

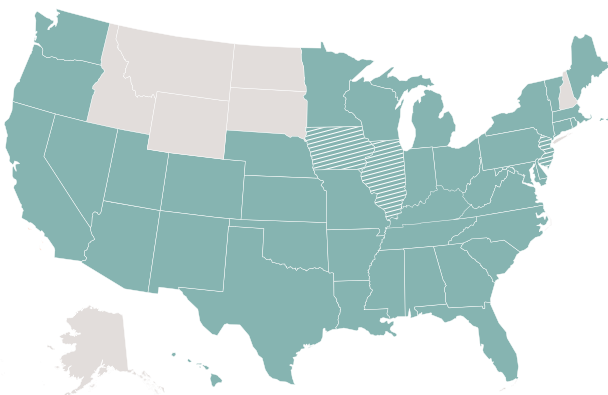


SUPPORTING SUCCESS: HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISON (HEP)

FEDERAL LEVEL

National Momentum Builds for Expanding Higher Education in Prison

- In 2020, the **Second Chance Pell (SCP)** program welcomed a second cohort of 67 institutions in 34 states and the District of Columbia. Created in 2015, the original pilot included 64 higher education institutions to serve incarcerated students using Pell Grant funds. As of April 2020, these SCP sites have awarded 2,071 college certificates, 2,017 associate degrees, and 365 bachelor's degrees.ⁱ
- As part of an omnibus spending bill signed into law in late December 2020, **Pell Grant eligibility was reinstated** for currently incarcerated students across the country, lifting the ban that had been in place since 1994.
- While justice-involved students remain ineligible for **more than half (54) of the largest 100** state grant aid programs, some states are re-examining their policies. In 2020, for example, New Jersey and California both passed legislation to remove these barriers to their state need-based aid programs.ⁱⁱ



■ Home to at least one confirmed or invited SCP site

■ SCP site included in HEP KPI research

By removing barriers for quality higher education in prison (HEP), federal policymakers can: improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities; disrupt inequities in postsecondary attainment, workforce participation, and incarceration; strengthen the federal economy, and create stronger civic engagement amongst our communities.

Though most correctional facilities are state-run, incarceration and postsecondary attainment are both national issues with key national solutions. To best support Higher Education in Prison, federal policymakers should:

- **Restore Pell Grant eligibility for incarcerated students.** Return access to federal student aid for incarcerated students to enhance the quantity and quality of higher education in prison.
- **Assess the impact of Second Chance Pell.** Examine the overall value and importance of the SCP pilot program for justice-involved students, correctional staff, colleges and universities, and the communities impacted by the justice system, by utilizing the KPI framework, described on the flip side of this page. This holistic framework will ensure that federal tax dollars like Pell are having a positive impact on today's students.
- **Expand funding opportunities for HEP programs.** Higher education in prison requires increased and stable funding for incarcerated students. Policymakers can use the KPI framework to inform how they distribute resources through funding models like public-private partnerships, pilot programs, and workforce development initiatives.

"By the early 1990s, it is estimated that 772 [higher education in prison] programs were operating. By 1997 [following the 1994 removal of Pell grant eligibility for currently incarcerated students], it is estimated that only eight college-in-prison programs existed in the United States."

- American Enterprise Institute (AEI)ⁱⁱⁱ

In September 2020, IHEP unveiled a first-of-its-kind set of metrics to measure the full impact of HEP. The **Higher Education Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Framework** offers a comprehensive set of KPIs to measure student success outcomes, academic quality, civic engagement, and soft skill development. The data collected will enable

meaningful evaluation of HEP success, promote the development and improvement of quality HEP, and support colleges and universities, corrections, and state and federal policymakers as they expand postsecondary opportunities for students in prison.

FOUR CATEGORIES OF DATA-BASED INSIGHTS TO INFORM CONVERSATIONS AROUND THE IMPACT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN PRISON



Retention, Completion, and Success

These KPIs measure progress and success of students involved in the justice system compared to their main-campus counterparts.



Academic Quality

Analyzing syllabi, faculty, and course grading and assignments, these KPIs ensure the same quality of coursework offered on main campuses is offered in correctional facilities.



Civic Engagement

These KPIs measure how college students engage with society during and after their college experience and the broader social effect of postsecondary education in correctional facilities.



Soft Skill Development

In addition to course curricula, employers call on colleges to develop students' soft skills. These KPIs account for how postsecondary education develops characteristics and skills, like empathy and time management, both inside and outside of correctional facilities, to prepare students for the workplace and community.

"Whether education gets you a better job, gets you more money, or does anything else for you, it will change who you are for the better."

Anonymous,
a student in the University of Iowa
Liberal Arts Beyond Bars program

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i. Delaney, R., & Montagnet, C. (2020). *Second chance Pell: A snapshot of the first three years*. Vera Institute of Justice. <https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/second-chance-pell-snapshot-first-three-years.pdf>

ii. Education Commission of the States. (2020). *50-State comparison: State financial aid barriers for students impacted by the justice system*. <https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-state-financial-aid-barriers-for-students-impacted-by-the-justice-system/>

iii. Robinson, G., & English, E. (2017, September). *The second chance Pell pilot program: A historical overview*. AEI. <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/The-Second-Chance-Pell-Pilot-Program.pdf>