Benefits

No matter what your involvement with the criminal justice system is or how rocky your educational pathway has been, college may still be an option for you!

Good colleges care about having a diverse body of students with all kinds of experiences. You'll have the personal experience colleges look for!

Going to college is a good way to meet people and make professional connections.

If you have children, there's a higher chance for them to be more excited about college if you want because they see the value of it.

You'll have more job options with a college degree. You will also earn more money!

After college, you'll have more professional opportunities, including those in fields like healthcare and law.

Flip over if you want to know how to enroll in college.

Enroll in college.

Yes, it can be!

This guide will help you plan for and enroll in college.

Open here to learn about the benefits and basics of college.

Degrees

There are many different types of college degrees and they can take two or more years.

Master's Degree
- M.A., M.S., etc.
  - One to three years
  - You need a Bachelor's degree.

Doctoral Degree
- M.D., Ph.D., etc.
  - Doctoral Dissertation and Four or more years.
  - You need a Master's degree, but sometimes they can be combined into one program.

Professional Degree
- Law, Nursing, etc.
  - Each degree varies in length.

Associate's Degree
- A.A., A.A.S., etc.
  - Two or more years.
  - If you earn an AA or AS at some schools, you're guaranteed acceptance into a Bachelor's degree program.

Bachelor's Degree
- B.A., B.S., etc.
  - Four or more years.
  - You need a high school diploma or equivalent to get it.

Public Schools

There are two important public school systems to get familiar with in New York State:

The City University of New York (CUNY)
- 11 four-year colleges and 7 community colleges and graduate schools in NYC
- cuny.edu
- (212) 997-CUNY (2869)

State University of New York (SUNY)
- 64 Campuses around the state
- suny.edu
- Phone (Toll-Free): (800) 342-3811

All public and nonprofit schools are accredited.

Benefits
- Are under the authority of New York State.
- Are usually the most affordable option.
- Don't require applicants to disclose their criminal justice history.

There are many different college programs on different subjects from highly specialized to more general. It's okay if you don't know what you want to study before college! Many programs are designed to guide you to pick your topic of study.

There are different types of Nonprofit Schools:
- For-profit schools are private schools run as businesses.
- For-profit schools are usually expensive.
- Credits are usually non-transferable and many programs at these colleges are unaccredited.

This doesn't necessarily mean that an unaccredited institution is of poor quality, but earning a degree from an unaccredited institution may create problems for students like transferring credits.

Student drop out rates are high.

Private Schools

Nonprofit schools have some scholarship funding available to students who don’t have large incomes. If you’re accepted at one of these schools, make sure to go over the financial aid package they’ve offered you to see if you’ll have to take out loans and how much.

There are many different college degrees and programs offered you to see if you’ll have to study different subjects from highly specialized to more general.

Many programs are designed to guide you to pick your topic of study.

You will also earn more money!

For-Profit
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Student drop out rates are high.

Yes, non-profit schools have some scholarship funding available! If you’re accepted at one of these schools, make sure to go over the financial aid package they’ve offered you to see if you’ll have to take out loans and how much.

Is College for Me?
You'll need a high school level diploma to enroll in college. If you don't have one, you have the right to get one!

### While still in prison

#### What happens when I get released?

**How much would it cost?**

Most programs are free of cost but you’ll have to give up another activity in its place.

There’s homework and you’ll have to study while you’re in college, so make sure you make time for that. Talk to other students in your program for support.

Contact these organizations if you have any questions about college!

PRI
534 West 53rd Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10019
(646) 781-5118
pri.org

and if you’re a woman:

College and Community Fellowship:
471 Broadway, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10013
(844) 380-7777
collegeandcommunity.org

#### Why should I enroll in college while still in prison?

You can get financial aid after having been in prison. Funding options may look different depending on your conviction.

The earlier you apply to FAFSA, the better! Check the website regularly for important dates.

There are four types of financial assistance results from FAFSA:

- **Grants**
  - Money received that doesn’t have to be repaid and that is based on financial need. Grants may come with requirements that have to be met before receiving it again.

- **Loans**
  - This is borrowed money that you’ll have to repay. Depending on your career path, a portion of loans can be forgiven after working 5-10 years or more in certain fields, like public service.

- **Scholarships**
  - Money that is awarded to students. Merit-based scholarships are the most common and are based on student academic, athletic, or other abilities. Need-based scholarships are based on financial need and are awarded for one year only, but you can reapply each year. There are scholarships that are for specific groups of people, backgrounds, or military families.

- **Work-Study**
  - Work-Study provides part-time jobs to undergraduate and graduate students with financial need. It allows you to earn money to help pay for your education.

**Understanding costs and tuition**

The cost of college can vary a lot depending on whether you’re going to a public or private school. Private schools can be a lot more expensive. The price difference can be up to $40,000.

- Tuition and fees are the price of taking classes at a college. This amount can change based on your program, your number of credit hours, and if you’ll live at a school dorm.

- **Paying for college**
  - **Apply for the Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** here: fafsa.ed.gov. The website will walk you through this process as you’re filling out your application. Talk to your college’s financial advisor if you have questions.

You can verify this number at sss.gov.

- **Selective Service registration number.** You can verify this number at ss.gov.

- **College transcripts if you’ve been to college before.**

- **College financial aid office.** A list of schools you want to apply to.

- **SAT scores if you’re interested in applying for a Bachelor’s degree.**

- **High school diploma or equivalent.**

**Gathering your documents**

- **Social Security Number (SSN).** If you’re not a U.S. citizen, then your Alien Registration Number.

- **Federal Income Tax Return, W-2 forms, letters of support if you’re being supported by friends and family, and tax return transcripts.** If you didn’t file taxes or receive any assistance, then you must fill out a 4506-T form from the IRS.

- **A list of schools you want to apply to.**

- **Selective Service registration number.** You can verify this number at ss.gov.

- **College transcripts if you’ve been to college before.**

- **SAT scores if you’re interested in applying for a Bachelor’s degree.**

- **High school diploma or equivalent.**

**Picking a college**

- **If you haven’t been to school in a while, you should visit your local community college. Community colleges are for anyone with a high school diploma.**

- **If you live in NYC, CUNY is a good place to start. If you’re outside of NYC but in New York State, SUNY is where you should start.**

Several CUNY and SUNY schools also have programs to help you get a high school diploma if you don’t have one.

#### Correspondence courses

are college classes that you do by mail. But be careful, you’ll have to pay for some of these!

There are three kinds of programs

- **Degree-granting programs**
  - allow you to finish your degree while you’re still in prison. In order to complete those programs, you need to have enough time left on your sentence to earn the credits required for your degree. These programs are free.

- **Degree-earning reentry programs**
  - allow you to start your college degree while in prison and finish it at a college when you’re released. Programs may have eligibility requirements relating to how much time you have left on your sentence. These programs are free.

- **Correspondence classes**
  - are college classes that you do by mail. But be careful, you’ll have to pay for some of these!

#### From prison to home

**What are the conditions of my parole?**

- You must fill out a 4506-T form from the IRS.

- **Social Security Number (SSN).** If you’re not a U.S. citizen, then your Alien Registration Number.

#### From prison to coming home

**How much am I willing to spend?**

You can verify this number at sss.gov.

- **Selective Service registration number.** You can verify this number at ss.gov.

- **College transcripts if you’ve been to college before.**

- **SAT scores if you’re interested in applying for a Bachelor’s degree.**

- **High school diploma or equivalent.**

#### From prison to after

**Do I want my college to be close to where I live?**

- **If you haven’t been to school in a while, you should visit your local community college. Community colleges are for anyone with a high school diploma.**

- **If you live in NYC, CUNY is a good place to start. If you’re outside of NYC but in New York State, SUNY is where you should start.**

Several CUNY and SUNY schools also have programs to help you get a high school diploma if you don’t have one.

#### From prison to prison

**Why should I enroll in college while still in prison?**

You’ll need a high school level diploma to enroll in college. If you don’t have one, you have the right to get one!