



RHODE ISLAND RECONNECT FACT SHEET 2004-2025

The Rhode Island Reconnect Program, an initiative by the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, aims to support working-class adults with getting a postsecondary credential by assisting with the removal of certain barriers outside of the classroom that serve as an obstacle to completing their higher education.

Program Overview

Rhode Island Reconnect provides students with individualized supports including personalized academic coaching, mentoring as well as wrap-around services. The program's unique features include comprehensive needs assessments and assistance with non-academic barriers such as food insecurity, reliable childcare, transportation issues, technology needs and mental health challenges among others. Students in the program are paired with a navigator who supports them throughout their postsecondary journey. Each navigator completes a comprehensive needs assessment with participants they serve to assess if any of the above-listed barriers to education exist for those individuals outside of the classroom. All participants are required to attend bi-weekly meetings with their navigators. These meetings allow navigators to provide critical social and emotional support and monitor new challenges. One unique aspect of the program is the navigator's ability to extend wrap-around support to students in need of financial assistance for items not eligible for traditional financial aid, but which still carry the potential to derail students' progression to a degree or credential. Examples of supportive services include purchasing a laptop computer, providing access to Wi-Fi or a mobile phone, or purchasing a bus pass that enables the student to get to class.

Key Achievements 2024-2025

- Continued to establish partnerships with higher education institutions and community-based organizations.
- 30 students graduated from higher education institutions in the fall 2024 semester while another 59 students are on track to graduate in spring 2025 semester.
- Expanded to assist students in the Rhode Island College Foster Care Scholarship program. In the inaugural year, 10 students participated, with one student graduating at the end of the fall 2024 semester.
- Executed a comprehensive marketing plan to get Rhode Islanders back to higher education.
- Partnered with five higher education institutions – CCRI, RIC, URI, NEIT & College Unbound to offer forgiveness on past-due balances that prevent Rhode Islanders from re-enrolling at their institution.



What Rhode Island Reconnect Students Say

"The organization has been an outstanding resource for us in many aspects, including the purchase of books, coverage of expenses and more. Their commitment and delivery of services both are greatly appreciated. Thank you."

"This program is amazing without it I would have to pause going to college again. I want to tell you how much I appreciate this assistance."

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your efforts with Rhode Island Reconnect. This initiative has significantly supported my educational journey. I was concerned about the feasibility of returning to school due to the challenging economic climate and the need to work. After discovering Rhode Island Reconnect through my school's homepage, I realized that pursuing my education was attainable with considerably less stress. The assistance I receive ... allowed me to focus on my studies and strive for academic excellence."

One Student's Story

Isaiah, a student in RIC's foster youth scholarship program, is a motivated student working toward his bachelor's degree in education with dual minors in coaching and music. He works part-time on campus and plays the saxophone. Prior to starting with Reconnect, Isaiah stopped out after two semesters, withdrawing from his classes during the last semester he was enrolled at RIC. Since Fall 2024, Isaiah has passed every class and has registered for classes next term.