



# Redeeming Scholars

Working Title

## Systems Integration

The following living document is designed to help the Redeeming Scholars Project Team's work through systemic issues that could hinder the success of a person with an incarceration background seeking a post-secondary certificate or degree.

## BARRIERS

### Barrier: Lack of seamless transition between education inside and outside

- Senate Bill 235 (2021) workgroup: to have a unified system with community colleges so if we have an Adult in Custody (AIC) taking classes on the inside, there's continuity on the outside with common course numbering.
  - *This bill was not passed during the 2021 Legislative Session*
  - *This bill would have directed Department of Corrections to develop plan for providing equipment, connectivity and infrastructure necessary to ensure that adults in custody, in Coffee Creek Correctional Facility and Snake River Correctional Institution, have online access to certain education programs.*

### Barrier: Challenges with bandwidth and staffing capacity

- COVID might have impacted some near-term issues/longstanding systems impact.
- Need to address what happens when an AIC cannot continue their education because the system could not get them to their final (e.g., there's a lockdown). Setting people up for frustration when they are hit by systems, they do not have control over.
  - *For 'outside' the system – This is why a mentor is helpful; they can work on technical violations with parole that could put someone back into prison or throw them out of educational opportunities; this is why probation is key*
  - *For 'inside' the system – OYA is more rehabilitative, more staff; for DOC, Chemeketa has contract with DOC to provide in-institution education; but still cannot do educational work online; there are individualized conversations in-institution at the community college level; there are corrections education directors that partner with DOC in this space—they take the lead on navigating systemic barriers for AICs.*

### Barrier: Lack of information about services and incentives

- Barriers to educate AICs: There seems to be difficulty in getting information about potential opportunities to an AIC. There's a need to educate AICs and staff on current and future opportunities.
- Lack of incentives to engage in skill building (perhaps vocational) within the system. One

needs to be very driven to pursue education or vocation. Need to hook into the motivation to earn a small amount for learning skills e.g., welding.

- *Development of types of incentives – for potential discussion and work during Phase 2*

### **Barrier: Need for quality assessments while inside institution**

- Assessments or guidance need to be built into the system to help each individual. Consider needs based assessments and/or goal-based assessments. If it is not needs based, it could be a turn off (e.g., not seeing the point, just another standardized test).
  - *Suggestion that during Phase 2, develop a definition of ‘assessments’ and timing on when it would occur.*

### **Barrier: Lack of information and differing priorities in corrections**

- Perception that local corrections officers view getting a job as the top priority versus enrolling for additional post-secondary education for formerly incarcerated.
- There’s a misunderstanding or lack of information about the grants that are available to help AIC that’s been recently released to access funds to support themselves to continue their education.
- Probation officers are overworked and likely don’t have an opportunity to be further informed.

### **Barrier: Lack of transition support on the outside**

- There are 36 counties with different resources depending on the country you are releasing to. Only two are managed by DOC (Douglas and Linn).
- Community colleges do not have good access to housing.
- Importance of transition support: Helping an AIC navigate from the inside to the outside and clarify the handoff to the community.
- Community college side-guided pathways are leverage that works to help AICs move from community to post-secondary education.
- Emphasize getting examples from a range of other states on transition support (Phase 2 work product)
  - *In California, Project Rebound helps guide them through the pathway. Great to have ambassadors on campus helping.*



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### **Barrier: Adults are released to the county where they were sentenced**

- This provides barriers if they want to access or continue education at a particular institution in a different location in Oregon.
- OYA can release youth anywhere in the state while based on previous home address, not where they committed the crime. The ability to move someone around the state is different across institutions. Consider education opportunities where someone gets released would be a very helpful factor, and more likely to be successful.
- Opportunities for e-campus learning. There are some positives (e.g., can access education anywhere), but also drawbacks (e.g., lack of campus support to build community and provide stability).

### **Other barrier for consideration**

- Timeline to access Oregon Promise - Discussion on Oregon Promise and short timeline to access it after high school diploma/GED completion; get details
- Discussion about a comprehensive look at overall financial aid system
- Need for common courses across colleges, universities, and needs to also apply to technical courses/help with transfer credits
- Future need – signal from state that this work is a priority at institution level



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## OPPORTUNITIES

- **Full Project Team to complete System PowerPoint during Phase II**
- **Future Ready Oregon** - Governor's workforce bill, SB 1545, was able to get current and formerly incarcerated people as a priority population; this bill is moving through the Legislature; it will have a short-term pot of funds to be spend over the next few years
  - Important to track; could be useful for AIC's
  - *Funding through BOLI – other sources?*
- **Opportunities for online learning** – see OSU as model
- **Lane Community College** – has a focus on supported formerly incarcerated students and wants to be included in Redeeming Scholars project team
- **Consider focusing on/working with community colleges first** – they have strong experience supporting this population
- **Strong Redeeming Scholars Project Team interest in piloting effort**
  - Also, long-term desire for which is essential for long-term viability
- The current effort to create Common course numbers for all first- and second-year transfer courses, irrespective of higher education institution, needs to be included as an opportunity. When completed, this will provide statewide alignment for the reentry population.
- John Kincaid, who ran education at the Sheridan Federal Correctional Institution, was interested in the project. He needs to be added in the next phase.
- **Current Legislative Task Force on Underrepresented Students in Higher Education** is looking at ways of improving access and success for first-generation students and other target populations. That includes formerly-incarcerated students. The Task Force is currently meeting with students at colleges and universities around the state.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Pell**
- Connect with key leaders/organizations
  - Joint Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education (JTUSHE)
  - Governor's Racial Justice Council
  - Governor's Reentry Council



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### DATA NEEDS

- **Number of currently enrolled inside for scope of work outside (adults and youth)**
- Those that need to continue education outside
- Those that need to shift from one level of certification or degree to the next (HS to AA, AA to BS, classes to certification/apprenticeship)
- *Note - In CA, 15-18 people in each program, so likely to be more in OR, with CC and trades.*
- In OYA - How many involved in college, probation, or parole, as well as going to school. How many individuals are outside or recently released may need help to be connected.
- Where are assessments or guidance built into the system to help each person, where are they needed?
- Explore if having past graduation data helps ensure individuals enter the education pipeline?
- For initial data gathering and starting scope purposes, how many pilot schools? Which ones? Just formerly incarcerated coming out, or add on supervision? Must they be formerly incarcerated, or probation included?
- Identify what other schools/universities are interested and get them engaged
- Qualitative data on the nature of recidivism
- Create timetable for data collection; develop a process on how to collect it
- Consider what additional support the institution may need to collect this data.
- *In-Institution Activity* – Oregon Department of Corrections to be putting together a course catalog of all educational offerings in each facility; important to understand what individuals can learn if transferred within institutions
- *QUERY:* Do we know of an inventory in California/other states of what incarcerated students are learning?
- Oregon Legislative Policy and Research Office (LPRO) staff shared a completed report from a workgroup they convened with HECC which includes “a table that outlines each of the higher education programs offered at Oregon’s correctional institutions that are already or may be Pell-eligible by 2023.”
- Need: matrix – data to show success



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### FUNDING RESOURCES & PARTNERS

- Oregon Legislature, mid- to long-term, is not the only source.
- Work Ready Oregon Initiative (\$250 million) federal and state
- Public/Private Partnerships/Foundations - examples
  - Jeldwen?/Klamath Works Staffing companies and employment agencies
  - Oregon Community Foundation
  - Ford Family Foundation
  - Meyer Memorial Trust Foundation
  - Others?
- Timing to apply for and/or receive these grants and foundational monies?
- Second Chance Pell helps on tuition side. Therefore, the funding is about the infrastructure to support these students.
- Support Basic Needs Navigators on all universities. May need to be updated.
  - We go to funders to assist to fund pilot programs to run Navigator roles at different institutions.
- AmeriCorps Campus Compact
- Social Work Internship Programs
- College and University Foundations
- Local Workforce Boards that are distributing state and federal dollars
- Leverage Federal Funding (Adult Basic Education)
- Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act
- Unions? (Sen. Dembrow)
- Apprenticeships? Some limitations here (Donna)
- Cities or counties as funding sources
- Faith communities?
- SB 234 work group - educational transition and pathway piece.

### Examples for future funding

- FY 2022 Second Chance Act Community-based Reentry Program. See this [link](#).
- This BJA grant can support housing. See this [link](#).



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### COMMUNICATION TASKS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

- Stand up a subcommittee focused on communications with potential inclusion of government relations outreach; examples of work products could be as follows:
  - Stand up resources webpage –
    - Note: Oregon Solutions will create webpage for work of Redeeming Scholars Project Team work for time being
  - Develop strategies to brief and reach out to key policymakers, organizations, committees, and institution
  - Develop list of partners/stakeholders who need outreach and/or contact
  - Assist other subcommittees with essential communications needs as they are developed



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## OTHER CRITICAL PARTNERS TO ENGAGE

List to be developed as part of Phase 2. This is a sample list of who already is engaged:

Formerly Incarcerated
Oregon Youth Authority
Oregon Legislature
PSU Admin + University Studies Program
OSU Admin + Sociology Program, School of Public Policy
Department of Corrections
Southern Oregon University
Department of Corrections
BOLI
Oregon Community College Association
University of Oregon
Oregon Higher Education Coordination Commission
Legislative Policy & Research Office, Oregon State
SOI Systems
US District Court

Needed: (examples)

- Parole and probation
- Governor's Racial Justice Council
- Governor's Reentry Council
- More community colleges/universities (e.g., LCC, TVC, LBCC)
- Community-based programs list development (for Phase III)