

## FACT SHEET: **Restoration of Pell Grant Eligibility**

The **Education from the Inside Out Coalition** supports policy change that would eliminate the 1994 ban on Pell Grant eligibility on incarcerated persons and re-establish the opportunity for otherwise eligible people in prison to obtain college financial aid through Pell Grants for postsecondary education programs.

The 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act dismantled higher education in prison by eliminating incarcerated students' eligibility for Pell Grants. Providing access to higher education has a ripple effect that extends far beyond the rehabilitation of incarcerated people. Higher education has a positive impact on society by reducing recidivism, increasing public safety and strengthening communities.

### **Incarceration without Education is a Bad Investment**

Nationally, correctional costs consume \$68 billion each year. One in every 31 people in the US is under some form of correctional supervision: jail, prison, probation or parole. More than 2/3 of incarcerated people are re-arrested for a new offense within three years of their release, a clear indication that current correctional policies are failing.

Increasing incarceration rates don't pay off. Despite the significant rise in the correctional population over the past 25 years, rising rates of imprisonment have not been shown to reduce crime or increase public safety.

Education is proven to lower recidivism, thus lowering incarceration costs. For every dollar invested in correctional education programs, two dollars are saved through prevented recidivism.

### **Increasing Access to Higher Education Pays Off**

The value of higher education is clear. Higher education:

- Decreases reliance on public assistance
- Elevates quality of life for children
- Increases the employment rates
- Strengthens communities
- Improves physical and mental health

Postsecondary education in prison is the most successful and cost-effective method to prevent crime and increase public safety.

### **Restoring Pell Grant Eligibility in Prison Will:**

- **Reduce Recidivism**—In 1994, at its highest rate of usage, awards represented only 1/10 of 1% of total grant awards, making this program more cost-effective than re-incarceration. Many people leave prison unskilled and undereducated, both factors that correlate powerfully to recidivism rates, leaving them unprepared for life on the outside.
- **Strengthen Underserved Communities**—Formerly incarcerated people are frequently released to communities that have little to no capacity to provide them with productive employment or reentry assistance. With ever-increasing prison sentences and recidivism rates, incarcerated people are released without the essential tools necessary for reintegration to society.
- **Increase Employment**—Higher education for incarcerated people is valuable in a society where postsecondary credentials are increasingly necessary to gain access to living wage jobs.
- **Reduce Poverty**—Success in higher education in prison carries far beyond prison walls. More than 50% of incarcerated people have children. When parents participate in postsecondary education the likelihood their children will go to college increases, creating more opportunities for multiple generations to climb out of poverty.

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The Education from the Inside Out Coalition is a nonpartisan collaborative of advocates, led by the College and Community Fellowship, JustLeadershipUSA and the Center for Community Alternatives. Our mission is to remove barriers to higher education funding facing students in prisons, both in New York State and nationwide.



### THE COLLEGE & COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP

College and Community Fellowship (CCF) is unique among organizations aimed at helping people reclaim their lives after criminal conviction. Many programs try to address the basic needs of people returning to the community after conviction and prison, but only CCF guides them through the stages of higher education while promoting their leadership, self-advocacy, artistic expression, civic participation and long-term economic security. We see beyond reentry. We see limitless possibilities for our participants, their families and their communities.

Visit [www.collegeandcommunity.org](http://www.collegeandcommunity.org) to learn more.



### JUSTLEADERSHIPUSA

JustLeadershipUSA (JLUSA) is dedicated to cutting the US prison population in half by the year 2030 while reducing crime. JLUSA empowers people most affected by incarceration to drive policy reform.

Visit [www.justleadershipusa.org](http://www.justleadershipusa.org) to learn more.



### THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVES

The Center for Community Alternatives (CCA) is a leader in the field of community-based alternatives to incarceration and reentry. CCA's mission is to promote reintegrative justice and a reduced reliance on incarceration through advocacy, services and public policy development in pursuit of civil and human rights.

CCA's work takes it into the neglected places of America – its ghettos and prisons – the places that many prefer to keep secret. CCA is committed to its responsibility to speak out, not only for progressive alternatives to the criminal justice system but also against those policies and practices that create barriers for people with criminal history records to personal development, transformation, and reintegration back into the community in a healthy, productive and fulfilling way.

Visit [www.communityalternatives.org](http://www.communityalternatives.org) to learn more.