

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Education
Belk Center for Community College
Leadership and Research



THE 5P FRAMEWORK: BRAIDING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS
Supporting Adult Learners, Veterans and Continuing Education Students

SPEAKERS



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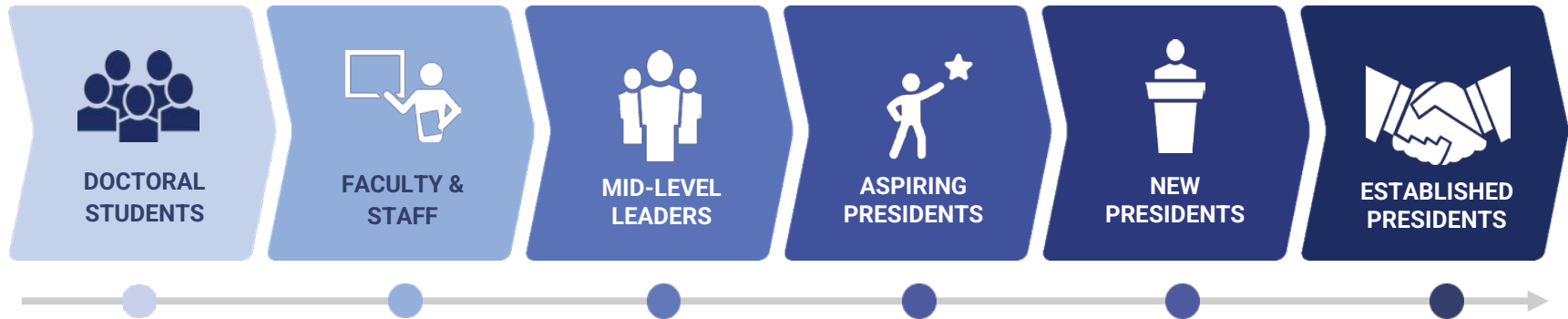
OUR MISSION

As a **trusted resource** for North Carolina's community college leaders, the Belk Center delivers actionable research and tailored leadership programming to advance college and student success.



WHO WE SUPPORT

Through our research and leadership programming, we engage leaders along and throughout **North Carolina's community college leadership pipeline...**



...including **instructional** leaders, **academic and administrative** leaders, and **executive** leaders.

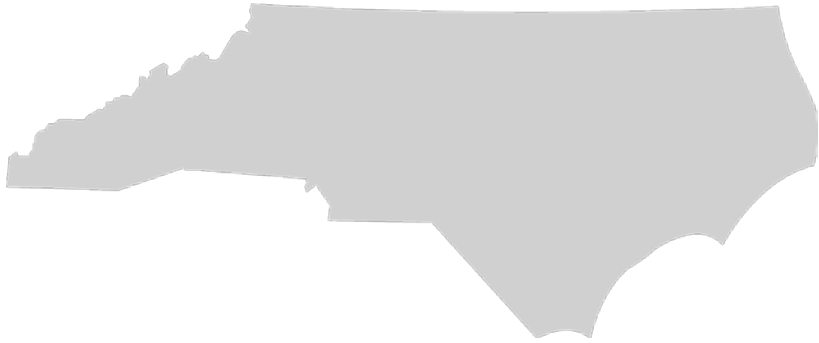
WHAT WE DO

Our research helps leaders understand key student success issues, make data-informed decisions, and take action grounded in evidence.



Our leadership programming mobilizes groups of leaders in similar roles or institutional contexts and guides them in evolving their practices to improve student success.

THE NORTH CAROLINA LANDSCAPE



North Carolina's Community College Students: Today's learners, tomorrow's workforce and those we've lost along the way.

Adult learners, veterans and "some college, no credential" students represent a critical opportunity

POPULATION TRENDS IN NORTH CAROLINA

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 10,441,499

2024 Estimate: 11,046,024

Change: 604,525

Growth Rate

5.8%

Race/Ethnicity

Amer. Indian | **0.8%**

Asian/Pac Isl. | **3.6%**

Black | **19.5%**

Hispanic | **12%**

Multiracial | **4.6%**

White | **59%**

POPULATION TRENDS



\$74,055

Median
Household
Income (2024)



66.8%

Home Owners
(2024)



77.8%

Households
with Broadband
(2024)



16.5%

Child Poverty
Rate (2024)



17.0%

Single Parent
Household
(2024)



9.9%

Foreign Born
(2024)

Takeaways

- More homeowners may mean more long-term residents.
- Less access to broadband should mean this is a key talking point with all students.
- Higher child poverty rates means our practices and policies should support parenting students.
- Each county has a unique population, meaning the practices and approaches should reflect the needs of the students – to meet them where they are.

EDUCATION TRENDS

Educational Attainment

North Carolina residents ages 25-44 (2024)



Have a Degree or Certificate

1,722,433

58.7%



No Degree

1,211,934

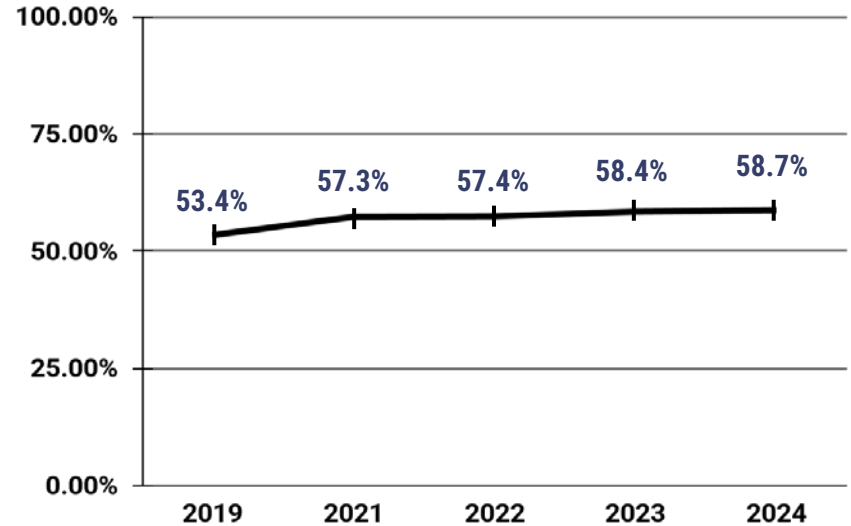
41.3%



Residents Ages 25-44

2,934,367

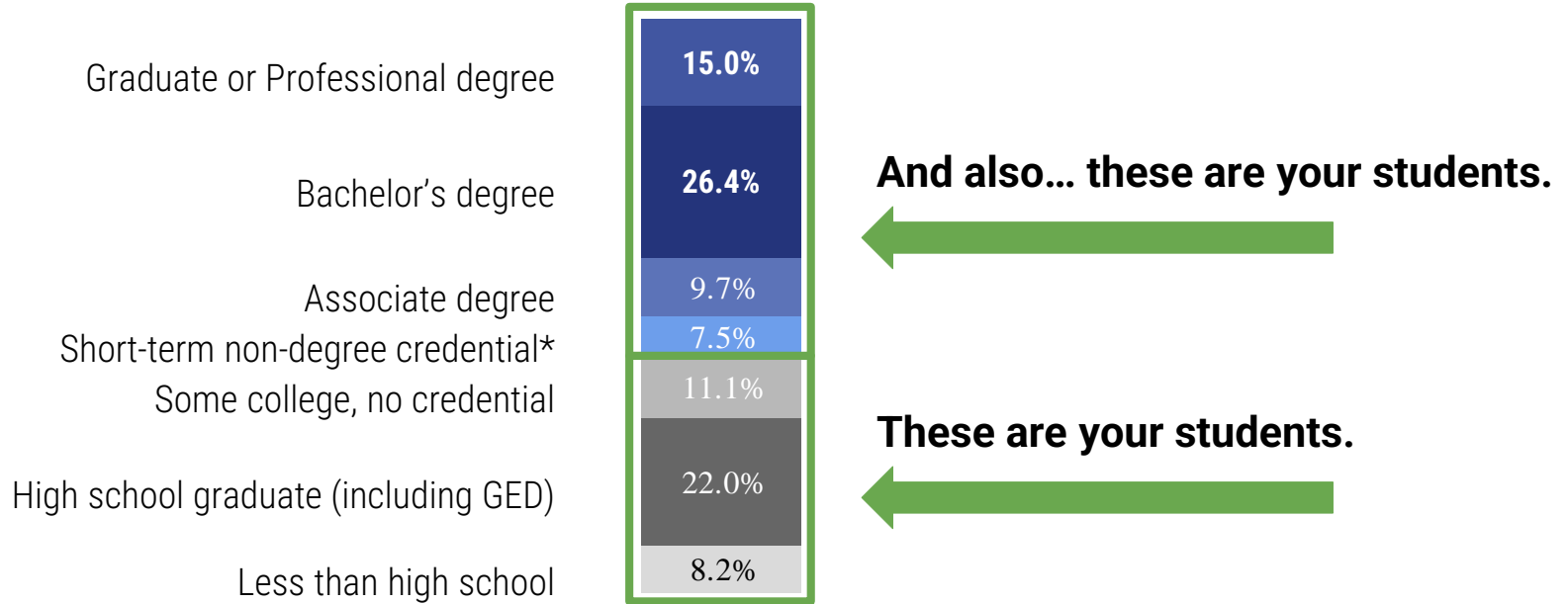
Educational Attainment Trend



Note: 2020 data not shown due to inconsistency

EDUCATION TRENDS

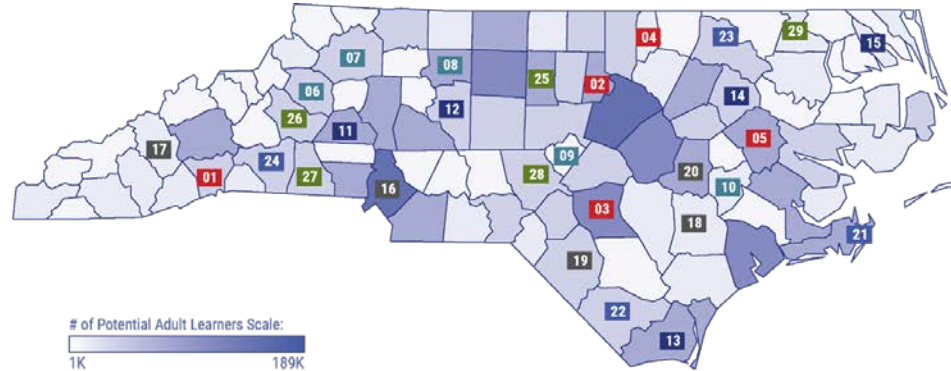
Educational Level Breakdown (2024)



*ACS excludes non-degree credentials, a 7.5% estimate is used for all counties.

NC RECONNECT ACROSS THE STATE

Since 2021, NC Reconnect has grown to 29 community colleges in six cohorts across North Carolina. Colleges are initiated in cohorts of five colleges each to build a scalable and sustainable statewide re-enrollment effort specifically for adult learners with some college but no credential.



COHORT ONE	COHORT TWO	COHORT THREE	COHORT FOUR	COHORT FIVE	COHORT SIX
01 BlueRidge	06 cccati	11 CATAWBA VALLEY	16 CENTRAL PIEDMONT	21 CARTERET	25 ALABARGE
02 DURHAM TECH	07 WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE	12 Davidson-Davie	17 HCC	22 Southeastern	26 WESTERN PIEDMONT
03 FITC	08 Forsyth Tech	13 BRUNSWICK	18 James Sprunt	23 Halifax	27 CLEVELAND
04 Vance-Granville	09 CENTRAL CAROLINA	14 Edgecombe	19 ROBESON	24 SOTHERMAL	28 Sandhills
05 PITT	10 LENOIR	15 COLLEGE OF ALBEMARLE	20 WAYNE		29 ROANOKE-CHowan

NC RECONNECT

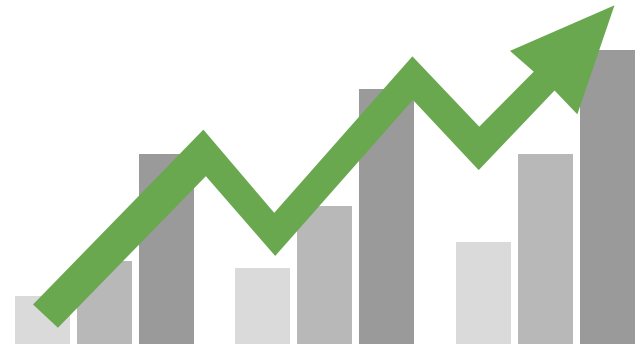
COHORT ONE

SUCCESS



\$20,700

Annual median wage increase for adult learners who returned to college and completed a continuing education course



\$17,100

Annual median wage increase for adult learners who returned to college and completed a CTE course

WHY BRAIDING RESOURCES MATTERS

- Student success depends on aligned systems
- Braided resources reduce barriers and improve completion
- Financial aid is a student success strategy

THREE CRITICAL PRIORITIES

Personalized Supports

- Meeting students where they are
- Beyond one-size-fits-all support
- Designed for adult and veteran learners

Credentials of Value

- Programs aligned to labor market demand
- Credentials that lead to family-sustaining wages
- Clear return on educational investment

Shorter Time to Degree

- Faster, more efficient pathways
- Stackable credentials and compressed terms
- Reducing time = reducing cost barriers

THE FIVE P FRAMEWORK FOR ADULT LEARNER SUCCESS

A roadmap for braiding resources to support adult learners

1

PUBLIC MESSAGING MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Community colleges are creating personalized marketing and communications to adult learners that highlight specific programs, align with institutional priorities, and emphasize the value of a free or low-cost community college education.



2

PARTNERSHIPS COLLABORATION

Community colleges intentionally collaborate with external partners – including employers, faith-based organizations, government agencies and funders – to expand resources and support for adult learners. College departments and units also partner internally to refer students to resources offered at the college, like scholarships, food pantries, counseling and transportation tokens.



3

PROCESSES SHIFTING THE APPROACH

Community colleges are streamlining and revising processes and policies to reduce barriers (i.e., financial, caregiving, transportation, housing, etc.) to enrollment and retention for adult learners, enhancing efficiency across the entire student experience – from application to advising to graduation.



4

PATHWAYS ACADEMIC AND CAREER ADVISING

Community colleges are designing clear, structured academic and career pathways – especially between continuing education and curriculum programs – that align with labor market needs, helping adult learners navigate their educational journeys more efficiently, reducing time to degree and connecting their programs to high-wage career opportunities.



5

PROXIMITY TO ACCESS AND COMPLETION

Community colleges are strengthening support for adult learners by creating dedicated campus spaces, clearly mapping out the time and steps needed to earn a degree or credential, and fostering meaningful connections between adult learners, faculty and staff. These efforts help adult learners feel more connected, supported and closer to reaching their educational goals.





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THANK YOU!



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