

**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 Oklahoma.



### HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

#### Correctional Agency Funding

- The Oklahoma legislature may appropriate state funds for postsecondary education programs in state correctional facilities.<sup>2</sup> Postsecondary education is funded through federal sources—such as the Second Chance Pell pilot program<sup>3</sup>—privately funded foundation grants,<sup>4</sup> and self-pay.<sup>5</sup>
- Oklahoma is not using Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds for postsecondary education.<sup>6</sup>

#### State Financial Aid

- The largest Oklahoma financial aid programs, the Oklahoma Tuition Aid Grant Program and Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program, have statutory barriers for individuals who are currently incarcerated.<sup>7</sup> On the application, the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access program also requires applicants to refrain from substance abuse or criminal/delinquent acts.<sup>8</sup> Other financial aid programs do not have explicit restrictions.<sup>9</sup>



### WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

#### Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- Through the CareerTech Skills Centers School System,<sup>10</sup> a division of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, the Oklahoma Department of Corrections provides career and technical education in automotive service technology, building and grounds maintenance, building maintenance technology, business information technology, cabinet making apprenticeship, commercial and residential painting and wall finishes, commercial framing and construction, computer technology, construction, culinary arts, electrical trades technology, engine performance, green technology, heavy equipment, HVAC/R technology, licensed trades journeyman program, maintenance workforce transition, manufacturing, masonry, pet services, plumbing technology, precision machine technology, transportation – distribution and logistics, and welding.<sup>11</sup>
- Certificates are provided through the federally funded Second Chance Pell Pilot program site at Tulsa Community College.<sup>12</sup>

#### Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Associate degrees are offered through the Second Chance Pell Pilot sites at Connors State College and Tulsa Community College.<sup>13</sup>
- Bachelor's degrees are offered through the Second Chance Pell Pilot site at Langston University.<sup>14</sup>

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

- ➔ Oklahoma 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>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 postsecondary services is prioritized based on an individual's release date.<sup>18</sup>
- ➔ If withdrawn from an education program for disciplinary reasons, a participant will be eligible to reenroll one year after their withdrawal.<sup>19</sup>

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

- ➔ The State Regents for Higher Education has a policy for non-academic criteria for admission for all institutions in the state system. These criteria include disciplinary history—such as expulsion, suspension, or being denied admission by other educational institutions—and convictions for felonies or crimes involving “moral turpitude,” which may allow the institutions to deny admission.<sup>20</sup>
- ➔ Out of Oklahoma's 14 state universities, only the University of Oklahoma used the 2019-2020 Common Application.<sup>21</sup> The school added questions asking applicants to disclose their criminal history.
- ➔ Twelve of the 13 state colleges and universities that do not use the Common Application require students to disclose their criminal history: Cameron University, East Central University, Langston University, Northeastern State University, Oklahoma Panhandle State, Oklahoma State University (Oklmulgee and Stillwater), Rogers State University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, University of Central Oklahoma, and University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma. Northwestern Oklahoma State University is the only university that does not require applicants to disclose their criminal history.



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

#### Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ Individuals can earn “achievement earned credits” to reduce their sentence by attending postsecondary education programs.<sup>22</sup>

#### Support and Services in the Community

- ➔ The parole-granting agency does not provide occupational training, information on postsecondary education, postsecondary education advisors and coordinators, and vocational credential testing.<sup>23</sup>

#### Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ Oklahoma Department of Corrections 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.<sup>24</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. 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>.
4. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
5. Oklahoma Department of Corrections, OP-090107.
6. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
7. 70 Okl. St. § 626.6(3).
8. "Oklahoma's Promise Application," Oklahoma Promise, accessed December 18, 2019, <https://www.okhighered.org/okpromise/pdf/app-english.pdf>.
9. Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant, O.A.C § 610:25-31-3; Regional University Baccalaureate Scholarship program, O.A.C §610:25-33-4; Academic Scholars Program, OAC § 610:25-1-4; Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Act, OAC § 610:25-29-3; William P. Willis Scholarship Program, OAC § 610:25-5-2.
10. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
11. OP-090101, Attachment D, "Achievement Credits for Job Skill Programs;" "Education," State of Oklahoma Department of Corrections, accessed November 1, 2019, <http://doc.ok.gov/education>.
12. 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>.
13. U.S. Department of Education, "12,000 Incarcerated Students to Enroll."
14. "College in Prison," Vera Institute of Justice, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://www.vera.org/projects/college-in-prison>.
15. 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 correctional education directors, July 12, 2019; "Programs - 09," State of Oklahoma Department of Corrections, accessed November 1, 2019, <http://doc.ok.gov/programs-09>. OP-090107(IV).
17. "Programs - 09," State of Oklahoma Department of Corrections, accessed November 1, 2019, <http://doc.ok.gov/programs-09>; OP-090107(II)(B)(4); OP-090107(III)(E); OP-090133(II)(B).
18. OP-090107(II)(E); OP-090133(II)(B).
19. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
20. "Chapter 3—Academic Affairs," in *Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Policies and Procedures* (Oklahoma City, OK: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 2017), 96, <https://www.okhighered.org/academic-policy-wksp/PDF/policy-chapter-3-july2017.pdf>.
21. 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.
22. 57 Okl. St. § 138(H); The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
23. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
24. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.