

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 Arizona.



HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

Correctional Agency Funding

- The Arizona legislature may appropriate state funds for career and technical education.² However, it does not appropriate state funds for education programs for individuals “who are sentenced to death or life imprisonment or who are classified as maximum custody.”³ Postsecondary education is also funded through self-pay,⁴ private sources,⁵ and federal sources, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.⁶
- Arizona is not using Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act funds for postsecondary education and did not apply for/receive Second Chance Pell pilot funding.⁷

State Financial Aid

- The Arizona Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership does not statutorily prevent people who are incarcerated from receiving the award. However, in practice, the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education uses the federal Pell Grant requirements to determine eligibility; therefore, people who are incarcerated are restricted from accessing the award.⁸



WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- The Arizona Department of Corrections provides career and technical education in programs leading to a National Center for Construction Education and Research certification.⁹

Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Individuals may participate in postsecondary correspondence courses through Rio Salado College geared toward college credit at their own expense.¹⁰
- Associate degrees are offered through Cochise College.¹¹
- Bachelor's degrees are offered through the Second Chance Pell Pilot program site at Ashland University, a private institution, via tablets.¹²
- College courses are offered through Arizona State University's Prison Education Programming.¹³

Labor Market, Employer Feedback, and Outcome Data Alignment

- Arizona has identified local labor market trends, employer feedback, and outcome data as the primary factors that determine the types of postsecondary education and CTE programming that are offered within the correctional facility.¹⁴



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 behavior during incarceration and an individual's offense/conviction.¹⁵ For example, individuals do not have access to career and technical education programs that may be related to their offense.¹⁶

Use of Criminal History in State College and University Applications

- ➔ Arizona has three state universities, two of which used the 2019-2020 Common Application.¹⁷ Neither Arizona State University nor University of Arizona ask about criminal conviction.
- ➔ Northern Arizona University asks whether an applicant has been convicted of a felony.



WHAT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS EXIST TO ENCOURAGE ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION?

Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ Individuals can earn credits to reduce their sentence by attending postsecondary education programs.¹⁸
- ➔ Incentives for participating in postsecondary education programs include dedicated or specialized housing, compensation, and access to technology for personal use.¹⁹

Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ Parole was abolished in Arizona in 1994; only people who committed crimes before January 1, 1994 may be eligible for parole.²⁰ The standard for granting parole is that "there is a substantial probability that the applicant will remain at liberty without violating the law and that the release is in the best interests of the state."²¹
- ➔ The board does not consider participation in postsecondary educational activities during incarceration when deciding whether to grant or deny parole.²²

Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ State laws do not address conditions of parole beyond stating that the parole board will make restitution a condition of parole.²³

Support and Services in the Community

- ➔ The parole-granting agency provides information on postsecondary education, but does not provide occupational training, postsecondary education advisors and coordinators, and vocational credential testing.²⁴

Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ Arizona 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.²⁵

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. A.R.S. § 31-240(A)(4).
3. A.R.S. § 31-240(C).
4. "Tuition, Fees, and Textbook," Rio Salado College, accessed March 22, 2019, <http://www.riosalado.edu/programs/palumni/distance-learning/Pages/materials.aspx>.
5. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. A.R.S. § 15-1856; Lauren Hobby, Brian Walsh, and Ruth Delaney, *A Piece of the Puzzle: State Financial Aid for Incarcerated Students—Technical Appendix* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2019), 3.
9. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
10. "Incarcerated Re-Entry," Rio Salado College, accessed March 22, 2019, <http://www.riosalado.edu/programs/palumni/Pages/default.aspx>; "Tuition, Fees, and Textbook," Rio Salado College, accessed March 22, 2019, <http://www.riosalado.edu/programs/palumni/distance-learning/Pages/materials.aspx>.
11. "Douglas," Arizona Department of Corrections, accessed November 26, 2019, <https://corrections.az.gov/location/100/douglas>.
12. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
13. "Prison Education Programming," Arizona State University, accessed November 27, 2019, <https://pep.asu.edu/>.
14. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. 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.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. A.R.S. § 31-402(A).
21. A.R.S. § 31-412(A).
22. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
23. A.R.S. § 31-412(D).
24. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
25. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.