

# SOUTH CAROLINA

## Access to Continued Education for People in the Criminal Justice System

**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 South Carolina.



### HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

#### Correctional Agency Funding

- The South Carolina legislature may appropriate state funds for college programs in prisons.<sup>2</sup> Postsecondary education is funded through federal sources—such as the Second Chance Pell pilot program—and private sources.<sup>3</sup>
- South Carolina is not using Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds for postsecondary education.<sup>4</sup>

#### State Financial Aid

- For all state financial aid awards, except the Lottery Tuition Assistance Program,<sup>5</sup> a statutory restriction permanently applies to all individuals convicted of a felony or a second drug/alcohol offense.<sup>6</sup> The state's need-based grant has the same policy; however, applicants who have been adjudicated delinquent or have been guilty of a second alcohol/drug misdemeanor, who would otherwise qualify for the award, can be eligible again one year after the conviction.<sup>7</sup>



### WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

#### Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- The South Carolina Department of Corrections provides career and technical education in auto mechanics/auto body, HVAC, master hair care, and welding technology, as well as programs leading to a National Center for Construction Education and Research certification.<sup>8</sup>

#### Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Associate of arts degrees in Bible studies are offered through Columbia International University's Prison Initiative.<sup>9</sup>
- Associate degrees are offered through the Second Chance Pell Pilot site at Northeastern Technical College.<sup>10</sup>
- South Carolina does not provide bachelor's degrees.<sup>11</sup>

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

- South Carolina has identified local labor market trends as the primary factor that determines the types of postsecondary education and CTE programming that are offered within the correctional facility.<sup>12</sup>





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

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

- ➔ South Carolina has 11 state universities, none of which used the 2019–2020 Common Application.<sup>13</sup> Eight of the state universities require students to disclose their criminal history: Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, Francis Marion University, Lander University, South Carolina State University, the University of South Carolina-Beaufort, and the University of South Carolina-Columbia. Each of the universities has an array of different questions; for example, Clemson University requires “major traffic violations” to be reported, the College of Charleston requires disclosure of alcohol- and drug-related fines, and Coastal Carolina University forbids individuals registered as sex offenders from enrolling or participating.



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

### Statutory of Administrative Benefits

- ➔ Individuals can earn “educational credits”<sup>14</sup> to reduce their sentence by attending postsecondary education programs.<sup>15</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>16</sup>

### Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ South Carolina 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>17</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. S.C. Code Ann. § 24-25-35.

3. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.

4. Ibid.

5. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-150-360.

6. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-104-20(B); Life Scholarship, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-149-90(A); Hope Scholarship, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-150-370(C), “student is eligible to receive a SC HOPE Scholarship if he meets the criteria for receiving and maintaining the Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship except that a minimum Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or ACT score and requisite class rank are not required for eligibility for the SC HOPE Scholarship.”

7. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-142-10(A)(4).

8. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.

9. “In Prison,” Columbia International University, accessed June 28, 2019, <http://www.ciu.edu/content/prison>; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.

10. “College in Prison,” Vera Institute of Justice, accessed June 28, 2019, <https://www.vera.org/projects/college-in-prison>; 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>.

11. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.

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. S.C. Code Ann. § 24-13-230(F).

15. S.C. Code Ann. § 24-13-230(A) and (B).

16. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.

17. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.