



Risk of Recidivism Significantly Lower for Adults Who Received Education in Correctional Settings

Adults who accessed correctional education programs¹ while in prison had significantly lower odds of recidivism, according to a recent report published by the RAND Corporation. Authors conducted a meta-analysis of multiple studies,² finding that the odds of re-incarceration within three years after release were 43% lower for individuals who participated in correctional education compared to those who did not. Those who specifically received high school/GED programming—the most common correctional education approach in the analyzed studies—had 30% lower odds of recidivism than those receiving no programming. Additionally, the analysis found that participation in correctional education was associated with a greater likelihood of post-release employment³ and that programs were cost-efficient.⁴ Authors highlight the challenge posed by funding shortages in recent years, which has resulted in considerable decreases in correctional education programs and the number of participants able to access them. Noting the potential of these programs to reduce prison populations and costs, authors recommend more research and analysis to better understand which program and implementation elements are most effective.



Source:

Davis, L. M., Bozick, R., Steele, J. L., Saunders, J., and Miles, J. N. V. (2013). *Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education: A meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults*. Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Available for download from: www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR266.html.

Notes:

- ¹ Adult correctional education included academic and vocational programs in four categories: basic (math, reading, writing, and English as a second language), secondary (high school or general education development [GED] completion), vocational or career/technical (employment preparation or job/industry-specific skills), and postsecondary (college level).
- ² The analysis was conducted by synthesizing results from multiple studies on correctional education effectiveness and determining patterns from combined data.
- ³ The overall odds of obtaining employment after release were 13% higher among those participating in academic or vocational correctional education programs compared with those who did not. For those participating in vocational programs (vs. academic programs), the odds of obtaining employment were 28% higher than for those who did not.
- ⁴ A cost analysis was conducted that compared direct costs of correctional education programs and incarceration, finding that cost savings from prevented re-incarcerations were greater than the costs associated with providing correctional education.

Prepared by the Center for Health and Justice (CHJ) at TASC. CHJ works to build, enhance, and sustain strong and vibrant communities by promoting policies and practices that stop the cycle of drugs and crime. We conduct research and evaluations, and offer policy analysis, trainings, and technical assistance in the fields of health and justice. For more information, visit us online at www.centerforhealthandjustice.org.

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