

RCW 72.09.467 Postsecondary degree education programs—Reports to the legislature. (1) The department, the state board for community and technical colleges, the student achievement council, and the Washington statewide reentry council, in collaboration with an organization representing the presidents of the public four-year institutions of higher education, shall submit a combined report, pursuant to RCW 43.01.036, by December 1, 2021, and annually thereafter, to the appropriate committees of the legislature having oversight over higher education issues and correctional matters. The state agencies shall consult and engage with nonprofit and community-based postsecondary education providers during the development of the annual report.

(2) At a minimum, the combined report must include:

(a) The number of incarcerated individuals served in the department's postsecondary education system, the number of individuals not served, the number of individuals leaving the department's custody without a high school equivalency who were in the department's custody longer than one year, and the number of individuals released without any postsecondary education, each disaggregated by demographics;

(b) A complete list of postsecondary degree and certificate education programs offered at each state correctional facility, including enrollment rates and completion rates for each program;

(c) A review of the department's identification and assessment of incarcerated individuals with learning disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, and other cognitive impairments or disabilities that may limit their ability to participate in educational programming, including general educational development testing and postsecondary education. The report shall identify barriers to the identification and assessment of these individuals and include recommendations that will further facilitate access to educational programming for these individuals;

(d) An identification of issues related to ensuring that credits earned in credit-bearing courses are transferable. The report must also include the number of transferable credits awarded and the number of credits awarded that are not transferable;

(e) A review of policies on transfer, in order to create recommendations to institutions and the legislature that to ensure postsecondary education credits earned while incarcerated transfer seamlessly upon postrelease enrollment in a postsecondary education institution. The review must identify barriers or challenges on transferring credits experienced by individuals and the number of credits earned while incarcerated that transferred to the receiving colleges postrelease;

(f) The number of individuals participating in correspondence courses and completion rates of correspondence courses, disaggregated by demographics;

(g) An examination of the collaboration between correctional facilities, the educational programs, nonprofit and community-based postsecondary education providers, and the institutions, with the goal of ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, including the roles and responsibilities of each entity in relation to ensuring incarcerated individual access to, and accommodations in, educational programming; and

(h) A review of the partnerships with nonprofit and community-based postsecondary education organizations at state correctional facilities that provide accredited certificate and degree-granting

programs and those that provide reentry services in support of educational programs and goals, including a list of the programs and services offered and recommendations to improve program delivery and access.

(3) The report shall strive to include, where possible, the voices and experiences of current or formerly incarcerated individuals. [2024 c 272 s 3; 2021 c 200 s 8.]