

## FACT SHEET:

# College in Prison Benefits California

## College in Prison Makes Us Safer

- More than 95% of the state's prison population will return home but recidivism rates remain high, with more than 60% rearrested within two years.<sup>1</sup>
- Students in prison who participate in correctional education have 43% lower odds of recidivating after release than those who do not. <sup>2</sup> The numbers improve even more for college courses: incarcerated students in college programs have 51% lower odds of recidivating as compared to those in other education.<sup>3</sup>
- Prison yards with college courses report reduced violence and a safer work environment for corrections staff.

## College in Prison Saves Us Money

- For every \$1 invested in correctional education, research shows a return of \$4 to \$5.<sup>4</sup>
- California taxpayers pay an average of \$70,812 a year for each person incarcerated in a state prison.<sup>5</sup>
- In contrast, state revenue needed to support a full-time California community college student is only slightly more than \$5,000 a year.<sup>6</sup>
- Almost 4,500 prisoners are currently enrolled in face-to-face community college in prison, with continued high demand and waiting lists. Changing the trajectory of even half of those students by reducing their likelihood of recidivating could save our communities and the state millions of dollars.

## College in Prison Builds the State's Economy

- Students in prison who receive an education are more likely to find employment upon release, transforming them from "offenders" into taxpayers and community leaders.<sup>7</sup>
- College-educated workers are critical to the state's economy; it is estimated that by 2030 the state will be 1.1 million workers short of demand for workers with a bachelor's degree.<sup>8</sup>
- Incarcerated students in California are doing as well or better than their on-campus counterparts, with high grades and educational enthusiasm. Student feedback and social science research indicates that their success is due, at least in part, to the availability of face-to-face courses.<sup>9</sup>
- Credentials and degrees earned by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students have a powerful intergenerational impact on families and communities, increasing social mobility for generations to come.

## Notes

1. Public Policy Institute of California, "California's Historic Corrections Reforms," September 2016, [http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R\\_916MLR.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_916MLR.pdf)
2. 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. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013. [http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR266.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR266.html). Also available in print form.
3. Id.
4. Id.
5. Legislative Analyst's Office, [http://www.lao.ca.gov/PolicyAreas/CJ/6\\_cj\\_inmatecost](http://www.lao.ca.gov/PolicyAreas/CJ/6_cj_inmatecost)
6. California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, "Key Facts" 2017; <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/PolicyInAction/KeyFacts.aspx>
7. The odds of obtaining employment after release increase by 13% for students who participate in correctional education. 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. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013. [http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR266.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR266.html).
8. Public Policy Institute of California, "Higher Education in California: Addressing California's Skills Gap," September 2017. <http://www.ppic.org/publication/higher-education-in-california-addressing-californias-skills-gap/>
9. Bettinger, Eric and Susanna Loeb. "Promises and Pitfalls of Online Education." Economic Studies at Brookings, Evidence Speaks Reports, Vol 2, #15, June 9, 2017; Hart, Cassandra M.D., Elizabeth Friedmann and Michael Hill. "Online Course-taking and Student Outcomes in California Community Colleges." March 23, 2016.