

TENNESSEE RECONNECT:

REVIEW OF STATEWIDE RESEARCH AND CURRENT APPROACHES



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*“The Drive to 55 is not achievable by just focusing on college enrollment among recent high school graduates. **900,000 adult Tennesseans** with some college but no degree represent the “**sleeping giant**” that must be an active part of the Drive to 55.” (THEC Master Plan 2025)*

What exactly is the state Tennessee doing to awake the “sleeping giant” and encourage adult students to “Go Back and Finish”? After having conducted phone conferences with personnel from both the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) and Tennessee Reconnect Community Advisors, it was encouraging to learn that adult learners are receiving extensive assistance to encourage college completion and find a career through Tennessee Reconnect. This composition is to provide a closer look at the Tennessee Reconnect initiative and its resources made available to help recruit, retain, and graduate students, particularly adults in support of Governor Haslam’s Drive to 55 catalyst. Tennessee Reconnect is reconnecting adult learners back to college but the assistance does not stop there. Through Tennessee Reconnect, adult learners receive professional assistance to keep them connected in their career field, which in the end will help sustain the workforce. Through this reading, the information regarding the establishment of Tennessee Reconnect and its five functional strategies will be reviewed. In the end, the reader will have a complete understanding how adult students, institutions, communities, and employers have a role in the Tennessee Reconnect initiative.

Who is the Adult Learner?

According to the Southern Regional Education Board, adult learners are aged 25 and older and come from diverse backgrounds with varying levels of educational attainment. These students do not typically follow the traditional pattern of enrolling in postsecondary education once they’ve graduated high school. Adult learners seek online learning and may need refresher courses to prepare them for college work due to stopping college attendance for numerous reasons. Adult learners often enroll in certificate or non-degree programs at colleges to obtain a credential in support of a current job or workforce training. These

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students juggle career, family, and financial responsibilities that have rigid schedules sometimes lacking financial support for childcare, transportation, distance learning courses, and understanding in what resources are available (www.sreb.org/general-information/who-adult-learner).

The purpose of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC)?

Learn about the history and mission of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission at www.tn.gov/thec/topic/about-thec to discover how the THEC fosters unity regarding higher education in the state. THEC serves nine public universities, two special purpose institutes, 13 community colleges, and 27 colleges of applied technology which totals approximately 250,000 students. The driving force behind THEC is the Public Agenda which can be reviewed at www.publicagenda.org. “Since 2008, THEC has served as the agency designated by the Governor to administer Tennessee’s College Access Challenge Grant (CACG), a federal formula grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Education and focused on developing partnerships to promote college access and success” (<https://www.tn.gov/thec/article/college-access-challenge-grant>). Expanding statewide college access and success efforts has long been the goal through CACG. Through this grant, THEC encourages students to “**Go Back and Finish**” through policy, planning, and research that focuses on identifying and reaching out to those adults who would be likely ready to begin or return to college. The state of Tennessee is doing just that by creating new programs in support of adult learners with Tennessee Reconnect and its community partners. THEC is helping institutions initiate approaches to improve graduation rates and provide opportunities for Tennesseans to obtain a postsecondary education.

The Complete College Tennessee Act (CCTA) was established to transform public higher education through changes in academic, fiscal, and administrative policies at the state and institutional level (<http://tn.gov/thec/topic/complete-college-tn-act>). CCTA has helped Tennessee understand that higher education includes encouraging all Tennesseans to become better educated and trained. The Drive to 55 initiative was utilized to meet the CCTA’s new Public Agenda to support Tennessee with

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graduating students to show a 55% increase in educational attainment by 2025. The THEC Master Plan for Higher Education 2010-2015 was restructured to focus on increasing statewide educational attainment and the state of Tennessee implementing the provisions to CCTA. Performance measures and reporting are controlled by THEC which includes the following emphases: recognize and support differences in mission statements between institutions; request progress reports from institutions monitoring the productivity of graduates to identify programs that are not meeting nationally through productivity thresholds; consider the high-needs analysis provided by the University of Tennessee Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) Supply and Demand Report that lists those fields which are in high demand in Tennessee; provide state appropriations based on different outcomes which includes an option for institutions to gain additional funding; monitor articulation and transferring of students between institutions; uphold the community college delivery approach required by CCTA; and consider research enhancement for state economic development. CCTA has laid the foundation for Tennessee to improve its higher education system (<http://tn.gov/thec/topic/complete-college-tn-act>).

Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-7-202(c)(1) directs the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to: Develop a statewide master plan for future development of public universities, community colleges and colleges of applied technology with input from the board of regents and the University of Tennessee board of trustees. The commission shall engage public universities, community colleges and colleges of applied technology for input during the creation of the master plan. The commission shall construct a statewide master plan that directs higher education to be accountable for increasing the educational attainment levels of Tennesseans. This master plan shall be reviewed and revised as deemed appropriate by the commission. This plan shall include, but not be limited to, the consideration of the following provisions:

Addressing the state's economic development, workforce development and research needs;

Ensuring increased degree production within the state's capacity to support higher education; and

Using institutional mission differentiation to realize statewide efficiencies through institutional collaboration and minimized redundancy in degree offerings, instructional locations and competitive research.

What is THEC's role in support of TN Reconnect?

Tennessee Reconnect is not leaving any stones unturned when it comes to providing resources and

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assistance to adult learners. THEC has made necessary adjustments to align Tennessee’s higher education system by including adult learners among other focus populations, in its outcomes-based funding formula to encourage campuses to place an additional emphasis on adults to and through postsecondary education. THEC has a statewide Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Education 2015-2025 with a mission to direct higher education to be accountable for increasing the educational attainment level of Tennesseans; to address the state’s economic development, workforce development, and research needs; to use institutional mission differentiation to realize statewide efficiencies through institutional collaboration; and to minimize redundancy in degree offerings, instructional locations, and competitive research (THEC Master Plan 2015-2025, Functions of the Master Plan section).

The THEC 2015-2025 Master Plan provides a snapshot of the number of working age adults (ages 25-64) with and without college credentials and the projected number of working adults with and without college credentials needed to achieve the Drive to 55 goals. The term “credential” is defined as a postsecondary credential including pre-baccalaureate certificates, associate’s degrees, and bachelor’s degrees. THEC’s focus is to help close the gap estimation in credential production across Tennessee with the understanding that historical underserved student populations of adult learners, low income students, and academically underprepared students will require policy and programmatic attention.

Baseline number (2013) of working age adults with college credentials:

1,294,249 or 37.8% of working-age adults in Tennessee.

Number of working age adults with a college credential needed to reach the 2025 Drive to 55 goal:

1,978,283 or 55% of working-age adults in Tennessee.”

Key Takeaways

Building a statewide framework for adult learners is a long process.
No single initiative will make or break success.



Tennessee Higher Education Commission



“Estimating the gap in credential production consists of a multi-step process, based on data from various sources and several key assumptions” (THEC Master Plan 2025, pg. 10). It helps to know where Tennessee stands as a means for understanding the importance of the Drive to 55 alliance, particularly Tennessee Reconnect. *The following bullets were taken from the THEC Master Plan 2015-2025 for the sake of being consistent in reporting how the total number of postsecondary certificate, associate’s degree, or bachelor’s degree working-age adults with college credentials is derived from population projections developed by the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at UT Knoxville. (THEC Master Plan 2025, page 10)*

1. “To estimate the gap, two factors must be taken into account: a) the number of credentialed working-age individuals at the starting and finishing points of the projection period and b) the natural growth in award production.”
2. “To calculate the number of credentialed individuals needed to meet the Drive to 55 goal, one must first project the number of 25-64 years old who will live in Tennessee in 2025 (see Table 1). These data are available from population projections developed by the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at UT Knoxville. Based on these projections, Tennessee will require

1,978,283 residents with a postsecondary certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree to boast 55 percent of working age adults with postsecondary credentials in 2025."

3. "The gap estimation relies on the 2013 American Community Survey (ACS), which provides data on educational attainment. The ACS does not include certificate holders; thus, based on the findings of a CBER study, we assume that four percent of Tennesseans hold a certificate from a postsecondary institution. Tennessee's postsecondary educational attainment rate (certificates or higher) in 2013, therefore, was **37.8 percent**, which translates into 1,294,249 individuals (Table 1)."
 4. "To use 2013 as a starting point, it is necessary to include only Tennesseans who were 54 or younger in that year. The rationale for this is that this group will not "age out" of the workforce before 2025. Applying the same finding that four percent of residents will hold a postsecondary certificate, and adding this number to the ACS-estimated number of people with at least an associate's degree totals **1,037,157** credentialed Tennesseans who will age out of the workforce by 2025 (see Table 1)."
 5. "The gap estimation also requires assumptions about interstate migration by educational attainment and natural mortality. Based on priority findings that Tennessee has positive net migrations at every level of educational attainment (including individuals with no college experience or credential), we assume the net migration of credentialed individuals to be zero. In other words, it was conservatively assumed that over the next ten years, the proportion of Tennessee residents with college credentials, because of migration patterns, will remain unchanged. For the purposes of these estimations, due to data limitation, mortality was also assumed to be zero."
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Table 1. Number of Credentialed Tennesseans Needed to Meet the Drive to 55 Goal¹

2013 ¹	
Working-age adults (25-64 years old)	3,419,845
Number of adults with an associate's degree or higher (33.8%)	1,157,455
Number of certificate holders (4%) ²	136,794
Total number of working-age adults with college credentials	1,294,249
Percent of working-age adults with college credentials	37.8%
2025 ³	
Projected number of working-age adults (25-64 years old)	3,596,879
Drive to 55 goal	55%
Number of credentialed individuals to meet Drive to 55 goal	1,978,283

In Table 2, the number of credentials needed to meet the Drive to 55 goal was calculated. “The difference between the number of credentialed individuals in 2025 and the credentialed below the age of 54 in 2013 minus the number of graduates in 2014 (69,817 awards) gives the overall number of credentials needed to achieve the Drive to 55 goal.” (THEC Master Plan 2015, page 12) The estimated amount in awards **871,309** need to meet the goal translates into “**79,210** total credentials needed annually between 2015 and 2025” and that “this number includes both the natural grown over the next ten years including the gap between the natural growth and needed growth” as shown in Table 2 below (THEC Master Plan 2015, page 12). THEC has also included in its Master Plan a demonstration of both the best-case scenario and worst-case scenario by institutional sector that includes historical data and projections of past and future production.

¹ Source: American Community Survey — 2013, One-year estimates.

² Based on estimates in Carruthers, C. K., & Fox, W. F. (2013). *The 2011 stock of postsecondary certificate holders in Tennessee*. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Center for Business and Economic Research.

³ Source: Center for Business and Economic Research, Population projections: 2014-2064.

Table 2. Number of Degrees Needed to Meet the Drive to 55 Goal

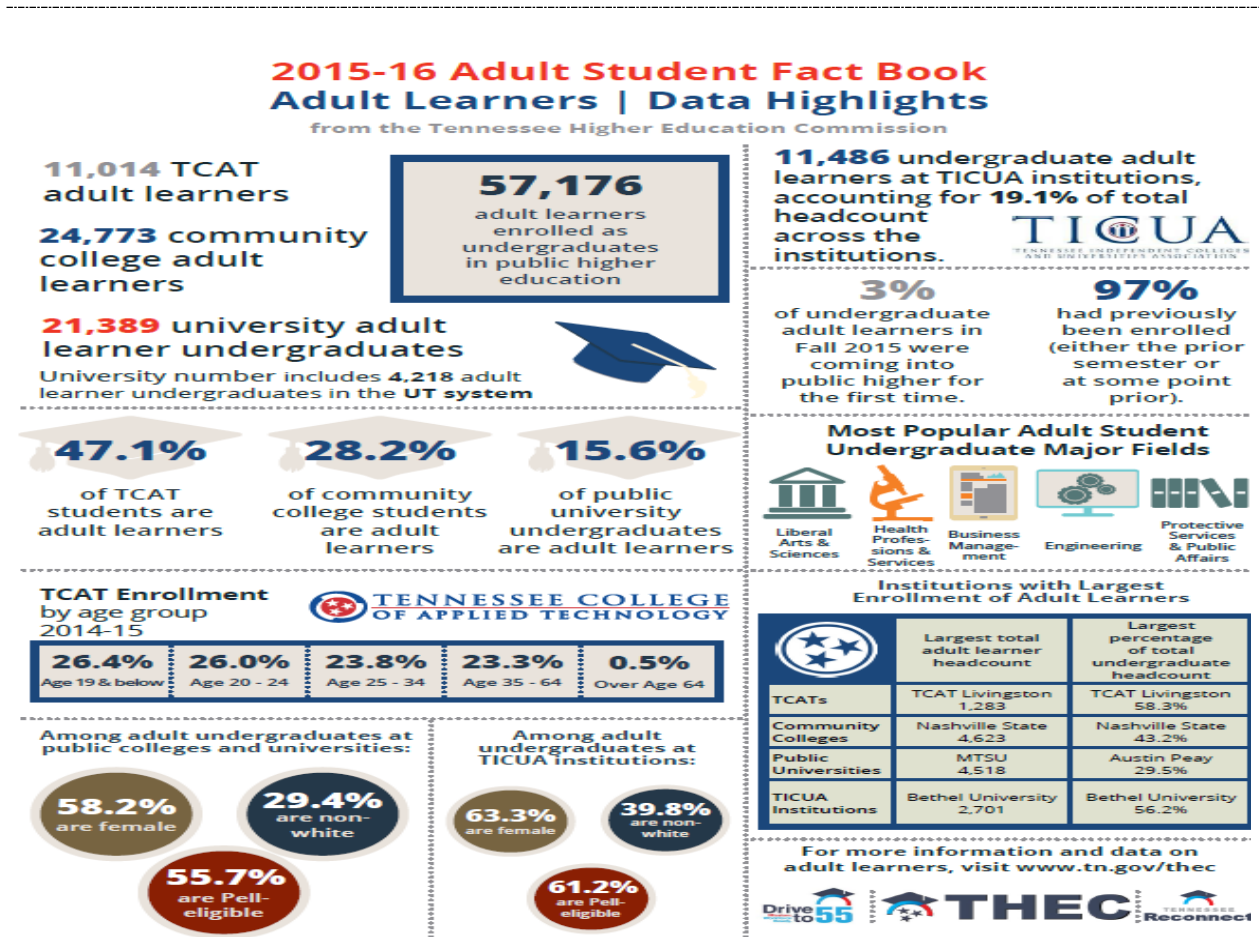
Number of credentialed residents in 2013 who will not age out by 2025	1,037,157
<i>Holders of an associate's degree or higher</i>	940,650
<i>Certificate holders (4%)</i>	96,507
Needed number of credentialed individuals in 2025	1,978,283
Number of credentials awarded in 2014	69,817
Number of credentials needed to meet the Drive to 55 goal	871,309
Annual needed growth to meet the Drive to 55 goal	79,210

What can you find inside the THEC Adult Student Fact Book?

The THEC Adult Student Fact Book highlights adult students' pursuit of postsecondary education in Tennessee (www.tn.gov/news/44676). As of August 2016, THEC released its 2015-2016 Adult Student Fact Book that highlights trends among adult learners. The THEC Adult Student Fact Book reviews programs such as TN Reconnect that shape the path toward the Drive to 55. THEC Executive Director, Mike Krause could not have said it any better. "Without adult learners, we don't reach the Drive to 55" (THEC Executive Director Mike Krause). "Adult students are defined as those aged 25 or above at the time of the award. Definitional issues surrounding certificates in the early years of the new outcomes-based funding formula led to over-reporting of these students at the certificate level in academic years 2010-11 and 2011-12" (THEC Master Plan 2015-2025). Tennessee has 57,176 adult students aged 25 and above enrolled in public institutions across all sectors, including full-time and part-time students. Additionally, there are 11,486 adult learners enrolled at institutions with the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Associations (TICUA). Out of the 57,176 adult students in public institutions, 11,014 students enrolled at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCATs), 24,773 were enrolled in Community Colleges, and 21,389 students were enrolled in Public Universities (tn.gov/thec/news).

"Among adult learners at public institutions in fall 2015, only 3 percent were entering public higher education for the first time during that semester; 97 percent had enrolled the prior

semester or at least one semester before” (THEC Press Release, August 09, 2016 / 11:30am,
 Kate Derrick, kate.derrick@tn.gov).



THEC Adult Learner Fact Book 2016 Infographic.pdf (<https://www.tn.gov/thec/article/adult-learner-fact-book-2016-infographic>)

“Adult learners earn more credentials than traditional students” (THEC FACT BOOK). THEC is making every effort to ensure that TN Reconnect Advisors and TN Reconnect Community Advisors receive a copy of the Adult Student Fact Book they too can gain knowledge of where and how adults are entering and exiting college. Table 3 shows a snapshot of public postsecondary awards for students in the adult learner focus population from 2009-10 through 2013-14.

Table 3. Public Postsecondary Awards for Students in the Adult Learner Populations, 2009-10 through 2013-14

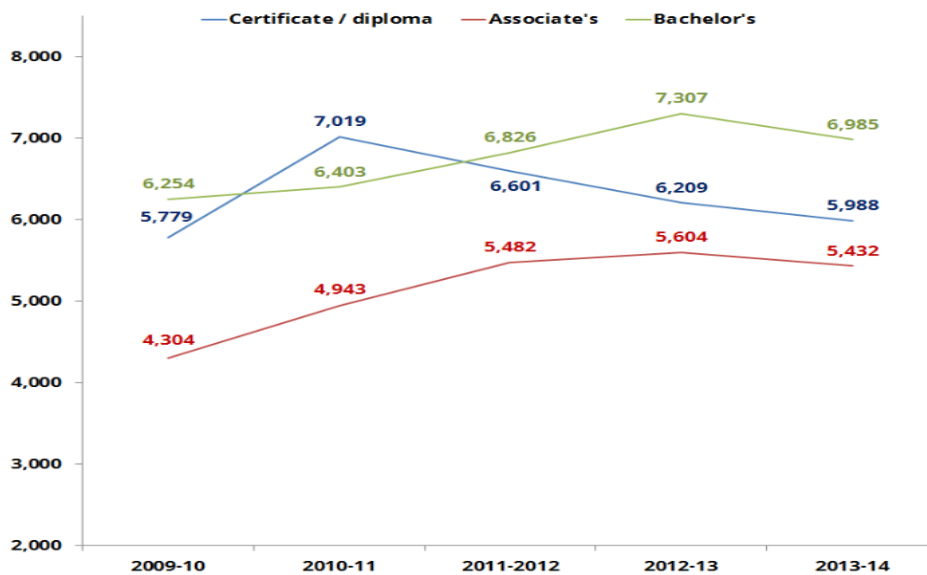
Adult students

Award level	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Total
Certificate	5,779	7,019	6,601	6,209	5,988	31,596
Associate's	4,304	4,943	5,482	5,604	5,432	25,765
Bachelor's	6,254	6,403	6,826	7,307	6,985	33,775
Total	16,337	18,365	18,909	19,120	18,405	

Sector	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Total
Comm. college	5,501	6,462	7,324	7,478	7,155	33,920
University	6,446	6,677	7,120	7,644	7,248	35,135
TCAT	4,390	5,226	4,465	3,998	4,002	22,081
Total	16,337	18,365	18,909	19,120	18,405	

Notes: Adult students are defined by ages 25 or above at the time of the award. Definitional issues surrounding certificates in the early years of the new outcomes-based funding formula let to over-reporting of these students at the certificate level in academic years 2010-11 and 2011-12.

Figure 2. Public Postsecondary Awards for Adult Students 2009-10 through 2013-14



THEC Master Plan 2025 table and notes found on pages 19-24 online at <https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/thec/attachments/MasterPlan2025.pdf>.

The key takeaways from Table3 and Figure 2 are as follows:

1. “Credentials production among adult learners increased 12.6 percent for the period.”

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- a. “Broken down by award level, credential growth for adult learners was highest for associate’s degrees (26.2 percent).”
- b. “Adult learners’ credential production was concentrated in the community colleges, where their degree-earning activity increased by 30.1 percent. Credentials earned by adult learners grew more modestly at public universities (up 12.4 percent) and actually decreased among TCATs (down 8.8 percent).”

What is the primary focus of the Tennessee Reconnect initiative?

The establishment of the Tennessee Reconnect initiative is not just a governing policy for Tennesseans, but this initiative was established to assist and encourage Tennesseans to obtain a college degree or certificate. Adult learners make up at least 30 percent of enrolled public undergraduate students in Tennessee (<https://www.tbr.edu/initiatives/tennessee-reconnect>). The Tennessee Reconnect initiative instills a culture of access and success for the adult learner with an organized framework to provide coaching to build self-efficacy skills among adult learners. Tennessee Governor Haslam, Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Tennessee Board of Regents, and many others are continuously working to re-engage adult learners and help them finish their degree or certificate. Tennessee’s degree attainment level in 2013 was at 43%. “Tennessee had between 900,000 and 1 million adults with some college but no degree” (<https://www.tbr.edu/initiatives/tennessee-reconnect>). Although Tennessee’s previous focus had been on the enrollment of recent high school graduates in college, the state has now refocused its efforts on addressing the drop-off between the number of students who enroll in school and those who graduate (<http://archive.knoxnews.com/news/local/report-tennessees-college-graduation-rates-lagging-ep-407000248-358257251.html>). The low production rate resulted in Governor Haslam developing the Drive to 55 Alliance for Tennesseans to work towards increasing a more sustainable workforce by earning a postsecondary credential.

Five distinct strategies are included in the Drive to 55 plan were organized with the aspiration to increase the number of Tennessee college graduates. One of these strategies was focuses solely on creating new programs and supports for the adult learner, which is called Tennessee Reconnect. For fun,

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let's consider the human body as Drive to 55 system with the five components centered as the head of the human body. Now, you may be familiar with the TN Promise initiative which focuses on high school students enrolling in college. TN Promise is the left arm of the human body which you can read more about at www.driveto55.org. The right arm, TN Reconnect, is simply another component in which THEC is using to strategically implement changes across Tennessee in support of adult learners. Tennessee Reconnect will provide adult graduates sustainability in the growing workforce. This number should gradually increase by 2025 with the five strategies of Tennessee Reconnect: 1) Research to build the policy framework; 2) Student outreach and support; 3) Building institutional capacity to serve adult learners more effectively; 4) Developing new employer and workforce partnerships; and 5) Coordinating community-based efforts to serve adult learners and promote local ownership of Tennessee Reconnect initiatives.

Just this year, THEC has initiated a large-scale research project which will include 1) qualitative factors related to adult learners by way of THEC's Student Information System; 2) request to Tennessee higher education faculty to conduct original research on the state of adult learners; and 3) request to Tennessee higher education administrators and non-profit organizations to develop qualitative analyses of evidence-based practices in serving adult learners. THEC plans to collect and publish 2016 research project outcomes so the results can be shared with state higher education policy leaders, non-profit organizations, and institutional faculty and staff to help these groups understand the challenges and barriers facing adult learners in the state. This research will also help to inform and influence state and institutional policy regarding adult learners. THEC will not only share this research within Tennessee but on a national level. THEC will work to share the collective research with pertinent organizations, commissions, and institutions (THEC TN Reconnect Initiatives Summary, July 2016).

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Student Outreach and Scholarship Support



Tennessee Reconnect includes a last dollar scholarship initiative to keep adult learners on the path to completing their higher education credential. With grant funding, THEC serve students with the last dollar scholarship at the TCATs and

Community Colleges. A student who enrolls full-time in pursuit of a certificate or diploma from the TCAT system will continue to receive Tennessee Reconnect funding as long as the student maintains continuous enrollment and satisfactory academic progress.



Starting fall 2016, Community Colleges will pilot a first-come, first-served TN Reconnect last-dollar scholarship that assists adults in returning to community college and completing their postsecondary degree. Eligible community college

adults “must have already earned at least 30 hours toward their degree, enroll in at least 9 semester hours, maintain a 2.0 GPA and satisfactory academic progress, have not enrolled or attended any postsecondary institution for at least 12 months and file the FAFSA by the appropriate deadlines” (THEC TN Reconnect Initiatives Summary).. Although the guidelines for Tennessee Reconnect may differ between TCAT and Community Colleges, THEC is making certain that scholarship recipients are receiving not just monetary assistance but advising and career counseling from the institutions through TN Reconnect Advisors. These students will receive consistent information and guidance through Tennessee Reconnect. Successful completions will have been made possible through the many enrollment services and financial opportunity provided by Tennessee Reconnect.

Tennessee Reconnect +Complete



Tennessee Reconnect +Complete will help institutions reach out to adults who have earned at least 50% of credits toward an associate or Bachelor’s degree but have never finished college. Higher education institutions received marketing

support and resources to help reach out to adults in their local communities. THEC’s continued backing of institutions to reach out to adult students has consisted of 2700 televised advertisements, 3500 radio

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ads, 21 billboards, 50,000 push cards being sent to students who are at least a 50% toward completing a degree. On top of this are the personal conversations Tennessee Reconnect advisors conduct encouraging adults to finish what they started. THEC organized a conference for higher education institutions to come together and receive updates. THEC also supports institutions through the production of resources and marketing material in support of Tennessee Reconnect reaching adult learners in local communities.

Community Based Efforts



Tennessee Reconnect Community (TRCs) are local community-based centers in place to serve as a resource center in support of higher education institutions, local employers, local organizations, and adult learners in a collaborative effort to increase degree-attainment across the state of Tennessee. In a phone interview with Tennessee Reconnect Community Advisors at Middle Tennessee and Upper Cumberland, adult students are receiving assistance to return to college and locate career advising through partnerships with local workforce agencies. Reconnect Community Advisors work to keep the adult student connected to the college of their choice. This is done by staying in constant communication with not only the student but the Tennessee Reconnect Advisor on-site at the institution. There will soon be a total of eight Reconnect Community counties all across the state. Tennessee Reconnect Community grant proposals and upcoming launches of eight newly granted Reconnect Community's kickoff events can be seen in Figure 3 and are listed below.

- **Upper Cumberland**
 - Counties served: Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Van Buren, Warren, White
- **Middle Tennessee**
 - Counties served: Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Maury, Montgomery, Rutherford, Sumner, and Williamson
- **Southwest**

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- Counties served: Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, McNairy, Carroll, Crockett, Gibson, Tipton, and Wayne
- **South Central**
 - Counties served: Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, Giles, Grundy, Lawrence, Lincoln, Marshall, and Moore
- **Northwest**
 - Counties served: Dyer, Lake, Lauderdale, and Obion
- **Graduate Memphis**
 - Counties served: Shelby
- **Smoky Mountain**
 - Counties served: Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Jefferson, Sevier, and Union
- **Northeast**
 - Counties served: Carter, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Washington, and Unicoi

Figure 3. Below is a snapshot of the THEC community announcement of fall 2016 Tennessee Reconnect Community Kickoff Events

Tennessee Reconnect Communities provide adults with free advising, career counseling, support and a personalized path to and through college.

Tennessee Reconnect Community Kickoff Events

<p>South Central Tennessee Reconnect Community Tuesday, November 1 4 pm to 7 pm Workforce Solutions Offices 410 Wilson Ave, Tullahoma, TN</p> <p>Wednesday, November 2 4 pm to 7 pm American Job Center 125 South Cedar Ln, Pulaski, TN</p> <p>Saturday, November 5 10 am to 1 pm Duck River Electric Auditorium 1411 Madison St, Shelbyville, TN</p>	<p>Graduate Memphis Reconnect Community Tuesday, November 15 11 am to 7 pm Benjamin Hooks Central Library 3030 Poplar Ave, Memphis, TN</p> <p>Northwest Tennessee Reconnect Community Tuesday, November 15 4 pm to 5:30 pm Melver's Grant Library 410 W Court St, Dyersburg, TN</p>	<p>Smoky Mountain Reconnect Community Tuesday, November 15 4 pm to 7 pm Tally Ward Recreation Center 324 S James Street, Morristown, TN</p> <p>Northeast Tennessee Reconnect Community Wednesday, November 15 4 pm to 6 pm Memorial Park Community Center 510 Bert St, Johnson City, TN</p>
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Whether you're returning to school to finish your degree, or starting for the first time, we're here to help.

To connect with your local Tennessee Reconnect Community, attend a kickoff in your area or visit www.TNReconnect.gov and click "Talk to an Advisor".

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“THEC released a call for proposals in fall 2015 to public and private not-for-profit two- and four- year institutions and TCATs for mini grants to fund institutional initiatives to support adult learning” (THEC Ready to Reconnect Grant Program

Summaries pdf). Seventeen higher education institutions received a total award of \$748,667 in Ready to Reconnect grant aid. Awarded institutions participated in the Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) assessment which is offered through the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). As a part of the assessment, institutions identified innovative solutions to support the challenges discovered through their institutional ALFI assessment results. Through the Ready to Reconnect grant, THEC partners with postsecondary institutions in Tennessee in a collaborative effort to develop targeted strategies to not only recruit adults but provide engagement opportunities supporting adult learners complete their credential. With grant funding, participating institutions established initiative that included: adult-specific orientations, a network of academic student services support including peer-to-peer advisors, interactive displays where adults can access learning modules and course options, the piloting and marketing of flexible and deferred payment plans , a designated apply-on-site day for potential adult students to get one on one assistance, the creation of interactive adult-specific websites and marketing, and developing accelerated hybrid programs for adult learners with options of online or traditional courses (THEC Reconnect_Infographic.pdf). Ready to Reconnect Grantees are listed below:

1. Austin Peay State University
2. Baptist Memorial College of Health Sciences
3. Chattanooga State Community College
4. Cleveland State Community College
5. Columbia State Community College
6. Dyersburg State Community College
7. Lipscomb University
8. Middle Tennessee State University
9. Roane State Community College
10. Southwest Tennessee Community College
11. Tennessee College of Applied Technology - Dickson
12. Tennessee College of Applied Technology - Shelbyville

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13. University of Memphis
14. University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
15. Volunteer State Community College
16. Walters State Community College

Source: <https://www.tn.gov/thec/article/reconnect-community#sthash.D0AF11tX.dpuf>



Veteran Reconnect was awarded to 11 campuses in 2015 for a 15-month service period as a method of increasing campus services for student veterans through Veteran specific resources. The grant's outcomes include: 1) "development of standardized systems of tracking the enrollment, retention, and graduation of student veterans; 2) formation of veteran success committees on campus composed of staff, faculty, and students focused on the continued evolution of best practices in veteran education; 3) providing dedicated student veteran coordinators on each campus to serve as a sole point of contact for student veterans and all of their needs, 4) building and furnishing Veterans' centers or lounges on campus to provide study space, social interaction, enhanced academic support, and other resources; 5) in-depth training program for faculty and staff to improve awareness of veteran-specific issues; and 6) increased internship and employment opportunities for Veteran students through new annual career development training sessions and enhanced relationship-building with corporate partners" (THEC press release. August 24, 2016). "In the wake of the passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Tennessee has experienced a significant increase in the number of veterans enrolled in higher education. Serving these veterans, and ensuring their opportunities for success are maximized, is key to reaching the goals of the Drive to 55" (Direct quote, THEC TN Reconnect Summary of Initiatives). The August 24, 2016 THEC press release—"Nearly \$1 Million in Veteran Reconnect Grants Support Campus Services to Student Veterans" - serves as notice that Tennessee is working to reach adult learners from the Veteran student population to enroll in a higher education institution or finish what they started.

Timewise TN—Prior Learning Assessment Branding



Adult learners can translate their years of knowledge into college credit

through TimewiseTN. THEC worked with a marketing firm to develop a

common identify for prior learning assessment (PLA). A website has been

developed to provide a common language for adult learners to easily locate PLA resources on campuses.

THEC has listed the institutions who voluntarily adopted the logo and program on to the TimewiseTN

website, <https://tn.gov/thec/article/timewise-about>. Students may receive PLA credits to cover many

subject areas by way of 1) Credit by Examination (Test-based PLA); 2) Credit recommendation Services

(past training assessed for credit); and 3) Portfolio assessment as an inexpensive way to earn college

credit. Timewise TN does not change the form and context of institutional PLA programs.

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