

**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 Rhode Island.



### HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

#### Correctional Agency Funding

- The Rhode Island legislature appropriates state funds for postsecondary education programs in state correctional facilities.<sup>2</sup> Postsecondary education is also funded through federal sources—such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act—and privately funded foundation grants—such as the Sunshine Lady, which funds four postsecondary academic courses, and the Transcending Through Education Foundation, which funds three courses annually.<sup>3</sup>
- Rhode Island did not apply for/receive Second Chance Pell pilot funding.<sup>4</sup>

#### State Financial Aid

- Rhode Island's financial aid programs do not mention past criminal conviction history in their eligibility requirements.<sup>5</sup> The Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner provides state funds to the private and public higher education institutions to disperse, and these institutions may develop their own criteria. Two of the state's institutions use the federal Pell Grant requirements to determine eligibility.<sup>6</sup>



### WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

#### Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- The Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) provides career and technical education in barbering.<sup>7</sup>

#### Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Associate degrees are offered through Community College of Rhode Island.<sup>8</sup>
- Rhode Island does not provide bachelor's degrees.<sup>9</sup>

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

- Rhode Island has not 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.<sup>10</sup>



## WHAT RESTRICTIONS OR BARRIERS ARE IMPOSED ON ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION?

### Statutory or Administrative Requirements, Permissions, and Restrictions

- ➔ If withdrawn from an education program for disciplinary reasons, a participant will be eligible to reenroll within six months after their withdrawal.<sup>11</sup>

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

- ➔ Rhode Island has two state universities, both of which used the 2019–2020 Common Application.<sup>12</sup> Both Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island added questions asking applicants to disclose their criminal history.



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

### Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ Individuals can earn “good time credits”<sup>13</sup> or “meritorious good time”<sup>14</sup> to reduce their sentence by attending postsecondary education programs.<sup>15</sup>

### Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ The board may consider postsecondary educational activities during incarceration as a factor when granting or denying parole.<sup>16</sup>

### Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ Post-release participation in postsecondary education can meet a parole requirement to seek or obtain employment.<sup>17</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>18</sup>

### Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ RIDOC has articulation agreements with the Community College of Rhode Island, which state that degree programs can be offered in correctional facilities.<sup>19</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. Ibid.
4. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
5. "Rhode Island Promise," Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, accessed on June 20, 2019, [https://www.riopc.edu/page/ri\\_promise/](https://www.riopc.edu/page/ri_promise/); R.I. Gen. Laws Section 16-107-6.
6. Lauren Hobby, Brian Walsh, and Ruth Delaney, *A Piece of the Puzzle: State Financial Aid for Incarcerated Students—Technical Appendix*, (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2019), 70; "Financial Aid: Available Types of Aid," Community College of Rhode Island, accessed October 28, 2019, [https://www.ccri.edu/oes/fa/types\\_of\\_fa.html](https://www.ccri.edu/oes/fa/types_of_fa.html); "Financial Aid Programs," Rhode Island College, accessed October 28, 2019, <http://www.ric.edu/financialaid/Pages/Financial-Aid-Programs.aspx#section10>.
7. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
8. "Rehabilitative Services: Post Secondary Education," State of Rhode Island Department of Corrections, accessed March 5, 2019, [http://www.doc.ri.gov/rehabilitative/educational/post\\_secondary.php](http://www.doc.ri.gov/rehabilitative/educational/post_secondary.php).
9. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
10. Ibid.
11. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
12. 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.
13. R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-56-24.
14. Ibid; R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-56-26.
15. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
16. R.I. Gen. Laws § 13-8-14.1(a); Rhode Island Parole Board Guidelines #1.5(C), (D), <http://www.paroleboard.ri.gov/guidelines/UPDATED%20PB%20Guidelines%202018v2.pdf>; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
17. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
18. Ibid.
19. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.