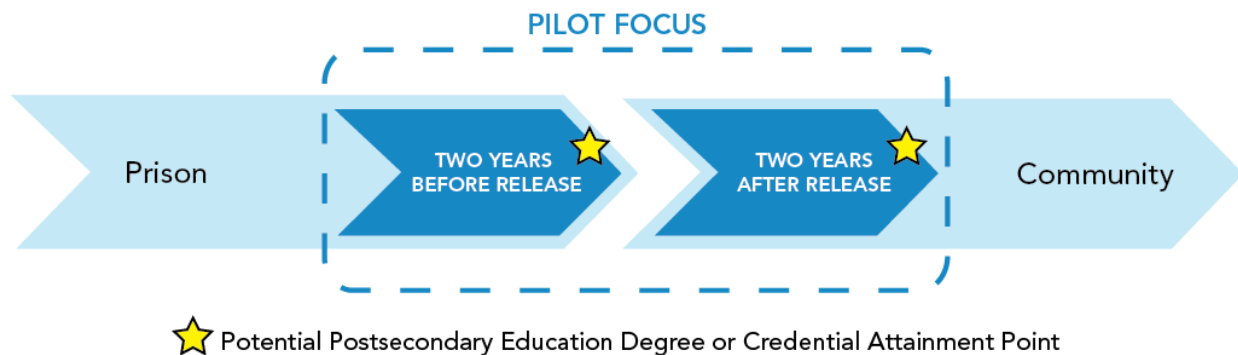


Pathways from Prison to Postsecondary Education Project

Pathways from Prison to Postsecondary Education is a five-year national initiative to increase educational attainment and employment opportunities for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals by supporting an expansion of educational opportunities in prison, seamless entry into higher education post-incarceration, and reentry services that promote individual success in the community. This effort involves partnerships between colleges, prison and parole officials, and community and business leaders in selected states to make access to postsecondary education in prison and immediately after a reality. The aim of Pathways is to transform lives as well as build stronger families and communities.



Note: This pilot focus graphic refers to Michigan and North Carolina; New Jersey's only time-to-release criteria is adequate in-prison time remaining to complete a full semester.

Goals of the Initiative

- > Increase postsecondary educational attainment among the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated population.
- > Increase employability and earnings among formerly incarcerated people as a means of disrupting the cycle of inter-generational poverty.
- > Reduce recidivism and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods disproportionately affected by crime and incarceration.
- > Build an evidence-based case that creates momentum for systems change and spurs national replication and long-term public investment.

States Selected to Participate

- > New Jersey: 6 prisons, 7 colleges and universities
- > North Carolina: 6 prisons, 6 community colleges
- > Michigan: 2 prisons, 2 colleges

Key Features

- > Funded by five leading foundations – the Ford Foundation, the Sunshine Lady Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The project also engages local and regional funders in participating states.
- > Selected states receive at least \$1 million in incentive funding and must provide a 25% match.
- > The Vera Institute of Justice, the national intermediary, provides technical assistance and supports a cross-site learning community.
- > In-prison and post-release postsecondary education provided by accredited local colleges and universities.
- > Vocational, developmental, GED, and college readiness courses and academic support services.
- > Male and Female participants with state-specific eligibility criteria.
- > An emphasis on the attainment of postsecondary education credentials and degrees.
- > Alignment of courses, degrees, and certification programs with local labor market trends.
- > Expanded use of technology solutions for in-prison academic services.
- > Transfer of college credits from prison to colleges in the community.
- > Partnerships with local employers.
- > Parole supervision practices that support pursuit of postsecondary educational opportunities.
- > Mentoring, tutoring, and reentry support services.
- > Comprehensive and coordinated in-prison and community-based case planning.
- > Third-party evaluation provided by the RAND Corporation, in partnership with RTI, with a focus on implementation (replicability and scale), outcomes (postsecondary enrollment and persistence, credential attainment, employment), and impact (recidivism).
- > A cost-benefit analysis conducted by Vera's Cost-Benefit Analysis Unit.
- > A national project advisory board that includes leaders in higher education, corrections, philanthropy, workforce development, and reentry services.

Highlights of Michigan’s Pathways from Prison to Postsecondary Education Program

Higher Education Institutions (2): Jackson College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

Prisons (2): Macomb Correctional Facility and Parnall Correctional Facility.

Pilot Communities: Pontiac and Kalamazoo.

Eligibility: Individuals must be nearing two years of release from prison, intending to return to one of the pilot communities, and have a high school diploma or equivalency.

Key Program Components:

- > Shared housing units for program participants.
- > A four-week assessment phase including:
 - Power Path – a computer-based assessment that identifies learning challenges, helps determine intervention strategies, and teaches organizational skills to students.
 - Compass – an adaptive college placement test that evaluates core skill levels.
 - Labor Ready Assessment – an evaluation of job readiness behaviors.
 - Burning Glass – a software program that provides information about prospective employment in chosen areas specific to precise geographic locations, industries, or occupations.
- > A College Readiness Plan to be developed for each student with the student’s input. The plan will identify how courses taken in prison will fit into the student’s overall college plan.
- > Digital Literacy and Keyboarding – a course leading to a Microsoft-issued certificate of completion.
- > Supervised computer lab with dedicated time for Pathways students.
- > Study Skills and Structured Study Hall Time – single-session workshops and weekly one-hour facilitated study sessions with additional study hall time available in library or through an available classroom.
- > Course Placement (based on assessments) including:
 - College Courses – At least four different college courses per year that are transferable from community colleges to baccalaureate colleges and universities.
 - Vocational Courses leading to state or national certifications in auto mechanics or building trades, potentially leading to college-approved credits toward degree attainment post-release.
- > Academic interventions lead by Michigan Department of Corrections program staff for students who need remedial assistance.
- > Student Success Workshops that help students complete/submit college applications and familiarize participants with services provided by the college.
- > Employment Counselors who develop highly specific, individualized reentry plans to assist with employment, housing, health, and other areas of need.
- > Pre- and post-release workshops on family reintegration, substance abuse, veterans’ benefits, and cognitive skills training.
- > Counseling and mentoring to assist students with successful transition to the education community.
- > A trained parole agent familiar with the Pathways project assigned to each participant.
- > Partnership with Michigan Works! and other community-based organizations focused on employment and related support services.

Highlights of New Jersey’s Pathways from Prison to Postsecondary Education Program

Higher Education Institutions (7): Drew University, Princeton University, and Rutgers University (Newark, New Brunswick, and Camden campuses); The College of New Jersey; Mercer County Community College, Essex County Community College, and Raritan Valley Community College. These institutions form the New Jersey Scholarship and Transformative Education in Prisons Consortium (NJ-STEP).

Prisons (6): Albert C Wagner Youth Correctional Facility, Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women, Mountainview Youth Correctional Facility, Garden State Youth Correctional Facility, East Jersey State Prison, Northern State Prison.

Pilot Communities: Essex County (Newark), Camden County (Camden), Middlesex County (New Brunswick).

Eligibility: High school diploma or equivalency and adequate in-prison time remaining to complete a full semester.

Key Program Components:

- > A statewide vision that every person in prison who qualifies for college will have the opportunity to earn college credits toward a degree while incarcerated and will obtain support for post-release continuation, with every prison connected to a community college and four-year college or university.
- > In-prison courses to match what students will need to matriculate in college degree programs.
- > Credits transferable throughout the prison system and consortium colleges in accordance with NJ Transfer and the Lampitt Law, which are agreements between all two-year community colleges that every course taken at one is transferable to any other in the state and two-year degrees are transferable in their entirety to four-year public colleges and universities.
- > Higher education institutions as primary employers of students (e.g. work-study, student employees in contracted services.).
- > Academic Counselors stationed at each correctional facility to provide guidance toward degree attainment.
- > Campus-based reentry counselors to assist with the college enrollment process and other services.
- > Course offerings leading to an Associate of Arts or Bachelor of Art’s degree.
- > Combined courses with people currently incarcerated and civilian students.
- > Student Advisory Boards comprised of NJ-STEP students at each facility.
- > Mandatory training for all instructional personnel led by the Student Advisory Boards inside the facilities.
- > Minimal disruptions of student academic participation through the use of academic holds.
- > Tutoring by NJ-STEP volunteers, community partners, and inside students.
- > Formerly incarcerated persons provide mentoring and lead pre-release workshops inside prison facilities and with incoming NJ-STEP students at college campuses.
- > A pre-release meeting and transition planning with an NJ-STEP Admissions Officer in order to continue college degree work upon release.
- > Post-release reentry services including financial literacy, workforce development, legal services, and individual/group counseling.
- > Case Planning – automated risk/needs/strengths assessment updated before release as part of a parole plan.
- > County-based reentry councils.

Highlights of North Carolina's Pathways from Prison to Postsecondary Education Program

Higher Education Institutions (6): Asheville-Buncombe Technical, Stanly, Pamlico, Pitt, Mayland, and Central Piedmont.

Prisons (6): Swannanoa Correctional Center for Women, Buncombe Correctional Center, Avery Mitchell Correctional Institution, Mountain View Correctional Institution, Albemarle Correctional Institution, and Pamlico Correctional Institution.

Pilot Communities: Greenville (Pitt County), Charlotte (Mecklenburg County), and Asheville (Buncombe County).

Eligibility: Individuals nearing two years of release from prison, intending to return to one of the pilot communities, and who have a high school diploma or equivalency.

Key Program Components:

- > A partnership with NC Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions, the Post Release Supervision and Parole Commission, and the North Carolina Community College System.
- > Shared housing within the same dormitory or wing of a dormitory for Pathways students.
- > Structured study hall time, tutoring and career advising services.
- > Courses leading to an Associate of Applied Science degree program, with the built-in opportunity to earn a certificate in computer information technology, business administration, entrepreneurship, or simulated gaming after 12 credit hours.
- > Access to computer labs with controlled wireless Internet access and other e-learning opportunities to facilitate academic learning.
- > Incentives provided for in-prison academic course progress, persistence and completion.
- > Success teams composed of a prison case manager, Local Reentry Council (LRC) staff, Department of Public Safety (DPS) staff including Rehabilitative Programs and Services and Community Supervision, a representative from the community college, and other volunteers. The Success team assists students throughout incarceration and reentry transition from prison to community by helping them develop a transition and educational plan, identify an appropriate academic path, monitor their progress, and provide any other necessary support.
- > Success Coaches – community college staff trained by the North Carolina Employment and Training (NC E&T) project in the areas of human resource development, continuing education, and student support services. The Success Coach meets Pathways student prior to release and serves as the student's point of contact on the college campus, providing counseling, mentoring, and other services to facilitate retention, completion, and employment.
- > Pathways Navigators – a navigator serves as an advocate and mentor for Pathways participants and helps them connect with services that are available in the community and at the community college. Pathways Navigators are primarily formerly incarcerated individuals who have successfully attended college and transitioned back into the community.
- > Local Reentry Councils (LRC) in the pilot communities assist participants in finding solutions to barriers to persistence including job placement, housing, transportation, and child care. The LRCs foster relationships with partner organizations including local businesses, health providers, nonprofits, legal, educational and governmental agencies. The LRC is also responsible for raising awareness and advocating for offender/formerly incarcerated issues to the community and its leaders.