

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 New Mexico.



HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

Correctional Agency Funding

- The New Mexico legislature may appropriate state funds for postsecondary education programs in state correctional facilities.² Postsecondary education is funded through federal sources, such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.³
- New Mexico is not using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds for postsecondary education and did not apply for/receive Second Chance Pell pilot funding.⁴

State Financial Aid

- New Mexico financial aid programs do not have any statutory, regulatory, or policy restrictions that prevent individuals who are currently incarcerated from receiving aid.⁵



WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- In partnership with the New Mexico Corrections Department, Luna Community College⁶ provides career and technical education in advanced computer technology, computer technology, automotive, barbering, building trades, and weaving.⁷

Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Associate degrees are offered through Mesalands Community College and Eastern New Mexico University.⁸
- Bachelor's degrees in Christian studies are offered through the University of the Southwest's Prison Seminary Program.⁹

Labor Market, Employer Feedback, and Outcome Data Alignment

- New Mexico not 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.¹⁰



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 custody level, behavior during incarceration, and length of sentence.¹¹
- ➔ If withdrawn for disciplinary reasons, a participant will be eligible to reenroll six months to a year after their withdrawal.¹²

Use of Criminal History in State College and University Applications

- ➔ New Mexico has seven state universities, none of which used the 2019–2020 Common Application.¹³ Four of the state’s colleges and universities require applicants to disclose their criminal history: Eastern New Mexico University, New Mexico Highlands University, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, and Western New Mexico University.



WHAT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS EXIST TO ENCOURAGE ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION?

Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ Individuals can earn “meritorious deductions” to reduce their sentence by attending postsecondary education programs.¹⁴
- ➔ Lump sum awards—which may include compensation, special housing, or extra privileges—may incentivize individuals to participate in postsecondary education programs.¹⁵

Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ The board may consider participation in postsecondary education as a factor when granting or denying parole.¹⁶

Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ Post-release participation in postsecondary education can meet a parole requirement to seek or obtain employment.¹⁷

Support and Services in the Community

- ➔ The parole-granting agency provides information on postsecondary education, but not occupational training, postsecondary education advisors and coordinators, and vocational credential testing.¹⁸

Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ New Mexico Corrections Department 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.¹⁹

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. Ibid.
5. Legislative Lottery Scholarship Program, N.M. Stat Ann. §21-21N-3; New Mexico Scholars, N.M. Stat Ann §21-21H-5; Bridge Scholarship; Student Incentive Grant Program, "Student Incentive Grant Program," New Mexico Higher Education Department, accessed May 28, 2019, <http://www.hed.state.nm.us/students/nmsig.aspx>; College Affordability Grant, N.M. Stat. Ann. §21-21L-4; Legislative Endowment Scholarship Program, N.M. Stat. Ann. §21-21J-4; Student Choice Grant, N.M. Stat. Ann §21-21C-6.
6. "Santa Rosa Satellite," Luna Community College, accessed June 25, 2019, https://luna.edu/santa_rosa.
7. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
8. Ibid.
9. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019; "Prison Seminary Program," University of the Southwest, accessed December 16, 2019, <https://www.usw.edu/Academics/Prison-Seminary-Program>. Email correspondence between CSG Justice Center and Corrections Department, December 16, 2019.
10. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. 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.
14. N.M. Stat. Ann. § 33-2-34(B) and (F); New Mexico Corrections Department Policy CD-080400 and CD-080401, <https://cd.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CD-080400.pdf>; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
15. New Mexico Corrections Department Policy CD-082800, <https://cd.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CD-082800.pdf>; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
16. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
17. Ibid.
18. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
19. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.