

Fair Chance to Advance State Action Networks:

Aligning Systems and Building Clear Pathways From Incarceration to Careers

Request for Proposal Eligibility Criteria

The review process will include four stages:



Stage 1: Initial Eligibility Review

During the Initial Eligibility Review, reviewers will assess whether each proposal meets the minimum threshold of enabling conditions and stakeholder readiness required to advance in the selection process. Stage 1 includes:

- Eligibility criteria for states
- Stakeholder readiness of corrections partners
- Stakeholder readiness of postsecondary partners



Stage 2: Competitive Regional Review

During the Competitive Regional Review, proposals that passed the initial eligibility screen will be evaluated and scored against priority criteria to identify the most competitive and well-positioned proposals within each U.S. Census region. Stage 2 includes:

- Priority criteria for states
- Stakeholder readiness of corrections partners
- Stakeholder readiness of workforce and employer partners



Stage 3: Finalist Interviews

Finalist states will be invited to participate in a virtual interview with the selection committee. The interview will offer an opportunity to provide additional context, highlight strengths of the proposal, and respond to questions from reviewers.



Stage 4: Final Calibration and Cohort Selection

Final decisions will balance readiness with diversity in terms of geography, political context, and correctional landscape.

[Click here to visit the RFP](#)

Review Appendix E of the RFP for a full list of criteria



Enabling Conditions in States

Stage 1: Initial Eligibility Review

Existing Cross-Sector Collaboration and Relationships

✓ Evidence of existing working relationships and commitments to collaboration between corrections, postsecondary education and training providers, the state higher education system, community-based organizations, policymakers, and/or employer-oriented actors in the state.

Engagement of People with Lived Experience:

✓ Evidence of past commitments to working with leaders and advisors who have lived experience of arrest, incarceration, or other interactions with the criminal justice system.

Commitment to All Learners

✓ Evidence of commitment to ensuring that all people who are or have been incarcerated have access to opportunities no matter what charges they faced or how much time they served and regardless of their demographic identity or socioeconomic status.

Commitment to Learner Choice

✓ Evidence of commitment to aligning academic and career pathways offered in carceral facilities and in community settings to the interests and aspirations of students.

Reentry Partnerships

✓ Evidence of existing coordination and partnerships between corrections agencies, institutions of higher education, providers of services to people returning to their communities, housing providers, and/or community-based organizations to adequately support learners as they continue their academic and career pathways after release.

Capacity for Research & Evaluation

✓ A willingness and ability to track short-term impact and outcomes over the life of the FC2A initiative, as well as the capacity (or evidence of progress toward the capacity) to integrate statewide data systems that track educational and employment outcomes.

Mitigating Career Barriers

✓ Evidence within the state of shared commitment to advocating for the removal of policy barriers that automatically disqualify people from jobs or professions based on their records, without considering the degree to which the charges individuals were convicted of are relevant to the roles or professions they're pursuing.



Enabling Conditions in States

Stage 2: Competitive Regional Review

Understanding of State-Specific Barriers

Past efforts to identify state-specific education and employment barriers for learners and workers with records of incarceration.

Aligned State Investments

Recent investments to expand access to education and training inside carceral facilities and in the community.

Gubernatorial/Policy maker Priority Population

Clear public commitment from state leaders to prioritize individuals with records of incarceration in education and workforce initiatives.

Data Systems Integration

Progress toward integrating statewide data systems.

Field Engagement

Past involvement in peer learning, national convenings, or technical assistance communities.

Impact and Innovation

Previous records of success or innovation in efforts to improve education and employment outcomes for people with records of incarceration.

Complementary Funding Sources

Existing funding that supports alignment of state education systems and reentry programs for people returning to their communities following incarceration.

Stakeholder Readiness: Corrections Partners

Stage 1: Initial Eligibility Review

DOC Infrastructure

✓ Evidence that sufficient infrastructure (space, staffing capacity, technology, learning resources) is available through the state department of corrections (DOC) or other statewide correctional agency to support evidence-based practices for student success in both virtual and in-person education and training programs (in addition to a stated commitment from corrections leaders to expanding and improving student access to secure internet and education technology).

IRB Approvals

✓ Evidence of leadership willingness to fast-track DOC institutional review board (IRB) approval processes to support the gathering and analysis of required data.

Accessibility and Student Support Services

✓ Evidence of a willingness and the ability to make accessibility and other student support services readily available.

Academic and Career Advising Services

✓ A statement of DOC commitment to establishing robust career coaching and academic advising services and providing access to other information, tools, and resources that help learners match their talents and aspirations with career fields and navigate the job search and hiring processes.

Stage 2: Competitive Regional Review

Work-Based Learning

✓ A statement of DOC commitment to incorporating work-based learning (WBL) opportunities and creating pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship pathways for learners who are incarcerated.

Compensation for Work-Based Learning

✓ A statement of DOC commitment to compensating participants in work-based learning programs at fair wage levels.

Continuing Access and Incentives

✓ A statement of DOC commitment to ensuring access to and providing incentives for participation in education and training opportunities during incarceration, as well as during parole or probation.

Employers in Facilities

✓ A statement of DOC commitment to creating opportunities for employers to connect, both virtually and in-person, with learners and workers who are incarcerated prior to their release.



Stakeholder Readiness: Postsecondary Partners

Stage 1: Initial Eligibility Review

Existing Collaboration



Evidence of collaboration and engagement among multiple postsecondary education providers in the state, with particular emphasis on engagement of public institutions (i.e., state higher education system, community or technical college system, two-year and four-year public institutions).

Pathways Diversity



Evidence of commitment to diversity of higher education pathways curricula across the state—pathways in the trades, liberal arts, business and entrepreneurship, etc.

Pathways Quality



Evidence of commitment to the quality of educational pathways offered in correctional facilities and a strategic approach to selecting postsecondary partners, offering recognized degrees and credentials, and improving transferability of credits.

Alignment to Quality Jobs



Evidence of commitment to aligning postsecondary pathways offered in carceral facilities and community programs to quality jobs, fair chance employers, and labor market demand.



Stakeholder Readiness: Workforce and Employer Partners

Stage 2: Competitive Regional Review

Fair Chance Hiring



Evidence of openness among local employers to becoming fair chance employers, adopting inclusive hiring and talent development practices for people with records of incarceration, and including corrections as partners in sourcing talent.

Fair Chance Promotion



Evidence of a commitment among local workforce entities to promoting the adoption and scaling of fair chance hiring practices within the employer community and encouraging public employers to model these hiring practices.

Past Workforce Board Engagement



Evidence of past efforts by local workforce agencies or boards to collaborate with corrections agencies or specifically support learners and workers with records of incarceration.