

Background: Since 2019, [Navigate Reconnect](#) has been Tennessee's primary model of college coaching and advising for independent and over-25 students in Tennessee. Navigate Reconnect differs from most post-secondary advising programs by focusing on prospective students who are not yet enrolled in college, and who are either financially independent from their parents or over age 25. Program advisors—called Navigators—meet with the prospective Reconnectors to identify education and career goals, as well as expected barriers to enrolling or succeeding in college. Navigators help individuals select an institution and program suited to their goals, apply for financial aid, and connect with other support services. For the [first annual Navigate Reconnect report](#), we combined program records with state administrative data to understand the rate at which Reconnectors enroll and persist in college and complete credentials.

Reconnector Profile: Reconnectors were about 2/3 female, and 33 years old on average, and they typically had below-average household income. Between 33 and 43% of Reconnectors enrolled in college within 1 year of first speaking with a Navigator, and 38 – 50% enrolled within 2 years. Enrolled Reconnectors were highly likely to have applied for the Tennessee Reconnect Grant (90%), and the vast majority enrolled in Tennessee public community colleges (87%). Most enrolled Reconnectors worked and attended college at the same time (75 – 80%).

Reconnector College Outcomes: Because the Reconnect program is aimed at non-traditional students starting or returning to higher education, we compare their postsecondary progress to non-Reconnectors ages 25 and older who enrolled at the same time. The figure below tracks persistence for those initially enrolled in a community college.

We find that 73% percent of Reconnectors versus 61% of non-Reconnectors re-enrolled for a second term. A similar gap remains at the end of two years, with 46% of Reconnectors still enrolled versus 35% of non-Reconnectors. Reconnectors stay in college at greater rates than their peers regardless of gender, socioeconomic characteristics, first-generation status, and

previous post-secondary enrollment. At the end of two years, 21% of Reconnectors in community colleges had received a credential versus 18% of non-Reconnectors. The [full report](#) describes these outcomes in more detail, as well as Reconnector employment and earnings before, during, and after college.

Ongoing work: Report findings are descriptive and help to inform ongoing work estimating the causal impact of Navigate Reconnect advising on college completion, employment, and earnings.

