

**P**ostsecondary education has been proven to reduce recidivism and promote more successful transitions back into communities for adults returning from incarceration.<sup>1</sup> 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 Louisiana.



### HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

#### Correctional Agency Funding

- The Louisiana legislature may appropriate state funding to implement and operate postsecondary education programs for individuals in state correctional facilities. However, funding is largely from federal funds, such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.<sup>2</sup>
- Although Second Chance Pell sites are active in correctional facilities, Louisiana did not apply for/receive Second Chance Pell pilot funding for their specific state colleges and universities.<sup>3</sup>

#### State Financial Aid

- The Taylor Opportunity Program for Students is the largest state financial aid program and has four separate awards. There is a statutory restriction that prevents individuals with a criminal conviction, except for a misdemeanor traffic violation, from being eligible for the award.<sup>4</sup> The GO Grant is limited to students receiving Pell funding; therefore, incarcerated students are not eligible.<sup>5</sup>



### WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

#### Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- In partnership with the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DPS&C), Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS)<sup>6</sup> provides career and technical education in HVAC and horticulture, as well as programs leading to Automotive Service Excellence certification, certified technology certification, Environmental Protection Agency certification, Internet and Computing Core certification, National Center for Construction Education and Research certification, and ServSafe certification.<sup>7</sup>

#### Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Associate degrees and bachelor's degrees are offered through the Second Chance Pell Pilot sites at Ashland University and Wiley College, private institutions.<sup>8</sup>
- An associate degree in pastoral ministries and a bachelor's degree in theology are offered through New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.<sup>9</sup>
- College courses are offered through a partnership with Tulane University and Operation Restoration, an organization that supports women and girls impacted by incarceration.<sup>10</sup>

### Labor Market, Employer Feedback, and Outcome Data Alignment

- ➔ Louisiana has not identified local labor market trends, employer feedback, or outcome data as the primary factors that determine the types of postsecondary education and CTE programming that are offered within the correctional facility.<sup>11</sup>



### 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 length of sentence. Priority is given to individuals who are within five years of release.<sup>12</sup>
- ➔ If withdrawn from an education program for disciplinary reasons, a participant will be eligible to reenroll within six months after their withdrawal.<sup>13</sup>

#### Use of Criminal History in State College and University Applications

- ➔ In June 2017, Louisiana became the first state to prohibit all public and state universities from asking about criminal history during the application process, with exceptions for convictions relating to sexual assault or stalking.<sup>14</sup>
- ➔ Louisiana has 16 state universities, 2 of which used the 2019-2020 Common Application.<sup>15</sup> Louisiana State University asks additional questions specifically about stalking, cyberstalking, rape, and sexual battery on their application.
- ➔ Louisiana State University Shreveport, 1 of the 14 state colleges and universities that do not use the Common Application, requires students to disclose criminal history involving sexual offenses. The University of Louisiana at Lafayette asks if the applicant is currently incarcerated due to the school being a “recipient of state and federal dollars.”



### WHAT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS EXIST TO ENCOURAGE ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION?

#### Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ An individual may earn a sentence reduction for attending postsecondary education programs.<sup>16</sup>
- ➔ Incentives for participating in postsecondary education programs include dedicated or specialized housing, exemption from work requirements, and certified treatment and rehabilitation program credits.<sup>17</sup>

#### Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ State policy requires the parole board to consider postsecondary education activities during incarceration as a factor when granting or denying parole.<sup>18</sup>

#### Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ The paroling authority may require an individual to participate in education as a condition of parole.<sup>19</sup>
- ➔ Post-release participation in postsecondary education can meet a parole requirement to seek or obtain employment.<sup>20</sup>

## 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.<sup>21</sup>

## Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ DPS&C has articulation agreements with all LCTCS schools, which state that courses offered in the correctional facilities are equivalent to those offered in the community.<sup>22</sup>

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](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; The state of Louisiana did not have any colleges or universities selected as Second Chance Pell Pilot sites, but both Wiley College (Texas) and Ashland University (Ohio) are operating in the state correctional facilities, 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>.
3. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
4. La. R.S. § 17:5028; See also LAC 28:IV.703(A)(7); LAC 28:IV.705(A)(3); LAC 28:IV.803(9); LAC 28:IV.805(A)(3).
5. La. R.S. § 17:3046.1(3).
6. "Reentry Initiatives & Transitional Work Programs," Louisiana Department of Corrections, accessed December 12, 2019, <https://doc.louisiana.gov/offender-programs-resources/transition-reentry/>.
7. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
8. Ibid.
9. "Reentry Initiatives & Transitional Work Programs," See Certified Treatment & Rehabilitative Programs (CTRP)>Faith-Based and Values Development Programming, Louisiana Department of Corrections, accessed December 13, 2019, <https://doc.louisiana.gov/offender-programs-resources/transition-reentry/>.
10. "Educational Programming," Operation Restoration, accessed December 12, 2019, <https://or-nola.org/education-programming/>; "Our Mission," Operation Restoration, accessed December 12, 2019, <https://or-nola.org/about-or/>; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
11. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. La. R.S. §17:3152; Judith Scott-Clayton, *Thinking 'beyond the box': The use of criminal records in college admissions*, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2017), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/thinking-beyond-the-box-the-use-of-criminal-records-in-college-admissions/>.
15. 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.
16. La. R.S. § 15:571.3(B)(1)(a).
17. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
18. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019; La. R.S. § 15:574.4(A)(4)(e), (B)(2)(a)(vi), (B)(2)(b)(vi), (B)(2)(c)(vi), (B)(2)(d)(vi), (D)(1)(e)(iii), (E)(1)(e)(iii), (F)(1)(e)(iii), (G)(1)(e)(iii); LAC 22:XI.701(C)(3)(a), (C)(7).
19. La. R.S. § 15:574.4.2(E); LAC 22:XI.901(B)(8).
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.