



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Partnerships Between Community Colleges and Prisons

**Providing Workforce Education and Training to
Reduce Recidivism**

Partnerships Between Community Colleges and Prisons

Providing Workforce Education and Training to Reduce Recidivism

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
Office of Correctional Education

This report was produced under U.S. Department of Education Contract No. ED-04-CO-0072/0001 with the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation and its subcontractor, MPR Associates, Inc. Rita Foy Moss served as the Contracting Officer's Representative. The content of this report does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsements by the U.S. government. This publication also contains URLs for information created and maintained by private organizations. This information is provided for the reader's convenience. The U.S. Department of Education is not responsible for controlling or guaranteeing the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. Further, the inclusion of information or URL does not reflect the importance of the organization, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered.

U.S. Department of Education

Arne Duncan

Secretary

Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Dennis Berry

Acting Assistant Secretary

Division of Adult Education and Literacy

Cheryl Keenan

Director

March 2009

This report is in the public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, *Partnerships Between Community Colleges and Prisons: Providing Workforce Education and Training to Reduce Recidivism*, Washington, D.C., 2009.

To order copies of this report,

write to: ED Pubs, Education Publication Center, U.S. Department of Education, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398;

or **fax** your request to: 301-407-1244;

or **e-mail** your requests to: edpubs@inet.ed.gov;

or **call in** your request toll free: 1-877-433-7827 (1-877-4-ED-PUBS). Those who use a telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD) or a teletypewriter (TTY), should call 1-877-576-7734. If 877 service is not yet available in your area, call 1-800-872-5327 (1-800-USA-LEARN; TTY: 1-800-437-0833);

or **order online** at: <http://www.edpubs.ed.gov>.

This report is available on the Department's Web site at:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/resource/index.html>

On request, this publication is available in alternate formats, such as Braille, large print, or computer diskette. For more information, please contact the Department's Alternate Format Center at 202-260-0852 or 202-260-0818.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
List of Tables.....	iv
List of Abbreviations	v
Acknowledgments	vi
Introduction.....	1
A Leading Role for Community Colleges.....	3
The Education and Employment Gap.....	5
Components of Partnerships between Community Colleges and Prisons	7
Incentives for Partnerships.....	7
Cost-effectiveness	7
Location.....	8
Postsecondary accreditation.....	8
Willingness to partner	9
Partnership Management.....	10
Centralized model	10
Decentralized model.....	12
Intermediary model.....	14
Funding.....	14
Federal funding.....	16
State funding.....	17
Inmate funding	19
Instruction.....	19
Curriculum	20
Instructional format	21
Instructor training.....	22
Program Completion.....	23
Administrative approaches.....	23
Programmatic approaches	25
Building Public Support	26
Conclusion.....	29
Resources	31
References	33

TABLES

	PAGE
Table 1. Funding Sources for Correctional Education Services, by Level.....	15
Table 2. Windham School District, Texas: Available College Credit Vocational Programs, 2008	21
Table 3. Virginia Inmate Recidivism Rate and Decrease: Fiscal Years 2001 and 2002.....	27

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AEFLA</i>	<i>Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998</i>
CCCCO	California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office
CDCR	California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
CEA	Correctional Education Association
CVSP	Chuckawalla Valley State Prison (California)
DOC	Department of Correction
DRC	Department of Rehabilitation and Correction
FSEOG	Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant
FTE	full-time equivalent
IHEP	Institute for Higher Education Policy
ISP	Ironwood State Prison (California)
IYO	Incarcerated Youth Offender—Used in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education’s Grants to States for Workplace and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Youth Offenders
MATC	Milwaukee Area Technical Institute (Wisconsin)
OPEC	Ohio Penal Education Consortium
PVC	Palo Verde College
PY	program year
RPC	Reentry Policy Council
SBCTC	Washington’s State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
TLN	Transforming Lives Network
<i>WIA</i>	<i>Workforce Investment Act of 1998</i>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Department would like to thank the following state agency and college personnel who contributed to this publication:

Alabama

J. Douglas Chambers J.F. Ingram State Technical College
James Merk J.F. Ingram State Technical College

California

Dawn Davison California Institute for Women
Christine Flores Chaffey College
Cheryl Fong California Community College Chancellor’s Office
Sherrie Guerrero Chaffey College
Laura Hope Chaffey College
Vincent Rodriguez Coastline Community College

Indiana

Susan Lockwood Indiana Department of Correction
John Nally Indiana Department of Correction

Iowa

Nancy Kucera formerly of the Iowa Department of Corrections

New Mexico

Jeff Wilson New Mexico Corrections Department

North Carolina

Arthur Clark North Carolina Department of Corrections
Kenneth Phillips North Carolina Department of Corrections

Ohio

Richard Ebin Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

Texas

Bob EvansWindham School District
Samuel Hurley Trinity Valley Community College

Virginia

Gwynne Cunningham.....Virginia Department of Correctional Education

Washington

Steve Aos..... Washington State Institute for Public Policy
Kathy Goebel Washington State Board for Community
& Technical Colleges
Michael Paris..... Washington State Department of Corrections

Wisconsin

Cindy Borden Northstar Correctional Education Services
Rich BusalacchiMilwaukee Area Technical College
Penny Richardson Northstar Correctional Education Services

INTRODUCTION

“The greatest error would be to do nothing.”

—An Inmate

Most of the nearly 700,000 state prisoners released each year are ill equipped to meet the challenges of reentering society. More than two-thirds of released prisoners are arrested within three years of leaving prison, and almost half are reincarcerated because they are lacking marketable skills, are burdened by a criminal record that makes them ineligible to be hired in many occupations, and have few supports to make transitions to society. To make matters worse, these statistics do not account for federal inmates and those currently incarcerated in jails who also are caught in this cycle of catch-and-release.

These alarmingly high recidivism rates, and the associated rising budgetary and safety costs, have caught the attention of policymakers. National public policy organizations, such as the Council of State Governments and the National Governors Association, have launched initiatives to help states develop, coordinate, and promote state and local strategies for addressing the challenges of reentry to society. The federal government, as part of the president’s Prisoner Reentry Initiative, has provided more than \$100 million to communities to develop programming and training strategies to improve employment and other post-release outcomes of ex-offenders. The president’s Prisoner Reentry Initiative was reauthorized and its programs expanded by the *Second Chance Act of 2007*. Inmate access to postsecondary education opportunities

“You’re taking people who are using tax dollars, and you’re converting them to people who are paying tax dollars. Criminal justice policy is economic policy.”

*—John Nally, Director of Education,
Indiana Department of Correction*

also was recently increased by the *Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008*. Through these and other initiatives, a growing number of states are working diligently to identify effective methods, including correctional education, to better prepare inmates for rejoining society.

Correctional education programs are intended to break the cycle of catch-and-release by providing inmates with more opportunities to develop the skills required to succeed in their workplaces and communities. These programs range from adult basic education and secondary instruction that enable high school dropouts to earn: (1) high school credentials; (2) career and technical education credentials to equip inmates with the occupational skills needed to find and maintain employment; and (3) postsecondary education credentials to provide inmates with the necessary skills to keep pace with today’s changing labor market. Other programs are designed to provide special instruction for inmates with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

A LEADING ROLE FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Since community colleges are committed to open access admission, they are natural partners for prisons needing support in providing correctional education. In some states, community colleges are contracted to provide the full range of correctional education programs. In other states, they provide only postsecondary vocational and academic programs, including noncredit certificate-bearing courses. In fact, a 50-state analysis of postsecondary correctional education policy conducted by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) in 2005 found that 68 percent of all postsecondary correctional education is provided by community colleges. The study also found that while less than 5 percent of prisoners are enrolled in postsecondary education, the number of enrollees has returned to the levels reported before the 1994 elimination of Pell grant eligibility for state and federal prisoners (see sidebar, “Elimination of Federal Correctional Education Funding”). Moreover, given today’s larger prison population, the actual number of inmates enrolled during program year (PY) 2003–04 was significantly higher than in the years leading up to 1994 (Erisman and Contardo 2005).

Elimination of Federal Correctional Education Funding

Several federal grant programs supporting components of correctional education were eliminated during the get-tough-on-crime movement in the 1990s, including the Pell grant program, a need-based grant program available to low-income postsecondary students. State and federal prisoners, who accounted for less than one-tenth of 1 percent of total grant awards, were made ineligible for these grants when the U.S. Congress passed the *Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act* in 1994. Eligibility was not eliminated for inmates incarcerated in local institutions (e.g., jails and treatment facilities), but their length of stay may not be long enough for them to benefit from the grant. Subsequent changes to the law also have prohibited anyone with a prior conviction for certain drug offenses from receiving Pell grants. Changes to the *Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998* and the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998* also restricted state spending on correctional education (LoBuglio 2001).

The IHEP findings were the basis for this review of partnerships between community colleges and prisons. The review seeks to: increase the visibility of partnerships between community colleges and prisons, encourage their replication in other communities, and illustrate how these partnerships can be a win-win for all involved—community colleges, prisons, inmates, and the public. Providing correctional education to inmates gives community colleges the opportunity to increase their student enrollment and revenue and fulfill their mission to make education available to all local residents. By collaborating with community colleges, prisons can strengthen and expand their educational services to prepare inmates more effectively for their transitions to life beyond prison. Inmates prepared to reenter society are less likely to recidivate, which, in turn, improves public safety and saves taxpayer dollars (Chappell 2004).

Interviews were conducted to learn more about partnerships between prisons and community colleges.* Representatives for the interviews were selected in 11 states—Alabama, California, Indiana, Iowa, North Carolina, New Mexico, Ohio, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin—based on recommendations from researchers and practitioners in the field. This review highlights these states’ experiences and attempts to answer the below questions.

- What education and employment needs of inmates can be addressed by these partnerships?
- How are these partnerships formed, coordinated, and funded?
- How do these partnerships benefit inmates, prisons, community colleges, and the public?
- What challenges do these partnerships face and how are those challenges being addressed?
- What resources and tools are available to community colleges and prisons that want to form or strengthen a partnership?

* Unless otherwise noted, information included in this review comes from interviews with state agency and college personnel whose names and affiliations are provided under acknowledgments on pages vi and vii of this document.

THE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT GAP

Much attention has been focused on the achievement gap in U.S. schools and its effects on employment and income. Little attention, however, has been focused on the even larger education gap between inmates and the general population. Approximately 40 percent of inmates in state and federal prisons and jails do not have a high school credential, compared to 18 percent of the general population. Even fewer inmates have completed college course work. While more than one-half of the general population has some college education, less than one-fourth of all state and federal inmates have any postsecondary education (Harlow 2003). Not surprisingly, many of these inmates were unemployed or underemployed before being incarcerated.

This lack of education credentials and workforce skills among inmates are significant factors to consider because 95 percent of the more than 2.3 million inmates incarcerated in the United States will eventually be released (Hughes and Wilson n.d.).

These low-skilled ex-offenders will face a labor market that increasingly requires postsecondary education degrees or certificates. Moreover, research demonstrates that incarceration can undermine a person's ability

Utmost attention should be given to increasing employability after release. It's the closest thing to a magic bullet against recidivism, not just because of providing a legal income. It changes a prisoner's entire psyche and outlook. It's the linchpin to offering perceived control of one's life and restored respect from one's loved ones.

—**An Inmate**

to find and maintain a living-wage job (Bushway 1998). Lacking the skills necessary to function successfully in society and on the job, many ex-offenders return to their criminal behavior.

Inmates, upon release from prison, want to obtain employment and, if they do, they are less likely to recidivate. In fact, according to one study, 26 percent of ex-offenders said they wished they had received job training while incarcerated (Visher, LaVigne, and Travis 2004). Another study found that inmates were more likely to participate in programs if they believed their participation could help secure employment after release. That same study found that inmates enrolled in programs while incarcerated had a better chance of maintaining employment and earning slightly higher wages than nonparticipants (Stana 1993).

COMPONENTS OF PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND PRISONS

Partnerships between prisons and community colleges are attempting to narrow the education and employment gap and thereby reduce recidivism by developing innovative ways to leverage federal, state, and local funding, provide instruction and support services, encourage course completion, and address negative public perceptions of correctional education. How these partnerships design, implement, and support their collaboration and services, however, varies from state to state. These variations, described below, are significant because they can affect the strength and success of the partnerships and may help or hinder inmates in using or continuing their education upon release.

Incentives for Partnerships

Prisons report collaborating with community colleges for education services because of their low cost, convenient locations throughout the state, status as an accredited postsecondary institution, and willingness to partner.

Cost-effectiveness

Community college fees are more affordable for prisons because: (1) tuition costs and fees at community colleges average \$2,272 annually, which is less than half of the annual cost at public four-year institutions (\$5,836) (American Association of Community Colleges n.d.) and (2) federal funding for correctional education has not kept pace with the growing prison population (see sidebar, “Government Expenditures for Correctional Education”). Differences in costs among community colleges also can be significant enough to make prisons choose one college over another. For example, the Windham School District (Windham), an education system providing academic and vocational education to inmates incarcerated within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, decided not to renew a contract with a particular community college because its courses, while of sufficient quality, were more expensive than a neighboring community college in another service area. Windham was able to work with both community colleges to receive permission to contract with

Government Expenditures for Correctional Education

Government expenditures for correctional facilities have skyrocketed over the last two decades. Since 1982, combined federal, state, and local government expenditures for corrections have nearly doubled, climbing from \$27.7 billion in 1990 to \$53.9 billion in 1999 (Gifford 2002). The most recent data on state investment in inmate programs come from a U.S. Department of Justice study of state prison expenditures, which found that national spending for inmate programs amounted to \$1.2 billion in 1996. This sum, which includes spending for educational and noneducational programs, equaled roughly 6 percent of total annual statewide operating expenditures (Stephan 1999).

the least expensive college, even though the prison receiving services was not technically in that community college's service area.

Tuition cost is also a factor for inmates paying for part or all of their education expenses. Inmates today have little or no access to student aid programs to help pay tuition since the removal of Pell grant eligibility and subsequent elimination of many state financial aid resources for inmates. They also generally do not have the personal funds or earn sufficient wages (typically less than \$1 per hour) through prison work to pay for their education. Moreover, these wages often must first pay for other such expenses as room and board, medical services, phone service, food, and supplies.

Location

Prisons also select community colleges as partners because of their convenient locations. Since most prisons require education services to be offered on-site, the location of the education provider is an important consideration. However, location is not a factor for states that use distance education, such as New Mexico, or use colleges like Coastline Community College in California and Milwaukee Area Technical College in Wisconsin.

In Ohio, for example, the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction connects prisons with the community college or university in the same education region, as designated by the state higher education board. Only when a college or university is unable to participate, because they lack sufficient instructors or do not wish to partner for other reasons, does the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction pair prisons with postsecondary institutions in another region.

The same approach is used in Virginia, where community colleges are responsible for serving students that reside in their service regions as established by the state. In only one case has the Department of Correctional Education contracted with a community college outside of a prison's service region because another community college was actually physically closer to that prison. The closer college was better able to recruit faculty to provide instruction to inmates on-site at the prison. Proximity also enables college advisors to meet with students throughout the year, administer academic placement assessments, conduct registration and orientation, and provide other support services. In addition, some college partners have helped the Department of Correctional Education stretch grant dollars by driving textbooks from one prison to another to be reused rather than forcing the prisons to purchase new books.

Postsecondary accreditation

State correctional education agencies wanting to qualify for the approximately \$22 million in federal funds allocated to the U.S. Department of Education's Grants to

States for Workplace and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Youth Offenders (commonly called the Incarcerated Youth Offender (IYO) grants or Specter grants) must ensure that postsecondary education services funded by the grant are provided by an accredited public or private education institution.* Authorized by the *Higher Education Act of 1994*, this formula grant to state correctional education agencies supports functional literacy, life skills, and job skills instruction through postsecondary academic and vocational education services for incarcerated youths aged 25 or younger (see federal funding on p. 16).

Willingness to partner

Regardless of cost, location, or the need to partner with an accredited postsecondary institution, the community college must be willing to collaborate with the prison or prison system. Colleges often cite their mission—providing open access to postsecondary education—as the reason they are interested in providing services to inmates.

In at least one case, a college’s sole mission is to provide education services to inmates. J.F. Ingram State Technical College, an accredited, state-supported technical college, was created by the Alabama legislature in 1965 to offer “accessible, responsive, and quality postsecondary career and technical education to incarcerated adults and eligible parolees under the charge of the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles, helping inmates to successfully return to their families and communities,” according to the school’s Web site. The school initially opened as a technical institute on the grounds of a correctional facility. It later became a technical college and briefly was accredited as a community college. Today, Ingram has three campuses closely linked to adjacent or nearby prisons and offers various programs inside other correctional facilities. Although several postsecondary institutions in the state work with neighboring correctional facilities, Ingram is the only technical college in the state dedicated to serving inmates.

Colleges serving the general population also see enrolling inmates as part of their mission. Trinity Valley Community College in Texas, for example, began working with Windham School District to educate inmates housed in nearby prisons, because its mission is to serve all potential students in the district, including the incarcerated. While the original and core incentive to partner remains unchanged, the college’s relationship with Windham also has been beneficial because its program has grown from approximately 20 inmates in 1969 to nearly 900 inmates annually today.

* State correctional education agencies refer to the administrative agencies in states that are responsible for overseeing education in state prisons.

The institutional benefits to collaborating with prisons are a driving force for many community colleges, particularly rural and small community colleges that need the student population and the accompanying funding based on student enrollment numbers. According to Richard Ebin, the postsecondary education coordinator at the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, “The reason for most state colleges and universities to partner in the beginning was, and to some extent still is, financial. They needed the student population, particularly a student population that didn’t require new buildings or the hiring of full-time professors. Ohio still has some colleges like this, but we also have some colleges and private universities as partners who see providing college education to inmates as a part of their mission and a form of community service.”

Partnership Management

The management structure of the partnerships between prisons and community colleges varies among states. Some are governed by a state body composed of representatives from the community college and correction systems. Others are more decentralized, with the prison or state correction system coordinating with the colleges individually. The management approach in each state primarily depends on the structure of the community college system. If the community college system is decentralized, then management of the partnership will most likely be decentralized. Other factors that determine partnership management include: (1) the emphasis the department of correction (DOC) and state policymakers place on correctional education and (2) the assignment of responsibilities in the memorandum of agreement between the prisons and colleges. Moreover, in states where the DOC is not the agency responsible for correctional education, an additional layer of oversight is created that requires navigation for the partnership to succeed.

Centralized model

In North Carolina, a partnership between the DOC and the community college system was first formalized in 1987, when a legislative act mandated the formation of an interagency agreement between the two entities to provide special education, adult basic education, career and technical education, and postsecondary vocational and academic education to inmates. This agreement dictates partnership management, course offerings, inmate eligibility, and participation restrictions, and other requirements. Any changes to the interagency agreement must be approved by the State Board of Community Colleges (State Board), which was assigned oversight of the agreement in 1993 by the state legislature. The State Board also is required to verify that courses and programs offered to inmates are equal in quality and content to those available to the non-incarcerated population. Before courses and programs are

submitted to the State Board for approval, though, the DOC and the community college system work collaboratively to ensure they:

- Will lead to realistic job opportunities for inmates by taking into account occupational licensing requirements, safety issues, and statewide labor market demands;
- Can be offered, given available funds, instructors, and space;
- Can be successfully completed during the average length of stay of inmates at a facility; and
- Are recognized by state colleges and universities to facilitate the transfer of credits, certificates, and degrees.

In addition to collaborating on course and program offerings, representatives from the DOC and the community college system are members of an interagency committee that meets twice a year to review progress reports and initiatives, discuss issues affecting the two agencies, and develop action plans. Sharing leadership responsibilities, the community college system's vice president for academic and student services and the deputy secretary of the DOC alternatively chair these meetings.

Ohio also formed an interagency group in 1979 that oversees the partnership between the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) and the community college and university systems. The Ohio Penal Education Consortium (OPEC), composed of senior DOC officials and participating college and university postsecondary correctional education coordinators, meets monthly to discuss any changes in policies, procedures, and legislation that may affect the partnership and the education services offered to inmates. The meetings also allow the college coordinators to share revisions in course offerings and describe issues related to prisons or inmates, which DRC then attempts to resolve. According to DRC's postsecondary education program coordinator, a prompt response to the community colleges' issues helps strengthen the partnership by building trust and buy-in among its members.

As a unified group, OPEC members and the superintendent of the Ohio Central School System were able to stave off several attempts by the legislature to reduce or eliminate college programming in Ohio's prisons. While the legislature recognized the importance of rehabilitation, it required assurance from DRC that the college programs offered to inmates were preparing them for employment after release. The DRC, therefore, changed the name of its program to "advanced job training" and, with the support of OPEC, changed the focus from a traditional liberal arts program to one that emphasized jobs and job placement.

In Washington, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and the DOC have been working diligently in recent years to strengthen their partnership. Before the partnership was formalized in the early 2000s, the DOC contracted separately with each college providing education services to its prisons, which created articulation, data collection, and management issues. The partnership resulted in positive changes including: (1) assigning the correctional education administrator at SBCTC to work with the DOC to oversee the partnership; (2) streamlining management oversight; (3) strengthening communication between the agencies; (4) addressing articulation and data collection issues; and (5) providing colleges with information, resources, and direction.

Decentralized model

In such states as California, Indiana, Texas, and Virginia, prisons collaborate with community colleges, and in some cases with state universities and private liberal arts colleges, on an institution-by-institution basis. For example, Windham School District in Texas has separate contracts with 14 community colleges and three universities to provide postsecondary education services to its inmates. These contracts are renewed annually, and each contract designates a liaison at the postsecondary institution. The authority given to a liaison, however, varies greatly from institution to institution. This can simplify or complicate management for Windham, depending on the administrative rank of the liaisons and their authority to make important decisions and address issues that arise. The Texas Board of Criminal Justice, however, has oversight responsibilities for the policies and activities of Windham and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, which ensure central coordination of operations between the education and corrections components of the state criminal justice system.

In California, postsecondary correctional education services are established and coordinated at the local level, although, at the state level, both the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation expressed support (e.g., through press releases and other public communications) for the partnerships formed between individual prisons and community colleges. In fact, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation contracted with Coastline Community College—which provides distance education to more than 3,000 inmates in approximately 57 California correctional institutions—to pilot-test an orientation and training for the correctional education and administrative staff to improve the coordination of college services for inmates and determine the adjustments needed by both institutions (see instructor training on p. 22).

Besides making inmates eligible for its fee waiver, the California Community Colleges System Board of Governors held a study session in May 2007 to learn more about the correctional education programs offered by the colleges. Impressed with what they learned, board members requested the development of more policies to encourage and strengthen these partnerships. Since then, the Board of Governors also has supported state legislation to increase funding to community colleges providing services to inmates (see funding on p. 14). Also, the college chancellor's office and staff who are collaborating with prisons already have been working with other state community colleges interested in forming partnerships with neighboring correctional facilities. At least three additional colleges are expected to begin providing instructional programs to inmates in the next year. The chancellor's office also promotes the successes achieved by its community colleges working with prisons. For example, a June 2007 press release reported:

The largest number of inmates in the United States ever to earn higher education degrees at one time graduated [from Palo Verde College] today at Ironwood State Prison and Chuckawalla Valley State Prison. This historic achievement is the result of a unique partnership between Palo Verde College (PVC) in Blythe, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) (California Community Colleges System Office 2007).

In general, however, the more decentralized the partnership is between prisons and community colleges, the more likely that course work may not articulate from one college to the next or be recognized by business and industry. Several states, for example, reported for the purposes of this study that the vocational programs offered by community colleges to inmates currently do not articulate with the same programs offered to non-incarcerated students. Moreover, since most correctional education services must be offered on-site rather than through distance education, the absence of a statewide articulation agreement can create transfer issues for inmates. Inmates often are transferred from one facility to another for security and prerelease reasons and therefore may be unable to continue the course or program in which they were previously enrolled. A similar transfer issue can develop when inmates are released from prison because their hometown is generally not the same town where they were incarcerated and enrolled in college courses.

Intermediary model

In at least one state, an intermediary is involved with the partnership between the prisons and community college. Prisons in Wisconsin obtain postsecondary education services for their incarcerated youth offender population through the DOC's partnership with the Correctional Education Association (CEA) and the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC). MATC provides telecourses through the satellite services of CEA's Transforming Lives Network (TLN), a distance-learning project offering corrections-specific offender education and staff development to correctional facilities across the country. MATC was approached first in 2006 to provide services to five pilot sites in Wisconsin, and it now offers courses, called College of the Air (see sidebar, "Milwaukee Area Technical College's (MATC) College of the Air"), in prisons throughout Wisconsin, Virginia, Tennessee, Minnesota, Maine, Louisiana, Hawaii, and Alaska.

Milwaukee Area Technical College's (MATC) College of the Air

Developed by MATC, College of the Air provides postsecondary education services to inmates by broadcasting instructional courses to subscribing prisons through the satellite feed of the Correctional Education Association's Transforming Lives Network. Inmates enrolled at MATC watch these broadcasts each week and work with assigned textbooks, workbooks, and CD-ROMs. Inmates correspond with instructors through site coordinators, who phone, e-mail, mail, or fax students' assignments and tests. The coordinator also monitors inmates' attendance and proctors their tests. Inmates who complete their course work receive a transcript that MATC keeps and can transfer their credits to colleges and universities throughout the nation. All courses are at the 200-level and above to facilitate transferability to other postsecondary institutions. College of the Air is also available to corrections staff and is economically competitive with other college programs. This, in turn, helps build buy-in for the postsecondary education program among the corrections staff.

Funding

Depending on the type of correctional education services—adult basic and secondary education, career and technical, and postsecondary education—provided, costs to the community college are generally covered by a combination of the funding sources specified in table 1 on p. 15.

Table 1. Funding Sources for Correctional Education Services, by Level

Federal Funding	State Funding	Inmate Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998</i> • <i>Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006</i> • U.S. Department of Education Grants to States for Workplace and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Youth Offenders Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State corrections appropriations • College head-count dollars^a • State financial aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inmate self-pay^b • Student loan reimbursement • Inmate welfare funds • Private scholarships

^a College head-count dollars refer to the amount of funding allocated per student enrolled in and attending classes at a public college or university. Many states also refer to this as full-time equivalent (FTE), which means the number of students attending full-time per full academic year. FTE also generally correlates with the amount of instructional effort required per student.

^b Inmate self-pay refers to when an inmate is responsible, either personally or through a guarantor (usually a family member), for a portion or the full cost of the correctional education services received.

The availability of these funds affects the stability of the correctional education programs (particularly postsecondary education), the resources offered to inmates, and the willingness of community colleges to provide services. According to the IHEP study, state financial support is vital to ensuring widespread inmate access to postsecondary education. The IHEP 2005 survey reported that 92 percent of inmates earning a degree or certificate in the 2003–04 program year were incarcerated in prison systems with large inmate populations, a greater emphasis on short-term vocational degree and certificate programs, and a large and dependable state funding source. Moreover, depending on the types of funds states used to support their postsecondary education services when most prisoners became ineligible for Pell grants and other economic measures were passed at the federal and state government levels, the number of inmates enrolled in these programs either drastically dropped off or remained relatively the same. In New York, for example, the number of postsecondary programs plummeted from nearly 70 to 4 (Erisman and Contardo 2005). The same decline was true in California, Iowa, Virginia, and Washington. Enrollments in such states as Indiana, North Carolina, and Texas, however, were virtually unaffected by the elimination of Pell grant opportunities for prison populations, since their postsecondary programs were supported by diversified state funding bases.

An overview of the various federal (other than Pell grants), state, and local funding sources that support correctional education is provided in the following sections.

Federal funding

The federal government has provided financial support to state correctional education programs since the mid-1960s. For states like Washington and Iowa that contract with community colleges to provide adult basic and secondary education and English literacy services to incarcerated adults age 16 or older, the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998 (AEFLA)*, Title II of the *Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA)*, is a source of some funding for their correctional education programs. Before the 1998 legislation, states were required to spend no less than 10 percent of their state grant funds on educational programming in state institutions, including mental health institutions, jails, and prisons. Today, however, the law requires that they spend no more than 10 percent of their grant funds. As a result, while some states may allocate 10 percent of state grant funds to correctional education in prisons, others may allocate a much lower percentage. In the case of Washington, however, most of the funding before 1998 was allocated to jails and mental health institutions. Today, the correctional education program in its prisons only receives approximately 0.4 percent of the state *AEFLA* dollars.

The same funding restriction occurred with the reauthorization of the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006*, Title III of *WIA*, which provides funding to states for vocational training programs offered by secondary and postsecondary institutions. Before 1998, states were required to spend at least 1 percent of their federal funds on vocational and technical education programs in state institutions, including correctional institutions. The 1998 legislation, however, specifies that no more than 1 percent of the federal allocation can be spent on such programs. The result has been that some states distribute much less than 1 percent of their federal vocational and technical funding to prison programs.

The only dedicated federal funding source for postsecondary correctional education is the federal Incarcerated Youth Offender (IYO) grant. The IYO grant covers the costs of postsecondary academic and vocational education for youth offenders and employment counseling and related services. IYO grant recently was modified by the *Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008* to increase the age limit for services from 25 to 35 and the annual spending cap from \$1,500 to \$3,000 per inmate. These changes are designed to help provide students with the time and money needed to complete their certificate or degree before “aging out” of the program and open the program to a larger portion of the inmate population.

Other potential, but limited, financial support for postsecondary correctional education includes the Pell grant, the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), the Federal Work-Study Program, and federal veterans benefits. The Pell grant is only available to inmates incarcerated in such local institutions as

jails or treatment centers (not federal or state prisons), but their length of stay is generally not long enough to make use of the grant provisions. The FSEOG provides student loans ranging from \$100 to \$4,000 per year for low-income undergraduate students. While inmates are eligible for these loans, priority is given to Pell grant recipients, and most inmates are ineligible for Pell grants. The Federal Work-Study Program grants to postsecondary institutions are for the purpose of providing part-time employment to low-income undergraduate and graduate students. For inmates to be eligible for this program, they must be enrolled in a participating postsecondary institution and have the opportunity and ability to be hired by a qualifying employer. Incarcerated veterans who have been honorably discharged also may be eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill or the Veterans Educational Assistance Program, either of which cover the costs of tuition, fees, and books.

State funding

When correctional education is provided by community colleges, it is typically supported through a line item under the state corrections budget, or student head-count funds provided to participating community colleges, or state financial aid, or a combination of these variables. At least one college, Ingram State Technical College in Alabama, receives funding through a line item under the state's Department of Postsecondary Education (in addition to other federal and state funding sources) to provide correctional education services to inmates.

The largest correctional education programs supported by prisons are found in states that have successfully combined various funding sources. The correctional education director in one state, however, reported being accused by policymakers of "double-dipping" because the DOC was providing money to the college for the postsecondary education program, while the college also was reimbursed by the state for the head counts of enrolled inmates. Most states recognize, though, that the two funding streams cover different costs associated with the education services. Colleges are more reluctant to provide the services in states where they are unable to collect money for contact hours since they will not be fully reimbursed for their expenses.

North Carolina has been able to provide colleges with head-count funds for enrolled inmates. It also has secured start-up funding for programs provided through the DOC's appropriations, tuition waivers, and inmate welfare funds (see inmate funding on p. 19) to cover the costs of its correctional education programs. While North Carolina does not appropriate funds specifically for prisoner education, colleges that enroll inmates receive the same student head-count dollars as those allocated for non-incarcerated students. Because community colleges receive their head-count funds the year after services are provided, the legislature agreed to give the DOC funding to pass through to community colleges to cover their start-up costs in the first year of

new programs. As a result of these start-up funds and the head-count funds, the community college system can afford to waive the tuition for inmates who do not qualify for IYO grants.

California also offers inmates who meet residency and income requirements the Board of Governors Fee Waiver, a state financial aid program that waives community college enrollment fees. Qualifying inmates must still pay for textbooks and supplies. However, according to Coastline Community College, the primary distance education provider in the state, most prisons use a textbook-sharing model developed by Palo Verde College and Ironwood State Prison, where inmates are encouraged to share and reuse books voluntarily to reduce the expense incurred by inmates. At least three California community colleges (Palo Verde College, Chaffey College, and Lassen Community College) also use funding from the state's Extended Opportunity Program and Services, which targets educationally and financially disadvantaged students, to provide eligible inmates with face-to-face college counseling services, an orientation program, education planning, and academic progress monitoring. This state program also covers the cost of textbooks.

Proposed legislation (Senate Bill 413, 2007–08 Regular Session) in California would have permitted community colleges to receive state funding for credit and noncredit courses offered on-site at correctional facilities, including state prisons. Currently, colleges only receive the lower noncredit rate for credit and noncredit classes offered to inmates. Senate Bill 413 also would have permitted community colleges to teach on-site at state prisons since they currently are only allowed to provide instruction to inmates at city and county jails, road camps, farms for adults, and federal prisons.

Washington, like many states, reduced postsecondary education programs during the 1990s get-tough-on-crime movement. A downturn in the state's economy also resulted in less support for these programs. Today, however, state funds for one-year postsecondary vocational certificate programs have significantly increased. Youth offenders receive additional postsecondary education services through the federal IYO grant, which is allocated directly to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). State-appropriated funds for postsecondary vocational programs, however, first go to the DOC, which contracts with the SBCTC for services. The SBCTC then contracts with each of the nine participating colleges. Funding is distributed to these colleges using a formula developed collaboratively each year by SBCTC and the college presidents. The formula takes into account program costs, program needs of the correctional facility, and faculty contracts.

Inmate funding

State funding in Texas pays for tuition, fees, tests, and textbooks associated with inmates' vocational training and one academic postsecondary education course per semester. The cost of additional courses must be paid directly to the college by the inmate at registration. That is, inmates either must (1) repay the costs of tuition, fees, and tests (referred to as state reimbursable costs) after they are released from prison by developing a payment plan with their parole officer or (2) pay these costs immediately, using personal funds, scholarships, or grants. Some inmates also are eligible for at least two financial aid programs in Texas: the *Hazelwood Act* grants (commonly called the Hazelwood Exemption), which provide financial assistance to Texas veterans, and the Texas Public Education Grants, a needs-based grant program for undergraduate students in Texas. In addition, some postsecondary education scholarships for inmates have been established at some of the state's colleges and universities. Inmates qualifying for the federal IYO grant, the two state financial aid programs, scholarships, or who can pay immediately for tuition using personal finances can enroll in postsecondary education programs without incurring state reimbursable costs. According to the director of continuing education with the Windham School District, of those inmates incurring state reimbursable costs, the 4,488 had paid these costs in full as of March 2008.

Inmates in Virginia are also responsible for paying their college tuition (currently \$263 for a three-credit class), textbooks, and supplies if they are ineligible for the IYO grant. Several local foundations, however, have established funds that provide scholarships to help cover these costs. These foundations include the Kates Foundation, which was created by Elizabeth Kates, Virginia's first female warden, to pay for the tuition of approximately 10–15 incarcerated women each year. Inmates also can access funding through the Charles Coe Scholarship, established by a doctor who was incarcerated as a youth and strongly believed education was critical to his future success. Inmates who are veterans also can receive state veteran education benefits. The 10–15 inmates that qualify each semester for this benefit program must be able to pay upfront for the courses using their personal funds and then request reimbursement after successfully completing the course work (Contardo and Tolbert 2008).

Instruction

Partnerships between prisons and community colleges also are shaped by the curriculum, instructional format, and instructor-training requirements of the state. Across all states, adult education and literacy instruction are the largest education programs offered to inmates. Noncredit vocational programs are also very common. As noted by the IHEP study, however, more inmates are gaining access to postsecondary education vocational and academic programs. These services are typically offered on-site,

although nearly half of the IHEP survey respondents reported using video or satellite instruction (e.g., College of the Air: sidebar 3) for some of their classes. The on-site format is also the most common way to deliver adult education and literacy services and noncredit vocational programs, generally offered by correctional education staff rather than an outside provider. Whether a prison's correctional education program is supported by in-house staff or staff from an outside provider, such as a community college, or a combination of the two, instructors typically are required to receive correctional training before they begin working with inmates.

Curriculum

In North Carolina, the community colleges provide more than 90 percent of the correctional education programming for inmates in the state. The adult education and literacy program has the largest enrollment. However, according to a program administrator, the postsecondary programming, which is predominantly vocational, awarded in 2006 more than 6,000 vocational noncredit certificates, 1,458 vocational for-credit certificates, and nearly 100 associate and bachelor's degrees to inmates in the state. North Carolina requires that colleges offer an entire for-credit certificate, diploma, or associate degree program, not just individual courses or groups of courses that do not allow inmates to complete credentials. The DOC and the community college system share responsibilities in planning and evaluating the correctional education program and ensuring that course work reflects changes in education technology, demands of the workplace, and characteristics of the inmate population.

Like North Carolina, the majority of credentials awarded to inmates in Texas in PY 2006–07 were college vocational credit certificates (1,689) and college noncredit certificates (1,464). Only 455 associate degrees and 31 bachelor's degrees were awarded. The vocational credit certificates include 24 different occupations and were available in 31 facilities in PY 2006–07 (see table 2 on p. 21). The noncredit vocational programs were available in 13 facilities. Classes leading to the associate degree were available in 37 facilities, and only four facilities offered programs leading to a bachelor's degree (Windham School District 2007). However, eligible offenders assigned to a facility without a college program may apply to be transferred to a facility offering the program of their choice.

Table 2. Windham School District, Texas: Available College Credit Vocational Programs, 2008

Air Conditioning/ Refrigeration	Computer Repair	Drafting	Retail Sales & Marketing
Auto Body Repair	Construction Carpentry	Electronics	Substance Abuse Counseling
Auto Mechanics	Culinary Arts	Graphic Arts	Counselor
Auto Transmissions	Data Processing	Horticulture	Truck Driving
Cabinet Making	Desktop Publishing	Masonry	Web Authoring
Computer Networking	Diesel Mechanics	Office Administration	Welding

Source: Windham School District. (2007). Windham School District annual progress report, 2006–07. Huntsville, TX: Author.

When selecting educational programs to offer, Texas considers the availability of facilities (e.g., it is advantageous for truck driving to be taught in correctional facilities with a transportation hub) and occupations in demand within the state. Labor market data are provided annually by the Texas Workforce Commission and organized by the state's 28 workforce investment areas. Analysis of these data pays specific attention to large cities, since most inmates return to those areas when released.

In contrast to Texas and North Carolina, New Mexico's postsecondary correctional education courses are predominantly academic. The most common program offered through its distance education program is the associate of arts in general studies. Because it is the core curriculum for a bachelor's university studies degree, it articulates with all New Mexico higher education institutions and, therefore, provides inmates with the credits needed to further their education upon release. New Mexico also has established internal standards for its programs: Instructors must be nationally certified or accredited; the program must result in a credential or prepare the inmate for national certification; and the resulting career must yield a \$9 per hour or better entry-level wage and be in demand in New Mexico's job market.

Instructional format

While on-site instruction is the most common format used by state correctional programs, a growing number of states are exploring distance education formats. States have been hesitant to use distance education for security reasons, but such states as New Mexico have created an approach that addresses those concerns. Using a WebCT engine, which is a closed-circuit Internet connection, New Mexico provides postsecondary education to all state prisons and one private prison through contracts with just three state postsecondary institutions—a four-year university, a two-year university, and a community college. Through distance education, eligible inmates can enroll in any of these three institutions to earn an associate, bachelor's, or mas-

ter's degree. While vocational programs are currently offered on-site by the New Mexico Department of Correction's Bureau of Education, the postsecondary education coordinator hopes to expand the courses available through distance learning and its partnerships with the postsecondary institutions.

Such states as Virginia also are exploring creative and flexible ways to offer instruction to their inmates. Virginia has arranged for colleges to offer intensive programs at two of its detention centers, similar to mini-semester programs offered by universities during semester breaks. This gives inmates, who otherwise would not have the time to be enrolled in such programs, the opportunity to complete a course or program before being released. Another Virginia community college offers "compacted" academic classes at some of the correctional facilities. Two compacted classes are provided during one semester that help to increase completion rates, since there is less chance an inmate will be transferred during the shorter time frame.

Similarly, Wisconsin's DOC worked with MATC to break down the postsecondary education programs offered to inmates into three smaller certificate programs. Although these certificates are not recognized by other postsecondary institutions or employers (the larger program, however, is recognized), the certificates provide students with intermediate credentials throughout the process and encourage course completion.

Instructor training

Most states require all correctional education instructors, regardless of who hires them, to participate in the DOC's preservice and periodic in-service corrections training programs. The amount of training required by different state prison systems ranges from a few hours to six weeks. States with an extensive training requirement find it a barrier to hiring and retaining instructors. Nevertheless, all states interviewed believe the training prepares instructors for the challenges of teaching inmates. These challenges include frequent lockdowns, strict routines that often conflict with the education culture, and little or no notice regarding inmate transfers to other correctional facilities. While instructors initially may be reluctant to teach inmates, they often report that inmates are easier to work with than non-incarcerated students because of the inmates' commitments to education and the controlled education setting. Even in New Mexico, where distance education is used, the postsecondary education coordinator has college instructors contacting him, eager to obtain clearance to meet their students in person and conduct classes on-site at the correctional facility.

Instructor training is also critical to the success of the correctional education program. In California, for example, Coastline Community College participated in a Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation pilot project to test an orientation

and training for the correctional education and administrative staff to improve coordination of college services to inmates. The training included an overview of the college enrollment processes, assessments, support services, and academic timelines. Correctional staff gave an overview of the prison environment and its challenges. Then staff from both agencies worked together to determine what adjustments needed to be made by each agency. Issues that were addressed included:

- How to provide textbooks to inmates, since prisons typically remove the covers of hardback books (the covers can conceal or be used as weapons);
- How to label textbooks to ensure they move through the prison mailrooms quickly;
- How to provide inmates with the various forms, such as course enrollment and credit transfer forms, they need; and
- How to address privacy issues when collecting and sharing student data.

Program Completion

Partnerships between prisons and community colleges must address the issue of low completion rates—one of the biggest challenges in correctional education programs—in order to succeed in improving post-release outcomes of inmates. These low completion rates are often the result of such environmental causes as inmate transfers to other facilities or work assignments that force or allow inmates to drop out of the program. Inmate motivation also can be a factor. To ensure inmates finish their course work, some states and partnerships have implemented some practical and creative administrative and programmatic approaches.

Administrative approaches

Several state correctional education programs, such as those in Virginia and Texas, have agreements with their DOCs to hold inmates enrolled in education classes until they complete their course work. Many states also provide good-time credits to inmates for successful program completion. Indiana, for example, cuts a half-year from the sentences of inmates completing a general equivalency diploma (GED), one year for those completing an associate degree, and two years for those completing a bachelor's degree. For inmates who have earned reduced sentences for good behavior, the good-time credits are applied to the reduced sentences rather than the original sentence. As a result, good-time credits lead to even shorter sentences in Indiana compared to other states that apply credits to the original sentence.

At least one state, North Carolina, has developed a course-offering matrix (see sidebar, “Course-Offering Matrix”) to determine which programs can be offered at its prisons, given the average length of stay of inmates at that facility. For example, if the average length of stay at a facility is 120 days, community colleges can offer only programs that can be completed within that time. North Carolina also has implemented several other management practices to ensure inmates complete their course work, including:

- Education, work, and other prison assignments are given equal priority. Therefore, inmates must complete their course or program before they can be reassigned.
- Comparable incentives, excluding wages, must be provided for all prison assignments.
- The appropriateness of an education program will be reassessed if the completion rates fall below 51 percent for two consecutive semesters.
- Multi-entry and multi-exit courses cannot be offered to inmates, except for basic skills courses.*

The North Carolina legislature also passed legislation in the mid-1990s requiring that student hours in prison education classes be counted on the basis of contact hours, not membership hours. This ensures that colleges are reimbursed only for the hours inmates attend class, rather than based on the enrollment indicated by a course roster. As a result of this policy, the community colleges are given an extra incentive to work closely with the DOC to ensure appropriate programs are offered to inmates and full attendance is maintained.

New Mexico, on the other hand, has created policies that place the burden of funding on inmates if they fail to complete the program. The state requires inmates to

Course-Offering Matrix

A Guide for North Carolina Community College System Programming in Department of Correction Facilities

Category 1 (2-month minimum length of stay)

Basic skills, employment readiness, and drug and alcohol treatment.

Category 2 (4-month minimum length of stay)

All programs in category 1 plus occupational extension courses and certificate programs.

Category 3 (12-month minimum length of stay)

All programs in category 2 plus diploma programs.

Category 4a (24-month minimum length of stay)

All programs in category 3 plus technical associate’s degree programs.

Category 4b (24-month minimum length of stay)

All programs in category 4a plus college transfer and academic associate degree programs.

Source: North Carolina Department of Correction, Education Services, Division of Prisons (2005)

* North Carolina Community College System defines multi-entry and multi-exit as the ability to enroll students continuously throughout the semester or contract with the prison.

sign a postsecondary education agreement, classroom rule contract, and a debit memo before they enroll in a postsecondary education program. If the inmate drops out before completing the program, these documents allow the Corrections Department to garnish the inmate's future wages for the cost of the program.

Programmatic approaches

Such states as Alabama, California, and Virginia supply inmates with academic advisers to provide education and career counseling, education-level diagnostic screenings, and information on how they can complete and make use of their program of study upon release. J.F. Ingram State Technical College in Alabama, for example, offers inmates the full range of support services found at any other technical or community college.

In Virginia, the Department of Labor and Industry sponsors an apprenticeship program at many of the state's correctional facilities to give inmates work experience corresponding with the vocational program in which they are enrolled. Also, through a partnership with Virginia Correctional Enterprises, the Department of Correctional Education has arranged for print school and optical lens technology graduates to be employed at Correctional Enterprises' printing and optical lens shops. Although these programs do not involve community college partners, they are an example of how inmates can be given the opportunity to put into practice the skills they learn in correctional education.

Similarly, North Carolina is developing a referral system that would allow inmates who graduate from certain education programs to be transferred to correctional facilities where those skills are needed. For example, inmates who graduate from a welding program at their prison may be transferred to another site that has a metal fabrication operation or a construction program. "The trick is to give inmates the opportunity to apply their skills; otherwise there's a degradation of those skills," according to Arthur Clark, an education specialist for the North Carolina Division of Prisons.

Many states also are considering or have implemented reentry policies that further prepare inmates for their release. One approach developed by Indiana includes a role for the state's only community college, Ivy Tech. In 2006, Indiana opened the Plainfield Re-entry Educational Facility with the sole purpose of addressing individual reentry barriers by providing inmates with education and vocational skills during their last 24 months of incarceration. Ivy Tech provides certificate programs in advanced manufacturing, while the DOC provides instructors for other programs, such as building trades and culinary arts. The reentry facility also attempts to address other such reentry barriers as an inmate's health, housing options, family issues, and substance abuse.

Building Public Support

For partnerships between prisons and community colleges to be successful, public support must be built and sustained. Otherwise, program funding and the services offered could be jeopardized if policymakers and the public do not understand the budgetary and public safety benefits of correctional education.

The state of Washington has used research effectively to educate policymakers about the usefulness of inmate intervention programs including correctional education. When news emerged that Washington would need to build two more prisons by 2020 and possibly a third by 2030, costing the state millions of dollars, the state legislature became concerned. The legislature asked the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, a research center created by the legislature, to identify evidence-based options for lowering the inmate population, thereby saving tax dollars and reducing crime rates. The institute developed a computer model for all inmate intervention programs to show what would happen to the state budget if (1) no interventions were employed, (2) interventions were at the same rate as in previous years, or (3) interventions received moderate or aggressive funding increases. The institute found that correctional education, including postsecondary education, would help to lower the prison population (Aos, Miller, and Drake 2006). These findings led the legislature in 2007 to provide the DOC with an additional \$2.9 million for vocational programs, \$2.1 million for basic skills, and \$117,000 for parenting courses. According to Kathy Goebel, the correctional education program administrator with the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the institute's computer model was the "Hercules that pushed the rock."

The Virginia Department of Correctional Education also commissioned a study of college programs offered as part of the state's IYO grant program. The study found that participants taking some college courses had significantly lower recidivism rates than nonparticipants (see table 3 on p. 27). Participants also had 13 percent greater average post-release quarterly earnings (\$2,639) than all ex-offenders released (\$2,329). The wage increase was even higher for inmates who earned an associate degree; their average quarterly earnings were \$5,727. Also, 11 percent of inmates enrolled in academic courses and 14.8 percent of inmates enrolled in vocational courses were more likely to enroll in Virginia colleges post-release (compared to 3.6 percent of all ex-offenders) (Lichtenberger and Onyewu 2005). These inmates also had higher grade point averages than non-incarcerated students enrolled in the same courses on campus.

Table 3. Virginia Inmate Recidivism Rate and Decrease: Fiscal Years 2001 and 2002

Fiscal Year	Recidivism Rate			Decrease in Recidivism	
	All Inmates	Academic Students	Vocational Students	Academic Students	Vocational Students
2001	29.3%	17.6%	24.2%	39.9%	17.4%
2002	25%	12.6%	11.1%	49.6%	55.6%

Source: Lichtenberger, E.J., & Onyewu, N. (2005). *Virginia Department of Correctional Education's Incarcerated Youth Offender Program: A historical analysis (No. 9)*. Richmond, VA: Department of Correctional Education.

The Department of Correctional Education presented the study findings to the Virginia Joint Subcommittee Studying the Commonwealth's program for Prisoner Reentry to Society, established by a Senate joint resolution in 2007. The subcommittee was directed to evaluate existing state correctional education programs and identify program needs and funding options. The work of the joint subcommittee continues, but it has issued a set of preliminary recommendations for legislative action that include allowing low-income inmates to apply for and receive state postsecondary education grants and providing funding for additional job training programs.

While North Carolina routinely collects and shares data on its correctional education program, the DOC and community college system recently organized an event to build their case in a more personal way. They held a "Lunch and Learn" at a meeting of the State Board of Community Colleges. Inmates enrolled in a culinary postsecondary education program provided lunch, and representatives from the DOC and the community college system gave a joint presentation on their partnership and the potential savings resulting from their education services.

CONCLUSION

Partnerships between prisons and community colleges can lead to significant benefits for all involved—community colleges, prisons, inmates, and the general public.

While the mission of community colleges may be the initial incentive for colleges to collaborate with prisons, the additional student population and revenue generated through correctional education further strengthens their commitment to the partnership. Prisons also benefit. They are able to meet the postsecondary education accrediting requirements of the federal Incarcerated Youth Offender grant as well as improve and expand the correctional education services available to other inmates. This will better prepare inmates to rejoin society and thereby lower recidivism rates, increase public safety, and save taxpayer dollars.

To provide correctional education services successfully to inmates, a partnership between prisons and community colleges must have in place an effective management structure, adequate funding, appropriate instruction, and practical and creative tactics for addressing such challenges as low completion rates and negative public perceptions of partnerships. The state representatives interviewed for this review also identified the following reasons for their success:

- Willingness to compromise;
- Good communication;
- Trust;
- Buy-in from top to bottom in each partner agency;
- Shared leadership; and
- A flexible framework to guide the partnership and services provided.

Prisons and colleges interested in forming a partnership or strengthening an existing partnership should consider the approaches developed and lessons learned by the states interviewed for this review. By doing so, the correctional education services they provide will help to decrease the number of inmates in the United States caught in the detrimental cycle of catch-and-release.

RESOURCES

Back to School: A Guide to Continuing Your Education after Prison

Prisoner Reentry Institute, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2007

This guide provides step-by-step instructions on preparing for and enrolling in education programs upon release from incarceration.

<http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/centersInstitutes/pri/BacktoSchool.pdf>

Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates

Steve Aos, Marna Miller, and Elizabeth Drake, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2006

This publication describes the findings from a computer model developed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to show the effects of evidence-based approaches to reducing crime on the Washington state budget. Correctional education, including postsecondary education, was found to help lower the prison population.

<http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=06-10-1201>

Learning to Reduce Recidivism: A 50-State Analysis of Postsecondary Correctional Education Policy

Wendy Erisman and Jeanne Bayer Contardo, Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2005

Based on a national survey of correctional education administrators, this report describes the status of postsecondary correctional education in state and federal prisons in the United States. It includes background information on the prison population and the benefits of postsecondary correctional education.

<http://www.inpathways.net/recidivism.pdf>

Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy

National Governors Association

The academy works with governors and state policymakers to develop and implement statewide prisoner reentry strategies that reduce recidivism rates by improving access to key services and supports. States include Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington.

<http://www.nga.org/center/reentry>

Reentry Web Site

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs

This is a Web site dedicated to the President's Reentry Initiative. The site contains links to information on state and federal reentry-related activities and resources, a list of agencies and organizations that offer training and technical assistance to providers, and publications on such topics as employment services, housing, and program descriptions and evaluations. Also provides background information on prisoner reentry and a calendar of events and conferences.

<http://www.reentry.gov>

Reentry Policy Council (RPC)

Justice Center, The Council of State Governments

Established in 2001, RPC helps states develop, coordinate, and promote state and local strategies for addressing the challenges of reentry. Projects include developing an online assessment tool to measure the risks and needs of inmates to inform state supervision, treatment, and program plans.

<http://reentrypolicy.org>

Transforming Lives Network (TLN)

Correctional Education Association (CEA)

A distance-learning project offering corrections-specific offender education and staff development to correctional facilities across the country.

<http://tln.ceanational.org/TLN/index.htm>

REFERENCES

- American Association of Community Colleges. (n.d.). Community college fast facts. Retrieved Feb. 22, 2008, from <http://www2.aacc.nche.edu/research/index.htm>.
- Aos, S., Miller, M., & Drake, E. (2006). *Evidence-based public policy options to reduce future prison construction, criminal justice costs, and crime rates*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.
- Bushway, S.D. (1998). "The impact of an arrest on the job stability of young white American men." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 35(4): 454–79.
- California Community Colleges System Office. (2007). "More than 100 inmate students graduate from Palo Verde College." Press Release. Retrieved March 17, 2008, from <http://www.cccco.edu/SystemOffice/News/PressReleases/InmateStudentsGraduate/tabid/1023/Default.aspx>.
- Chappell, C.A. (2004). "Post-secondary correctional education and recidivism: A meta-analysis of research conducted 1990–1999." *Journal of Correctional Education* 55(2): 148–69.
- Contardo, J.B., & Tolbert, M. (2008). *Prison postsecondary education: Bridging learning from incarceration to the community*. Presented at the Reentry Roundtable on Education cosponsored by the Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the Urban Institute. Retrieved March 17, 2008, from <http://www.urban.org/projects/reentry-roundtable/roundtable10.cfm>.
- Erisman, W., & Contardo, J.B. (2005). *Learning to reduce recidivism: A 50-state analysis of postsecondary correctional education policy*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.
- Gifford, S.L. (2002). *Justice expenditure and employment in the United States, 1999*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. NCJ 191746.
- Harlow, C.W. (2003). *Education and correctional populations*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Hughes, T. and Wilson, D.J. (n.d.). Reentry trends in the United States. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved Feb. 22, 2008, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/reentry/reentry.htm>.
- John F. Ingram State Technical College. (n.d.). "Mission." Retrieved March 17, 2008, from <http://www.ingram.cc.al.us>.

- Lichtenberger, E.J., & Onyewu, N. (2005). *Virginia Department of Correctional Education's Incarcerated Youth Offender Program: A historical report (No. 9)*. Richmond, VA: Department of Correctional Education.
- LoBuglio, S. (2001). "Time to reframe politics and practices in correctional education." In J. Comings, B. Garner, and C. Smith (Eds.). *Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy*, Vol. 2. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- North Carolina Department of Correction, Educational Services, Division of Prisons. (2005). *Educational Services annual report, calendar year 2004*. Raleigh, NC: Author.
- Stephan, J.J. (1999). *State prison expenditures, 1996*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. NCJ 172211.
- Stana, R. (1993). *Federal prisons: Inmate and staff views on education and work training programs*. Report to the Chairman, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, U.S. House of Representatives. Washington, DC: U.S. General Accounting Office.
- Visher, C., La Vigne, N., & Travis, J. (2004). *Returning home: Understanding the challenges of prisoner reentry (Maryland Pilot Study: Findings from Baltimore)*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Windham School District. (2007). *Windham School District annual performance report, 2006–2007*. Huntsville, TX: Author.



The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

www.ed.gov