

**Tennessee Reconnect:
An Early Look at an Adult Promise Program**

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Abstract

In order to meet growing demand for college educated workers, many states are engaging in policy efforts to re-enroll adults with prior college experience and support them to degree completion. One such effort is Tennessee Reconnect (TNR), a last-dollar grant program launched in Fall 2018. TNR is available to eligible adult students who are enrolled in a certificate or associate degree program at one of Tennessee’s public community colleges. During the first year of the program, 34,353 adults submitted a TNR application, of whom 13,848 TNR-eligible students enrolled in a qualifying program in Fall 2018 – these numbers far outpaced projections for program participation. Using administrative data from multiple Tennessee state organizations, we describe these populations of applicants and enrollees in detail, including their background characteristics, previous academic experiences, and academic performance in the 2018-19 academic year. For a descriptive comparison, we also show this information for likely-eligible students who did not apply for TNR. We conclude with a discussion of potential intervention efforts to increase take-up of TNR or likelihood of degree completion among TNR recipients.

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Introduction

For both individuals and society, the benefits of postsecondary educational attainment remain substantial, yet socioeconomic inequalities in degree completion have only widened over time (Bailey and Dynarski, 2011). These disparities have contributed to widening economic and social mobility in the United States (Carr & Wiemers, 2016; Chetty et al., 2017). Rising college wage premium accounts for two-thirds of the widening income gap over the past decades, which emphasizes the role that higher education must play to boost social mobility (Goldin & Katz, 2007).

Accompanying the rise in returns to postsecondary education is the steadily growing share of jobs that require some form of postsecondary education. By 2020, 65 percent of all jobs will require some postsecondary education/training (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2013). Postsecondary education is particularly essential as the economy grows: since 2011, the U.S. economy has added 11.5 million net new jobs for workers with postsecondary education but only 80,000 for those with a high school diploma or less (Lumina Foundation, 2017).

Over half of all jobs are considered “middle-skill,” meaning jobs that require education beyond high school but not a four-year degree (National Skills Coalition, 2015). Yet economists predict the supply of sufficiently-educated workers to fill these jobs will fall millions short of employer demand (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2013). To meet labor market demands, an additional 16.4 million additional workers will need to earn credentials by 2025 (Lumina Foundation, 2017).

To meet this growing demand for college educated workers, most states have set specific goals to significantly increase the share of their state’s adult workforce with a degree or credential. For

instance, Tennessee’s goal is to increase this share to 55 percent by the year 2025, with current attainment at 42.7 percent.

In order to meet these goals, states will have to substantially increase postsecondary education and skill training among traditionally underrepresented and non-traditional student populations (Lumina Foundation, 2017). Adult learners aged 25-49 comprise over one quarter of all undergraduate enrollments, and nearly one-third of enrollment at community colleges (Digest of Education Statistics, Table 303.50). Adult students have worse postsecondary outcomes than their traditional age peers: The first-year persistence rate for students aged 24 and over is 25.5 percentage points lower than the first-year retention rate for students aged 20 and below (NSC Research Center, 2017). Over thirty million working-aged adults have completed some college credits but did not complete a credential (Shapiro et al, 2014).

The policy community has had a strong focus and longstanding investment in improving postsecondary access and attainment for economically-disadvantaged populations. The primary illustration of this investment is federal and state financial aid for college, which has provided hundreds of billions of dollars over several decades to increase college affordability for low-income students. Rigorous research demonstrates that need- and merit-based financial aid programs can substantially improve postsecondary outcomes for students (Castleman and Long, 2013; Dynarski, 2008; Scott-Clayton, 2011).

Building on this evidence base, several states have recently established grant programs specifically focused at increasing enrollment (or re-enrollment) and completion rates among adult residents. One such program is the Tennessee Reconnect Grant (TNR). TNR was launched in 2018 and provides “last dollar” funding to eligible applicants--meaning that TNR support covers the tuition

and mandatory fees not funded by other sources of federal, state, or institutional aid the student would already receive. In the first year of the program 34,353 adults completed a TNR application, of whom 13,848 TNR-eligible students enrolled in a Tennessee public community college during the Fall 2018 semester.

In this research brief we provide the first descriptive evidence of which we are aware on participation in a state grant program focused specifically on increasing enrollment and completion among adult residents. We document application and take-up patterns for TNR; the characteristics of TNR enrollees; and the academic experience of TNR students. We also discuss potential intervention opportunities to increase TNR participation or the success of TNR students that are informed by our analyses.

We summarize briefly the main insights from our analyses to date. The substantial majority of TNR students were already enrolled at the time of their TNR application (41.3 percent) or had prior postsecondary enrollment (43.9 percent). Among students reconnecting to a community college, 31.5 percent had last enrolled between two and six years prior, and 37.5 percent had last enrolled more than six years in the past.

Both already enrolled and reconnecting students had earned substantial credits at the time of their TNR application. Among already enrolled students, the majority (66 percent) had earned at least 30 credits at the time of their application, with over half (51 percent) earning more than 40 credits. Reconnecting students had earned somewhat fewer credits in their prior enrollment, but over 40 percent had still earned 30 or more credits. The mean cumulative GPA for already enrolled students was 2.49 but was substantially lower for reconnecting students (1.92).

Because TNR is a “last dollar” grant program, not all TNR students received funding--in practice, 63 percent received financial support through the program, with an average grant of \$908. Just under half of TNR students (46.8 percent) received a federal Pell Grant, and just under 20 percent (19.7 percent) received the need-based Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA) grant.

Already enrolled and new students earned most of the credits they attempted in their first semester as TNR students, but reconnecting students completed more than a full course less on average. Fall 2018 GPA was very consistent across groups, with a mean of 2.8 for the overall TNR sample. Most TNR students persisted into Spring, with the highest rates of persistence among new students (81.6 percent) and slightly lower rates among reconnecting students (75.6 percent). Over 20 percent of already enrolled students earned a degree or credential, compared with only 5.7 percent of reconnecting students.

Tennessee Reconnect Background

A primary motivation for TNR is to support a greater share of adults in Tennessee to complete a postsecondary credential or degree. In Table 1 we present educational attainment rates in Tennessee, both for individuals over 25 (columns 1 and 2) and individuals 25 - 64 who may be more likely to continue their education (columns 3 and 4). Focusing on 25-64-year olds, nearly two-thirds of Tennessee residents (63.3 percent) do not have an associate degree or higher. Over 42 percent have a high school diploma or less education, and over 21 percent have some postsecondary participation but no degree.

Over the past decade, Tennessee has invested in several policies that emphasize the role of adult learners in meeting Tennessee’s Drive to 55 attainment goal. The state’s Master Plan for Higher

Education identified adults with some college but no degree as “the ‘sleeping giant’ that must be awakened in order for the Drive to 55 to be realized” (THEC, 2015). Adult learners are also a focus of the state’s outcomes-based funding formula, the Quality Assurance Funding program, and other initiatives that aim to support adults, veterans, and workforce development.

With the launch of TNR, Tennessee became the first state to offer tuition-free community college to both adults and recent high school graduates. TNR built upon Tennessee Promise, the state’s other last dollar scholarship program that launched statewide in 2015 for recent high school graduates. Both programs are funded through proceeds from the state’s lottery, and both were marketed with a simple message about tuition-free college. For instance, when Governor Bill Haslam announced the Tennessee Reconnect Act in 2017, he emphasized the similarities of the two programs, saying “No caps. No first come, first served. Just as we did with Tennessee Promise we’re making a clear statement to families with Reconnect: Wherever you might fall on life’s path, education beyond high school is critical to the Tennessee we can be.”

To be eligible for TNR, adults have to be a resident in Tennessee for at least a year, be an American citizen or eligible non-citizen, and qualify as an independent student on the FAFSA. Students cannot have earned a prior associate’s or bachelor’s degree or have defaulted on student loans.¹ Adults have to complete the TNR application and success plan, apply to a Tennessee community college, and complete the FAFSA to be eligible for TNR funding. If students receive TNR support, they have to complete at least six credits and maintain a 2.0 GPA or higher to renew TNR. TNR recipients are required to be continuously enrolled and must re-apply for TNR on an annual basis.

¹ The full set of eligibility requirements are available here: <https://www.tnreconnect.gov/PayForCollege/LookingfortheCommunityCollegeReconnectGrant/tabid/5258/Default.aspx>

Students can use the TNR grant at Tennessee’s 13 public community colleges to cover the full cost of tuition and mandatory fees, which was approximately \$4,400 per year for full-time students in 2018-19. As a last dollar scholarship, TNR at community colleges covers whatever remains of a student’s tuition and mandatory fees after funds from Pell grants and other state financial aid are applied (like the HOPE scholarship or the need-based Tennessee Student Assistance Award). However, TNR does not cover the costs of textbooks, transportation, housing, or other costs of attendance. It also does not cover fees that a student may be charged for enrolling a specific programs or courses, including fees associated with enrolling in online courses.²

Data

The data from our analyses come from multiple sources. Student-level data about Tennessee Reconnect applications was provided by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (THEC/TSAC), the agency that administers state financial aid programs including TNR. THEC/TSAC also provided data about FAFSA filing for TNR applicants. Additional data were collected from the student information system at the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR)—The College System of Tennessee, which serves as the governing board for the 13 community colleges that enroll TNR students. The data about student enrollment, demographic characteristics, credit hour accumulation, student major, coursetaking, and graduation are based on end-of-term reporting from community colleges to TBR. Information about students’ prior enrollment comes from TBR’s student information system, from 2009 to 2018, and is supplemented by data from the National Student Clearinghouse from 2005 to 2018.

² A small number of students used TNR to enroll in associate degree programs at eligible four-year institutions. For these students, TNR covers the average amount of tuition and fees at a community college after other sources of aid are applied, up to \$4,200 per year. TNR applicants who enrolled at four-year institutions in 2018 are not included in this analysis.

Data on students' TNR award amount are provided by THEC/TSAC, while data on Pell grants and other aid is from TBR's student information system.

For this analysis, the sample includes students who applied for TNR in its first year, through the summer of 2019. Because the TNR applications are available on a rolling cycle, it may be the case that some later applicants intended to enroll in the spring and summer 2019 terms. Data on enrollment of TNR applicants are limited only to students who enrolled at community colleges, which excludes the small number of TNR applicants who enrolled at eligible universities as well as students who complete a separate application to participate in TNR at the state's colleges of applied technology.

Results

TNR applicants

We begin by describing the first applicant pool for TNR (Table 2). 34,353 individuals completed a TNR application for the 2018-2019 academic year (column 1). Note that initial budgetary projections for TNR assumed 8,000 adults would apply. The mean age of applicants (the only individual-level characteristic available from the application) was 33.5. Of these, a large share (81.4 percent) also completed the FAFSA (column 2). FAFSA filers had a mean estimated family contribution to college (EFC) of \$5,669, but a sizeable share of FAFSA filers (43.8 percent) had an EFC of \$0, suggesting a bi-modal sample comprised of very low-income students and comparatively higher-SES students. Over half (55.8 percent) of individuals who completed the TNR application and FAFSA enrolled at a Tennessee community college in Fall 2018 (column 3), although 11.2% of enrollees were ineligible for TNR (difference between column 3 and 4). TNR

Enrollees³ (column 4) were slightly older (34.0 years) and had somewhat higher EFCs (\$6,098). Over 70 percent of enrollees were female and over 71 percent were White. Sixty-three percent of enrollees received TNR financial support because they had remaining unmet need after all other grant aid was applied to tuition and mandatory fees (column 5). Students who received TNR support had substantially higher EFCs (\$9,173) but were otherwise similar to the overall sample of enrollees.

In Table 3 we compare the characteristics of community college enrollees who applied for TNR and completed the FAFSA to other adult students who were likely TNR-eligible but who did not apply.⁴ Interestingly, of students who were likely TNR-eligible but who did not apply, over two-thirds (68.0 percent) were already enrolled in the prior academic year (Table 5b). TNR applicants were more likely to be female (70.2 percent vs. 63.6 percent) and more likely to be White (71.2 percent vs. 63.4 percent). TNR applicants were less likely to receive a Pell Grant (46.8 percent vs. 58.6 percent). One reason TNR applicants with sufficiently low EFCs may not have received a Pell Grant is that they had already exhausted their Pell eligibility in prior enrollments, or had not met Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements to maintain Pell eligibility. It is also possible that likely-eligible students who did not apply for TNR did so with the knowledge that they would not receive TNR funding given other sources of aid they anticipated receiving.

In Figures 1 and 2 we describe TNR enrollees by enrollment status and time since prior enrollment. The substantial majority of TNR students were already enrolled at the time of their TNR

³ TNR students are those who were eligible for TNR funding and enrolled in fall 2018 at a community college, even if other sources of aid covered their tuition and fees.

⁴ This group of likely-TNR eligible non-applicants includes all students enrolled at a community college in fall 2018 who were Tennessee residents over age 24 and had not previously earned an associate degree or higher. This group excludes students who are not degree seeking, who are seeking a technical certificate, or who are students taking a single course at a community college while enrolled and in good standing at another institution.

application (41.3 percent) or had prior postsecondary enrollment (43.9 percent) (Figure 1). Only 14.8% of TNR students were new enrollees. Among students who had prior enrollment but who were not enrolled at the time they completed the TNR application (the “reconnecting” category), the majority had multiple years of an enrollment gap since their last enrollment: 31.5 percent had last enrolled between two and six years prior, and 37.8 percent had last enrolled more than six years in the past (Figure 2). As we show in Table 5, the composition of TNR students is similar across prior enrollment status.

TNR aid received

In Table 6 we present the sources of financial aid received by TNR students, both overall and by prior enrollment status. Just under half of TNR students (46.8 percent) received a federal Pell Grant, and just under 20 percent (19.7 percent) received the need-based Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA) grant. As we describe earlier, 63 percent of TNR students received aid, with a mean TNR award amount of \$908. The share of students receiving Pell and TSAA grants was highest among new enrollees, with 65.7 and 28.7 percent doing so, respectively. While 67.9 percent of already enrolled students received aid through TNR, only 48.5 percent of students reconnecting after prior enrollment received aid. In the bottom panel of Table 6 we report sources of aid conditional on receiving financial support through TNR. A much smaller share of students receive a Pell (19.8 percent) or TSAA (0.8 percent) grant, which is consistent with earlier data we presented on the higher mean EFC among students receiving TNR financial support. The mean TNR grant amount is \$1,431. In the middle panel we compare aid sources for adults who likely would have been eligible but who did not apply for TNR. A substantially larger share of this

population (58.3 percent) received a Pell Grant, with particularly high rates of Pell receipt (85.5 percent) among new students.

Academic experience among TNR students

In Table 7 we examine the prior academic experiences for TNR students who were already enrolled or who had prior enrollment at the time of their TNR application. Among already enrolled students, the majority (66 percent) had earned at least 30 credits at the time of their application, with over half (51 percent) earning more than 40 credits. Reconnecting students had earned somewhat fewer credits in their prior enrollment, but over 40 percent had still earned 30 or more credits. The mean cumulative GPA for already enrolled students was 2.49 but was substantially lower for reconnecting students (1.92). In both populations over 70 percent of students were pursuing either Health or Humanities and Transfer programs at the time of their application.⁵ As we show in Table 8, most students who were already enrolled at the time of their TNR application stayed in the same program of study, with only 9.7 percent switching in the semester after they applied for TNR. Over 40 percent of these switches were from Humanities programs to Health programs, which was driven primarily by movement from pre-health programs into nursing programs and other selective allied health fields. But almost half (47.6 percent) of reconnecting students switched programs from their last enrollment. Interestingly, nearly 30 percent switched from Health in their prior enrollment to Humanities.

⁵ Academic focus areas are based on the two-digit federal CIP code family. Humanities and transfer programs are all coded using a single CIP code that signifies if a student is in any Associate of Arts or Associate of Science program (i.e., programs designed to transfer to a university). It may also be used for students who are undecided or are taking prerequisites before entering a selective health care program. The number of students moving from humanities to health programs includes students moving from pre-nursing to nursing.

In Table 9 we present Fall 2018 academic outcomes overall, by prior enrollment status, and for adults who were likely eligible for TNR but who did not apply. Across prior enrollment status, students attempt a similar number of credits, with an average credit load of 9.8. Already enrolled and new students completed most of the credits they attempted (9.0 and 9.3 respectively) but reconnecting students completed more than a full course less on average (8.5 credits). Adults students who did not apply but who likely would have been eligible for TNR attempted slightly fewer credits (8.9) and completed most of the credits they attempted (8.0). Fall 2018 GPA was very consistent across groups, with a mean of 2.8 for the overall TNR sample. In the bottom panel of the table we report the share of students that persisted into the Spring 2019 semester or that earned a degree or credential in the 2018-2019 academic year. Most TNR students persisted into Spring, with the highest rates of persistence among new students (81.6 percent) and slightly lower rates among reconnecting students (75.6 percent). Over 20 percent of already enrolled students earned a degree or credential, compared with only 5.7 percent of reconnecting students. Among likely-TNR eligible adult students, 62.8 percent persisted into the Spring and 16.0 percent earned a degree or credential.

Change in enrollment and academic performance before and after TNR

In the next several tables we examine changes in academic experiences for students before and after the introduction of TNR. In Figure 3 we present enrollment trends at Tennessee community colleges by prior enrollment status. New and reconnecting student enrollment had essentially been flat in the seven years leading up to the introduction of TNR and appears to have increased somewhat in Fall 2018. As a result, these populations account for a greater share of all adult enrollments at Tennessee community colleges (49.2 percent) than in prior years. This trend is

driven by a substantial increase in the number of Reconnecting and New Enrollee students between Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 (51 percent and 96 percent, respectively). The number of Already Enrolled students decreased by only 2 percent between Fall 2017 and Fall 2018, compared to a decline of 10% from fall 2016 to fall 2017.⁶

In Table 10 we compare Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 academic outcomes for already enrolled TNR students, both overall and by whether they received aid through TNR. We also present changes in academic performance over this time period for already enrolled adults who were likely eligible for TNR but who did not apply. Relative to Fall 2017, TNR students attempted and completed somewhat more credits in Fall 2018. Students who received TNR funding attempted 0.8 additional credits and completed 0.7 additional credits, while TNR students who did not receive funding attempted 0.4 additional credits and completed 0.2 additional credits. By comparison, likely-TNR eligible adults who did not apply both attempted and completed fewer credits over this time period (0.4 credits in both categories). Across all groups, GPA declined somewhat from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018. Regardless of funding received, TNR students' GPAs declined from 3.2 to 2.9 and likely-TNR eligible adults' GPAs declined from 3.0 to 2.8.

In Table 11 we compare the share of students completing at least six credits--the minimum amount required to maintain TNR eligibility--in Fall 2017 relative to Fall 2018. Across groups, the share of students earning at least six credits increases, with the largest increase among reconnecting students. 84.4 percent of reconnecting students completed at least six credits in Fall 2018 compared with 72.1 percent of reconnecting students in Fall 2017.

⁶ These numbers exclude enrollment from Pellissippi State Community College, where TNR launched a year early in Fall 2017.

Method of course delivery

In our final set of analyses, we investigate patterns in course delivery method (in-person vs. online) among TNR students. In Table 12 we present the share of enrollments by TNR students in fully online courses, conventional courses, or hybrid courses by prior enrollment status. Fully online participation is highest among reconnecting students (38.9 percent) and lowest among new students (25.5 percent). Almost 65 percent of course enrollments by new students were in conventional courses, as were 59.6 percent of course enrollments by already enrolled students. Across groups fewer than 10 percent of enrollments were in hybrid courses. In the bottom panel of the table we present the share of course enrollments resulting in a grade of “C” or higher by course delivery method. Across groups and delivery methods, TNR students received a “C” or higher in 76.4 percent of their course enrollments, with fairly consistent pass rates across prior enrollment status. For all groups of TNR students, course success rates are higher in conventional courses than in online courses. For instance, already enrolled students in all conventional courses earned at least a “C” in 81.3 percent of their courses, compared with 73.5 percent of already enrolled students in fully online courses. Reconnecting students in all conventional courses earned at least a “C” in 76.8 percent of their courses, compared with 68.1 percent of already enrolled students in fully online courses.

Intervention opportunities

As we discuss in the introduction, one of the primary goals of our descriptive analyses is to identify potential margins for intervention, either to encourage more adults in Tennessee to participate in the Reconnect program or to support current participants to successfully complete college and earn their degree.

One margin for potential intervention is to increase the share of TNR applicants who successfully enroll or re-enroll at a Tennessee community college. As we describe earlier, only 56 percent of adults who successfully complete the TNR application and who complete the FAFSA enrolled in the Fall 2018 semester. Some share of these students may have made active and informed decisions not to pursue postsecondary education, but others may have encountered informational or behavioral barriers that impeded them from following through on their intention to continue their education. We plan to conduct additional qualitative research with this population to understand the factors that contribute to successful applicants not enrolling, and anticipate that this qualitative research could inform proactive outreach strategies to support applicants with persistent college-going intentions to successfully enroll.

Another margin for intervention is to support TNR students—particularly those who received financial support through the program—to renew their TNR award. Like many financial aid programs, students need to re-apply for TNR on an annual basis. Among Fall 2018 TNR students, 52 percent re-applied for TNR for the 2019-2020 academic year (excluding graduates) and 43 percent both re-applied and re-enrolled in the Fall 2019 semester (based on preliminary data about re-application and enrollment). Some students may not be aware of the renewal requirement or may struggle to make a plan to complete the renewal application given competing demands in their lives. We will explore the factors that contribute to TNR students not renewing their application and design intervention strategies that support higher rates of renewal for students who intend to continue their education at a Tennessee community college.

A third margin for intervention is to encourage likely-eligible students who are already enrolled at Tennessee community college to apply for TNR (there were ~7,000 such students enrolled in Fall

2018). Similar to TNR students who did not renew their award, likely-eligible students who did not apply may not have been aware of TNR or may not have believed they would be eligible. We will explore factors that led likely-eligible students not to apply and will explore intervention design as appropriate.

Conclusion

Increasing degree completion among adults is an integral component of many states' strategies to achieve postsecondary attainment goals. Numerous states have recently started or are considering grant programs focused specifically on increasing college affordability for adult state residents. We present the first descriptive analyses of which we are aware on one such grant program, Tennessee Reconnect. We find that TNR attracted tens of thousands of applications in its first year, well more than policy makers in the state anticipated. Well under half of these students successfully matriculated in the next academic year, suggesting opportunities to support adults who have intentions and have taken action to continue their education to successfully do so. TNR students are comprised mainly of already enrolled students continuing their education and reconnecting students for whom, in many cases, several years have elapsed since their last enrollment. Reconnecting students complete a smaller share of courses they take and tend to enroll more frequently in fully online courses, suggesting that these students may benefit from additional academic support. We offer several ideas for intervention strategies that could support more adults in Tennessee to participate in the Reconnect program or that could support current participants to successfully complete college and earn their degree.

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Table 1: Educational Attainment in Tennessee

	Population 25 years and over		Population ages 25 to 64	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Number	4,527,198		3,518,053	
Number without Associate Degree or Higher	3,015,748	66.6%	2,226,863	63.3%
<i>Educational Attainment</i>				
Less than 9th Grade	216,289	4.8%	120,239	3.4%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	374,024	8.3%	249,247	7.1%
High School Graduate (includes Equivalency)	1,465,937	32.4%	1,110,524	31.6%
Some College, No Degree	959,498	21.2%	746,853	21.2%
Associate Degree	328,595	7.3%	282,258	8.0%
Bachelor's Degree	756,055	16.7%	651,459	18.5%
Graduate or Professional Degree	426,800	9.4%	357,473	10.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 2: Tennessee Reconnect Applicants in 2018

	Completed a TNR Application	TNR Application + FAFSA	TNR Applicants + FAFSA + Enrolled in Fall 2018	TNR Students in Fall 2018	TNR Students in Fall 2018 Who Received TNR Funding
Number of Applicants	34,353	27,958	15,596	13,848	8,726
% of Applicants	--	81.4%	45.4%	40.3%	25.4%
<i>Demographics</i>					
Average Age	33.5	33.3	33.3	34.0	34.8
Average EFC	--	\$5,669	\$6,152	\$6,098	\$9,173
EFC = \$0		43.8%	40.1%	39.7%	18.6%
Female	--	--	70.1%	70.2%	66.4%
Black or African American	--	--	21.1%	19.9%	17.3%
Hispanic	--	--	4.4%	4.3%	3.9%
White	--	--	69.6%	71.2%	74.3%
Other race	--	--	4.9%	4.7%	4.5%

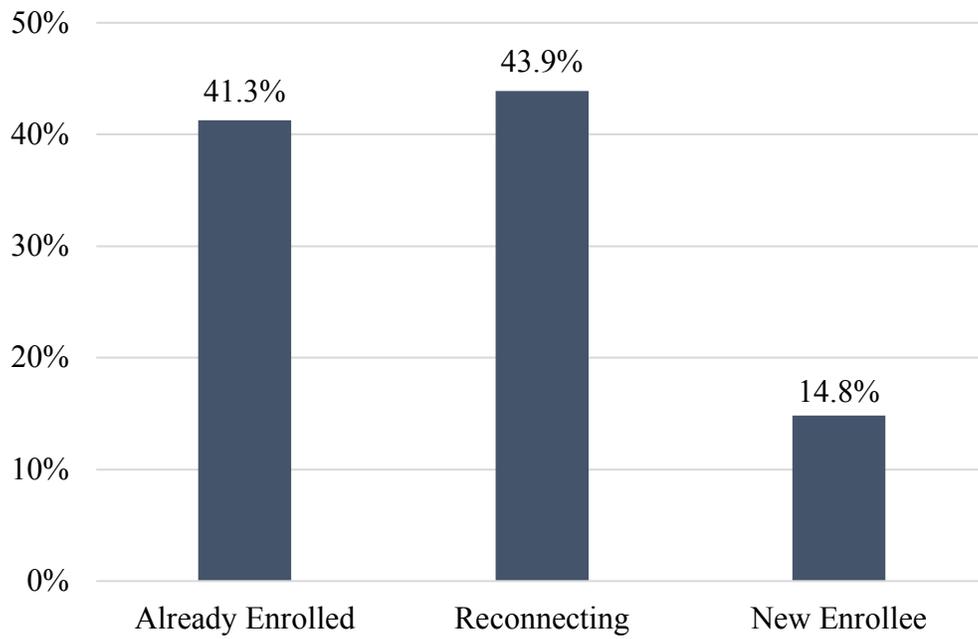
Note: Applicant and payment data are current as of August 2019. Because the TNR application is available on a rolling cycle, it may be the case that some applicants intended to enroll in the spring and summer 2019 terms. The number of TNR applicants who filed the FAFSA excludes students who filed the FAFSA after December 31, 2018. TNR Students are those who were eligible for TNR funding and enrolled in fall 2018 at a community college, even if other sources of aid covered their tuition and fees. Age is based on the time of application, not the time of enrollment. EFC is based on data reported from the FAFSA application.

Table 3: Students Enrolled in Fall 2018 at a Tennessee Community College

	Non-Applicant Adult Students	TNR Students in Fall 2018
Number of Students	6,764	13,848
<i>Demographics</i>		
Average Age	34.1	34.0
Female	63.6%	70.2%
Black or African American	24.7%	19.9%
Hispanic	5.2%	4.3%
White	63.4%	71.2%
Other race	6.7%	4.7%
Received Pell Grant	58.3%	46.8%

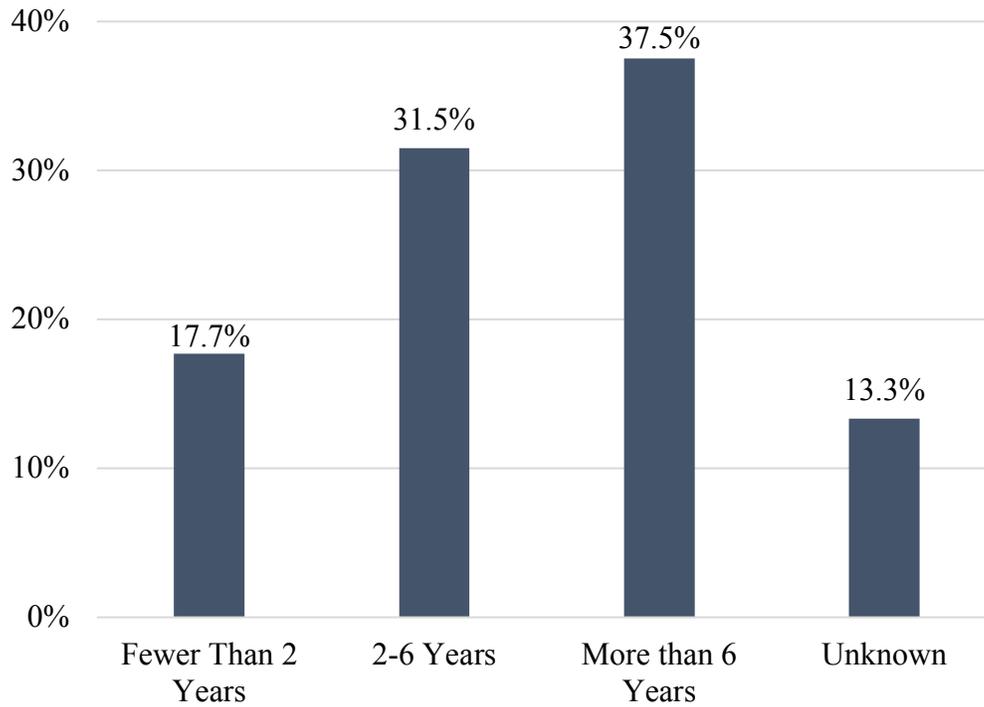
Note: Applicant data are current as of August 2019. TNR Students are those who were eligible for TNR funding and enrolled in fall 2018, even if other sources of aid covered their tuition and fees. TNR-eligible non-applicants includes all students enrolled at a community college in fall 2018 who were Tennessee residents over age 24 and had not previously earned an associate degree or higher, using data from the National Student Clearinghouse. TNR-eligible non-applicants exclude students who are non-degree seeking, who are seeking a technical certificate, or who are transient students taking a single course at a community college while enrolled and in good standing at another institution.

Figure 1: Tennessee Reconnect Students by Prior Enrollment Status



Note: Student enrollment designations are reported by colleges. Already enrolled students are those who were enrolled at that institution during the preceding semester (spring 2018 or summer 2018). Reconnecting students are those who have enrolled at some point in the past but are returning to college after at least a semester away. New enrollees are students enrolling as first-time freshmen.

Figure 2: Reconnecting Students by Years Since Last Enrollment



Note: Prior enrollment histories are calculated using data from the National Student Clearinghouse. Reconnecting students are those who have enrolled at some point in the past but are returning to college after at least a semester away.

Table 5: Tennessee Reconnect Students by Prior Enrollment Status

	Already Enrolled	Reconnecting	New Enrollee
N	5,713	6,080	2,055
% of TNR Students	41.3%	43.9%	14.8%
<i>Demographics</i>			
Average Age	33.6	34.3	34.2
Average EFC	\$6,394	\$5,987	\$5,603
EFC = \$0	36.0%	41.8%	43.8%
Female	70.3%	70.9%	67.7%
Black or African American	18.0%	22.6%	17.4%
Hispanic	4.6%	3.2%	6.5%
White	72.3%	70.1%	71.1%
Other Race	5.1%	4.1%	5.0%

Note: Student enrollment designations are collected by colleges. Age is based on the time of enrollment.

Table 5b: Students Who Did Not Apply for TNR but Were Likely Eligible

	Already Enrolled	Reconnecting	New Enrollee
N	4,604	1,574	586
% of Non-Applicants	68.0%	23.3%	8.7%
<i>Demographics</i>			
Average Age	34.5	33.8	32.7
Female	63.1%	64.4%	65.7%
Black or African American	23.1%	26.6%	32.9%
Hispanic	5.4%	4.4%	5.8%
White	64.8%	62.8%	54.1%
Other Race	6.8%	6.2%	7.2%

Note: TNR-eligible non-applicants includes all students enrolled at a community college in fall 2018 who were over age 24 and had not previously earned an associate degree or higher, using data from the National Student Clearinghouse. TNR-eligible non-applicants exclude students who non-degree seeking, seeking a technical certificate, or transient students taking a single course at a community college while enrolled and in good standing at another institution.

Table 6: Tennessee Reconnect Students and Other Sources of Aid

	% Receiving Pell Grant	% Receiving TSAA Grant	% Receiving Aid from TNR	Average TNR \$ Received
<i>All TNR Students</i>	46.8%	19.7%	63.0%	\$908
Already Enrolled	47.4%	20.4%	67.9%	\$904
Reconnecting	40.0%	15.9%	48.5%	\$983
New Enrollee	65.7%	28.7%	63.0%	\$656
	% Receiving Pell Grant	% Receiving TSAA Grant	% Receiving Aid from TNR	Average TNR \$ Received
<i>Non-Applicant Adult Students</i>	58.3%	26.0%	--	--
Already Enrolled	57.4%	15.6%	--	--
Reconnecting	50.8%	29.9%	--	--
New Enrollee	85.5%	23.9%	--	--
	% Receiving Pell Grant	% Receiving TSAA Grant	% Receiving Aid from TNR	Average TNR \$ Received
<i>TNR Students Who Received TNR Funding</i>	19.8%	0.8%	100.0%	\$1,431
Already Enrolled	22.2%	*	100.0%	\$1,433
Reconnecting	14.8%	*	100.0%	\$1,448
New Enrollee	32.1%	*	100.0%	\$1,353

Note: Data represents the percent of students receiving aid in fall 2018 from the federal Pell grant, the need-based Tennessee Student Assistance Award, or aid from Tennessee Reconnect. *Groups of fewer than 10 students are excluded to protect student privacy.

Table 7: Prior Academic Experiences of Tennessee Reconnect Students

	Already Enrolled	Reconnecting
<i>Prior Credits Earned</i>		
0-10 Credit Hours	5.8%	21.6%
11-20 Credit Hours	12.9%	18.2%
21-30 Credit Hours	15.4%	16.8%
31-40 Credit Hours	15.0%	13.0%
41+ Credit Hours	51.0%	30.4%
Cumulative GPA	2.49	1.92
<i>Academic Focus Area</i>		
Applied Technology	0.4%	1.0%
Arts	1.8%	1.4%
Business	11.0%	8.2%
Education	3.7%	4.4%
Health	19.4%	28.4%
Humanities and Transfer Programs	52.6%	50.5%
STEM	9.0%	3.4%
Social Sciences	2.0%	2.8%

Note: Prior credits includes the cumulative number of credits earned at any institution prior to fall 2018. Cumulative GPA includes credits earned at the current institution and credits transferred prior to fall 2018. In this case, reconnecting students includes only students with prior enrollment at a TBR community college, which represents 48% of all reconnecting TNR students. Academic focus areas are groups of academic programs defined by federal CIP codes. This excludes students with no declared major.

Table 8: Tennessee Reconnect Students in Fall 2018 By Academic Focus Area

	All TNR Students	Already Enrolled	Reconnecting	New Enrollee
Applied Technology	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%	*
Arts	1.84%	1.8%	2.0%	1.6%
Business	12.1%	10.7%	12.4%	15.2%
Education	3.7%	3.6%	3.8%	3.2%
Health	17.9%	22.6%	15.8%	10.9%
Humanities and Transfer Programs	53.3%	49.8%	55.5%	53.3%
Social Sciences	8.5%	9.1%	7.5%	9.9%
STEM	2.3%	1.9%	2.6%	2.7%
<i>Changed Focus Area since Prior Enrollment</i>				
Total	--	9.7%	47.6%	--
Number	--	523	1,334	--
From Business to Humanities	--	8.0%	5.7%	--
From Health to Humanities	--	13.0%	29.8%	--
From Humanities to Business	--	7.5%	8.9%	--
From Humanities to Health	--	41.5%	11.6%	--
From Humanities to STEM	--	6.5%	6.1%	--
Other Changes	--	23.5%	37.9%	--

Note: Includes all TNR students who were enrolled in fall 2018. Academic focus areas are groups of academic programs defined by federal CIP codes. This Excludes students with no declared major. The percent of students who changed their focus area refers only to students with prior enrollment at a TBR community college, which represents 48% of all reconnecting TNR students. Academic focus areas are groups of academic programs defined by federal CIP codes.

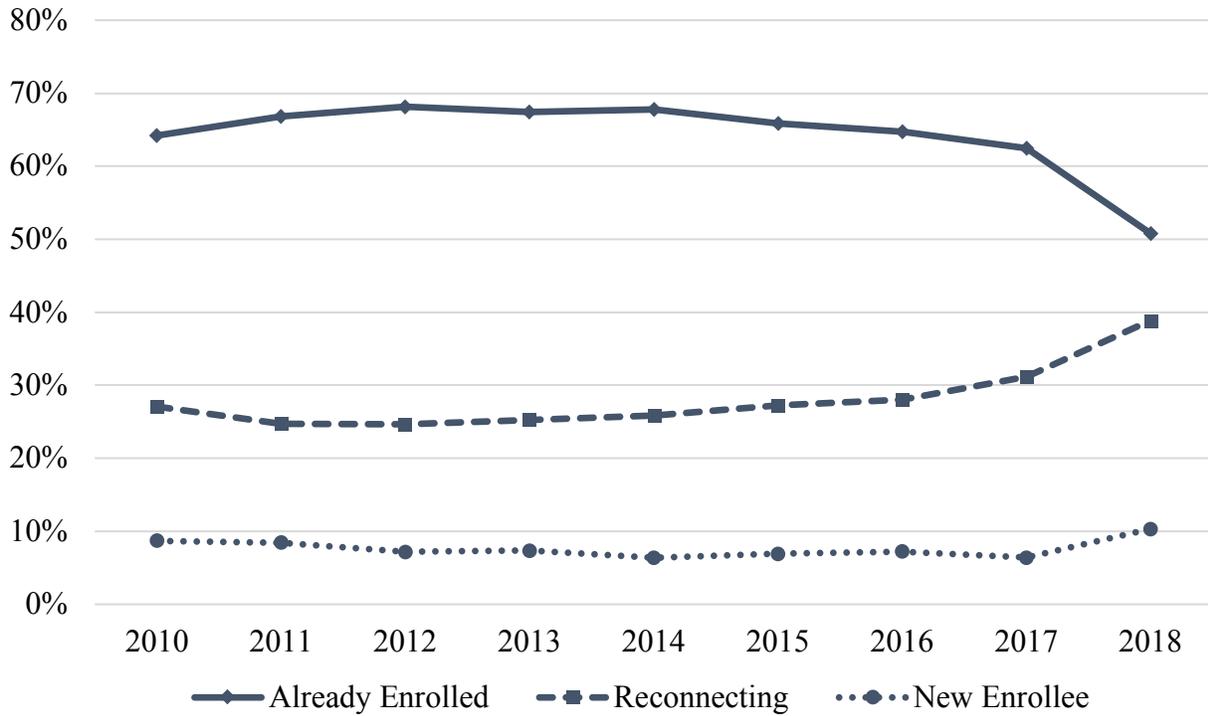
*Groups of fewer than 10 students are excluded to protect student privacy.

Table 9: Outcomes for Tennessee Reconnect Students in Fall 2018

	All TNR Students	Already Enrolled	Reconnecting	New Enrollee	Non- Applicant Adult Students
<i>Credits Attempted in Term</i>					
Average Credits Attempted	9.8	9.9	9.5	10.4	8.9
1-6 Credits	24.5%	19.5%	29.3%	24.2%	34.1%
7-11 Credits	36.7%	44.2%	34.1%	24.0%	30.5%
12+ Credits	38.8%	36.3%	36.7%	51.8%	35.3%
<i>Credits Earned in Term</i>					
Average Credits Earned	8.8	9.0	8.5	9.3	8.0
1-6 Credits	34.3%	28.7%	40.2%	33.4%	43.3%
7-11 Credits	37.0%	43.4%	33.8%	28.1%	31.2%
12+ Credits	28.7%	27.9%	26.0%	38.5%	25.5%
<i>Term GPA</i>					
Average Term GPA	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.6
0.0-1.0	12.9%	10.3%	15.1%	14.1%	17.4%
1.1-2.0	10.6%	12.6%	9.4%	8.5%	12.9%
2.1-3.0	23.2%	27.6%	21.3%	16.3%	25.9%
3.1-4.0	53.3%	49.6%	54.2%	61.1%	43.8%
<i>Retention and Graduation</i>					
Returned in Spring 2019	78.1%	79.4%	75.6%	81.6%	62.8%
Graduated in 2018-2019	11.5%	21.8%	5.7%	*	16.0%

Note: Includes all TNR students who were enrolled in fall 2018. Credit hours include all credit hours attempted and earned during the fall term, including college-level hours and remedial hours. This excludes students where credit hour and GPA information are missing. Graduates include students who earned an associate degree or technical certificate in fall 2018 or spring 2019. *Groups of fewer than 10 students are excluded to protect student privacy.

Figure 3: Adult Enrollment at Tennessee Community Colleges Each Fall



Note: Adult enrollment is based on the headcount of students age 25 and over at community colleges in the fall term of each year. Excludes Pellissippi State Community College, where Tennessee Reconnect launched a year early in fall 2017.

Table 10: Already Enrolled Students: Fall 2017 to Fall 2018

	TNR Students		Received TNR Funding		TNR Students who Did Not Receive Funding		Non-Applicant Adult Students	
	<i>Fall 2017</i>	<i>Fall 2018</i>	<i>Fall 2017</i>	<i>Fall 2018</i>	<i>Fall 2017</i>	<i>Fall 2018</i>	<i>Fall 2017</i>	<i>Fall 2018</i>
Already Enrolled Students								
<i>Credits Attempted in Term</i>								
Average Credits Attempted	9.2	9.9	8.9	9.7	9.7	10.1	9.2	8.8
1-6 Credits	28.7%	19.3%	31.2%	19.6%	24.2%	18.9%	30.8%	33.7%
7-11 Credits	37.6%	44.7%	39.5%	47.9%	34.2%	39.0%	31.8%	35.5%
12+ Credits	33.7%	36.0%	29.3%	32.5%	41.7%	42.1%	37.4%	30.8%
<i>Credits Earned in Term</i>								
Average Credits Earned	8.6	9.1	8.3	9.0	9.0	9.2	8.4	8.0
1-6 Credits	35.0%	28.0%	37.3%	28.0%	30.8%	28.0%	38.6%	41.3%
7-11 Credits	39.1%	43.4%	40.7%	45.5%	36.4%	39.5%	32.7%	34.8%
12+ Credits	25.9%	28.6%	22.0%	26.5%	32.8%	32.5%	28.7%	23.9%
<i>Term GPA</i>								
Average Term GPA	3.2	2.9	3.2	2.9	3.1	2.8	3.0	2.8
0-1.0	4.9%	9.6%	5.0%	8.8%	4.8%	10.9%	6.5%	12.8%
1.1-2.0	9.2%	12.4%	8.3%	11.5%	10.7%	13.9%	11.9%	13.9%
2.1-3.0	24.9%	28.4%	24.8%	27.8%	25.0%	29.4%	27.5%	28.7%
3.1-4.0	61.1%	49.6%	62.0%	51.8%	59.5%	45.7%	54.1%	44.6%
Number of Students		3,873		2,483		1,391		3,391

Note: Includes all TNR students who were enrolled in fall 2017 and fall 2018. Credit hours include all credit hours attempted and earned during the fall term, including college-level hours and remedial hours. Excludes students where credit hour and GPA information are missing.

Table 11: Adults at Community Colleges Attempting At least Six Credit Hours

	Fall 2017	Fall 2018
Already Enrolled	79.2%	82.1%
Reconnecting	72.1%	84.4%
New Enrollee	94.1%	96.7%
All Adult Students	77.9%	84.5%

Note: Enrollment of students age 25 and over at community colleges in the fall term of each year. Excludes Pellissippi State, where Tennessee Reconnect launched a year early in fall 2017.

Table 12: Coursetaking by Delivery Method in Fall 2018

Percent of Course Enrollments	All TNR Students	Already Enrolled	Reconnecting	New Enrollee
Online Method of Instruction	33.4%	30.6%	38.9%	25.5%
Conventional Method of Instruction	57.1%	59.6%	52.1%	64.7%
Hybrid Method of Instruction	5.5%	5.5%	5.4%	5.5%
Other Method of Instruction	4.0%	4.2%	3.7%	4.3%

Course Success Rate	All TNR Students	Already Enrolled	Reconnecting	New Enrollee
Online Method of Instruction	70.7%	73.5%	68.1%	70.2%
Conventional Method of Instruction	79.1%	81.3%	76.8%	79.0%
Hybrid Method of Instruction	80.6%	83.5%	79.0%	76.6%
Other Method of Instruction	82.3%	84.2%	82.0%	78.9%
All Types of Courses	76.4%	79.1%	73.7%	76.6%

Note: Online courses include courses taken through institutional online offerings and TN eCampus, a systemwide collaborative market for online courses. Conventional courses are offered in-person. Hybrid courses combine in-person instruction and online instruction. Other methods of instruction include clinical instruction and interactive media courses. Coursetaking is weighted by credit hour and includes only those courses taken for a standard letter grade. Course success includes courses for which students received a grade of A, B, C.