

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 South Dakota.



HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

Correctional Agency Funding

- The South Dakota legislature may appropriate state funds for career and technical education programs in state correctional facilities.²
- South Dakota is not using Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds for postsecondary education and did not apply for/receive Second Chance Pell pilot funding.³

State Financial Aid

- Every relevant South Dakota financial aid program has a statutory restriction for individuals convicted of felonies of controlled substances or marijuana. People convicted of crimes other than controlled substance violations may be eligible for financial aid.⁴



WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- The South Dakota Department of Corrections provides career and technical education in automotive technology (body and mechanic), construction, and welding.⁵

Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- South Dakota does not provide associate and bachelor's degrees.⁶

Labor Market, Employer Feedback, and Outcome Data Alignment

- South Dakota 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.⁷



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 length of sentence; individuals who have less than two years left on their sentence are prioritized.⁸
- If withdrawn from an education program for disciplinary reasons, a participant will be eligible to reenroll within six months after their withdrawal.⁹

Use of Criminal History in State College and University Applications

- ➔ South Dakota has six state universities, one of which—University of South Dakota—used the 2019–2020 Common Application.¹⁰ This school does not require applicants to disclose their past criminal history.
- ➔ None of the other state universities require applicants to disclose their criminal or disciplinary history.



WHAT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS EXIST TO ENCOURAGE ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION?

Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ People can earn “discharge credits” to reduce their sentence by up to 90 days by attending vocational programming.¹¹

Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ The board is permitted to consider participation in postsecondary educational activities during incarceration and plans for future education or training as factors when granting or denying parole.¹²

Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ Post-release participation in postsecondary education can meet a parole requirement to seek or obtain employment.¹³

Support and Services in the Community

- ➔ The parole-granting agency provides occupational training and vocational credential testing, but not information on postsecondary education nor postsecondary education advisors and coordinators.¹⁴

Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ South Dakota 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.¹⁵

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. S.D. Codified Laws §13-55-29.

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

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. 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.

11. S.D. Codified Laws § 24-15A-50.1 (establishing that incarcerated people can receive earned discharge credits through “an academic or vocational program”); South Dakota Department of Corrections Policy 1.4.B.17, <http://sdlegislature.gov/docs/interim/2018/documents/DSTR10012018-B.pdf>; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.

12. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019; South Dakota Board of Pardons and Paroles Policy 8.1.A.5-IV, <https://doc.sd.gov/documents/8.1.A.5%20Parole%20Board%20Decisions%20and%20the%20Setting%20of%20Next%20Review%20Dates%20122018.pdf>.

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

14. Ibid.

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