

TECHNOLOGY IN ADULT
EDUCATION VIRTUAL
CONFERENCE 2021

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE OF JUSTICE

DIGITAL LITERACY AND ACCESS IN OUR JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Presented by Jeffrey Abramowitz, JD



Questions and Answers

Today's challenge is a lesson in:

Building bridges to connect individuals with justice involvement on their journey and helping them see and realize their future.



Education is all a matter of building bridges.

— *Ralph Ellison* —

AZ QUOTES



My journey, My bridge, My new glasses ...



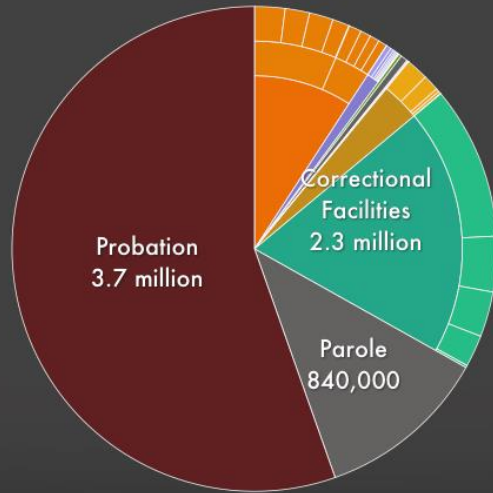
Building the
bridge begins with
understanding the
challenge...

Just the
Facts

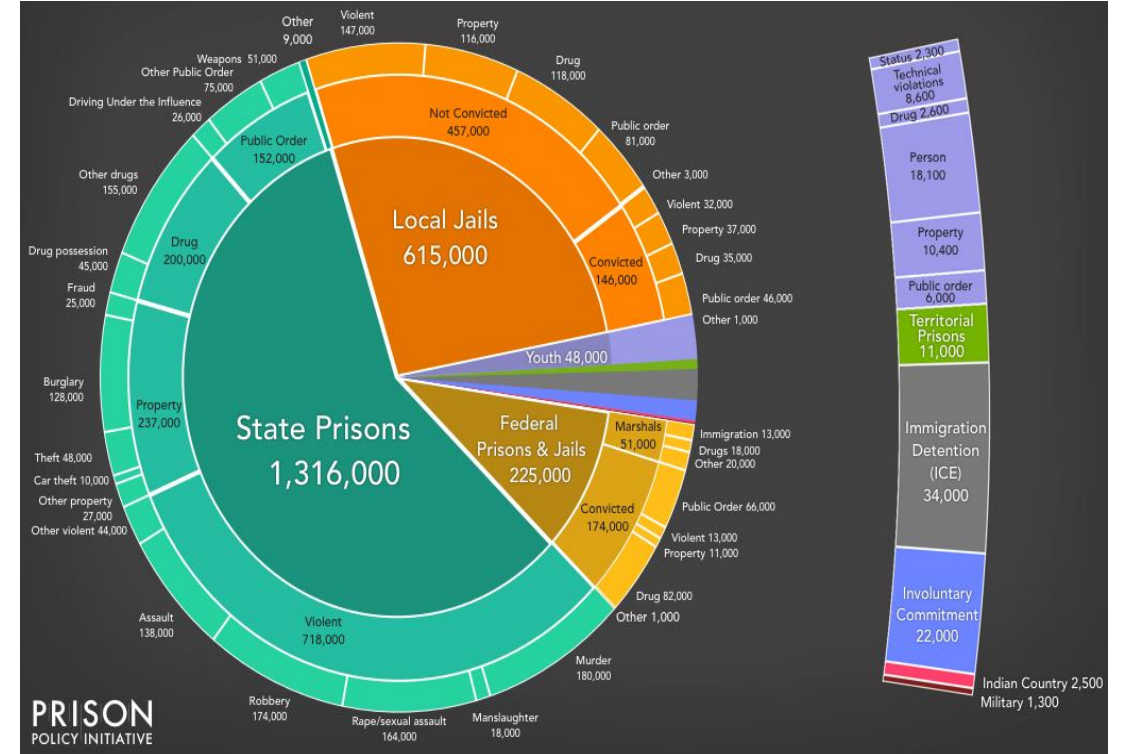


Incarceration is just one piece of the much larger system of correctional control

The U.S. justice system controls almost 7 million people, more than half of whom are on probation.



PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE



PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

The Whole Pie

113 MILLION

People have an immediate family member who have been incarcerated.

(1/2 of the Adults in the US)

**70-100
MILLION**

People in the US
with a criminal
history.

(It starts with an
allegation or charge)





A person without data is just another person with an opinion- Albert Einstein

**636,000 CITIZENS ARE
RELEASED EACH YEAR
(More since COVID19)**

**MORE THAN 2/3 OF THOSE
RELEASED WILL BE REARRESTED
WITHIN 3 YEARS.
1/2 WILL GO BACK TO PRISON!**

1 in 3
American
workers have
limited or no
digital skills!

National Skills Coalition April 21, 2020



**Low literacy levels cost the US economy
\$2.2 trillion per/year in GNP**

National Data

- 781 Million people in the world are either illiterate (cannot read a single word), or functionally illiterate (with a basic or below a basic ability to read)
- 54% of US adult population @ 130 Million people lack proficiency in literacy (6th grade level)
- 22,000,000 in the US without a high school diploma (63% of all US jobs require at least a high school diploma)

Impact: Correlation to personal income, employment, health...



Why education/skill development and a career pathway matter!

Low skilled adults are 8X more likely to be incarcerated

Providing “ANY” form of educational programming in prison provided a 43% “BETTER” chance of not going back

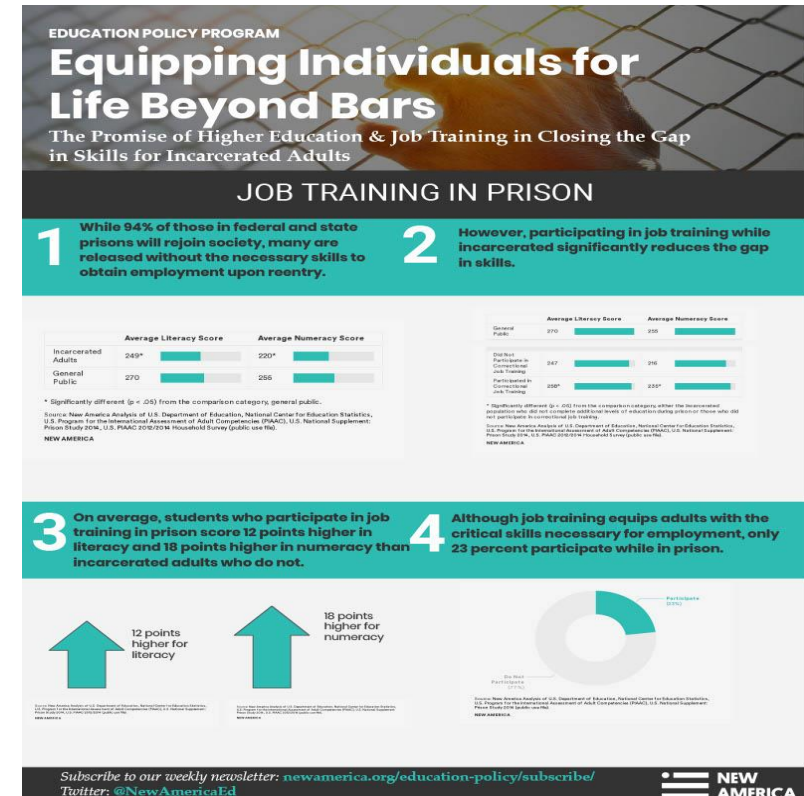
By 2021, 63% of all US jobs will require education beyond high school

Equipping Individuals for Life Beyond Bars

94% of those behind bars will someday be released (many without the necessary skills to obtain employment)

Students who participate in job training behind the walls, score higher in literacy and numeracy

Only 23 % of inmates participate in job training behind the walls



The State of Digital Literacy inside of our prisons and jails.



Digital Literacy
Reduces Recidivism
(10/6/2015 Brookings)



Impact of Digital Literacy

- Digital literacy skills for life, employment
- A gateway for engaging disenfranchised learners (prior negative - experiences)
- On demand and independent learning
- Brings people together and creates relationships
- Improved mental and physical health
- Easier to track progress of individuals with challenges (learning disabilities)
- Creates a safer and healthier prison environment

America spends more on its prison systems than it does on public schools.



Pennsylvania ranks 13th

Spending per student: **\$15,417**
Spending per inmate: **\$42,727**

There are over 44,000 barriers to employment, education, housing, loan borrowing and licensing, among many other categories.
(70% of these are employment related)

The unemployment rate for formerly incarcerated people stands at:

27%

That is higher than peak unemployment during the great depression!

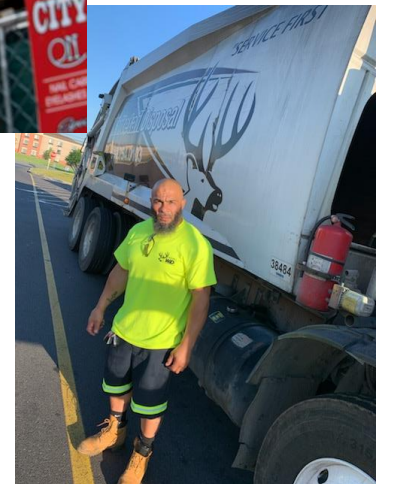
(8.4% today)

“Laying the Groundwork: How States Can Improve Access to Continued Education for People in the Criminal Justice System”.

Building that bridge starts with a strong foundation (starting at the beginning)

- * Basic math and reading support
Supplies/materials
- * High school equivalency
- * **Digital literacy**
- * Upskilling
- * Career & technical training leading to a desired career pathway

Choose wisely – occupational licensing, high demand industry sectors!



COVID 19 Behind & Beyond the Walls

(The bridge is down to one lane proceed carefully, but you need to proceed!)



The COVID
Pivot:
Inside/outside

The Impact of COVID on Adult Education in Corrections and Reentry

<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/05/01/a-state-by-state-look-at-coronavirus-in-prisons>

397,422

A State-by-State Look at Coronavirus in Prisons

The Marshall Project is collecting data on COVID-19 infections in state and federal prisons. See how the virus has affected correctional facilities where you live.

STATE	TOTAL CASES	PER 10,000 PRISONERS	NEW CASES OVER TIME
Federal	49,324	2,866	
California	49,230	4,185	
Texas	34,611	2,470	
Michigan	26,655	6,982	
Florida	18,069	1,927	
Arizona	12,296	2,903	
Arkansas	11,351	6,486	
Pennsylvania	11,344	2,436	
Wisconsin	10,967	4,649	
Illinois	10,892	2,949	



What happened behind & beyond the prison walls over the past year????



High Priority
Industry
Sectors
(Reentry
Friendly?)

Seeing into
the future!

The beams/supports of our bridge



Transitional
Housing



Education



Skill
Training/Employment



Medical &
Addiction
Support



Basic Needs:
Identification,
clothing,
transportation



Legal Support



Tools that are helping people cross the bridge!

- **Digital Literacy/Competency**

- **What can be done:**

- **Blended learning programs**
- **Virtual computer centers/classrooms**
- **In cell technology**
- **Prison clouds**
- **Look to our international partners**

SUCCESS IS A JOURNEY,
NOT A DESTINATION

The Talent Pool Building The Bridge

Thinking outside the cell

1- Innovations in teaching

- Blended learning
- Better materials
- Incentives
- Virtual learning tools
- Digital literacy supports

2- Inside Out Connectors

3- Peer tutoring/mentoring at work

4- Integrated Educational Training

5- Post secondary supports – Pell Grant (tools)

Education and Skill Development – The Support Wires

Restoring
Education and
Learning Act
(REAL Act)

Active Employer
Engagement in
Education &
Training



Upskilling

TRAINING
(Skills/licensing/
ITA)

Bridge supports that can keep traffic running!

Adult Literacy Agencies

Career One Stops

Community Colleges

Apprenticeships

Employers/Unions/WDB

Resources

LINCS Correctional & Reentry Community of Practice

- <https://lincs.ed.gov/>

Career Pathways Sample (PA)

<https://www.paadultresources.org/sector-strategies/>

Barriers to Employment Liptak, John J., Ed.D. Barriers to Employment Success Inventory (BESI). 5th Ed. Jist Publishing.

https://www.career-lifeskills.com/pdf/jst-323209_guide.pdf

Steve Steurer

["How to Unlock the Power of Prison Education"](#)

["Apprenticeship and the Justice System: Adapting a Proven Training Model to Serve People in Prison"](#)

["U.S. Skills Map: State and County Indicators of Adult Literacy and Numeracy"](#)

["Laying the Groundwork: How States Can Improve Access to Continued Education for People in the Criminal Justice System"](#)

["Reconnecting Justice: Pathways to Effective Reentry through Education and Training"](#)

["Reentry Education Framework: Guidelines for Providing High-Quality Education for Adults Involved in the Criminal Justice System"](#)

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/ReferenceResources/WWC_CTE_Protocol_4.0_08-02-19_sxf.pdf

SHRM- Getting Talent Back to Work

www.gettingtalentbacktowork.org

Google Reentry Career Preparedness Program

<https://grow.google/reentry/>

IBM Skills Build Initiative

<https://skillsbuild.org/>

Do's & Don'ts of Virtual Education in Prison

<https://incarcerationnationsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Virtual-Education-Behind-Bars-Toolkit-with-Hyperlinked-SC.pdf>



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