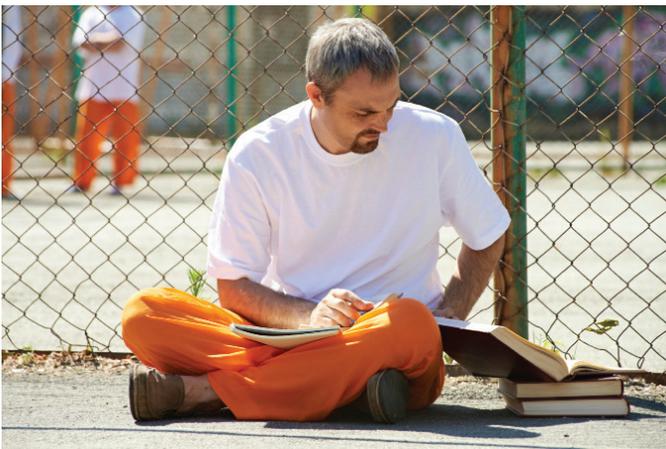


# CORRECTIONS EDUCATION

*"I thought of myself as nothing but a street monger and did not believe that I was worth more than anything other than to die a statistic. I know that (education) has changed my life and it gave me a purpose."*<sup>1</sup>

*Gina McConnell, former Purdy inmate and past Seattle Central College student. McConnell travels throughout the prison system encouraging inmates to pursue education.*



## Improving lives and public safety

The Department of Corrections contracts with community colleges to provide basic education and job training at each of the state's 12 adult prisons so upon release, individuals are more likely to get jobs and less likely to return.

Most offenders entering the prison system lack the education to find work and succeed in society. The average Washington offender scores at an eighth-grade level or lower in basic literacy skills, such as reading and math. Sixty percent are unemployed, and 75 percent lack job skills and vocational training.<sup>2</sup>

Community colleges build a bridge for offenders to successfully re-enter communities. In 2013-14, 9,596 incarcerated offenders participated in community college programs. These students earned:

- 1,085 GED™ certificates.
- 1,812 vocational certificates.
- 47 associate degrees. (No state funds were used.)<sup>3</sup>

## A smart investment

On average, inmates who participate in correction education programs have 43 percent lower odds of returning to prison than inmates who do not, according to a 2013 study by the RAND Corporation.<sup>4</sup>

The return to taxpayers and society is substantial. A 2013 update of a 2011 study by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that there is a benefit to cost ratio of \$13.22 to \$20.13. This means that for every dollar invested in these programs up to \$20.13 is saved from fewer new crimes and costly incarcerations.<sup>5</sup> Instead of paying for prison beds, money is freed for public education, infrastructure, job creation and other priorities that impact the lives of everyday Washingtonians.

Prison education programs also give students hope, focus, goals and a new way of thinking even before they leave the prison walls.<sup>6</sup>

Every year, anywhere from 7,000 to 8,000 inmates are released from Washington prisons.<sup>7</sup> Corrections education helps ensure they don't come back. In doing so, it gives prisoners a fresh chance to be successful community members and gives residents a safeguard from crime.

## Legislative request: AA degrees

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Washington State Department of Corrections are seeking a statutory change to broaden educational pathways available to prisoners. The two agencies are requesting authorization for the Department of Corrections to use existing public funds for associate degrees along with the standard basic education and job training programs.

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## College and prison partnerships

Airway Heights Corrections Center  
Community Colleges of Spokane

Cedar Creek Corrections Center  
Centralia College

Clallam Bay Corrections Center  
Peninsula College

Coyote Ridge Corrections Center  
Walla Walla Community College

Larch Corrections Center  
Clark College

Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women  
Tacoma Community College

Monroe Correctional Complex  
Edmonds Community College

Olympic Corrections Center  
Peninsula College

Stafford Creek Corrections Center  
Grays Harbor College

Washington Corrections Center  
Centralia College

Washington Corrections Center for Women  
Tacoma Community College

Washington State Penitentiary  
Walla Walla Community College

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### Sources:

1. Gina McConnell testimony before House Higher Education Committee, Feb. 21, 2013.
2. Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (Oct. 30, 2014). Washington Community Colleges Correctional Education Annual Report 2013-2014. Olympia: SBCTC.
3. Ibid.
4. RAND Justice, Infrastructure, and Environment. (2013). Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults. Headquartered in Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.
5. Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP). (2015). Inventory of Evidence-Based and Research-Based programs for Adult Corrections. WSIPP.
6. Washington Department of Corrections testimony before Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee, Feb. 6, 2014.
7. Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC). (FY 2013). Number of Prison Releases by County of Release. Olympia: DOC.

## Programs offered

Every prison offers adult basic education programs, which provide a foundational education in reading, writing, math and English language. They also offer GED™ preparation programs and job-search and anger management courses. Workforce programs vary by institution and include:

- Automotive Mechanics Technology
- Automotive Rebuilding and Refinishing
- Automotive Services
- Basic Bookkeeping
- Building Maintenance
- Business Technology
- Carpentry
- CNC for the Workplace
- Computer Programming
- Diesel Mechanic
- Graphic Design
- Green Building
- Horticulture
- HVAC Technology
- I-BEST HVAC Technology\*
- I-BEST Material Composites\*
- I-BEST Building Maintenance\*
- Information Technology Data Specialist
- Institutional Sanitation
- Interactive Media
- Upholstery
- Modern Drywall
- Nursing Assistant
- Roofing and Siding
- Small Business Management
- Specialty Baking
- Technical Design
- Vocational Assessment
- Welding

\*Washington's nationally recognized I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) program pairs basic education with hands-on job experience so students learn in real-world settings.

