

Some College, No Credential *Student Outcomes*

Annual Progress Report – Academic Year 2021/22



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Nearly all states in the United States (45) currently have a [postsecondary attainment goal](#) to improve the average education levels of their residents and develop a highly-educated workforce. During a time of accelerated COVID-19 related postsecondary enrollment declines, the question as to how states will meet these goals could be particularly pertinent. While our latest enrollment [report](#) provides encouragement that these unusually large declines are stabilizing, it is still uncertain when and how higher education will be able to rebound.

Re-engaging with the Some College, No Credential (SCNC) population—the former students who stopped out without earning a credential—has been a priority for the many states with these established attainment goals. To succeed in bringing them back into higher education, state and institutional leaders need accurate and timely information about the current SCNC population, their progress, and outcomes upon re-enrollment, which is the focus of this annual progress reporting of SCNC students.

This year's report suggests that there is an increasingly missed opportunity for states and institutions to re-engage with SCNC students even as the SCNC population is growing. Between July 2020 and July 2021, the U.S. has added 1.4 million more SCNC students; the SCNC population is now 40.4 million, up 3.6 percent from 39.0 million a year earlier. However, during the latest academic year 2021/22, fewer SCNC students re-enrolled, completed a credential, or persevered to a second year of re-enrollment than they did the previous year.

On the bright side, two sub groups of students identified this year demonstrate promising re-enrollment and completion outcomes and may be a source for states and institutions to pursue with more focus—potential completers and recent stop-outs. *Potential completers* have already made at least two years' worth of academic progress up until last enrollment. *Recent stop-outs* are newly identified SCNC students this year, having stopped out since our last report released in May 2022.

In addition to detailing the SCNC population growth nationally and in each state, this report shows the annual re-enrollment and completion outcomes among SCNC students for the 2021/22 academic year and those who persevered over a two-year period upon re-enrolling. The report is accompanied by a data appendix and an interactive data dashboard for 50 states, D.C., and U.S. territories. These resources will help states and institutions better tap into the SCNC students and identify their own areas of success and opportunity for the postsecondary attainment goals.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The SCNC population rose to 40.4 million as of July 2021. This large one-year growth of 3.6 percent or 1.4 million is due to a lack of re-enrollment among the 39 million previously identified SCNC students and the 2.3 million new SCNC students (recent stop-outs). Approximately 2.9 million (or 7.3% of the SCNC population) are “potential completers” who have already made at least two years' worth of academic progress up until their last enrollment.
- Most SCNC students were younger than 35 at last enrollment. Potential completers and recent stop-outs were relatively younger, with nearly a quarter of recent stop-outs under 20 (24.6%) and potential completers primarily in their early 20s (55.6%).
- Community colleges are the most common type of institution of last enrollment, re-enrollment, and first credential attainment for SCNC students.

HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

- Compared to the previous year, fewer SCNC students re-enrolled (864,800, -8.4%), earned a credential within a year after re-enrolling (53,300, -11.8%), or persevered into their second year of re-enrollment (508,700, -4.3%). The annual re-enrollment rate fell from 2.4 to 2.1 percent and the completion rate within a year of re-enrolling fell from 6.4 to 6.2 percent.
- Potential completers and recent stop-outs were more likely to re-enroll (6.1% and 9.4%, respectively) and to complete a credential within a year after re-enrolling (11.6% and 7.1%, respectively).
- All regions experienced declines in completers within a year of re-enrolling, though 11 states saw slight growth. A larger share of completers earned a certificate this year (+7.1 percentage points, 42.1%). Certificates are most prevalent in the Midwest (50.6%), while bachelor's degrees are prevalent in the Northeast (43.8%).
- When we track over a two-year period after re-enrolling, 15.4 percent or 145,900 of the 944,200 re-enrollees in AY 2020/21 earned their first ever credential: 6.4 percent (60,500) earned in their first year of re-enrollment and 9.0 percent (85,400) in their second year of re-enrollment.
- Black SCNC students were less likely to earn a bachelor's degree within one year of re-enrolling (22.8% of Black completers) compared to the national average of 25.7 percent. However, the gap disappeared for potential completers, with the share of bachelor's degree earners among all Black completers on par with the national average (38.4% vs. 38.8%).

SECTION I. OVERVIEW OF SCNC POPULATION

- 1. The SCNC population has reached 40.4 million (+1.4 million, +3.6%). This large one-year growth was due to a lack of re-enrollment among the 39 million SCNC students previously identified and the addition of 2.3 million new SCNC students. All states and D.C. experienced growth.**

As of July 2021, there are 40.4 million SCNC students in the United States, an increase of 1.4 million in one year (+3.6%). The SCNC population grew across all 50 states and D.C. (see Table 1). There are two contributing factors to this growth: First, the vast majority of the 39 million SCNC students last identified remained disengaged with postsecondary education (over 94%). Second, an additional 2.3 million students are newly identified as SCNC this year. These *recent stop-outs* last enrolled at some point in 2019 with no further enrollment any time between January 2020 and July 2021.

The largest share of SCNC students (16.4%, 6.6 million) were last enrolled in California but when accounting for the size of enrollment in the state, Alaska has the largest SCNC student number in the nation (5,400 SCNC students per 1,000 current undergraduates in the state; see Appendix). Nationally, SCNC student counts grew by 200 per 1,000 undergraduates, and eighteen states saw larger increases than the national average on this metric (see Table 1).

The SCNC demographic and enrollment characteristics remain largely the same as we reported previously in 2022 (see Appendix). SCNC students are slightly more women (45.8% or 18.5 million versus 45.3% or 18.3 million for men). Many were under 25 when they left postsecondary education (44.0% or 17.8 million; see Figure 1). Most SCNC students last attended a community college (58.3%). Racial and ethnic minority students are overrepresented among SCNC students, relative to current undergraduate students. Latinx and Black students collectively comprised 43.0 percent of the total SCNC students with valid race and ethnicity data, compared to 34.7 percent in overall undergraduates (See Figure 2).

Figure 1. SCNC Age Profile by Student Group

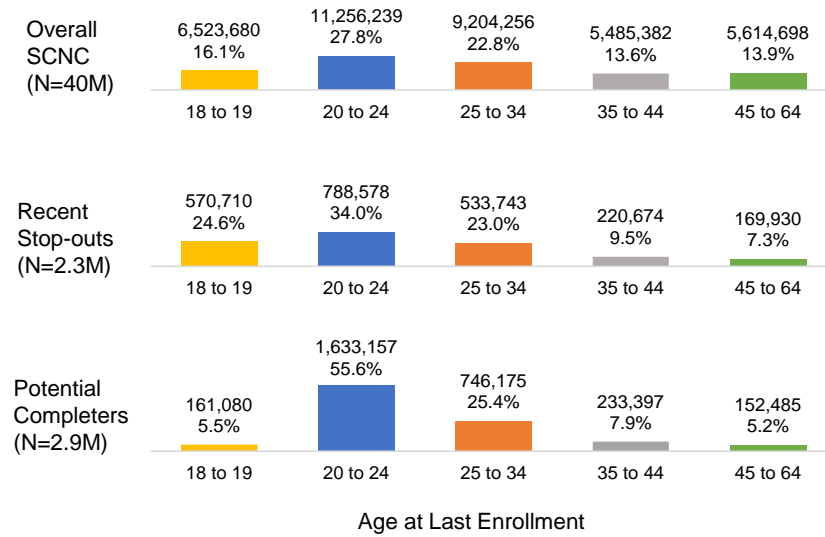
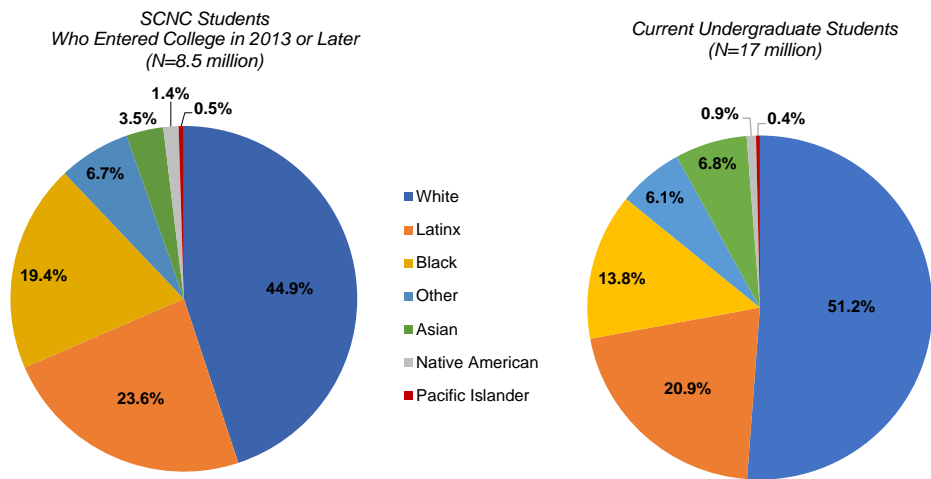


Figure 2. A National Snapshot of the SCNC Racial/Ethnic Composition



Note: Race and ethnicity data are missing for 25.6% of SCNC students and 16.2% for overall undergraduates (AY2021/22). "Other" includes multi-race and international students.

Table 1. SCNC Population and Growth From Previous Year by State

State	Total Counts (as of July 1, 2021)	Change from Previous Year (Student Counts)	Change from Previous Year (Percent Change)	Change from Previous Year (SCNC Counts Per 1,000 Undergrad Enrollment)
Alabama	469,488	19,188	4.3%	108
Alaska	121,035	3,123	2.6%	396
Arizona	726,293	45,041	6.6%	115
Arkansas	314,843	10,330	3.4%	202
California	6,612,278	251,903	4.0%	351
Colorado	726,076	18,492	2.6%	254
Connecticut	384,799	11,487	3.1%	186
D.C.	38,618	2,043	5.6%	-322
Delaware	68,540	5,018	7.9%	539
Florida	1,661,306	64,331	4.0%	139
Georgia	773,228	28,733	3.9%	109
Hawaii	99,625	3,401	3.5%	87
Idaho	190,536	8,639	4.7%	110
Illinois	1,942,815	50,776	2.7%	270
Indiana	769,286	23,928	3.2%	200
Iowa	386,692	12,039	3.2%	148
Kansas	398,413	16,472	4.3%	199
Kentucky	611,023	18,220	3.1%	195
Louisiana	478,853	15,971	3.5%	151
Maine	137,281	4,822	3.6%	144
Maryland	635,665	22,527	3.7%	173
Massachusetts	719,985	24,087	3.5%	125
Michigan	1,159,852	32,535	2.9%	187
Minnesota	612,294	17,298	2.9%	222
Mississippi	328,330	11,839	3.7%	319
Missouri	678,566	22,658	3.5%	241
Montana	113,914	3,824	3.5%	145
Nebraska	315,301	7,956	2.6%	198
Nevada	383,036	11,652	3.1%	271
New Hampshire	102,777	2,954	3.0%	191
New Jersey	792,527	26,068	3.4%	196
New Mexico	301,215	9,772	3.4%	298
New York	2,011,385	63,276	3.2%	201
North Carolina	1,109,025	28,887	2.7%	104
North Dakota	75,358	2,633	3.6%	82
Ohio	1,398,230	34,520	2.5%	244
Oklahoma	418,509	15,220	3.8%	158
Oregon	791,143	18,063	2.3%	279
Pennsylvania	1,121,313	33,758	3.1%	162
Rhode Island	129,361	3,478	2.8%	122
South Carolina	487,205	15,162	3.2%	55
South Dakota	69,787	2,765	4.1%	119
Tennessee	635,828	23,502	3.8%	197
Texas	2,614,007	112,205	4.5%	134
Utah	400,221	13,903	3.6%	59
Vermont	66,956	2,233	3.5%	155
Virginia	954,052	29,287	3.2%	120
Washington	1,160,584	35,942	3.2%	460
West Virginia	192,168	6,719	3.6%	245
Wisconsin	744,153	22,475	3.1%	132
Wyoming	97,491	2,804	3.0%	386
U.S. Territories	158,248	14,784	10.3%	234
National	40,432,112	1,392,013	3.6%	199

Note: Multi-state and Primarily Online Institutions are included in the National but are not included in individual states.

2. Potential completers account for 2.9 million or 7.3 percent of the total SCNC students. They are typically younger when they stopped out, compared to the overall SCNC population. Arizona and Alabama show some of the highest shares of potential completers among all states whereas Washington and Illinois have some of the lowest.

This year, we re-introduced an important subset of the SCNC population first presented in our [2019 report](#). SCNC students are identified as *potential completers* if they had completed at least two years' worth of full-time enrollment within the last ten years (see Methodological Notes). They currently represent 2.9 million or 7.3 percent of the total SCNC students. Washington and Illinois have some of the lowest shares of potential completers (4.4%; see Appendix), while Arizona and Alabama represent some of the highest (11.1% and 10.2%, respectively).

Both potential completers and recent stop-outs were typically younger, compared to the overall SCNC population (see Figure 1). Almost a quarter of recent stop-outs were younger than 20 when they stopped out (24.6%), most having enrolled for less than two years (73.1%; see Appendix). Differing from recent stop-outs, the majority of potential completers were between ages 20 and 24 at the time of stop-out (55.6%).

Potential completers also differed by where they last enrolled. Although community colleges were most represented across the board, a higher share of potential completers last attended a public four-year institution (27.1%; see Appendix) compared to non-potential completers and recent stop-outs (15.1% and 17.3%, respectively).

SECTION II. SCNC STUDENT SUCCESS AND PROGRESS

The following sections outline SCNC student outcomes for those who returned or completed a first credential during AY2021/22 (observed August 2021 to July 2022), and who were aged 18 to 64 at the time of the outcome (see Methodological Notes). In addition, the report will examine those who returned in the previous year and how they continued to progress this year. The three metrics outlined are re-enrollment, first credential (in either the first or second year of re-enrollment), and perseverance. Figure 3 shows the timeline of the metrics as defined below.

Re-Enrollment is defined as students who hold a valid (full-time or part-time) enrollment record at least once during the academic year (defined as August 2021 to July 2022) following a stop-out of at least three consecutive terms. In AY2021/22, **864,800 (2.1%** of the 40 million) SCNC students re-enrolled.

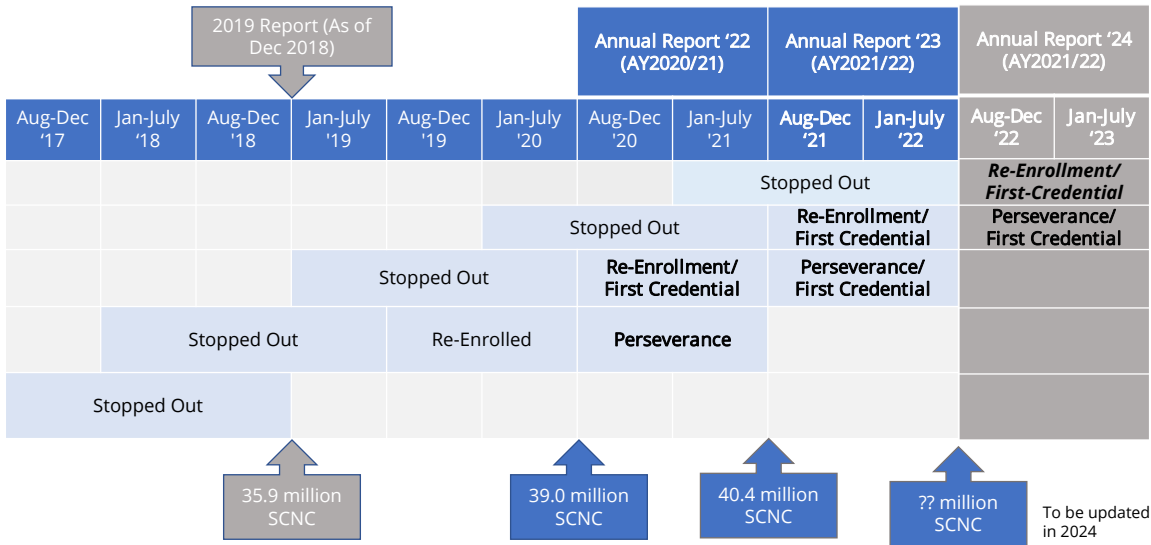
First Credential is defined as students earning their first ever undergraduate credential after re-enrolling, either in their first or second year. In AY2021/22, **53,300 students (6.2%** of the 864,800 re-enrollees and **0.1%** of the 40 million SCNC) earned a credential within one year of re-enrolling.

When we track the SCNC completion rate over a two-year period, **15.4 percent (145,900)** earned their first ever undergraduate credential: 6.4 percent (60,500) earned in their first year of re-enrollment and 9.0 percent (85,400) in their second year of re-enrollment (two-year completion rates based on the 944,200 SCNC students that first re-enrolled in AY2020/21).

Perseverance captures students who continued enrollment in AY2021/22 after first re-enrolling in AY2020/21. Of the 944,200 students who re-enrolled in AY2020/21, **508,700** persevered the following year (53.9%).

The two-year total success and progress rate for 2020/21 re-enrollees is 60.3 percent, the combination of the perseverance rate (53.9%) and the completion rate within a year of re-enrollment (6.4%).

Figure 3. Timeline of Re-Enrollment, First Credential, and Perseverance Metrics



- 3. Fewer SCNC students re-enrolled this year (864,800, down 8.4% from last year), resulting in a 0.3 pp lower re-enrollment rate (2.1%). Re-enrollment rates were 3 to 4 times higher among recent stop-outs (9.4%) and potential completers (6.1%). SCNC students commonly returned to the same community college where they last enrolled.

During AY2021/22, 864,800 students re-enrolled in postsecondary education, down nearly 80,000 students from the previous year (944,200). Due to the SCNC population rising while re-enrollees declined, the re-enrollment rate fell to 2.1 percent (-0.3 pp; see Appendix).

However, recent stop-outs and potential completers re-enrolled at higher rates than the national average. The re-enrollment rate was more than 4 times higher for recent stop-outs (9.4%, 218,400) and 3 times higher for potential completers (6.1%, 179,000; see Figure 4). Higher rates of re-enrollment were applicable across gender, age, and race/ethnicity (see Appendix).

Nearly 39 percent of all re-enrollees returned to the same institution where they last enrolled (see Figure 5) and recent stop-outs and potential completers were even more likely to return to the same institution (52.8% and 45.4%, respectively). Across all re-enrollment pathways, students who returned to the community college they last attended made up the largest share (213,500, 24.7%; see Appendix), a trend consistent with previous years. Recent stop-outs were even more likely to return to the same community college (68,400, 31.3%; see Appendix).

Figure 4. Re-Enrollment Rates by SCNC Population Group

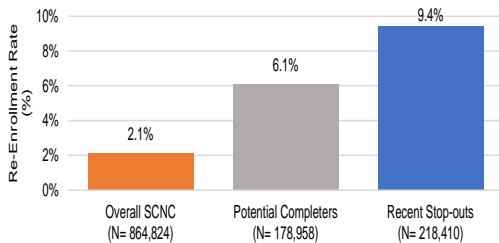
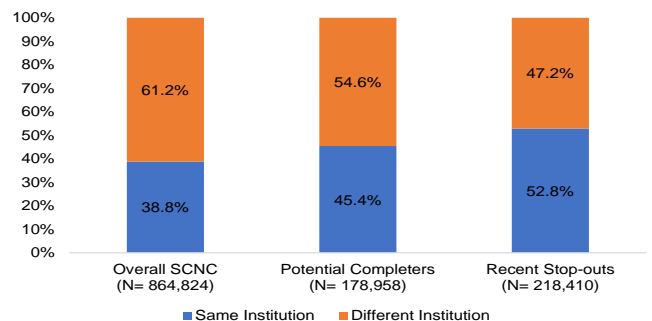
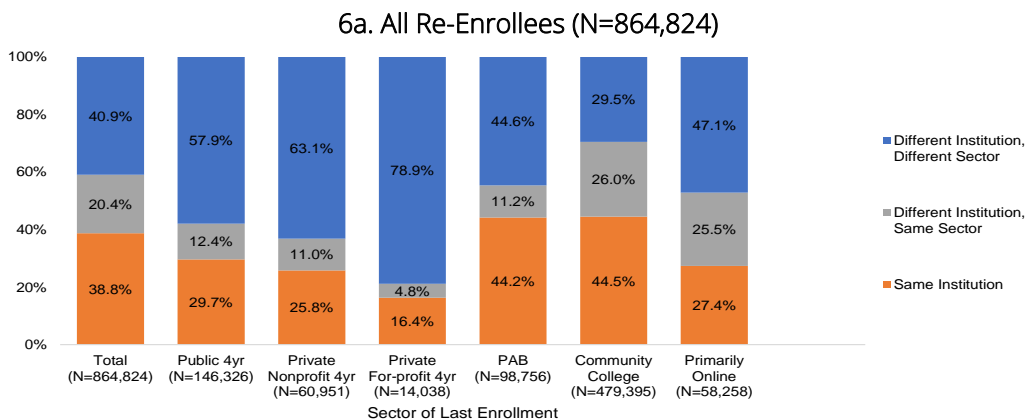


Figure 5. Re-Enrollment Destination by SCNC Population Group

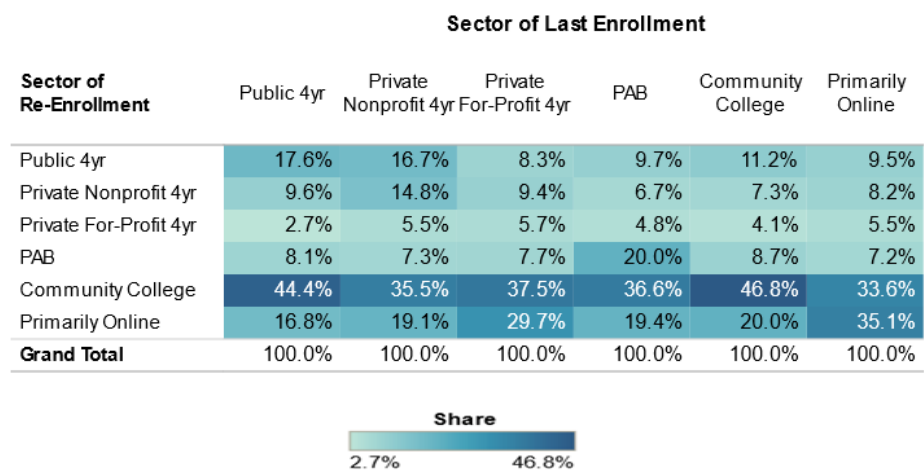


For students who did not return to the institution of last enrollment (529,600, 61.2%), most returned to a different sector (353,600 or 40.9% of all re-enrollees; see Figure 6a). Community colleges and primarily online institutions (POIs) were the two most popular re-enrollment destinations (see Figure 6b). But the re-enrollment pathway from a non-POI to a POI is less common among potential completers and recent stop-outs relative to overall re-enrollees (see National Dashboard).

Figure 6. Education Pathways from Last Enrollment to Re-Enrollment



6b. SCNC Students Who Changed Institutions Upon Re-Enrolling (N=529,640)



4. Within a year of re-enrollment, 53,300 students earned a credential (down 11.8% over the previous year), for a completion rate of 6.2 percent. Those earning a certificate increased, accounting for 42.1 percent of completers. Potential completers had a higher completion rate (11.6%) and mainly earned associate and bachelor’s degrees (80.4%).

In AY2021/22, 53,300 students completed their first credential within a year of re-enrolling, an 11.8 percent decline from the previous year (-7,200). The number of associate and bachelor’s degree earners fell more steeply (-17.6% and -26.8% respectively; see Appendix), while the number who obtained a certificate increased (+1,200, +5.5%). As a result, the share of certificates rose 7.1 pp to 42.1 percent (see Figure 7).

Potential completers and recent stop-outs were more likely to earn a credential within a year of re-enrolling. Potential completers represented 39.1 percent of all first-time completers in AY2021/22 and completed at a rate nearly 2 times higher than both overall SCNC and recent stop-outs (see Figure 8). Potential completers were also able to finish a credential in a shorter amount of time. For completers within a year of re-enrolling, the median elapsed time to completion for potential completers was 3.8 months compared to 4.1 months for overall SCNC, and 4.3 months for recent stop-outs (see Appendix).

Figure 7. Type of First Credential Earned Within a Year of Re-Enrollment

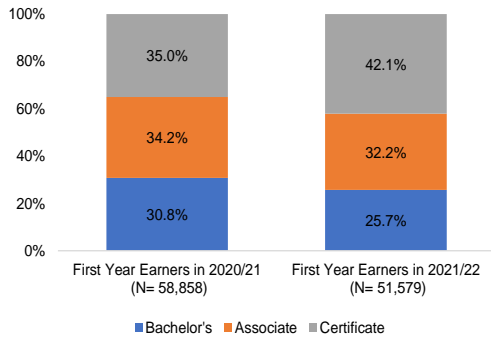
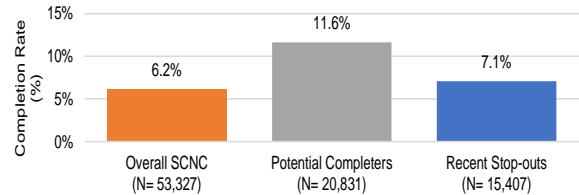


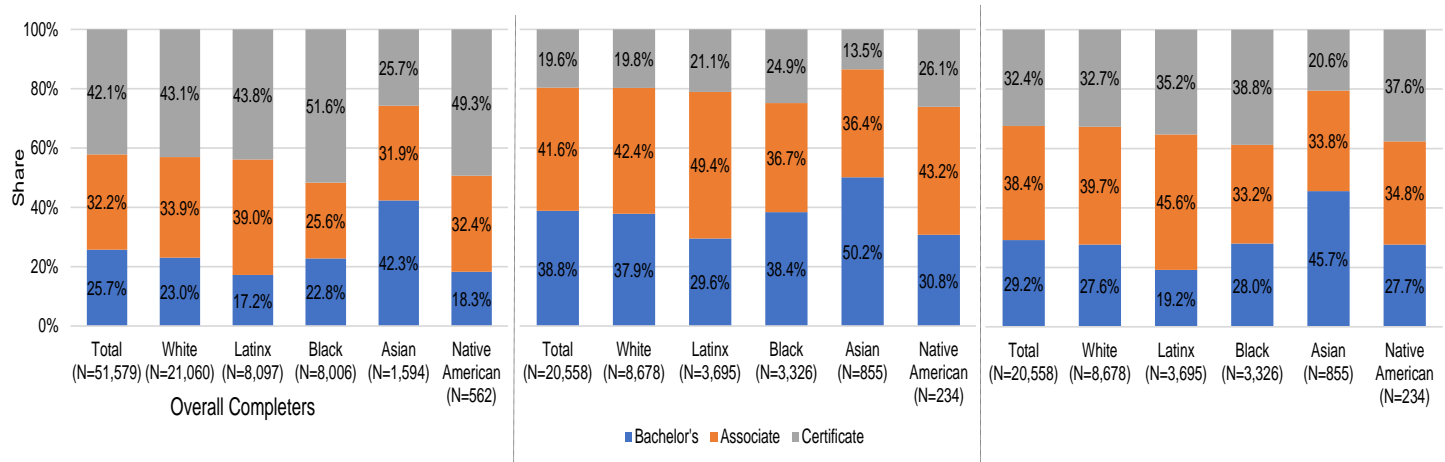
Figure 8. Completion Rate by SCNC Population Group



Note: Data are shown for major credentials. A small number of other credentials earned are not shown in the figures.

The majority of SCNC students that completed a credential within a year after re-enrolling obtained either associate or bachelor's degrees (57.9%; see Figure 9). In contrast, most Black completers earned a certificate (51.6%). Potential completers were more likely to earn associate and bachelor's degrees (80.4%), regardless of race or ethnicity. Additionally, the race/ethnicity gaps in degree shares were generally smaller among potential completers than overall completers. In particular, 38.4 percent of Black potential completers who earned a credential obtained a bachelor's degree, on par with the national average (38.8%), while for overall completers, the gap was 2.9 pp (22.8% vs. 25.7%). However, bachelor's degrees did not increase consistently for potential completers across all racial/ethnic groups. For example, Latinx students had smaller shares of bachelor's degree earners for both potential completers and overall completers (29.6% and 17.2%, respectively).

Figure 9. Type of First Credential Earned Within a Year of Re-Enrollment by SCNC Student Group and Race/Ethnicity

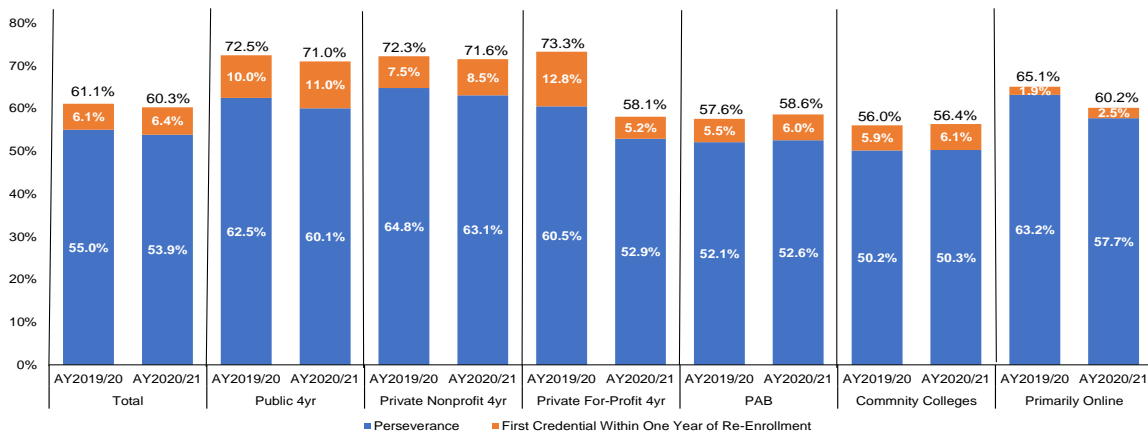


5. The perseverance rate declined to 53.9 percent (508,700, down 1.2 pp from the previous year). Factoring in credentials earned within a year of re-enrolling (60,500), the total success and progress rate is 60.3 percent (569,200) for SCNC students that re-enrolled in AY2020/21.

Of the 944,200 SCNC students that re-enrolled in AY2020/21, 508,700 persevered (53.9%). This perseverance rate is 1.2 pp lower than last year's rate. In contrast to the national decline, 25 states experienced rate gains, ranging from +0.1 pp (Oklahoma) to +1.7 pp (Alabama; see Appendix).

The decline in the perseverance rate contributed to the decline in the total success and progress rate (-0.8 pp, see Figure 10). Students re-enrolling at public four-year and private non-profit four-year institutions fared better with the success and progress rates above 70 percent, while all other sectors had rates below the national average (60.3%).

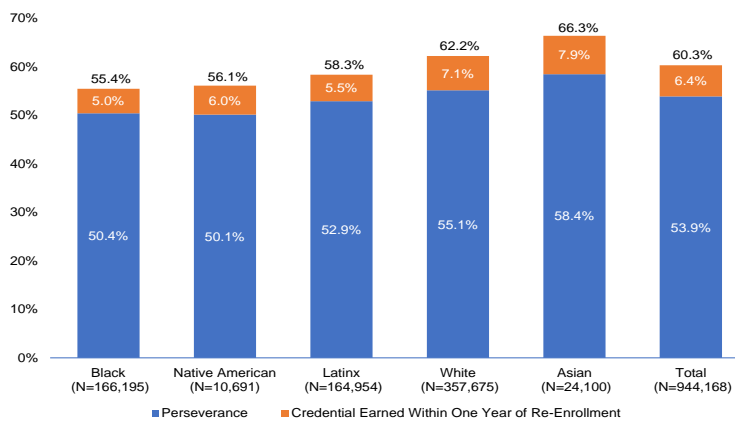
Figure 10. Total Success and Progress Rate by Academic Year of Re-Enrollment and Sector of Re-Enrollment



Note: Perseverance includes second-year completions. Interpret AY2019/20 Private For-Profit data with caution due to a small institution's impact on this sector.

Total success and progress rates followed similar patterns to what we previously reported across race and ethnicity. Asian students had the highest total success and progress rate (66.3%) while Black students had the lowest (55.4%). Even though slightly more Black students re-enrolled compared to Latinx students (166,200 vs. 165,000), they persevered and earned credentials at lower rates compared to Latinx students, resulting in a 2.9 pp gap in the total success and progress rate (see Figure 11).

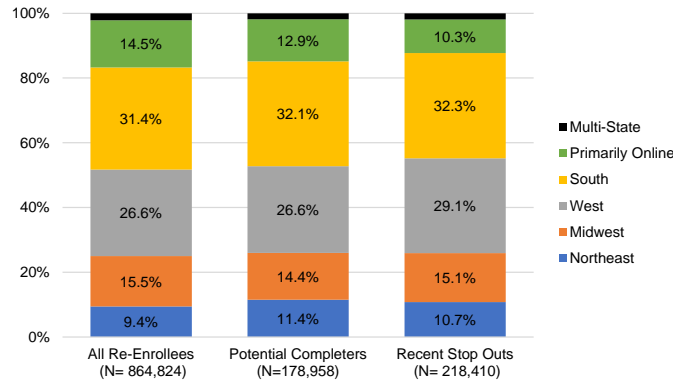
Figure 11. Total Success and Progress Rate by Race/Ethnicity: AY2020/21 Re-Enrollees



- The geographic distribution of re-enrollees was similar across SCNC population groups. Students who earned a credential one year after re-enrolling declined regardless of region, though 11 states saw slight growth. The Midwest had the highest share of one-year completers earning a certificate (50.6%), while bachelor's degree recipients predominated in the Northeast (43.8%).

Where a student re-enrolled followed similar regional patterns across SCNC population groups. Like last year, most students re-enrolled in either the South or West (58.0% of all re-enrollees). Higher shares of potential completers and recent stop-outs re-enrolled in the Northeast, and a smaller share of recent stop-outs re-enrolled in a primarily online institution, compared to the national average (see Figure 12).

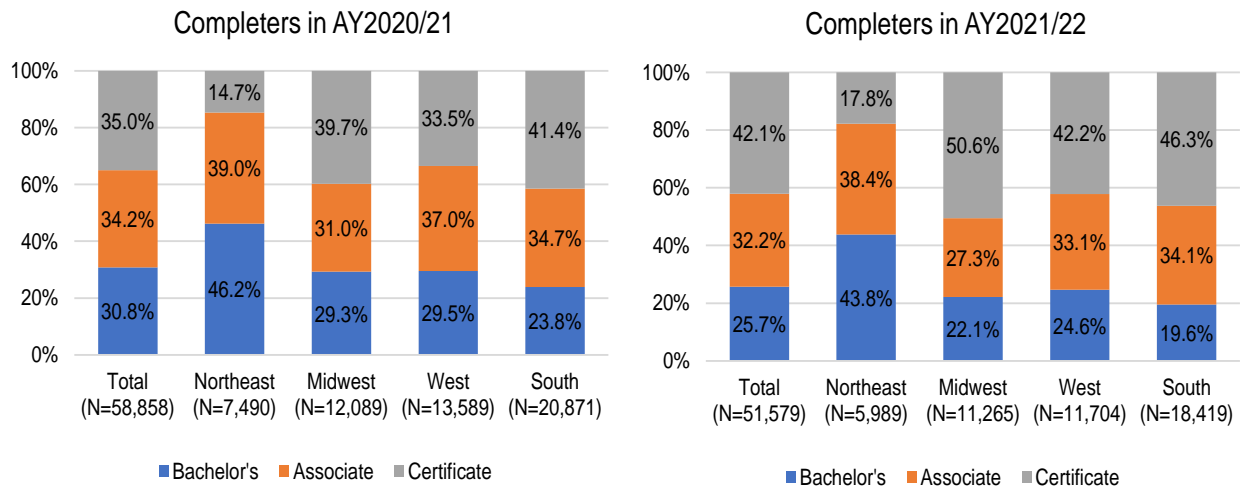
Figure 12. Region of Re-Enrollment by SCNC Population Group



Credential earners within a year of re-enrolling declined regardless of region. Despite these declines, 11 states increased in the number of first-time credential earners, though gains were small (see Appendix).

While certificate earners grew as a share of all completers in every region from 2020/21 to 2021/22, they grew more rapidly in the Midwest (+900, +18.6%). This large increase means that this year, the Midwest has the highest share of one-year completers earning a certificate out of all regions (50.6%; see Figure 13) whereas the South had the highest share last year (41.4%). Bachelor's degrees remain most prevalent in the Northeast, comprising 43.8 percent of all credential earners in AY2021/22.

Figure 13. Share of Completers within One Year of Re-Enrollment by Region and Academic Year

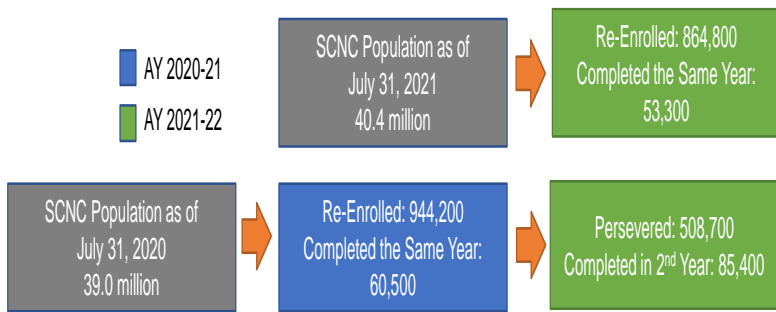


SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

As of July 2021, approximately 40.4 million individuals were identified as having some college education but no earned credential (SCNC) in the Clearinghouse database. This represents 17.5 percent of U.S. residents age 18 and older. This large annual growth (+3.6% or 1.4 million) was due to both the vast majority of SCNC students remaining disengaged with postsecondary education and an additional 2.3 million stopping out during the pandemic-impacted academic year 2020/21.

The SCNC demographic and enrollment characteristics remained largely the same as we previously reported in 2022, with racial/ethnic minorities predominating in the SCNC population than the undergraduate student body generally (Latinx comprising 23.6% of SCNC population vs. 20.9% of the overall undergraduates; 19.4% vs. 13.8% for Blacks; 44.9% vs. 51.2% for Whites).

Younger students were associated with the greater odds of re-enrolling and obtaining a credential. Compared to the larger SCNC population, potential completers with at least two years' worth of full-time enrollment prior to stopping out were mostly in their early to mid-twenties at the time of stopping out (55.6%). Nearly a quarter of the recent stop-outs were under 20 when they stopped out (24.6%).



The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic factored into the re-enrollment and progress outlook for SCNC population during the latest academic year 2021/22 (see the figure on the left). The number of SCNC students who re-engaged with postsecondary education fell 8.4 percent to 864,800 students over the previous year; completers fell 11.8 percent to 53,300; those who persevered over a two-year period dropped 4.3 percent to 508,700. Only 2.1 percent of

SCNC students re-enrolled this year and 6.2 percent of those re-enrollees obtained a credential. Moreover, of the 944,200 students that re-enrolled in the previous year, only 53.9 percent (-1.2 pp) continued enrollment for their second year.

Among those who returned and completed a credential in the latest academic year, more pursued short-cycle certificate programs than associate or bachelor's degrees. This was consistent across the country but especially pronounced in the Midwest, where they have the highest share of certificate earners (50.6%) as opposed to the South having the highest share one year ago (41.4%).

Younger SCNC students on the whole have higher re-enrollment rates than older students. Particularly, younger students predominate the two groups of students proven to be highly successful: Potential completers re-enrolled at nearly three times the rate of the overall SCNC population (6.1% vs. 2.1%), and recent stop-outs re-enrolled at more than four times the overall rate (9.4%).

Even more importantly, potential completers were more likely to earn a credential within a year after re-enrolling (11.6%), a rate that was 1.5 times higher compared to both overall SCNC and recent stop-outs (6.2% and 7.1% respectively). This difference is likely because potential completers had more prior enrollment, which reduced the time to completion, making them the most promising group for states and institutions to leverage as they seek to improve their postsecondary attainment rates.

Potential completers may also provide a pathway for diminishing equity gaps in attainment. Compared to the SCNC completers overall, a higher share of Black credential earners from the potential completers group earned bachelor's degrees, thereby narrowing the baccalaureate attainment gap from 2.9 pp to 0.4 pp. Even more striking, the gap between Black and Asian bachelor's earners for potential completers (38.4% for Black students vs. 50.2% for Asians) was 7.7 pp smaller than the gap in the full SCNC population.

The COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on postsecondary enrollments and did not spare SCNC students, with all key performance indicators deteriorating from the previous year. Nonetheless, over 900,000 SCNC students re-enrolled and 139,000 graduated with a credential during the 2021/22 academic year. While current enrollment trends show some cautious optimism for overall growth, going forward it will be even more important to determine if these enrollment gains also pertain to SCNC student re-enrollment and whether institutions and states can successfully engage them in the postsecondary attainment pipeline.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

NATIONAL COVERAGE OF THE DATA

The National Student Clearinghouse currently collects data from more than 3,600 postsecondary institutions, representing 97 percent of all U.S. postsecondary enrollments in degree-granting institutions, as of 2022. Data collection began in 1993, and national coverage has been above 90 percent since 2007. However, some states and sectors have lower coverage rates, particularly in the earlier years. Historically, private for-profit coverage has been lower than that of other institution types. Details of annual data coverage rates by institution type and state are available [here](#). Variations in coverage, particularly during the early years of the study period, may result in an underestimate of the true population of Some College, No Credential students in both national and state-level results. Further, the data may overestimate the students included in the study cohort if they earned a degree or enrolled at a non-Clearinghouse participating institution during the study period.

STATE DATA COVERAGE

While most institutions that currently report to the Clearinghouse reflect over 90 percent of institutions that report to the U.S. Department of Education by state, this coverage was much lower in the earlier years of NSC data collection (refer to enrollment table for historical coverage rates). Since this lower coverage may impact the overall number SCNC students by state, please use caution when interpreting the state shares of SCNC populations.

SCNC STUDENT IDENTIFICATION AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS CALCULATION

Overall Population: SCNC students identified in the Clearinghouse data as of July 2021 are those who had at least one postsecondary enrollment record after January 1, 1993 (the beginning of the Clearinghouse database), with a period of stop-out defined as having had no enrollment between January 1, 2020, and July 31, 2021 (representing roughly three consecutive academic terms), and no degree or certificate awarded as of July 31, 2021. This resulted in 40,432,112 students. For measuring perseverance, their stop-out period was defined as students with no enrollment between January 1, 2019, and July 31, 2020. They also had to have a valid re-enrollment record between August 1, 2020, and July 31, 2021, and then have a valid enrollment record between August 1, 2021, and July 31, 2022 to be counted as persevered. Success metric analyses focus on students 64 or younger at the time of either re-enrollment or credential attainment. The number of re-enrollees and credential earners over 65 is small (8,400 and 300 students, respectively).

New SCNC Students: Student identifiers were utilized to connect the SCNC population from this year's report to last year's to identify those who were not in last year's population. Based on

the stop-out period identified above, students who were newly identified as SCNC students (2.3 million, 5.7%) last enrolled sometime during 2019 and had no enrollment records between January 1, 2020, and July 31, 2021. For this reason, these students are referred to as recent stop-outs.

Potential Completers: A subset of SCNC students were identified as being "potential completers" due to having made substantial academic progress toward a credential before stopping out. These are students who had completed at least two years' worth of enrollment or four 15-week semesters at full-time in the past ten years (see Academic Progress below).

Academic Progress Calculation: A standardized definition of a "full-time week" (FTW) equivalent was used to create units to calculate students' accrued enrollment across institutional contexts in the past ten years. This was determined by crossing the number of enrolled weeks with enrollment intensity, described below:

- One week enrolled at full-time enrollment equaled one full-time week (FTW) equivalent
- One week enrolled at three-quarters equaled 0.75 FTW equivalent
- One week enrolled at half-time equaled 0.5 FTW equivalent
- One week enrolled at less than half-time or quarter-time equaled 0.25 FTW equivalent

For the purposes of these analyses, two years' worth of progress was defined as the completion of 60 FTW enrollment, equivalent to four 15-week semesters at full-time. All enrollment records, including short terms, summer terms and concurrent enrollments, and dual enrollments were included when calculating progress by FTW equivalent. Because the estimation of academic progress is based upon enrollment intensity, a proxy for the number of credits attempted, rather than completed, the calculation of academic progress is an overestimate.

TIME TO FIRST CREDENTIAL

Time to first credential in this report is calculated based on the elapsed time (in months) between the term begin date of a student's first re-enrollment record and the award date of their first credential.

DUAL ENROLLMENTS

NSC data includes dual enrollments in college for students who are still in high school. Dual enrollments are identified by using student age at the time of enrollment (under 18) as a proxy. Students with dual enrollments were removed from the cohort only if the dual enrollment was their only enrollment record across the study period. In other words, students with dual enrollments and no earned credential were included in

the SCNC cohort only if they had continued postsecondary enrollment after they turned 18.

AGE CALCULATION METHODS

SCNC profile defines current age of a student as of July 31, 2022 (the end of the academic year studied) and age at last enrollment was based on the term begin date of a student's last enrollment record prior to stopping out.

- Re-enrollment by age: was determined by the term begin date of the student's first re-enrollment after stopping out.
- First credential by age: was determined by the award date of the first credential.
- Perseverance by age: was determined by the term begin date of the student's first re-enrollment after stopping out (to calculate perseverance rate into the following year).

PRIMARILY ONLINE and MULTI-STATE INSTITUTIONS

Primarily online institutions (POIs) were identified based on the distance education survey items in the IPEDS fall 2020 enrollment survey. Any institution where the primary campus reports more than 90 percent of its students enrolled exclusively in distance education courses before the COVID-19 pandemic began is considered a POI. Using this method, there were a total of 30 institutions identified as POIs. There are some institutions or systems of institutions that report their online campuses as separate entities to IPEDS while combining them with offline campuses into a single reporting entity when submitting data to NSC. In these cases, the students enrolled at POIs identified in IPEDS are not accurately identified as enrolled at a POI in this report, resulting in an underestimation of POIs in our reporting. In reporting student outcomes in each state, POIs are not included in individual state counts in this report.

We defined multi-state institutions as those with at least one branch campus operating in a different state from the main campus as reported to the Department of Education. To better reflect an institution's multi-state status for the postsecondary attainment metrics, we applied whether the institution had operating branch campuses in different states based on the fall 2020 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics Survey data. While this designation will differ from whether the institution was multi-state or not at the time of a student's last enrollment, utilizing the current multi-state status will enable for more accurate reporting as we continue to update this annual progress report.

INSTITUTION SECTOR RECLASSIFICATIONS

There has been a growing number of the sector reclassifications by IPEDS from associate colleges to four-year institutions, which are considered Primarily Associate Degree Granting Baccalaureate Institutions (PABs). PABs can be identified using the institutional category variable from the IPEDS Institutional Characteristics survey, which relies on both

program offerings and degrees awarded. Alternatively, PABs can be identified based on the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2021), which similarly relies on program offering (there must be one bachelor's-level program offered) and degrees awarded. The IPEDS methodology identifies more PABs than the Carnegie methodology. This is because Carnegie excludes tribal colleges and special focus colleges (e.g., those focused on health sciences, arts, or religious instruction) from its PAB designation. We elect to use the more conservative Carnegie Classification. PABs carry Carnegie Classifications of either 14 (Associate Dominant) or 23 (Mixed Baccalaureate/Associate). In general, Institutions with a 14 designation award 90% or more of degrees at the associate level while those with a 23 designation award 51% to 90% of degrees at the this level. While the classification largely follows IPEDS sector designations, we use the Carnegie where there are differences from IPEDS. These discrepancies primarily affect PABs as well as 34 institutions considered four-year institutions by IPEDS but two-year institutions by Carnegie. Institution sector designations are applied consistently across all years to enable us to analyze student pathways without the disruption of sector reclassifications over the years.

DATA LIMITATIONS

MISSING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: While in recent years, the data coverage rate for gender and race/ethnicity has improved, with over 96 percent of the current undergraduate population having a valid gender value, and 83 percent of the undergraduate population with a valid reported race/ethnicity, this coverage previously was low, with less than 15 percent of institutions reporting this information to the Clearinghouse as late as 2008/09 (see our [Additional Data Elements](#) for historic coverage rates). As a result, the share of SCNC students with missing gender or racial/ethnic information is 68.0 percent compared to 8.4 percent. In both cases, the missing rates are higher for historical enrollment dates. Due to this higher level of missing data, demographic analyses of the entire SCNC population should be interpreted with caution.

DATA PRIOR TO 1993: Since the Clearinghouse's enrollment reporting began in 1993, SCNC students who stopped out more than 25 years ago are likely to be underestimated in this report. Interpret age related findings with caution.

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