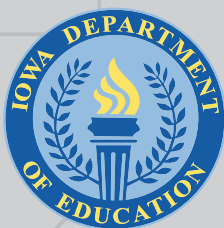


# IOWA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES EDUCATION IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Employment & Recidivism Outcomes

*Released*  
May 2021  
2018 Cohort



**COMMUNITY COLLEGES &  
WORKFORCE PREPARATION**  
*PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION*

A statewide overview of education, employment and recidivism outcomes of individuals released in 2018 who were enrolled in educational programs while incarcerated.

Prepared by

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## Introduction

The Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Corrections and Iowa Workforce Development partnered to evaluate and report education, employment, and wage outcomes for individuals released from prisons in Iowa who participated in training programs. This partnership has allowed for data sharing through agreements that adhere to all Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations and rules. Research objectives are clearly stated in the agreements and limited staff have access. In addition, staff from the agencies have signed confidentiality agreements pertaining to the reporting and use of individual student records.

The ability to follow students on the individual-record level and report in aggregate is the preferred method of documenting the education outcomes by training type (secondary, credit or noncredit career and technical); however, confidentiality restrictions often interfere with the ability to link individual student records for most researchers. Fortunately, that is not the case in Iowa. Similar to many other states, educational records, corrections records and employment records are held in three different state agencies in Iowa: the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE), the Department of Corrections (DOC) and Iowa Workforce Development (IWD). Agency research staff have resolved the disconnect by forming a partnership dedicated to evaluating and reporting education outcomes (i.e., continued education, employment, and wages) for high school equivalency diploma students, community college credit certificate, diploma and associate degree students, as well as noncredit students through strict data sharing and confidentiality agreements.

*Iowa's Community Colleges, Education in Correctional Facilities Report* (first edition) is a statewide attempt to analyze data, establish a baseline and report the post-release outcomes of students. The students were enrolled in credit and noncredit training (including adult education) programs in Iowa community colleges while incarcerated and released in 2018.

In this report, two levels of education are explored: secondary, for high school equivalency diplomas, and postsecondary education in Iowa's community colleges. This 2018 cohort was analyzed by the type of education or training received while incarcerated, demographics and type of offense. The analysis was used to document the overall description of the cohort and employment or recidivism outcomes. One year following release, the cohort was matched to educational records or employment data to identify those who continued in postsecondary education, had been reintroduced into the prison system (recidivism) or became employed. Employment data includes the median wages earned the first year following release. The data is helpful to illustrate the impact that education and training may have on those released from correctional facilities.

Education Received at Iowa Community Colleges While Incarcerated  
Calendar Year 2018

## Education Benefits Individuals,

### Improves Post-Release Employment and Decreases Recidivism Rates

The credit and noncredit programs offered to incarcerated individuals by nine of Iowa's 15 community colleges provide tangible benefits to individuals, allow for post-release success in employment and significantly decrease recidivism rates.

Over 21.6% of Iowa's 5,284 incarcerated population who were released during calendar year 2018 received education through an Iowa community college between 2010-2018 in a variety of credit and noncredit programs, including adult education, agriculture, business, transportation and logistics, health science, manufacturing and more.

### Comparative Demographics

As compared to nonstudents, students in the cohort tend to be male and significantly younger and more racially diverse than their peers.



**88.5%** of students were male compared to **85.2%** of nonstudents.



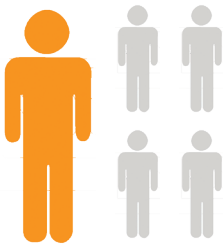
**22.7%** of students were under 25 years compared to **14.4%** of nonstudents.



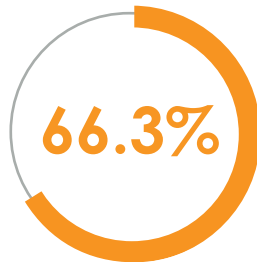
**37.5%** of students were of a racial or ethnic minority group compared to **29.1%** of nonstudents.

### Reduced Recidivism

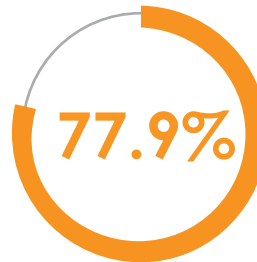
Females with previous enrollment in community colleges demonstrate the lowest rate of recidivism.



**21.6%** of the 2018 cohort were involved in education while incarcerated.



Of those who took courses while incarcerated, **66.3%** had not re-offended.



Of those females who took courses while incarcerated, **77.9%** had not re-offended.

### Top 10 Class & Types of Offense

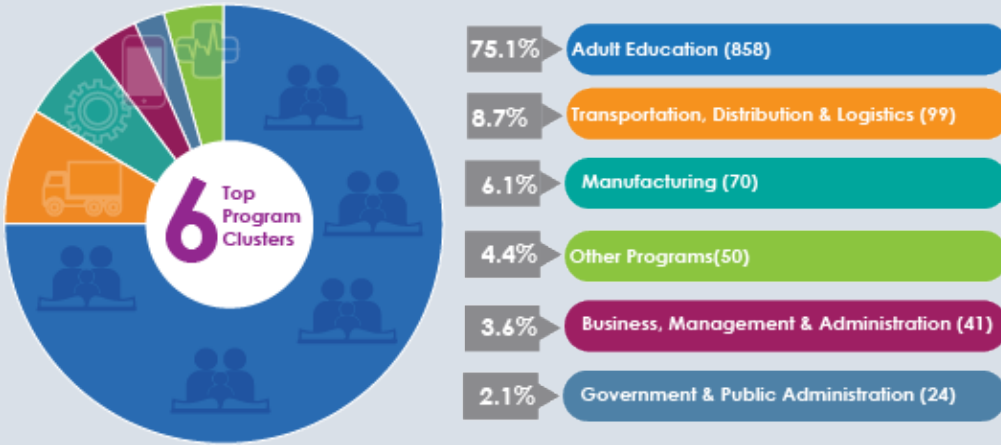


Incarcerated Iowans who were involved in a community college educational program, distributed by class and type of offense.



## Top Program Areas

During the examined period, the incarcerated individuals mostly participated in the following six credit and noncredit programs. Overwhelmingly, participants took courses in adult education.



## Highest Employment Rates by Program Area



Of the post-release students employed one year following program exit, the highest percentages (100) were among those who received education in architecture and construction area.

## Employment Comparisons

One year post release, individuals with a college education were employed at higher rates and earned higher wages compared to those without a college education.



**70%** of former students were employed in the first year following release, earning \$16,961 on average.

**63%** of individuals without a college education were employed in the first year following release, earning \$14,992 on average.



## Earnings

Earnings in the first year following release vary based on a number of factors, including the volume of education, type of program and employer demand. Thus, depending of the type of programs, earnings ranged from manufacturing (\$22,516) to hospitality and tourism (\$12,255). The following examples provide median annual wages for the top three earning programs

### Manufacturing

\$22,516



### Architecture & Construction

\$20,848



### Business, Management & Administration

\$20,223



COMMUNITY COLLEGES & WORKFORCE PREPARATION  
PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION

IOWA  
**WORKFORCE**  
DEVELOPMENT





## Future Ready Iowa & Second Chances

Future Ready Iowa is Governor Kim Reynolds' initiative designed to build Iowa's talent pipeline for the careers of tomorrow. The initiative was created after Iowa received a National Governors' Association grant in 2014 to develop strategies to improve the educational and training attainment of its citizens and to align degree and credential programs with employer demand.

Education and training beyond high school has become the new minimum threshold for Americans to earn a living wage and attain middle-class status. "In 1973, only 28 percent of U.S. jobs required education beyond a high school diploma; by 2025, almost two out of three jobs in the nation are projected to require at least some postsecondary education or training."<sup>[1]</sup> Iowa's economy reflects this national trend and has seen a steady increase in the demand for postsecondary education and training in the industries that form the mainstay of the economy.

To address the demand for a more skilled workforce, Future Ready Iowa set a goal for 70 percent of Iowa's workforce to have education or training beyond high school by 2025. In 2016, a Future Ready Alliance was formed to develop a strategic plan for meeting this goal. After meeting over the course of a year, the Alliance of business, education and community leaders released its recommendations in 2017.

In 2018, the Future Ready Iowa Act, which addresses the Alliance's recommendations, was signed by Governor Reynolds via House File 2458. This act is designed to strengthen Iowa's talent pipeline by establishing a registered apprenticeship development program, a volunteer mentoring program, summer youth internships, summer postsecondary courses for high school students aligned with high-demand career pathways, an employer innovation fund and skilled workforce scholarship and grant programs.

## Future Ready Iowa Goal

The goal of Future Ready Iowa is for 70 percent of Iowa's workforce to have education or training beyond high school by 2025. The Future Ready Iowa initiative is not an isolated program, but rather a collaborative "all hands on deck" approach to highlighting best practices, nurturing high-quality partnerships and ensuring taxpayer dollars are focused on those areas that will maximize progress toward this shared goal.

The Future Ready Iowa initiative:

- » builds Iowa's talent pipeline to ensure the state has a workforce ready to fill the high-quality, well-paying jobs of today and tomorrow;
- » aligns Iowa's education, workforce and economic developmental efforts to overcome skills gaps; and
- » assesses workforce demands and aligns programming to ensure Iowans have the skills necessary to obtain employment in high-demand occupations.

In January of 2020, Governor Reynolds released five key priorities as part of the Future Ready Iowa initiative, titled "Changing Lives Through Second Chances" which included addressing the needs of the state's prison population. These priorities emphasize the need for opportunities to be available to those reentering communities and the workforce including voting rights, criminal justice reform and supporting successful reentry. Governor Reynolds and the DOC have taken an innovative approach to provide inmates in Iowa's prisons with education and work-based learning experiences in order to prepare them for life and work following their release. This approach includes, but is not limited to, encouraging lawmakers in Congress to lift the ban on federal Pell Grants for incarcerated people which has been limited in Iowa to two community college sites under the Second Chance Pell program's experiment through the U.S. Department of Education, analyzed separately in this report.

This effort to expand Pell eligibility in prisons has also been supported through a report produced by the Vera Institute of Justice and supported by the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality titled "Making the Grade, Developing Quality Postsecondary Education Programs in Prison", which describes how lifting the ban would benefit workers, employers and states by increasing potential employment opportunities and impacting earnings.

*"Those who take college courses find it easier to secure employment and establish or strengthen positive relationships with family, friends, and associates when they return home—key factors that research has shown are important in keeping people crime-free. Moreover, with a 13 percent higher chance of obtaining employment post-release and the likelihood of higher annual earnings than those who did not participate in education programs while incarcerated, students are not the only ones who come out ahead. Postsecondary education directly benefits participants' families and can potentially strengthen the viability of those communities to which students return after their release—often economically disadvantaged, under-resourced neighborhoods, many of which suffer from crime, high rates of drug use, low rates of employment, and endemic poverty."*[2]

In April 2020, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced that the U.S. Department of Education was inviting 67 new schools to participate in the expansion of the Second Chance Pell experiment bringing the total participation to 130 schools in 42 states and the District of Columbia.[3]

In 2016, the RAND Corporation, sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, produced a report that showed that individuals who participate in any type of educational program while in prison are 43 percent less likely to return to prison compared to 66 percent less likely in Iowa.

*“The authors undertook a meta-analysis to examine the association between correctional education and reductions in recidivism, improvements in employment after release from prison, and learning in math and in reading. Their findings support the premise that receiving correctional education while incarcerated reduces an individual’s risk of recidivating. They also found that those receiving correctional education had improved odds of obtaining employment after release.”[4]*

In January of 2020, a consortium application was awarded to Iowa by Ascendium to plan and implement systematic changes to the delivery of postsecondary education in prison. The intent of the project was to focus on identifying barriers to educational attainment (access, equity and quality) for students who are currently and formerly incarcerated, and to establish collaborations across organizations and institutions focused on higher education in prison in the State of Iowa.

One of the major outcomes that arose from the steering committee meetings was the importance of addressing challenges and opportunities in the following areas: funding, partnerships, student support and reentry services, and technology. These four areas emerged as critically important and working groups were created per area with stakeholders from diverse organizations and institutions across Iowa participating. Over the course of the year, recommendations were prepared in a final report, released December 2020. Such recommendations included but were not limited to



the creation of training modules for teaching staff that focus on security protocols and anti-racism as well as the development of a student success matrix which would include and acknowledge the success and attrition of incarcerated individuals from racially marginalized backgrounds engaged in higher education in prison programs and services within and outside facilities along with supporting longitudinal data tracking methods.



## Supporting Successful Reentry

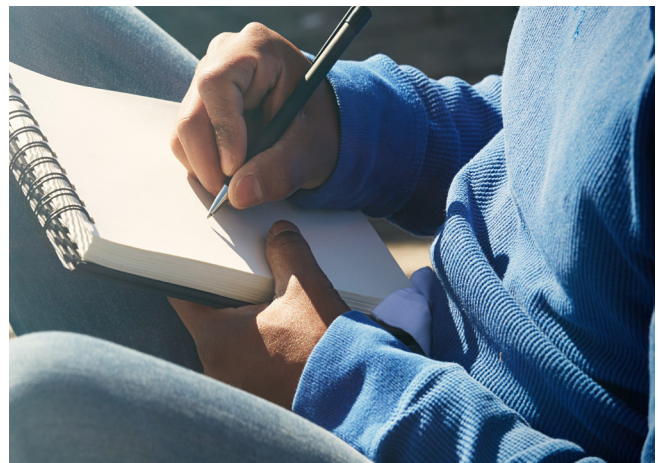
In support of the Governor's Future Ready Iowa initiative noted earlier, Iowa's Department of Corrections takes an innovative approach to providing inmates with unique education opportunities and work-based learning experiences that prepare them for life and work after incarceration. To continue to advance these efforts, Iowa's Department of Corrections will focus

- » Creating a competitive grant program to support and enhance the re-entry efforts of nonprofit organizations.
- » Establishing the Second Chance Employer designation for businesses that hire reentering citizens.
- » Assisting individuals nearing release or discharge from prison with obtaining a driver's license, if eligible.
- » Connecting individuals not eligible for a driver's license with the Department of Transportation's Get There Your Way program, increasing awareness of alternative transportation options, including public transit.
- » Increasing completion of the HiSET (high school equivalency test) among incarcerated individuals over the age of 21.
- » Creating a post-release educational pathway for re-entering individuals who want to continue pursuing postsecondary education.[5]

## Research Overview

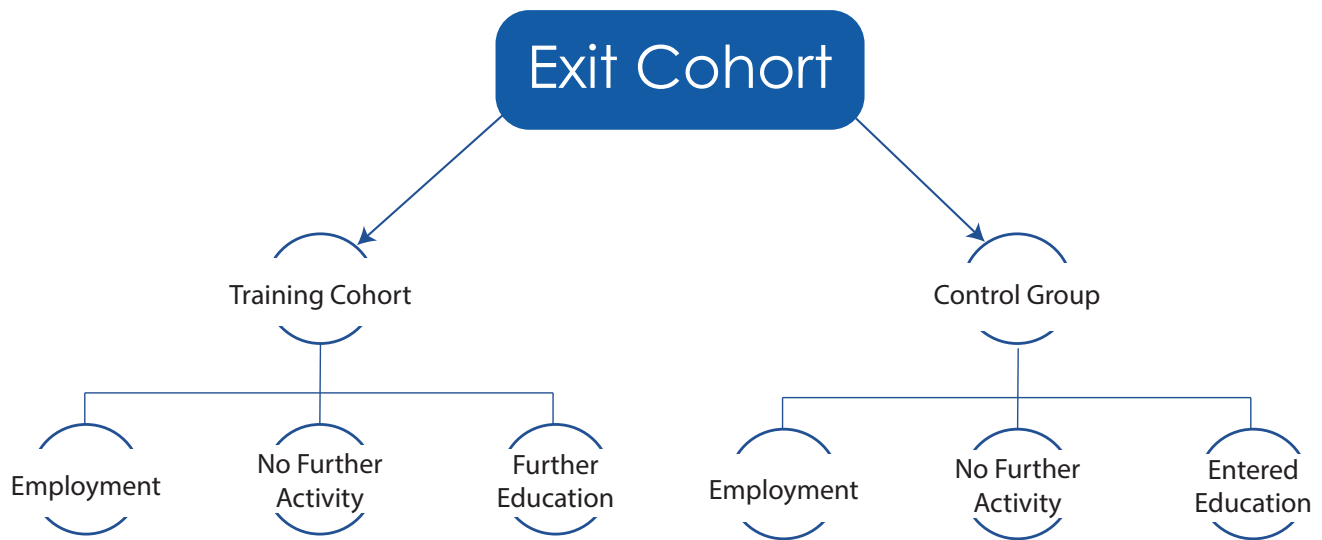
This initial annual report contains outcomes based on incarcerated persons who were released from one of Iowa's correctional facilities during the calendar year 2018 and illustrates the impact that education/training has on the success of returning citizens. Future iterations will contain a control group of those who had not attended training as a comparison. The types of education and training experienced by students while incarcerated includes adult literacy education, credit-bearing and noncredit technical training.

Earlier in the report, the proposed research schema contained an analysis of those incarcerated persons who did not receive training/education while incarcerated, but for the remainder of this initial analysis they have been limited to only a few of the descriptors due to the sample size of the cohort. As stated above, future iterations conducted will be outlined in



the diagram below (Figure 1) and additionally will be split between secondary (up to and including a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma (HSED)) and postsecondary training.

FIGURE 1. DIAGRAM OF PROPOSED COHORT ANALYSIS. RACE/ETHNICITY FOR RETURNING CITIZENS 2018



Match all groups for status change including recidivism annually.

Once data (adult population) were received from the DOC, they were matched to the Iowa Community College Management Information System (MIS) in order to extract more specifics such as previous degrees, contact hours or credits and their program of study related to the training received through the community colleges. The data were then sent to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to identify students who enrolled in credit-bearing programs following their release. These individuals may have transferred from one college to another or continued their education at the college where they began through the correctional facility. Those found in postsecondary education were analyzed by college type (two- or four-year, and private or public) and by transfer location, allowing for the study of out-migration (leaving Iowa).

The records of the individuals not found in postsecondary education and those who had experienced recidivism were sent via secure file transfer to IWD to be matched to the Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records. This match provided employment, wage and industry data by quarter using the following time frames:

- » Quarter 1: January 1 to March 31
- » Quarter 2: April 1 to June 30
- » Quarter 3: July 1 to September 30
- » Quarter 4: October 1 to December 31

Due to the confidentiality of the wage record data, IWD processed these records and returned aggregate data to the IDOE to use in this report. All data were thoroughly scrutinized to maintain confidentiality based on all rules, regulations and restrictions for each of the data sources.

## Demographics

Before addressing the demographic composition of the researched cohort, an overview of a typical annual cohort of students receiving their education in Iowa community colleges while incarcerated might present an appropriate comparison. During the latest year of available data (academic year 2019-20) there were 2,303 students in credit (N=231) and noncredit (N=2,089) enrollments in Iowa community colleges who were attending courses while incarcerated. The vast majority of those who received some form of education in this cohort were male: 97.8 in noncredit training and 78.5 percent in credit-bearing programs. The average age of noncredit students was 28 years of age, while the average age for credit students was 33. Nearly two-thirds of those who received education/training in this cohort of students were white (62.5 percent) and over one-fourth were black (28.6 percent).

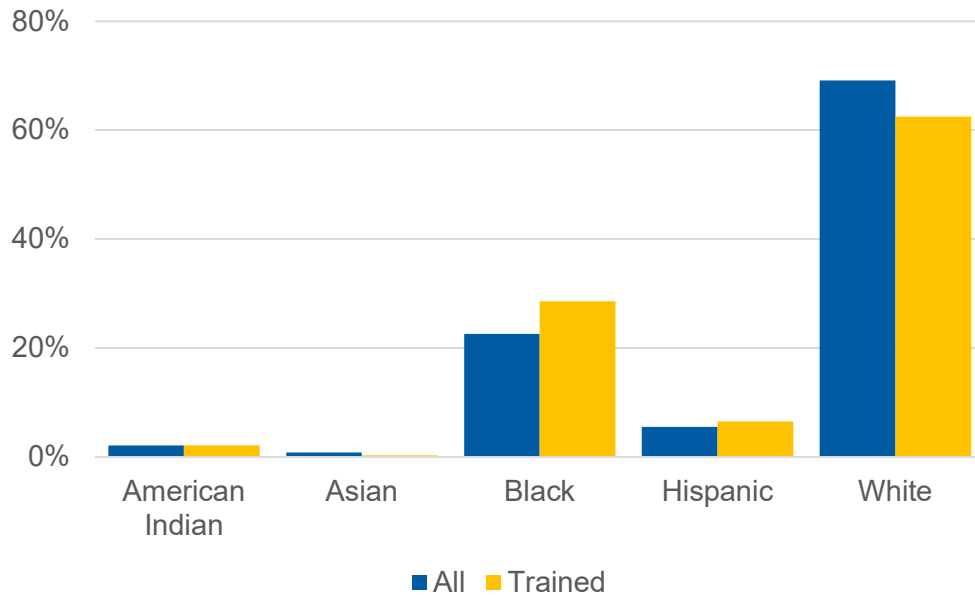
The starting research cohort of returning citizens of 2018 consisted of 5,284 individuals, with 26.1 percent of them (N=1,142) having attended credit or noncredit courses in Iowa community colleges any time between 2012 and 2018. Of those, an overwhelming majority (91.3 percent, N=1,043) attended noncredit courses, which included 858 enrolled in adult literacy education, 51 enrolled in credit courses and 48 enrolled in combined credit and noncredit education. The vast majority of 2018 returning citizens with



community college experience were male (88.5 percent). Male students represented 88.3 percent noncredit education/training, 96.0 percent in credit and 85.4 percent in mixed education, similar (though somewhat lower) to a typical annual cohort.

Race/ethnicity were also identified for all the 2018 returning citizens. While the majority of those released did not experience education/training while incarcerated (N=4,142), there was a higher percentage of minority inmates who took advantage of the opportunity to gain skills or education than the overall percentage of returning citizens (37.5 percent compared to 30.9 percent, respectively). Nearly two-thirds of those who received education/training were white (62.5 percent) and over one-fourth were black (28.6 percent). Similar percentages reflect the makeup of the overall population studied (69.1 percent white and 22.6 percent black) (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. RACE/ETHNICITY FOR RETURNING CITIZENS - 2018



Further analyses revealed that the majority (61.9 percent) of noncredit enrollees were white students while 38.1 percent belonged to racial or ethnic minority groups. The percentage of white students taking credit-bearing coursework was much higher (70.6 percent), reducing the percentages of minority students to 29.4 percent. The mixed (credit and noncredit) group was represented by 67.7 percent white students, and correspondingly, 33.3 percent minority students (Figures 3 and 4).

FIGURE 3. ENROLLMENT IN NONCREDIT AND CREDIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRAINING BY RACE/ETHNICITY

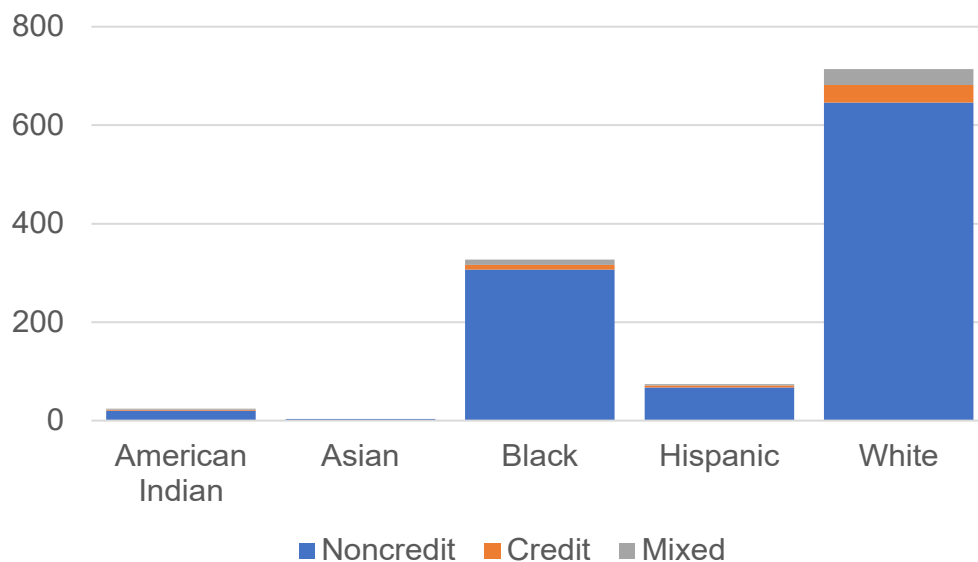
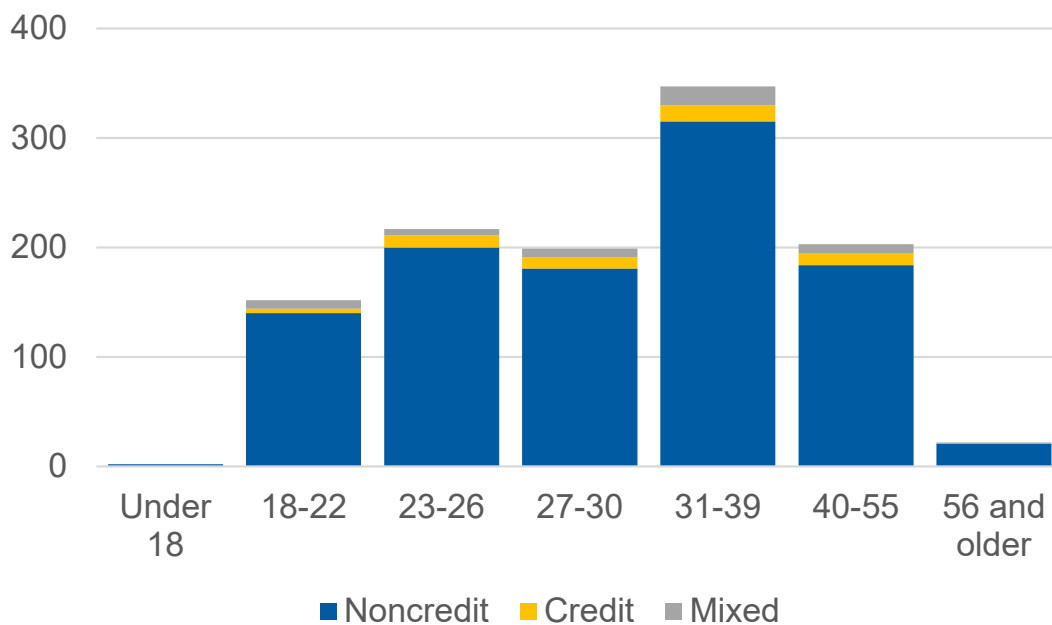


FIGURE 4. ENROLLMENT IN NONCREDIT AND CREDIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRAINING BY RACE/ETHNICITY

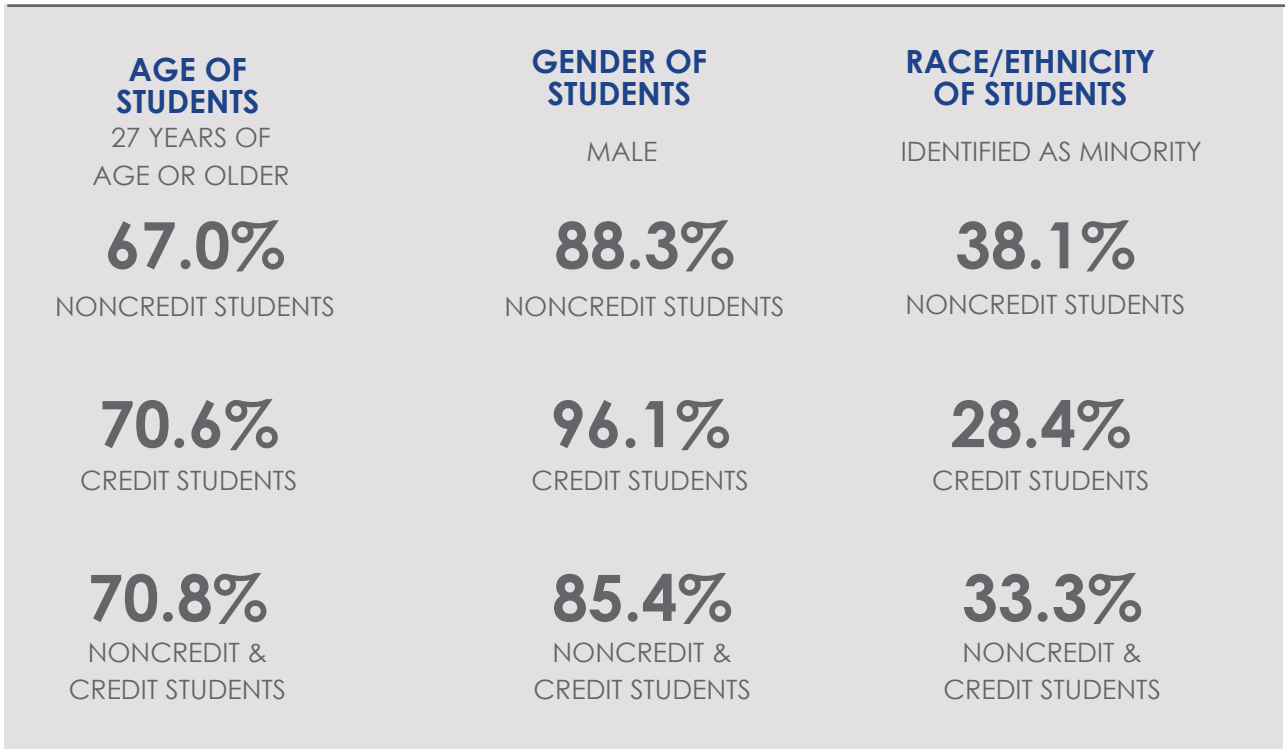
Training Type	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
Noncredit	20	3	307	67	646
Credit	2	0	9	4	36
Mixed	2	0	11	3	32

Unlike in the typical annual cohort, the average age of 2018 returning citizens with community college experience while incarcerated did not range significantly for noncredit, credit and mixed education students, at 32.3 years, 33.1 years and 31.7 years, respectively. An analysis was also conducted based on the age range of this student population. The largest group of those who experienced only noncredit training while incarcerated were between the ages of 31 and 39 (N=315), and the same is true for those who were enrolled in only in credit courses (N=15) or both credit and noncredit courses (N=17). Figure 5 illustrates the proportion of students by age group.

FIGURE 5. NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY AGE RANGE AND TRAINING TYPE







The majority of returning citizens were noncredit students, white, male and an average age of 32.2

### Types of Training

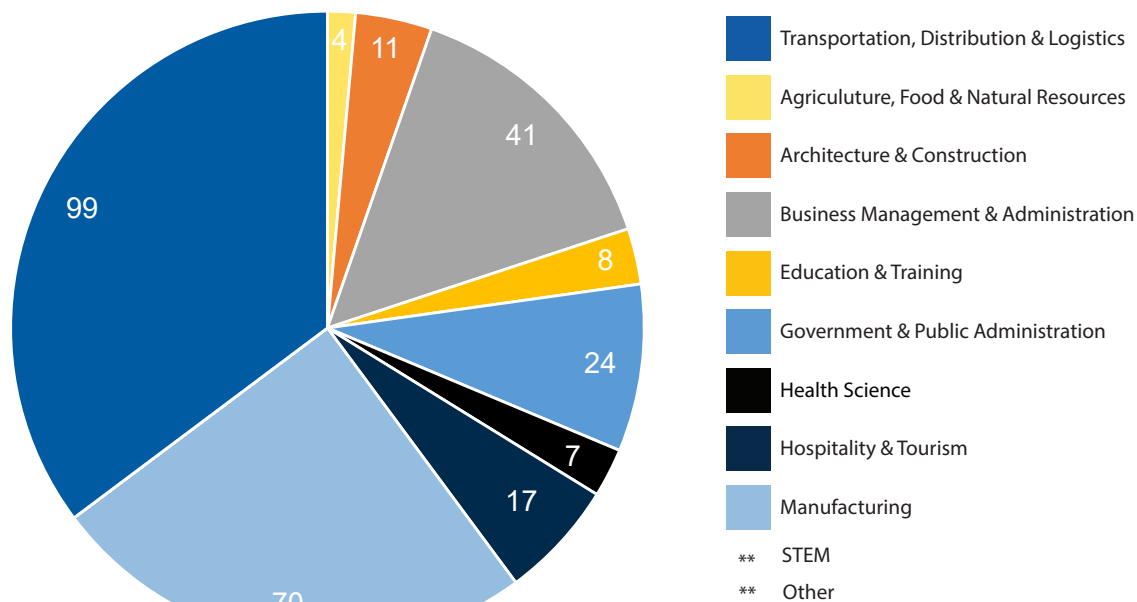
Iowa’s community colleges offer secondary training programs to incarcerated adults which include adult basic education and developmental or remedial education to prepare students for further training and postsecondary education. In addition, a program which prepares students for the HiSET®, the state-approved high school equivalency test, is offered to inmates, which leads to achieving their High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED).

There were 858 people released in 2018 who attended some form of adult literacy education prior to their release. This education consists of basic skills and developmental or remedial education including mathematics and English coursework (including HSED) or job-seeking skills training.

In addition to adult education and literacy options, Iowa’s community colleges offer pathways into both credit and noncredit career and technical education (CTE) instruction leading to industry credentials needed to continue their postsecondary education either while incarcerated or post-release or secure and maintain employment. In order for the Department of Education to analyze program-specific outcomes, the use of the Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code, reported through the MIS, was incorporated to categorize programs into career clusters. The National Career Clusters Framework organizes programs into 16 career clusters. These career clusters detail the training that each of the students had experienced while incarcerated and include a wide variety of training options designed to assist returning citizens in preparation to

enter/reenter the workforce. There were ten career clusters identified based on the training options available, the other six were aggregated into the “other” category. Two of the clusters (STEM and Other) had less than three students enrolled, therefore data were suppressed. The transportation, distribution and logistics cluster was predominant (N=99), followed by manufacturing (N=70) and business management and administration (N=41) (see Figure 6 for totals).

FIGURE 6. ENROLLMENT BY CAREER CLUSTER



\*\* Suppressed due to confidentiality

Returning citizens also have the option to continue their education/training post-release through credit-bearing program enrollment. A small portion of previously incarcerated students who had been enrolled in a community college program continued their education post-release (N=23) with the majority re-enrolling in a community college (N=17), 14 of them in-state and three out-of-state. The remaining six students transferred to an out-of-state, four-year public university/college.

Unexpectedly, there were an additional 81 returning citizens who had not previously been enrolled in educational programs while incarcerated, but had subsequently enrolled following their release. Two-thirds of this group (N=53) enrolled in an in-state college or university with most (N=51) in a community college. Figure 8 below is broken into two groups, those who had or had not experienced education and training while incarcerated and whether they went on to two- or four-year colleges, public or private institutions, in- or out-of-state the first year following release (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7. CONTINUED EDUCATION/TRAINING POST RELEASE

Year Following Release	Characteristics of Institution		Continued Education		Continued Education	
	2yr/4yr	Public/Private	In-State #	In-State %	Out-of-State #	Out-of-State %
<b>Education/Training While Incarcerated</b>						
2019	2	Private	0	0.0%	3	13.0%
		Public	14	60.9%	0	0.0%
	4	Private	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
		Public	0	0.0%	6	26.1%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>60.9%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>39.1%</b>
<b>No Education/Training While Incarcerated</b>						
2019	2	Private	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
		Public	51	63.0%	6	7.4%
	4	Private	1	1.2%	16	19.8%
		Public	1	1.2%	6	7.4%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>65.4%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>34.6</b>

Many strategies have been implemented in the state of Iowa in order to reduce recidivism. For example, the Second Chance Act Comprehensive Statewide Adult Recidivism Reduction (SRR) Strategy is “uniquely designed by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to assist executive-branch policymakers and state corrections departments, plan and implement system-wide reforms to reduce recidivism” [4]. This grant enabled Iowa’s SRR planning team to assess, implement changes, and engage community-based service providers to reduce reincarceration and re-arrest rates for adults leaving the prison system across the state. In addition to the SRR, the U.S. Department of Education expanded the Second Chance Pell Experimental Sites Initiative to include Iowa Central Community College and the University of Iowa, allowing need-based Pell Grants in order to provide training opportunities to people in state and federal prisons.

As a part of this study, recidivism cases were analyzed by age group, gender, race/ethnicity, number of contact hours (noncredit or credit) and the type of crime of the 2018 returning citizens. The analysis included those who did or did not receive the benefit of the Second Chance Pell and was designed to highlight the impact that education and training had on returning citizens overall.

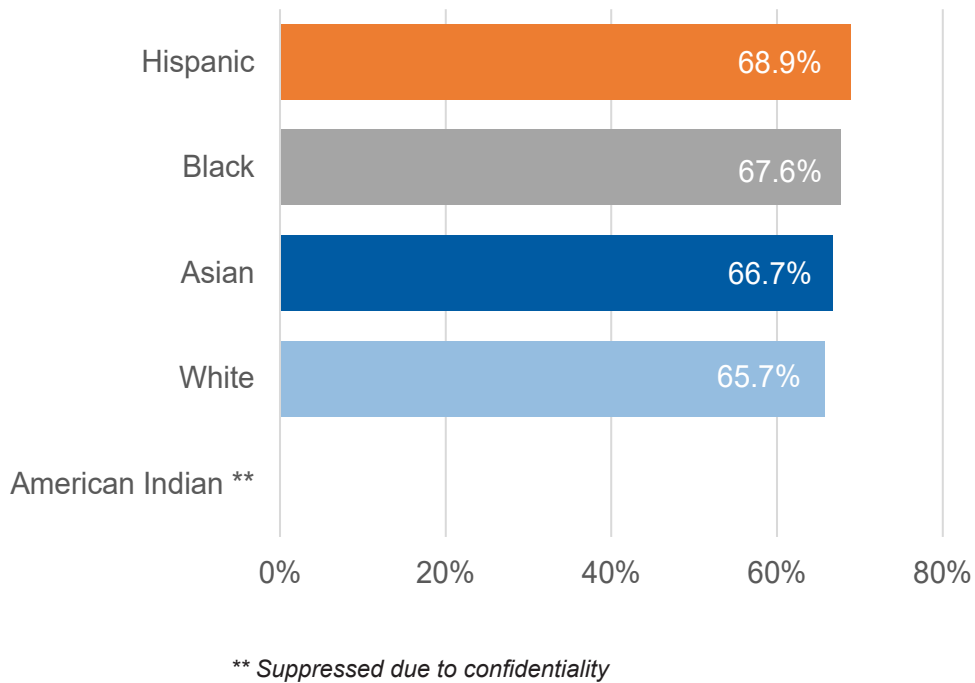
Of those who reentered Iowa communities in 2018, 66.3 percent (aggregate), of those who had received training, did not become reincarcerated one year following their release. The data clearly shows that there is a correlation between education and recidivism, as 73.3 percent of those who had taken 1,000 contact hours or more or even those who had taken less than 30 contact hours (71.7 percent) in noncredit training had not re-offended the year following release (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8. RECIDIVISM NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS BY NONCREDIT CONTACT HOURS OR CREDITS EARNED

CONTACT HOUR RANGE/ CREDIT HOUR	NO RECIDIVISM	YES RECIDIVISM	% OF NO RECIDIVISM
<30 contact hrs	43	17	71.7%
3-100 contact hrs	203	107	65.5%
101-500 contact hrs	377	182	67.4%
501-1,000 contact hrs	56	34	62.2%
>1,000 contact hrs	11	4	73.3%
Credit	32	16	66.7%

When looking at recidivism by race/ethnicity, the highest percentages of those who received training and had not re-offended were among Hispanic or black individuals (68.9 percent and 67.6 percent respectively), but overall, recidivism percentages are similar for representatives of all races and ethnicities (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9. PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS BY RACE/ETHNICITY WHO HAVE NOT REOFFENDED



Though a breakdown of race/ethnicity by gender or age for those who had participated in a form of community college training was not available for this initial report overall males experienced a higher rate of recidivism than female students (35.2 percent and 22.1 percent, respectively) and those who were under age 25 had a much higher recidivism rate (44.0 percent) compared to under 25 years of age (30.7 percent).

**FEMALE** students, over the age of **25**, and those with over **1,000** contact contact hours of training experienced **less recidivism** post-release.

An analysis of recidivism for those who enrolled in adult literacy and programs related to a career cluster was also conducted. Data show that those individuals who were enrolled in the business management and administration, education and training or agriculture and construction clusters, demonstrate the lowest percentages of recidivism at 75.6, 75.0 and 75.0, respectively. Those percentages are significantly higher than the overall education cohort percentage of 66.3 percent.

FIGURE 10. PERCENTAGE BY CAREER CLUSTER - NO RECIDIVISM

Career Cluster	Percentage No Recidivism
Adult Literacy	65.9%
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	75.0%
Architecture & Construction	72.7%
Business Management & Administration	75.6%
Education & Training	75.0%
Government & Public Administration	66.7%
Health Science	57.1%
Hospitality & Tourism	58.8%
Manufacturing	60.0%
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	71.7%
STEM	**
Other	**

\*\* Suppressed due to confidentiality



## Type of Offense

An analysis of returning citizens by type of offense was also completed using education, recidivism and employment data. The type of offense was categorized as drug, property, public order, violent and other violations such as serious misdemeanors. The highest percentage of those enrolled in some type of training during incarceration were those that had been convicted of a violent offense (29.1 percent) followed by property (21.9 percent) and a drug offense (20.7 percent).

Of those incarcerated and enrolled in some education/training while incarcerated, recidivism varied. The smallest recidivism percentage was among those who had been convicted of a violent offense (27.2 percent) while property related offenders with college training while incarcerated did not fare as well with 40.2 percent recidivism rate within the first year following release (see Figure 11).

FIGURE 11. ENROLLMENT AND RECIDIVISM PERCENTAGES BY TYPE OF OFFENSE

Type of Offense	Percent Enrolled in Training	Recidivism %
Drug	20.7%	34.7%
Property	21.9%	40.2%
Public Order	13.0%	30.4%
Violent	29.1%	27.2%
Other Violation	12.8%	35.0%



## Employment and Wages

When analyzing wage and employment data, it is important to note the restrictions and limitations of the Iowa Unemployment Insurance (UI) data. Three important factors that impact the data are: (1) the wage data only represents employees of companies that pay UI tax; (2) the number of hours worked are not reported within the data, making it impossible to identify



part- versus full-time employment and (3) the occupation is not reported within the industry. Only Iowa wage record data were used for this report though out-of-state wages may be explored for subsequent reports. Using the initial cohort (N=5,284) in its entirety, there were 1,500 returning citizens who had attended community college credit or noncredit training while incarcerated and had all components needed to conduct a match (social security number) to UI wage records. Alternatively, there were also 2,867 returning citizens who had not received any training or education that were matched and used for comparison, where applicable. Those who had attended education/training options outside the Iowa community college system while incarcerated may be contained in this group among other individuals who did not enroll in a community college.

A study conducted by the Urban Institute found that “the availability of data on the employment and earnings of ex-offenders is quite limited” [6] and often depends on estimates based on employment rates of the total population. Through the partnership and data sharing agreements, we (collectively) have overcome this barrier and are able to provide employment and wage outcomes of Iowa’s returning citizens by race, gender, age and career cluster of received education for this initial report.

Each program offered at the community colleges to those incarcerated was aggregated into a cluster based on its two-digit CIP code. These clusters mirror a broad industry type such as agriculture, construction, business, government, health, hospitality, manufacturing and transportation. Each cluster had different employment and wage results for those who became employed one year following reentry into the workforce, as illustrated in Figure 12. Those who enrolled in training programs associated with manufacturing had the highest wage (\$22,516) and those trained in hospitality and tourism related programs had the lowest annual median wage (\$12,255).

Overall, 70.4 percent of those who received some community college education/training became employed by the second quarter following their release, whereas 63.0 percent of those who did not receive training became employed within the same time period. The median annual wage was also higher for those who experienced training with \$16,961 in earnings compared to \$14,992 earned by those who had not received any training.

FIGURE 12. EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES BY TYPE

CC Enrollment Status	Type of Program	N	Employment	% Employed First Year	Median Annual Wage
<b>CC Enrollment</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>\$ 16,961.33</b>
CC Enrollment	Adult Literacy	560	379	67.7%	\$ 15,680.15
CC Enrollment	Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	3	*****	*****	*****
CC Enrollment	Architecture & Construction	8	8	100.0%	\$ 20,848.54
CC Enrollment	Business Management & Administration	30	22	73.3%	\$ 20,223.31
CC Enrollment	Education & Training	6	*****	*****	*****
CC Enrollment	Government & Public Administration	16	8	50.0%	\$ 15,901.60
CC Enrollment	Health Science	4	*****	*****	*****
CC Enrollment	Hospitality & Tourism	10	9	90.0%	\$ 12,255.07
CC Enrollment	Manufacturing	41	36	87.8%	\$ 22,516.56
CC Enrollment	Not a Clustered CIP	1	*****	*****	*****
CC Enrollment	Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	71	55	77.5%	\$ 15,386.63
<b>NO CC Enrollment</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>2,867</b>	<b>1,806</b>	<b>63.0%</b>	<b>\$ 14,991.99</b>

\*\*\*\*\*Data suppressed due to confidentiality

Employment and wage outcomes also vary by gender, race/ethnicity and age. An analysis of those who were enrolled in community college educational opportunities and those who had not been enrolled during incarceration was also completed by demographic group.

Some of the inequality in wages can be associated with occupations that have stereotypically been female or male dominant, such as jobs in hospitality which pay low wages and have a much higher percentage of female employees, whereas manufacturing has historically been a male-dominant industry that pays much higher wages; however, it is notable that there are equity issues which exist for returning citizens, which is only compounded by the historical or stereotypical differences.

Overall, female applicants are hired at a higher rate than male applicants (65.9 percent compared to 64.3 percent, respectively) but wages are noticeably less with female employees, earning approximately \$5,000 less the first year after release. Community college students overall were hired at a higher rate (females at 66.3 percent and male students at 71.0 percent) and male employees earned even higher wages at \$17,850 per year, though the wages for female employees with community college experience were even lower than those of the overall female population (Figure 13).

FIGURE 13. EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES BY GENDER

GENDER	ENROLLMENT STATUS	N	EMPLOYMENT	% EMPLOYED FIRST YEAR	MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGE
Female	CC Enrollment	101	67	66.3%	\$10,460.06
Female	NO CC Enrollment	454	299	65.9%	\$11,684.20
<b>Female</b>	<b>Overall Population</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>65.9%</b>	<b>\$11,164.98</b>
Male	CC Enrollment	649	461	71.0%	\$17,849.99
Male	NO CC Enrollment	2,413	1,507	62.5%	\$15,670.03
<b>Male</b>	<b>Overall Population</b>	<b>3,062</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>64.3%</b>	<b>\$16,391.28</b>

When analyzing employment and wage data by race/ethnicity, the categories were divided into two groups, white or minority. Again, those that had been enrolled in a community college while incarcerated outperformed those who had not, with 69.2 percent of minority students employed within the first year following release, earning an annual median wage of \$14,427, and 71.1 percent of white students earning \$18,997 (Figure 14).

FIGURE 14. EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES BY RACE/ETHNICITY

RACE	ENROLLMENT STATUS	N	EMPLOYMENT	% EMPLOYED FIRST YEAR	MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGE
Minority	CC Enrollment	286	198	69.2%	\$14,427.39
Minority	NO CC Enrollment	858	520	60.6%	\$12,933.81
<b>Minority</b>	<b>Overall Population</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>62.8%</b>	<b>\$13,373.50</b>
White	CC Enrollment	464	330	71.1%	\$18,997.02
White	NO CC Enrollment	2,009	1,286	64.0%	\$16,196.76
<b>White</b>	<b>Overall Population</b>	<b>2,473</b>	<b>1,616</b>	<b>65.3%</b>	<b>\$16,564.34</b>

Nearly three-fourths (72.5 percent) of the overall population of those who are under the age of 25 became employed within one year following release, but wages were low. Those 25 or older and who had enrolled in a community college program had the highest wages, earning a median annual wage of \$18,121, approximately \$3,000 more than those who had not enrolled while incarcerated and \$2,000 more than the overall population (Figure 15).



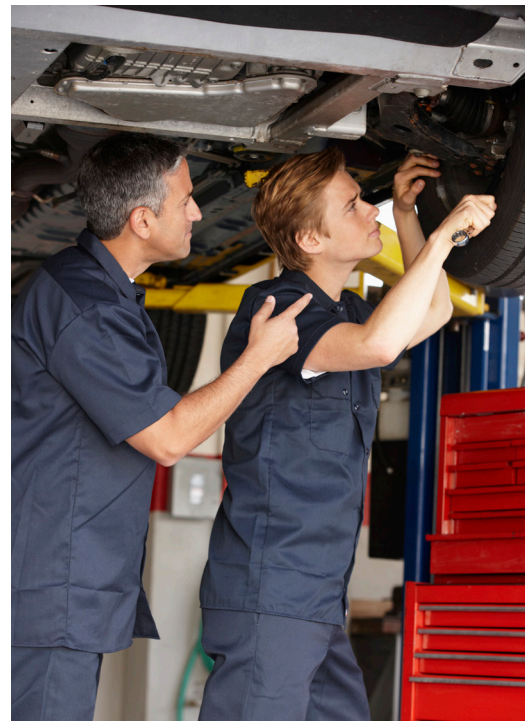
FIGURE 15. EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES BY AGE GROUP

AGE	ENROLLMENT STATUS	N	EMPLOYMENT	% EMPLOYED FIRST YEAR	MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGE
Under 25	CC Enrollment	143	98	68.5%	\$10,299.08
Under 25	NO CC Enrollment	385	285	74.0%	\$12,166.95
<b>Under 25</b>	<b>Overall Population</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>72.5%</b>	<b>\$11,728.61</b>
25 and Older	CC Enrollment	607	430	70.8%	\$18,121.12
25 and Older	NO CC Enrollment	2,482	1,521	61.3%	\$15,404.35
25 and Older	<b>Overall Population</b>	<b>3,089</b>	<b>1,951</b>	<b>63.2%</b>	<b>\$16,171.25</b>

### Conclusion

An equity study conducted by Policy Link finds that “as training programs evolve toward skills, rather than degree-focused approaches, hiring practices should mirror this shift and eliminate artificial and unnecessary educational requirements in favor of skills requirements wherever possible. Other formal barriers to employment that disproportionately disadvantage people of color can also be remedied by both public policy and employer practices” [7] which holds true for gender or past offense barriers as well.

We have only scratched the surface on the difference training and education make on the prison population once they become returning citizens. More thorough reporting can and will be done annually, incorporating better data collection practices in order to conclude what policy implications are needed for success after reentry into Iowa communities. This report is meant to provide initial outcomes for recidivism and employment outcomes.





### Cohort Formation

1. Starting cohort: all incarcerated Iowans released during calendar year 2018.
2. Community college students while incarcerated: all individuals in the starting cohort who were found in CC MIS system between 2010 and 2018 and had attended classes in that period of time while incarcerated.
3. Community college while incarcerated sub cohorts: students in credit and noncredit education, additionally grouped by type of education (AEL, CTE, general education).
4. No community college while incarcerated cohort: all individuals in the starting cohort who were not found in CC MIS system between 2010 and 2018 during the time of incarceration.

### Methods for matching and limitations.

1. Social Security number (SSN): used as a sole method of matching the students across various data systems, except for National Student Clearinghouse, where names and dates of birth were used. While SSN is a 100% reliable method of matching to workforce data (based on Unemployment Insurance database), it is not entirely reliable when used with CC MIS, as some students do not report their SSNs to colleges. Thus, a “no college experience” cohort can be larger due lack of SSNs in the CC MIS system.
2. Name and date of birth: used to match to NSC to determine further education or training post-release.
3. Records provided for matching to IWD for employment and wages did not contain individuals found in postsecondary credit education or returning to incarceration after initial release, one year following initial release.

### Data Field Formation (for calculated fields)

Some data fields are reported at face value, as they were reported with the starting cohort information (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity), and some data fields contain imputed values. Below is the description of calculation methods for such fields:

1. Career and Technical Education (CTE) enrollees are identified by utilizing data codes for Career/Vocational Training programs using National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) codes listed under Advance CTE 16 National Career Clusters®.
2. Program of Study (POS): POS is established based on students' enrollment CIP codes. If a student has been reported under more than one CIP code during the cohort formation year, his or her POS determination is based on the POS with the majority of contact hours. In cases of multiple CIP codes of enrollments obtained from external sources (e.g., National Student Clearinghouse [NSC], for previous, concurrent or subsequent credit enrollments), a method of random CIP number selection has been applied.
3. Age: Age is represented by two groups - “under 25” and “25 and older” based on each student's age as of the release date.

## Employment and Wage Record Methodology

All wages for this report originate from the Iowa Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage database. The actual aggregate wage earned (“Median Wage”) in 2019 is included in all tables and reported throughout this report does not include those who did not match the UI wage database (i.e, the median wages only include those who had wages covered by UI tax during that period of time). The UI wage records do not cover those employers exempt from paying UI tax, such as federal employees, members of the armed forces, the self-employed, proprietors, unpaid family workers, church employees, railroad workers covered by the railroad unemployment insurance system, and students employed at a college or university as part of a financial aid package.

All wage estimates in the report include all wages in the UI wage database for that person in that year. Each individual is associated with just one industry sector and state in each time period, and that assignment is based on the industry sector/state of the employer with whom they earned the most wages within that period. For example, if Lincoln earned \$5,000 in the manufacturing industry sector and \$2,000 in the retail trade industry sector per quarter following enrollment, Lincoln would be included in the overall employment and wages table with a gross wage of \$7,000 per quarter. In the employment and wages by industry sector table, he would be included under the manufacturing industry sector with a gross wage of \$7,000 per quarter (he would not be counted in retail trade, but the wages he earned in that sector would still be counted).

Median wages are used in this report rather than average wages to mitigate the effect of outliers. Wage distributions are typically right-skewed so the median is a better measure of center than the mean, which is pulled in the direction of the skew (and is more affected by outliers, particularly with small sample sizes).

To protect individual identities, some cells in this report are suppressed due to small cell size using the following rules:

1. Suppress the cell if number of employed in cell is less than three.
2. If the sum of employed individuals across all suppressed subgroups is less than three, suppress the next smallest subgroup (to ensure the number of suppressed individuals is three or greater).

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## **COMMUNITY COLLEGES & WORKFORCE PREPARATION**

*PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION*

The Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation within the Iowa Department of Education administers a variety of diverse programs that enhance Iowa's educational system and help to prepare a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. Divided between two bureaus — the Bureau of Community Colleges and the Bureau of Career and Technical Education — the Division is committed to providing and supporting opportunities for lifelong learning. In addition to working with Iowa's 15 public community colleges on state accreditation, program approval, equity review, and data reporting, guidance is also provided in the areas of career and technical education, workforce training and economic development, adult education and literacy, military education, the state mandated OWI education program, the GAP Tuition and PACE programs, Senior Year Plus, the National Crosswalk Service Center, and the Statewide Intermediary Network program.