ADULT COMPLETION MATTERS: The National Perspective

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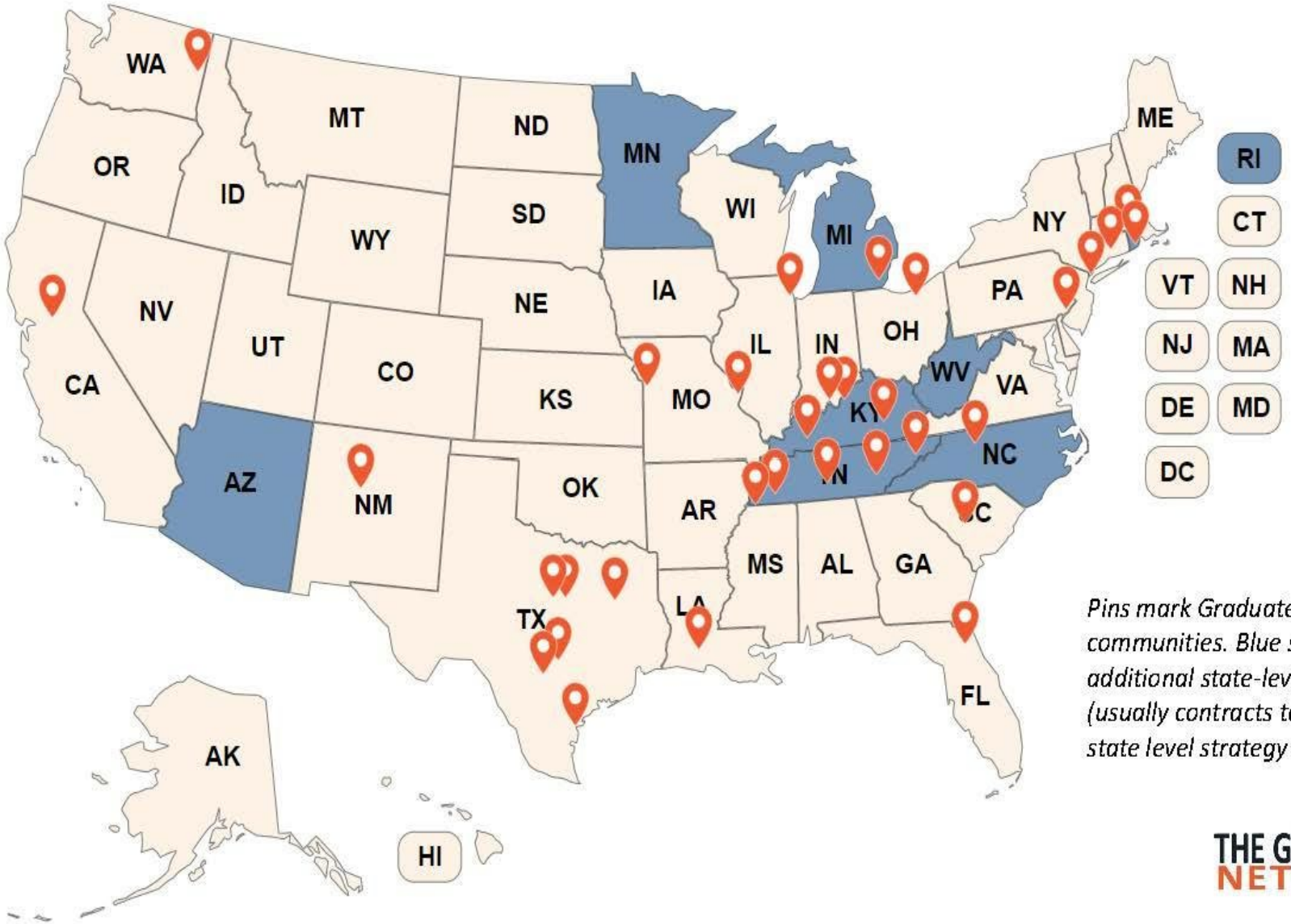

Pins mark Graduate! Network communities. Blue shading denotes additional state-level engagement (usually contracts to develop a state level strategy or network.)

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The Comebacker Campaign

The term “Comebacker” expresses the potential of non-completers to make a comeback and complete a degree, **redefining this population as an asset rather than a deficit.**

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According to the 2019 NSC Some College No Degree report, of the 3.8 million Some College, No Degree students who re-enrolled nationwide since 2013 25 percent graduated and 29 percent were still enrolled as of December 2018 for a combined success and progress rate of 54 percent among re-enrollees.

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Across 14 Graduate! Network communities, graduation rates of potential completers in a five-year window were slightly higher at 27 percent than the national average, and 66 percent of our potential completers–fully double the national average–stayed continuously enrolled after returning to college until graduation.

Adults just need more preparation, more support, and more time.

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Comebackers are twice as likely to re-enroll if:

- They have a goal of immediate return to college, or readiness within 3-6 months,
- Talk 3-10 times with specially trained pre-enrollment advisor/navigators.

#IntrusiveAdvising #NeutralNavigators

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Adults who graduated with help from a Graduate!-trained advisor, spent close to 8 months on average preparing for re-enrollment.

16 percent spent more than a year, perhaps as much due to twice-annual semester start dates as to the amount of preparation they needed.

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Factor 1. AGE WHEN RETURNING TO COLLEGE

The most predictive ages clustered between 18 years and 50. The “peak” age was 46 years.

#NeverTooOld #LifelongLearners

https://graduate-network.org/dtmu/

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Factor 2. FAMILY ANNUAL INCOME

Individuals with household income less than $24,000 (i.e., at or below the poverty rate) were least likely to graduate.

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Factor 3. EDUCATION LEVEL AT INTAKE

Comebackers engaging with a Graduate! program already having earned 2-year degree were twice as likely to graduate with a 4-year degree than adults who engaged with the program having earned some college but no degree.

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Factor 4. DEFAULTED STUDENT LOANS

Adults with defaulted student loans were half as likely to graduate than adults who had no loans in default. Even so, adults with defaulted loans still completed degrees.

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Factor 5. REFERRAL SOURCE

Comebackers who heard about the program from a "social support" such as a family member, a college advisor or a friend were more likely to graduate.

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Factor 6. READINESS/EAGERNESS TO START

This factor was a significant predictor when examined in relation to other factors.

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Factor 7. TOP REASONS FOR RETURNING

"Personal satisfaction" and "looking to make a career change" were most predictive of degree completion, along with "required by an employer" or "promotion."

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Factor 8. EMPLOYER TUITION BENEFITS

Knowing whether one's employer offered tuition benefits was predictive of graduation.

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