

Career Interest and Perceived Value of Accounting

accounting⁺

EVERFI®



Career Interest and Perceived *Value of Accounting*

In 2024, the Center for Audit Quality conducted online survey research on U.S. high school students of all races/ethnicities who planned to attend college after graduation to determine their impressions of accounting and their openness to accounting careers. The research specifically focused on Black and Hispanic student populations, where the pipeline shortage has been most significant, while also gathering insights from Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) and White students for comparison. The study found significant differences in student interest, experience, and perceptions towards accounting careers across racial/ethnic backgrounds, as well as several gender disparities. This research, conducted by EVERFI, was designed to supplement and validate those findings using a larger sample of high school students enrolled in a digital course designed to increase exposure to accounting careers: *Accounting Careers: Limitless Opportunities*. The program introduces students to key accounting skills, exposes them to a variety of accounting-related careers, and shows ways in which accounting skills can be useful as students pursue both career and personal goals. Along with race and gender categories, we also included comparisons of students in low-middle income (LMI) schools and their peers (Non-LMI). LMI schools were defined as those where at least 50% of the school population receives free or reduced lunch and were obtained for each school from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

STUDIES SHOW

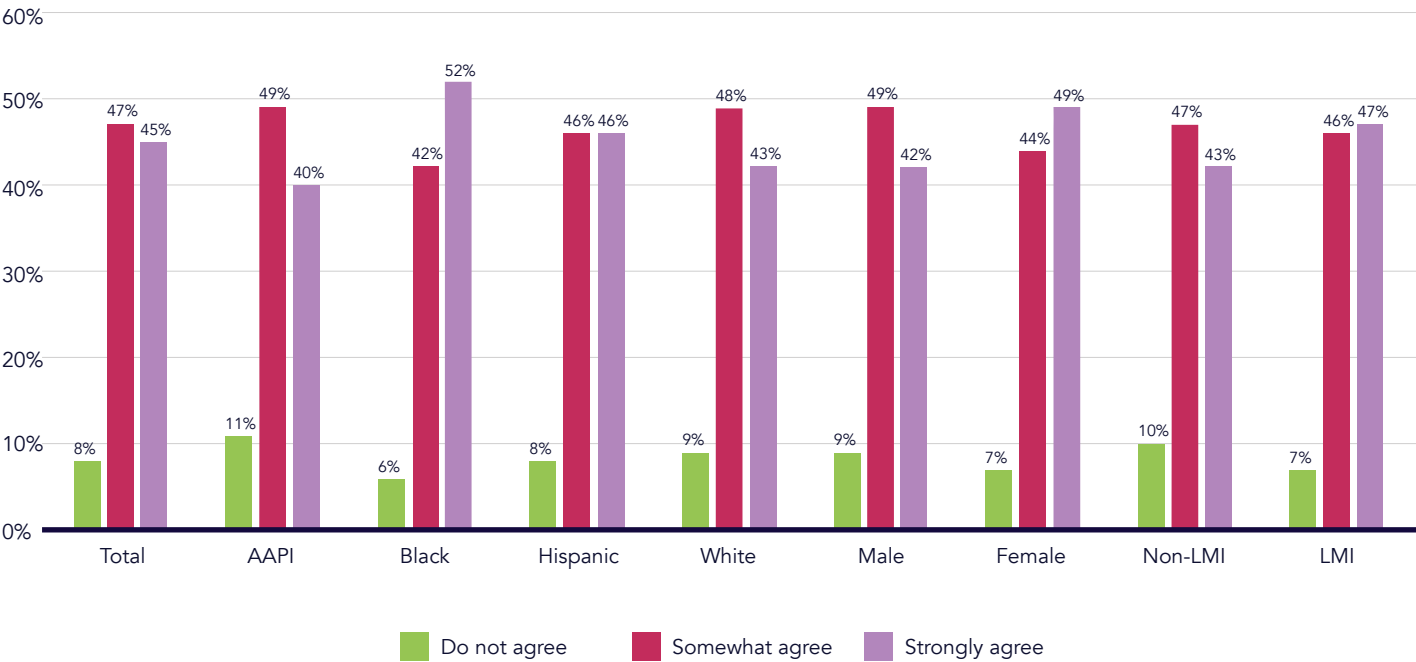
Black & Hispanic high school students report lower interest in accounting careers.

Post-Graduation Plans

Our sample of over 10K students was filtered down to only include those students who reported that they planned to attend college after graduation from high school. In terms of career plans, 88% of EVERFI students claimed that they at least somewhat agreed that they “knew what kind of career they wanted to pursue after high school”. Only 7-11% of any sub-category reported that they did not know what kind of career they wanted to pursue, leaving little perceived room for convincing amongst this high school sample and these percentages are consistent across demographic variables. These findings are very close to what CAQ found among high school and the percentage that had at least “some idea” of what they wanted to study in college.

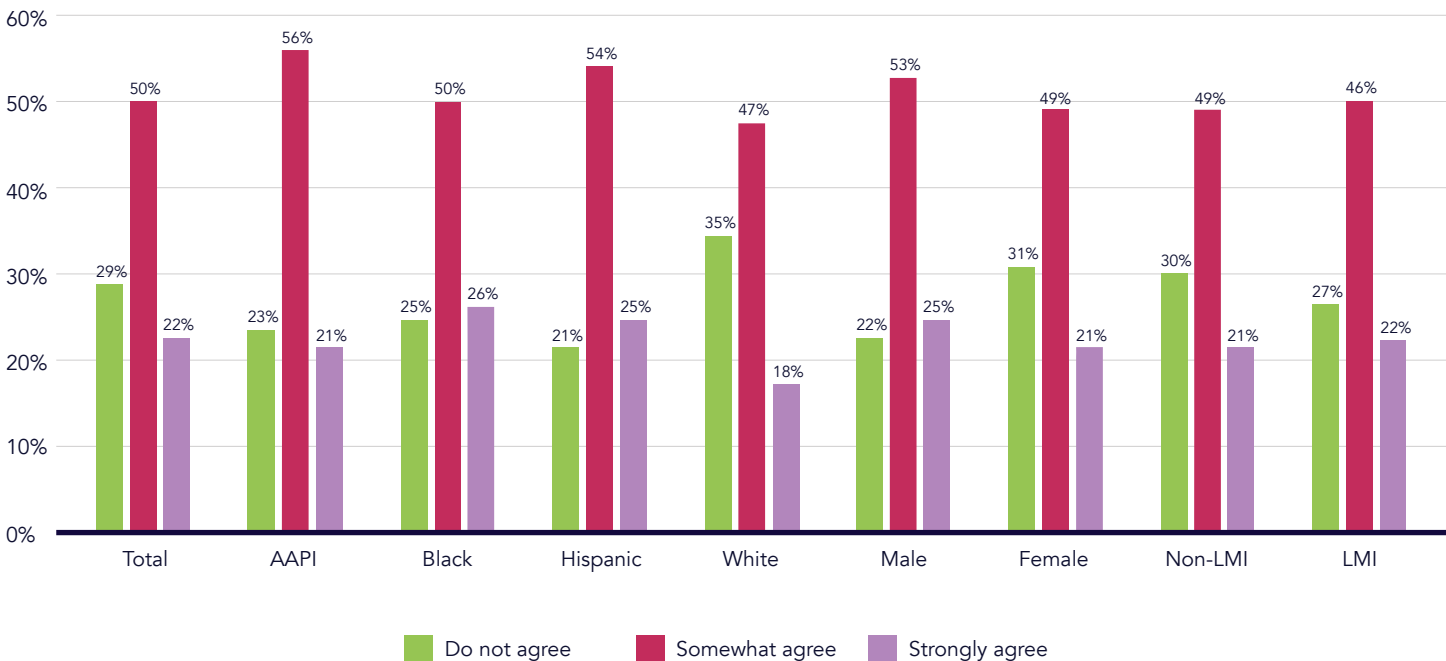
Non-White and male students (particularly Black and AAPI students) expressed the greatest levels in interest in taking accounting courses compared to their peers

I know what kind of career I want to pursue after high school



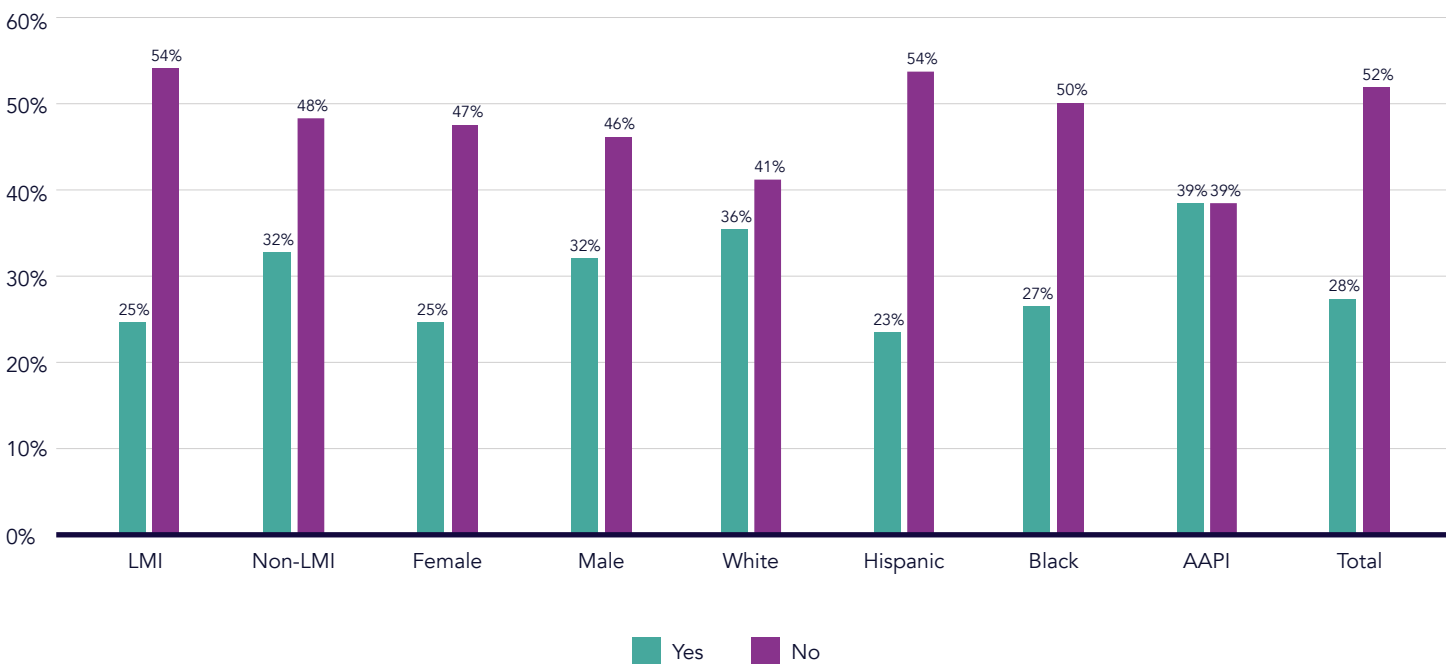
When specifically asked about taking accounting courses in high school, 70% of EVERFI students expressed at least some interest. Non-White and male students (particularly Black and AAPI students) expressed the greatest levels of interest in taking accounting courses compared to their peers, giving some hope of exposing high school students to accounting content before graduation and, hopefully, sparking some career interest.

I would be interested in an accounting course in high school



One of the best predictors of pursuing a career in accounting relates to having exposure to that field. Only 28% of EVERFI’s total sample personally knew someone who worked in accounting, while 52% did not, and another 20% were unsure. CAQ research found that Black students were the least likely to personally know an accountant. Female students were also less likely than male students to have such connections. Our data reflected similar trends, with Hispanic students and those attending LMI (low-to-moderate income) schools also being among the least likely to know someone in the accounting field.

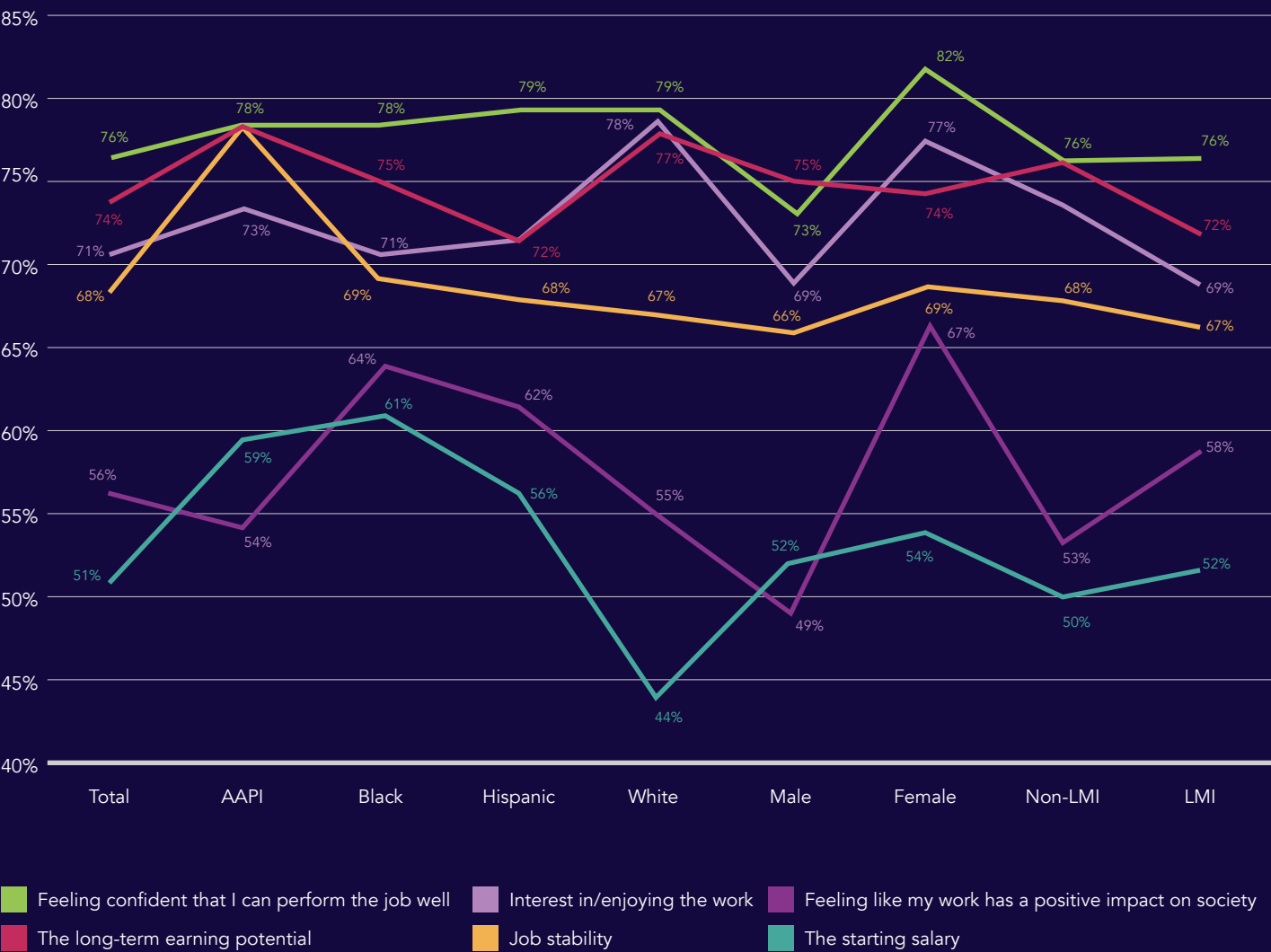
Do you personally know anyone who works in accounting?



Career Priorities

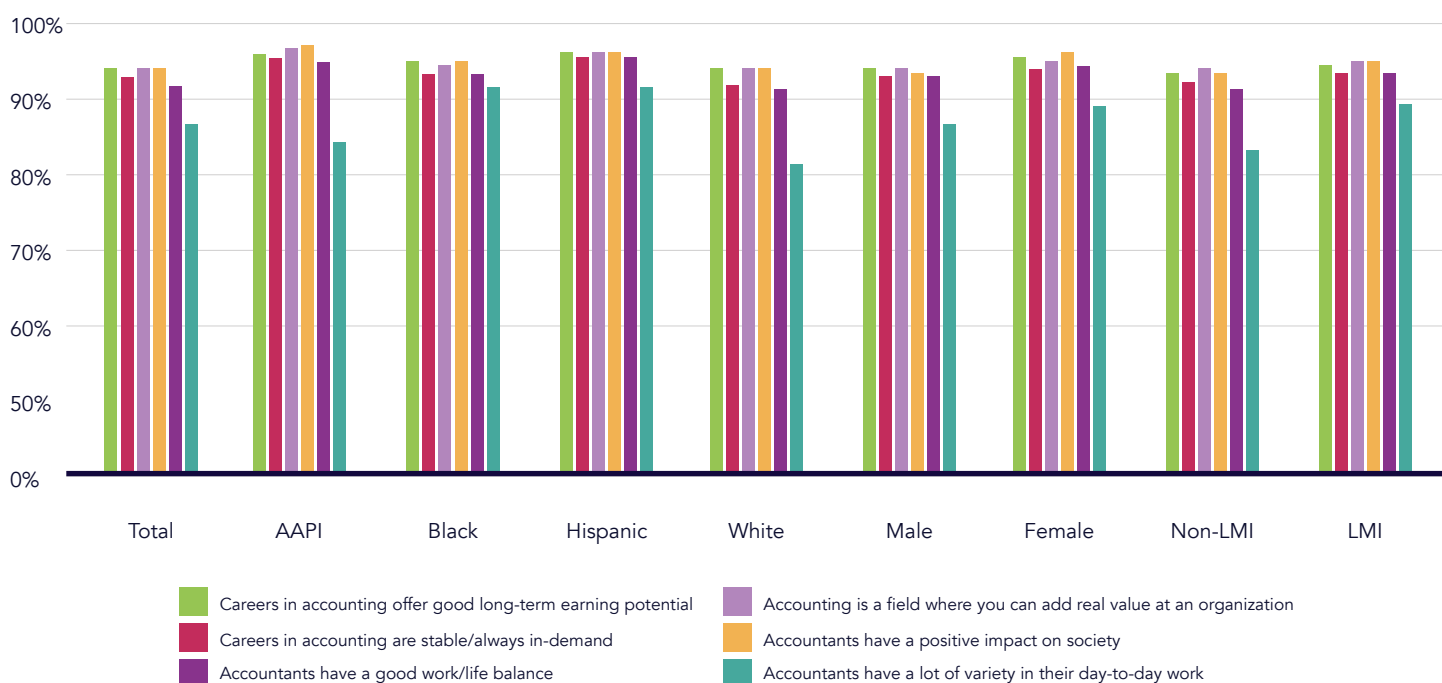
When asked about the factors that were important to them in a future career, EVERFI students prioritized their performance, earning potential, and interest above social impact, stability, and starting salary. These findings are similar to the CAQ study where performance and interest were among the top tier factors for future careers of high school students. EVERFI female respondents were much more likely to prioritize job performance, interest, and even social impact than their peers. Black students also favored careers with social impact and a high starting salary more than other categories of students.

When you think about a career that you would like to have in the future, how important are each of this factors? (% very important)



Perceptions of Accounting

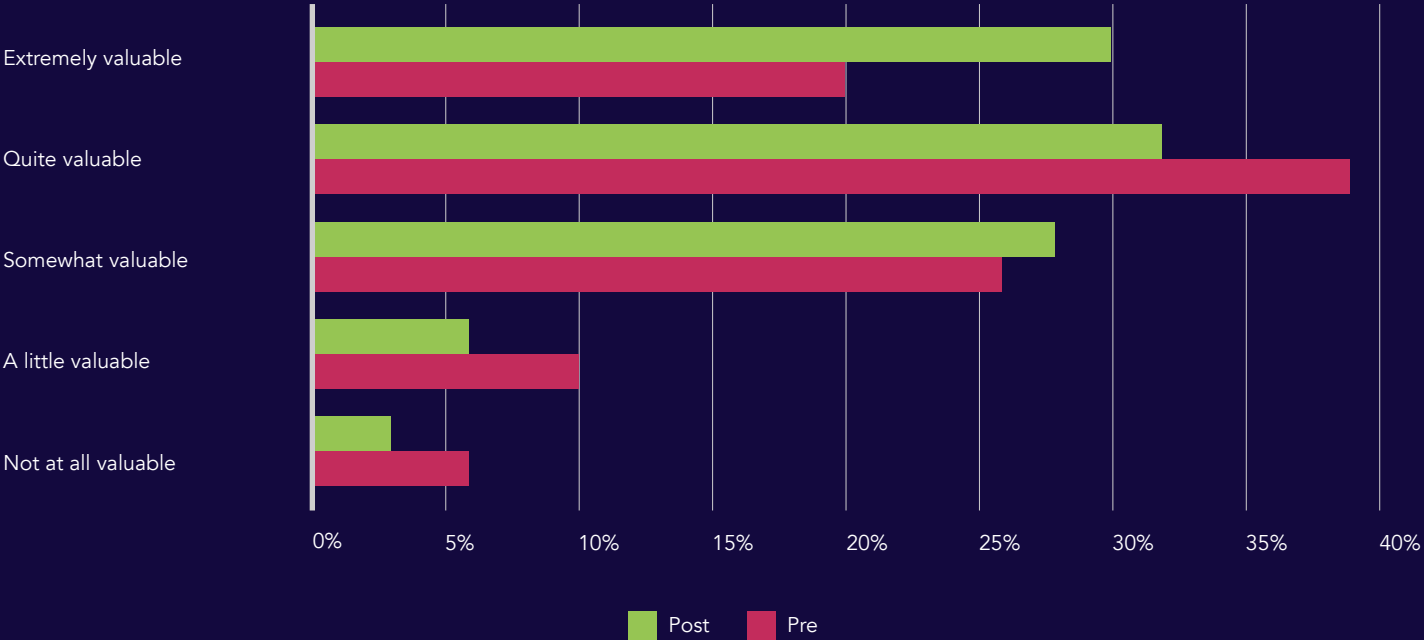
The vast majority of EVERFI students perceive accounting careers to be stable, profitable, impactful, and varied. These percentages are highly stable across demographic categories and much higher than those reported in prior CAQ research of high school students. These consistently high perceptions may be influenced by students' active engagement with a digital accounting course—though it's unclear how many selected the course by choice versus being assigned. Regardless, the findings suggest that early exposure to accounting content can significantly elevate students' perceptions of the profession's value and potential.



Pipeline to Accounting Careers

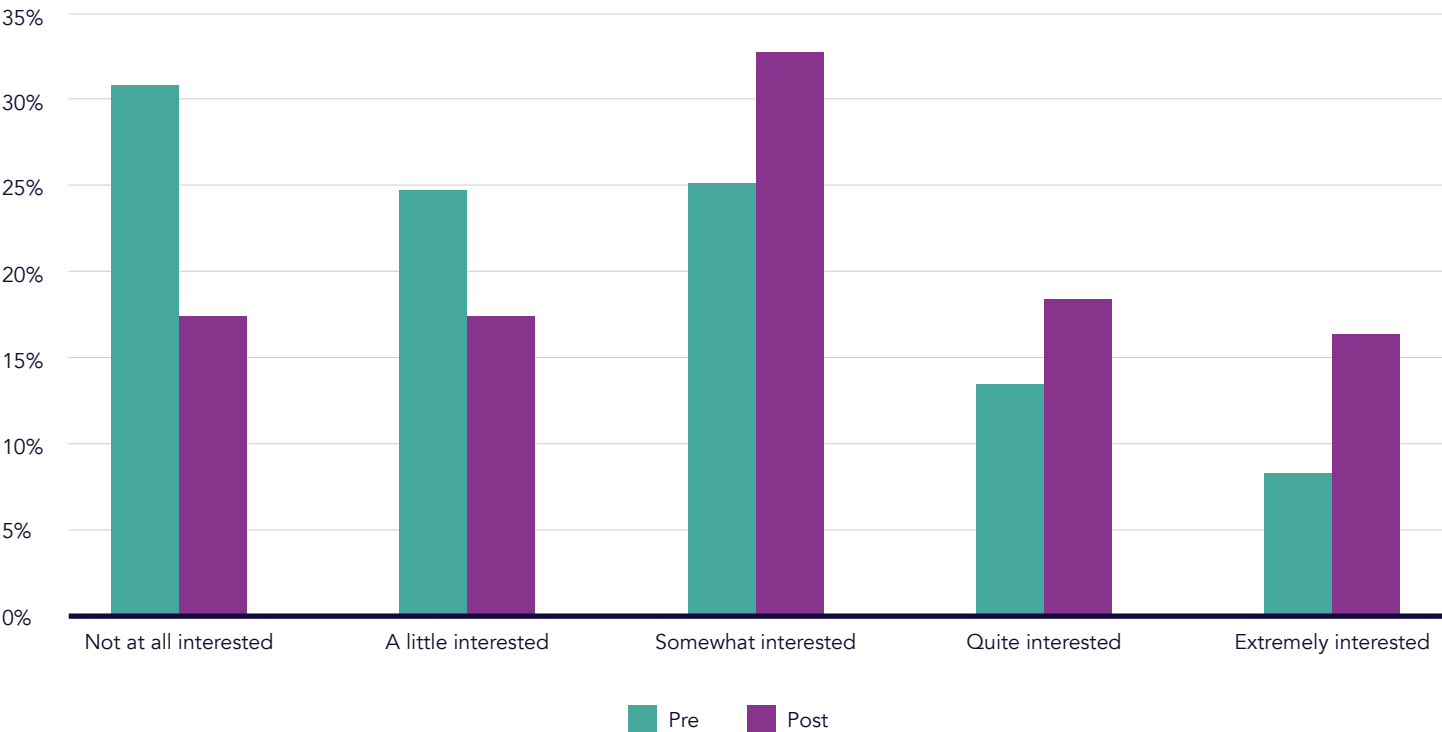
Before and after *Accounting Careers: Limitless Opportunities*, students were asked about the value of accounting skills and then specifically about their interest in an accounting career. Overall, students saw an average of 11% increase in their evaluation of accounting skills comparing pre survey responses to post survey responses. However, there were no significant differences across demographic categories, aside from male students seeing slightly less of an impact on their perceived value of accounting skills (8%).

How valuable do you think accounting skills are?



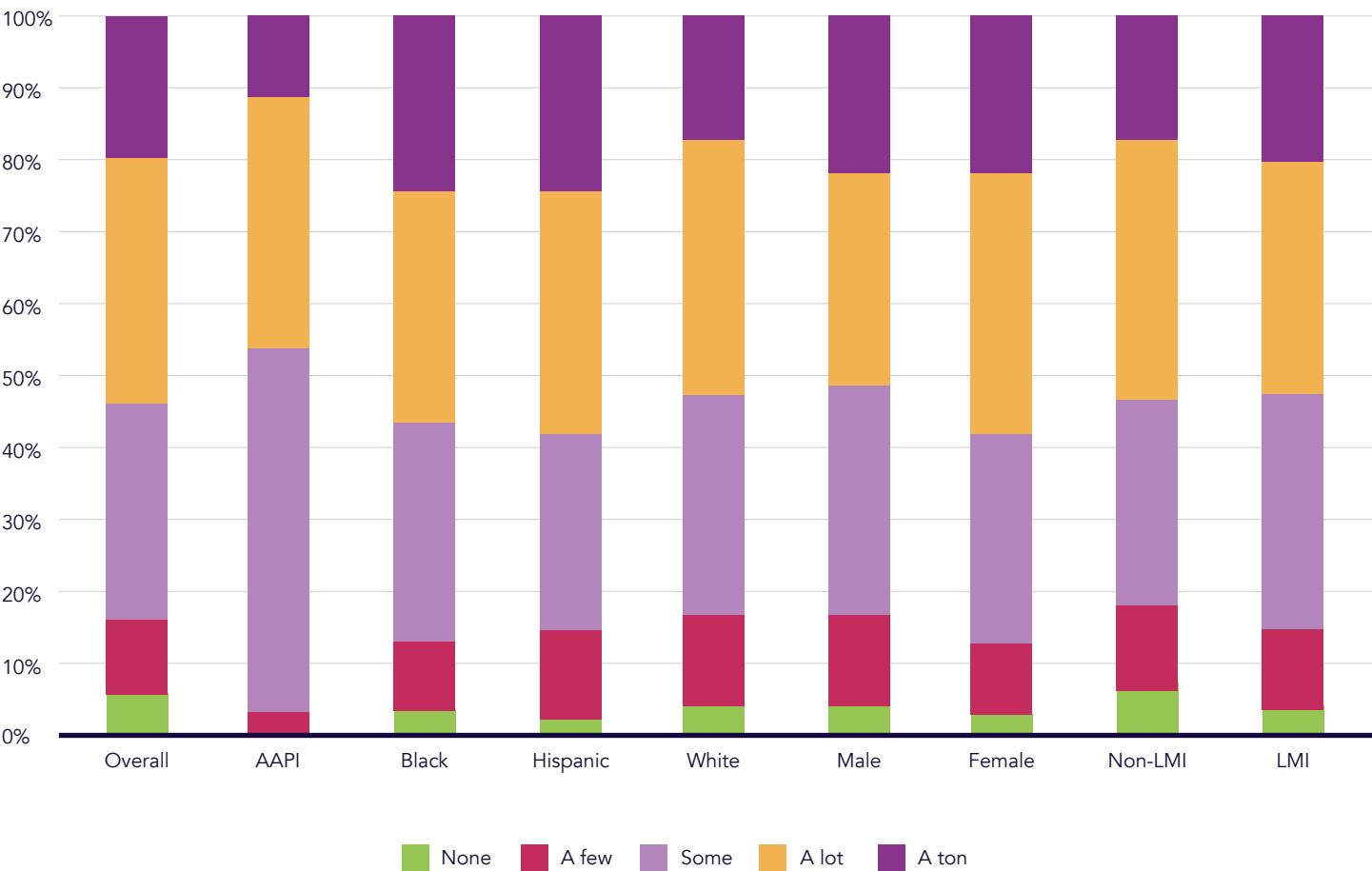
EVERFI students saw an increase in their interest in a career in accounting, a 20% increase on average from pre to post course. This impact was also fairly steady across demographic groups, but White and Female students saw the greatest increase in interest.

How interested are you in an accounting career?



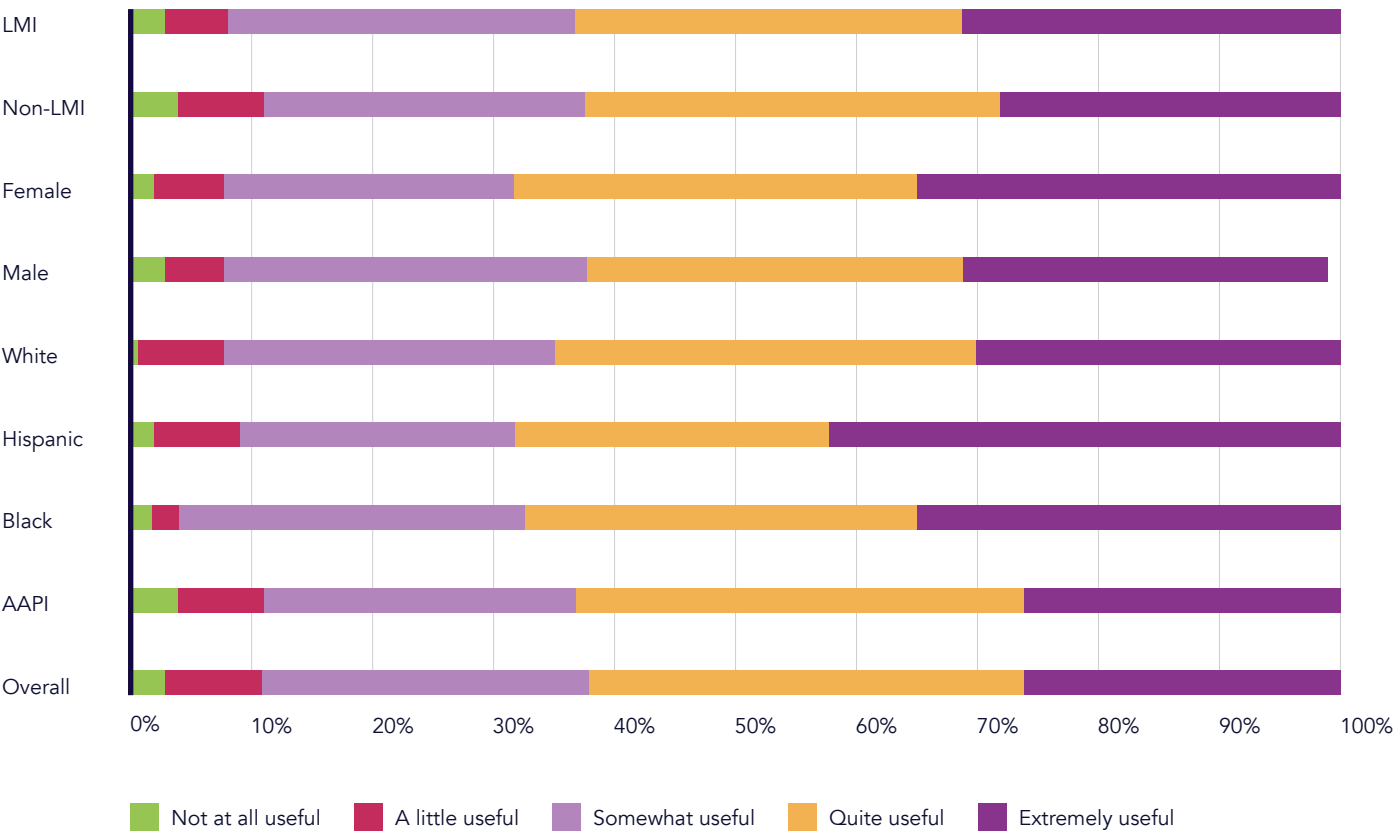
After completing their digital accounting course, EVERFI students were asked how many careers they were newly exposed to in the accounting field, as well as the utility of accounting skills in achieving their goals. Black and Hispanic students reported they learned the most about new accounting career options from the course and this tracks with their data about how likely they were to know anyone in an accounting career personally.

How many accounting careers did this course show you that you did not know about before?



Most EVERFI students reported that accounting skills were useful for reaching their goals after taking the course, but Black, Hispanic and Female students were more likely to find them ‘extremely’ useful than their peers. This suggests these subsets of students may be the most valuable to target for additional content and encouragement towards accounting careers.

How useful do you think accounting skills are to reaching your goals?



Most of the EVERFI findings correspond very directly to those put out by CAQ in 2024 in terms of gender and race/ethnicity-based differences. Fewer differences were found between students from LMI and non-LMI schools, suggesting these programs would be just as valuable in both types of schools, though LMI students were much less likely to know someone in an accounting career. While it is encouraging to see most of CAQ's results validated through this study, further investigation is needed to determine why EVERFI students had such higher positive perceptions of accounting careers and if that bias could be utilized to drive more interest in moving these students down the pipeline towards accounting careers.



About this report

This report is based on survey responses from high school students enrolled in *Accounting Careers: Limitless Opportunities* course, developed by EVERFI and the Center for Audit Quality. This is a digital course that explores how an accounting background can help students achieve their personal and career goals.

Unless otherwise noted, student responses were collected prior to participating in the course (pre-course surveys), between March and April 2025. The primary data set was 5,676 responses to a supplemental survey about career values and perceptions of accounting careers. These were filtered down to only those students who reported they planned to attend college after graduation from high school.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

GRADE LEVEL

Middle School	7%
Freshman	21%
Sophomore	22%
Junior	21%
Senior	30%
Other	1%

GENDER

Male	49%
Female	49%
Different Identity	2%

RACE & ETHNICITY

Note: For purposes of this report, White Only students are those who selected ‘White’ and no other race or ethnicity option. Black and Hispanic students are those who selected, respectively ‘Black or African American’ or ‘Hispanic or Latino/a’ alone or in combination with other options. AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander) students are those who chose either “Asian” or “Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander” alone or in combination.

White only	31%
Black or African American	28%
Hispanic or Latino/a	28%
AAPI	6%

accounting⁺

EVERFI[®]

