More than half a million Tennesseans have some college credit but no degree. Many of these Tennesseans made substantial progress toward a degree before leaving college.

Over the past decade, 113,000 adults with some college but no degree reconnected with higher education at Tennessee community colleges. We call these students reconnector.

Upon re-enrolling, fewer than half of reconnectors enrolled at the same college where they were previously enrolled before stopping out of college.

Among students who reconnected at Tennessee community colleges since 2010, 21% graduated within three years of reconnecting, and 26% graduated within six years.

Some reconnectors faced significant obstacles on their path to success.

- Success rates were much lower for students who enrolled in fully online courses during their reconnecting semester. This was especially true for students who reconnected at a different college than where they previously attended.
- Equity gaps in success rates are persistent. These findings point toward the need for further research on the paths to success for Black reconnectors, low-income reconnectors, and female reconnectors.
- Most adult students worked while enrolled and were responsible for childcare. Many adult students wanted more help from their colleges in balancing school with their life outside of the classroom.

To promote the success of reconnectors, we must ensure that advisors, success coaches, and faculty have the information they need to tailor their support of reconnecting students.

We identified four distinct groups of reconnectors based on their enrollment history.