

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 Michigan.



HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

Correctional Agency Funding

- The Michigan legislature does not appropriate state funds for college 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 the Second Chance Pell pilot program—self-pay,⁴ and private sources.⁵
- Michigan is not using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds for postsecondary education.⁶

State Financial Aid

- Recently, Michigan changed a policy that restricted incarcerated individuals from accessing the state's Tuition Incentive Program.⁷ However, the state maintains the ban for incarcerated students for other awards, such as the Michigan Competitive Scholarship and Michigan Tuition Grant.⁸ Upon release, individuals may apply for state financial assistance.



WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- The Michigan Department of Corrections provides career and technical education in auto tech, carpentry, commercial truck driving, electrical, food tech, forklift, horticulture, machinery, masonry, plumbing, optical lab, robotics, tree trimming, and welding.⁹
- Certificates in art and design, business administration and computer service, business management, general studies, marketing management, and small business management (entrepreneurship) are provided through the federally funded Second Chance Pell Pilot program sites at Delta College, Jackson College, and Mott Community College.¹⁰

Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Individuals may participate in postsecondary correspondence courses geared toward college credit through a number of colleges, including Ohio University, Delta College, and Montcalm Community College, at the student's own expense.¹¹
- Associate degrees are offered through the Second Chance Pell Pilot site colleges.¹²
- College courses are offered through University of Michigan Dearborn's Inside Out Program.¹³
- Bachelor's degrees in ministry leadership are offered through Calvin College, a private institution.¹⁴

Labor Market, Employer Feedback, and Outcome Data Alignment

- ➔ Michigan 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.¹⁵



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.¹⁶
- ➔ Access to postsecondary services is prioritized based on an individual's release date, special education needs, and other factors;¹⁷ it can be limited based on licensure requirements, custody level, and risk assessments.¹⁸

Use of Criminal History in State College and University Applications

- ➔ Michigan has 15 state universities, 8 of which used the 2019–2020 Common Application.¹⁹ Six of these schools added questions asking applicants to disclose their criminal history: Eastern Michigan University, Michigan State University, University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, University of Michigan–Dearborn, University of Michigan–Flint, and Western Michigan University.
- ➔ Five of the seven state colleges and universities that do not use the Common Application require students to disclose their criminal history: Ferris State University, Grand Valley University, Michigan Technological University, Oakland University, and Saginaw Valley University.



WHAT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS EXIST TO ENCOURAGE ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION?

Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ Individuals can earn “special good time credits” to reduce their sentence by attending postsecondary education programs.²⁰
- ➔ Incentives for participating in postsecondary education programs include dedicated or specialized housing, exemption from work requirements, and compensation.²¹

Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ The parole board may consider several factors related to postsecondary education when determining whether to release a person on parole, including work or school performance and the acquisition of a vocational skill or educational degree that will help secure employment.²²

Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ The parole board has broad discretion to set conditions of parole²³ but never includes postsecondary education as a requirement.²⁴
- ➔ Postsecondary education may be used to waive the parole employment requirement.²⁵

Support and Services in the Community

- ➔ The parole-granting agency provides information on postsecondary education, but not postsecondary education advisors and coordinators, occupational training, and vocational credential testing.²⁶

Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ The Michigan Department of Corrections has articulation agreements with schools offering programming in correctional facilities, which state that courses and degree programs offered in the correctional facilities are equivalent to those offered in the community and indicate what credits can be transferred.²⁷ In addition, general education credits offered within facilities are transferable between most in-state schools.²⁸

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. "Prison Education Initiative," Prison Studies Project, accessed May 3, 2019, <http://prisonstudiesproject.org/2018/06/prison-education-initiative-2/>.
5. Ibid.
6. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
7. Angie Jackson, "Michigan now allows inmates to get financial aid for college education," *Detroit Free Press*, October 16, 2019, accessed December 20, 2019, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2019/10/16/michigan-expands-financial-aid-to-inmates/3918872002/>.
8. "MI Student Aid," Office of Postsecondary Financial Planning, accessed on February 15, 2019, <https://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid/0,4636,7-372-89024---,00.html>; Phone call between The Council of State Governments Justice Center and Rene from Michigan State Aid, December 10, 2019.
9. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
10. 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," 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>.
11. "Educational Programming," Michigan Department of Corrections, accessed March 8, 2019, https://www.michigan.gov/corrections/0,4551,7-119-9741_12798-294493--,00.html.
12. U.S. Department of Education, "12,000 Incarcerated Students to Enroll."
13. "Educational Programming," Michigan Department of Corrections; "Inside Out Program," University of Michigan-Dearborn, accessed October 21, 2019, <https://umdearborn.edu/casl/life-casl/learning-community/inside-out-program>.
14. "Calvin Prison Initiative," Calvin College, accessed March 11, 2019, <https://calvin.edu/prison-initiative/>; "The Calvin Prison Initiative," Prison Studies Project, accessed March 11, 2019, <http://prisonstudiesproject.org/2018/03/the-calvin-prison-initiative/>.
15. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
16. Michigan Department of Corrections Policy Directive 05.02.112(N), https://www.michigan.gov/documents/corrections/05_02_112_515776_7.pdf; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
17. Ibid.
18. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
19. 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.
20. Mich. Comp. Laws Serv. § 800.33(5) (LexisNexis); Michigan Department of Corrections, Policy Directive 03.01.100(N)-(S), https://www.michigan.gov/documents/corrections/03_01_100_578172_7.pdf.
21. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
22. Mich. Admin. Code r. 791.7715(2).
23. Mich. Comp. Laws Serv. § 791.236 (LexisNexis).
24. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
28. Ibid.