



SHEEO

STATE HIGHER EDUCATION EXECUTIVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FOR INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS:

GUIDANCE FOR STATE AGENCIES
AND SYSTEMS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Special thanks to Andy Carlson, our former colleague, who launched this initiative during his tenure at the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO). This paper is possible because of his early efforts.

The United States leads the world in the number of incarcerated persons per 100,000.¹ In today's global economy, these numbers represent huge wastes in human capital, especially when you consider the inequitable nature of the American criminal justice system, as witnessed by the disproportionate racial and ethnic composition, types of crimes, and length of prison sentences represented within this population. Regardless of the pathway to prison, most incarcerated people will eventually return to the communities from which they came, so one of the important questions may be, how does society want them to show up? Broken or made whole? Angry or hopeful? Employable or unemployed? Role model or counterexample?

The essence of this paper is linked to a favored quote by the late Nelson Mandela, who said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." These words are as profound today as they were in 1990 when he addressed an audience of Boston high school students. Furthermore, education in America remains one of the best investments individuals and governments can make, which should include investment in prison-based education programs. These types of efforts are cost-effective, reduce recidivism, improve employment prospects, increase civic engagement, and can disrupt generational poverty. Despite Second Chance Pell programs and other evidence supporting the multilayered value of postsecondary (coursework beyond high school) education for incarcerated populations, barriers and challenges persist. Fortunately, leaders of state agencies and systems of higher education are increasingly exploring the feasibility of these programs for their states.

This paper presents preliminary findings from a survey SHEEO administered to its members in 2018. It advocates for postsecondary education for incarcerated persons as a relevant policy issue at federal and state levels in current political environments. Key findings and recommendations were informed by responses from 38 percent of SHEEO's membership. States responding to the survey were Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming. Non-member organizations included Truckee Meadows Community College (NV); University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Bismarck State College (ND); and the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges.

The paper is organized around three main categories: access, program delivery, and reentry of program participants into society, with the following key performance indicators.

1. Radu, S. (2019). Countries with the highest incarceration rates. *U.S. News and World Reports*. <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2019-05-13/10-countries-with-the-highest-incarceration-rates>

Key Performance Indicators

1. In-depth knowledge of the issues and policy barriers in their state to providing postsecondary education to incarcerated individuals;
2. Regular communication and engagement between the SHEEO and their counterpart at the state's Department of Corrections (or between their respective staffs);
3. Existence of an in-state Second Chance Pell site;
4. State financial aid program eligibility;
5. Existence of at least one state or institutional program that provides quality postsecondary opportunities within correctional facilities; and
6. Political buy-in and support from key constituents.

Key recommendations emerged from research, SHEEO survey data analysis, and a summary of member survey data obtained from the Association of State Correctional Administrators.

Recommendations

- Advocate for the restoration of Pell eligibility at the federal level.
- Conduct a policy audit to identify and mitigate barriers.
- Ensure postsecondary programs are aligned and articulated to those outside of prisons.
- Establish and maintain relationships with counterparts at state correctional agencies.
- Charge a staff person with ownership of this policy area.
- State agency and system leaders and staff should visit a program within a prison.
- Organize a statewide convening to galvanize support for increased opportunities.
- Craft and push a legislative agenda at the state level.

Postsecondary education for incarcerated populations has economic, moral, and societal imperatives that will benefit from state agency and system leadership along with cross-sector stakeholders interested in this growing policy area. Together with its members, SHEEO staff are committed to building on the work put forth in this paper.

INTRODUCTION

Postsecondary education for incarcerated persons is a growing topic of consideration for stakeholders, including policymakers, higher education institutions, researchers, criminal justice reform advocates, community-based organizations, and the larger American prison system. Some of these discussions are included with national and state degree attainment agendas, workforce and economic development goals, and a restorative/moral impetus for postsecondary education in prison settings. Not unlike within the general American population, the benefits of postsecondary education for incarcerated persons accrued to states, communities, and families are well documented. This paper is an exploration of this complex, multilayered issue and presents ideas for consideration by state agency and system leaders of higher education.

According to criminal justice reformists, including legal scholars, the prison industrial complex (PIC) maintains positions that fundamentally compete with reform policies and practices discussed in this paper, specifically those with potential to disrupt mass incarceration and reduce recidivism rates among prisoners.^{2,3} The PIC is defined as a system that allows private prisons and businesses that supply goods and services to government prisons to prioritize profit over prisoner rehabilitation and efforts aimed at successful reentry into their communities.⁴ Critics of the PIC assert that it is responsible for decades of mass incarceration, which impacts communities of color at disproportionate rates.⁵ The PIC more closely aligns with principles of retributive justice that rationalizes punishment, as opposed to principles of restorative justice that are centrally rehabilitative in nature. Fundamentally, restorative justice is about righting wrongs for victims, offenders, and communities, which can be addressed through postsecondary education. The underpinnings of retributive and restorative justice are not mutually exclusive. For some, postsecondary education for incarcerated populations is one approach to repairing harms caused by inequitable criminal justice systems, including histories of discriminatory practices in arrests, sentencing, and probation that disproportionately and adversely impact racial and ethnic minorities.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, more than 10,000 prisoners are released every week, and more than 650,000 are released every year. How they reenter communities from which they came will depend on their experiences during incarceration. While some of those released will successfully reintegrate into society, a significant percentage will find themselves back in the prison system within three years.⁶ In addition to the impact on prisoners, recidivism has catastrophic impacts on states' economies, communities, and multiple generations of families. Education attainment, however, is positively correlated with reducing recidivism rates.

Most states have established postsecondary education attainment goals, aiming as high as 80 percent of the state's population possessing a postsecondary credential by the year 2025. Nationwide, individual state attainment goals range from 55-80 percent.⁷ Despite these ambitious

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- Alexander, M. (2012). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. The New Press.
 - Whitehead, J.W. (2012). *Jailing Americans for profit: The rise of the prison industrial complex*. The Rutherford Institute.
 - Spelman, D. and Leighton, P. (2010). *Punishment for sale: Private prisons, big business, and the incarceration binge*. Rowman & Littlefield. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Punishment_for_Sale/qb3BAAAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=inauthor:%22Donna+Selman%22&printsec=frontcover
 - Whitehead, J.W. (2012).
 - U.S. Department of Justice. Prisoners and prisoner re-entry. Retrieved May 16, 2019 from https://www.justice.gov/archive/fbci/progmenu_reentry.html
 - Lumina Foundation. *A stronger nation: Learning beyond high school builds American talent*. <http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2019/#nation>

goals, higher education scholars like Nettles (2017) provide evidence supporting doubt in the possibility of reaching the federal goal of 60 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds by the year 2020. According to Nettles, the only racial and ethnic groups projected to meet this goal are Asian males, Asian females, and White females. White males are projected to reach 60 percent by 2038, and African American females are projected to reach 60 percent by 2058. African American males, Hispanic males, Hispanic females, American Indian/Alaskan males, and American Indian/Alaskan females are not projected to reach 60 percent by 2060.⁸

As a strategic approach to achieving goals and mitigating educational inequities, higher education policymakers and others are increasingly assessing incarcerated populations as potential workforce and postsecondary education talent pools. Providing postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated individuals is pursued as a strategy to address equity gaps and make progress toward state and national attainment goals. Included in this population of prospective students are members of racial and ethnic groups historically underrepresented in higher education who, again, may also be victims of inequitable justice systems across the country.

With funding from Lumina Foundation, SHEEO launched an initiative to assess its members' understanding of key issues related to postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated individuals and their interest and capacity to include these issues in future strategic planning. This paper presents findings from a survey administered to members, and offers considerations intended to inform state agencies and systems of higher education, along with other stakeholders, about key issues related to postsecondary education for incarcerated populations. It includes data that could inform decision-making and a broad framing of dominant issues, including post-incarceration challenges and opportunities, and offers recommendations for state agencies and systems of higher education interested in exploring postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated individuals — toward earning credentials of value, securing meaningful employment, and successfully reentering society.

MAKING THE CASE FOR PRISON-BASED EDUCATION

The case for postsecondary education for incarcerated populations can be made from multiple perspectives, including equity, workforce development, recidivism, return on investment, and generational impact. This section explores these perspectives in some detail, which may be helpful when engaged in dialogue with diverse constituent groups, including policymakers, institutions of higher education, legislative entities, and correctional organizations.

Equity & Moral Imperative: The equitable distribution of higher education is a nationwide issue, and as states continue to develop and refine their equity agendas, policymakers are being reminded that incarcerated populations — generally and historically — have not participated in equitable systems of K-12 (primary and secondary) education. The inequities are manifested in academic achievement gaps and educational opportunity gaps that have been impacting their quality of life since childhood, in many cases. A significant number of incarcerated persons have never had the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for success in society. Inequitable systems of K-12 education and a widely studied school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon serve to exacerbate inequitable systems of postsecondary education.

8. Nettles, M. (2017). Challenges and opportunities in achieving the national postsecondary degree attainment goals. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ets2.12141>

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) examines the consequential school-to-prison pipeline, which is the practice of systematically forcing students out of school and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems, evidenced as early as in elementary school years. Many of these students reportedly suffer from learning disabilities or some form of trauma, including poverty and abuse, and instead of addressing their needs, they are repeatedly punished for sometimes minor violations of school policy and ultimately pipelined into the prison system.⁹ This phenomenon is included in this conversation because K-12 systems and student outcomes should not be entirely decoupled from postsecondary systems and student outcomes. For example, zero-tolerance discipline policies and an increased reliance on law enforcement in schools has resulted in an increase in school expulsions and suspensions (most vivid among students of color).¹⁰ These suspended and expelled children often experience school days absent of adult supervision, making it easy for them to fall further behind in their school work, which increases chances they will drop out and never complete high school and end up in prison.¹¹

Giving incarcerated individuals a “second chance” through educational opportunities can mitigate some of the harm caused by past systemic inequities, and studies suggest it is a promising rehabilitative vehicle that can benefit incarcerated populations and the states and communities to which incarcerated persons will return. It is both moral and reasonable for federal and state governments to invest in prison-based education initiatives. In addition to reducing prison costs, postsecondary education for incarcerated populations benefits society in larger ways while offering those who have made mistakes in the past (and made retributions to society) opportunities to construct new pathways for more productive and fulfilling futures.

Workforce/Economic Imperative: The U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Statistics releases annual reports on “correctional populations,” defined as persons supervised by the U.S. adult correctional systems, including persons supervised in the community on probation or parole and those incarcerated in state or federal prisons or local jails. The 2016 report highlights a decrease in the number of persons supervised for the ninth consecutive year, with 2016 marking the lowest-level incarceration rate since 1996; it decreased from 2,172,800 in 2015 to 2,162,400 in 2016. More than 650,000 individuals are released from prison every year.¹² Despite these declines, the number of incarcerated persons (including victims of unjust criminal justice laws) remains high, representing untapped talent for the workforce in states, many of which are experiencing record low unemployment and cannot meet current workforce needs. Investing in prison education could benefit the American economy and create a new source of talent to meet states’ economic and workforce needs. Not having a high school diploma closes doors to higher education, workforce training, and employment opportunities. For formerly incarcerated individuals, the disadvantage of not having a postsecondary credential of value (or even a high school diploma, in many cases) is compounded by the myriad barriers to successful reentry and additional stigmas they face during transition and reentry to their communities and the labor force.¹³

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9. American Civil Liberties Union. (n.d.) School to prison pipeline. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/juvenile-justice/school-prison-pipeline>
 10. Ibid. ACLU history: For black children, a pipeline from schoolhouse to jailhouse. <https://www.aclu.org/other/aclu-history-black-children-pipeline-schoolhouse-jailhouse>
 11. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2013). Out of school suspension and expulsion. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/131/3/e1000.full.pdf>
 12. Kaeble, D. and Cowhig, M. (2018). Correctional populations in the United States, 2016. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus16.pdf>
 13. Bender, K. (2018). Education opportunities in prison are key to reducing crime. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/news/2018/03/02/447321/education-opportunities-prison-key-reducing-crime>

Bottom line — incarcerated men and women report lower levels of educational attainment when compared with the general population, and lower levels of educational attainment have been associated with increased risks of incarceration. These facts, along with predictions about educational requirements for jobs of the future, support investment in education for incarcerated populations.

Recidivism and Return on Investment: The relationship between recidivism rates and educational attainment is widely understood; higher education levels are correlated with reduced recidivism rates. It is not uncommon for the undereducated to find themselves without financial resources or social support systems upon their release from prison, and they are therefore more vulnerable to committing criminal acts rather than reintegrating into society. The most important factor in determining recidivism (or a relapse into criminal behavior) rates is the ability to find employment. If a formerly incarcerated person is unable to find employment after eight months, there is a 33 percent chance they will commit another crime, landing them back behind bars. This increases to 50 percent after one year of unemployment and 70 percent after three years.¹⁴

Research asserts that postsecondary education for incarcerated populations is cost effective. According to one report, each inmate released from a prison system saves that state an average of \$25,000 per year. With more than 650,000 people released from state prisons across the country each year, some experts assert that reducing the reincarceration rate by 50 percent could produce cost savings of \$2.7 billion per year.¹⁵ According to Davis, Bozick, et al., when compared to the costs of recidivism, the cost of prison education saves roughly \$5 for every dollar expended.¹⁶ A 2016 RAND Corporation report suggests that incarcerated individuals who engaged in education programs were 43 percent less likely to return to prison.¹⁷ In addition to decreasing recidivism rates, correctional education has other positive impacts on prison systems with postsecondary education programs. According to the Vera Institute, there is less violence among prison populations in prisons with these programs, which foster a safer environment for everyone, including prison personnel.¹⁸

Long-Term Generational Impact: The impact of postsecondary education for incarcerated persons should also be considered from a multigenerational perspective, specifically, the impact of parents' incarceration on their children. The RAND Corporation, for example, studied at-risk factors for vulnerable children, which include exposure to trauma, such as having an incarcerated parent and low family income.¹⁹ Sometimes referred to as "hidden victims," children of incarcerated persons are confronted with a unique set of challenges, including those that are psychological, behavioral, educational, and economic in nature.²⁰ Some studies suggest trauma

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14. The Living Wage Coalition. *Discrimination against formerly incarcerated people*. <https://www.livingwage-sf.org/mass-incarceration/discrimination-against-formerly-incarcerated-people>
 15. Skorton, D. and Altschuler, G. (March 25, 2013). College behind bars: How educating prisoners is paying off. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/collegeprose/2013/03/25/college-behind-bars-how-educating-prisoners-pays-off/#385d2c502707>
 16. Davis, L. M., Bozick, R. Steele, J.L., Saunders, J., and Miles, J.N.V. (2013). Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education: A meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults. RAND Corporation. http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR266.html
 17. RAND Corporation. (2016). *The case for correctional education in U.S. prisons*. RAND Review. <https://www.rand.org/blog/rand-review/2016/01/course-correction-the-case-for-correctional-education.html>
 18. Vera Institute of Justice. (2017). *Expanding access to postsecondary education in prison. Fact sheet for correctional leaders*. <https://www.vera.org/publications/postsecondary-education-in-prison-fact-sheet-for-correction-leaders>
 19. RAND Corporation. (n.d.). Research on at-risk children and youth. <https://www.rand.org/well-being/social-and-behavioral-policy/portfolios/children-and-at-risk-youth.html>
 20. Martin, E. (2017). Hidden consequences: The impact of incarceration on dependent children. *National Institute of Justice*. May, Issue Number 278. <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/hidden-consequences-impact-incarceration-dependent-children>

related to having an incarcerated parent can be more severe than death or divorce, putting these children more at risk for entering the penal system themselves.²¹

Having an incarcerated parent can have an impact on the family for multiple generations, including in ways that are positive. The Prison Studies Project quotes one incarcerated student as saying, “I believe education can mean the difference between a life of crime and a productive life. My educational level can influence whether my twin sons [and eventually their children] aspire to be criminals or whether they have the self-confidence to pursue occupations that challenge their minds.”²² Accepting the axiom “the higher the degree, the lower the recidivism” supports the imperative of having relevant policies and practices that consider the families of incarcerated persons and the generational impact of postsecondary education. Consider, finally, another quote from an inmate taking advantage of postsecondary opportunities while incarcerated: “The more opportunities we in prison have to learn and value education and see possibilities in ourselves, the greater the chance we will break the cycle of incarceration not just for ourselves but for future generations to come” (C.K.L. 2011 valedictorian of the Prison University Project).²³

PRISON POPULATIONS AND MASS INCARCERATION

Globally, the United States leads the world in per capital incarceration rates. According to a 2019 U.S. News & World Report and the World Prison Brief, the United States incarcerated 655 per 100,000 people, followed by El Salvador (618); Thailand (553); Turkmenistan (552); U.S. Virgin Islands (542); Cuba (510); Maldives (499); Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. territory (482); British Virgin Islands (470); and Rwanda (464).^{24, 25}

Nationwide, the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that 2018 was the fifth consecutive year of declining state prison populations, down almost 6 percent since 2013. However, this national downward trend is not reflective of individual states’ trends. Of the 34 states that saw reduced imprisonment rates over this period, Alabama had the largest decrease at almost 36 percent while Kentucky saw an increase of 13 percent.

21. Sparks, S. (2015). Parents’ incarceration takes toll on children, studies say. *Education Week*. February 25, Vol. 34, Issue 22, pp 1-18.

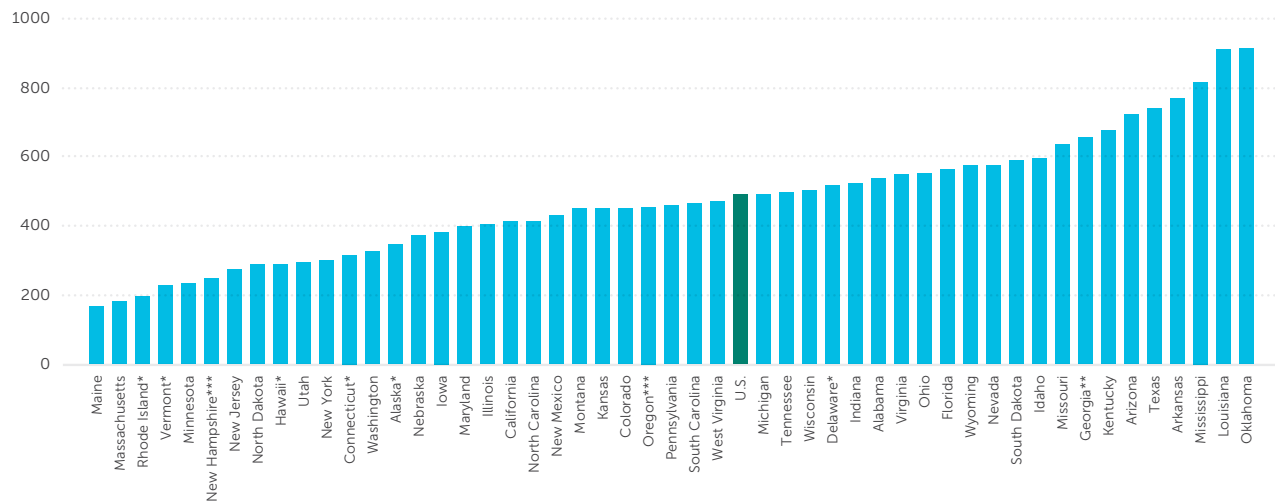
22. Prison Studies Project. *Why prison education?* <http://prisonstudiesproject.org/why-prison-education-programs>

23. Ibid.

24. Radu, S. (2019). Countries with the highest incarceration rates. *U.S. News & World Reports*.
<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2019-05-13/10-countries-with-the-highest-incarceration-rates>

25. World Prison Brief. (n.d.). *Highest to lowest-prison population rate*.
https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All

FIGURE 1.
2018 STATE IMPRISONMENT RATES PER 100,000 RESIDENTS



Notes: Imprisonment rate for ages 18 and older is the number of prisoners under state jurisdiction with a sentence of more than one year per 100,000 residents.

* Prisons and jails form one integrated system. Data include total jail and prison populations.

** State includes county prisons in its custody count.

*** Data are imputed.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Prisoner Statistics, 2017 and 2018; and U.S. Census Bureau, post-censal resident population estimates for January 1 of the following calendar year.

Together with decreasing prison populations, The Pew Charitable Trusts reported declines in the three-year prison recidivism rate between 2005 and 2012, analyzing data from 23 states.²⁶ While 48 percent of people returned to prison after being released in 2005, only 37 percent of people released in 2012 returned three years later. It is difficult to compare recidivism rates among states due to differing definitions and data availability issues; however, the Virginia Department of Corrections releases an annual State Recidivism Comparison report that most recently compared 42 states.²⁷ This report illustrates the rate at which prisoners are re-incarcerated within three years of release. For those states that report recidivism rates of those released from state prisons, rates ranged from 23.1 percent in Virginia and South Carolina to 63.5 percent in Delaware.

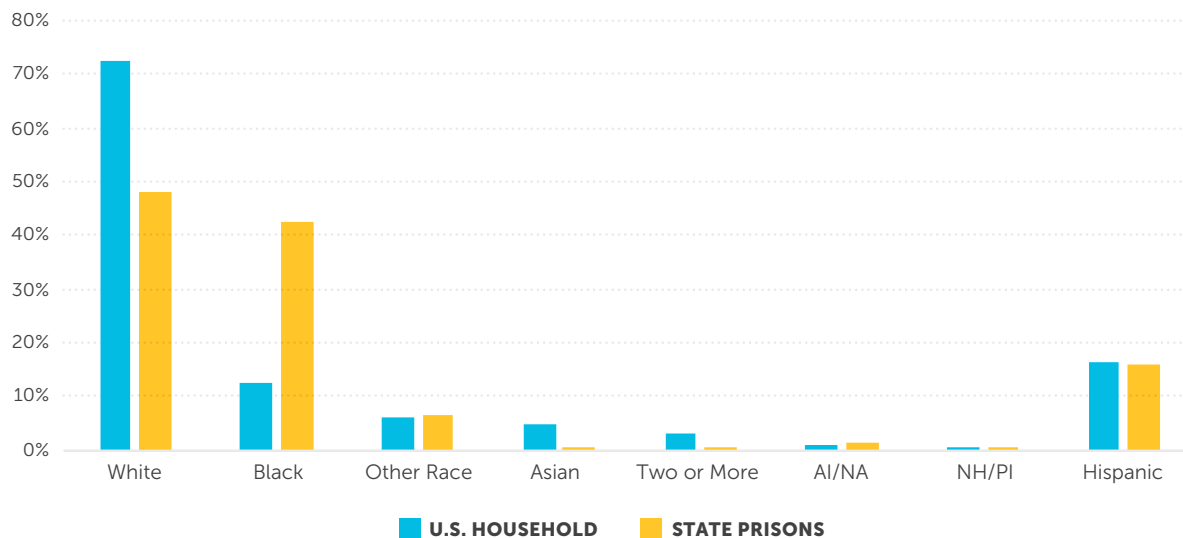
Incarcerated populations do not typically reflect the composition of their state’s population. Historically, White and Asian prisoners are underrepresented in prison populations, and Black and Hispanic prisoners are overrepresented, relative to the overall population in a state. While the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported in 2017 that state or federal correctional authorities have seen a 31 percent decline in the imprisonment rate for Black adults and a 25 percent decline for Hispanic adults, national statistics still show that state prisons are overwhelmingly and disproportionately Black compared to other racial and ethnic groups, as shown in *Figure 2*.²⁸

26. Pew Charitable Trusts. *The changing state of recidivism: Fewer people going back to prison.* <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2018/08/01/the-changing-state-of-recidivism-fewer-people-going-back-to-prison>

27. Virginia Department of Corrections Research-Evaluation Unit. (2018). *State recidivism comparison.* <https://vadoc.virginia.gov/media/1485/vadoc-state-recidivism-comparison-report-2020-02.pdf>

28. U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Prisoners in 2017.* <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p17.pdf>

FIGURE 2.
U.S. HOUSEHOLD AND STATE PRISON POPULATIONS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Group Quarters Population by Group Quarters Type (PCT20).

Again, those in prison tend to have lower education levels than the non-incarcerated population. This presents a challenge since a postsecondary credential beyond high school is a necessary requirement for most opportunities in today’s workforce, while many in prison lack a high school diploma. It is also a reminder of inequitable P-12 education systems. *Table 1* illustrates a 2014 national study which found that only 6 percent of inmates held anything higher than a high school credential compared to 37 percent of the U.S. household population.²⁹

TABLE 1.
COMPARISON OF EDUCATION LEVELS BETWEEN U.S. INMATES AND U.S. HOUSEHOLDS

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	U.S. INMATES	U.S. HOUSEHOLDS
Below high school	30%	14%
High school credential	64%	50%
Any postsecondary award	6%	37%
Graduate or professional degree	1%	11%
Bachelor’s degree	1%	17%
Associate degree	4%	9%

29. Rampey, B.D., Keiper, S., Mohadjer, L., Krenzke, T., Li, J., Thornton, N., and Hogan, J. (2016). *Highlights from the U.S. PIAAC survey of incarcerated adults: Their skills, work experience, education, and training: Program for the international assessment of adult competencies: 2014*(NCES 2016-040). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016040.pdf>.

While state policy and prison reform efforts are likely contributors to a declining prison population and decreasing recidivism rates, it remains that the incarcerated population reentering the community and the workforce is less educated compared to the overall population.

PRISON-BASED POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION: MAJOR ISSUES AND BARRIERS

Several issues and barriers must be addressed to create new or expand existing opportunities for quality postsecondary education that leads to sustainable employment upon release for incarcerated or justice-involved individuals. In this section, we describe three main issue categories: access, program delivery, and reentry of program participants into society. More detailed information on these and other issue areas can be found in *Appendix C – Additional Resources*.

ACCESS

In general, full access to postsecondary education programs delivered in correctional facilities can be impeded by correctional staff who sometimes view these programs as benefits for well-behaved inmates with fewer infractions incurred during their sentence and those serving shorter sentences.³⁰ These staff can furthermore be opposed to expanded opportunities for inmates with more infractions or those serving longer sentences. Lack of staff support may become an even greater barrier as states explore expanding and scaling postsecondary education opportunities within correctional facilities beyond their current range and scope.

The transfer of inmates to new facilities can be a major barrier to complete access. Given the small number of postsecondary education programs offered in correctional facilities, a transfer in the middle of a course effectively means the student must withdraw from the course as a non-completer. Further, this student will likely not be able to enroll again if their new facility lacks educational programming. Buy-in and support of prison staff can alleviate this barrier as they may be able to align planned transfers to the end of a term or course for students. Ithaka recommends that state correctional departments and institutions of higher education establish memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to ensure transfers do not impede student progress to program completion.³¹

With the passage of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Pell Grant funding to students attending postsecondary education programs in prisons was eliminated, and the primary funding source for these programs evaporated. The impact on these programs was immediate, and enrollment in prison postsecondary education programs fell 44 percent in the first year of the ban. What these data illustrate is the impact of cost constraints on postsecondary programs for those in correctional facilities. Cost to individuals and the cost to deliver programs on the inside are major access barriers that must be addressed to create more opportunities for those in the U.S. justice system.³²

30. Wilson, M., Alamuddin, R., and Cooper, D. (2019). *Unbarring access: A landscape of postsecondary education in prison and its pedagogical supports*. Ithaka S+R. <https://sr.ithaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SR-report-landscape-review-postsecondary-education-in-prison-053019.pdf>

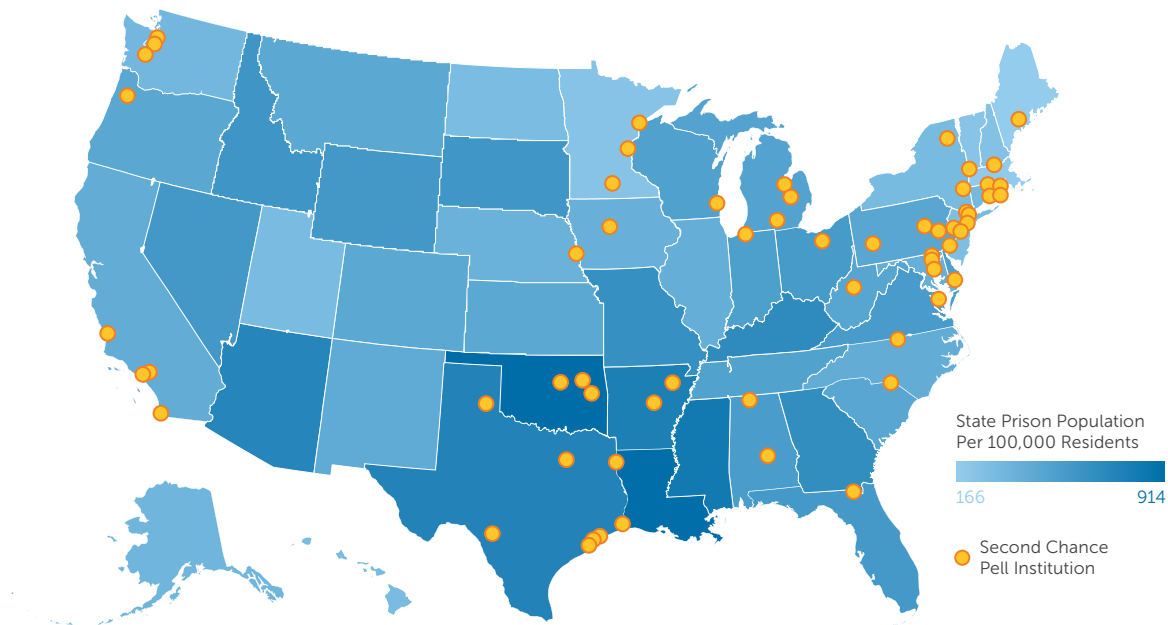
31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

The introduction of the Second Chance Pell program in 2015 has allowed for increased access to higher education for incarcerated individuals who meet the criteria to participate in the pilot program. The U.S. Department of Education reports that there are currently 63 Second Chance Pell-participating institutions in 26 states, shown in *Figure 3*. The Vera Institute of Justice reports that more than 5,000 students participated in fall 2017, a 236 percent increase from fall 2016, and 954 credentials were awarded to 612 graduates.³³

The Second Chance Pell initiative has garnered the support of U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, who announced on April 24, 2020, its expansion that will include an additional 67 schools/experimental sites³⁴

FIGURE 3.
MAP: STATE PRISON POPULATION PER 100,000 RESIDENTS AND SECOND CHANCE PELL LOCATIONS



Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Inmates in custody of state or federal correctional facilities, excluding private prison facilities*, December 31, 1978-2016.
 U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. *Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016*.
 U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid. <https://experimentalsites.ed.gov/exp/pdf/ESIParticipants.pdf>

33. Vera Institute of Justice. (2017). *Expanding access to postsecondary education: Fact sheet for corrections leaders*. <https://www.vera.org/publications/postsecondary-education-in-prison-fact-sheet-for-correction-leaders>

34. U.S. Department of Education. (2020) *Secretary DeVos expands Second Chance Pell experiment, more than doubling opportunities for incarcerated students to gain job skills and earn postsecondary credentials*. <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-devos-expands-second-chance-pell-experiment-more-doubling-opportunities-incarcerated-students-gain-job-skills-and-earn-postsecondary-credentials>

The dramatic response to higher education in state prisons supported by the Second Chance Pell highlights the interest and willingness to pursue postsecondary education when the barrier of cost is removed. While initial results from the program are promising and Second Chance Pell has improved access to postsecondary educational opportunities for the incarcerated, the program is still a pilot serving only a small subset of the demand. According to the Vera Institute, more than 200 schools in 46 states and Puerto Rico applied to participate in Second Chance Pell in 2015.³⁵ Across the country, only 4 percent of Title IV institutions offer some sort of prison-based higher education.³⁶ Clearly, more programs are needed to meet this demand.

The full restoration of Pell eligibility for those in prison would go a long way to providing greater access to postsecondary education; however, further barriers remain. For example, completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is often a barrier because those on the inside have a difficult time collecting, and may even be unable to access, the financial information to complete the form. A Government Accountability Office (GAO) study of the Second Chance Pell pilot found that many otherwise eligible students were unable to access their Social Security number. Many others were in federal student loan default or not registered for the Selective Service.³⁷ While these issues would limit access on the outside as well, they appear to be more prevalent among potentially eligible participants in prisons.

Finally, potential access barriers that limit enrollment are unique to the circumstances of those in prisons. It is common for some existing programs to limit eligibility to prisoners who are within a certain time frame of release and have fewer in-prison infractions, for example. Other factors impacting an inmate's ability to participate in prison-based education programs include time to release, inmate's age, reason for imprisonment, test scores, length of imprisonment, and in-prison violations.³⁸

PROGRAM DELIVERY

Embedding postsecondary educational programs into a prison facility creates challenges unique to this environment, with unique implications for instructional methodologies, faculty, security procedures, and other related matters. On-site instruction, correspondence courses, and video instruction are common instructional modalities, with the most common method being on-site classroom instruction, according to a study by Gorgol & Sponsler. States also provided instruction through correspondence courses — a course of study by which students and faculty communicate by mail. Online or video instructional methods were used the least as almost all states prohibit use of the Internet by inmates.³⁹

35. Vera Institute of Justice. (2017). *Expanding access to postsecondary education: Fact sheet for corrections leaders*. <https://www.vera.org/publications/postsecondary-education-in-prison-fact-sheet-for-correction-leaders>

36. Wilson, M., Alamuddin, R., and Cooper, D. (2019). *Unbarring access: A landscape of postsecondary education in prison and its pedagogical supports*. Ithaka S+R. <https://sr.ithaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SR-report-landscape-review-postsecondary-education-in-prison-053019.pdf>

37. The U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2019, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/697248.pdf>. In Wilson, M., Alamuddin, R. and Cooper, D. (2019). *Unbarring access: A landscape of postsecondary education in prison and its pedagogical supports*. ITHAKA S+R. <https://sr.ithaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SR-report-landscape-review-postsecondary-education-in-prison-053019.pdf>

38. Gorgol, G. E. and Sponsler, B. A. (2011). *Unlocking potential: Results of a national survey of postsecondary education in U.S. prisons*. Institute for Higher Education Policy. http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/pubs/unlocking_potential-psce_final_report_may_2011.pdf

39. Ibid.

Faculty preparedness is essential, as program effectiveness and successful student outcomes will depend on their ability to adjust their pedagogical/andragogical approaches to align with the unique characteristics of prison-based education. Also related to instructional methodology is the actual instructional facility, which varies across the country. A study by Erisman & Contrado reports that community colleges provided 68 percent of postsecondary coursework offered to incarcerated persons; 16 percent was provided by public four-year institutions; 10 percent was provided by four-year private, nonprofit institutions; and 6 percent was provided by other types (such as private for-profit institutions).⁴⁰

With an increasing mandate to connect postsecondary education with workforce development, Winterfield et al. and Nally et al. highlighted the wide range of study available to incarcerated persons, which includes coursework in business, social and behavioral sciences, humanities, and computer science, as well as courses in vocational training in bookkeeping, carpentry, and other areas that allow inmates to earn credits toward certificates in those industries.^{41,42}

To close this section, the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) provides a framework for assessing the impact and importance of prison-based education programs. IHEP identified four specific data-based areas for assessment of such program efforts: 1) retention, completion, and success; 2) academic quality; 3) civic engagement; and 4) soft skill development.⁴³ Of the four areas identified, soft-skill development has implications far beyond completion or course of study, because those skills transcend most jobs. Essential skills is a more accurate term and includes effective communication, teamwork, honesty, dependability, critical thinking, and open-mindedness.

POST-RELEASE/REENTRY

When incarcerated persons are released from prison, they are confronted with obstacles that can challenge their ability to successfully reintegrate into society and avoid recidivism. Families and communities left behind may not be the same upon return. The challenges of such new realities are compounded by low levels of educational attainment, lack of a steady job history, and the stigma of any type of conviction that typically presents barriers to finding reentry employment. Even when formerly incarcerated persons find employment, they find it in predominantly low-skilled jobs with few benefits and limited opportunities for advancement.⁴⁴ These and other socioeconomic factors can increase the likelihood of re-incarceration.

To counter these challenges, prison-based postsecondary education could position the formerly incarcerated with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to improve the likelihood for successful reentry into society, community, and family. Failure to adequately prepare the formerly incarcerated for reentry into society is exacerbated by the consequences of having a criminal record, which

40. Erisman, W. Contardo, J.B. (2005). *Learning to reduce recidivism: A 50-state analysis of postsecondary correctional educational policy*. Institute for Higher Education Policy. <http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/g-l/LearningReduceRecidivism.pdf>

41. Winterfield, L., Coggeshall, M., et al. (2009). *The effects of postsecondary correctional education: Final report*. The Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/effects-postsecondary-correctional-education>

42. Nally, J.M., Lockwood, S. et al., (2012). An evaluation of the effect of correctional education programs on post-release recidivism and employment: An empirical study in Indiana. *Journal of Correctional Education* 63(1):69–88.

43. Institute for Higher Education Policy. *Assessing the impact and importance of higher education in prison*. http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/kpi_one-pager.pdf

44. Li, M. (2018) *From prisons to communities: Confronting re-entry challenges and social inequality*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2018/03/prisons-to-communities>

can impact employment, housing, and social service opportunities.⁴⁵ States' growing interest in postsecondary education for incarcerated populations can provide a buffer against many of the challenges and barriers that the formerly incarcerated will face upon reentry. Furthermore, a shift to investment in programs that prepare incarcerated populations for reentry is showing promise. Specifically, research suggests that incarcerated persons who participate in prison-based education programs show lower levels of recidivism, with every dollar spent on prison education saving approximately four dollars on expenses associated with recidivism, according to the Department of Justice.⁴⁶

SURVEY OF THE SHEEO LANDSCAPE

SHEEO surveyed its membership to learn more about their understanding of the issues related to postsecondary education for incarcerated individuals and their capacity to implement new or scale existing opportunities for this population. Twenty-three (37 percent) members responded in addition to responses from four non-member agencies. See *Appendix C – Survey Instrument*.

Over the same time frame, the Association for State Correctional Administrators conducted a comparable survey of its membership. From these combined surveys, we identified six key indicators that suggest whether or not a state agency or system of higher education is positioned to take greater action to develop opportunities for those in prison and justice-involved individuals. These indicators are described below.

KEY INDICATORS AND FINDINGS

- 1. In-depth knowledge of the issues and policy barriers in their state to providing postsecondary education to incarcerated individuals.** As described above, there are myriad issues that create barriers in this policy space, including lack of political support, the cost of these programs for the state and individuals, the education levels of those in prison, and a multitude of instructional delivery issues, as well as those created by the timing of prisoner release and how credits (or learning) transfer to programs outside of a correctional facility. For those who complete programs, there are likely licensure and job placement barriers upon release that create challenges for securing employment and a sustainable wage. While the majority of SHEEO member agency respondents expressed enthusiasm, general interest, and commitment around this policy area, a smaller number demonstrated detailed knowledge of the issues that arise at the intersection of correctional facilities and postsecondary education. One respondent shared that they had analyzed the educational level of inmates at each of the prisons in their state to gauge where better opportunities for new programs might exist. Some respondents highlighted “ban the box” initiatives in their state or demonstrated knowledge of how access to Internet and technology prohibitions, space constraints, etc., impacted instructional delivery within prisons. A thorough understanding of these issues is critical to supporting effective programs for postsecondary education in prisons.

45. Coates, T.N. (2015). The black family in the age of mass incarceration. *The Atlantic*, 316(3), 82.

46. Li, M. *From prisons to communities: Confronting re-entry challenges and social inequality*.

Note: Endorsed by former President Barack Obama, Ban-the-Box laws prohibit employers from asking applicants about their criminal history on a job application. Nationwide, 35 states and over 150 cities and counties have adopted these laws so that employers consider job applicants' qualifications first, without the stigma of a conviction or arrest record.⁴⁷

2. **Regular communication and engagement between the SHEEO and their counterpart at the state's Department of Corrections (or between their respective staffs).** Postsecondary education programs in prison must adhere to the policies and practices of two distinct agencies within a state: Departments of Corrections and Higher Education (and their institutions). Consequently, effective and regular communication between these two departments is key to either creating quality programs or scaling existing programs. Several survey respondents indicated a strong and continuous relationship with their state's Department of Corrections counterpart. Continuous communication and engagement can occur through regularly scheduled meetings or less formally, through phone calls, for example.
3. **Existence of an in-state Second Chance Pell site.** The Second Chance Pell sites are reportedly highly successful, and the existence of these programs within states provides opportunities to highlight and promote expanded postsecondary opportunities for the incarcerated. There are currently 63 Second Chance Pell-participating institutions in 26 states. Arkansas, for example, responded that more than 700 students enrolled in programs at five sites through Second Chance Pell and that their governor delivered the commencement address for one of the programs. In addition to directly benefiting participating students, the success of Second Chance Pell programs provides a leverage point for SHEEOs to cultivate political buy-in and support for postsecondary education for incarcerated populations writ large. See *Appendix B – List of Second Chance Pell States*.
4. **State financial aid program eligibility.** Most states have need-based financial aid programs, but 14 states have barriers to financial aid for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students.⁴⁸ Only two survey respondents indicated they had such a program in their state. This reporting discrepancy may be due to the Pell Grant ban in place since 1994. For example, incarcerated individuals in Louisiana are not expressly, legislatively, or statutorily prohibited from accessing GO Grants (one of the state's financial aid programs); however, receiving a Pell Grant is a requirement to receive GO Grant funding. Therefore, the Pell ban effectively bans students from accessing the state grant as well. SHEEOs should work to ensure that state financial aid programs, policies, and guidelines do not prohibit or limit access to the aid. They should also advocate, where appropriate, for increased funding for these aid programs to serve more students.
5. **Existence of at least one established state or institutional program that provides quality postsecondary opportunities within correctional facilities.** As with Second Chance Pell sites, states with existing, quality, postsecondary programs within correctional facilities should leverage their success to garner support for expansion

47. Avery, B. (n.d.). *Ban the box: U.S. cities, counties, and states adopt fair hiring policies*. National Employment Law Project. <https://www.nelp.org/publication/ban-the-box-fair-chance-hiring-state-and-local-guide>

48. Hobby, L., Walsh, B. and Delaney, R. (2019). *A piece of the puzzle: State financial aid for incarcerated students*. Vera Institute of Justice. <https://www.vera.org/publications/a-piece-of-the-puzzle-state-financial-aid-for-incarcerated-students>

and scaling. SHEEO agency staff should consider engagement with these program administrators to learn how best to support the program and how the SHEEO agency may support the design and creation of similar high-quality programs within the state.

6. Political buy-in and support from key constituents. Broad prison reform may be one of the only national policy issues today that garners some level of bipartisan support for change. Second Chance Pell was established during the Obama administration and has been largely supported by the current White House. Members of the Trump administration, along with Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), have expressed support for repealing the 1994 ban as part of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. For the first time, actual legislation to repeal the ban received GOP co-sponsorship.⁴⁹ Survey respondents provided numerous examples of bipartisan support for prison-based education. Indiana’s Republican governor publicly set a goal to help 1,000 inmates earn a credential of value in 2018, and was also instrumental in implementing “ban the box” policies through administrative policy. In Rhode Island, the Democratic governor is described as highly supportive of the need to provide more educational opportunities for inmates in the state’s prisons. When states have support for prison reform from political leadership, SHEEOs are better positioned to advocate for greater postsecondary educational opportunities within their states’ correctional facilities.

This preliminary survey of the SHEEO landscape and the identification of critical indicators will serve as the foundation for SHEEO staff to engage state agencies and systems of higher education, philanthropic organizations, and others interested in increasing postsecondary opportunities for incarcerated populations. Shifts in policies and practices that ultimately improve prospects for successful reentry into society will benefit the formerly incarcerated as well as the communities to which they return.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are intended for SHEEOs and their staffs interested in increasing support for postsecondary education for incarcerated individuals in their respective states. While not exhaustive, we hope these recommendations provide clear, actionable, and cost-effective steps to engage proactively with diverse stakeholder groups and eventually increase postsecondary opportunities for incarcerated populations.

- **Advocate for the restoration of Pell eligibility at the federal level.** Given the success of the Second Chance Pell program to date, SHEEOs should consider supporting and advocating for the full restoration of Pell Grant funding for eligible students in the prison system, lifting the ban that was put in place in 1994. This policy change is likely to be discussed during the Higher Education Act reauthorization efforts over the next year, and SHEEOs may consider articulating support for Pell restoration to address the cost barrier to students looking to enroll in prison education programs.

49. Kreighbaum, A. (2019). Taking stock of Pell Grants behind bars. *Inside Higher Education*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/07/16/full-repeal-pell-ban-prisons-top-mind-annual-convening-second-chance-pilot>

- **Conduct a policy audit to identify and mitigate barriers.** SHEEO agency staff should conduct a thorough policy audit and review to see where existing policies and regulations create barriers limiting the effectiveness of higher education programs in prisons within the state. Such an audit may serve as the basis for implementing policy reform through administrative rule or for crafting a legislative agenda to pursue statutory change. Special attention should be paid to state financial aid policies to address student cost barriers for those looking to enroll in prison education programs.
- **Ensure postsecondary programs are aligned and articulated to those outside of prisons.** It is imperative that programs within prisons offer high-quality credentials that are aligned with programs delivered outside of a prison environment. Further, programs should align with job licensure requirements and should not be offered in fields where individuals with criminal records are prohibited from obtaining the license.
- **Establish and maintain relationships with state correctional agencies.** Because academic programs delivered within the penal system must adhere to both higher education and corrections policies and practices, strong and regular communication between the two entities is critical. Regular communication between the SHEEO and their counterpart at the state Department of Corrections (or between their respective staffs) helps ensure that programs meet the needs of state higher education and correctional stakeholders. Strong interagency relationships may also foster collective action to scale existing or create new programs for those within the prison system.
- **Charge a staff person with ownership of this policy area.** Recognizing that SHEEO agency staff have myriad responsibilities and limited bandwidth to take on new responsibilities, a SHEEO may consider tasking a staff person in the agency to take ownership of prison-based postsecondary education from the state agency perspective to learn how best to support more opportunity for this population.
- **Visit a program within a prison.** Observing a class delivered in a prison setting could help SHEEOs and their staffs understand the unique aspects of postsecondary educational delivery for those in prison. Such visits also provide firsthand experience of the security protocols that faculty and instructors go through, the space constraints that limit programs, and clarity around how technology barriers are addressed within these programs. Most importantly, a visit provides the opportunity to see and hear how life-changing these programs can be for students and adds a human element to further engagement to support these programs.
- **Organize a statewide convening to galvanize support.** Bringing together constituents from statewide higher education (including institutions), corrections, workforce departments, parole offices, and advocacy organizations provides a forum to engage across agencies and sectors — while signaling and reinforcing a commitment to advance efforts to increase educational opportunities for those in prison.

- **Develop and advance a legislative agenda at the state level.** Legislation may be required to address some of the barriers that limit the effectiveness of prison-based postsecondary education programs. SHEEOs might pursue change through their annual legislative agenda, crafting and supporting bills on this topic, and working with a legislator(s) committed to prison reform and expanded postsecondary opportunities for incarcerated individuals.

CONCLUSION

This guidance is developed to inform SHEEOs, their staffs, and other stakeholders on critical matters related to the current state of postsecondary education for incarcerated populations. Specifically, it offers key data to inform decision-making by multiple stakeholders, and it provides a comprehensive framing of the issues, including barriers related to access, program delivery, and issues that arise following release. Equally important, it offers recommendations for how SHEEOs can engage thoughtfully and more proactively in this policy space and support greater postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated individuals to earn credentials of value, secure employment, and successfully reenter society.

More than 40 states have established ambitious “North-Star” postsecondary educational attainment goals designed to guide state efforts to increase postsecondary attainment to the levels needed to meet projected economic and workforce needs. No state can reach their goal without significantly closing equity gaps in attainment between White and underrepresented minority populations. The challenge is magnified when you consider America’s prison populations, which are disproportionately represented by Black Americans — mostly males. At the same time, many states are in a period of historically low unemployment and cannot find qualified candidates for their current openings. Within this context, more than 650,000 individuals are released from U.S. prisons every year. The formerly incarcerated are less likely to possess some type of postsecondary credential, which further complicates their ability to seamlessly reenter society and secure employment in a labor market where most opportunities require training beyond high school.

Finally, a fundamental goal of any prison-based education program should be to prepare individuals for meaningful employment or continued education upon reentry into society. A major area of concern involves programs that train incarcerated persons for professions that require licensure to practice, even when those with criminal convictions are legally prohibited from obtaining the license to practice. This policy and practice disconnect effectively makes the value of such training debatable, further compromising a formerly incarcerated person’s ability to secure meaningful employment. Related to coursework/training, portability is the issue of credit transfer. As SHEEOs and their staffs develop or refine transfer and articulation agreements among their institutions, special attention should be paid to prison education programs to ensure they are included in these negotiations.

The responsibilities, challenges, and opportunities associated with postsecondary education for incarcerated populations are significant. Fortunately, relevant research is expanding, policymakers are interested, and stakeholders are diverse and deeply committed. Aligned with its mission, SHEEO is among this group of stakeholders and believes postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated individuals should be an area of focus considered by states and SHEEOs striving to close equity gaps, meet current and projected workforce needs, and increase educational attainment in their states and beyond.

APPENDIX A: PERCENT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN U.S. POPULATION AND STATE PRISON POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY.

In the United States, the White prisoner population is 24.6 percent less than the White household population. The Black prisoner population is 30.2 percent more than the Black household population. (AI/NA = American Indian/Native American; NH/PI = Non-Hispanic/Pacific Islander)

UNDERREPRESENTED IN STATE PRISONS

OVERREPRESENTED IN STATE PRISONS

STATE	WHITE	BLACK	AI/NA	ASIAN	NH/PI	TWO OR MORE	OTHER RACE	HISPANIC
United States	24.6%	30.2%	0.6%	4.2%	0.1%	2.2%	0.3%	0.4%
Alabama	28.4%	32.8%	0.5%	1.1%	0.1%	0.8%	1.9%	2.2%
Alaska	22.3%	3.1%	22.6%	4.6%	0.1%	2.0%	1.0%	0.8%
Arizona	15.5%	8.2%	5.7%	2.2%	0.1%	1.2%	5.1%	6.8%
Arkansas	23.0%	27.8%	0.3%	0.9%	0.2%	1.4%	2.0%	3.0%
California	8.9%	24.0%	0.3%	12.1%	0.2%	4.1%	0.9%	1.2%
Colorado	11.0%	15.4%	3.4%	1.6%	0.1%	2.6%	3.5%	12.4%
Connecticut	43.3%	31.7%	0.0%	3.3%	0.2%	1.7%	16.4%	13.9%
Delaware	31.6%	41.0%	0.4%	3.1%	0.0%	2.5%	3.3%	6.3%
Florida	26.3%	32.8%	0.2%	2.2%	0.0%	1.8%	2.2%	11.3%
Georgia	22.4%	30.9%	0.3%	3.0%	0.0%	1.8%	3.4%	4.4%
Hawaii	0.2%	2.4%	0.1%	17.3%	32.3%	19.7%	1.8%	1.4%
Idaho	3.5%	2.4%	1.8%	0.9%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	3.2%
Illinois	37.9%	43.2%	0.0%	4.3%	0.0%	1.9%	0.9%	2.8%
Indiana	25.9%	30.1%	0.1%	1.5%	0.0%	1.8%	0.9%	1.1%
Iowa	19.9%	21.0%	1.7%	1.0%	0.1%	1.0%	0.9%	1.2%
Kansas	19.7%	27.4%	0.5%	1.4%	0.1%	2.9%	3.8%	1.4%
Kentucky	17.8%	19.5%	0.3%	0.8%	0.0%	0.5%	0.7%	0.9%
Louisiana	33.7%	38.1%	0.6%	1.4%	0.0%	1.1%	1.3%	2.7%
Maine	5.1%	4.7%	1.3%	0.5%	0.0%	1.0%	0.6%	0.4%
Maryland	34.8%	46.4%	0.3%	5.4%	0.0%	2.7%	3.2%	6.2%
Massachusetts	14.1%	20.2%	0.3%	4.3%	0.1%	2.1%	0.1%	14.5%
Michigan	34.2%	39.9%	0.1%	2.2%	0.0%	2.2%	1.5%	1.3%
Minnesota	31.7%	30.2%	7.1%	1.7%	0.0%	2.2%	1.8%	2.9%
Mississippi	25.6%	25.6%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.8%	2.2%
Missouri	23.1%	28.0%	0.2%	1.6%	0.1%	1.8%	1.3%	1.6%
Montana	14.6%	2.3%	12.9%	0.4%	0.1%	1.7%	1.6%	1.4%
Nebraska	20.6%	21.6%	3.6%	1.1%	0.0%	1.6%	1.8%	3.9%
Nevada	2.4%	20.4%	0.7%	5.0%	0.6%	3.8%	9.3%	3.6%
New Hampshire	3.8%	6.2%	0.2%	1.6%	0.0%	1.5%	0.6%	2.9%
New Jersey	36.4%	44.7%	0.3%	7.7%	0.0%	0.7%	0.3%	0.5%
New Mexico	6.0%	6.1%	0.7%	1.0%	0.1%	2.2%	8.1%	11.2%
New York	31.8%	41.3%	0.2%	6.7%	0.0%	2.8%	0.2%	1.6%
North Carolina	30.4%	35.5%	0.5%	1.8%	0.0%	1.7%	2.2%	3.4%
North Dakota	22.0%	5.5%	17.3%	0.9%	0.0%	0.5%	0.7%	3.4%
Ohio	29.4%	33.5%	0.1%	1.5%	0.0%	1.9%	0.5%	0.5%
Oklahoma	15.6%	20.2%	0.9%	1.4%	0.0%	3.2%	0.9%	0.1%
Oregon	1.2%	7.9%	1.2%	2.3%	0.3%	3.3%	2.0%	1.4%
Pennsylvania	40.5%	37.2%	0.2%	2.4%	0.0%	1.7%	7.6%	5.0%
Rhode Island	26.6%	24.0%	0.0%	1.8%	0.1%	3.2%	7.8%	9.1%
South Carolina	33.3%	36.9%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	1.6%	0.8%	2.5%
South Dakota	26.0%	3.5%	22.6%	0.7%	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	2.2%
Tennessee	25.6%	29.7%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	1.2%	1.7%	2.2%
Texas	20.7%	24.3%	0.5%	3.5%	0.1%	2.2%	2.7%	7.3%

STATE	WHITE	BLACK	AI/NA	ASIAN	NH/PI	TWO OR MORE	OTHER RACE	HISPANIC
Utah	12.8%	6.3%	3.4%	1.7%	0.5%	0.2%	5.0%	9.3%
Vermont	10.3%	7.1%	1.6%	1.1%	0.0%	2.1%	0.5%	3.3%
Virginia	31.5%	42.5%	0.3%	5.2%	0.0%	2.8%	2.6%	5.4%
Washington	5.4%	15.6%	2.6%	6.4%	0.5%	2.5%	4.6%	1.8%
West Virginia	9.8%	10.9%	0.2%	0.6%	0.0%	1.2%	0.5%	0.4%
Wisconsin	33.4%	36.6%	2.2%	2.0%	0.3%	1.4%	2.3%	3.2%
Wyoming	5.3%	3.0%	2.6%	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	5.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

APPENDIX B: SELECTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Vera Institute of Justice works to secure equal justice, end mass incarceration, and strengthen families and communities across America. Vera works with states and provides technical assistance to provide postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated people. www.vera.org

- *Expanding Access to Postsecondary Education*: Provides expert information and technical assistance to state Departments of Corrections, colleges and universities, and state and local policymakers selected for the Second Chance Pell Experimental Sites Initiative of the U.S. Department of Education.
- *Pathways from Prison to Postsecondary Education*: A five-year initiative that provides selected states with incentive funding and technical assistance to expand postsecondary education for currently and formerly incarcerated people.

The Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) is committed to promoting access to and success in higher education for all students. www.ihep.org

- *College Not Prison*: Initiative aims to make college accessible and affordable for all justice-involved youth.
- *Assessing the Impact of Prison-Based Postsecondary Education Programs*: A research initiative to develop a key performance indicators framework that will help Higher Education in Prison practitioners assess the impact of programs and processes.

RAND Corporation helps policymakers make decisions that are based on the best available information. www.rand.org

- *Higher Education Programs in Prison Reduce Recidivism*
- *Does Providing Inmates with Education Improve Post-Release Outcomes? A Meta-Analysis of Correctional Education Programs in the United States*

The Council of State Governments Justice Center aims to develop research-driven strategies to increase public safety and strengthen communities. nrrc.csgjusticecenter.org/reentry-and-employment

- *Reentry and Employment Project*: Provides resources to corrections, workforce, and reentry administrators and practitioners navigating the coordinating, planning, and delivery of employment-related services for people returning to communities after incarceration

The Alliance for Higher Education in Prison is a multi-stakeholder, collaborative, national network supporting the expansion of quality higher education in prison, empowering students in prison and after release, and shaping public discussion about higher education and incarceration. www.higheredinprison.org

- *Equity and Excellence in Practice*: A Guide for Higher Education in Prison provides a clear and specific summary of some of the most essential components of high-quality in-prison higher education programs. The report outlines the attributes of programs that uphold a commitment to

equity, excellence and access. While each prison setting is unique, the recommendations in the report are intended to be applied to the field of higher education generally. www.higheredinprison.org/publications/equity-and-excellence-in-practice-report

- *National Directory of Higher Education in Prison Programs* (coming in 2020). The Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, the Prison Studies Project at Harvard University, and the Research Collaborative on Higher Education in Prison at the University of Utah together conduct an annual survey to collect and publish data about U.S. programs offering higher education in prison.

The University of Utah Prison Education Project advances educational equity through on-site higher education, empirical research, and advocacy. prisoneducationproject.utah.edu

The Prison Policy Initiative produces cutting edge research to expose the broader harm of mass criminalization in addition to advocacy campaigns to create a more just society. www.prisonpolicy.org

- *Getting Back on Course*: Using data from the National Former Prisoner Survey, this report reveals that formerly incarcerated people are often relegated to the lowest rungs of the education ladder; more than half hold only a high school diploma or GED, and a quarter hold no credential at all. Educational exclusion among formerly incarcerated people causes harm and limits employment opportunities.

The Thrive for Life Prison Project creates opportunities for spiritual development and provides educational resources for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals while partnering with local universities and employers in New York. www.thriveforlife.org

- *2019 Annual Gratitude Report* details successful educational programs and upcoming projects.

Ithaka S+R provides research and strategic guidance for higher education and the arts. sr.ithaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SR-report-landscape-review-postsecondary-education-in-prison-053019.pdf

- *Unbarring Access: A Landscape Review of Postsecondary Education and its Pedagogical Supports* examines the lack of access to and information about postsecondary education in U.S. prisons. It surveys previous studies, paved by important research efforts led by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), the RAND Corporation, and the Vera Institute of Justice.

U.S. Department of Justice: National Institute of Corrections is a federal entity comprised of four divisions: Community Services Division, Academy Division, Prison Division, and Jail Division. nicic.gov

- *Reducing Recidivism: States Delivering Results*. This report is a great resource for those people looking for ideas on how to reduce statewide recidivism. It is highly worthwhile due to its data being current, coming from a diverse group of states, and showing that states can significantly reduce their recidivism rates. The statistics presented in this publication come from eight states — Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Wisconsin. nicic.gov/reducing-recidivism-states-deliver-results

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) is a federal office that helps to support American communities by strengthening the nation’s criminal justice system.

- BJA funds and administers the National Reentry Resource Center.
(csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc)

Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) is a member association representing directors of corrections for the 50 states, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and five large urban jail systems. Their objectives are to promote the profession of corrections, influence policy and practices that affect public safety, and to support ASCA members. www.asca.net

Bureau of Justice Statistics is the United States’ primary source for information about the criminal justice system under the U.S. Department of Labor. www.bjs.gov

National Employment Law Project seeks to ensure that America upholds, for all workers, the promise of opportunity and economic security through work. www.nelp.org

Anti-Recidivism Coalition empowers formerly and currently incarcerated people to thrive by providing a support network, comprehensive services, and opportunities to advocate for policy change. www.antirecidivism.org

APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

INCARCERATED POSTSECONDARY ACCESS

Contact Information

The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO), has received a Lumina Foundation grant to explore the policy barriers and opportunities for state policy action on postsecondary education for incarcerated and recently released individuals. This grant will fund collaboration between SHEEO, the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA), and Lumina Foundation to determine how SHEEO and ASCA might work together (nationally and in key states) to significantly elevate corrections connected post-secondary education attainment. The primary goal of this project is to get six to seven SHEEO member states committed and ready to take action to increase access to postsecondary education for incarcerated and recently released individuals in their states.

1. Full Name

2. Title

3. Organization

4. State

5. Email Address

INCARCERATED POSTSECONDARY ACCESS

OTHER BARRIERS

6. Do you interact with your counterpart at the state Department of Corrections?

Yes

No

7. If yes, how often?

8. If yes, please describe these interactions

9. Does your office engage the state DOC on any programs or projects? If so, please describe and provide links to relevant material

10. Has your office engaged in any concerted efforts to support postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated or recently released individuals?

Yes

No

11. If yes, please describe. Were these efforts done through...

Policy and rule-making

Legislation

Both policy/rule-making and legislation

Other (please specify)

12. If no, do you think there is an opportunity to do so in the near term? Please describe

13. Please indicate whether you think the following entities would support improved postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated or recently release individuals in your state:

Legislators

The Governor

Republicans

Democrats

Higher education governing/coordinating board

Institutional presidents

General public

Business community

None

14. Are there any Second Chance Pell sites in your state?

- Yes
- No

15. Please list any Second Chance Pell sites in your state

16. If there are Second Chance Pell programs in your state, are you aware of how the program at the site(s) is going?

17. Are incarcerated individuals eligible for state financial programs?

- Yes, all
- Yes, need-based only
- Yes, for a specific, categorical program
- No
- Other (please specify)

18. If yes, do you have data about the financial awards to these individuals?

19. If no, why not? (prohibited in statute/prohibited in state policy/prohibited in institution policy/other regulations effectively prohibit/other please describe)

20. What barriers exist in your state to provide more postsecondary educational opportunities for incarcerated and recently released individuals in your state? Please describe.

21. How can these barriers be addressed? Can your office play a role?

22. What barriers exist that may limit recently released individuals from obtaining employment that pays a living wage? Please describe.

23. Do institutions of higher education in your state offer any programming in prisons or for incarcerated or recently released individuals? Check all that apply.

- Yes, within state prison(s) for incarcerated individuals
 Yes, outside of state prison(s) for incarcerated individuals
 Yes, outside of state prison(s) for recently released individuals
 No

24. If yes, what type of institutions offer these opportunities?

- Non-profit public
 Non-profit private
 For-profit private

25. If you answered yes to question #24: What types of programs are offered?

26. If you answered yes to question #24: How many incarcerated individuals are currently enrolled in these programs?

27. How do students pay tuition for these programs?

28. How can your office support or scale these programs? Please describe.

APPENDIX D: SECOND CHANCE PELL PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS AS OF APRIL 2020

Alabama	Calhoun Community College	New York	Bard College	
	Ingram State Technical College		CUNY Hostos Community College	
Arkansas	Arkansas State University - Newport		CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice	
	Shorter College		Marymount Manhattan College	
California	California State University - Los Angeles		Mercy College	
	Chaffey Community College		North Country Community College	
	Cuesta College		Nyack College	
	Southwestern Community College District			
Connecticut	Asnuntuck Community College		Ohio	Ashland University
	Middlesex Community College		Oklahoma	Connors State College
	Quinebaug Valley Community College	Langston University		
	Three Rivers Community College	Tulsa Community College		
Florida	Florida Gateway College	Oregon	Chemeketa Community College	
Indiana	Holy Cross College	Pennsylvania	Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	
Iowa	Iowa Central Community College		Indiana University of Pennsylvania	
Maine	University of Maine - Augusta		Lehigh Carbon Community College	
Maryland	Anne Arundel Community College		Villanova University	
	Goucher College	South Carolina	Northeastern Technical College	
	University of Baltimore	Texas	Alvin Community College	
	Wor-Wic Community College		Cedar Valley College	
Massachusetts	Mount Wachusett Community College		Clarendon College	
Michigan	Delta College		Lamar State College - Port Arthur	
	Jackson College		Lee College	
	Mott Community College		Southwest Texas Junior College	
Minnesota	Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College		University of Houston - Clear Lake	
	Pine Technical and Community College		Wiley College	
	South Central College		Vermont	Bennington College
Nebraska	Metropolitan Community College	Virginia	Danville Community College	
New Jersey	Raritan Valley Community College		Rappahannock Community College	
	Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey	Washington	Centralia College	
			Seattle Central Community College	
		West Virginia	Tacoma Community College	
			Glenville State College	
		Wisconsin	Milwaukee Area Technical College	

Source: U.S. Department of Education. Schools Participating in Experimental Sites.
Retrieved from <https://experimentalsites.ed.gov/exp/pdf/ESIParticipants.pdf>

STATE HIGHER EDUCATION EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

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