



HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISON

Understanding its Power and Fulfilling its
Promise in Illinois

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HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISON: UNDERSTANDING ITS POWER AND FULFILLING ITS PROMISE IN ILLINOIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Executive Summary
7	Introduction
8	Benefits of HEP
8	Education's Role in Making Space for an Incarcerated Person's Dignity
9	An Expanded View
14	The Evolution of HEP
14	Emergence of Basic Correctional Educational Offerings (Early 1700s – Mid 1800s)
16	Rise of the Rehabilitative Ideal (1870 – 1950)
16	Initial Growth of HEP in Illinois and Around the Country (1952 – 1992)
17	HEP Amidst the War on Crime (1994 – Early 2000s)
18	Development of the Current HEP Landscape in Illinois (Late 2000s to 2021)
21	Barriers to HEP Expansion
21	Limited Resources
23	Inconsistent and Opaque Policies
24	Lack of Data-Informed and Collaborative Policymaking
26	Recommendations to Expand Quality HEP in Illinois
28	Conclusion
29	Appendix 1: Profiles of HEP Programs in Illinois
33	Appendix 2: Recommendations for Areas of Further Exploration

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Higher education in prison (“HEP”) is a critical support for the dignity and well-being of individuals who are incarcerated, and yet Illinois’ system for providing this support to individuals within its correctional facilities falls far short of what HEP students, practitioners, and advocates have envisioned and worked to build. However, recent federal action to reinstate Pell Grants for incarcerated scholars creates new funding for HEP efforts and the creation of the Illinois HEP Task Force establishes an important body to inform quality expansion of HEP in the state. Given these federal and state actions, Illinois has a critical opportunity to expand HEP and establish a more accessible and effective system throughout the state. This report aims to stimulate conversation about the benefits of HEP, describe the development of HEP nationally and in Illinois, and provide a blueprint for overcoming existing barriers to expanding quality HEP in all Illinois prisons. Given these federal and state actions, Illinois has a critical opportunity to expand HEP and establish a more accessible and effective system throughout the state. This report aims to stimulate conversation about the benefits of HEP, describe the development of HEP

nationally and in Illinois, and provide a blueprint for overcoming existing barriers to expanding quality HEP in all Illinois prisons.

The authors have reviewed key literature regarding mass incarceration and prison education, as well as consulted HEP administrators, instructors, students, and alumni to inform this report. Through analysis of literature and lived experiences, we seek to aid policymakers, institutions of higher education, the Illinois Department of Corrections (“IDOC”) leadership, advocates, and other HEP stakeholders to better understand the import and value of HEP and to more effectively strategize how to overcome current barriers to HEP expansion in Illinois.

HEP is a critical mechanism for supporting incarcerated people, because it creates space for human dignity in dehumanizing prison environments and provides a myriad of social and emotional benefits. While research on the benefits of HEP has largely focused on decreased recidivism and increased employability, this report proffers additional HEP benefits that center education’s role in affirming an incarcerated person’s human dignity:



EMPOWERMENT AND EXPANDED SELF-PERCEPTION

HEP helps foster a sense of empowerment and heightened self-esteem in incarcerated students. Participation in HEP programming counters the dehumanizing prison environment and provides space for students to overcome stigma and transform their self-perception.



IMPROVED WELL-BEING

HEP classrooms and coursework allow students to transcend the confines of the correctional facility and continue their self-discovery despite the realities and limitations of incarceration.



DEEPENED COMMUNAL BONDS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

HEP promotes development of communal ties within the classroom and outside of it by assisting students in understanding and nurturing relationships with each other and their loved ones who serve as social support during incarceration and, for many, throughout reentry.

Illinois has yet to implement HEP in all IDOC facilities, failing to capitalize on the integral tool that it is. To contextualize the current state of HEP in Illinois and the opportunities for expansion, this report describes the evolution of HEP around the country and in the state. Discussion of the policy implications of varying approaches to incarceration, from punitive to rehabilitation, during different political climates permits the reader to fully comprehend the numerous factors that have contributed to the ebb and flow of HEP growth throughout history.

Following a historical review, this report outlines the current state of HEP in Illinois. There are eleven HEP programs that presently provide various offerings in eleven of IDOC's twenty-eight correctional facilities. HEP has expanded significantly in recent years, yet programming remains constrained and unavailable to many incarcerated people who would benefit from the support and opportunity HEP programs can provide. Recent efforts to expand HEP in Illinois provide insight into three barriers to growth. Informed by surveys of HEP administrators, interviews with HEP instructors, students, and alumni, and the authors' observations of HEP programs, this report identifies those barriers and posits recommendations for addressing them:

BARRIER 1: LIMITED RESOURCES RESTRICT THE GROWTH AND AVAILABILITY OF HEP OFFERINGS

HEP programs are currently available to a small fraction of incarcerated people in Illinois because few federal and state funding streams provide support for HEP. The majority of existing HEP programs receive no state funding and depend on private funding sources. Without more resources, access to and growth of HEP will remain erratic and scarce.

Recommendation 1: Illinois should explore opportunities to effectively use federal funding and free up state aid.

Reinstatement of Pell Grants for incarcerated scholars creates a significant funding stream for HEP programs to leverage, especially given current Illinois law restricting access to state financial aid. It is critical that Illinois take advantage of existing and

new federal funding sources and amend the Illinois Higher Education Student Assistance Act to allow HEP programs and students to receive and benefit from federal and state funding.

BARRIER 2: INCONSISTENT AND OPAQUE POLICIES PREVENT DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE STRUCTURES FOR QUALITY, CONSISTENT PROGRAMMING

IDOC grants vast discretion to individual facilities to determine practices for engaging with higher education institutions to allow them to offer programming inside. This discretion results in a lack of uniformity and transparency that negatively impacts HEP programs and students. Using instructor clearance as an example of how HEP administrators are forced to navigate different rules and regulations that vary by facility and/or semester, the authors discuss how HEP programs suffer because of varying and unpredictable requirements and expectations for implementation.

Recommendation 2: IDOC should generate and implement uniform policies that are publicly available.

Consistent application of systemwide policies is critical to ensure that students know how to access HEP and HEP administrators have clear expectations and know with particularity how to successfully collaborate with IDOC. It is essential that IDOC establish and publish clearly-written, uniform policies and train correctional staff on implementing these policies so that HEP students can succeed in their studies and HEP programs can predictably operate and expand.

BARRIER 3: LACK OF DATA-DRIVEN AND COLLABORATIVE POLICYMAKING RESULTS IN POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT FAIL TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF HEP

Without collecting data or consulting HEP instructors and students with direct experience, IDOC officials engage in isolated policymaking to the detriment of quality HEP expansion. Through discussion of IDOC's procedures for publication reviews and recent instances of censorship of HEP materials, the

authors illustrate IDOC's problematic procedures for review and development of policies that impact HEP programs and how those procedures prevent creation of data-driven, effective policies.

Recommendation 3: *Illinois should create a sustainable structure for HEP policymaking informed by meaningful data analysis and collaboration.*

Because IDOC leadership and staff lack relevant expertise and data or direct experience to inform decision-making, IDOC should not oversee the development and expansion of HEP in isolation. Illinois should establish formal mechanisms for HEP data collection and recurring collaboration between all HEP stakeholders to support the expansion of quality HEP. The authors outline important factors for Illinois to consider when designing such a mechanism, including: mission and impact, powers, and necessary stakeholders.

Implementing the above recommendations and expanding quality HEP programming to all incarcerated students in Illinois will require thoughtful, collaborative, and sustained engagement of policymakers, institutions of higher education, IDOC leadership, and HEP administrators, instructors, students, alumni, and advocates. If successful, Illinois would make important strides toward the goal of treating incarcerated individuals with dignity and respect.

INTRODUCTION

Since the release of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Michelle Alexander's groundbreaking work exposing the racial discrimination embedded in the criminal legal system, social discourse on incarceration has transformed dramatically. There has been increasing awareness of the many horrors of prison and recognition that our policies and practices have led to a crisis of overcriminalization and mass incarceration that inequitably impacts Black and Latinx people. Legislators, policy analysts, advocates, and activists are grappling with, and sometimes collaborating with, one another to identify the best strategies to address our systems of confinement. Regardless of one's view of the most effective approach, there is common acknowledgement that prisons are often dehumanizing spaces for the individuals behind their walls. While society works to develop and implement answers to the question of what to do with our prison system, in the meantime we must ensure we implement policies and practices that respect the rights and dignity of incarcerated people, by ensuring, among other things, safe conditions, quality health care, and access to services and programs. This report focuses on one of the ways in which we can uphold the rights and dignity of incarcerated people: higher education in prison ("HEP").

At present, there are a small number of HEP programs in Illinois. Unfortunately, higher education is not available in all prisons in the state. Illinois is

at a pivotal moment. The state recently adopted a joint resolution to establish the Illinois Higher Education in Prison Task Force to study HEP¹ and passed legislation that enhances the amount of sentencing credits incarcerated people can earn for participating in programming like higher education in prison.² At the federal level, there has been recent expansion of Pell Grants to benefit incarcerated students.³ We can either successfully and equitably expand HEP programming or miss this powerful opportunity to positively impact the lives of incarcerated scholars around our state. For quality HEP opportunities to continue and expand statewide, there must be, at a minimum, a concerted effort to ensure funding, consistent IDOC policies and practices, as well as policies informed by those most directly impacted, i.e., students and educators, and data.

This report highlights the benefits of HEP, provides a historical overview of HEP nationally and within Illinois, discusses some barriers to expansion, and concludes with recommendations for fostering the expansion of a more coordinated, equitable, and effective HEP system in Illinois.

¹ H.R.J. Res. 27, 102nd Gen. Assemb., Veto Sess. (Ill. 2021).

² 730 ILCS 5/3-6-3.

³ Juan Martinez-Hill & Ruth Delaney, *Incarcerated Students Will Have Access to Pell Grants Again. What Happens Now?*, Vera Inst. of Justice (Mar. 4, 2021), <https://www.vera.org/blog/incarcerated-students-will-have-access-to-pell-grants-again-what-happens-now>.

BENEFITS OF HEP

Terms like “correctional education” or “postsecondary education” often have been used to capture the wide range of educational opportunities offered within prison (i.e., high school or GED programming, adult basic education, vocational offerings, career offerings, and avocational programs).⁴ For the sake of clarity and consistency, this report adopts the following definition of HEP: Courses provided to students who have earned a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent secondary credential by or in close partnership with a regionally accredited two- or four-year college or university (public, private, or nonprofit status). HEP programs may provide credit or not-for-credit postsecondary, non-vocational coursework and degree or nondegree granting pathways.⁵

To better understand why HEP is a relevant tool in supporting currently incarcerated individuals, it is important to examine the powerful role that HEP plays in fostering space that acknowledges incarcerated people’s humanity in a dehumanizing prison environment.

EDUCATION’S ROLE IN MAKING SPACE FOR AN INCARCERATED PERSON’S DIGNITY

When the prison gates slam behind an [incarcerated person], he does not lose his human quality; his mind does not become closed to ideas; his intellect does not cease to feed on a free and open interchange of opinions; his yearning for self-respect does not end; nor is his quest for self-realization concluded. If anything, the needs for identity and self-respect are more compelling in the dehumanizing prison environment.⁶

Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall’s assertion in *Procunier v. Martinez*, that confinement does not forfeit one’s right and desire to be treated with human dignity highlights a key, yet obvious, fact that is often overlooked in policy discussions: Incarcerated people are human and should be treated as such.⁷ Incarcerated people should be presumed to require both tangible, physical needs like food, water, and shelter as well as social and emotional intangible needs like feelings of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization.⁸ In “Respecting Beasts: The Dehumanizing Quality of the Modern Prison and an Unusual Model for Penal Reform,” James Binnall, a legal professor and formerly incarcerated scholar, argues that

⁴ Erin L. Castro & Eboni M. Zamani-Gallaher, *Expanding Quality Higher Education for Currently and Formerly Incarcerated People: Committing to Equity and Protecting Against Exploitation*, ASHE-NITE Paper Series 11 (2018).

⁵ Alliance for Higher Education in Prison, *AHEP Prospectus: A Working Document to Support the Planning and Launch of the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison* 10 (2017), https://assets-global.website-files.com/5e3dd3cf0b4b54470c8b1be1/5e3dd3cf0b4b5497a68b1d23_Alliance%20Prospectus_English.pdf.

⁶ *Procunier v. Martinez*, 416 U.S. 396, 428 (1974) (holding that the California Department of Corrections mail censorship regulations that banned law students and paralegals from conducting attorney-client interviews were unconstitutional under the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution).

⁷ The stigma connected to criminal legal system involvement contributes to society’s ability to view incarcerate people in more stereotypical terms and less like the human beings they are. See Nguyen Toan Tran, et al., *Words Matter: A Call for Humanizing and Respectful Language to Describe People Who Experience Incarceration*, 18 BMC Int’l Health Hum. Rts. 41 (2018).

⁸ Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is a motivational theory in psychology used as a model to explain the five categories of human needs that dictate a person’s behavior: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. The tiers cover physical (tangible) needs as well as social, emotional, and interpersonal (intangible) needs. Saul McLeod, *Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs*, Simply Psychol. (Dec. 29, 2020), <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html#needs5>.

TANGIBLE HUMAN NEEDS



Food



Water



Shelter

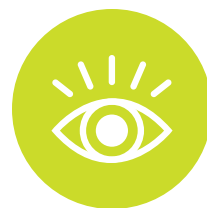
INTANGIBLE HUMAN NEEDS



Belonging



Self-esteem



Self-actualization

the “modern prison...dehumanizes [incarcerated people]” by the way that many correctional staff treat people experiencing incarceration as “commodities, unworthy of rehabilitative efforts.”⁹ The contradiction in the dehumanizing nature of prisons and the reality Justice Marshall describes, highlights the need to find ways to actively build space in prison to help meet those intangible human needs in prison while fights to decarcerate persist.

Members of the international community also view education in prison as an important tool for uplifting incarcerated people's dignity. In a report from the United Nation's Human Rights Council, Vernor Muñoz, the Special Rapporteur, provides “[h]uman dignity, core to human rights, implies respect for the individual, in his actuality and also in his potential.”¹⁰ Because education's primary concern is “learning, fulfilling potential and development, it should be a fundamental concern in detention...” not merely an add-on.¹¹ In essence, Muñoz suggests that because the purpose of education, including higher education, is to fulfill human development (i.e., the intangible needs discussed above), education in prison should be core to the prison experience.

Given HEP's ability to address the intangible human needs that support human development and maintain human dignity, it can be a crucial tool in supporting those experiencing incarceration.¹²

AN EXPANDED VIEW

Often policy arguments in favor of HEP focus on how programming leads to decreased recidivism and increased employability.¹³ These markers, considered alone, provide a limited view of HEP's benefits and fail to account for the ways in which HEP creates space to acknowledge incarcerated individuals' dignity in an otherwise dehumanizing space. This report moves beyond recidivism and employability to focus on the ways in which HEP benefits incarcerated individuals by meeting their intangible needs.

Using education as a tool to create space for the recognition of human dignity in prison allows people experiencing incarceration to have their needs recentered in conversations about HEP's importance. This human dignity requirement that HEP helps foster applies to all incarcerated individuals, regardless of sentence length. In “Higher

⁹ James M. Binnall, *Respecting Beasts: The Dehumanizing Quality of the Modern Prison and an Unusual Model for Penal Reform*, 17 J. L. & Pol'y 162 (2008).

¹⁰ Vernor Muñoz, *Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Including the Right to Development: The Right to Education of Persons in Detention*, U.N. Hum. Rts. Council (Apr. 2, 2009), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4a00419d2.html>.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Although this report highlights HEP as a method for creating space for human dignity and, in turn, addressing incarcerated people's intangible needs, HEP should not be construed as the only or primary method for supporting human dignity in prison.

¹³ Postsecondary education programs promote safer communities and improve life outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. Specifically, incarcerated people who participate in prison education programs are forty-three percent less likely to recidivate than those who do not. Those who pursue educational opportunities in prison “experience increased opportunities for employment and earnings, increased intergenerational educational achievement, and more frequent and meaningful civic engagement.” See Vera Inst. of Justice, *Building Effective Partnerships and Programs for High-Quality Postsecondary Education in Correctional Facilities* (Dec. 2015), <https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/EAPSE-Factsheet-v5.pdf>.

“The impact that the liberal arts has had on me is visible in my everyday walk.”

— Johnny Page

Education in an Era of Mass Incarceration: Possibility Under Constraint,” Johnny Page, an incarcerated scholar who at the point of writing had served twenty years in prison, provides insight into these additional benefits: “[T]he direct benefit of the skills I obtained through the many vocational training programs in which I have participated is still yet to be seen (i.e., obtaining gainful employment); however, the impact that the liberal arts has had on me is visible in my everyday walk.”¹⁴ Page’s comments illuminate the transformative nature of a liberal arts education, which bestows benefits that HEP scholars can immediately actualize during and post engagement in HEP programming. These benefits include: (1) empowerment and expanded self-perception, (2) improved well-being, and (3) deepened communal bonds and social support.

EMPOWERMENT AND EXPANDED SELF-PERCEPTION

*Although vocational training and certifications provides [sic] incarcerated students with the requisite skills to make a living, the breadth of knowledge and accompanying consciousness that students may develop as a result of a liberal arts education provides that same student with the necessary utensil to make a life.*¹⁵

—Johnny Page, incarcerated scholar

HEP helps students counter the consequences of self-stigma, i.e., the negative thoughts incarcerated people have about themselves as member of a group stigmatized by society and the behavioral reactions that result from those thoughts.¹⁶ Participating in HEP helps incarcerated people feel more empowered, increase their self-confidence, and have a more positive self-perception.¹⁷ Individuals that belong to the stigmatized group either “respond to self-stigma with low self-esteem, which limits their quality of life,” or with a sense of empowerment, a hope for a positive future or the ability to impact that future.¹⁸ HEP has the ability to foster that empowerment by helping students expand their world- and self-view. Scholars feel more empowered, have increased self-confidence, and have a more positive self-perception. A sense of empowerment includes heightened self-esteem, power over a feeling of powerlessness, a pull towards community activism, and righteous anger.¹⁹ Professor Soong-Chan Rah, an Illinois HEP instructor, exemplifies how such empowerment can be an integral part of a HEP course:

*I want to empower them, not only with knowledge, but with a sense of agency...one of the things that the prison system does is it takes away individual identity, you're a number, not a name. It takes away dignity in many cases... that's just the facts of what the prison system is trying to do. It's trying to take away dignity, trying to take away identity, trying to minimize... [society pushes] images... [of] lock them up and throw away the key, you know, get them out of sight, get them out of mind...I'm hoping to give them a sense of dignity, a sense of agency, a sense of identity.*²⁰

¹⁴ Erin L. Castro, Michael Brawn, Daniel E. Graves, Orlando Mayorga, Johnny Page, & Andra Slater, *Higher Education in an Era of Mass Incarceration: Possibility Under Constraint*, 1 J. Critical Scholarship on Higher Educ. & Student Aff. 13-31,18 (2015).

¹⁵ *Id.* (emphasis added).

¹⁶ Douglas N. Evans, et al., *Education in Prison and Self-Stigma: Empowerment Continuum*, 64 Crime & Delinquency 225-280 (2017).

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ Zoom Interview by Fatoumata Magassa with Soong-Chan Rah, Professor, N. Park Univ. (Jan. 26, 2021). At the time of his interview, Professor Rah was a professor at North Park Theological Seminary. He is currently a Professor of Evangelism at Fuller Theological Seminary.

In addition to the empowerment that HEP provides, it also offers opportunities for incarcerated individuals to positively broaden their self-perception. Michael Tafolla, an HEP alumnus, shares how his participation in HEP programming countered the dehumanizing conditioning of prison and thus shifted his self-view,

...in prison, you're so used to being isolated... you get used to being talked down [to], so used to being categorized as less than and you don't notice it, you know, it's [a] transition, that becomes pretty normal, and you don't realize the way you think and feel, has been... conditioned to a certain extent...[EJP] viewed us as students, which was a heck of an adjustment for me. I wasn't viewed as a criminal. I wasn't viewed as a convict. I wasn't viewed as the blues that I wore. I wasn't viewed as the worst decision of my life. I wasn't viewed as an animal. I was actually viewed as a human being. I was respected as a human being, as respected as a student. And I was treated as such, and for me is like it helps save my sanity to a certain extent, and it helped me find my humanity in the process of those four years.²¹

While Tafolla highlights how HEP countered dehumanizing prison culture and helped him “find his humanity,” Page offers a different perspective on how exposure to HEP, or a liberal arts education, transformed his self-perception:

For most of my existence, I had been living in a box (cave) and my every action, behavior, and attitude was reflective of this box, a box I wasn't even aware existed. As I began taking classes in the liberal arts, awareness of the box began to surface...[t]hrough the liberal arts I have increased my consciousness, which has allowed/forced me to challenge my thinking and how I perceive the world and my place within it today.²²

Participating in HEP helps incarcerated people feel more empowered, increase their self-confidence, and have a more positive self-perception.

Page goes on to say that participation in HEP not only altered his awareness by expanding his world view, but also helped him fundamentally change his actions. Tafolla's, Page's, and Professor Soong-Chan Rah's sentiments demonstrate the impact that HEP can have on students by challenging their negative or limited self-perception. HEP can not only counter stigma, but also empower students by helping them open their minds.

IMPROVED WELL-BEING

Even though I was stuck in prison, it was like my mind was free. I like the image of the bent prison bars—even how strong they are and prison is supposed to keep you in, there is nothing anyone can do to stop you [from] achieving better by bending the bars and setting your mind free.²³
— Incarcerated Scholar

Though prison is still prison, a place where dehumanizing practices persist, students spoke about how the classroom and study helped improve life inside. Monica Cosby, a formerly incarcerated scholar and activist, discussed how classroom space is “...not like freedom. But it feels maybe a

²¹ Zoom Interview by Fatoumata Magassa with Michael Tafolla, Formerly Incarcerated Scholar, Educ. Justice Project (Dec. 3, 2020).

²² Castro, *supra* note 14, at 18–19.

²³ Nina Champion, *What is Prison Education For? A Theory of Change Exploring the Value of Learning in Prison*, Prisoner Learning All. 10 (2019).

Although education is not a panacea for addressing the harms that manifest because of America's carceral system, as advocates work to decarcerate and even close correctional facilities, quality HEP provides a method of supporting those inside while the work to achieve their actual freedom continues.

little less locked up."²⁴ She also disclosed the role her education played in equipping her to persevere while incarcerated: "[W]hat you do get in programs in prison is kind of self-discovery [...] if it wasn't outright healing, it helped me hold the things that I needed to hold so I could do my time."²⁵ Xavier Perez, an HEP alum, offered, "it was nice because it felt somewhat like the real-world taking courses."²⁶

In a report produced by the Prisoner Learning Alliance,²⁷ students shared various perspectives that also reinforced the notion of improved well-being through education. One student posited, "I

was angry, I was not happy, I had nothing to focus on, but with education I felt complete. The anger was gone."²⁸ Although education is not a panacea for addressing the harms that manifest because of America's carceral system, as advocates work to decarcerate and even close correctional facilities, quality HEP provides a method of supporting those inside while the work to achieve their actual freedom continues.

DEEPENED COMMUNAL BONDS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

"[P]rison is designed to isolate you...[I]t's designed to break you and your family up too because of the constraints that they have to deal with in order to see you."²⁹

— Zahir, a formerly incarcerated scholar

Prison is an isolating experience for incarcerated people and does not foster communal development.³⁰ Apparatuses for generating communal bonds both within the facility and outside of it are key for incarcerated individuals' maintaining a sense of hope and resilience.³¹ Students and instructors cite their involvement in HEP as promoting communal ties within the classroom itself and among family members, as well as fostering social support upon reentry.

Professor Soong-Chan Rah of North Park University spoke about the community that can arise in a classroom, "I felt the graciousness and real forming of community in [my] class."³² In sharing his feelings of brotherhood, Zahir stated,

²⁴ Zoom Interview by Fatoumata Magassa with Monica Cosby, Formerly Incarcerated Scholar, Women's Justice Inst. (Dec. 3, 2020).

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ Zoom Interview by Fatoumata Magassa with Xavier Perez, Formerly Incarcerated Scholar, Educ. Justice Project (Dec. 3, 2020).

²⁷ The Prisoner Learning Alliance is a European based organization that hopes to make every prisoner a learner and prisons a space to learn. Prisoner Learning All., *Mission, Vision, Values*, <https://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/about-us/mission-vision-values/> (last visited Dec. 30, 2021).

²⁸ Champion, *supra* note 23.

²⁹ Hillary Binda, et al., "You're Almost in a Place that Doesn't Exist": *The Impact of College in Prison as Understood by Formerly Incarcerated Students from the Northeastern United States*, 6 *J. Prison Educ. & Reentry* 253 (2020).

³⁰ See Megan Fowler, *The Human Factor in Prison Design: Contrasting Prison Architecture in the United States and Scandinavia*, Ass'n of Collegiate Schs. of Architecture (2015), <https://www.acsa-arch.org/proceedings/Annual%20Meeting%20Proceedings/ACSA.AM.103/ACSA.AM.103.45.pdf> (discussing the architecture of American prisons and most American prisons built in the 1800s, which tend to be the same facilities in use today, that were constructed with the notion of solitude and reflection as a manner of penance. Other facilities were constructed with the point of making the imprisonment itself the punishment and only began to let incarcerated individuals have time outside of their small cells due to the deplorable living conditions like rat infestations, heat, bugs, etc.)

³¹ Rah, *supra* note 20.

³² *Id.*

It's like a close-knit group of guys who went through the program...many of us have come out and some of us are still in there and we're all still like a band of brothers...and that never goes away I think...I mean you experience a metamorphosis with somebody alongside you; you kind of don't forget that you both went through that together. It never, never changes.³³

A broad discussion of HEP's benefits justifies its use as a method in supporting incarcerated scholars. However, in order to identify pathways to expanding HEP, discussion of the national and state landscape is critical because it provides the necessary context for comprehending the highlighted barriers to expansion and the recommendations needed to overcome them.

In addition to the development of community among students in HEP programs, researchers have found that the sociological and historical perspectives from their coursework helped increase students' abilities to nurture relationships with family members.³⁴ Exposure to sociological and historical frameworks help incarcerated scholars build empathy and understanding as it relates to often complex relationships with family, especially members who also have had contacts with the criminal legal system.³⁵ Zahir explained how HEP helped him to better understand his father. Through HEP, Zahir "was able to attribute [his father's behavior] to his culture, his upbringing...what he dealt with."³⁶

In addition to positively impacting relationships with loved ones, the relationships students can build with HEP instructors and each other may contribute to students' quality of life upon release. Some formerly incarcerated scholars phrased this as the programming building "social support for their reintegration."³⁷ Patrick Pursley, an HEP alumnus, exemplifies this position in discussing how professors supported his reentry: "[A] lot of these professors were instrumental in helping me get free and provided me work while I am free."³⁸

³³ Binda, *supra* note 29, at 251.

³⁴ *Id.* at 253.

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ Evans, *supra* note 16.

³⁸ Zoom Interview by Fatoumata Magassa with Patrick Pursley, Formerly Incarcerated Scholar (Dec. 7, 2020).

THE EVOLUTION OF HEP

The prevailing purpose of incarceration, which swings on a pendulum from punitive to rehabilitative and back again, impacts the conditions of prisons and has had a notable influence on the historical development of educational opportunities in prison generally and HEP specifically. This trend can be observed on the national and state level; this report describes both to situate the development of HEP in Illinois within the broader national context. Throughout history, when policies and practices lean more punitive, educational programming has been limited. Alternatively, when policies and practices emphasize rehabilitation, programming has increased, creating more space to recognize and support human dignity.

EMERGENCE OF BASIC CORRECTIONAL EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS (EARLY 1700S – MID 1800S)

The beginning of education in prison has been tied to religious studies provided by faith leaders.³⁹ The earliest prisons in the United States arose in the late 1700s.⁴⁰ Incarceration at that time was carried out solely for the purpose of punishment, and incarcerated individuals were kept in solitary confinement to ensure they remained in isolation.⁴¹ Apart from correctional facility employees, religious

leaders and clergymen were the only people allowed to interact with incarcerated individuals.⁴² While visiting men in these early prisons, faith leaders provided religious studies and services, the only learning opportunities available for several decades.⁴³

In the mid-1800s, "Sabbath schools" developed, which combined religious teachings with secular education.⁴⁴ Following this advancement, states began to recognize the import and value of basic education for incarcerated individuals; New York passed the first legislation authorizing education of incarcerated scholars,⁴⁵ and evening schools were established at prisons in several states, including Illinois.⁴⁶ Evening school offerings were limited to reading, writing, and arithmetic⁴⁷ until the reformatory movement ushered in a new era of prison education characterized by the introduction of organized systems of formal education.⁴⁸

RISE OF THE REHABILITATIVE IDEAL (1870 – 1950)

The concept of reformatory prison discipline was introduced at the Prison Congress of 1870,⁴⁹ a national meeting organized by prison reformers to explore ideas and institutional practices that would foster the reformation of incarcerated individuals.⁵⁰

³⁹ Meagan Wilson, et al., *Unbarring Access: A Landscape Review of Postsecondary Education in Prison and Its Pedagogical Supports*, Ithaka S+R (May 30, 2019), <https://sr.ithaka.org/publications/landscape-review-postsecondary-education-in-prison/>.

⁴⁰ Carl C. Gaither, *Education Behind Bars: An Overview*, 33 J. Correctional Educ. 19 (1982).

⁴¹ John W. Roberts, *Reform and Retribution: An Illustrated History of American Prisons* 26 (Am. Correctional Ass'n, 1996).

⁴² David E. Jones, *Impact of Post-Secondary Correctional Education on Self-Efficacy and Personal Agency of Formerly Incarcerated African American Men* (2017) (dissertation, Western Michigan University), <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations/3106>.

⁴³ Wilson, *supra* note 39.

⁴⁴ Gaither, *supra* note 40, at 20.

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ Terry Angle, *The Development of Educational Programs in American Adult Prisons and Juvenile Reformatories During the Nineteenth Century*, 33 J. Correctional Educ. 5 (1982).

⁴⁷ Gaither, *supra* note 40, at 20.

⁴⁸ Angle, *supra* note 46, at 6.

⁴⁹ Snell Putney & Gladys J. Putney, *Origins of the Reformatory*, 53 J. Crim. L. & Criminology 441 (1962).

⁵⁰ Stephen E. Tillotson, *National Congress on Penitentiary and Reformatory Discipline*, in *The Social History of Crime and Punishment in America: An Encyclopedia*, 1187-1189 (2012).

A wide range of stakeholders attended the meeting, including state administrators, judges, wardens, politicians, and activists from around the country.⁵¹ The group adopted thirty-seven principles, including one recognizing that “education is a vital force in the reformation of fallen men and women.”⁵² One of the attendees was Zebulon Brockway, a major proponent of reformatory prison discipline, who went on to direct the development of the first adult reformatory, Elmira.⁵³ Elmira was established in New York in 1876 and quickly acquired an international reputation for its formalized system of education for incarcerated people.⁵⁴ Despite these sound beginnings, adoption of the model was slow over the next half century.⁵⁵

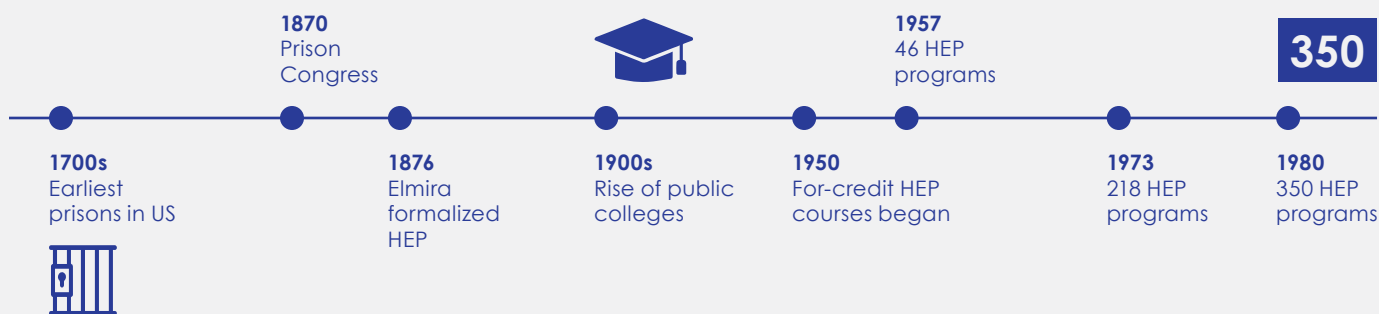
A rise in public high schools in the 1890s⁵⁶ and public colleges and universities in the early 1900s⁵⁷ coupled with research supporting the importance of an increased emphasis on imprisonment as a

“[E]ducation is a vital force in the reformation of men and women.”

— One of 37 principles adopted by Prison Congress of 1870

means of rehabilitation led to more rapid growth of prison education.⁵⁸ At this time, colleges and universities began to get involved directly with prison education,⁵⁹ primarily through provision of student-funded correspondence courses.⁶⁰ Credit-bearing HEP courses were implemented inside prisons much later, in the 1950s.⁶¹

EVOLUTION OF HEP IN UNITED STATES



⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² 1870 Congress of the National Prison Association, *Declaration of Principles Adopted and Promulgated by the 1870 Congress of the National Prison Association*, [http://moglen.law.columbia.edu/twiki/pub/AmLegalHist/AndersPauleyWikiProject/Declaration_of_Principles_\(1870\).pdf](http://moglen.law.columbia.edu/twiki/pub/AmLegalHist/AndersPauleyWikiProject/Declaration_of_Principles_(1870).pdf) (last visited on Dec. 12, 2021).

⁵³ Snell, *supra* note 49.

⁵⁴ Angle, *supra* note 46, at 6.

⁵⁵ Delyte W. Morris, *The University's Role in Prison Education*, 45 Neb. L. Rev. 544 (1966).

⁵⁶ Angle, *supra* note 46, at 6.

⁵⁷ Mary C. Wright, *Pell Grants, Politics and the Penitentiary: Connections Between the Development of U.S. Higher Education and Prisoner Post-Secondary Programs*, 52 J. Correctional Educ. 12 (2001).

⁵⁸ Gaither, *supra* note 40, at 21.

⁵⁹ Rebecca Ginsburg, Address at Convening on Higher Education in Illinois Prisons (Oct. 28, 2019) (transcript available upon request).

⁶⁰ Wilson, *supra* note 39.

⁶¹ Gaither, *supra* note 40, at 22.

INITIAL GROWTH OF HEP IN ILLINOIS AND AROUND THE COUNTRY (1952 – 1992)

Illinois was the first state to offer face-to-face HEP instruction to incarcerated scholars⁶² and quickly emerged as a national leader in the HEP field in the mid-twentieth century. In 1952, a partnership emerged between Southern Illinois University (“SIU”) and Menard Correctional Center (“Menard”).⁶³ It is unclear exactly what prompted the partnership, but scholars point to SIU’s commitment to “take the University to the people” and a supportive warden at Menard.⁶⁴

For the first four years, offerings were limited to non-credit bearing automotive and art courses taught by the Division of Technical and Adult Education at SIU.⁶⁵

Then, in 1956, the university’s Division of University Extension joined the burgeoning partnership, which allowed SIU to provide the first for-credit course in a prison.⁶⁶ By 1962, SIU had established a two-track program where students at Menard could enroll in individual courses or as full-time students.⁶⁷ This was the first-ever college-in-prison program in the country⁶⁸ and demonstrated how higher education in prison programs could grow from a single course offering to a full-fledged degree-granting program.

The ongoing and growing success of the SIU HEP program drew attention and support from other universities and policymakers in Illinois, including then Governor Otto Kerner. To encourage additional state prisons to explore partnerships with

Illinois was the first state to offer face-to-face HEP instruction to incarcerated scholars.

neighboring educational institutions, Kerner held the Governor’s Conference on University-Penitentiary Relationships in April 1964.⁶⁹ The event was followed by a “golden age” of HEP in Illinois, characterized by new partnerships and “increased energy applied to expanding programming across the state.”⁷⁰ Many HEP programs were established and began providing programming through a variety of mediums, including correspondence, video instruction, and in-person teaching.⁷¹

Budding programs in the late 1960s expanded tremendously in the early 1970s because of newly established federal financial aid for students. In 1972, the federal government began awarding grants directly to students through the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant Program.⁷² These grants, later renamed Pell Grants, created the largest funding source for incarcerated students and became the primary source of funding for HEP programs nationwide.⁷³ Programs proliferated across the country; scholars estimate that forty-six HEP programs existed in the United States in 1967 and, by 1973, the number of programs grew to 218.⁷⁴

⁶² Wilson, *supra* note 39.

⁶³ Ginsburg, *supra* note 59.

⁶⁴ Morris, *supra* note 55, at 547.

⁶⁵ *Id.*

⁶⁶ Rob Scott, *The Rise and Fall of the “Corrections” Paradigm in the Illinois Prison System*, 15 (unpublished) (on file with author).

⁶⁷ Ginsburg, *supra* note 59.

⁶⁸ Scott, *supra* note 66, at 3-4.

⁶⁹ Morris, *supra* note 55, at 550.

⁷⁰ Ginsburg, *supra* note 59.

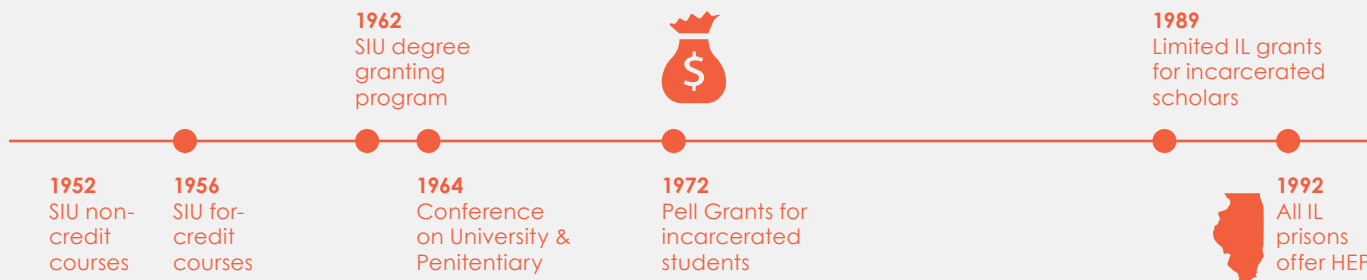
⁷¹ Morris, *supra* note 55, at 550.

⁷² Lumina Foundation, *Pell Grant: Building Block of Student-Based Aid* (Nov. 29, 2017), <https://www.luminafoundation.org/history-of-federal-student-aid/chapter-three/>.

⁷³ Bradley D. Custer, *The History of Denying Federal Financial Aid to System-Impacted Students*, 50 *J. Student Fin. Aid* 3 (2021).

⁷⁴ Max Kenner, *The Long History of College in Prison*, in *Education for Liberation: The Politics of Promise and Reform Inside and Beyond America’s Prisons*, 9-29 (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019).

EARLY YEARS OF HEP IN ILLINOIS



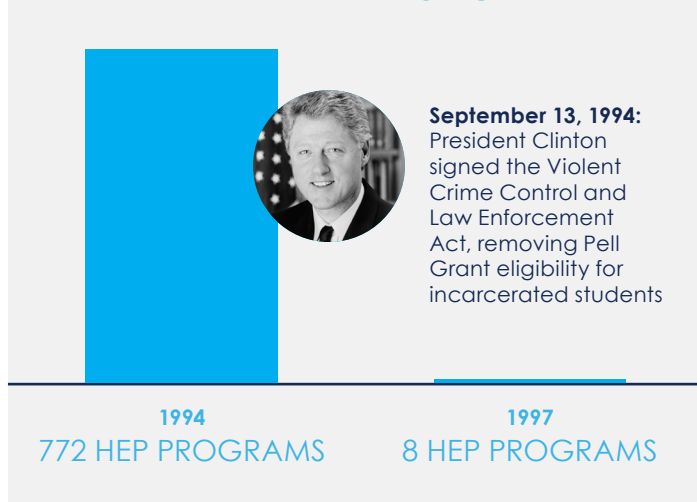
By the early 1980s, over 350 HEP programs were available in ninety percent of the states.⁷⁵ Early expansion of HEP in Illinois rapidly increased and, by 1992, every Illinois prison offered some form of college programming.⁷⁶

This reemergence of punitive prison philosophies occurred on national and state levels. Around this time, numerous states, including Illinois, implemented similar cutbacks and restrictions on state financial aid.⁸⁰ The removal of Pell Grants

HEP AMIDST THE WAR ON CRIME (1994 – EARLY 2000S)

This unprecedented growth was short-lived. As violent crime spiked in the early 1990s, so did legislators' punitive responses to it.⁷⁷ This confluence of factors ushered in the politicization of crime and “law and order” that eventually led to the War on Crime. The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 played a central role in advancing the War on Crime by introducing federal funding incentives that drove mass incarceration and punitive cutbacks that functionally eliminated rehabilitative offerings in prisons.⁷⁸ Specific to HEP, this legislation removed Pell Grant eligibility for incarcerated scholars and had disastrous consequences for HEP programs.⁷⁹

HEP AND THE WAR ON CRIME



⁷⁵ Daniel Karpowitz & Max Kenner, *Education as Crime Prevention: The Case for Reinstating Pell Grant Eligibility for the Incarcerated*, Bard Prison Initiative (2003), <https://bpi.bard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/KarpowitzKenner2003.pdf>.

⁷⁶ Scott, *supra* note 66, at 23.

⁷⁷ Lauren-Brooke Eisen, *The 1994 Crime Bill and Beyond: How Federal Funding Shapes the Criminal Justice System*, Brennan Ctr. (Sept. 9, 2019), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/1994-crime-bill-and-beyond-how-federal-funding-shapes-criminal-justice>.

⁷⁸ Avlana K. Eisenberg, *The Prisoner and the Polity*, 95 N.Y.U.L. Rev. 1 (Apr. 2020).

⁷⁹ Spearlt, *Keeping it REAL: Why Congress Must Act to Restore Pell Grant Funding for Prisoners*, 11 U. Mass. L. Rev. 26 (2016).

⁸⁰ Bradley D. Custer, *The Disenfranchisement of Justice-Involved College Students from State Financial Aid (2019)* (dissertation, Michigan State University), https://cdn.theconversation.com/static_files/files/596/CUSTER.pdf?1557867364.

and state aid caused severe financial cuts to HEP programs and decreases in student enrollment, ultimately decimating HEP. Nationwide, 772 HEP programs existed prior to this ban and, by 1997, it is estimated that only eight remained.⁸¹ Illinois programs simultaneously collapsed. Available programming across the state dwindled and all that remained by the early 2000s were a few vocational programs.⁸²

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRENT HEP LANDSCAPE IN ILLINOIS (LATE 2000S TO 2021)

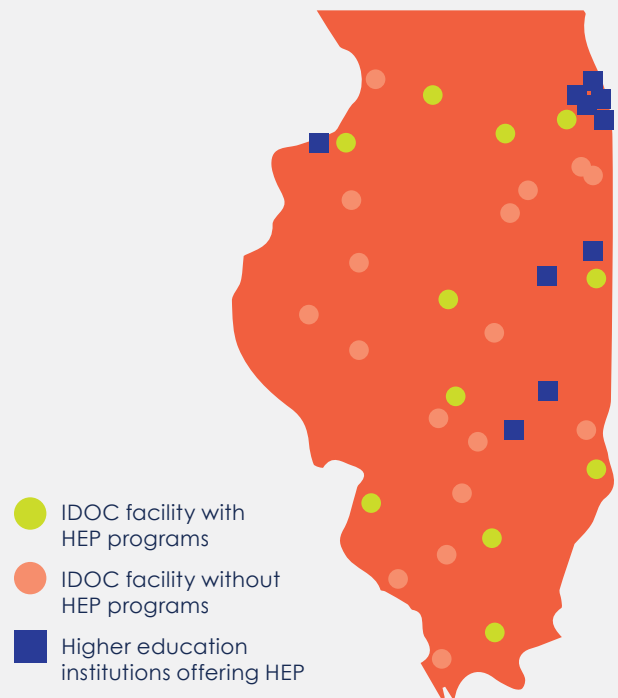
Mass incarceration continued to grow at alarming rates throughout the 1990s and 2000s.⁸³ The exponential growth in incarceration without a corresponding increase in public safety led political scientists and policymakers to question the effectiveness of such punitive policies; by the late 2000s, a growing movement to end the War on Crime had emerged.⁸⁴ Mass incarceration became an important topic of discussion and several critiques and interventions developed, including new HEP programs.

Structured college-in-prison programs, offering courses beyond the vocational and associate degree levels, began to reemerge in Illinois at this time despite a lack of federal and state aid. Growing recognition of the dehumanizing nature of prisons and the transformative nature of HEP programs coupled with non-governmental funding sources allowed some universities to begin reestablishing HEP in Illinois. To date, eleven programs have been established and offer HEP in eleven of IDOC's twenty-eight correctional facilities.⁸⁵

The Education Justice Project ("EJP") is the oldest of

HEP PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS

This map depicts the gaps in HEP accessibility. It shows the location of HEP programs at IDOC correctional facilities and the location of higher education institutions providing HEP programming as of December 2021. See Appendix 1 for information about HEP Programs in Illinois.



the currently existing college-in-prison programs in Illinois. EJP is a comprehensive HEP program through the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign offering several for-credit courses and extracurricular opportunities at Danville Correctional Center ("Danville").⁸⁶ Although EJP was created over fifty years after the SIU HEP program, both developed similarly. Like the SIU HEP program, EJP grew out of the interest of individual university faculty members

⁸¹ Gerard Robinson & Elizabeth English, *The Second Chance Pell Pilot Program: A Historical Overview*, Am. Enter. Inst. (Sep. 18, 2017), <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/The-Second-Chance-Pell-Pilot-Program.pdf?x91208>.

⁸² Scott, *supra* note 66, at 24.

⁸³ Heather Schoenfeld, *The Fallout of Declaring War on Social Issues: The War on Drugs, the Politics of Crime, and Mass Incarceration*, 15 J. Gender Race & Just. 156-57 (2017).

⁸⁴ Carl Takei, *From Mass Incarceration to Mass Control and Back Again: How Bipartisan Criminal Justice Reform May Lead to a For-Profit Nightmare*, 20 U. Pa. J.L. & Soc. Change 322-26 (Spring 2012).

⁸⁵ See Appendix: Profiles of HEP Programs in Illinois for full directory of existing programs as of December 2021.

⁸⁶ Education Justice Project, *About*, <https://educationjustice.net/about/> (last visited on Dec. 12, 2021).

and its offerings have increased and expanded over time.

In 2006, Professor Rebecca Ginsburg, Director of EJP, formed a working group of Illinois graduate students, faculty, and community members to design a program tailored to the needs of incarcerated scholars in Illinois.⁸⁷ The group worked for two years to analyze different HEP models and best practices around the country while building alliances and raising funds to get the program off the ground.⁸⁸ After persuading university administrators of HEP's benefits and working with IDOC officials to establish a memorandum of understanding, EJP launched its first for-credit classes in Spring 2009.⁸⁹

Two years later, the Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project ("PNAP") was established at Stateville Correctional Center ("Stateville").⁹⁰ Sarah Ross, PNAP Co-Founder and Co-Director, was a member of the aforementioned EJP working group while teaching art history with a community college offering programming at Danville.⁹¹ After several requests from artists incarcerated at Stateville and relocating to Chicago, PNAP began building a new HEP model for Illinois,⁹² an arts and education project taught by faculty from several higher education institutions.⁹³ PNAP launched two credit-bearing courses in 2011 and has since grown into a full degree-granting program with non-credit and extracurricular offerings, including workshops, think tanks, and guest lectures.⁹⁴

These early programs played an important role in developing models of HEP for Illinois, demonstrating

the importance of creating space for dignity in IDOC facilities, and supporting the growth and establishment of new HEP programs. As a result, over the last decade, HEP programs in Illinois have developed relatively rapidly. This expansion has played an important role in providing access to additional facilities and populations.

Eight new programs have launched in the last seven years.⁹⁵ In reaction to this marked growth and need for coordinated expansion, a few of the HEP administrators in Illinois came together in 2016 and founded the Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison ("IL-CHEP"). IL-CHEP's founding members sought to create a space where existing and emerging programs could cooperate and collaborate. In an effort to guide their work, IL-CHEP's founding members outlined seven priorities and goals, including: supporting HEP programs and instructors to ensure offerings are of high quality, educating the public on the value of HEP, and

At present, less than three percent of individuals incarcerated in IDOC have the opportunity to enroll in HEP programming.

⁸⁷ Education Justice Project, *The Beginnings of EJP*, <https://educationjustice.net/ejp-blog/the-beginnings-of-ejp/> (last visited on Dec. 2, 2021).

⁸⁸ Education Justice Project, *EJP Handbook* (Sep. 2021), https://educationjustice.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/EJP_handbook_21-22_virtual.pdf.

⁸⁹ *Id.*

⁹⁰ Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project, *About Us*, <https://p-nap.org/about-us/> (last visited on Dec. 12, 2021).

⁹¹ Telephone Interview with Sarah Ross, Co-Dir. of Art and Exhibitions, Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Educ. Project (Nov. 4, 2021).

⁹² *Id.*

⁹³ Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project, *Structure*, <https://p-nap.org/structure/> (last visited on Dec. 12, 2021).

⁹⁴ Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project, *supra* note 90.

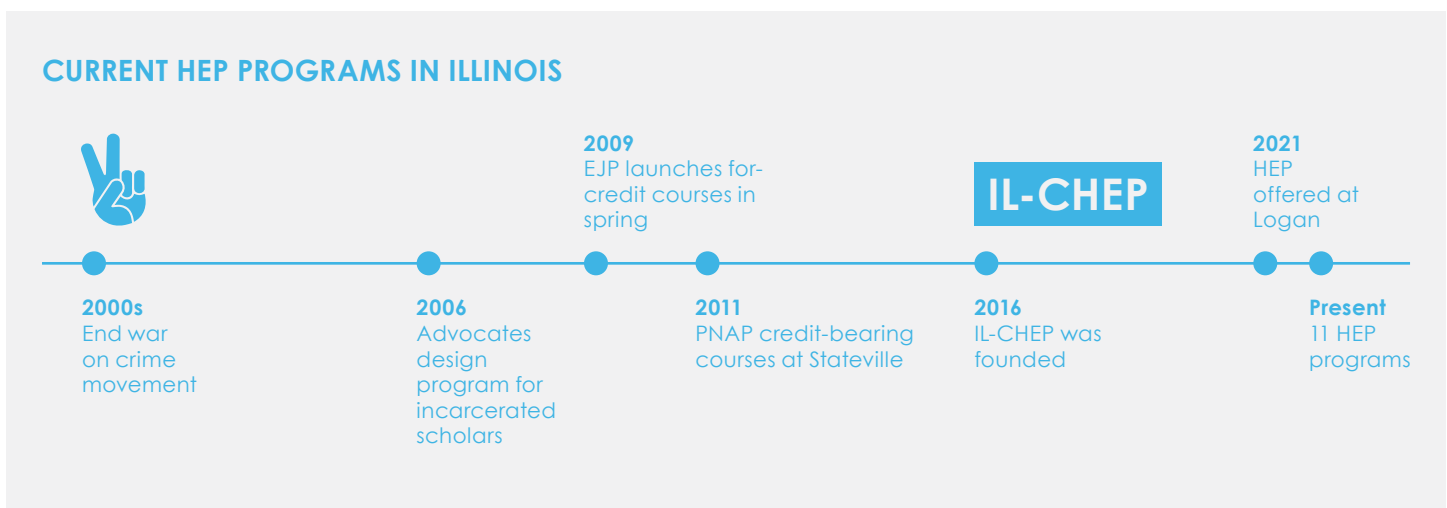
⁹⁵ Survey, *Understanding the Landscape of Higher Education in Prison (HEP) in Illinois - Program Administrator Survey* (unpublished) (on file with author).

advocating for the expansion of HEP programming and partnerships in Illinois.⁹⁶

Since IL-CHEP's inception, HEP offerings continue to grow and emerge in new IDOC facilities. This coordinated support and influx of programming has increased the number of HEP opportunities available to incarcerated scholars, yet student access to HEP programming in Illinois remains erratic, constricted, and, for the majority of IDOC facilities and incarcerated scholars, nonexistent. At present, less than three percent of individuals incarcerated in IDOC have the opportunity to enroll in HEP programming.⁹⁷ The eleven existing HEP programs offer courses in just eleven of the twenty-eight IDOC facilities,⁹⁸ with two programs expanding recently to serve women, a severely underserved population.⁹⁹ In 2021, two existing HEP programs,

North Park University School of Restorative Arts and Northwestern Prison Education Program, began offering programming to women incarcerated at Logan Correctional Center.¹⁰⁰

Important HEP expansion has occurred in recent years. Unfortunately, programs have grown in a piecemeal fashion in the absence of critical state-provided supports and cross-sector partnerships necessary to ensure the availability of quality HEP programming around the state. While this way of HEP development has allowed, and often required, significant innovation by HEP programs that have advanced the field, there are hurdles Illinois must overcome to address limited access to HEP and realize the full impact of HEP's benefits.



⁹⁶ Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison, History, <https://ilchep.org/history/#> (last visited on February 11, 2022).

⁹⁷ The Illinois Department of Corrections currently incarcerates 25,447 individuals in its twenty-eight correctional facilities. See Illinois Department of Corrections, *Quarterly Report* (Oct. 1, 2021), https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/reportsandstatistics/Documents/IDOC%20Quarterly%20Report_October%202021.pdf.

⁹⁸ Survey, *supra* note 95.

⁹⁹ Women's Justice Institute, *Redefining the Narrative* (Apr. 28, 2021), <https://redefine.womensjusticeinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/WJI-Redefining-the-Narrative-Bro-L01.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰ Survey, *supra* note 95.

BARRIERS TO HEP EXPANSION¹⁰¹

Reflection on the history of HEP development in Illinois reviews the challenges to ensuring HEP reaches incarcerated scholars around the state, including limited resources, inconsistent and opaque policies, and a lack of data-informed and collaborative decision-making. The negative impact of these barriers is borne by students, programs, and the state throughout all stages of program development — from design and initiation to expansion and evaluation. In general, limited resources constrain the availability of HEP while a lack of uniform and transparent policies informed by data and the perspectives and experiences of HEP stakeholders create an unpredictable environment that impedes HEP program implementation and expansion. Until these challenges are addressed, Illinois will not be positioned to reap the full benefits of HEP.

LIMITED RESOURCES

Limited resources for HEP severely restrict available offerings. HEP programming is currently available to less than three percent of IDOC's population.¹⁰² At present, eleven Illinois colleges and universities offer HEP in eleven IDOC correctional facilities.¹⁰³ Where programming is available, enrollment is restricted, and waitlists are lengthy. HEP program enrollment ranges from ten to 131, with an average

Eleven Illinois colleges and universities offer HEP in eleven IDOC correctional facilities.

enrollment of forty-four while hundreds of students remain on waitlists to enroll.¹⁰⁴ Without more access to resources, programs cannot launch or grow and students will continue to wait several years to have the opportunity to begin postsecondary coursework.¹⁰⁵

Available resources are scarce and restricted. There are very few federal and state funding streams that provide aid to HEP programs or students. Federal funding for HEP was first available through two funding streams, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act ("Perkins IV funds") and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act ("WIOA funds"); these two funds allow states to use up to two percent of the state's total grant funds and twenty percent of the state's workforce development funds on correctional education, respectively.¹⁰⁶ Illinois receives funding from both programs.¹⁰⁷ IDOC uses Perkins IV funds to provide vocational programs and

¹⁰¹ While this report aims to highlight major obstacles to expanding HEP in our state, it cannot and does not cover all issues that impact the ability to expand quality HEP to all Illinois prisons. See Appendix 2 for areas in need of additional exploration.

¹⁰² See Illinois Department of Corrections, *supra* note 97.

¹⁰³ Survey, *supra* note 95; Illinois Department of Corrections, *Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report* (2019), <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/reportsandstatistics/Documents/Annual%20Report%20FY19.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ See Survey, *supra* note 95; Illinois Department of Corrections, *supra* note 103.

¹⁰⁵ See Lee V. Gaines, *Lack of Access, Long Waitlists: Education in Illinois Prisons*, Ill. Pub. Media (Feb. 24, 2020), <https://will.illinois.edu/news/story/lack-of-access-long-waitlists-education-in-illinois-prisons>.

¹⁰⁶ Leah Bacon, et al., *Laying the Groundwork: How States Can Improve Access to Continued Education for People in the Criminal Justice System*, Council of State Gov'ts Justice Ctr. (Feb. 2020), https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Laying-the-Groundwork_Feb2020.pdf.

¹⁰⁷ *Id.*

reentry services¹⁰⁸ and WIOA funds to support reentry preparation services and adult education programs limited to basic and secondary offerings.¹⁰⁹

In 2015, a new federal program was created specifically to support HEP, the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program.¹¹⁰ This program made Pell Grants available to select postsecondary institutions around the country to test how access to this funding influences academic and life outcomes for incarcerated adults.¹¹¹ Sixty-seven schools were selected to participate in 2016. In 2020, the program was expanded to include sixty-seven additional programs.¹¹² No Illinois schools participated in the pilot program.

By the end of 2020, Second Chance Pell students had earned over 7,000 degrees and certificates.¹¹³ The pilot was found to successfully contribute to a range of positive outcomes, including successful reentry, upward mobility, public and facility safety, and taxpayer savings.¹¹⁴ Growing recognition of the myriad of benefits realized through the pilot fostered support for a full reversal of the ban on Pell Grants for incarcerated students in December 2020.¹¹⁵ Although Illinois did not receive funding through the

pilot program,¹¹⁶ the recent restoration of access to Pell Grants creates new opportunities for Illinois colleges and universities that did not participate in Second Chance Pell.¹¹⁷

While changes at the federal level potentially increase access to federal funding for HEP programs in Illinois, bans on state financial aid remain in place and prevent HEP programs and students from accessing several streams of state-based financial aid.¹¹⁸ Since 1989, the Illinois Higher Education Student Assistance Act has limited access to several Illinois grant programs for incarcerated scholars.¹¹⁹ This legislation disqualifies programs that serve incarcerated students from receiving state aid,¹²⁰ effectively barring HEP students from directly receiving state financial aid.¹²¹ The Illinois legislature does appropriate some funds to IDOC for postsecondary programming provided directly by IDOC facilities or in contract with community colleges.¹²² However, this funding has been inconsistent over the years¹²³ and currently supports contracts to support HEP with only two of Illinois' forty-nine community colleges.¹²⁴

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Department of Education, *How States Made Available Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act Funds to Support Correctional Education* (Dec. 2019), https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/uploads/How_States_Made_Available_Perkins_Funds_for_Correctional_Ed.pdf#page=28&zoom=100,93,689.

¹⁰⁹ Illinois Workforce Innovation Board, *2020-2024 State of Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan* (May 29, 2020), <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Updated%20Final%20USP%20Plan%20Document.pdf>.

¹¹⁰ Robinson, *supra* note 81.

¹¹¹ U.S. Department of Education, *Second Chance Pell Fact Sheet*, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/pell-secondchance.pdf> (last visited on Dec. 12, 2021).

¹¹² U.S. Department of Education, *U.S. Department of Education Announces It Will Expand the Second Chance Pell Experiment for the 2022-2023 Award Year* (July 30, 2021), <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-announces-it-will-expand-second-chance-pell-experiment-2022-2023-award-year>.

¹¹³ Kelsie Chesnut & Allan Wachendorfer, *Second Chance Pell: Four Years of Expanding Access to Education in Prison*, Vera Inst. of Justice (Apr. 2021), <https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/second-chance-pell-four-years-of-expanding-access-to-education-in-prison.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ *Id.*

¹¹⁵ The Office of Federal Student Aid announced on June 11, 2021, that full implementation would be delayed one year. Federal Student Aid, *Beginning Phased Implementation of the FAFSA Simplification Act* (June 11, 2021), <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/electronic-announcements/2021-06-11/beginning-phased-implementation-fafsa-simplification-act-ea-id-general-21-39>.

¹¹⁶ The Council of State Governments Justice Center, *Illinois: Access to Continued Education for People in the Criminal Justice System* (Mar. 2020), https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Illinois_Laying-the-Groundwork.pdf.

¹¹⁷ See Lee V. Gaines, *Illinois Could Expand Access to Higher Education in Prison Through Pell Grants*, Ill. Newsroom (Jan. 21, 2021), <https://illinoisnewsroom.org/illinois-could-expand-access-to-higher-education-in-prison-through-pell-grants/>.

¹¹⁸ Custer, *supra* note 80.

¹¹⁹ *Id.*

¹²⁰ 110 ILCS 947/10.

¹²¹ Custer, *supra* note 80.

¹²² The Council of State Governments, *supra* note 116.

¹²³ See Illinois Department of Corrections, *supra* note 103 (attributing a lack of funds for education to “no budget in FY 2016 and FY 2017”).

¹²⁴ See *id.*; Survey, *supra* note 95.

These limited and restricted federal and state funding streams leave a substantial resource gap. Nevertheless, private funding sources have allowed several HEP programs to continue offering programming. Eight of the eleven HEP programs in Illinois rely entirely on support from private institutions and individuals, including colleges and universities, foundations, corporate contributions, and gifts.¹²⁵ This growth in philanthropic support of HEP has allowed programs to thrive despite the resource gap, but alone cannot support the expansion needed to ensure quality HEP opportunities are available in all IDOC correctional facilities.

INCONSISTENT AND OPAQUE POLICIES

When implementing programming, many HEP administrators encounter and struggle to navigate obscure procedures and inconsistent IDOC policies related to HEP programs. Administrators report different rules and regulations depending on the IDOC facility and/or semester. Without clear, consistent, systemwide HEP policies and practices, HEP administrators are unable to accurately predict what is necessary to be successful, deterring programs from implementation and expansion, and students have difficulty determining how to access and enroll in available programming. This ambiguity also hinders relationship building between HEP programs and IDOC facility leadership.

An example of how the lack of uniformity and transparency hinder development of quality HEP programming is the ambiguous IDOC procedures for instructor clearance. To obtain entry into IDOC facilities, a necessary initial step for program implementation, HEP instructors must obtain clearance from the facility at which they aspire to offer programming. These clearance procedures vary by facility, making it difficult for instructors to anticipate what will be required and often causing program delays and interruptions.

From completing training requirements to obtaining tuberculosis testing, HEP instructors report maneuvering complex and varying requirements to obtain clearance into IDOC facilities. Procedures differ depending on the type of programming offered and whether an instructor is considered a “volunteer.” In many cases, HEP instructors are considered volunteers and reviewed according to IDOC’s Volunteer Services Administrative Directive (“Volunteer AD”). However, because the Volunteer AD provides scant guidelines for review of instructors and delegates vast decision-making authority to each facility’s chief administrative officer,¹²⁶ significant procedural variation persists even among instructors considered volunteers. This ambiguity and discretion results in variation that hinders HEP administrators from producing sustainable structures for programming and collaborating to learn from other administrators’ experiences.

To overcome this lack of uniformity and transparency from IDOC, several HEP administrators have come together to collaborate and support each other in navigating these opaque processes. Individual HEP programs provide critical resources and guidance to other local programs, and IL-CHEP, a growing coalition of HEP programs and individual educators and students dedicated to providing quality HEP for incarcerated people in Illinois, has led recent efforts to foster statewide collaboration. The coalition has garnered significant support from existing HEP programs and continues to perform outreach to bring other existing and emerging HEP programs into the conversation and the community.¹²⁷ IL-CHEP’s growing network provides an important mechanism for identifying the variance in policy implementation across IDOC facilities and developing solutions for addressing such inconsistent policies. Nonetheless, HEP will benefit from consistent and transparent policies and practices to guide and support students and program administrators.

¹²⁵ Survey, *supra* note 95.

¹²⁶ See Administrative Directive from Ill. Dep’t of Corr., Volunteer Services (Feb. 1, 2021) (on file with author).

¹²⁷ Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison, *Members*, <https://ilchep.org/membership/> (last visited on Dec. 12, 2021).

LACK OF DATA-INFORMED AND COLLABORATIVE POLICYMAKING

Several current IDOC policies that impact HEP are ill-informed and, as a result, unworkable, because they were devised in the absence of data and without consultation of key HEP stakeholders. Because there is no statewide, systematic data collection or sustained collaboration between IDOC and HEP administrators and students, IDOC officials are unable to develop data-driven policies and generally lack an understanding of system-wide successes, opportunities, and areas for growth.

Currently, there is no single entity collecting or reporting comprehensive data on HEP programming in Illinois, preventing meaningful evaluation of existing offerings and effective identification of opportunities for growth. Illinois law requires only that IDOC collect and report the rate of people in custody who have completed evidence-based programs at each facility¹²⁸ and the number of participants.¹²⁹ Some additional information is collected by individual HEP programs,¹³⁰ but there are few, if any, established mechanisms for information-sharing and data compilation or analysis across programs.

Although formal data collection mechanisms have yet to be established, HEP administrators, instructors, and students have a wealth of knowledge and perspective informed by direct HEP experience that is critical for IDOC to consider when crafting policy. The current absence of processes to involve

HEP instructors and students in departmental policymaking¹³¹ prevents IDOC from understanding and effectively addressing the needs of those implementing and participating in HEP programs.

Recent controversy related to IDOC's revised Publication Reviews Administrative Directive ("Publication AD") exemplifies the negative impacts of IDOC's isolationist approach to policymaking. In January 2019, after more than ten years of ongoing programming offered by the Education Justice Project ("EJP") at Danville Correctional Center ("Danville"), Danville staff removed more than 200 publications, many of which were previously approved, from EJP's Community Library at Danville.¹³²

The book removal prompted national discussion and local action, including the formation of Freedom to Learn ("FTL"), an IL-CHEP campaign that calls for clear and fair statewide legislation that allow HEP programs to operate free from undue interference or interruption of their students' academic and intellectual pursuits,¹³³ and an Illinois House subject matter hearing on censorship in Illinois prisons.¹³⁴ At the hearing, IDOC's then-Acting Director (and now current Director) Rob Jeffreys acknowledged the lack of sound process and need for policy revision and oversight.¹³⁵ State legislators and HEP administrators were pleased to hear a public commitment from IDOC to "revitalize our current policy creation, review, and application,"¹³⁶ and they urged IDOC to include external stakeholders in the process.¹³⁷

¹²⁸ 730 ILCS 5/3-2-12(b)(1)(C)(i).

¹²⁹ 730 ILCS 5/3-5-3.1(b)(4).

¹³⁰ Survey, *supra* note 95.

¹³¹ See Administrative Directive from Ill. Dep't of Corr., Administrative Directives (Mar. 1, 2021), <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/aboutus/Policies/Policies/Administration,%20Organization%20and%20Management/101101%20Administrative%20Directives.pdf>.

¹³² Lee V. Gaines, *Illinois Prison Removes More Than 200 Books From Prison Library*, Ill. Pub. Media (May 29, 2019), <https://will.illinois.edu/news/story/illinois-prison-removes-more-than-200-books-from-prison-library>.

¹³³ Freedom to Learn Campaign, *Factsheet*, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5dbda5531ece6c59d36ce516/t/5e5ea76d8f32bd65e68baf84/1583261550097/FTL+1+-+pager+3.3.20.pdf> (last visited on Dec. 12, 2021).

¹³⁴ Education Justice Project, *EJP Fall 2019 Newsletter* (Fall 2019), https://educationjustice.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/EJP_Fall_2019_newsletter_digital.pdf.

¹³⁵ Lee V. Gaines, *The Reason Why Hundreds of Books Were Removed From an Illinois Prison Library*, Ill. Pub. Media (Aug. 15, 2019), <https://will.illinois.edu/news/story/the-reason-why-hundreds-of-books-were-removed-from-an-illinois-prison-library>.

¹³⁶ Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg, *Illinois Department of Corrections Revises Book Ban Policy*, *The Appeal* (Nov. 4, 2019), <https://theappeal.org/illinois-department-of-corrections-revises-book-ban-policy/>.

¹³⁷ See Letter from the Steering Comm. of the Freedom to Learn Campaign to Rob Jeffreys, Dir., Ill. Dep't of Corr. (Nov. 7, 2019) (on file with author).

IDOC adopted revisions to its Publication AD in November 2019, the policy's eighth revision in less than five years.¹³⁸ Again, and despite recommendations made at the July hearing, the revised policy was created in the absence of data and without any meaningful attempt to engage HEP educators or students in the revision process.¹³⁹ As long as decisions are made in this isolated fashion, IDOC officials will lack the insight and information necessary to craft effective policies that serve all stakeholders' needs.

Despite these challenges, there are efforts to allow for more collaboration. IDOC meets with IL-CHEP quarterly, for example. This serves as an opportunity for information sharing and for IL-CHEP members to raise concerns. However, the problem of lack of HEP student and practitioner influence in policymaking persists. Without their meaningful involvement, Illinois will not be able to appropriately tailor policies and procedures to ensure we effectively expand HEP around our state.

¹³⁸ See Peter Nickeas, "It's the Racial Stuff": Illinois Prison Banned, Removed Books on Black History and Empowerment from Inmate Education Program, Chi. Trib. (Aug. 15, 2019), <https://will.illinois.edu/news/story/the-reason-why-hundreds-of-books-were-removed-from-an-illinois-prison-library>.

¹³⁹ Letter from the Steering Comm. of the Freedom to Learn Campaign to Rob Jeffreys, *supra* note 137 (noting that the University of Illinois was the only university consulted in relation to the Publication AD).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXPAND QUALITY HEP IN ILLINOIS

To ensure quality HEP programming is available throughout Illinois, the state must proactively address the barriers identified above. Specifically, relevant actors should, (1) ensure that the state take advantage of available federal resources and open existing state funding, (2) establish and operate uniform policies across facilities and make all policies publicly available, and (3) end IDOC's isolated policymaking by creating a sustainable structure for data-informed analysis and meaningful collaboration with current and past students as well as HEP program administrators and instructors.



#1: ILLINOIS SHOULD EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO EFFECTIVELY USE FEDERAL FUNDING AND FREE UP STATE AID

Relying on private funding as the main source of financial aid is insufficient to support the growth and sustainability of quality HEP. With the FAFSA Simplification Act removing the ban on incarcerated individuals receiving Pell grants, there is an opportunity for HEP programs to begin receiving funds that offset the costs of administering programs and allow for additional programming around the state. Additionally, if the state were to remove its effective ban¹⁴⁰ on supplying educational grants to incarcerated scholars through programming or direct aid, the state can address the current shortfall of funding resources to support HEP expansion and incarcerated scholars.



#2: IDOC SHOULD GENERATE AND IMPLEMENT UNIFORM POLICIES THAT ARE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE

IDOC must have clear policies that are consistently applied from facility to facility. This certainty would make it easier to develop more programming and, thus, increase opportunities for student access. IDOC should have clear and consistent policies that address volunteer clearance, rights and responsibilities, program requirements for entering a facility, and student processes for accessing a program. Practitioners and administrators should know with particularity the requirements that they must meet as they plan for and implement a quality HEP program. Students should know what actions they must take to gain access to HEP programming regardless of facility. Additionally, IDOC should train relevant prison staff on implementing the policies and refrain from deferring to independent facilities to develop individual procedures and practices. Having clarity helps foster the growth of

¹⁴⁰ 110 ILCS 947/10 (does not consider higher education programs offered to incarcerated students eligible for funding) and 110 ILCS 947/65.100(c)(6) (prohibits HEP grants for incarcerated scholars).

existing programming and also makes it easier to describe expectations to prospective colleges and universities interested in providing HEP in areas with less accessible prisons. Finally, IDOC policy should be made easily accessible to the public, so existing and emerging programs as well as students can be kept up to date regarding IDOC policy changes. Uniformity in both policy and practice helps promote accountability and transparency.



#3: ILLINOIS SHOULD CREATE A SUSTAINABLE STRUCTURE FOR HEP POLICYMAKING INFORMED BY MEANINGFUL DATA ANALYSIS AND COLLABORATION

Accomplishing statewide policy and practice uniformity is important, but this also must be done in conjunction with opportunities for meaningful and ongoing collaboration among IDOC, current and former students, and HEP instructors and administrators and be informed by data. To support the successful expansion of quality HEP around Illinois, it is imperative that HEP experts play an ongoing and integral function in developing policy and procedures that affect HEP program administration. Illinois should consider and implement formal mechanisms for recurring and meaningful collaboration on policymaking at the state and department level to ensure and expand quality HEP programs around the state. Ensuring representation in this endeavor is critically important. The collaboration must reflect the voices of those best equipped to understand the complexity associated with providing higher education in a prison setting: current and past students, their loved ones, as well as HEP program administrators and instructors.

CONCLUSION

As society continues to contemplate how best to support those currently experiencing incarceration, HEP is one manner that is currently accessible to Illinois. The creation of the HEP Task Force marks an important, though early, step in ensuring that Illinois leads the way in effectively expanding HEP statewide. Recognizing that incarcerated people have both tangible and intangible needs that need to be met, HEP aids in cultivating space to meet the intangible need of human dignity. Using human dignity as a key principle provides for a discussion of HEP's benefits that center incarcerated people. These benefits include opportunities for students to be empowered and improve their self-perception, improve their well-being while incarcerated, as well as deepen communal bonds and foster relationships.

Despite the emergence of innovative HEP programs in Illinois, substantial obstacles stand in the way of expansion. Those barriers include limited resources, inconsistent and opaque IDOC policies and practices, and a lack of data informed and collaborative policymaking. To address those barriers and support successful expansion, this

report sets forth three major recommendations: (1) Illinois should explore opportunities to effectively use federal funding and free up state aid to support incarcerated scholars, (2) IDOC should generate and operate uniform policies and procedures across facilities and make all policies available to the public, and (3) Illinois should end IDOC's isolated policymaking by creating a sustainable structure for meaningful collaboration with the goal of sustaining and expanding quality HEP in our state. By achieving these recommendations, Illinois could take important steps toward achieving an equitable statewide system that truly responds to student and administrative needs and concerns, in furtherance of the goal of upholding the rights and dignity of incarcerated individuals.

APPENDIX 1: PROFILES OF HEP PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS

Data contained in profiles was collected through program surveys, interviews of program administrators, and internet research. When possible, information included in program profiles was confirmed by a current program administrator. Profiles with an asterisk (*) after the Program Name have been confirmed. The information contained in this directory is current as of December 2021.

PROGRAM NAME		AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	
Adler University Bachelor's Completion Program*		Adler University	
IDOC FACILITY	ANNUAL ENROLLMENT	FOR-CREDIT OFFERINGS	ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Big Muddy River Correctional Center	10	Bachelor of Science in Applied Psychology	60 undergraduate credit hours
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING	ACADEMIC SUPPORT	POST-INCARCERATION SUPPORT	FINANCING
N/A	Academic Advising, Proctors, Digital Library	Referrals for Transitional Homes and Support Services	Foundation Grants, Support from Higher Education Institution
WEBSITE		CONTACT	
N/A		Michelle Dennis, Interim Executive Dean, mdennis@adler.edu	

PROGRAM NAME		AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	
Augustana Prison Education Program*		Augustana College	
IDOC FACILITY	ANNUAL ENROLLMENT	FOR-CREDIT OFFERINGS	ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
East Moline Correctional Center	10 – 20	Bachelor of Arts	GED
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING	ACADEMIC SUPPORT	POST-INCARCERATION SUPPORT	FINANCING
Non-Credit Courses, Book Clubs	Tutoring, Academic Advising	Employment Opportunities	Foundation Grants, Support from Higher Education Institution, Individual Donors/ Gifts
WEBSITE		CONTACT	
N/A		Sharon Varallo, Executive Director, sharonvarallo@augustana.edu	

PROGRAM NAME		AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	
Benedictine University Inside-Out Program*		Benedictine University	
IDOC FACILITY	ANNUAL ENROLLMENT	FOR-CREDIT OFFERINGS	ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Sheridan Correctional Center	10	Inside-Out Courses, Individual Courses	N/A
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING	ACADEMIC SUPPORT	POST-INCARCERATION SUPPORT	FINANCING
N/A	N/A	N/A	Foundation Grants, Support from Higher Education Institution, Publisher Donations
WEBSITE		CONTACT	
N/A		Chez Rumpf, Associate Professor, crumpf@ben.edu	

PROGRAM NAME		AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	
N/A		Danville Area Community College	
IDOC FACILITY	ANNUAL ENROLLMENT	FOR-CREDIT OFFERINGS	ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Danville Correctional Center	Unknown	Associate of Arts, Associate of General Studies	Unknown
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING	ACADEMIC SUPPORT	POST-INCARCERATION SUPPORT	FINANCING
Vocational Certificates	Tutoring, Academic Advising, Proctors, Academic Library	Unknown	State Government Grants/ Contracts

PROGRAM NAME		AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	
DePaul University Inside-Out Prison Exchange*		DePaul University	
IDOC FACILITY	ANNUAL ENROLLMENT	FOR-CREDIT OFFERINGS	ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Stateville Correctional Center	12	Inside-Out Courses	Desire to learn as expressed through an essay
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING	ACADEMIC SUPPORT	POST-INCARCERATION SUPPORT	FINANCING
Think Tanks, Book Clubs	Tutoring, Academic Advising	Academic Advising	Support from Higher Education Institution
WEBSITE		CONTACT	
https://resources.depaul.edu/steans-center-community-based-service-learning/for-students/community-service-studies/Pages/Inside-Out-Prison-Exchange.aspx		Helen Damon-Moore, Director, hdamonmo@depaul.edu	

PROGRAM NAME		AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	
N/A*		Eastern Illinois University	
IDOC FACILITY	ANNUAL ENROLLMENT	FOR-CREDIT OFFERINGS	ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Danville Correctional Center	35	Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies	Unknown
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING	ACADEMIC SUPPORT	POST-INCARCERATION SUPPORT	FINANCING
N/A	Academic Advising, Academic Library	N/A	State Government Grants/ Contracts
WEBSITE		CONTACT	
N/A		Kimberly Redfern, Program Coordinator, karedfern2@eiu.edu	

PROGRAM NAME		AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	
Education Justice Project*		University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	
IDOC FACILITY	ANNUAL ENROLLMENT	FOR-CREDIT OFFERINGS	ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Danville Correctional Center	55	Certificate of Education Studies, Certificate of Humanities, Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language, Individual Courses	40 lower-division academic credit hours
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING	ACADEMIC SUPPORT	POST-INCARCERATION SUPPORT	FINANCING
English as a Second Language, Anti-Violence Education, Mindfulness, Computer Programming, Computer Lab, Community Library, Student Newsletter, Workshops (STEM, Writing, Business, and Computer), Guest Lectures	Tutoring, Academic Advising	Reentry Guides, Academic Scholarships, Emergency Loans	Foundation Grants, Support from Higher Education Institution, Individual Donors/Gifts
WEBSITE		CONTACT	
https://educationjustice.net/		Ellen Ritter, Academic Director, esritte2@illinois.edu	

PROGRAM NAME		AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	
Lake Land College Department of Correction Programs		Lake Land College	
IDOC FACILITY	ANNUAL ENROLLMENT	FOR-CREDIT OFFERINGS	ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Dixon Correctional Center, Lawrence Correctional Center, Shawnee Correctional Center, Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center, Taylorville Correctional Center	Varies; 131 in 2020; approx. 3,000 in 2017-2019 (see https://www.lakelandcollege.edu/wp-content/laker-documents/dv/ir/EAR%202021%20DOC.pdf for more information)	Associate Degrees	Unknown
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING	ACADEMIC SUPPORT	POST-INCARCERATION SUPPORT	FINANCING
Vocational Certificates	Unknown	Unknown	State Government Grants/Contracts
WEBSITE		CONTACT	
N/A		N/A	

PROGRAM NAME		AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	
Prison+Neighborhood Arts/Education Project*		Multiple. Degree program is offered in partnership with Northeastern Illinois University.	
IDOC FACILITY	ANNUAL ENROLLMENT	FOR-CREDIT OFFERINGS	ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Stateville Correctional Center	50 – 150	Bachelor of Arts, Individual Courses	High school diploma or GED and professional, community, political, and life experiences that have resulted in significant college-level learning
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING	ACADEMIC SUPPORT	POST-INCARCERATION SUPPORT	FINANCING
Non-Credit Courses, Art, Poetry, Think Tank, Guest Lectures	Academic Advising, Proctors, Resource Room	Fellowships, Scholarships, Academic Advising	Foundation Grants, Support from Higher Education Institution, Corporate Contributions, Individual Donors/Gifts
WEBSITE		CONTACT	
https://p-nap.org/		Timmy Rose, Managing Director, trose0226@gmail.com Jason La Fountain, Higher Education Coordinator, jason@p-nap.org	

PROGRAM NAME		AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	
School of Restorative Arts*		North Park University	
IDOC FACILITY	ANNUAL ENROLLMENT	FOR-CREDIT OFFERINGS	ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Stateville Correctional Center and Logan Correctional Center	80 and 20, respectively	Master of Arts in Christian Ministry/Restorative Arts, Certificate in Transformative Justice, Individual Courses	High school diploma or GED and 12 months free of 100-200 level tickets
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING	ACADEMIC SUPPORT	POST-INCARCERATION SUPPORT	FINANCING
Redemptive Storytelling and Other Small Group Programming, Non-Credit Workshops, Creative Writing Courses, Writing Center, Student Newsletter	Tutoring, Academic Advising, Group Mentoring	Degree Completion, Career Services, Housing Support	Foundation Grants, Support from Higher Education Institution, Individual Donors/ Gifts
WEBSITE		CONTACT	
https://www.northpark.edu/seminary/school-of-restorative-arts/		Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom, Director, mclifton-soderstrom@northpark.edu	

PROGRAM NAME		AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	
Northwestern Prison Education Program*		Northwestern University and Oakton Community College	
IDOC FACILITY	ANNUAL ENROLLMENT	FOR-CREDIT OFFERINGS	ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Stateville Correctional Center	40	Associate in General Studies/ Oakton Community College	High school diploma or GED
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING	ACADEMIC SUPPORT	POST-INCARCERATION SUPPORT	FINANCING
Reading Groups and Book Clubs, Educational Workshops, Math and Science Study Groups, Community Building Workshops, Lecture Series	Study Hall, Resource Room	Yes	Foundation Grants, Support from Higher Education Institution, Individual Donors/ Gifts
WEBSITE		CONTACT	
https://sites.northwestern.edu/npep/		Jennifer Lackey, Director, j-lackey@northwestern.edu	

APPENDIX 2: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AREAS OF FURTHER EXPLORATION

HEP is an area rich in nuance with issues that impact students' access to programming and the ability of new and current programs to exist. This report could not address every concern. Below is the beginning of a list of topics worthy of exploration as the state investigates how to best expand HEP statewide:

- How IDOC's various initiatives regarding reentry and reclassifying facility security levels impact student access to HEP programming, especially those with sentences that exceed five years
- Students' access to prerequisite testing (i.e., GED)
- The role that non-credit HEP classes play in prepping incarcerated students for college's rigor
- How higher education institutions can support formerly incarcerated student transfer to "outside" campuses
- Policies that limit currently incarcerated students' ability to communicate with instructors while taking a course and upon release
- Policies that prohibit formerly incarcerated students from reentering the prisons as volunteer instructors
- Guiding principles that describe the nature of the rights of HEP volunteers and students
- The coordination of space among HEP programs within IDOC facilities
- Whether there should be uniform agreements that IDOC has with every HEP Program and the nature of those agreements
- State legislation that could support additional educational opportunities (e.g., "Ban the Box" legislation that would prohibit colleges and universities from inquiring about a student's past involvement with the criminal legal system)

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