



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY
PRISON
FACILITY/SPANISH MANUAL

REVISION DATE
1/13/25

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POLICY

TITLE
**EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL
PROGRAMS IN PRISONS**

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

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- Revised: 11/7/11
- Revised: 8/6/19
- Revised: 11/15/21
- Revised: 9/22/23
- Revised: 1/13/25

SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:


Major changes to include alignment with new financial aid requirements. Read carefully!

APPROVED:

Signature on file

CHERYL STRANGE, Secretary
Department of Corrections

1/7/25
Date Signed

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REFERENCES:


DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; [RCW 28A.193.020](#); [RCW 28B.50.536](#); [RCW 72.09.100](#); [RCW 72.09.130](#); [RCW 72.09.270](#); [RCW 72.09.460](#); DOC 200.000 Trust Accounts for Incarcerated Individuals; DOC 320.400 Risk and Needs Assessment Process; DOC 320.500 Youthful Offender Program; DOC 420.500 Tool Control (RESTRICTED); DOC 500.100 Correspondence Education in Prisons; DOC 690.400 Individuals with Disabilities; DOC 850.030 Relationships/ Contacts with Individuals; [8 U.S.C. 1227](#); [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#); [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#); [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\) Simplification Act of 2019](#)

POLICY:

- I. The Department will provide basic academic skills, pre-apprenticeship, vocational, and postsecondary degree programs designed to meet an incarcerated individual’s needs and enhance pathways for post-release employment and/or education.
- II. To the extent possible and considering available funds, the Department will prioritize its resources to meet the goals of incarcerated individuals per RCW 72.09.460.
- III. Educational services for individuals under the age of 18 will be provided per DOC 320.500 Youthful Offender Program.
- IV. Education programs with participation through correspondence (i.e., interaction between instructors and students is not regular/substantive and the instruction materials and examinations are provided by the institution through the mail) and primarily initiated by the student will be conducted per DOC 500.100 Correspondence Education in Prisons.

DIRECTIVE:

- I. Program Proposals
 - A. Education program proposals must be submitted to the Educational Services Administrator and approved by the Assistant Secretary for Reentry before implementation.
 1. Washington State-recognized vocational and pre-apprenticeship programs and/or personnel will be accredited, certified, or licensed by the state or other acceptable organization or authority.
 2. Postsecondary degree or certificate education programs from a nationally accredited university, college, or community or technical college, are limited to no more than a bachelor’s degree.

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II. General Responsibilities

A. The Educational Services Administrator will:

1. Analyze program needs annually,
2. Develop a program budget,
3. Recommend a statewide service delivery plan,
4. Monitor use of resources and expenditures,
5. Monitor provider equipment and software inventory lists for accuracy,
6. Conduct quarterly contract compliance reviews, and
7. Ensure curriculum related projects that could be a potential security risk have prior written approval from the Security Management Unit.


B. Facilities will maintain and post an approved programs list in locations accessible to individuals.

III. General Requirements

A. Individuals may be required to participate in a combination of work and Department-approved education programs. Educational program participation will be addressed as a priority.

B. Educational programs will:


1. Meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements regarding reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
 - a. Non-discrimination statements will be provided to enrolled individuals, and will include the process for how individuals may request disability accommodations.
2. Only be eligible for financial aid grants with the approval of the United States Department of Education as a Prison Education Program.
 - a. Financial aid programs will comply with the Prison Education Program regulations and requirements.
3. Be provided at times when the majority of the population is available and can participate.
4. When possible, programs offered at different facilities will be standardized to facilitate completion if an individual is transferred.

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- C. Disclosure of any information will comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- D. Education programs available for individuals who are 18 and over will include:
 - 1. Basic skills programs - Adult Basic Education, General Educational Development (GED), High School +, and English Language Acquisition
 - 2. Pre-college programs - developmental education courses needed to raise the individual's skills to college level
 - 3. Postsecondary education including Washington state-recognized pre-apprenticeship, vocational certificate, and postsecondary degree programs
- E. Individuals subject to deportation per the provisions of 8 U.S.C. 1227:
 - 1. Are not required to participate in education programming unless it is necessary for the maintenance of discipline and security.
 - 2. May participate in:
 - a. Basic skills programming to obtain a high school equivalency.
 - b. Vocational skills training required for a work program.
 - c. Postsecondary education programs provided by the Department or contracted providers, if the program is paid for by the individual or a third party and space is available.
 - 1) A written request to participate must be submitted by the individual to the case manager and Education Dean/Director. The request will be documented in the electronic file.

IV. Program Referrals

- A. Education employees/contract staff will verify an individual's high school equivalency and create an adult basic education referral if needed.
 - 1. Education employees/contract staff will have sole authority to change the status of system referrals.
- B. Education employees/contract staff and case managers will:
 - 1. Refer individuals to educational and vocational programs, consistent with the Custody Facility Plan and the assessment conducted per DOC

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320.400 Risk and Needs Assessment Process, to develop a career and education plan.

a. Before a referral is made, the following will be identified and considered:


- 1) Education assessment
 - 2) Risk and need levels
 - 3) Reported and/or verified education history
 - 4) Employment history
 - 5) Job skills and experience
 - 6) Vocational skill level
 - 7) Expected release date
 - 8) Custody level
 - 9) Possible custody change
 - 10) Judgment and Sentence conditions
 - 11) Prior participation or completion in Department-provided education and work programs
 - 12) Availability of program resources
 - 13) Willingness of the individual to complete programs
2. Prioritize referrals based on risk level, individual needs, expected release date, and availability of program resources (e.g., if employment is identified as high-need or high-risk, the priority should be an educational course that leads to employment).
 3. Ensure individuals assigned to educational programs do not discontinue programming for full-time employment.
 4. Provide help in managing work schedules to accommodate educational programming.

V. Program Enrollment

- A. Enrollment in education programs will be planned as a component of the Custody Facility Plan and/or case management plan to facilitate completion.
- B. Individuals in education programming must complete a FERPA release form obtained from the provider prior to enrollment.
- C. Facility education employees/contract staff will document verification that the individual has earned a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate in the electronic file.

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1. Individuals without a verified high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate will be required to participate in Adult Basic Education.
 - a. Pending verification, mandatory enrollment in basic skills programs may be delayed up to 60 days at the discretion of the education dean/director.
 2. Individuals with medical or mental health issues may be exempted from mandatory basic skills enrollment with input from Health Services, as appropriate. Exemptions will be documented in the case management plan.
- D. Education providers will verify individuals are eligible and meet the prerequisites prior to enrollment in pre-apprenticeship, vocational, and postsecondary degree programs.
1. Education providers for bachelor programs will verify individuals have completed at least 90 quarter credits or the equivalent prior to enrollment.
- E. Individuals will meet with Education contract staff to complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) at least 60 days prior to initial enrollment and annually as needed for financial aid eligible programs.
1. Individuals will be provided advice for academic and financial aid prior to enrolling in a financial aid program and each academic year that the individual remains enrolled.
 2. Individuals who decline to complete a FAFSA or WASFA application may be denied enrollment unless they have sufficient funding to cover the cost of attendance (i.e., tuition and fees).
- F. The Superintendent/designee may excuse or defer enrollment based on security considerations, conduct, or medical concerns.
- VI. Priority Enrollment
- A. Priority enrollment for pre-apprenticeship, vocational, and postsecondary degree programs will be:
1. For individuals who:
 - a. Do not already possess a postsecondary education degree, and

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- b. Have a reentry plan that includes participation in a postsecondary degree or certificate education program that is:
 - 1) Offered at the facility where the individual is housed,
 - 2) Approved by the Department as eligible and effective, and
 - 3) Limited to a bachelor's degree or certificate program.
- 2. Prioritized for individuals in the following order:
 - a. High-risk or high need in education and/or employment if less than 7 years to the Early Release Date (ERD)
 - b. Moderate and Low Risk if less than 7 years to ERD
 - c. High and Moderate Risk if more than 7 years to ERD
 - d. Low Risk if more than 7 years to ERD or the individual is paying for education themself

VII. Transfer Holds

- A. Requests to place a hold on an individual's transfer to another facility will be submitted to the Education Services Administrator/designee when the hold would benefit the individual's educational needs.
 - 1. Individuals within 6 months of an eligibility date who have a Minimum 1 or 2 custody level should not be placed in education/work programs that require remaining at their current facility.
 - a. Individuals will not be enrolled in financial aid programs if their eligibility date is within 90 days of the end of the program's term.
- B. Education holds will be considered for individuals enrolled in High School + or Open Doors programs.
- C. Vocational and postsecondary education holds will be considered as follows:
 - 1. Bachelor or Associate degree for up to 24 months
 - 2. One-year certificate programs for up to 12 months
 - 3. Short-term certificate program for the duration of the program
- D. Holds for financial aid programs will be honored per DOC 300.380 Classification and Custody Facility Plan Review.
 - 1. Holds may be placed for individuals who have submitted a financial aid application prior to enrollment.

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2. Holds for financial aid verification will not count against the time limit for vocational and postsecondary education holds.

E. Holds may be extended in extenuating circumstances or changed/removed by the Educational Services Administrator due to the safety and security of the facility.

VIII. Participant Responsibility

A. Individuals participating in basic skills education programs will participate in a minimum of 12 hours of instruction per week or each session the class is scheduled, whichever is greater, unless the individual has limited capacity or is required to participate in other programs (e.g., substance abuse/sex offense/court-ordered treatment, cognitive behavioral intervention).

1. Failure to participate in assigned programming may result in disciplinary action, loss of earned time, and/or programming points.

2. Individuals who refuse to participate in Department-funded educational programming will lose privileges (e.g., access to employment, incentive programs, future participation in programs) and will meet with a multidisciplinary team to review their refusal to participate in programs.

B. Individuals participating in educational programming will not be paid during regularly scheduled class time.


C. Individuals will maintain attendance and behavior as required by the facility and education provider, demonstrate measurable progress consistent with program standards, and meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress policies of the provider.

1. Employment will be adjusted or suspended if the individual is unable to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress and attendance.

a. An education program performance evaluation will be documented at least once in a 12-month period by the case manager in the individual's electronic file.

2. Individuals in financial aid programs, who lose eligibility due to failing to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress, may not be eligible for Department funding for the cost of attendance.

D. Individuals who have received maximum benefit from the program, as determined by the Education Services Administrator/designee based on assessed ability and consultation with the education dean/director, faculty, and

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Department employees/contract staff, may be exempted from further participation without loss of privileges.

1. The Education Services Administrator will notify the case manager and the education provider.
2. Exemption from further participation without loss of privileges will be documented in the Custody Facility Plan and the electronic file.


IX. Fees for Department-Funded Programs

A. Fees will not be charged for basic academic skills instruction or to eligible individuals for the following Department-funded programs:

1. A vocational program that is less than 45 credits
2. The first one-year state vocational certificate for which the Department does not offer a degree
3. The first postsecondary degree for eligible individuals

B. Individuals who have already earned a postsecondary degree, one-year state vocational certificate, or pre-apprenticeship program while incarcerated may request to enroll in subsequent Department-funded programs and may be required to pay tuition per Student Financial Responsibility (Attachment 1).

1. Individuals who have previously earned a degree and are unable to return to employment in that degree field may be eligible to participate in a Department-funded one-year state vocational certificate or postsecondary degree at no additional cost.
2. If a subsequent postsecondary education is not associated with an individual's work program, current educational program, or community employment, tuition will be required per Attachment 1.
3. The ability to pay tuition will be determined by the monthly income and balance of funds available in an individual's account.
 - a. The portion paid by the individual is determined using the:
 - 1) Per credit ~~hour~~ fee set by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and
 - 2) Average of wages, gratuities, and deposits, regardless of the source, received in the most recent 3 months.

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a) Individuals without a monthly income who have a balance of funds available must be able to pay the fee leaving at least \$10.00 in the account.

4. Tuition and fees will be made payable to the Department for deposit into the General Fund before participating in the program.

a. Individuals may not create a debt for education.

b. Family members or third parties may provide payment for tuition and fees. These funds may be transferred from the education sub-account.

5. Facility procedures will be developed in alignment with DOC 200.000 Trust Accounts for Incarcerated Individuals for payment of tuition and communication with education providers.

C. A refund will not be provided if an individual who has fully or partially paid for a subsequent vocational program is transferred due to negative behavior. If the transfer is not due to negative behavior, a refund will be made according to the education provider's scale for refunds.

D. Department-funded and third party-funded individuals may enroll in the same program courses. Costs must be paid by appropriate funds based on the percentage of enrollment.

X. Fees for Financial Aid-Funded Programs


A. Individuals will be charged by the education provider for the cost of attendance up to the Washington College Grant maximum award amount.

1. The cost of attendance will be the same rate for all individuals in the program, regardless of the funding source.

2. Education providers will verify an individual's financial aid eligibility or payment method before the individual can be enrolled in the program.

a. The education provider will inform the Department of the individual's financial aid status at the time of enrollment and will apply financial aid to the cost of attendance prior to billing the Department.

B. The Department will pay the cost of attendance for eligible individuals after subtracting any financial aid grants or third party funding.


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C. Individuals may use available financial aid grants, third party funding, or make payments themselves to cover the cost of attendance.

1. Individuals must pay the entire cost of attendance before enrollment by the education provider.
2. Cost of attendance for individuals who choose not to use available financial aid grants will not be subject to the financial responsibilities in Attachment 1 and will be provided an invoice directly from the education provider.

XI. Program Operations


- A. Education providers will supply a course curriculum outline and schedule to the facility before the beginning of each quarter. Courses will be supported by appropriate classroom materials.
- B. Education providers will maintain an educational file for each individual, to include documented attendance, progress, and achievements.
- C. Classrooms and computer labs are set up to enhance security and ensure appropriate use of computers, equipment, and tools.
 1. Rooms/labs will be set up so the instructor can view input screens and work process/product for all individuals and teaching assistants directly or through electronic monitoring.
 2. Printers, scanners, and input devices, not including keyboards and mice, will be secured at the instructor's desk and/or other secured area.
 3. Equipment and tools will be maintained and inventoried per DOC 420.500 Tool Control (RESTRICTED).
 4. Education laptops will only be issued by the education provider to individuals who are enrolled in an approved education program.
 - a. Education laptops will not be issued to individuals whose Judgment and Sentence prohibit access to computers.
 - b. Individuals will be subject to losing the privilege of using a laptop for their education if they misuse it or are found guilty of an infraction related to the use of an issued laptop.

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- D. All educational programs are required to have an instructor and/or facilitator (i.e., employee, contract staff, volunteer, sponsor) in the room/area throughout the scheduled callout. Intermittent supervision of programs is not authorized.
 - 1. If there is no instructor/sponsor/facilitator available, the class/program will be cancelled for that period.
- E. Classroom assistants working in education will not have additional privileges.
- F. Employees/contract staff maintaining and tracking education programs in the individual's electronic file will ensure the accuracy of schedules and locations for each class.
- G. Appointments that are not tracked in the individual's electronic file (e.g., registration, testing, education orientation, advising, graduation) will be scheduled using the callout system.
- H. The facility will assist education providers in organizing formal recognition of achievements (e.g., graduation ceremonies).
- I. Individuals will be provided with a copy of the unofficial transcript at no cost upon their release or transfer when they have participated in an education program, even if the individual became ineligible to participate in or did not finish the program.

XII. Reentry

- A. Education employees/contract staff may assist with:
 - 1. Completing and submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application
 - 2. Contacting previous colleges
 - 3. Arranging supervised conference calls or virtual meetings with college admissions staff
 - 4. Issues with a financial aid application and/or student loan default
- B. Releasing individuals participating in programming will be provided information on how to complete their programming in the community.
- C. References for incarcerated individuals will be reviewed by the dean/director and may only be provided per DOC 850.030 Relationships/Contacts with Individuals.

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XIII. Data Collection

- A. The Programs section of the electronic file will be used to document, track, and generate reports for educational program data, including:
1. Programs
 2. Sessions
 3. Providers
 4. Referrals
 5. Attendance
 6. Participation
 7. Evaluation
 8. Certificates
- B. Data will be used to determine future programs for each facility's population based on risk, needs, and facility resources with input solicited from community stakeholders in academic and vocational education.

DEFINITIONS:

Words/terms appearing in this policy may be defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual.

ATTACHMENTS:

Student Financial Responsibility (Attachment 1)

DOC FORMS:

None