



ILLINOIS HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISON TASK FORCE 2022 REPORT



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A REPORT TO THE ILLINOIS GOVERNOR
AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Higher education in prison (HEP) transforms lives and strengthens communities. It saves taxpayers money and reduces prison violence. Research indicates HEP contributes to reduced recidivism, supporting public safety and protecting families and communities. HEP partnerships also support the state's college and university missions of education and service.

Given HEPs many proven benefits, state leaders should aim to increase the HEP program enrollment. This will allow the state to take advantage of a cost-effective and proven strategy for empowering those who are incarcerated, reducing violence, supporting families, and investing in the most vulnerable neighborhoods.

The Illinois Higher Education in Prison Task Force met between February and July 2022 to consider the steps state lawmakers can take to expand access to quality HEP in Illinois. In addition, Task Force members considered what state leaders can do to ensure effective, sustainable, and equitable HEP programs, and ease the transition between HEP and college or university settings for formerly incarcerated individuals.

The Task Force heard from subject matter experts, reviewed published reports and other research findings, listened to formerly incarcerated students' experiences, and received public comments from those currently in prison about their educational goals and the obstacles to achieving them.

In the end, Task Force members crafted recommendations that will allow for efficient, thoughtful, and cost-effective growth of quality HEP programming in Illinois. These recommendations can be grouped into the following six themes.

The Task Force proposes that the State of Illinois:

- Create a commission to ensure the continued work of the Task Force.
- Ensure regular and systematic data collection and reporting related to HEP programming.
- Conduct regular assessments of the conditions, operations, and outcomes of HEP programs.
- Increase access to quality technology in Illinois prisons.
- Leverage state and federal dollars to support HEP funding.
- Build and sustain a rich ecology of HEP programming through leveraging the support of state leaders, strategic messaging, and investing in existing HEP programming to provide a solid foundation for future growth.

Finally, *higher education in prison* was not formally defined by the Task Force. However, its discussions primarily focused on post-secondary academic education at the undergraduate level in both community college or four-year settings. Data throughout this report focuses on undergraduate academic programming (as opposed to vocational or career and technical education programs). Some Task Force members said defining HEP should be a priority moving forward.

INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Higher Education in Prison Task Force (Task Force) was created by House Joint Resolution 27 (HJR 27) in the 102nd General Assembly. State Representative Carol Ammons and State Senator Kimberly Lightford introduced the resolution, recognizing the need for policy and legislative supports to provide incarcerated people with safe and dignified learning environments and to ensure equitable expansion of educational opportunities throughout the state.

The Task Force comprised 19 statutorily required members, including state agency representatives, legislators, students and administrators with HEP experience, HEP experts, and individuals who had been incarcerated in Illinois (Appendix A). Task Force members represented a broad range of research, practice, and policy expertise in higher education and criminal justice.

Appointed members worked to address the following four primary objectives, per HJR 27:

1. To obtain and analyze existing data on HEP in Illinois.
2. To identify data points that should be collected to allow for meaningful, statewide evaluation of HEP.
3. To assess barriers and opportunities to HEP in Illinois, including barriers and opportunities to continuing higher education upon release from IDOC.
4. To recommend a legislative action plan.

Task Force carried out these activities with administrative support from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority from February 2022 through July 2022. This report summarizes and concludes the work of the Task Force.

WHAT IS HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISON?

U.S. colleges and universities have partnered with prisons to provide educational opportunities for the incarcerated since the 19th century. Starting in the 1950s, though, a new model emerged whereby university faculty taught creditable courses to incarcerated students and offered them resources similar to what was available on campus, such as student newspapers, guest speakers, and other extracurricular activities. The earliest program of this kind was developed by instructors at Southern Illinois University, first offering it at Menard Correctional Center (formerly Southern Illinois Penitentiary). Following successes there, SIU expanded the program to serve almost half a dozen other Illinois prisons. This became the model for modern HEP nationwide.

HEP severely contracted in the 1990s, when Congress disallowed the use of Pell grants for incarcerated students and most programs ended. But since then, the field has mightily expanded. The Alliance for Higher Education in Prison (AHEP), which tracks and conducts HEP research, reports that about 375 HEP programs exist in the United States. Unfortunately, AHEP does not offer a clear definition of HEP, nor does it provide a breakdown between programs offering career and technical education, those offering only academic courses, and those offering both types. Furthermore, some HEP research is marked by a lack of clarity on how the researchers define HEP.

In spite of an uncertain funding landscape, more and more academic institutions are offering postsecondary education programs to those in prison. Some do this as part of their public engagement or research missions, others because of the opportunities for campuses, through their HEP programs, to engage with important social issues, and some because of the social benefits associated with such programming.

Decades of research affirm the many ways that higher education in prison benefits individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

Recidivism

Researchers have recognized for many years that prison education reduces recidivism (Chappell, 2004; Chesnut & Wachendorfer, 2021; Cronin 2011; Davis et al., 2013; Hrabowski & Robbi, 2002; Nuttall et al., 2003; Winterfield et al., 2009). Dozens of studies affirm this.

A national study of the connection between prison education and recidivism examined meta-analyses across 116 studies published between 1980 to 2011. The most rigorous of these studies indicated that, on average, individuals who participated in prison education programs had 43% lower odds of recidivating than incarcerated individuals who did not (Davis et al., 2013).

State-level studies have examined the impacts of college education on recidivism. For example, an Ohio study found that the recidivism rate of individuals who participated in college during the

study period was 31%. A rate of 46.2% was found among those who had a high school diploma or equivalent (Lockwood et al., 2012).

Researchers at the Urban Institute examined the correlation between recidivism and postsecondary education programs in Massachusetts, New Mexico, and Indiana (Winterfield et al., 2009). In each state, program participants had a lower recidivism rate than those who did not participate.

Other studies confirm that post-secondary education appears to be the most impactful form of prison education. A 2005 study that controlled for students' background characteristics found that college in prison was the educational variable that correlated most strongly with lower recidivism rates (Batiuk et al., 2005).

Post-Release Employment

Approximately 95% of incarcerated individuals in U.S. state prisons will re-enter society (Hughes & Wilson, 2004). Most leave prisons having completed an average of only 10.4 years of schooling (Delaney et al., 2016). Most return to public life facing the challenge of finding employment that will provide financial stability. By contrast, incarcerated individuals who participate in prison education programs of any kind are employed at higher rates upon release and with higher earnings. In addition, they are 48% less likely to recidivate (di Zerega et al., 2020). The Vera Institute of Justice predicts that 70% of all jobs in 2027 will require higher education and training beyond high school (di Zerega et al., 2020). Better educated individuals will be able to meet the needs of the future while also supporting their families and meaningfully contributing to the nation's economy.

Financial Efficiency

According to a 2013 RAND analysis, for every \$1 spent on higher education in prison, taxpayers may save between \$4 to \$5 on costs related to recidivism and other unfavorable prison reentry outcomes (Davis et al, 2013). The state also benefits when individuals who leave prison become formally employed, tax-paying residents. Studies show that persons who obtain a bachelor's degree at liberal arts institutions achieve greater success and fulfillment in terms of earnings, health, and overall life satisfaction (Picker, 2020). But, one size does not fit all: Illinoisians can benefit from the variety of HEP offerings available to address the diversity of people who are incarcerated.

Familial Impact

Educational opportunities for incarcerated adults have positive ripple effects on their children. The Journal of School Health reported in 2017 that 1 in 10 American children had a parent currently or formerly incarcerated (Shlafer et al., 2017). Empirical research attests that children of incarcerated parents are more likely to obtain a college degree when their incarcerated parents

have achieve a college degree (Ositelu, 2019). In the 2019 New America Report, Senior Policy Analyst Monique Ositelu quoted an incarcerated adult:

“I’m the first in my family to graduate from high school. ... Since I’ve been locked up, my daughter dropped out of high school. But now that I have been part of the college [program], she is telling me she wants to get her GED and then go into nursing. It’s like my second chance is becoming her second chance!”

Implementing high quality college-in-prison programs offers rewards for employers, taxpayers, families, and the state. The sooner Illinois raises the bar for education in prisons, the more quickly the state may realize these exponential long-term effects that will benefit all communities throughout the state.

Challenges Associated with HEP

National studies point also to the challenges of implementing HEP. The prison environment itself, for example, can present obstacles. A lack of dedicated space can limit a prison’s capacity for providing appropriate classroom settings, libraries, and computer labs (Tanaka & Cooper, 2020). Technology poses another challenge. Prisons prioritize security and, in the absence of robust support, administrators may default to banning technology altogether (Tanaka & Cooper, 2020). Technological literacy is required not only for higher education, but also for living and working in today’s society. Correctional staff have identified challenges in respect to individuals being released after lengthy sentences without basic technological literacy (Dewey et al., 2020).

Funding is another challenge. Inadequate funding for prison education leads to limited course offerings and enrollment challenges (Meyer et al., 2010). Moreover, many students in prison lack tutoring and other supports, research resources, and access to other educational materials. Prison libraries in some states are restricted to what is required by law, such as legal materials (Edwards-Willey & Chivers, 2005). Specific challenges encountered by incarcerated students in IL and HEP programs in this state are addressed later in this report.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISON IN ILLINOIS

HEP program operations vary from state to state. In Illinois, HEP operate via contractual and non-contractual programs.

Contractual HEP Programs

Contractual programs receive state funding. Danville Area Community College, Lake Land College, and Eastern Illinois University provide contractual HEP programming. The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) reimburses community colleges for HEP program wages, benefits, and commodities, while [Perkins V](#) funds support equipment, supplies, contractual services, consultants, and professional development. Eastern Illinois University is funded under a different formula.

Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and Lake Land representatives provided information on contractual career and technical education programs to the task force. In academic year 2019-2020, 2,894 students were enrolled in community college CTE programs. Danville Area Community, Lake Land , and Kaskaskia community colleges offer training and certification in fields such as horticulture, construction, and culinary arts.

Non-Contractual HEP Programs

Non-contractual programs are funded through private donations, grants, foundations, the supporting university or college, and other sources. In some cases, the program's home university or college offers reduced tuition or free instruction to incarcerated students.

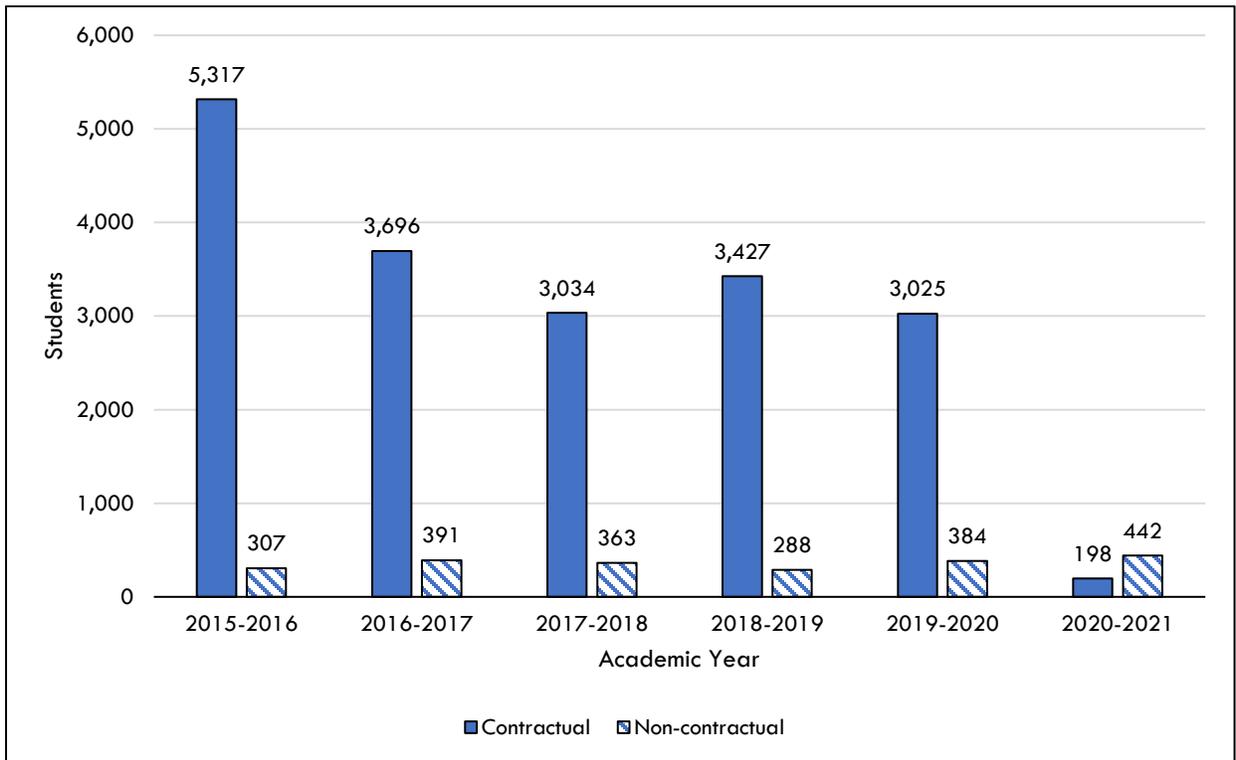
There are currently eight non-contractual programs providing academic HEP programs in Illinois prisons. Seven are hosted by colleges and universities (1 public, 6 private) and another is run by a non-profit organization. Four of these HEP programs offer degrees, while another two work closely with degree-granting HEP programs to serve as pathways to degree programs. Together, these HEP programs partner with six Illinois state prisons.

Illinois' non-contractual HEP programs range from offering a single for-credit course each year to non-credit offerings that can be applied to bachelor's degrees. These programs provide courses ranging from arts instruction and liberal arts coursework to computer programming. Further, most of the non-contractual programs offer extracurriculars, such as mindfulness training, peer tutoring, study halls, and think tanks.

There were 11 HEP programs serving six prisons in Illinois at the end of the 2021-22 academic year. These programs offered academic programming at the post-secondary level and were provided by community colleges, four-year institutions, and one non-profit organization. In 2020-21, the last academic year for which student-level data on all programs was available, 640

incarcerated students participated in this programming (2.2% of the state’s prison population). It is believed this total was impacted by the pandemic, as COVID forced the suspension of many programs, disrupting delivery that year. For comparison, 3,409 individuals participated in academic higher education programming within IDOC during the previous year (Figure 1). It is anticipated that demand for HEP program enrollment will return to their pre-pandemic numbers and beyond.

Figure 1
IDOC Students in Contractual and Non-Contractual HEP Programming, by Academic Year



Profiles of Illinois’ 11 HEP programs and maps indicating the locations of the prisons at which they are based, and of the prisons that lack HEP programs, can be found in the [2022 Directory of Higher Education Programs in Illinois Correctional Centers](#).

ILLINOIS IN NATIONAL CONTEXT

In early 2020, Rep. Ammons and Sen. Lightford co-sponsored [HJR27 in the 102nd General Assembly](#). Several other states had by that time undertaken systematic review of HEP, enacted legislative supports to expand and protect it and invested in it. Some of this activity was due to the anticipated restoration of Pell grant funding in 2023. The FAFSA Simplification Act will allow new and established HEP programs to apply for Pell funds from the U.S. Department of Education. Many states have shown interest in ensuring that their colleges and universities are prepared to meet the Pell eligibility requirements and take advantage of the funding stream once it becomes available.

Some of the most notable examples are:

California. In 2014, California passed legislation that increased funding for postsecondary opportunities for incarcerated students. As a result, HEP programs operate in 34 of the state's 35 correctional facilities - more than any other state in the country (Corrections to College California, 2018). More recently, California passed laws protecting formerly incarcerated students by disallowing institutions of higher education from asking criminal history questions on admissions applications (SB 118) and allocating annual state funding to several community college and state university programs serving people who are formerly incarcerated (AB 417).

New Jersey. This state's HEP programs receive a direct line allocation from the state (\$2.25 million in 2022) to provide a continuum of higher educational services from prison to post-release (State of New Jersey, 2021). The state provides additional funding by allowing incarcerated students to receive grants through New Jersey's Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (S2055).

Tennessee. The Tennessee governor created a Correctional Education Initiative in 2019 that provides tuition to incarcerated students enrolled in associate degree programs (The Education Trust, 2022). That same year, in anticipation of the reinstatement of Pell Grants for people in prison, the state created the Tennessee Prison College Coalition to create a partnership of four-year and community colleges, departments of correction, education-focused nonprofits, and state departments of higher education to improve collaboration and create more effective HEP systems (diZerega & Eddy, 2022).

TASK FORCE PROCESS

Orlando Mayorga, Lt. Gov. Julianna Stratton's Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative/McCormick Reentry Policy Coordinator served as Task force chair. The Task Force was coordinated by ICJIA.

The Task Force met 12 times between February and July 2022. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and widespread geographical composition of the group, meetings were held virtually and recorded through Cisco WebEx conferencing software. In conformance with the Open Meetings Act, members of the public were welcome. Meeting times and agendas were posted on the ICJIA website and in its physical office. All meetings followed Robert's Rules of Order for calling roll, facilitating discussion, taking votes, and adjourning. Voting on the recommendations started on July 21, 2022. Final voting on the recommendations was taken July 28, 2022.

Task Force members were informed of HEP barriers and opportunities in Illinois via:

- Testimony from subject matter experts, including state agency leaders and program administrators.
- Input from community members.
- Reports and other documents submitted by Task Force members or other interested parties.
- Presentations by the Task Force's Data Working Group and Barriers and Opportunities Working Group.

Agendas, presentations, and minutes taken during Task Force meetings were made available to Task Force members and the public.

Subject Matter Experts

The following subject matter experts addressed the Task Force:

Feb 24, 2022:

Rob Jeffreys, Alyssa Williams, James Pagano, IDOC

March 10, 2022

Sarah Ross, Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project;

Rebecca Ginsburg, Education Justice Project, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

March 24, 2022

Brian Walsh, Program Manager, Vera Institute of Justice;

Ashton Hoselton, Policy and Research Director, Education Justice Project, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

April 8, 2022

Jennifer Billingsley, Dean of Correctional Programs North, Lake Land College; Nathan Wilson, Deputy Director for Research and Information, IL Community College Board; Janelle Washington, Director for Career and Technical Education, Illinois Community College Board

April 21, 2022

Sandra Brown, Senior Advisor Economic Security and Empowerment, Women's Justice Institute

May 5, 2022

Timothy Barnett, Professor of English and Women's/Gender/Sexuality Studies and Former Director of Without Walls, Northeastern Illinois University;

Sharon Varallo, Director, Augustana Prison Education Program;

Mary Ellen Mastrorilli, Faculty Director, Boston University Prison Education Program

Community Members

In conformance with the Open Meetings Act, and in an effort to gather input from community members, the Task Force solicited public comment at each meeting. Public comment was submitted by formerly incarcerated students, HEP program coordinators, HEP researchers, social service providers, policy advocates, and concerned coalitions and consortia from Illinois and across the country (*Appendix C*).

Submitted Reports

In addition to written comments provided by community members, some individuals who did not address the Task Force provided written comments and shared research briefs. Such materials came from statewide organizations, such as the Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison and the Mississippi Humanities Council, and national groups such as the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison and Ascendium Education Group.

Two reports in particular helped guide the task force's discussions on opportunities to advance Illinois' capacity to provide and expand quality of HEP. A 2020 analysis published by the Council of State Governments Justice Center identified four fundamental statutory, administrative, and funding building blocks required to provide incarcerated people access to quality HEP programming (Bacon et al., 2020). Illinois has in place two of the four (addressing lack of restrictions and offerings). The Task Force's recommendations address steps Illinois can take to expeditiously implement the other two building blocks: funding and incentives & support.

Another report that helped to ground the Task Force's discussion and analysis was a 2022 report on HEP in Illinois published by Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (Ewulomi & Hoselton, 2022). It listed three barriers to HEP expansion in Illinois: limited resources, inconsistent and opaque IDOC policies related to HEP, and a lack of data-informed and collaborative

policymaking. The Task Force's report and recommendations discusses how the state may address those challenges.

Working Group Presentations

The Task Force created two working groups to review research and testimony and facilitate broader discussion around the objectives outlined by HJR 27. A third working group was created to assist with the writing of the report.

Barriers and Opportunities Working Group. The Barriers and Opportunities Working Group consisted of Task Force members Antoinette Burton, Rebecca Ginsburg, and Sarah Ross, and was supported by non-Task Force members Ashton Hoselton (EJP) and James Pagano (IDOC). It met three times to distill expert and public testimonies and present draft recommendations to the Task Force in line with the third statutory requirement of HJR 27, to assess barriers and opportunities to HEP in Illinois, including barriers and opportunities to continuing higher education upon release from IDOC.

Data Working Group. The Data Working Group consisted of Task Force members Rebecca Ginsburg, Eric Lichtenberger, Gwyn Troyer, and Nathan Wilson, and was supported by non-Task Force members Ashton Hoselton (EJP), James Pagano (IDOC), and Sharon Varallo (APEP). It held four meetings to create a request of HEP data from IDOC, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the ICCB, and Illinois Coalition for Higher Ed in Prison (IL-CHEP), discuss other available data on HEP programs in Illinois, and craft recommendations concerning future data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Report Writing Working Group. ICJIA presented the Task Force with a draft copy of this report on July 19, 2022, and this third working group was established by the Task Force on July 21, 2022 to assist with report writing. That group consisted of Task Force Members Antoinette Burton, Rebecca Ginsburg, Sarah Ross, and Gwyn Troyer and was supported by non-Task Force members Ashton Hoselton (EJP) and Sharon Varallo (APEP).

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

On July 21 and July 28, 2022, Task Force members voted on the recommendations listed below. The recommendations are organized according to which of the six themes they align with.

1. Need to create a commission to ensure the continued work of the Task Force.

There was broad consensus among Task Force members that the Task Force was unable to complete a comprehensive and detailed review of the conditions of HEP in Illinois. As a consequence, the Task Force was unable to meaningfully address important questions such as:

- How much would HEP have to expand throughout Illinois prisons such that all eligible individuals could enroll?
- What are the primary obstacles to HEP expansion in IL?
- What do lessons from other states suggest about the best way to meet the need?
- What are best practices for growing a network of HEP across a state?
- Has access to HEP in Illinois been racially and gender-equitable to date and how can we best ensure that it is moving forward?

While time was a constraint, given that the Task Force needed to complete its work within 6 months, another significant constraint was limitations on data the Task Force could access. IDOC did not have capacity to answer all of the Task Force's questions. Furthermore, there is currently no entity that collects state level data about non-contractual programming. Some providers collect their own data, but there is no standard format for programs that are not part of the community college system. One university declined to provide data to the Task Force upon request. There is a clear need to improve data collection and sharing.

Creating a sustainable HEP decision-making and quality oversight structure was a topic that came up repeatedly throughout Task Force meetings in regard to fostering efficient and equitable expansion of HEP across Illinois. Brian Walsh, then of the Vera Institute, encouraged us to consider the statewide consortia already in operation as possible models. He advised that no state's consortium currently has an advisory council of currently incarcerated students, and that such a structure is advisable for equity.

The Task Force received an advance paper from Ascendium Education Group on HEP coalitions and consortia. It addresses the advantages of building such consortia, including:

- Preparing groundwork for Pell expansion, especially with regard to sharing knowledge from current Second Chance Pell sites and laying a foundation for data collection required by new reporting requirements;
- Facilitating data collection more broadly (e.g. for program evaluation);

- engaging in policy change at the state level;
- providing quality control of programs;
- enhancing cooperation between programs; and
- coordinating educational pathway transitions as students are released to different parts of a state.

Given the importance to the state of achieving efficient, equitable, and dynamic expansion of HEP across Illinois' prisons, Task Force members broadly endorsed the idea of creating a commission to continue the work of the Task Force. The members are confident that, with more time, it will be possible for a future body to acquire and analyze the necessary data and formulate additional evidence-based recommendations that further the Task Force's goals. Task Force members also advised that one responsibility of a commission should be to consider the advisability of creating a permanent entity to ensure the sustainability of initiatives undertaken by the commission. The following recommendations fall under this theme.

Recommendation #1

The General Assembly should establish a Commission on Higher Education in Prison to ensure the continued work of the task force. The responsibilities of the commission will include assessing the barriers and opportunities to higher education in prison (HEP) in Illinois, including those associated with continuing education upon release; identifying data points that allow for meaningful statewide evaluation of HEP and ensuring that they are collected; supporting the development of HEP-related data collection processes and research agendas among universities and relevant agencies; ensuring regular reporting on HEP data; recommending legislation that will expand access to quality HEP in Illinois and propel Illinois to being a national exemplar in that area; and exploring the advisability of creating a permanent statewide HEP commission or advising body. The Commission shall make final recommendations to the General Assembly regarding such a body, and regarding other matters within its purview, within two years of its formation.

The Commission will be housed at the Illinois Board of Higher Education, which has been an active participant in the Task Force's work and engages with many relevant agencies and stakeholders. Membership may include, but is not limited to, representatives from the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Corrections, Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison, educators and administrators of contracted and non-contracted HEP programs, former students of HEP programs, and individuals who are and have been directly impacted by policies relating to higher education in prison.

All agencies/entities with HEP-related or adjacent data should consider the development of a reporting and research agenda and determine the best path forward to achieving the agenda. The agenda should include a detailed plan for obtaining the information necessary to measure and evaluate the post-release outcomes of HEP participants and include further education, use of social services, earnings and employment in Illinois, and one or more measures of recidivism. Another outcome of the new body will be to align operational definitions across the agencies, so

all agencies/entities involved in HEP are using consistent language when describing and/or reporting on programs. The group could also ensure the alignment of state and federal collection definitions/reporting to the extent possible.

The Commission will ensure that currently incarcerated individuals have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the work of the Commission on a regular basis and provide critical input into the direction of statewide policy related to higher education in prison.

The Commission will issue annual reports to the Governor and General Assembly about its progress and the state of policy and practice in Illinois. These reports must be made available to the general public. This transparency will help support and streamline efforts to expand and improve higher education in prison.

Per the recommendations of the Data Working Group, the Commission will develop two resources that will be updated at least annually: a student-centered resource on accessing HEP and continuing education post-release; and an institution-centered resource that outlines what is required of higher education institutions wishing to provide HEP.

Furthermore, we recommend:

That the Commission shall consist, at a minimum, of the following members:

1. A representative from the Illinois Board of Higher Education
1. A representative from the Illinois Community College Board
2. A representative from the Illinois Department of Corrections
3. A representative from the Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison
4. Four current or former educators or administrators of Illinois HEP programs, one appointed by the President of the Senate, one by the Minority Leader of the Senate, one by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one by the Minority Leader of the House.
5. Four former students of HEP programs, one appointed by the President of the Senate, one by the Minority Leader of the Senate, one by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one by the Minority Leader of the House.
6. A representative from the John Howard Association

That the Commission shall have all appointments made within 30 days of the effective date of this legislation;

That the Commission members shall serve without compensation;

That the Commission shall hold at least six meetings each year, but otherwise shall meet at the call of the Chair;

That Illinois Board of Higher Education shall provide administrative and technical support to the Commission and be responsible for administering its operations and ensuring that the requirements of the Commission are met;

That the Commission shall submit its final report to the Governor and General Assembly by or before 2025 [2 years from the legislation being adopted];

That the final report be made available online for the general public, and upon the release of its report, the Commission is dissolved;

That the State of Illinois continues to commit to becoming a national exemplar of higher education for incarcerated persons by supporting and encouraging the establishment of new programs, and by enhancing existing programs across the state.

Recommendation #2

Assuming availability of funding, the HEP taskforce recommends the creation of another body (commission, task force, ILDS working group, etc.) with all relevant parties represented:

The body should develop two resources and make the resources readily available:

1. Student-centered resource on accessing HEP and how to seamlessly continue postsecondary education after re-entry. This resource will include information on accessing and maintaining financial aid and other student supports;
2. Institution-centered resource that outlines what higher education institutions are required to do to from both operational authority and degree granting standpoints to provide higher education in a HEP setting. The resource should also outline all regulatory and reporting requirements.

The body should also be tasked with developing a more uniform policy for awarding good-time credit to incarcerated individuals for the successful completion of higher education in prison (HEP) programming. The policy should be applicable for contractual and non-contractual HEP providers.

2. Need to ensure regular and systematic data collection and reporting related to HEP programming.

Much anecdotal data exists to testify to the value of HEP in Illinois, some of which was presented to the Task Force by former and current HEP students (Appendix C). Research speaks to the multiple benefits to individuals, families, and the state of controlled and equitable expansion of HEP. However, the consensus of Task Force members was that conscientious data collection and assessment of existing programs and practices and student outcomes are needed. To address the deficiencies that currently exist in relation to HEP data collection, the Task Force encourages the General Assembly to act upon the following recommendations, some of which presume the existence of the previously referenced commission.

Recommendation #3

IDOC and ICJIA should consider creating a memorandum of agreement/understanding to facilitate the sharing of information and data between the two respective agencies, including access to O360 for ICJIA. This idea should be expanded and potentially include IBHE, ICCB, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) and other pertinent agencies as well.

Strengthening the relationship between higher education and corrections.

Recommendation #4

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) should consider joining the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) to facilitate a greater understanding how people leaving its custody are performing, beyond the simple measure of a three-year recidivism rate.

To facilitate this process and make the best use of available informational sources, the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) should be leveraged to strengthen/modernize the IT infrastructure at IDOC.

Recommendation #5

The Commission should commission a comprehensive survey of providers of higher education in prison across the state to support the identification and preservation of impactful and innovative programs and practices. Future expansion of higher education in prison and implementation of new higher education in prison programs should align with existing programs to support their continuation and develop a rich and healthy ecology of programs.

The commission should also collect baseline information on educational processes and outcomes, including but not limited to the number of enrollments, types and amounts of funding sources, student demographics including location and transfers, types and amounts of completed course credits, types of credentials, certificates and degrees awarded; with a plan to continue collecting and reporting this type of information in an annual HEP report. Also, with this information, create an online, data dashboard with key processes and outcomes: enrollment numbers, student and teacher demographics, completed credentials, certifications and degrees.

Current HEP programs operating in Academic Year 2022-23 should be evaluated for the quality and quantity of programs offered as a baseline for improving and expanding HEP in Illinois. Current and former students should be provided the opportunity to describe and rate their HEP experiences via survey, interviews, and/or focus groups. This information should be provided in a report to the legislature and a broader audience by the end of calendar year 2023.

Recommendation #6

For each Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) facility, conduct a realistic and comprehensive assessment of IDOC infrastructure, or lack thereof, to provide Higher Education in Prison (HEP) in

each facility, and recommendations to prepare facilities that are lacking in infrastructure, including but not limited to classrooms, libraries, computer and other educational laboratories and equipment, and internet needed for in class and virtual learning.

Recommendation #7

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) should collect enrollment information specific to participation in credit-bearing coursework from higher education in prison (HEP) providers including the facility/location as part of their enrollment and graduation collections which include demographic information. To facilitate the analysis of access to HEP programs, IBHE and ICCB should collect information on the locations in which HEP is occurring as part of the aforementioned enrollment collections. IBHE and ICCB may adopt rules to facilitate this process.

Recommendation #8

(Executive/Legislative) – IBHE and ICCB should add prison and facility fields to their tracking systems. While ICCB does have an indicator to determine whether courses are offered in a prison, IBHE does not. Neither tracks which facility is offering the course.

Recommendation #9

The Illinois Department of Corrections should report the amount of Earn Program Sentence Credit (EPSC) “good time” assigned to each HEP. Additionally, IDOC should collect and report data on the amount of good time awarded by HEP program and include student demographic data.

Recommendation #10

IDOC should include HEP participants by program and demographics in the collection of three-year recidivism rate data.

Recommendation #11

(Executive/Legislative) – All education providers include facility and IDOC numbers in their tracking systems of record – All services providers working with IDOC in any capacity should keep records that include IDOC numbers and facility locations. This will ensure data is useful to interested parties and will facilitate matching in the future.

Recommendation #12

If additional funding is available through appropriation, IBHE should collect information on non-credit enrollments offered through HEP programs and collect and eventually report this information in a manner that is consistent with enrollment information in credit-bearing programs. IBHE could utilize ICCB as a technical resource, as ICCB has been collecting and reporting non-credit information for several years.

It should be noted that systematically collecting information at the individual-level and publicly reporting it with a high degree of confidence can take up to two years to accomplish. Also, to

provide the required information to IBHE and ICCB at the student-level, HEP providers will have to collect and report it the same way they do for the non-HEP student population.

Recommendation #13

IBHE and ICCB shall publicly report information on HEP as part of their regular reporting on enrollment and degrees, including demographics. IBHE and ICCB may adopt rules to facilitate this process.

Recommendation #14

The Illinois Department of Corrections shall consider publicly reporting information on the pipeline and access to HEP programs, including demographics (waitlists, eligible individuals based on the Test of Adult Basic Education [TABE] scores) as part of their regular reporting.

3. Need to conduct regular assessments of the conditions, operations, and outcomes of HEP programs.

HEP program administrators who spoke to the Task Force reported challenges encountered in delivering HEP programming. They include, for instance, a shortage of classrooms in the prison, shortage of prison staff, and rules regarding the number of prison staff needed to work in education areas of the prison. In addition, lack of cooperation between prison officials and programs create uneven offerings and support between programs. According to Tim Barnett, a faculty member at Northeastern Illinois University and instructor at the Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project, “We are happy at Stateville to have the most college prison programs in Illinois. But we face challenges. For example, the prison tells us there is not enough space for all the programming we envision. And yet, empty rooms are everywhere, and the times we are allowed to teach are limited.”

Sharon Varallo, Executive Director of the Augustana Prison Education Program, told the Task Force, “The time it takes to approve educational materials—books, scholarly journal articles, films—has ranged from 1 day to 6 weeks. And we are never sure how long it will take.”

For instructors, the length of time it takes to have materials cleared and approved by IDOC can hinder effective teaching and instructors’ ability to introduce materials in response to questions raised during classes.

The issue of limited access to certain educational materials due to IDOC restrictions was also raised. As Sarah Ross, a Task Force member, explained in her presentation to the Task Force, “In order to ensure college-level offerings, college credit, and more, Academic Freedom is imperative.”

Once an HEP course is up and running, instructors may face obstacles to their teaching and students may encounter challenges to effective learning. The latter include the lack of access to

adequate learning supports, including study spaces, pens, and adequate and up-to-date technology. According to Sarah Ross from the Prison+Neighborhood Arts/Education Project at Stateville Correctional Center, “Students have to write required papers with golf pencils, without access to pencil sharpeners.”

Limitations on HEP programs’ effectiveness depends not only on conditions within facilities, but also on policies that determine which students can enroll and how easily they can be removed from an HEP program. Sandra Brown, a formerly incarcerated independent scholar, explained that otherwise qualified individuals are often excluded from HEP programming because of restrictions that prison administrations and/or programs place upon enrollment in both community college and 4-year programs. These restrictions vary, and might be based upon length of sentence, time to release, nature of offense, or disciplinary infractions and other non-academic matters.

In written testimony to the Task Force from the Illinois Coalition for Higher Ed in Prison, three currently incarcerated people illuminate this challenge:

“The facility I’m currently [in] does offer different education programs but the facility makes it a “priority” to give the offenders with the less time an opportunity to get out their diploma or GED. I’ve been in this facility for 6 years and I’ve been on the waiting list for school for 6 years! Yes, 6 years.” – Person at Pinckneyville Correctional Center

“I was arrested in 1999 and was sentenced to 39 years at 85%. My current out date is 2028. Early on in my sentence I didn’t have a problem taking college courses. I’m currently one credit short of an associates degree, but due to many rule changes, I haven’t been able to take any kind of educational courses in several years.” – Person at Graham Correctional Center

“I can remember when I would send request to counselors to enroll into college or vocational classes I would never get any reply so one day I was able to catch a counselor on the gallery and I asked him if I could enroll into classes, he asked how much time I have and I said life he said that schooling was only for short term offenders. He went on to explain how there wouldn’t be a reason why I would wish to go to college because I would never go home to use it and I do hear that logic, but I could never accept it.” – Person at Lawrence Correctional Center

Work assignments can also impede student participation. Individuals that are employed within the prison may rely on the funds they receive to purchase necessities, such as food, clothing, and even instructional supplies. Sandra Brown advised that making HEP a paid assignment would incentivize enrollment.

When a student who participated in HEP programming is released and wants to complete their degree, they may not automatically be allowed to continue at the same institution. Some university admissions practices impose extra hurdles for individuals with justice system involvement. These

can discourage students from applying. Tim Barnett of Northeastern Illinois University stated, “application questions about a person’s background and more can make college in the free world more challenging than in prison.” One Task Force member mentioned the lack of clarity around IDOC restrictions regarding continued contact with former students as an obstacle to engaging with them following their release from prison.

Finally, IDOC’s HEP policies are experienced by some HEP programs as being opaque and inconsistent. Tim Barnett, professor at Northeastern IL University, stated that HEP programs experience inconsistent treatment by IDOC, sometimes even programs that partner with the same facility. “When our program and others have asked at Stateville to meet with prison administrators and the other programs so we can work together on a more holistic educational system, we are put off, and I can only imagine that is because it is easier to maintain control when we are kept separate”.

The 2022 BPI report on HEP in Illinois found that individual prisons are afforded vast discretion to determine practices for engaging with higher education institutions that provide programming for people incarcerated in their facilities. These practices concern matters from the type of educational materials allowed to the form of orientation faculty must complete prior to teaching. As a result, there may be a lack of uniformity and transparency that negatively impacts HEP programs and students and makes it difficult for colleges and universities to build sustainable programs (Ewulomi & Hoselton, 2022). Representatives from IDOC disagreed with this characterization.

A related concern is the lack of collaborative, data-informed policy making around HEP in Illinois. Currently, policy making takes place without the benefit of robust data collection or consultation with HEP instructors, administrators, and students. Such practices prevent the creation of data-driven policies that would better support quality expansion of HEP.

IDOC presented to the Task Force a draft revised policy and draft MOU template on February 24, 2022 and requested stakeholder feedback that attempted to address some HEP provider concerns and provide greater uniformity, predictability, and support for programming (Appendix F). IDOC incorporated feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders in drafting this policy, including formerly incarcerated individuals. The policy was written with input from experts at the Vera Institute of Justice and is currently being finalized through IDOC’s formal processes and it is anticipated to go into effect in the summer of 2022.

Another obstacle to expansion concerns Illinois’ geography. Most institutions of higher education are in the northern part of the state, while most IDOC facilities are located in the south. Brian Walsh, then with Vera Institute, spoke to the Task Force on March 24, 2022 and stated that he considered this the single-most significant obstacle to expansion of HEP in the state.

Finally, the more widespread availability of Pell grant funds may introduce challenges. While Pell funding (federal funding intended for post-secondary students in need) can help to grow HEP in

Illinois, Pell's expansion may also open opportunities for predatory HEP programming. Illinois has not established any processes for controlling for quality HEP. A document shared with the Task Force by the executive director of the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison explained states should expect, and be prepared for, the emergence of predatory practices among HEP programming (Alliance for Higher Education in Prison, 2021).

To a great extent, the formation of a commission for higher education in prison for the state will address all the above concerns, as the commission will investigate the conditions of HEP and consider what changes might be necessary to address identified problems. The following recommendations also respond to the challenges of program implementation, quality, access, and outcomes.

Recommendation #15

Support a collaborative, periodic (3-5 years), and rigorous process, outcome, and cost effectiveness evaluation of HEP with all colleges and universities in the Illinois Community College Board or Illinois Board of Higher Education that provide educational services and collect process and outcome HEP data with the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, and other Illinois agencies such as Department of Employment Security, to demonstrate the effectiveness of the HEP programs in not only reducing recidivism (convictions and incarceration), but also increasing the Illinois tax base from employed graduates, individual and familial changes in quality of life, types of employment and careers available to and held by HEP graduates one to five years after completing HEP classes. If possible, the first evaluation should begin in 2025. The evaluations should include both numerical (quantitative) and narrative (qualitative) information such as case studies and interviews, to demonstrate the strength of the impact of education on the participants, but also to share the humanity of the students. Case studies should focus on those who are successful, those who are struggling, and those who were unable to complete their educational goals.

4. Need to increase access to quality technology in Illinois prisons.

Everyday work and life in America increasingly require at least basic technology skills. IDOC and its college, university and nonprofit partners can ensure access to prison-appropriate computing solutions that meet the security needs of IDOC and the requirements of modern postsecondary instruction. It should be noted that any provider of higher education that hopes to draw Second Chance Pell funds must provide evidence that it is legitimately meeting its stated learning objectives; source literacy, research skills, digital literacy, and basic business skills require access to technology for in-person instruction. The following recommendations fall under this theme.

Recommendation #16

(Legislative) IT infrastructure investment – The State of Illinois has not invested in the network infrastructure needed to provide wireless internet access to individuals in IDOC custody. This will require a large capital outlay, but delaying the investment further will only ensure that IDOC is

not able to take advantage of technology to increase educational opportunities and address the barrier posed by the geography of IDOC.

Recommendation #17

(Legislative) Require DoIT identify a correctional appropriate computing solution for use statewide. DoIT has struggled to work effectively in prison settings because of the unique demands of prison life and DoIT's concerns with IT security. The state's approach in the past has been to simply shun prison technology, but that approach is no longer tenable. Instead, DoIT should within 6 months layout an affirmative plan for the type of technology it would recommend be made available statewide to offer high-quality education in prisons, to include some type of access to the internet. The existing catalog of laptop options are far too expensive to be scaled within IDOC, different computer images are too limited, and IDOC does not have the requisite expertise to identify the correct server/internet solutions.

Recommendation #18

Provide affordable, user friendly, accessible, quality and secure virtual learning at all levels possible, in all facilities; allowing students uninterrupted learning upon transfer or release from the facility.

Recommendation #19

(Executive) Create a guide for synchronous remote instruction to expand access to more IDOC facilities – While in-person instruction may be preferable, to effectively reach every prison facility in the state, HEP Providers will need to develop an effective method of synchronous instruction to reach many prison facilities when in-person instruction is not available. Technology is a major barrier, but along with other recommendations, HEP Providers should work to develop an outline for high-quality synchronous instruction. Other states, such as Wisconsin, Colorado and South Carolina have developed different models to overcome geographic barriers.

5. Need to explore opportunities to leverage state and federal dollars to support HEP funding.

Federal and state dollars are available to support HEP programming. Pell funding, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, is expected to return fully in 2023. Accredited institutions of higher education that meet program requirements will be able to apply for Pell funding on behalf of eligible students. However, it was noted several times by Task Force members that Pell grant funding alone will not cover the costs of operating an HEP program. Another possible source of federal funding is Perkins V, which funds career and technical education administered by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), 2% of which can be allocated to support HEP. Another is the Workplace Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which allows states to use up to 20% of workplace development funds on HEP, as well as provides opportunities for correctional institutions, including both jails and the Department of

Corrections, to receive funding under Title II, Adult Education and Literacy to offer adult basic education, adult secondary education, and English Language Acquisition.

On the state level, Illinois law and Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) administrative rules do not allow incarcerated students to receive state financial aid through Monetary Assistance Program grants and several other state grant programs and gift assistance benefits. Revision of the Illinois Higher Education Student Assistance Act and ISAC General Applicant Eligibility Requirements would remedy this. According to a 2020 report, only 17 of 50 states take advantage of these federal and state funding streams to support postsecondary education for people in prison and post-release. Illinois is well-poised to employ this accepted best practice for expanding HEP (Bacon et al., 2020). The following recommendations fall under this theme.

Recommendation #20

The General Assembly should amend the Illinois Higher Education Student Assistance Act, 110 ILCS 947/10, to remove the following language, “for otherwise eligible educational organizations which provide academic programs for incarcerated students, the terms “institution of higher learning”, “qualified institutions”, and “institution” shall specifically exclude academic programs for incarcerated students.” Subsequent to this amendment, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission should amend its administrative rules related to gift assistance benefits to allow students enrolled in academic programs while incarcerated to be made eligible for such benefits, including the Monetary Award Program.

Recommendation #21

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds (WIOA) and Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) funds should be investigated in the reallocation to proportionally support HEP. Allocation of such funds should be proportional to the number of impacted people served by a given agency. In acknowledgement of the fact that the Illinois Department of Corrections incarcerates tens of thousands more people than the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and that there are thousands of individuals in the Illinois Department of Corrections currently on waiting lists to enter adult basic, adult secondary, and English as a second language programs, reserved funds should be more effectively leveraged to eliminate these waiting lists.

Discussions regarding reallocation should include: the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Department of Employment Security, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and the Illinois State Board of Education.

Recommendation #22

(Legislative) The commission should investigate providing a lump sum payment to community colleges offering credit-bearing courses in IDOC - Funding is one of the main barriers to offering expanded access to associates degree courses. The existing state reimbursement rate is insufficient for community colleges to offer these courses in IDOC due to class size limitations in a carceral setting. By offering a lump sum payment of \$5,000 to \$10,000 for full-time credit-

bearing programs offered in IDOC, the state would dramatically increase the number of community colleges willing and able to work inside IDOC for a modest investment.

Recommendation #23

(Legislative) Earmark specific funds to increase and maintain education staff in IDOC. IDOC has faced long-running shortages of educators and educational support staff. By earmarking more of the IDOC budget toward this line item, the Legislature can ensure that HEP providers have access to a better prepared population of individuals in custody to work with, have more support from IDOC in advance of Pell Restoration, and have easier access to classroom space.

Recommendation #24

(Legislative) Investment in high-quality classroom space - The State of Illinois has underinvested in the physical infrastructure of its prison system, relying on prisons that are sometimes more than 100 years old and not designed with education and rehabilitation in mind. To address space concerns, the State should build high-quality classroom space at every facility with more than 500 individuals in custody.

Recommendation #25

(Legislative) The state executive branch should investigate the allocation of \$5 million in Title 1 of WIOA funding to career and technical education courses inside prisons – Illinois allocates almost none of its WIOA funding toward prison-based education programs. This is a missed opportunity to expand access to critical trainings and services in prisons. Many other jurisdictions leverage WIOA in their prison systems, but stakeholders in the workforce development space have generally been resistant to the idea. The State should consider a portion of this funding be spent on programs, such as CTE or One Stop Centers, inside of prisons.

Recommendation #26

Develop a HEP budget and plan to provide adequate, financial support for HEP across Illinois, including diverse sources of funding: state, federal, Illinois lottery, and private sectors.

6. Need to build and sustain a rich ecology of HEP programming by leveraging the support of state leaders, strategic messaging, and investing in existing HEP programming to provide a solid foundation for future growth.

A diverse educational ecosystem will support students by providing them multiple pathways and means of meeting their postsecondary educational goals. Task Force members considered the various platforms that can be utilized to give access to a range of HEP opportunities. In-person instruction is understood to be the best pedagogical approach, but this depends on a college or university being willing to establish programming at a given facility. Individuals incarcerated in prisons that do not host in-person programs should be able to access other forms of instruction. Task Force members discussed distance learning, including written correspondence and online instruction, and acknowledged the value of non-credit offerings, especially for individuals who are re-starting their education after many years.

There was disagreement among some Task Force members of the role that degree-granting programs should play within the larger HEP landscape in Illinois. Some Task Force members shared the view that, while degree-granting programs are valuable, for the sake of the diverse educational needs of incarcerated students, they should not be exclusively pursued or promoted at the expense of non-degree bearing, educational offerings. According to the testimony of Sharon Varallo, Executive Director of the Augustana Prison Education Program, “evidence suggests that all by themselves non-credit bearing college courses reduce recidivism and improve prison environments for incarcerated people and for prison staff by reducing violence and increasing hope.”

However, IDOC representatives on the Task Force expressed a stronger interest in degree-granting programs and have signaled an intention to prioritize the expansion of those programs moving forward.

A submission to the Task Force written jointly by three administrators of HEP coalitions in other states encouraged Illinois to identify current areas of educational excellence and ensure their sustainability within the expanding IL HEP ecosystem:

“Especially as Pell returns to HEP, we recognize the value of protecting quality programs that can serve as exemplars and models for the incoming programs” (Florida Coalition for Higher Education in Prison).

One example of excellence is represented in the competency-based bachelor’s degree HEP programs that Northeastern Illinois University (through PNAP) and Eastern Illinois University offer. Both utilize Prior Learning Assessments to identify the knowledge held by individuals who have taken classes or performed independent study, though they may not have received college credits for such work. These programs evaluate a student’s competency in a particular area of study and utilize a range of learning experiences that students have access to in prison. Students can earn degrees through these competency-based programs. An untapped well of flexible access to quality Bachelor programs may exist with those universities that have already demonstrated commitment to supporting incarcerated students and creating pathways to higher education upon release.

The following recommendations fall under this theme:

Recommendation #27

The Governor should issue an executive order that indicates his strong support for higher education in prison.

The executive order should emphasize the vision of Illinois reclaiming its leadership and providing a model for higher education in prison in other states.

The executive order should also call the General Assembly to support the passage and implementation of provisions outlined in the legislative action plan designed by the Task Force.

Recommendation #28

(Executive) Begin statewide messaging around Pell restoration – Working together, IBHE, ICCB, ISAC, and IDOC should begin to message to the postsecondary community about the imminent restoration of Pell benefits for individuals in custody. The state has roughly 1 year before these benefits become available. To take full advantage, colleges/universities should begin to think now about how/if they will try and work with incarcerated individuals. IBHE and ICCB should facilitate these conversations and IDOC should make itself available to communicate its vision and explain how to work effectively in IDOC prisons. IDOC should also consider issuing a small number of planning grants to institutions not currently engaged in HEP. Develop a marketing and public information campaign to engender public support and awareness of the need for HEP, how it is funded, how it operates, and the benefits to Illinoisans, businesses, families and communities.

Recommendation #29

HEP in Illinois should be broadly defined to include students seeking certifications in specific careers, students seeking associate, bachelor's, master's or doctoral degrees in all fields available in the institutions of higher education providing HEP.

Recommendation #30

While vocational training brings many opportunities to people in the custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), colleges should consider some additional offerings, including matching program offerings with in-demand occupations, providing industry-recognized credentials through their courses, aligning course offerings in-prison with those on campuses, increasing access to courses, and adopting strategies that improve availability.

Recommendation #31

Colleges should ensure that courses provided in-custody meet the same standards as those provided in the community. Campus courses listed on the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) should be administered similarly to people in custody, including the potential to earn industry-recognized credentials, when applicable. Programs on the ETPL allow for federal funding for eligible candidates, which reduces the financial obligation of the school or student. The ETPL also signifies to employers that students completing these programs are prepared, and often credentialed, for work using specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities. This would provide returning citizens a competitive edge over lesser qualified candidates while job seeking and may yield higher earnings.

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APPENDIX A: Task Force Membership

Membership in the Illinois Higher Education in Prison Task Force (Task Force) was statutorily mandated in [House Joint Resolution 27](#). The roles and/or organizational affiliations of Task Force members, as stated directly in Illinois legislation, are listed below, along with the Task Force member(s) who fulfilled the legislative membership requirement. If the member did not serve on the Task Force during the entire time period covered in this report, February 2022 to July 2022, the dates of service are noted.

The Governor or his or designee, who will serve as chair:

Orlando Mayorga, Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative/McCormick Reentry Policy Coordinator, Office of the Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton

The Director of the Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative as designated by the Lieutenant Governor:

Yaacov Delaney, Director, Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative, Office of the Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton

The Director of Illinois Department of Corrections or his or her chief of staff:

Rob Jeffreys, Director, Illinois Department of Corrections

The Chair of the Illinois Board of Higher Education or his or her designee:

Eric Lichtenberger, Deputy Director for Information Management and Research, Illinois Board of Higher Education

The Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Board or his or her designee:

Nathan Wilson, Deputy Director for Research and Information Technology, Illinois Community College Board

The Executive Director of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority or his or her designee:

Lynne Mock, Manager for Center for Community Corrections Research, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

One State Representative appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representative, one State Representative appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, one State

Senator appointed by the President of the Senate, and one State Senator appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate:

Carol Ammons, State Representative, Illinois General Assembly

VACANT, State Representative, Illinois General Assembly

Terri Bryant, State Senator, Illinois General Assembly

Cristina Pacione-Zayas, State Senator, Illinois General Assembly

Two academic officers (e.g., deans or provosts) at institutions currently or formerly involved with Higher Education in Prison in Illinois, one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one by the Minority Leader of the House:

Antoinette Burton, Professor of History, Swanlund Endowed Professor, Director of the Humanities Research Institute, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

VACANT

Two current or past administrators in Illinois Higher Education in Prison programs, one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one by the Minority Leader of the House:

Sarah Ross, Co-Director Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project; Associate Professor, Art Education, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Jennifer Lackey, Director of Northwestern Prison Education Program, Wayne and Elizabeth Jones Professor of Philosophy, Northwestern University; Professor of Law (courtesy), Northwestern Pritzker School of Law

Two formerly incarcerated individuals who participated in Higher Education in Prison in Illinois, one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one by the Minority Leader of the House:

Quintin Williams, Program Officer, The Joyce Foundation

VACANT

Two recognized experts on Higher Education in Prison, one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one by the Minority Leader of the House:

Rebecca Ginsburg, Director, Education Justice Project, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

VACANT

One member who is a representative of a statewide organization that independently monitors corrections facilities, policies, and practices in Illinois appointed by the Lieutenant Governor:

Gwyn Troyer, Director of Prison Monitoring, John Howard Association

APPENDIX B: Data Requested by Data Working Group

The Data Working Group created a list of data elements to collect. Table 1 shows this list and their sources, along with preferred dis-aggregation.

Table 1

HEP Data Working Group Data Request

Data request	Dis-aggregations	Data source
Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) scores for all individuals in custody (IIC)	Race, age, facility	IDOC
Highest level of education for all IIC	Race, age, facility	IDOC
Sentence length for all IIC	Race, age, facility	IDOC
Remaining time on sentence for all IIC	Race, age, facility	IDOC
Unique enrollments, post-secondary by year	Race, age, facility, provider, course	ICCB, IBHE, ILCHEP
Credit hours, post-secondary by year	Race, age, facility, provider, course	ICCH, IBHE, ILCHEP
Completion rate, post-secondary by year	Race, age, facility, provider, course	ICCB, IBHE, ILCHEP
Adult Basic Education (ABE) enrollment by year	Facility	IDOC
ABE completions by year	Facility	IDOC
ABE waitlists by year	Facility	IDOC
ABE enrollment, current	Facility	IDOC
ABE waitlists, current	Facility	IDOC
Adult Secondary Education (ASE) enrollment by year	Facility	IDOC
ASE completions by year	Facility	IDOC
ASE waitlists by year	Facility	IDOC
ASE enrollment, current	Facility	IDOC
ASE waitlists, current	Facility	IDOC
High school equivalency achieved by year	Facility	IDOC
High school equivalency waitlists by year	Facility	IDOC

IDOC Data

IDOC population information was presented to the Task Force by IDOC on February 24, 2022. As they showed, the number of individuals in custody (IIC) in IDOC facilities was 22,897 as of December 2021, which marked a 28.6% decrease compared to July 2019 (39,083 IIC). On average, IDOC admits between 20,000 and 23,000 individuals from across Illinois.

IDOC provided data to the Task Force and ICJIA in June of 2022. Sentence data provided by IDOC included information on all IIC held in IDOC facilities as of June 22, 2022. Table 2 shows summary descriptive data of the individuals in the sample and the estimated sentence length and time to Mandatory Supervised Release (MSR) in years of all IIC in IDOC facilities, by age, race, and sex.

Table 2

Sentence Length and Time to MSR in Years, by Demographics Categories

Demographic	Average Sentence Length in Years (N)	Average Time to MSR in Years (N)
Age		
18-24	6.8 (1,999)	5.1 (2,101)
25-34	12.5 (7,525)	10.5 (8,198)
35-44	19.4 (6,893)	17.2 (7,754)
44-59	22.3 (5,055)	20.0 (5,874)
60+	28.1 (1,319)	23.0 (1,643)
Race		
Black	19.1 (12,883)	16.8 (13,710)
Hispanic	19.5 (2,691)	16.6 (3,377)
White	12.7 (7,648)	11.7 (8,281)
Other	17.3 (155)	14.7 (174)
Unknown	13.1 (32)	10.4 (39)
Sex		
Female	14.7 (1,291)	10.7 (1,245)
Male	19.7 (23,404)	15.3 (24,330)
Total	17.2 (22,791)	15.1 (25,570)

Note. ICJIA analysis of IDOC data.

The average estimated sentence length for the entire sample was 17.2 years, while the average estimated time to MSR was 15.1 years. These data show that IIC who were 60 or older, Black or Hispanic, or male tended to have both longer estimated sentences and time to MSR.

Table 3 shows the average estimated sentence length and estimated time to MSR by IDOC facility. The facility with the longest average sentence length among IIC was Menard, while the facility with the shortest average sentence length was Vandalia. Likewise, the facility with the longest estimated average time to MSR among IIC was Menard, and the shortest estimated time to MSR was Vandalia.

Table 3
Sentence Length and Time to MSR in Years, by IDOC Facility

Facility	Average Sentence Length in Years (N)	Average Time to MSR in Years (N)
Big Muddy River	12.0 (679)	11.1 (957)
Centralia	14.5 (987)	12.5 (1,161)
Danville	14.4 (1,251)	12.1 (1,447)
Decatur	6.5 (358)	4.9 (358)
Dixon	20.6 (1,130)	17.3 (1,293)
East Moline	11.5 (361)	9.1 (393)
Graham	10.8 (1,142)	9.1 (1,250)
Hill	26.7 (1,272)	23.9 (1,388)
Illinois River	14.0 (1,426)	11.9 (1,652)
Jacksonville	5.5 (1,001)	3.7 (1,016)
Joliet	22.2 (157)	20.4 (173)
Kewanee	17.2 (204)	14.3 (205)
Lawrence	36.9 (404)	34.0 (450)
Lincoln	4.5 (757)	3.0 (773)
Logan	15.5 (871)	13.2 (894)
Menard	37.2 (1,463)	35.5 (1,586)
Pinckneyville	20.6 (1,541)	18.7 (1,741)
Pontiac	36.9 (596)	34.4 (655)
Robinson	9.3 (614)	7.1 (663)
Shawnee	10.9 (1,159)	9.1 (1,393)
Sheridan	8.9 (977)	6.8 (995)
Southwestern Illinois	4.8 (270)	3.1 (270)
Stateville	20.5 (1,423)	18.8 (1,482)
Taylorville	11.3 (536)	9.6 (966)
Vandalia	4.1 (449)	2.5 (457)
Vienna	9.3 (428)	7.3 (466)
Western Illinois	24.7 (1,335)	22.9 (1,486)
Total	17.2 (22,791)	15.1 (25,570)

Note. ICJIA analysis of IDOC data.

IDOC also provided data on Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) score results for all IIC. The TABE is an assessment test used to determine grade equivalencies and is the most subscribed

program among all IDOC IIC. TABE scores are converted into grade levels which then inform enrollment in educational programming. Over 60% of all IIC who took the TABE in 2020 scored below a 6.0. Out of 20,622 tests, the average TABE grade was 4.7 (4th grade educational level). For math, the average was 4.2, while the average grade for reading was 5. In order to analyze the scores by demographic information and facility, only the latest test result for each IIC was included. This reduced artificial weighting, given that the data often included multiple test results per individual. The final sample for analysis included 14,505 test results. Table 4 displays the average test results by demographic categories and subject.

Table 4
TABE Scores, by Demographics

Demographic	Overall Average	Math Averages	Reading Averages	Total (N)
Age				
18-24	4.6	4.3	5.0	1,668
25-34	4.9	4.5	5.3	5,404
35-44	4.9	4.5	5.4	4,135
44-59	4.5	4.1	4.9	2,786
60+	3.7	3.4	4.0	512
Race				
Black	4.3	3.9	4.7	7,549
Hispanic	4.2	4.0	4.5	1,731
White	5.5	5.1	6.0	5,103
Other	4.6	4.3	4.9	95
Unknown	5.3	4.9	5.7	27
Sex				
Female	5.0	4.4	5.6	732
Male	4.7	4.3	5.1	13,773
Total	4.7	4.3	5.2	14,505

Note. N = 14,505. ICJIA analysis of IDOC data.

These findings show that IIC who were 60 or older, Black or Hispanic, and male tended to have lower average TABE scores results than others. This finding is similar to the sentence data findings, which showed that people in these same demographic categories had longer average estimated sentence lengths and time to MSR.

Table 5 displays average TABE results for IIC by IDOC facility. The facility with the highest overall average TABE score was Southwestern, while Graham and Kewanee had the highest average math and reading scores, respectively. Additionally, Dixon had the lowest overall average TABE score, as well as the lowest average reading score. Joliet had the lowest average math score.

Table 5*TABE Scores, by IDOC Facility*

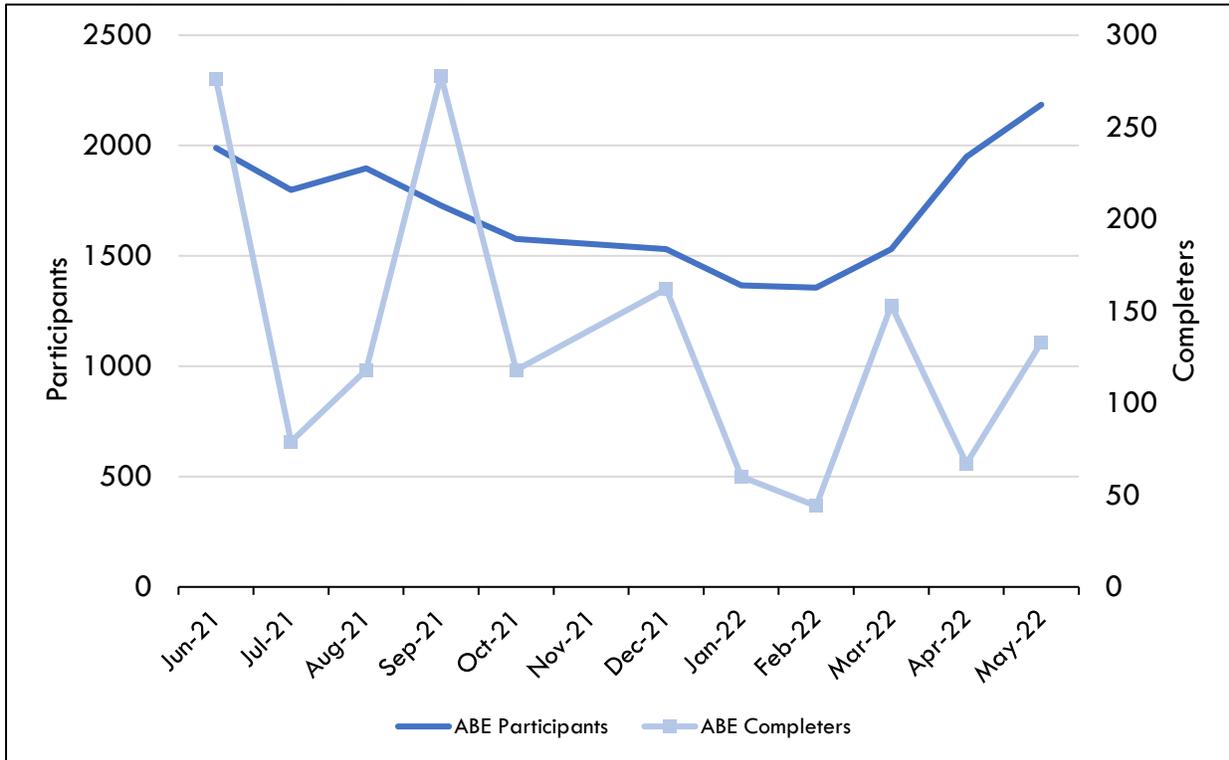
Facility	Overall Average	Math Averages	Reading Averages	Total (n)
Big Muddy River	4.3	3.8	4.6	662
Centralia	4.5	4.1	4.9	645
Danville	4.9	4.5	5.4	843
Decatur	5.3	4.8	5.9	252
Dixon	3.5	3.2	3.8	600
East Moline	3.8	3.4	4.1	209
Graham	5.3	5.0	5.6	681
Hill	4.8	4.8	5.6	635
Illinois River	4.7	4.3	5.1	784
Jacksonville	5.0	4.8	5.3	442
Joliet	3.7	3.1	4.3	106
Kewanee	5.5	4.7	6.3	7
Lawrence	4.7	4.2	5.1	719
Lincoln	4.7	4.1	5.2	684
Logan	4.8	4.3	5.4	481
Menard	4.7	4.3	5.0	626
Pinckneyville	4.8	4.4	5.1	1,012
Pontiac	5.1	4.9	5.3	143
Robinson	4.6	4.3	4.9	503
Shawnee	4.5	4.1	4.9	1,144
Sheridan	5.3	4.8	5.8	803
Southwestern Illinois	5.4	4.8	6.1	219
Stateville	4.8	4.2	5.5	368
Taylorville	5.0	4.9	5.2	360
Vandalia	5.0	4.6	5.3	543
Vienna	4.7	4.3	5.0	253
Western Illinois	4.7	4.2	5.2	773
Total	4.7	4.3	5.2	14,497

Note. N = 14,497. ICJIA analysis of IDOC data. The location for eight individuals in the data provided by IDOC was listed as “Discharged” and were removed from TABE analysis by facility.

IDOC also provided data on Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) programming. Figure 1 shows the trend in ABE participation and completion from June 2021 through May 2022 (the most recent data available). Though the trend in ABE participation has increased by 10% in this time (1,989 to 2,185), the trend in the number of program completers per month has declined by roughly 52% (276 to 133).

Figure 1

ABE Participation and Completion, by Month

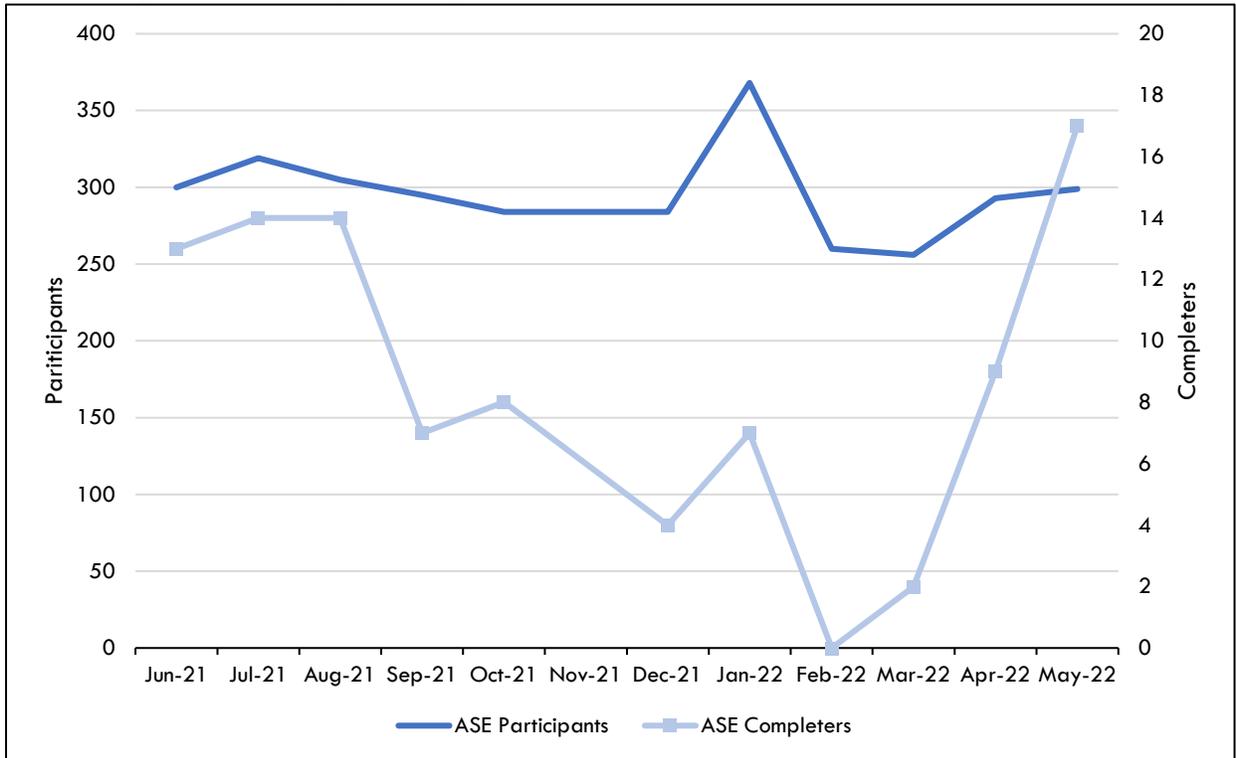


Note. IDOC data analyzed by ICJIA. Time period was June 2021 through May 2022.

Figure 2 shows the trend in ASE participation and completion from June 2021 through May 2022. While ASE participation has stayed fairly constant in this timeframe, the trend in the number of ASE completers by month has risen to a high of 17 in May of 2022 from a low of 0 in February 2022.

Figure 2

ASE Participation and Completion, by Month



Note. ICJIA analysis of IDOC data. Time period was June 2021 through May 2022.

Table 6 displays ABE and ASE participation and completion statistics for the most recent month of available data (May 2022) by IDOC facility). The facility with the highest number of ABE participants was Vandalia, while the facility with the highest number of ASE participants was Danville. Additionally, the facility with the highest number of ABE completers was Pinckneyville, while the facility with the highest number of ASE completers was Shawnee.

Table 6*ABE and ASE Participation and Completion*

Facility	ABE		ASE	
	Participants	Completers	Participants	Completers
Big Muddy River	101	0	15	3
Centralia	108	4	16	0
Danville	84	5	29	0
Decatur	41	4	9	1
Dixon	56	2	0	0
East Moline	42	1	4	0
Graham	116	8	20	0
Hill	65	0	16	0
Illinois River	155	0	21	0
Jacksonville	29	6	7	0
Joliet	42	0	4	0
Kewanee	0	0	0	0
Lawrence	68	0	11	2
Lincoln	74	2	4	0
Logan	67	0	7	0
Menard	49	5	12	0
Pinckneyville	148	18	25	0
Pontiac	16	1	8	0
Robinson	142	0	11	1
Shawnee	108	9	7	7
Sheridan	71	1	0	0
Southwestern	41	6	4	0
Stateville	100	5	20	0
Taylorville	85	16	20	1
Vandalia	165	14	4	1
Vienna	79	13	6	1
Western Illinois	134	13	19	0
Total	2,185	133	299	17

Note. ICJIA analysis of IDOC data for May of 2022.

Data provided by IDOC state that there are currently 5,440 individuals waitlisted for ABE participation, and 120 waitlisted for ASE participation. However, James Pagano of IDOC stated that these numbers may be inflated due to double counting within IDOC data.

ICCB Data

ICCB HEP program data was also analyzed and presented to the Task Force by Task Force member Nathan Wilson, ICCB Deputy Director for Research and Information Technology. Below are the findings from the analysis.

Table 7 provides demographic information on ICCB HEP program students who enrolled for the 2020 academic year. Roughly 80% of students identified as either Black or White, and 87% were between the ages of 25 and 55.

Table 7
ICCB HEP Program Students, by Demographics

Demographic	Count
Race	
Asian	23
Native American	35
Black	2,328
Hispanic/Latinx	702
White	2,442
Pacific Islander	7
Bi-Racial	96
Unknown	289
Age	
16 and Under	2
17-20	84
21-24	431
25-30	1,338
31-39	1,933
40-55	1,857
Over 55	271
Unknown	6
Total	5,992

Note. ICCB Centralized Data System: 2020 academic year enrollment data.

Table 8 provides enrollment data for the 2020 academic year by hours enrolled and area of study. Over half of the students were listed under the Transfer Associate and General Associate areas of study, and about a third of students were enrolled in between 3 and 6 credit hours.

Table 8

ICCB HEP Program Students, by Enrollment Data

Variable	Count
Area of Study	
Transfer Associate	1,620
General Associate/Studies	1,406
Housing and Human Environments, Other	695
Applied Horticulture/Horticulture Operations, General	544
Construction Trades, General	502
Culinary Arts/Chef Training	385
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician	202
Parts, Warehousing, and Inventory Management Operations	170
Welding Technology/Welder	114
Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services, Other	110
Autobody/Collision and repair Technology/Technician	68
Manufacturing Engineering Technology/Technician	33
Restaurant/Food Services Management	26
Cosmetology/Cosmetologist	24
Food Service, Waiter/Waitress, and Dining Room Management/Manager	12
Construction Engineering Technology/Technician	4
Energy System Technology/Technician	4
Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences	1
Job-Seeking/Changing Skills	1
Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor	1
Hours Enrolled	
0 to 3	583
3 to 6	1,939
6 to 9	541
9 to 12	642
12 to 15	526
15 to 18	456
18 to 21	324
21 to 30	575
Over 30	336
Total	5,922

Note. ICCB Centralized Data System: 2020 academic year enrollment data.

Table 9 provides transfer associate degree enrollment counts by institution and academic year, 2016-2021.

Table 9

ICCB Annual Transfer Associate Degree Enrollment in State Correctional Institutions, by Academic Year

College	Academic Year					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Danville Area	207	184	121	273	352	34
Lake Land	3,651	1,856	1,372	1,430	1,267	87

Note. ICCB Centralized Data System: annual enrollment data

Table 10 provides general associate degree enrollment counts by institution and academic year, 2016-2021.

Table 10

ICCB Annual General Associate Degree Enrollment in State Correctional Institutions, by Academic Year

College	Academic Year					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Kaskaskia	41	0	0	0	0	0
Danville Area	11	10	9	6	14	0
Lake Land	853	1,646	1,532	1,718	1,392	57
Richland	554	0	0	0	0	0

Note. ICCB Centralized Data System: annual enrollment data

Non-Contractual Programs

Non-contractual programs are independent higher education programs that are not under contract with IDOC and do not earn profits for their HEP programming. Most four-year university programs are non-contractual. Since July 2019, IDOC has formed partnership with three additional four-year universities (Adler, Augustana, and Eastern Illinois University). It has expanded for-credit bachelor's degree programs to three facilities that previously lacked them (Big Muddy River, East Moline, and Logan).

Non-contractual HEP program data was collected from the following programs in Illinois:

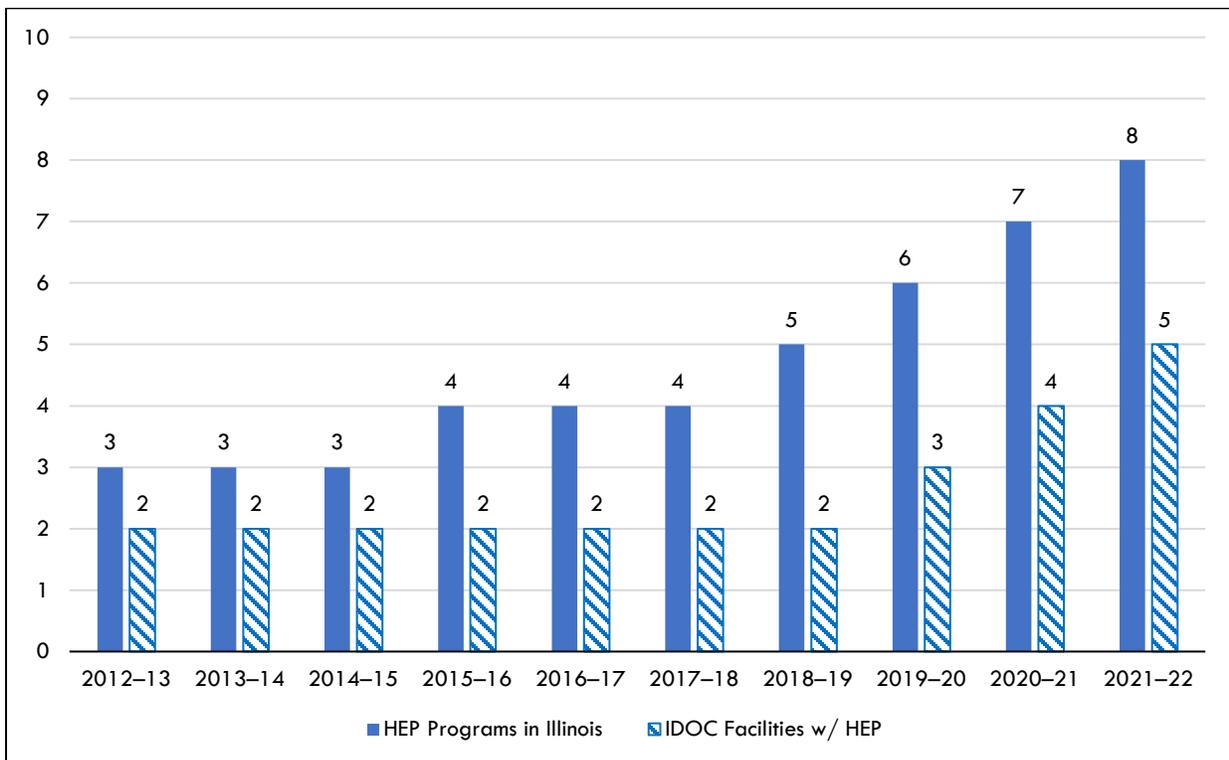
- Adler University Bachelor's Completion Program
- Augustana Prison Education Program
- Benedictine Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program
- DePaul Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program
- North Park University School of Restorative Arts
- Northwestern Prison Education Program
- Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Program

- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Education Justice Project

Community colleges are the largest providers of postsecondary education for IDOC IIC. IDOC receives a reimbursement for contracting with ICCB for vocational courses. Community colleges also offer Associates Degree Courses for which they receive state funding.

Figure 3 displays the number of non-contractual HEP programs in Illinois and the number of IDOC facilities with HEP programming between the 2012-2013 and 2021-2022 academic years. The total number of programs doubled from four to eight between the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 academic years, while the number of IDOC facilities with HEP programming increased from two to five in that same time. 2021-2022 academic year data show that one of the IDOC facilities with non-contractual HEP programming was a women’s facility, and there were 2 non-contractual HEP programs in that facility.

Figure 3
Non-Contractual HEP Programs in Illinois and IDOC Facilities with HEP Programming, by Academic Year

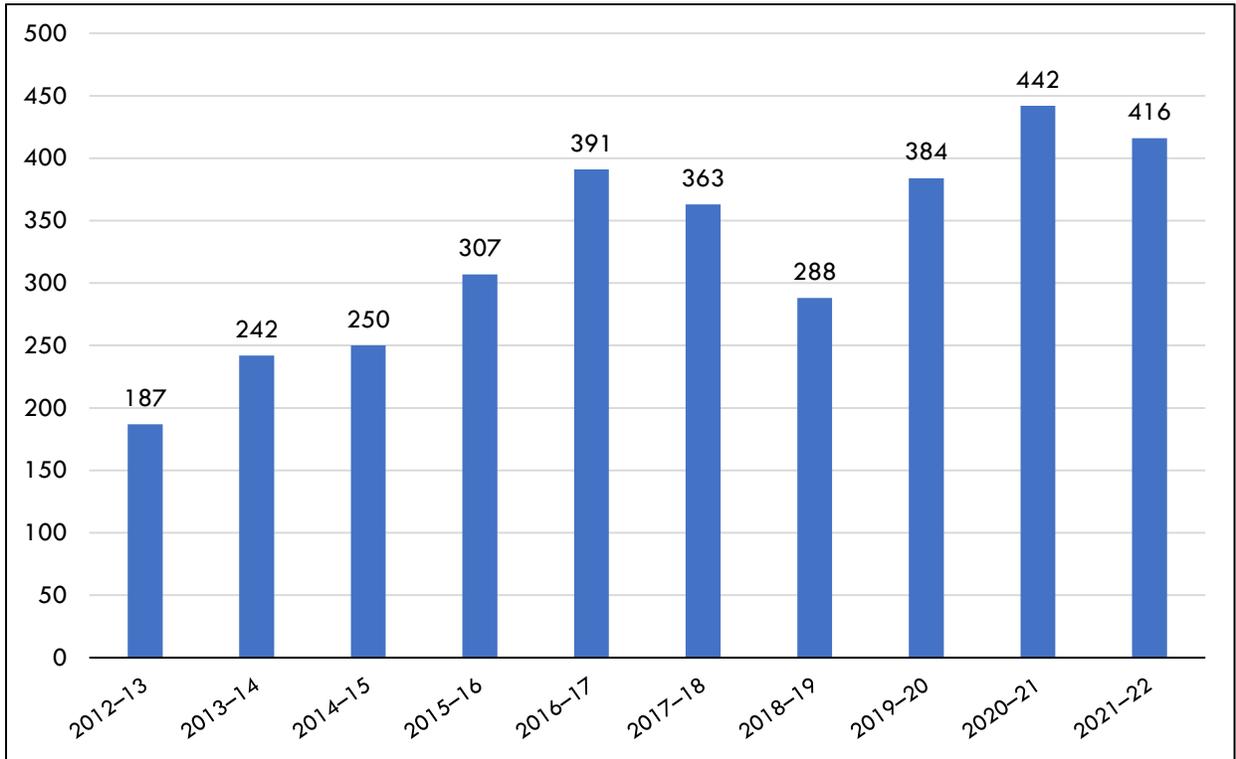


Note. Non-contractual HEP program data, academic years 2012-2022.

Figure 4 displays the total enrollment in non-contractual HEP programs in Illinois. The number of students increased from 187 in the 2012-2013 academic year to 416 in the 2021-2022 academic year, a 122% increase.

Figure 4

Incarcerated Students Enrolled in Non-Contractual HEP Programs in Illinois, by Academic Year

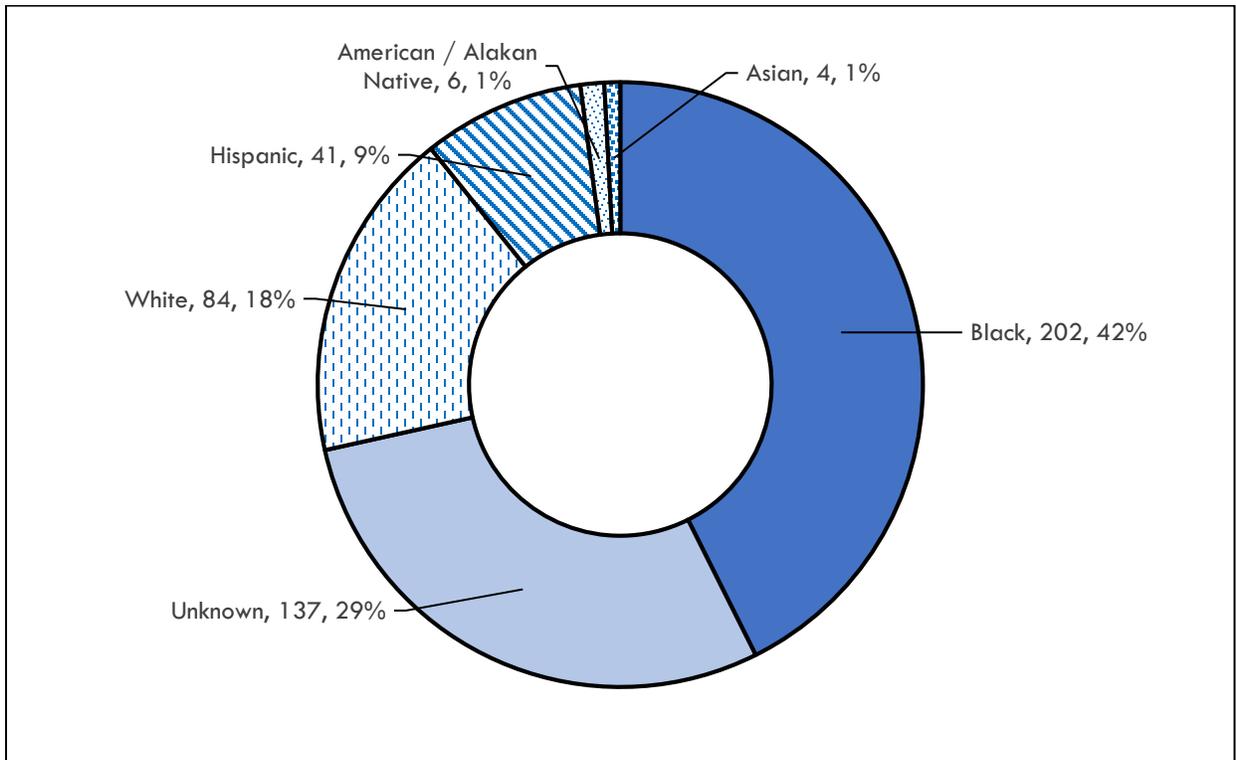


Note. Non-contractual HEP program data, academic years 2012-2022.

Figure 5 shows the number and percent of non-contractual HEP students by race during the 2021-2022 academic year. A plurality of students identified as Black (42%), while White students accounted for the second largest identified group (18%). The race of nearly a third (29%) of the 474 total students was unknown.

Figure 5

Non-Contractual HEP Students in Illinois, by Race

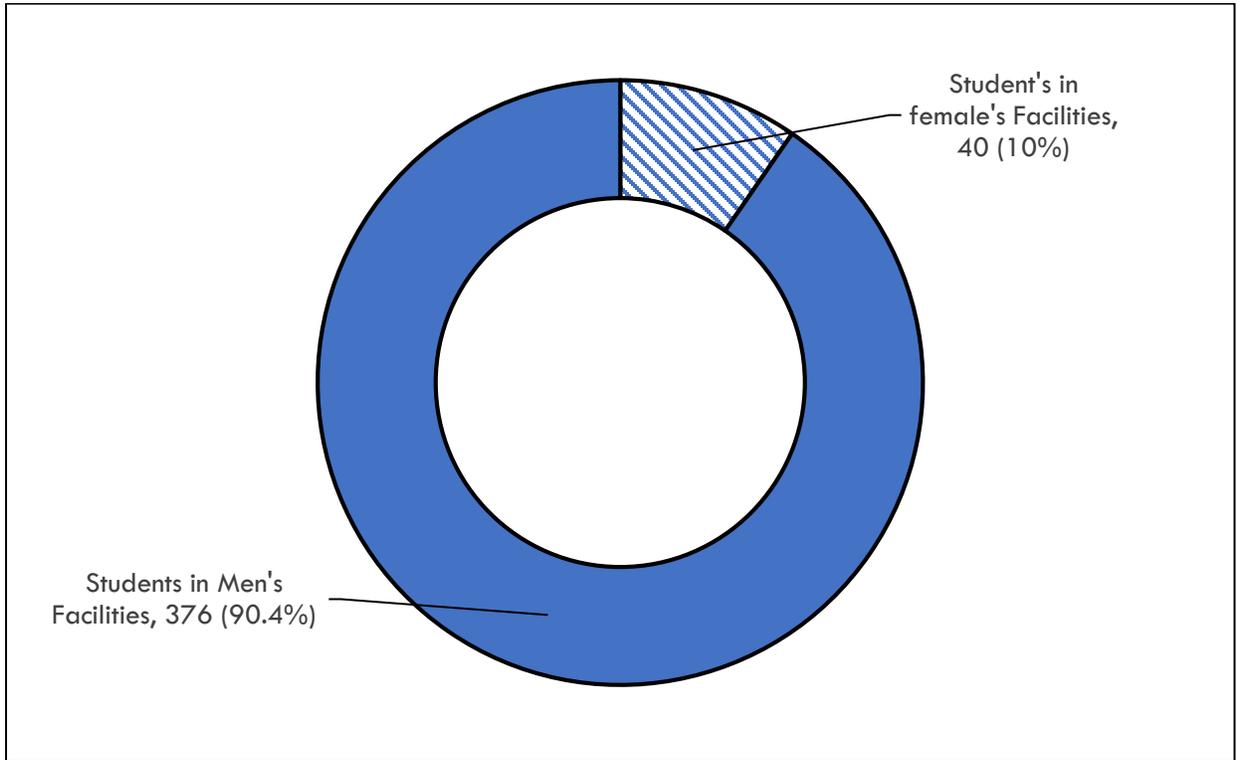


Note. N = 474. Non-contractual HEP program data, academic years 2012-2022.

Figure 6 shows the breakdown in non-contractual HEP students by facilities defined by their population's gender during the 2021-2022 academic year. Roughly 90% of students were in men's facilities, while 10% were in female's facilities.

Figure 6

IDOC Students Enrolled in Non-Contractual HEP Programs in Illinois, by Facility Population Gender (N = 416)

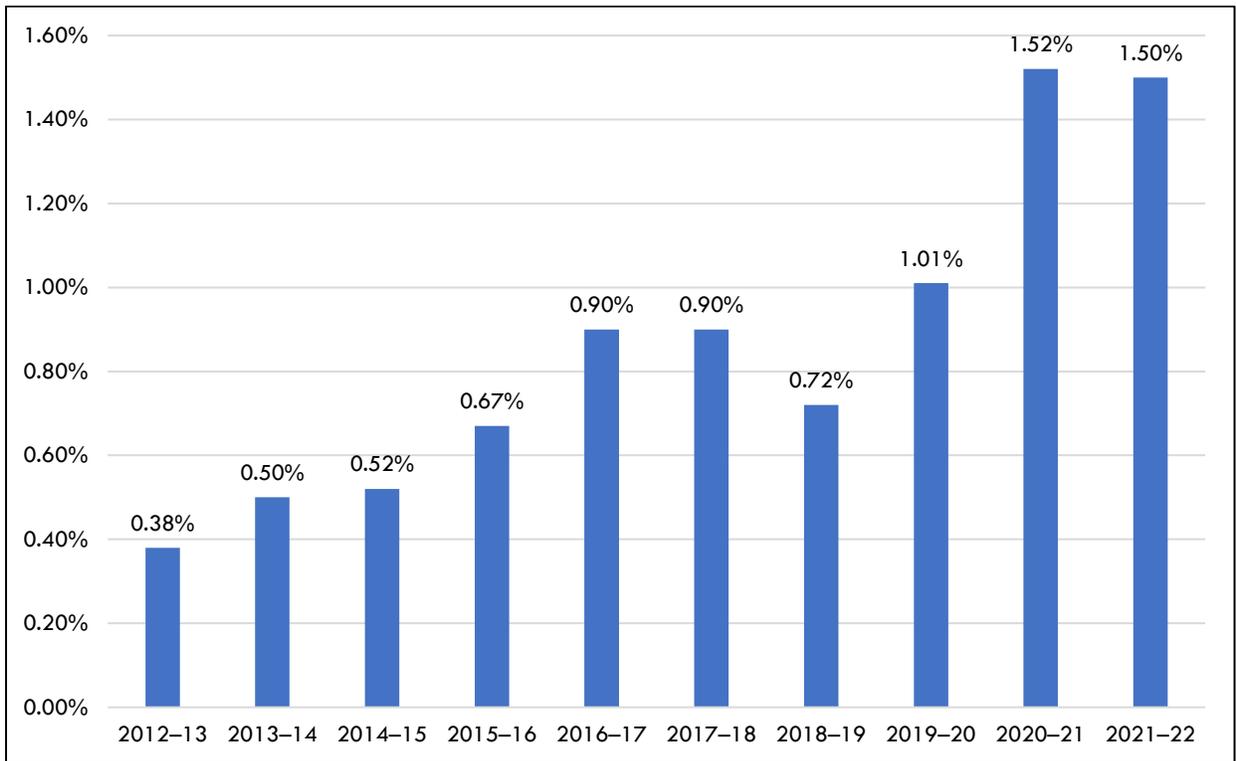


Note. N = 416. Non-contractual HEP program data, academic years 2012-2022.

The percentage of non-contractual HEP students out of the total IDOC population has stayed under 2% between the 2012-2013 and 2021-2022 academic years. Since the 2019-2020 academic year, over 1% of the population has been enrolled in non-contractual HEP programs, with a high of 1.52% in the 2020-2021 academic year. There was a slight decrease to 1.50% during the 2021-2022 academic year. Of the 2021-2022 academic year students, 0.14% were female.

Figure 7

Percentage of Non-Contractual HEP Students in the IDOC Population, by Academic Year

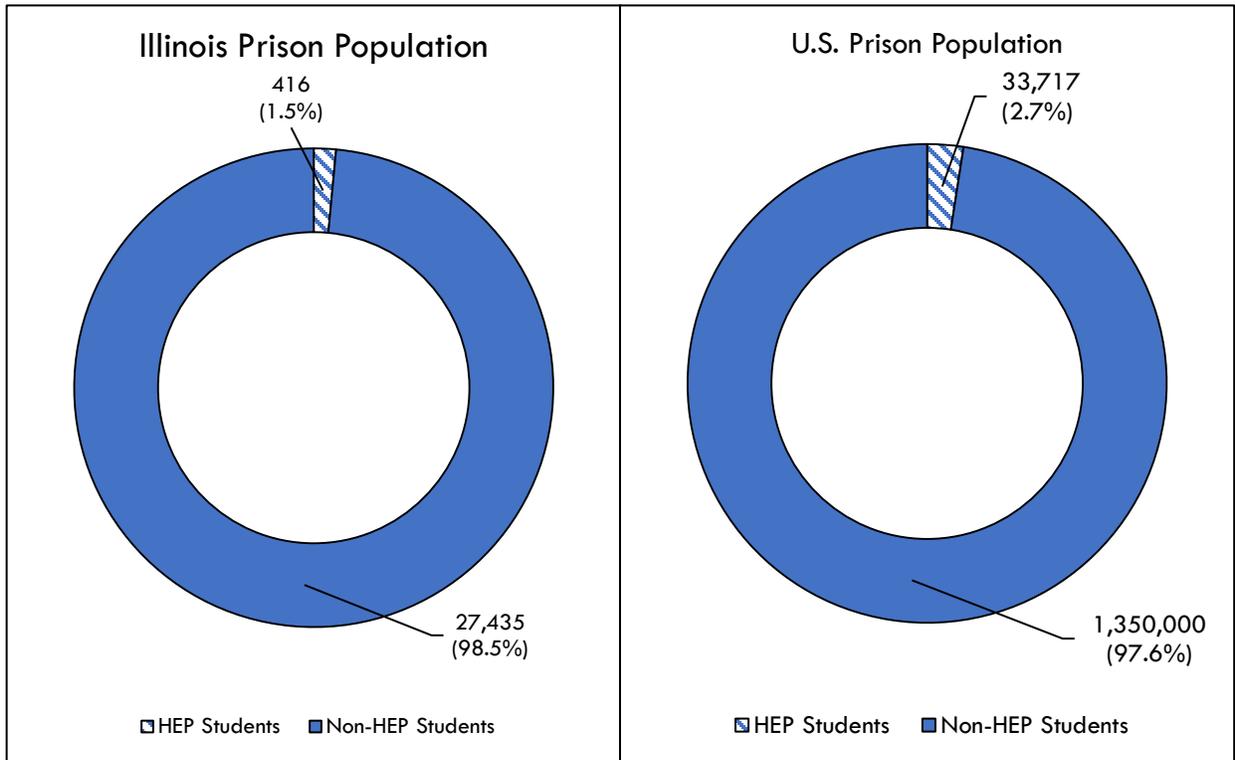


Note. Non-contractual HEP program data, academic years 2012-2022.

Figure 8 compares the percentage of non-contractual HEP students in Illinois with the percentage of non-contractual HEP students nationwide in the 2021-2022 academic year. A smaller portion of the Illinois IDOC population (1.5%) was enrolled in HEP programming compared to the nationwide proportion of IIC (2.7%).

Figure 8

Prison Populations by Non-Contractual HEP Program Enrollment, Illinois and Nationwide

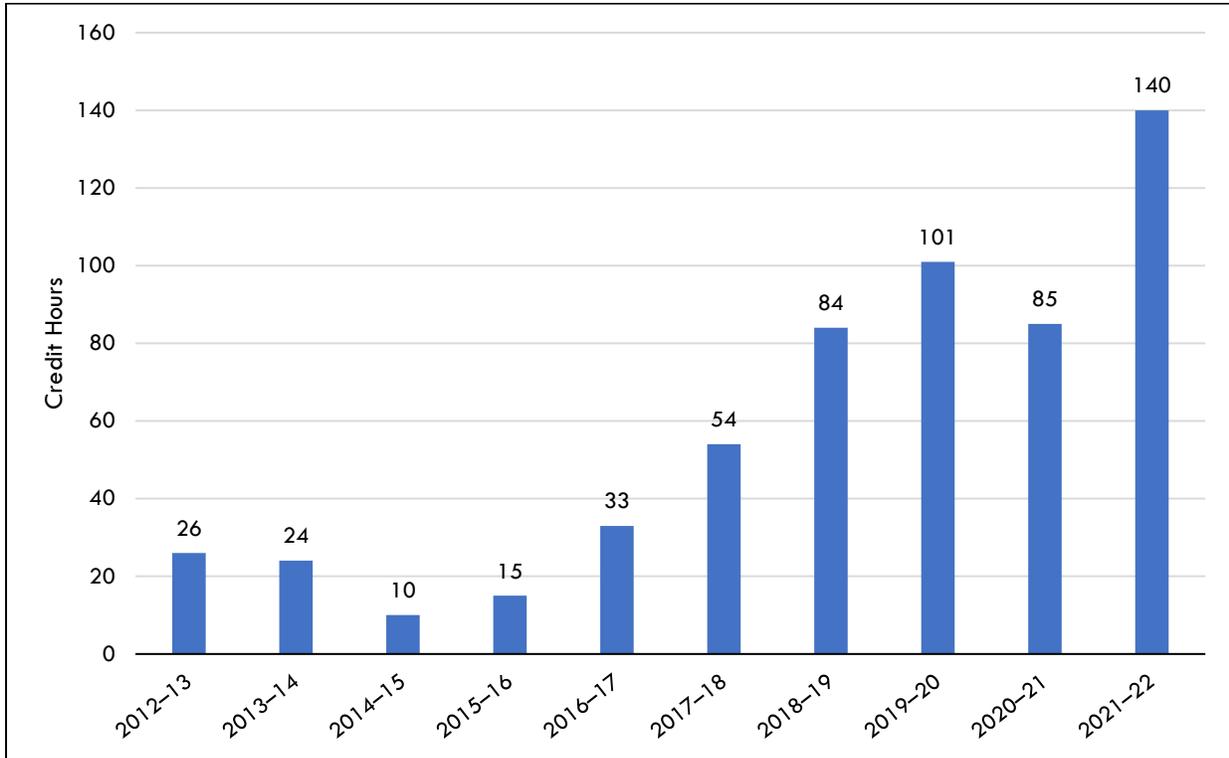


Note. Illinois N = 27,851. U.S. N = 1,383,717. Non-contractual HEP program data, academic years 2012-2022.

Figure 9 displays the number of credits hours offered by non-contractual HEP programs in Illinois facilities by academic year. The total number of credit hours per year increased from 26 during the 2012-2013 academic year to a high of 140 during the 2021-2022 academic year, a 438% increase during that time. There was a total of 57 degrees conferred by non-contractual HEP programs during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Figure 9

Credits Offered by Non-Contractual HEP Programs in Illinois, Academic Year



Note. Non-contractual HEP program data, academic years 2012-2022.

Data Limitations

Although most of the data requested by the Task Force was made available, some data was ultimately not provided. In their response to the data request, IDOC indicated that the variable indicating the highest level of education for all TABE test takers in IDOC facilities contained incorrect information in the IDOC system, and thus not included in the data analysis for this report. IDOC stated that the new variable intended to track this information would be fixed in July of 2022. Additionally, IDOC advised that documented sentence lengths and MSR (mandatory supervised release) dates are only estimates, as the actual sentences lengths and time to MSR depend on a variety of factors that may be unknown at the time the information was recorded. As such, the average sentence lengths and average remaining time to MSR calculated for this report are estimates and the actual sentences served may ultimately differ in length. Moreover,

some of the sentence date and projected MSR date data is missing or appeared to be incorrect (i.e., projected release dates prior to the admission date).

Additionally, the ABE and ASE statistics could not be fully provided in the format requested by the Task Force (annual and by facility). While IDOC publishes quarterly reports with participant and completer information, totals are only aggregated by month. Quarterly and yearly aggregates are not provided. Without individual-level data, ABE and ASE participation and completion data cannot be aggregated over time without double counting individuals. Additionally, these data do not include annual waitlist information.

APPENDIX C: Expert Testimony and Presentations

The following subject-matter experts presented to the Task Force:

Feb 24, 2022

Rob Jeffreys, Alyssa Williams, James Pagano, Illinois Dept. of Corrections
IDOC. 2022. DRAFT IDOC Higher Education Policy Act.
IDOC. 2022. Draft Higher Education MOU Template.

March 10, 2022

Sarah Ross, Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project;
Rebecca Ginsburg, Education Justice Project;
Brian Walsh, Program Manager, Vera Institute of Justice

March 24, 2022

Ashton Hoselton, Policy and Research Director, Education Justice Project, University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign

April 8, 2022

Jennifer Billingsley, Dean of Correctional Programs North, Lake Land College; Nathan Wilson,
Deputy Director for Research and Information, IL Community College Board; Janelle Washington,
Director for Career and Technical Education, Illinois Community College Board

April 21, 2022

Sandra Brown, MA, Senior Advisor Economic Security and Empowerment, Women's Justice Institute

May 5, 2022

Timothy Barnett, Professor of English and Women's/Gender/Sexuality Studies and Former
Director of Without Walls, Northeastern Illinois University;
Sharon Varallo, Executive Director, Augustana Prison Education Program;
Mary Ellen Mastroilli, Faculty Director, Boston University Prison Education Program

APPENDIX D: Response from the Illinois Department of Corrections

TO: Illinois General Assembly

FROM: Rob Jeffreys, Director and Alyssa Williams, Assistant Director of the Illinois Department of Corrections

SUBJECT: Laying out an Affirmative Agenda for Higher Education in Prisons

DATE: August 5, 2022

Overview

The Higher Education in Prisons Taskforce (HEP Taskforce) concluded at the end of July 2022 and drafted a report that provided useful recommendations but failed to articulate an affirmative and comprehensive vision for postsecondary education across the state prison system. While IDOC acknowledges real challenges in working with postsecondary providers in the past, the Department is fully committed to improving educational offerings at all levels at each facility in the state. Education is proven to reduce recidivism, improve life outcomes and provides an inherent good regardless of its measurable effects.

IDOC felt it important to provide the legislature a sketch of its vision for improving statewide postsecondary opportunities. IDOC's vision is purely forward looking and tries to avoid relitigating past challenges and shortcomings. While some of the progress IDOC hoped to make was significantly delayed by the unique challenges posed to IDOC by COVID-19, IDOC has managed to expand the number of postsecondary education providers in its prisons since 2019. This progress has come despite critical staffing shortages and continued pandemic-related disruptions.

IDOC was glad to be included in the HEP Taskforce and believes that future collaboration with the right experts and decisionmakers, focused appropriately on the future, can tangibly improve educational opportunities for the incarcerated people of Illinois.

Establishing Strong Policy Informed by National Expertise

At the very first HEP taskforce meeting, IDOC unveiled a new policy to govern the delivery of postsecondary education courses across all state prisons in a clear and consistent manner. The policy was written with help from national experts at the Vera Institute, and included input from community colleges, research universities, formerly incarcerated individuals, and other state agencies. It was written to better prepare IDOC for the restoration of Pell benefits for incarcerated learners in July 2023 as well as to systematically address a number of grievances brought to IDOC's attention by college educators working inside IDOC facilities.

The policy addresses many previous issues, including:

- Easier access to IDOC facilities for instructors,
- Transfer holds for students enrolled in postsecondary education courses,
- And devolution of admission criteria decisions to postsecondary education providers.

Expanding Access to Education in More Prisons Outside of the Chicagoland Area

Due to the geography of Illinois' prison system, much of the focus on college in prison programs revolves around Stateville Correctional Center due to its proximity to Chicago. Unfortunately, this site poses unique challenges due to its age, custody level, and critical staffing shortages. While

some of challenges at Stateville are generalizable across all DOC facilities, many are specific to that lone facility and should be understood as such.

Looking forward, IDOC aims to continue the expansion of postsecondary opportunities to more prisons and not just those nearest to Chicago. It is IDOC's intention to ensure that every *facility in the state* has at least an academic associates degree pathway, if not a bachelors or master's degree track. IDOC has already established new partnerships with educational institutions at Big Muddy River Correctional Center (Adler University) and Logan Correctional Center (Northwestern University). It is actively working to add a new 4-year degree program at Sheridan Correctional Center (Lewis University).

Major Investments in Information Technology

Overcoming the challenging geography of the state's prison system will also require significant investments in IT infrastructure. To this end, IDOC is actively working on a procurement to provide Wi-Fi at all IDOC facilities and is working with the Department of Innovation and Technology to identify a correctionally appropriate laptop solution. IDOC is also actively considering correctional appropriate academic database solutions to better support its students. These technologies will improve course quality and allow for synchronous and/or asynchronous instruction to reach all prison facilities.

IDOC hopes any future bodies that are formed to discuss postsecondary education in prisons include the necessary IT expertise to inform conversations and that any future groups think critically about addressing geographic inequities.

Preparing for the Restoration of Pell Benefits

In July 2023, Pell benefits will be restored for incarcerated learners. IDOC is rapid attempting to prepare for this major landscape change. The Department is working to hire a staff member who specializes in high education financing to join its Office of Adult Education and Vocational Services. Further, the Department is working with Lewis University and Augustana College as Second Chance Pell pilot recipients to garner a better understanding of what changes IDOC needs to undertake to capitalize on the restoration of Pell grants. This is a topic that will warrant additional conversation and was not adequately covered during taskforce meetings.

Moving forward, IDOC intends to establish closer working relationship with ISAC, IBHE and build upon existing relationship with ICCB to ensure that all stakeholders in this space understand the opportunities and barriers posed by Pell restoration.

Conclusion

IDOC remains committed to expanding education for everyone in custody and looks forward to working collaboratively with the legislature and other stakeholders to realize a constructive vision for the future of prison education in Illinois.

APPENDIX E: Public Comments

The following members of the public provided their comments to the task.

April 8, 2022

Gregory Gaither, Woodlawn Community Reentry Project Chicago Founder

May 5, 2022

Flor Esquivel, Illinois Coalition for Higher Ed in Prison Administrative Director

May 19, 2022

Flor Esquivel, Illinois Coalition for Higher Ed in Prison Administrative Director

June 2, 2022

Flor Esquivel, Illinois Coalition for Higher Ed in Prison Administrative Director

Cean Gamalinda, Prison+Neighborhood Arts/Education Project Programming Coordinator

Erica Meiners, Prison+Neighborhood Arts/ Education Project Co-Director of University Curriculum

Tim Barnett, Prison+Neighborhood Arts/ Education Project Co-Director of University Curriculum

June 10, 2022

Letter from the Illinois Coalition for Higher Ed in Prison Policy Committee, containing letters from currently incarcerated students

June 10, 2022

Letter from Illinois Coalition for Higher Ed in Prison Steering Committee and Freedom to Learn Steering Committee

June 18, 2022

Letter from Paul E. Taylor, Student in IDOC

June 28, 2022

Stephanie Gaskill, Mississippi Humanities Council, "Statewide HEP Coalitions and Consortia: Preliminary Research from the Field of Higher Education in Prison"

June 27, 2022

Florida Coalition for Higher Education in Prison, the Mississippi Humanities Council, and the Alabama Prison + Arts Project, "Statement on Creating an Ecology of HEP Programming"

July 14, 2022

Pablo Mendoza, Returning Citizen, Prison+Neighborhood Arts/ Education Project Director

Angel Pantoja, Illinois Coalition for Higher Ed in Prison Project Coordinator

July 21, 2022

Gregory Gaither, Woodlawn Community Reentry Project Chicago Founder

APPENDIX F: Report Contributors

Rep. Carol Ammons, Illinois House of Representatives
Antoinette Burton, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Cristin Evans, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Jacquelyn Gilbreath, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Rebecca Ginsburg, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Education Justice Project
Emilee Green, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Ashton Hoselton, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Education Justice Project
Rob Jeffreys, Illinois Department of Corrections
Crystal Johnson, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Michelle Kerz, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Timothy Lavery, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Lynne Mock, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
H. Douglas Otto, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
James Pagano, Illinois Department of Corrections
Jessica Reichert, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
Sarah Ross, Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project, School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Gwyn Troyer, John Howard Association
Sharon Varallo, Augustana Prison Education Program
Alyssa Williams, Illinois Department of Corrections
Nathan Wilson, Illinois Community College Board

APPENDIX G: Draft IDOC HEP Policy and MOU Template

<p>Authority: 730 ILCS 5/3-2-2, 3-6-2, and 3-12-3 20 IAC 405</p>	<p>Related ACA Standards</p>
<p>Referenced Policies: 01.02.104, 01.02.107, 04.01.122, 04.23.130, 05.06.112, 05.15.100</p>	<p>Referenced Forms: DOC.XX.XX.1 – Higher Ed MOU Template DOC.YY.YY.YY – Complaint Form DOC.ZZ. ZZ. ZZ – New Program Proposal Form DOC.VV.VV.VV – Request to Expand Postsecondary Opportunities Form DOC 0362 – Educational Release of Information</p>

Policy

The Department shall coordinate with postsecondary institutions to provide or support the provision of consistent, predictable, and high-quality postsecondary education opportunities across custody levels and throughout the state.

The Department and institutions will strive toward equity in access, completions and outcomes. IDOC aims to ensure that all students have access to an education comparable to what is available in the community.

Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish a written procedure defining the responsibilities involved in the administration and support of credit-bearing postsecondary education programs as the Department seeks to establish consistent, predictable, and high-quality postsecondary education across custody levels and throughout the state.

Applicability

This directive is applicable to the Office of Adult Education and Vocational Services (OAEVS) and to all correctional facilities within the Department that provide academic, vocational, or contractual programs through the OAEVS.

This policy covers:

All courses and programs offered by accredited postsecondary institutions that confer college credit towards an associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or industry-recognized certificate or licensure.

This policy does not cover:

Courses offered by postsecondary institutions or individuals associated with postsecondary institutions that do not lead to the conferral of college credit. Such programs are covered under IDOC's Volunteer Services A.D., (04.01.122)

Facility Reviews

A facility review of this directive shall be conducted at least annually.

Designees

Individuals specified in this directive may delegate stated responsibilities to another person or persons unless otherwise directed.

Definitions

Accredited Program – A university or college accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and offering Postsecondary Education.

Course -- A standalone class or series of instructional modules within a broader program of study.

Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agency – An agency the Secretary of the United States Department of Education determines to be a reliable authority as to the quality of education or training provided by the facilities of higher education and the higher education programs accredited by the agency. This includes public postsecondary vocational education and nurse education.

Postsecondary Education – For the purposes of this policy, any education received after secondary school (i.e., high school or high school degree equivalence) through an accredited institution of higher education or higher education program that yields credit to students enrolled students who successfully complete course requirements. For the purposes of this policy, Career and Technical Education courses (CTE or Vocational) are not included.

Postsecondary Provider – A college or university that is authorized by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and/or the Illinois Community College Board and that offers programs of study authorized by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Program – A series of multiple courses that culminates in the conferral of a degree or a widely recognized stackable credential.

Requirements

The Director or their designee shall:

Hold a biannual call or meeting with postsecondary providers to address concerns and receive program updates.

The Office of Adult Education and Vocational Services (OAEVS) Manager shall develop and implement policies and procedures for the operation of postsecondary courses. This shall include, but not be limited to:

Review the curricula of accredited programs to ensure that are consistent with existing departmental postsecondary education needs and adhere to DOC's applicable legal standards. The OAEVS Manager shall seek to ensure a variety of topical offerings and an even distribution of postsecondary opportunities across the state and across custody levels.

Make recommendations on the signature of MOUs or contracts with postsecondary providers to the Chief of Programs

Assist facility-level staff in navigating questions or unforeseen challenges that emerge from postsecondary providers.

Address concerns from postsecondary providers that facility-level staff are unable to address.

Maintain a publicly available listing of all postsecondary courses offered across the Department, to include the IDOC facility and the postsecondary provider

The facility Warden shall:

Meet quarterly, along with the Assistant Warden of Programs, with representatives from postsecondary education providers to understand current course offerings and help to address any issues that providers have identified during the preceding quarter.

The Assistant Warden of Programs shall:

Meet quarterly, along with the Warden, with representatives from postsecondary education providers to understand current course offerings and help to address any issues that providers have identified during the preceding quarter.

Provide general support to the EFA in their coordination of postsecondary programs and support the EFA in ensuring that all providers are notified as expeditiously as possible of any changes or events (such as lockdowns) that may impede course delivery.

Ensure the facility has an updated Education Building Volunteer Orientation Manual that provides specific instruction to volunteers planning to work inside the education building.

The EFA or their designee shall:

Serve as the primary liaison with postsecondary providers and assist in scheduling and coordinating the delivery of postsecondary opportunities inside the facility.

Meet quarterly, along with the Assistant Warden of Programs, with representatives from postsecondary education providers to understand current course offerings and help to address any issues that providers have identified during the preceding quarter.

Provide an Education Building Orientation to all Postsecondary Administrators and Faculty working in a given facility.

Enter student assignments of incarcerated individuals enrolled in postsecondary education into the tracking system of record

Maintain earned program sentence credit contracts for postsecondary education courses as well as calendars for postsecondary courses.

Close out Earned Program Sentence Credit contracts at the end of the goal period, both on paper and in the tracking system of record, sending recommendations to the Records Office.

Update student transcript information at the end of each academic quarter or semester as available, providing a copy of the transcript to the Records Office for inclusion in the master file, placing a copy in the students education file, and ensuring the student has a copy themselves. Work with providers to troubleshoot and find solutions to day-to-day issues that may arise during course delivery.

Review course materials in a timely manner and clearly communicate concerns and request any changes.

Provide a roster of potentially eligible students using data available in the Department's tracking system of record based on the qualifications set forth by the postsecondary provider and agreed to by IDOC.

Provide a class roster to postsecondary faculty for attendance purposes.

Work with relevant facility staff to support and expedite when appropriate the review and clearance of college faculty.

Coordinate with the agency Volunteer Coordinator to schedule trainings with college faculty per the volunteer policy at the nearest possible IDOC facility.

General

Facilities may offer individuals in custody the opportunity to participate in postsecondary education through accredited non-profit colleges and universities. These opportunities may include either academic or career and technical education courses and programs.

Providers must have completed and countersigned MOUs or contracts 90 days prior to the proposed start date of the program. All MOUs must be reviewed and approved by IDOC Legal staff.

The DOC shall establish contracts for paid services, or MOUs using the Department's Higher Education MOU template (DOC XX.XX.XX) or other legally binding document with all accredited programs seeking to work inside a DOC facility. A completed contract, MOU, or equivalent will be required before offering courses inside a DOC facility.

IDOC Legal staff should review all proposed MOUs address, at a minimum, the following topics:

Target population, program requirements, and rationale for serving the identified target population.

Program description and meeting frequency.

Description and explanation of the desired application process for program admittance.

Transferability and transfer process for students with existing college credits.

Any plans for the inclusion of additional volunteers or other outside involvement in course delivery, including the number of proposed volunteers in the classroom at a given point in time.

Explanation of existing articulation agreements with other postsecondary institutions.

Credentialing and professional requirements for instructional staff hired by accredited programs, to include discussion of any deviations from normal hiring requirements that exist for on-campus programs.

Clearly identify a plan for enrolling formerly incarcerated students following release, any legal limitations on the enrollment of formerly incarcerated students, and whether the institutions will place any special restrictions on formerly incarcerated students. If providers do not plan to allow released individuals to enroll in courses on-campus following release, that must be stated clearly.

Attestation to comply with IDOC publication review process

Formally agree to the release of grades and transcripts to IDOC on the behalf of students for record keeping purposes

Detail whether specific programs or courses will be offered such that they will preclude students from enrolling in other courses or programs

Facilities offering Postsecondary Education shall establish procedures for individuals in custody to enroll, participate, and complete Postsecondary Education in accordance with this policy and as laid out in the MOUs with the provider.

Postsecondary Education Requirements

The Department may enter into agreements to offer postsecondary education through accredited colleges and universities.

For the Illinois Department of Corrections

The AWP, EFA, or their designee will work with the facility record office to update the master file with the individual in custody's most recent transcript as they become available.

IDOC facilities must create an assignment code for each course and section, consistent with the Department's assignment code naming convention.

To the extent possible, correctional facilities shall house incarcerated individuals enrolled in Postsecondary Programs together, to create a physical community of postsecondary students, unless otherwise requested by a postsecondary provider.

IDOC shall use reasonable best efforts to ensure that MOUs entered into with any postsecondary institution provide that (i) the postsecondary institution cannot prohibit any student who was formerly incarcerated from attending the institution in-person upon release; and (ii) formerly incarcerated students are permitted to live in college housing and have access to all college facilities.

For Individuals in Custody

Individuals in custody must have a GED or HSE to be eligible for postsecondary education courses. Individuals in custody must have sufficient time remaining on their sentence, when accounting for earned program sentence credit, such that they will substantially benefit or complete postsecondary programs.

Per statute, individuals who are mandated to enroll in Adult Basic Education are not eligible for postsecondary education regardless of their GED/HSE status.

Individuals in custody shall meet all additional accredited program eligibility requirements as agreed upon in the relevant MOU and consistent with DOC policy.

Individuals in custody may only enroll in a single postsecondary program at any given time to provide the maximum number of students an opportunity to pursue a postsecondary education.

While individuals may not pursue multiple programs simultaneously, they may pursue multiple postsecondary courses, or courses in addition to a separate program concurrently. Individuals in custody are expected to focus efforts toward a single degree at given point in time.

Individuals in custody are strongly encouraged to complete programs they are actively enrolled in before enrolling in postsecondary courses that would conflict or interrupt ongoing programs.

Individuals in custody are expected to prioritize programs and courses that are identified in their individualized risk and need assessment or required by statute before enrolling in postsecondary courses.

When enrolling into Postsecondary Education, the following may be considered if the relevant MOU does not identify different specific criteria:

Ability to complete the program or course prior to projected MSR date when accounting for the award of earned program sentence credit and earned discretionary sentence credit.

Identified treatment needs including current or impending enrollment,

Previous program termination for fault within the preceding two-year period,

Conduct during the previous one-year period,

Earned Program Sentence Credit and Goal Statements

Consistent with AD 04.23.130 Earned Program Sentence Credit, all students will have a goal statement completed within the stated timeframe.

Individuals enrolled in postsecondary courses will earn EPSC as outlined in 04.23.130.

Credentials of Instructional Staff Hired by the Accredited Program

All postsecondary providers' staff shall be issued either yellow or light blue contractual employee badges depending on the frequency of their visits per AD 01.02.104, contingent on the passage of a background check per AD 01.02.107

Transfer Holds

In accordance with 05.06.112 Offender Transfer Procedure, students enrolled in a credit-bearing postsecondary course shall be considered for an educational hold for as long as they maintain enrollment in a postsecondary program and continue to make regular progress toward completions of their program without substantial interruption due to behavior or poor academic performance.

The Department reserves the right to make transfers, as needed, for operational reasons but will endeavor to avoid educational interruptions.

Removal from Postsecondary Education

Individuals found guilty of disciplinary infractions that occur outside of the classroom, do not affect education delivery, and do not necessitate placement into Restrictive Housing (RH) per AD 05.15.100 shall not be removed from postsecondary courses unless they are found guilty of four (4) or more such infractions in a 90 days period.

In the event a student regularly and persistently disrupts the delivery of postsecondary education, the student may be removed following at least 3 such instances of disruption during the same 30 day period. The first removal shall last no more than 5 days. At the discretion of the instructor, students may be removed from courses or program for fewer infractions.

In accordance with AD 05.15.100 and DR 504, RH may only be used when there is a clear and documented threat to the safety and security of the facility or the general public that cannot be mitigated without the use of RH.

The use of less restrictive options, such as a temporary demotion in grade (i.e. "C" Grade) as defined in DR 504, shall be considered prior to any RH placement.

Individuals found guilty of an infraction that are then assigned to RH shall miss the remainder of the current relevant academic unit of course delivery (quarter, semester, trimester, etc...) as determined by the postsecondary provider.

Filing a Formal Complaint

The Department shall provide postsecondary institutions a formal complaint process to address issues with service delivery. These issues may include but are not limited to: timely review of course materials, unreasonable rejection of course material, or erroneous removal of a student from a course. When such events arise, postsecondary providers may file a formal complaint and request for remedy by completing and submitting form DOC.YY.YY.YY to the Assistant Warden of Programs. If a facility lacks an AWP, the provider may submit the complaint to the OAEVS Manager.

Upon receipt of DOC.YY.YY.YY, the Assistant Warden of Programs will make a good faith effort to address the issue, complete the "explanation of remedy" section, sign the form and submit a copy to the postsecondary provider, the Warden, and to the OAEVS Manager.

As needed, upon the receipt of a completed DOC.YY.YY.YY, the OAEVS Manager or their designee shall contact the relevant Assistant Warden of Programs, Education Facility Administrator, or postsecondary provider for further mediation of disputes.

Individuals in custody shall follow existing policy for submitting grievances (04.01.114).

Financial Aid Services

The Department will make reasonable accommodations to facilitate the delivery of financial aid seminars at least on a biannual basis to interested student and individuals preparing for reentry.

Postsecondary providers and their administrative staff will be responsible for delivering financial aid seminars and instruction in the facility(ies) in which they instruct in conjunction with other postsecondary providers.

Higher Education Advisory Services

The Department staff shall make reasonable accommodations and coordinate with postsecondary providers and their administrative staff to facilitate the delivery of academic advising. Advising session may occur in-person or by phone on a quarterly basis.

Process for Adding New Postsecondary Program and Courses – New Providers

The Department shall have a formal process through which postsecondary providers not under contract with IDOC can propose offering additional programs and courses at IDOC facilities. The Department will consider proposals from any accredited postsecondary institution that demonstrate a willingness to work collaboratively with the Department to modify course delivery to suit a correctional setting and are able and willing to complete an approved MOU.

IDOC shall clearly lay out and provide any required documentation to complete this process on its website.

To propose adding an additional postsecondary program or course at IDOC, providers should be directed to:

Complete and submit a short proposal and implementation plan (DOC.XX.XX) to the Chief of Programs or their designee.

The Chief of Programs shall review the submission, provisionally accept, or deny the request, and then share with the relevant AWPS and the OAEVS Manager for final approval.

Upon approval by the OAEVS Manager, in consultation with the IDOC Legal Team, shall work with the postsecondary provider to negotiate an MOU based on the IDOC MOU Template.

Should the Department reject a proposal, the postsecondary provider may submit a revised proposal, to include specific solutions to address the rationale for rejection from the Department.

IDOC will review proposed additions at least twice per year, in January and June of each calendar year, and respond to prospective partners in writing in as timely a manner as feasible.

Process for Adding Postsecondary Opportunities – Existing Providers

The Department shall have a formal process through which postsecondary providers currently working with IDOC can propose offering additional programs and courses at IDOC facilities.

For those postsecondary providers not working under a paid IDOC contract, the Department will entertain any proposals for expansion of postsecondary opportunities .

To expand postsecondary educational opportunities, facility-level staff will work in coordination with the OAEVS Manager to:

Support postsecondary providers in the development of a short proposal and implementation plan (DOC.VV.VV.VV) identifying the additional program, course, or courses, how the proposed additions fit into or enhance a facilities existing postsecondary offerings, who would instruct additional offerings, and how the provider plans to deliver those courses.

Upon review of the DOC.VV.VV.VV the relevant EFA and AWP will consult and make a formal recommendation, complete with a justification, as to whether to move forward with the proposed addition. This recommendation will take into consideration the importance of expanded program opportunities for rehabilitation while also identifying barriers to implementation specific to the facility. This formal recommendation will be sent to the OAEVS Manager.

The OAEVS Manager will formally approve or deny of the program expansion and provide a justification should that conclusion differ from the recommendation made by staff.

Upon approval by the OAEVS Manager, the Department, in close consultation with its Legal Team, shall work with the postsecondary provider to modify the existing MOU to reflect new additions.

Should the Department reject a proposal, the postsecondary provider may submit a revised proposal, to include specific solutions to address the rationale for rejection from the Department.

IDOC will review proposed additions at least twice per year, in January and June of each calendar year, and respond to prospective partners in writing in as timely a manner as feasible.

Prioritizing Postsecondary Offerings

In the event a facility has inadequate space and resources to offer additional postsecondary opportunities and reasonable measures have been taken to address these limitations, it may be incumbent on the Department to select which postsecondary courses it can offer. This decision shall be made by the OAEVS Manager in collaboration with the relevant EFA and Assistant Warden of Programs. In prioritizing postsecondary offerings, the Department may consider:

Total course length, with preference given to courses that can offer credits in a shorter period of time and thus provide access to more students;

The number of students a single course can accommodate;

Course accessibility, with preference given to courses that are accessible to more individuals in custody (ie. Associates degree course over a Master's Degree course);

Course diversity, a broad but logical set of offerings that fit the average sentence length and education level of individuals incarcerated at the relevant institution;

Complete programs of study ahead of standalone courses;

Education pathways, the way in which a course logically leads to the completion of a degree with preference given to courses that logically build on each other over courses that are not part of a broader pathway;

Transferability, with preference given to institutions whose credits are accepted by the widest range of higher education institutions in Illinois.

Communication Outside of the Classroom

Postsecondary instructors and relevant administrative staff may communicate with current or former students, during incarceration or following release for the purposes of education, higher education counseling, and career counseling as needed. IDOC will make reasonable accommodations to facilitate this communication during incarceration.

If instructors intend to maintain professional relationships with students following release from prison, IDOC will require the signature of a release form (DOC ZZ.ZZ.ZZ) which will be maintained in the instructor's volunteer file. Institutions may also include a blanket release in their respective MOUs or contract.

Individuals or institutions that choose to provide ongoing services to their formerly incarcerated students shall not be considered representatives of the Department in any way.

Consistent with IDOC policy, individuals on community supervision (MSR) may not communicate with incarcerated individuals until the completion of the mandatory supervised release.

Scheduling Outside Visits and Graduation Ceremonies

The process for scheduling outside visits to postsecondary classrooms and facility graduations shall be laid out in individual MOUs as this process may vary by facility and security level.

All outside visits and graduation ceremonies must be approved by appropriate security personnel, including the Warden, Assistant Warden of Operations, or their designees as appropriate.

Illinois Department of Corrections Postsecondary Education MOU Template

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (“MOU”) is entered into by and between [_____] (“College”) and the Illinois Department of Corrections (“Department”) the [__] day of [Month], [Year] for the purpose of providing a system of effective educational services as an integral part of corrections programs at [Correctional Facility].

WHEREAS, [College] and the Illinois Department of Corrections (each a “Party” and collectively the “Parties”) are entering into this MOU for the purpose of bringing college courses to qualified incarcerated individuals.

WHEREAS, all parties desire to collaborate to deliver a post-secondary educational program for eligible people who are incarcerated in a state correctional facility;

WHEREAS, this program seeks to encourage students to pursue postsecondary education while they are incarcerated. Studies have shown that students who seek education during their time in prison have lower recidivism rates compared to others;

NOW, THEREFORE, [College] and the Illinois Department of Corrections agree as follows:

I. PURPOSE OF THE MOU

The purpose of the MOU is to define the overall structure and guiding principles under which the [College] and the Illinois Department of Corrections will collaborate during the term of this agreement. [College] is currently authorized to participate in the Project. [Insert description of college programs provided]. The Illinois Department of Corrections will partner with [College] to house enrolled students, provide classroom facilities, and provide staffing support that enables the [College] to offer classes in its facilities.

Through this MOU, the Parties aim to create an operational structure that (i) defines the overall responsibilities of and roles for each of the partners and (ii) provides an overall basis for additional supplemental operating agreements between parties, as may be useful to the success of this MOU.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Full compliance with the policies and procedures of the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Specifically, Administrative Directive XXX.XX.XXX

Consistent high-quality educational offerings

Fiscal transparency and cost effectiveness

Mutual respect and understanding for all parties involved

Genuine partnership to deliver services safely, effectively, and to ease administrative burdens where possible

The Parties recognize that the Illinois Department of Corrections has the legal responsibility for the safety and security of all participants. The Parties agree to carry out activities in ways that are fully compliant with the Illinois Department of Corrections policies and procedures.

The Parties recognize the need to provide the highest quality educational offerings possible within the unique context of correctional facilities. The qualifications of instructors and the classroom

pedagogy (including the design of syllabi and evaluation of student learning) are the responsibility of the [College]. IDOC aims to respect and uphold the tenets of academic freedom. The Parties recognize that exceptional care will need to be given to managing program costs and coordinating available revenue streams to ensure the financial viability of the Project over time. Prior to the beginning of each year, [College] will develop an annual budget with expected costs, both direct and indirect, and revenues (including from Pell grants and grants from foundations and public entities) based on enrollment and instructional projections.

III. DEFINITIONS

Except as otherwise noted, the following words shall have the following meanings when used in this

MOU:

[Examples of possible definitions:]

- A. "College" means any postsecondary institution working inside IDOC
- B. "Director" means . . .
- C. "Education Facility Administrator (EFA)" means . . .
- D. "Incarcerated Student"
- E. "Education Program"
- F. "President"
- G. "Project"
- J. "Student"

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES

The lists of responsibilities contained in Article [] through [] below are not intended to be exhaustive.

The Parties will consult on these duties periodically (at least twice per year) to determine whether responsibilities should be modified, removed, added, or expanded. Such a revision shall be effective upon the mutual, written agreement of the Parties; an email between the designated points of contact listed in Article [], Section [], below is sufficient for this purpose.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS]

[Corrections Department] agrees to support the Project in the following manners:

Access to classroom space. The Illinois Department of Corrections agrees to permit and facilitate [College]'s access to classroom space in the facilities for college degree courses offered during the academic semesters.

Access to storage space. The Illinois Department of Corrections agrees to permit and facilitate [College]'s access to storage space for instructional materials.

Program materials. The Illinois Department of Corrections agrees to review and approve program materials prior to the start of the semester.

Student screenings. The Illinois Department of Corrections agrees to facilitate the screening of students to determine qualification to participate in the Project. Minimum qualifications for students can be found in Attachment A.

College faculty, staff, and volunteer screenings. The Illinois Department of Corrections agrees to screen college faculty, staff, and volunteers prior to the start of the semester. Screening requirements will include any and all background requirements laid out in IDOC AD 01.02.107.

Support for training related to the Project. The Illinois Department of Corrections agrees to provide training and orientation for college faculty and staff participating in the Project. The Illinois Department of Corrections facilities will develop and present an orientation program regarding important IDOC policies and important issues about safety and security within a correctional facility.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF [COLLEGE]

[College] agrees to support the Project in the following manners:

- A. Courses, certificates, and degree programs. [College] agrees to develop and implement courses, certificates, and degree programs that provide recognized educational credit or widely recognized industry-recognized credentials.
- B. Faculty training. [College] agrees to provide pedagogy training for faculty who teach in the corrections facilities. [College] attests that faculty and staff working on this project meet the same rigorous standards and possess the same credentials as the faculty and staff employed at its home campus.
- C. Program goals and structure. [College] agrees to provide an overview of the program goals and structure to corrections staff.
- D. Student and faculty orientation. [College] agrees to lead orientation for new students and faculty prior to the beginning of the semester.
- E. List and schedule of classes. Prior to the beginning of the semester or quarter, [College] agrees to provide the Illinois Department of Corrections with a list of classes to be offered and a schedule of the times classes will be offered.
- F. Syllabi of assignment and curriculum. [College] agrees to provide syllabi for students of the assignments and curriculum for each course being taught over the semester.
- G. Textbooks and supplies. [College] agrees to provide students with textbooks and supplies required for the course.
- H. Target Population and Program Criteria. [College should detail which specific population(s) it plans to serve. College will lay out the requirements to be eligible to participate beyond the minimum requirements set forth by IDOC in its Administrative Directives]
- I. Credit Transferability and Articulation Agreements. [College explains how and if students that receive credit can transfer that credit to other institutions. College explains how it will facilitate the transfer of credit for students enrolling into its program or course.]
- J. Desired Application Process [College will identify a simple application process to screen program applicants]
- J. Plans for Inclusion of Additional Volunteers. [College will explain whether it anticipates participants, outside of faculty and staff, participating in any course work]
- K. Plan for Enrollment Post-Release [College explains whether it plans to accept students who are released from prison to continue their education at the institution in question. College states explicitly whether it has any special provisions that prohibit or prevent incarcerated students from enrolling following release]
- L. Publication Review. [College] attests that it will comply with IDOC's publication review process as detailed in IDOC administrative directives.

M. Release of Grades and Transcripts. [College] agrees to provide unofficial grades and transcripts to IDOC and to incarcerated students, free of charge, for recording keeping purposes in compliance with FERPA.

N. Program Exclusivity. [College] does/does not anticipate that participation in its offering will preclude students from enrolling in other post-secondary opportunities for the duration or a portion of their enrollment.

O. Request Timeliness. [College] agrees to provide Departmental staff a sufficient amount of time to process requests and accommodate adjustments to schedules, lesson plans, and materials.

P. Outside Availability. [College identifies whether the courses or programs of study it offers are available in the community or are only being offered in correctional facilities]

Q. Attendance. [College] agrees to track attendance of all students for the duration of their participation. [College] recognizes that not tracking attendance may jeopardize a student's ability to earn sentence credit.

VII. DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES of DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

The Department agrees that its staff shall work collaboratively and cooperatively with [College] counterparts and complete their duties and responsibilities consistent with the agency Administrative Directive covering postsecondary programming. (Attachment A)

VIII. DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES of [College] FACULTY, STAFF, & ADMINISTRATORS

[College] agrees that its Faculty, Staff and Administrators shall:

Provide an overview of the program goals and structure to corrections staff on a biannual basis or as requested by the EFA or Assistant Warden of Programs.

In conjunction with the EFA or their designee, lead program or course orientation for new students and faculty prior to the beginning of the semester.

Disseminate and collect signed forms from participating students indicating they have received a course orientation.

Complete attendance for each class on the class roster provided by the EFA.

Provide syllabi for students of the assignments and curriculum for each course.

Provide students with textbooks and supplies required for each course.

Submit all course materials to the relevant facility at least 25 working days prior to the anticipated start date of the program

Provide a final schedule for program delivery at least 14 working days prior to the anticipated start date of the program.

Provide any minor revisions to a previously approved curriculum at least 5 working days before instituting those changes

In conjunction with other postsecondary providers working in a given facility, deliver a biannual financial aid and higher education seminar to Department staff to inform IDOC staff about postsecondary funding opportunities for them and their families and to build support for postsecondary education across DOC.

Furthermore, [College] agrees to provide annual reports to the Department on program enrollment and completion, to include data on aggregate age, race, and sex. All individual-level data collected by postsecondary providers will include the IDOC number of the relevant individuals in custody.

Grades/records and other pertinent student information shall be maintained per the accredited programs' standards. Grades/records and pertinent student information will be made available to the Department upon request.

Each semester, trimester, or quarter as available, postsecondary education providers must submit to the Assistant Warden of Programs, or Education Facility Administrator, an updated unofficial transcript for each student.

Postsecondary providers, at the end of each quarter, shall provide IDOC with the number of unique students that have enrolled and completed any courses they offer across the Department. These reports shall include the individual's name and IDOC number.

Postsecondary providers are strongly encouraged to have a representative present during instruction, such as a proctor or volunteer, to ensure students are able to answer questions about program completion and to ensure fidelity. Upon request, IDOC can work with postsecondary providers to identify an alternative arrangement for course delivery supervision/assistance when the postsecondary provider is unable to identify a suitable program representative.

IX. JOINT DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

[College] and [Corrections Department] agree to support the Project in the following manners:

A. Disciplinary procedures and dismissal policies. Parties agree to abide by the Department's policies for program removal and discipline, consistent with state law and laid out in Attachment A. In the event that a disagreement arises, [College] staff/faculty will follow IDOC's formal complaint process, as detailed in Attachment A.

B. Movement and transfer policies. Parties agree to consider the issue of student movement to and from areas of the prison and transfers between corrections facilities and draft policies covering these activities.

C. Data-sharing and protections. Parties agree to develop a data-sharing agreement including protecting Family Education Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") related data.

D. Academic Freedom policy. Parties agree to consider [College]'s Academic Freedom policy and how it will be upheld in the prison satellite location.

E. Accreditation audit. Parties agree to clarify how an accreditation audit will be conducted by the [College]'s accrediting agency and what access this agency will need to classrooms, materials, and students.

F. Information technology. Parties agree to clarify information technology responsibilities, limitations, and requirements.

G. Communications plan. Parties agree to develop a communications plan for press releases and graduations. Parties agree that any planned events must receive prior written approval from Department staff, to include the relevant Warden or Assistant Warden of Operations.

H. Disruptions and lockdowns. Parties agree to troubleshoot course continuity during widespread disruptions or facility lockdowns and, when deemed feasible by IDOC, provide electronic access.

I. Annual reporting, audits, and reviews. Parties agree to develop a schedule and procedure for annual reporting and audit or program reviews.

J. Postsecondary Advisory Services. [College] and their administrative staff will provide academic advising to all their enrolled and prospective students. The Department shall make reasonable accommodations to facilitate the delivery of academic advising to students and prospective

students, in-person, by phone, or other widely available communications platform, at least quarterly.

X. FILING FORMAL COMPLAINTS TO RESOLVE CHALLENGES

[College] and their staff will have access to a formal complaint process should [College] encounter an issue with service delivery in a specific facility, including but not limited to: timely review of course materials, unreasonable rejection of course material, or erroneous removal of a student from a course. In such instances, the provider may file a formal complaint and request for remedy by completing and submitting form DOC.YY.YY.YY (Attachment B) to the Assistant Warden of Programs. If a facility lacks an AWP, the provider may submit the complaint to the OAEVS Manager.

Upon receipt of DOC.YY.YY.YY, the Assistant Warden of Programs will make a good faith effort to address the issue, complete the “explanation of remedy” section, sign the form and submit a copy to the postsecondary provider, the Warden, and to the OAEVS Manager.

As needed, upon the receipt of a completed DOC.YY.YY.YY, the OAEVS Manager or their designee shall contact the relevant Assistant Warden of Programs, Education Facility Administrator, or postsecondary provider for further mediation of disputes.

XI. PROCESS FOR EXPANDING EXISTING POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS

The Department shall establish a process to allow existing postsecondary partners to expand their existing program offerings. This process is laid out in the Department’s policy and in Attachment A. [College] staff shall work with their counterparts at the Department to complete IDOC Form VV.VV.VV and submit the completed form to the relevant Assistant Warden of Programs and Education Facility Administrator.

Following approval of a request to expand existing postsecondary programs, the Department and [College] shall collaborate to modify their MOU to reflect updated offerings.

XII. MISCELLANEOUS

A. No assignment of rights. Neither party may assign its rights under this MOU without the express written permission of the other party. Any assignment that does not adhere to this provision will be deemed null and void.

B. Amendment only by mutual agreement. This MOU may be amended only by mutual, written agreement of the parties. Either party may terminate the MOU with thirty (30) days’ written notice to the other.

C. Term. This MOU is effective as of [Date], and continues in effect through [Date]. The MOU may be extended beyond this date by mutual, written agreement of both parties; email between the points of contact below is sufficient for this purpose.

D. Termination. This MOU is contingent upon [Corrections Department]’s fulfillment of its obligations as set forth in Article [] hereof. In the event that [Corrections Department] fails to meet these obligations, [College] shall have the right to terminate this MOU.

E. Liability/Indemnification: No party will be responsible for delays or failures in performance from acts beyond the reasonable control of such party. Each party shall be responsible for any liability arising from its own conduct and retain immunities and all defenses available to them pursuant to state and federal law. Each party shall cooperate with the other party in the investigation and resolution of administrative claims and/or litigation arising from conduct related to the responsibilities and procedures addressed herein.

F. Governing Law. This MOU shall be governed by and construed in accordance with Illinois law and any applicable federal laws. G. Points of Contact. To facilitate successful administration of the Project, each party will designate a principal representative who will act as the contact person for each party in the day-to-day conduct of the Project.

H. Confidential Information. When Confidential Information is exchanged by IDOC and (College) the following rules shall apply: (a) the confidential nature of the information must be preserved; (b) the information furnished must be used only for the purpose for which it was made available; (c) assurance must be given that the proper steps shall be taken to safeguard the information; and (d) access to such information shall be limited to personnel who require the information to perform their duties or to whom access is permitted by statute or regulation. As used herein, "Confidential Information" shall mean and include all information relating to the business, finances, technology, research, development, and intellectual property of a Party, and any other information which such Party ("Disclosing Party") discloses to the other Party ("Receiving Party") relating to the Purpose and is designated by Disclosing Party as confidential or proprietary. Confidential Information may be disclosed by any means, including written, electronic, and verbal. All Confidential Information must be either disclosed in (a) tangible form and conspicuously marked "confidential," "proprietary," or the like or (b) non-tangible form, and identified as confidential at the time of disclosure and reduced to writing and sent to the Receiving Party within fifteen (15) calendar days of its disclosure. IDOC and (College) acknowledge that certain information about the students will be confidential by reason of the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20. U.S.C 1232g), Illinois Code of Corrections, 730 ILCS 5/3-5-1 and other Federal and State confidentiality statutes and regulations that cover persons committed to IDOC. Both Parties agree to protect these records in accordance with the aforementioned rules and statutes.

Notices. Any notice, demand, or request required or permitted to be given under the provisions of this Agreement shall be in writing and shall be deemed to have been duly given under the earlier of (a) the date actually received by the party in question, by whatever means and however addressed, or (b) the date sent by facsimile or e-mail (receipt confirmed), on the date of personal delivery, if delivered by hand, or on the date signed for if sent by an overnight delivery service, to the following addresses, or to such other address as either Party may request.

To IDOC: Maria Miller
Illinois Department of Corrections
1301 Concordia Court
Springfield, Illinois 62794

To (College):

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties to this Agreement, through their duly authorized representatives have executed the agreement on the days and dates set out below and certify that they have read, understood and agree to the terms and conditions of this agreement as set

forth herein. This agreement shall be effective upon execution by the duly authorized representatives of IDOC and (College).

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Date _____

By:

Illinois Department of Corrections

Date _____

By:

(College)



Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

60 E. Van Buren Street, Suite 650
Chicago, Illinois 60605
Phone: (312) 793-8550
Fax: (312) 793-8422
TDD: (312) 793-4170

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