

**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 Wyoming.



### HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

#### Correctional Agency Funding

- The Wyoming legislature may appropriate state funds for college programs in state correctional facilities.<sup>2</sup> Postsecondary education is funded through federal sources—such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act<sup>3</sup>—self-pay<sup>4</sup>, and private sources.<sup>5</sup> The Pathways from Prison program provides programming at no cost for incarcerated students through grants and donations.<sup>6</sup>
- Wyoming is not using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds for postsecondary education and did not apply for/receive Second Chance Pell pilot funding.<sup>7</sup>

#### State Financial Aid

- Wyoming offers the Hathaway Scholarship Program, which encompasses five different awards. In statute, the program prevents incarcerated students and any applicants convicted of a felony from receiving the award.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, upon release, individuals with a felony on their records cannot access the program.<sup>9</sup>



### WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

#### Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- The Wyoming Department of Corrections provides career and technical education in carpentry, computers, computer aided design, plumbing, and welding.<sup>10</sup>

#### Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- College courses are offered through the Pathways from Prison program through the University of Wyoming. This program provides college credits at no cost and partners with the Wyoming community colleges to deliver a variety of programming.<sup>11</sup>
- Wyoming does not provide associate and bachelor's degrees.<sup>12</sup>

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

- Wyoming 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>13</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 custody level,<sup>14</sup> behavior during incarceration,<sup>15</sup> and length of sentence.<sup>16</sup>
- ➔ Access to postsecondary services is prioritized based on an individual's release date.<sup>17</sup>
- ➔ If withdrawn from an education program for disciplinary reasons, a participant will be eligible to reenroll six months to one year after their withdrawal.<sup>18</sup>

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

- ➔ Wyoming has only one state university, The University of Wyoming, which used the 2019-2020 Common Application.<sup>19</sup> The school added questions asking applicants to disclose their criminal history, including questions about misdemeanors, felonies, and whether applicants have ever had to register as a sex offender.



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

### Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ Incentives for participating in postsecondary education programs include compensation.<sup>20</sup> Further, students are provided a bonus upon completion for each course.<sup>21</sup>

### 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.<sup>22</sup>

### Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ Post-release participation in postsecondary education can meet a parole requirement to seek or obtain employment.<sup>23</sup>

### Support and Services in the Community

- ➔ The parole-granting agency provides information on postsecondary education, but does not provide occupational training, postsecondary education advisors and coordinators, and vocational credential testing.<sup>24</sup>

### Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ Wyoming 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>25</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. WDOC Policy & Procedure #5.100(IV)(C)(5)(ii).
5. "Donate," University of Wyoming, accessed November 19, 2019, <http://www.uwyo.edu/gwst/wpfp/donate/>.
6. Ibid.
7. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
8. Wyo. Stat. § 21-16-1303 (e)(v), (vi).
9. 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), 92.
10. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
11. "What We Do," University of Wyoming, accessed May 29, 2019, <http://www.uwyo.edu/gwst/wpfp/what-we-do/>; "Latest Work," University of Wyoming, accessed May 29, 2019, <http://www.uwyo.edu/gwst/wpfp/latest-work/index.html>.
12. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
13. Ibid.
14. WDOC Policy & Procedure #5.100(IV)(C)(3) and (C)(4)(i), (iii). <https://docs.google.com/a/wyo.gov/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=d3lvLmdvdxkb2N8Z3g6MTMwMTgwMTU2YTJIMTNhMg>.
15. WDOC Policy & Procedure #5.001(IV)(B)(4)(iv), <https://docs.google.com/a/wyo.gov/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=d3lvLmdvdxkb2N8Z3g6YTYNTc4OTk1NjRjZWVk>; WDOC Policy & Procedure #3.101(IV)(D), <https://docs.google.com/a/wyo.gov/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=d3lvLmdvdxkb2N8Z3g6NmFmOWFmYTcxMTRkNmQ5MQ>. 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.
17. WDOC Policy & Procedure #5.100(IV)(D)(4)(iii), <https://docs.google.com/a/wyo.gov/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=d3lvLmdvdxkb2N8Z3g6MTMwMTgwMTU2YTJIMTNhMg>.
18. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
19. 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.
20. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
21. Ibid.
22. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.