

WASHINGTON

Access to Continued Education for People in the Criminal Justice System

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 Washington.



HOW ARE SERVICES FUNDED?

Correctional Agency Funding

- The Washington legislature appropriates state funds for college programs in state correctional facilities. Annually, the Department of Corrections allocates \$18 million for educational programming, in which they are required to fund basic skills programs; however, the state goes beyond basic skills courses and uses the additional funds to provide postsecondary offerings.² Postsecondary education is also funded through federal sources—such as the Second Chance Pell pilot program and Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act funds³—and privately funded foundation grants.⁴
- Washington is not using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds for postsecondary education.⁵

State Financial Aid

- Washington has a statutory restriction that prevents people with felony convictions from participating in the Washington College Bound Scholarship program, which is designated for foster youth and students receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.⁶ The state's largest financial aid program, the Washington College Grant, does not have statutory or policy barriers for incarcerated individuals.⁷



WHAT IS OFFERED INSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

Career and Technical Education and Certifications

- The Washington State Department of Corrections funds community colleges to provide career and technical education in accounting and bookkeeping, autobody collision and repair, automotive repair, baking and pastry arts, business administration and management, carpentry, technical design and computer aided design drafting and design, computer numerical controlled manufacturing, computer programming, diesel mechanics, digital media: web and multimedia, drywall, entrepreneurship and small business management, HVAC technology, horticulture, material composites, pre-apprenticeships/construction trades, roofing and siding, upholstery, and welding.⁸

Associate and Bachelor's Degrees

- Associate degrees are offered through the Second Chance Pell Pilot sites at Centralia College, Seattle Central Community College, and Tacoma Community College.⁹
- Associate degrees are also offered through Washington's State Board for Community and



Technical Colleges.¹⁰ Specifically, Clark College, Edmonds Community College, Grays Harbor College, Peninsula College, Spokane Community College, Tacoma Community College, and Walla Walla Community College provide associate degrees using DOC funding. Tacoma Community College also partners with the Freedom Education Project of Puget Sound to provide associate degrees using private funds.

- ➔ Bachelor's degrees will be offered through private funding beginning in the fall of 2020 through Freedom Education Project of Puget Sound in partnership with the University of Puget Sound.

Labor Market, Employer Feedback, and Outcome Data Alignment

- ➔ Washington 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.¹¹



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.¹² Those who are sentenced to life without parole or to a death sentence may not access state-funded associate degree education programs.¹³ However, these individuals are able to access the privately funded programming.¹⁴

Use of Criminal History in State College and University Applications

- ➔ Washington has 11 state universities, but only Evergreen State College used the 2019-2020 Common Application.¹⁵ The university provides a disclaimer that they do not collect criminal history information.
- ➔ Of the remaining 10 state colleges and universities that do not use the Common Application, none of them require applicants to disclose their criminal history.



WHAT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS EXIST TO ENCOURAGE ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION?

Statutory or Administrative Benefits

- ➔ People can earn "early release credits" to reduce their sentence by attending postsecondary education programs.¹⁶
- ➔ Incentives for participating in postsecondary education programs include exemption from work requirements and "community college contracted navigators" who provide support to people who are incarcerated to successfully transition to educational programs after release.¹⁷

Postsecondary Education as a Factor in Parole Decisions

- ➔ Washington is a truth in sentencing state; therefore, parole impacts a limited number of people being released. The parole board is permitted to consider postsecondary educational activities during incarceration as a factor when granting or denying parole.¹⁸

Parole Conditions Related to Postsecondary Education

- ➔ Post-release participation in postsecondary education can meet a parole requirement to seek or obtain employment.¹⁹

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.²⁰

Coursework Transfer Policies

- ➔ Washington requires its colleges to offer courses that transfer to other colleges. There are formalized articulation agreements for the pre-apprenticeship programs and college certificate and degree programs, which state that the credits, certificates, and degrees issued through the community college programs in the correctional facility are the same credits issued on campus.²¹

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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. Phone correspondence between CSG Justice Center and Washington State DOC, February 20, 2020.
 3. Washington's State Board for Community and Technical Colleges directly receives Perkin's funds to assist with their postsecondary programming; Phone correspondence between CSG Justice Center and Washington State DOC, February 20, 2020.
 4. 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>; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
 5. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
 6. Wash. Rev. Code § 28B.118.010(3a).
 7. Washington College Grant/State Need Grant, Wash. Rev. Code § 28B.92.005 et. seq.; Opportunity Grants, Wash. Rev. Code § 28B.50.272; Opportunity Scholarship Program, Wash. Rev. Code § 28B.145.005 et. seq.; WAC § 250-20-011.
 8. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
 9. 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>.
 10. Phone correspondence between CSG Justice Center and Washington State DOC, February 20, 2020.
 11. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
 12. Ibid.
 13. Wash. Rev. Code § 72.09.460(10); The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
 14. Email correspondence between CSG Justice Center and Brian Walsh, February 21, 2020.
 15. 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.
 16. Wash. Rev. Code § 9.92.151; The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
 17. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.
 18. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019; WAC § 381-40-100(1); WAC § 381-40-070(1).
 19. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state parole-granting agencies, July 12, 2019.
 20. Ibid.
 21. The Council of State Governments Justice Center electronic survey of state correctional education directors, July 12, 2019.