

**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 Minnesota.



### HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

#### Correctional Agency Funding

- The Minnesota legislature may appropriate state funds for college programs in state correctional facilities.<sup>2</sup> There are restrictions preventing state funding from being used for college programs beyond an associate of arts degree for people convicted of murder.<sup>3</sup> Postsecondary education is funded through federal sources—such as the Second Chance Pell pilot program<sup>4</sup>—and privately funded foundation grants.<sup>5</sup>
- Minnesota is not using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act funds for postsecondary education.<sup>6</sup>

#### State Financial Aid

- Minnesota financial aid programs do not have any statutory, regulatory, or policy restrictions that prevent people who are currently incarcerated from receiving aid. Further, the Minnesota State Grant addresses the costs of attendance—tuition and fee components—for individuals in correctional institutions directly in statute.<sup>7</sup>



### WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

#### Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- In partnership with the Minnesota Department of Corrections, Century College,<sup>8</sup> Pine Technical and Community College, and South Central College<sup>9</sup> provide career and technical education in barbering license preparation, business management, cabinetmaking, carpentry, computers, computer network cabling, cosmetology license preparation, drywall installation, floor covering, green energy management, heavy equipment operation, masonry, manufacturing skills, mechanical design and drafting, mechatronics, production technology, painting and decorating, production technologies, and solar panel installation.<sup>10</sup>
- Certificates are provided through the federally funded Second Chance Pell Pilot program sites at Pine Technical and Community College and South Central College.<sup>11</sup>

#### Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Associate degrees are offered through Augsburg University, Inver Hills Community College, and Lake Superior College.<sup>12</sup>
- Associate degrees and college course credits are offered through the Second Chance Pell Pilot site college at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.<sup>13</sup>

- ➔ Bachelor's degrees are offered through the Second Chance Pell Pilot site college at Ashland University, a private institution.<sup>14</sup>

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

- ➔ Minnesota has identified local labor market trends and employer feedback as the primary factors that determine the types of postsecondary education and CTE programming that are offered within the correctional facility.<sup>15</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<sup>16</sup> and length of sentence.<sup>17</sup> Access to career technical programming is prioritized based on a person's release date; individuals with less than five years until release are prioritized.<sup>18</sup>
- ➔ If withdrawn from an education program for disciplinary reasons, a participant will be eligible to reenroll six months to one year after their withdrawal.<sup>19</sup>

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

- ➔ Minnesota has 12 state universities, 4 of which used the 2019–2020 Common Application.<sup>20</sup> Three of these schools added questions asking applicants to disclose their criminal history: University of Minnesota-Duluth, University of Minnesota-Morris, and University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.
- ➔ One of the eight state colleges and universities that do not use the Common Application requires students to disclose their criminal history: University of Minnesota-Crookston. The application used for the state's other universities does not ask about criminal conviction and states the following: "If you have been arrested, charged or convicted of any criminal offense, you should investigate the impact that the arrest, charge, or conviction may have on your chances of employment in the field you intend to study; or on your chances to obtain federal, state, and other higher education financial aid."



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

### Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ Incentives for participating in postsecondary education programs include dedicated or specialized housing and compensation.<sup>21</sup>

### Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ The parole board was abolished in 1982.<sup>22</sup> A sentencing judge imposes a determinate sentence, which may include fixed terms of incarceration.<sup>23</sup> Thus, participation in postsecondary education is not a factor for early release.

### Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ The state parole granting agency may include post-release participation in or completion of postsecondary education as a condition of parole.<sup>24</sup>
- ➔ Post-release participation in postsecondary education can meet a parole requirement to seek or obtain employment.<sup>25</sup>

## 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.<sup>26</sup>

## Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ The Minnesota Department of Corrections has articulation agreements with schools offering programming in the 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.<sup>27</sup> In addition, credits are transferable to any Minnesota state college and university.<sup>28</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.
3. Minn. Stat. § 241.265.
4. 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>.
5. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
6. Ibid.
7. Minn. Stat. § 136A.121(Subd. 6)(c); "Minnesota State Grant," MN Office of Higher Education, accessed October 7, 2019, <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?PageID=138>.
8. "Fact Sheet," Minnesota Department of Corrections, January 2019, [https://mn.gov/doc/assets/Education%20and%20Programming\\_tcm1089-364582.pdf](https://mn.gov/doc/assets/Education%20and%20Programming_tcm1089-364582.pdf).
9. "College in Prison," Vera Institute of Justice, accessed May 15, 2019, <https://www.vera.org/projects/college-in-prison>.
10. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
11. 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>.
12. "Fact Sheet," Minnesota Department of Corrections, January 2019, [https://mn.gov/doc/assets/Education%20and%20Programming\\_tcm1089-364582.pdf](https://mn.gov/doc/assets/Education%20and%20Programming_tcm1089-364582.pdf); Master Academic Plan 2016-2018, Minnesota Correctional Education Center, (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2016), 8, [https://mn.gov/doc/assets/Attachment\\_3B.2\\_Master\\_Academic\\_Plan\\_tcm1089-275538.pdf](https://mn.gov/doc/assets/Attachment_3B.2_Master_Academic_Plan_tcm1089-275538.pdf).
13. U.S. Department of Education, "12,000 Incarcerated Students to Enroll; "College in Prison," Vera Institute of Justice, accessed May 15, 2019, <https://www.vera.org/projects/college-in-prison>.
14. "Fact Sheet," Minnesota Department of Corrections, January 2019, [https://mn.gov/doc/assets/Education%20and%20Programming\\_tcm1089-364582.pdf](https://mn.gov/doc/assets/Education%20and%20Programming_tcm1089-364582.pdf); The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
15. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
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. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
22. Minnesota Parole, Government Registry: Online Records Retrieval, accessed May 16, 2019, [http://www.governmentregistry.org/criminal\\_records/parole/state\\_parole/minnesota\\_parole.html](http://www.governmentregistry.org/criminal_records/parole/state_parole/minnesota_parole.html).
23. Minnesota Parole, Government Registry: Online Records Retrieval, accessed May 16, 2019, [http://www.governmentregistry.org/criminal\\_records/parole/state\\_parole/minnesota\\_parole.html](http://www.governmentregistry.org/criminal_records/parole/state_parole/minnesota_parole.html); "How Supervision Works," Minnesota Department of Corrections, accessed October 8, 2019, <https://mn.gov/doc/community-supervision/supervision-101faq/>.
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. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019; "College in Prison," Vera Institute of Justice, accessed May 15, 2019, <https://www.vera.org/projects/college-in-prison>.