



Since 2019, ten states—including **Louisiana** and **North Carolina** in the South—have enacted measures entirely aimed at education and credentialing within the correctional system. These range from requiring access to postsecondary educational programs to amend how full-time equivalency is measured in correctional education to studying what is or is not working regarding educational and vocational programs within state Departments of Corrections.

State	Measure (Year)	Summary
Arizona	House Bill 2266 (2019)	Modified the eligibility criteria for the state Department of Corrections' transition program to require inmates who are not literate to an eighth-grade level to be currently enrolled in a program to achieve functional literacy.
California	Senate Bill 416 (2021)	This act requires the Department of Corrections to make college programs available to inmates who have a high school diploma or its equivalent, and only through an accredited nonprofit college or university. The bill also requires inmates enrolled in a full-time college-level program to be categorized by the department as equivalent to being assigned to full-time work or training.
Connecticut	House Bill 5301 (2022)	Among other items, the act extends the deadline for the state task force to study the costs and benefits of establishing a Postsecondary Prison Education Program Office within the Department of Corrections. By law, the task force must study topics, including space demands for prison education programming in correctional facilities; processes and standards for approving these programs, their curricula, and course materials; and other state and county correctional agencies' strategies for increasing the number of people who can access these programs using federal Pell grants.
Hawaii	House Bill 300 (2023)	A general budget act included an appropriation of \$100,000 to expand the capacity of a prison literacy program and a grant of \$200,000 to support literacy for the children of inmates.
Illinois	House Joint Resolution 27 (2021)	Created the Illinois Higher Education in Prison Task Force, which is mandated to obtain and analyze existing data on higher education opportunities in prisons across the state, recommend improvements to the data collection and tracking on the issue currently done by the Department of Corrections, assess barriers and opportunities for inmates to complete or continue educational opportunities upon release, and recommend legislative actions to expand the higher education offerings available to inmates.
Illinois	House Bill 3648 (2023)	The Higher Education in Prison Act mandates the Department of Corrections to annually report on higher



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		education programs within its institutions – due each September – and cover various aspects of these programs, including participant demographics, sentence details, waiting lists, grievances, financial expenditures, and the impact of participation on risk assessment scores. The Act requires the protection of personal information in these reports, which are to be submitted to the Governor and General Assembly. Additionally, it outlines that public and private higher education institutions offering degree or certificate programs in prisons must provide student-level data to the Board of Higher Education or the Illinois Community College Board for public dissemination, including enrollment and completion data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and type of degree or certificate.
Louisiana	House Resolution 174 (2023)	Created a task force to study the available opportunities for expanding both academic and vocational educational programs within the prisons and jails of the state. The task force was instructed to compile data on post-release outcomes, programmatic offerings, demographic information, academic retention and completion rates, as well as other relevant details to be reported to the Legislature.
New Hampshire	Senate Bill 376 (2024)	Established the state Corrections Education and Vocational Planning Group (CEVPG) with the stated aim of enhancing the state correctional systems, focusing on career and education opportunities for inmates. To reduce recidivism rates and improve chances of post-release integration into society, the CEVPG is to align its educational offerings with labor market needs and report on any improvements needed to state law or funding to improve outcomes for inmates upon release.
North Carolina	Senate Bill 61 (2019)	An omnibus bill required any community college offerings in state prisons or local jails to be clearly applicable to job skills, post-release transitional needs, or both. It also amended the reporting of full-time equivalent student hours for these correctional programs to be based on student membership, rather than contact hours.
Oregon	Senate Bill 269 (2023)	Required the Department of Corrections and the state Higher Education Coordinating Commission to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to share data, clarify the programs that qualify for a degree or postsecondary credit, craft a policy for distance learning opportunities for adult inmates, and develop financial aid



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State	Measure (Year)	Summary
		guidance and opportunities. Notably, it also requires the inclusion of at least one male and one female incarcerated adult on the advisory committee responsible for annually reviewing the MOU.
Oregon	Senate Bill 270 (2023)	Added language to the statute specifying that the Department of Corrections may enter into agreements for educational offerings with any community college in the state, an accredited distance or other postsecondary program, and in accordance with federal Pell Grant requirements.
Utah	House Bill 226 (2022)	Creates the state Higher Education and Corrections Council to provide recommendations on the delivery of educational offerings within the state's correctional facilities, collect and track data as to impacts, and report to the Legislature annually.