

Transformational Education



The student-teacher ratio in Minnesota is currently 16:1. However, the state's correctional system has 50 teachers for the incarcerated population of over 9,000 people. Given the contribution education can make to rehabilitation, job attainment, personal transformation, and increased public safety, this level of underinvestment in prison education impedes the Department of Correction's (DOC) mission of creating safer communities.

The DOC requests an ongoing increase in funding to ensure opportunities for robust, transformative educational programming for every willing participant. The proposal puts together a comprehensive strategy to address the lack of educational supports in Minnesota prisons – and the significant number of people returning to communities without marketable skills required to contribute to society. Through these investments, people will return to communities more prepared to live safely and successfully.

Education Staffing and Space - \$3.1 million in FY24, \$3.9 million in FY25, and \$2.9 million ongoing for more teachers, education case managers, and support services management to increase education across all DOC facilities, impacting incarcerated people of all backgrounds and education levels.

Educational Information Technology - \$918,000 in FY24 and \$50,000 in FY25 ongoing for essential IT education components for secondary and post-secondary education as well as the licensing fees required to maintain them.

Vocational Opportunities - \$650,000 in FY24 and \$50,000 ongoing for expanded vocational training to expand state and private sector partnerships. The investment will expand heavy equipment and Mechatronics programs to help incarcerated individuals attain professional licensure and help connect them to employers upon release.

Pell Grant Access and Partnerships - \$200,000 each year to facilitate, run, and support Pell partnerships with state higher education partners operating in DOC facilities. The 2020 restoration of federal Pell funding to 1.5 million people in prison is available to more than 5,000 Minnesotans currently incarcerated. Pell eligibility for tuition at any Minnesota public or private college or university begins in full this year.

Higher Education Work Release Expansion - \$2 million in FY24 and in FY25 and \$1 million ongoing to expand the current work release program for education.

Cognitive Processing Therapy - \$310,000 each year to expand this important therapy to help individuals learn how to modify and challenge unhelpful beliefs related to trauma.

Supplies - \$188,000 in FY24 and \$248,000 in FY25 and each subsequent year for annual supplies and expenses.