

# Second Chance Pell Experimental Sites Initiative Update

(Data through fall 2017)

June 2018  
Fact Sheet

## Why postsecondary education in prison matters

Postsecondary education in prison has been shown to contribute to successful reentry for people who have been incarcerated, while promoting public safety.

- > People who participate in postsecondary education in prison describe the experience as transformative.<sup>1</sup> They become positive role models in prison and they return to their communities with new perspectives and goals, and with new opportunities open to them.
- > People who participate in education programs in prison are more likely to be employed after release. In addition, their families and loved ones are more likely to pursue higher education if they see their loved one enrolled and succeeding.<sup>2</sup>
- > Incarcerated people who participate in prison education programs are 43 percent less likely to recidivate than those who do not.<sup>3</sup> This contributes to creating safer communities as well as taxpayer savings from reduced incarceration costs.<sup>4</sup>

## Second Chance Pell program

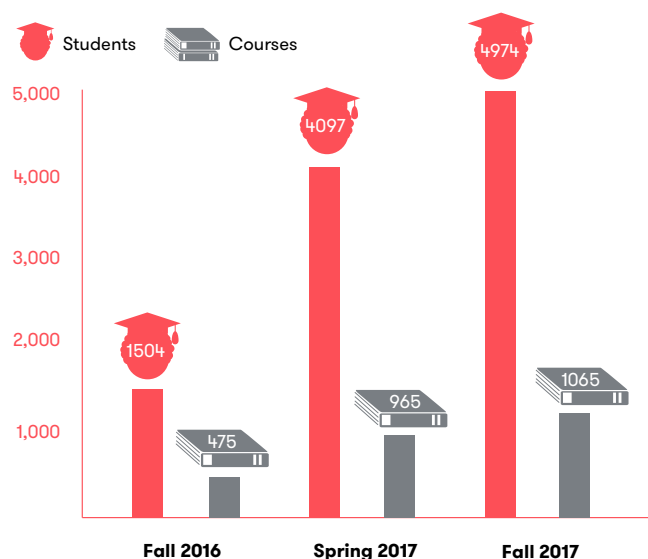
The Second Chance Pell (SCP) Experimental Sites Initiative, launched by the U.S. Department of Education in 2015, provides need-based Pell grants to people in state and federal prisons through partnerships with 65 colleges in 27 states. The colleges were selected in June 2016 for this initiative, which examines whether expanding access to financial aid increases incarcerated adults' participation in educational opportunities. The Vera Institute of Justice (Vera), with initial support from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, and now with philanthropic support, is providing technical assistance to the participating colleges and corrections departments, helping

to ensure that these programs are providing quality higher education both in prison and post-release.

## Increasing enrollment

These college and corrections partnerships taught more than 4,900 students in fall 2017, a 21 percent increase in enrollment from the prior spring semester and a 231 percent increase from fall 2016. Colleges offered more than 1,000 different courses during the fall 2017 semester, an average of 19 courses per site.

## Expanding enrollment and course offerings



## Awarding degrees

Colleges participating in SCP are offering a combined:

- > 82 certificates
- > 68 AA/AS/AAS degrees
- > 21 BA/BS degrees

Incarcerated students are working toward career/technical-oriented stackable certificates in areas like entrepreneurship at

### For more information

The Vera Institute of Justice is a justice reform change agent. Vera produces ideas, analysis, and research that inspire change in the systems people rely upon for safety and justice, and works in close partnership with government and civic leaders to implement it. Vera is currently pursuing core priorities of ending the misuse of jails, transforming conditions of confinement, and

ensuring that justice systems more effectively serve America's increasingly diverse communities.

This project was supported by ECMC Foundation. For more information about the project, contact Ruth Delaney, program manager, at [rdelaney@vera.org](mailto:rdelaney@vera.org).

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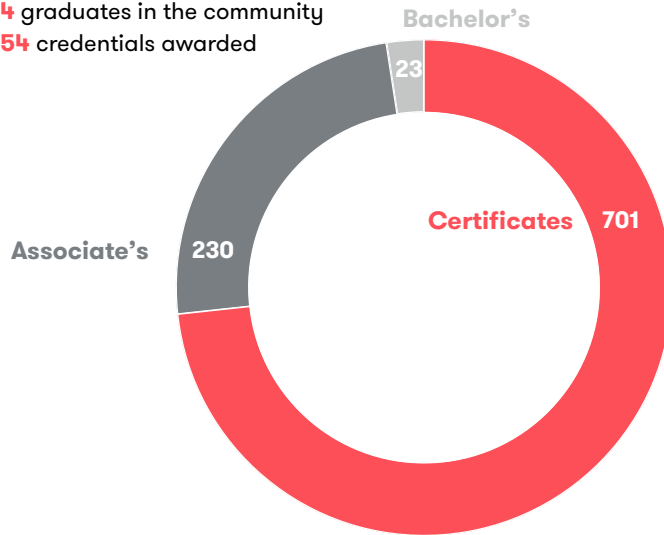
### Endnotes

- 1 Lindsey Livingston and Jody Miller, "Inequalities of Race, Class and Place and Their Impact on Post-Incarceration Higher Education," *Race & Justice* 4, no. 3 (2014), 212-45; and Alexis Halkovic, Michelle Fine, John Bae, et al., *Higher Education and Reentry: The Gifts They Bring* (New York: Prisoner Reentry Institute, 2013), <https://perma.cc/E84N-EUN2>.

Delta College in Michigan, and more academic offerings like an AS in business administration from Connors State College in Oklahoma, and a BA in communications at California State University, Los Angeles.

## Credentials earned since the start of the initiative

**578** graduates in prison  
**34** graduates in the community  
**954** credentials awarded



### Broad impact and a variety of models

Programs range in type and size across states. While several colleges have programs that pre-dated SCP, such as Goucher College in Maryland, Lee College in Texas, and Jackson College in Michigan, 40 percent are new to teaching in prison. Participating colleges—the majority of which are teaching face-to-face courses—offer a variety of programs, including a range of stackable certificates that can build to two-year and four-year degrees. Some, like Florida Gateway College and Auburn University in Alabama, are designed to teach students in a cohort model where a group of students move through the program together; while others, like Shorter College in Arkansas, are teaching more than 200 students who are at different points along their educational trajectories.

## Fall 2017 enrollment by state

State	Students taught*	Courses offered
Texas	664	246
Michigan	583	110
New Jersey	466	52
New York	438	100
Connecticut	409	56
Louisiana	366	39
West Virginia	320	63
Arkansas	305	97
Oklahoma	268	57
Ohio	247	31
Maryland	154	24
Alabama	116	125
California	86	26
Iowa	83	4
Pennsylvania	73	26
Florida	56	4
Indiana	56	14
South Carolina	56	9
Oregon	47	16
Massachusetts	45	7
Maine	43	8
Minnesota	36	6
Washington	29	4
Virginia <sup>^</sup>	>26	>3

\*The numbers only reflect the number of students who accessed Second Chance Pell grants in 2017. They do not reflect students funded through other sources.

<sup>^</sup>Virginia is missing data from one college so the total numbers of students taught and courses offered are greater. Wisconsin and Nebraska also have SCP students. Overall, colleges had a 97 percent response rate to Vera's fall 2017 survey.

### Endnotes (continued)

2 By 2020, 65 percent of jobs will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school. Anthony P. Carnevale, Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl, *Recovery: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2020* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2013), 15, <https://perma.cc/2RPN-8K6Q>.  
 When parents—including those who are incarcerated—complete college, their children are more likely to do so, thereby disrupting the typical cycle of poverty and

incarceration. Correctional Association of New York, *Education from the Inside, Out: The Multiple Benefits of College Programs in Prison* (New York: Correctional Association of New York, 2009), 3, <https://perma.cc/678G-979E>. Also see James M. Conway and Edward T. Jones, *Seven Out of Ten? Not Even Close* (New Britain, CT: Central Connecticut State University, 2015), 10-14, <https://perma.cc/6C63-DRTS>.  
 3 Lois M. Davis, Robert Bozick, Jennifer L. Steele, et al., *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs that Provide Education*

to *Incarcerated Adults* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), 32, <https://perma.cc/AVZ9-JZSG>.  
 4 Every dollar invested in prison-based education yields \$4 to \$5 of taxpayer savings in reduced incarceration costs. Lois M. Davis, Jennifer L. Steele, Robert Bozick, et al., *How Effective Is Correctional Education, and Where Do We Go from Here? The Results of a Comprehensive Evaluation* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014), 81, <https://perma.cc/Q4RQ-DMZW>.