college or university through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)?



**47%**

Have a currently active professional certification or a state or industry license

Do you have a currently active professional certification or a state or industry license? (% Answering Yes)



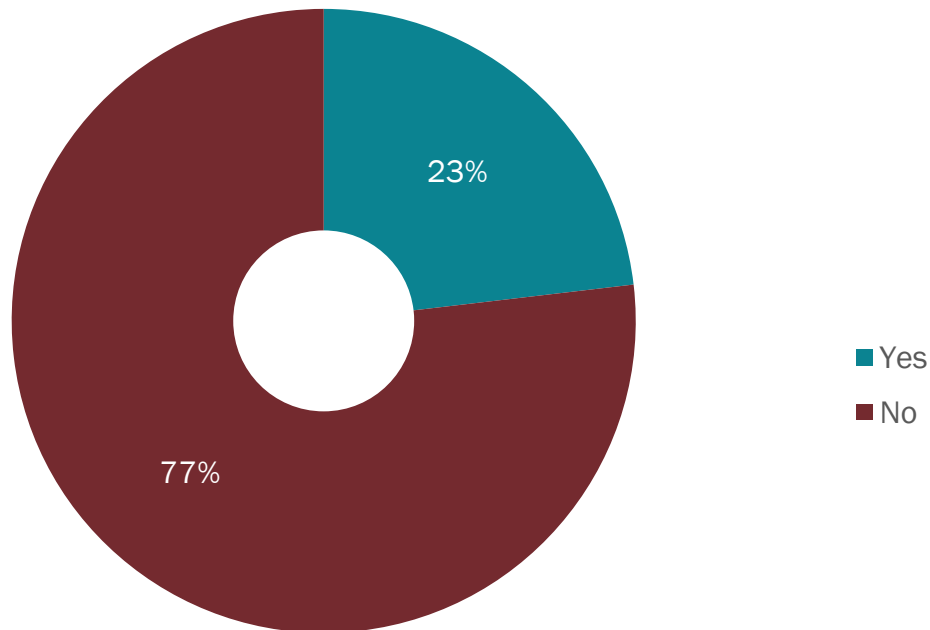


**INDUSTRY  
RECOGNIZED  
CREDENTIALS**



# 1 in 4 respondents hold a current active professional certification or state/industry license. About the same proportion received this without it being required.

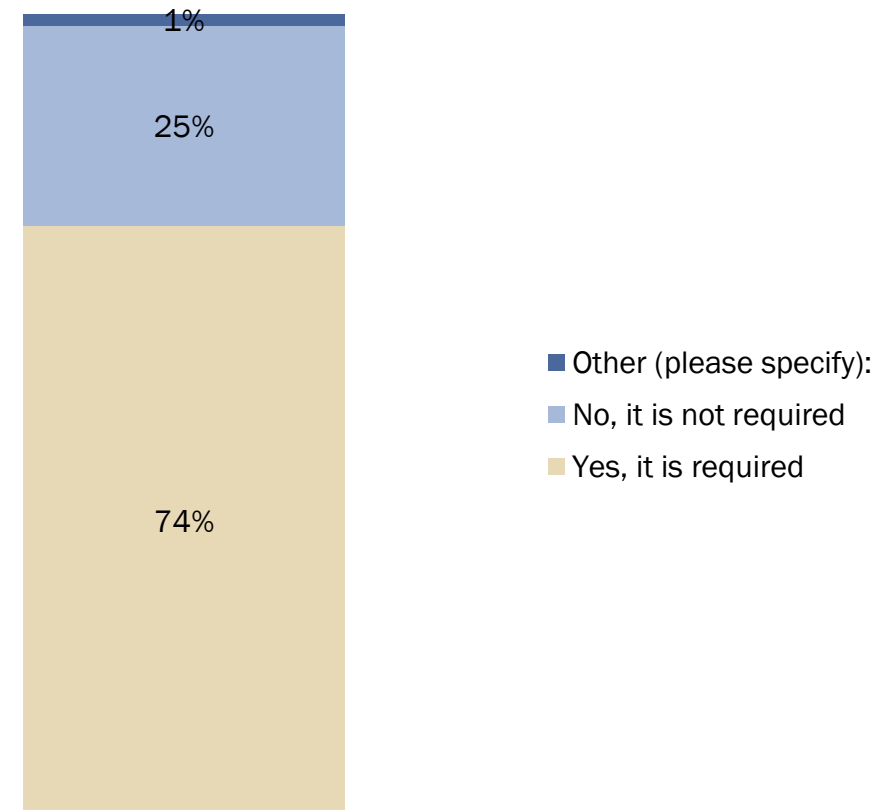
Do you have a currently active professional certification or a state or industry license? Do not include business licenses, such as a liquor license or vending license. (n=2031)



Examples that do not require an Associates or Bachelors:

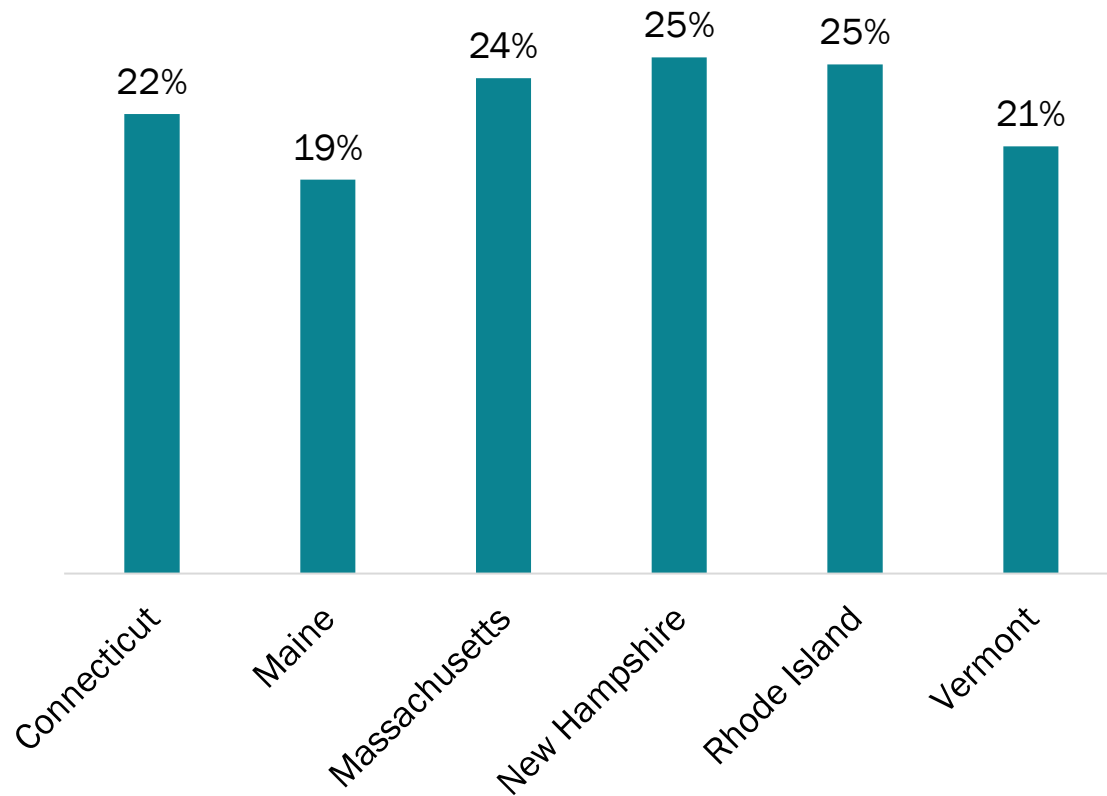
- Certified Medical Assistant
- Certified Professional Coder
- Registered Medical Assistant
- Electrical License
- LEED Certification
- Hoisting License

Is your certification required for your job (either current or past job)? (n=470)



# % of Respondents with Recognized Credentials

Do you have a currently active professional certification or a state or industry license?  
(% Answering Yes by State)



**Respondents  
with Credentials:**

**21.3%**

Intend to start or continue taking courses in the next three years

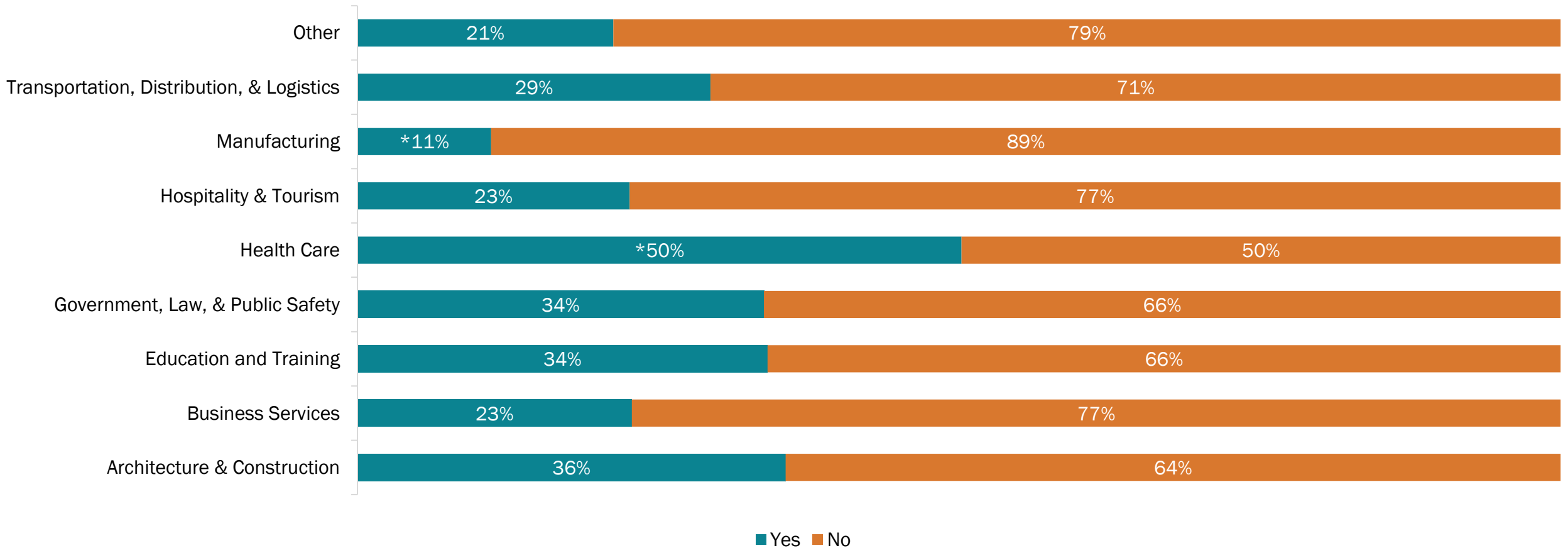
**Respondents  
w/out Credentials:**

**18.4%**

Intend to start or continue taking courses in the next three years

# Active licenses were reported as more prevalent in Architecture & Construction, as well as Health Care where at least half of participants held some certification.

Do you have a currently active professional certification or a state or industry license? Do not include business licenses, such as a liquor license or vending license. (n=2031)

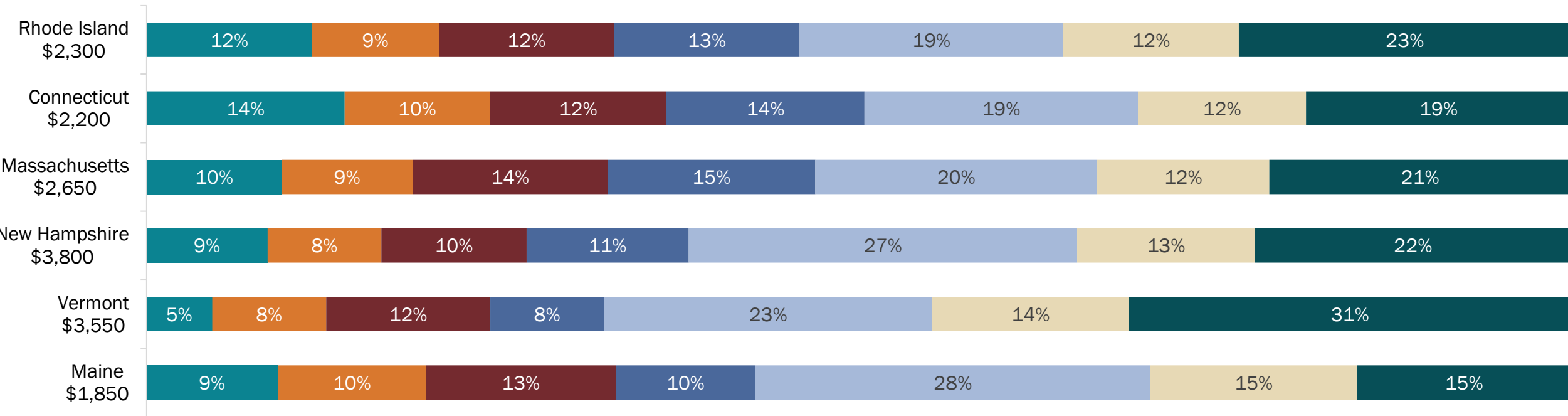


\*"Healthcare" is significantly different from "Business Services" and "Manufacturing"

\*"Manufacturing" is significantly different from "Education and Training", "Government, Law & Public Safety", and "Architecture"

# Interest in 2-year institutions was strongest in Connecticut with 36% willing to pay at least \$1,100 for a year of part-time study.

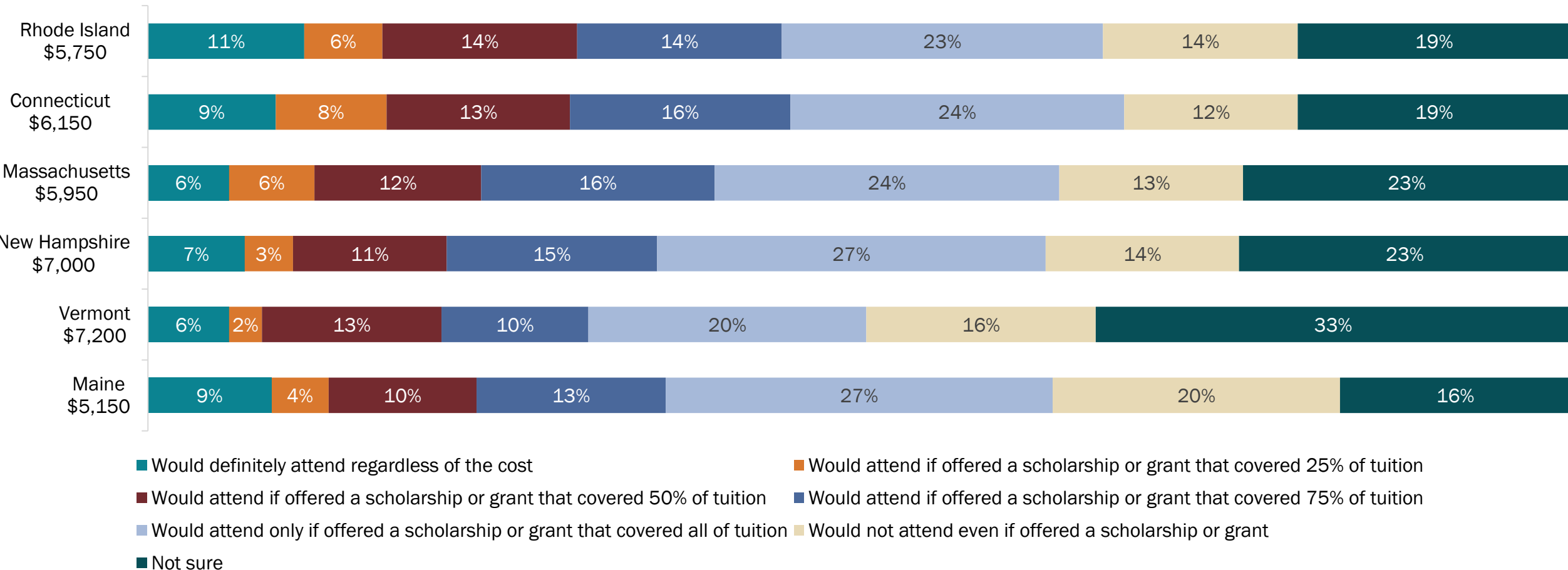
The approximate tuition and fees for one year of a part-time program at a 2-year institution in your state is \$x. Which category best describes your interest in attending a 2-year institution?



- Would definitely attend regardless of the cost
- Would attend if offered a scholarship or grant that covered 25% of tuition
- Would attend if offered a scholarship or grant that covered 50% of tuition
- Would attend if offered a scholarship or grant that covered 75% of tuition
- Would attend only if offered a scholarship or grant that covered all of tuition
- Would not attend even if offered a scholarship or grant
- Not sure

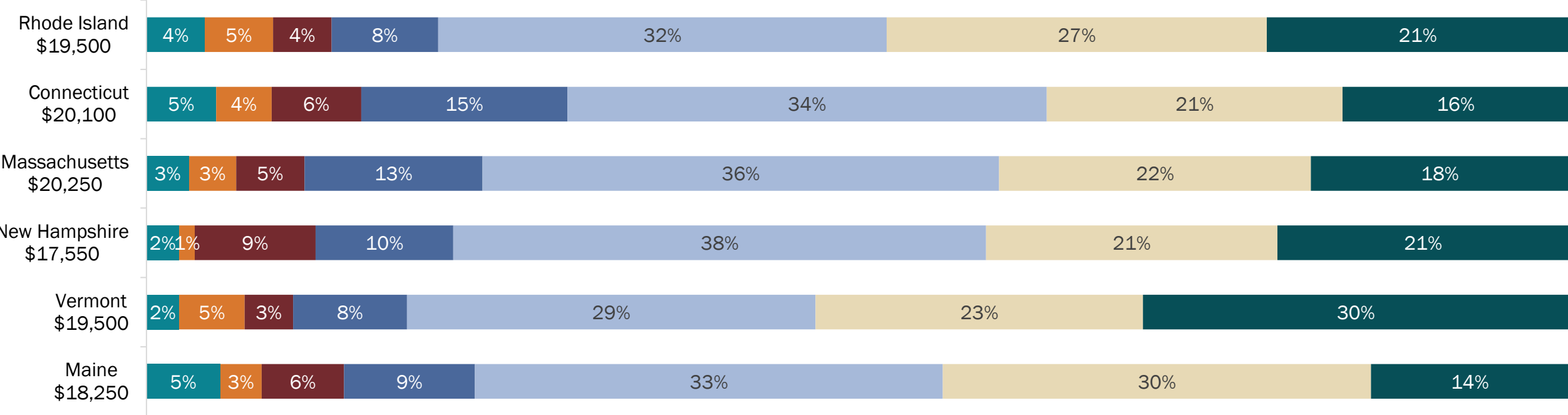
# Potential adult learners in MA, NH, and VT were more sensitive to the price of 4-year public education with less than 12% considering options below a 25% discount

The approximate tuition and fees for one year of a part-time program at a public 4-year institution in your state is \$x. Which category best describes your interest in attending a public 4-year institution?



# Those from New Hampshire held strong negative opinions about paying for 4-year private education, despite the average being the lowest of all 6 New England states

The approximate tuition and fees for one year of a part-time program at a private non-profit 4-year institution in your state is \$x. Which category best describes your interest in attending a private non-profit 4-year institution?



- Would definitely attend regardless of the cost
- Would attend if offered a scholarship or grant that covered 25% of tuition
- Would attend if offered a scholarship or grant that covered 50% of tuition
- Would attend if offered a scholarship or grant that covered 75% of tuition
- Would attend only if offered a scholarship or grant that covered all of tuition
- Would not attend even if offered a scholarship or grant
- Not sure

# TAKEAWAYS





# Summary and Takeaways

- ◆ There is significant interest in PLA, even in those who have no prior experience with it.
  - ◆ 54% would be more likely to consider a college in their state that offers credit for prior learning.
- ◆ People with PLA experience more often stop out of school because they are starting a family.
  - ◆ They also list this as a reason for wanting to go back to school, but often with some level of financial need.
- ◆ 75% of credential holders work in industries where it is required
  - ◆ Healthcare is the field in which the largest percentage of respondents hold an industry recognized credential.
- ◆ People with PLA Experience more often intend to start or pursue an education in the next three years.
  - ◆ 28.8% for people with PLA vs 18.2% for people without.