

# CGC Candidate Demographic Data Report

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*Aug. 2024 and Feb. 2025 Exam Windows*

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# Forward

The American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) is committed to supporting diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) within the genetic counseling profession. As part of our commitment, we initiated a review of our processes and procedures around certification examination development and administration in 2021. To ensure an unbiased process of assessment, ABGC identified Nonprofit HR, a firm with DEIJ expertise, to conduct an independent assessment of policies, practices, and stakeholder perspectives.

Complete findings of the [DEIJ Certification Assessment Report](#) can be found on the ABGC website. While no major biases were identified in the exam, they recommended ABGC begin collecting demographic data to support ongoing, equitable evaluation of the certification process. Historically, the lack of demographic data made it difficult to identify potential barriers for all candidate populations.

In 2022, following these recommendations and the launch of the [DEIJ committee](#), the ABGC Board approved the collection of demographic data and collaborated with the DEIJ Committee to guide question development. We thank the DEIJ Committee members for their thoughtful contributions and continued dedication to equity in the genetic counseling profession.

As of May 2024, Certified Genetic Counselor (CGC)<sup>®</sup> exam candidates are invited to share demographic information during the application process. This report includes data from two exam cycles, August 2024 and February 2025, and reflects responses from the 646 first-time and repeat candidates

## THE VALUE OF THIS DATA

Since nearly all genetic counselors take the ABGC certification examination when entering the profession, this demographic data offers a comprehensive picture of who are becoming certified genetic counselors. It complements existing workforce data and provides unique insights into the diversity of new professionals. While some DEIJ efforts may extend beyond ABGC's direct scope, we recognize our key role in collecting and sharing this information to support broader, profession-wide initiatives.

Though it will take several exam cycles to identify trends, ABGC remains committed to using this data thoughtfully to advance equity both within our certification process and across the genetic counseling field.

Sincerely,

**ABGC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

# Methodology of Report

## DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The demographic questionnaire for ABGC exam candidates was developed through a comprehensive and collaborative process led by the DEIJ committee. The development began in 2023 with a thorough landscape analysis examining demographic questions utilized by similar organizations in the genetic counseling field, including the Minority Genetics Professionals Network (MGPN) and the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC), among others. This analysis provided foundational insight into established practices and emerging best practices in demographic data collection within our professional community.

The development process was inherently collaborative, involving consultation with the ABGC Board of Directors and ABGC's DEIJ Committee. This iterative approach included multiple rounds of feedback collection and refinement, with each iteration bringing reflections back to stakeholders in an effort to create the most inclusive instrument possible. Throughout this process, the committee carefully balanced the need for detailed demographic information that could inclusively represent candidate identities with the practical necessity of maintaining questionnaire understandability and manageability.

Prior to implementation, the final questionnaire underwent thorough review by ABGC legal counsel to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and best practices for demographic data collection in professional certification contexts. The complete demographic questionnaire is provided in Appendix A, along with a link to the ABGC DEIJ glossary for terminology definitions used in this report.

## QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTRATION

Demographic data was collected at the time of registration to take the ABGC examination. This timing decision was made for logistical reasons, as collecting demographic information after examination completion was not operationally feasible. We acknowledge that collecting demographic data prior to examination may introduce potential stereotype threat concerns; however, we believe this risk is minimized due to the extended time period between demographic data collection and actual examination administration.

For candidates who are repeat test takers, demographic questions do not need to be re-answered, as their previously submitted demographic information is retained in the system. All demographic questions were configured as required fields, though a "Preferred not to answer" option was made available for every question to respect candidate autonomy. During early administration periods, some questions were not configured as required fields. For cases where candidates did not provide responses to these optional questions, their data was excluded from relevant analyses to maintain data integrity.

## DATA SECURITY AND PRIVACY

Demographic data is maintained with strict security and privacy protections through a clear separation of data systems and access controls. The demographic information is collected and stored in a database maintained by ABGC staff, which is entirely separate from the examination performance data managed by the test vendor, Prometric. This separation ensures that demographic responses had no influence on examination results or scoring.

Access to demographic data is highly restricted, with only designated ABGC staff members having access to the demographic database. All data is associated with a unique ID rather than the candidate's name, ensuring that no names are linked to the demographic information. No genetic counselors have access to raw or individual-level demographic information. Individual demographic data is never reported in conjunction with specific examination outcomes, maintaining candidate confidentiality throughout all reporting processes.

## DATA ANALYSIS

All analyses conducted for this report were descriptive in nature, focusing on characterizing the demographic composition of exam candidates rather than inferential statistical testing. Categories within demographic variables were generally not collapsed or combined, with the exception of continuous variables such as age and years since graduation, which required categorization for meaningful reporting.

Data organization followed standard statistical conventions, with response categories typically ordered from most frequent to least frequent occurrence. Cases with “No Answer” responses were systematically removed from analyses to ensure accurate representation of the responding candidate population.

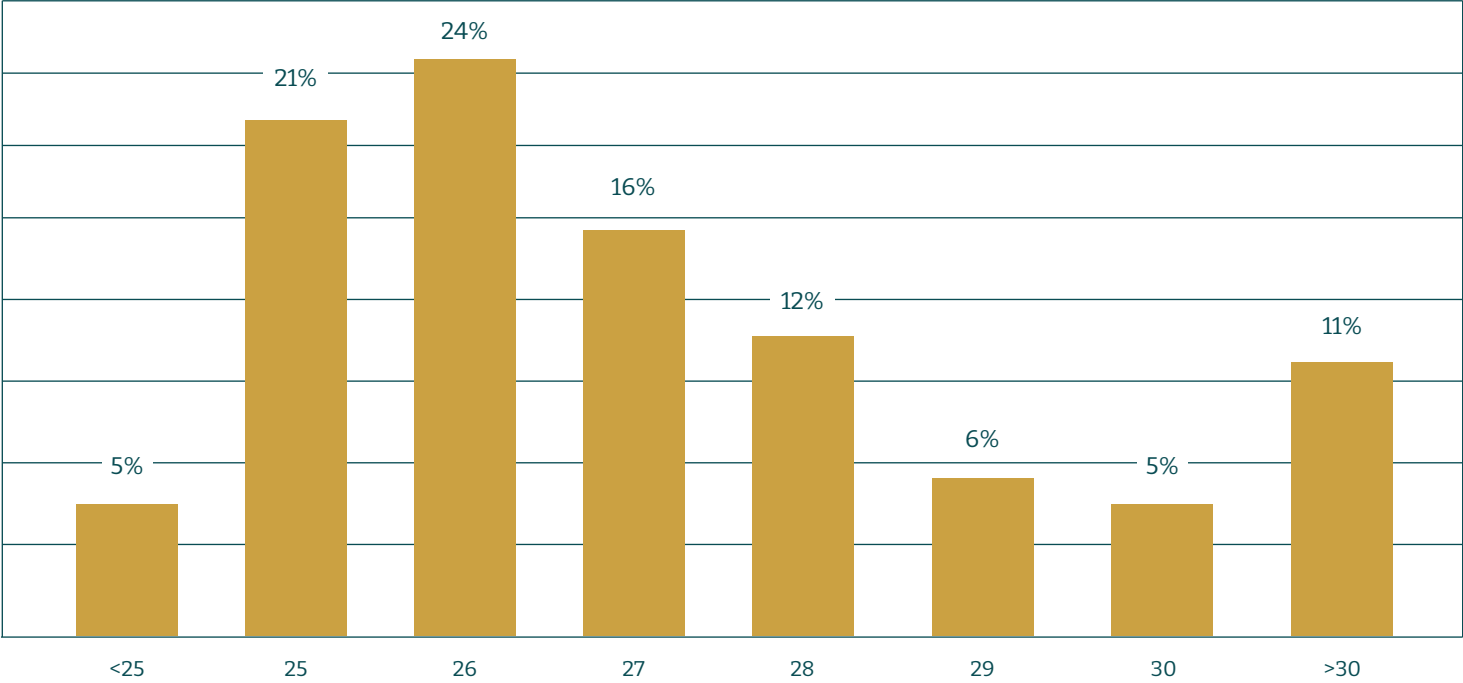
## DATA ANONYMIZATION

To protect candidate confidentiality, several anonymization procedures were implemented:

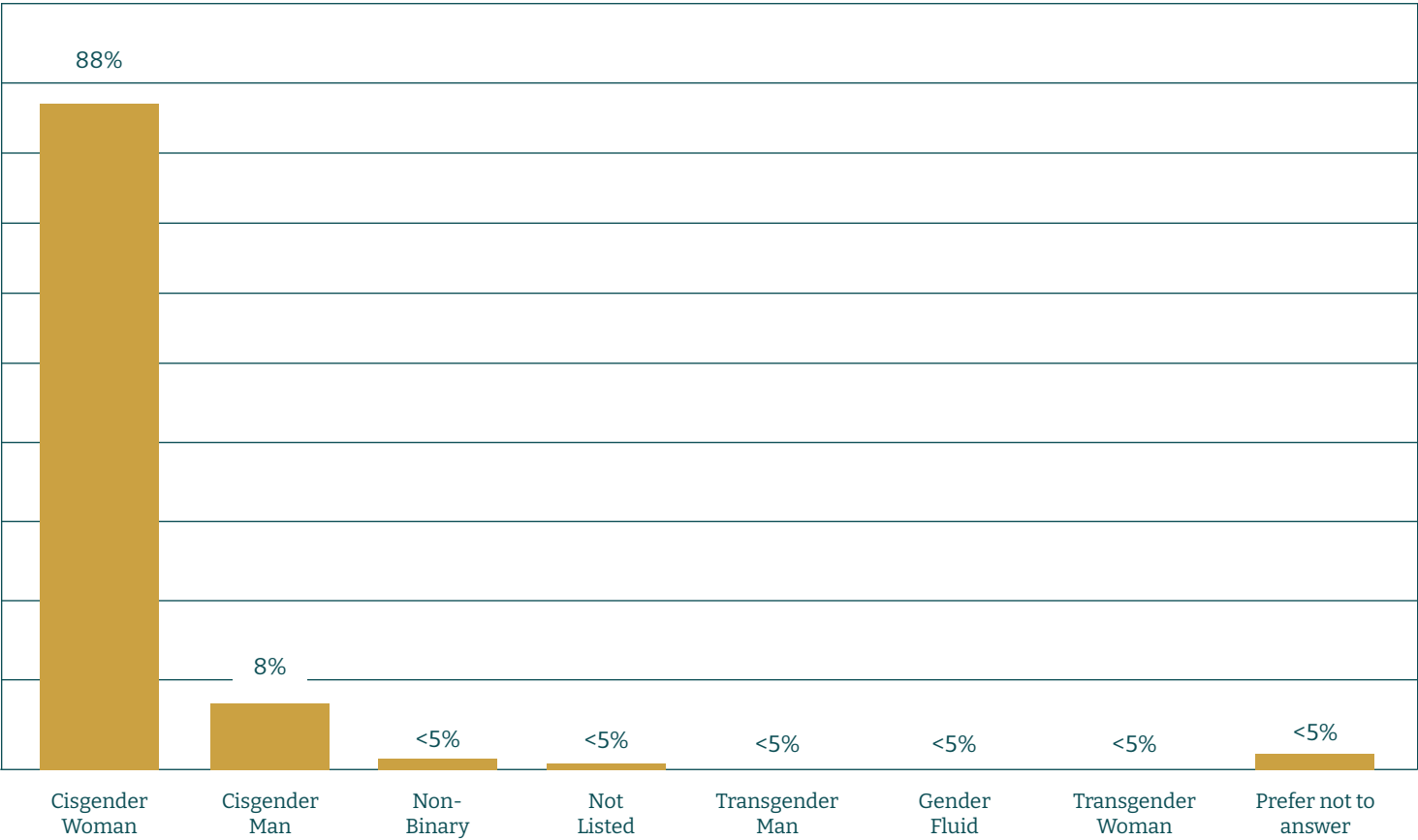
- All results are reported as percentages rather than exact counts
- Categories representing fewer than 5% of respondents are reported as “<5%” rather than providing specific percentages, further protecting the identity of candidates in small demographic groups

# Candidate Demographics

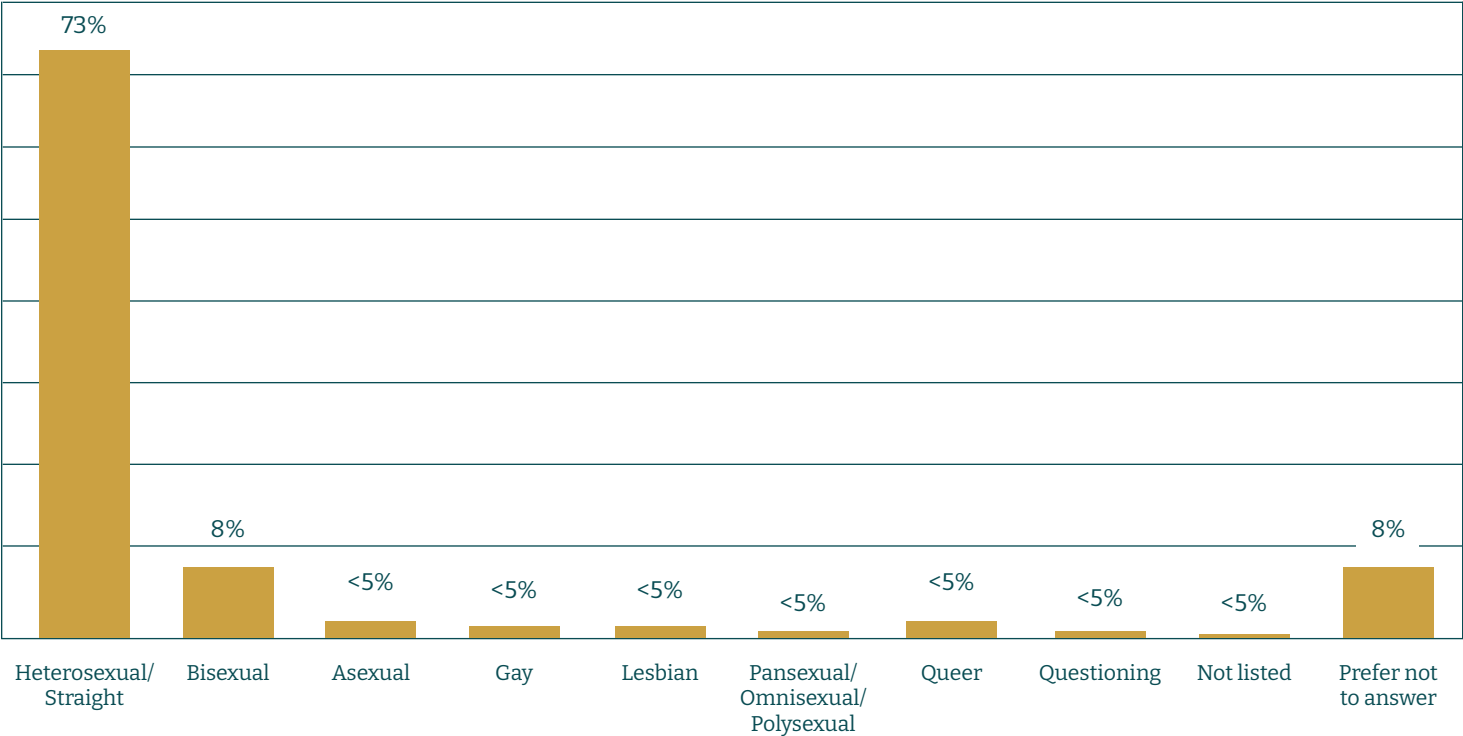
## AGE



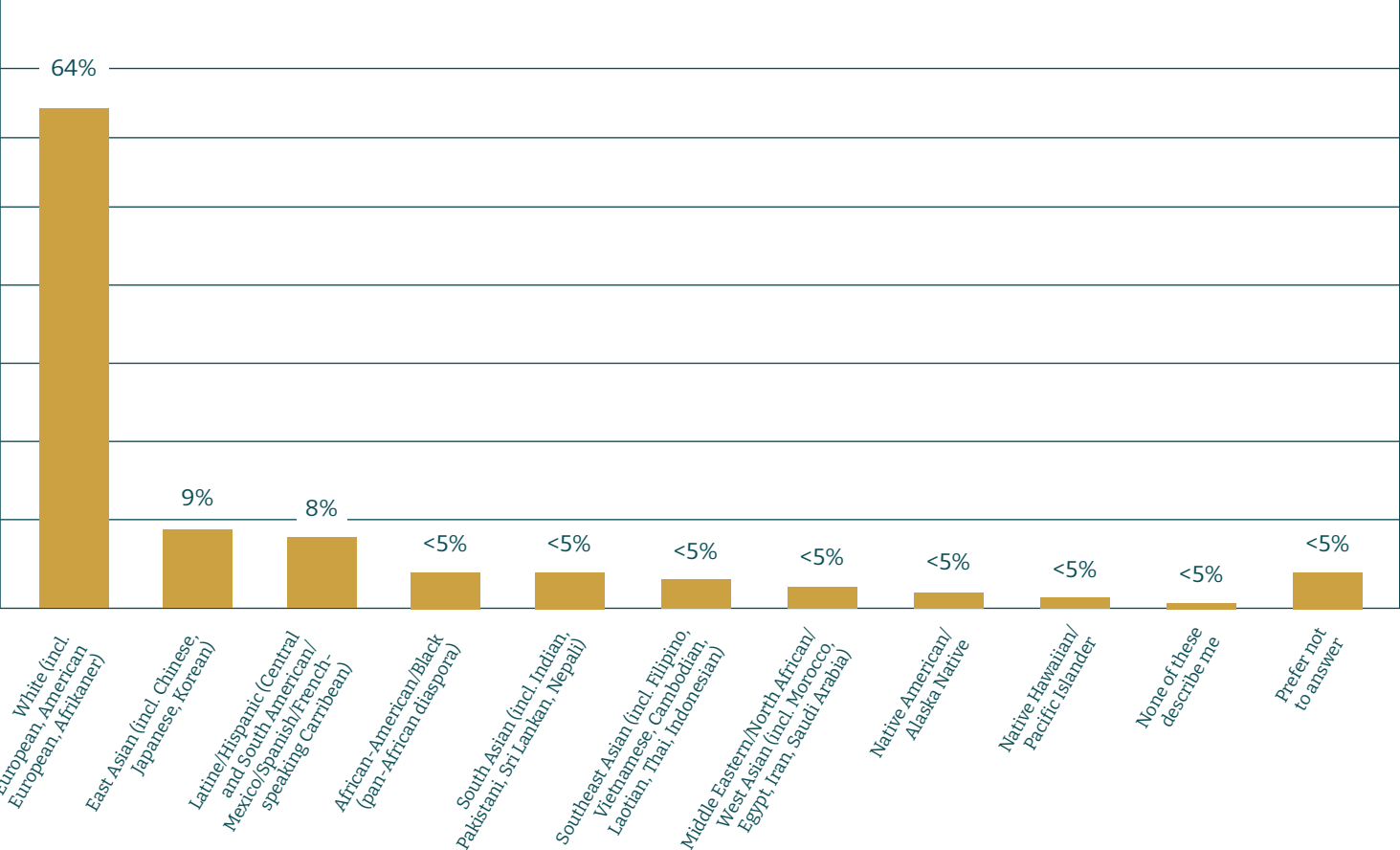
## GENDER IDENTITY



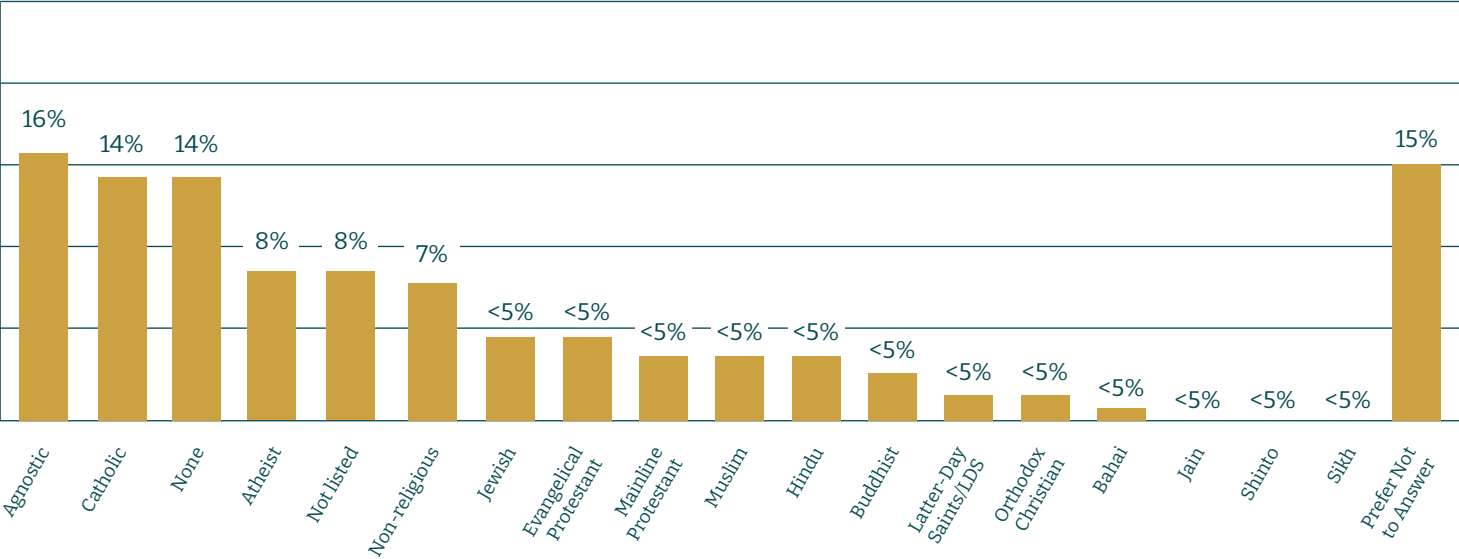
SEXUAL ORIENTATION



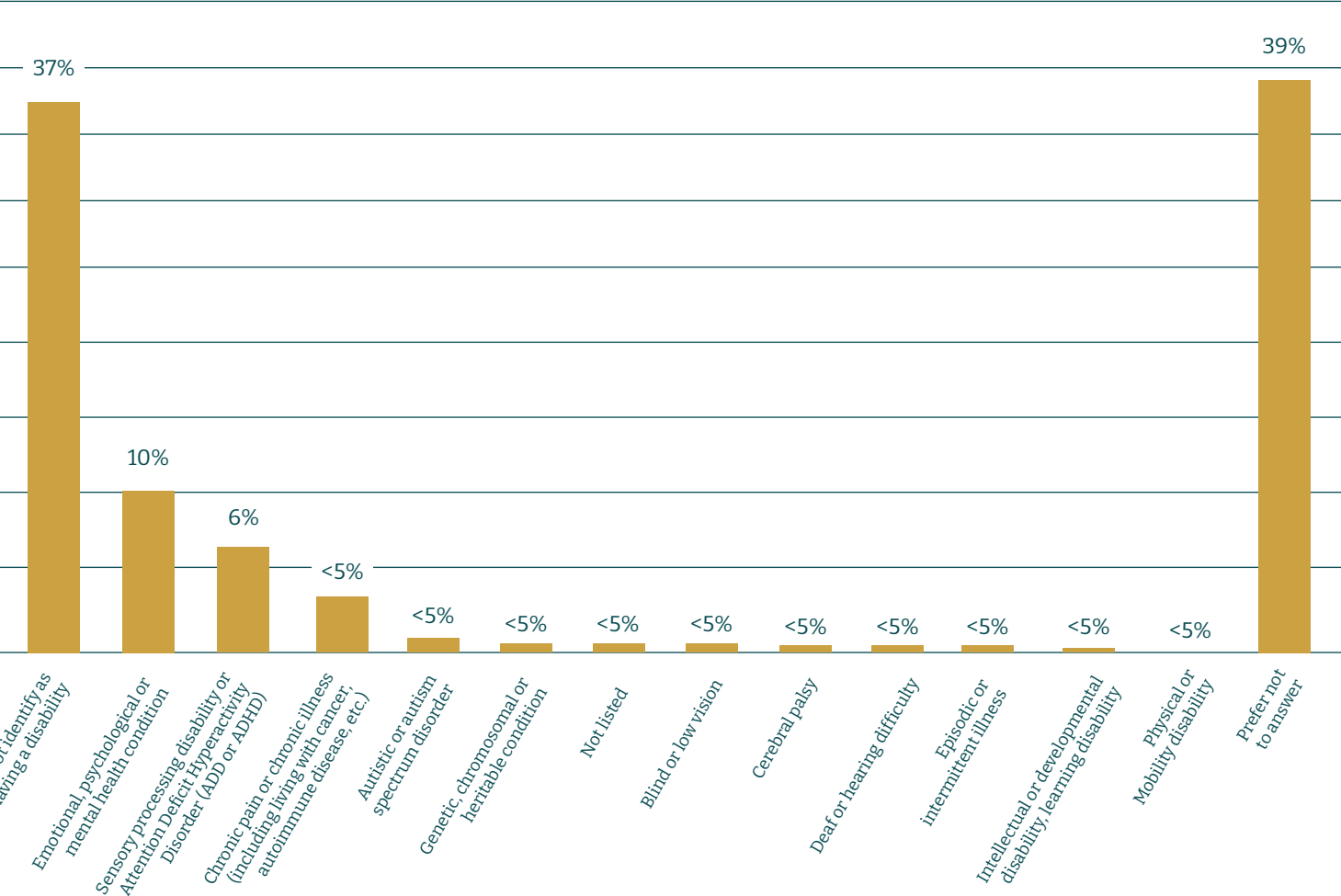
RACE/ETHNICITY



# RELIGION/SPIRITUAL AFFILIATION



# DISABILITIES, CHRONIC ILLNESS, OR OTHER MEDICAL CONDITION





# August 2024 and February 2025 Exam Cycles



## 90% CANDIDATES

received their undergraduate degree in the US

## 99% CANDIDATES

report English language proficiency



## 16% CANDIDATES

are the first individuals in their family to go to college

## 9% CANDIDATES

report experiencing material hardship in the past



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## When Candidates Take the Exam

Prospective CGC candidates take the exam at different points in their educational career



WITHIN 1 YEAR OF GRADUATION



1-2 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION



2+ YEARS AFTER GRADUATION

# Appendix A: Demographic Questions

ABGC created a [DEIJ Glossary](#), which was used as a resource when creating these demographic questions.

## WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR GENDER IDENTITY?

- |                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Cisgender Man   | e. Transgender Man      |
| b. Cisgender Woman | f. Transgender Woman    |
| c. Gender Fluid    | g. Not Listed           |
| d. Non-Binary      | h. Prefer not to answer |

## WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

- |                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. Asexual               | f. Pansexual/Omnisexual/Polysexual |
| b. Bisexual              | g. Queer                           |
| c. Gay                   | h. Questioning                     |
| d. Lesbian               | i. Not Listed                      |
| e. Heterosexual/Straight | j. Prefer not to answer            |

## WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH (CATEGORIES ADAPTED FROM MGPIN)? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- |                                                                                            |                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. African-American/Black (pan-African diaspora)                                           | f. Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander                                                  |
| b. East Asian (incl. Chinese, Japanese, Korean)                                            | g. South Asian (incl. Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Nepali)                          |
| c. Latine/Hispanic (Central and South American/ Mexico/ Spanish/French-speaking Caribbean) | h. Southeast Asian (incl. Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, Indonesian) |
| d. Middle Eastern/ North African/ West Asian (incl. Morocco, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia)    | i. White (incl. European, American European, Afrikaner)                               |
| e. Native American/ Alaska Native                                                          | j. None of these describe me                                                          |
|                                                                                            | k. Prefer not to answer                                                               |

## IS ENGLISH THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH YOU FEEL MOST PROFICIENT?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to answer

## WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT RELIGION OR SPIRITUAL AFFILIATION, IF ANY?

- a. Agnostic
- b. Atheist
- c. Bahá'í
- d. Buddhist
- e. Catholic
- f. Evangelical Protestant
- g. Hindu
- h. Jain
- i. Jewish
- j. Latter-Day Saints/LDS
- k. Mainline Protestant
- l. Muslim
- m. Non-religious
- n. Orthodox Christian
- o. Other Christian
- p. Shinto
- q. Sikh
- r. Taoist
- s. Not Listed
- t. None
- u. Prefer not to answer

## DESCRIBE ANY DISABILITIES, CHRONIC ILLNESS, MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSES, OR OTHER MAJOR MEDICAL CONDITION OR IMPAIRMENT YOU HAVE. PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- a. I do not identify as having a disability
- b. Autistic or autism spectrum disorder
- c. Blind or low vision
- d. Cerebral palsy
- e. Chronic pain or chronic illness (including living with cancer, autoimmune disease, etc.)
- f. Deaf or hearing difficulty
- g. Episodic or intermittent illness
- h. Genetic, chromosomal or heritable condition
- i. Intellectual or developmental disability, learning disability
- j. Limb difference
- k. Emotional, psychological or mental health condition
- l. Physical or mobility disability
- m. Sensory processing disability or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD or ADHD)
- n. Not Listed
- o. Prefer not to answer

**GROWING UP, DID YOU OR YOUR FAMILY CONSISTENTLY EXPERIENCE MATERIAL HARDSHIP AND DEPRIVATION, HOUSING INSECURITY, AND/OR FOOD INSECURITY?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to answer

**DID YOU OBTAIN YOUR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN THE UNITED STATES OR CANADA?**

- a. Yes in the United States
- b. Yes in Canada
- c. No
- d. Prefer not to answer

**ARE YOU THE FIRST INDIVIDUAL IN YOUR FAMILY TO GO TO COLLEGE?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to answer