

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 Alaska.



HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

Correctional Agency Funding

- As a result of the 1990s No Frill Prison Act, the Alaska legislature prohibits appropriating state funds for postsecondary education programs in state correctional facilities.² Postsecondary education is funded through federal sources—such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act³—and self-pay.⁴
- Alaska is not using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds for postsecondary education and did not apply for/receive Second Chance Pell pilot funding.⁵

State Financial Aid

- Alaska financial aid programs do not have any statutory, regulatory, or policy restrictions that prevent people who are currently incarcerated from receiving state aid.⁶



WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- In partnership with the Alaska Department of Corrections, Iisagvik College⁷ provides career and technical education in barbering, computers, flagging⁸ pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs through state and federal Department of Labor, and welding, as well as programs leading to Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response certification, National Center for Construction Education and Research certification, Occupational Safety and Health Administration 10 and 30 certifications, and ServSafe certification.⁹

Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Individuals may participate in postsecondary correspondence courses at University of Alaska Anchorage geared toward college credit.¹⁰
- Associate degrees are offered through Adams State University, Iisagvik College, and University of Alaska Anchorage and Fairbanks.¹¹
- Alaska does not provide bachelor's degrees.¹²

Labor Market, Employer Feedback, and Outcome Data Alignment

- Alaska has identified local labor market trends as the primary factors that determine the types of postsecondary education and CTE programming that are offered within the correctional facility.¹³



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 length of stay and behavior during incarceration.¹⁴ For example, for courses leading to employment, preference is given to individuals with shorter incarceration terms.¹⁵
- ➔ Access to postsecondary services is prioritized based on an individual's release date.¹⁶
- ➔ Individuals may be automatically suspended from participating in postsecondary education programs, or from reading educational materials, if found guilty of an infraction¹⁷ or in violation of program rules.¹⁸
- ➔ If withdrawn from an education program for disciplinary reasons, a participant will be eligible to reenroll within six months after the withdrawal.¹⁹

Use of Criminal History in State College and University Applications

- ➔ Alaska has three state universities, none of which used the 2019-2020 Common Application.²⁰ None of these three state universities require students to disclose their criminal or disciplinary history.



WHAT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS EXIST TO ENCOURAGE ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION?

Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ The parole board is required by statute to take into account an individual's plans after release, which may include further education, when deciding to grant or deny parole.²¹ State law permits the board to consider participation in postsecondary educational activities during incarceration.²²

Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ As a condition of parole, if an individual is participating in postsecondary education after release, they must continue their programming unless "granted permission" from a parole officer to discontinue the program.²³
- ➔ Post-release participation in postsecondary education can meet a parole requirement to seek or obtain employment.²⁴

Support and Services in the Community

- ➔ The parole-granting agency provides occupational training, information on postsecondary education, postsecondary education advisors and coordinators, and vocational credential testing.²⁵

Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ Alaska 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.²⁶

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. Alaska No Frills Prison Act, 1997 AK. SB 1; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
3. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
4. Alaska Department of Corrections, Programs and Services (2018) (Anchorage, Alaska: Alaska Department of Corrections, 2018), 14, <http://www.correct.state.ak.us/corrections/doc/programs-services.pdf>; "Spring Creek Education Programs," Alaska Department of Corrections, accessed April 22, 2019, <http://www.correct.state.ak.us/institutions/spring-creek-education-programs>.
5. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
6. "FAQs," Alaska Performance Scholarship, 2017, 5-6, https://acpe.alaska.gov/Portals/3/APS/Pubs/APS-FAQs_03.2017.pdf; Alaska Stat. § 14.43.810 et seq.; "Alaska Education Grant," Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, accessed March 21, 2019, <https://acpe.alaska.gov/FINANCIAL-AID/AK-Education-Grant>; Alaska Stat. § 14.43.415.
7. Alaska Department of Corrections, Programs and Services (2018) (Anchorage, Alaska: Alaska Department of Corrections, 2018), 4, 5, 14, <http://www.correct.state.ak.us/corrections/doc/programs-services.pdf>.
8. A flagging certification is required for individuals interested in obtaining employment as crossing guards, highway maintenance workers, or any traffic-related laborer. "Traffic Flagging Certification, Certificate," Department of Labor and Workforce Development: Research and Analysis, accessed November 26, 2019, <http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/atc/program.cfm?pg=02002046>.
9. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
10. "Fairbanks Correctional Center Education Programs," Alaska Department of Corrections, Institutions, accessed April 22, 2019, <http://www.correct.state.ak.us/institutions/fairbanks-education-programs>; "Spring Creek Education Programs," Alaska Department of Corrections, Institutions, accessed April 22, 2019, <http://www.correct.state.ak.us/institutions/spring-creek-education-programs>.
11. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. 22 AAC 05.400; 22 AAC 05.470.
18. Policies and Procedures 808.04 and 809.02.
19. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
20. 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.
21. Alaska Stat. § 33.16.100(g)(2).
22. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
23. 22 AAC 20.200(a)(2).
24. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
25. Ibid.
26. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.