



Prison Higher Education


Bills to improve employment and reduce recidivism



Higher education for incarcerated Texans is a proven strategy that has historically been underutilized in Texas prisons. That will now change.

 Even though **higher education programs** for incarcerated individuals are known to **reduce recidivism and improve post-release employment outcomes**, the number of incarcerated Texans enrolled in these programs **declined 50% between 2011 - 2021**.

 A 2024 report by Sunset Advisory Commission found that the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) **lacked data and couldn't effectively administer** postsecondary education programs.

 By April 2024, the number of incarcerated Texans **waitlisted** for associate and bachelor-level programs **outnumbered those enrolled 4 to 1**.

The 2025 Texas Legislative Session overhauls prison education, improving workforce readiness upon release to address recidivism

The Legislature enhanced the post-release workforce readiness of incarcerated Texans by passing several key measures that can make Texas a national model for addressing recidivism through education.

Improving Prison Higher Education Management

SB 2405 by Sen. Parker & Rep. Canales

Transfers authority over postsecondary education programs from TDCJ to Windham School District, the agency responsible for academic and career and technical education for Texas' adult correctional population

Pre-Release

Occupational Licensing

SB 1080 by Sen. West & Rep. Cook

Permits incarcerated Texans who have been through education and training to earn a provisional occupational license before their release, improving their odds of getting a high-quality job

Improved Data-Sharing among Ed & Workforce Agencies

SB 2405 (cont.)

Improves the workforce alignment of credentials and provides transparency and accountability of results by linking prison data with education and workforce data

Free Dual Credit for Incarcerated Students

SB 1786 by Sen. Creighton & Rep. VanDeaver

Allows incarcerated students in Windham School District to take free dual credit courses while completing high school programming

Oversight & Evaluations to Improve Programs

SB 2405 (cont.)

Requires regular evaluations of postsecondary programs, bringing together stakeholders, experts and agencies for a continuous improvement process.

Effective Use of Postsecondary Funding

SB 1 by Sen. Huffman & Rep. Bonnen

Ensures that funds for prison-based postsecondary programs go to directly benefit students instead of administration

For questions,
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