

Postsecondary education has been proven to reduce recidivism and promote more successful transitions back into communities for adults returning from incarceration.¹ However, currently incarcerated and reentering adults often face barriers to receiving high-quality postsecondary education. The Council of State Governments Justice Center, with support from Lumina Foundation, conducted an intensive 50-state scan and survey of the statutory, financial, and administrative policies and practices that impact the provision of postsecondary education for this population. This fact sheet outlines the research findings for Alabama.



HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

Correctional Agency Funding

- The Alabama legislature appropriates state funds for college programs in state correctional facilities through the Alabama Special Educational Trust Fund.² However, the use of state funding for individuals serving life without parole is prohibited.³ Postsecondary education is also funded through federal sources—such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and the Second Chance Pell Pilot program—and privately funded foundation grants.⁴

State Financial Aid

- Alabama financial aid programs do not have any statutory, regulatory, or policy restrictions that prevent people who are currently incarcerated from receiving state aid.⁵



WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- In partnership with the Alabama Department of Corrections, Calhoun Community College, Coastal Alabama Community College, J.F. Ingram State Technical College, and Wallace Community College provide career and technical education in programs that lead incarcerated students to receive the Alabama Certified Worker Certificate, Manufacturing Skills Standards Council - Certified Logistics certification, National Career Readiness Certificate, and National Center for Construction Education and Research certification.⁶
- Certificates are also provided through the federally funded Second Chance Pell Pilot program sites at Calhoun Community College, Coastal Alabama Community College, and J.F. Ingram State Technical College.⁷

Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Associate degrees⁸ are offered through J.F. Ingram State Technical College, a fully accredited educational institution established by the Alabama legislature to exclusively provide career and technical education to people who are incarcerated in Alabama.⁹
- Bachelor's degrees are offered through the Second Chance Pell Pilot program site at Auburn University.¹⁰
- College courses are offered through Calhoun Community College.¹¹

Labor Market, Employer Feedback, and Outcome Data Alignment

- ➔ Alabama has identified local labor market trends and employer feedback as the primary reason for determining the types of postsecondary education and CTE programming that are offered within the correctional facility.¹²



WHAT RESTRICTIONS OR BARRIERS ARE IMPOSED ON ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION?

Statutory or Administrative Requirements, Permissions, and Restrictions

- ➔ Participation in postsecondary education programs is based on custody level and behavior during incarceration.¹³

Use of Criminal History in State College and University Applications

- ➔ Alabama has 16 state colleges and universities, 2 of which used the 2019-2020 Common Application.¹⁴ Both of these schools added questions asking applicants to disclose their criminal history: University of Alabama at Birmingham and University of South Alabama.
- ➔ Twelve of the 14 state colleges and universities that do not use the Common Application require students to disclose their criminal history: Alabama A&M University, Alabama State University, Auburn University, Auburn University at Montgomery, Jacksonville State University, Troy University (all three campuses), The University of Alabama, University of Alabama in Huntsville, University of Montevallo, and University of West Alabama.



WHAT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS EXIST TO ENCOURAGE ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION?

Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ The parole board may consider postsecondary education during incarceration when granting or denying parole.¹⁵ Completion of rehabilitative programs may be viewed favorably in parole consideration.¹⁶

Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ Statute requires that the parole board establish the general conditions of parole and the process for determining special conditions of parole;¹⁷ these conditions often include post-release participation in or completion of postsecondary education.¹⁸

Support and Services in the Community

- ➔ The parole-granting agency provides information on postsecondary education and postsecondary education advisors and coordinators, but not occupational training and vocational credential testing.¹⁹

Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ Alabama Department of Corrections does not have formalized articulation agreements with schools offering programming in correctional facilities to ensure that courses offered in correctional facilities are equivalent to those offered in the community and that credits fully transfer.²⁰

1. Lois M. Davis et al., *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR266.html.
2. Code of Ala. § 14-12-4.
3. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
4. Ibid.
5. "State of Alabama Financial Aid Programs," Alabama Commission on Higher Education, accessed March 19, 2019, http://ache.edu/ACHE_Reports/Forms/Grants/AL-Financial-Aid-Prog.pdf; "Chapter 300-4-2: Alabama Student Assistance Program," Alabama Commission on Higher Education Student Assistance, June 30, 2017, <http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/hged/300-4-2.pdf>.
6. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019; "Helping Alabama Reduce Recidivism," Alabama Community College System, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.accs.edu/correctional-and-post-correctional-ed/>; "College in Prison," Vera Institute of Justice, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.vera.org/projects/college-in-prison>; Calhoun Community College, Calhoun Community College Catalog and Student Handbook 2018-2019, (Tanner, Alabama: 2018), https://catalog.calhoun.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/pdf_generator/201919-catalog-pdf-download.pdf?1551216452%20.
7. U.S. Department of Education, "12,000 Incarcerated Students to Enroll in Postsecondary Educational and Training Programs through Education Department's New Second Chance Pell Pilot Program," news release, June 24, 2016, <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/12000-incarcerated-students-enroll-postsecondary-educational-and-training-programs-through-education-departments-new-second-chance-pell-pilot-program>; "College in Prison," Vera Institute of Justice, accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.vera.org/projects/college-in-prison>.
8. J. F. Ingram State Technical College, *2018-2019 College Catalog*, (Deatsville, Alabama: 2018), <http://www.istc.edu/Content/Uploads/istc.edu/files/File/DI/CATALOG%202016-2019.pdf>; "Programs," Ingram State Technical College, accessed November 26, 2019, <https://istc.edu/programs/#atf>.
9. "Events," Ingram State Technical College, accessed December 1, 2019, <https://istc.edu/?pn=contact>.
10. "College in Prison," Vera Institute of Justice, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.vera.org/projects/college-in-prison>.
11. Ibid.
12. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
13. Ibid.
14. The Common Application, an undergraduate college application system, recently removed its required criminal history question, but maintains its questions on disciplinary infractions. However, colleges on the Common Application can add questions regarding criminal conviction or disciplinary information to their individualized applications.
15. Code of Ala. § 15-22-26(a); Male Inmate Handbook (Montgomery, Alabama: Alabama Department of Corrections, 2017) accessed March 28, 2019, <http://www.doc.state.al.us/docs/PublicMaleInmateHandbook.pdf>.
16. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
17. Code of Ala. § 15-22-29.
18. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
19. Ibid.
20. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.