Criminal History Impact on EMT Certification 2020

Emergency Medical Services Authority

California Health and Human Services Agency

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In accordance with Health and Safety Code Section1797.229, the Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) collected Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) initial certification applicant criminal history, race, ethnicity, gender, and age data from 68 certifying entities during the 2020 calendar year to determine whether applicant criminal history may be an obstacle to EMT or AEMT certification. Certifying entities tasked with the certification of EMTs and AEMTs reported data from 8,277 EMT and AEMT applications. Of those, 8,254 applicants were approved, 17 applicants (.2% of all applicants) were denied due to criminal history, three (3) applicants withdrew their application in lieu of denial, two (2) applicants withdrew their applications for unknown reason and one (1) applicant was rejected due to an incomplete application.

Analysis of the data shows 393 applicants (5% of all applicants) were found to have criminal background check history. Of those, 327 (83%) applicants were approved without restrictions and 46 (12%) applicants were approved with restrictions. Typical restrictions for applicants include probation for a period of one-to-three years. The remaining 20 applicants include the 17 denials and the three (3) withdrawn in lieu of denial applicants. The low number of EMTs and AEMTs denied with criminal backgrounds compared to those approved or approved with restrictions does not suggest that criminal history is an absolute barrier to certification.

After reviewing the data, EMSA found prior criminal history records, race, ethnicity, gender, and age do not appear to present an obstacle to EMT or AEMT certification in the state of California. EMSA found applicants with criminal history who identified as "Hispanic or Latino" had the highest rate of denial at 41% of denied applicants, even though they represented only 22% of the total applicants. While all identified ethnicity groups were approved at over 99% and only a small number of applications were denied or withdrawn, the correlation between ethnicity and approval or denial is unknown. EMSA will continue to monitor this data.

BACKGROUND:

Health and Safety Code 1797.229 states that each local EMS Agency (LEMSA) and other Certifying Entities shall annually submit to the authority data on approvals or denials of EMT I (EMT Basic) or EMT-II (Advanced EMT). Health and Safety Code Section 1797.229 was enacted in 2018 and became effective January 1, 2019. Reporting by all agencies for calendar year 2019 was due to EMSA by July 1, 2020. Reporting shall continue annually through July 1, 2024.

SCOPE & METHODOLOGY:

EMSA provided a reporting tool for all agencies to utilize in tracking the required

data monthly that could then be submitted annually to EMSA. The reporting tool EMSA provided interlinked via excel all the data points so that final analysis could be conducted, correlations between the denial rates and the demographic data could be considered.

Three (3) of the reporting agencies elected to use their own report in lieu of using the reporting tool provided by EMSA. The reports from these agencies were limited to aggregate totals, which did not permit any further breakdown and analysis. EMSA's ability to analyze the age, gender and ethnicity reflects the limits of these undifferentiated data reports. The specific demographic data of approvals and denials could not be determined. Additionally, one agency chose not to collect or provide demographic data. This is reflected in subsequent appendixes in this report under the categories "Data Not Provided (by Agency)".

Of the 68 agencies required to provide annual data, EMSA found 60 reports were complete and eight (8) reports were missing varied data points. All data collected was compiled and analyzed by EMSA and included in this report.

ANALYSIS:
EMSA reviewed the submitted data to determine if criminal background, age, gender or ethnicity may be a significant obstacle toward EMT or AEMT certification. EMSA further reviewed the data to determine if criminal backgrounds were a substantial barrier to certification. An analysis of all criminal history data received shows that while the number of applicants who have a criminal background was small (393), this background did not pose a significant barrier to certification, with less than half of one percent (<.5%) of all (8,277) applicants being denied. EMSA reviewed the data on applicants with criminal history and determined the following:

- 393 (5%) applicants were found to have criminal history in their background check.
- 327 (83%) applicants with criminal history were approved without restrictions.
- 46 (12%) applicants with criminal history were approved with restrictions.
- 17 applicants with criminal history were denied.
- Three (3) applicants with criminal history withdrew in lieu of denial
- Less than half of one percent (.21%) of the overall EMT and AEMT applicants (8,277) were denied due to criminal history.

Of the data submitted in a format allowing stratification, EMSA found gender was not a factor in denials. EMSA reviewed the data of 65 certifying entities' submissions for this analysis. The remaining data sets were submitted in a format that was aggregate and did not allow more granular analysis. While most applicants were male at 66%, the percentage of male applicants with criminal history and who were denied was much higher at 88%. This can partially be explained by the fact that more of the applicants with a criminal history were

male at 75%. Considering, however, that applicants of both declared genders were approved at over a 99% rate, EMSA could find no direct correlation between the gender of applicants and application denial. EMSA reviewed the gender data submitted on all applicants and determined the following:

- 66% of all applicants were male.
- 75% of all applicants with criminal history were male.
- 32% of all applicants were female.
- 23% of all applicants with criminal history were female.
- Three percent (3%) of all applicants either chose not to disclose or the gender data was not provided.
- Two percent (2%) of all applicants with criminal history either chose not to disclose or the gender data was not provided.
- Over 99% of applicants of both declared genders were approved
- 88% of all denials were male, six percent (6%) were female, six percent (6%) had no gender data disclosed or provided.
- 100% of all applicants who withdrew or had incomplete applications were male.
- 83% of all applicants approved with restrictions were male, 17% were female.

EMSA also collected demographic data for the age of all applicants. For data collected in a format that allowed analysis, EMSA examined the data and determined that age was not a factor for denial. EMSA was only able to review the data of 65 certifying entities as the other data sets were in an aggregate format that prevented further analysis. Most applicants with criminal history that were denied were age 35 or younger. This is consistent with the age composition of the entire population of applicants in 2020. EMSA found no evidence that the age of the applicant was a factor in denial. EMSA reviewed the age demographic data submitted on all applicants and determined the following:

- 91% of all applicants were age 35 or younger.
- 79% of all applicants with criminal history were age 35 or younger.
- 88% of all denials were age 35 or younger.
- 100% of all applicants who withdrew or had incomplete applications were under the age of 35.
- 91% of all applicants approved with restrictions were age 35 or younger.

Of the data submitted in a format allowing analysis, the correlation between ethnicity and approval or denial was unknown. Over 99% of all applicants identified by specific ethnicity groups were approved and 23 applicants out of 8,277 were denied or withdrawn. EMSA was able to review the data of 64 certifying entities submissions for this analysis, all others were either submitted in a format that was aggregate or the ethnicity data was not provided at all. EMSA
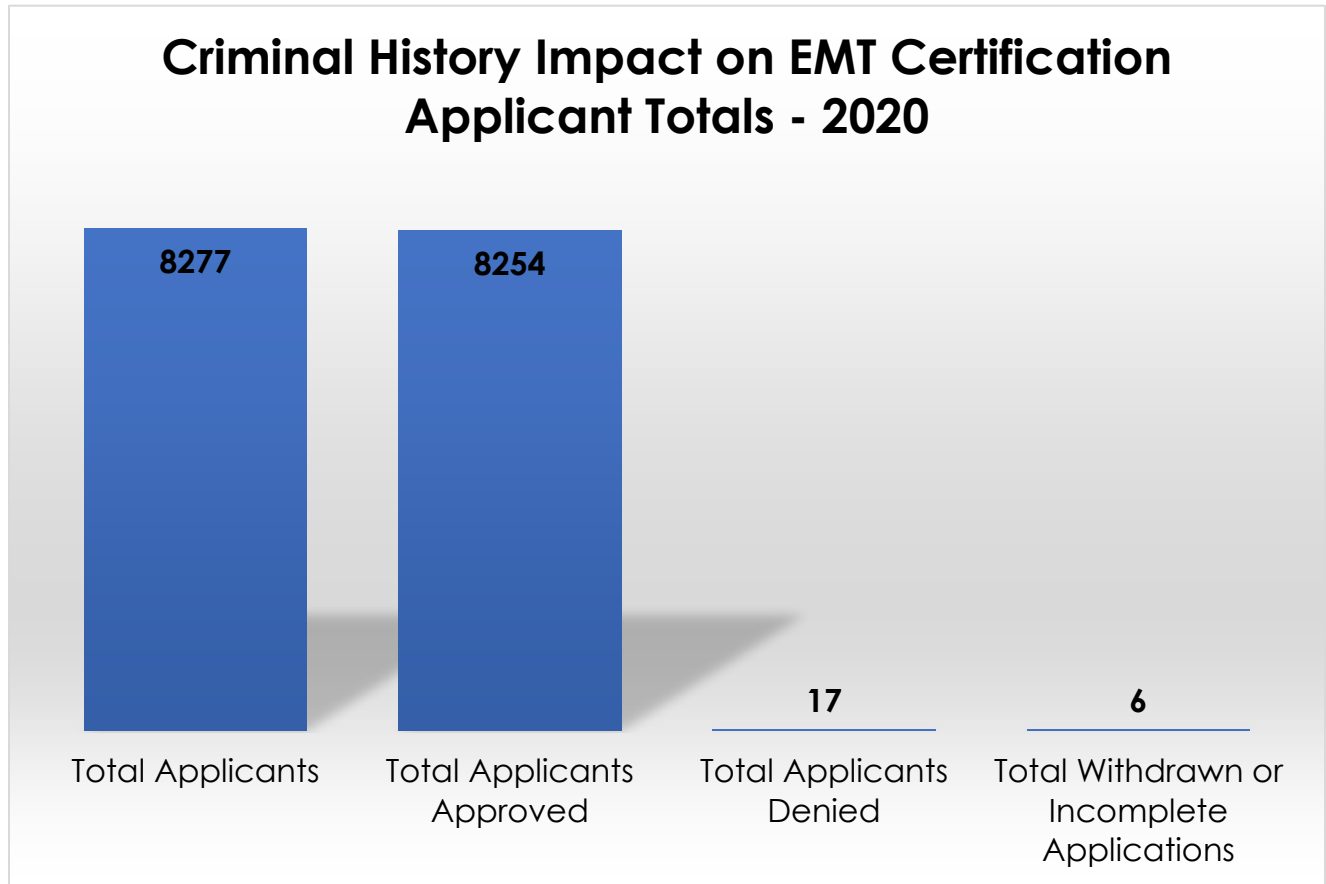
found that applicants with criminal history who identified as "Hispanic or Latino" had the highest rate of denial at 41% of all denied applicants, even though they represented 22% of the total applicants and 27% of the total applicants with criminal history. A review of all ethnicity data showed the following:

- 42% of applicants identified as "White/Caucasian."
- 22% of applicants identified as "Hispanic or Latino."
- 12% of applicants chose not to identify.
- 10% of applicants identified as "Asian."
- Eight percent (8%) of applicants had no ethnicity data reported in the data that was submitted.
- Three percent (3%) identified as "Black/African American."
- Other ethnicities identified in the data: "American Indian or Alaska Native" two percent (2%) and "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander" one percent (1%). Over 99% of all declared ethnicity groups were approved.
- 41% of the applicants who were denied identified as "Hispanic or Latino."
- 24% of the applicants who were denied identified as "White/Caucasian."
- Five percent (5%) of applicants who were denied identified as "Asian" as well as five percent (5%) who identified as Black/African American.
- Four (4) of the 17 denials reported, either chose not to identify their ethnicity (one) or the ethnicity was not specified in the data (three).
- 37% of applicants who were approved with restrictions identified as "Hispanic or Latino."
- 37% of applicants who were approved with restrictions identified as "White/Caucasian."
- Two (2) applicants who were approved with restrictions identified as "Asian" as well as another three whose ethnicity was not specified in the data.
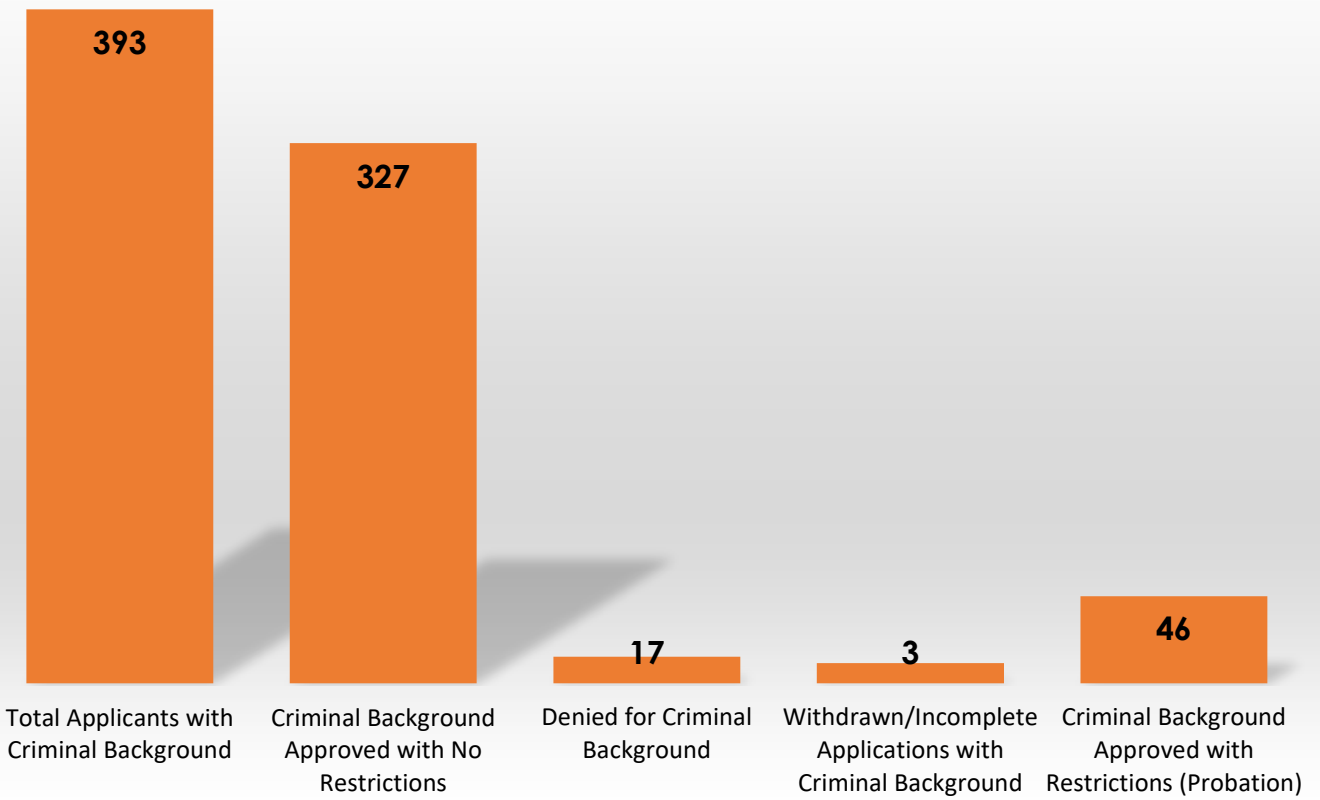
CONCLUSION:
After reviewing and analyzing the EMT and AEMT certification data collected from 68 certifying entities for 2020, EMSA found prior criminal history does not appear to represent an obstacle to certification as an EMT or AEMT in the state of California. The low number of EMTs and AEMTs denied due to criminal background records compared to those approved or approved with restrictions indicates criminal history is not an absolute barrier to certification. EMSA was also unable to find a correlation between gender or age and the denial or approval of EMT or AEMT applicants. The correlation between ethnicity and the denial or approval of EMT and AEMT applications is inconclusive.

EMSA recognizes the impact of incomplete data collection and the efficacy of this analysis. Complete data collection was hindered by ten reports received with either missing or aggregated data. As collaboration with certifying entities continues, EMSA anticipates improvements in the collection of this data and reported outcomes.

Appendix A: Aggregate Data Sets

Criminal History Impact on EMT Certification Applicant Totals - 2020

8277	**8254**	17	6
Total Applicants	Total Applicants Approved	Total Applicants Denied	Total Withdrawn or Incomplete Applications

Criminal History Impact on EMT Certification
Criminal Background Totals - 2020

Category	Value
Total Applicants with Criminal Background	393
Criminal Background Approved with No Restrictions	327
Denied for Criminal Background	17
Withdrawn/Incomplete Applications with Criminal Background	3
Criminal Background Approved with Restrictions (Probation)	46

Criminal History Impact on EMT Certification
Total Applicants by Percentage - 2020

5%

95%

■ Applicants without Criminal Background
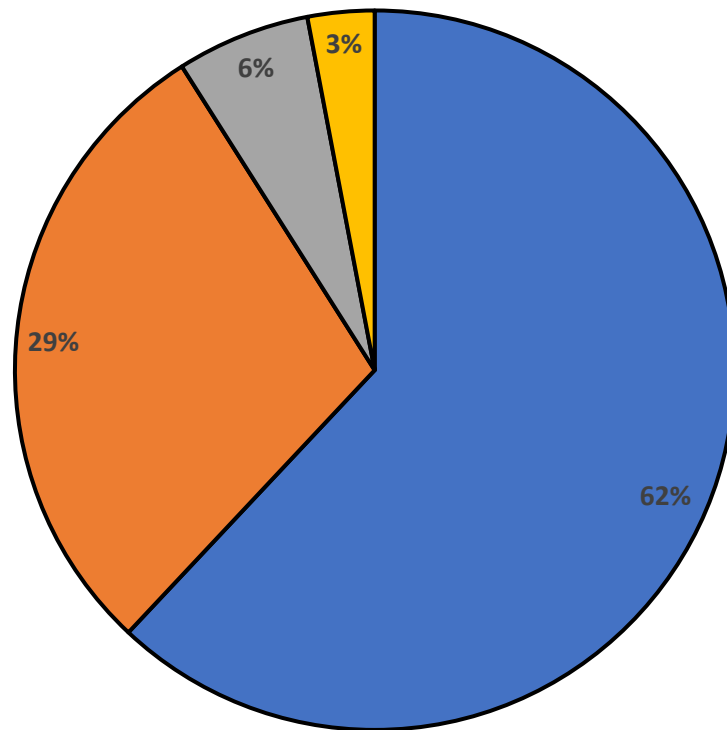
■ Applicants with Criminal Background
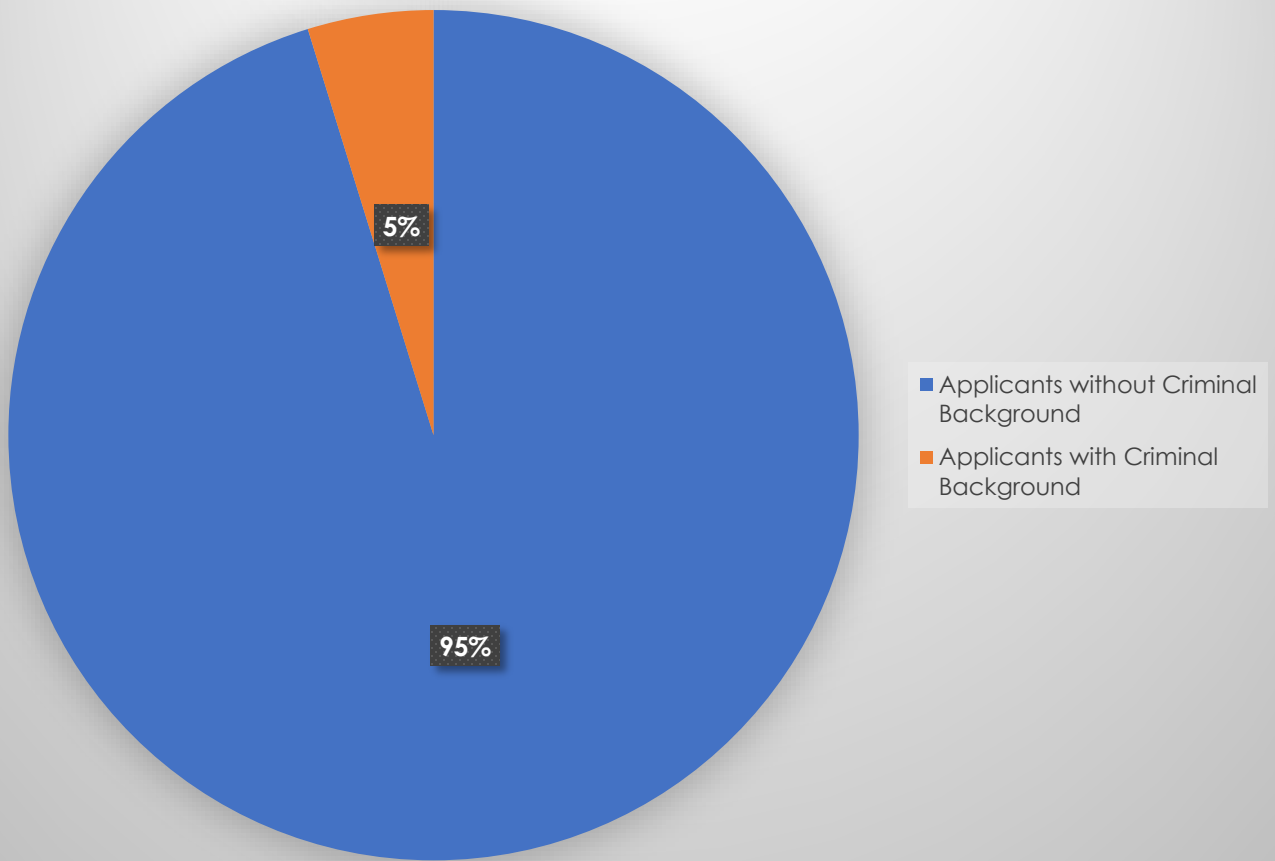
Criminal History Impact on EMT Certification Gender Applicant by Percentage -2020
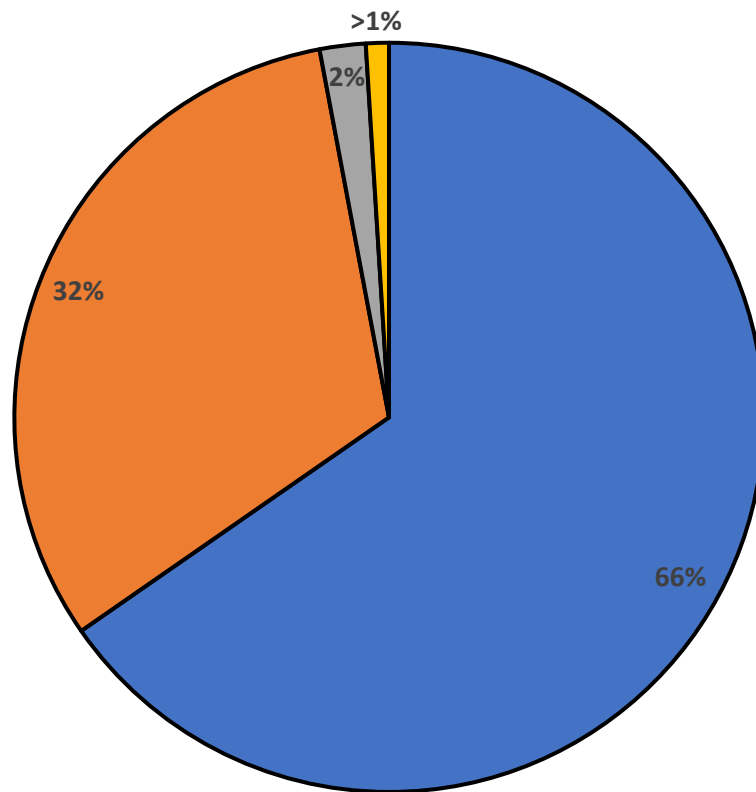
- ■ Male Applicants
- ■ Female Applicants
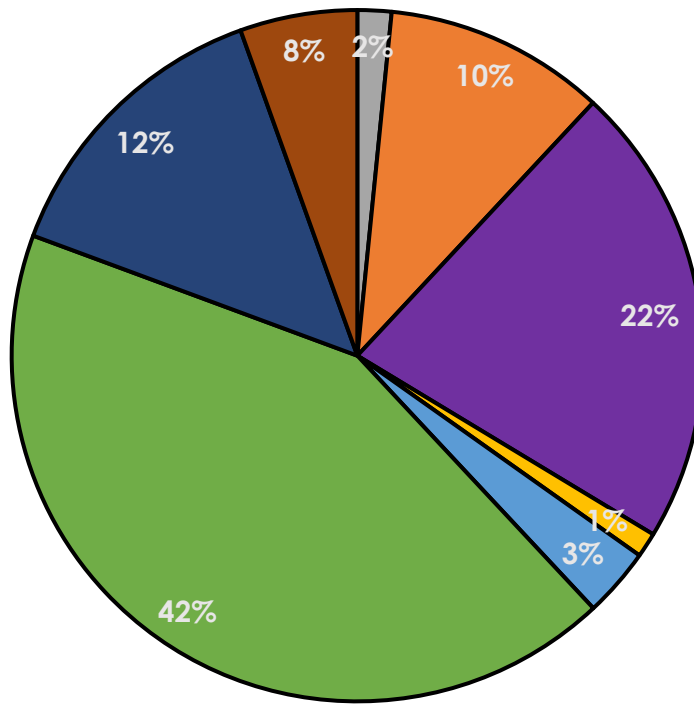- ■ Gender Not Disclosed (by Applicant)
- ■ Gender Not Provided (by Agency)

Pie chart values: 66%, 32%, 2%, >1%

Criminal History Impact on EMT Certification
Age of Applicants by Percentage - 2020

62%

29%

6%

3%

- Age: 18-25 Applicants
- Age: 26-35 Applicants
- Age: 36-45 Applicants
- Age: 46-Older Applicants

Criminal History Impact on EMT Certification Ethnicity Applicant by Percentage - 2020

Legend:
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- White/Caucasian
- Choose Not to Identify
- Ethnicity Data Not Provided

Criminal History Impact on EMT Certification Ethnicity Applicant with Criminal History by Percentage - 2020

- American Indian or Alaska Native
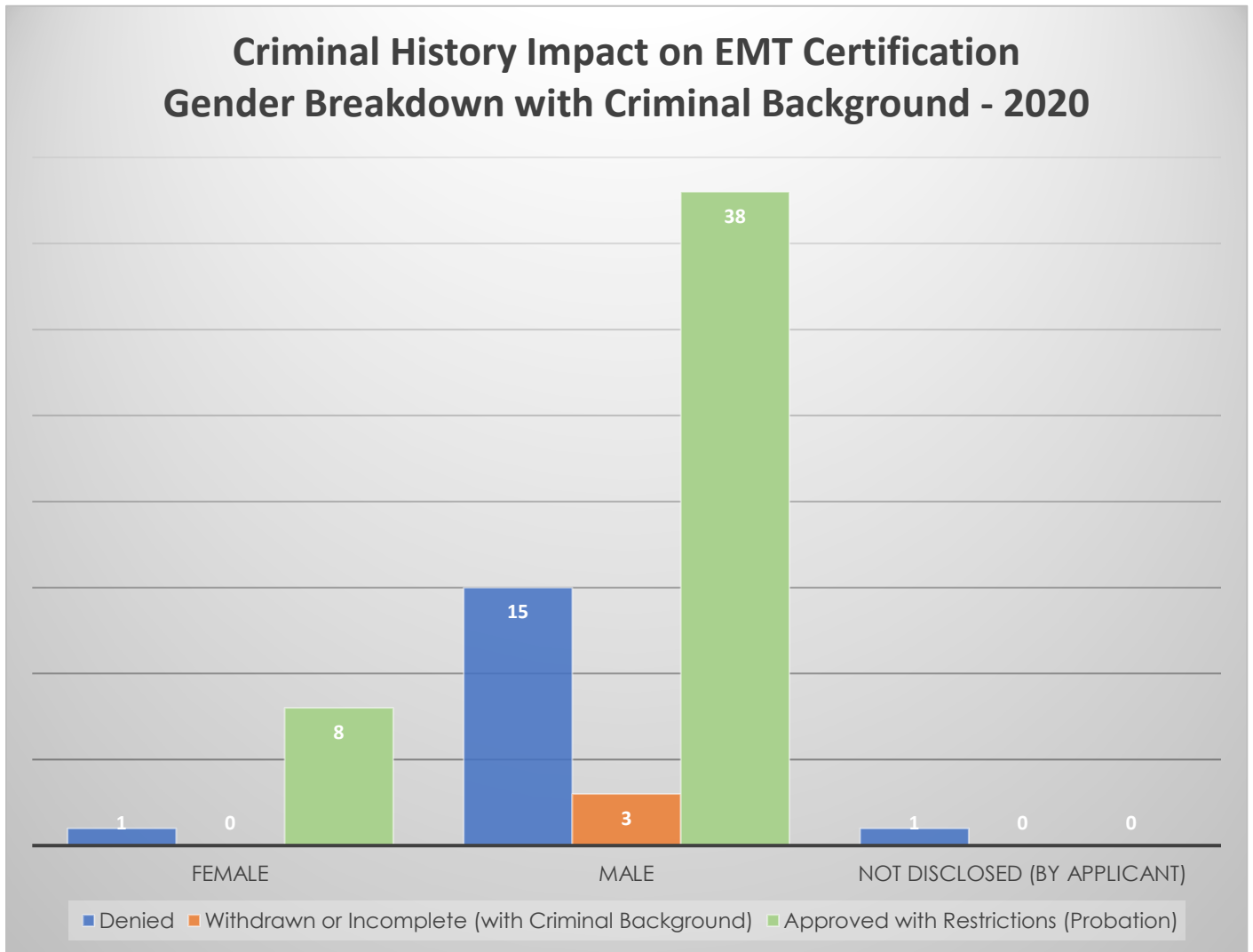- Asian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- White/Caucasian
- Choose Not to Identify
- Ethnicity Data Not Provided

Appendix B: Graphs and Tables

Criminal History Impact on EMT Certification
Gender Breakdown with Criminal Background - 2020

- Denied
- Withdrawn or Incomplete (with Criminal Background)
- Approved with Restrictions (Probation)

Criminal History Impact on EMT Certification
Age Breakdown with Criminal Background - 2020

	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-OLDER
Denied	3	12	1	1
Withdrawn or Incomplete (with Criminal Background)	1	2	0	0
Approved with Restrictions (Probation)	13	29	4	0

Criminal History Impact on EMT Certification Ethnicity Breakdown with Criminal Background - 2020

	ASIAN	HISPANIC OR LATINO	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE/CAUCASIAN	CHOOSE NOT TO IDENTIFY (BY APPLICANT)	ETHNICITY DATA NOT PROVIDED (BY AGENCY)
Denied	1	7	1	4	1	3
Withdrawn or Incomplete (with Criminal Background)	0	2	0	1	0	0
Approved with Restrictions (Probation)	2	17	0	17	7	3
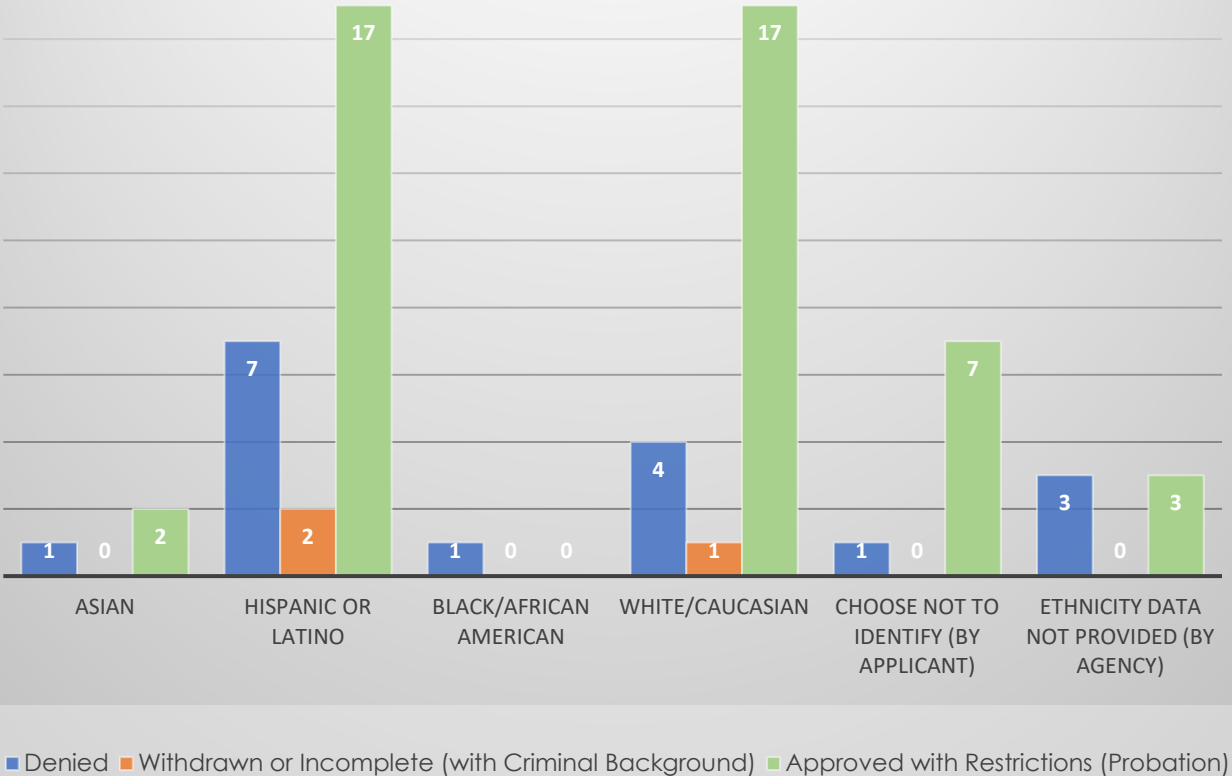
(Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander and American Indian / Alaskan Native not included as all results were zero)