



The Cabinet-level Reentry Council is working to enhance community safety and well-being, assist those returning from prison and jail becoming productive citizens, and save taxpayers dollars by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration

Education

In a major federal study of individuals released from state prisons, 94 percent of incarcerated adults nearing release identified education as a key reentry need. Most incarcerated adults did not complete high school, although many have subsequently earned equivalency diplomas. Education is a core resource

for release preparation, and is an evidence-based tool for reducing recidivism among adults and juveniles. For example, empirical research in the federal prison system, where literacy education programming is mandatory for most inmates, has demonstrated that participation in education programming is associated with a 16-percent reduction in recidivism. Education is also a critical building block for increasing employment opportunities.

Accomplishments to Date

- Reentry Council agencies have published two [Reentry MythBusters](#) that address access to education post release. One addresses misconceptions about student financial aid eligibility for formerly incarcerated persons. The second addresses barriers to youth educational integration.
- The Department of Education (ED) undertook a Department-wide review of reentry-related issues. Consensus was reached on broad priorities including the prevention of initial criminal justice system contact, enhancing in-facility educational opportunities (quality and access), and supporting transitions into community-based educational programs and services for formerly incarcerated youth and adults.
- ED initiated an ongoing process of engagement with external stakeholders (formerly incarcerated individuals, program providers, and the advocacy community) on correctional education and reentry. The engagement provided direction for ongoing strategy development and implementation.
- With the assistance and participation of agency partners, ED engaged subject matter experts in a process to develop a research-based [Reentry Education Model](#).
- With financial support provided through an interagency agreement between ED and the Department of Justice (DOJ), ED awarded grants to two community colleges and one Intermediate School District to test implementation of the Reentry Education Model.
- ED is working with privately funded demonstration projects to amplify findings on strong reentry programs. Through coordination with the Vera Institute for Justice, post secondary reentry education programs have been initiated in three states to expand and connect pre- and post-release college programs for state inmates. ED is working with Vera to provide forums for all grantees to share ideas and findings.
- ED developed and has put forward reauthorization proposals for the Workforce Investment Act, calling for greater and more reentry-focused financial support for correctional education from the Title II program for reentry education.
- ED and DOJ worked together to support implementation of a Second Chance Act-funded National Study of Correctional Education. The study will provide a definitive meta-analysis of the recidivism benefit of correctional education, identify trends in correctional education, and provide guidance to the field to improve correctional education services and outcomes.

Agenda Moving Forward

Create Pre- and Post-Release Opportunities for Educational Participation

ED and DOJ are closely coordinating with private foundations to support reentry education model projects, through direct support of demonstration projects, technical assistance, and national evaluations. ED and Reentry Council agencies will support federal, state, and local correctional officials and their partners to expand and improve educational opportunities (including access to high-quality special education and related services) for incarcerated persons. There will be particular emphasis on educational opportunities that span the moment of release and allow incarcerated persons to continue movement toward personal educational goals throughout the release process and upon return to the community. ED is addressing the need for transitional support involving records transfer and cost management.

Engage a Broad Range of Educational Entities about the Service Needs of the Reentry Population

ED will conduct outreach to multiple groups in the educational community to encourage engagement with

correctional entities and expansion and improvement of services to formerly incarcerated individuals. This will especially include the Office of Vocational and Adult Education portfolio of education communities, including Career Technology Education Programs, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funded programs, and community colleges. ED will identify and utilize bully pulpit opportunities.

Build and Disseminate Research-Based Innovations to Expand Educational Programs and Improve Their Outcomes

Two important elements of this work will include (1) bringing technology to bear on improving access, quality and connectedness of educational opportunities for the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated, and (2) facilitating partnerships that connect academic education, career technology education, industry relevant credentialing, work experiences, and related services to help formerly incarcerated individuals obtain employment within an occupational area and be positioned to advance to higher levels of future education and employment in that area.

Key Resources (Education)

Reentry Council

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/projects/firc/>

Reentry MythBusters

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/projects/mythbusters/>

National Reentry Resource Center

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/>

Office of Vocational and Adult Education

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/resource/index.html>

Reentry Education Model

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/Adult-Ed/reentry-model.pdf>

Student Financial Aid Information

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/eligibility/criminal-convictions>

“Take Charge of Your Future, Get the Education and Training You Need,” a guide for incarcerated individuals

<http://www.edpubs.gov/document/ed005354p.pdf?ck=131>