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OPENING DOORS

The State of Higher Education in Texas Prisons



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Executive Summary

Recidivism, a relapse into criminal behavior following release from the criminal justice system, costs Texas over \$585 million every year.¹ Expanding educational opportunities available to people while they are incarcerated can significantly reduce recidivism, saving taxpayers money and improving post-release economic outcomes including workforce success.

The most recent academic studies indicate that inmates who participated in college-level education programs are as much as 41.5% less likely to recidivate and demonstrate a \$1.61 return for every \$1 spent on prison college programs.² While higher education programs in Texas prisons are having positive outcomes, they do not have the capacity to meet the demand for enrollment among incarcerated Texans.

Texas has the opportunity to reduce recidivism and improve post-release outcomes among individuals in Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) facilities by expanding access to educational opportunities that provide incarcerated Texans with the skills and credentials they need to succeed in the workforce upon release, but to do so will require the state to update inadequate data and governance systems to provide the information, structure, and oversight necessary.

Recent federal and state action, including community college finance reforms in House Bill 8 (88R), can provide crucial support for such efforts, as community colleges are best positioned to provide the necessary education programming at scale, but additional state action is necessary to ensure long-term success.

Texas can continue to reduce recidivism and improve employment outcomes by:

- Improving governance and identifying and removing barriers to new postsecondary programming in Texas prisons;
- Allowing community colleges to offer postsecondary education and training to incarcerated Texans outside of a specific service area;
- Improving data collection and sharing between state corrections, education, and workforce agencies; and
- Establishing and integrating benchmarks on prison higher education into state workforce goals.

¹ The Cost of Recidivism. The Council of State Governments Justice Center. April 2023. <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/the-cost-of-recidivism/>

² Stickle, Ben, and Steven Sprick Schuster. "Are Schools in Prison Worth It? The Effects and Economic Returns of Prison Education." American Journal of Criminal Justice 48, no. 6 (December 2023): 1263–94. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-023-09747-3>

Higher Education Reduces Recidivism and Increases Employment Outcomes

Research has consistently shown that participation in formal prison education programs is positively correlated with lower recidivism and better employment outcomes. A frequently-cited 2013 RAND meta-analysis of relevant studies on prison-based academic vocational training programs found that inmates who participated in correctional education programs were 43% less likely to recidivate and 13% more likely to obtain post-release employment than those who did not participate. Education programs also saved the state money. According to the RAND study, every \$1 invested in prison education reduced incarceration costs by \$4 to \$5 during the first three years after an inmate's release.³

In 2018, the same RAND authors limited their sample to studies with the most rigorous research designs and found that participants in any correctional education program were at least 28% less likely to recidivate when compared with those who did not participate.⁴ And a more recent 2023 meta-analysis by researchers from Middle Tennessee State University suggests a 41.5% reduction in the likelihood of recidivism and an estimated \$1.61 return for every \$1 spent on college-level programs in prisons.⁵

Employers also indicate that they are more likely to hire formerly incarcerated individuals with a postsecondary credential. A 2024 study surveyed a nationwide sample of employers presenting them with three kinds of fictional applicant résumés of formerly incarcerated individuals with differing levels of education—a GED, a sub-baccalaureate certificate, and a bachelor's degree.⁶ Employers who reviewed applicants with a certificate or bachelor's degree were 42% more likely to indicate a willingness to call back the applicant than those with only a GED.

³ Davis, Lois M, Robert Bozick, Jennifer L Steele, Jessica Saunders, and Jeremy N V Miles. "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults," RAND Corporation (2013).

⁴ Bozick, Robert, Jennifer Steele, Lois Davis, and Susan Turner. "Does Providing Inmates with Education Improve Postrelease Outcomes? A Meta-Analysis of Correctional Education Programs in the United States." *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 14, no. 3 (September 2018): 389–428. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s1292-018-9334-6>

⁵ Stickle, Ben, and Steven Sprick Schuster. "Are Schools in Prison Worth It? The Effects and Economic Returns of Prison Education." *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 48, no. 6 (December 2023): 1263–94. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-023-09747-3>

⁶ Ballou, Abby. "Degrees of Difference: Do College Credentials Earned behind Bars Improve Labor Market Outcomes?" *Criminology* 62, no. 1 (February 2024): 129–55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12364>

Additional Benefits of Correctional Higher Education

Participation in education programs provides benefits to incarcerated students beyond reducing recidivism and increasing post-incarceration employment outcomes. A 2023 study by Professor Amy Lerman of the University of California, Berkeley exploring the relationship between postsecondary education and desistance showed positive results in students' sense of self-efficacy and civic orientation.⁷ Smaller surveys found that participation in postsecondary education programs can mitigate the effects of self-stigmatization associated with incarceration.⁸ Other qualitative surveys suggest that the “development of personal attributes and professional skills through higher education connects individuals with larger social institutions and prosocial networks.”⁹

The results of both the qualitative studies showing pro-social behavioral changes and the quantitative studies suggesting real reductions in recidivism and improvements in economic and employment outcomes point to the same conclusion—postsecondary education in prison works.



⁷ Lerman, Amy E, and Meredith Sadin. “Transformational Learning and Identity Shift: Evidence from a Campus behind Bars.” *Punishment & Society* 25, no. 3 (July 2023): 683–706. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14624745221087702>.

⁸ Evans, Douglas N., Emily Pelletier, and Jason Szkola. “Education in Prison and the Self-Stigma: Empowerment Continuum.” *Crime & Delinquency* 64, no. 2 (February 1, 2018): 255–80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001128717714973>.

⁹ Evans, Douglas N. and Emily Pelletier. “Beyond Recidivism.” *Journal of Correctional Education* (1974-) 70, no. 2. (August 2019): 49–68.

Existing Correctional Higher Education Programs in Texas

Institutions of higher education (IHEs) have been working with incarcerated Texans through various educational, vocational, and rehabilitative programs for decades despite multiple challenges. Due to technological and infrastructural obstacles, instruction is generally delivered in person, requiring close coordination with TDCJ officials. Instructors are screened and trained by TDCJ and limited class space and competing class times complicate scheduling. Additionally, correctional officers have to move incarcerated individuals from residential areas to the classrooms.

Existing Educational Programs are Delivering Positive Outcomes

Established by the Texas Legislature in 1969, Windham School District provides educational services to students incarcerated in TDCJ facilities. With over 900 employees and operating at 100 TDCJ facilities, Windham's high-school level academic, career and technical education (CTE), and cognitive behavioral programs are designed to provide students with the skills needed to obtain employment upon reentry.

According to the most recent data available, students who completed Windham programs were 17.6% less likely to recidivate, and students who completed Windham's CTE program were 23.1% less likely to recidivate. Additionally, Windham students obtained post-release employment 20% more quickly than non-students.

Between 2019 and 2021, Windham awarded:

3,146

High School
Equivalency credentials.

129

High School Diplomas.

27,501

Career and Technical
Education (CTE) certificates.¹⁰

¹⁰ Windham SD. "Rider 6 Report." January 2023. https://wsdtx.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Rider_6_Report_January_2023_f9e3b.pdf

// EXISTING CORRECTIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN TEXAS

Historically, IHEs contracted with Windham to provide postsecondary education to incarcerated Texans who had a GED or high school diploma and met other criteria.¹¹ Following changes in the governing budget rider, IHEs contracted directly with TDCJ, and higher education fell under the purview of the Rehabilitation Programs Division (RPD) within TDCJ, which administered and managed a broad array of inmate programs.¹² A few RPD employees assigned to the postsecondary education department were responsible both for coordinating institutions of higher education offering the programs as well as the enrollment of incarcerated individuals in those same programs.

When an incarcerated individual wanted to enroll in a higher education program, they would fill out an interest form indicating their preferred programs and submit it to RPD's postsecondary education employees.¹³ They would also indicate how they intended to pay for the courses. If the individual met the program criteria, they would be placed on an "interest list," a waitlist based on program availability. Historically, incarcerated men have had significantly more program offerings than incarcerated women.¹⁴

TDCJ is currently undergoing a substantial reorganization in response to recommendations from the Sunset staff report, and as of October 2024, the responsibility of administering higher education has shifted from RPD to a newly merged division called "Rehabilitation and Reentry."¹⁵



¹¹ See Fabelo, Tony. "Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District." Criminal Justice Policy Council. April 2020.

¹² TDCJ. "Post-Secondary Education Programs (Academic and Vocational)." Rehabilitation Programs Division. Accessed October 17, 2024. https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/rpd/ps_education.html.

¹³ TDCJ. "Postsecondary Education Interest Form (Male)." Rehabilitation Programs Division. Accessed October 17, 2024. https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/documents/rpd/Academic_Vocational_Interest_Form_Male.pdf

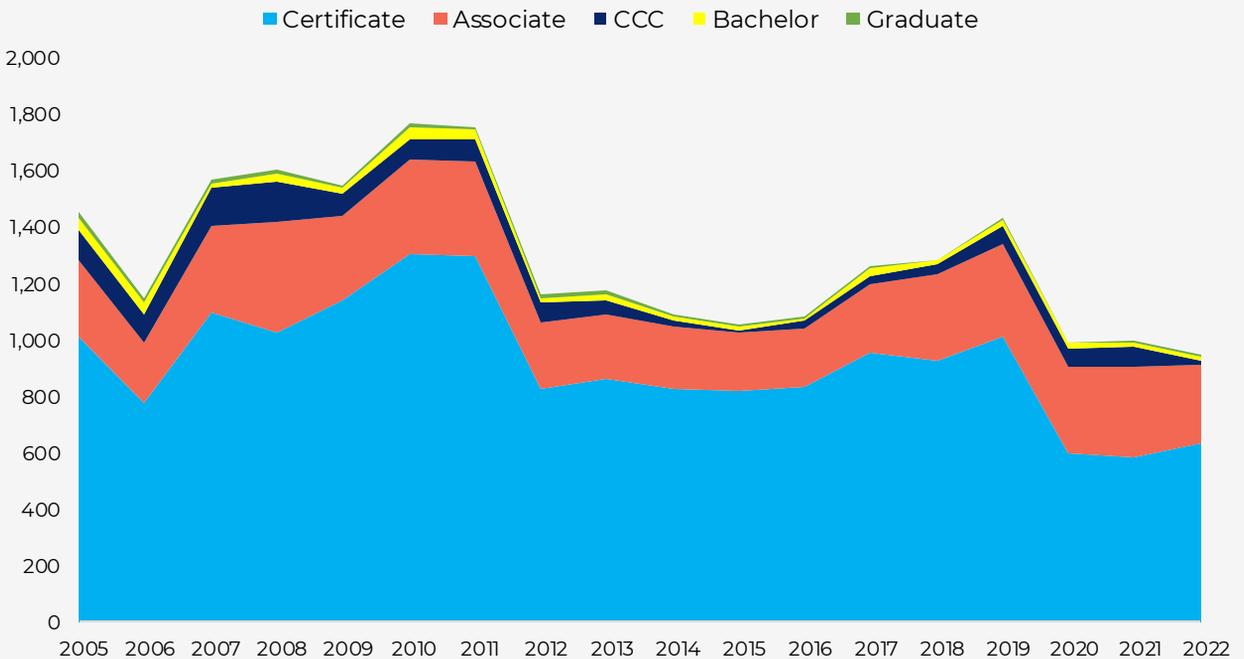
¹⁴ Nadra Nittle. "In Texas prisons, men have access to significantly more higher education programs than women." 19th News. May 2022. <https://19thnews.org/2022/05/texas-prison-higher-education-system-inequity/>.

¹⁵ See Appendix B: TDCJ Organizational Charts

Degree & Credential Attainment Trends

Texas 2036 analyzed higher education data maintained by the Texas Education Research Center (ERC) for this report.¹⁶ Data on degrees and credentials is divided into six types: certificates, associate’s degrees, core curriculum completion certificates (CCC), bachelor’s degrees, graduate-level degrees, and other credentials. Between 2005 and 2022, no incarcerated students obtained a credential in the “other” category. Notably, the decline in the number of degrees and credentials attained—from 1,752 degrees and credentials awarded in 2011 to 945 degrees and credentials awarded in 2022—is smaller than the decline in overall enrollment, indicating that the credential attainment rate among enrolled students has not declined.

Figure 1: Credential & Degree Attainment for Incarcerated Students

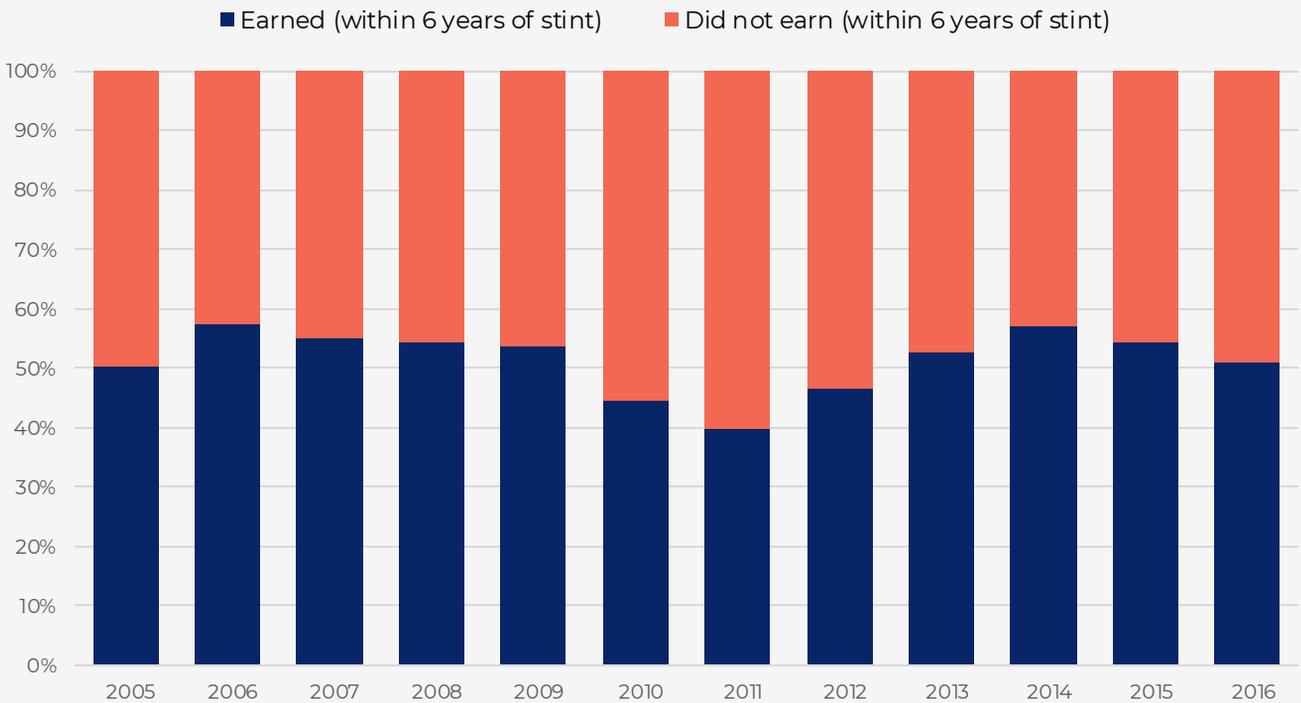


Source: Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data.

¹⁶ For a full summary on methodology and a table of data elements, see Appendix A: ERC Data Elements.

Estimating completion rates is important to evaluate the health of higher education programs. Starting with incarcerated Texans enrolled in 2005, between 40-57% earned some kind of postsecondary degree or credential within 6 years of their initial incarcerated-enrollment. This generally outpaces community college 6-year graduation rates over the same period.¹⁷

Figure 2: Degree/Credential Attainment Rates for Incarcerated Students ¹⁸



Source: Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data.

¹⁷ THECB. "Texas Higher Education Accountability System." available at <https://www.txhigheredaccountability.org/AcctPublic/InteractiveReport/AddReport>.

¹⁸ Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data.

Fields of Study and Positive Wage Outcomes

Incarcerated higher education students enroll in a broad range of fields of study, with “Business Management” being the most popular.¹⁹

Figure 3: Incarcerated Students Fields of Study

Majors	Total Enrollments/Year										
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Agriculture	273	235	254	260	395	375	360	343	265	237	291
Computer & Info. Services	312	216	277	244	309	357	262	298	158	112	125
Personal & Culinary Services	138	92	153	155	143	160	146	141	119	86	87
Engineering Technicians	283	246	288	240	223	192	194	185	131	88	106
Liberal Arts / General Studies	2,344	1,722	1,206	1,027	1,088	1,095	957	910	873	538	579
Multi / Interdisciplinary	109	87	77	76	82	93	70	68	72	41	61
Social Sciences	49	15	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Construction Trades	70	64	90	132	112	139	126	118	66	55	54
Mechanic & Repair Technologies	385	353	413	394	399	447	398	378	286	161	281
Precision Production	401	359	543	518	485	478	458	497	391	261	294
Transportation & Materials Moving	69	71	86	82	-	-	63	68	64	12	-
Health Professions	19	40	59	-	70	95	176	146	164	87	63
Business Management	542	416	655	1,000	1,295	1,588	1,584	1,614	1,288	1,424	1,604
Undeclared	214	72	54	164	196	88	-	-	-	-	-
Total	5,208	3,988	4,161	4,356	4,858	5,168	4,806	4,781	3,886	3,111	3,581

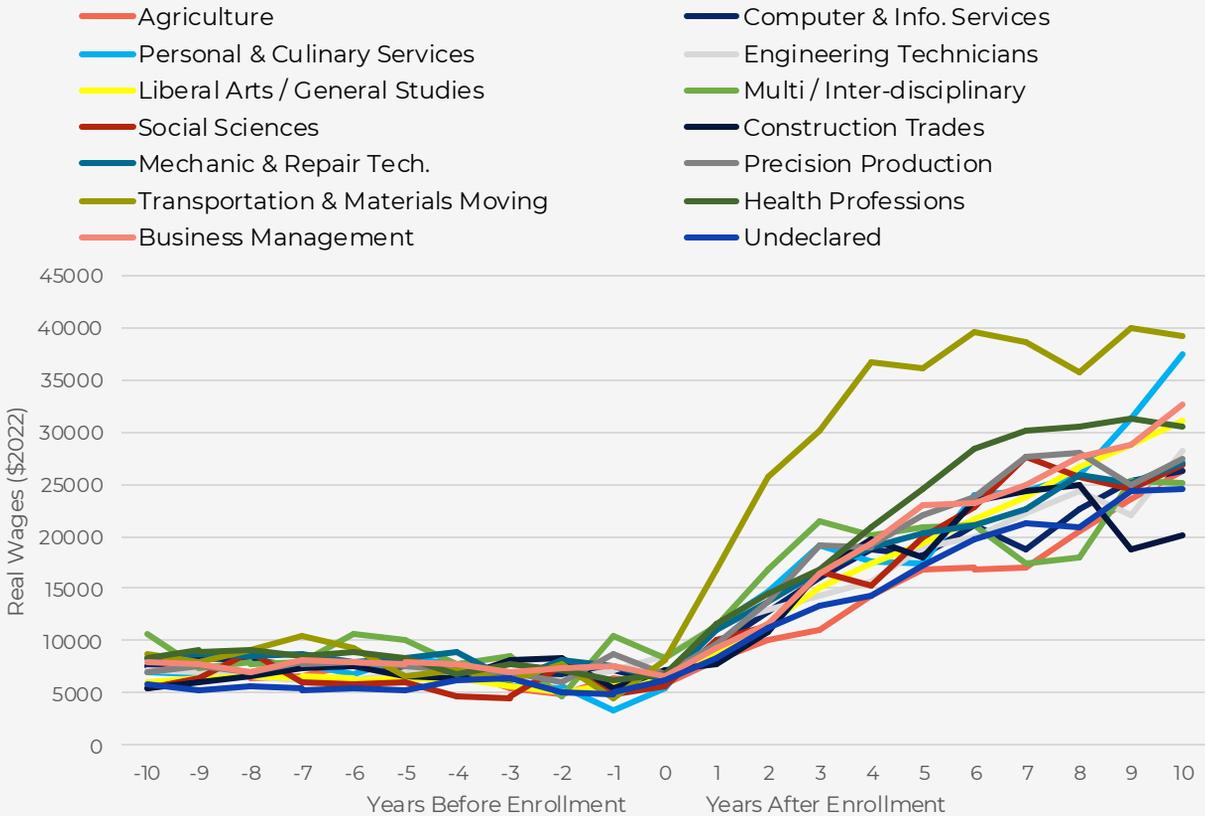
Source: Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data..

¹⁹ Ibid.

// EXISTING CORRECTIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN TEXAS

Students who have reported wages before and after their enrollment while incarcerated experienced an increase in their median wages regardless of their field of study.²⁰ Across the board, these students' inflation-adjusted wages show increases that are thousands of dollars above what was reported prior to their incarcerated-enrollment.

Figure 4: Incarcerated Students' Real Median Wages (2022 CPI)



Source: Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data.

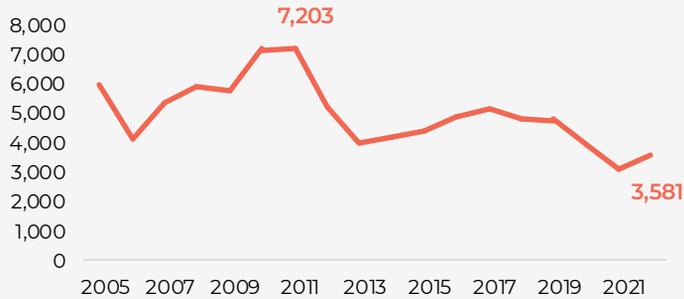
If adult correctional data were shared with the ERC's education and workforce database, future analysis could pinpoint when an individual was incarcerated and when they were released back into society. It could also provide a baseline of incarcerated individuals' wage experiences regardless of their enrollment in higher education programs that would provide additional insights into program outcomes and efficacy.

²⁰ Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data. Year zero" represents an individual's first year in the data as both enrolled and incarcerated. This "stint year" can range from 2005 to 2022. To protect privacy, any major grouping with fewer than 5 people reporting wages at any point was excluded. The chart only displays non-zero reported wages. It doesn't distinguish between actual zero earnings and missing data.

Existing programs do not meet demand

According to ERC data, enrollment among incarcerated individuals is at a historical low point. From a high-water mark in 2011, overall enrollment in 2022 was down more than 50%. Declining enrollment does not, however, reflect a lack of demand for correctional education programs but a lack of capacity to meet demand for these programs.

Figure 5: Incarcerated Student Enrollment Over Time



Source: Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data.

Data from TDCJ's Rehabilitative Programs Divisions (RPD) suggest a significant unmet demand for postsecondary education among incarcerated Texans.²¹ According to TDCJ-RPD, 13 IHEs offered some programming in 32 different TDCJ units in 2022. In November of that year, there were roughly 2,000 incarcerated individuals enrolled and over 8,100 incarcerated Texans on the waitlist. Data from April 2024 shows both figures worsening — 1,800 students enrolled while 8,300 were waitlisted.

Figure 6: TDCJ Student Enrollments & Waitlists

	November 2022		April 2024	
	Enrolled	Waitlisted	Enrolled	Waitlisted
Academic	1,659	3,700	1,532	3,118
Vocational	474	4,469	343	5,249
Total	2,133	8,169	1,875	8,367

Source: TDCJ

Data about how long eligible, prospective students remain on a waitlist before enrollment was not available.

²¹ Obtained via public information request from TDCJ-RPD.

Community Colleges Offer a Transformative Solution

Given their typical offerings—two-year associate's degrees and shorter courses of study for technical and vocational certifications—community colleges are well-equipped to offer adaptable programming in a prison environment.

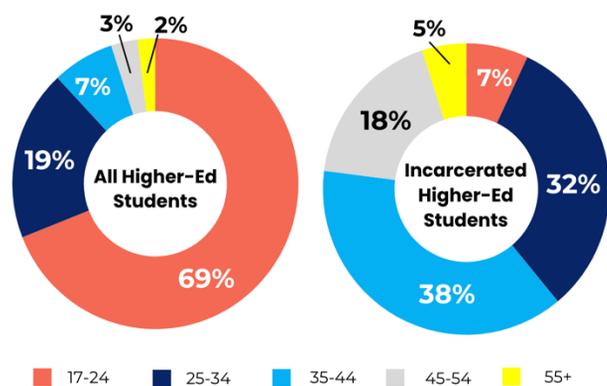
Of the IHEs reporting data to the ERC on incarcerated Texans enrolled in 2022, not only are 8 out of 10 IHEs community college systems, but community colleges also account for the majority of enrollments — over 90% of incarcerated Texas students in 2022 were enrolled in community colleges.²²

While the majority of higher education students in Texas are 17-24 years old, incarcerated higher education students are notably older, with the majority falling between 25-44 years old.²³ Because incarcerated students trend older, this provides access to increased funding opportunities for community colleges in particular.

Figure 7: IHE Incarcerated Enrollments, 2022

Institutions of Higher Education Teaching Incarcerated Texans	Incarcerated Texas Students Enrolled in 2022
Alvin Community College	371
Blinn College	67
Clarendon College	139
Trinity Valley Community College	683
Lee College	1,742
Southwest Texas Junior College	7
Central Texas College	120
Western Texas College	115
University of Houston - Clear Lake	109
Lamar State College – Port Arthur	228
Total	3,581

Figure 8: Age Distribution of IHE Students, 2022



Source: Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data.

²² Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data. Data about some institutions recognized by TDCJ are not included either because they do not award course credits or because their program structure (i.e. extension or continuing education programs) operates under different data-reporting rules. IHEs reported as operating in state prisons by TDCJ as of May 2023 that do not appear in the data for the last three years include Texas A&M-Central Texas, Amarillo College, Austin Community College, Cedar Valley College, Texarkana College.

²³ Texas 2036 Analysis of ERC Data.

Texas Community College Funding Opportunities

Coinciding with changes in federal Pell Grant availability, the way Texas community colleges are financed with state funding is undergoing a sea-change. The passage of HB 8 in 2023 transformed the system from a static, enrollment and hours-based formula to a model that is based on dynamic outcomes.²⁴ In short, the new model relies on four priority metrics: credential of value attainment, credential of value attainment in high-demand fields, successful transfer to a four-year university, and dual credit completion. Importantly, there are additional weights for key student populations: economically disadvantaged, academically disadvantaged, and adult learners—populations with a significant presence in prisons.

Figure 9: Community College Finance Elements

Definitions & Weights	
Economically Disadvantaged	= Pell recipients (25% weight)
Academically Disadvantaged	= Students failing to meet TSI requirements (25% weight)
Adult Learners	= 25+ years old (50% weight)

Community colleges are aware of the alignment between these weighted student populations and the general population of incarcerated Texans. In 2024, 13 IHEs established the Texas Higher Education in Prison Consortium (TXHEPC) to collaborate on meeting new federal Pell Grant requirements and to explore additional opportunities for post-secondary education in prisons. TXHEPC is organized as a nonprofit for institutions to pool resources, collect and share data, develop policy recommendations, and promote scholarly research on higher education in prison.²⁵ A majority of the founding members of the TXHEPC are community college systems. However, the ability of community colleges to capitalize on these natural advantages is limited in part by statutorily defined service areas.

²⁴ Renzo Soto. "Understanding HB 8: The new funding formulas." Texas 2036. July 2023. <https://texas2036.org/posts/understanding-hb-8-the-new-funding-formulas/>.

²⁵ Alexa Garza. "Higher Education in Texas Prisons: A Collective Conversation & Networking." Alliance for Higher Education in Prison. July 2024. <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Texas-HEP-Convening-Brief.pdf>.

Federal Pell Grants and Prison Education Programs

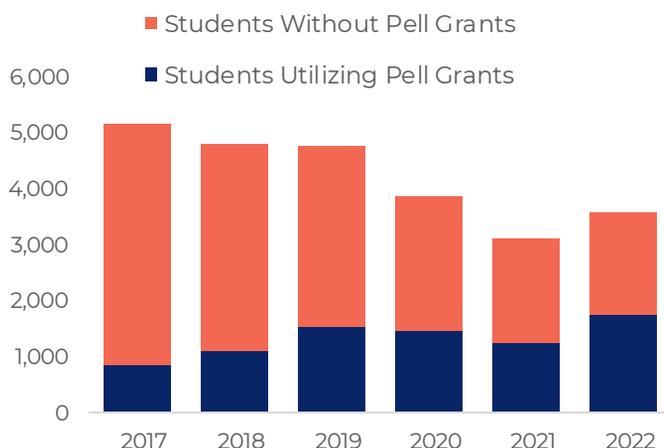
In addition to existing state funding opportunities, federal Pell Grants offer additional student financial aid that can further offset the cost of participation in prison higher education programs.

In 2015, the Obama Administration announced the “Second Chance Pell Pilot Program” (SCP), providing need-based Pell Grants to incarcerated individuals in state and federal prisons. In 2016, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) invited 67 IHEs from 17 states to participate as Second Chance Pell (SCP) sites. Early successes led to expansions under the Trump Administration in 2020 and 2022, ultimately covering 200 colleges in 48 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico.²⁶

During the SCP pilot program, a growing share of incarcerated students have relied on Pell Grants and, by 2022, Pell Grant recipients represented nearly half of all incarcerated students.²⁷

While the SCP pilot program ended in 2023, education programs that were previously approved are temporarily continuing under waivers that provide for a revised SCP program.²⁸ As of June 2024, six IHEs in Texas were operating under Revised SCP waivers.

Figure 10: Incarcerated Student Pell Utilization.



Source: Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data.

²⁶ Niloufer Taber and Asha Mralidharan. “Second Chance Pell: Six Years of Expanding Higher Education Programs in Prisons, 2016-2022.” Vera Institute of Justice. June 2023. <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/second-chance-pell-six-years-of-expanding-access-to-education-in-prison.pdf>

²⁷ Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data.

²⁸ US Department of Education. “(GENERAL-23-25) Invitation to Participate in a Revised Second Chance Pell Experiment Under the Experimental Sites Initiative.” April 18, 2023. <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/electronic-announcements/2023-04-18/invitation-participate-revised-second-chance-pell-experiment-under-experimental-sites-initiative>. see also, Taber, Niloufer, Amanda Nowak, Maurice Smith, Jennifer Yang, and Celia Strumph. 2024. “The First Year of Pell Restoration.” June 2024. https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/The-First-Year-of-Pell-Restoration_Report.pdf

Following the successes of the SCP pilot program, changes in federal law further expanded funding options for incarcerated individuals. The FAFSA Simplification Act of 2020 (passed as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021) was signed into law by President Trump and made Pell Grants available to incarcerated individuals for eligible prison education programs.²⁹ To be eligible, programs must adhere to regular reporting, oversight, and evaluation.³⁰

To qualify for Pell reinstatement, Texas IHEs first apply to TDCJ for approval to become Prison Education Programs (PEPs).³¹ According to federal rules, TDCJ is responsible for overseeing the required advisory committee, the stakeholder feedback process, and final program approval.³² Approved programs are then accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and ultimately authorized by the US Department of Education for a two-year oversight period before final approval. As of June 2024, at least seven IHEs had applied to TDCJ.

In response to the Pell Grant reinstatement, TDCJ convened a Prison Education Program Advisory Committee and opened applications to institutions to begin the process of standing up formally recognized prison education programs that can accept Pell dollars. The agency has also engaged in outreach to community college partners to open new lines of communication with IHEs.

Texas Postsecondary Education Reimbursement Program

Students in TDCJ facilities have another finance option available to them called the Postsecondary Education Reimbursement program or “PSER.” In short, the costs of tuition are paid up front by TDCJ with the expectation that they be repaid by the incarcerated Texan as a condition of parole upon release. In any given year between the 2013-14 and 2022-23 school years, between 1,000 and 3,000 TDCJ students have utilized PSER funds to pay for some college-level programs.³³ Additional access to individual-level data on PSER uptake would allow analysts to more fully account for financial aid utilization among incarcerated Texans and the effects of Pell Grant availability.

Figure 11: PSER Utilization

Academic Year	TDCJ Students Utilizing PSER
2013-2014	1,207
2014-2015	2,604
2015-2016	3,082
2016-2017	3,026
2017-2018	2,624
2018-2019	2,730
2019-2020	1,902
2020-2021	1,274
2021-2022	1,076
2022-2023	1,100

Source: Texas 2036 analysis of ERC data.

²⁹ “Eligibility of Confined or Incarcerated Individuals to Receive Pell Grants (Updated Sept. 30, 2024) | Knowledge Center.” 2024. Ed.gov. 2024. <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2023-03-29/eligibility-confined-or-incarcerated-individuals-receive-pell-grants-updated-sept-30-2024>

³⁰ Myra Hyder. 2023. Review of Accessing Pell Grants for College Programs in Correctional Settings. Vera Institute of Justice. January 2023. <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/accessing-pell-grants-for-college-programs-in-correctional-settings.pdf>

³¹ See 34 CFR § 668.235.

³² U.S. Department of Education. “Dear Colleague Letter: Eligibility of Confined or Incarcerated Individuals to Receive Pell Grants (Updated Sept. 30, 2024).” <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2023-03-29/eligibility-confined-or-incarcerated-individuals-receive-pell-grants-updated-sept-30-2024>

³³ Obtained via public information request to TDCJ-RPD. For more information, see Appendix C: TDCJ Postsecondary Education Budget Provisions Over Time.

Barriers to Community College Program Expansion

Geographic Limitations of Community College Service Areas

Community colleges are geographically restricted by law to teaching within a designated service area, with very limited exceptions.³⁴ Many TDCJ units are located in service areas where the college system does not offer programming to incarcerated Texans. Typically, for a community college system to teach any course in a different system's service area, it must first establish that the second system is not able to offer the course.³⁵ The community college then seeks approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board after the Higher Education Regional Council reviews the proposed courses.³⁶ Although an expedited process exists that allows a college to offer courses in another college's service area, it does not apply to prison units, and there may be friction in matching the needed programs with the IHE best able to provide them regardless of service area.³⁷

A Lack of Data Hinders Program Development and Success

TDCJ has taken important first steps to address access to correctional higher education programs, but it is limited by a lack of adequate data and coordination between relevant state agencies. Currently, data on the outcomes of Texas postsecondary prison programs are occasionally self-reported by individual IHEs, and limited system-wide information can only be obtained through public information requests to RPD.

According to RPD's data process, initial enrollment information and changes in enrollment for each academic semester are electronically reported by contracting IHEs into the Post-Secondary Education Tracking and Screening System (ES30/ES00).³⁸

³⁴ Texas Education Code, Chapter 130, Subchapter J. See also Texas Association of Community Colleges. "Community College Service Area Legislative History." 2019. https://tacc.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-11/service_area_legislative_history.pdf

³⁵ Sec. 130.251(d), Education Code.

³⁶ Ibid.; 19 T.A.C. §4.278.

³⁷ See, *i.e.* Sec. 51.981, Education Code.

³⁸ TDCJ. "FY 2025-2029 Agency Strategic Plan. June 2024. available at https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/documents/bfd/Agency_Strategic_Plan_FY2025-2029.pdf

Enrollment information entered in ES30/ES00 is verified against the college/university rosters and the unit rosters as of the class certification date. Upon program completion, each IHE confirms any awarded academic degrees and vocational certificates with RPD by providing an “Achievement Report”—a list of academic graduates and vocational certificate completions. Information on degrees and certificates is also entered in the ES30/ES00 system by the IHE.

This data could be improved by including certain demographic information on students (i.e. race) and how long incarcerated Texans sit on waitlists before getting enrolled in a program.

Texas Lacks Measurable Benchmarks for Prison Higher Education Programs

Benchmarking—the practice of identifying and checking specific program metrics at regular intervals—helps ensure programs are making progress towards agency goals. TDCJ’s “2030 Vision,” an aspirational strategy document, includes the ambitious goal of having 95% of exiting inmates secure post-release employment before they are released,³⁹ but it lacks specific benchmarks for higher education programs, even though 63% of jobs in Texas will require some postsecondary training beyond the high school level through 2031.⁴⁰ Similarly, while TDCJ’s Agency Strategic Plan includes goals for postsecondary education including enrollment and credential attainment, these are not “key performance measures” or other program benchmarks against which to measure progress towards these goals.⁴¹

³⁹ TDCJ. “2030 Vision.” Accessed October 17, 2024. https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/documents/2030/2030_Vision.pdf

⁴⁰ Georgetown University. “After Everything: Projections of Jobs, Education, and Training Requirements through 2031 (State Report).” McCourt School of Public Policy, Center on Education and the Workforce. 2023. Accessed October 17, 2024. https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Projections_2031-State-Report.pdf.

⁴¹ TDCJ. “FY 2025-2029 Agency Strategic Plan. June 2024. available at https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/documents/bfd/Agency_Strategic_Plan_FY2025-2029.pdf.

Recommendations

Improve Governance and Identify Structural Barriers to Postsecondary Programs

Windham SD is well positioned to coordinate among IHEs and help process thousands of incarcerated Texans who are eligible and interested in higher education programming. Working collaboratively with education and workforce agencies and other stakeholders, TDCJ and Windham SD should work to identify structural barriers to postsecondary programming that are both internal and external to the adult corrections system.

Allow Community Colleges to Provide Education and Training Outside a Service Area

Community college systems have historically been the most active providers of postsecondary education in Texas prisons, and today they teach the majority of incarcerated higher education students. By law, community colleges are geographically restricted to teaching within a designated service area with very limited exceptions. One of those exceptions should be a streamlined process to offer postsecondary education and training to incarcerated Texans in prisons outside of a college's service area.

Improve Data Collection and Sharing

TDCJ does not collect usable data on most of its rehabilitative programming, and the data collected by institutions of higher education on incarcerated students is limited. The lack of data sharing between TDCJ and the broader education/workforce data ecosystem hampers efforts to effectively measure program outcomes. Texas should improve data collection and sharing to track progress and facilitate performance evaluations.

Establish and Integrate Prison Higher Education into State Workforce Goals

TDCJ and Windham SD should establish measurable benchmarks for the expansion of postsecondary education to improve degree and credential attainment among incarcerated Texans. TDCJ should also incorporate a measurable goal into the TDCJ 2030 Vision plan for pre-release postsecondary credential attainment in a way that is informed by the state's Building a Talent Strong Texas workforce strategic plan.

Appendix A: ERC Data & Methodology

In partnership with the Texas Schools Project at the University of Texas at Dallas through the Texas Education Research Center (ERC), Texas 2036 has pulled comprehensive data on enrollment among incarcerated Texans in IHEs spanning three decades. This is only possible because certain colleges and universities are required to report to THECB whether students are incarcerated in regular CBM reports.

Public Universities

- Univ. Student Census Report (CBMOC1); and
- Univ. Student End of Semester Report (CBMOE1)

Community, Technical, & State Colleges

- CTC Graduation Report (CBM009); and
- CTC Occupational Skills Achievement Report (CBM00M)

Relying on this reporting, Texas 2036 reviewed two datasets generated from the ERC. The first is an “enrollment file,” which includes historical data of all individuals enrolled in higher education from 1993-2022 with an indication as to whether or not the institution of higher education marked the student as “incarcerated” or not. This relies exclusively on higher education data maintained by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The second is a “stint file,” which includes similar information indexed to a “stint year” to conduct a more sophisticated analysis, including students’ public education experience and workforce experience as reflected in wage data collected through the unemployment insurance system. This relies on additional higher education data from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as well as data from the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission.

In selecting the incarcerated student population, Texas 2036 selected enrolled students marked as “incarcerated” between 2005-2022 and screened out individuals who were under 17 years of age.

Dataset 1: “Enrollment File” Data Elements

Variable	Description
ssnrep	Student-SSN replacement ID
enr_yr	Enrollment year
age	Age in an enrollment year
ethnic	Ethnicity reported in an enrollment year
sex	Sex reported in an enrollment year

// APPENDIX A: ERC DATA & METHODOLOGY

ftic	FTIC indicator when enrolled in an enrollment year
school	FICE code where enrolled in an enrollment year
major	Major-CIP code enrolled in an enrollment year
sch_yr	Total semester credit hours in an enrollment year
incar_id	Incarcerated indicator
crs_id	Indicating whether took any course in a year
cte_id	Indicating if took any CTE course in this year
dual_crd_id	Indicating if took any dual credit course in a year
cert_1	Year when received 1st certification
cert_2	Year when received 2nd certification
cert_3	Year when received 3rd certification
asso_1	Year when received 1st associates
asso_2	Year when received 2nd associates
asso_3	Year when received 3rd associates
bach_1	Year when received 1st bachelor
bach_2	Year when received 2nd bachelor
bach_3	Year when received 3rd bachelor
ccc_1	Year when received 1st core curriculum completion certificate
ccc_2	Year when received 2nd core curriculum completion certificate
ccc_3	Year when received 3rd core curriculum completion certificate
grd_1	Year when received 1st graduate
grd_2	Year when received 2nd graduate
grd_3	Year when received 3rd graduate
oth_1	Year when received 1st other credential
oth_2	Year when received 2nd other credential
[pell]	

Dataset 2: “Stint File” Data Elements

Variable	Description
ssnrep	SSN replacement ID
stint_yr	When enrolled as incarcerated but did not enroll as incar. in the prev year
age	Age in a stint year
ethnic	Ethnicity reported in a stint year
sex	Sex reported in a stint year
school_1	FICE the student enrolled in the most credit hours in a stint year
school_2	FICE the student enrolled in the 2nd most credit hours in a stint year
major_1	Major the student enrolled in the most credit hours at school_1 in a stint year
major_2	Major the student enrolled in the most credit hours at school_2 in a stint year
incar_school_1	FICE the student enrolled in the most CH and as incarcerated in a stint year
incar_school_2	FICE the student enrolled in the 2nd most CH and as incarcerated in a stint year
incar_major_1	Major the student enrolled in the most CH at incar_school_1 in a stint year
incar_major_2	Major the student enrolled in the most CH at incar_school_2 in a stint year
ftic	Whether enrolled as a FTIC in a stint year
sch_yr	All Semester credit hours enrolled in a stint year
dual_ch	Dual-Credit hours enrolled in a stint year
dual_id	indicating whether took any dual-credit course in the past
crs_id	crs_id indicating whether took any course in a stint year, available since 2012
cte_id	indicating whether took any CTE course in a stint year, available since 2012
z_rawwrt_8th	Z-score of wrting in 8th grade
z_rawred_8th	Z-score of reading in 8th grade
z_rawmth_8th	Z-score of math in 8th grade
z_rawsci_8th	Z-score of science in 8th grade

// APPENDIX A: ERC DATA & METHODOLOGY

z_rawsoc_8th	Z-score of soc.science in 8th grade
enr_aft_1yr	Whether enrolled 1 year after a stint year
enr_aft_1yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in most hours 1 year after a stint year
enr_aft_1yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in 2nd most hours 1 year after a stint year
enr_aft_1yr_majo	Major at FICE 1 that enrolled 1 year after a stint year
enr_aft_1yr_majo	Major at FICE 2 that enrolled 1 year after a stint year
enr_aft_2yr	Whether enrolled 2 year after a stint year
enr_aft_2yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in most hours 2 year after a stint year
enr_aft_2yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in 2nd most hours 2 year after a stint year
enr_aft_2yr_majo	Major at FICE 1 that enrolled 2 year after a stint year
enr_aft_2yr_majo	Major at FICE 2 that enrolled 2 year after a stint year
enr_aft_3yr	Whether enrolled 3 year after a stint year
enr_aft_3yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in most hours 3 year after a stint year
enr_aft_3yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in 2nd most hours 3 year after a stint year
enr_aft_3yr_majo	Major at FICE 1 that enrolled 3 year after a stint year
enr_aft_3yr_majo	Major at FICE 2 that enrolled 3 year after a stint year
enr_aft_4yr	Whether enrolled 4 year after a stint year
enr_aft_4yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in most hours 4 year after a stint year
enr_aft_4yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in 2nd most hours 4 year after a stint year
enr_aft_4yr_majo	Major at FICE 1 that enrolled 4 year after a stint year
enr_aft_4yr_majo	Major at FICE 2 that enrolled 4 year after a stint year
enr_aft_5yr	Whether enrolled 5 year after a stint year
enr_aft_5yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in most hours 5 year after a stint year
enr_aft_5yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in 2nd most hours 5 year after a stint year
enr_aft_5yr_majo	Major at FICE 1 that enrolled 5 year after a stint year
enr_aft_5yr_majo	Major at FICE 2 that enrolled 5 year after a stint year

enr_aft_6yr	Whether enrolled 6 year after a stint year
enr_aft_6yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in most hours 6 year after a stint year
enr_aft_6yr_fice	FICE where enrolled in 2nd most hours 6 year after a stint year
enr_aft_6yr_majo	Major at FICE 1 that enrolled 6 year after a stint year
enr_aft_6yr_majo	Major at FICE 2 that enrolled 6 year after a stint year
asso_aft_0yr	Received Associate in this stint year
cert_aft_0yr	Received Certificate in this stint year
ccc_aft_0yr	Core Curriculum Completion in this stint year
bach_aft_0yr	Received Bachelor in this stint year
grad_aft_0yr	Received Master/Doc in this stint year
oth_aft_0yr	Received Other Credential in this stint year
asso_aft_1yr	Received Associate 1 year after a stint year
cert_aft_1yr	Received Certificate 1 year after a stint year
ccc_aft_1yr	Core Curriculum Completion 1 year after a stint year
bach_aft_1yr	Received Bachelor 1 year after a stint year
grad_aft_1yr	Received Master/Doc 1 year after a stint year
oth_aft_1yr	Received Other Credential 1 year after a stint year
asso_aft_2yr	Received Associate 2 year after a stint year
cert_aft_2yr	Received Certificate 2 year after a stint year
ccc_aft_2yr	Core Curriculum Completion 2 year after a stint year
bach_aft_2yr	Received Bachelor 2 year after a stint year
grad_aft_2yr	Received Master/Doc 2 year after a stint year
oth_aft_2yr	Received Other Credential 2 year after a stint year
asso_aft_3yr	Received Associate 3 year after a stint year
cert_aft_3yr	Received Certificate 3 year after a stint year
ccc_aft_3yr	Core Curriculum Completion 3 year after a stint year

// APPENDIX A: ERC DATA & METHODOLOGY

bach_aft_3yr	Received Bachelor 3 year after a stint year
grad_aft_3yr	Received Master/Doc 3 year after a stint year
oth_aft_3yr	Received Other Credential 3 year after a stint year
asso_aft_4yr	Received Associate 4 year after a stint year
cert_aft_4yr	Received Certificate 4 year after a stint year
ccc_aft_4yr	Core Curriculum Completion 4 year after a stint year
bach_aft_4yr	Received Bachelor 4 year after a stint year
grad_aft_4yr	Received Master/Doc 4 year after a stint year
oth_aft_4yr	Received Other Credential 4 year after a stint year
asso_aft_5yr	Received Associate 5 year after a stint year
cert_aft_5yr	Received Certificate 5 year after a stint year
ccc_aft_5yr	Core Curriculum Completion 5 year after a stint year
bach_aft_5yr	Received Bachelor 5 year after a stint year
grad_aft_5yr	Received Master/Doc 5 year after a stint year
oth_aft_5yr	Received Other Credential 5 year after a stint year
asso_aft_6yr	Received Associate 6 year after a stint year
cert_aft_6yr	Received Certificate 6 year after a stint year
ccc_aft_6yr	Core Curriculum Completion 6 year after a stint year
bach_aft_6yr	Received Bachelor 6 year after a stint year
grad_aft_6yr	Received Master/Doc 6 year after a stint year
oth_aft_6yr	Received Other Credential 6 year after a stint year
hs_grd_yrs	How many yrs bef/aft the stint yr when grd from a HS
sch_bef_0	Semester credit hours enrolled in the year 0 year(s) before
sch_bef_1	Semester credit hours enrolled in the year 1 year(s) before
...	...
sch_bef_30	Semester credit hours enrolled in the year 30 year(s) before

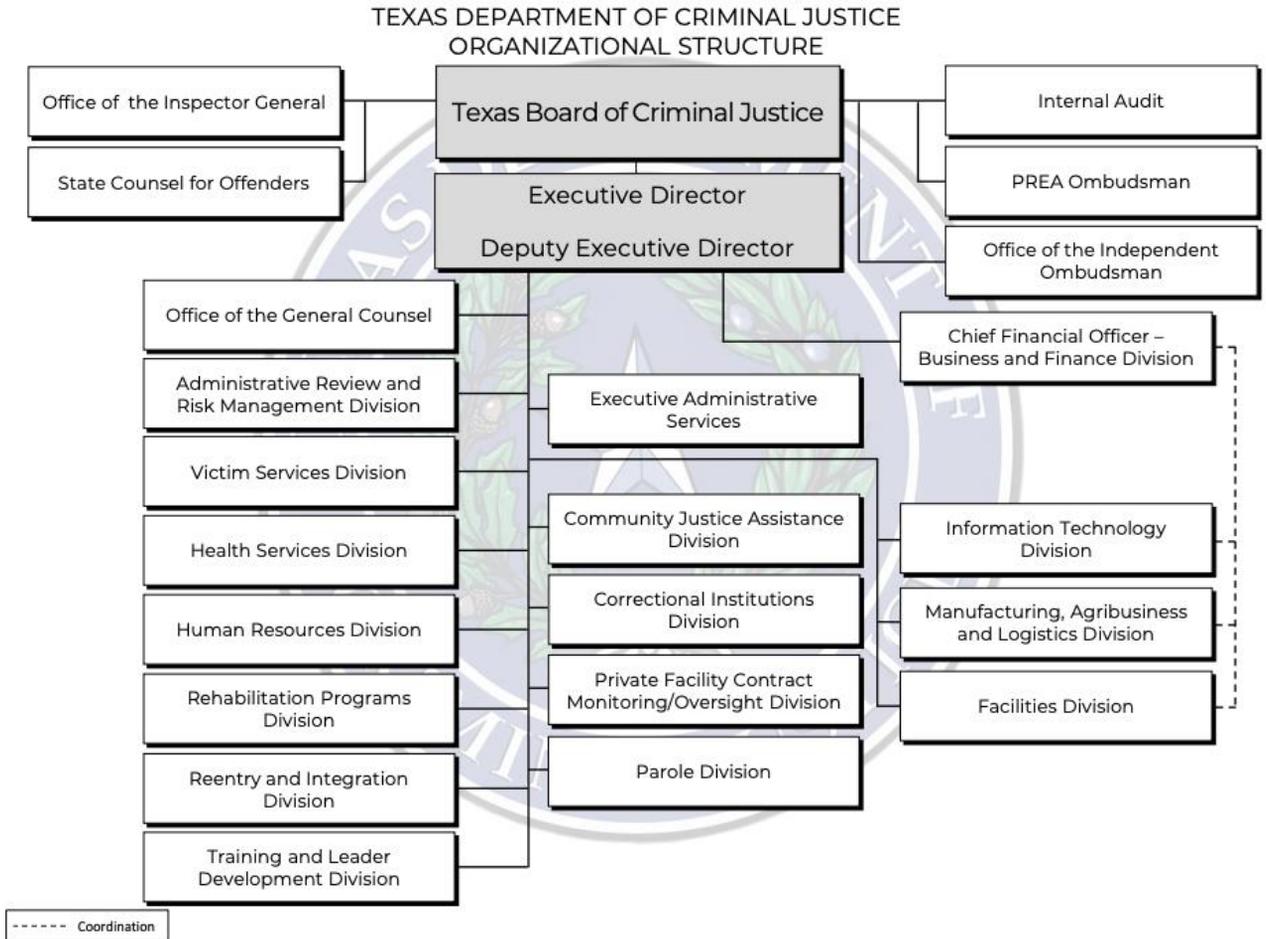
// APPENDIX A: ERC DATA & METHODOLOGY

sch_aft_1	Semester credit hours enrolled in the year 1 year(s) after
...	...
sch_aft_29	Semester credit hours enrolled in the year 29 year(s) after
dual_bef_0	Dual-Credits enrolled in the year 0 year(s) before
dual_bef_1	Dual-Credits enrolled in the year 1 year(s) before
...	...
dual_bef_30	Dual-Credits enrolled in the year 30 year(s) before
dual_aft_1	Dual-Credits enrolled in the year 1 year(s) after
...	...
dual_aft_29	Dual-Credits enrolled in the year 29 year(s) after
stem_bef_0	STEM credit hours earned in the year 0 year(s) before
stem_bef_1	STEM credit hours earned in the year 1 year(s) before
...	...
stem_bef_10	STEM credit hours earned in the year 10 year(s) before
stem_aft_1	STEM credit hours earned in the year 1 year(s) after
...	...
stem_aft_10	STEM credit hours earned in the year 10 year(s) after
cte_bef_0	CTE credit hours taken in the year 0 year(s) before
cte_bef_1	CTE credit hours taken in the year 1 year(s) before
...	...
cte_bef_10	CTE credit hours taken in the year 10 year(s) before
cte_aft_1	CTE credit hours taken in the year 1 year(s) after
...	...
cte_aft_10	CTE credit hours taken in the year 10 year(s) after
ftf_bef_0	Credit hours taken in person in the year 0 year(s) before
ftf_bef_1	Credit hours taken in person in the year 1 year(s) before

...	...
ftf_bef_10	Credit hours taken in person in the year 10 year(s) before
ftf_aft_1	Credit hours taken in person in the year 1 year(s) after
...	...
ftf_aft_10	Credit hours taken in person in the year 10 year(s) after
int_bef_0	Credit hours taken online/hybrid in the year 0 year(s) before
int_bef_1	Credit hours taken online/hybrid in the year 1 year(s) before
...	...
int_bef_10	Credit hours taken online/hybrid in the year 10 year(s) before
int_aft_1	Credit hours taken online/hybrid in the year 1 year(s) after
...	...
int_aft_10	Credit hours taken online/hybrid in the year 10 year(s) after
wage_bef_0	Annual income 0 year(s) before, in 2022 US dollar value
wage_bef_1	Annual income 1 year(s) before, in 2022 US dollar value
...	...
wage_bef_32	Annual income 32 year(s) before, in 2022 US dollar value
wage_aft_1	Annual income 1 year(s) after, in 2022 US dollar value
...	...
wage_aft_29	Annual income 29 year(s) after, in 2022 US dollar value
pell_bef_0	Pell received in the year 0 year(s) before
pell_bef_1	Pell received in the year 1 year(s) before
...	...
pell_bef_21	Pell received in the year 21 year(s) before
pell_aft_1	Pell received in the year 1 year(s) after
...	...
pell_aft_29	Pell received in the year 29 year(s) after

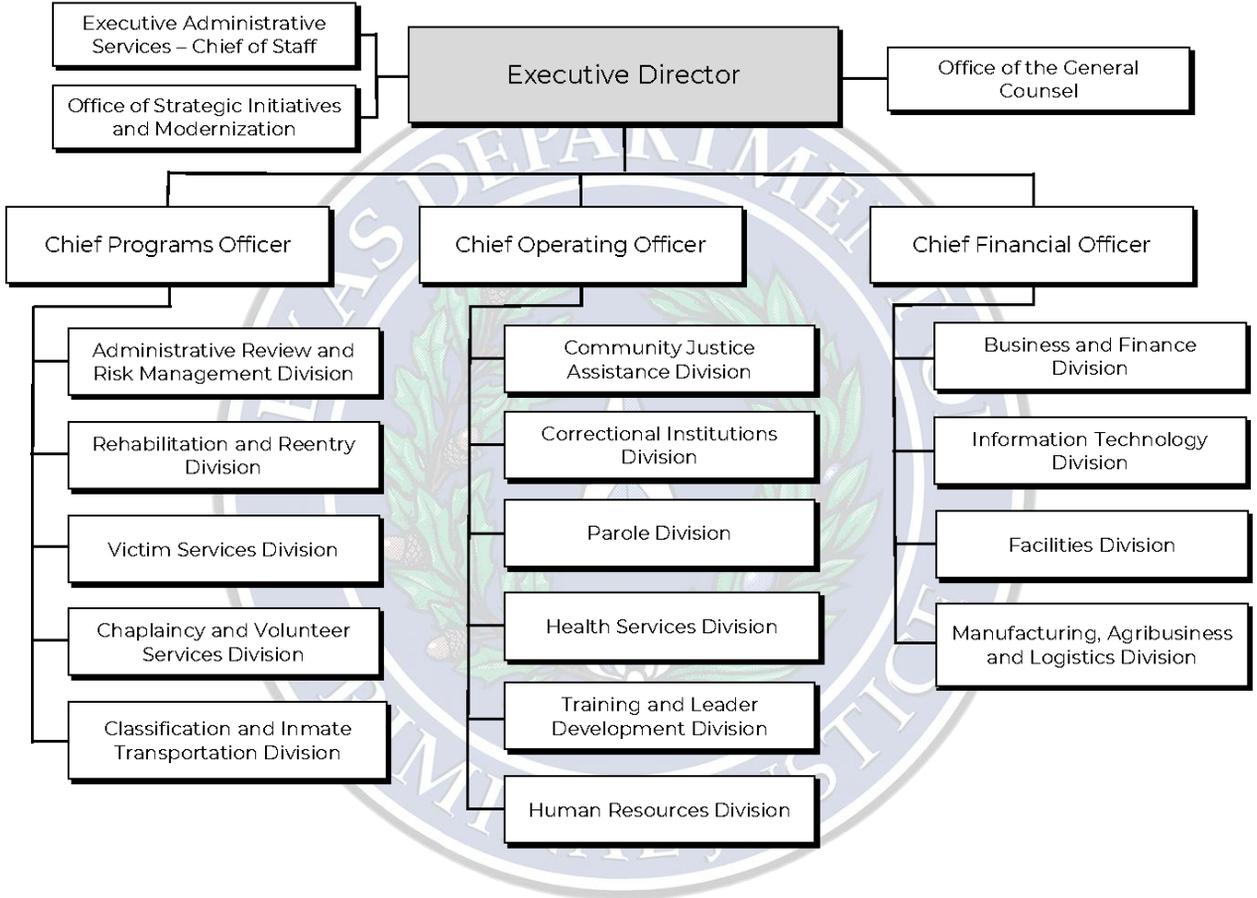
Appendix B: TDCJ Organizational Charts

Pre-October 2024 TDCJ Organizational Chart



Post-October 2024 TDCJ Organizational Chart

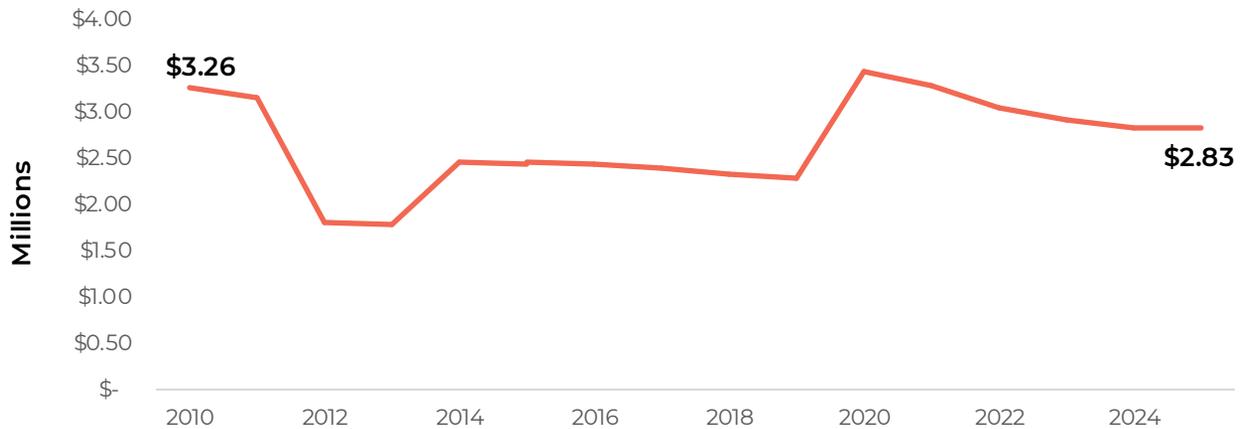
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



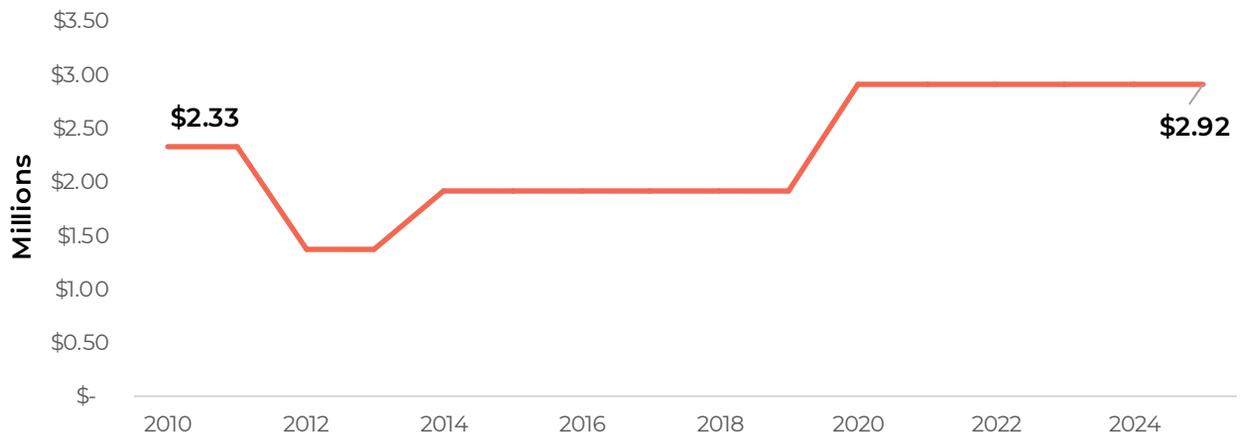
Appendix C: TDCJ Postsecondary Education Budget Provisions Over Time

As discussed in Part 2, prison TDCJ’s postsecondary education budget provision – a 183-word rider – is the sole legal authority directing prison higher education. Over the past decade, this rider has seen substantial changes. The following graphs and tables demonstrate those changes over time as well as funding changes over the same period.

TDCJ C.2.2. Academic/Vocational Training Funding: 2010-2025 (CPI \$2023)



TDCJ C.2.2. Academic/Vocational Training Funding: 2010-2025 (non-adjusted)



GAA 2009 (FY10-11)	GAA 2011 (FY12-13)
C.2.2. = \$2,332,715 \$2,332,715	C.2.2. = \$1,363,883 \$1,363,883
TDCJ Rider 35	TDCJ Rider 36

Postsecondary Education Programs.

Postsecondary education courses shall be available only to inmates who have:

- a. demonstrated a clear and convincing record of rehabilitation while incarcerated, and
- b. demonstrated an interest in a field of study that lends itself to performing specific and beneficial tasks while incarcerated, and
- c. demonstrated the aptitude and capabilities to do college-level study.

The costs of such postsecondary education programs shall be reimbursed by the inmate as a condition of parole.

The Department of Criminal Justice shall not provide in-cell tutoring for inmates who are in administrative segregation.

The Department of Criminal Justice may not transfer appropriations out of Strategy C.2.2, Academic/Vocational Training.

Postsecondary Education Programs. Postsecondary education courses shall be available only to inmates who have:

- a. demonstrated a clear and convincing record of rehabilitation while incarcerated, and
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The costs of such postsecondary education programs shall be reimbursed by the inmate as a condition of parole.

The Department of Criminal Justice shall not provide in-cell tutoring for inmates who are in administrative segregation.

The Department of Criminal Justice may not transfer appropriations out of Strategy C.2.2, Academic/Vocational Training.

GAA 2013 (FY14-15)	GAA 2015 (FY16-17)
C.2.2. = \$1,919,044 \$1,919,044	C.2.2. = \$1,919,044 \$1,919,044
TDCJ Rider 32	TDCJ Rider 30

Postsecondary Education Programs.

Out of funds appropriated above in Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, the Department of Criminal Justice may provide postsecondary education courses only to inmates who have:

- a. demonstrated a clear and convincing record of rehabilitation while incarcerated, and
- b. demonstrated an interest in a field of study that lends itself to performing specific and beneficial tasks while incarcerated, and
- c. demonstrated the aptitude and capabilities to do college-level study.

The costs of such postsecondary education programs shall be reimbursed by the inmate as a condition of parole. One hundred percent of the reimbursements are appropriated to Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training.

The Department of Criminal Justice shall not provide in-cell tutoring for inmates who are in administrative segregation.

The Department of Criminal Justice may not transfer appropriations out of Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training. All of the funds appropriated above in Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, are to be distributed to the community colleges that provide the postsecondary education programs and services. No funds appropriated above in Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, may be retained by TDCJ or the Windham School District for administration. Programs under Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, are to be administered by TDCJ's Rehabilitation Programs Division.

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GAA 2017 (FY18-19)	GAA 2019 (FY20-21)
C.2.2. = \$1,919,044 \$1,919,044	C.2.2. = \$2,919,044 \$2,919,044
TDCJ Rider 30	TDCJ Rider 30

Postsecondary Education Programs.

Out of funds appropriated above in Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, the Department of Criminal Justice may provide postsecondary education courses only to inmates who have:

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No funds appropriated above in Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, may be retained by TDCJ or the Windham School District for administration. Programs under Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, are to be administered by TDCJ's Rehabilitation Programs Division.

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GAA 2021 (FY22-23)	GAA 2023 (FY24-25)
C.2.2. = \$2,919,044 \$2,919,044	C.2.2. = \$2,919,044 \$2,919,044
TDCJ Rider 26	TDCJ Rider 26

Postsecondary Education Programs.

Out of funds appropriated above in Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice may provide postsecondary education courses only to inmates who have:

- a. demonstrated a clear and convincing record of rehabilitation while incarcerated, and
- b. demonstrated an interest in a field of study, and
- c. demonstrated the aptitude and capabilities to do college-level study.

The costs of such postsecondary education programs shall be reimbursed by the inmate as a condition of parole. One hundred percent of the reimbursements are appropriated to Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice may not transfer appropriations out of Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training. All of the funds appropriated above in Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, are to be distributed to the community colleges that provide the postsecondary education programs and services. No funds appropriated above in Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, may be retained by TDCJ or the Windham School District for administration. Programs under Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, are to be administered by TDCJ's Rehabilitation Programs Division.

Postsecondary Education Programs.

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- c. demonstrated the aptitude and capabilities to do college-level study.

The costs of such postsecondary education programs shall be reimbursed by the inmate as a condition of parole. One hundred percent of the reimbursements are appropriated to Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice may not transfer appropriations out of Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training. All of the funds appropriated above in Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, are to be distributed to the **community colleges** that provide the postsecondary education programs and services. No funds appropriated above in Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, may be retained by TDCJ or the Windham School District for administration. Programs under Strategy C.2.2, Academic and Vocational Training, are to be administered by TDCJ's Rehabilitation Programs Division.

Contributors

This report was authored by Texas 2036 as a collaboration between Luis Soberon, who wrote the report, and Carlos Ignacio Navarro, who performed the data analysis.



Luis Soberon, Senior Policy Advisor

Luis is responsible for justice policy at Texas 2036. He covers issues across the justice system from the regulation of law enforcement, to the efficacy of state courts, through various reforms in prisons and beyond. He has been awarded for his legislative work on behalf of first responders and has been recognized for his knowledge of the legislative process & parliamentary procedure in the Texas House of Representatives. He is three-time longhorn. He earned a B.A. in Government and Philosophy from the University of Texas at Austin, Master of Global Policy Studies from the L.B.J. School of Public Affairs, and J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law.



Carlos Ignacio Navarro, Data Analyst

Carlos is a data analyst at Texas 2036, specializing in education, labor markets, natural resources, growth, and data partnerships. He recently contributed to the Space Commission's Strategic Plan by recommending increased collaboration between state and federal agencies to improve space-related data accessibility and sharing. Previously, Carlos collaborated in the development of the College Station-Bryan Economic Index, and coauthored "The Effect of Public Health Insurance on Criminal Recidivism" in the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. Carlos holds a B.A. in Economics from the University of Texas-Pan American and a Master of International Affairs with a focus on International Development and Economic Policy from the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University.



Texas 2036 is a nonpartisan, public policy organization that uses data-driven research to enable Texans to make informed decisions to ensure our state continues to be the best place to live and do business through its bicentennial in 2036 and beyond.

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