

# The Parent Leadership Training Institute 2020 Alumni Survey Report

Prepared for the National Parent Leadership Training Institute by:

Katie Lim  
Joanna Geller  
Wendy Perez

*NYU Metro Center*

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**AUTHORS** | Katie Lim, M.A., Joanna D. Geller, Ph.D. and Wendy Y. Perez, Ph.D.

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## Executive Summary

The Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) is a 20-week initiative that parents experience in cohorts of approximately 15-20 members. Depending on resources and funding, some sites offer opportunities for PLTI alumni, such as ongoing social events, civic projects, and professional development workshops. In Spring 2020, NYU Metro Center administered a survey intended for all PLTI alumni. The survey, which included both closed- and open-ended questions asked parents about their civic engagement, changes in their personal and professional lives, skills they were interested in developing, issues on which they were working, and interactions with PLTI alumni. PLTI alumni from all current or former PLTI sites were invited to complete the survey. In this report, we answer three questions:

1. How are PLTI alumni civically engaged? Are there differences by race, education, gender, immigration, and whether their children participated in CLTI?
2. How do PLTI alumni attribute personal changes they have made to their PLTI experience? Are there differences by race, education, gender, and immigration?
3. How can PLTI best support alumni?

### Methods

A total of 498 PLTI alumni from 50 unique sites completed the survey. NPLI provided us with a list of approximately 1,500 alumni with valid contact information. The survey was administered through Qualtrics, an electronic survey platform, and disseminated by NYU Metro Center, NPLI staff, and local PLTI site coordinators through a variety of channels. It was available in Spanish and English. The survey was open from May 26 - June 26, 2020.

### Key Findings

- 86% of parents were working on at least one issue. The most common issue was *Education and Schools*, followed by *Racial Equity*. 64% of alumni said they would like to work with other alumni on these issues, while 23% of alumni stated that they are already working with other alumni.
- The most desired skills PLTI alumni were wishing to learn were *Racial and Equity Facilitation Skills* (45%), followed by *Fundraising and/or Grant Writing* (42%).
- The most common way alumni reported staying connected to PLTI was communication on the alumni social media page (51%), followed by participation in a local alumni event or workshop (40%).
- 71% of alumni reported recruiting parents into PLTI.

- Out of 13 possible common civic actions alumni could have engaged in over the past year (e.g. contacting an elected official, volunteering, serving on a committee), the average alum participated in nine of these civic actions.
- Consistent with the mission of PLTI to support parents in working across differences, the most common civic action that alumni had undertaken in the past year was collaborating across differences in social background (89%).
- There were few significant differences in civic actions by race, education, immigration, and gender among PLTI alumni. In the cases where significant differences were present, white parents were not the most civically active, illustrating that the “civic empowerment gap” that is found in the general US population was largely not found among PLTI alumni.
- PLTI alumni reported making many changes as a direct result of PLTI, including improving their financial situation (28%), advancing their education (30%), changing or advancing their career (36%), improving their family situation (40%), and improving their mental, emotional, or physical health (41%).
- There was a significant relationship between alumni with children who had participated in the Children’s Leadership Training Institute and alumni who reported working with their child to fix or improve something.
- In open-ended responses, alumni shared many examples of the ways they had continued to grow civically and personally since PLTI and how their PLTI community projects had continued to make a difference. However, many shared that time and lack of communication from their PLTI site and fellow alumni were barriers to ongoing engagement.

## Recommendations

1. Continue to offer opportunities for alumni engagement: Overall, PLTI alumni expressed a strong desire to continue to be connected with their PLTI community, through meetings and events, professional development opportunities, and receiving information about policy-related actions they could take.
2. Prioritize racial equity: Not only was racial equity the most common issue PLTI alumni were addressing, but racial equity training was also the most commonly selected skill alumni were hoping to develop, with nearly half of respondents selecting this option.
3. Offer ways for alumni to engage in collective action: Nearly two-thirds of alumni reported that they desired to work on issues with other parents. Consistent with the interactive nature of the 20-week initiative where parents learn and practice civic skills through a community project, ongoing professional development for alumni could occur through engaging in hands-on collective action. For the many alumni who noted having little time to stay connected to PLTI, supporting other parent leaders with their projects may be a way for them to “plug in” without investing a lot of time.

## Introduction

The National Parent Leadership Institute (NPLI) coordinates and increases the civic skills and impact of diverse parents at home, in the neighborhood, and in public policy to improve child and community outcomes. The organization represents a pioneer in developing the field of parent leadership and differentiates itself by embracing a cross-race, cross-class, parent-informed and pro-social learning approach to building parents as a constituency for community and recognizing children as the beneficiaries. NPLI works with agencies, community organizations, local/state governments and other systems and trains parents, agency leaders and community leaders (as well as children through a two-generational strategy) to view parents as valuable leaders working to build caring communities. The Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) is a 20-week initiative that parents experience in cohorts of approximately 15-20 members. Twelve sites also offer the Children’s Leadership Development Institute (CLTI), for children of PLTI participants, ages 3-13. CLTI operates parallel to PLTI and adapts the content for children. Depending on resources and funding, some sites offer opportunities for PLTI alumni, such as ongoing social events, civic projects, and professional development workshops.

In Spring 2020, NYU Metro Center administered a survey intended for all PLTI alumni. The primary purpose of the PLTI Alumni Survey was to identify areas for improvement for supporting alumni, and a secondary purpose was to identify how some PLTI alumni engage in their communities. The survey, which included both closed- and open-ended questions asked parents about their civic engagement, changes in their personal and professional lives, skills they were interested in developing, issues on which they were working, and interactions with PLTI alumni. PLTI alumni from all current or former PLTI sites were invited to complete the survey.

In this report, we answer three questions:

4. How are PLTI alumni civically engaged? Are there differences by race, education, gender, immigration, and whether their children participated in CLTI?
5. How do PLTI alumni attribute personal changes they have made to their PLTI experience? Are there differences by race, education, gender, and immigration?
6. How can PLTI best support alumni?

## Literature Review

PLTI is one of many initiatives throughout the United States and the world that develop parents as leaders to effect change on behalf of children, families, communities, and systems. Studies across various contexts consistently illustrate how parent leadership initiatives lead to personal and family transformation (e.g. Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2019; Cossyleon, 2018; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Dynress, 2009; Geller et al., 2019; Hong, 2011). Parent leadership initiatives offer

a “counter-space” (Nasir et al., 2012) where parents develop counternarratives about themselves and a vision for what is possible. Similar to Friere’s (1970) concept of conscientizacao, parents “become agents of their own development as they reflect and act to transform the conditions influencing their lives” (Ginwright, 2005, p. 105). Through “healing-centered engagement,” (Ginwright, 2015) they learn that their personal problems have roots in systems of oppression and develop hope and healing through collective action. Additionally, parents develop a “second family” increasing access to people in positions of power, and expanding knowledge of school and community resources (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Henderson & Gill Kressley, 2016; Hong, 2011).

Because of NPLI’s long-lasting commitment to evaluation, PLTI participants have completed pre-post surveys in nearly every site across many years. Therefore, we have highly consistent data across time and place that parents experience significant changes in civic knowledge, skills, and behaviors after the 20-week program (RMC Research Corporation, 2015; Geller & Perez, 2019). Pre-post survey data also show that PLTI alumni report experiencing various personal changes as a direct result of PLTI, including advancing their careers, furthering their education, and making changes in their family situation, financial situation, and mental, emotional, and physical health (Geller & Perez, 2019).

Subgroup analysis of the pre-post survey data from 2017-2019 (Lim, Geller, & Perez, 2020) showed that overall, all sub-groups increased their civic engagement, and in many cases, gaps that existed prior to PLTI no longer existed after PLTI. Gaps by race and immigration decreased the most, while a number of gaps by education level persisted or grew after PLTI. Parents who were Hispanic/Latino, mixed race, Black/African American, had less formal education (high school or less), and were not born in the U.S. were more likely than white and Asian/Pacific Islander parents and parents with graduate degrees to report personal changes as a result of PLTI. There is currently no data on the connection between a child’s participation in CLTI and their parent’s civic engagement, although we hypothesize that CLTI would lead families to be more likely to take civic action together.

What happens to PLTI alumni after the completion of the 20-week initiative? Follow-up interviews with PLTI alumni in Revere, MA., Bridgeport, CT., and Rochester, NY. have illustrated that PLTI alumni continue to take civic action in their communities, actively participating in committees and decision-making bodies, running for office, starting community-based organizations, supporting other parents, and working towards increased diversity and racial equity in school and community spaces -- to name just a few examples (Adams et al., 2019; Geller, 2019; Perez, 2019). Additionally, a survey we conducted in spring 2019 of alumni who graduated from PLTI in spring 2018 showed that increases in civic actions persisted for PLTI alumni after one year (response rate = 62%). For 5 of the 6 civic actions we measured, the percentage of parents who had engaged in the civic action either increased or stayed the same

from the time of the post-survey to the time of the alumni survey. This is notable, given that many program evaluations show “fade-out” effects, whereby the impact of a program decreases over time. Additionally, one year after graduating, PLTI alumni reported making many changes as a direct result of PLTI. Approximately one-third reported improving their family situation, health, and advancing their career; one-quarter reported improving their financial situation, and one-fifth reported furthering their education. Two percent had run for public office, while 9% had taken steps toward doing so.

In the past several years, NPLI has begun offering training and technical assistance to PLTI sites to support their alumni. The purpose of the 2020 Alumni Survey was to inform NPLI’s national alumni support efforts, as well as local efforts. An additional purpose was to identify how PLTI alumni are engaging in their communities. A final purpose was to understand the long-term impact of the PLTI experience on parents, although the decision to include all PLTI alumni in the sample - rather than selecting a smaller and more targeted sample - precluded us from making definitive statements about the long-term impact of PLTI on a representative sample of graduates.

## Methods

### Sample

A total of 498 PLTI alumni from 50 unique sites completed the survey. NPLI provided us with a list of approximately 1,500 alumni with valid contact information. However, the number of alumni who received communications about the survey was likely higher given that PLTI site coordinators also disseminated the survey via social media, Whatsapp, and by personal phone calls. Therefore, we could not calculate an exact response rate. Rather than surveying a sample of PLTI alumni, we made the decision with our NPLI partners to include all PLTI alumni in the survey invitation because the primary goal of this survey was to inform improvement and capture stories, rather than to make definitive statements about the trajectory of PLTI alumni.

The parents who completed the survey were not representative of all PLTI alumni. First, the number of responses varied greatly by PLTI site, from one respondent in several sites to 63 respondents in Rochester, NY (see Table 1). The average was ten respondents per site. We assume that this variation has much to do with the infrastructure and resources of the particular site, including whether the site is currently running PLTI, whether the site has alumni engagement activities/events, and whether the site has a dedicated site coordinator with time to reach out to alumni to encourage them to take the survey. The COVID-19 pandemic may have also influenced response rate, as sites could not promote the survey at public events.

Table 1. PLTI Responses by Site

PLTI Site	Total
Rochester, NY	63
Stamford, CT	47
Danbury, CT	45
Bridgeport, CT	37
West Hartford, CT	37
Everett, WA	29
Alexandria, VA	23
Larimer, CO	19
Miami, FL	19
Naugatuck, CT	15
New Orleans, LA	15
Merced, CA	14
Columbus, OH	13
Revere, MA	11
Aurora, CO	9
Norwalk, CT	8
Broward County, FL	7
Middlesex County, CT	6
Milford, CT	6
Arapahoe, CO	5
Decatur, IL	5
Kansas City, MO	5
Los Banos, CA	5
West Central CT, CT	5
Boulder, CO	4
Cranston, RI	4
Solano, CA	4
Adams County, CO	3
Oahu, HI	3
Providence, RI	3
Prowers, CO	3
New Visions, NY	2
Springfield, MO	2
Stockton, CA	2
Waterbury, CT	2
Wind River Indian Reservation, WY	2
Woonsocket, RI	2
Grand Junction, CO	1

Hartford, CT	1
Hot Springs, WY	1
Jacksonville, FL	1
Jefferson, CO	1
Laramie, WY	1
Long Island, NY	1
Morgan County, CO	1
Other	1
Pueblo, CO	1
Sanford, ME	1
South West Denver, CO	1
Summit, CO	1
Windsor Locks, CT	1

Second, although the first PLTI cohort graduated in 1993, over half of the respondents graduated from PLTI in the past 5 years (2016-2020), as shown in Figure 1.

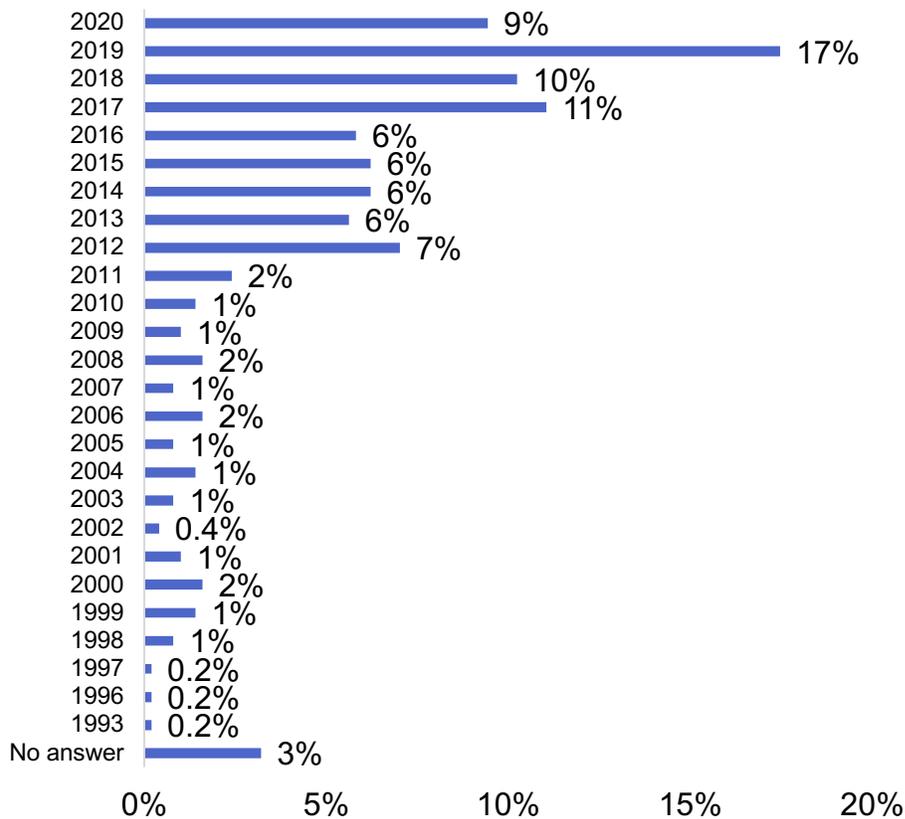


Figure 1. PLTI Graduation Year Frequency

Finally, compared to PLTI participants from 2017-19 (N=501), the sample for this survey included a greater proportion of white parents, parents with higher levels of education, and fewer

parents who were immigrants. To illustrate the differences, both sample demographics were included for race/ethnicity, education, immigration, and home language. The full survey demographics are detailed below (Figures 2-9).



Figure 2. PLTI Alumni Gender Composition, 1993-2020

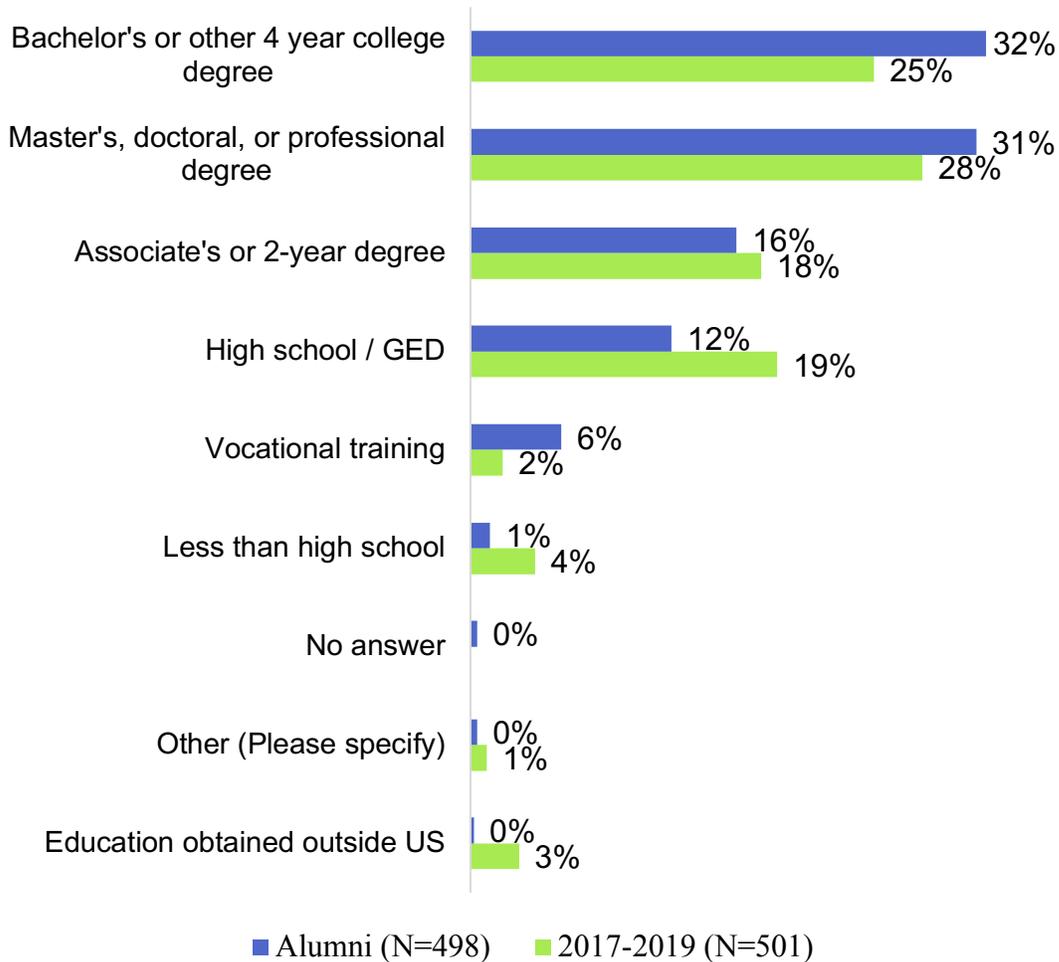


Figure 3. PLTI Educational Composition, 1993-2020 vs. 2017-2019<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compared to alumni who graduated in 2017-2019 (N=193), 31% had a Bachelor's, 27% had a graduate degree, 17% had an Associate's, 15% had a high school/GED, and 3% had less than high school.

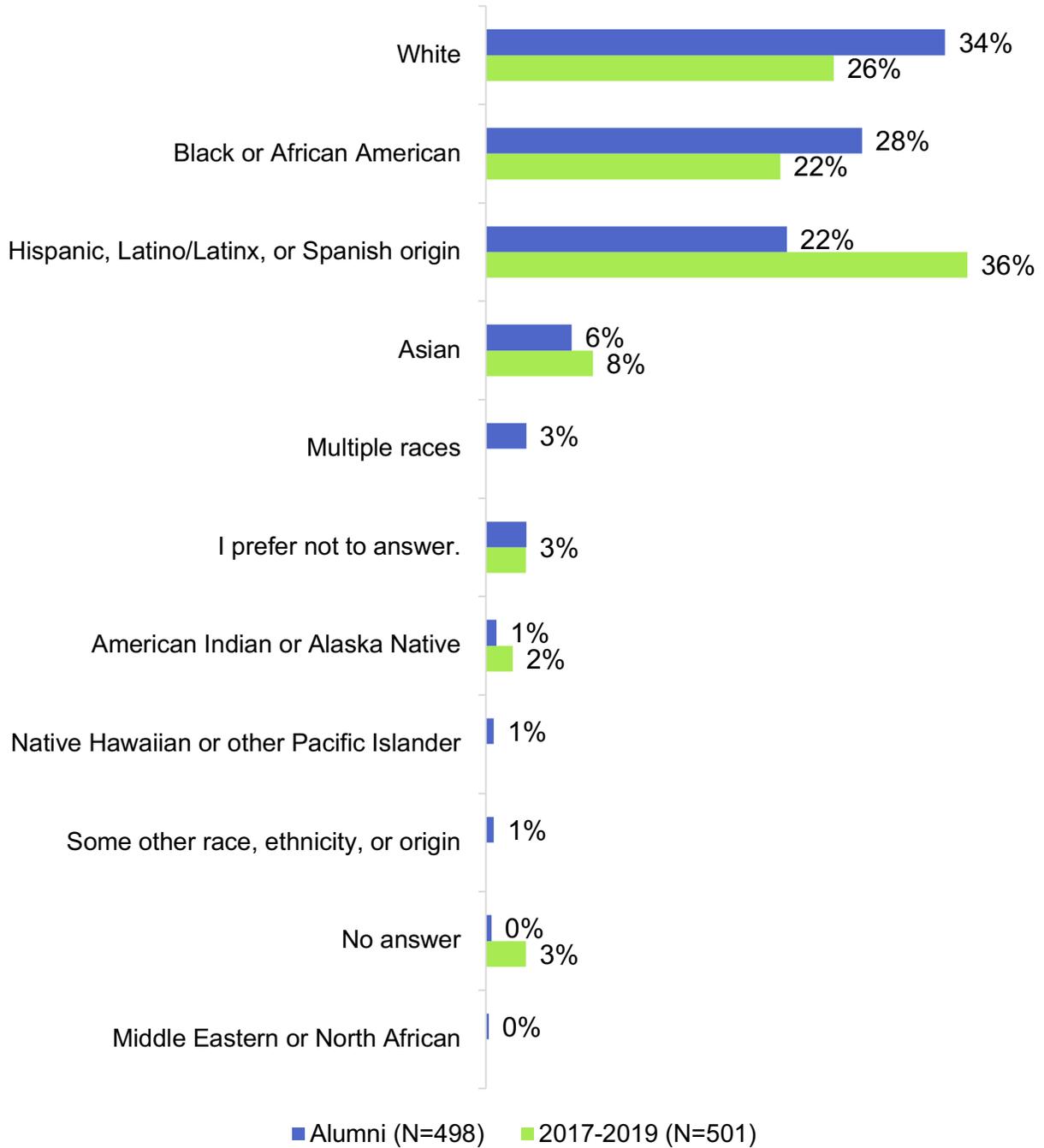


Figure 4. PLTI Alumni Race/Ethnicity Composition, 1993-2020 vs. 2017-2019<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Compared to alumni who graduated in 2017-2019 (N=193), 34% were White, 32% were Hispanic/Latinx, 22% were Black/African American, 6% were Asian, and 4% were multiple races.

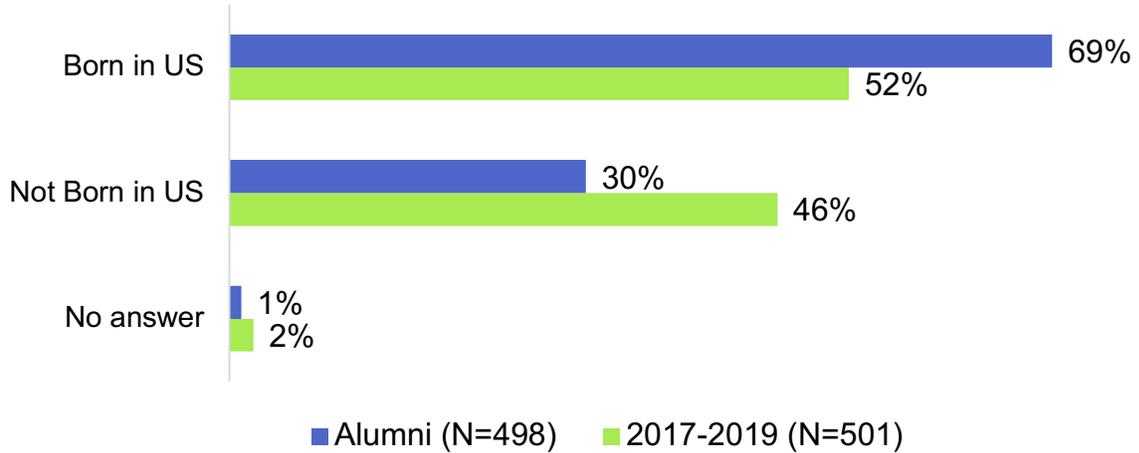


Figure 5. PLTI Alumni Country of Birth - US or not, 1993-2020 vs. 2017-2019<sup>3</sup>

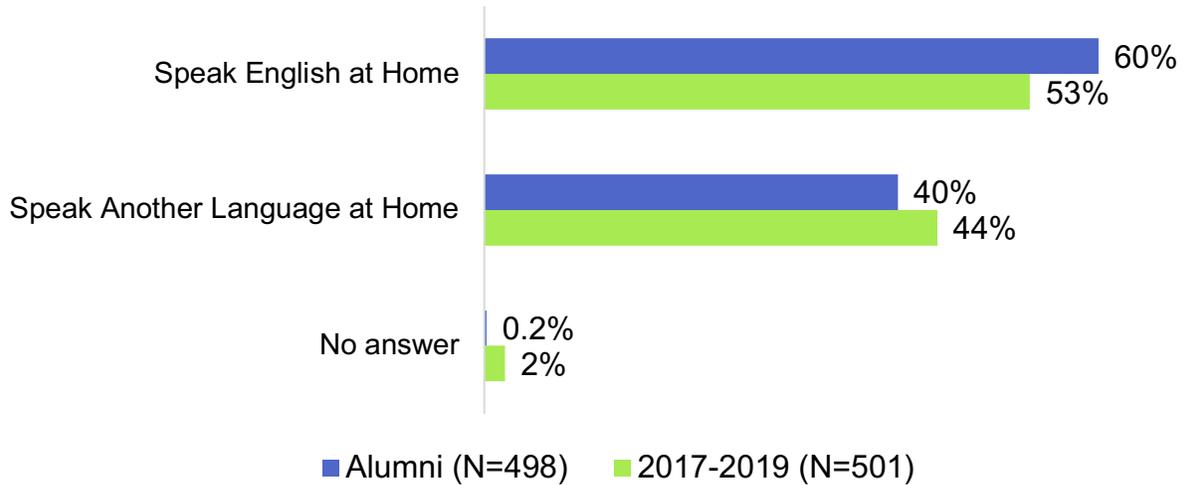


Figure 6. PLTI Alumni Linguistic Composition - Speaks English at home or not, 1993-2020 vs. 2017-2019<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Compared to alumni who graduated in 2017-2019 (N=193), 62% were born in the US and 36% were not born in the US.

<sup>4</sup> Compared to alumni who graduated in 2017-2019 (N=193), 48% speak English at home and 51% speak another language besides English at home.



Figure 7. PLTI Alumni LGBTQ+ Composition, 1993-2020

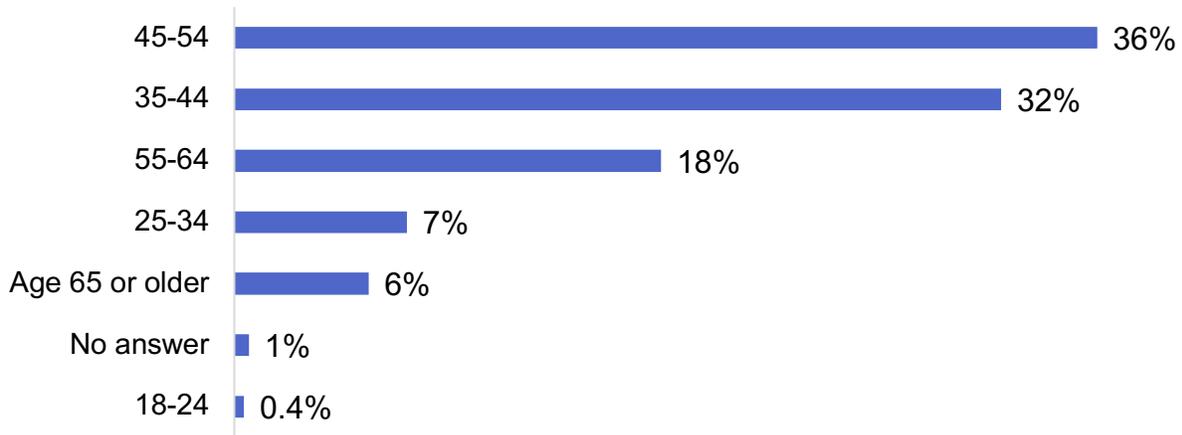


Figure 8. PLTI Alumni Age Composition, 1993-2020

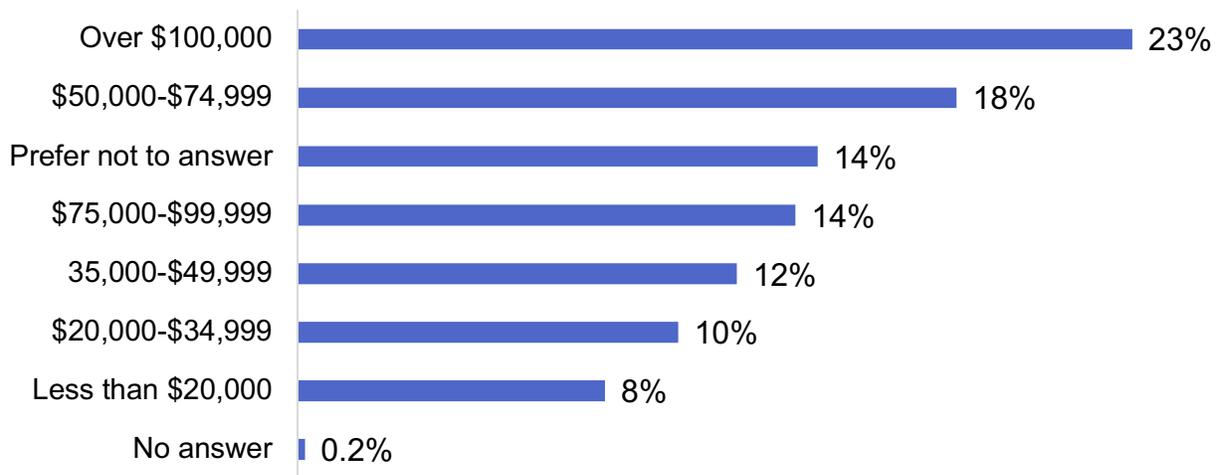


Figure 9. PLTI Alumni Income Composition, 1993-2020

## Data Collection

The survey was administered through Qualtrics, an electronic survey platform. It was available in Spanish and English. NYU Metro Center presented the draft survey to NPLI staff and PLTI site coordinators and provided opportunities for feedback. The survey was open from May 26 - June 26, 2020. NPLI staff alerted site coordinators about the survey one week before the survey launched. NYU Metro Center provided an e-mail template for site coordinators to send to their alumni encouraging them to participate in the survey. NYU Metro Center also provided social media post templates, flyers, and a one-pager with findings from the previous alumni survey to increase survey participation. NPLI staff and site coordinators used various platforms to share the information, such as Facebook, Twitter, Google Groups, and Whatsapp. NYU also e-mailed the survey via Qualtrics to all alumni with valid e-mail addresses. Contextually, it is important to note that the survey was administered amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and the height of the spring 2020 Movement for Black Lives protests. Therefore, PLTI sites were not holding in-person meetings or events, and some alumni likely had a heightened commitment to racial justice.

## Data Analysis

Since the alumni survey was shared with all PLTI participants, 2020 graduates were also included in the participant sample. In order to differentiate the outcomes of alumni and recent 2020 graduates, two separate datasets were created: all participants and 1993-2019 graduates only. The findings outlined below are broken up into these two categories.

For the full sample, findings include:

- Demographics
- Recruiting parents into PLTI
- Issues alumni are working on
- Skills alumni want to learn
- Interactions with alumni
- Participating in CLTI and parents' civic outcomes

For the 1993-2019 graduates' sample, findings include:

- Civic outcomes
- Personal changes outcomes
- Subgroup analysis for civic and personal changes outcomes

We used descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis to analyze the data.

## Findings

The following section describes alumni responses related to a variety of questions. We used the full sample of graduates when reporting on issues alumni were working on, skills alumni wanted to learn, alumni engagement in recruiting for PLTI, and how alumni interacted with one another. We excluded the 2020 graduates when reporting on alumni civic actions and alumni personal changes, as our goal was to understand how PLTI alumni civically engaged over time.

### Issues Alumni Are Working On

The survey asked respondents to select all of the issues they were currently working on and if they would be interested in working with other alumni on these issues. 86% of parents were working on at least one issue. The most common issue was *Education and Schools*, followed by *Racial Equity* (Figure 10). In the 2019 Alumni Survey, *Education and Schools* was also the most common issue and *Racial Equity* was the 5th most common. 64% of alumni said they would like to work with other alumni on these issues, while 23% of alumni stated that they are already working with other alumni. See appendix B for alumni responses to ‘other.’

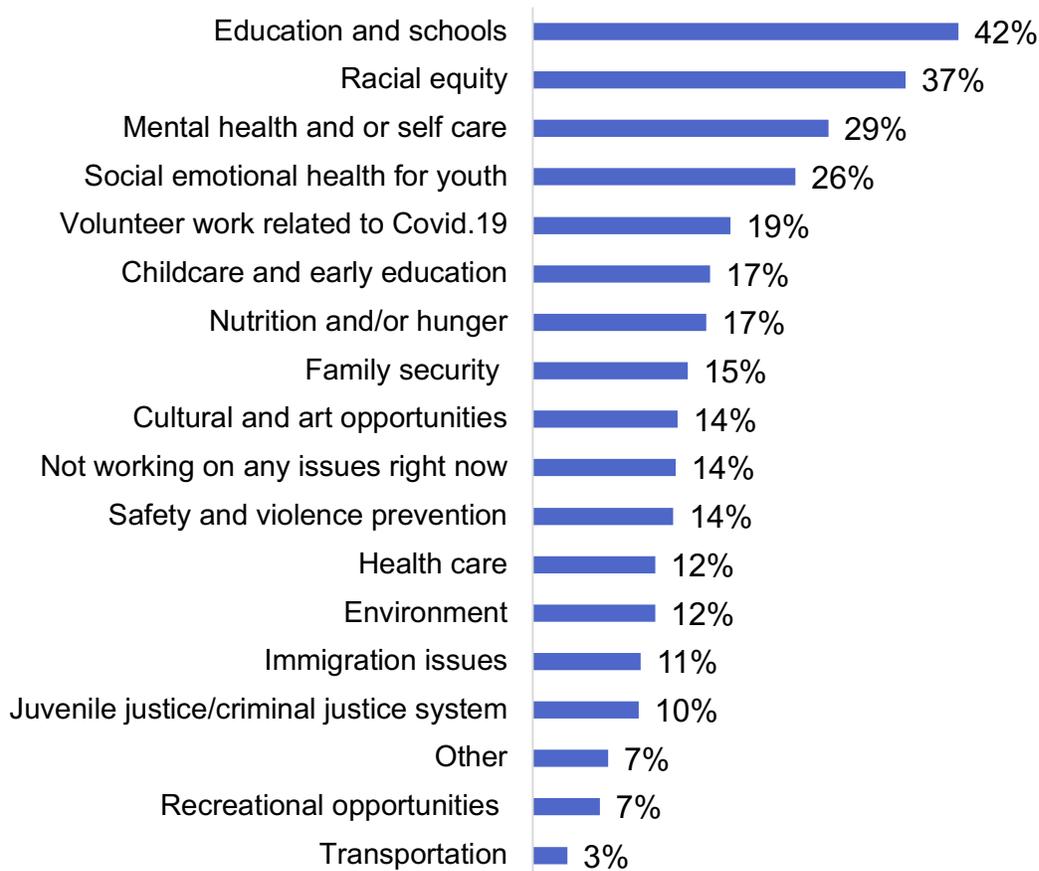


Figure 10. Percentage of Alumni Working on Various Issues

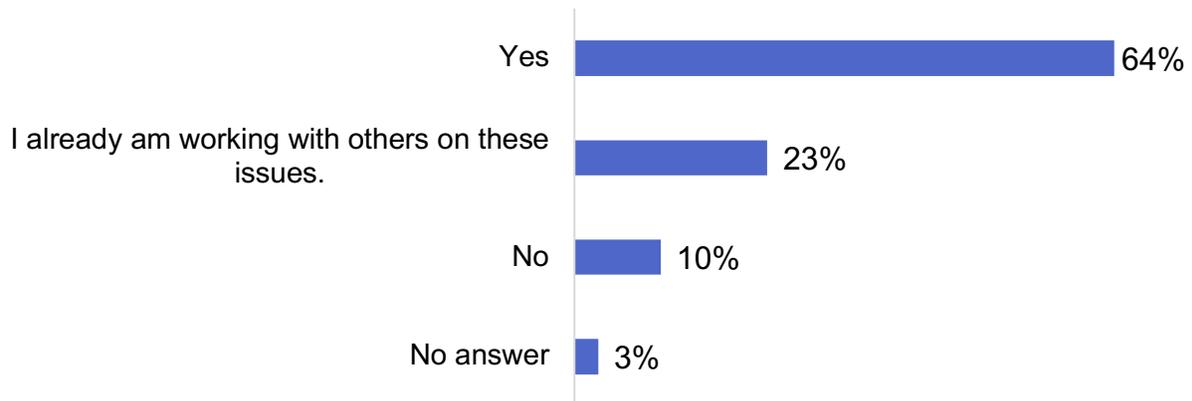


Figure 11. Percentage of Alumni Wanting to Work with Other Alumni on Issues

### Skills Alumni Want to Learn

The survey asked respondents to select all of the skills they were wishing to learn. The most desired skill was *Racial and Equity Facilitation Skills*, followed by *Fundraising and/or Grant Writing*. In the 2019 Alumni Survey, *Fundraising and/or Grant Writing* was also the most desired skill and *Racial and Equity Facilitation Skills* was the 4th most desired. See appendix B for alumni’s responses to ‘other.’

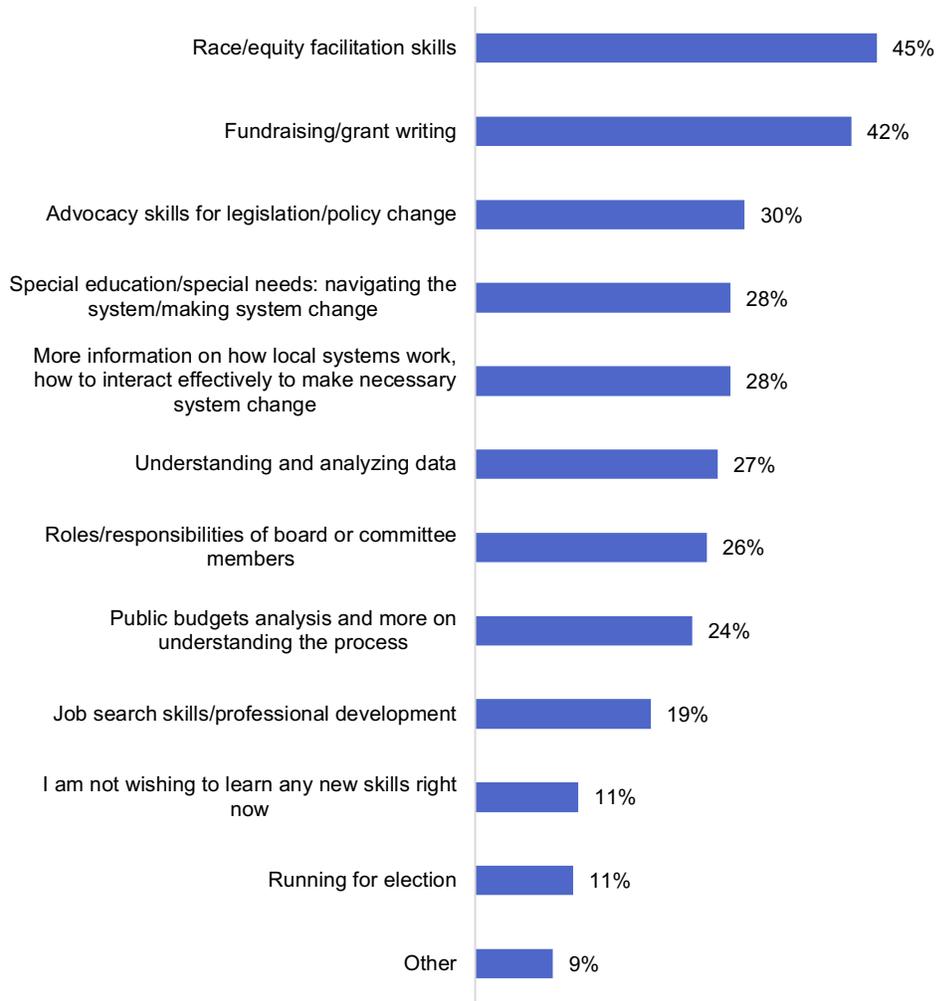


Figure 12. Percentage of Alumni Wanting to Learn Various Skills

### Alumni Interactions

The survey asked respondents to select the various ways that they have communicated with other alumni. The most common was communication on the alumni social media page, followed by participation in a local alumni event or workshop. Many alumni also mentioned being friends with other alumni and interacting outside of PLTI. See appendix B for alumni responses to ‘other.’

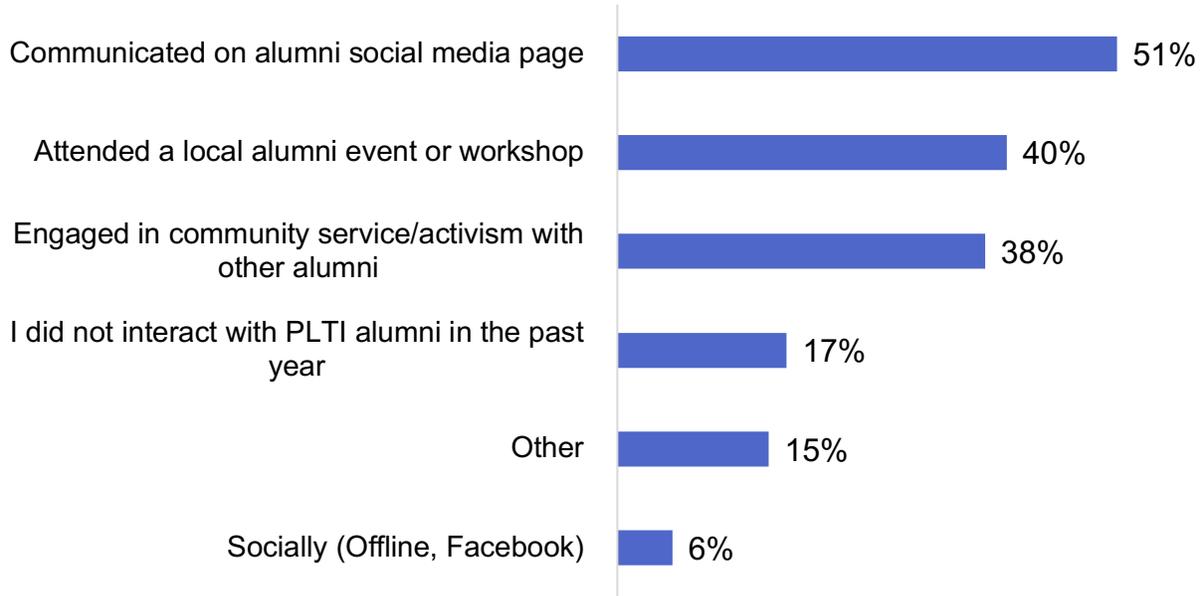


Figure 13. Percentage of Alumni Interacting with Other Alumni in Various Ways

**Recruiting for PLTI**

71% (N=353) of alumni reported recruiting parents into PLTI.

**Civic Findings**

The alumni survey asked parents whether they had engaged in a variety of 13 different civic actions in the past 12 months. Among the sample of 451 parents (excluding the 2020 cohort respondents)<sup>5</sup>, the average number of civic actions that alumni participated in was 9, with a minimum and maximum of 1 and 13, respectively. The majority of alumni (17%) participated in 10 civic actions. No alumni completed zero civic actions.

Table 2. Number and Percentage of Alumni Participating in a Number of Civic Actions

Number of Civic Actions	Number (%)
1	5 (1%)
2	3 (1%)
3	11 (2%)
4	13 (3%)
5	12 (3%)
6	29 (6%)
7	41 (9%)

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix A for the 1993-2019 alumni demographics.

8	52 (12%)
9	57 (13%)
10	77 (17%)
11	69 (15%)
12	43 (10%)
13	39 (9%)

The figure below shows the percentage of alumni participating in each of the civic actions. The majority of alumni reported that they collaborated with people from different backgrounds (89%) and volunteered (89%). Among the 22% (N=99) who said they worked to register new voters, 77% (N=71) said that their experience in PLTI influenced them to register new voters.

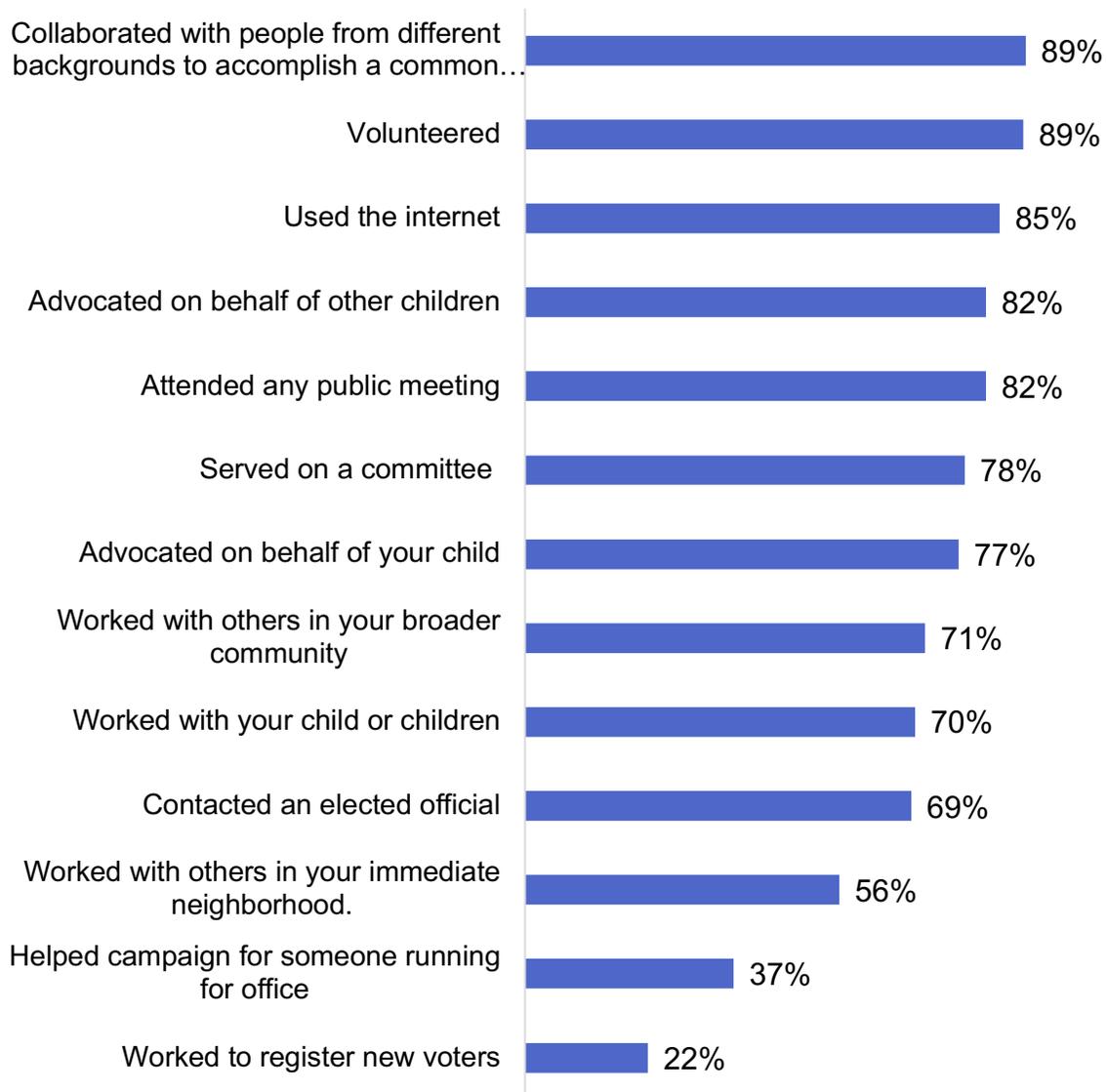


Figure 14. Percentage of Alumni Participating in Civic Action in The Past Year

## Personal Changes as a Result of PLTI

PLTI alumni reported making additional changes as a direct result of PLTI:

- Over 1/3 reported improving their mental, emotional, and physical health
- Over 1/3 reported improving their family situation
- Over 1/3 reported changing or advancing their career
- Over 1/4 reported advancing their education
- Over 1/4 reported improving their financial situation
- 38 parents reported running for public office and 20 parents reported taking steps toward running.

In comparison to the 2019 Alumni Survey, the percentage of alumni having done these five personal changes was higher. Moreover, improving family situation and health remained the top two personal changes that alumni had made. Unsurprisingly, running for public office continued to have the fewest responses.

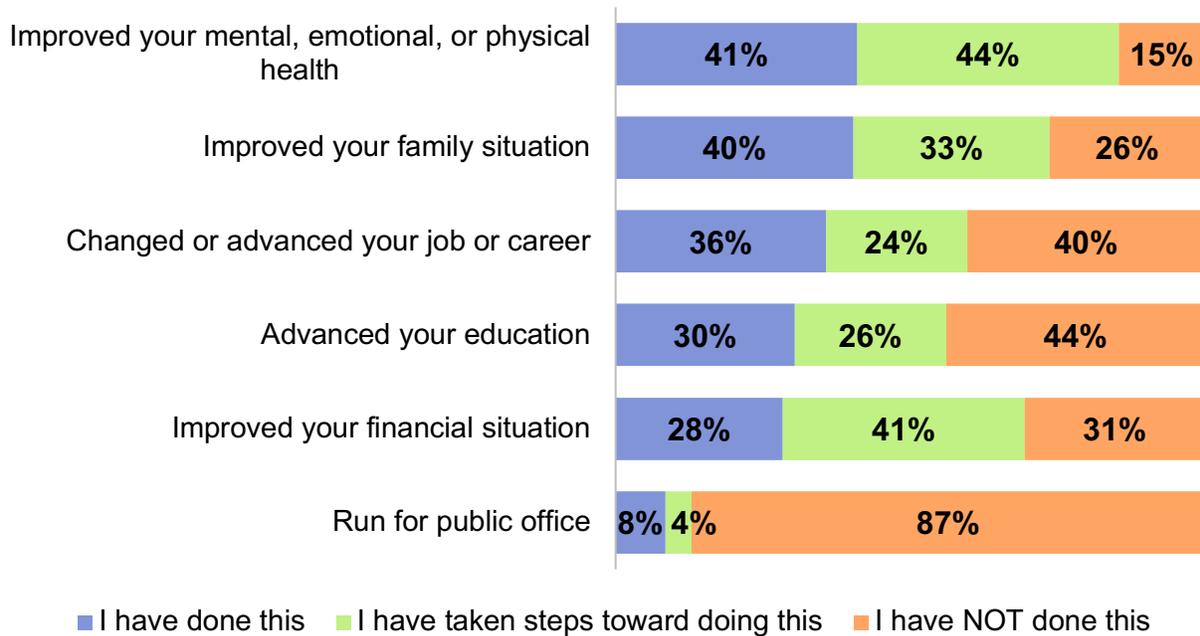


Figure 15. Percent of Alumni Who Have Made Personal Changes as a Result of PLTI

## Subgroup Analysis

### Civic Outcomes

#### *Participation in Children's Leadership Training Institute (CLTI) and Parents' Civic Actions<sup>6</sup>*

Among the 24 PLTI sites, 12 sites offer CLTI. For the most part, parents with children who participated in CLTI engaged in civic actions at the same rate as parents with children who did not participate in CLTI. For example, 78% of parents with a child who did not participate in CLTI served on a committee compared to 80% of parents with a child who did participate in CLTI. However, there was a significant difference between these two groups for working with their child or children to fix or improve something, with 77% of parents with children in CLTI having done this and 67% of parents without children in CLTI having done this.

#### *Differences in Civic Actions by Race*

Across racial/ethnic subgroups<sup>7</sup>, there were no significant differences for the majority of civic actions, including attending a public meeting, serving on a committee, volunteering, working with others in the broader community, working with your child or children, using the internet, advocating on behalf of your child, advocating on behalf of all children, and collaborating with people from different backgrounds.

As shown in Figure 16, across racial/ethnic subgroups, there were significant differences for contacting an elected official, working with neighbors, helping a campaign, and registering new voters.

- 100% (N=12) of alumni who identified as multiple races said they have contacted an elected official compared to 59% (N=60) of alumni who identified as Hispanic/Latinx.
- 71% (N=72) of alumni who identified as Hispanic/Latinx said they worked with their neighbors compared to 46% (N=73) of alumni who identified as White.
- 43% (N=44) of alumni who identified as Hispanic/Latinx said they helped a campaign compared to 17% (N=2) of alumni who identified as Multiple Races.
- 32% (N=8) of alumni who identified as Asian/Pacific Islander said they helped register new voters compared to only one alumnus who identified as Multiple Races.

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<sup>6</sup> The full sample was used to explore the relationship between participation in CLTI and parents' civic actions.

<sup>7</sup> Racial/ethnic subgroups with less than 5 alumni were excluded from the analysis.

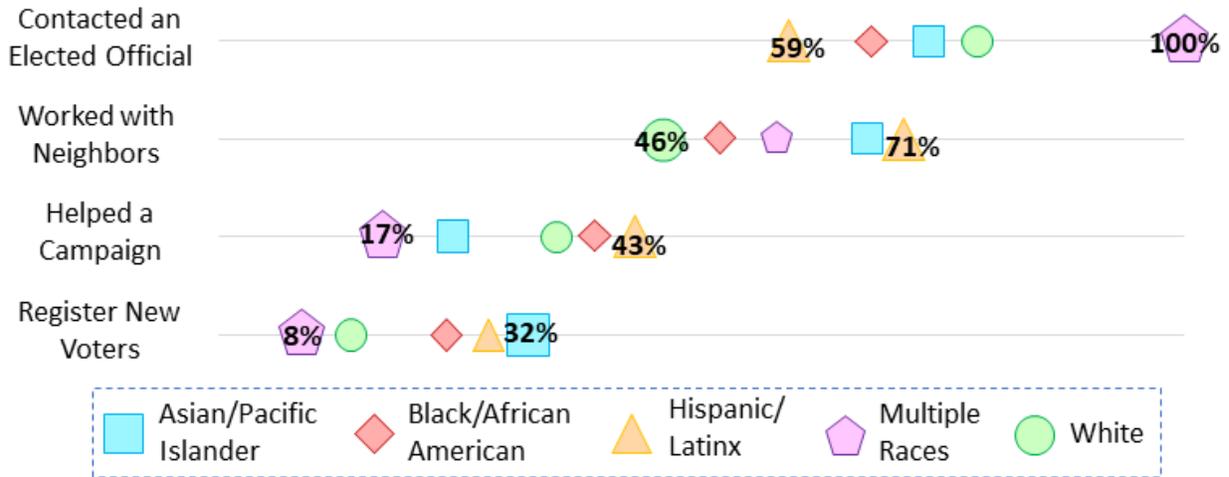


Figure 16. Significant Differences in Civic Actions by Racial/Ethnic Groups

*Differences in Civic Actions by Education*

Across education levels<sup>8</sup>, there were no significant differences in civic actions. This may be because the sample was heavily skewed toward parents with higher levels of education. Almost 80% of the sample had an associate’s, bachelor’s, or graduate degree and the majority had engaged in civic actions.

*Differences in Civic Actions by Gender*

86% (N=36) of males said they contacted an elected official compared to 68% (N=264) of females. There were no significant differences between males and females for any other civic actions.



Figure 17. Significant Differences in Civic Actions by Gender

<sup>8</sup> Education levels with less than 5 alumni were excluded from the analysis.

### *Differences in Civic Actions by Immigration*

There were no significant differences by immigration for most of the civic actions, including attending a public meeting, serving on a committee, volunteering, working with others in the broader community, working with your child or children, using the internet, advocating on behalf of your child, advocating on behalf of all children, collaborating with people from different backgrounds, and helping a campaign.

There were significant differences by immigration for contacting an elected official, working with neighbors, and registering new voters.

- 74% (N=228) of alumni who were born in the US said they contacted an elected official compared to 59% (N=72) of alumni who were not born in the US. This gap was also significant in the 2017-19 Subgroup Analysis.
- 67% (N=82) of alumni who were not born in the US said they worked with their neighbors compared to 52% (N=159) of alumni who were born in the US.
- 33% (N=40) of alumni who were not born in the US said they helped to register new voters compared to 18% (N=56) of alumni who were born in the US.

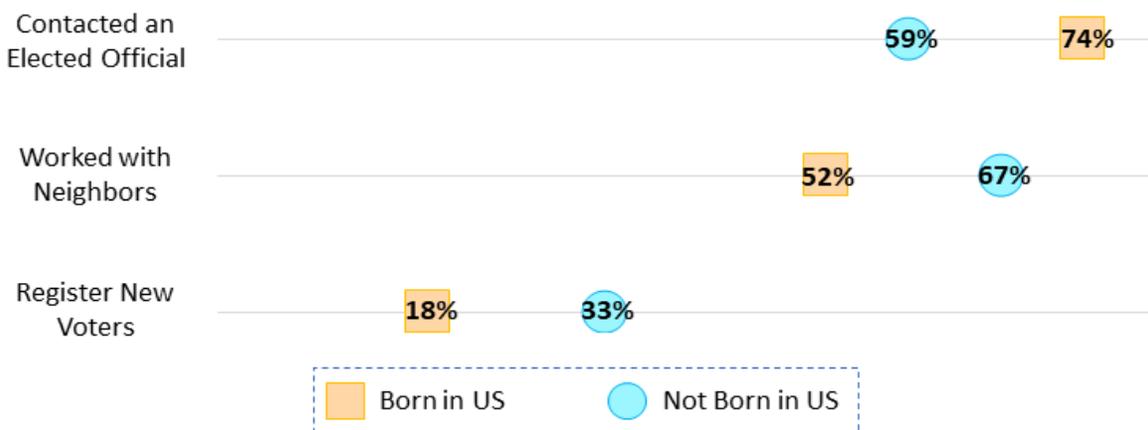


Figure 18. Significant Differences in Civic Actions by Immigration

### **Personal Changes Outcomes**

#### *Differences in Personal Changes by Race*

There were significant gaps in reported personal changes by race<sup>9</sup> for furthering education, advancing career, changing family situation, and changing financial situation. These gaps were also significant in the 2017-19 Subgroup Analysis.

- Asian/Pacific Islander alumni were most likely to further their education (40%)

<sup>9</sup> Racial/ethnic subgroups with less than 5 alumni were excluded from the analysis.

- Black/African American alumni were most likely to advance their career (44%). This is consistent with the 2017-19 subgroup analysis.
- Asian/Pacific Islander and Black/African American alumni were most likely to change their family situation (44%). In the 2017-19 subgroup analysis, Latinx parents and parents who identified as multiple races were most likely to change their family situation.
- Alumni who identified as Multiple Races were most likely to change their financial situation (42%). In the 2017-19 subgroup analysis, Black/African American parents and parents were most likely to change their financial situation.

These findings deviate somewhat from the 2017-19 subgroup analysis, wherein White and Asian/Pacific Islander parents were the least likely subgroups to have made changes in all four areas.

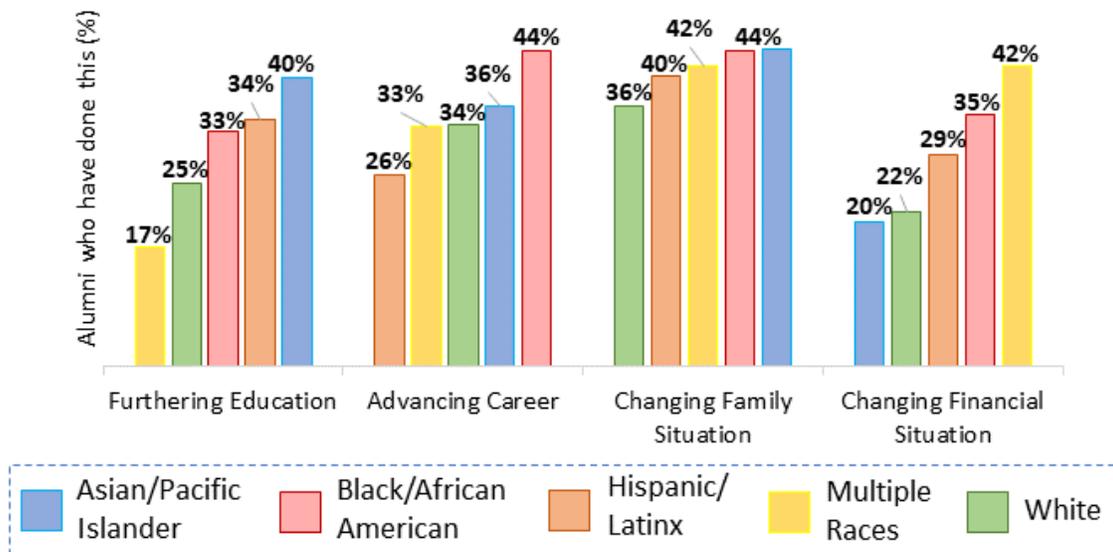


Figure 19. Significant Differences in Personal Changes Outcomes by Racial/Ethnic Groups

### *Differences in Personal Changes by Education*

There were differences in personal changes by education level<sup>10</sup> for furthering education, changing family situation, and changing financial situation, but there was not a significant difference in furthering career and improving emotional/mental/physical health. These differences were also significant in the 2017-19 subgroup analysis.

- Parents with vocational training were most likely to further their education, change their family situation, and change their financial situation.
- Parents with a graduate degree followed after parents with vocational training as the most likely group to make these personal changes.

<sup>10</sup> Education subgroups with less than 5 were excluded from the analysis.

- Parents with the least amount of formal education (less than high school or high school) were also least likely to report furthering their education and changing their financial situation. Parents with no high school degree were also least likely to report changing their family situation, while parents with a high school degree were more likely than parents with a Bachelor’s degree to report changing their family situation.

These data contrast with the 2017-19 subgroup analysis, where parents with less than high school or high school/GED were more likely to have done or taken steps toward doing these three personal changes outcomes.

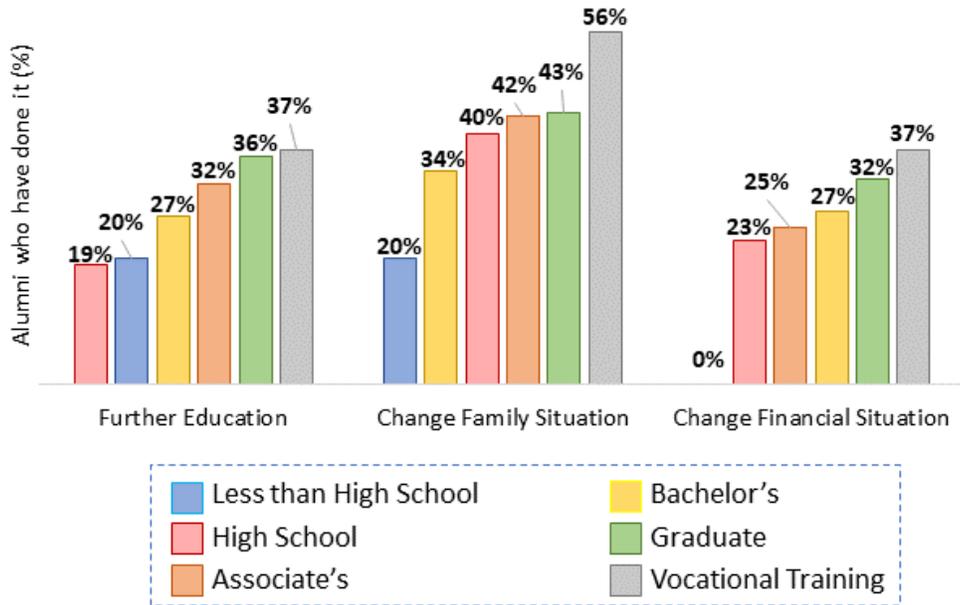


Figure 20. Significant Differences in Personal Changes Outcomes by Education

*Differences in Personal Changes by Gender*

19% of males said that they ran for public office compared to 8% of females. There were no other significant differences by gender.

*Differences in Personal Changes by Immigration*

There were differences in personal change by immigration for advancing career and changing the family situation. In comparison to the 2017-19 subgroup analysis, differences by immigration were significant for furthering education and changing the family situation. Parents who were born in the US were more likely to advance their career and change their family situation.

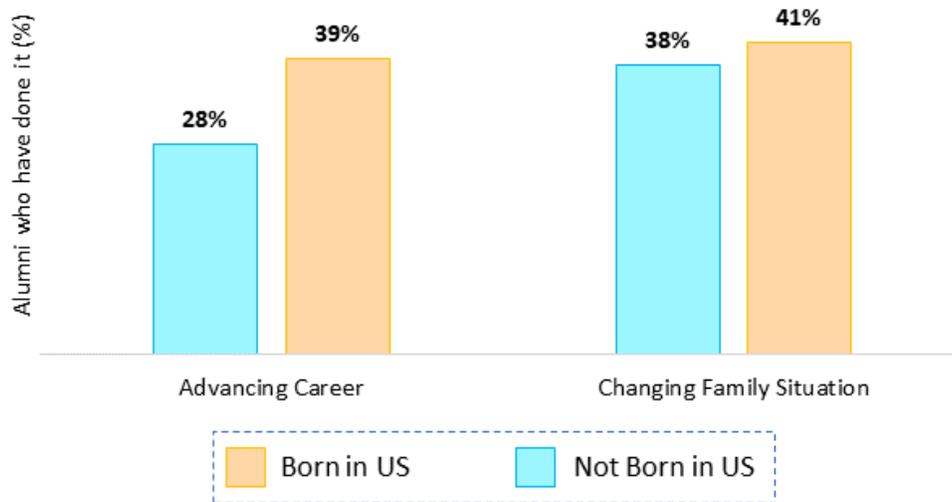


Figure 21. Significant Differences in Personal Changes Outcomes by Immigration

## Open-Ended Responses

### Personal and Professional Changes

352 PLTI alumni answered the question “Have you made any changes in your personal/professional/family/life as a result of PLTI?” While 22 parents answered “no,” The rest shared many positive remarks regarding their growth and development. Alumni shared that they experienced professional advancement such as learning new skills, changing jobs, or starting new professions.

When I started PLTI, I was on a path to nursing, but after learning how to be a better advocate my desire to change my career began to bud. It was then I made a decision to go to law school.

PLTI alumni also learned new skills including the formation of different perspectives, ways to collaborate, how to help others, increased confidence, continuous learning, more advocacy, and using their voices in public arenas.

When I took PLTI I wasn't confident speaking in public since English wasn't my first language. I had a school age kid you needed extra support, PLTI not only showed me ways to advocate for him but helped my confidence and the importance of my voice.

I learned to be solution and collaboration focused and not to approach things from a deficit mindset.

The many civic and leadership skills gained by alumni were also directed to greater community engagement. Alumni ran for public office, supported the passage of legislation, attended community meetings, and held leadership positions in the community. Two alumni expressed how they were more empowered to serve and connect to their community:

PLTI was the core of prospering every aspect of my life. I have learned policy, economic issues, mentor ship, community engagement; testified for hearings, was successful with helping in passage of 3 high profile bills, releasing a book in July, Presented to Congress in Washington DC, and is preparing me for my 2022 run for office.

PLTI has enabled me [to] maintain a more active "consciousness" of my community. The network educates me and helps me maintain my knowledge of issues in my community (as shared and uncovered by parent leaders). As a result, I am more engaged, more helpful, and more informed.

Many alumni also furthered their education or shifted their educational pursuits. Some alumni went on to complete college degrees and graduate degrees after PLTI.

Following my completion of the PLTI course I decided to pursue a BA degree completion program and enroll in a grant writing certification program. I felt more confident in my ability to soar in the areas of higher education and in my ability to be a change agent around government systems failing competent parents raising complex and high-need kids.

When I first became involved with PLTI I was looking for ways to engage parents in the education community. Since then, I have become a PLTI facilitator, director of education program, and attained my masters degree in Native American Leadership. So overall, I have improved my life personally and professionally.

Alumni also strengthened relationships within their families and made new connections with their fellow participants and beyond.

Entiendo mucho mejor a mis hijos, sé a dónde dirigirme ante alguna situación de la escuela o de la comunidad. (I understand my children much better, I know where to go when faced with a situation at school or in the community.)

I am so very grateful for the opportunity it has afforded me and for the amazing people that it has introduced me to. The individuals that I have met through PLTI are some of my favorite people. It doesn't matter if I haven't talked to them for awhile I feel that I can instantly connect with them when we do see one another...like old really close friends!

The experiences of PLTI alumni illuminate the many ways that they have grown and benefitted through their participation in PLTI.

## **PLTI Alumni and Their Community Projects**

344 PLTI alumni answered the question, “How has your community project changed or expanded since PLTI graduation?” While many noted that their project had not changed or expanded, many shared how their community projects made an impact. Other alumni discussed why their projects ended. Among those PLTI alumni who felt that their projects had a lasting impact, their community projects ranged from establishing awareness campaigns, working on policies, providing new resources to their communities, and starting programs.

My project was about the generational/cultural challenges in Asian American families. It is especially relevant now with the current national conversations about race. Younger generations are struggling to talk to their parents about Black Lives Matter and anti-blackness in the Asian community. I have helped facilitate conversations and share resources although not branded as my PLTI project, I am still doing work related to my project.

I have been working in my project by encouraging Latino parent and students to look for opportunities to learn and attend private schools. I have been a parent liaison at the REACH Prep program in Stamford. My experience of having my daughter the opportunity to attend and graduated from Greenwich Academy and the learning from PLTI helps me to believe in these educational opportunities for our children who have potentials and desire to have a better education.

The Fresh food co-op we created as my community project ran with the partner agency from 2015 to 2020 and had expanded to include many more families.

My community project was focused on equity as it related to class size. I have found myself raising issues of equity in other ways since then. Especially with COVID, I have been advocating for increased attention to issues of equity and the need for my district to provide direct opportunities to listen to and partner with parents.

We have been making small strides in efforts to revitalize the Shoshone language. I was instrumental in helping develop the first ever Shoshone language App, with the assistance of others in the community.

Several alumni also transferred skills from their community projects into their professional lives or in furthering their community work.

I took the skills from advocating for arts education and branched out into State education funding advocacy when the need arose in my district. My years of experience coordinating with the district inspired me to run for School Board.

My project has not expanded but it did lead to one of my current jobs which is a reading intervention paraeducator since my project was to do a summer reading program at my son's elementary school.

Different reasons were given for why PLTI alumni didn't expand their community projects. Some projects were not aimed for expansion, were considered complete, or PLTI alumni interests changed. Others didn't continue because of personal commitments or issues, the lack of support for the project, and COVID-19.

My community project was a one and done project. However, each year (or almost each year) I take on a new project (i.e., create a diaper bank in my local food pantry, start a birthday bag initiative with my child for children, etc.)

My community project only lasted a year. It did not work out as planned because conditions changed in our school environment and what I had been preparing to do was no longer required. So I had to make changes to my program. Considering I did not get much support from leadership at my school and I had to pay for child care for my children to accomplish my project, I only did it for one year. It was not financially feasible or emotionally feasible for my family. But I am glad I did it. At least I learned what was important or not important at my school.

Many PLTI alumni were successful in expanding their community projects. Those who weren't able to expand their work may benefit from community support for their projects or information on how to carry on in the midst of COVID-19.

### **Barriers Alumni Have Faced in Staying Connected to PLTI**

Among the 276 alumni who answered this question, 79 of these respondents said there were no barriers to staying connected. Of the remaining 197 respondents, 70 alumni mentioned time as a barrier, making this by far the most common response. Of these 70 alumni, most often, work and family commitments prevented ongoing connection to PLTI. Seven alumni also noted their own or family health issues as barriers. Two alumni noted that other civic duties prevented their ongoing connection, including volunteering and being invested in a role in town government.

The next most common theme involved challenges with communication and outreach from the PLTI site. Thirty alumni mentioned that they received no or little communication from their PLTI site; some of these alumni noted that their site no longer existed because of funding challenges. Some of these alumni noted additional desired supports, such as a mentor for their community project, updates on other alumni projects or activities that they could support, more regular events, more advanced content (e.g. a “202 or 303” level course), and a way to connect with other PLTI alumni through technology that wasn’t tied to social media. Five alumni noted that they are not on social media or Facebook and thus could not stay updated. Alumni noted that they had difficulty attending events because of scheduling conflicts (e.g. working, having family dinner) (N=6), location of the event (N=3), lack of transportation (N=1), and lack of childcare (N=1). Several alumni identified COVID-19 as a barrier to ongoing connection (N=7). Five alumni also mentioned language as a barrier to ongoing connection.

Another theme was a lack of alumni connection to their cohort, PLTI coordinators, or national PLTI, with 25 alumni expressing reasons such as that they didn’t fit in with their cohort due to race or political orientation, they felt unwelcome, they were disappointed with PLTI’s response to various issues, they had no reason to reach out because alumni weren’t working on the same project, or they tried to reach out but others were uninvested or disengaged. An additional five alumni noted personal barriers, including a fear of public speaking, discomfort with reaching out to others, and concern about not being accepted.

Finally, 13 alumni noted that they had moved, and a couple of other alumni pointed towards others from their cohorts moving as barriers to ongoing engagement.

### **How PLTI or NPLI Can Support Alumni**

228 alumni answered the question, “Do you have any additional suggestions how your PLTI site or NPLI can support you?” 105 parents noted they had no suggestions, with several making positive remarks, such as that they wanted PLTI to “keep up the amazing work” or that they “always feel supported.” Of the 123 with suggestions, 20 alumni noted they would like more gatherings, either in-person or virtually, for example: open forums, opportunities for alumni to share experiences and challenges, an asset mapping activity, alumni panels and discussion groups, and policy-specific networking. Several alumni wanted more opportunities to engage in collective action, for example, through a group project, advocacy for issues affecting families (healthcare, housing, living wage), and supporting alumni running for office. One alum wrote:

Come up with a project that we as alumni can work on together, not necessarily to lead it but have facilitators that will guide us, similar to how the classes were held weekly for 3 hours, have a designated date, time and place we can all go to work as a team led by instructors

Fifteen alumni noted wanting additional professional development, with five of these individuals wanting help with fundraising and three alumni wanting more ongoing project support and mentoring. Three additional alumni hoped PLTI could connect them to job opportunities or create a job board, one additional alum hoped that PLTI could connect them to an English class, and one additional alum wished for PLTI to connect them to other community organizations.

Seven alumni expressed a desire for more communication or continued communication, including a newsletter with alumni contributions and policy updates, an alumni contact list, a monthly calendar of PLTI events, and information about “what is happening, how to help, and who to write or call.” This individual noted finding out about a recent protest from PLTI. Several alumni remarked on the importance of site coordinators in sustaining alumni engagement:

The PLTI Site Coordinator role is so key. A "below excellent" PLTI Site Coordinator can make the difference between staying connected or not. This can make or break a PLTI Alumni effort. Excellence is expected, necessary and not optional. The current site coordinator is beyond excellent and could serve as a model of excellence to others, for sure. The biggest barrier is that the job description of the site coordinators has been minimized in hours and in scope. Many only have the time to address the recruitment and the running of an annual cohort; no time or not enough time to support and develop the alumni (individually as leaders, and/or collectively as an alumni group or organization).

Four alumni suggested equity-related improvements, including being mindful of racial disparities “amongst our own,” diving deeper into systemic racism, reminding white people to listen during conversations related to race and racism, and sharing all information in Spanish.

## Discussion & Recommendations

Survey findings showed that PLTI alumni were highly engaged in their communities. 86% were working on at least one issue. Additionally, PLTI alumni respondents were actively engaged in public and political life, including 78% serving on committees, 69% contacting an elected official, 37% supporting campaigns, and 22% registering new voters. Furthermore, alumni were addressing pressing and urgent issues of the moment; 37% were working on racial equity and 19% were doing volunteer work related to COVID-19. Consistent with the mission of PLTI to support parents in working across differences, the most common civic action that alumni had undertaken in the past year was collaborating across differences in social background. Although PLTI participants develop their own community project during the 20-week initiative, survey findings suggest that PLTI alumni engage in collective action once they graduate. 71% reported working on community issues with others, and interestingly, 70% reported working on community issues with their child or children. This finding adds to existing qualitative data suggesting that PLTI’s impact may be intergenerational.

PLTI alumni attributed a variety of personal changes to their PLTI experience. Compared to the 2019 alumni survey, which only surveyed alumni who had graduated the previous year, a slightly greater percentage of alumni who responded to the 2020 survey reported making personal changes. This suggests that PLTI has a lasting impact on alumni, although as stated, a major limitation is that the response rate was low and the sample was not representative of all PLTI alumni.

Researchers have long noted a "civic empowerment gap," between those who are non-White, immigrant, and less formally educated and those who are White, native-born, and more formally educated (Levinson, 2010). Such gaps are not accidental. They result from "civic barriers," when institutions and systems exclude Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and immigrants from civic and political power. PLTI is designed to reduce the impact of such barriers by equipping all parents with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to engage civically in meaningful ways. According to the alumni survey findings, there were few significant differences in civic actions by race, education, immigration, and gender among PLTI alumni. In the cases where significant differences were present, white parents were not the most civically active. In fact, white parents were the least likely to work with others in their immediate neighborhood on an issue and among the least likely to work to register new voters. Parents who were immigrants were more likely to work with neighbors and register new voters. The only data that supports the civic empowerment gap narrative is that white parents were the most likely group (after multiple races) to contact an elected official. Additionally, males and U.S. born parents were more likely than females and non-U.S. born parents to contact an elected official. Males were also more likely than females to report running for public office, despite being a much lower percentage of all PLTI alumni. This is consistent with other literature that men tend to be more politically engaged than women (Shores, Ben-Porath, & Jefferson, 2019).

A puzzling finding is that among 2017-19 PLTI graduates, PLTI graduates with a high school diploma or less were the most likely to report having done or taking steps toward making changes in their financial situation, family situation, or furthering their education as a direct result of PLTI. In contrast, respondents to the 2020 alumni survey who had less formal education were least likely to have actually made these changes. Although this finding could merely reflect an underlying difference between 2017-19 graduates and alumni respondents, this finding suggests that alumni with lower levels of formal education may have taken steps towards making these changes but have needed more support to follow through.

Another point to consider relates to the representativeness of the sample, which as stated, had a greater proportion of white, US-born, and highly educated parents, compared to parents who completed PLTI from 2017 to 2019. Given that diversity and representation are key values of PLTI, it is important that PLTI alumni reflect the diversity of existing PLTI sites, which in turn

reflect the demographics of their surrounding cities. The disproportionality in survey responses could be a result of a number of causes, such as immigrants avoiding completing surveys due to current immigration policies; lack of internet access; and lack of time or being preoccupied with the triple pandemics of COVID-19, racism, and the economic collapse. It could also be a function of sites with more resources to publicize the survey also being sites with a greater proportion of white and US born parents. Additionally, the disproportionality could be a function of lower levels of alumni engagement among BIPOC and parents born outside of the US. Some questions to consider related to disproportionality in survey responses, compared to the 2017-19 sample, include: How might the racial and cultural background of site coordinators influence their ongoing relationships with alumni? How racially and culturally heterogeneous are alumni networks post-PLTI? Are sites with greater proportions of BIPOC and immigrant parents receiving as much support – or more support – than sites with a greater proportion of white, US born parents?

Given the findings described above and offered through the open-ended responses, we offer the following recommendations:

#### 1. Continue to offer opportunities for alumni engagement

Overall, PLTI alumni expressed a strong desire to continue to be connected with their PLTI community, through meetings and events, professional development opportunities, and receiving information about policy-related actions they could take. Strategies can be developed to include more diverse (demographically) and broad (across site) representation in alumni survey responses. Given that so many parents remain civically engaged and also further their personal development, strengthening alumni networks could enable more collective action, mentoring, open forums, and learning opportunities.

#### 2. Prioritize racial equity

Findings illustrated that racial equity was a key theme. Not only was racial equity the most common issue PLTI alumni were addressing, but racial equity training was also the most commonly selected skill alumni were hoping to develop, with nearly half of respondents selecting this option. While not many parents expanded upon what types of racial equity supports they wanted, suggestions included being mindful of racial disparities “amongst our own,” diving deeper into systemic racism, and reminding white people to listen during conversations related to race and racism. There were also suggestions about how to make events and information accessible, including sharing all information in Spanish, not scheduling events during dinnertime (especially when events are remote and meals cannot be offered at the event), and being mindful of having events near where parents live (also not relevant for virtual meetings).

### 3. Offer ways for alumni to engage in collective action

Related to the recommendation to prioritize racial equity, we also recommend offering more opportunities for alumni to engage in collective action. Nearly two-thirds of alumni reported that they desired to work on issues with other parents. Consistent with the interactive nature of the 20 week initiative where parents learn and practice civic skills through a community project, ongoing professional development for alumni could occur through engaging in hands-on collective action. For the many alumni who noted having little time to stay connected to PLTI, supporting other parent leaders with their projects may be a way for them to “plug in” without investing a lot of time.

## Conclusion

PLTI alumni are highly engaged in their communities. Alumni participate in current issues such as those related to COVID-19 and racial equity. Alumni work with others across differences. They also join collective actions and many bring their children into this community work. Alumni can also be found as active members in civic life as they join committees, connect to elected officials, support campaigns, and register new voters. After participating in PLTI, alumni experience various personal changes as well. These positive findings suggest that the PLTI program is having a positive impact on its graduates.

As PLTI is committed to offering an equitable experience for all of their diverse graduates, it is notable that there were few significant differences in civic actions by race, education, immigration, and gender among PLTI alumni. Regardless of diverse demographic and experiences, PLTI alumni are engaging in civic life in similar ways after graduating from the program. The few differences that emerged suggest that counter to the “civic empowerment gap,” immigrant alumni are more likely to be working with their neighbors and registering new voters than other alumni. Conversely, in support of the “civic empowerment” gap, US born participants and males are more likely than immigrants and females to contact an elected official. Further exploring these and other significant differences will help PLTI find ways to address disparities in outcomes when they occur.

Additional areas for PLTI to further explore include: understanding how alumni with lower levels of formal education may have taken steps towards making changes but may also need more support, building on alumni recruitment efforts to ensure PLTI cohorts are diverse, and finding strategies to increase participation of all PLTI sites as opposed to participating being concentrated in certain sites. Overall, the PLTI Alumni Survey findings indicate that PLTI graduates are equipped to grow, develop, and engage in their own lives and communities. Building an alumni network to further support these alumni to connect with each other and further community actions will infuse much activism across the country.

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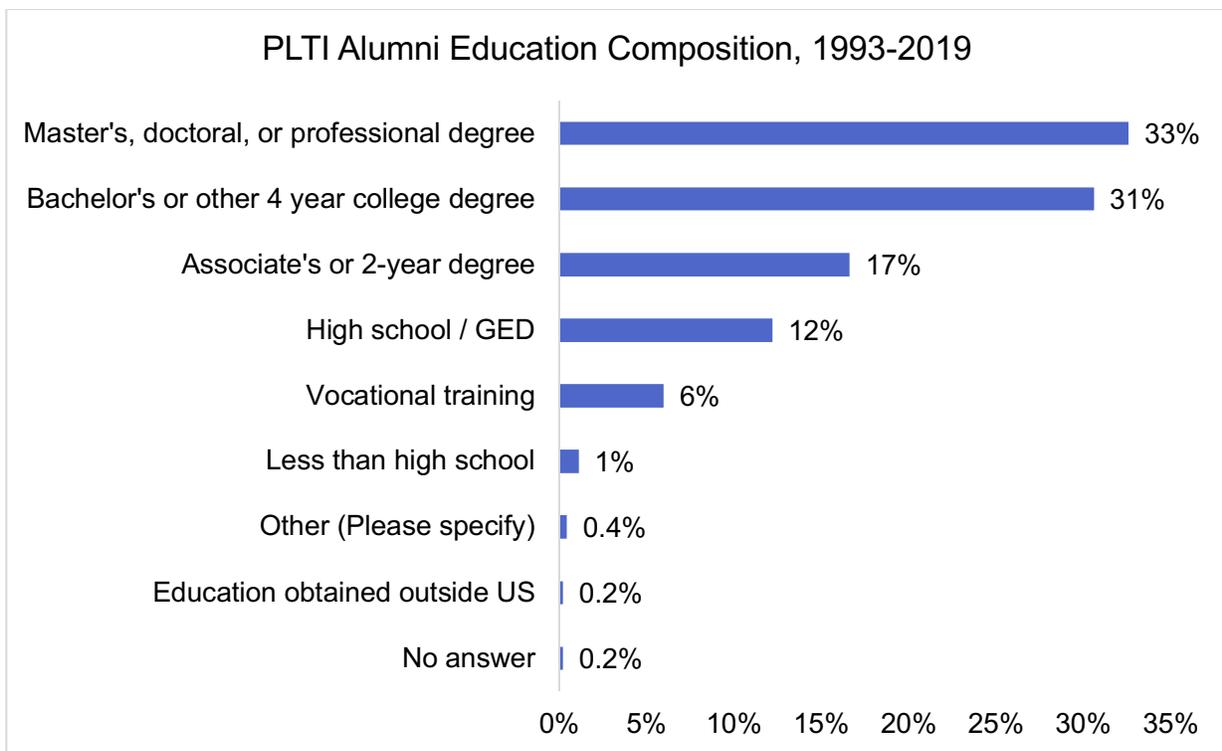
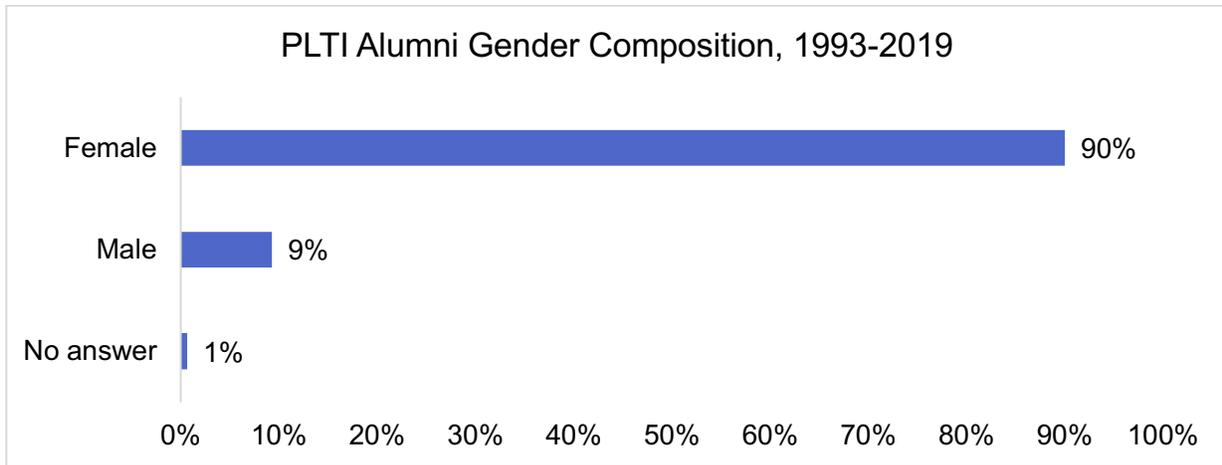
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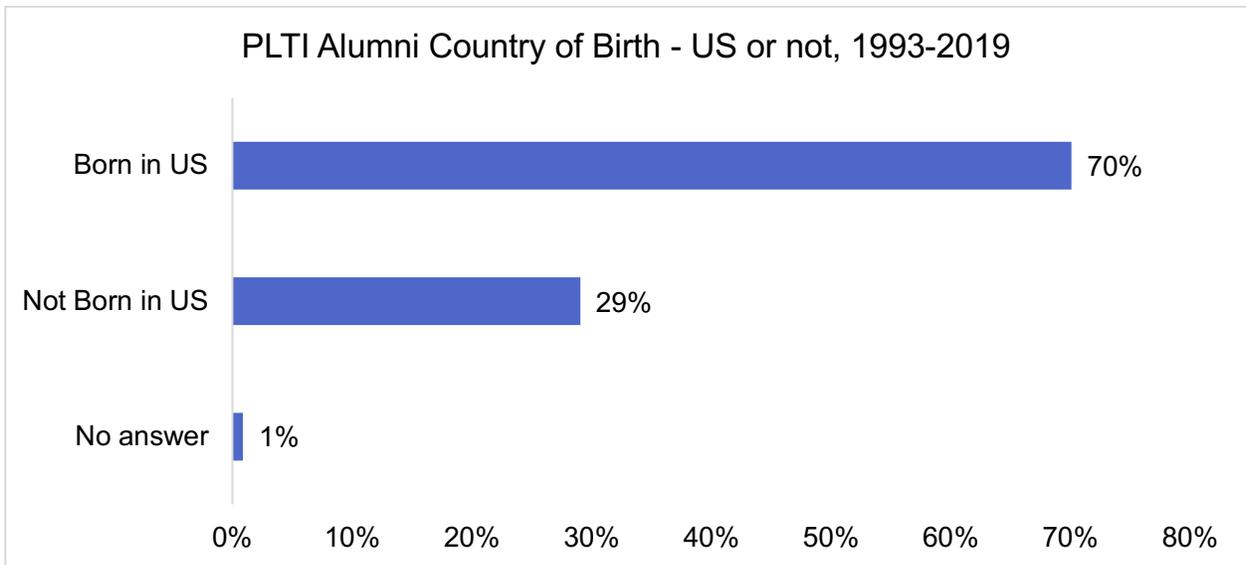
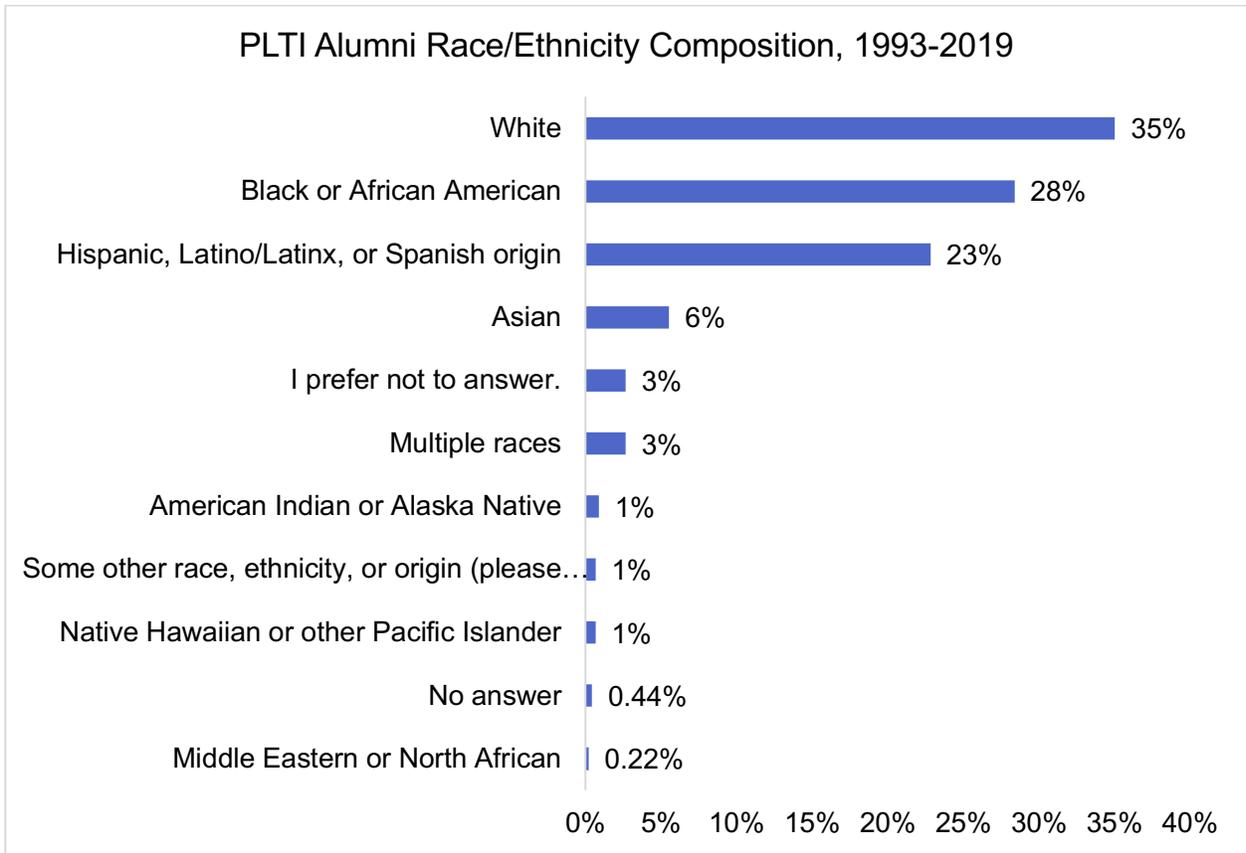
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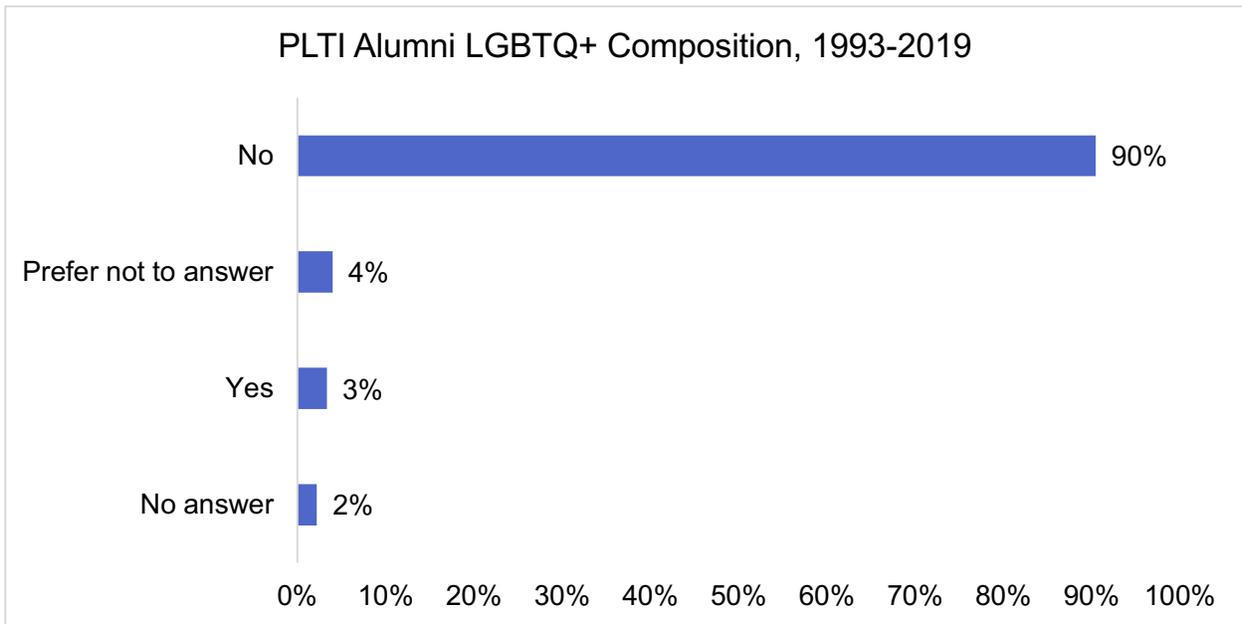
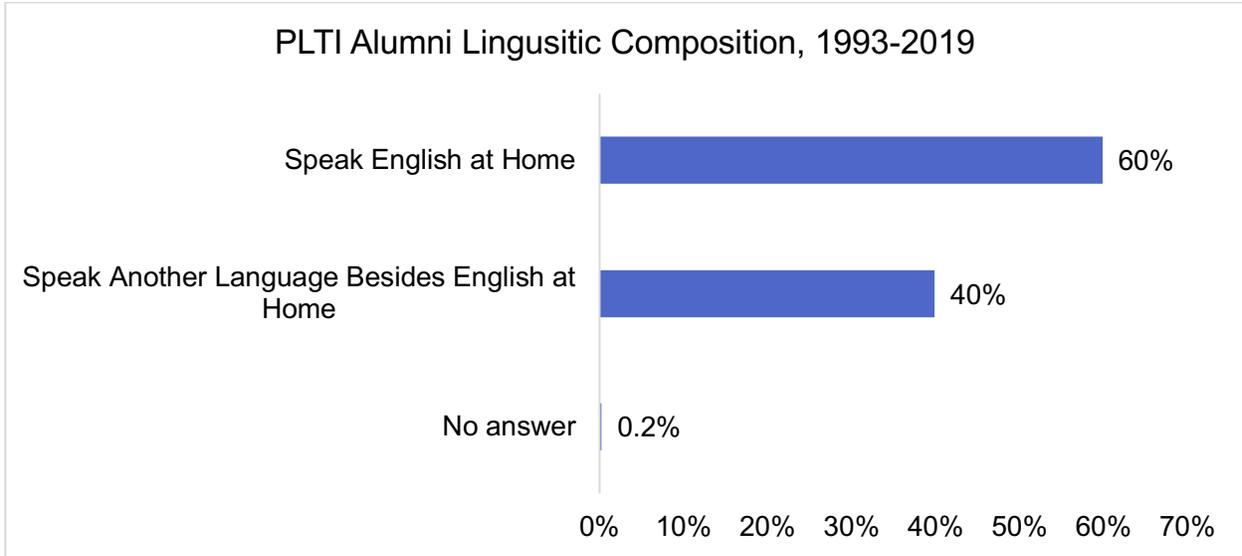
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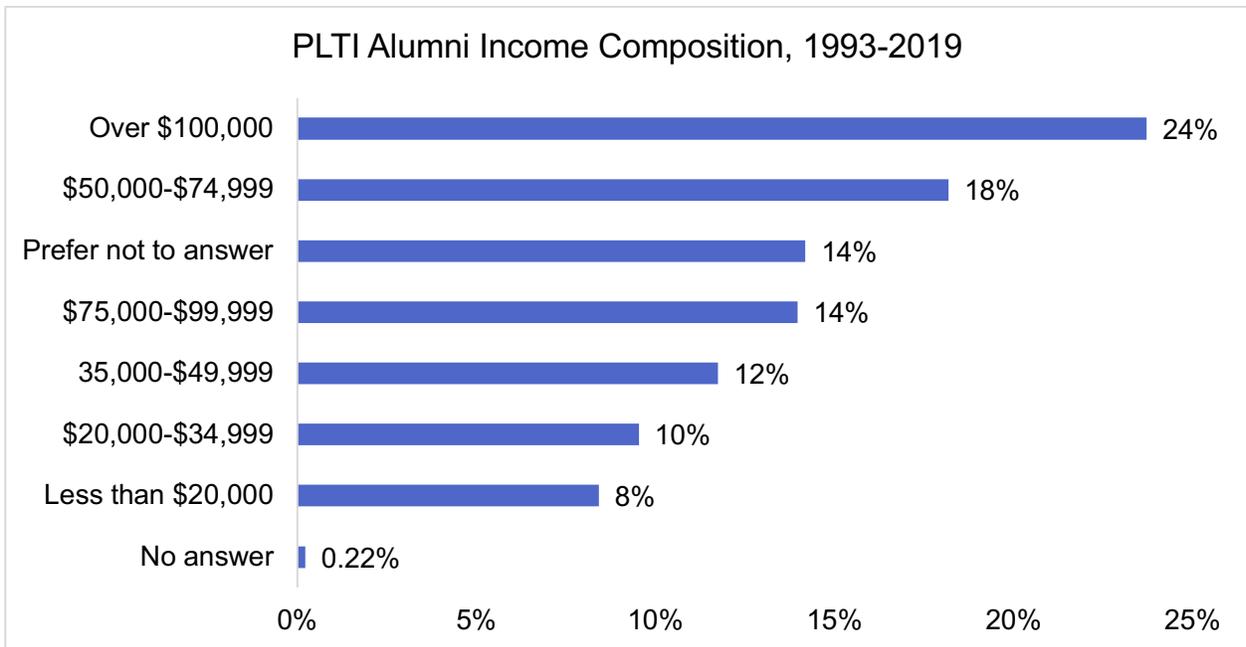
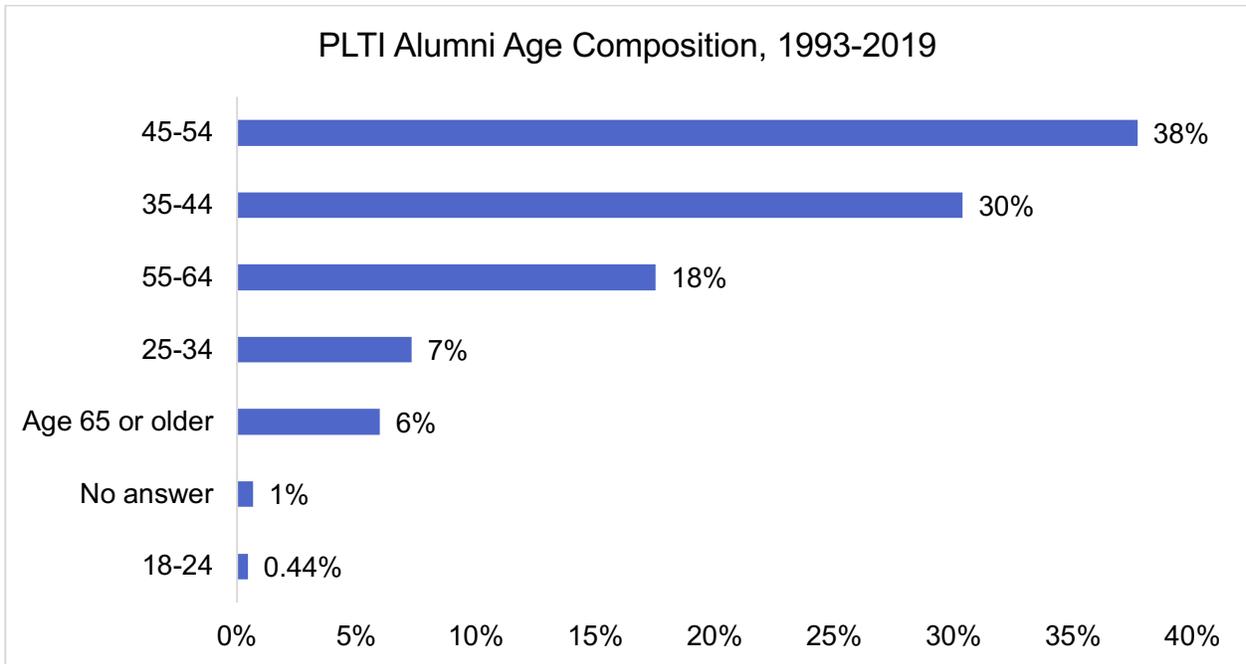
## Appendix A

### PLTI Alumni Demographics, 1993-2019









## Appendix B

### *Issues alumni are working on - 'Other' responses*

32 respondents selected “other” and 30 respondents wrote in the following responses (one response = one person):

- Andrew hyde
- Canvassing
- Capacity building, agency sustainability, community fun
- Census
- Census 2020
- Census 2020 And more
- Child Welfare and Grandparents and other relatives raising kin
- Child welfare reform; awareness campaign around pre-verbal trauma impact on kids inform
- Church community
- Communicating w/empathy
- Crisis intervention, services, and shelter homes for homeless, runaway and at-risk youth
- Currently a Community Doula which supports infant mortality in the community that women of color along I also took part in a Taskforce that deals with some of the housing issues.
- Educación espiritual
- Equity for women disproportionately experiencing poverty (single female heads of households)
- Faith-based
- Finances for secondary education
- Fulfilling my project of financial wellness
- Housing
- I am involved with my community.
- Kids with illnesses and disabilities
- Job description involves many of the above listed however not currently working on issues independently outside of work covid has put a pause on a lot
- Language Revitalization efforts
- Legal reform
- LGBTQIA
- Neighborhood community building
- Scholarship Foundation
- Sex Trafficking
- Statewide Veteran Needs Assessment

- Strengthening couple's relationship. Strengthening the Family
- Tax reform

### *Skills Alumni Desire to Learn - 'Other' responses*

36 respondents selected "other" and 32 respondents wrote in the following responses (one response = one person):

- Aprendiendo inglés, y la licencia de manejo
- as an educator, I am focusing my summer professional development on student socio-emotional concerns, as well as racially/culturally informed instruction
- Building An Organization to Influence Change
- Campaign Financing
- Cómo hacer parte del Comité Escolar
- Compassionate communication, aka nonviolent communication, aka empathy
- Continue to work on educational and racial equity
- Cultural & Art; Safety & Violence Prevention Initiatives for Children & Adults.
- Educación escolar
- Effective communication - non-verbal, verbal and written - to advance my advocacy work.
- Establishing a Business
- Estoy en un programa ministerial
- Going back to school
- How to build relationships across cultural differences
- How to reintegrate with community after long absence
- How to use my skills to help community
- Inmigración. Cancelación de renta por pandemia.
- intentional community
- Just on making the connections on building my youth program
- Large-scale change management
- Launching a small biz that brings trauma informed art to kids in residential facilities.
- LGBTQIA issues
- Marketing
- More in-depth training on what it means to make or see system change for Education. What does The Colorado Department of Education do? Why do they exist? What are the checks and balances? This is an overall suggestion. How the State Board of Education work? How does it's members get elected. What is the State Board of Education in charge of. We have to get to the root of a problem and go higher up the hierarchy in order to see real change in education.
- Most effective strategies to achieve political ends

- Recovery
- Running a transformational business
- Social Service restored Citizens family and Communities
- Succeeding in upper leadership roles as I take on them
- Understanding NYSED structures and how parents can proactively engage with them
- Ways to effectively engage the community
- Working with RCSD

*Interactions with Alumni - 'Other' responses*

46 respondents selected “other” and 37 wrote in the following responses (one response = one person):

- Communicated with PLTI alumni
- Minimal via social media
- Social activities in different communities
- Asistiendo a reuniones de intercambio comunitario.
- Called 10 local Plti members during covid to check if they need help. Volunteered for [site coordinator]
- Children in Foster Care
- Civic Design Team for FLTI, representative of FLTI in Councils
- CLTI activities, Trained as an Energy Master
- Discussion with PLTI alumni
- Emails
- Estuve como facilitadora fase uno
- Facilitated a training
- Facilitated Bristol PLTI Class 2020
- Facilitated FLTI workshops
- Facilitated FLTI workshops with alumni
- Helping with the current class
- I have interacted with alums via email.
- I have spoken to many alumni and supported their community projects and offered any support or help they may need to further themselves or their project in our community.
- Joined civics design team with other alumni
- Kwanzaa
- Local group
- met w/one PLTI leader
- regularly communicate with the person who recruited me into FLTI.

- Since 1997, I had always volunteered to help in the logistics of space and meals for all the classes and also had sat in the Stamford Design Team ever since my graduation which was the first class in Stamford.
- Support PLTI students
- There are so many grads now, maybe yes, maybe not.
- Through class
- Time la capacitación de PLTI para facilitadora
- Virtual support groups
- We are on the school board together, we organize, we started a nonprofit, etc...
- Work directly with alumni from other classes on neighborhood resilience teams
- Worked to help provide programming for alumni events
- Working on Community Project Collaboration
- Zoom Alumni gathering
- Zoom meeting
- Zoom meeting
- Zoom meeting to check in