

# Reconnecting Adult Learners

**Elizabeth Cox Brand, PhD**  
**Director, Student Success Center**  
**Oregon Community College Association**

# Changing Demographics



## “Enrollment Cliff(s)”

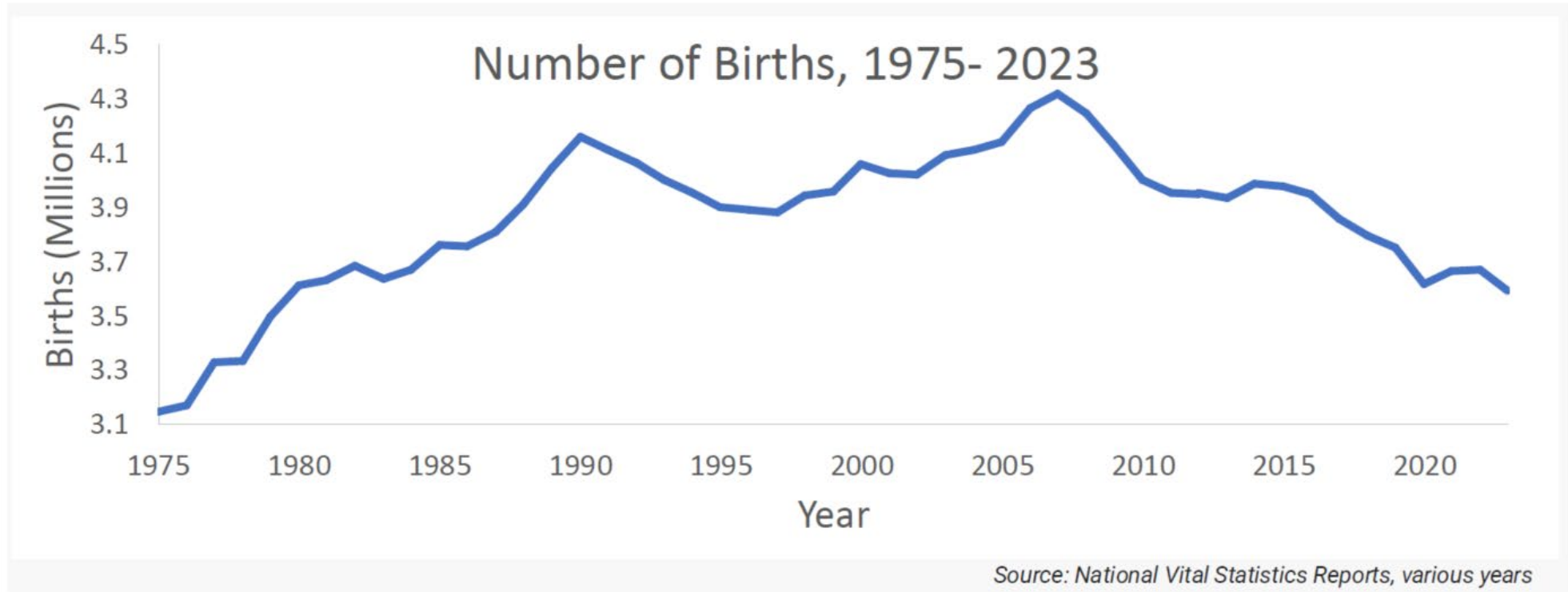


## Job Requirements

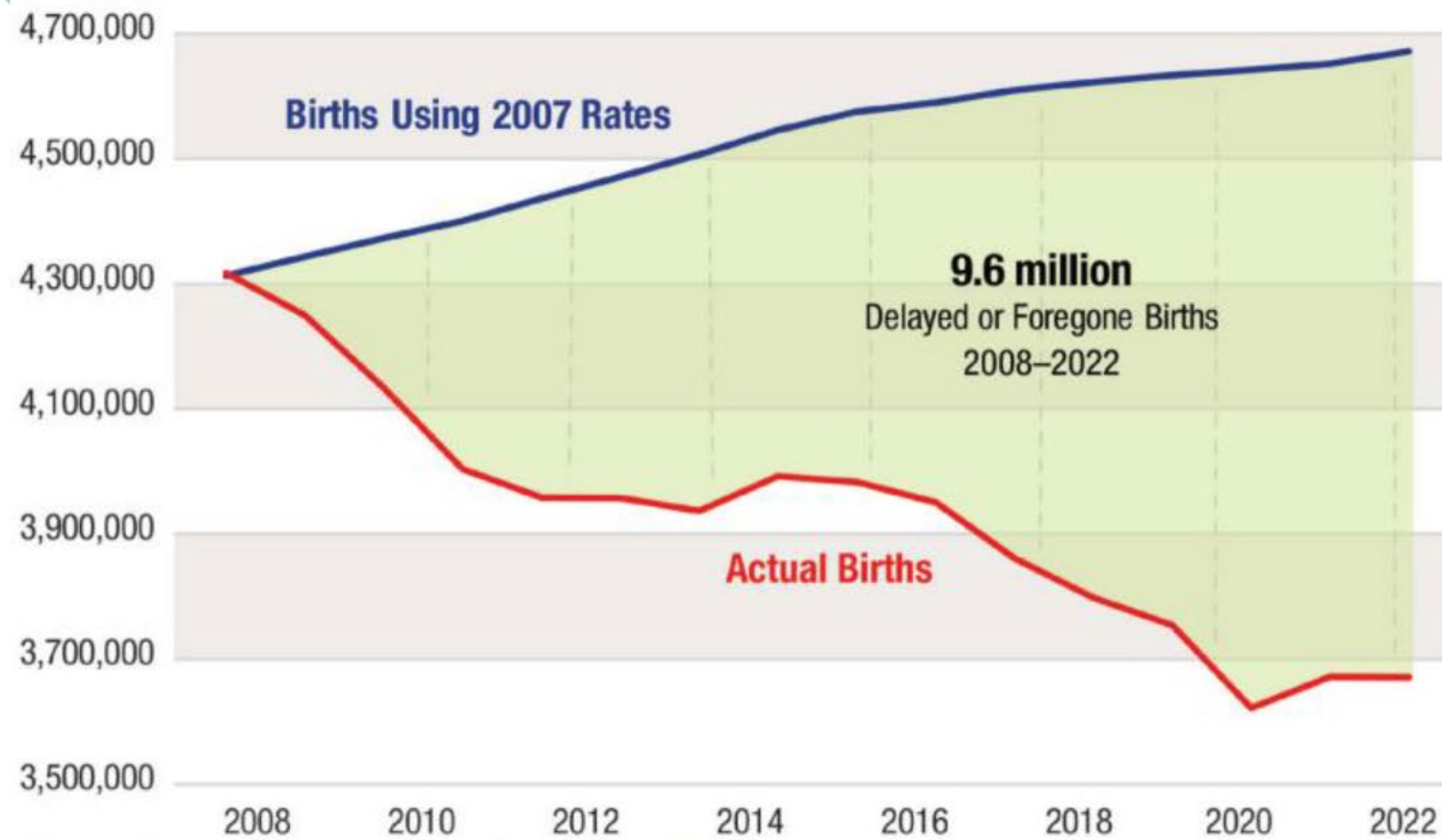
# | Changing Demographics

# History of US Births

In 2023, births reached a 44-year low



## ACTUAL BIRTHS PER YEAR COMPARED TO BIRTHS USING 2007 BIRTH RATES, 2007 TO 2022

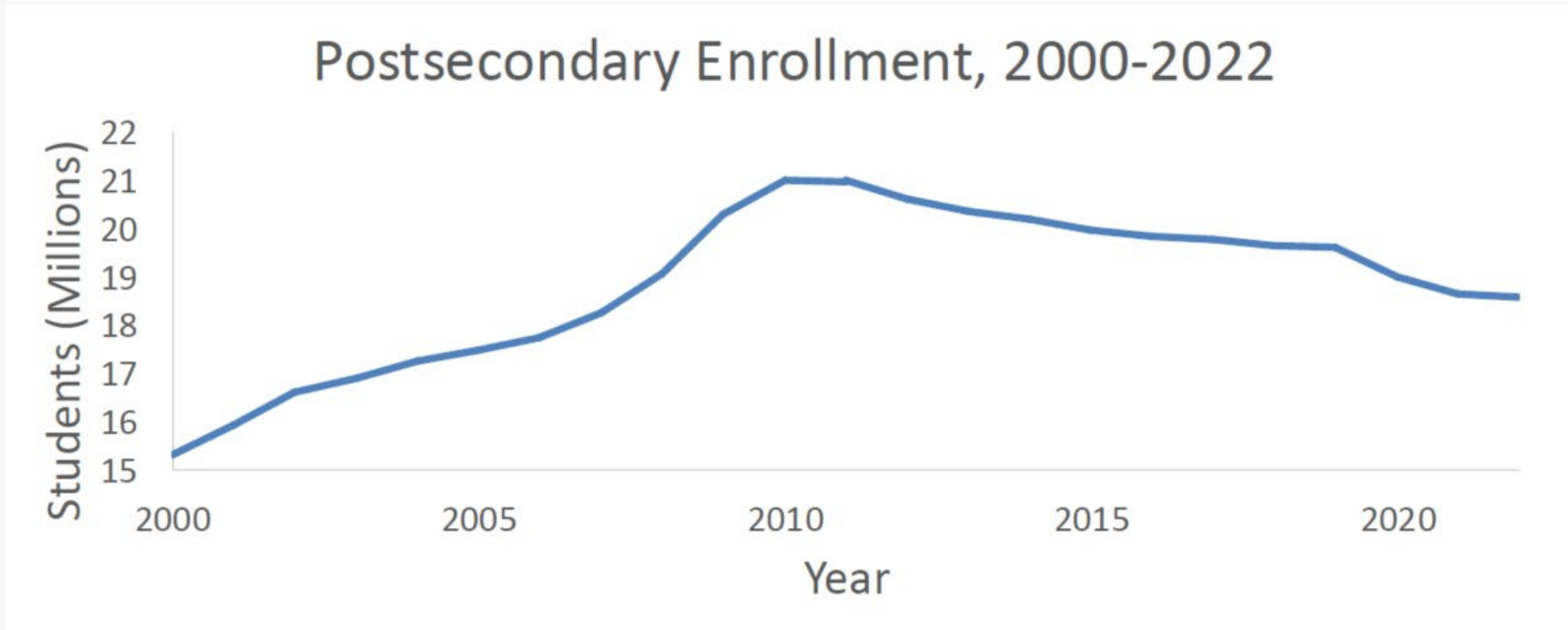


Source: National Center for Health Statistics, 2023

# | “Enrollment Cliff(s)”

# Enrollment Decline

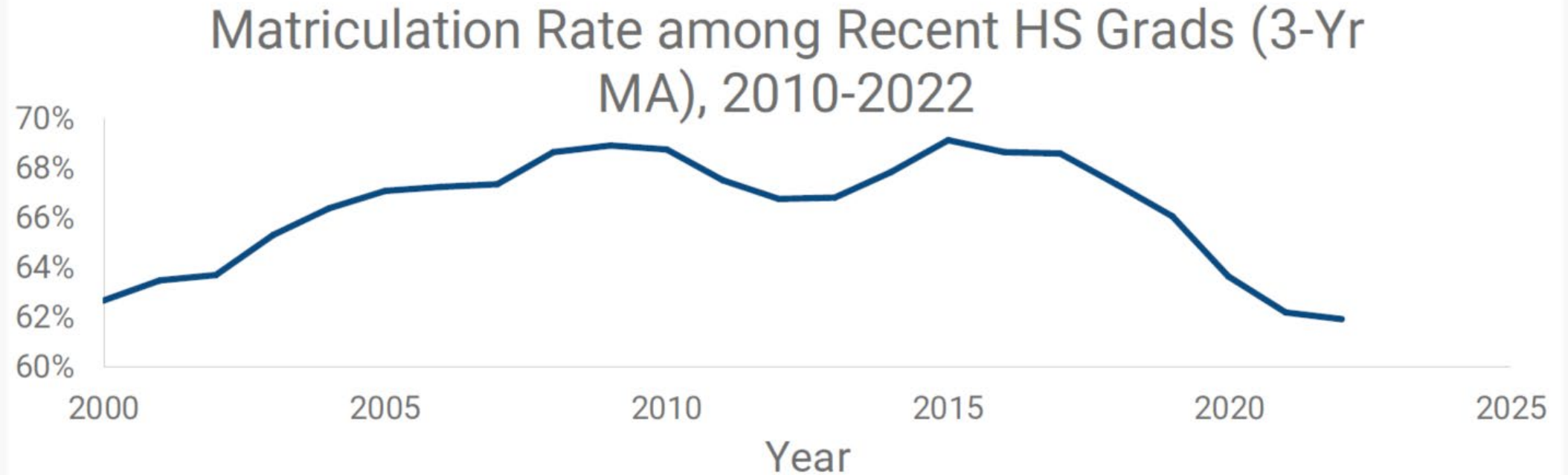
## Great Recession and beyond



Source: Digest of Education Statistics (2023)

# Enrollment Decline

## Lower matriculation rate, not demographics



Source: Digest of Education Statistics (2023)



# | Job Requirements

# The Future of Jobs



# 70%

of jobs in Oregon will  
require some level of  
post-secondary education  
and/or training by 2031

**Opportunities to  
meet Oregon's  
employment  
needs and  
continue to build  
our economy**

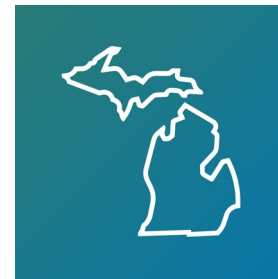
**OVER 700,000  
OREGONIANS**

**AGE 25-64 HAVE SOME COLLEGE,  
NO DEGREE**

**Community Colleges  
can help**



**COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE  
RECONNECT**



Michigan Reconnect





**NC STATE UNIVERSITY**

College of Education  
Belk Center for Community College  
Leadership and Research

# NC Reconnect: The Strategy & Results

*Dr. Audrey J. Jaeger, W. Dallas Herring  
Distinguished Professor of Community  
College Education & Executive Director, Belk  
Center*

*Dr. Sarah A. Deal, Director of Research, Belk  
Center & Adjunct Assistant Professor*





# The Belk Center



## RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

Actionable tools and frameworks,  
grounded in North Carolina's  
realities, for higher education  
leaders and institutions



## LEADERSHIP & LEARNING

Programs and contextualized supports  
empowering leaders and institutions to  
meet evolving needs of their students,  
colleges and communities



## PARTNERSHIPS & CONVENINGS

Collaborative initiatives  
advancing equitable outcomes  
for historically underserved  
populations in higher education

# Convene. Create. Catalyze.

# Adult learners are a key component of reaching state attainment goals



North Carolina gap toward 2030 goals:

**444k**

**more college graduates needed**

Like most states, North Carolina has a gap between what we need to grow economically, and current attainment levels.

# NC Reconnect: Program Overview

Pilot project began with Cohort 1 of 5 community colleges in 2021 driving toward Fall '21.  
The John M Belk Endowment is not only the funder but remains involved with the project in supporting each school.

## Five Cohorts of 4-5 Schools (2021–2025)

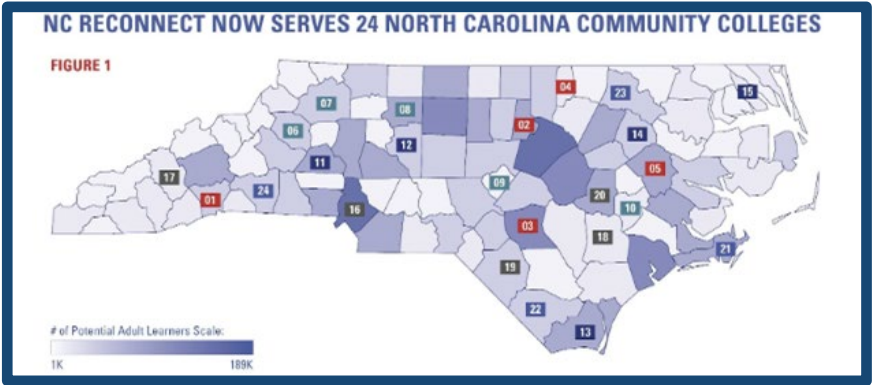
*Total of 24 out of 58 community colleges across the state*

<b>COHORT 1:</b>	<i>Blue Ridge CC, Durham Tech, Fayetteville Tech, Pitt CC, Vance Granville</i>
<b>COHORT 2:</b>	<i>Wilkes CC, Lenoir CC, Forsyth Tech, Central Carolina CC, Caldwell Community &amp; Tech Institute</i>
<b>COHORT 3:</b>	<i>Brunswick CC, College of the Albemarle, Davidson Davie CC, Catawba Valley CC, Edgecombe CC</i>
<b>COHORT 4:</b>	<i>Central Piedmont CC, James Sprunt CC, Haywood CC, Robeson CC, Wayne CC</i>
<b>COHORT 5:</b>	<i>Halifax CC, Isothermal CC, Carteret CC, Southeastern CC</i>

- Began with pilot project to assess impact, build something scalable, learn and optimize for next cohort.
- Each year, a new cohort of 5 schools have been selected based on “institutional readiness” with planning starting Q1 of each year to support outreach in Q2 and Q3, driving toward re-enrollment in Fall of that year and continued support of learners into and through Fall term.
- Cohort 5 of four community colleges have been selected and will launch in Q1 of 2025 to continue making progress toward the state attainment goal.

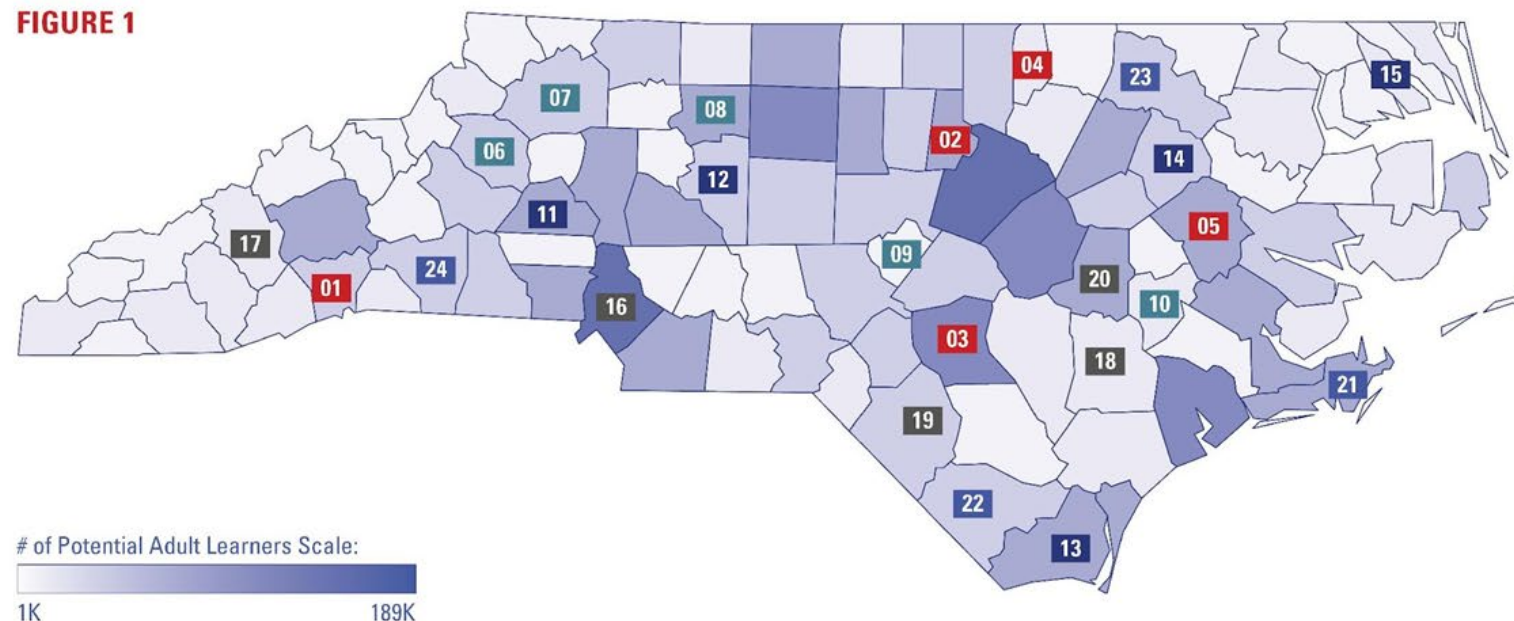


# PARTNERSHIP



# NC RECONNECT NOW SERVES 24 NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**FIGURE 1**



COHORT ONE	COHORT TWO	COHORT THREE	COHORT FOUR	COHORT FIVE
<b>01</b> BlueRidge COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>02</b> DURHAM TECH <b>03</b> FICC <b>04</b> Vance-Granville Community College <b>05</b> PITT Community College	<b>06</b> CCC&I Catawba Community College <b>07</b> WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>08</b> Forsyth Tech COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>09</b> CENTRAL CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>10</b> LENOIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE	<b>11</b> Catawba Valley COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>12</b> Davidson-Davie COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>13</b> BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>14</b> Edgecombe COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>15</b> COLLEGE OF THE ALBEMARLE	<b>16</b> CENTRAL PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>17</b> HCC <b>18</b> James Sprunt COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>19</b> ROBESON COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>20</b> WAYNE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	<b>21</b> CARTERET COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>22</b> Southeastern COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>23</b> Halifax COMMUNITY COLLEGE <b>24</b> ISOTHERMAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE



# This message isn't about college



# NC RECONNECT STUDENTS



**15**

North Carolina Community colleges (cohorts 1-3) began NC Reconnect in Fall 2021-Fall 2023.



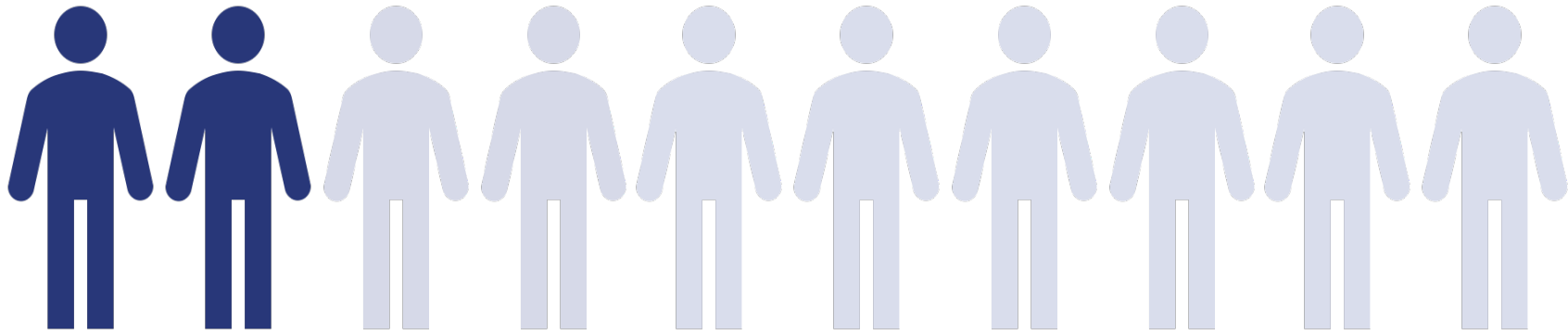
**33,000**

Adults were identified by the colleges as having some college and no degree.



**8,600**

Contacts made with adults.



**20%** OF STUDENTS CONTACTED...  
Reenrolled in the community college



**1 IN 5 STUDENTS**

Graduated within the first year



## **1 IN 5 STUDENTS**

Graduated within the first year ... they were that close when they left college



**\$7.5**  
**million in**  
**FTE**



**SCAN THE QR  
CODE TO VISIT THE  
BELK CENTER  
WEBSITE**



**<https://belk-center.ced.ncsu.edu/>**



**NC STATE UNIVERSITY**

College of Education  
Belk Center for Community College  
Leadership and Research

# THANK YOU!



@ncstatebel  
k



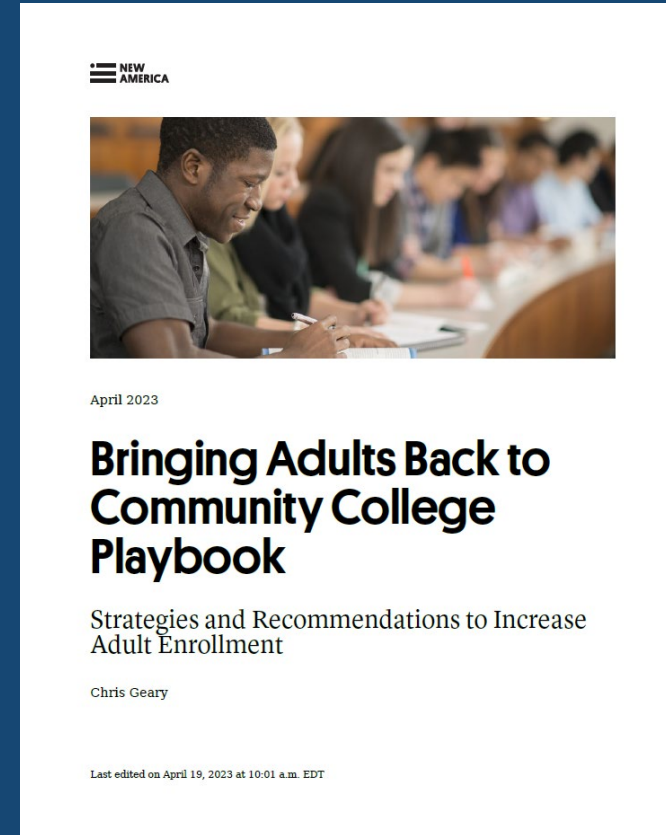
@ncstatebelk



@NC State Belk Center

# What Oregon Community Colleges are Doing

- Two Oregon Community Colleges in national pilot (2023)
  - Southwestern Oregon CC
  - Mt Hood CC
- All Oregon Community Colleges participated in survey and statewide summit (Spring 2024)



Project to help community colleges  
recruit, enroll/re-enroll adult  
students





**Continue to Support HB 2686**

# Thank you!

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