

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 Vermont.



HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

Correctional Agency Funding

- The Vermont legislature may appropriate state funds for college programs in state correctional facilities. Postsecondary education is funded through federal sources—such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act²—state need-based financial aid, and private funds.³
- Vermont is not using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds for postsecondary education.⁴

State Financial Aid

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



WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- The Vermont Department of Corrections provides career and technical education in programs leading to a National Center for Construction Education and Research certificate, Occupational Safety and Health Administration certificate, and ServSafe food handler and manager certificate.⁶

Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Non-degree college courses, some of which are credit-bearing, are offered through the Liberal Arts in Prison Program at University of Vermont⁷ and through Community College of Vermont.⁸
- Vermont does not provide associate and bachelor's degrees.⁹

Labor Market, Employer Feedback, and Outcome Data Alignment

- Vermont has identified local labor market trends and employer feedback 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 behavior during incarceration.¹¹
- ➔ If withdrawn from an educational program for disciplinary reasons, a participant will be eligible to reenroll within six months after their withdrawal.¹²

Use of Criminal History in State College and University Applications

- ➔ All four of the state universities used the 2019-2020 Common Application.¹³ Two of the schools added questions asking applicants to disclose their criminal history: University of Vermont and Vermont Technical College.



WHAT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS EXIST TO ENCOURAGE ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION?

Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ The parole board is permitted to consider participation in postsecondary educational activities during incarceration as a factor when granting or denying parole.¹⁴ Education and job skills are explicitly listed as a factor when making the parole decision.¹⁵

Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ Post-release participation in postsecondary education can meet a parole requirement to seek or obtain employment.¹⁶

Support and Services in the Community

- ➔ The parole-granting agency provides occupational training, information on postsecondary education, postsecondary education advisors and coordinators, and vocational credential testing.¹⁷

Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ Vermont 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.¹⁸

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. Note: Vermont's Bennington College was awarded a Second Chance Pell grant to provide associate degrees, but only operates at Great Meadow facility in New York state.
3. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019; "Liberal Arts in Prison Program (LAPP)," The University of Vermont, accessed May 31, 2019, <https://www.uvm.edu/cas/liberal-arts-prison-program-lapp>.
4. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
5. Vermont Incentive Grant, Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 16 § 2842; Vermont Non-Degree Grants, Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 16 § 2846.
6. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
7. "Liberal Arts in Prison Program (LAPP)," The University of Vermont, accessed May 31, 2019, <https://www.uvm.edu/cas/liberal-arts-prison-program-lapp>.
8. Katie Keszey, "CCV Receives VT Community Foundation Funding for Prison-to-Career Program," *The News Magazine of the Community College of Vermont*, January 25, 2019, <https://now.ccv.edu/ccv-receives-vt-community-foundation-funding-for-prison-to-career-program/>; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
9. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
10. Ibid.
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. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
15. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019; State of Vermont Department of Corrections, *The Vermont Parole Board Manual (2019)*, 12, 18-19.
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 state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.