About

The Department of Corrections contracts with the State Board of Community & Technical Colleges to provide adult basic education and workforce/technical associate degrees and certificates at each of the state’s 12 adult prisons. Most incarcerated individuals entering the prison system lack the education to find work and succeed in society. The average Washington incarcerated student scores at an eighth-grade level or lower in basic literacy skills, such as reading and math. In addition to the contract with SBCTC, the Department also has partnerships with other colleges and non-profit organizations to bring quality education inside our prisons.

→ Referrals are prioritized based on risk level, individual needs, expected release date, and availability of program resources.

→ If employment is identified as high-need or high-risk, an educational course that leads to employment is established as a priority.

→ Individuals may be required to participate in a combination of work, education, and vocational programs. Educational program participation will always be addressed as a priority.

Programs offered

Every prison offers adult basic education programs, which provide foundational education to obtain a high school equivalency. Reentry Life Skills programming is also provided prior to release. Workforce/technical associate degree and certificate programs offered through our college providers include:


Additionally, private and federal grant partners also offer Associate in Arts Transfer Degree programs and Baccalaureate degrees.
Washington is a national leader in delivering quality educational programming to a significant proportion of the Department of Corrections incarcerated population. DOC aims to provide basic academic skills, vocational training, and workforce education programs designed to meet the individual’s needs and enhance pathways for post-release employment and/or education.

Through a long and vibrant partnership between DOC, SBCTC, Washington’s community and technical colleges, and private partnerships, Washington has built an educational system that provides opportunities for incarcerated adults to earn a high school equivalency, and learn high-wage and high-demand workforce skills, and earn college degrees.

Through the SBCTC contract, incarcerated individuals are provided education and employment reentry support through a state-wide network of prison- and community-based education reentry navigators.

The Department focuses on providing vocational programs that are labor market-driven, developing skills needed for facility and Correctional Industries jobs, and are accepted by community-based training programs to allow the individual to transfer and complete programs upon release, if necessary. The department will also offer postsecondary education opportunities designed to prepare for entry into the workforce.

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