

JUSTICE-INVOLVED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) delivers high-quality educational opportunities for justice-involved individuals, leading to sustainable income and postsecondary pathways that support lifelong learning. “Justice-involved” individuals have interacted with the criminal justice system but can continue to participate in and benefit from formal education and training.

The System’s commitment extends to reducing recidivism, reflected in partnerships with the Department of Corrections, county jails, the Department of Wisconsin Workforce Development and community-based organizations that provide various treatments.

OPPORTUNITIES

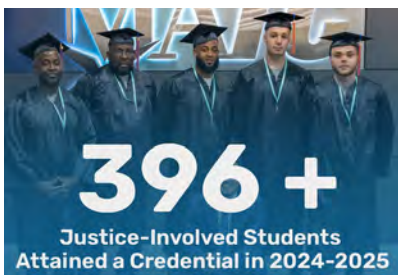
Educational opportunities provided by Wisconsin’s technical colleges in support of justice-involved populations include General Educational Development testing and High School Equivalency Diploma preparation, as well as English Language Learning courses.

In addition, the technical colleges offer traditional and flexible delivery of a variety of occupational programs, which vary widely by college and correctional institution.



IMPACT

The WTCS Board and the System’s 16 colleges annually invest more than \$1 million of federal, state and local funds to bring instruction, curriculum, technology, materials, employment partnerships and support services to justice-involved individuals. Technical college presidents have made this a priority, meeting quarterly with Wisconsin Department of Corrections staff and other partners.



Since 2019, 11 of the 16 technical colleges have provided education services to 25 of 27 state prisons, annually awarding more than 30,000 credits to over 4,850 individuals.

In addition, all 16 colleges work with 38 of the state’s county jails and serve an average of 2,000 individuals, offering opportunities to pursue basic skill instruction (reading, math, English language), high school completion, career training and postsecondary credentials.

FINANCIAL AID COMMITMENT

Wisconsin has been a leader in piloting the return of Pell Grants for incarcerated individuals and has made significant strides in advancing correctional education post-COVID.

The return of Pell Grants has significantly increased educational opportunities for incarcerated individuals in Wisconsin. This initiative helps reduce recidivism and supports successful reintegration into society by providing access to higher education.

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN WISCONSIN

Criminal justice systems are complex networks that typically consist of law enforcement agencies, courts and correctional facilities. Each contributes to the rehabilitation of individuals by upholding the law, preventing crime, reducing or preventing recidivism, and rehabilitating offenders of all ages.

Wisconsin's criminal justice system is responsible for apprehending, prosecuting, defending, sentencing, and holding accountable those who are suspected or convicted of criminal offenses. It includes local, state and federal facilities.



Local

Wisconsin's 72 counties operate [county jails](#), which confine individuals sentenced for minor crimes, who are unable to gain release on bail, are in custody awaiting trial, or are offenders sentenced to less than one year imprisonment.

Individuals confined in county jails may be granted privileges under the Huber Law to work, seek employment, provide childcare, or attend school and/or treatment programs while serving their sentence.



State

The [Wisconsin Department of Corrections](#) operates three types of facilities:



- [Adult Correctional Facilities](#) house inmates who have been sentenced by a court to incarceration for one or more years and are to serve that time in a state facility.
- [Community Corrections Facilities](#) serve individuals on probation or parole. Probation is a court-ordered period of supervision in the community, generally used as an alternative to jail or prison. Parole is a period of conditional, supervised release from prison. Although not all released prisoners are put on parole, a majority are.
- [Correctional Centers](#) prepare inmates for safe, successful reintegration into the community by providing the resources necessary to make positive life changes.

In addition, DOC's [Division of Juvenile Corrections](#) works to promote a juvenile justice system that balances protection of the community, youth accountability and competency building for responsible and productive community living.

Federal

A Federal Correctional Institution (medium-security prison) and Camp (minimum-security prison) is overseen by the North Central Regional Office of the Federal Bureau of Prisons and both operate in Oxford, Wisconsin.

