

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 Iowa.



HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

Correctional Agency Funding

- The Iowa legislature may appropriate state funds for college programs in state correctional facilities.² Postsecondary education is funded through the Second Chance Pell Pilot program and private grants.³ Some of these private grants include the Friends of Iowa Grant and the Skylark Program, a five-year program tailored for incarcerated women who are survivors of domestic abuse and sexual assault.⁴
- Iowa is not using Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds for postsecondary education.⁵

State Financial Aid

- Iowa financial aid programs do not have any statutory, regulatory, or policy restrictions that prevent people who are currently incarcerated from receiving aid. Further, one of the “duties”⁶ of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission is to work with the judicial district departments of correctional services and Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC) to help people who are currently incarcerated apply for federal and state financial aid.⁷



WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- In partnership with the DOC, Iowa Western Community College, Iowa Central Community College, and Kirkwood Community College provide career and technical education in carpentry, computer operation, food preparation, industrial mechanist laboratory, landscaping apprenticeship, supply chain management, and welding.⁸
- Certificates are provided through the federally funded Second Chance Pell Pilot program site with Iowa Central Community College.⁹

Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Associate degrees are offered through the Second Chance Pell pilot site at Iowa Central Community College.¹⁰
- Associate degrees are offered through Kirkwood Community College and Upper Iowa University, a private institution.¹¹
- Bachelor's degrees are also offered through Upper Iowa University's Self-Paced Degree Program.¹²
- College courses are offered through Grinnell College's (a private institution) Liberal Arts in Prison Program.¹³

Labor Market, Employer Feedback, and Outcome Data Alignment

- ➔ Iowa has not identified local labor market trends, employer feedback, or outcome data alignment 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, length of sentence, and type of offense.¹⁵ People with life sentences may be restricted from accessing postsecondary education.¹⁶
- ➔ If withdrawn from an education program for disciplinary reasons, a participant will be eligible to reenroll within six months after their withdrawal.¹⁷

Use of Criminal History in State College and University Applications

- ➔ Iowa has three state universities, all of which used the 2019–2020 Common Application.¹⁸ Each school added questions asking applicants to disclose their criminal history.



WHAT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS EXIST TO ENCOURAGE ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION?

Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ Individuals can earn a reduction off their sentence by attending postsecondary education programs.¹⁹

Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ Post-release participation in postsecondary education can meet a parole requirement to seek or obtain employment.²⁰

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.²¹

Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ The DOC does not have 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.²²

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. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
3. Ibid.
4. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019; "The Skylark Project," Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://www.icadv.org/skylark>.
5. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
6. Iowa Code § 261.2(5).
7. Kibbie Grant (Iowa Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant)," Iowa College Aid, accessed April 9, 2019, <https://www.iowacollegeaid.gov/KibbieGrant>; "Iowa Vocational Technical Tuition Grant," Iowa College Aid, accessed April 9, 2019, <https://www.iowacollegeaid.gov/IowaVocational-TechnicalTuitionGrant> and Iowa Code § 261.17; "Robert D. Blue Scholarship Application Help Sheet," Treasurer of the State of Iowa, accessed April 9, 2019 <https://www.rdblue.org/pdfs/blueapp.pdf>; "Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship," Iowa College Aid, accessed August 23, 2019, <https://www.iowacollegeaid.gov/LastDollar> and Legislative Services Agency: Fiscal Services Division, "Fiscal Update Article," Iowa Legislature, July 11, 2019, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/BL/1061719.pdf>.
8. "Iowa Department of Corrections," *Iowa Department of Corrections, FY 2018 Annual Report*, (Iowa: Iowa Department of Corrections, 2018), https://doc.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2018/12/fy2018_idoc_annual_report.pdf; "Clarinda Correctional Facility," Iowa Department of Corrections, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://doc.iowa.gov/about-us/about-institutions/clarinda-correctional-facility>; "College in Prison," Vera Institute of Justice, accessed April 10, 2019, <https://www.vera.org/projects/college-in-prison>; "Triton Pride: Spring/Summer 2017 Alumni & Friends Newsletter," Iowa Central Community College, http://www.iowacentral.edu/foundation/triton_pride/Spring2017.pdf, 10.
9. 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>.
10. "College in Prison," Vera Institute of Justice, accessed April 10, 2019, <https://www.vera.org/projects/college-in-prison>.
11. "Anamosa State Penitentiary," Iowa Department of Corrections, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://doc.iowa.gov/about-us/about-institutions/anamosa-state-penitentiary>; "Upper Iowa University," Prison Activist Resource Center, accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.prisonactivist.org/resources/upper-iowa-university>.
12. Upper Iowa University, Prison Activist Resource Center, accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.prisonactivist.org/resources/upper-iowa-university>.
13. "Mission & Goals of the Liberal Arts in Prison Program," Grinnell College, accessed October 4, 2019, <http://prisonstudiesproject.org/2011/08/grinnell-liberal-arts-in-prison-program/>.
14. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
15. Iowa Code § 904.707; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
16. 15 CCR § 8004(b)(1); The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
17. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
18. 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.
19. Iowa Code § 903A.2(1)(a)(1).
20. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
21. Ibid.
22. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.