

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 Wisconsin.



HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

Correctional Agency Funding

- The Wisconsin legislature may appropriate state funds for college programs in state correctional facilities.² The state developed a sub-grant program under the Becky Young Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction Appropriation bill for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) to partner with local technical colleges and Workforce Development Boards to provide career and technical education training.³ Postsecondary education is also funded through federal sources—such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, the Second Chance Pell pilot program, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds—and state need-based financial aid.⁴ WIOA Title I funds are used by the Reentry Division through the Department of Workforce Development to pay for workforce training with local technical colleges.⁵

State Financial Aid

- Wisconsin financial aid programs do not have any statutory, regulatory, or policy restrictions that prevent people who are currently incarcerated from receiving aid.⁶ On the contrary, the state's Higher Education Aids Board guidelines for state financial awards are inclusive of applicants who have a drug-related conviction; are incarcerated; or in default on a federal student loan.⁷ However, individuals must be up-to-date on child support payments to access the aid programs.⁸



WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- The DOC provides career and technical education in auto maintenance, baking, barbering/cosmetology, braille transcription, building maintenance construction, cabinet making, computer assisted drafting, computer numeric control, electric pre-apprentice, food service assistant, culinary arts, horticulture, institution food prep, machine tool operations, masonry, office software applications, and welding.⁹ These credits and certificates are awarded by technical college partners.¹⁰
- Certificates are provided through the federally funded Second Chance Pell Pilot program site at Milwaukee Area Technical College.¹¹

Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Incarcerated students may participate in postsecondary correspondence courses geared

toward college credit.¹²

- ➔ Associate degrees are offered through the Second Chance Pell Pilot site at Milwaukee Area Technical College.¹³
- ➔ Bachelor's degrees in biblical studies are offered through Operation Transformation at Trinity International University and the Wisconsin Inmate Education Association for people who are incarcerated and serving a long sentence or life sentence.¹⁴ Further, Operation Transformation is partnering with the Wisconsin Indian Education Association and Trinity International University to establish a new Trinity campus within the Waupun Correctional Institution.¹⁵
- ➔ College courses are offered through the Convicts to College Program at University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Fox Valley Technical College and Moraine Park Technical College both endorse the certificate and/or degree programming.¹⁶

Labor Market, Employer Feedback, and Outcome Data Alignment

- ➔ Wisconsin 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.¹⁷



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; individuals in restrictive housing are not able to participate.¹⁸
- ➔ If withdrawn from an education program for disciplinary reasons, a participant will be eligible to reenroll within six months after their withdrawal.¹⁹

Use of Criminal History in State College and University Applications

- ➔ Wisconsin has 13 state universities, 3 of which used the 2019-2020 Common Application.²⁰ These 3 schools do not require applicants to disclose their criminal history.
- ➔ The remaining 10 state colleges and universities that do not use the Common Application do not require students to disclose their criminal history.



WHAT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS EXIST TO ENCOURAGE ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION?

Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ Incentives for participating in postsecondary education programs include compensation.²¹

Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ Wisconsin is a "truth in sentencing" state; only those who have committed a felony before December 31, 1999 are eligible for parole.²²
- ➔ While the law requires the parole board to consider participation in postsecondary education activities during incarceration as a factor when granting or denying parole, in practice the parole board gives very little weight to educational activities.²³

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.²⁴

Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ Wisconsin 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.²⁵

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. *Becky Young Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction Fiscal Year 2018 Report*, (Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Corrections, 2018), <https://doc.wi.gov/Documents/AboutDOC/Reentry/2018BeckyYoungReport.pdf>; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
4. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019; 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>.
5. Email correspondence between CSG Justice Center and Brian Walsh, February 21, 2020.
6. Wisconsin Grant, Wis. Stat. § 39.435; The Talent Incentive Program Grant, Wis. Stat. § 39.435(2); Minority Undergraduate Retention Grant, Wis. Stat. § 39.44; Academic Excellence Scholarship, Wis. Stat. § 39.41; Technical Excellence Scholarship, Wis. Stat. § 39.415.
7. "Chapter 4-Student Eligibility," in *Policies and Procedures Manual*, State of Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board, accessed July 1, 2019, <http://heab.state.wi.us/finadmin/manual/index.html#4>.
8. 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), 90.
9. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
10. Email correspondence between CSG Justice Center and Brian Walsh, February 21, 2020.
11. 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>.
12. Wisconsin Department of Corrections, *Columbia Correctional Institution Annual Report FY 2018*, 11, <https://doc.wi.gov/Documents/OffenderInformation/AdultInstitutions/CCIAnnualReport.pdf>; Wisconsin Department of Corrections, *Stanley Correctional Institution Annual Report FY 2018*, 10, <https://doc.wi.gov/Documents/OffenderInformation/AdultInstitutions/SCIAnnualReport.pdf>; Wisconsin Department of Corrections, *Wisconsin Correctional Center System Annual Report FY 2018*, 18, <https://doc.wi.gov/Documents/OffenderInformation/AdultInstitutions/WCCSAnnualReport.pdf>; Wisconsin Department of Corrections, *Waupun Correctional Institution Annual Report FY 2018*, 8, <https://doc.wi.gov/Documents/OffenderInformation/AdultInstitutions/WCIAnnualReport.pdf>; Wisconsin Department of Corrections, *New Lisbon Correctional Institution Annual Report FY 2018*, 5, <https://doc.wi.gov/Documents/OffenderInformation/AdultInstitutions/NLCIAnnualReport.pdf>.
13. U.S. Department of Education, "12,000 Incarcerated Students to Enroll."
14. "How Does It Work?," Wisconsin Inmate Education Association, accessed June 17, 2019, <https://wisinmateedu.org/operation-transformation/how-it-works/>; "Operation Transformation: An in-prison college curriculum to transform inmates, families and communities," Wisconsin Inmate Education Association, accessed November 21, 2019, <https://wisinmateedu.org/>.
15. "Operation Transformation," Wisconsin Inmate Education Association, accessed November 25, 2019, <https://wisinmateedu.org/operation-transformation/>.
16. Wisconsin Department of Corrections, *2019 Annual Report Oshkosh Correctional Institution*, 6 <https://doc.wi.gov/Documents/OffenderInformation/AdultInstitutions/OSCIAnnualReport.pdf>; "Criminal Justice," University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, accessed June 17, 2019, <https://uwosh.edu/criminaljustice/current-students/criminal-justice-internship/>.
17. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. 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.
21. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
22. See Wis. Stat. § 304.06(1)(b); Wis. Adm. Code PAC 1.06(16).
23. Wis. Adm. Code PAC 1.06(16); The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
24. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
25. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.